

THE DAILY SENTINEL

GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO

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Child-prostitution ring broken

14 indicted in trafficking investigation in Grand Junction, Glenwood, Front Range cities

By EMILY ANDERSON
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Fourteen people have been arrested in connection with a human-trafficking ring that brought teenage girls to Grand Junction and other Colorado cities for prostitution.

Colorado Attorney General John Suthers announced Monday he secured an indictment against four men suspected of running the ring: Patrick Lloyd McGowan, 22, Chad Armand Gow, 20, Roy Manuel Ibarra-Gonzales, 20, and Bryan Steven Burns, 20. The men and

10 others linked to the ring were arrested over the weekend, Suthers said.

The four suspected ringleaders are suspected of charges including trafficking of children, pimping of a child, and inducement of child prostitution. McGowan is also accused of distribution of methamphetamine and cocaine. According to the indictment, he sold methamphetamine to undercover officers in December at a Denver Taco Bell and at Casa Bonita in Lakewood, then attempted to sneak nearly 15 grams of methamphetamine into the Jefferson County Jail by placing it in his underwear.

The four ringleaders allegedly recruited five girls, all under the age of 18, to perform acts of prostitution last January through June, Suthers said. The girls, who were not arrested, were sometimes brought to hotel rooms in Grand Junction, Glenwood Springs, Denver, Boulder and Lakewood to use drugs and alcohol and perform sexual acts for money, according to the indictment. At least two of the girls traveled to hotels in Grand Junction to perform



PATRICK LLOYD MCGOWAN CHAD ARMAND GOW ROY MANUEL IBARRA-GONZALES BRYAN STEVEN BURNS

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Four accused of recruiting underage girls for work in prostitution business

City Council's guy in place



DEAN HUMPHREY/The Daily Sentinel

Acting City Manager Rich Englehart sits between Grand Junction Mayor Tom Kenyon, left, and Councilman Bennett Boeschstein during a City Council retreat on Monday. Another council member, Laura Luke, said the support of Englehart by city employees is such that the money being paid former City Manager Laurie Kadrich as part of her severance agreement "was a good investment" for the city.

Interim manager draws praise after Kadrich ousted

By AMY HAMILTON
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One month later, most Grand Junction City Council members report they feel pleased with their decision to place former Deputy City Manager Rich Englehart in the city's top position.

Council members ousted former City Manager Laurie Kadrich after a private meeting Dec.

14 and tapped Englehart to fill in as acting city manager for a six-month term.

Already, communication has been flowing more freely between Englehart and council members than it had been with Kadrich, Council member Laura Luke said. And, Luke said, she's heard from some city employees that they applaud the leadership change.

"I have staff come to me and thank me," Luke said. "They say they wake up in the morning and want to come to work."

According to terms of her contract, Kadrich is paid a year's salary and benefits for her resignation. She earned about \$153,000 a year.

"It was a good investment to ask for her resignation," Luke said. "We work more cohe-

sively with staff and the public and that was the goal. Laurie brought a lot of good things to the table but at the expense of the bigger picture."

Englehart had been earning \$125,000 a year since taking on the deputy city manager role in 2008. His pay has been increased

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'Not above law,' Bradford tells House session

Legislative privilege a thorny issue with traffic stop, alcohol on breath

By CHARLES ASHBY
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Rep. Laura Bradford apologized Monday, but it's unclear for what.

It also is unclear what effect, if any, it will have on a pending House investigation into the events surrounding a questionable traffic citation the Colbrann Republican received last week.

On Wednesday, Bradford was issued a citation a few blocks away from the Colorado Capitol on suspicion of illegal lane change and improper turning.

Officers who pulled her over said they could smell alcohol on her breath, and they gave her a roadside sobriety test, but they didn't seek more evidence of what her blood-alcohol level was at the time to determine whether she should be issued a citation for driving under the influence of alcohol.

The question has been raised whether Bradford intentionally invoked a little-known legislative privilege that prevents police from detaining her long enough to perform that test.

Denver Police Department spokesman Sonny Jackson said he did not know if Bradford first brought up the law or if police did.



State Rep. Laura Bradford, R-Colbran, speaks to the House on Monday in a webcast from the state Capitol. Bradford received a traffic citation near the Capitol this past Wednesday after being given a roadside sobriety test.

