

**SLAVERY NO MORE 2012 GLOBAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING CONFERENCE**  
**August 10-11 ~ LOS ANGELES, CA**

**PANEL: The Victim vs. Criminal Paradigm Shift**

**Julian Sher:** I was at Juvenile Hall yesterday talking to about 50 girls, and I said that it's really important that you go to a place where people don't judge you, and then they looked at me, and I said, "*Commissioner Pratt may judge you but not in that sense.*" Just before we start I'm going to show a couple of slides, and I'll ask each panelist the same format that we did in the morning. They'll each introduce themselves, and they'll talk about a specific question I will put to them.

This is a sting operation that's Shared International did in Las Vegas. What you're going to see is a man pretending to be a john, trying to buy some young girls in Las Vegas. They're buying a product. They're negotiating a price. He's got 14 year olds. The women cost \$200. Two girls were just bought in Las Vegas for \$300, and that was a sting operation. You can bet, and the police officers here and the people on this panel, this goes on every day, every night in Los Angeles and Las Vegas across the country.

Next slide. People know these two cases. A 13 year old. She was sold basically as a sex slave. She's now serving life in prison for shooting her pimp at age 16. [Bridgette Gray] from Sacramento, she was strangled to death by a john. That's the real face of what's going on in Los Angeles. Most people here know that California harbors three of the FBI's 13 highest intensity child prostitution areas in the nation Los Angeles, San Francisco, and San Diego.

Who gets arrested? And that's what we're going to look at. If you look at the numbers of who gets arrest, not necessarily in Los Angeles and Long Beach where they are beginning to change. Look at the statistics. For every six women arrested in New York City only one male purchaser was charged. In Boston the gap was 11 to one. In Chicago 89% of the prostitution arrests were women, only 10% were men.

The biggest myth were going to look at, slowly it's beginning to change. Pimps and johns are beginning to get arrested but only slowly because of some of the work. Mortality, I was talking to the girls yesterday. You're better off signing up to go fight in Afghanistan than to walk the tracks in any major American city. "*The mortality rate among women forced into prostitution,*" according to a study of the *American Journal of Epidemiology*, "*is 200% greater than the general population.*"

Finally the question of choice. We talked about this a bit in the morning, but here's some quick statistics I want to show you. Do these girls have choice? 93% of runaways were sexually abused, 85% had abuse or neglect in child welfare cases, and two-thirds were recruited by somebody close to them a family member, a brother, a cousin, or a friend. So is that really an issue of choice?

With that general presentation, I'm going to do the same thing we did in the morning. I'm going to ask you each to introduce yourself. We'll probably start with Commissioner Pratt.

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I'd like you to say what you do and the question I want to ask you is what has been the hardest attitude or myth that you had to change among your colleagues. Not someone out there, not the public but among the people you're working with police, NGO's, or your own personal myth that you have to overcome in order to move this paradigm shift. To begin to see these girls not as criminals but as victims. Let me start with you Commissioner.

**Commissioner Pratt:** I would say probably the hardest thing to shift, and I would guess that this is true for most of us who work in this area, is that they are not choosing to do this. When they come in, and when you talk to them, and for the first half dozen times you talk to them, they'll tell you this is their choice. They'll tell you that they are with their boyfriend. We would all describe him as the pimp. They describe him as a boyfriend, and they say they want to do it. That these are choices that they are making, and please just let me back out, and I'm going to go live my own life.

It's getting past that as their initial response I think is probably the biggest challenge. For a long time, most of us listened to that, took it at face value. I did at least and learning that that is defensive and not true was probably the biggest thing to overcome.

**Julian Sher:** Dana for officers on the street or some of your senior guys what were some of the hardest things you had to overcome?

**Dana Harris:** I think to make it a little bit more personal for all of us in this room, we can all agree that a lot of us are basically on the same page. We care about these kids. We want to go out, and we want to help our young survivors. I think that one of the myths, maybe even as far back as a couple of years ago, is that law enforcement, NGO's, different law enforcement agencies are not working together. I think that's been the hardest thing to overcome is when I look and I see Commissioner Pratt. When I look at Kim, and I see Kim sitting next to me whose gotten our phone calls. When I look out and I see a representative like Vanessa from CAST that we're all working together.

