



OFFICE OF THE WASHINGTON COUNTY ATTORNEY

PETER J. ORPUT COUNTY ATTORNEY

Press Release

Contact: Laura Perkins,
Public Information Manager

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: February 28, 2022

Phone: 651-430-7994

Convicted Felon Sentenced to Over 16 Years for Sex Trafficking

A Brooklyn Park man charged with promoting prostitution was sentenced to over 16 years in prison on Friday in Washington County District Court.

Washington County Judge Juanita Freeman sentenced 42-year-old James E. Williams to the presumptive sentence of 201 months in state prison on charges of engaging in sex trafficking and violation of a no contact order. Williams entered the straight plea the morning jury trial was set to begin after having previously rejected offers by the State.

“That sentence may seem high to some, but the defendant admitted to extreme exploitation of human beings for his own profit,” said Washington County Attorney Pete Orput. “And given what he did to people, I’m satisfied that 201 months is an appropriate sentence to protect the public.”

The Washington County Attorney's Office charged Williams in October 2020 with promoting prostitution and engaging in sex trafficking, though the charges were later amended to include several counts of no contact order violations and tampering with a witness after Williams made over thirty phone calls to the victim from the Washington County Jail.

Prosecutor Scott Haldeman credits the successful prosecution to the extensive investigation conducted by the East Metro Sex Trafficking Task Force, of which he is the designated prosecutor. Founded in 2018, the East Metro Sex Trafficking Task Force unites several jurisdictions across Washington County to combat the commercial sex trade and provide services and resources for victims. Consisting of members from the Washington County Sheriff's Office, Woodbury Police Department, Oakdale Police Department, Cottage Grove Police Department, Homeland Security Investigations, and the Washington County Attorney's Office, the task force uses a victim-centered approach to coordinate various community and advocacy resources while investigating, arresting, and submitting charges for those responsible. They also assist in the recovery and identification of high-risk youth who are missing or listed as runaways to provide early intervention.

Orput added, “This was truly an enormous win for public safety. The East Metro Sex Trafficking Task Force put in a great deal of time and effort to hold this predator accountable, and they deserve great kudos from the public.”

Williams remains in custody at the Washington County Jail awaiting transfer to the Minnesota Department of Corrections. The East Metro Sex Trafficking Task Force anonymous tip line can be reached at 651-430-7825.

(CRIMINAL COMPLAINT ATTACHED BELOW THIS DOCUMENT) ####

State of Minnesota
County of Washington

District Court
10th Judicial District

Prosecutor File No.
Court File No.

CR-2020-1657
82-CR-20-4099

State of Minnesota,

Plaintiff,

vs.

JAMES EDWARD WILLIAMS DOB: 04/03/1979

8709 Maplebrook Pkwy N
Brooklyn Park, MN 55445

Defendant.

COMPLAINT

Summons

Amended

The Complainant submits this complaint to the Court and states that there is probable cause to believe Defendant committed the following offense(s):

COUNT I

Charge: Engages in the sex trafficking of an individual

Minnesota Statute: 609.322.1a(4), with reference to: 609.322.1(b)(1)

Maximum Sentence: 20 years and/or \$40,000 fine

Offense Level: Felony

Offense Date (on or about): 09/25/2020 to 10/29/2020

Control #(ICR#): 20044851

Charge Description: intentionally, and while acting other than as a prostitute or patron, engage in the sex trafficking of an individual

COUNT II

Charge: Promotes Prostitution of an Individual

Minnesota Statute: 609.322.1a(2), with reference to: 609.322.1(b)(1)

Maximum Sentence: 20 years and \$40,000

Offense Level: Felony

Offense Date (on or about): 09/25/2020 to 10/29/2020

Control #(ICR#): 20044851

Charge Description: intentionally and while acting other than as a prostitute or patron, promoted the prostitution of an individual

COUNT III

Charge: Violate No Contact Order - Within 10 years of the first of two or more convictions

Minnesota Statute: 629.75.2(d)(1), with reference to: 629.75.2(d)

Maximum Sentence: 5 years and \$10,000

Offense Level: Felony

Offense Date (on or about): 11/05/2020 to 11/05/2020

Control #(ICR#): 20044851

Charge Description: violate a domestic abuse no contact order, knowing of the existence of such order, to wit: 11-05-2020/Phone Contact , within ten years of the first of two or more previous qualified domestic violence-related offense convictions or adjudications of delinquency

