



Yakima Police Department



News Release

Subject: Child Sex Trafficking Case

Contact: Yakima Police Captain Jay Seely – 576-6319

Communications & Public Affairs Director Randy Beehler – 901-1142

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Suspects in Child Sex Trafficking Case Arrested

On Saturday, February 29th, Yakima Police Department (YPD) detectives and officers arrested two suspects in a child sex trafficking case. The suspects were apprehended at a residence where an incident involving a juvenile female victim occurred.

The two suspects are scheduled to make preliminary appearances in Yakima County Superior Court this afternoon.

In January of this year, the YPD Special Assault Unit began an investigation into suspected child sex trafficking. Child sex trafficking refers to the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a minor for the purpose of a commercial sex act (as defined by the United States Department of Justice).

Through the investigation, detectives learned that a juvenile female victim conversed with an adult male that she didn't know via social media. Upon meeting in person, the adult male transported the juvenile to a residence in Yakima and left her in the care and company of two other adult males that she did not know. These subjects are believed to have committed the crime of commercial sexual exploitation of a minor against the juvenile female. This crime is Washington State's equivalent to a juvenile sex trafficking charge.

The Yakima Police Department is recommending charges for both suspects, including the charges of commercial sexual exploitation of a minor, sexual exploitation of a minor, rape 2nd degree and indecent liberties. High bail has been requested for both subjects due to the nature of the charges that were committed against a vulnerable youth.

The YPD would like to thank the Yakima County Prosecutor's Office Special Assault Unit for its outstanding assistance throughout this investigation. The YPD would also like to recognize the ASPEN victim advocacy program in Yakima for its continued hard work and dedication in serving the victims of human trafficking and sexual assault.

The number of criminal investigations linked to unmonitored social media use by children continues to rise at an alarming level. "We encourage parents to be engaged with their children and to monitor their use of social media applications," Captain Seely said.