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Los Angeles-Area Gang Member Pleads Guilty To Sex Trafficking Of Minors By Force

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lynwood Man Becomes Eighth Convicted of Sex Trafficking Charges for Prostituting Teenage Girls Recruited from Inland Empire Schools

Conviction is the Latest in a String of Human Trafficking Prosecutions Recently Brought by the United States Attorney's Office

RIVERSIDE, California – On the day a jury was expected to hear opening statements in his trial, a Lynwood gang member pleaded guilty on Tuesday to federal sex trafficking charges, admitting that he used force, fraud and coercion to recruit teen-age girls who worked as prostitutes across Southern California.

Paul Edward Bell, 29, an alleged member of the Rolling 60s Crips street gang, pleaded guilty on Monday pursuant to a plea agreement that calls for a sentence of 30 years in federal prison.

Bell, who used multiple monikers, including J-Roc, pleaded guilty before United States District Judge Virginia A. Phillips, who is scheduled to determine whether to accept the 30 year binding plea agreement and sentence the defendant to that term of imprisonment on March 31, 2014.

Bell is the eighth and final defendant convicted after a federal grand jury returned an indictment in August 2012 that resulted from an investigation by the Inland Child Exploitation/Prostitution Task Force, which is comprised of agents, deputies and officers with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, the Riverside Police Department, the San Bernardino Police Department, the Pomona Police Department, and the Ontario Police Department.

In court documents previously filed in this case, prosecutors said that Bell and his co-defendants used minors as prostitutes for their own financial gain. They preyed on vulnerable victims, convinced them to become prostitutes, and verbally and physically abused them when they did not perform as required, according to various court documents.

In a plea agreement filed yesterday, Bell specifically admitted that in 2011 he recruited and harbored four minor victims (ages 15 to 17) that he forced to work as prostitutes in Lynwood and Compton. Bell admitted physically abusing one victim "for not performing as a prostitute and for acting up," according to the plea agreement.

"Sex trafficking is an abominable crime that condemns its victims to physical and psychological trauma, hardship and abuse," said United States Attorney André Birotte Jr. "Mr. Bell and his cohorts coldly and brutally victimized young women and juveniles, subjecting them to treatment that can only be described as inhumane. Bell exploited his victims for profit and now he will be held accountable and punished for his predatory conduct."

"The defendants in this case lured minor victims from school with false promises of a glamorous lifestyle only to sexually exploit and abuse them in furtherance of the gang, and for their own financial gain," said Bill Lewis, the Assistant Director of the FBI's Los Angeles Field Office. "January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month and today's announcement should send a message to those with similar intentions of targeting minors that the FBI and our task force partners are committed to investigating allegations of sex trafficking and sending them to prison."

The other defendants in this case who previously pleaded guilty are:

Samuel Rogers, also known as Bone, 23, of Moreno Valley, another alleged member of the Rolling 60s, who pleaded guilty to sex trafficking of a minor;

Gary Rogers, who used monikers such as G-Man, 25, of Moreno Valley, another alleged member of the street gang and Samuel Rogers' brother, who pleaded guilty to conspiracy to engage in sex trafficking;



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Christopher Weldon, who is also known by several names, including C-Roc, 24, of Compton, the fourth alleged Rolling 60s member named in the indictment and Bell's half-brother, who pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to engage in sex trafficking and received a six-year prison sentence;

Javiya Brooks, who is also known as Shady Blue, 21, of Lynwood, who was the lead prostitute for Bell, who pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to engage in sex trafficking;

Kimberly Alberti, 20, of Riverside, who was the lead prostitute for Samuel Rogers, who pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to engage in sex trafficking;

Kristy Harrell, 21, of Riverside, who was Gary Rogers' lead prostitute, who pleaded guilty to interstate transportation in the aid of racketeering; and

Su Yan, 31, of Rosemead, a Chinese national who assisted Bell with his prostitution business and pleaded guilty to interstate transportation in the aid of racketeering.

