

ATLANTIC COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

4997 Unami Boulevard, Mays Landing, NJ 08330

Theodore F. L. Housel
Prosecutor

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release
Aug. 6, 2009
2 Page(s)

For further information contact:
Madelaine Vitale 609-909 -7855
or 609-457-7359

MAYS LANDING – Four men were charged with engaging in human trafficking and had their initial court appearance today, Atlantic County Prosecutor Ted Housel announced.

Superior Court Judge Albert Garofolo presided over the video hearing and advised the suspects of their rights. They are as follows; Malik Canty, 30, of Union County; Felix Nunez, 32, of Union County, Cedric Crews, 35, of Essex County and Daryl Baskerville, 29, of Newark, Assistant Prosecutor Danielle Buckley stated.

It is alleged that the men transported a 16-year-old girl and a 22-year-old woman from Elizabeth in Union County to Atlantic City on or about July 21 for the purpose of forcing them to engage in prostitution by threats of serious bodily harm and physical restraint.

On July 22 Atlantic City police arrested Canty, Nunez, Crews and Baskerville at the Martinique Motel located on Pacific Avenue, after an investigation into alleged prostitution. The men were initially charged with firearm possession offenses and promoting prostitution. Additional charges of first-degree human trafficking were signed by the Prosecutor's Office today. The element of force differentiates the prostitution charge and the human-trafficking charge, Buckley said.

At today's hearing, Superior Court Judge Garofolo set bail at \$1 million full cash for each of the suspects. The judge also ordered that the men have no contact with the victims.

According to Prosecutor Housel, this is the first time the 2005 statute has been charged in this County. "The abuse of young girls and women by those who would force them into the sex trade is an evil which this Office will not tolerate. The prostitutes in cases such as this are truly victims and I view them as such. Severe sanctions against the perpetrators will deter both trafficking and prostitution in the long run. The severity of the penalties for violation of this statute aptly demonstrates the Legislature's belief that the exploitation of women must be eradicated."

Prosecutor's Office Detective Bill Adamson, Atlantic City Police Detective Sergeant Andrew Leonard, Lt. Michael Russack, and Detective Michael Ruzzo, conducted the investigation.

If indicted and convicted, Canty, Nunez, Crews and Baskerville could each face 20 years to life in prison.

*****These charges are merely an accusation and not proof of guilt. In all criminal cases, a charged defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. Anyone with information involving serious crimes is asked to call the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office at 609-909-7800 or go to the Prosecutor's Office Web site at <http://www.acpo.org/tips.html> and provide information by filling out the form anonymously on the Submit a Tip page. People can also call Crime Stoppers at 609-652-1234 or 1-800-658-8477 (TIPS). Crime Stoppers offers cash rewards for information leading to the arrest and indictment of those who commit crimes in Atlantic County.**