

# Human Trafficking in a United States Context

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## DOMESTIC SEX TRAFFICKING

Trafficking victims can be men or women, adults or children, rich or poor, and U.S. citizens or foreign-born. Domestic sex trafficking involves U.S. citizens who are forced to perform commercial sex acts entirely within the borders of the United States.

### The Pimp Subculture

Generally, pimping involves a complex relationship between a male pimp and one or more women and/or girls. In this relationship, the pimp wields complete control and domination and induces commercial sex acts in order to make money. The pimp attains authoritative levels of control and obedience through a combination of intense manipulation and feigned affection, brutal violence, and verbal, psychological, and/or emotional abuse. In the pimp relationship, the pimp is motivated primarily by the pursuit of money. He keeps all the money from the commercial sex acts of the women and girls he controls and prides himself on achieving higher and higher levels of blind obedience.

#### *The Rules and Techniques of Being a “Real” Pimp*

Pimps enforce “rules” for the women and minors under their control. A sampling of the formal “rules” of pimping is included below:

- The Term “Daddy”: Women and girls under a pimp’s control must never know his real name or identity and refer to him exclusively as “daddy.”
- Eye Contact: A woman or girl may not ever make eye contact with another pimp. If this rule is broken, the woman or girl suffers serious physical violence.
- Sidewalks and Streets: As indicated by the term “Pimps Up, Ho’s Down,” women and girls must always exist in “lower” ways than the pimp, including by standing only on the street during street prostitution. A woman or girl who ventures onto the sidewalk is severely reprimanded or forced into what is known as a “pimp circle.”
- Quotas: Pimps set nightly monetary quotas that the women or girls must reach through providing commercial sex or theft. *The Language and Terminology of the Pimp Subculture* The following is a sample glossary of terms that are heavily used throughout the pimp culture in street prostitution.
- “Daddy” – a term used to describe one’s own pimp, evoking images of fatherhood.
- “Bottom” or “Bottom Bitch” – the woman who’s been with the pimp the longest and often takes on a mid-level controlling role to keep other victims in line.
- “Dates,” “Johns,” and “Tricks” – terms used to describe buyers of commercial sex.
- “Square” – a term used that describes trying to go straight and get out of the life, or that describes law enforcement and those that don’t understand “the game.”
- The “Stroll” or “Track” – the common area or cross-streets where street prostitution is known to occur on a nightly basis.
- “Pimp circle” – the process of multiple pimps swarming and surrounding one woman or girl and

hissing insults at her, for the purposes of humiliation and intimidation.

□ “Wife in Law” – each individual in a group of women or girls that are with the same pimp. “Family” and “folks” also are synonyms.

“Stable” – refers to the group of women and girls under a pimp’s control (i.e., a pimp’s stable). “Out of Pocket” – a term used to describe when a woman or girl breaks “the rules” by making eye contact with another pimp.

#### *Initial Recruiting Behavior:*

Pimps manipulate their victims beginning with an initial period of false love and feigned affection. This initial period is critical to attaining long-term mind-control. This period often includes: Warmth, gifts, compliments, and sexual and physical intimacy Elaborate promises of a better life, fast money, and future luxuries Purposeful and pre-meditated targeting of vulnerability (e.g., runaways, throwaways) Purposeful targeting of minors due to naivete, virginity, and youthful appearance  
An Ongoing Search for Victims and the Relentless Pursuit of Wealth and Power  
Pimps are known to engage in constant recruiting to attempt to entice women and children into their web of control.

#### *The Role of Money and Debt in the Pimp Relationship*

#### Quotas

It is widely-known and well-documented that pimps establish nightly monetary quotas that the women and girls under their control must make in order to end each night of commercial sex. These quotas typically fall in the range of \$500 - \$1,000 each night. Through whatever means necessary (including forced theft), the woman or girl must reach these quotas each night to be allowed to eat or sleep. If she does not make enough money, the woman or girl will be forced back out into her venue of commercial sex until she reaches her quota. Quotas are strictly enforced, and the punishment for failing to meet a quota is severe physical retaliation from the pimp or other torture methods. It is also essential to note that in pimp-controlled situations, the women and girls keep zero of this money and turn over 100 percent of the profits to the pimp.

#### *How much income do pimps really make?*

The following calculation is intended to demonstrate how pimps make money off the women and girls held under their control. Much or all of this income can be evaded from Federal reporting and taxes. Polaris Project, a Washington, DC-based nonprofit working with victims of human trafficking recently conducted an informal analysis of a pimp’s wages, based on direct client accounts. One teenage girl was forced to meet quotas of \$500/night, 7 days a week and gave the money to her trafficker each night. This particular pimp also controlled three other women. Based on these numbers, Polaris Project estimates that the pimp made \$632,000 in one year from four young women and girls.

