

# Department of Justice

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

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## **ROCHESTER MAN CHARGED WITH RUNNING SEX TRAFFICKING OPERATION INVOLVING A MINOR VICTIM**

ROCHESTER, N.Y.-- U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Marques Williams, 26, of Rochester, N.Y., was arrested and 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 Complaint, the FBI received information that the defendant advertised a fifteen-year-old female as a prostitute on the Internet classified advertising service, Backpage.com. The minor victim was interviewed by the FBI and said that between July 2011 and September 2011, she worked as a prostitute for Williams. According to the victim, the defendant taught the girl how to engage in prostitution activities, and set the prices for her prostitution activities. The minor further stated that Williams took her to the East Avenue Inn in Rochester for prostitution purposes and paid for the room since she was underage. The victim also told the FBI that Williams took pictures of her for the Backpage.com advertisements.

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.projectsafchildhood.gov](http://www.projectsafchildhood.gov).

"Compelling any individual to engage in commercial sex activities is a more than a tragedy," said U.S. Attorney Hochul. "When this egregious behavior involves a child, it is also a serious federal criminal offense that will be vigorously prosecuted by this office."

The Criminal Complaint is the culmination of an investigation on the part of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Cyber Crimes Task Force, which includes the Monroe County Sheriff's Office, under the direction of Sheriff Patrick O'Flynn, the Rochester Police Department under the direction of Chief James Sheppard, and Special Agents of the FBI, 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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