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**QUEENS MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO ATTEMPTED MURDER
FOR TRYING TO KILL TRANSGENDER GIRLFRIEND**

WHEN SHE REFUSED TO CONTINUE TO ENGAGE IN PROSTITUTION

Defendant Faces 10 Years in Prison at Sentencing

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that a 30-year-old Cambria Heights man has pleaded guilty to attempted murder for trying to kill his transgender girlfriend whom he was pimping out. The victim refused to continue selling sex to strangers to fill his wallet with cash when he beat and slashed her in April of 2018.

Queens District Attorney Katz said, “Our transgender population has faced a tremendous amount of violence all over this country. The victim in this case was attempting to free herself from the sex trade industry when the defendant – who was pocketing the money she made – attacked her and could have killed her. The defendant has now admitted his guilt and will be punished for this criminal act.”

The DA added that, “Sex trafficking of transgender people is sorely under reported in Queens and elsewhere. These victims – regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identification - should know that they can come forward. We are here to help everyone.”

The District Attorney’s Office identified the defendant as David Viltus, 30, of 221st Street in the Cambria Heights neighborhood of Queens. The defendant pleaded guilty yesterday to attempted murder in the second degree before Acting Queens Supreme Court Justice Peter Vallone Jr. Sentencing was set for April 8, 2020, at which time Justice Vallone indicated he would sentence the defendant to a determinate term of 10 years in prison to be followed by 5 years’ post release supervision.

District Attorney Katz said, in pleading guilty, Viltus admitted that on April 18, 2018, he went to the Hillside Hotel in Jamaica, Queens where the victim, a 29-year-old transgender woman was staying and attempted to cause her death. The victim was found in front of the hotel with a slash to her face and had been repeatedly punched in the face and body. The victim had a plant smashed against her head and she was thrown against an automated door, knocking the door off its hinges.

Continuing, according to the charges, the DA said, further investigation determined that the victim was being coerced into having sex with strangers for money and that the defendant was pocketed the cash she was making. At one point, the victim refused to continue prostituting herself and Viltus retaliated with violence.

According to the indictment, after the defendant had been arrested and charged with attempted murder, Viltus contacted the victim and tried to convince her to drop the charges.

Assistant District Attorney Amy M. Scotto, of the District Attorney's Kew Gardens Trial Bureau II, prosecuted the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Mark Osnowitz, Bureau Chief, Peter Lomp, Deputy Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Trials Pishoy Yacoub. Assistance was also provided by Assistant District Attorney Jessica L. Melton, Chief of the District Attorney's Human Trafficking Unit.

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