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D.C. MAN INDICTED FOR TRANSPORTING A MINOR TO ENGAGE IN PROSTITUTION
IN MARYLAND

Maryland Task Force Aggressively Pursues Federal Charges for Child
Prostitution

Greenbelt, Maryland - A federal grand jury today indicted Melvin Douglas, a/k/a Melvin Longwood, age 31, of Washington, D.C., for transporting a minor across state lines to engage in prostitution.

The indictment was announced by United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein; Special Agent in Charge Richard A. McFeely of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Colonel Marcus L. Brown, Superintendent of the Maryland State Police (MSP), as part of the Maryland Child Exploitation Task Force; and Prince George's County State's Attorney Angela D. Alsobrooks.

"Maryland's human trafficking task force pursues all leads concerning exploited children and follows a zero-tolerance policy for child prostitution," said U.S. Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein. "Anyone who pays for or profits from sex with children should understand that we are standing by to send them to federal prison."

The one count indictment alleges that between September 5, 2011, and February 9, 2012, Douglas transported the minor victim with the intent that the victim engage in prostitution. According to court documents, the Maryland State Police Child Recovery Unit received a missing child alert from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), for a 15 year old female, who had been reported missing from Prince William County, Virginia. The Maryland Child Exploitation Task Force (MCETF) located an advertisement for the missing girl on the website "Backpage.com"; a website that is frequently used to post advertisements for prostitution and escort services.

According to court documents, a "date" was made with the victim, using the telephone number from the advertisement. An MSP undercover officer was instructed to meet the girl at a motel on Baltimore Avenue in College Park, Maryland, room #147. Members of the MCETF went to room # 147 and located the missing girl, who was taken to the College Park State Police Barrack where she was interviewed by law enforcement.

Prior to the undercover officer arriving at the hotel for his "date," Melvin Douglas and a woman were seen in the area of room #147 by an FBI special agent who was conducting surveillance outside the motel. Douglas walked from the area of room #147 to a car with Washington, D.C. registration. Douglas and the woman were detained and subsequently arrested. Two cellular telephones were seized from Douglas at the time of his arrest. A search of the motel room and Douglas' car recovered a laptop computer, an i-Pod Touch, condoms, and two additional cellular telephones. In addition, the receipt for the telephone which was the contact telephone in the backpage.com advertisement for the victim, was located in the front, driver's side door compartment of Douglas' car. This receipt was dated January 19, 2012 and was associated with the name "Mel Longwood."

The victim also agreed to a search of her cellular telephone, which revealed text messages to Douglas and photographs of the victim with Douglas.

Douglas faces a minimum mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in prison and a maximum of life in prison for transporting a minor to engage in prostitution. No court appearance has been scheduled. Douglas is detained on related state charges. An indictment is not a finding of guilt. An individual charged by indictment is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at some later criminal proceedings.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and local resources to locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who sexually exploit children, and to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.usdoj.gov/psc For more information about internet safety education, please visit www.usdoj.gov/psc and click on the "resources" tab on the left of the page.

The case was investigated by the Maryland Child Exploitation Task Force as part of the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force. The Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force was formed in 2007 to discover and rescue victims of human trafficking while identifying and prosecuting offenders. Members include federal, state and local law enforcement, as well as victim service providers and local community members. For more information about the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force, please visit www.justice.gov/usao/md/Human-Trafficking/index.html.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein commended the FBI, Maryland State Police, Maryland Child Exploitation Task Force and Prince George's County State's Attorney's Office for their work in the investigation. Mr. Rosenstein thanked Special Assistant U.S. Attorney LisaMarine Freitas, who is prosecuting the case.

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