

THE OBSERVER



Monthly Publication

Volume 1 | Publication 7

Reporting Accurate and Objective Information Based on Facts, Not Theory

Dominic Casey | Private Investigator

8:46 PM EST | September 23, 2009

Human Trafficking – Who are the Traffickers?

(Part 2 of 4)

[\(Part 1 of 4\)](#)

The next time your manicured fingers touch beautiful gold jewelry, visualize an underage child who has been [trafficked](#) to work in an artisanal gold mine somewhere in Africa, Asia or South America. Two million children worldwide work these mines in a debt bondage contract that exposes them to hazardous elements such as mercury, cyanide and sulfur. Because mercury is magnetically attracted to gold, the children rub mercury on their hands before sifting through the dirt.

The children who wash the gold often stand in water that is contaminated with mercury. [Prolonged mercury exposure](#) causes retardation, blindness, kidney damage and tremors.

A Harvard Medical School study found that children from Ecuador who work in these mines have many abnormalities caused by exposure to mercury. Their days consist of excruciating work hours and conditions. The artisanal mines are prone to collapse and this endangers their lives even more.

Laws enforcing the banning of child trafficking for exploitation in the mines have not been enforced. Former victims also become perpetrators, proving once again, traffickers [sell their own](#) because they know their own vulnerabilities. Africans sell Africans, Russians sell Russians, Vietnamese sell Vietnamese and yes, Americans *do* sell Americans.

These are soul-less traffickers creating a symphony of sorrow. The most vulnerable groups of people are those who do not have a nationality. This is commonly referred to as [Statelessness](#).

Nationality is defined as a legal bond between a person and a government. According to NGO Refugees International, "individuals from the former Soviet bloc, The Rohingya in Burma and throughout Asia, the Bidun in the Middle East, many of Europe's Roma, The Bhutanese in Nepal, children of Haitian migrants in the Caribbean, denationalized Kurds, some Palestinians, ethnic groups in Thailand and the Horn of Africa are considered stateless.

Modern day human trafficking is slavery and is both regional and national according to the United Nations. Drug activity is more documented than the illegal sale of human beings. Lack of data doesn't

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permit society to analyze the components of slavery which are demand, supply, trafficking and pricing. The varieties of circumstantial differences make data collecting and analyzing very difficult. Children sold by their own parents to pay off debt or gain income is reasoned differently than an African teenager being abducted and forced into an army of murderers. Thousands of children are forced into soldiering.

Sweat shop enslavement is different than brothel activity. Greed has no boundaries. Money is power and a life becomes a product to sell. [Title 18 U.S. Code Section 1589](#) Forced labor:

"Whoever knowingly provides or obtains the labor or services of a person shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 20 years, or both. If death results from the violation of this section, or if the violation includes kidnapping or an attempt to kidnap, aggravated sexual abuse or the attempt to commit aggravated sexual abuse, or an attempt to kill, the defendant shall be fined under this title or imprisoned for any term of years or life, or both."

Enslavement has been around forever and appears to be increasing according to the [US State Department Trafficking in Persons Report \(TIP\), June 2009](#). What happened to our Pop-Culture that desensitized society and strengthened this ugliness? Hollywood initially introduced society to mainstream movies in 1978 with the Academy Award winning movie, "Pretty Baby". It was the story of a 12 year old prostitute. Another 12 year old actress also played a prostitute in "Taxi Driver." Continuing with the misogyny and exploitation of females, in the 1980's and 1990's; KRS-One, 2 Live Crew, NWA and Eminem contributed to making the word "ho" acceptable.

Etymologists are still scratching their heads over the war of words. "Ho" is the southern pronunciation of the word "whore", an incomprehensible degradation of our wives, daughters and sister's that purports to mirror success in a pimp-ho fantasy.

The 1990 release of a romantic-comedy film titled "Pretty Woman" perpetuated the myth that a woman who is down on her luck can gain her self-esteem by providing escort services and allowing herself to be exploited by a stranger. Society approved of this myth in helping the movie gross \$464 million dollars worth of acceptance and once again Hollywood blessed this myth with a series of awards.

Hollywood labeled this a romantic-comedy? If this was your daughter, sister or any female that you respected and loved would you find the humor in her exploitation? Bring this ugly subject home and you'll find the reality and the truth of sexual exploitation. We need to change our thinking and become proactive to make positive changes happen that will save people from becoming victimized.

The largest percentage of human trafficking exploits the female gender. When a woman's civil, political, social and economic rights are not protected, then women become more vulnerable to human enslavement. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, [Global Report on Trafficking in Persons](#) states that 155 countries are involved in human trafficking. 79% are used in sexual exploitation, 18% in forced labor and the remaining 3% fall under an undetermined category that includes organ

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removal, the exploitation of children forced into begging, sex trade and/or children used as soldiers. [NGO Positions on UN Protocols Against Trafficking In Persons and Smuggling of Migrants](#): "prohibits the use of human trafficking for the purpose of organ removal." This includes medicinal practice, witchcraft and/or "the involuntary removal of another living person's organ" 10% of the 70,000 kidneys used in transplants are generated via the black market. Human trafficking is not tabloid titillation, but a society cancer that has grown into huge proportions. It won't go away because we ignore the problem. Human trafficking exists and at anytime, it can affect anyone of us or someone we love.

One out of every seven children will run away from home before they are eighteen years old. Runaway children often become the homeless and street children that society ignores. Society has thoughtlessly labeled them 'throwaways.' How callous to think that a life that took nine months to come to term and years of development to move independently within our culture is referred to as a *throwaway*. Wake up America! We're talking about our children who are our future and will eventually become our caretakers! People are not disposable items. It's time for our society to become more responsible and help victims of enslavement. It's time for the media to use their power of communication to make social changes. We must end human trafficking and hold the trafficker(s) accountable. Laws protecting the victims of sexual exploitation and forced labor must be enforced and training must be provided to our law enforcement units to help them better understand this problem.

