

Presented to the Court by the foreman of the
Grand Jury in open Court, in the presence of
the Grand Jury and FILED in the U.S.
DISTRICT COURT at Seattle, Washington.

By April 28 2026
Joshua C. Lewis
Deputy

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
AT SEATTLE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
Plaintiff,
v.
BRANDEN BARNETT,
Defendant.

NO. **CR26-066 RAJ**
INDICTMENT

The Grand Jury charges that:

COUNT 1

(Conspiracy to Commit Sex Trafficking by Force, Fraud, and Coercion)

Beginning on a date unknown, and continuing until on or about November 24,
2025, in King County, within the Western District of Washington, and elsewhere,
BRANDEN BARNETT, and others known and unknown, knowingly conspired and
agreed, in and affecting interstate commerce, to recruit, entice, harbor, transport, provide,
obtain, and maintain, by any means, adult females, knowing and with reckless disregard
of the fact that force, threats of force, fraud, and coercion, and any combination of such
means, would be used to cause those adult females to engage in a commercial sex act.

All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1591(a)(1) and 1594(c).

COUNT 2

(Sex Trafficking of an Adult Female (AF2) by Force, Fraud, and Coercion)

Beginning in or about May of 2025, and continuing until in or about November 24, 2025, in King County, within the Western District of Washington, and elsewhere, BRANDEN BARNETT did knowingly, in and affecting interstate commerce, recruit, entice, harbor, transport, provide, obtain, and maintain, and did aid and abet the same, by any means, an adult female, AF2, knowing and with reckless disregard of the fact that force, threats of force, fraud, and coercion, and any combination of such means, would be used to cause AF2 to engage in a commercial sex act.

The Grand Jury further alleges this offense was committed during and in furtherance of the Conspiracy to Commit Sex Trafficking by Force, Fraud, and Coercion charged in Count 1.

All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1591(a)(1) and (b)(1), and 2.

COUNT 3

(Conspiracy to Transport Adult Women for Prostitution)

Beginning on a date unknown and continuing through on or about November 24, 2025, in King County, within the Western District of Washington, and elsewhere, BRANDEN BARNETT, and others known and unknown, did knowingly conspire and agree to:

a. Transport individuals in interstate and foreign commerce, with intent that such individuals engage in prostitution and any sexual activity for which a person can be charged with a criminal offense in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2421; and

b. Persuade, induce, entice, and coerce individuals to travel in interstate and foreign commerce with intent that such individuals engage in prostitution and any sexual

1 activity for which any person can be charged with a criminal offense, in violation of
2 Title 18, United States Code, Section 2422(a).

3 A. Object of the Conspiracy:

4 It was an object of the conspiracy to profit financially from the prostitution
5 activities of adult females in the States of Washington, Alaska, Oregon, California,
6 Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Massachusetts, Montana, Minnesota, Texas, and
7 elsewhere, including foreign countries.

8 B. Manner and Means of the Conspiracy:

9 The manner and means by which the members of the conspiracy sought to
10 accomplish the object and purpose of the conspiracy included, among others, the
11 following:

12 1. It was part of the conspiracy that the co-conspirators recruited young
13 women to work as sex workers through the promise of protection, money, and other items
14 of value;

15 2. It was part of the conspiracy that the co-conspirators purchased sex workers
16 from other human traffickers and unnamed co-conspirators and transported them to
17 Washington;

18 3. It was part of the conspiracy that the co-conspirators purchased lingerie and
19 other sex related objects such as condoms, lubricant and sex toys for the sex workers to
20 use with potential clients;

21 4. It was part of the conspiracy for the co-conspirators to take photographs of
22 the sex workers wearing the lingerie in sexual poses, which they then posted in online
23 sex-advertisements to entice potential sex customers;

24 5. It was part of the conspiracy that the co-conspirators sent the sex workers to
25 Aurora Avenue and other locations in Seattle, and elsewhere, for the purpose of
26 recruiting potential commercial sex customers;

