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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
SATURDAY, MARCH 10, 2018

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QUEENS WOMAN CHARGED WITH DWI FOLLOWING HIGHWAY DEATH

Defendant Allegedly Intoxicated When Companion Jumped from Car During Argument

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown today announced that a 34-year-old South Ozone Park woman has been charged with driving while under the influence of alcohol when her boyfriend jumped out of her vehicle and was struck and killed by an oncoming car on the Grand Central Parkway early this morning.

District Attorney Brown said, "A verbal dispute quickly turned into a deadly scene of horror when the defendant decided to get behind the wheel of a car after drinking and then became engaged in a verbal dispute with her boyfriend. As a result, her companion jumped out of the car and was fatally struck. The defendant should never have been driving in that alleged condition."

District Attorney Brown identified the defendant as Savitrie Beria-Lackhan, 34, of 118th Street, in the South Ozone Park section of Queens. The defendant was arraigned tonight before Queens Criminal Court Judge Jerry Iannece on charges of driving while under the influence of alcohol. Beria-Lackhan, who faces up to four years in jail was ordered held on \$20,000 bail/\$20,000 bond and to return to court on March 23, 2018.

The District Attorney said that, according to the charges, the defendant was operating a 2015 Mercedes Benz this morning at approximately 3:45 a.m. on the Grand Central Parkway with her boyfriend, Arif Hoosein, 30, of Queens. It is alleged that the defendant and Mr. Hoosein were involved in a verbal argument when he opened the passenger door and jumped out and was struck by an oncoming vehicle. The defendant stopped the vehicle and was standing near an Emergency Medical Technician when she was observed to have bloodshot watery eyes, slurred speech, and a strong odor of alcohol on her breath. When questioned, the defendant stated that she was driving the vehicle on her way home from Bob's Bar, and that she had one drink of Hennessy and a ginger ale at 8:30 p.m. Beria-Lackhan was later removed to the NYPD's 112th precinct where an intoxilyzer exam was administered and indicated that the defendant allegedly had a .209 of one percentum or more of alcohol in her blood which is above the legal limit of .08 in New York City.

The case is being prosecuted by District Attorney Brown's Narcotics Trial Bureau under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Karen H. Rankin, Bureau Chief and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Trial James C. Quinn and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney Laura M. Heningman.

It should be noted that a criminal complaint is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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