It's not about who gets the credit, who did that. At some point, we're all going to get tired of hearing ourselves talk, but the reality is I want to hear from all of you. You want to hear from all of us, and we're all here for the same reason. We're all here to work together and that we're all on the same page and that we're all on the same team. I will say one myth that I would like to dispel is that there isn't one person has this. We're all working together, and we're all here for the same common goal.

**Julian Sher:** Ken if you could introduce yourself, because you're new. Explain what your work is, and what's the biggest myth that you've had to overcome?

**Ken Turner:** I'm Ken Turner with Long Beach Police Department. I'm actually a missing person's detective. With budget issues being what they are we're trying to put together a human trafficking unit. We haven't quite done it yet. What I told my partner at work one day is tell Miss Dorothy to make some new business cards, and where it says *Missing Persons*, tell her to put "*Missing Persons and Human Trafficking*." We started passing

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the cards out, and it seems like my bosses didn't mind that we did that, so we're able to do some human trafficking work.

One of the biggest things that I think we have to deal with is time with these budget cuts. I know that this is beating a dead horse in regards to everyone hearing about the different budget problems. In too many cases, the different detectives in the different fields are coming across human trafficking situations, and they're really not realizing what it is that they have. I have was talking to some of our domestic violence detectives at Long Beach the other day, and as I was explaining to them what it is that my partner and I do, they were explaining that they had this particular victim that was kicked out of a car on the 91 Freeway in Long Beach at 1:00AM. When she was kicked out of the car, she was naked, and she was beat up.

They were handling that as it though it was a domestic violence case. One of the things that we need to do is we need to get educated amongst our law enforcement community and not only get the information out in these small numbers, but we need to do it at home. Rick [Surrato] earlier was talking about how he's doing some very intensive training in Orange County. We need to figure out how to get that done in Los Angeles County so that not only the detectives that have the passion for the human trafficking information but the patrol officers that are on the streets. They're coming across the victims all the time, and they're really not recognizing what it is that they have before them.

**Julian Sher:** Kim if you could talk briefly about Saving Innocence and some of the myths that you had to overcome in the NGO world.

**Kim Biddle:** Saving Innocence is the nonprofit that's contracted out by Los Angeles County. We're contracted out by the Superior Court as well as Los Angeles Probation. We work very closely with all of this panel right here. We are the nonprofit that's contracted specifically to work with the STAR Program which is the special court that Commission Pratt oversees. We work with a lot of girls who are rescued in Los Angeles. Some of them were born in raised in Los Angeles, and some of them come from other states.

We do intensive case management for them. We meet them at that point of crisis intervention. We're alongside law enforcement, and we create that sense of permanency for them. We follow them wherever they go. These kids are used to being passed around from officer to officer or from governmental system to the next, social worker to the social worker. What we do is stick with them, and we help them have a voice to all of these important people in their life. We help coordinate all of the intensive crisis response that is needed for them along that journey of healing.

I've worked with everyone here very extensively. These are all my heroes. Because these are my heroes, because these professionals up here are so rare, one of the major myths that we've had to overcome with the girls that we work with is that law enforcement, the court, actually want to help you. It's really hard to build trust for these girls with these guys when at some point they most likely had a cop pay for sex and demand it for free, because he

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showed his badge. They've often been arrested when the john who was 45 and she was 13 was let go without any charges yet she was arrested and detained, so there's a lot of truth myth that has to be overcome with the girls that we work with, because fortunately we have people like this now that are really at the forefront.

We're all pioneering in this in the nation and in our county. It's really for the girls reframing. Law enforcement can become someone that you can run to. The agencies, court, probation even can be a source of help with the restoration and help with all of the services that you need rather than I'm being punished by these people, they don't understand me, so reframing that for the girls mind is really key.

**Julian Sher:** We'll explore that when we look at how to help some of these girls, and speaking of helping the girls, Emilio can you talk a bit about the work you do at the Department of Child and Family Services and the myths that you had to overcome in that department.

