

Seven New Yorkers arrested over 'Internet brothel'

August 25 2015



The view of Manhattan and Brooklyn from One World Observatory on May 22, 2015 in New York City

Seven New Yorkers were arrested and charged with promoting male prostitution on Tuesday through an "Internet brothel" offering sex to paid-subscribers across the world, prosecutors said.

Website rentboy.com hosts thousands of paid advertisements from men,

primarily offering prostitution internationally and in cities across the United States, [prosecutors](#) said.

The site racked up more than \$10 million in gross proceeds in the last five years alone, officials said.

The US government was working to shut down the site but it was still accessible Tuesday, offering services in countries as diverse as Afghanistan, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates.

The government also issued warrants to seize more than \$1.4 million of alleged criminal proceeds from six bank accounts.

"This internet brothel made millions of dollars from the promotion of illegal prostitution," said acting US attorney Kelly Currie in the eastern district of New York.

The six men and one woman arrested in New York face up to five years behind bars and a fine of \$250,000 if convicted. They will appear before a magistrate at the US federal court in Brooklyn, officials said.

They were identified as Jeffrey Hurant, 50, alleged CEO of the website, together with employees Michael Belman, 47, Clint Calero, 48, Edward Estanol, 23, Shane Lukas, 41, Marco Decker, 28 and Diana Mattos, 43.

Prosecutors said subscribers pay up to several hundred dollars a month to advertise paid sexual services on the website.

They can also allegedly link to another website where their sexual prowess is rated by prior customers.

Prostitution is illegal in the United States, except for in isolated counties in the state of Nevada.

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