COUNT IV

Charge: Violate No Contact Order - Within 10 years of the first of two or more convictions

Minnesota Statute: 629.75.2(d)(1), with reference to: 629.75.2(d)

Maximum Sentence: 5 years and \$10,000

Offense Level: Felony

Offense Date (on or about): 11/06/2020 to 11/06/2020

Control #(ICR#): 20044851

Charge Description: violate a domestic abuse no contact order, knowing of the existence of such order, to wit: 11-06-2020 Phone Contact , within ten years of the first of two or more previous qualified domestic violence-related offense convictions or adjudications of delinquency

COUNT V

Charge: Violate No Contact Order - Within 10 years of the first of two or more convictions

Minnesota Statute: 629.75.2(d)(1), with reference to: 629.75.2(d)

Maximum Sentence: 5 years and \$10,000

Offense Level: Felony

Offense Date (on or about): 11/07/2020 to 11/07/2020

Control #(ICR#): 20044851

Charge Description: violate a domestic abuse no contact order, knowing of the existence of such order, to wit: 11-07-2020 Phone Call , within ten years of the first of two or more previous qualified domestic violence-related offense convictions or adjudications of delinquency

COUNT VI

Charge: Violate No Contact Order - Within 10 years of the first of two or more convictions

Minnesota Statute: 629.75.2(d)(1), with reference to: 629.75.2(d)

Maximum Sentence: 5 years and \$10,000

Offense Level: Felony

Offense Date (on or about): 11/09/2020 to 11/09/2020

Control #(ICR#): 20044851

Charge Description: violate a domestic abuse no contact order, knowing of the existence of such order, to wit: 11-09-2020 Phone Call , within ten years of the first of two or more previous qualified domestic violence-related offense convictions or adjudications of delinquency

COUNT VII

Charge: Violate No Contact Order - Within 10 years of the first of two or more convictions

Minnesota Statute: 629.75.2(d)(1), with reference to: 629.75.2(d)

Maximum Sentence: 5 years and \$10,000

Offense Level: Felony

Offense Date (on or about): 11/16/2020 to 11/16/2020

Control #(ICR#): 20044851

Charge Description: violate a domestic abuse no contact order, knowing of the existence of such order, to wit: 11-16-2020 Phone call , within ten years of the first of two or more previous qualified domestic violence-related offense convictions or adjudications of delinquency

COUNT VIII

Charge: Tampering w/Witness - 3rd Degree - Prevent Testimony by Intimidation.

Minnesota Statute: 609.498.2a(a)(1), with reference to: 609.498.3(b)

Maximum Sentence: 90 days and \$1000

Offense Level: Misdemeanor

Offense Date (on or about): 11/07/2020 to 11/07/2020

Control #(ICR#): 20044851

Charge Description: intentionally prevent or dissuade or intentionally attempt to prevent or dissuade by means of intimidation, a person, to wit: L.L.J. who is or may become a witness from attending or testifying at any trial, proceeding, or inquiry authorized by law

STATEMENT OF PROBABLE CAUSE

The Complainant states that the following facts establish probable cause:

Your Complainant is a licensed peace officer in the State of Minnesota and is employed by the Washington County Sheriff's Office. In that capacity, your Complainant states the following to establish probable cause:

During September 2020, Woodbury Police Department received a complaint of a theft of a wallet. The wallet theft victim, J.R., reported that he met a female from Tinder and invited her to his room located at the Extended Stay in Woodbury. J.R. stated that after visiting him she was picked up by an unknown person. Upon the departure of the female, J.R. noticed that his wallet was missing. J.R. discovered that his credit card was used at a Speedway gas station in St. Paul and a hotel in Shakopee. Shakopee Police Department made contact with the hotel and discovered two suspects in the room. The stolen credit card was used to purchase the room. The two suspects were identified as L.L.S (DOB: 09-22-1992) and James Edward Williams, AKA James Edward Walton (DOB: 04-03-1979), the defendant herein.

