

The WATCH Chronicle



WATCH is a court monitoring and judicial policy non-profit located in Minneapolis, Minnesota. WATCH works to make the justice system more responsive to crimes of violence against women and children, focusing on greater safety for victims of violence and greater accountability for violent offenders.

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A view from The Link, where survivors learn how to put their lives back together

Trafficking survivors share their stories

By Pamela Schmid

Marie has a message for people who think it should be easy to break free from the “the lifestyle” of sexual exploitation: It is anything but.

“You’ve got money issues. You’ve got drug issues,” she said. “You’ve got PTSD, depression. You’ve got to look yourself in the mirror every day and tell yourself to get up and do it. Financially it’s hard and mentally it’s hard because every time you can’t do something you want to run back.”

The 21-year-old knows the struggle all too well. She was 13 when she was first trafficked for sex, lured in by a teen-ager she had met at a juvenile treatment center. She drifted in and out of “the life,” but it was not until she gave birth to a daughter in 2014 that she became determined to leave for good. She credits The Link with giving her the support and services she needed to find another way to live. Even so, she has to remind herself every day that she’s better off out of the life than in it.

Recently she and Jen, also 21 and a fellow trafficking survivor, shared their stories with *The WATCH Chronicle*, speaking frankly about their ongoing struggles to turn their lives around. Their names have been changed in order to protect their privacy.

Both Marie and Jen found help after years on the street. Today, as members of The Link’s Survivor Advisory Committee, they draw on their experiences to speak with those who work within the justice system, spreading the word about the challenges faced by exploited youth.

They understand the challenges. From a young age, “the life” was all they knew. Both youth had mothers who had been involved in sex work and from adolescence on, they were left to fend for themselves on the streets of Minneapolis.

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The Link, based in Minneapolis, provides services for exploited youth.

“The thinking is that every bad thing that happens wouldn’t be happening if you were still with your trafficker. If I was still prostituting, I wouldn’t have to worry about food stamps. I could get some shoes.”

“The reasons why youth get involved in the life: it’s not a choice. It’s a lack of other options and choices,” said Beth Holger-Ambrose, executive director of The Link. “It’s difficult for any of us to make a change, let alone someone who experienced so many types of abusive, traumatic situations in their life.”

The Link provides housing and other services for sexually exploited youth, working with kids “both in the life, out of the life, one foot in and one foot out,” Holger-Ambrose said. “We’re just hoping that eventually ... they make the decision that, hey – maybe there’s something else I want to do.”

For Jen and Marie, staying with their traffickers meant that at least they had food, shelter and clothes. Leaving meant they no longer had to sell their bodies to strangers, but they might not have a coat in the winter. They might go hungry. Even worse, for Marie, her daughter might, too.

“Me not being able to buy my daughter a gallon of milk is a trigger,” she said. “The thinking is that every bad thing that happens wouldn’t be happening if you were still with your trafficker. If I was still prostituting, I wouldn’t have to worry about food stamps. I could get some shoes. You don’t have to worry about stuff like that when you’re in the lifestyle.”

Jen had been in the life seven years before she first sought help at age 18. She relapsed a handful of times before she finally decided to leave for good. A customer had threatened to kill her and leave her for dead. She was pregnant at the time, and it was the first time for as long as she could remember that she actually felt afraid.

“I remember crying so hard,” she said. “If you ain’t never felt nothing for a long time and you finally do, it feels weird. I was like the walking dead, and I finally felt fear. I was actually scared, and it shocked me.”

Jen credits her pregnancy with scaring her into escaping the life. She has been out since April –her longest stretch yet.

It was Jen’s example that inspired Marie, whom she’d known since childhood, to consider leaving the life. Over the years, Jen encouraged her friend to join her at The Link “whenever you’re ready.”

“Two years later, I was finally ready,” Marie said. Today, she’s working toward earning a GED and then hopes to enroll in classes at Century College in St. Paul.

Jen earned her GED in 2012; since then, she’s taken classes on and off at Minneapolis Community and Technical College. In January, she enrolled in its human services program. Her dream is to make a living helping youth who face the same types of challenge she did.

