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QUEENS MOTORIST PLEADS GUILTY TO LEAVING THE SCENE
IN WHICH PEDESTRIAN WAS KILLED

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown today announced that a 28-year-old Jamaica, Queens, man, has pleaded guilty to the felony charge of leaving the scene of an incident in which his vehicle clipped a 48-year-old man removing personal items from his vehicle parked in the Richmond Hill area this past February. The victim died shortly afterwards as a result of the injuries he sustained in the incident.

District Attorney Brown said, “An intensive joint investigation conducted by the Homicide Investigations Bureau of the Queens District Attorney’s Office and the Collision Investigation Squad of the New York City Police Department’s Highway Unit# 3 revealed evidence, including video surveillance, which led to the identification of the defendant. Having pleaded guilty in the case, the defendant will now be sentencing to time behind bars for his actions.”

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Aftab Safdar, 28, of 143rd Street in Jamaica, Queens. Safdar appeared yesterday before Acting Queens Supreme Court Justice Dorothy Chin-Brandt and pleaded guilty to section 600(2)(a) of the New York State Vehicle and Traffic Laws (leaving the scene of an incident without reporting a death). Safdar was immediately remanded to Rikers Islands pending sentencing on August 30, 2016, at which time he will be sentenced to six months in jail and five years’ probation. The resolution of the case was reached after consulting with the victim’s family, who will have the opportunity to address the Court and the defendant at sentencing and give a victim impact statement.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the criminal charges, Safdar was operating a 2008 blue Nissan Sentra at approximately 4:40 a.m. on February 28, 2016, when he struck the victim, Besik Shengelia, 48, who was standing next to a 2015 Toyota Highlander in the vicinity of 107-42 111th Street. Safdar left the scene of the collision without notifying the police or displaying any identification. Mr. Shengelia was transported to a local Queens hospital where he died as a result of severe head trauma he sustained as a result of being struck by Safdar’s vehicle.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Michael O’Connor, of the New York City Police Department’s Highway Unit #3.

Assistant District Attorney Timothy R. McGrath, of District Attorney Brown’s Homicide Investigations Bureau, prosecuted the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Peter T. Reese, Bureau Chief, John W. Kosinski, Deputy Bureau Chief and Chief of the District Attorney’s Vehicular Homicide Unit, and Peter J. McCormack and Richard B. Schaeffer, Deputy Bureau Chiefs, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Daniel A. Saunders.

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