

Pierce County

Office of the Prosecuting Attorney

930 Tacoma Avenue South, Room 946
Tacoma, Washington 98402-2171
Front Desk: (253) 798-7400
1-800-992-2456

Prosecutor Mark Lindquist

(253) 798-7792
FAX: (253) 798-2968
www.pierceprosecutor.org
pcprosatty@co.pierce.wa.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEN CHARGED WITH HUMAN TRAFFICKING OF MINORS

TACOMA, WA – Pierce County Prosecutor Mark Lindquist charged Jevante McCray, 20, with Human Trafficking in the Second Degree and four counts of Promoting Commercial Sexual Abuse of a Minor. The defendant was arraigned today and bail was set at \$250,000. McCray and co-defendant Isiah Martin, 18, were involved in prostituting at least six underage girls in California and Washington.

“This is another example of our successful collaboration with national law enforcement and local law enforcement to end this scourge of human trafficking,” said Prosecutor Mark Lindquist.

On January 22, 2012, 16-year-old M.S. called the Pomona, California police after being assaulted by her “boyfriend”, defendant McCray. The victim told police she had run away from home in Washington State in December of 2011. Since arriving in California, the defendants had forced her to work as a prostitute. The defendants demanded she meet a minimum quota of \$550 per day and beat her and withheld food if she refused their orders.

On February 9, FBI agents working with the Innocence Lost Task Force enlisted the help of local law enforcement officers in an operation to locate a girl who appeared in an ad for escort services on Backpage.com. An undercover FBI agent set up a phony date at a Lakewood motel with the girl, who was identified as 14-year-old S.H. from Tacoma. S.H. told officers that she had been working for Martin for two months.

On February 13, Prosecutor Mark Lindquist charged defendant Martin with Promoting Commercial Sexual Exploitation of a Minor. The court issued a No-Contact Order prohibiting Martin from contacting S.H. while the case was pending.

Less than a week later, Innocence Lost Task Force investigators found another Backpage.com ad with S.H.’s picture and phone number. An undercover detective arranged a date with S.H. at a Shoreline motel. At the motel he encountered three young women, including S.H. and 16-year-old L.R. from Tacoma. One of the victims told police McCray suggested they work in Shoreline because they could make more money than in Tacoma.

On April 15, an Everett Police Officer on routine patrol spotted defendant Martin sitting in a car outside a motel. He arrested Martin, who had a warrant for failing to appear for a court hearing in Pierce County. In a room of the motel were 14-year-old A.G. and S.H. Surveillance video showed Martin escorting S.H. into the motel, in clear violation of the No-Contact Order.

The case was assigned to detectives who are members of the Innocence Lost Task Force. They quickly learned about the California, Lakewood and Shoreline investigations and met with investigators from those jurisdictions to coordinate efforts. Over the course of the next several months, investigators amassed a significant amount of evidence showing that the defendants

prostituted at least six juvenile females from December 2011 to April 2012, including a 13-year-old. Photos on McCray's Facebook page and cell phone records connected him to the victims. A bench warrant was issued for McCray on November 9. He turned himself into authorities on November 17.

The Pierce County Prosecutor's Office is working with the King County's Prosecutor's Office and the Snohomish County Prosecutor's Office on these cases.

Charges are only allegations and a person is presumed innocent unless he or she is proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

For more information, please contact Rebecca Stover at (253) 798-4910, rstover@co.pierce.wa.us.