1 6. It was part of the conspiracy that the co-conspirators trained the sex
2 workers on how to recruit potential customers and accompanied the sex workers both to
3 Aurora Avenue and elsewhere as they attempted to recruit potential customers, and
4 accompanied them to the eventual location of the commercial sex act with the potential
5 customer;

6 7. It was part of the conspiracy for the co-conspirators to set rules for their sex
7 workers including where they could go, who they could talk to, how much to charge for
8 specific sex acts, and a daily quota of how much money they had to earn each day;

9 8. It was part of the conspiracy that the co-conspirators used the funds earned
10 from the women's commercial sex acts to, among other things, pay for transportation
11 within and between states and foreign countries for sex work, post advertisements for sex
12 work, and pay for hotels for sex work;

13 9. It was part of the conspiracy that the co-conspirators caused women to
14 travel within and between the States of Washington, Alaska, Oregon, California,
15 Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Massachusetts, Montana, Minnesota, Texas, and other
16 foreign countries to engage in commercial sex;

17 10. It was part of the conspiracy that the co-conspirators obtained hotel rooms
18 that were off the hotel books in SeaTac, Washington, and elsewhere. These hotel rooms
19 were used both as a location for potential sex acts with customers and as a location for
20 the conspiracy to house various sex workers;

21 11. It was part of the conspiracy for the co-conspirators to use the threat of
22 eviction from the hotel and withhold food as a means of controlling the sex workers and
23 enticing them to continue to conduct commercial sex acts;

24 12. It was part of the conspiracy for the co-conspirators to create false identities
25 both for themselves and for the sex workers under their control to enable interstate travel
26 and to avoid detection by law enforcement;
27

1 13. It was part of the conspiracy for the co-conspirators to use violence and the
2 threat of violence to force sex workers to continue to engage in commercial sex acts and
3 recruit additional customers;

4 14. It was part of the conspiracy for the co-conspirators to provide controlled
5 substances to the sex-workers and then to deny them access to the controlled substances
6 if they did not follow their rules; and

7 15. It was part of the conspiracy for the co-conspirators to use false identities to
8 fraudulently obtain rental properties and vehicles that they used to further the conspiracy
9 to conduct sex trafficking.

10 C. Overt Acts:

11 During and in furtherance of the conspiracy, in the Western District of
12 Washington, and elsewhere, the coconspirators committed the acts charged in Count 4,
13 below, as overt acts.

14 All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 371.

15 **COUNT 4**

16 **(Transportation of an Adult Female (AF2) for the Purpose of Prostitution Through**
17 **Coercion and Enticement)**

18 Beginning in or about May 2025, and continuing until on or about November 24,
19 2025, in King County, within the Western District of Washington, and elsewhere,
20 BRANDEN BARNETT did knowingly persuade, induce, entice, and coerce, and did aid
21 and abet the same, an adult female, AF2, to travel in interstate commerce, specifically, to
22 and from the States of Texas, California, Washington, Oregon, and elsewhere, to engage
23 in prostitution and any sexual activity for which any person can be charged with a
24 criminal offense.

25 The Grand Jury further alleges this offense was committed during and in
26 furtherance of the Conspiracy to Transport Adult Women for Prostitution charged in
27

Count 3.

All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2422(a) and 2.

COUNT 5

(Attempted Sex Trafficking of a Minor)

Beginning in or about May 2025, and continuing until in or about July 2025, in King County, within the Western District of Washington, and elsewhere, BRANDON BARNETT did, in and affecting interstate commerce, knowingly attempt to recruit, entice, harbor, transport, provide, obtain, and maintain, by any means, a minor, MV2, knowing and in reckless disregard of the fact, and having had a reasonable opportunity to observe MV2, that MV2 had not attained the age of 18 years and would be caused to engage in a commercial sex act.

All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1591(a)(1), (b)(2), and (c), and 1594(a).

COUNT 6

(Attempted Sex Trafficking of a Minor)

Beginning in or about May 2025, and continuing until in or about July 2025, in King County, within the Western District of Washington, and elsewhere, BRANDON BARNETT did, in and affecting interstate commerce, knowingly attempt to recruit, entice, harbor, transport, provide, obtain, and maintain, by any means, a minor, MV4, knowing and in reckless disregard of the fact, and having had a reasonable opportunity to observe MV4, that MV4 had not attained the age of 18 years and would be caused to engage in a commercial sex act.

All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1591(a)(1), (b)(2), and (c), and 1594(a).

FORFEITURE ALLEGATION

The allegations in Counts 1 through 6 of this Indictment are hereby realleged and incorporated by reference for the purpose of alleging forfeiture.

Upon conviction of any of the offenses charged in Counts 1, 2, 5, and 6 of this Indictment, BRANDEN BARNETT shall forfeit to the United States, pursuant to Title 18, United States Codes, Section 1594(d), any property that constitutes or is derived from proceeds of the offense and any property traceable to such property, as well as any property involved in, used, or intended to be used to commit or facilitate commission of the offense and any property traceable to such property.

Upon conviction of either of the offenses charged in Counts 3 and 4 of this Indictment, BRANDEN BARNETT shall forfeit to the United States, pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 2428(a), any property that constitutes or is derived from proceeds of the offense, as well as any property used or intended to be used to commit or facilitate the offense.

Substitute Assets. If any of the above-described forfeitable property, as a result of any act or omission of the defendant,

- a. cannot be located upon the exercise of due diligence;
- b. has been transferred or sold to, or deposited with, a third party;
- c. has been placed beyond the jurisdiction of the Court;
- d. has been substantially diminished in value; or,
- e. has been commingled with other property which cannot be divided without difficulty,

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1 it is the intent of the United States to seek the forfeiture of any other property of the
2 defendant, up to the value of the above-described forfeitable property, pursuant to
3 Title 21, United States Code, Section 853(p).

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5 A TRUE BILL:

6 DATED: 4/28/2026

7 *Signature of Foreperson redacted pursuant*
8 *to the policy of the Judicial Conference of*
9 *the United States.*

10
11 FOREPERSON

12 
13 SARAH Y. VOGEL
14 Criminal Chief Assistant United States Attorney

15 
16 TODD GREENBERG
17 Assistant United States Attorney

18 
19 ZACHARY W. DILLON
20 Assistant United States Attorney

21 
22 CATHERINE L. CRISHAM
23 Assistant United States Attorney
24
25
26
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Defendant Status Sheet
(Prepare ONE for EACH defendant)

Defendant Status	Defendant Name: BRANDEN BARNETT Is there already a charging document filed for this defendant for this case in this district? ☐ Yes ☒ No If yes: If yes, please enter the cause number below: CR <u>Enter CR Cause Number here.</u> or MJ <u>Enter MJ Cause Number here.</u> Has the Defendant had an initial appearance in this case in this district? ☐ Yes ☒ No
Defendant Location	☐ At the FDC under the cause number indicated above. ☐ At the FDC under a different cause number: Enter different cause number here. ☐ In custody under this cause number in another District: <u>Enter other District here.</u> ☐ In custody (different cause number) in another District: <u>Enter other info here.</u> ☒ In local custody: <u>King County Jail</u> ☐ In the community on supervision under cause number: <u>Enter cause number here.</u> ☐ At large. ☐ Other: Click or tap here to enter text.
Release	☐ Continue Conditions of release ☐ Continue Detention ☐ Not set; temporary detention; detention hearing scheduled for: Click or tap to enter a date.
Arraignment	☒ Warrant to Issue (MUST complete <i>Defendant Arrest Warrant Info Sheet</i>). ☐ Summons to be issued for: Click or tap to enter a date. ☐ Defendant Address: <u>Click or tap here to enter text.</u> ☐ Letter to defense counsel for appearance on: <u>Click or tap to enter a date.</u> ☐ Defense Counsel name and address:
Trial	Estimated trial length (days): 3-5 days