

## Ten Years of Sex Trafficking Cases in the United States

In 2015, the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) responded to over 5,500 cases of human trafficking. Of those cases, 75 percent involved sex trafficking. Sex trafficking occurs when a person is induced to perform a commercial sex act by means of force, fraud, or coercion, or when a minor is induced to perform commercial sex regardless of whether there is any force, fraud, or coercion. A commercial sex act can be any sexual activity done in exchange for an item of value, such as money, food, drugs, or shelter. Sex traffickers lure and compel people into commercial sex by manipulating and exploiting their vulnerabilities, often using force, threats, lies, or other psychological coercion.

Federal laws on human trafficking are outlined by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000. The TVPA allows legal protections to be offered to any victim of severe forms of human trafficking, regardless of citizenship.<sup>1</sup> The TVPA specifies circumstances of human trafficking that would qualify victims for its protections, which include, but are not limited to, unlawful conduct with respect to documents, involuntary servitude, visa fraud, importing aliens for immoral purposes, sex trafficking by force, fraud, or coercion, or sex trafficking of children.<sup>2</sup> The TVPA has been re-authorized four times, leading to increased penalties and protections.

Not all cases of sex trafficking are prosecuted using human trafficking statutes. Sex trafficking frequently coincides with a variety of other crimes, allowing prosecutors to file charges based on whichever claim has the strongest evidence and will carry the highest penalty. Because each sex trafficking case is unique, prosecutors and attorneys must take a number of factors into consideration, such as the strength and availability of corroborating evidence, the severity of the offense, the victim's level of trauma and ability to retell his or her story, statutes of limitations, and the jury's interpretation of the events or behavior.

Two additional laws commonly used by prosecutors when bringing charges against sex traffickers are the Mann Act and the RICO statute. The Mann Act, passed in 1910, stipulates litigation as it applies to the transportation of minors or adults with the intent to engage in any in illicit sexual activities. The Mann Act also includes coercion and enticement as they apply to prostitution or any criminal activity.<sup>3</sup> Unlike the TVPA, the Mann Act does not require proof of force, fraud, or coercion, but only proof that transportation with the intent of a sexual encounter occurred.

The RICO statute, which added human trafficking to the list of 27 federal crimes categorized as racketeering, was originally enacted to eliminate "the infiltration of organized crime and racketeering into legitimate organizations operating in interstate commerce."<sup>4</sup> In practice, this statute allowed prosecutors to charge members of organized crime who had not physically committed the crime, but had either ordered it or had some part in arranging the circumstances of the offense. The RICO statute also allowed the prosecution to seize assets gained through a racketeering offense, helping to defund criminal organizations.<sup>5</sup> Because sex trafficking is a common practice among organized criminal networks, this statute has allowed prosecutors to bring charges against anyone who participated in or facilitated trafficking. Anyone who can be linked in some way to the incidence of trafficking, such as hotel owners or truck drivers, are able to be charged and have their assets seized.

<sup>1</sup> "Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000." 2002. 10 Feb. 2016 <<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/10492.pdf>>

<sup>2</sup> "Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit (HTPU) | CRT ...". 2015. 10 Feb. 2016 <<http://www.justice.gov/crt/human-trafficking-prosecution-unit-htpu>>

<sup>3</sup> "Federal Mann Act - Prostitution - USLegal." 2010. 11 Feb. 2016 <<http://prostitution.uslegal.com/federal-mann-act/>>

<sup>4</sup> "18 US Code § 1961 - Definitions - Legal Information Institute." 2011. 11 Feb. 2016 <<http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/1961>>

<sup>5</sup> "18 U.S. Code § 1963 - Criminal penalties | US Law | LII ...". 2006. 11 Feb. 2016 <[http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/18/usc\\_sec\\_18\\_00001963----000-.html](http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/18/usc_sec_18_00001963----000-.html)>

Below are several examples of sex trafficking cases of adults and minors. The following compilation offers a selection of sex trafficking cases prosecuted in the United States. Although this list is not exhaustive, it is intended to offer an overview of a variety of cases that have been prosecuted in the last 10 years, since 2006.

