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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Fla. Man Sentenced to 8 Years in Human Trafficking Case

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution secured an eight-year prison sentence for a Florida man convicted of human trafficking. In May, a jury found Claude Ramsey guilty on counts of human trafficking of a minor, online solicitation, traveling to meet a minor and unlawful use of a two-way communications device. A sting operation captured Ramsey responding to an advertisement on Backpage.com for commercial sex acts with minor children.

On Oct. 6, 2016, Homeland Security Investigations Tampa Public Safety Group and the Largo Police Department conducted an undercover operation targeting subjects utilizing the internet to pay for and engage in commercial sex acts with minors. Ramsey responded to that advertisement and an undercover agent corresponded through text messaging to negotiate the sex act.

During the text exchange, the undercover agent explicitly stated on more than one occasion that a 14-year-old female would be sold for commercial sex. Despite the repeated notifications, Ramsey proceeded to make the appointment at an undercover location. An hour after the conversation, Ramsey arrived with five condoms and $278 in cash. The Largo Police Department arrested Ramsey near the undercover location in Clearwater.

Judge Susan St. John convicted and sentenced Ramsey for human trafficking of a minor, traveling to meet a minor and the unlawful use of a two-way communications device. In addition to eight years in state prison, Ramsey received 15 years of sex offender probation and will be a lifetime registered sex offender.

Assistant Statewide Prosecutors Julie Sercus and Jessica Costello prosecuted the case.