

Massachusetts Man Charged With Sex Trafficking

A Springfield man was charged in federal court in Springfield Thursday with sex trafficking.

William Coleman, 48, was charged with one count of conspiracy to commit sex trafficking and nine counts of sex trafficking. Coleman was arrested on Dec. 23, 2018, and has been in custody since.

According to court documents, William Coleman ran a prostitution business and used violence, as well as the drug addictions – primarily heroin – of female victims to coerce them into engaging in commercial sex acts with paying customers. The women were typically required to turn over all of their earnings to Coleman, while being subject to his tight control over their daily lives. Most of the women were not allowed to keep any of the money they earned, and they were only allowed to obtain the drugs they were addicted to from Coleman. Victims who did not engage in prostitution for Coleman, or who did not follow his rules, were subjected to physical assaults, sexual violence and the withholding of drugs. Coleman allegedly used websites to post prostitution advertisements for the victims working for him. His business covered the greater Springfield and Hartford areas, and other parts of Connecticut.

The maximum sentence for sex trafficking and conspiracy to commit sex trafficking is life in prison, five years of supervised release and a \$250,000 fine. The Sex Trafficking statute also imposes a mandatory minimum sentence of 15 years for offenses committed by means of force, threats of force, fraud or coercion. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling; Peter C. Fitzhugh, Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in Boston; Hampden County District Attorney Anthony D. Gulluni; Colonel Kerry Gilpin, Superintendent of the Massachusetts State Police; and Acting Springfield Police Commissioner Cheryl Clapprood made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorney Alex J. Grant of Lelling's Springfield Branch Office is prosecuting the case.

The details contained in the indictment are allegations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.