

Sierra Jorgensen

Megan Goates

English 2010

20 April 2018

Take Away the Chains and You Have Sex Trafficking

We have all heard of the phrase “sex trafficking”. Those who are brave enough to actually talk about it know what it entails, complete with the chain and shackles and foreign young women who are thousands of miles away from home, their disheveled appearance only adding to the appeal of their shady captors. Unfortunately, even those who believe they are “well versed” in what sex trafficking is, can be woefully misinformed.

Admittedly, there are cases that deal with the extreme, which I will talk more about throughout this paper. The majority of this harrowing topic is never fully discussed, partially because of the uncomfortable emotions it portrays in people. Despite all that, sex trafficking is an issue that is constantly being battled throughout the world.

Professor Meghan Sobel of Regis University, majorly focusing her lectures on human rights, international communications and public relations, gives a 15 minute informative talk about the logistics of sex trafficking, as well as a more correct view on what sex trafficking really means. Sex trafficking is a specific term for a widespread nightmare, focusing on forced labor in the sex industry. Watching her video caused me to stop and realize that my view of sex trafficking was bias at best, from all the “glamor” of Hollywood’s portrayal in movies to worst case scenarios and appalling stories told by either victims of the worst kind of sex trafficking or rescue operatives who deal with the blatant scum who’s work centers out of third world

countries. According to Professor Sobel, there can be things referred to as “triggers”, events or situations that cause a reaction depending on the emotions it can provoke. She talks about how some victims who are living in impoverished areas can be more high-risk victims because they lack adequate safety and their living conditions are, at best, depleted.

The main difference in how we can better understand what sex trafficking means is by looking more closely at the word “trafficking”. Says Professor Sobel, “Some people are misled by the word “traffic”, to think that it must involve cross-border movement, but that’s smuggling. A person could be trafficked in their hometown” (0.59). When hearing the word “trafficking”, we automatically assume someone has been taken to a secondary location from their original abduction site, and that secondary location is usually thought to be miles away, typically in a different state or a different country. What Professor Sobel strives to explain is the underlying fact that sex trafficking is not partial to countries outside of the United States. One example can be seen in the arrest of Roger Dewayne Jessop in October 2017.

He was found for participating in prostitution exploitations as well as dealing with sex trafficking in and around the state of Utah. His arrest was reported in Fox News by Ashton Edwards, and this reporter goes on to mention how Jessop’s arrest was part of a bigger operation known as Operation Cross Country XI. This particular operation was over the course of four days and carried out a “nationwide effort focusing on underage human trafficking that resulted in the recovery of 84 minors and arrest of 120 traffickers” (Edwards). Although arrests were mainly in Utah, this rescue campaign was able to find other illegal activity in both Coeur d’Alene, Idaho and Billings, Montana.

Edwards made a sound comment about this and other operations that deal with recovering victims of sex trafficking, “The point of this is to combat commercial sexual exploitation of children” and in turn, “conduct interviews to ensure the women being advertised for sex were not victims of human trafficking” by saving those who are especially underage victims as well as looking more closely into the prostitution rings in Utah.

Going back to what Professor Sobel and Fox News reporter Edwards have mentioned, sex trafficking is not foreign to our side of the world. “Sex trafficking happens in every country on earth, in both urban and rural areas” (Sobel, 0.51). Not only is it happening around the world, but the other myth of victims only being female is also something to look upon. We think of young women snatched up from either terrible parent homes, halfway houses, foster care, or even tourists on vacation, and that those are what typical victims look like when dealing with sex trafficking. Despite this, men and young children are also vastly impacted in terms of falling victim to sex trafficking, as well as racial aspects and the likelihood throughout society.

Jennifer E. O’Brien’s article titled “Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking among Adjudicated Male Youth: Prevalence and Links to Treatment.” talks about how males are just as vulnerable as female victims. The use of drugs, sexual abuse in their childhood, and being outsiders can all attribute to how predators perceive their potential victims. O’Brien mentions how “although experts agree on the critical age range of DMST victims, the available research has not yet been able to determine clearly to what extent male youth are likely to be vulnerable to and to experience DMST relative to female youth” but that “the U.S. Department of State reported that males comprised only 2% of the DMST population nationally. Such diverse findings highlight the need for further research.”

