

Case 35

Contributor: Agenfor International

Assessed case number: CR 14 366, United States District Court, Northern District of California

Title: Trafficking in persons, facilitating prostitution

- What type of trafficking/exploitation is being analysed?**

Sexual THB	Forced Labour	Forced Criminal Activities	Minor Exploitation and forced adoption	Polycrime	Other (Specify the type)	All the aforementioned
X						

- Please provide a brief description of the case (about 500 words)**

Omuro was the operator of the website myredbook.com. According to information available on that website as of the date of its seizure by the FBI, myredbook.com purported to provide “Escort, Massage, and Strip Club Reviews”. Although the website could be accessed for free, myredbook.com charged fees for premier placement of prostitution advertisers and for “VIP Membership,” which purportedly allowed customers access to “private forums” and to search reviews of the prostitution services. According to an affidavit submitted in connection with the sentencing hearing, the FBI identified more than 50 juveniles who were also advertisers on myredbook.com for the purpose of prostitution. Co-defendant Annmarie Lanoce pleaded guilty to assisting Omuro with the operation of the myredbook site pursuant to a diversion program that ran into 2016. At sentencing, Omuro was ordered to forfeit more than USD 1.28 million in proceeds from his operation of the site.

- Which is the *modus operandi* of the entities using cyber tools for trafficking and/or exploitation?**

MODUS OPERANDI	Yes/No	Description
Internet: myredbook.com	Yes	The website included escort, massage and prostitution reviews, where also the website



		hosted advertisers for sex workers, complete with explicit photos, lewd physical descriptions, menus of sexual services, hourly and nightly rates, and customer reviews of the sex workers' services.
Other		

• **Please provide more details on the perpetrator(s):**

Was/were the perpetrator(s) male or female?	Male
Which is the nationality of the perpetrator(s)?	American
In which country was he/she, were they operating?	Multiple
Was it an individual or a group?	Individual
Were there any preliminary indicators for early detection?	Yes
Which other aspects are important?	

• **Which were the main characteristics of the victim(s)?**

THB Victims	Involved (x)	Please describe in more detail
Men		
Women	X	
Minors	X	
LGTBI	X	
Country of origin	X	Multiple
Country of exploitation	X	Multiple
Capturing Method		
Coercion Method (debt-bonded, victims' families threatened...)	X	
Handing over the passport		
Other		
Unknown		

• **What were the money laundering mechanisms used by traffickers?**

Money Laundering Mechanisms	Involved (x)	Please describe in more detail
Checks and money orders to anonymous post office boxes		
Back accounts in foreign countries		



Funnel account(s)		
Route cash from different cities		
Money Mules		
Hawala System		
Purchase of corporate vehicles or real estate		
Cash business entities such as restaurants or bars		
Other		
Unknown	X	

• **Has the case been tried or is it still under investigation?**

Legal Procedure	Yes/No	Please describe in more detail
Case with judgment	Yes	In May 2015, Eric Omuro was sentenced to 13 months in prison following his conviction for the use of a facility of interstate commerce to facilitate prostitution.
Under investigation	No	

• **What was the economic evidence of the crime?**

Economic evidence	Yes/No	Please describe in more detail
Money Transfers	No	
Banks Accounts	No	
Unjustified Financial Wealth	No	
Network Accountancy	No	
Financial Study of the Victim	No	
Wallet Cards	No	
Suspicious transactions	No	
Cryptocurrency exchanges or payments	No	
Cash payments	No	
Faster Payments Inwards (FPI) from the same entity	No	
Same mobile number or email address	No	
Hawala Payments	No	
Various bank accounts beneficiaries	No	
Others	No	



Unknown	X	
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• **What activities in internet were considered suspicious?**

Internet Activities	Yes/No	Please describe in more detail
money transfers	No	
Purchases at online gaming sites	No	
Ads on Backpage.com or similar sites	No	
Social media to recruitment	No	
Use of digital platforms to advertise deceptive job offers and to market exploitative services to potential paying customers	Yes	The victims were deceived into thinking that they will be solemnly performing as dancers, through job offers posted by the defendant to job advertisement sites.
Fishing potential victims by posting advertisements	No	
Use of video equipment to stream and broadcast exploitative services	No	
Used of multiple online profiles	No	
Use of specific apps: Please circle the relevant apps or add the name at the end if not listed	use of the website called myredbook.com.	Ex: 1) For Advertising: Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc.; 2) For Recruitment and Communication: FaceTime, IMO, Messenger, Signal, Signal, Skype, Viber, WA, WeChat, Zalo, etc. 3) For Logistic: video-sharing platforms distributing essential logistic instructions, satellite images and photos, planned routes, Google Maps waypoints, GPS data, etc.; Guidance, including mapping applications (Maps.me, Google Maps) for remotely guiding migrants across borders through tailor-made tutorials and YouTube videos containing detailed guides on how to navigate migrant routes, where to cross borders or buy fake documents, how to find smuggling hotspots, shelter or assistance, etc.; 4) For Payments, online transfer of fees and documentation of payment proof via messaging services, hawala, etc. 5) Countermeasures adopted by smugglers to anonymize their services, AppLocks, Secure Folders, burner applications, DiskDigger, private VPN connections, or clone apps, Fake GPS and modified display caller ID (Numberbook). 6) Other:



Others	No	

• **Other relevant information or important case specificities:**

		Please describe in more detail