#### **The Truck Stop**

Sex trafficking can be present at commercially-operated truck stops as well as state- operated rest areas and welcome centers due to their remote locations and the dominant male-customer base that use the facilities. These locations are often insulated from local communities, making it a convenient place for transient customers to purchase sex with minimal concerns of detection. Because these locations are also geographically isolated, it is difficult for victims to leave their situations and allows traffickers to quickly and frequently move victims without interference or undue attention. Additionally, traffickers reap significant profits by making commercial sex accessible to a customer base of male truckers and travelers willing to pay.

Two particular forms of sex trafficking that have been identified as operating out of truck stops include pimp-controlled sex trafficking and brothels fronting as licensed massage businesses. Pimp-controlled sex trafficking typically involves traffickers or “pimps” who compel women and/or children into commercial sex where they may use truck stops as an exclusive marketplace or one of many venues to maximize profits. These traffickers often require their victims to meet a daily quota of earnings or face unwanted or potentially violent consequences. The victims are often U.S. citizens who come from diverse backgrounds. Fake massage businesses often prey on Asian women with promises of good jobs, and instead compel them into commercial sex through a well-developed system of debt bondage. Many of these women are often isolated due to language and cultural barriers.

### *Characteristics of Sex Trafficking at Truck Stops*

**Venues** – While sex trafficking occurs at state-operated rest areas and welcome centers, it is most often prevalent in commercially-operated truck stops where truckers are offered more privacy and access to more amenities such as dining, lodging, and entertainment. Moreover, law enforcement is not as present in these locations unless responding to complaints or incidents.

**Customers** – The majority of customers are transient male truckers and travelers often on the road for long periods of time—making them an ideal customer in search of companionship and/or commercial sex. With the presence of a commercial front brothel or fake massage business, customers can also be from the local communities near where the truck stops are located. Customers seeking commercial sex can search online advertisements (e.g. escort services) while at a truck stop. Customers can also signal their interest for sex by responding to broadcasts offering “commercial company” over the Citizen Band (CB) radio or by flashing their truck headlights at women or children walking the tarmac (parking lot).

**Advertisement** – Sex trafficking victims are often coerced by their trafficker to solicit customers by means of advertising over CB radio, knocking on truck cab doors, walking up and down the tarmac, or directly approaching and offering services to men. Fake massage businesses and commercial front brothels also advertise by posting large billboards along the highway that encourage truckers to visit their locations. In pimp-controlled situations, the traffickers are not always visible and may wait at nearby motels while their victims are engaging in prostitution.

**Commercial Sex Acts** – Commercial sex often occurs in various locations such as in truck cabs, at nearby motels or private residences, in customers’ vehicles, or at other venues selected by customers. Pricing for commercial sex varies based on types of sex acts, use or lack of use of protection, geographic location, etc. Prices at truck stops typically range from \$25-\$100 per sex act.

**Perpetration of Other Crimes** – In addition to engaging in commercial sex, sex trafficking victims may be required by their traffickers to engage or facilitate other crimes such as cargo theft, petty theft (e.g. wallets or personal items), identity theft, or selling and/or transporting illegal narcotics or other contraband.

### *Common Terms Used at Truck Stops Referencing Commercial Sex*

“Commercial Company, Company, Date, Bunk Bunny, Highway Hostess, Parking Lot Hostess, Lot Lizard, Road Ho, Road Juliet, Dress For Sale, Free Ride, Little Bit, Pavement Princess, Professional Beaver, Trick Babe” – Meaning: Women or girls engaging in commercial sex at truck stop locations

“Buffalo, Lot Lord, Good Buddy”- Meaning: Men or Boys engaging in commercial sex (particularly with males)

“Apartment, Home Twenty, Home Port” – Meaning: Trucker’s cab or an actual physical location

“Party Row” – Meaning: Location at a truck stop where truckers park for commercial sex

“Truck Stop Tommy” –Meaning: Individual providing drugs or other illegal services (prostitution)

“Bear, Black n’ White, Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Jack Rabbit, Johnny Law” – Meaning: Law enforcement

## CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING

Trafficking of minors for the purpose of commercial sex acts is a form of modern-day slavery. Child sex trafficking occurs when a person under the age of 18 is induced to engage in commercial sex. Unlike other forms of trafficking, there is no need to show that a minor has been forced, coerced or defrauded into engaging in commercial sex. If a minor has been induced to perform commercial sex in any way, that minor is a victim of human trafficking.

### *Relevant Statistics*

The following are existing statistics on the sex trafficking of U.S. citizen minors. The availability of statistics on human trafficking is limited due to the crime’s hidden nature, limited awareness by law enforcement and social service providers, and lack of research.

