

PRESS RELEASE

Dangerous Sex Trafficker of Young Women Sentenced to 33 Years in Federal Prison

Tuesday, November 7, 2017

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Oregon

Defendant trolled suburban malls searching for young innocent victims

PORTLAND, Ore. – On Monday, November 6th, U.S. District Judge Marco Hernandez sentenced Taquarius Kaream Ford, 38, of Portland, Oregon, to 33 years in federal prison followed by a lifetime of supervised release. On December 21, 2016, after a jury trial, Ford was found guilty of multiple counts, including Conspiracy to Commit Sex Trafficking by Force, Fraud, or Coercion and Sex Trafficking by Force, Fraud, or Coercion.

Between 2008 and 2013, defendant Taquarius Ford (a/k/a "Cameron Ford") traveled around the United States and recruited 40 young women with promises of "modeling" careers, when in fact, his plan involved exploiting them in the commercial sex industry. Defendant met these young women in suburban shopping malls, usually in small towns. He lured them in by posing as a successful modeling executive from Beverly Hills who had connections to famous celebrities. He shared photographs of himself standing next to famous people and he urged his recruits to show their family and friends his business card and his "Victory P.R." website.

Ford convinced his recruits to travel to Los Angeles, where he wined and dined them in Hollywood, took them to red carpet events, and introduced them to television stars. Next, Ford made promises of professional photo shoots to kick-start their modeling careers, but first, there was a catch. Ford explained to his recruits that if they wanted to become models, they must first start at the bottom and work their way up; they needed to engage in some "escorting" work for him in order to continue on the path towards a successful modeling career. Ford used

various techniques to maintain control over these recruited women and to cause them to engage in commercial sex acts, including relying on his female co-defendant to reassure them, making promises of fame and fortune, isolating them, using violence, rape and sexual assault. Even after the women escaped from him, defendant continued to terrorize them and their family members with threats and blackmail.

"This investigation started with an alert hotel employee calling the Port of Portland Police concerned about prostitution activity. As a result of that call, a young courageous victim was rescued. Through the efforts of the brave young women who came forward to testify and the diligent pursuit of justice by the law enforcement investigators, the community will now be protected from this predator" said US Attorney Billy J. Williams. "This case is a cautionary tale for young women and families about the manipulative techniques used to ensnare young unsuspecting victims into sex trafficking. I would like to say this is an isolated incident, but tragically it is becoming all too common and the information we learned through this investigation should be widely shared as a warning".

"Taquarius Ford promised those victims a future filled with bright lights and big money, but that dream quickly turned to the stuff of nightmares: rapes, beatings and threats against loved ones," said Renn Cannon, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI in Oregon. "Those victims deserve justice, and the FBI's Child Exploitation Task Force ensured they got it. I want to thank the Port of Portland as well as the Tigard Police Department and all of our task force partners on the CETF for ensuring that Ford will spend many years behind bars."

This case was investigated by the Port of Portland who first brought the case to the FBI's attention, and a Tigard Police detective who serves as a task force officer on the FBI's Child Exploitation Task Force (CETF) who led this investigation. Portland FBI's CETF consists of agents and Task Force Officers from Beaverton PD, Portland Police Bureau, Tigard PD, Hillsboro PD, and Clackamas County Sheriff's Office. The FBI's Child Exploitation Task Force is committed to locating and arresting those who prey on children, as well as recovering underage victims of sex trafficking and child pornography. Assistant U.S. Attorney Leah K. Bolstad and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney J.R. Ujifusa prosecuted the case in federal court.

Updated November 8, 2017

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District of Oregon

Main Office:

1000 SW Third Ave Suite 600

Portland, Oregon 97204



Telephone: (503)727-1000