This is important because we can see this as those who are in charge of conducting operations and interviews with sex trafficking are not thinking outside the box. Their focus is predominantly on female young adult or adult victims, and O'Brien states that "over 10% of the adjudicated male youth in this sample reported DMST victimization. The high prevalence of youth in our sample who reported DMST is concerning, particularly given it is likely an underestimation." Children are the majority of victims when it comes to sex trafficking but there is not enough work that is being done to help eradicate sex trafficking and its ties to young minor victims.

Valerie R. Anderson works in the School of Criminal Justice at the University of Cincinnati in Ohio. She, along with her colleagues, wrote a very descriptive article titled "Juvenile Court Practitioners' Construction of and Response to Sex Trafficking of Justice System Involved Girls", the primary focus being victims who are youth and female sex traffickers. The commercial sexual exploitation of children, also known as CSEC, is an extensive problem that resonates throughout the world and is not stopping any time soon. "There is not a clear estimate on the number of CSEC victims in the United States, but research suggests that the majority of victims are children, most of whom are female" (Anderson 2).

Reading this article talking about how "potentially hundreds of thousands of youth are at risk for sexual exploitation in the United States" (Anderson 2) and how unfortunately, there are few sound solutions to preventing every one of those abductions, is beyond painful to read. Regrettably, for most victims of sex trafficking, the justice system has its hands tied when trying to help pacify the victims' trauma. Anderson brings up a valid point how "the juvenile justice system is not designed to provide treatment and services for victims of CSEC. Epstein and

Edelmen (2013) recommended that victims should not be detained except as a last resort for their safety. Court practitioners and law enforcement officials may view placement as the only option, but these practices may revictimize youth, put them at risk for deeper juvenile justice system involvement, and ultimately hinder their access to community-based services”. By wrongly assuming the best recovery options for victims of sex trafficking are placing them in recovery homes or welfare systems, the justice system fails to “focus on healing and addressing the complex relationships in the lives of females” (Anderson 5).

Although “the biggest gaps in services include helping youth obtain long-term housing and employment, as well as reuniting with their families” (Anderson 5), there can be positive side effects that the justice system has been able to achieve. Such successful actions include, but are not limited to, “most successful intervention approaches utilize in-house services (e.g., a clinician was on the program staff), and the staff were able to locate appropriate services and coach youth to advocate for themselves” (Anderson 5).

However, some benefits are not as well tailored as we would like for it to be. Anderson dwells on some faults within the justice system’s attempt to help trafficking victims, “Crime victim benefits and public entitlement programs also exist, although they are not specifically tailored to victims of CSEC. Further, there is little data to assess both the extent to which victims involved with the juvenile justice system are accessing and utilizing such services and the evaluation of programming for victims of CSEC”.

Melissa Farley’s “Comparing Sex Buyers with Men Who Do Not Buy Sex: New Data on Prostitution and Trafficking” article dives into some troublesome facts about men who buy sex compared to men who are not subject to prostitution. “There is evidence for a connection

between sexual aggression and prostitution. Buying sex has been associated with men's perpetration of gender-based violence, including perpetration of physical and sexual violence against intimate partners" (Farley 3). Perhaps when a certain type of men looks to women who sell their bodies for sex becomes a habitual routine in their lifestyle, their secret aggressions toward women can blur the line between ethical agreements during intimate connections and becoming a rapist.

Farley believes that "sexually aggressive male college students demonstrate greater hostility toward women, a stronger inclination toward dominance in relationships, and a greater acceptance of rape myths" (4). Thankfully, those who do not participate in paid sexual acts are more likely to empathise with their emotional connections towards women. "The prevalence of childhood sexual abuse will be higher among men who buy sex than among men who do not buy sex" (Farley 6). Sexual abuse is a common factor in creating victims who are more vulnerable to sex trafficking. But sexual abuse can also be a trigger for young people to somehow grow up and turn into someone who is committing the acts of sex trafficking and other illegal sex acts.

