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TWO QUEENS MEN INDICTED FOR SEX TRAFFICKING TEENAGE GIRLS

Defendants Face Up to 25 Years in Prison if Convicted

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Mario Serrano and Shaquille Lopez, both 23, have been indicted by a Queens County grand jury and arraigned in Supreme Court. Both men – acting independently of one another – allegedly trafficked the same two teenage girls between November 2021 and February 2022.

District Attorney Katz said, “The victims in this case were just 13 and 16 years old when these two defendants allegedly offered the girls for sex in online advertisements and then lined their own pockets with the cash the two teens were paid to have sex. Both men are now charged with very serious crimes for their alleged actions.”

Serrano, of Fresh Meadows, and Lopez, of Corona, were both arraigned late yesterday afternoon before Queens Supreme Court Justice David Kirschner on an indictment charging them with sex trafficking of a child, promoting prostitution in the first, second and third degree and endangering the welfare of a child. Justice Kirschner set the defendants’ return date for April 4, 2022. Serrano and Lopez face up to 25 years in prison, if convicted.

According to the charges, the defendants drove the victims to various hotels, rented rooms at these establishments and then left the underage girls there to engage in sex for money with customers. The older teen collected the cash and allegedly gave the proceeds to the two defendants.

DA Katz said defendant Lopez, who was an ex-boyfriend of the 16-year-old victim, on February 2, 2022, drove the girls to the Flushing Hotel and allegedly paid for a room and left the two there to have sex in exchange for money with male customers.

The following day, said the DA, an undercover police officer responded to one of the many online advertisements for the two teens. He went to the hotel and made a verbal agreement with the 13-year-old for sex in exchange for money. Other officers moved in and rescued both girls from the Flushing Hotel room.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Joseph Azevedo and Police Officer Ivan Crespoloja, of the New York City Police Department’s Vice Enforcement Human Trafficking Division, under the supervision of Sergeant Robert Duplessis, Lieutenant Amy Capogna, Captain Thomas Milano, and under the overall supervision of Inspector Fernando Guimaraes.

Assistant District Attorney Kiran Cheema, of the DA’s Human Trafficking Bureau, is prosecuting the case, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Jessica Melton, Bureau Chief, Tara DiGregorio, Assistant Deputy Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Gerard A. Brave.

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

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