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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Six Arrested in Human Trafficking Operation

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody and St. Petersburg Police Department Chief Anthony Holloway today announced that five men and one woman were arrested following an eight-month long human trafficking investigation. An additional suspect remains at large. The case involved the trafficking of a 15-year-old victim from Marion County.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “This case is just one example of how I will work daily with my Office of Statewide Prosecution and Florida’s great law enforcement officers to combat human trafficking and rescue survivors. The teenage victim in this case was lured away from his family with promises of a better life. Instead, he was moved into a filthy trailer and used as a slave for nearly a year. As a mother, I cannot even begin to express how disturbing the facts of this case are to me.”

According to the investigation, in April 2017, a 15-year-old boy from Marion County expressed unhappiness at home to an acquaintance, Eleanor McGlamory. McGlamory introduced the boy to two friends, Mark Dennis and Andrew Dennis, living in Pinellas County. Several weeks later, Mark and Andrew Dennis picked the boy up and traveled to Pinellas County. Unaware of the situation, the boy’s mother found a note from her son saying he was gone and to not try to find him. The mother immediately reported her son missing to the Marion County Sheriff’s office.

The suspects allegedly moved the boy into a filthy trailer, covered in animal feces to live with four men; Mark Dennis, Andrew Dennis, Curtis Gruwell and Michael Schwartz. During the 11 months living with the suspects, the victim did not attend school and had no medical care. Rather, the minor received inhumane treatment by Mark Dennis and his underlings, Andrew Dennis, Gruwell, Schwartz; along with associates Michael Blasdel and JR Gauthier.

St. Petersburg police identified the victim’s location on May 8, 2018 while investigating the disappearance of another victim from Louisiana. Mark Dennis, Andrew Dennis, Gruwell and the victim were present at the scene. Mark Dennis claimed to be the child’s biological father, but when asked for proof, did not provide such documentation. The Division of Children and Families removed the boy from the suspects’ custody. The victim is receiving specialized trauma-informed care designed for victims of human trafficking at a Florida safe house.

The Lee County Sheriff’s Office and Marion County Sheriff’s Office assisted in the investigation. Mark Dennis, Andrew Dennis, Schwartz, Blasdel, Gauthier and McGlamory are charged with conspiracy to commit human trafficking and interference with custody. Mark Dennis, Andrew Dennis, Blasdel and Gauthier are also charged with sexual battery. Gruwell is the only suspect that remains at large.

Statewide Prosecutor Julie Sercus will prosecute the case.

***Update: The seventh suspect, Curtis Gruwell, turned himself in to authorities on the morning of Tuesday, January 15th, 2019.*