



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF TULARE

Tim Ward, *District Attorney*

PRESS RELEASE

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THREE SENTENCED IN OPERATION BABY FACE

Today in Department 10 of the Tulare County Superior Court, Visalia Division, Judge Kathryn Montejano sentenced three men for their roles in sex trafficking in Tulare County. Each defendant pleaded no contest to charges on February 3, 2017, during the preliminary hearing phase of court proceedings.

Antonio Alvarez, age 44, of Visalia, was sentenced to 40 years in prison after pleading to one count of human trafficking of an adult (with force, fear, and coercion), six counts of human trafficking of a minor, one count of oral copulation of a person under 18, one count of lewd act upon a child, two counts of oral copulation of a person under 16, one count of pimping of an adult, and one violent count of sexual penetration with a foreign object. Each count is a felony. In addition to his sentence, Alvarez must register as a sex offender for life.

Alvarez's sentence is the longest human trafficking sentence ever handed down in Tulare County.

Anthony Raya, age 19, of Dinuba, was sentenced to 3 years in state prison after pleading to one felony count of pimping an adult. Joel Mancini, age 40, of Visalia, was sentenced to one year in jail after pleading to one count of being an accessory after the fact to the crime of human trafficking of a minor, and one count of unlawful sex with a minor. Each count is a felony.

From January 2014 to August 2016, Alvarez befriended and attempted to recruit minors and adults to engage in commercial sex acts for money using a fictitious Facebook account. The account used stolen photos to create a persona named "Rebecca

Rodriguez,” a prostitute who glamorized the lifestyle. While pretending to be a female, Alvarez requested naked photographs of the minor and adult women he contacted; many sent photos, some of which Alvarez sent to co-defendant Joel Mancini. As part of Alvarez’s scheme, “Rebecca” would inform the minors and adults that they would have to meet the “boss,” who was Alvarez, for an “interview” to get hired and perform sexual acts on the “boss.” Both adults and minors met with Alvarez and sexual acts occurred. On some occasions, Alvarez took the girls to co-defendant Mancini’s residence. During the investigation it was determined Raya was contacted by “Rebecca” to drive some of the adult victims of prostitution. No evidence was found that co-defendant Raya knew or ever personally met co-defendants Alvarez or Mancini.

“Selling and engaging children for sex is an immoral and indefensible crime. It dehumanizes and demeans those who are already the most vulnerable in our communities,” said District Attorney Tim Ward. “Before the Coalition against Human Trafficking was created in 2014, very few were talking about trafficking. That has changed. Today’s sentencing is a reminder of how far we’ve come as a county in terms of awareness and action. It is because of the compassion of the community and the dedication of law enforcement that we can confidently say: To the victims, we will help you. And to the traffickers who prey on the vulnerable, we will find you and hold you accountable for your crimes.”

Since the creation of the District Attorney’s Tulare Coalition against Human Trafficking, which consists of law enforcement, community victim service non-profits, and other government agencies, two defendants have been sentenced to prison for trafficking minors for sex: Marvin Carraway, age 32, to 10 years and Anthony Lott, age 25, to 9 years and 4 months, both in 2016.

Currently the District Attorney’s Office is prosecuting 10 defendants in 7 cases for sex trafficking.

The case was prosecuted by Supervising Deputy District Attorney Cindy Underwood and investigated by the Tulare County Sheriff’s Department.

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