## 2015

**United States v. Hicks** (California): Shanntaye Ebony Hicks recruited at least four victims, ranging in age from 13 to 17 years old, and forced them to engage in commercial sex acts. She advertised victims, negotiated prices, and transported the victims to the customers, collecting money in exchange for time with the victims. Hicks used drugs and alcohol to motivate the victims to perform and threatened those who resisted with violence and a handgun. Hicks transported one of her victims across state lines to provide commercial sex in Nevada. Hicks was sentenced to 292 months in prison for two counts of transportation of a minor with intent to engage in criminal sexual activity.<sup>6</sup>

**State of Florida v. Andras Janos Vass** (Florida): Andras Janos Vass and two others convinced gay Hungarian men, ages 20 to 22, to come to the United States under false promises of jobs with good pay. The defendants then brought the young men to Miami, Florida, where they forced the victims to engage in commercial sex entirely for their own profit, working up to 20 hours a day. The traffickers isolated the victims from each other, confiscated their travel and identification documents, kept them confined to the apartment, and used financial manipulation to keep the victims from leaving or seeking help. The traffickers monitored their communications with family and with others. Vass was found guilty of human trafficking of an adult, deriving support from prostitution, racketeering conspiracy, and RICO/Racketeering. He was sentenced to 11 years in state prison.<sup>7</sup>

**United States v. Rodriguez et al.** (Florida): Edegardo Osorno Rodriguez and eight others were indicted in 2015 for conspiring to transport, harbor, and market women in several states across the southern United States. One of the defendants was responsible for picking the women up from the Greyhound bus station and taking them to his home, where they compelled the women to engage in commercial sex. They transported women from state to state to engage in commercial sex and charged buyers \$30-40 for 15 minutes with a victim. The nine men were also charged with over 25 counts relating to money laundering, prostitution, and aiding illegal entry of non U.S. citizens. This case is being brought by the U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Florida. Eight of the defendants have pled guilty.<sup>8</sup>

## 2014

**United States v. Mendez-Hernandes** (Georgia): Joaquin Mendez-Hernandes, also known as "El Flaco," enticed women to come to the United States from Mexico and Nicaragua with false promises of a comfortable life and easy fortune to be made. Once Mendez-Hernandes lured the women into the U.S., he forced them to perform as many as 20-50 commercial sex acts a day. He threatened anyone who resisted with violence. He also had men in Mexico threaten the children and families of the victims. Mendez-Hernandes was sentenced to life in prison for his role in a sex trafficking organization that exploited dozens of women. Twenty-four other members

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<sup>6</sup> "FBI — Sacramento Woman Sentenced to More Than 24 ..." 2015. 1 Mar. 2016 <<https://www.fbi.gov/sacramento/press-releases/2015/sacramento-woman-sentenced-to-more-than-24-years-in-prison-for-sextraffickingof-minors>>

<sup>7</sup> "Sex Traffickers Charged with RICO for Luring Hungarian Men to Miami" 3 Oct 2014. <<http://news.miamisao.com/2014/10/sex-traffickers-charged-with-rico-for.html>>

<sup>8</sup> "FBI — Nine Charged in Interstate Human Trafficking ..." 2015. 1 Mar. 2016 <<https://www.fbi.gov/jacksonville/press-releases/2015/nine-charged-in-interstate-human-trafficking-conspiracy>>

of this trafficking organization were also arrested at the same time, and their sentences ranged from 12 to 240 months in prison.<sup>9</sup>

**United States v. Haskins** (Nevada): Lenny Paul Haskins, also known as "2 Much," 34, of Las Vegas, Nevada, was a pimp for multiple women and girls, who he lured into commercial sex with false promises. Haskins had his nickname tattooed on the victims and encouraged them to develop drug addictions, which he used as both a motivator and a control mechanism. At least 17 victims were under Haskins's control, some as young as 15 years old, and he advertised their services on internet sites like Backpage.com. Haskins was sentenced to 40 years in prison followed by a life term of supervised release for sex trafficking of a child.<sup>10</sup>

