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Federal Jury Convicts Rochester Man Of Sex Trafficking

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ROCHESTER, N.Y. -- U.S. Attorney James P. Kennedy, Jr. announced today that a federal jury has convicted Andre L. Barnes, 42, of Rochester, NY, of conspiracy to sex traffic minors, sex trafficking of minors and adults by force, and transportation of girls across state lines to engage in prostitution. The charges carry a mandatory minimum sentence of 15 years in prison, a maximum of life, and a \$1,000,000 fine.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Melissa M. Marangola and Craig R. Gestring, who handled the prosecution of the case at trial, stated that Barnes and co-defendant Christopher Johnson began working together in 2012 to sex traffic minors and adults by force. This lasted until the arrest of Barnes in May 2013 for assaulting one of his victims at the Gates Motel.

Barnes and Johnson posted the victims on Backpage.com to advertise for clients. During the conspiracy, Barnes and Johnson recruited vulnerable girls and young women, meeting them at locations such the Department of Social Services. More than 10 girls, some as young as 15 years old, worked for them as prostitutes. Barnes was convicted of using force, fraud, and coercion to keep the girls working for him. The defendant also supplied them with heroin, crack cocaine, and ecstasy. Barnes also assaulted several girls and threatened them repeatedly with violence.

After his arrest, the defendant admitted to investigators that he was a pimp and expressed an interest in returning to that conduct upon his release from prison. Barnes admitted that he beat his girls but did not want to leave bruises on their faces because that could lead to a loss of money. Several victims and witnesses testified during the 10 day trial.

Johnson was previously convicted for his role in the conspiracy is awaiting sentencing.

The verdict is the culmination of an investigation on the part of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Child Exploitation Task Force, under the direction of Special Agent-in-Charge Gary Loeffert.

Sentencing is scheduled for January 10, 2019, at 10:00 a.m. before U.S. District Judge David G. Larimer who presided over the trial.

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