**Emilio Mendoza:** Thank you for having me here. My name is Emilio Mendoza. I'm the acting Assistant and Regional Administrator over two specialized task forces, and I'm also co-chair with my colleague who you already met Debra Deem over our interagency Council on Child Abuse, Neglect, and the direct services subcommittee for issues related to commercial sexual exploitation of children. Some of the work that I do, I carry a lot of hats like many of my partners here. One of those hats is to oversee a specialized task force that responds to drug scenes, everything from the small minor sales to the major narcotic traffickers all the way to cartels, etcetera, and clandestine drug laboratories.

The other job that I do is I oversee a specialized task force that's referred to as the Multi Agency Response Team. This is a specialized task force that gets calls in advance and last minute notices from law enforcement jurisdictions predominantly that have children in custody or are coming across some very heinous situations of abuse and neglect but more on the side of criminal elements. In other words, they give us a call in advance I would say 85% of the time that they're going to be serving a warrant in any particular location. There could be a one warrant location or there could be like we just handled the other day 357 at one time.

Our team is ready at the go to be present and respond to the scene and minimize the trauma that our children are experiencing. This is not your traditional trauma that you thinking about even though it's part of it. It's more about access to weapons, narcotics, child pornography; you name it, the worst of it, that's who we respond to. Within that element one of the cases that we respond to are issues of human trafficking. Any case that comes in whether it be foreign or technology facilitator or domestic traffic youth, our team is the one that responds for our department. We provide training for our personnel and we'll talk a little bit more about what we do during our panel discussion here, but that's some of the things we do and of course we're doing the ICAN subcommittee that is working to identify

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barriers and identify resources then cultivate new leaders and new programs that are out there much like yourself on how to help this population.

To your question. One of the biggest myths, the traditional one is of course the issue choice. The one that we have the greatest difficulty is the attitude that we have to overcome within our own agencies. When it comes to whether it be probation and law enforcement, it's certainly within my own organization. The prevailing thought is too much effort, little gain. That prevailing thought of this is a lost society. These are the ones we let go, so why are we trying to put too much effort? I think that when you start talking to our professionals, when it comes to this situation, you'll hear a lot of issues of well if I put X amount of effort, or if I commit myself to this effort, I'm frequently met with challenges all along the path. I can't get a police report; NGO doesn't want to talk to me about this particular victim because of confidentiality. Probation says you know what I can't talk to you right now; we're still dealing with certain aspects of it through our criminal proceeding.

Our department hides behind the shield of confidentiality, so you come across so many barriers within our own organizations that it has become difficult not only with this population but other types of population. When you deal with this particular population, it's one of those things that if we can remove those barriers, if we can work towards that effort and certainly the task force model is a great idea, it's like planting the seed, and it just takes over an entire organization. That's what we're trying to do. We're trying to create specialized professionals that can respond to this, meet all those barriers, work with people like you see here in this panel, and once we do that, we start to infect our entire organization for cultural change. Sometimes it has to start from the bottom up, sometimes from the top down, but we're trying all angles when we're dealing with this aspect.

**Julian Sher:** And finally Michele, you do find increasingly now across the country police forces that are dealing with this issue. You'll find a couple of judges. Obviously you'll have NGO's and the community groups like Saving Innocence, but when I first told people I was going down to talk to probation officers that were handling child sex trafficking, I had a lot of raised eyebrows. I don't know of any other jurisdiction where the probation officers are not only just involved but actually playing the leading role, so it's a great honor for Michelle. I've already introduced her, but if you can talk about setting up of a special trafficking project and the myths that you had to overcome inside the probation department.

**Michelle Guymon:** Again I'm Michelle Guymon with Los Angeles County Probation Department. I am currently, my assignment, the Director of Placement Services. As of November 2010, I also became one of the lead managers for our domestic minor sex trafficking within probation. I think the biggest myth, personally, that I had to overcome was prior to November 2012, the only thing I knew about human trafficking or trafficking was that that happened in other countries. That's the only thing I knew. When Judge Donna Groman asked me who was a part of the ICAN Committee to be on a domestic minor trafficking sex trafficking subcommittee, the first thought that came to my mind is wow,



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probations gotten pretty progressive. They're going to let me travel to other countries. I mean what does that really have to do with us?

