

NEWS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

San Diego, California

***United States Attorney
Laura E. Duffy***

Assistant U. S. Attorneys Alessandra P. Serano (619) 557-7084 or Matthew Gardner 557-7042

For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - December 19, 2011

United States Attorney Laura E. Duffy announced that Maurice Lerome Smith was sentenced today by United States District Court Judge Roger T. Benitez to serve 360 months in federal prison, followed by 5 years of supervised release, ordered to pay \$90,000.00 in restitution and to pay a \$200.00 penalty assessment and mandatory registration under the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act.

A federal jury found Smith guilty on May 27, 2011, following a three-day jury trial. The jury returned verdicts convicting Smith on one count of sex trafficking of children and by force, fraud and coercion, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1591(a) and (b) and one count of being a felon in possession of a firearm, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 922(g)(1) and 924(a)(2). In addition to the prison term, Smith stipulated to the criminal forfeiture of two vehicles, jewelry and the firearm.

According to evidence presented at trial, Smith set up online ads on the Internet offering commercial sex acts with the child. Smith would book the rooms and drive the victim to the motels; he then took possession of all of the money she earned from prostitution. The victim was told to make a daily quota as high as \$1200. The victim testified that she met the defendant online in 2009. In her testimony, she said that in September 2010, while walking in San Diego, Smith forced her to get into his car and later physically assaulted her with a belt, had sex with her and then drove her to a motel to work as a prostitute. The defendant told the victim that if she did not get into the car, she would be “in pieces in the trunk.”

United States Attorney Duffy said, “Today’s sentence reflects the very real and lasting damage suffered by victims forced into prostitution. This office will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to investigate and prosecute those involved in abusing women of all ages - both adults and minors - in the sex trafficking business.”

The jury also convicted Smith of being a felon in possession of a 12-gauge bolt action Mossberg Model 195 firearm with a magazine and no serial number. He was previously convicted of state charges involving assault with a firearm on a person and conspiracy to commit child abduction.

DEFENDANT

Case Number: 11CR0471-BEN

Maurice Lerome Smith

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1591(a) and (b) - Sex Trafficking of Children or by Force, Fraud or Coercion

Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(g)(1) and 924(a)(2) - Felon in Possession of a Firearm

INVESTIGATING AGENCIES

San Diego Police Department
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives