

THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
SOUTHERN DISTRICT *of* TEXAS

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Southern District of Texas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Man admits to enticing South Texas minor into commercial sex

HOUSTON – A 23-year-old man has entered a guilty plea for enticement of a minor online, announced U.S. Attorney Jennifer B. Lowery.

Today, Malcom Lenard Thomas, Houston, admitted he communicated via Instagram with whom he thought was a 15-year-old female.

He connected with the individual in October 2021. In those conversations, he conveyed his expectations to recruit her to engage in commercial sex in Houston for his own financial benefit, calling it the rules of “the game.”

Through numerous exchanges over social media and other means, he instructed her how to send him money. He then purchased a bus ticket for her to travel to Houston. He made arrangements to pick her up on Oct. 29, 2021. Upon his arrival, law enforcement took him into custody.

As part of his plea, he admitted to sending the bus ticket knowing the minor was coming to Houston to engage in commercial sex. He claimed his role would be to provide her with protection.

U.S. District Judge Charles Eskridge will impose sentencing Sept. 15. At that time, Thomas faces a mandatory minimum of 10 years and up to life federal prison and a possible \$250,000 maximum fine.

Thomas will remain in custody pending that hearing.

The Human Trafficking Rescue Alliance (HTRA) conducted the investigation.

HTRA law enforcement includes members of the Houston Police Department, FBI, Homeland Security Investigations, Texas Attorney General's Office, IRS-Criminal Investigation, Department of Labor (DOL), DOL – Wage and Hour Division, Department of State, Texas Alcoholic and Beverage Commission, Texas Department of Public Safety, Department of Homeland Security – Office of Inspector General (OIG), Social Security Administration – OIG and Sheriff's Offices in Harris and Montgomery counties in coordination with District Attorney's offices in Harris, Montgomery and Fort Bend Counties.

Established in 2004, the United States Attorney's office in Houston formed HTRA to combine resources with federal, state and local enforcement agencies and prosecutors, as well as non-governmental service

organizations to target human traffickers while providing necessary services to those that the traffickers victimized. Since its inception, HTRA has been recognized as both a national and international model in identifying and assisting victims of human trafficking and prosecuting those engaged in trafficking offenses.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Sherri L. Zack is prosecuting this case.

Topic(s):

Human Trafficking

Component(s):

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