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MONDAY, July 13, 2020
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Pikeville Man Sentenced to 156 Months for Human Trafficking Charges

PIKEVILLE, Ky. – A Pikeville man, Ernest Ray, 56, was sentenced Monday, to 156 months in federal prison, by U.S. District Judge Karen Caldwell, after previously pleading guilty to five counts of recruiting, enticing, harboring, transporting, providing, and maintaining minors to engage in commercial sexual acts.

According to his plea agreement, Ray admitted that he provided five minors alcohol, cigarettes, money, and drugs (i.e., marijuana), in exchange for the minors engaging in sexual acts in front of the Defendant. Ernest admitted that, on numerous occasions, he drove the minors to a rural location for the purpose of having them engage in these sexual acts. Some of the sexual acts also took place at his residence.

Ray pleaded guilty in June 2019.

Under federal law, Ray must serve 85 percent of his prison sentence; and upon his release, he will be under the supervision of the United States Probation Office for life. Additionally, Ray will be required to pay \$60,000, in lieu of forfeiture of the real property and vehicles used in the crimes.

Robert M. Duncan, Jr., U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky, and James Robert Brown, Special Agent in Charge, FBI, Louisville Field Office, jointly made the announcement.

The investigation was conducted by the FBI. The United States was represented in the case by Assistant U.S. Attorney Hyde Hawkins.

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