At the same time, Jen is ready to move on from being a spokesperson for survivors. “I want to be on the other side,” she said. “I have a whole other identity.” □



IN THE NEWS

Coordinated approach by feds has led to more trafficking convictions in Minnesota

A heightened emphasis on human trafficking by the U.S. Department of Justice and its chief local prosecutor, Andrew Luger, has "paid off with an increased willingness by victims to testify, prosecutors say, while also revealing the sheer volume of local prostitution cases.

In [a Feb. 2 report](#) in the *Star Tribune*, Mr. Luger calls sex trafficking a top priority since he took office two years ago. Last December, he "took the uncommon step of personally trying the case of a suspect whose victims included a sixth-grade girl he raped and prostituted." The subsequent conviction against Lee Andrew Paul, 32, of Bloomington was "aided in no small part by the willingness of his victims to tell their stories in court."



Andy Luger, Minnesota's U.S. Attorney

Read the full *Star Tribune* article [here](#).

Femicide report's "horrific" number: 34

Killings in Minnesota from domestic violence rose to at least 34 in 2015 – including four children, according to a report released late last month.

The [Femicide Report](#) is compiled by the [Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women](#) from news reports and details from police, prosecutors, courts, battered women's programs and acquaintances of the victims. The 2015 number represents a 33 percent rise over 2014, when there were 23 such deaths, according to the coalition. "One is too many; 34 is horrific," said Becky Smith, program manager in public awareness for the coalition. The coalition said the final tally might not include killings among marginalized communities, since those deaths "frequently go unreported in mainstream media."

Last year's victims included 22 women, three men and nine children, friends or family members who intervened in a domestic-violence situation, according to the report.

Read the full report [here](#).

Read the *Star Tribune's* coverage of the report [here](#).

- What systemic changes does the coalition recommend to help reduce numbers of domestic-violence killings?
- The report found that 13, or 60 percent, of the killers had a documented history of abuse. How many domestic violence-related charges did those killers total among them?

Read the *Star Tribune* story [here](#) to learn more.



Report: Better education about healthy relationships could have helped victims

Survivors of sex trafficking in Minnesota say better education about healthy relationships could have helped prevent their exploitation and abuse.

A 43-page report, "[Voices of Safe Harbor](#)," commissioned by Hennepin County's "No Wrong Door" initiative, was released Jan. 25. It used surveys and focus groups to reach more than 70 youth and older survivors. Caroline Palmer of the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault told [Minnesota Public Radio](#) that many young people reported that the sex education they received in school didn't mesh with reality. The participants said they needed people to respond to their situations with empathy, patience and cultural competency.

Read the full report [here](#).

Read the MPR report [here](#).

State by state, more guns means more killing of women, study suggests

A new study from Boston University has found a strong link between a state's rate of gun ownership and its rate of women murdered by people they know. The study, appearing in [Violence and Gender](#) and summarized in a recent [article in Slate](#) magazine, refutes claims by some that guns make women safer. On the contrary, the study found, relaxing gun laws could have grim consequences for domestic violence.

According to authors Michael Siegel and Emily Rothman, the data suggest that a state's high gun-ownership rate has far greater consequences for the killing of women than for the killing of men. The findings hold special import for policymakers concerned with domestic violence, the *Slate* article noted. Ninety-three percent of women killed by men know the person who killed them. Just having a gun in the home makes the incidence of domestic violence five times more likely to lead to murder, the authors found.

- Read the *Slate* article [here](#).
- Read the abstract of the article [here](#).

Also in the news:

- The prostitution of children has become a top priority for authorities in Washington County. Read the full article [here](#).
- Minnesota Supreme Court upholds conviction in Eric Dean case. Learn the details [here](#).

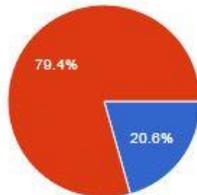
- What are some misconceptions about sexual exploitation detailed by survivors in the report?
- Families play an important role in regard to sex trafficking. Why is this true?

Read the full report [here](#) to learn the answers.



COURT MONITORING BULLETIN: **DISRUPTIONS**

Were there any disruptions in court today?



Yes	33	20.6%
No	127	79.4%

“Slight disruptions by outspoken defendants and people in the audience. Judge calmly asserted control.”

This month, we take a closer look at an important aspect of courtroom decorum: disruptions.

According to a 2001 WATCH report on Judicial Response and Demeanor, judges who maintain a “firm and authoritative demeanor and response” are able to virtually eliminate chaos and disrespectful behavior in the courtroom. The report also noted that, typically, judges who seemed familiar with the court and its routines maintained control of the courtroom, while judges who were new to the court had more difficulty maintaining control.

Between Oct. 1, 2015 and Feb. 12, 2016, WATCH volunteers monitored 160 court hearings in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties. Of those, monitors witnessed some sort of disruption—be it crying babies, phones ringing, or outbursts by the defendant or spectators—in 33 instances. In the remaining 127 cases, no disruptions were observed.

Below is a selection of monitors’ observations:

- “In between cases two females left the court laughing because the defendant was telling them to call him.”
- “Petitioner ... had outburst stating she has violated her OFP against him.”
- “Judge was stern; asked family members to leave, etc.”
- “Lots of loud babies; wasn’t handled.”
- “[Judge] stopped the court to ask someone to take off their hat.”
- “A woman came in to support one of the defendants and was very loud when she came in the middle of someone else’s hearing and was chatty and almost immediately told to be quiet by court personnel.”
- “There were a lot of people ... leaving and entering the court. At one point, a toddler opened the door but a woman went to get him and left with someone. No one addressed it.”
- “One lawyer yelled at another.”
- “The judge’s phone rang. She turned it off, but answered when it rang again. It was the wrong number.”
- “Slight disruptions by outspoken defendants and people in the audience. Judge calmly asserted control.”
- “Child crying, asked to move to a viewing room where they could still watch and hear the proceedings.”
- “Lots of loud babies; wasn’t handled.”

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SEX TRAFFICKING UPDATE

Eight-day trial results in sex-trafficking conviction for ring leader



Rashad R. Ivy was convicted by a Ramsey County jury.

Johnson and others testified that Ivy demanded all the money earned by the women and girls and kept them in line through a mix of enticements, coercion and physical violence.

The leader of a St. Paul-based prostitution ring has been convicted of recruiting at least seven girls and women, including one who turned him in after she was beaten and hospitalized.

A Ramsey County jury on Feb. 9 convicted **Rashad R. Ivy**, 35, of four counts of sex trafficking, three counts of soliciting prostitution and one count of second-degree criminal sexual conduct. He is scheduled to be sentenced on May 20.

Ivy is the eighth person convicted by a Ramsey County jury for sex trafficking girls and women, according to Ramsey County Attorney John Choi.

WATCH volunteers attended the eight-day trial. Two accomplices and several victims testified against Ivy, describing how he and co-defendant **Tarris L. Trapps**, 25, repeatedly used promises of money and cars to lure victims. The men typically would roll up in a rented SUV, tell the women how attractive they were and bring them back to their Jackson St. apartment. Once there, Ivy, Trapps and co-defendant **Danika S. Johnson**, 20, would groom their victims for the sex trade—often beginning with talk about music videos before progressing to back massages and, ultimately, prostitution. Johnson and others testified that Ivy demanded all the money earned by the women and girls and kept them in line through a mix of enticements, coercion and physical violence.

Two female victims testified they met Ivy and Trapps near the sober house where they were living and that the men urged them repeatedly to get into their SUV. When they finally consented, they were driven back to Ivy's house, where they said Ivy and Trapps sexually assaulted them in separate rooms. Ivy later asked them to prostitute for him, promising them a place to live and all the drugs they wanted. One woman testified that Johnson told them she made \$1,000 a night and had two Mercedes. The women later reported the incident to the manager of the sober house and made a statement to police.

In another case, Ivy talked a 23-year-old woman into the business in June 2015, using backpage.com to post an ad for her. After the woman and her 3-year-old son moved in with Ivy, Trapps testified that Ivy would instruct the woman to make a certain amount of money or "I'll [mess] you all up."

After a particularly bad beating last summer, the woman was dropped off at United Hospital, where she reported that she had been beaten and strangled by Ivy and had her head submerged in a bathtub. She also confirmed that she was a victim of sex trafficking.



Tarris L. Trapps and Danika S. Johnson

Johnson testified that she posted ads on backpage.com for herself and others and helped the other women get established in the sex trade. Johnson said she feared leaving Ivy because he had threatened to attack her aunt's home.

Ivy took the stand in his own defense, denying the allegations against him. He said he owned a record and entertainment business and that people made assumptions about him because he enjoyed the company of women. He also denied knowingly driving women to meet "johns" or making money from the women who lived in his house.

Johnson, who pleaded guilty in November to conspiracy to commit sex trafficking, was sentenced to one year in the workhouse. Trapps pleaded guilty last month to sex trafficking and solicitation. His sentencing is set for May 23.

WATCH congratulates Ramsey County prosecutor Karen Kugler for successfully achieving Ivy's conviction. We also commend the victims who courageously shared their stories in the courtroom. ∞

Satterlund receives 10-year sentence for promoting prostitution of minor

The victim said she engaged in sex with clients nine times within a week, giving the money she was paid to Satterlund.

In another case WATCH has followed closely, a 23-year-old Brooklyn Center man was sentenced Feb. 3 to 10 years in prison for promoting the prostitution of a juvenile. **Tony T. Satterlund** was sentenced in Hennepin County District Court after pleading guilty to one felony count of promoting the prostitution of an individual under 18. He faced a maximum sentence of 20 years.

According to a police statement, Satterlund first met the underage victim last August, in a park in Maple Grove. After telling her that he was a pimp, Satterlund took the girl to a Brooklyn Center motel. He and another male posted an ad for the girl on backpages.com, posting under the name "Summer" and "MIA."

Satterlund instructed the victim to answer the phone if men called and ask if they were associated with law enforcement, according to police. The victim said she engaged in sex with clients nine times within a week, giving the money she was paid to Satterlund.

In a statement, Satterlund's victim told Hennepin County District Judge Hilary L. Caligiuri that she believed the 10-year sentence was too lenient. She described how she had to be hospitalized after Satterlund dragged her off the couch, kicked her in the ribs and stepped on her while he laughed. She said she has been diagnosed with PTSD and depression and is currently in residential treatment. ∞

CLARIFICATION: Joseph Nathan Keys

Last month, we reported on a case in Hennepin County District Court involving **Joseph Nathan Keys** of Hopkins. On December 7, Keys received a stayed prison sentence after pleading guilty to a felony charge of making terroristic threats.



Originally, Keys had also been charged with a felony count of domestic assault by strangulation, but that charge was later dropped as part of a plea bargain. We regret that in our reporting, we did not originally seek out comment from the sentencing judge, Fred Karasov. As WATCH later learned, the sentence was based entirely on a plea negotiation between the state and the defense, and was related to issues that the state had proving both charges.

WATCH understands that the article gave the perception that Judge Karasov was intentionally light on the defendant, when in fact this sentence may have been the strongest that the state thought it could have obtained.

It was not our intention to single out Judge Karasov or any individual within the criminal justice system, and we regret that we created the perception of having done so. At the same time, we at WATCH strongly support the idea that court proceedings be as open as possible, and plea bargains—where contributing factors are typically not on the public record—are often far from transparent. We will continue to strive for fairness, even as we push for transparency and accountability in our courts.



WATCH expands to St. Paul



WATCH is expanding eastward! For more than twenty years, we have focused on bringing a public eye to justice in Hennepin County courtrooms. In 2014, WATCH volunteers began crossing the river to monitor sex trafficking hearings in Ramsey County. Now, WATCH has three volunteers per week tracking a variety of cases in Ramsey County: domestic violence at all levels; sexual assaults; violence against children (maltreatment, child endangerment and murder); and violence against women.

If you would like to volunteer for WATCH in Ramsey County, we would love to hear from you! ∞