Due to the nature of the initial theft complaint, the case was referred to the East Metro Human Trafficking Taskforce. Woodbury Police Detective Paul Kroshus contacted J.R. to conduct a follow-up interview. J.R. denied any involvement with prostitution. J.R. identified L.L.S. as the female who he "hung out" with and the female who stole his wallet. J.R. stated that he communicated with L.L.S. by phone and provided her phone number (XXX-XXX-7290) to Detective Kroshus. Surveillance video revealed that after the theft she was identified as the passenger in a vehicle at the Speedway gas station. A male driver, matching the description of the defendant, was observed using J.R.'s stolen credit card to pay for gas. Detective Kroshus conducted a law enforcement database search on the phone number provided by J.R. to see if any commercial sex advertisements were associated with the phone number. The law enforcement database archives commercial sex advertisements that are posted from all over the country. Detective Kroshus discovered dozens of commercial sex advertisements with photographs matching L.L.S. The advertisements were active when L.L.S. and J.R. met at the Extended Stay hotel. It is believed that J.R. solicited L.L.S. for commercial sex from the posted advertisement on 09-25-2020.

Detective Kroshus discovered the social media accounts belonging to L.L.S. and the defendant. In the social media account belonging to L.L.S., she states that she was married on 10-05-2020. The defendant social media page noted that he was married on 10-07-2020. At the issuance of this complaint it is unknown if L.L.S. and the defendant are married. It is common in trafficking cases where the victim is fictionally married to their trafficker to illustrate loyalty. Numerous pictures were discovered that depict both L.L.S. and the defendant posing together. From the social media profiles it appears that L.L.S. and the defendant are in a romantic relationship.

On 10-29-2020, Detective Kroshus discovered an active commercial sex advertisement associated with L.L.S. The advertisement was located on a known website for commercial sex solicitation. The advertisement verbiage was consistent with commercial sex being offered by L.L.S. The phone number used in the advertisement was the same phone number provided by J.R. Detective Kroshus initiated an undercover text message conversation with the phone number belonging to L.L.S. L.L.S. agreed to meet for \$200 in exchange for 30 minutes. L.L.S. also discussed what type of sexual acts were included in the price. L.L.S. was provided an apartment location located in the City of Woodbury, Washington County.

At approximately 10:50 am, members of the East Metro Human Trafficking Taskforce observed a blonde female matching the description of L.L.S. exit the passenger side of a silver vehicle at the predetermined location. The driver then departed and parked at a nearby store. Law enforcement made contact with the male who was identified as the defendant. The defendant was arrested. The defendant initially stated that he did not drop anyone off and was coming from St. Paul to go shopping. When confronted that he was observed dropping L.L.S. off, he then admitted that he did, however denied any knowledge of commercial sex. Detective Kroshus spoke with L.L.S. who admitted that she was there for the purposes of commercial sex. L.L.S. denied being dropped off by the defendant. L.L.S. later acknowledged she has been in an on and off relationship with the defendant.

The cell phones belonging to L.L.S. and the defendant were seized. Detective Kroshus drafted search warrants to search both devices. On 10-29-2020, the search warrants were signed and executed. A preliminary search of L.L.S. phone revealed numerous conversations between her and the defendant involving commercial sex. These conversations elucidate the defendant's knowledge involving the commercial sex activity of L.L.S. and how the defendant is involved in promoting her prostitution. The defendant would often provide transportation to commercial sex appointments, collect money derived from commercial sex acts, and involved in the operational control of L.L.S.'s commercial sex activity. The texts messages illustrate that the defendant exercises control and uses force to compel L.L.S. to continue to provide money and narcotics from commercial sex.

The defendant has an extensive criminal history which includes felony convictions for: (1) Sex Trafficking (27-CR-01-007464), (2) False Imprisonment (27-CR-01-069700), Domestic Assault (27-CR-08-37513), Domestic Assault (27-CR-12-14376), Violation of No Contact Order (27-CR-12-33644), and Burglary 2 (27-CR-14-32870). The defendant has a significant probation violation and bench warrant history associated with his criminal record. Due to the serious allegations in the complaint, criminal history and violation/warrant history, significant bail is requested.

A forensic examination of the phone revealed communication between the defendant and L.L.S. The text communication shows that the defendant promoted the prostitution, profited from the commercial sex appointments, and involved in the trafficking of L.L.S. In the text communication the defendant would consistently berate and threaten L.L.S. For example, on 09-19-2020 during an argument the defendant states "I can't do this shit Ill end up killing you." The defendant would make other references to assaulting L.L.S.

On 10-30-2020, the Honorable Gregory G. Galler issued a Domestic Abuse No Contact Order (DANCO) prohibiting the defendant from having contact with L.L.S. The defendant has a history of domestic assaultive behavior. The defendant has two prior felony, domestic-related offenses, within the past ten years (Hennepin County 27-CR-12-14376 and Hennepin County 27-CR-12-33644).

