

Former Kentucky Constable Accused of Running Prostitution Ring for Police and Lawmaker Friends

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2016 Cop running prostitution ring for cops and lawmakers

The enterprise allegedly hired women and teens to service powerful clients.



Franklin County Regional Jail

A "prostitution ring" in Kentucky's capitol city may have shared a lot more than proximity with powerful state officials. The operation, allegedly run by former Franklin County constable Thomas Banta, is accused of servicing a roster of local legislators and police officers.

Banta, 67, was indicted in early May on suspicion that his company, Banta Security and Investigations, had a healthy side business in the sex trade. He's charged with five felonies, including promoting prostitution, kidnapping, and impersonating a peace officer. The

latter two charges stem from an alleged 2015 incident in which Banta and an associate supposedly approached a 17-year-old boy under the guise of being police detectives, then abducted him. The teen claims they interrogated him for more than two hours about a burglary that took place next to an apartment where his grandma lived, and also pressured his relatives while pretending to be police.

Banta—who served as an elected county constable from 2011 through 2014—plead not guilty to all charges, as did his alleged associate, Hendra “Dre” Chanault Valentine.

The case does contain a few red-flag details, such as a claim by one woman that, under Banta's direction, she had appointments with 15 to 20 clients per day, twice a week, and was once offered \$500 to have sex with a dog.

According to the Kentucky Center for Investigative Reporting, documents filed with the Franklin County Circuit Court say that clients of this operation included local politicians and police officers, though no one in particular is named. The individuals who said that Banta managed them were adults, though one claims she was in eighth grade when Banta first started paying her to have sex with him and others.

Interestingly, none of the Kentucky media that have reported on the story have been throwing around terms like "sex trafficking," despite the possible link to at least one underage woman. I guess it's only sex trafficking when former government officials aren't involved.