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NEWS RELEASE

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Aug. 12, 2016

Felon Sentenced to Prison for Sex Trafficking Teen, Woman

A 38-year-old man was sentenced today to 16 years and eight months in state prison for trafficking an underage girl and a woman in South Los Angeles, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

At today's court appearance, Benjamin Pennington (dob 11/1/77) pleaded no contest to three felony counts in case TA138850: human trafficking of a minor for a commercial sex act, human trafficking and dissuading a witness from prosecuting a crime. The defendant also admitted he was previously convicted of making criminal threats in 2003.

In addition to the prison sentence, Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Laura Walton also ordered Pennington to register as a lifetime sex offender.

Deputy District Attorney Craig Rouviere of the Victim Impact Program, who prosecuted the case, said between February and December 2015, Pennington pimped a 17-year-old girl in the streets of South Los Angeles. He also advertised the underage victim for sex services online, the prosecutor added.

In addition to trafficking the teenage girl, Pennington also pimped a 23-year-old woman in late 2015, according to the prosecutor.

While working for the defendant, the 17-year-old victim was apprehended by authorities, the prosecutor said. During her arrest, the underage girl revealed to police that the defendant was forcing her to be a sex worker, the prosecutor said.

Pennington was subsequently located and arrested at his probation officer's office in December 2015.

While in custody, the defendant called the 23-year-old victim and demanded that she continue prostituting herself while he was in custody. Additionally, he ordered the victim to not testify in his criminal case, the prosecutor added.

The case was investigated by the Los Angeles Police Department, South Bureau Human Trafficking Task Force.

[About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#)

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.