## 2013

**United States v. Fields** (Florida): Andrew Blane Fields sold drugs such as Oxycodone, Dilaudid, and Morphine to numerous young women, causing addiction and dependency. Fields preyed on young vulnerable women and recruited them by promising to help get them off the streets. He then forced them into commercial sex to pay off their drug debt. He coerced the victims to engage in commercial sex by threatening to withdraw the drugs and subject them to painful and debilitating withdrawal symptoms. He harbored some of the victims in his trailer home in the Tampa Bay area. Fields was convicted of five counts of sex trafficking by force, fraud, and coercion and additional narcotics-related offenses. He received a sentence of 405 months imprisonment.<sup>11</sup>

**United States v. Li** (Northern Mariana Islands): Yanchun Li and Wei Lin transported three female victims to and from their apartment, the Rosen Music Studio karaoke bar, and local hotels for the purpose of forced labor and commercial sex. Li and Wei recruited the victims from China with the promise of legitimate jobs in the U.S. as waitresses or housekeepers. Upon arrival, the defendants confiscated their passports and told them they would be killed if they went outside. The women were forced to entertain men at the karaoke bars, and if the men paid an extra fee they could have sex with the women. Li pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit sex trafficking and received a sentence of 60 months imprisonment.<sup>12</sup>

**State of Tennessee v. Strong** (Tennessee): Between 2004 and 2011, Walter Strong abused his power as conservator over two mentally disabled adults, Lisa and Guy. Guy was forced to perform hours of unpaid farm labor, and Lisa was forced to engage in sexual activity in exchange for candy and trips to the dollar store. Lisa and Guy lived in a decrepit trailer that Strong made them purchase from him. Strong also had full control of the rest of their funds and social security payments. Strong pleaded guilty to sexual abuse and theft charges and was sentenced to 120 months in prison and ordered to pay \$105,480.84 in restitution.<sup>13</sup>

## 2012

**United States v. Yarbrough** (Tennessee): Terrence Yarbrough, also known as "T-Rex," forced two minor females and two adult females to perform commercial sex acts from 2006 to 2009. The youngest victim was 15 years old. He recruited the victims by promising them love and money. Yarbrough collected public benefits in his name to support the victims. He forced the victims to obey him by beating them with various objects, including

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<sup>9</sup> "FBI — Leader of International Sex Trafficking Ring ..." 2015. 1 Mar. 2016 <<https://www.fbi.gov/atlanta/press-releases/2014/leader-of-international-sex-trafficking-ring-sentenced-to-life-in-prison>>

<sup>10</sup> "FBI — Las Vegas Man Sentenced to 40 Years in Prison for ..." 2015. 1 Mar. 2016 <<https://www.fbi.gov/washingtondc/press-releases/2015/las-vegas-man-sentenced-to-40-years-in-prison-for-sex-trafficking>>

<sup>11</sup> "Lutz., Fla., Man Convicted on Drug Distribution and Sex Trafficking Charges," November 6, 2013. U.S. Department of Justice. Retrieved from <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/lutz-fla-man-convicted-drug-distribution-and-sex-trafficking-charges>.

<sup>12</sup> "USA V. LI YANCHUN, No. 13-10104 (9th Cir. 2015) :: Justia." 2015. 1 Mar. 2016 <<http://law.justia.com/cases/federal/appellate-courts/ca9/13-10104/13-10104-2015-06-29.html>>

<sup>13</sup> "FRANKENFIELD v. STRONG | Leagle.com." 1 Mar. 2016 <<http://www.leagle.com/decision/In%20FDCO%2020140428820/FRANKENFIELD%20v.%20STRONG>>

belts, crowbars, padlocks, and dog chains. He also threw the women down stairs, burned them with boiling water, and branded them with "T-Rex" tattoos. Yarbrough was convicted of 10 counts of sex trafficking and one count of conspiracy to commit food stamps fraud. He received a sentence of 536 months imprisonment.<sup>14</sup>