"It is a state constitutional law, and there's something in our (department) policy about it as well," Jackson said. "Most officers are aware of the laws because they have to enforce them. We were very careful in our interpretation of the law. Obviously, we don't want to violate somebody's constitutional rights."

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Panel rejects animal abuse registry bill

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DENVER — A proposal to create an online registry for animal cruelty convicts akin to databases for sex offenders failed Monday as Colorado lawmakers worried that it would unfairly label some people.

Supporters of the legislation argued that people who mistreat animals are at a higher risk of committing much more serious crimes. Karen L.

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Family delivered, dealt cocaine in GJ area, authorities allege

By MIKE WIGGINS
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A Grand Junction family of four has been arrested in connection with what a prosecutor said was a large cocaine-distribution ring that regularly brought more than 2 pounds of the drug into the area.

Federico Lerma, 41, his wife, 40-year-old Dolores Flores, their 19-year-old daughter, Blanca Lerma, and their 16-year-old son were taken into custody on Sunday and could face a multitude of felony charges, the most serious of which include dis-

tribution of a controlled substance, conspiracy to distribute a controlled substance and sentencing-enhancing counts of being special offenders.

The arrest warrants in the case are sealed, but Mesa County Chief Deputy District

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DOLORES FLORES



BLANCA LERMA

LIVING TO TELL ABOUT IT



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Greg Ock, a heavy-equipment repairman from Georgia, recounts his kidnapping and captivity by gunmen in Nigeria, including a near miss by police who fired at the car that was whisking him away. Page 10A



Man says Nigeria kidnapping like 'an action movie'

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOWDON, Ga. — As the car an American man was riding in idled in traffic in a remote Nigerian town, two men appeared, one of them shooting the Georgia man's security guard five times while the other forced him into a tiny getaway car that sped away.

"I felt like I was in an action movie," Ock told The Associated Press at his west Georgia home on Monday, a day after he returned to his family.



GREG OCK Wine, marijuana to keep him groggy

As they were speeding away from the police, he said he told his guards "I was more afraid of mops than you guys."

barrels of crude oil a day. After being held seven days, he was released on Friday.

Ock worked in construction for decades, landing gigs all over the U.S. and as far away as Abu Dhabi. He loved the work, the camaraderie and the pay, which helped him support a wife and four daughters.

He landed in the Nigerian town of Sapele in September 2010 to begin one of his more adventurous assignments, maintaining gas turbines and other heavy machinery for Marubeni Corp.

in Warri, where he would get a checkup for a recent bout with malaria.

He had taken some cash from an ATM, hopped in the car and tuned his iPod to Don Henley, as the driver waited in traffic, when the kidnapers struck.

The gunmen took him out of the car, and one of the kidnapers then called Ock's boss and demanded about \$30,000 for his safe return.

The men dulled his senses by forcing him to smoke marijuana and drink Baron Del Valle red wine all day long.

After a few days, he decided to escape. He found a butcher knife resting in a bowl and reached for it when he thought his captors were sleeping. They weren't. One alerted the others, who "slapped me around a bit" and chained him tighter to his chair. Despite the beating, Ock said he wasn't tortured.

He returned home to Atlanta on Sunday morning.

"It told them I didn't care," he said. "I've had a good life."

On Thursday, Ock could tell the negotiations were heating up. His captors were celebrating and drinking moonshine. Two men left the house around noon, returning five hours later with wide smiles.

CITY: Council members decide to meet more frequently

Continued from Page One

to the equivalent of \$143,000 a year to account for the increase in duties.

Under Englehart, fire and police employees have been encouraged to attend meetings and they have a standing invitation for Wednesday afternoon walk-throughs at the new public safety center under construction at Ute Avenue and Pitkin Avenue.

"The employees are engaged now and asked their opinions," Mayor Tom Kenyon said. "They have meaningful dialogue about the things they want."

An all-day retreat Monday for council members followed on how the seven-member body moves forward. The three newest members, Bennett Boeschstein, Jim Doody and Luke, attended their first council retreat soon after the April 2011 election. That first retreat focused on placing priorities on policies and issues the board wanted to tackle.

On Monday, council members decided to meet more frequently

to get a better handle on issues before they surface, such as the dispute among neighbors about plans to locate a Greyhound station on 24 1/2 Road.

