



Former cop charged in sex trafficking case

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Ronald Miko. Courtesy: Republican Herald

A sex trafficking ring has ensnared a former police officer who once served as vice president of a borough council, officials said.

Ronald Miko was arrested Thursday in connection with a sex trafficking ring that operated out of Reading, federal officials said.

Federal investigators alleged that Miko, 37, helped arrange sexual encounters with known prostitutes.

It was all part of a web-based prostitution company that offered services like strippers, role playing and overnights, officials said.

Authorities said the company was run by Paul Sewell, who referred to himself as "God."

Federal agents alleged that Miko offered advice to Sewell about women who Sewell employed, knowing that they were employed as

prostitutes.

Investigators also alleged that Miko, while wearing his Reading police officer uniform, and driving a Reading police cruiser, visited the business which operated out of homes located at 214 N. 10th St. and 209 Fisher Ct. in Reading.

Just last month, Bob Morrison, director of the non-profit Freedom and Restoration for Everyone Enslaved, held a workshop in Reading, teaching residents how to identify the signs of sex-trafficking.

Morrison said the industry is lucrative and the demand is high.

"You can imagine people being easily corrupted by being able to make that kind of money," said Morrison. "So, it's not a surprise that someone could be ensnared by something like that."

Officials said Paul Sewell and a partner, Michael Johnson, were charged by a federal grand jury in July 2010.

U.S. authorities alleged that Miko wired money to Johnson's prison account at the Federal Detention Center as a bribe, all to prevent criminal investigators from finding out that he, Miko, was involved in the business.

"I believe everyone has their price. So, in a circumstance where there is that kind of opportunity, corruption can hit people at all levels," said Morrison.

Paul Sewell, self-identified as God, and Michael Johnson, are currently awaiting sentencing in federal court.

Miko, employed by the Reading Police Department for nine years, once served as vice president of Pine Grove Borough Council in Schuylkill County.

He was suspended from the police force in September 2010 and fired by City Council on Jan. 24, 2011, said Michael Dee, spokesman for the city.

If convicted, Miko faces a maximum possible sentence of five years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, a three-year term of supervised release, and a \$100 special assessment, federal prosecutors said.

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