

## People vs. Hardiman

On December 8, 2021, the OCHTTF began investigating a case for possible human trafficking involving a 16-year-old girl after reports of a missing juvenile and suspicious activity. The mother of the victim's friend was able to take the minor's phone before she left the house with two unknown adult females. The minor was groomed over time by the females she met online. They took her to Los Angeles County to put her to work on the streets. Initial leads prompted task force investigators to begin the search for the victim in areas of LA County known for high street commercial sex activity well into the night until 3am. By the time task force investigators arrived the victim was no longer there. From the streets of LA County, the victim was approached by 24-year-old Daymond Hardiman in a car. Hardiman had his 3-year-old and 9-month-old children in the car with him and persuaded the victim under false pretenses to help him look for the children's mother. He was already trafficking the children's mother for commercial sex. Hardiman drove to Bakersfield with the victim.

During the car ride the minor asked to leave, but stayed in the car because she was afraid he would beat her and she had nowhere else to go. He later attacked the victim by choking her with his hands. The trafficker told her, "You're gonna make money for me. You're gonna see." The OCHTTF and Bakersfield Police Department worked together to locate the minor. The victim was eventually found abandoned at the greyhound bus station after being tipped off. The case was prosecuted by the Kern County District Attorney's Office. Hardiman pleaded guilty to charges of human trafficking of an adult and minor, false imprisonment, and domestic violence. On July 20, 2022, he was sentenced to 24 years and 8 months in state prison. He will be serving 80% of his time because of a prior strike conviction. Human trafficking is a non-violent and non-serious felony crime in California, and in the current conviction human trafficking is ineligible as a strike under the three strikes law.