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## NEW YORK PRESS: THE MARKETING ARM OF THE HUMAN TRAFFICKING INDUSTRY

New York, NY-- According to Media Post, *the New York Post* has an online readership of more than 110,000 people. The Association of Free Weeklies also estimates that about as many people read the print edition every week. That means that nearly quarter of one million people have seen the “adult” ads that are displayed on the back pages of the newspaper. That also means that, deliberately or not, the Press has become the intermediary between trafficked people and the “johns” who seek their services.

Today, trafficking human beings for sexual exploitation, labor, and domestic servitude is the third fastest growing illegal enterprise. The United States is the second highest destination in the world for trafficked women, with an estimated 17, 500 women being smuggled in every year. Human traffickers find New York to be a great market. In fact, New York City is consistently named as one of the top cities that traffickers operate in. A few examples:

- NOW-NYC discovered eight “spas” between 14<sup>th</sup> Street and 40<sup>th</sup> Street on the East Side of Manhattan in its Block by Block Campaign. Another “spa” operates across the street from NOW headquarters.
- [www.spahunters.com](http://www.spahunters.com) is a website where men who have received services from trafficked women in brothels can describe their experiences. In graphic detail, the visitors to the site discuss their overall satisfaction with the services that they received.
- In January, 2007, Do Hyup Bae pled guilty to human trafficking after an FBI investigation uncovered brothels that Bae operated in Queens, NY, New England, and several other states. Bae was sentenced to thirty-eight months in March 2007.
- In August 2006, two busts were made on brothels found on West 26<sup>th</sup> St . The Korean women who worked there had been forced to prostitute themselves after having their identification and travel papers stolen.

Unfortunately, The Press is not the only media outlet that does business with organized prostitution enterprises. The Village Voice, a weekly with more than twice the readership of the Press, generates an average of \$80,000 per month from the adult ads on its back pages. Other smaller papers report that they would be unprofitable or unable to publish if they rejected “adult” ads.

When NOW-NYC launched its campaign *Ending the Business of Human Trafficking* in New York City, the organization attempted to open up a dialogue with the *New York Press*, hoping to educate the editors about the tragedy of human trafficking and to convince the paper to practice due diligence in order to ferret out brothel owners from legitimate businesses.

Unfortunately, the efforts have come to naught; NYP has repeatedly cancelled meetings with NOW-NYC executives. Sonia Ossorio says “While other local papers have made a decision not to knowingly advertise brothels on their pages, New York Press has continuously refused to make a similar commitment. It only takes a few mouse clicks determine whether a massage parlor is a brothel..” Their unwillingness to work with NOW-NYC on this issue only empowers and emboldens traffickers in the long run, making it possible to hide trafficked women in plain sight.

The National Organization for Women is the nation’s largest organization working to advance women’s rights and improve women’s lives. The New York City Chapter of NOW, founded in 1966, is the largest chapter in the country with 7,000 members locally and 35,000 statewide. NOW-NYC works to protect women’s reproductive

choices, end violence against women and eliminate sex discrimination in our schools, workplaces, and the justice system in New York.