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**PARENTS OF TEEN DRIVER SENTENCED ON CHILD ENDANGERMENT CHARGES IN  
GROUNDBREAKING CASE AFTER SON ALLEGEDLY KILLED 14-YEAR-OLD GIRL IN  
GRUESOME COLLISION**

*Fortune Williams killed in May 2023 Crash After Being Ejected from BMW Going More Than 100 MPH;  
Case Marks First Time Parents Have Been Convicted On Endangerment Charges After Their Child  
Allegedly Killed Someone In Car Crash In Queens County And Believed To Be First Of Its' Kind  
Prosecution In New York State*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that the parents of a teen driver – who was charged with manslaughter in the death of the 14-year-old passenger in the BMW he was driving – were sentenced today in a groundbreaking case on endangering the welfare of a child charges for facilitating the child’s access to the car when he was legally unable to drive the vehicle.

District Attorney Katz said: “The parents of a 16-year-old gave their son a BMW when he did not have legal authority to drive it anywhere in New York City. We allege that because of that teenager’s actions, 14-year-old Fortune Williams is now dead after she was thrown from the car when it crashed into a UPS truck at more than 100 miles an hour. With this conviction, we have shown that the culpability in a fatal crash can go beyond the driver. Parents who provide vehicles to their children and let them drive illegally can be held responsible in the case of tragedies such as this one. We will continue to seek justice for Fortune Williams and her grieving family.”

The teen driver’s father, Sean Smith, 40, of 227<sup>th</sup> Street in Springfield Gardens, pleaded guilty on June 11 before Supreme Court Justice Michael Yavinsky to endangering the welfare of a child. He was sentenced today to three years of probation. As a condition of the sentence, he must take a 26-week parenting class and attend the Victim Impact Panel Program.

The boy’s mother, Deo Ramnarine, 43, also of 227<sup>th</sup> Street, pleaded guilty to endangering the welfare of a child and disorderly conduct on June 11. Judge Yavinsky sentenced her to a 26-week parenting class and to attend the Victim Impact Panel Program. If she successfully completes both, she will be allowed to withdraw her plea to endangering the welfare of a child and only the disorderly conduct charge will stand.

The now 17-year-old, of 227<sup>th</sup> Street, was arraigned in December on charges of manslaughter in the second degree; three counts of assault in the second degree; assault in the third degree; reckless endangerment in the second degree; endangering the welfare of a child; reckless driving; driving in excess of the maximum speed limit; unsafe lane change on a roadway laned for traffic; making an unlawful turn; two counts of operating a motor vehicle with a tinted windows; operating or driving a motor vehicle without a license; and operating a motor vehicle in violation of a restricted permit or license.

The case against their son is ongoing and he faces up to 15 years in prison if convicted of the top count.

According to the investigation:

- On May 17, 2023, at approximately 6:38 p.m., the then 16-year-old defendant was driving a red 2005 BMW 325i westbound on North Conduit Avenue near 160<sup>th</sup> Street at a speed calculated at 101 miles per hour. The posted speed limit was 30 miles per hour.
- The teenager lost control of the vehicle when attempting to move from the left-center lane to the right-center lane and crashed into the back of a parked UPS truck. After hitting the truck, the BMW spun across the roadway and struck a tractor-trailer traveling westbound.

- As a result of the initial collision, Williams was ejected from the front passenger seat of the BMW into the back of the UPS truck. She suffered severe head trauma and was pronounced dead at the scene.
- A UPS employee was getting into his truck just as the BMW collided with it, throwing the worker to the ground. He was taken to a local hospital where he was treated for a large hematoma to his leg, a laceration to his face and a bruise to his chest.
- At the hospital where he was being treated for minor injuries, the defendant explained to police that he had picked Williams up at her home and was taking her to his grandmother's house. His father, who was with his son at the hospital, told police that while the BMW was registered in his name, he had bought the vehicle for his son and that the car was his son's.
- The son had a junior driver's license, which prohibited him from driving under any circumstances in New York City.
- Three weeks after the fatal crash, on June 7, Smith told the car's insurer that his son had driven the BMW approximately twice with him in the vehicle and that his son was a good driver.
- Prior to the fatal collision, in November 2022, witnesses from the defendant's school saw him regularly driving the same BMW and a school administrator informed the parents that their child was driving to school.
- The child was also ticketed in November 2022 for driving without a license and driving while using a portable electronic device. His name is being withheld because of his age.

Assistant District Attorneys Erin Mullins of the District Attorney's Career Criminal Major Crimes Bureau is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Michael Whitney, Bureau Chief and Roni C. Piplani, Deputy Chief, along with Assistant District Attorney Joseph Randazzo of the District Attorney's Homicide Bureau, with assistance from Assistant District Attorney Jonathan Selkove, Vehicular Homicide Unit Chief, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys John Kosinski, Bureau Chief, and Karen Ross, Deputy Chief and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Shawn Clark.

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*Criminal complaints and indictments are accusations. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.*

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