

NEWS RELEASE

Luther Strange

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AG STRANGE ANNOUNCES ARREST OF FLORENCE ATTORNEY, ANOTHER MAN FOR MULTIPLE COUNTS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING, OTHER CRIMES

(MONTGOMERY)--Attorney General Luther Strange announced the arrest today of an attorney and another man from Florence on a 24 count indictment which included multiple charges of human trafficking and other crimes. Edward Ray Dillard, also known as Chip Dillard, 51, an attorney, and Timothy Wylie Staggs, 83, were arrested and taken to the Lauderdale County Jail.

Attorney General Strange's Office presented evidence to a Lauderdale County grand jury, resulting in an indictment* this morning against Dillard and Staggs.

Specifically, the indictment charges Dillard with seven counts of human trafficking in the second-degree, four counts of conspiracy to commit human trafficking in the second-degree, one count of sexual abuse in the second-degree, two counts of making terroristic threats and one count of intimidating a witness. Staggs is charged, in the same indictment, with five counts of human trafficking in the second-degree and four counts of conspiracy to commit human trafficking.

Human Trafficking is defined as knowingly recruiting, enticing, soliciting, inducing, harboring, transporting, holding, restraining, providing, maintaining, subjecting or obtaining by any means another person for the purpose of labor servitude or sexual servitude.

Dillard and Staggs are accused of using various methods to take advantage of young female victims in the Lauderdale County area. No further information about the investigation or about the defendants' alleged crimes other than that stated in the indictment may be released at this time.

"Although we cannot provide other details at this time, I want to stress that this is an ongoing investigation," said Attorney General Strange. "We ask anyone who has information related to possible crimes by these two men, to please come forward. I want also to thank those involved in bringing this case, which was a cooperative effort by my office and numerous agencies." The Attorney General's Office may be contacted by calling (334) 242-7300.



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The possible penalties are two to 20 years for each count of human trafficking in the second-degree, a class B felony; one to 10 years for each count of conspiracy to commit human trafficking in the second-degree, a class C felony; one to 10 years for making a terroristic threat, a class C felony; up to one year for sexual abuse in the second degree, a class A misdemeanor; and one to 10 years for intimidating a witness, a class C felony.

Attorney General Strange commended Assistant Attorneys General Bill Lisenby and John Kachelman of his Criminal Trials Division, and Special Agents of his Investigations Division. He thanked the Lauderdale County District Attorney's Office, the Lauderdale County Sheriff's Office, the Florence Police Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Lawrence County Drug Task Force, Lauderdale County Drug Task Force and the Colbert County Drug Task Force for their assistance in the investigation and the arrest in this case.

**An indictment is merely an accusation. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.*