

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Southern District of Florida

United States of America
v.
VAN LAWSON WILLIAMS

Case No. 12-mj-6202-BSS

Defendant(s)

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of January 2012 - May 11, 2012 in the county of Broward in the Southern District of Florida, the defendant(s) violated:

Code Section
18 U.S.C. 1591(a)(1)

Offense Description
Knowingly, in and affecting interstate or foreign commerce, recruits, entices, harbors, transports, provides, obtains or maintains by any means a person knowingly or in reckless disregard of the fact that the person has not attained the age of 18 years and will be caused to engage in a commercial sex act.

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

SEE ATTACHED AFFIDAVIT

Continued on the attached sheet.

Handwritten signature of Regino E. Chavez

Complainant's signature

Regino E. Chavez, Special Agent, FBI

Printed name and title

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence.

Date: 05/11/2012

Handwritten signature of Barry S. Seltzer

Judge's signature

Barry S. Seltzer, U.S. Magistrate Judge

Printed name and title

City and state: Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF COMPLAINT

I, Regino E. Chavez, being duly sworn, depose and say:

INTRODUCTION AND AGENT BACKGROUND

1. I am a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), United States Department of Justice. I have worked in this position since November of 2003. I am currently assigned to the Miami Field Office of the FBI and I am a member of the Minor Vice Task Force (MVTF) in South Florida. The MVTF is comprised of federal, state and local law enforcement, and its purpose is to address the Department of Justice's "Innocence Lost National Initiative." I am presently assigned to handle violent crimes, including offenses involving sex trafficking of children, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1591; enticing minors to engage in prostitution, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2422(b); as well as offenses involving transportation for purposes of prostitution, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2421. Prior to being assigned to the Miami Field Office, I was assigned to the San Juan Field Office for approximately five (5) years and have participated in investigations involving money laundering and drug trafficking, as well as police corruption and violations of civil rights.

2. This affidavit is submitted in support of a criminal complaint against VAN LAWSON WILLIAMS, date of birth August 8, 1963 (hereinafter, "WILLIAMS"). As explained in detail below, I respectfully submit that there is probable cause to believe that WILLIAMS knowingly recruited, enticed, harbored, transported, provided, obtained or maintained by any means a person knowing, or in reckless disregard of the fact, that the person had not attained the age of 18 years and would be caused to engage in a commercial sex act, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1591(a)(1). I base the facts in this affidavit upon my personal

knowledge, as well as knowledge, information, and documentation that I obtained from other law enforcement officers while in my official capacity. This affidavit does not include every fact that I know about this investigation.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVESTIGATION

3. On February 27, 2012, the Fort Lauderdale Police Department (FLPD) responded to 2021 NW 30th Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33311, later identified as WILLIAMS' residence, in response to a report from the Broward Sheriff's Office (BSO) Child Protective Investigation Services (CPIS). The report alleged that WILLIAMS was enticing and persuading runaway juveniles to reside with him in his home and prostitute themselves. Upon arrival at WILLIAMS' residence, FPLD knocked on the door, identifying themselves as law enforcement. There was no response. The windows were covered with rails, drapes and hurricane shutters, preventing any visibility into the residence. Officers heard a clanging sound at a window followed by a female's moan and a male's voice. Orders from law enforcement for the occupants to exit were ignored. Fire rescue responded to the scene and, based on what was deemed exigent circumstances, forced entry into the residence. WILLIAMS stood in the doorway preventing access and using his body to conceal the interior of the home. After yelling and swinging his arms at the officers, WILLIAMS was pulled out of the doorway. After violently fighting with the officers, striking several, WILLIAMS was handcuffed and placed under arrest. ~~Officers located two loaded firearms inside the residence.~~ ^{pl c.s} WILLIAMS is a convicted felon. After his arrest, it was also determined that WILLIAMS had an active warrant. WILLIAMS was charged with custody interference, resisting arrest with violence, obstruction and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. (These charges were later dropped and WILLIAMS was released from state custody.)

4. Upon entering the residence, officers located G.D., a 16 year old minor, inside one of the bedrooms. FLPD officers confirmed that G.D. had been reported missing by her grandmother in July 2011. FLPD placed G.D. in the custody of the Fort Lauderdale Hospital.