Due to the assaultive nature of the text messages and the violations of prior domestic orders in the past, Detective Kroshus began monitoring the defendant's phone calls while incarcerated at the Washington County Jail. As of 11-16-2020, the defendant has had over thirty (30) separate phone calls placed to the L.L.S. The defendant has called the victim on L.L.S. phone and has used family members to call three-way in an attempt to avoid detection. In an attempt to mislead, the defendant would pretend he was talking with someone else, not L.L.S. However, the content of each phone call proved that the person he was talking to was L.L.S. In addition, Detective Kroshus was able to match the voice on jail calls with the voice of L.L.S. when law enforcement spoke with her during the defendant's arrest.

On 11-05-2020, the defendant placed four phone calls to L.L.S. In those calls the defendant instructed L.L.S. to erase all the text communication between the two. On 11-06-2020, both the defendant and L.L.S. acknowledge that they are unable to communicate with each other. Between 11-07-2020 and 11-12-2020 there were an additional sixteen phone calls between the defendant and L.L.S. On 11-07-2020, the defendant, in an attempt to dissuade L.L.S. from testifying said 'If they aint got no witness I don't know. They aint got no witness they aint got no case. No witness, no case ya feel me'

On 11-09-2020, the defendant tells L.L.S. to "log out of every fucking thing out of all phones, erase all phones, ya feel me, ya hear me for them accounts." During the phone calls the defendant refers to L.L.J. as "bitch" multiple times and tells her about his bail situation saying "I am out there getting laced 1500-1700 and you mother fucker cant do nothing, what fucked up shit is this man, shit that mother fucker is still hustling that is crazy." The term "laced" is common in the commercial sex industry that the female/victim is affiliated with a pimp. It appears that the defendant was angry with L.L.S. by not coming up with the money to bail him out and references the amount of money be previously made trafficking her.

As of 11-16-2020, the defendant continues to violate the DANCO by having phone contact with L.L.J. The communication reveals that the defendant is aware that he is unable to have contact with L.L.J. Similar to the text messages, the defendant often yells and berates L.L.J. It is clear the defendant not only gave L.L.J. directions to destroy evidence and advised her not to cooperate with any court proceedings. Given the prior criminal history involving the defendant and the new felony violations, the State is requesting the bail in matter to increase.

SIGNATURES AND APPROVALS

Complainant requests that Defendant, subject to bail or conditions of release, be:
(1) arrested or that other lawful steps be taken to obtain Defendant's appearance in court; or
(2) detained, if already in custody, pending further proceedings; and that said Defendant otherwise be dealt with according to law.

Complainant declares under penalty of perjury that everything stated in this document is true and correct. Minn. Stat. § 358.116; Minn. R. Crim. P. 2.01, subds. 1, 2.

Complainant Washington County Sheriff's
Office
15015 62nd Street N
PO Box 3801
Stillwater, MN 55082-3801

Being authorized to prosecute the offenses charged, I approve this complaint.

Prosecuting Attorney Imran Ali
PO Box 6
15015 62nd Street North
Stillwater, MN 55082
(651) 430-6115

Electronically Signed:
11/16/2020 11:46 AM

FINDING OF PROBABLE CAUSE

From the above sworn facts, and any supporting affidavits or supplemental sworn testimony, I, the Issuing Officer, have determined that probable cause exists to support, subject to bail or conditions of release where applicable, Defendant's arrest or other lawful steps be taken to obtain Defendant's appearance in court, or Defendant's detention, if already in custody, pending further proceedings. Defendant is therefore charged with the above-stated offense(s).

SUMMONS

THEREFORE YOU, THE DEFENDANT, ARE SUMMONED to appear on _____, _____ at _____ AM/PM before the above-named court at 14949 62nd Street N PO Box 3802, Stillwater, MN 55082-3802 to answer this complaint.

IF YOU FAIL TO APPEAR in response to this SUMMONS, a WARRANT FOR YOUR ARREST shall be issued.

WARRANT

To the Sheriff of the above-named county; or other person authorized to execute this warrant: I order, in the name of the State of Minnesota, that the Defendant be apprehended and arrested without delay and brought promptly before the court (if in session), and if not, before a Judge or Judicial Officer of such court without unnecessary delay, and in any event not later than 36 hours after the arrest or as soon as such Judge or Judicial Officer is available to be dealt with according to law.