□□ According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, approximately 100,000 children are at risk of being commercial sexually exploited annually.

□□ The average age of entry into the commercial sex industry is between 12 to 14 years old.

### *Types of Child Sex Trafficking*

□□ Pimp-Controlled Prostitution and Stripping: A pimp exerts control over minors who provide commercial sex to paying customers where the pimp retains the profit. Pimps recruit vulnerable girls through promises of love, attention and support, and use the victim’s emotional and financial reliance to induce the girls into commercial sex. Pimp-controlled prostitution is extremely manipulative and can be exceedingly physically violent. Victims are often moved from place to place or city to city to avoid detection and increase reliance on the pimp. Sites include, but are not limited to, street-based prostitution, hotels and motels, truck stops, and exotic dance clubs.

□□ Residential Brothels: Residential brothels are typically informal, cash-based, underground businesses that operate in residential and non-commercial areas. Common venues include: homes, condos, apartments, trailers, and outdoors in agricultural areas. Typically, residential brothels maintain a flexible and mobile status; escort services or “out calls” are also used. One of the most common types of residential brothels in the U.S. is a “closed network” Latino brothel which is restricted for Latino men only. The victims present within these networks are almost always women and children from Latin America and are recruited through a variety of means, often with false promises of a good job in the United States.

□□ Escort Agencies: Though escort agencies may claim to advertise adult women to their customers, at times these agencies will advertise commercial sex with minors, often using coded language such as “barely legal” or “young” on websites or other media outlets. Pimps often use escort agencies to advertise the minor victims under their control.

□□ Truck Stops: Pimps often bring young girls to truck stops to engage in commercial sex with truck drivers. Pimps may target truck stops exclusively, may use truck stops to supplement their main market or may bring their victims to truck stops as the opportunity arises; for example, as they are en route bringing their victims to another location. Purchasers of commercial sex will search “john boards” on the internet to find truck stops where commercial sex is available. At the truck stop, pimps will advertise that girls are available using CB radios or by forcing the victims to solicit customers by going truck to truck. Johns signal that they want to purchase sex by using their headlights or stickers on their windows.

## Labor Trafficking of Domestic Workers

Domestic workers perform work within their employers' households, such as cooking, cleaning, childcare, elder care, gardening and other household work. Domestic workers may or may not live in their employer's homes; they may work for a single employer or family, or several employers or families. Employers may include relatives, diplomatic officials or employees of international organizations such as the World Bank or the United Nations and may or may not be from the same national, cultural, ethnic, or linguistic backgrounds as the domestic worker.

Domestic workers may be U.S. citizens, or foreign nationals – with or without legal documentation. Specific work visas that a domestic worker may have can include: A-3, G-5, NATO-7 or B-1. Females make up the large majority of this population, however males may also be employed as domestic workers. Victims may be adults or minors.

### *Defining Characteristics*

Victims of human trafficking in domestic work commonly work 10 to 16 hours a day or more for little to no pay. Victims of labor trafficking of domestic workers in the U.S. are most often foreign national women living in the home of their employer. According to the International Labour Organization, approximately 83% of domestic workers are women and girls; a study on domestic workers in California found that 98% were female. Men and boys may also be victims, but these cases are less common. According to the International Labour Organization, in 2008 at least 15.5 million children ages five to 17 worked as domestic workers globally. In a report for the United Nations, Cecilia Flores-Oebanda estimates that at least 90% of child domestic workers are girls.

### *Relevant Statistics*

The availability of statistics on labor trafficking of domestic workers in the U.S. is limited due to the crime's hidden nature, limited awareness, and the lack of a comprehensive study.

In a 2008 report, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) identified 42 domestic workers with A-3 and G-5 visas who alleged abuse by foreign diplomats from 2000 through 2008. Ten of the 42 cases resulted in federal human trafficking investigations. The study concluded that the total number of incidents is likely higher.

In a 2006 report, Domestic Workers United estimated that there are over 200,000 domestic workers in New York City. According to this report, 76% are foreign nationals, 95% are people of color, and 93% are women. The report further found that 41% of the workers who participated in the study earned low wages and an additional 26% made below minimum wage. Half of the workers interviewed worked overtime, often more than 50 or 60 hours a week. Sixty-seven percent of workers reported not receiving overtime pay for overtime hours worked.

A 2007 report on domestic workers in California found that many respondents experienced various labor violations or mistreatment. Respondents reported working more hours than initially agreed upon (31%), being paid less than agreed upon with their employer (22%), or not being paid at all (16%). Additionally, many domestic workers reported being insulted or threatened by their employers (20%), being sexually harassed (9%), or experiencing physical assault or violence (9%). The study also notes an unusually high rate of non-response to these particular questions, suggesting that workers were uncomfortable with the questions or concerned about responding.