

## Lawsuits say 3 Philly hotels ignored sex slavery on their properties

By Joseph A. Gambardello,

Lawsuits filed Wednesday on behalf of two young women who had been forced “The lawsuit filed today will seek to remedy the disregard of the degradation and humiliation of young women in order to pursue a profit,” said attorney Tom Kline of Kline & Specter, which represents the young women. “These lawsuits seek to right a wrong on behalf of the victims of not only crime, but illicit gain.”

The suits come two years after the law firm filed a similar action — the first of its kind in Pennsylvania — against the Roosevelt Inn under the state’s 2014 human trafficking law.

At that time, the Roosevelt’s manager, Yagna Patel, said he was not aware of minors being prostituted at the hotel.

“We just rent the room and that’s all we can do,” Patel said, adding that “if we think a lot of people are having a party in the room, we kick them out.” into prostitution when they were teenagers say three Philadelphia hotels turned a blind eye to human trafficking and profited from the alleged victims being used as sex slaves.

The plaintiffs were freed in 2013, when they were 15 and

16 years old, following raids by the police and FBI, according to the complaint accompanying the lawsuits.

Named in the suits, filed in the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas, are the owner and management companies of the Roosevelt Inn and Days Inn, both located on Roosevelt Boulevard in Northeast Philadelphia, and North American Motor Inns, on City Avenue in the Wynnefield section. The hotels or their management companies did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

According to the complaint, the plaintiffs, identified only as C.A. and B.H., were forced into prostitution for several months by two different traffickers and drugged so they would have sex with paying customers at the hotels.

The hotels, according to the suit, failed to take steps to prevent the trafficking “and instead permitted heinous and unspeakable acts to occur.”

The suits seek unspecified compensatory and punitive damages against the defendants.