

NEWS

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New York Pimp Pleads Guilty to Operating an Interstate Organization Using Minors for Prostitution

(More)

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TRENTON – A New York City man who led an interstate prostitution enterprise that recruited and prostituted minor girls in several U.S. cities pleaded guilty today in federal court, Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division and United States Attorney Christopher J. Christie of the District of New Jersey announced today.

Matthew D. Thompson, 38, of the Bronx, a.k.a. “Knowledge,” entered his plea in U.S. District Court in Trenton before Judge Freda L. Wolfson, to one count each of conspiracy to transport minors to engage in prostitution and conspiracy to engage in money laundering. Judge Wolfson scheduled sentencing for March 2, 2007.

At his plea hearing, Thompson admitted he was a pimp and organized and managed a prostitution ring operating from at least as early as 1999 and continuing until December of 2005 in various U.S. cities, including Atlantic City, New York (including Manhattan and Hunts Point in the Bronx), Las Vegas, Boston, and Miami.

Other members of the conspiracy, including Melissa Ramlakhan, Anna Argyroudis, Emily Collins-Koslosky, Jacqueline Collins-Koslosky, and Kemyra Jemerson recruited and transported young girls to and from various cities in order to have them work as prostitutes for him, Thompson admitted. At Thompson’s direction members of the conspiracy would also hide the proceeds of the illegal prostitution enterprise by converting the proceeds into U.S. postal and Western Union money orders in amounts under the legal reporting requirement of \$3,000. To date, over \$800,000 in U.S. postal and Western Union money orders have been identified as having been purchased and used by members of the conspiracy.

In pleading guilty, Thompson agreed to forfeit \$748,243 in funds, three New York properties, one New Jersey property and eight vehicles all of which were derived from or used in the prostitution enterprise.

To date, Ramlakhan, Argyroudis, Emily and Jacqueline Collins-Koslosky, Jemerson as well as another pimp involved in the conspiracy, Demetrius Lemus, have all plead guilty and are awaiting sentencing.

The case is part of the “Innocence Lost” initiative, a cooperative effort to prevent and prosecute cases involving child prostitution between the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United States Department of Justice, Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. To date, the Innocence Lost Initiative has resulted in 252 open investigations, 614 arrests, 96 complaints, 142 informations or indictments, and 106 convictions in both the federal and state systems.

On Count One Thompson faces a mandatory minimum prison term of five years and a

statutory maximum prison term of 30 years and a \$250,000 fine for conspiring to transport minors to engage in prostitution. Thompson faces maximum prison term of 20 years and the greater of a 250,000 fine or twice the gross amount of any pecuniary gain or twice the amount of any pecuniary loss suffered by the victims for conspiring to commit money laundering.

In determining an actual sentence, Judge Wolfson will consult the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

The case was investigated by Special Agent Daniel Garrabrant of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Special Agent Tara Nevrinean of the United States Postal Service, Office of Inspector General and is being prosecuted by Trial Attorney Sherri A. Stephan of the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section and Assistant U.S. Attorney Jason Richardson of the District of New Jersey's Criminal Division in Camden.

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Defense Attorney: Mitchell C. Elman, Esq. Ozone Park, New York