



Department of Justice

Office of the United States Attorney
Northern District of California

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**BAY AREA RESIDENT CONVICTED OF PRODUCTION OF CHILD
PORNOGRAPHY AND SEX TRAFFICKING OF A MINOR**

SAN FRANCISCO – Kenneth Orlando Sparks was convicted of production of child pornography and sex trafficking of a minor by a federal jury, announced United States Attorney Ismail J. Ramsey and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Special Agent in Charge Robert K. Tripp. The verdicts followed a week-long jury trial before the Hon. Vince Chhabria, United States District Judge.

The jury found that Sparks, 36, of Oakland, Calif., produced child pornography by recording multiple videos of himself having sex with a minor victim in July 2019. The jury also found that Sparks engaged in sex trafficking of a minor for his actions enticing, recruiting, and transporting the minor victim to Oakland and San Francisco to engage in commercial sex work on “the Blade” (a generic term used to describe both cities’ commercial sex strips).

Evidence at trial highlighted Sparks’ text messages and social media communications with the minor victim and others, in which Sparks arranged to transport the minor to and from the Blade and offered her advice and instruction while she was working on the Blade. Evidence at trial also demonstrated that Sparks provided the minor accommodation in the Bay Area (including at the location where the child pornography was filmed) in furtherance of her engaging in commercial sex. Trial evidence also demonstrated Sparks had been warned about

the minor's age and nevertheless transported her to the Bay Area for commercial sex on three occasions after receiving the warning.

The investigation began after Sparks and the minor victim were stopped by San Francisco Police Department officers in July 2019. During the traffic stop, SFPD officers learned the passenger in the car was a minor and observed evidence of her involvement in commercial sex work.

A federal grand jury indicted Sparks on September 29, 2021, charging him with one count each of production of child pornography, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2251(a); sex trafficking of a minor, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1591(a)(1), (b)(2), (c); coercion and enticement of a minor, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2422(b); and receipt of child pornography, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2252(a)(2). The government dismissed the receipt of pornography charge before trial and the jury acquitted Sparks of the enticement charge.

Sparks faces a maximum statutory sentence of 30 years in prison and a minimum of 15 years in prison, a lifetime term of supervised release, a \$250,000 fine, plus restitution and a special assessment for the production of child pornography conviction. Sparks faces life in prison, a minimum of 10 years in prison, a lifetime term of supervised release, a \$250,000 fine, as well as restitution and a special assessment for the sex trafficking of a minor conviction. However, any sentence following conviction would be imposed by the court after consideration of the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and the federal statute governing the imposition of a sentence, 18 U.S.C. § 3553.

Judge Chhabria has not yet scheduled Sparks's sentencing hearing. He remains free on bond, pending further hearings.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Ilham Hosseini and Alethea Sargent are prosecuting the case with the assistance of Veronica Hernandez and Megan Pagaduan. The prosecution is the result of an investigation by the FBI and San Francisco Police Department.

Further Information:

Case #: 21-CR-00281-VC

A copy of this press release will be placed on the U.S. Attorney's Office's website at www.usdoj.gov/usao/can.

Electronic court filings and further procedural and docket information are available at <https://ecf.cand.uscourts.gov/cgi-bin/login.pl>.

Judges' calendars with schedules for upcoming court hearings can be viewed on the court's website at www.cand.uscourts.gov.

All press inquiries to the U.S. Attorney's Office should be directed to Abraham Simmons at (415) 436-7264 or by e-mail at Abraham.Simmons@usdoj.gov.