5. On March 9, 2012, law enforcement officers interviewed G.D., who provided the following information:

- G.D. began working as a prostitute for WILLIAMS in February or March of 2011. At that time, G.D. was 15 years old and she told WILLIAMS her age as soon as she met him. According to G.D., customers would come to WILLIAMS' residence where she would have sexual intercourse with them for money. When customers arrived, they would pay WILLIAMS \$20 to \$30 to use one of the bedrooms. Once the customer and G.D. were in the bedroom, the customer would pay G.D. approximately \$100 and they would engage in sexual intercourse. G.D. would later give WILLIAMS half the money she was paid by the customers. During this time period, G.D. engaged in sexual intercourse for money approximately 10 times at the Williams' residence.
- G.D. left WILLIAMS for a period of time, but returned around Christmas time of 2011. Upon her return, G.D. again worked as a prostitute for WILLIAMS at the Williams' residence. During this period, G.D. engaged in sexual intercourse approximately 30 times with approximately six different customers. During these "dates", the prostitution customers paid between \$100 and \$150, which was split equally between G.D. and WILLIAMS. WILLIAMS continued to charge customers a \$20 to \$30 fee for use of a bedroom.
- During this latter period of time that G.D. was working as a prostitute for WILLIAMS, another minor female, R.T., was also working as a prostitute for WILLIAMS at the Williams' residence. WILLIAMS told G.D. that R.T. was 15 years old. According to G.D., R.T. engaged in sexual intercourse for money approximately 30 times during the same time period.
- G.D. stated that both she and R.T. had sexual intercourse with WILLIAMS at the Williams' residence at his demand. WILLIAMS also had sexual intercourse with a third female, Q.E., who spent time at the Williams' residence. According to G.D., Q.E. did not work as a prostitute for WILLIAMS. (Law enforcement has identified Q.E. as a 16-year old minor.) G.D. advised that both she and R.T. were physically abused by WILLIAMS, who punched and pushed both girls on several occasions. WILLIAMS also provided G.D. and R.T. with illegal narcotics, including crack cocaine and marijuana. According to G.D., WILLIAMS keeps illegal narcotics that he provides to the girls behind a hidden door in his bedroom.

6. On March 7, 2012, law enforcement officers interviewed Vashawn Thurston, the mother of R.T., in reference to allegations that WILLIAMS was sexually exploiting her daughter.

THURSTON provided the following information:

- R.T. ran away from her home approximately two months prior to the date of the interview. Shortly after, Thurston received a telephone call from WILLIAMS, who told her that he had R.T. and that he was looking out for her. Thurston told WILLIAMS that R.T. was 14 years old and that he had no business being with her. WILLIAMS told Thurston that he was not doing anything with her.
 - Approximately two weeks after this telephone call, Thurston spoke with R.T. who told her that WILLIAMS was bringing men to his residence and that she was having sex with them for money. R.T. also told Thurston that the men were giving the money to WILLIAMS. R.T. further told Thurston that there were two other minor females at WILLIAMS' residence.
 - R.T. eventually left WILLIAMS and returned home. Upon her return, Thurston observed bruises on R.T.'s back, neck and eye, which R.T. told her were caused by WILLIAMS. R.T. also told Thurston that WILLIAMS had provided her and the other girls with ecstasy, crack cocaine, and marijuana. R.T. told Thurston that she had engaged in sexual intercourse with WILLIAMS on several occasions.
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- On February 27, 2012, Thurston again spoke to WILLIAMS via telephone. WILLIAMS insulted Thurston and told her that she had to return R.T. to him and that if she did not, she would suffer. Thurston told WILLIAMS that she was going to call the police. WILLIAMS told her to go ahead and call the police because they would not do anything to him. On both occasions that Thurston spoke to WILLIAMS, he was using telephone number 954-274-7354.

7. On March 23, 2012, law enforcement officers interviewed Q.E. who made the following statements:

- Q.E. met WILLIAMS near the Williams' residence. WILLIAMS asked Q.E. if she wanted to help babysit his 7 year old daughter. Q.E. agreed and began to spend time at the Williams' residence. Q.E. told WILLIAMS that she was 16 years old the first time they met.
- According to Q.E., while she was at the Williams' residence, she met G.D.

and R.T. who were each living with WILLIAMS, along with several other minors. Q.E. learned that G.D. and R.T. were working as prostitutes for WILLIAMS. According to Q.E., WILLIAMS, G.D. and R.T. would go out looking for customers on the street or in the neighborhood. Q.E. also stated that prostitution customers would come to the Williams' residence and pay between \$50 and \$100 to have sexual intercourse with G.D. or R.T. Q.E. was present during several of these prostitution dates.

- Q.E. stated that WILLIAMS used his cell phone to arrange prostitution dates for G.D. and R.T. or would have G.D., R.T. or Q.E. send text messages to potential customers to arrange dates for G.D. or R.T. According to Q.E., WILLIAMS had her use his phone to send these text messages on several occasions. On one occasion, WILLIAMS asked Q.E. to send a customer a text message about how much WILLIAMS charged for a prostitution date and how many prostitutes he had working for him at his residence.
- Q.E. was aware of the fact that WILLIAMS engaged in sexual intercourse with G.D. and R.T. WILLIAMS also asked Q.E. to have sexual intercourse with him, and also asked her to have sex with him and one of the girls.
- According to Q.E., WILLIAMS provided G.D. and R.T. with drugs such as marijuana and "monkeys" (ecstasy). Q.E. also stated that WILLIAMS was aware of G.D. and R.T.'s ages. WILLIAMS told Q.E. that he liked young girls. Q.E. witnessed WILLIAMS physically assault G.D. and R.T. and on one occasion, WILLIAMS threatened R.T. with a machete he keeps in his residence.

