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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 1, 2024

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## **Human Trafficker Sentenced to Life for Trafficking 17-Year-Old**

**ORANGE COUNTY, Fla.** – An Orange County man was found guilty of Human Trafficking and sentenced to life in prison for trafficking a runaway juvenile for several months.

The 17-year-old victim was befriended by a woman after running away from foster care in May 2016 who then took the victim to Bobby Brooks, 47. Brooks immediately required the victim to participate in prostitution including engaging in sexual intercourse with the victim himself. Over the next several months, Brooks took the victim to various hotels in Orlando and traveled to Georgia with the victim in furtherance of commercial sexual activity. Brooks preyed on the victim's vulnerability and status as a foster child to manipulate the victim into continuing these acts.

Brooks ran a prostitution enterprise and directed other prostitutes to teach the victim how to further this enterprise on his behalf. Brooks forced the victim to engage in commercial sex acts including advertising the victim's prostitution services on a website known as Backpage. Backpage was used by individuals looking to advertise sexual services to include prostitution and trafficking. The defendant used threats of violence and physical abuse to force the victim to continue with these acts.

In August 2016, while in Georgia, the victim was able to get away from the defendant and purchase a bus ticket to Texas to escape. The victim eventually returned to Florida and gave a statement to law enforcement regarding her runaway status and the months of trafficking by Brooks, prompting the Metropolitan Bureau of Investigation to begin its investigation. The MBI identified several suspects and key witnesses in the case and the victim provided positive identification of the suspects through a series of interviews and a photo lineup.

After a four-day trial, Brooks was found guilty of Human Trafficking for Commercial Sexual Activity of a Child under 18. Human trafficking of a minor carries a mandatory life sentence. The judge immediately sentenced Brooks to life in prison.

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