**United States v. Chappell** (Georgia): Timothy Lyle Chappell recruited a 15-year-old girl to engage in commercial sex acts through an internet chat site. The girl told the Chappell that she was thinking about running away from home. Chappell, a registered sex offender, had someone transport the girl to a hotel and harbor her there. He then forced her to have sex with him and then made the girl engage in commercial sex acts with at least two other men. Chappell was convicted of enticing a minor to engage in prostitution and transporting and harboring a minor for prostitution, and received a sentence of 240 months imprisonment plus 36 months supervised release.<sup>15</sup>

## 2011

**United States v. Flanders, et al.** (Florida): Beginning in 2006, Lavont Flanders and Emerson Callum recruited women into fake modeling auditions over the internet using a variety of aliases and sometimes pretending to be well-known companies. When the victims arrived for the auditions they were drugged by Flanders with Xanax. Flanders transported victims to Callum where he recorded Callum having sex with the victims. The defendants sold the video-recordings online. The victims were not given money or other benefits for the films. The exact number of victims is unknown, but at least 50 crimes were reported. The defendants were found guilty of sex trafficking of children by force, fraud, or coercion, conspiracy to commit offense or to defraud the United States, and distribution of a controlled substance. They were sentenced to 12 terms of life in prison.<sup>16</sup>

**United States v. Juarez-Santamaria** (Virginia): Through his involvement in the MS-13 gang, Jose Ciro Juarez-Santamaria forced a 12-year-old girl to engage in commercial sex acts. The defendant transported the victim to engage in prostitution in Maryland, Virginia, and D.C. by car or public transportation over the course of three to four months. The victim met the defendant at a party in 2009 after she ran away from home and was looking for a place to stay. The defendant and fellow gang members gave the victim alcohol and marijuana to gain her compliance. Juarez-Santamaria was convicted of sex trafficking of a child, transportation for the purpose of prostitution, and conspiracy to commit sex trafficking. He was sentenced to life imprisonment.<sup>17</sup>

**United States v. Payer** (South Dakota): Joshua Payer, a doctor, participated in the sex trafficking of minors in South Dakota. Payer was part of a trafficking ring organized by Brandon Thompson and Megan Hays of Tea, South Dakota. Payer engaged in commercial sex acts with minors and illegally provided prescription painkillers to the victims. Payer knew that the minor girls were being held against their will, though he did nothing to stop the trafficking. Payer pleaded guilty to dispensation of a controlled substance and sex trafficking of children and was sentenced to 22 months imprisonment.<sup>18</sup>

## 2010

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<sup>14</sup> "FBI — Sex Trafficker Terrence 'T-Rex' Yarbrough Sentenced ..." 2015. 1 Mar. 2016 <<https://www.fbi.gov/memphis/press-releases/2013/sex-trafficker-terrence-t-rex-yarbrough-sentenced-to-serve-536-months-in-prison>>

<sup>15</sup> "FBI — Convicted Sex Offender Sentenced to 20 Years for ..." 2015. 1 Mar. 2016 <<https://www.fbi.gov/atlanta/press-releases/2012/convicted-sex-offender-sentenced-to-20-years-for-additional-crimes-against-a-child>>

<sup>16</sup> "FBI — Two Men Convicted of Luring Women to South ..." 2015. 1 Mar. 2016 <<https://www.fbi.gov/miami/press-releases/2011/two-men-convicted-of-luring-women-to-south-florida-drugging-them-raping-them-filming-the-rape-and-then-selling-the-recorded-footage-online-and-at-pornography-stores>>

<sup>17</sup> "FBI — MS-13 Associate Sentenced to 292 Months for Sex ..." 2015. 1 Mar. 2016 <<https://www.fbi.gov/washingtondc/press-releases/2011/ms-13-associate-sentenced-to-292-months-for-sex-trafficking-teenage-runaway-girls>>