Council meetings will be on every first and third Wednesday of each month. "Readiness Sessions" will be on the first and third Monday nights of each month. Readiness sessions will operate like open forums for council members to discuss a range of topics as they come up. Council will still host workshop sessions from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the first and third Mondays. All meetings are open to the public.

The transition from having Englehart as an acting city manager to finding a replacement for a permanent city manager will occur within the next few months, council members said.

Stepping into the role of acting city manager and working with-out a deputy city manager has been an "balancing act," but he's enjoyed the transition, Englehart said. He said he's focusing on the city's two largest capital improvements: the Stocker Sta-

dium project and the new public safety center. He's also focused on upgrades at Persigo Wastewater Treatment Plant and road improvements.

Englehart said he has the advantage that the 2012 budget was finalized before the management switch occurred.

He is interested in the position of being the permanent city manager, Englehart said, and council members haven't ruled out the option of hiring him.

"I enjoy the community here," Englehart said. Council members have given him the OK to move into the larger corner office typically occupied by the city manager, but Englehart has so far declined the offer, saying he's happy with his current office.

City Council member Teresa Coons was the sole council member who did not approve of asking Kadrich to resign.

Coons said recently she is pleased with how Englehart has worked out so far.

"He stepped into a very difficult situation," she said. "I think he's great. I've always respected

his approach. Whether he's the right person remains to be seen."

Council members said, under Kadrich's leadership, they sometimes felt they were learning of events or key developments on projects after the fact. Some council members wanted more access to specific budgetary numbers or information that was not produced after several reports.

Kadrich said, in a press release after she agreed to resign, that she and council had a "fundamental difference" in her style of management.

Kenyon said he appreciates that, under Englehart's leadership, employees feel more open to report to council members. Kadrich largely had employees report to her and she passed information along to council members.

"I really like his approach," Kenyon said of Englehart. "Even though we went through the budget (with Kadrich) we didn't have the information from the department heads. I do think that this is a change we don't have to be wondering about."

RING: Backpage.com site used

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acts of prostitution.

Eight people named in the indictment are suspected of providing a place for the incidents of prostitution to occur and/or driving the girls to places where they performed sex acts for money. One of the eight, Matthew Anthony Dominguez, 20, is also suspected along with Gov. of holding down one of the suspected prostitutes and making sexual contact with her without her consent in August in a Boulder hotel room.

One person named in the indictment was a frequent patron of the prostitution ring and another is suspected of destroying evidence by deleting Barra-Gonzales' Facebook account and another computer account.

The men arranged meetings for the girls with clients through the website Backpage.com, a site where people can

post classified ads for adult services. Suthers said his office has repeatedly asked the site to "be more corporately responsible" for its postings. He said so far the site hasn't responded with any major changes.

The case, brought to the attorney general's attention by the Wheat Ridge and Lakewood police departments, will be prosecuted by the attorney general's office in Jefferson County District Court with assistance from the Jefferson County District Attorney's Office. Suthers said the four human-trafficking ring leaders could face as many as 24 years behind bars.

Suthers called the case "very disturbing" and said he hopes it teaches people human trafficking is not just a problem in other countries.

"People should not think in Colorado are immune to this type of thing," he said.

BRADFORD: Privilege law meant to protect lawmakers' speech

Continued from Page One

Jackson said determining whether Bradford was too drunk to drive would have required officers to detain the legislator to determine her blood-alcohol level, but doing so would have meant violating the law.

When the Colorado House convened for the day Monday, Bradford gave a two-minute apology. In it, she said she was sorry for "cessing any kind of shadow" on the Legislature.

But then she said she didn't do anything wrong.

"I am not above the law," she said in the apology. "I responded to officers' questions. My statements were not intended to invoke legislative privilege."

"But I'm not saying she was intoxicated by any means because we don't know," he said. "At this point in time, nobody knows if she was or not."

Officers ended up issuing Bradford a citation for a minor traffic infraction, and then calling a cab to take her home.

University of Denver law professor Tom Russell said it doesn't matter if Bradford invoked the privilege or not. What matters is that police offered it and she accepted.

The law, which was included in the original Colorado Constitution when it was adopted in 1876, was never intended to cover Bradford's situation, he said.

