



**ERIK NASARENKO**  
VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
**NEWS RELEASE**



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## Fresno Man Sentenced for Child Sex Trafficking

VENTURA, Calif. – District Attorney Erik Nasarenko announced today that Javontay Bess (DOB 03/26/96), of Fresno, was sentenced on June 16, 2023, in Ventura County Superior Court to 15 years 4 months prison. Bess previously pled guilty on April 13, 2023, to felony human trafficking, by causing a minor to engage in a commercial sex act.

In May 2019, an alert citizen called the Ventura County Sheriff's Office to report suspicious circumstances and possible sex trafficking at a Camarillo motel. Ventura County Sheriff's detectives initiated an investigation into the sexual exploitation of a 16-year-old victim. Both the minor victim as well as the suspect were from outside Ventura County. Detectives ultimately determined that Bess used online advertising to arrange commercial sex acts with the 16-year-old victim at Ventura County motels.

Deputy District Attorney Rikole Kelly, a member of the Ventura County District Attorney's Office Sexual Assault Human Trafficking Unit, prosecuted the case.

"Human trafficking inflicts unspeakable harm upon some of the most vulnerable members of society—in this case, a child," Kelly said. "Ventura County will never be a soft target for these types of crimes and we will continue to hold perpetrators accountable."

Deputy District Attorney Kelly is also a member of the Ventura County Human Trafficking Task Force (VCHTTF), which was established in 2019. Co-led by the Ventura County Sheriff's Office and Interface Children & Family Services, the task force works to prevent, identify, investigate, disrupt, and prosecute human trafficking crimes in our community. In addition to holding perpetrators accountable, VCHTTF provides services and resources to victims, spreads community awareness and compiles county-level data and statistics.

Sex trafficking is not a victimless crime. Victims are often youths who are persuaded into commercial sex under the guise of a romantic relationship, financial gain, or a glamorized lifestyle. Combating this problem is a top priority within the Ventura County District Attorney's Office. Community members are urged to become more aware of the pervasive problem of human trafficking and to call 911 to report suspicious activity.

**Case: 2019019111**

**Defendant Information:**

Javontay Bess (DOB 03/26/96)

Fresno

**Charges Pled To:**

- PC 236.1(c)(1) – Felony human trafficking of a minor

**Special Allegation:**

- CRC 4.421(b)(4) – Defendant was on parole at the time of the offense