8. On March 30, 2012, law enforcement officers interviewed E.T., another minor that WILLIAMS attempted to coerce into prostitution. E.T. made the following statements:

- On March 29, 2012, E.T. and another female went to WILLIAMS' residence where WILLIAMS talked to her about selling her body and making money. At the time, E.T. was 15 years old and WILLIAMS told her that he would charge \$100 per date, and that they could split the money. WILLIAMS began calling customers on his cell phone to arrange prostitution dates for E.T. and told her that she was going to have sex with his brother for \$40. According to E.T., she refused and left.
- While at the residence, WILLIAMS learned that E.T. was living in a group home, to which WILLIAMS responded that he liked young girls and girls from group homes.

9. On April 10, 2012, at approximately 4:17 pm, E.T. made a consensually recorded telephone call to WILLIAMS on his cell phone (954-274-7354). During the call, E.T. told WILLIAMS that she had been suspended from high school and that she wanted to make money. WILLIAMS told E.T. that she could start whenever she was ready and asked E.T. whether she wanted him to pick her up. E.T. told WILLIAMS that she would call him at a later time.

10. On May 2, 2012, law enforcement officers interviewed another minor, S.K., who had reported to an official working for ChildNet (the Florida Department of Children and Families Representative in Broward County, Florida) that WILLIAMS wanted her to work for him as a prostitute. S.K. made the following statements:

- S.K. met WILLIAMS in March 2012 after running away from a children's shelter with G.D. When she first met WILLIAMS, she told him that she was 14 years old. WILLIAMS asked S.K. whether she wanted to make money with him and told her that she could make a lot of money. WILLIAMS told S.K. that if she worked for him, she would have a place to stay, that he would feed her, and that she would be able to get her nails done. WILLIAMS also told S.K. that she would have to give him 30% of the money she made, but that he would hold all the money and give it to her when she needed it. The first night that S.K. spent at the Williams' residence, WILLIAMS pulled off her pants and tried to have sex with her, but she fought him off.
- According to S.K., she spent four to five days living at the Williams' residence. WILLIAMS visited his neighbors and told them that S.K. was going to have sex with them for money. One neighbor wanted to have sex with S.K. and when S.K. refused, WILLIAMS threw her down on a bed and while holding her head down, told her that she had to do it. WILLIAMS also told her "that's money-you need money." According to S.K., she was able to fight WILLIAMS off and get away from him. Another customer, whom S.K. identified as "G", wanted to have anal sex with S.K. for \$2000. When S.K. refused, WILLIAMS screamed at her, threatened to beat her if she did not work as a prostitute for him and ultimately kicked her out of his house because she would not work for him.
- According to S.K., several other customers came to the Williams' residence to look her over in order to determine whether they wanted to have sex with

her, but she never went through with any dates. WILLIAMS always told customers that S.K. was 18 or 19 years old. S.K. stated that WILLIAMS tried to have sex with her on at least three occasions. WILLIAMS also told S.K. that he did not like using protection

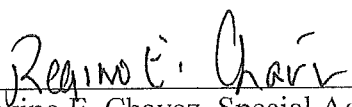
- WILLIAMS gave S.K. drugs, including crack and powder cocaine and marijuana. According to S.K., WILLIAMS keeps his illegal narcotics behind a hidden door in his bedroom.
- During the time that S.K. was at the Williams' residence, she saw both G.D. and R.T. According to S.K., G.D. and R.T. work as prostitutes for WILLIAMS and he physically abuses both girls. WILLIAMS also gives both girls illegal drugs. The last time S.K. saw WILLIAMS was a couple of days before the date of the interview. At that time, G.D. was with WILLIAMS.

11. On May 2, 2012, at approximately 1:30 pm, S.K. made a consensually recorded telephone call to WILLIAMS on his cell phone (954-274-7354). During the call, S.K. told WILLIAMS that she had run away from ChildNet and that she wanted to work for him. WILLIAMS told S.K. that she did not listen and S.K. told him that she would listen this time. S.K. told WILLIAMS that she wanted more than 30% of the money. WILLIAMS told her that "if you come to me-you're mine."

CONCLUSION

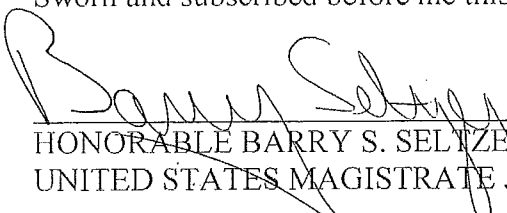
12. Based upon my training and experience, and as further supported by the facts in this affidavit, I respectfully submit that there is probable cause to believe that WILLIAMS knowingly recruited, enticed, harbored, transported, provided, obtained or maintained by any means a person

knowing or in reckless disregard of the fact that the person has not attained the age of 18 years and would be caused to engage in a commercial sex act, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1591(a)(1).



Regino E. Chavez, Special Agent
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Sworn and subscribed before me this 1st day of May 2012.



HONORABLE BARRY S. SELIZER
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE