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Trafficking Charges Accuse Trio of Forcing Teen into Prostitution

Houston, TX – Three people have been arrested and charged with the first-degree felony of human trafficking for allegedly smuggling a 15-year-old Mexican girl into the United States and forcing her into prostitution in Houston, District Attorney Patricia Lykos announced Thursday.

Lykos praised the work of Houston Police Department investigators, especially citing the performance of Officers Chris Cegielski, Phil Munoz and Ruben Trevino. They rescued the girl on May 4 as she was hiding in an apartment in the 8500 block of Broadway. Her mother and a family friend had alerted officers that the girl was trying to get help.

Defendants are Jorge Taxis Montano, 24; Sonia Tecuapacho, 24; and Jorge Luis Aguila-Cuapio, a 19-year-old who is also accused of having sex with the girl.

The teenager told authorities that Aguila-Cuapio told her there was legitimate restaurant work available for her in Houston, to make money to send to her ailing mother back in Mexico. She was allegedly smuggled across the border about four months ago and forced to become a prostitute who solicited clients in local bars and cantinas.

Investigators said she told of being beaten if she did not make her nightly “quota” of money. She told police that she was warned that if she tried to leave the prostitution work, her family would be harmed. She was also supplied with fake identification that listed her age as 21.

The trafficking charge alleges that the three knowingly transported the girl with the intent and knowledge that she would be forced to engage in prostitution. The charge, upon conviction, carries punishment ranging from probation to up to life in prison and \$10,000 fine. Aguila-Cuapio is also charged with the first-degree felony of aggravated sexual assault of a person younger than 17 years of age.

Houston police were assisted in the investigation by the Major Offender Division of the District Attorney’s Office. Lykos has made the prosecution of human trafficking offenses a priority in her administration, and pledged to coordinate investigations and cases with state and federal agencies. “These horrendous crimes will not be tolerated here,” Lykos said.

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