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**QUEENS WOMAN INDICTED FOR SEX TRAFFICKING TRANSGENDER VICTIM ON
ROOSEVELT AVENUE**

*Defendant Allegedly Threatened Victim with Physical Harm, Release of Private Information and Videos;
Demanded Money at Knifepoint After Victim Stated She Wanted Out*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Valezka Echeverrias was arraigned on an indictment charging her with sex trafficking and other crimes for allegedly forcing a transgender woman to engage in prostitution on Roosevelt Avenue and to pay the defendant a weekly sum of money. After the victim stated that she wanted to stop engaging in prostitution, the defendant allegedly demanded money at knifepoint. Echeverrias is also indicted on charges of grand larceny, robbery and other crimes for attempting to extort a second victim and forcibly stealing the phones of both victims while threatening them with a knife.

District Attorney Katz said: “The defendant is accused of using threats of violence to exploit one victim and terrorize another in an effort to exert her power and line her pockets. Sex trafficking is a brutal and degrading enterprise. It is why I created a Human Trafficking Bureau and why we remain fully dedicated to eradicating sex trafficking from our communities.”

Echeverrias, 30, of 80th Street in Jackson Heights, was arraigned yesterday on a 24-count indictment charging her with four counts of sex trafficking; grand larceny in the second degree; coercion in the first degree; two counts of coercion in the second degree; three counts of coercion in the third degree; promoting prostitution in the third and fourth degrees; two counts of robbery in the first degree; two counts of robbery in the second degree; two counts of menacing in the second degree; two counts of criminal mischief in the fourth degree; attempted grand larceny in the second degree; and two counts of criminal contempt in the second degree.

Supreme Court Justice Peter Vallone remanded the defendant and ordered her to return to court December 16. If convicted of the top count, Echeverrias faces a potential maximum sentence of 25 years in prison.

DA Katz said that, according to the indictment and investigation, around October 2023, Echeverrias forced the victim to pay her a weekly sum of money while engaging in prostitution on Roosevelt Avenue. A short time later, the victim was forced to pay a daily sum regardless of whether the victim engaged in prostitution.

During this time, Echeverrias allegedly repeatedly threatened to reveal the victim’s private and personal medical information to clients and release private videos of the victim engaging in prostitution.

In December 2023, the victim told Echeverrias that she wanted out of the forced arrangement. Upon hearing that, Echeverrias allegedly threatened to harm the victim and demanded money. The victim was then told to leave and never come to the area again.

In January 2024, while the victim was with the second victim, another transgender woman, on Roosevelt Avenue, both victims were approached by Echeverrias and several other unapprehend individuals. Echeverrias took out a silver knife from her waistband and threatened to kill both women if they returned to the area. The defendant also allegedly ordered an accomplice to forcibly remove both victims' phones and throw them into the sewer.

Echeverrias was arrested on Thursday, November 21, pursuant to the indictment.

The sex trafficking investigation was conducted by Detectives Liam O'Hara and Kevin DeLeon, of the NYPD Special Victims Division, Human Trafficking Squad, under the supervision of Sergeant Kevin Kavanagh and Lieutenant Amy Capogna, and under the overall supervision of Captain Maripily Clase.

Assistant District Attorney Felicia Thomas and Deputy Bureau Chief Tara DiGregorio of the District Attorney's Human Trafficking Bureau are prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Jessica Melton, Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Gerard A. Brave.

Criminal complaints and indictments are accusations. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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