Human trafficking involves sexual exploitation, debt bondage, domestic servitude and forced labor. One can find this in massage parlors, nail salons, entertainment, pornography publishing, fraudulent marriages including mail order brides, deceptive employment in the fishing, construction, canneries and manufacturing. A trafficked person can originate from any social background and is usually introduced to the trafficker by someone they know...a friend, family member or neighbor. It is not uncommon for traffickers to use Social Networking for introduction; this method of networking should be used cautiously.

The majority of trafficking is via small groups of networks specializing in recruitment, advertising, transportation or retail. Clubs, businesses and modeling agencies need very little capital to front human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Many traffickers broker children through adoption agencies and law firms having legitimate fronts.

"Source, Transit and Destination" are the labels given to the countries involved in trafficking.

For example: [Source Countries](#) are the countries from where the trafficked victims are recruited. Those countries include the Soviet territories, Nepal, Guatemala and Nigeria. [Transit Countries](#) include Mexico and Israel.

The trafficked victim will make a temporary stop in these countries before going to the country where he/she will be enslaved. The [Destination Countries](#) are the ones with disposable income who can purchase the slave.

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Those countries include the USA, Western Europe, Japan and India. Per Future Group 2006 report titled [Falling Short of the Mark](#). An International Study on the Treatment of Human Trafficking Victims", Canada received an F Rating. The author of this report Benjamin Perrin also wrote, "Canada has ignored calls for reform and continues to re-traumatize trafficking victims, with few exceptions, by subjecting them to routine deportation and fails to provide even basic support services." In the 2009 US Trafficking in Persons Report, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton listed Canada as a Tier 1 country. This same report gave the United Kingdom a D, while Australia, Norway, Sweden, Germany and Italy all received B or B-. The USA received a B+.

The [U.S. State Department Categorizes various Countries in Tiers](#):

Tier 1: 28 Countries whose governments fully comply with the Trafficking Victims Protection Act's (TVPA) minimum standards.

Tier 2: 76 Countries whose governments do not fully comply with the TVPA's minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards.

Tier 2 Watch List: 52 Countries whose governments do not fully comply with the TVPA's minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards AND a) The absolute number of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing, or b) there is a failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons from the previous year or c) The determination that a country is making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with minimum standards was based on commitments by the country to take additional future steps over the next year.

Tier 3: 17 Countries whose governments do not fully comply with the minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so.

The higher the Tier number, the less proactive the country is to revise and enforce human trafficking laws. Japan is rated Tier 2. Japan's organized crime syndicate called The Yakuza is the trafficking force in Japan. Many of the victims were coerced and drugged into the commercialization of the sex industry that include hostess bars, private video rooms, escort services and strip clubs.

Often women who migrate voluntarily are unable to leave the job because they have now become property and victims in debt bondage anywhere between \$23,000-\$43,000 for alleged medical and living expenses. Many Japanese females which include children are sold into fraudulent marriages.

[Japan](#) often labels the trafficked victims as criminals, thus causing the woman or child less apt to be rescued. Thai women are often sold to the Yakuza brothels. In 2006, there were only two actual

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prosecutions for labor trafficking. This number reflects the fear of the Yakuza. In Japan a trafficker can be imprisoned for up to seven years.

[Vietnam](#) is a [Tier 2](#) country involved in sexual and labor exploitation. Accordingly it is estimated that 10% of the arranged marriages between Vietnamese women with Chinese men could be victims of trafficking. It's not uncommon for the victims to be sold off to other men after being abused by their husbands and in-laws. The US State Department believes that Vietnam is becoming an international tourist destination for child sex exploitation. Vietnam has refused to share information with the U.S. about pedophile cases. Vietnam has had a significant number of labor-related fraud cases and has yet to ratify the 2000 UN TIP Protocol.

Part 3 of 4: Human Trafficking - Statelessness

Prior Publications:

[Human Trafficking - Crime Against Humanity 9.15.09](#)

[Media Fact and Fiction 8.7.09](#)

[Predicting Social Security Numbers 7.22.09](#)

[Identity and Information 5.31.09](#)

[And Things Are Not What They Seem 4.28.09](#)

[The Media and Reporting 4.17.09](#)

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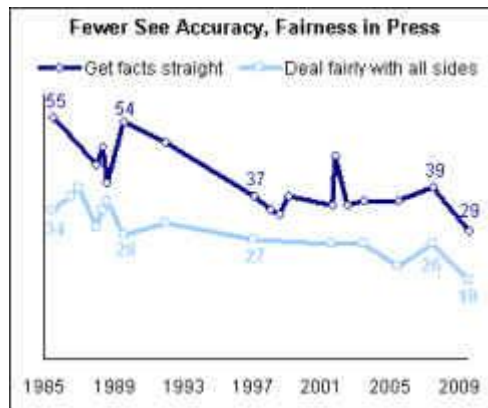


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Dominic Casey | Private Investigator
9:33 PM EST | September 16, 2009

In The News *Press Accuracy Rating Hits Two Decade Low*



According to the *Pew Report* 63% say that news stories are often inaccurate >>>> [read more](#)

There is no more important contribution that we can make to society than strong, publicly-spirited investigative journalism. – [Tony Burman](#), editor-in-chief of [CBC News](#)

Hugo De Burgh (2000) states that: "An investigative journalist is a man or woman whose profession it is to discover the truth and to identify lapses from it in whatever media may be available. The act of doing this generally is called investigative journalism and is distinct from apparently similar work done by police, lawyers, auditors and regulatory bodies in that it is not limited as to target, not legally founded and closely connected to publicity".

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