



Department of Justice

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June 14, 2011			PHONE: (813) 274-6388	
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NEW YORK CITY SEX TRAFFICKER SENTENCED TO MORE THAN 26 YEARS

Jacksonville, Florida - U.S. Attorney Robert E. O'Neill announces that U.S. District Judge Marcia Morales Howard today sentenced Tyrone Townsend (45, New York, New York) to 320 months in federal prison, followed by 10 years of supervised release, for sex trafficking by force, threats of force and fraud; transporting women across state lines for prostitution; enticing, inducing and coercing a woman to travel across state lines for prostitution; and conspiracy to transport a woman across state lines for prostitution. Townsend was found guilty on February 16, 2011, following a federal jury trial.

According to court documents and testimony at trial, Townsend met the first victim, an eighteen year old runaway, in April 2009 after she traveled by Greyhound bus to New York City, New York. He met the second victim, a Canadian citizen, after she responded to an internet advertisement and met up with Townsend and the first victim in Norfolk, Virginia. Both victims testified that Townsend beat and sexually assaulted them as a means of causing them to engage in commercial sex acts. Both victims testified that Townsend required them to call him "Daddy," and he was also referred to as "King Tycoon."

The victim from Canada testified that Townsend forcibly removed her personal property (including her passport, cell phone, and laptop computer) from her belongings at

the residence of Townsend's brother in Thomasville, North Carolina as a means of preventing her from leaving. Evidence also included a Myspace message to one of the victims in which Townsend acknowledged that the victim would get beaten for not making "her number," a reference to a nightly quota of \$1,000. Townsend transported the women from Norfolk, Virginia, to Thomasville, North Carolina; Atlanta, Georgia; Kingsland, Georgia; and Jacksonville, Florida. Townsend and the women were in Jacksonville from September 9, 2009, until September 16, 2009.

Townsend caused the women to engage in commercial sex acts at an abandoned apartment on Edenfield Road (Jacksonville) and also at the locations of customers, including local homes and hotels. On September 16, 2009, the Canadian woman was apprehended by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office as part of an undercover prostitution sting. At that time, the woman became hysterical and advised officers about what had happened to her. The investigation into Townsend's sex trafficking activities then commenced. Investigators amassed a large amount of evidence including hotel records, phone records, bank records, and 28 internet ads in which Townsend advertised the victim's availability for commercial sex acts. Investigators also seized a Garmin GPS from Townsend's vehicle and were able to establish locations of various customers in Jacksonville from the data contained in the Garmin.

This case was investigated by the FBI and the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Mac D. Heavener, III.