<sup>18</sup> "Dickinson County News: Local News: Child sex trafficking ..." 2010. 1 Mar. 2016 <<http://www.dickinsoncountynews.com/story/1655722.html>>

**United States v. Martinez** (Florida): Veronica Martinez arranged for two Honduran women to be illegally smuggled into the United States and told them they would provide childcare and household cleaning services to pay off their smuggling debt. Instead, the victims were forced to work at a bar and dance, talk, and drink with customers in the West Palm Beach area. The victims were also forced to perform sexual favors for bar patrons. The victims worked 11 hour shifts four nights a week, but Martinez continued to raise the victims' debt. Martinez pleaded guilty to smuggling and forced labor charges and received a sentence of 84 months in prison. She was ordered to pay the victims \$25,818 in restitution.<sup>19</sup>

**United States v. Lewis** (District of Columbia): Over a three year period, Shelby Lewis recruited four minor females in the Washington, D.C. area into commercial sex. Some of the girls were runaways. In addition to transporting the victims from his house in Maryland to downtown D.C. to engage in commercial sex acts, Lewis routinely forced them to have sex with him. Lewis obtained legal guardianship of the 12-year-old. In 2009, the D.C. police conducted an undercover operation that led to the arrest of two of the victims and yielded evidence of Lewis's crimes. In January 2010, he pleaded guilty to sex trafficking of children by force, fraud, or coercion and interstate transportation of minors for purposes of prostitution. He received a sentence of 240 months imprisonment and was ordered to pay \$3,892,055 in restitution to the victims.<sup>20</sup>

**United States v. Sanderson** (Connecticut): In 2009, Jarrell Sanderson and Hassonah Delia recruited two 14-year-old runaway girls who were in the custody of the state's Department of Children and Families and arranged to prostitute them in the East Hartford, Connecticut area. They advertised the girls online and drove them to hotels where the appointments for commercial sex occurred. They bought them alcohol and supervised them when they were with johns. The defendants pleaded guilty to sex trafficking of a minor and received a sentence of 110 months imprisonment.<sup>21</sup>

## 2009

**United States v. Strunk, Madden, and Evans** (Pennsylvania): William J. Strunk, Chun Yong Madden, and John G. Evans operated a brothel in Berwyn, Pennsylvania under the name "Swan Day Spa." The defendants Strunk and Evans were male U.S. citizens, and defendant Chun Yong Madden was an undocumented immigrant from China. From 2005 to 2008, the operators regularly brought female workers to the spa to provide sexual services to male employees. In 2006, they transported two undocumented Chinese women, whom they promised employment as masseuses, and forced them provide commercial sex acts to customers for profit. The defendants were convicted of aiding and abetting and conspiracy. They received sentences of 7 months imprisonment.<sup>22</sup>

**United States v. Wallace** (Missouri): In June 2008, April Chaney and her sister, Waquita Wallace met an 18-year-old woman with mental disabilities. Wallace told the victim that she would help her get her children back and take care of her. When they got to Wallace and Chaney's house, however, Wallace told the victim that the victim's cousin owed Wallace money, and now that debt was the victim's debt. Wallace told the victim she would have to pay it back by giving up her monthly social security disability check. Wallace threatened to hurt the victim, as well as her mother and grandmother. Wallace took the victim out at night to work as a prostitute on the streets and arranged for men to come over and have sex with the victim. Wallace also ordered the victim to do housework and to massage Wallace's back and feet rather than sleep. Wallace and Chaney abused the victim in other ways, including physical abuse, confinement, beatings, and confiscating her clothing. Wallace

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<sup>19</sup> "FBI — Palm Beach County Woman Sentenced on Charges ..." 2015. 1 Mar. 2016 <<https://www.fbi.gov/miami/press-releases/2010/mm102010.htm>>