Russell said the law mirrors the U.S. Constitution and virtually every state's, and is intended to protect a lawmaker's speech and debate rights while in session or in a committee hearing.

"The intention is to protect the speech or debate of legislators in their core legislative functions," he said. "Let's say a Denver legislator says something negative about a Grand Junction association of businesses. They can't sue him for that."

Russell said that rather than treating Bradford like someone with diplomatic immunity, it was incumbent on the Denver police to determine exactly where she was coming from before allowing her to use the privilege.

The professor pointed to a Colorado Supreme Court decision that addresses the law, a case that pitted former Gov. Roy Romer against the Colorado Legislature over line-item vetoes in a budget bill.

In the 1991 case, Romer v. Colorado General Assembly, the high court said the state's speech or debate law is not absolute, but limited only to "legitimate legislative activity."

Problem is, Russell said, that isn't defined.

Audio and video logs from last Wednesday show that the House had completed its work by 10:30 that morning, and Bradford's comment was immediately afterward. It, however, was done by noon. The Bradford incident occurred at 10 p.m.

Even if she had, or had just gone to a bar for a drink, spoke to a lobbyist or another lawmaker about a bill, still wouldn't constitute "legitimate legislative activity," Russell said.

"Somewhere along the way, the police have gotten the idea that legislators have protection if they claim they're going to or from a legislative function. That's simply wrong," he said. "In this instance, it was constitutionally permissible to arrest Representative Bradford, and have her do a Breathalyzer or a blood test."

Russell said "it's absurd" for police to say they couldn't perform those tests because they would need to detain her first.

He also said Bradford herself could have declined the privilege as did former Rep. Russell George, R-Rifle, who was issued a DUI citation in 2009 while he was under the influence of the House.

On Friday, House Speaker Frank McNulty, R-Highlands, temporarily suspended Bradford as chairwoman of the House Local Government Committee pending the outcome of an investigation.

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Attorney Dan Rubinstein on Monday began painting a picture of a drug network allegedly headed by Federico Lerma.

During advisement hearings for the Lermas and Flores, Rubinstein told County Judge Craig Henderson that the Federico Lerma-led ring shuffled more than 2 pounds of cocaine from Denver to Grand Junction every 10 days or so. He said Federico Lerma had his son distribute drugs in the Grand Valley while he made trips back and forth to Denver, and that Federico Lerma's wife and daughter also acted in his direction.

Rubinstein said narcotics officers arrested Federico and Blanca Lerma on Sunday while the father and daughter were returning to Grand Junction from Denver. Police found more than 2 pounds of cocaine inside the vehicle's air filter. Blanca Lerma's 7-month-old child also was in the vehicle, Rubinstein said.

Officers later executed a search warrant at the family's

house at 830 Independent Ave., No. 42, and found another 1 1/2 ounces of cocaine broken up into smaller quantities and \$5,000 in cash, according to Rubinstein. Flores and the 16-year-old son were arrested at the house.

"The investigation is not complete and more arrests are expected," Rubinstein said after the hearing.

Public Defender Ramsey Lama told Henderson that Federico Lerma has lived in Mesa County for seven years, owns a house, works in landscaping and has no criminal record.

Henderson set bail at \$150,000 for Federico Lerma and \$25,000 each for Blanca Lerma and Flores. Both Federico Lerma and Flores have U.S. Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement holds that prevent them from posting bond and being released from jail.

The 16-year-old boy was advised during a juvenile detention hearing Monday morning. His name and more information about his case weren't immediately available.



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BILL: Effectiveness doubted

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Naiman, who testified in support of the bill, listed several serial killers that reportedly mistreated animals. But Democratic Rep. Roger Wilson said he was concerned people on the registry would be unfairly stereotyped.

House lawmakers rejected the proposal, sponsored by Democratic Rep. Jeanne Labuda on a 9-3 committee vote. House Bill 1087 would have required adults convicted of cruelty to animals to register with the Department of Public

Safety. They would also alert authorities where they live.

Opponents of the bill said there is no evidence that having such a registry would prevent animal abuse or other serious crimes.

"We don't think it serves any purpose," said Linda Hart, with the Colorado Federation of Dog Clubs. "We also feel this bill would be even more restrictive toward the (animal) offenders than our child abuse laws or drunk drivers. Those people do not have their faces or their home addresses listed on a website online."

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