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DARCEL D. CLARK
DISTRICT ATTORNEY, BRONX COUNTY

198 EAST 161ST STREET
BRONX, N.Y. 10451
(718) 590-2234

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**BRONX MAN SENTENCED TO 20 YEARS TO LIFE IN PRISON
FOR KIDNAPPING, SEXUAL ASSAULT AND SEX TRAFFICKING
Defendant Forced Victim Into Prostitution by Beating Her and Using Coercion;
Victim Made to Walk Streets and Was Advertised on Internet**

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark today announced that a Bronx man has been sentenced to 20 years to life in prison for Kidnapping, Predatory Sexual Assault, Sex Trafficking and other charges related to his forcing a woman into prostitution.

District Attorney Clark said, "The defendant brutally beat, sexually assaulted and held the victim against her will. He also used coercive control tactics to compel her to engage in prostitution for his profit. Today's sentence will keep a depraved man off our streets."

District Attorney Clark said the defendant, Lemuel Skipper, 28, of 1610 Sedgwick Avenue, was sentenced to an aggregate prison term of 20 years to life in prison today by Bronx Supreme Court Justice James McCarty. The defendant will be required to register as a sex offender upon his release. A jury found the defendant guilty of two counts of first-degree Kidnapping, Predatory Sexual Assault, two counts of Sex Trafficking, first-degree Aggravated Sexual Abuse, second-degree and fourth-degree Promoting Prostitution, and second-degree Assault on January 14, 2019.

According to the investigation, on or about and between July 20, 2015 and July 22, 2015, the defendant lured a 26-year-old woman to an apartment to intentionally advance and profit from the prostitution of the victim. While holding her captive, the defendant slapped and punched the victim, and sexually assaulted her with an object. The defendant then took the victim to the areas of Westchester Square and Southern Boulevard to force her to engage in prostitution. The victim managed to get away by having someone drive her to a local Bronx hospital, where she called police. Hotel records, phone records, and backpage.com advertisements were retrieved during the investigation.

In prosecuting this matter, the Bronx District Attorney's Office presented evidence from
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Dr. Chitra Raghavan, PhD, Professor of Psychology and Deputy Director of The Forensic Mental Health Counseling Program at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, as an expert in Trauma-Bonding and Coercive Control in Sex Trafficking. During New York State's first-ever *Frye* hearing (a hearing to determine whether expert testimony is based on established and accepted scientific methods) on this topic, this Office successfully proved the scientific community's acceptance of Trauma-Bonding and Coercive Control in Sex Trafficking.

The case was prosecuted by former Assistant District Attorney Lauren Di Chiara of the Criminal Enterprise Bureau and Assistant District Attorney Jason Birriel of the Criminal Enterprise Bureau, under the supervision of James Goward, Chief of the Criminal Enterprise Bureau, and the overall supervision of Tarek Rahman, Deputy Chief of the Investigations Division, and Jean T. Walsh, Chief of the Investigations Division.

District Attorney Clark thanked Detective James Barrenger of the Bronx Special Victims Squad, for his assistance with the case. District Attorney Clark thanked Assistant District Attorney Stephen Knoepfler of the Criminal Enterprise Bureau, Assistant District Attorney Mary Jo Blanchard, Counsel to the Investigations Division; former Assistant District Attorney Meagan Powers, Investigation Support Staff Supervisor Victoria Tucker and Trial Prep Assistant Karishma Pyankaroo for their assistance.

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