

Courtney Carlton

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Human Trafficking & Exploitation

Each year almost 91 billion dollars is made through the criminal networking of women and children around the world, including here in the United States. The sheer amount of women and children being bought and sold has steadily grown from several hundred thousand in 1980s to over two million people a year in the 2000s. The Palermo Protocol that was organized to prevent human trafficking states, “effective action to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, especially women and children, requires a comprehensive international approach in the countries of origin, transit and destination that includes measures to prevent such trafficking, to punish the traffickers and to protect the victims of such trafficking, including by protecting their internationally recognized human rights” (International Labour Office Geneva). The driving force behind this massive criminal activity is greed and money and the desire for such exploitation from those who purchase women and children.

One of the most prevalent criminal activities in the exploitation of women and children is sexual abuse. In the United States alone experts have suggested there are at least 100,000 minors who are currently being sexually exploited in human trafficking. The average age of the sexual abuse is between the ages of 11 and 14. In Northern Ireland Rebecca Dudley conducted research that concluded that sexual exploitation was happening in Northern Ireland and that that women and children were being trafficked into the country so they later could be sold as prostitutes. The risk factors that can be tied to sexual exploitation and human trafficking are poverty, neglect, difficult in school, unemployment, disrupted family life, domestic violence, going missing, and

physical or sexual abuse. These risks increase the chances of a younger child or adult to become part of sexual exploitation abuse. The factors that are related to abuse through prostitution are very similar to these risk factors. In Northern Ireland young people are given what they believe to be free drugs it's not till later that they receive a drug bill. If they can't pay the bill they will have to exchange sex for money and to supply their drug habit. In some cases girls are used to pay off their older boyfriend's drug habit.

Japan is among the worst countries that suffer from human trafficking and exploitation. Japan has an industry within their country that takes foreigners or their own people to be sold into prostitution to pay a debt they were conned into. It starts with the network of connections of friends and relatives that are responsible to recruit women. In the case of Columbian women being trafficked into Japan they are recruited by people they know. An example of this type of trafficking is a girl named Carmen who was recruited by a friend in Columbia for a job in a computer shop in Japan. A Columbian broker that was located in Japan sent her US\$37 to cover the costs of getting a passport and paid to have her flown to Japan in September 2000 from Bogota. Carmen was met at the airport by the Columbian broker and her Japanese husband. Carmen was told at the airport that she had a debt of three million yen to cover the cost of her ticket. The broker and her husband then informed her that it wasn't a problem to pay it off with her salary. All three of them stayed in a hotel and, the next day the broker was making phone calls looking for a job for Carmen as they drove to Tokyo. Carmen was shocked to see that the details of her job weren't organized and when she asked the broker said she was looking for the best job possible and to not to worry because the broker's husband was very powerful. The next day the broker dropped her off in the street located in Kinshicho and told her to copy what the other girls were doing. During this time Carmen found out she was pregnant by her Columbian

boyfriend and her employers were going to take her to the hospital to have it aborted. Carmen escaped to the Embassy and was then sent back to Columbia with only being there a month in Japan. In Carmen's situation she was conned into a job that she thought would be beneficial only to find she had been recruited into prostitution and trafficked into Japan (International Labour Office Geneva).

Many types of deception are used to recruit people into being trafficked and exploited. A report given stated many of these deceptions are done through advertisements in the newspaper that are looking for young models who wish to live abroad or through scholarships given to study in a foreign land, contracts with companies, marriage, music or dance groups, and recruitment by local women. These deceptions are fronts for jobs where women are forced into being prostitutes in the streets, in small houses in which they would stand in the front window of the house for advertisement, or work in a gekijo; which is a theatre where women strip to make money for their employers. A young girl by the name of Angelica is a victim of exploitation and human trafficking; she was recruited through her cousin who lives in Japan. Her cousin told her that she would work as her babysitter and she was unaware of her cousin's intentions. Her cousin's boyfriend was a broker that would recruit Columbian women into the Japanese sex industry. When Angelica arrived she was told she had a debt of four million yen and became four and a half million yen in a week for unexplained reasons. The boyfriend threatened her that if she didn't agree that they would harm Angelica's children. She was then forced to work in a number of gekijos in which she stripped and prostituted herself. A few months later she ran away to the Embassy that helped her get her passport and ticket from her apartment where she was staying. The Embassy helped Angelica hide from her exploiters while she waited for her flight to Columbia, they were able to keep her safe even though her employers came looking for her. The

types of deception are so well organized that anyone can be deceived and be exploited and sold into human trafficking.