In "The Anomaly among Sexually Abusive Youth: The Juvenile Sex Trafficker." by L.C. Miccio-Fonseca, the article can enlighten the reader more about how there are few victims of sex trafficking that turn around and become the predator, some captors who are still in the juvenile disposition. "The little known about juvenile sex traffickers is deduced from several avenues (i.e., victim's reports, sex crime reports, research findings on sexually abusive youth, agencies providing resources for abuse victims, etc.). Victims' reports clearly suggest that the human sex trafficker (juvenile or adult) is a different kind of sex offender, who is likely predatory, perpetrates severe physical and sexual assaultive behaviors, and engages in drug use"

(Miccio-Fonseca 3). The terrible truth to juvenile aggressors are such that “[their] results reported that male adolescent sex offenders were markedly more likely sexually abused, exposed to sexual violence in their family and/or experienced other types of abuse or neglect. These youth were further described as being more likely to be socially isolated, have early exposure to pornography, evidencing substantially more atypical sexual interests, and have more anxiety and/or problems with low self-esteem” (Miccio-Fonseca 5).

Despite the scarce albeit deplorable reality of juvenile sex traffickers, Beth Sapiro talks about practices that could best help victims recover from the trauma of sex trafficking in her scholarly journal titled “Supporting Youth Involved in Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking: Divergent Perspectives on Youth Agency.” She demonstrates how she believes youth can adapt back into society with much needed help from supportive and protecting people around the victims. Victims who were forced into the sex industry within the United States are referred to as domestic minor sex trafficking (DMST) victims. Mainly because there is a sufficient amount of negative impact on youth who suffer from sex trafficking domestically.

In spite of little review and inadequate research on the best methods to help sustain a victim’s psyche, “a review of related domains that frequently overlap with DMST, including child maltreatment, domestic violence, sexual assault, and services for homeless youth, suggests valuable principles to inform treatment and future research. This literature suggests that comprehensive case management, trauma-informed care, and services that promote empowerment are essential aspects of treatment” (Sapiro 5). Sapiro, along with numerous people who can conduct successful research and create well-based treatment practices, are keeping the trauma-induced therapy their top priority. “Trauma-informed care supports the rights of trauma

survivors, utilizing a collaborative, relational approach to services whenever possible, rather than a hierarchical approach that emphasizes differentials of power”(Sapiro 6).

Samarasinghe Vidyamali’s “Strategising Prevention: A Critical Review of Local Initiatives to Prevent Female Sex Trafficking” scholarly article vastly talks about how “female sex trafficking is viewed as the darker side of globalization” (Samarasinghe 1). Samarasinghe goes on to explain how “the flow of human trafficking for sexual exploitation involves almost every country in an intricate web. Geographical proximity, porous borders, differential levels of economic well being, violent conflicts, and ease of communication via the Internet have combined to prey upon women's vulnerabilities to feed a steadily increasing male demand for commercial sex” (Samarasinghe 2). This recognition derives from cross-border trafficking and the countless research that foreign operatives have been able to ascertain. Samarasinghe believes that this crime that happens throughout the world needs to be followed up with more frequently.

Raising awareness for sex trafficking has been and continues to be a familiar advertisement throughout popular cities in the United States as well as capitals in international countries. But that is not enough, according to Samarasinghe, who states that, “It is essential to maintain both a local or regional perspective and a global perspective in order to combat the transnational trade in human beings. Although development practitioners are increasingly aware of the need for such a balance, it is still quite difficult to maintain in the context of working with a criminal enterprise that, by definition, crosses national and regional borders” (13).

Sex trafficking is not a crime to be taken lightly. The violent ordeals that innumerable victims have suffered cannot be undone. There are prevention plans, rescue operations, multiple organizations who major in giving insight to people who are not aware of what sex trafficking is

capable of. Despite these constant efforts to help, the world is too big to eliminate such a threat.

