



RICHARD A. BROWN
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

**DISTRICT ATTORNEY
QUEENS COUNTY**
125-01 QUEENS BOULEVARD
KEW GARDENS, NEW YORK 11415-1568
718-286-6000

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CONTACT: KEVIN RYAN
HELEN PETERSON
MERIS CAMPBELL
(718) 286-6315

QUEENS PIMP PLEADS GUILTY TO PROMOTING PROSTITUTION

Befriended 14-Year-Old Girl On Internet and Lured Her to New York; Faces Up to 7 Years In Prison

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that a Queens pimp has pleaded guilty to promoting the prostitution of a 14-year-old girl who he met on a social networking website, lured to New York and exploited by having her work for him as a prostitute and go on more than 500 “dates” during a two-month period.

District Attorney Brown said, “Every parent should take heed when their child turns on their computer and goes on an interactive social networking site. The defendant used just such a website to recruit a young, emotionally vulnerable child by promising to take care of her. Instead, he physically abused her and threw her into a life of degradation in which she was required to perform sexual acts with hundreds of men for money.”

The District Attorney continued, “Today’s plea spares the young victim the trauma of testifying at trial and ensures that the defendant answers for his actions. Under the circumstances, his imprisonment is just punishment for a terrible crime.

District Attorney Brown identified the defendant as Jamaal Watkins, 26, of 107-42 166th Street in Queens. Watkins pleaded guilty earlier today to third-degree promoting prostitution before Queens Supreme Court Justice Joseph Grosso who indicated that he would impose an indeterminate prison term of 2 1/3 years to 7 years when the defendant is sentenced on September 14, 2009.

District Attorney Brown said that, in pleading guilty, the defendant admitted that between November 4, 2008, and January 3, 2009, he advanced and profited from the prostitution of a person less than 19 years old.

According to the charges, the victim – who was residing in an out-of-state group home – first met Watkins on a chat site when she was thirteen years old. The victim spoke with the defendant often and he frequently asked her to come to New York, where he promised he would take care of her. Late in the fall of 2008, approximately a year after they first met online, the victim ran away from the group home and stayed with friends in New York until she met Watkins on November 6, 2008, at which time he engaged in a sexual relationship with her.

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It is further alleged that, four days later, Watkins told the victim that she was going to make money and he began to set up “dates” for her. He accomplished this, in part, by taking pictures of her in lingerie and skimpy clothing and posting the pictures on the Craigslist.com website under the listing “dates.” The defendant took the victim on approximately eleven “dates” per day between November 11, 2008, and January 2, 2009, at various hotels and residences in Queens County during which she performed sexual acts for money – which she turned over to the defendant in exchange for him providing her with food and clothing. During this period the defendant physically assaulted the victim when she did not call him after she went on a date.

Watkins was arrested on January 3, 2009, a day after the victim was picked up by police at the Par Motor Inn, located at 82-85 Parsons Boulevard, where she had agreed to have sexual intercourse with an undercover police officer in exchange for money.

District Attorney Brown said that a court-ordered search warrant was executed at the defendant’s residence and a photo album was recovered from his bedroom floor which contained approximately 40 photos of approximately 20 different naked females, and a digital camera containing photographs of naked females, including the victim. A computer inside the residence contained numerous photographs of the victim performing sexual acts with the defendant.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Jessica Melton, with the assistance of Assistant District Attorney Charles Balvin, of the District Attorney’s Special Proceedings Bureau, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Anthony M. Communiello, Bureau Chief, and Oscar W. Ruiz, Deputy Chief, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Peter A. Crusco and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Linda M. Cantoni.

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Note to Editors: E-version of this press release posted at www.queensda.org.