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MAN INDICTED FOR SEX TRAFFICKING RAPING AND BEATING TEEN GIRL, AND HOLDING HER HOSTAGE IN SEVEN-MONTH ORDEAL

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark today announced that a man has been indicted on first-degree Kidnapping, Sex Trafficking and Rape charges for sexually exploiting and assaulting a teen girl and holding her against her will.

District Attorney Clark said, “The defendant is charged in a 20-count indictment for allegedly beating, raping and sex trafficking a girl who was only 15 years old when she met him. It is alleged that he raped her and held her hostage in various locations for seven months. The defendant allegedly employed a classic trauma bond to keep her with him, instilling fear in the victim while making her believe he cared for her well-being. We will continue our work to hold the defendant accountable for his actions.”

District Attorney Clark said the defendant, Albert Lenhardt, 41, who is homeless, was arraigned on first-degree Kidnapping, Sex Trafficking of a Child, Sex Trafficking, two counts of first-degree Rape, three counts of second-degree Kidnapping, second-degree Assault, third-degree Promoting Prostitution, five counts of third-degree Rape, two counts of third-degree Criminal Sexual Act, second-degree Strangulation, and two counts of fourth-degree Criminal Possession of a Weapon on June 6, 2022 before Bronx Supreme Court Justice George Villegas. The defendant was remanded and is due back in court on August 30, 2022. He faces up to life in prison if convicted of the top charge of first-degree Kidnapping.

According to the investigation, the defendant allegedly sexually abused the victim approximately every other day between September 2021 to April 2022.

The defendant allegedly began a relationship with the victim, who was 15 years old at the time, in the summer of 2021 and offered her to stay at his then-girlfriend’s apartment in Brooklyn, where he allegedly began a sexual relationship with the victim against her will and punched, slapped, and choked her. In the fall of 2021, Lenhardt allegedly brought the victim, who had just turned 16, to live in the NYCHA Mitchel Houses in the Bronx and forced her to perform oral sex on an individual in exchange for drugs for Lenhardt.



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In November, 2021, the defendant allegedly kept the victim in a utility room in a building of NYCHA Mott Haven Houses. At one point, the victim attempted to escape and the defendant allegedly assaulted her and slashed her wrist with a blade, causing a deep wound, and raped her.

According to the investigation, on January 23, 2022, the defendant allegedly raped the victim in a public park bathroom, then brought her to his sister's apartment on College Avenue where she was raped again and when she tried to leave the defendant threatened her with a knife. The teen girl was able to text a family member who then called the police. Officers arrived and the victim was able to leave. The defendant escaped. The victim went back to him.

According to the investigation, in the end of March 2022, Lenhardt took the victim to a utility room on a roof of a Mitchel Houses building, where he raped and strangled her.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Sarah Ross-Benjamin of the Human Trafficking Unit, under the supervision of Stephen Knoepfler, Chief of the Human Trafficking Unit, and under the overall supervision of Adrienne Giunta, Deputy Chief of the Special Victims Division, and Joseph Muroff, Chief of the Special Victims Division.

District Attorney Clark thanked Jessica Walmsley, Case Discovery Analyst in the Human Trafficking Unit for her assistance. District Attorney Clark thanked Detective Corey Simpson of the 44th Precinct, and the NYPD Major Case Human Trafficking Team, specifically Detective Judith Moreno, Lieutenant Amy Capogna, Captain Thomas Milano, and Inspector Carlos Ortiz.

If you have been a victim of human trafficking, we encourage you to contact the Bronx District Attorney's Office, (718) 838-6535; the New York City Police Department, or the U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline, (888) 373-7888, or by texting "BeFree" (233733) to the hotline phone number.

An indictment is an accusatory instrument and not proof of a defendant's guilt.