

Former D.C. police officer Linwood Barnhill sentenced to prison for prostituting local teenage girls

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WASHINGTON (WJLA) - A former D.C. police officer was sentenced to prison Thursday after pleading guilty to charges that he recruited and arranged dates for several local teenage girls to engage in prostitution.

Linwood Barnhill, 48, was sentenced to seven years behind bars for two counts of pandering a minor and one count of possession of child pornography after investigators presented evidence that they allege proves he prostituted at least two underage girls, the U.S. Attorneys Office said Thursday.

Word of Barnhill's crimes came to light in December after D.C. police officers located a missing 16-year-old girl at this home.

An investigation revealed Barnhill had recruited her to be a prostitute for him. He reportedly took both clothed and unclothed photos of her and told the victim he planned to send them out to men to find "dates" for her. The victim said he told her the man would pay her \$80 for the "date" and she would be required to give him \$20 of the payment.

According to the U.S. Attorney's Office, Barnhill's plans were discovered before she went on any "dates."

The investigation also revealed Barnhill's activities with at least two other girls, aged 15 and 17, as well as a number of adult women.

The government presented evidence that Barnhill met a 15-year-old girl in September 2013 when he pulled up to a bus stop and asked her if she would be interested in "modeling" for him.

The girl reportedly agreed and went back to Barnhill's apartment to pose for "modeling photos." Barnhill then reportedly took both clothed and unclothed photos of her.

That night, the victim said Barnhill called her to say that he had shown her pictures to a man who wanted to meet her for a "date." Authorities said Barnhill collected payment and gave her a portion of it after the date was over.

Investigators also identified a 17-year-old girl Barnhill reportedly recruited in the same manner the following month, when he pulled up to a bus stop and asked her if she would like to be a model for him. Again, Barnhill took her to his home and took multiple photos of her both with and without clothing.

After taking the photos, however, authorities said Barnhill asked her to perform oral sex on him. She agreed, and filmed the act with his cellphone.

Police reportedly found the video on Barnhill's phone after obtaining a warrant.

Officials said Barnhill has been in custody since his arrest in December 2013, when the missing 16-year-old girl was found in his home.

Barnhill, who was a D.C. police officer with the seventh district, pleaded guilty in June of this year in D.C. court. He has resigned from the police department.

As part of an agreement for pleading guilty, Barnhill was sentenced Thursday to seven years in prison, followed by 10 years of supervised release. He also will be required to register as a sex offender for the rest of his life.

The investigation was conducted in partnership with Project Safe Childhood.

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