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## News Releases



NOVEMBER 26, 2012 CHICAGO, IL

### Former Chicago-area massage parlor owner sentenced to life in prison for sex trafficking 4 women

CHICAGO — A former northwest suburban massage parlor owner was sentenced Monday to life in federal prison for crimes including sex trafficking, forced labor, harboring illegal aliens, confiscating passports to further forced labor, and extortion. These crimes were committed against four foreign women whom he mentally and physically abused while forcing them to work for him.

The life sentence resulted from a joint investigation conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), and the Cook County Sheriff's Office. The Cook County State's Attorney's Office assisted in the investigation, which was coordinated by the Cook County Human Trafficking Task Force.

Alex Campbell, 47, formerly of Glenview, Ill., operated the Day and Night Spa on Northwest Highway in Mt. Prospect, Ill. He used violence and threats of violence to force three women from Ukraine and one from Belarus to work for him without pay and, at times, little to no subsistence between July 2008 and January 2010.

Campbell, aka "Dave" and "Daddy," called himself "Cowboy." He was sentenced to life in prison Nov. 26 by U.S. District Judge Robert Gettleman, Northern District of Illinois, and ordered to pay about \$124,000 restitution. There is no parole in the federal prison system.

"They (the victims) have a life sentence — all of them...and their life sentence at your hands compels a life sentence for you," Judge Gettleman said in imposing sentence.

Campbell was convicted at trial in January of three counts each of forced labor, harboring illegal aliens for financial gain, and confiscating passports and other immigration documents to force the victims to work, and one count each of sex trafficking by force, and extortion. He faced a mandatory minimum sentence of 15 years in prison and a maximum of life on the sex-trafficking count alone, and the judge also imposed maximum prison terms ranging from five to 20 years on each of the remaining counts, to run concurrent with the life sentence.

"The seriousness of Campbell's crimes cannot be overstated, nor could the government put into words the magnitude of harm or the life-altering consequences of Campbell's actions...An evaluation of the seriousness of what Campbell has done must necessarily begin by looking at his victims, whose lives he upended, dreams he shattered, ideals he undermined, and whose faith in humanity he so cruelly crushed," the government argued in urging a life sentence.

"If you treat human beings as property, to be branded, beaten, raped and sold, the law will punish you to the greatest extent possible," said Gary S. Shapiro, Acting U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois. "This sentence ensures Alex Campbell's incapacitation, which will prevent him from victimizing other women."

"Alex Campbell abused women by violently coercing them into labor and commercial sex. By working together with law enforcement and community groups, those women were able to testify about that abuse," said Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Attorney General for the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. "Today's sentence is a victory not only for the department and the Human Trafficking Task Force, but also for those women who so bravely came forward and told the truth about their exploitation."

"This life sentence sends a clear message to those who think they can callously prey upon vulnerable women to turn a profit," said Gary J. Hartwig, special agent-in-charge of HSI Chicago. "The servitude, abuse and torture of other human beings will not be tolerated. HSI will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to ensure that those who engage in human trafficking are held accountable for their actions."

Cook County Sheriff Thomas J. Dart, whose sheriff's police initiated the investigation, said, "I am extremely proud of the effort and resolution of all the agencies involved with the successful investigation, conviction and now sentencing of such a violent individual."

All four victims testified as government witnesses at trial, as well as co-defendant Danielle John, 25, who pleaded guilty before trial to two counts of harboring illegal aliens for financial gain. She was sentenced previously to three years' probation. In addition to the trial victims, the government presented evidence of about 20 women victimized by Campbell.

The trial showed that Campbell recruited and groomed foreign women without legal status in the United States to become part of his "family," which he claimed was an international organization that would provide them with support. He offered them jobs in his massage parlor, a place to live, assistance with immigration, and lured each of them to enter into a romantic relationship with him. After gaining their trust, he forced the victims to get tattooed with his moniker, which he said made them his property and allowed him to stop paying them. At the same time, he acquired the women's passports and visas. The women were forced to work long hours every day and do as Campbell instructed them, and they were beaten and punished if they disobeyed him.

Trial testimony established that Campbell confiscated passports and identity documents from three of the victims, as well as harbored and transported them to ensure their continued labor. Campbell forced one victim to engage in commercial sex acts with customers at other massage parlors, but not at the Day and Night Spa, which testimony showed he operated "cleanly" to avoid problems with law enforcement. He extorted another victim to pay him more than \$25,000 to leave the "family" by threatening to send a sexually explicit video recording to her parents in Belarus.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Diane MacArthur and Steven Grimes, Northern District of Illinois, and John Richmond, Special Litigation Counsel with the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division's Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit, successfully prosecuted the case.

Human trafficking is one of the most heinous crimes that HSI investigates. In its worst manifestation, human trafficking is akin to modern-day slavery. HSI relies on tips from the public to dismantle these organizations. Trafficking victims are often hidden in plain sight, voiceless and scared. HSI encourages the public to report suspicious activity by calling HSI's Tip Line at 1-866-DHS-