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LONG ISLAND RESIDENT SENTENCED
IN DWI CRASH THAT KILLED TWO WOMEN

Receives 3½ To 10½ Years In Prison

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown today announced that a Long Island man has been sentenced in connection with the deaths of two women who were killed when, under the influence of alcohol, he drove his vehicle through a red light and slammed into a livery cab killing its driver and her passenger.

District Attorney Brown said, “The defendant in this case chose to get behind the wheel of a car while under the influence of alcohol and to speed through a red light. In doing so he crashed his vehicle into a livery cab, killing its driver and her passenger. Two lives were senselessly destroyed. Many more people – including the driver’s young daughters and the passenger’s parents and siblings – will carry the pain of these deaths for the rest of their lives.”

District Attorney Brown identified the defendant as Daryush Omar, 25, of 35 Eldorado Boulevard in Plainview, New York. The defendant, an employee of a coffee supply company, pleaded guilty to first-degree vehicular manslaughter earlier this year. He was sentenced today to an indeterminate term of 3½ to 10½ years in prison by Acting Supreme Court Justice Ira Margulis.

The District Attorney said that in pleading guilty, the defendant admitted that, according to the charges, on Sunday, November 16, 2008, at about 3:10 a.m., the defendant was operating a 2004 white Range Rover at a speed of at least 45 miles per hour through a steady red light at the intersection of 34th Street and 31st Avenue. The defendant, going westbound on 31st Avenue, collided with a livery cab that was going southbound on 34th Avenue. The driver of the cab, Bessy Velasquez, 41, of 77 Steuben Street in Brooklyn, and the passenger, Panayiota Demetriou, 30, of 31-23 34th Street in Astoria, both suffered massive body trauma and were transported to a local hospital where they died later that day.

At the time of his arrest, Omar admitted that he had been drinking and was driving the vehicle when he collided with another automobile. An intoxilyzer exam administered to the defendant resulted in a reading of .176 of one percent blood alcohol content – more than twice the legal limit.

Assistant District Attorney Keshia J. Espinal prosecuted the case under the supervision of John W. Kosinski, Chief of the Vehicular Homicide Unit of the District Attorney’s Homicide Investigations Bureau, and Assistant District Attorneys Peter T. Reese, Bureau Chief and Peter J. McCormack III, Deputy Bureau Chief, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Charles A. Testagrossa and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Daniel A. Saunders.

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Note to Editors: Press release e-version posted at www.queensda.org.