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Child prostitution sweep nets 19

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The U.S. Department of Justice charged three Hawaii men as well as more than two dozen others across the country with recruiting children for prostitution.

The charges are part of "Innocence Lost," a two-year investigation into the recruiting of children for prostitution, the Justice Department said.

More than 30 children, some as young as 12-years-old, were rescued from prostitution, U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales said. Nineteen people were arrested and 12 remain at large, the government said.

"Our society has no place for those who prey on children and no tolerance for child prostitution sex trafficking," Gonzales told reporters at a Washington news conference.

The charges — which include sex trafficking in children, transportation of minors to engage in prostitution, and kidnapping — were unsealed over the past two days in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Michigan and Hawaii.

Arrested in Hawaii were Jeffrey "Goldie" McCoy, George Abro, and Robert Lewis Young.

A federal grand jury indicted Young in connection with the trafficking of children and adults between Honolulu and Detroit for prostitution.

Young, also known as Lawrence Benjamin, Ronald McCree, Blue Diamond, or Blue, was charged yesterday in U.S. District Court in a 21-count indictment including sex trafficking of children, conspiracy to transport sex trafficking by force, fraud and coercion, transportation of minors and transportation for prostitution.

He was also charged with aiding in the transport of child pornography, money laundering and distributing the proceeds of a racketeering enterprise through interstate commerce.

The most serious offense, sex trafficking of children, is punishable by a maximum of 40 years imprisonment.

According to the indictment, at least two minors and eight adults were moved back and forth between Honolulu and Detroit beginning in November 2003 and continuing through July 2005.

They were forced to engage in commercial sex acts.

One of the minors was depicted in pornographic materials engaging in sexually explicit conduct, the indictment said.

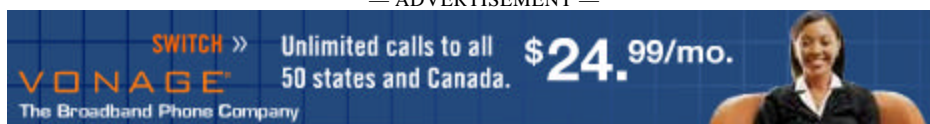
Young was arrested in Las Vegas.

Star-Bulletin reporter Debra Barayuga, Bloomberg News and the Associated Press contributed to this report.

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