Execute in MN Only

Execute Nationwide

Execute in Border States

ORDER OF DETENTION

Since the Defendant is already in custody, I order, subject to bail or conditions of release, that the Defendant continue to be detained pending further proceedings.

Bail: \$
Conditions of Release:

This complaint, duly subscribed and sworn to or signed under penalty of perjury, is issued by the undersigned Judicial Officer as of the following date: _____, _____.

Judicial Officer <judge name>

Sworn testimony has been given before the Judicial Officer by the following witnesses:

**COUNTY OF WASHINGTON
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

State of Minnesota

Plaintiff

vs.

James Edward Williams

Defendant

LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER RETURN OF SERVICE
*I hereby Certify and Return that I have served a copy of this
Summons upon the Defendant herein named.*

Signature of Authorized Service Agent:

DEFENDANT FACT SHEET

Name: James Edward Williams
DOB: 04/03/1979
Address: 8709 Maplebrook Pkwy N
Brooklyn Park, MN 55445

Alias Names/DOB: James Edward Walton DOB:
SID: MN01413070

Height:
Weight:
Eye Color:
Hair Color:
Gender: MALE
Race:
Fingerprints Required per Statute: Yes
Fingerprint match to Criminal History Record: Yes
Driver's License #:
Alcohol Concentration:

STATUTE AND OFFENSE GRID

Cnt Nbr	Statute Type	Offense Date(s)	Statute Nbrs and Descriptions	Offense Level	MOC	GOC	Controlling Agencies	Case Numbers
1	Charge	9/25/2020	609.322.1a(4) Engages in the sex trafficking of an individual	Felony	Z1303	N	MN0820000	20044851
	Penalty	9/25/2020	609.322.1(b)(1) Enhanced Penalty - Committed a prior qualified human trafficking-related offense	Felony	Z1303	N	MN0820000	20044851
2	Charge	9/25/2020	609.322.1a(2) Promotes Prostitution of an Individual	Felony	Z1303	N	MN0820000	20044851
	Penalty	9/25/2020	609.322.1(b)(1) Enhanced Penalty - Committed a prior qualified human trafficking-related offense	Felony	Z1303	N	MN0820000	20044851
3	Charge	11/5/2020	629.75.2(d)(1) Violate No Contact Order - Within 10 years of the first of two or more convictions	Felony	AJ001	N	MN0820000	20044851
	Penalty	11/5/2020	629.75.2(d) Violate No Contact Order-within 10 years-first of two or more conviction or possess dangerous weapon	Felony	AJ001	N	MN0820000	20044851
4	Charge	11/6/2020	629.75.2(d)(1) Violate No Contact Order - Within 10 years of the first of two or more convictions	Felony	AJ001	N	MN0820000	20044851
	Penalty	11/6/2020	629.75.2(d) Violate No Contact Order-within 10 years-first of two or more conviction or possess dangerous weapon	Felony	AJ001	N	MN0820000	20044851
5	Charge	11/7/2020	629.75.2(d)(1) Violate No Contact Order - Within 10 years of the first of two or more convictions	Felony	AJ001	N	MN0820000	20044851
	Penalty	11/7/2020	629.75.2(d) Violate No Contact Order-within 10 years-first of two or more conviction or possess dangerous weapon	Felony	AJ001	N	MN0820000	20044851
6	Charge	11/9/2020	629.75.2(d)(1) Violate No Contact Order - Within 10 years of the first of two or more convictions	Felony	AJ001	N	MN0820000	20044851
	Penalty	11/9/2020	629.75.2(d) Violate No Contact Order-within 10 years-first of two or more conviction or possess dangerous weapon	Felony	AJ001	N	MN0820000	20044851
7	Charge	11/16/2020	629.75.2(d)(1) Violate No Contact Order - Within 10 years of the first of two or more convictions	Felony	AJ001	N	MN0820000	20044851
	Penalty	11/16/2020	629.75.2(d) Violate No Contact Order-within 10 years-first of two or more conviction or possess dangerous weapon	Felony	AJ001	N	MN0820000	20044851
8	Charge	11/7/2020	609.498.2a(a)(1) Tampering w/Witness - 3rd Degree - Prevent Testimony by Intimidation.	Misdemeanor	X2040	N	MN0820000	20044851
	Penalty	11/7/2020	609.498.3(b) Tampering With a Witness - 3rd Degree - Misdemeanor	Misdemeanor	X2040	N	MN0820000	20044851