

Philly Days Inn Reaches \$24M Deal With Trafficking Victims

By **P.J. D'Annunzio**

Law360 (February 2, 2023, 4:49 PM EST) -- Days Inn has reached a \$24 million settlement with eight human trafficking victims at its Roosevelt Boulevard location in Philadelphia, whose owner and management were accused of failing to protect them, according to the victims' attorneys.

The settlement was announced by Kline & Specter PC on Thursday after two days of mediation. It resolves litigation brought by the plaintiffs — who were between age of 14 and 17 at the time of their trafficking — that Days Inn failed to provide adequate security on hotel grounds.

The names of the victims were not disclosed to protect their privacy.

Hotel staff and security should have noticed that sex trafficking was "open, obvious, and notorious" at the hotel, the plaintiffs claimed. According to the complaint for the plaintiff identified as C.A., the hotel was a hotbed of sex and labor trafficking in the area.

In C.A.'s case, the complaint said, "At times, plaintiff was visibly treated in an aggressive manner by traffickers engaged in commercial sex acts with plaintiff while in public areas of the Roosevelt Inn" from 2012 to 2013.

She was also in visible distress, which should have put the hotel's staff on notice that something was wrong, the complaint said.

C.A. and the other girls were eventually rescued when the FBI raided the facility, according to the complaint.

Days Inn argued in court papers that there was no evidence it knew that C.A. was being trafficked at the Roosevelt location.

"Plaintiff speculated about 'hotels' 'knowing' about prostitution but is unable to testify as to why the Days Inn 'knew' she was allegedly being trafficked at the Days Inn," it said.

Days Inn also argued that C.A. never complained to staff about her situation.

"The victimization of these young girls should not be tolerated," Nadeem Bezar of Kline & Specter said in a statement. "The criminal process has punished the traffickers. It's now time to hold the hotel owners accountable. Plain and simple, this type of activity should not be allowed to go on anywhere"

Bezar's co-counsel Emily Marks said, "Instead of hiring qualified security and adopting and enforcing policies against criminal activity, the Days Inn did nothing and permitted criminal activity to continue unabated to the detriment of our clients."

The victims' attorneys said there are other lawsuits against other area hotels and their corporate owners, as the girls were routinely transferred to and from different locations.

Counsel for Days Inn did not immediately respond to requests for comment Thursday.

The victims are represented by Nadeem Bezar and Emily Marks of Kline & Specter PC.

Days Inn is represented by Conrad Benedetto, Philip Priore, Susan Keesler and Anthony Cognetti of McCormick & Priore PC.

The case is C.A. v. 4200 Roosevelt LLC, case number 190303355, in the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas.

--Editing by Adam LoBelia.