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United States Attorney Nicholas A. Klinefeldt
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CONTACT: Kevin VanderSchel
(515) 473-9300
kevin.vanderschel@usdoj.gov

THREE PEOPLE SENTENCED ON SEX TRAFFICKING AND PROSTITUTION CHARGES

COUNCIL BLUFFS, IA - On February 21 and 22, 2012, Parrish Jason Casebier, age 39, Cheryl Elaine Tucker, age 41, and Kentrell Vertner, age 26, all of Omaha, Nebraska, were sentenced in United States District Court in Council Bluffs and Des Moines, upon their convictions for participation in crimes relating to sex trafficking and interstate transportation for prostitution, announced United States Attorney Nicholas A. Klinefeldt. United States District Court Judge John A. Jarvey sentenced Parrish Jason Casebier to 300 months imprisonment, and Cheryl Elaine Tucker to 120 months imprisonment for their participation in a conspiracy to commit sex trafficking. Kentrell Vertner was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment for his role in conspiracy to transport individuals in interstate commerce for prostitution.

Judge Jarvey also sentenced Casebier and Tucker to 5 years of supervised release following their respective terms of imprisonment, and sentenced Vertner to 3 years of supervised release following his imprisonment. Each defendant was also ordered to pay a \$100.00 special assessment for the Crime Victims Fund, and ordered to remain in the custody of the United States Marshal pending designation to a Federal Bureau of Prison facility at which he or she will serve that defendant's federal sentence.

Casebier was found to be the leader of the prostitution operation, and to have committed the acts of physical and sexual abuse against the victims. Tucker was Casebier's girlfriend and served as his manager of the prostitution operation. Vertner played a much lesser role in the prostitution operation, primarily associated with at times posting internet solicitations for prostitution and assisting with transporting various of the other individuals for prostitution. Tucker and Vertner themselves suffered some much lesser intimidation by Casebier, but knowingly and voluntarily participated in the prostitution operation.

"These individuals victimized young women in a way that may forever affect them - all for their own personal financial gain," stated United States Attorney Nicholas A. Klinefeldt. "Let these sentences serve as a message of just how seriously we take this type of conduct."

"The protection of the innocent and the most vulnerable among us is one of the most important obligations of law enforcement," said Weysan Dun, FBI Special Agent in Charge. "Sex trafficking, especially the trafficking of children, is unconscionable and the FBI is working closely with state and local authorities through the Innocence Lost Task Force to fight this most reprehensible sort of exploitation."

The investigation arose out of a Council Bluffs, Iowa, Police Department (PD) response to a June 8, 2010 request for help regarding an alleged kidnapping at a motel in Council Bluffs, Iowa. As a result of Council Bluffs PD's quick response to the call for help, a 19 year old woman was rescued and another woman taken into protective custody. At that time, Casebier was arrested and charged by the Pottawattamie County Attorney's Office with kidnaping. These State of Iowa charges were later dismissed, and a federal investigation was begun by the FBI and the Council Bluffs PD. In February of 2011, as part of the continuing federal investigation, the

Federal Bureau of Investigation and Council Bluffs PD conducted a prostitution sting in Council Bluffs. As a result of the sting, a third woman was taken into custody and removed from Casebier's control.

Ultimately, four women were identified as victims of the defendants. The record shows that three of the four victims were originally induced by false promises to join the prostitution operation, and then coerced to participate in prostitution by Casebier's acts of physical and sexual abuse and threats of abuse. The fourth victim, a woman who had just turned 19 years of age, was enticed away from a homeless shelter by Casebier with promises of assistance, deceived or forced into being taken by Tucker from Omaha, Nebraska, to Council Bluffs, Iowa, and then coerced by Casebier to engage in acts of prostitution for just over one day until the victim was able to make a call for help without Casebier knowing. The conspiracy lasted from early in 2009, to June 1, 2011, ending with the arrest, on a federal warrant, of Casebier and Tucker by the Iowa State Patrol in eastern Iowa.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the SouthWest Iowa Narcotics Enforcement Task Force, the Council Bluffs, Iowa, Police Department and the Pottawattamie County Sheriff's Department, with later assistance by the Pottawattamie County Attorney's Office. This case was prosecuted by the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Iowa.

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