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**BRONX MEN INDICTED FOR MURDER AND ARSON IN 2018 FIRE
THAT KILLED TWO PEOPLE, INCLUDING A 14-YEAR-OLD BOY
The Boy's Mother and 7-year-old Sister Were Critically Injured in Blaze;
Two Firefighters Suffered Burns**

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark today announced that two Bronx men have been indicted on Murder, Arson and additional charges for starting a fire inside a Belmont building in 2018 that killed two people including a 14-year-old boy, critically injured his mother and sister, and left two firefighters with burns.

District Attorney Clark said, "The defendants, who are brothers, allegedly started the fire in an apartment because they wanted to hurt two people inside. The fire traveled to the apartment above where a family lived, killing a 14-year-old boy and a 42-year-old man. The boy's mother and seven-year-old sister sustained terrible injuries, and two firefighters were also injured. We will seek justice for the innocent lives lost and for the individuals who suffered because of the defendants' malicious actions."

District Attorney Clark said the defendants, Charlie Garcia, 44, who is currently incarcerated for another incident in Manhattan, and Edward Garcia, 47, who was residing in a homeless shelter, were charged with first-degree Arson, two counts of second-degree Murder, two counts of Attempted Murder in the second degree, second-degree Arson, three counts of first-degree Assault, two counts of Attempted Assault in the first-degree and four counts of second-degree Assault. Charlie Garcia was arraigned today before Bronx Supreme Court Justice Michael Gross. Remand was continued and he is due back in court on September 9, 2021. Edward Garcia is awaiting arraignment.

According to the investigation, at approximately 1:30 a.m. on March 5, 2018, in the ground floor apartment the brothers shared in 2381 Hoffman Street in the Belmont section, the defendants used ignitable liquid, disconnected the gas line from the stove, and started a fire that rapidly accelerated. The defendants allegedly started the blaze and fled as two individuals who were staying in the apartment, Alyssa Cooke and Paul Montgomery, slept inside. The fire traveled to the apartment above where Evelyn Aponte, her 14-year-old son Jordan Conde, her seven-year-



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old daughter and her boyfriend Roberto Cortez were. Jordan and Cortez died of smoke inhalation and sustained burn injuries.

Aponte sustained third-degree burns on over half of her body and the young girl suffered third-degree burns to her feet, collapsed lungs, and a burned throat due to smoke inhalation. Both were hospitalized for months.

Additionally, two firemen who responded to the scene sustained injuries. FDNY Firefighter Ryan Davis suffered second-degree burns to his legs and FDNY Lieutenant Daniel Bocian suffered a second-degree burn to his wrist as well as a hernia.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Karl Miller, under the supervision of Christine Scaccia, Chief of the Homicide Bureau, and under the overall supervision of James Brennan, Deputy Chief of the Trial Division, and Theresa Gottlieb, Chief of the Trial Division.

District Attorney Clark thanked FDNY Fire Marshals John Szeligowski and Edwin Vega, and NYPD Detective Robert Klein of the Bronx Homicide Squad for their assistance in the investigation.

An indictment is an accusatory instrument and not proof of a defendant's guilt.

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