

A February trial is set in Utah for a La Crosse man accused of being a pimp who took young women to western states to work for him as prostitutes.

Ontario Lowery pleads not guilty in a federal court to nine counts of sex trafficking, for incidents over the last three years. He could get life in prison if he's convicted. A 17-year-old girl from La Crosse also is charged with being Lowery's accomplice in trafficking. Lowery has been accused by women who claim he forced them to travel to Utah, California, and other states for prostitution and assaulted them. La Crosse County issued an arrest warrant for Lowery last year, after he skipped a plea hearing in a disorderly conduct case. The teenage suspect was under a diversion agreement in a theft case, in which the charge would be dropped if she stayed out of trouble until next July.