

El Paso County juvenile probation officer charged in connection with sex-trafficking gang

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An El Paso County juvenile probation officer is charged with working with a regional sex-trafficking ring in which gang members allegedly forced teenage girls and women into prostitution.

Timothy McCullough Jr., 28, was arrested Friday by FBI and Homeland Security Investigations agents on charges of conspiracy to commit sex trafficking and sex trafficking of a minor, the U.S. Attorney's Office said Tuesday.

Roger Martinez, the head of the juvenile probation department, said he was advised by lawyers not to disclose any information about McCullough. On Jan. 15, a federal grand jury indicted McCullough, who is jailed pending a detention hearing on Friday.

Authorities said the case is linked to an incident in March in which El Paso police arrested two suspected pimps after they allegedly beat a woman at the Super 8 Motel on Gateway East near Cielo Vista Mall.

The U.S. Attorney's Office said that McCullough is charged along with five suspected members of the Folk Nation-Gangster Disciples street gang in El Paso who are accused of forcing girls and women to work as prostitutes in El Paso, Albuquerque, Las Vegas, Colorado and Killeen, Texas.

The suspected gang members charged were: Deion "Memphis" Lockhart, 25; Brandon Shapiro, 21, aka "Chicago" and "B'radd;" Tai Von "Trigg" Lynch, 20; Richard "Crenshaw" Gray, 24; and Emmanuel "E Jay" Lockhart, 23.

Authorities alleged the gang's prostitution operation ran from May 2012 to March 2013.

Prosecutors alleged that the women and **teenage girls** were held against their will, threatened and beaten if they did not work as prostitutes. The prostitution was advertised as escort services on the Internet and the sex took place in motels and the homes of johns, documents stated.

In one case, a 16-year-old girl was lured when she went with a high-school friend to an El Paso motel room to "make some money," according to a criminal complaint affidavit filed by an FBI agent. There were four to five men in the motel room, including one known as "Memphis" (Lockhart).

The girl said the men gave her marijuana, held her against her will, had her pose for photos for a website and forced her to have sex with a man at the motel, the document stated.

In the days that followed, the girl was forced to have sex for money with five to six men a day, the complaint stated. The men paid \$100 for 30 minutes with the girl or \$180 for an hour.

The document alleged that Lockhart "used the money that he obtained from her prostitution to customize his car."

In another case, a woman said Gray assaulted her, held her against her will and forced her to have sex with about 10 men in two days in July, a complaint affidavit stated. The woman had met Gray socially but she was afraid to escape because the group allegedly threatened her family.

In March, El Paso police arrested reputed gang members Kiry Hakeem Nalls and Grant Rutledge, both 24, after responding to a call of a man with a gun at the Super 8 Motel near Cielo Vista Mall, police officials had said.

A woman told police that Nalls held her against her will for about a week, cut her arms with a razor blade and forced her to have sex with others for money.

When the woman tried to escape and ran to another room for help, Nalls allegedly dragged her out of the room, beat her and forced her into a car. The woman was taken to the desert where she was assaulted again. The men were arrested and the woman was rescued when the three returned to the motel while police were at the scene investigating the disturbance.

Nalls and Rutledge are scheduled to go to trial on March 3 on federal charges of forced prostitution, the U.S. Attorney's Office said.

The criminal complaint against McCullouch was not immediately available on Tuesday. It is not known if the charges against him are linked to his job as juvenile probation officer.

If convicted, all eight men charged in the scheme could be sentenced to life in federal prison, officials said.