Human trafficking wouldn't be present if the demand wasn't there; so many people are subjects to greed, money, and sexual desire that the two supply one of the biggest crime industries in the world. The trafficker is motivated by money and the power that it holds and which is the real drive in the economics of sex trafficking. If there is a thriving sex industry in which customers are driven by sexual desires the sexual exploiters need to generate a supply of humans used as sex commodities. Organized criminal networks which traffickers belong too are influenced by the profits in an industry that supplies around ninety-one billion dollars a year. The whole system thrives on this demand that supplies mankind sexual desires. A recent research study on sex trafficking in four countries with a major problem with trafficking show they have a level of "culture of tolerance" that supports trafficking markets. An example of this is the United States they glamorize pimping and prostitution so it creates a level of tolerance in the culture because that's what most people seek is glamour and other sorts of beauty.

In 2006 the Associated Press ran an article about Jose Antonio Martinez. Jose came to Florida in 1999, he was a young Mexican immigrant who thought he was being hired to pick tomatoes in exchange for minimum wages and a place to stay while he saved money to build a house for his parents back in Mexico. This was not the case. For the first four months he worked the man who hired him locked him up so he couldn't get away, beat him and threatened to hurt his family in Mexico if he tried to escape. Jose said, "After I escaped, he tried to run me over with a truck. He said he would kill me." Luckily in Jose's case the man that beat him was caught, charged and prosecuted but such cases are rare. Almost all human traffickers are never caught because there are not enough law enforcement officers to find them and the victims are

too scared to go to authorities. However, in recent years, the United States Department of Homeland Security has made some high profile arrests in human trafficking cases.

In some states, like Florida, the legislatures are trying to create legislation that will curtail human trafficking and strengthen penalties for human traffickers because most experts put Florida third, behind California and New York, for human trafficking. Some states, like California, already have an anti-trafficking law. "We have the perfect breeding ground. We are a major port of entry," said Nola Theiss, managing director of the Florida Coalition Against Human Trafficking. "We have agriculture, which attracts very low-wage workers, tourism, which means hospitality workers, and very wealthy people, which means domestic servitude." In the Associated Press article Laura Germino, one of the leaders of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, which helped bring Martinez's case to light, said the bill is an important step. "An officer may respond correctly to a situation, but might put down battery, or a shooting, or dispute over a debt, but he might not realize that it's in the context of a trafficker ensuring that workers don't leave," she said. The article went on to quote Assistant U.S. Attorney Doug Molloy, who was the prosecuting attorney in the Martinez's case. He said raising public awareness is key to stopping human trafficking and that most of those who are victims don't come forward because they fear being deported. There was a positive outcome in the Martinez tragedy when Martinez was able to get another job and save enough money to build the house for his parents. The article concluded that Martinez hoped legislation would prevent young people like him from becoming a victim of human trafficking. He stated, "I don't want that to happen to others. I tell them what I've learned," he said. "If you know something is happening to someone you know, you should look for someone to tell. If they don't, it's never going to end."

The problem with exposing human trafficking is because it is confined to the shadows and margins making it difficult to get an idea of how big the problem is in Utah. In an article in the Deseret News, January 2011, writer Kassi Cox reported that the Salt Lake Police Department estimates that 10 percent of all prostitutes in Utah are minors controlled by traffickers. Since 2006, there have been over 100 human trafficking cases in Utah, and an estimated 150 children have been rescued from traffickers.

In August of last year, for example, the Deseret News profiled four Thai men who worked on a Milford pig farm to pay off debts they owed to an international trafficking ring. They repeatedly went hungry and even trapped wild birds to subsist.

There are organizations in Utah who have stepped up to combat human trafficking. The Summit Adventure Church, Operation 61, Utah Health and Human Rights (UHHR), and Child Rescue have been aggressive in raising awareness. The best way to prevent sex trafficking is to help build up young women and to teach boys and young men how to treat young women. "We see celebrities on TV that portray what young women should look like, which turns into low self-confidence. This creates a breeding ground for human trafficking," said Operation 61's Holdaway. A runaway child or young teenagers with no self-confidence seeking love will find that attention from pimps, Holdaway said. Before the victim can realize it, they're stuck. The Deseret News article conclude by stating that there are many ways to prevent labor and sex victims from enslavement and they are premised on just being aware of signs that point to a victim of trafficking. In the articles the common thread through out suggest there is no one consistent face of a trafficker and it involves people in every part of society, from the rich to the poor and at every education level possible; and, it transcends every type of criminal networks and international organized criminal syndicates.

Human trafficking is a common problem among many countries and states. As countries we suffer the same problem where our own people become victims. Victims that are frightened to even come forward; as a country that is strong and reliant it has become the United States that everyone looks to, to solve the problem. In order to solve this problem we need to prevent human trafficking by bringing awareness to the situation and make an effort to solve human trafficking.

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