

Department of Justice

United States Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr.
Western District of New York

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CONTACT: BARBARA BURNS
PHONE: (716) 843-5817
FAX: (716) 551-3051

ROCHESTER SISTERS CHARGED IN SEX TRAFFICKING CASE

ROCHESTER, N.Y.-- U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Jerese Blue, 25, and Chelsea Blue, 22, both of Rochester, N.Y., were charged by Criminal Complaint with sex trafficking of a minor. The charge carries a mandatory minimum penalty of 10 years in prison, a maximum penalty of life, and a fine of \$250,000.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Tiffany H. Lee, who is handling the case, stated that according to the Criminal Complaint, in April 2012, Rochester Police began investigating the whereabouts of a 14-year-old female runaway. When the girl was found, she stated that from April 14 to April 18, she and another 17-year-old female had been introduced to prostitution by the defendants. The Complaint further states that the defendants had encountered the girls in the City of Rochester and took them to Chelsea Blue's residence on Arnett Boulevard. There, they used Jerese Blue's laptop to begin posting ads for the girls using Backpage.com, the Internet classified advertisement website.

The Complaint states that according to the 14-year-old female, between April 15 and April 18, she had sexual relationships with numerous customers, with the sexual activity taking place at the homes of both defendants. On occasion, the 14-year-old was taken to meet with customers at two motels, where the defendants paid for the room for the victim to engage in commercial sex. The defendants kept most of the money earned by the minors through the prostitution activity.

"Human trafficking on any level is disturbing, but with minors taken into the illegal sex trade, it is particularly so," said U.S. Attorney Hochul. "These children, just 14 and 17 years old, should have been experiencing the best life has to offer. Instead, the defendants stand accused of exploiting and exposing them to the worst sides of society. Our Office will continue to track down such predators and prosecute them to the fullest extent of the law."

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. Led by United States Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.

The Criminal Complaint is the culmination of an investigation on the part of the FBI's Cyber Crimes Task Force, which includes the Rochester Police Department under the direction of Chief James Sheppard, and Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, under the direction of Christopher M. Piehota, Special Agent in Charge.

The fact that a defendant has been charged with a crime is merely an accusation and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

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