<sup>20</sup> "FBI — Pimp Sentenced to 20-Year Prison Term for ..." 2015. 1 Mar. 2016 <<https://www.fbi.gov/washingtondc/press-releases/2010/wfo110110a.htm>>

<sup>21</sup> "FBI — Wethersfield Man Sentenced to Seven Years in ..." 2015. 1 Mar. 2016 <<https://www.fbi.gov/newhaven/press-releases/2011/wethersfield-man-sentenced-to-seven-years-in-federal-prison-for-distributing-heroin>>

<sup>22</sup> "Indictment - US Department of Justice." 2015. 1 Mar. 2016 <<http://www.justice.gov/archive/usao/pae/News/2008/jul/swandavspaindict.pdf>>

pleaded guilty to sex trafficking by fraud, force, or coercion and was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment and five years of supervised release. Chaney was sentenced to 60 months imprisonment and two years of supervised release on a charge of conspiracy to engage in sex trafficking by fraud, force, or coercion.<sup>23</sup>

**United States v. Vianez** (Washington): Juan Alexander Vianez became sexually involved with a 17-year-old girl. He then pressured her into prostitution and sold her across multiple states for the next four years. Vianez brutally beat the victim, threatened her, and hid her to keep her from leaving him. He received a sentence of 240 months imprisonment, five years supervised release, and was ordered to pay \$1,354,500 in restitution.<sup>24</sup>

## 2008

**United States v. Burroughs** (Washington, D.C.): Aaron J. Burroughs was a volunteer coach at Bowie High School. He met the victim at the school in fall 2005 when she was 14 years old, initiated a sexual relationship with her, and compelled her to engage in commercial sex. On July 31, 2006 Burroughs was arrested after an officer encountered the victim performing oral sex for money. Burroughs pleaded guilty to sexual exploitation of a minor and aiding and abetting, transportation of a minor to engage in prostitution, and first degree child sexual abuse. He received a sentence of 192 months imprisonment.<sup>25</sup>

**United States v. Davis** (New York): Corey Davis, also known as “Magnificent,” a resident of New York, pleaded guilty in a case involving the forced prostitution of minor and adult women in New York, Connecticut, and Texas. He forced girls as young as 12 years of age to work as strippers, dancers, and prostitutes for up to 12 hours a day. After each shift, Davis confiscated all of the victims' earnings. When the victims were not working, Davis confined them to a locked house in Queens, New York. To maintain control over the victims, Davis repeatedly assaulted those girls and women who broke house rules. In one instance, Davis assaulted a 17-year-old victim by placing a handgun in the girl's mouth. Davis pleaded guilty to one count of sex trafficking and was sentenced to over 24 years imprisonment. A fund for the victims was created from Davis' profits.<sup>26</sup>

**United States v. Flint** (Michigan): Donald Wayne Flint and James Roney transported the victims, a 15-year-old girl and an adult woman, to Detroit, Michigan from Cleveland, Ohio, for the purposes of engaging in prostitution. The defendants supplied the victims with clothing and condoms, and collected the money the victims earned from prostitution. Additionally, there was evidence that both men sexually assaulted the juvenile victim. A federal jury convicted Flint of sex trafficking of children and interstate transportation of minors for prostitution. He was sentenced to 135 months imprisonment. Roney pleaded guilty to trafficking-related charges and was sentenced to 151 months imprisonment and five years supervised release.<sup>27</sup>

## 2007

**United States v. Jones** (Georgia): From 2000 to 2005, Jimmie Lee Jones, also known as “Mike Spade,” coerced and forced a number of young women, including minors, to engage in commercial sex. Jones recruited women from colleges, restaurants, nightclubs, and other public venues by promising to help them pursue work as models and exotic dancers. Jones convinced at least five girls to sign contracts under which they agreed to pay Jones hundreds of dollars per week to help build their modeling careers. Jones then used physical violence and threats of violence to coerce the victims into engaging in commercial sex. Jones also manipulated the victims by

