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FORMER ELK GROVE MAN CONVICTED OF SEX TRAFFICKING OF MINOR

Sacramento--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that DEONTE SANTOS, 28, of Elk Grove, was convicted late yesterday of two counts involving the trafficking of a minor for prostitution. The guilty verdict was returned by a federal court jury in Sacramento after a seven day trial before Chief United States District Judge Garland E. Burrell. In the first count, SANTOS was charged with using a facility or means of interstate commerce, namely the Internet and AOL Instant Messenger, to persuade, induce, or entice a minor to engage in prostitution and unlawful sexual activity. In the second count, SANTOS was charged with sex trafficking of a minor.

This case is the product of an extensive/joint investigation by the Elk Grove Police Department, the Sacramento County Sheriff's Office, the Sacramento Valley High Tech Crimes Task Force, and the Federal Bureau of Investigations.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Laurel White, who is prosecuting the case, the evidence introduced at trial showed that SANTOS, in early May, 2006, targeted a 12-year old Elk Grove girl and induced her to work for him as his prostitute in Sacramento. Evidence at trial revealed that SANTOS worked the girl for about four days in Sacramento, and then transported her to Los Angeles, where she was put on the street to prostitute. SANTOS ultimately arranged to fly the girl to Seattle, Washington to a friend of his who SANTOS later told authorities was a pimp.

Sentencing is scheduled for January 4, 2008. The maximum statutory penalty for a violation of using a facility and means of interstate commerce to persuade, induce, or entice a minor to engage in prostitution or unlawful sexual conduct is 30 years in prison. The charge also carries a five- year mandatory minimum sentence. The charge of sex trafficking of a minor carries a 15-year mandatory minimum to potential life term of imprisonment. The actual sentence will be dictated by the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of factors, and will be imposed at the discretion of the court. However, the actual sentence will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables, and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

“This case amply demonstrates the unwavering commitment of local, state, and federal authorities to aggressively target the exploitation of children. Deonte Santos awaits the lengthy - and well deserved - sentence in a federal penitentiary,” stated United States Attorney Scott.

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