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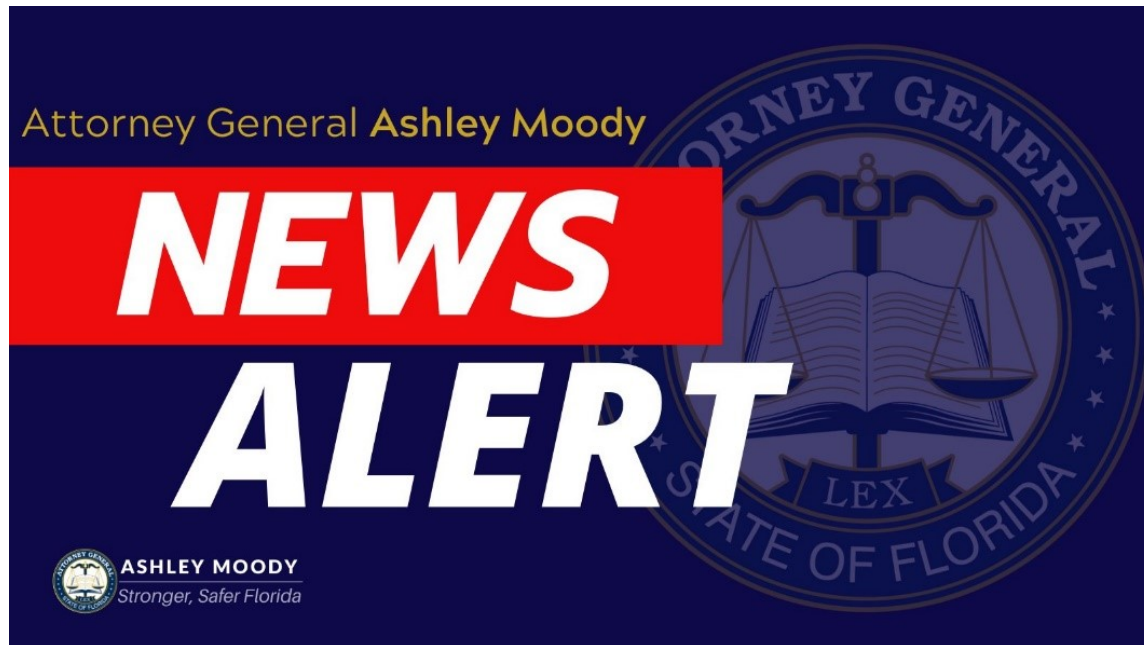
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OFFICE OF THE
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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

AG Moody's Statewide Prosecutors Charge Couple Operating Massive Human Trafficking Ring Involving More Than 30 Victims



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution is charging a Florida couple with human trafficking, RICO, sexual battery, money laundering and other serious counts for operating a massive trafficking ring. According to a Homeland Security investigation, Marquett James and Alyson Marquett recruited and forced victims to engage in commercial sex work in various locations in Florida and across the country.

The HSI investigation uncovered James and Marquett used violence against women who attempted to leave the operation. The investigation also uncovered victims branded with tattoos, including James' name. Authorities believe more than 32 victims are involved in this ring.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "Through coercion and violence, a Florida couple operated a massive human trafficking ring that victimized more than 30 women. The couple branded these women with tattoos, took control of their finances, and forced them to engage in hundreds of sex acts. Working with law enforcement we shut down this human trafficking ring and rescued victims."

According to the HSI investigation, James and Marquett worked together to operate a trafficking ring, in which James served as the main trafficker and Marquett assisted in several aspects of the operation. On multiple occasions, both James and Marquett used similar threats of abuse and intimidation to force victims into sex work. The investigation revealed that James recruited victims working at nightclubs. The defendants advertised the women's services online and scheduled the victims' dates with other men. After the dates, the defendants took the proceeds. One victim did not have a personal bank account. James took all the funds for the illicit services.

The investigation also uncovered that James opened multiple corporations to attempt to hide the illicit activity when arranging advertising or travel for the victims.

James and Marquett are each charged with human trafficking, conspiracy to commit human trafficking, RICO and conspiracy to commit RICO, sexual battery and money laundering, among other felony charges.

Attorney General Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution will handle the case.

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