



RICHARD A. BROWN
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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

Release # 11-2016
www.queensda.org
[twitter@QueensDABrown](https://twitter.com/QueensDABrown)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2016

CONTACT: PRESS OFFICE
(718) 286-6315

FLUSHING WOMAN CHARGED WITH HOLDING CHILDREN CAPTIVE AS SLAVES

Defendant Allegedly Forced Children To Work And Turn Over Salary, Had Them Sleep On Floor And Provide Her With Manicures, Pedicures And Multi-Hour Massages

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that a Flushing woman has been charged with labor trafficking and other charges for allegedly endangering the lives of two Korean children – now 16 and 14 – whom she took into her home in 2010 and then forced to do her bidding over a six-year period.

“The defendant lives on a quiet, tree-lined Queens street with neat brick veneer homes that offered no clues to the horrors that she allegedly made her two young victims endure beginning when they were nine and eleven in age,” said District Attorney Brown. “According to the charges, the defendant cut off all contact between the two young victims and their parents in Korea, held them hostage in her home by seizing their passports, forced them to do household chores well into the night and to work outside of the home and turn over all their earnings to her. In return, the victims were allegedly given space to sleep on the floor without a mattress. In the older child’s case, the space allegedly was in a closet.”

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Sook Yeong Park, 42, of 43-52 196th Street in Flushing, Queens. Park was arraigned on Saturday, January 9, 2016, before Queens Criminal Court Judge Elisa Koenderman on a criminal complaint charging her with labor trafficking, third-degree assault and endangering the welfare of a child. Park, who faces up to seven years in prison if convicted, was ordered held on \$10,000 bond/\$2,500 cash bail and to return to court on February 16, 2016.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the criminal charges, the two victims, a 16-year-old female and her 14-year-old brother – were brought to the United States from Korea in approximately January 2010 by one of Park’s relatives who delivered them to her at her former Queens residence. Thereafter, it is alleged that Park confiscated the victims’ passports and moved to her present location.

It is additionally alleged that shortly after being placed with Park, the female victim was forced by Park to work almost every day after school for approximately 10 hours (from 4:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m.) doing housework, including meticulously cleaning Park’s residence for her and her family, as well as forcing the child to give her back and foot massages and manicures and pedicures. In one instance, it is alleged that Park forced the young female victim to give her a five-hour body massage while Park watched television.

According to the criminal charges, beginning in April 2013 and continuing until approximately 2014, Park started requiring the female victim to work at a Queens grocery store approximately two days a week for eight hours a day at a salary of \$10 an hour which the victim was forced to turn over in full to Park. From approximately September 2014 through January 2016, it is alleged that Park forced the female victim to work several days a week at a grocery store on Northern Boulevard, as well as at other grocery stores in

(MORE)

New York City, for nine hours a day at a wage of \$10 an hour. As before, the victim allegedly had to turn over all her earnings to Park. Beginning in August 2015, it is alleged that the male victim was also required to work at the grocery store for at least one day a month and turn over all his wages to Park. The two children were allegedly told by Park that they had to work to pay their expenses because their mother wasn't sending her any money from Korea.

It is further alleged that, between January 2010 and January 2016, Park forced the female victim to sleep on the floor in a small closet with one blanket and no mattress and the male victim to sleep on a bedroom floor with only one blanket and no mattress. During this time, it is also alleged that Park routinely beat them by striking them with objects, slapping them, stepping on their legs and kicking them about the body for not obeying her orders, causing them to fear her. Over the past year, it is alleged that Park often made the female victim miss school in order to assist her and clean her residence. In one instance, it is alleged that Park did not allow her to attend school for approximately one month (September 2015) so she could work in the house assisting Park.

In November 2015, Park allegedly scratched the female victim about the legs with a nail clipper, causing scratches and substantial pain, because the manicure and pedicure that the victim was giving her were not up to her standards. Two months later, on January 4, 2016, Park alleged became angry with the female victim and began kicking her on her leg, causing swelling and substantial pain, and the following day, Park became angry with her and cut off her hair and kicked her in the head, causing swelling and substantial pain.

According to the criminal charges, Park would not allow the two victims to have any contact with their natural parents in Korea. It is alleged that last week marked the first time the female victim spoke to her mother in three years.

Finally, it is alleged that while the female victim was a student at Francis Lewis High School for approximately one and a half years, she was often absent from school and had difficulty staying awake during classes. On January 7, 2016, it is alleged that the high school's assistant principal observed bruising on the victim's legs which were the result of Park's actions. On the same day, the assistant principal went to Park's residence and demanded that Park turn over the two victims' passports, which Park ultimately did. On January 9, 2016, the assistant principal allegedly brought both victims to the Northern Boulevard grocery store where they collected the salary due them.

The matter came to light when the children reported the physical abuse to school officials who, in turn, notified the police. The investigation was conducted by Police Officer Gregory Payea from the New York City Police Department's 111th Precinct. A subsequent investigation was conducted by Detective Paul Carlin, of the Police Department's School Safety Division's Field Intelligence Unit, under the supervision of Assistant Chief Brian Conroy

Assistant District Attorney Jessica L. Melton, Chief of District Attorney Brown's Human Trafficking Unit, is prosecuting the case. The Human Trafficking Unit operates within the District Attorney's Special Proceedings Bureau, which is supervised by Assistant District Attorney and Bureau Chief Anthony M. Communiello and Assistant District Attorney Oscar W. Ruiz, Deputy Chief, and is under 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 a criminal complaint is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

#