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<sup>23</sup> "FBI — St. Louis Woman Sentenced on Federal Sex ..." 2015. 1 Mar. 2016 <<https://www.fbi.gov/stlouis/press-releases/2009/sl072209a.htm>>

<sup>24</sup> "UNITED STATES V. VIANEZ, No. 10-30282 (9th Cir. Aug 11 ..." 2014. 1 Mar. 2016 <<https://casetext.com/case/us-v-vianez>>

<sup>25</sup> "UNITED STATES v. BURROUGHS | FindLaw." 2010. 1 Mar. 2016 <<http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-dc-circuit/1531605.html>>

<sup>26</sup> "#08-1135: Leader of Expansive Multi-State Sex-trafficking ..." 2009. 1 Mar. 2016 <<http://www.justice.gov/archive/opa/pr/2008/December/08-crt-1135.html>>

<sup>27</sup> "FBI — Ohio Man Sentenced for Trafficking in Children for ..." 2015. 1 Mar. 2016 <<https://www.fbi.gov/detroit/press-releases/2009/de012909.htm>>

threatening their financial security and threatening to release sexually explicit videotapes of them. Jones pleaded guilty to conspiracy to engage in sex trafficking and transporting persons across state lines for purposes of prostitution and was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment.<sup>28</sup>

**United States v. Williams, et al.** (Massachusetts): Three defendants induced a minor into performing commercial sex acts in Massachusetts, Maine, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire. The girl was 13 to 15 years old when she took calls from defendant Dawn Young's escort service. The defendants helped the teenager obtain false identification documents. The defendants took nearly all of the minor's earnings. The victim was reported missing in 2001, when she was 14 years old. The defendants, aware of the missing status of the child, called the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children in 2001 to report that the minor was safe. Williams appealed his sentence to assert that his acts were a "joint venture" between the victim and himself, and therefore not a "violent" act. The court dismissed this line of reasoning and held that violating the prohibition on sex trafficking of minors "constitutes a crime of violence." The defendants were charged with conspiracy in sex trafficking and inducing interstate travel for the purpose of prostitution and were sentenced to 151 months imprisonment.<sup>29</sup>

**United States v. Webster** (Alaska): Don Arthur Webster Jr., 49, of Anchorage, Alaska, also known as "Jerry Star," lured impoverished women and girls into working for his escort service with the promise of high wages and shelter. Victims were forced to engage in commercial sex up to 10 times a day and gave all earnings to Webster, who gave them drugs in return. All of the victims reported that they were addicted to crack cocaine and were completely isolated from the outside world, forbidden from speaking to anyone outside of the "family" while living under Webster's control. Victims reported punishments for not earning enough or for being disrespectful ranged from being physically abused—having hair pulled or being burned with hot water—to being locked in a small crawl space or closet. Webster was convicted of two counts of sex trafficking of a minor, nine counts of sex trafficking by force, fraud, or coercion; and 14 counts of distributing crack cocaine, two of which were to a pregnant woman. He was sentenced to 360 months in prison and ordered to pay \$3,615,750 in restitution to the 11 victims.<sup>30</sup>

## 2006

**United States v. Kyo Hwa Adler** (New York): Twenty-two defendants recruited women in Korea to come to the United States and supplied the women with fake visas and passports. After entering the U.S., the defendants forced the victims to pay off their smuggling debts by working in brothels owned by the defendants that were disguised as massage parlors, health spas, and acupuncture clinics. The defendants were charged with interstate transportation for the purposes of engaging in prostitution and coercion and enticement to engage in prostitution. They were sentenced to up to 25 years in prison.<sup>31</sup>

**United States v. Mondragon, et al.** (Texas): Oscar Mondragon and seven other defendants were part of a scheme to smuggle Central American women and girls into the United States. The defendants lured their victims with promises of legal jobs in the United States. Once in the country, however, the victims were forced to work in restaurants, bars, and cantinas in the Houston area and, in some instances, were required to provide commercial sex acts to customers. The women were threatened with physical harm or harm to their families if they attempted to escape before paying off their smuggling debt, and some were sexually assaulted by the defendants. The money the women made was turned over to the defendants to pay off their debts. The

