



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Hotel staff alerts police to human trafficking case

Howard County police have charged an Elkton man with human trafficking after they investigated a tip from staff at an Ellicott City hotel.

Berris Munroe, 39, of Rolling Road in Elkton, was charged with human trafficking, prostitution and disorderly conduct after detectives discovered evidence that he was trafficking a 21-year-old woman. He was arrested and later released on \$15,000 bond.

Police were contacted by staff at a hotel in Ellicott City who reported suspected prostitution in one of their rooms. Officers responded and found the 21-year-old woman in the room with Munroe. Through investigation, detectives learned that Munroe would arrange transportation for the woman to come from New York on a regular basis after advertising her as a prostitute on the website Backpage.

Through investigation, police believe Munroe was taking money from the woman after he arranged for her to meet with numerous men for the purpose of prostitution.

Detectives referred the woman to victim advocate services to help her return home to New York.

“We will not tolerate human trafficking in Howard County,” said Police Chief Gary Gardner. “The police department will continue to devote resources to arresting traffickers and doing all we can to help and protect victims.”

Howard County has an ongoing effort to combat prostitution, human trafficking and related offenses. The county recently created a dedicated account to fund victims’ services and additional police training, and added a second full-time detective to investigate human trafficking cases. Investigators are focused on arresting traffickers and offering assistance to victims through housing, treatment, transportation and other help.

“We are pleased to see that our focus on this issue in Howard County is having an impact,” said County Executive Allan H. Kittleman. “Our strategies of devoting funds to address human trafficking and increasing police resources are paying off in ways that are helping real victims and taking offenders off the streets.”

Howard County detectives regularly monitor the website Backpage, which is known by police to be used for prostitution, often involving girls who are victims of trafficking. Police recently placed their own ad on Backpage, warning men not to engage in prostitution or human trafficking in Howard County.

Anyone with information about human trafficking in Howard County, should call 410-313-STOP or email HCPDcrimetips@howardcountymd.gov.

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