The defendants who have not been sentenced will also be sentenced later this year by Judge Phillips.

The investigation in this case began in January of 2011, when the Riverside County Sheriff's Department learned that teenage girls attending schools in the Inland Empire were being recruited to work as prostitutes. The investigation later revealed that Alberti attended one of the schools and recruited underage females by "grooming them" -- or gaining their trust and telling them that they could make large sums of money by working as prostitutes for Alberti's pimp. The girls who were successfully recruited to work as prostitutes were brought to the Los Angeles area, where they were housed by Bell and the Rogers brothers at hotels on and near Long Beach Boulevard or at Bell's apartment.

The United States Attorney's Office worked with the Justice Department's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section to prosecute this case.

The case being announced today 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.

Fighting human trafficking has been, and will remain, a priority for the Central District of California. The convictions announced today are the latest in a string of human trafficking cases that the United States Attorney's Office, working in partnership with federal and local law enforcement, has brought in the past year. Over the past year, the United States Attorney's Office has also prosecuted the following matters, among others:

United States v. Letha Montemayor Tucker, CR No. 13-78-ABC. On March 12, 2013, a federal grand jury returned a first superseding indictment charging Letha Montemayor Tucker with conspiracy to produce child pornography, production of child pornography, conspiracy to engage in sex trafficking of a child, and sex trafficking of a child. Tucker was arrested last year after tips from members of the public to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigation agency helped identify her as a woman allegedly seen molesting a pre-teen victim in a series of child photography images that had been widely-distributed over the Internet. The jury trial in this case is set for April 8, 2014. Tucker faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 15 years and a statutory maximum of life imprisonment if convicted.

United States v. Roshawn Nakia Porter and Marquis Monte Horn, CR No. 12-97(A)-JLS. On March 27, 2013, a federal grand jury returned a first superseding indictment charging Roshawn Nakia Porter and Marquis Monte Horn with conspiring to engage in sex trafficking and sex trafficking by force, fraud, and coercion. According to court documents filed in this case, Horn allegedly recruited victims to work in a prostitution organization through a website and by claiming that he and Porter were running an upscale escort service in which women could make \$500 per day. Prosecutors allege that this was merely a ruse; and that Horn, Porter, and others used various coercive tactics -- including developing purportedly romantic relationships with the victims, falsely promising financial assistance to the victims and their families, falsely promising to help obtain lawful immigration status in the United States for their victims, and isolating some of the victims from their families and friends -- all to induce these victims into engaging in prostitution. Both Horn and Porter face a mandatory minimum sentence of 15 years and a statutory maximum of life imprisonment if convicted. Their trial is set for February 18, 2014.

United States v. William Earl Flavors, CR No. 13-143-JLS. On August 7, 2013, a federal grand jury returned an indictment charging William Earl Flavors, aka "Andre," with sex trafficking by force, fraud, or coercion, and transportation in interstate commerce for purposes of prostitution. On December 5, 2013, Flavors pleaded guilty to transportation in interstate commerce for purposes of prostitution, admitting, among other things, that he transported his victims between Long Beach to Las Vegas, forced or coerced them to work as prostitutes in Las Vegas, and used physical abuse and threats of additional physical abuse to make one of his victims work for him as a prostitute. Flavors' conviction in this case marks the second time Flavors has been convicted in federal court of trafficking women across state lines and forcing them to work as prostitutes. Pursuant to the parties' plea agreement, Flavors and the government agreed to recommend the statutory maximum sentence of 10 years' imprisonment. Sentencing is set for May 9, 2014.

