Woodbridge man to serve 15 years for sex-trafficking girls in Dumfries, Springfield motels

* Staff Reports

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A Woodbridge man was sentenced Friday to 15 years in prison in connection with sex-trafficking young women held against their will at Dumfries and Springfield-area motels in 2017, according to the U.S. Attorney’s office and related court documents.

Cornell Devore Rhymes, 32, conspired with others, including Justin Robinson and Markus Plummer, who were previously convicted, to force and coerce young women into commercial sex work during August 2017, U.S. Department of Justice prosecutors said in the news release.

Over a period of about three months, Rhymes and the other men “recruited young women, including a minor, into commercial sex work,” prosecutors said.

“The men advertised the women for sex acts, set their ‘dates’ and collected and retained the profits,” the news release said.

The men’s crimes came to light after one of their victims, a 16-year-old female runaway, managed to contact police from the Motel 6 in Dumfries. Officers rescued her at the motel, according to court documents.

Before his trial, Rhymes pleaded guilty possession of a firearm as a felon, after law-enforcement officers executed a search warrant and seized a gun from his home.

The case was investigated by the FBI Washington Field Office’s Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Force, composed of FBI agents, and detectives from the Fairfax County, Arlington County, Prince William County, Leesburg and Alexandria City Police departments, the Loudoun County and Fauquier County sheriff’s offices, Washington Metropolitan Police, George Mason University Police, the United States Marshal’s Service and agents of various Office of Inspector Generals.

This case was brought to the task force by the Prince William County Police Department as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse.