

# Sex Trafficker Terrence “T-Rex” Yarbrough Sentenced to Serve 536 Months in Prison

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U.S. District Court Judge S. Thomas Anderson sentenced Terrence Yarbrough, aka “T-Rex,” 38, of Memphis, Tenn., to serve 536 months in prison, the Justice Department announced today. A jury convicted Yarbrough on Dec. 5, 2012 of 10 counts of sex trafficking and one count of conspiracy to commit food stamp fraud.

“The Civil Rights Division is committed to pursuing justice on behalf of vulnerable members of our society,” said Acting Assistant Attorney General Jocelyn Samuels. “Today’s sentence sends a clear message that the United States will not tolerate modern-day slavery and will work tirelessly to restore the rights and dignity of its victims.”

“Today’s sentence of 536 months in prison ensures Terrence Yarbrough, a ruthless predator who inflicted unspeakable physical and emotional harm upon vulnerable young women, will be held accountable for his depraved acts,” said Edward L. Stanton III, U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Tennessee. “We will continue to prosecute those who engage in such reprehensible conduct of coercion and exploitation.”

During the trial, victims recounted a series of violent acts perpetrated by Yarbrough to coerce them into prostituting for him, including being beat with belts, wooden coat hangers, crowbars, padlocks and dog chains; being thrown down stairs; having their heads smashed in car doors; having their legs burned with irons; and being scalded with boiling water.

“The horrific physical violence, sexual abuse, and emotional torment suffered by the victims in this case cannot be undone, but this sentence ensures that their violent and evil predator will face the consequences of his actions,” said A. Todd McCall, Special Agent in Charge of the Memphis Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. “The efforts of the FBI and our law enforcement partners have removed a human trafficker from our streets. We will continue to work together to aggressively pursue and bring to justice those who cruelly exploit others for profit, and to restore the rights and dignity of human trafficking victims.”

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The USDA-Office of Inspector General is committed to the investigation and prosecution of those individuals who fraudulently obtain food stamp benefits,” said Karen Citizen-Wilcox, Special Agent in Charge of the Southeast Region for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Office of the Inspector General. “We are very pleased we were able to work with the U.S. Attorney’s Office and other law enforcement agencies in this case .”

Evidence presented at trial included the testimony of 10 victims identified in the indictment as well as several eyewitnesses. Numerous witnesses testified that Yarbrough repeatedly lured vulnerable victims, some as young as 15 years old, into prostitution with false promises of love, family and prosperity. The evidence showed that any time a victim refused to engage in prostitution, Yarbrough resorted to threats, intimidation and violence. The jury heard testimony that Yarbrough's pattern of recruitment, exploitation, and violent coercion continued for years before his 2009 arrest in St. Louis.

One victim testified that Yarbrough forced her to engage in prostitution the entire time she was pregnant with his child and that he frequently beat her on the stomach when she did not want to comply with his demands. He induced labor through a severe beating in her eighth month of pregnancy, during which time he also had her working as a prostitute in Tunica, Miss. Yarbrough drove her back to Memphis, dropped her off at a hospital, and forced her to resume prostituting the day after her release. At a later date, Yarbrough smashed her on the head with a lamp and kicked out her front teeth when she tried to stop prostituting for him.

Another victim testified that Yarbrough lured her into prostitution by promising to reunite her with their children, then beat her severely when she insisted on seeing them and refused to continue working, punching her in the face so hard that he broke three of her teeth. On another occasion, he beat her knees with a metal pipe, causing injuries that continue to affect her. She also testified that Yarbrough threatened to prostitute their nine-year-old daughter.

Further testimony showed that a victim slept through a phone call from a client after prostituting for days on end with almost no sleep, and that when Yarbrough found out that she had missed the call, he smashed her head into a car door, dragged her by the hair to his hotel room and beat her with his belt. Jurors also saw a letter addressed to the same victim and signed by Yarbrough stating that he was proud she did not scream during the aforementioned beating.

Witnesses testified that as a warning, Yarbrough bragged about his beatings of some victims to other victims. Jurors also saw the "T-Rex" logos Yarbrough tattooed on four separate victims, and heard that he claimed that they had been "branded" as his property. Testimony and jail recordings showed that Yarbrough confiscated his victims' identification documents and money to make it difficult for them to escape.

Jurors also heard testimony that Yarbrough conspired with his mother, Norma Yarbrough Webb, 66, and Michelle Johnson, 41, to fraudulently obtain food stamp benefits while Yarbrough was incarcerated. Johnson and Webb previously pled guilty to related charges.

The case was investigated by the FBI and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Inspector General, with assistance from the St. Louis Police Department. Assistant U.S. Attorney Jonathan Skrmetti and Trial Attorney Benjamin J. Hawk of the United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division's Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit prosecuted the case.