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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, AUGUST 25, 2022

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TWO INDICTED ON KIDNAPPING, ASSAULT AND ROBBERY CHARGES

*Allegedly Held Victim in Hotel and Assaulted him for Hours;
Defendants Face Up to 25 Years in Prison if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz today announced that defendants Destiny Lebron, 19 and Gil Iphael, 22, have been indicted on multiple charges and arraigned in Queens Supreme Court for an August 6, 2022 incident where the defendants kidnapped, assaulted, punched and robbed the victim inside a Queens hotel.

District Attorney Katz said, “As alleged, the defendants pounced on the unsuspecting man, held him against his will and severely beat and terrorized him over several hours. This kind of lawlessness is inexcusable and will not be tolerated. Both defendants are in custody and face very serious charges.”

Lebron, of 81 North Portland, Brooklyn, and Iphael, of 116 Copaigue Street, Valley Stream, were arraigned yesterday before Queens Supreme Court Justice Ira Margulis on a 22-count indictment charging them with kidnapping in the second degree, robbery in the first and second degree, assault in the second and third degree, unlawful imprisonment in the first and second degree, grand larceny in the fourth degree, petit larceny, unauthorized use of a vehicle in the third degree and criminal possession of a weapon in the fourth degree. Justice Margulis ordered the defendants to return to court on September 13, 2022. If convicted, both defendants face up to 25 years in prison if convicted.

According to the charges, on August 6, 2022, the victim, a 59-year-old man, answered a prostitution advertisement with a photo of defendant Lebron. The victim was instructed to meet defendant Lebron at a Queens hotel. Once inside the room, the victim paid defendant Lebron to have sex and began to undress. As the victim began to undress, defendant Lebron threw bleach in the victims’ face, opened the door to let defendant Iphael into the room and he covered the victim’s head with a blanket and began punching him and demanded his money. The defendants took the victim car keys, phone and wallet and when the victim refused to unlock his phone, defendant Lebron burned him with a curling iron until he complied.

Furthermore, DA Katz said, the defendants restrained the victim against his will for several hours while they continued to assault him. Defendant Iphael reached his hand into a bag and threatened to kill the victim, leading the victim to believe defendant Iphael had a gun. During this time, the defendants attempted to transfer his money electronically, then made multiple trips to the ATM to take money from the victims’ bank account using his ATM card. Throughout the ordeal, the defendants repeatedly threatened to kill his family if he reported the crime to the police.

The investigation was conducted by Police Officer Christopher Messina of the New York City Police Department's 103rd Detective Squad, under the supervision of Lieutenant Stephen Faber, Sergeant William Hallahan, and Detective Quinn Ferrin, under the overall supervision of Inspector Vincent J. Tavalaro and Deputy Inspector Eric A. Robinson.

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

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz asks that if anyone has any information relevant to this investigation, they report it to the New York City Police Department's Human Trafficking Squad at (212) 694-3031.

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

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