



Department of Justice

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Lexington Man Convicted of Multiple Counts of Sex and Drug Trafficking and Related Offenses, Including Witness Tampering

Defendant used physical violence and crack cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine to compel multiple victims into prostitution

FRANKFORT, KY- A Lexington, Ky., man, Prince Bixler, 41, was convicted on Wednesday by a federal jury in Frankfort, Ky., for charges related to his extensive and violent sex and drug trafficking operation that sold crack cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine throughout the Lexington area and forced young, drug-addicted women to prostitute.

After 6.5 hours following a 7-day trial, the jury convicted Bixler of three counts of sex trafficking by force, fraud, or coercion; two counts of tampering with a witness, victim or an informant; one count of operating an unlawful prostitution business as an interstate racketeering enterprise; six counts of distributing controlled substances including crack cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine; and three counts of being a felon in possession of a firearm.

Evidence presented at trial, including the testimony of four victims, established that defendant Prince Bixler compelled four victims into prostitution between 2013 and March 2018 by physically assaulting them and others, and weakening the victims by worsening their addictions to crack cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine. The defendant also sold crack cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine throughout the Lexington area to numerous customers. The Lexington Police Department executed a search warrant at the defendant's residence in March 2018, which led to the recovery of numerous firearms. The defendant, a convicted felon, was prohibited from possessing these and other firearms.

As the investigation into the defendant's illegal conduct continued throughout 2018 into 2019, he became aware that multiple potential witnesses were subpoenaed to testify before a federal grand jury in Lexington. The defendant threatened one witness with physical violence in an attempt to dissuade her from testifying truthfully before the grand jury. The defendant also repeatedly called and harassed another witness on the eve of her scheduled grand jury appearance in an attempt to prevent her from testifying truthfully before the grand jury.

Bixler was indicted in June 2019.

"Prince Bixler used violence and threats of violence to create a climate of fear to trap these young women, while at the same time increasing their dependence on him by worsening their

addictions to crack cocaine, heroin, or methamphetamine,” said Assistant Attorney General Eric Dreiband for the Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division. “Human traffickers are adept at exploiting victims’ drug addictions and using coercive tactics to intimidate and compel their services. There can be no place in our society for conduct like this defendant’s, and the Department of Justice will continue its vigorous efforts to hold human traffickers accountable, bring justice to their victims, and prevent them from harming others.”

“The hard work, dedication, and cooperation of law enforcement from state and federal agencies have made our community safer and brought some measure of justice to the victims of Prince Bixler,” said Robert M. Duncan, Jr., United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky. “His conduct was truly despicable, and will serve to strengthen our resolve to combat the destructive exploitation of human traffickers. I commend the members of the investigative and prosecution teams for their committed work in prosecuting this case.”

“Today’s conviction is yet another example of the FBI’s commitment to bring justice to those who exploit the most vulnerable members of our community,” said James Robert Brown, Jr., Special Agent in Charge, FBI, Louisville Field Office. “When human beings are treated as commodities, they are not only being abused physically, but emotionally and financially. FBI Louisville will continue to work closely with our law enforcement partners to identify and disrupt those who engage in human trafficking.”

“Human trafficking is a violent crime with victims whose fear of reprisal often keeps them from getting help,” stated Special Agent in Charge Shawn Morrow of the ATF Louisville Division. “What began as a drug and firearms investigation saved these victims from further exploitation and shut down a dangerous supplier of drugs in the Lexington area. ATF is proud of our local and federal law enforcement partnerships and the good work that resulted today.”

Assistant Attorney General Dreiband; U.S. Attorney Duncan; FBI SAC Brown; ATF SAC Morrow; and Chief Lawrence Weathers, Lexington Police Department, jointly announced the conviction.

This case was investigated by FBI, ATF and the Lexington Police Department. The United States is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Hyde Hawkins for the Eastern District of Kentucky and Special Litigation Counsel Matthew Grady for the Civil Rights Division’s Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit.

Bixler will be sentenced on December 29, 2020. He faces a minimum sentence of 15 years’ imprisonment and a maximum sentence of life imprisonment, as well as mandatory restitution to the sex trafficking victims. However, the Court must consider the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and the applicable federal sentencing statutes before imposing a sentence.

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