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Monserrate dumps his att'y for legal top gun

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BELEAGUERED state Sen. Hiram Monserrate has hired legal top gun Joseph Tacopina to fight charges he slashed his girlfriend in the face.

Monserrate (D-Queens) dumped his old lawyer and retained Tacopina to defend him against charges he slashed Karla Giraldo with glass during a lovers' quarrel last year.

Monserrate maintains the injury — which required more than 20 stitches — was an accident, as does his girlfriend.

Prosecutors cite a videotape they say shows the former city councilman violently yanking his bleeding girlfriend from his

Queens apartment building as she screams for help on Dec. 19.

The pol faces up to seven years in prison if convicted.

Tacopina also represented disgraced Queens City Councilman Dennis Gallagher on charges he raped a woman in his campaign office in 2007. The Middle Village Republican took a no-jail plea deal of misdemeanor forcible touching and sexual abuse in exchange for stepping down from his seat.

Monserrate's old lawyer, Irving Seidman, who stepped down yesterday, would not comment on the change.

"Everything should go smoothly and justice will be done," Seidman said.

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