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<sup>28</sup> "Read more - US Department of Justice." 2009. 1 Mar. 2016 <[http://www.justice.gov/archive/opa/pr/2008/January/08\\_crt\\_058.html](http://www.justice.gov/archive/opa/pr/2008/January/08_crt_058.html)>

<sup>29</sup> "Read more - US Department of Justice." 2009. 1 Mar. 2016 <[http://www.justice.gov/archive/opa/pr/2007/January/07\\_crm\\_057.html](http://www.justice.gov/archive/opa/pr/2007/January/07_crm_057.html)>

<sup>30</sup> "FBI — Webster Ordered to Pay \$3.6 Million to Victims in Sex ..." 1 Mar. 2016 <<https://www.fbi.gov/anchorage/press-releases/2009/webster-ordered-to-pay-3.6-million-to-victims-in-sex-trafficking-case>>

<sup>31</sup> "FBI — International Sex Trafficker Arrives in Manhattan ..." 2015. 1 Mar. 2016 <<https://www.fbi.gov/newyork/press-releases/2010/nyfo083110.htm>>

defendants pleaded guilty to conspiracy to hold persons in a condition of peonage, conspiracy to illegally and knowingly recruit, harbor, transport, provide, and obtain persons for labor and services, harboring an alien, and forced labor. The defendants received sentences of up to 180 months in prison and were required to pay \$1,715,588 in restitution.<sup>32</sup>

**United States v. Norris** (Georgia): Harrison Norris, Jr. ran a sex trafficking ring in Georgia and North Carolina. He recruited victims by promising to train them as professional wrestlers. Norris forced the victims to engage in commercial sex acts through threats and physical abuse. He imposed a military-style system of discipline over his victims by assigning them to a "squad" and piercing their skin to designate their "rank," which was overseen by the other defendants. Norris also forced the victims to perform manual labor. He charged the victims for cigarettes, medicine, and food to keep the women in debt. Norris was convicted of conspiracy to commit peonage, commercial sex trafficking, and forced labor and received a sentence of life imprisonment.<sup>33</sup>

### More Resources

#### Governmental Agencies:

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) (<http://www.fbi.gov/>)

U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ) (<http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/crm/htpu.php>)

U.S. Department of State (DOS), Bureau of Diplomatic Security (<http://www.state.gov/m/ds/>)

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (USCIS) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) (<http://www.ice.gov/hsi>)

#### Case Records and Legal Documents:

Pacer (<https://www.pacer.gov/>)

Lexis Nexis (<http://www.lexisnexis.com/>)

University of Michigan Human Trafficking Law Clinic Database

(<https://www.law.umich.edu/clinical/HuTrafficCases/Pages/searchdatabase.aspx>)

### Where Can You Find Help?

The NHTRC maintains a database of service providers and resources throughout the United States. Victims and advocates, outreach workers, friends, family, and others can call the NHTRC hotline 24 hours a day, seven days a week to get connected to help.

**Report Online or Access Resources & Referrals:** [www.traffickingresourcecenter.org](http://www.traffickingresourcecenter.org)

**Call:** 1-888-373-7888 (24/7)

**Email:** [nhtrc@polarisproject.org](mailto:nhtrc@polarisproject.org)

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<sup>32</sup> "FBI — Houston Man Sentenced for Human Trafficking and ..." 2015. 1 Mar. 2016 <<https://www.fbi.gov/houston/press-releases/2009/ho042709.htm>>

<sup>33</sup> "#08-206: 03-13-08 Co-Defendants Sentenced for Roles in ..." 2016. 1 Mar. 2016 <[https://www.justice.gov/archive/opa/pr/2008/March/08\\_crt\\_206.html](https://www.justice.gov/archive/opa/pr/2008/March/08_crt_206.html)>