

THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
DISTRICT *of* MARYLAND

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**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Maryland

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, April 14, 2022

## **Sex Trafficking Conspiracy Member Sentenced to Nine Years in Federal Prison**

### **Defendant Was Paid to Manage the Victim and Force the Victim to Conduct Commercial Sex Dates**

**Baltimore**, Maryland – U.S. District Judge Catherine C. Blake sentenced Lakeya Aldridge age 41, of Federalsburg, Maryland to nine years in federal prison, followed by five years of supervised release, for conspiracy to commit kidnapping.

The sentence was announced by United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Erik L. Barron; Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division; Special Agent in Charge James R. Mancuso of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Baltimore; Colonel Woodrow W. Jones III, Superintendent of the Maryland State Police; Chief Michael McDermott of the Federalsburg Police Department; and Colonel Melissa Zebley of the Delaware State Police Department.

According to her guilty plea, in October 2018, Aldridge participated in a conspiracy to traffic Victim 1 led by Joshua Lankford, age 33, of Federalsburg, Maryland. Victim 1 had been engaging in commercial sex acts on her own before being approached by Lankford. Knowing of Victim 1's drug addiction, Lankford lured Victim 1 into performing commercial sex acts at his direction with the promise that he would help Victim 1 make more money to buy a house and attain custody of her son.

Days after luring Victim 1 to conduct commercial sex dates at his direction, Lankford recruited Aldridge, Kevonne Murphy, age 31, of Federalsburg, Maryland; and David Goodwin, age 29 of Federalsburg, Maryland to participate in the sex trafficking conspiracy. Throughout the conspiracy, Aldridge forced Victim 1 to continue to engage in commercial sex acts and maintained Victim 1 in exchange for money from Lankford.

Specifically, on October 29, 2018, the conspiracy members drove Victim 1 back to Maryland from Delaware where she continued to engage in commercial sex acts and provided all funds she was paid to the co-conspirators. After one commercial sex act, Victim 1 returned to the co-conspirators and gave them the money she had collected. Aldridge and Murphy yelled at Victim 1 for not making enough money. Fearing for her safety, Victim 1 attempted to escape by attempting to jump out of Aldridge's moving car. Aldridge then removed her belt and another co-conspirator put it around Victim 1's neck to prevent her from escaping.

Murphy then contacted Lankford and informed him of Victim 1's escape attempt. Subsequently, Aldridge, Lankford, and the other conspiracy members drove to railroad tracks in a dark and remote location where Aldridge and her co-conspirators physically assaulted Victim 1 with Aldridge's belt to maintain her compliance.

After assaulting Victim 1, Aldridge and her co-conspirators transported Victim 1 to a motel in which Victim 1 was prohibited from wearing clothes for the remainder of the evening. Victim 1 was also forced to take a cold shower to cause her to suffer. Later that night, the co-conspirators drafted a sex acts sheet which listed acts that the victim would be required to perform for customers moving forward. The sex acts sheet was later recovered pursuant to a search warrant of the motel room.

As detailed in his plea agreement, on the morning of October 30, 2018, Victim 1 accessed Aldridge's cell phone and called 911. Upon arrival at the motel room, Murphy opened the door for Delaware State police troopers. Troopers saw Victim 1 standing behind Murphy and Victim 1 began indicating that she was in distress. The three conspirators were then detained.

Report suspected instances of human trafficking and sex trafficking to HSI's tip line at 866-DHS-2ICE (1-866-347-2423) or by completing its [online tip form](#). Both are staffed around the clock by investigators.

United States Attorney Erik L. Barron and Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke commended the HSI Baltimore and Philadelphia offices, the Maryland State Police Department, the Federalsburg Police Department, and the Delaware State Police Department for their work in the investigation. Mr. Barron thanked Assistant U.S. Attorney Mary W. Setzer and Leah Branch of the Department of Justice's Human Trafficking Prosecution unit, who are prosecuting the case.

For more information on the Maryland U.S. Attorney's Office, its priorities, and resources available to help the community, please visit <https://www.justice.gov/usao-md/human-trafficking> and <https://www.justice.gov/usao-md/community-outreach>.

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**Topic(s):**

Human Trafficking

**Component(s):**

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