



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Local man charged with human trafficking

Woman safe after observant officers pick up on signs she may be victim

Howard County police have charged a Pikesville man with human trafficking after an investigation revealed he was forcing women into prostitution and taking their money.

Detectives were called around 1:30 a.m. on March 23 after patrol officers stopped a car in which the driver, William O. Murray, 29, of Arrowhead Road, appeared to be having a medical emergency. Officers suspected Murray had taken drugs and arranged for him to be transported to the hospital. Officers found a 34-year-old female passenger in the car and suspected she may be a victim of human trafficking.

Through investigation, detectives believe Murray has been trafficking as many as nine women in the area. It appears that Murray placed ads on the website Backpage, which is known to be used for prostitution. He would allegedly coordinate appointments for the girls and force them to perform sex acts for money, which he would then take for himself.

Police believe that many of the women became dependent on Murray, who would supply them with heroin or withhold the drug. Detectives also believe Murray controlled when the women were permitted to eat and sleep and often forced them to stay awake to engage in prostitution. The investigation showed that Murray had transported women all over Maryland to various hotels to meet with men.

Upon his release from the hospital around 4 a.m., Murray was taken into custody. Police found him in possession of \$500 and multiple cell phones. He was charged with human trafficking and prostitution, and was later released from the Howard County Detention Center on \$15,000 bond.

Police worked with local service organizations to provide emergency assistance, drug treatment and shelter to the victim who was in the car with Murray at the time of his medical emergency. Detectives are continuing to investigate Murray and his connections to additional victims. Anyone with information should call 410-313-STOP or email HCPDcrimetips@howardcountymd.gov.

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