We need everyone on board to help in whatever way possible. These aggressors take sadistic pleasure in knowing they have full control over their victims. We must take that control away and give the victims their freedom back.

Works Cited

- Anderson, Valerie R., et al. "Juvenile Court Practitioners' Construction of and Response to Sex Trafficking of Justice System Involved Girls." *Victims & Offenders*, vol. 12, no. 5, Sept. 2017, pp. 663-681. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1080/15564886.2016.1185753.
- Edwards, Ashton and Danica Lawrence. "Arrests made in Utah, other states in nationwide FBI sex trafficking sting." *Fox13*, Oct. 2017, fox13now.com/2017/10/18/arrests-made-in-utah-other-states-in-nationwide-fbi-sex-trafficking-sting/. Accessed 28 Feb 2018.
- Farley, Melissa¹, mfarley@prostitutionresearch.com, et al. "Comparing Sex Buyers with Men Who Do Not Buy Sex: New Data on Prostitution and Trafficking." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, vol. 32, no. 23, Dec. 2017, pp. 3601-3625. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1177/0886260515600874.
- Miccio-Fonseca, L. C. "The Anomaly among Sexually Abusive Youth: The Juvenile Sex Trafficker." *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, vol. 26, no. 5, May 2017, pp. 558-572. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1080/10926771.2017.1304476.
- O'Brien, Jennifer E.¹, Jennifer.O'Brien@unh.edu, et al. "Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking among Adjudicated Male Youth: Prevalence and Links to Treatment." *Children & Youth Services Review*, vol. 82, Nov. 2017, pp. 392-399. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2017.09.026.
- Sapiro, Beth, et al. "Supporting Youth Involved in Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking: Divergent Perspectives on Youth Agency." *Child Abuse & Neglect*, vol. 58, Aug. 2016, pp. 99-110. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1016/j.chiabu.2016.06.019.

Sobel, Meghan. "Sex trafficking isn't what you think it is." *YouTube*, uploaded by Tedx Talks, 14 Dec 2016, www.youtube.com/watch?v=wyhF7q3_bpk.

Vidyamali, Samarasinghe and Burton Barbara. "Strategising Prevention: A Critical Review of Local Initiatives to Prevent Female Sex Trafficking." *Development in Practice*, no. 1, 2007, p. 51. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1080/09614520601092378.

Sierra Jorgensen

Megan Goates

English 2010

24 April 2018

Sex Isn't Always Fun (Companion Piece)

The brush of her hair used to make her feel wanted.

Safe.

At home.

Now it reminds her of damp rooms.

No food.

Sewer smells.

What does the sun feel like?

How can she experience joy again?

Will she taste joy again?

The captor is not depression.

It's not anxiety.

Suicidal thoughts.

No, those are the aftermath of a trauma

worsened by her own memories.

Her captor took her from a home.

Sent her away.

Another state?

Maybe a country.

She's not a victim of opportunity.

These things just don't happen to people like her.

What constitutes "people like her"?

She came from a family of love, of hope.

Faithful, God-fearing folk.

Where is God now?

She's not in chains. She's not tied up.

No animals reside here.

Her jail are the arms of the many men

she's forced to sleep with.

Her pride weakened.

Her confidence obliterated.

She feels no beauty.

Sees no peace.

In time, she may find help.

Help may find her.

A rescue happens quite often.

Not often enough.

There are still so many victims.

So many broken souls.

This isn't a foreign fear.

It's in our backyard as well as our neighboring seas.

The emotional drain this will take on her

cannot be undone.

There is no turning back.

There is only moving forward.

Some have the power

to seek the shelter their minds need.

For others, it is a long and dry road

to a hopeful recovery.

Fear.

Pain.

Loneliness.

Few barely make it back to their

once happy selves.

This is not a story to be taken lightly.

This is happening.

Yesterday.

Today.

Tomorrow.

Two seconds ago.

This is sex trafficking.

