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D.A. BROWN: ALLEGED PIMP INDICTED FOR PROMOTING PROSTITUTION

*Accused of Befriending 14-Year-Old Girl On Internet and Then Luring Her to New York;
Faces Up To 15 Years In Prison*

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that an alleged pimp has been indicted for promoting prostitution of a 14-year-old girl who he met on a social networking website and lured to New York, where he exploited her 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. As alleged in this case, the defendant used just such a website to recruit a young, emotionally vulnerable girl by promising to take care of her. Instead, he is accused of physically abusing her and throwing her into a life of degradation in which she was required to perform sexual acts with hundreds of men for money.”

District Attorney Brown identified the defendant as Jamaal Watkins, 25, of 107-42 166th Street in Queens. Watkins was arraigned earlier this week, Tuesday, February 24th, before Acting Queens Supreme Court Justice James P. Griffin on a 95-count indictment charging him with the crimes of second-degree promoting prostitution, second- and third-degree rape, second-degree criminal sexual act, promoting an obscene sexual performance by a child, promoting a sexual performance by a child, possessing an obscene performance by a child, possessing a sexual performance by a child and endangering the welfare of a child. Justice Griffin continued the defendant’s previous bail of \$100,000 and ordered him to return to court on April 28, 2009. If convicted, the defendant faces up to 15 years in prison.

District Attorney Brown said that, 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. It is alleged that she spoke with him 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 allegedly 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.

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 allegedly accomplished this, in part, by taking

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pictures of her in lingerie and lewd clothing and posting the pictures on the Craigslist.com website under the listing “dates.” It is alleged that between November 11, 2008, and January 2, 2009, Watkins took her on approximately eleven “dates” per day at various hotels and residences in Queens County during which she performed sexual acts for money – which she allegedly turned over to the defendant in exchange for him providing her with food and clothing. It is further alleged that 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 allegedly 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 allegedly contained numerous photographs of the victim performing sexual acts with the defendant.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Michael Wallen of the New York City Police Department’s Queens Vice Enforcement Division under the supervision of Sergeant Michael Jones and Captain Joseph Burns and the overall supervision of Chief Brian Conroy in conjunction with the District Attorney’s Special Proceedings Bureau.

Assistant District Attorneys Jessica Melton and Charles Balvin of the District Attorney’s Special Proceedings Bureau are prosecuting the case, 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.

It should be noted that an indictment is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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