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Herring Found Guilty of Human Trafficking of a Minor Using Force
People v. Rico Herring: Kern County Superior Court Case BF193344A

(Bakersfield) - District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a significant human trafficking of a minor with force trial conviction. On May 1, 2024, in a case presented by Deputy District Attorney Janae Knallay, a Kern County jury found Rico Herring guilty of human trafficking of a minor with an enhancement that he used force, fear, coercion, duress in the course of trafficking the minor, pandering a minor, and pimping a minor.

On December 5, 2022, Herring began communicating online with the 16-year-old minor from Bakersfield. On December 7, 2022, Herring purchased the minor a bus ticket and she travelled to Sacramento to meet with him. Upon arriving, Herring forced the victim commit commercial sex acts immediately. He advertised the minor online and sold her all across the state of California, including forcing her to walk the “blade,” an area in Los Angeles with a high concentration of prostitution. After about a week, the victim told Herring she no longer wanted to commit commercial sex acts for him. Herring proceeded to subject the minor to physical violence, took her phone, and stranded her in Fresno with no phone or transportation, and hours away from anyone she knew. A week later, he picked her up from Fresno and took her back to Sacramento where he continued to force her to commit 7-10 commercial sex acts a day. He threatened to kill her and her family member. He took all the money made from commercial sex acts, controlled when she ate, and required she meet a \$500 quota every day before she came inside, despite the cold winter conditions. Social media and cellular phone evidence also revealed that Herrings trafficked other females as well.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented; “This is unfortunately a common tactic for traffickers to target victims – luring them online, promising false lifestyles, and taking control of basic living necessities – making it nearly impossible to escape.”

Sentencing is set for May 30, 2024, in Department 7 of the Kern County Superior Court before the Honorable Judge Brian McNamara. Herring faces up to 15 years to life in prison and lifetime 290 registration.

Rico Herring:

