



P R E S S R E L E A S E

Re: *People v. David Johnson 17CR06829*

District Attorney Joyce E. Dudley announced today that on January 22, 2020, 34 year-old David Johnson pled guilty as charged in a human trafficking sex case.

The defendant was charged with Human Trafficking; Pimping; and Pandering. The defendant also admitted special allegations for inflicting great bodily injury upon Jane Doe during the time that he was also human trafficking her. He further admitted to a prior strike conviction for robbery, and also admitted to serving two separate terms in prison. The defendant is a known Piru Blood gang member from Los Angeles.

In April 2016, the defendant met 18-year-old Jane Doe in Miami, Florida. He told her she could make money dancing in Los Angeles. He then convinced her that he loved her, and she decided to move to California with him. After moving to Los Angeles, the defendant became violent with her. Ultimately, he took her to Utah where he insisted she begin working for him as a prostitute. Over the next 16 months, the defendant sex trafficked Jane Doe to various states including Washington, Nevada and all over California. During this time, he beat her so severely that she required medical attention on multiple occasions. Some of her injuries included: a broken nose, a lacerated brow, and injury to her genitalia. He also often threatened to kill her as well as her family. As a result, Jane Doe was in constant fear for both herself and those she loved; therefore, she continued to work for him as a prostitute.

On June 29, 2017, detectives with the Santa Barbara Police Department conducted a human trafficking sting operation. The goal of the operation was to locate and liberate victims of human sex trafficking. During the course of their investigation, they located an escort advertisement featuring Jane Doe. Sergeant Ryan DeJohn posed as a client and set up a meeting with Jane Doe. Sergeant DeJohn's ensuing investigation revealed that she was a victim of human trafficking.

According to District Attorney Joyce Dudley, "Throughout the next several months Sergeant DeJohn, and other extraordinarily dedicated professionals with the Santa Barbara Police Department, worked closely with Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office's Human Trafficking Task Force on this case. Our team of DA experts included: Prosecuting Attorney Senior DDA Jenn Karapetian, supervising victim advocate Rita McGaw and a team of DA Investigators lead by Commander Robert Lowry. All of these criminal justice professionals worked tirelessly to gather as much evidence and legal research as they could to educate the jury and support the human trafficking victim/survivor. This same team also had to garner the trust and support of the terrified victim, her family and other witnesses who understandably feared retaliation."

Yesterday, after a jury had been impaneled and Prosecutor Jennifer Karapedian presented her opening statement, the defendant pled guilty as charged to all charges and allegations even though Senior DDA Karapetian refused to offer any plea bargain.

After pleading guilty to all charges and allegations the case was continued for sentencing to March 19, 2020, in Department 11, in front of the Honorable Von Deroian.

The defendant is now facing a maximum sentence of 57 years in state prison.

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