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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2022

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**SECOND INDICTMENT OF COUPLE ON SEX TRAFFICKING AND PROMOTING
PROSTITUTION CHARGES**

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 by a Queens County grand jury and arraigned in Supreme Court on sex trafficking and other charges in the July 2022 incident that took place inside the Quality Inn hotel in Jamaica, Queens.

District Attorney Katz said, “This is a second indictment for the two defendants, who were previously accused of viciously assaulting, torturing, and robbing an unsuspecting victim in August. As alleged in the new charges, a mere week prior to this incident, the defendants forced a young woman into prostitution through threats and physical force for their own financial benefit. Both defendants are in custody and will be held accountable.”

Lebron, of North Portland, Brooklyn, and Iphael, of Copaigue Street, Valley Stream, were re-arrested and arraigned yesterday before Queens Supreme Court Justice Peter Vallone on an 11-count indictment charging them with sex trafficking, promoting prostitution, unlawful imprisonment in the second degree and assault in the third degree. Defendant Lebron is additionally charged with petit larceny. Justice Vallone ordered the defendants to return to court on October 25, 2022. If convicted, both defendants additionally face up to 25 years in prison.

According to the charges, defendant Lebron befriended the victim via Instagram in February 2022. The two exchanged messages of sexual content and photos and engaged in prostitution related conversations. During the conversations, defendant Lebron requested the victim create a Megapersonals account for the defendant that would allow her to advertise other girls. Defendant Lebron then asked the victim to engage in prostitution and the victim declined. Defendant Lebron continued to call and message the victim over two days and the two agreed to meet.

Continuing, said District Attorney Katz, on July 30, 2022, the defendant along with co-defendant Iphael went to pick the victim up and the three traveled to the Quality Inn hotel located at 153-95 Rockaway Blvd. Defendant Lebron checked into a room using the victim’s identification and once inside the room she informed the victim that she would have to either rob unsuspecting buyers of sex or engage in prostitution activity. When the victim again refused, defendants Lebron and Iphael began slapping, punching and threatening the victim. Furthermore, the defendants forced the victim to take pictures of herself which would be posted on the internet and also used photos saved in the victim’s phone. Later that evening, several clients appeared at the hotel and engaged in prostitution activity with the victim. The defendants kept all proceeds collected from the clients.

The victim managed to escape on July 31, 2022, when she was left unattended in the hotel room.

Furthermore, DA Katz said, after the incident took place, the victim told a friend what happened to her and the friend sent her an email with an article on sex trafficking. Since the defendant still had possession of the victim's phone, the email was intercepted and a return message was sent to the friend threatening to kill the victims' family.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Liam O'Hara of the New York City Police Department's Human Trafficking Squad, under the supervision of Sergeant Robert Duplessis, Lieutenant Amy Capogna, Captain Thomas Milano and under the overall supervision of Deputy Chief Carlos Ortiz.

Assistant District Attorneys Rachel Greenberg and 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, Assistant District Attorney Tara DiGregorio, Deputy 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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