

Youth Pastor Forced Boys Into Prostitution, Report Says

Police arrested a youth pastor on human trafficking charges after he allegedly forced boys into prostitution, according to a report.

Miami's Ron "Romeo" Cooper sold the boys, ages 16-18, to clients online. Romeo raped and assaulted the victims, as well as forced them to do drugs like crystal meth, the report says.

"The boys went through with the sex act because they were afraid of the defendant. The defendant has in the past physically grabbed them and yelled at them in their faces. He also has threatened to go to their families and basically extort them and blackmail them, stating that he was going to show them the photographs he had taken and the advertisements for sex he himself had posted," a prosecutor said.

Cooper used sites like Backpage for his despicable alleged actions. The Backpage CEO was arrested in Texas earlier this month on human trafficking charges.

"Making money off the backs of innocent human beings by allowing them to be exploited for modern-day slavery is not acceptable in Texas," Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton said.

As for Cooper, south Florida is considered one of the Top 5 destinations for human trafficking in the United States.

As of June, more than 265 cases of human trafficking were reported in Florida this year alone.