



UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA

ALEXANDRIA NEWPORT NEWS NORFOLK RICHMOND

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

December 22, 2006

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Two Individuals Sentenced for Prostituting Minor

(Alexandria, VA) - Erny Winston Wells, also known as "JP," and "Just Pimpin," and his co-defendant, Andrea Castro, were sentenced today for their roles in transporting a 14-year-old girl from California to Virginia for purposes of prostitution. United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, Chuck Rosenberg, announced that United States District Judge Leonie M. Brinkema sentenced Wells to 10 years in prison, and Castro to five years in prison. In October, Wells pled guilty to conspiracy to transport individuals for illegal sexual activity and to produce child pornography, transportation of individuals in interstate commerce to engage in prostitution, and transportation of a minor to engage in prostitution. Castro also pled guilty in October to transportation of individuals in interstate commerce to engage in prostitution and transportation of a minor to engage in prostitution.

According to court documents, Wells was a pimp who operated in the Los Angeles, California area. Castro, who worked as a prostitute for Wells for several years, assisted him in operating his business. Between January and July of this year, Wells and Castro recruited females to work as prostitutes, and Wells arranged for several of the prostitutes to travel to the Washington, D.C. area to engage in prostitution. Wells used the Internet to advertise his prostitution business and arranged for photographers to photograph the prostitutes in seductive and nude, or partially nude, poses.

In June, Wells and Castro recruited a 14-year-old girl in Los Angeles to work as a prostitute for Wells. Wells had sexually explicit photographs taken of the girl to advertise her as a prostitute. On June 22, 2006, Wells arranged for Castro, the 14-year-old girl, and three other prostitutes to fly from California to the Washington, D.C. area to engage in prostitution. On June 24, 2006, FBI agents and Alexandria Police Department officers raided a room at the Washington Suites Hotel in Alexandria, Virginia, where Castro and the 14-year-old girl had been prostituting for two days.

“Folks who prey on our children ought to go to jail for a very long time,” said United States Attorney Rosenberg.

This prosecution is part of the Eastern District of Virginia’s anti-sex trafficking initiative and Project Safe Childhood initiative. The convictions are the result of the coordinated efforts of Federal and local law enforcement agencies. The Federal Bureau of Investigation in Northern Virginia and Los Angeles worked with local law enforcement officers in Alexandria and Los Angeles during the investigation of this case.

The case was investigated by the FBI, the Alexandria Police Department, the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department, and the Los Angeles Police Department. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Morris Parker and Patricia Giles, and with the assistance of Jennifer Leonardo, Trial Attorney, Department of Justice, Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section.

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