



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
RICHMOND COUNTY

DANIEL M. DONOVAN, JR.
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

130 STUYVESANT PLACE
STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK 10301
TELEPHONE (718) 876-6300

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release on December 3, 2007

Contact: William J. Smith (718) 556-7150
William.Smith@rcda.nyc.gov

D.A. Donovan: Manslaughter Charges Filed in July 2007 **Fatal "Drag Racing" Crash**

******Joseph Donovan, 17, and Anthony Reis, 18, Arraigned on Indictment for their Roles as Drivers in Crash Which Killed 17 year old Michelle Arout******

STATEN ISLAND, NY - Richmond County District Attorney Daniel M. Donovan, Jr. today announced the unsealing of a 4-count Grand Jury indictment against Joseph Donovan, 17, of Iris Court, and Anthony Reis, 18, of Seaver Avenue, for a July 23, 2007 incident in which the defendants are alleged to have participated in a high-speed automobile race which resulted in a crash, killing a passenger in Donovan's vehicle, 17 year-old Michelle Arout, and injuring other passengers in both cars.

The defendants have been charged with one felony count each of Manslaughter in the 2nd Degree, Assault in the 2nd Degree, Reckless Endangerment in the 2nd Degree and misdemeanor charge of Engaging in an Unlawful Speed Contest and Race. The top count of the indictment, Manslaughter in the 2nd Degree, carries a maximum penalty of up to 15 years in prison.

District Attorney Donovan stated, "This indictment alleges that Anthony Reis, while driving a 1994 Ford Mustang at approximately 80 mph, equipped with a canister of nitrous oxide attached to its engine, did engage in a high-speed "drag race" on Veterans Road West with a 2003 Honda Accord operated by Joseph Donovan, which was operated at approximately 90 mph. In the course of that race, Donovan's vehicle entered Reis' lane, impacting Reis' vehicle and causing it to cross over a median into oncoming traffic and forcing Donovan's vehicle off the roadway, where it crashed into a fire hydrant. The resulting impact killed Ms. Arout. A senseless tragedy was brought about by these defendants' alleged reckless behavior. There are serious consequences for this type of behavior, both for these defendants and for the family of Michelle Arout who have suffered an indescribable loss."

The defendants were arraigned on the charges today in State Supreme Court in St. George before Judge Leonard P. Rienzi who ordered the defendants held on \$25,000 bail until their next court date of January 11, 2008. The case will be prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Mark Palladino, head of the Special Case Unit, under the supervision of ADA Mario F. Mattei, Chief of the Investigations Bureau. Joseph Donovan and Anthony Reis are represented by John Murphy, Jr., Esq. and Mark Fonte, Esq.

The public is reminded that the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

-end-