United States v. Joshua Jerome Davis & Sharilyn Kae Anderson, CR No. 13-589-CAS. On August 22, 2013, a federal grand jury returned an indictment charging Joshua Jerome Davis with sex trafficking of a child,



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coercion and enticement to travel in interstate commerce to engage in prostitution, and transportation of a child for purposes of prostitution. As detailed in the criminal complaint filed in this case, Davis is accused of prostituting a 16-year-old girl in Southern California and transporting her across state lines to engage in commercial sex in Las Vegas casinos. The Department of Homeland Security and the Long Beach Police Department began investigating this case after the victim's father reported her missing and discovered that his daughter was being featured in an on-line prostitution ad. The indictment also charged Davis' mother, Sharilyn Kae Anderson, with aiding and abetting the child sex trafficking offenses committed by her son. A jury trial in this case is set for April 22, 2014. Both defendants face a mandatory minimum sentence of 15 years and a statutory maximum of life imprisonment if convicted.

United States v. Tabitha Samaria Walls and Kenyati Jakeen Rahh-Potts, CR No. 13-637-MWF. On September 4, 2013, a federal grand jury returned an indictment charging Tabitha Samaria Walls and Kenyati Jakeen Rahh-Potts with sex trafficking of a child and transportation of a minor for purposes of prostitution. According to the criminal complaint filed in this matter, Walls and Rahh-Potts allegedly forced the child victim in this case to accompany them from Las Vegas to California, where they forced her to engage in acts of prostitution in Los Angeles, Hollywood, Pomona, and Ontario. It is further alleged in the criminal complaint that the child victim was forced to surrender all of the money that she earned as a prostitute to Walls and Rahh-Potts, that Rahh-Potts beat her on one occasion when she lost the money she earned as a prostitute, and that Rahh-Potts told two individuals who attempted to rescue the child victim from Walls and Rahh-Potts that he had killed the child victim and left her body on the side of the road along the Interstate 15 freeway. The trial in this case is scheduled for June 17, 2014. Both Walls and Rahh-Potts face a mandatory minimum sentence of 15 years and a statutory maximum of life imprisonment if convicted.

United States v. Curtis Maurice Canady, Jr., CR No. 13-165-DOC. On September 4, 2013, a federal grand jury returned an indictment charging Curtis Maurice Canady Jr. with sex trafficking of children and transportation of children for purposes of prostitution. Canady pleaded guilty on November 19, 2013, to transportation of children for purposes of prostitution. As detailed in court documents filed in this case, Canady drove his victims, including two girls who were 15 and 16, from a motel in Los Angeles to locations in Anaheim where he had them work as prostitutes; transported his victims, including a minor victim, to Las Vegas for the purpose of engaging in prostitution; and engaged in on-line advertising aimed at attracting customers for his victims. At sentencing, Canady faces a statutory maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

United States v. Vincent Earl Jordan, 13-657(A)-BRO. On October 29, 2013, a federal grand jury returned a first superseding indictment charging Vincent Earl Jordan, aka "Vinnie Mac," with sex trafficking of a minor, sexual exploitation of a child, possession of child pornography, transportation of a child for purposes of prostitution, and coercion and enticement to travel in interstate commerce to engage in prostitution. As detailed in court documents filed in this matter, this case began when Long Beach Police Department detectives encountered a 17-year-old girl engaged in acts of prostitution who had a moniker, "Vinnie," tattooed across her stomach. The documents allege that, after this child victim identified Jordan as her pimp, the police found a second victim who also alleged that Jordan had threatened and coerced her to travel from Texas to California to work as a prostitute. The indictment further alleges that Jordan produced and possessed child pornography of his 17-year-old victim. The jury trial in this case is set for February 25, 2014. Jordan faces a statutory minimum sentence of 15 years and a statutory maximum of life imprisonment if convicted.

United States v. Samuel Gonzalez, CR No.11-193-AG. On November 15, 2013, Samuel Gonzalez pleaded guilty pursuant to a plea agreement to arranging and facilitating travel of minors for prostitution. As detailed in court documents filed in this case, Gonzalez lured three teenage girls from Texas to California under the guise that he wanted to take them "to the beach." Once in California, Gonzalez induced these minor victims to work as prostitutes, until the family of one of the teenage victims reported the victims missing and Gonzalez was apprehended. As a result of this guilty plea, Gonzalez faces a maximum sentence of 30 years' imprisonment. Sentencing is set for February 24, 2014.

