



Ending the Business *of* Human Trafficking in NYC

WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

- Trafficking is the business of **exploiting** vulnerable women, men, and children for use as commodities in conditions of sexual and labor servitude. Traffickers use fraud, deception, coercion, threats and force to transport, harbor or obtain a person to perform commercial sex or labor acts against their will.
- The **United States is the second highest destination in the world for trafficked women**. The UN estimates criminal trafficking groups take in 7 billion a year. Eighty percent of victims are women and girls trafficked for sexual exploitation. An estimated **20,000 victims** are in U.S. In 2000 the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Prevention Act, was passed to combat the issue on a national level.
- New York is consistently named as one of the top cities that traffickers use as both a point of entry into the U.S., transit location, and as a final destination for victims. According to the U.S. Justice Department, **New York City's JFK Airport is a main trafficking hub**.
- As of 2010, 42 states have laws criminalizing trafficking but only 9 states offer public benefits to trafficking victims. As a result of the work of NOW-NYC and the New York State Anti-Trafficking Coalition, the state passed its first ever anti-human trafficking law in 2007. In 2008, New York Passed the Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Youth Act- recognizing youths caught in prostitution as victims rather than as criminals.

IN OUR OWN NEIGHBORHOODS:

- **June 2010-** Eight were indicted on charges including sex trafficking and promoting prostitution by the Brooklyn District Attorney. The investigation uncovered four forced prostitution rings, three run by Bloods gang members. The pimps targeted junior high schools to recruit girls as young as 15. The girls were routinely beaten and deprived of food if they did not achieve their daily quotas of \$500 a day or more. The girls operated out of hotels, motels, the pimps' apartments and the streets and were advertised on Craigslist and Backpage.com. In response, the DA created a new Sex Trafficking Unit to investigate the sexual exploitation of women and girls.
- **June 2010-** Following a four month investigation, prosecutors charged Jin Hua Cui with running an operation that sent at least seven young Korean immigrants- who spoke little or no English- to Long Island massage parlors. The women answered help-wanted ads for nail salons, but were then forced into prostitution through threats of violence and intimidation. Traffickers maintained obedience by threatening to expose the girls to the community as prostitutes. Upon searching the madam's home, a sprawling mansion in Flushing, detectives found \$20,000 in cash, lingerie, and thousands of condoms. The women were forced to have sex for between \$60 and \$80 and the johns were solicited through Craigslist ads promising 'very lovely' girls.
- **December 2009-** David Brown became the first person to be convicted under New York State's Anti Trafficking law. Brown was "sold" a 19-year old girl for \$2,000, who he then forced to work as a prostitute. She was imprisoned in his apartment, assaulted, raped, and under constant threat of death.
- **June 2008-** Woodley Gaston was charged with sex trafficking, promoting prostitution and rape after a 16 year old girl who he held captive for two weeks escaped and contacted police. Gaston approached the teen with promises of new clothes and trips to the hair and nail salon. He then held her captive from March 5-23 in his Rockaway Blvd. apartment in Queens, where he repeatedly raped her and forced her to have sex with almost 200 men. The teen's family frantically searched for her while Gaston posted ads on Craigslist and threatened to kill her if she left him. This was Gaston's second arrest- the first was also for rape of a 16 year old girl.

THE MEDIA: THE MARKETING ARM OF TRAFFICKING

- Traffickers supply New York City's large established sex industry with workers, women they've lured to New York with promises of jobs as nannies, housekeepers or models. Traffickers funnel women into brothels to fulfill the shortage of workers and meet the demand of the market. The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Services documented 250 brothels in 26 cities, including New York, with trafficking victims in the year 2000.

- There aren't enough American women and girls willing to do sex work to meet the huge demand that exists for commercial sex. Foreign women are brought to the U.S. and then forced into brothels, domestic servitude and sweatshops. Originally told they'll be given jobs as nannies or waitresses, once in the United States, trafficking victims report having their passports and money taken, enduring threats against themselves and their families back home, as well as physical violence.
- Traffickers use mainstream media outlets to advertise their business. Community newspapers grow rich with sex ads. "Adult" advertisements generate up to 35% of these newspaper's gross revenue on a weekly basis. Many papers report that they would be unprofitable or unable to publish if not for these advertisements. Ads featuring specific ethnicities or "in call only" escort services are most often found to have human trafficking ties according to the Department of Justice.
- The Village Voice generates an average of \$80,000 a month on the adult ads that line its back pages, according to the classified ad sales department. Nationally, the Verizon Yellow Pages generates hundreds of thousands of dollars annually on its extensive escort services and massage parlor advertising categories.
- Sites like Craigslist enjoy huge increases in revenue every year- largely due to acting as online facilitators for human trafficking by hosting brazen prostitution ads in their 'Adult Services' sections. Craigslist has helped set an industry standard in which basic human rights are disregarded in the name of higher profits.

John the Blogger:

Websites masquerading as "Hobbyist Boards" are, in reality, a forum for "johns," a slang term for someone who purchases sex, to exchange tips, hints and advice about brothels around the New York City and New Jersey area. In these forums, the links between massage ads, prostitution, and the human trafficking industry become crystal clear. Here is an example of what one "john" had to say:

- "Getting back to Suny, or Sunshine, I asked her (after, of course) if she minds doing this to men. After much pantomime and language barrier breakthrough, she said, "Oh. For first six months, I cry every night. Now it not so bad." That was a pivotal moment for me because I realized what a scumbag I am. Then I wished I'd seen Candy again."

NOW-NYC's "Trafficking Free, NYC!" Pledge:

In March 2007 NOW-NYC presented a "Trafficking Free, NYC!" pledge to publications throughout the five boroughs, compelling New York newspapers and magazines recognize their role as a potential marketer for the trafficking industry, and publicly commit to being "trafficking free."

NOW-NYC provides support to publications and training in identifying human trafficking red flags. Once educated, publications are able to use their own discretion in order to avoid ads obviously related to human trafficking, such as those offering "Young Russian Girls, 24hr Delivery". This ad appeared in the May 17, 2007 edition of *El Diario/La Prensa*, a daily Spanish-language newspaper.

NOW-NYC's "Trafficking Free, NYC!" Pledge asks publications to do basic due diligence and use common sense when it comes to choosing which advertisements to accept. For example, NOW-NYC asks merely that publications adhere to long-standing New York State law prohibiting unlicensed businesses from advertising under the "massage" or "massage therapy" title.

By simply requiring business seeking to advertise with them to first present a valid, New York State issued Massage Therapy license, publications would be able to take a stand against human trafficking in our city. Fifteen publications have already signed on.

Trafficking-Free Publications!			Marketers of Human Trafficking	
Time Out New York	The Brooklyn Paper	Hoy	The Village Voice	El Diario/La Prensa
Our Town	West Side Spirit	Our Town Downtown	The World Journal	AM New York
City Hall	Chelsea Clinton News	AVENUE	Park Slope Courier	Gay City
New York Family	Queens Courier	The L Magazine	El Especialito	Times Ledger
New York Press		New York Magazine	Courier-Life	Sing Tao
			Hudson Reporter	

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO BECOME ACTIVE IN FIGHTING TRAFFICKING:

Please visit: <http://www.nownyc.org>

You can report trafficking crimes or get help by calling the **Trafficking in Persons and Worker Exploitation Task Force Complaint Line at 1-888-428-7581 (voice and TTY)**. New laws provide options for trafficking victims regardless of immigration status. Operators have access to interpreters and can talk with callers in their own language. The service is offered on weekdays from 9AM to 5PM EST.

After these hours, information is available on tape in English, Spanish, Russian, and Mandarin.