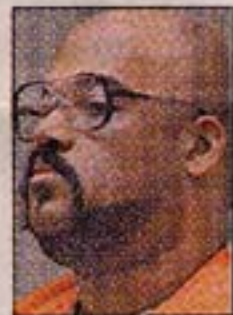


Mom, son get max in A.C.-based sex ring

By **BRIAN J. O'MALLEY**
For The Press

CAMDEN — After years of cars, money, jewels and furs, Anthony Kirkland and his mother, Bernice Motley, of Sicklerville, will have to get used to prison bars and jumpsuits.



KIRKLAND



MOTLEY

The pair that financed a lavish lifestyle with proceeds from a prostitution ring operating in Atlantic City, northern New Jersey, New York and Las Vegas received maximum sentences Monday for their crimes.

Kirkland, 32, barely blinked when Camden County Superior Court Judge John T. McNeill III referred to him as "a despica-

ble human being who deserves no favorable consideration from this court."

McNeill punctuated the point with a 37-year sentence in state prison and a \$500,000 fine for racketeering, money laundering, promotion of prostitution, theft by deception and conspiracy.

Motley, 64, by contrast, was far more emotional. Her claims of ignorance of her son's activities and her attorney's argument that her only crime was

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J.

FROM PAGE A1

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2003

Ring

(Continued from Page A1)

one of greed fell on deaf ears. She received a sentence of 14 years and a fine of \$250,000 for theft by deception, money laundering and conspiracy. Both Kirkland and Motley also must forfeit homes valued at more than \$100,000 and furs and jewels estimated to be worth more than \$250,000, according to Deputy Attorney General Jill Mayer.

Christina Kirkland was the star witness of the day, testifying against both her estranged husband and her mother-in-law. She said of Anthony Kirkland:

"You took 10 years of my life. You beat me until I had blood all over my body. You broke my bones."

She was no less critical of Motley, saying, "She has been part of this prostitution ring since her first son was 16. ... She is the root of this bad evil."

No one attempted to counter the arguments against Kirkland, who entered court shackled and wearing a blaze orange prison uniform with a white T-shirt hanging loosely from beneath, but family members came to the rescue in numbers for Motley. The neatly dressed, coifed woman, in a black pinstriped suit and elegant white scarf, held back emotion as her husband and five of her seven sisters

spoke on her behalf.

"I can't believe some of the things said in this court today. That's not my wife. That's somebody else," said Bernice's husband, Leroy Motley. He highlighted Bernice Motley's long-term employment at Commerce Bank when he asserted: "We earned a living. We didn't need handouts from anybody."

One by one, her sisters lined up to defend their older sister. The comments were equally split between support for Motley and surprise at Christina Kirkland's earlier testimony. Marlene Lark, the youngest of the eight girls, said: "Bernice is wonderful. She is loving." Citing the death of their mother three

weeks earlier, she added, "This is worse."

The elderly Motley stirred much emotion as she shakily rose to speak on her own behalf. Spitting out words between deep, emotional gulps for air, Motley said: "I'm so sorry for the pain and suffering. I'm sorry I lied. I lied only to protect myself. I'm sorry for the pain and suffering I've caused everyone involved."

McNeill noted that Motley had a number of positive character traits, including regular church attendance and a long employment history. But he added, "Her life, on an overall basis, was conflicted." Hours of tape-recorded conversations, which were,

according to him, "very sad; very disconcerting," led him to the conclusion that "she knew what was going on. She was critical to the operation."

The prostitution ring was noted for taking advantage of young, disadvantaged women who were promised the fulfillment of their dreams. All they really found was the brutal world of prostitution and the sadistic cruelty of Kirkland, who made several women work well into the late terms of pregnancy, beat them with extension cords and broke their bones if they failed to meet his income expectations. And Motley apparently was the crucial veneer of legitimacy for the entire operation.