United States v. Eric Lamar Wells and Tonisha Alecia Moore, CR No. 12-120-CJC. On May 23, 2012, a federal grand jury returned an indictment charging Eric Lamar Wells and Tonisha Alecia Moore with conspiracy to engage in sex trafficking of minors, sex trafficking of minors, and transportation of minors into prostitution. As detailed in court documents filed in this case, Wells recruited a 14-year-old girl and a 17-year-old girl to work as prostitutes for him. Wells and Moore then transported these girls from Las Vegas, Nevada, to Phoenix, California, and finally to Anaheim, California, so that they could engage in commercial sex acts and give the money they made to Wells. Wells also posted on-line ads to find men who would pay to engage in sex acts with the minor victims. Following their guilty pleas, on June 26, 2013, the court sentenced Wells to 10 years' imprisonment and Moore to 70 months' imprisonment.

United States v. Kawaum Marquez Scott and Nekeyia Necole Weatherspoon, CR No. 13-116-VAP. On November 27, 2013, a federal grand jury returned an indictment charging defendants Kawaum Marquez Scott and Nekeyia Necole Weatherspoon with conspiracy to engage in sex trafficking of a child and sex trafficking of a child. Jury trial is set for April 29, 2014. In the criminal complaint filed in this case, it is alleged that Scott and Weatherspoon befriended a 14-year-old victim who lived at a residence located on the same property where Scott and Weatherspoon lived; forced this 14-year-old victim to engage in prostitution, pocketing for themselves all of the money this victim made; and utilized the Internet to advertise this child victim as a prostitute. Defendants face a statutory minimum sentence of 15 years and a statutory maximum of life imprisonment if convicted.

United States v. Ralph Allen Jackson, Jr., CR No. 13-476(A)-BRO. On December 16, 2013, Ralph Allen Jackson, Jr., 41, also known as "Mac Wimp," pleaded guilty to conspiracy to engage in sex trafficking of a

minor. In his plea agreement, Jackson admitted that he trafficked four victims – including a 17-year-old girl – in the Long Beach area in June 2013. As detailed in court documents filed in this matter, Jackson drove his victims to known areas for prostitution, instructed them to engage in sex acts for money, gave them quotas that they were required to meet each day, and engaged in acts of coercion to insure that his victims continued to work for him as prostitutes. When law enforcement first encountered the minor victim in this case, she was branded with the words “Mac Wimp’s bitch” tattooed across her chest. Pursuant to the terms of the plea agreement, Jackson has agreed to recommend that he serve a sentence of no less than five years’ imprisonment, and the government agreed to recommend a sentence of no more than ten years’ imprisonment. Sentencing is set for March 10, 2014.

An indictment or complaint contains allegations that a defendant has committed a crime. Every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in court.

January 2014 has been proclaimed National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month by President Obama (see: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/12/31/presidential-proclamation-national-slavery-and-human-trafficking-prevent>). In addition to efforts to investigate and prosecute human trafficking violations, law enforcement has also been proactive with respect to outreach, education and prevention efforts in local communities. To that end, on Saturday, January 11, the United States Attorney’s Office for the Central District of California and the Los Angeles Field Office of the FBI co-hosted an Anti-Human Trafficking Summit to assist local prevention efforts and help raise awareness about the many facets of human trafficking. The all-day Summit was held at the National Council of Jewish Woman/Los Angeles (NCJWLA) in Los Angeles and featured presenters and participants from federal and local law enforcement, as well as local community stakeholders and victims’ services organizations. Presenters included prosecutors, investigators, subject matter experts, victims’ advocates and victims who were survivors of human trafficking. United States Attorney André Birotte Jr. and FBI Assistant Director in Charge Bill Lewis also participated. Volunteers from the Expediente Rojo Project, Inc. (<http://www.expedienterojo.org/>) and NCJWLA assisted in all facets of the Summit.

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