



THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Department of Justice
Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, November 6, 2017

Seattle Area Man Convicted of Multiple Counts of Sex Trafficking by Force, Fraud, or Coercion, Sex Trafficking of a Minor, and Production of Child Pornography

WASHINGTON – A 51 year-old Seattle-area man was convicted of 17 federal felonies today in the U.S. District Court in Seattle for his scheme to recruit young women and girls and force them to engage in prostitution, announced Acting Assistant Attorney General John Gore of the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division, U.S. Attorney Annette L. Hayes of the Western District of Washington, and Special Agent in Charge Jay S. Tabb, Jr. of the FBI’s Seattle Field Office.

David D. Delay was convicted following a ten-day jury trial. The jury deliberated approximately 90 minutes before returning guilty verdicts on the following counts: conspiracy to engage in sex trafficking through force, fraud, and coercion; three counts of sex trafficking adults through force, fraud, and coercion; two counts of attempted sex trafficking of a juvenile through force, fraud, and coercion; one count of attempted sex trafficking through force, fraud, and coercion; conspiracy to transport females for prostitution and six counts of transporting individual victims for prostitution; two counts of production of child pornography; and one count of obstruction of and interference with a sex trafficking investigation.

According to evidence presented in court, including the testimony of seven victims, the defendant targeted vulnerable teenagers and young women in their early 20s on the internet, enticing them to travel to Seattle with false promises of fame and fortune and a starring role in a purported HBO documentary that he claimed to be producing and filming. In order to convince the victims that his assertions were true, Delay sent them falsified bank account screenshots supposedly depicting the profits of his other films, a photograph of himself outside of an HBO office, and seemingly official, binding contracts that he asked them to sign. An HBO representative testified that the company did not have any business dealings with Delay.

Updated November 6, 2017

Once the victims arrived in Seattle, the defendant coerced them to engage in prostitution for his profit. He manipulated them emotionally and psychologically, isolated them, established their complete dependency on him, and in some instances threatened legal action, falsely claiming that the victims had violated the terms of their contracts and were subject to civil lawsuits. In furtherance of his sex trafficking scheme, the defendant also enticed two minor victims to produce graphic pornographic photographs and videos for him, and in one instance threatened to release sexually explicit video images of a victim unless she complied with his demands.

“This defendant preyed on vulnerable teenagers and young women, exploiting them for his own profit and sexual gratification, with no regard for their humanity,” said Acting Attorney General John Gore of the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division. “The Department of Justice will vigorously pursue sex traffickers and hold them accountable for their horrific crimes.”

“I commend the victims who courageously took the witness stand and described some of the darkest moments in their lives,” said U.S. Attorney Annette L. Hayes of the Western District of Washington. “It was their testimony coupled with the other evidence in this case that demonstrated for all to see that the defendant’s outrageous actions were nothing less than criminal.”

Defendant Delay’s sentencing has been scheduled for Feb. 2, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. He faces a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

Co-defendant Marysa Comer, 22, of Matthews, North Carolina, previously pleaded guilty on Nov. 16, 2015, to one count of sex trafficking conspiracy for her role in defendant Delay’s scheme. She faces up to life in prison at her sentencing, which is scheduled for Dec. 1, 2017.

The case was investigated by the FBI’s Seattle Field Office and the Redmond Police Department, along with assistance from the FBI’s Chicago Field Office, the King County Sheriff’s Office, the Beaverton, Oregon Police Department, and the Bureau of Prisons. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Kate Crisham and Trial Attorney Matthew Grady of the Civil Rights Division’s Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit.

Topic(s):
Civil Rights

Component(s):
Civil Rights Division
USAO - Washington, Western

Press Release Number:
17-1250