It was kind of interesting to hear, and it actually wasn't one of my so proud moments, because by education, I have my masters in social work and did many years of treatment in one of our treatment facilities within probation. I've always worked with kids who were arrested and came into probation for prostitution. I thought I did a lot of great work with a lot of childhood trauma but never crossed my mind in all those years that those girls were being sexually exploited. I think it was about choice that I had to overcome. It was also the myth that I've always worked with these girls and just totally missed that. I think that myth is also something that rings true in my own department which we're trying to change through training.

I was walking down the hall a couple of months ago with Nola Brantley who comes out and does some of the training for us. She's quite extraordinary, and a gentleman walked out of his office, and he said, "Hey Miss Guymon. I understand that you're doing some work with human trafficking in our department. That's great that the department that you work with those kids in Mexico." I thought well he started off good, but he didn't quite get it. Again, we have a lot of work to do to try to change those basic attitudes too that not only does it happen in other countries, but it also happens here in the United States.

**Julian Sher:** So we heard some of the basic myths that it happens abroad not here, that this is a lost society or they're not worth working on, that the girls themselves have the myth that the cops or law enforcement are out there to punish us. They're not there to help. The time that it takes to do this work, the myth that the different agencies and that the different interest groups and agencies are working together, and Commissioner Pratt started off with the whole issue of choice. So that's where I want to start going back to the issue of choice. It is really the nub of everything both from the girls, the pimps. Dana this morning talked about the pimp who sort of said talk to her. Right? The words were also, "Society didn't want her. I wanted her."

Let me ask, anyone can answer this, but let's not talk about the 10 year old who may be easily misguided or manipulated, or even the rare cases of physical kidnapping that 15 year olds who are snapped off the street. You've got an intelligent, aware 16 year old not with a gorilla pimp with a pimp who's not necessarily beating the crap out of her every night and is maybe in contact with the police and doesn't want to break away. If either one of you a prosecutor or Saving Innocence or a cop how do you explain to somebody that girls choice?

**Michelle Guymon:** I'll say a little bit. It was actually yesterday day at juvenile hall where Julian we invited Julian down to talk to a group of our girls. Every week we do a workshop there to really try to bring awareness and give some support for the girls there. One of the girls as he began his presentation said, "We choose to do this. Why are you saying that we were pressured into this?" I couldn't hold my tongue. Again, I just had to tell the kids the same thing. "When I was doing treatment with you at 16 and 17, I absolutely thought it was

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your choice, because again it was just easy to think that way. It was really easy to think that okay this is just what you chose to do, and I remember having a feeling about you need to quit that. You need to stop that. All the things you say.”

And I said, “What changed for me was the first 11 year old we saw. That’s really what changed it for me. Then there was a 10 year old. I was in the middle of supervisor Knobbe’s fundraiser one night, and my Blackberry went off. We got a report from someone. They’d just recused or recovered a 10 year old. I think during that whole process and what really changed it for me and really solidified it for me was the fact that it was easier to wrap my head around a 16, 17, 18 year old in some crazy way.” When I posed that question to the kids, I think when you really get them to look at that, did she have a choice at 10? Was that a choice, and you take it back, and if you know the average age of entry is 12, again I think sometimes the matter of choice is really big and even for the kids.

**Catherine Pratt:** One thing that became clear to me as I worked more with these girls is that they’re so disenfranchised that they really don’t have any family that is reliable. They’ve been probably through a number of foster homes, and frankly the pimps or other gang members or other girls who are in the life are the people that they are closest to. That is their connection. That’s where they feel connected, and that’s why they go back. They’re so disenfranchised, off the grid, they don’t have their birth certificates. They don’t have the transcripts from school, so if they wanted to go get a legitimate job, if they wanted to enroll in school, they couldn’t. What kind of choice is it when you don’t have any other choice? That’s the reality for them. Really getting birth certificates and getting identification cards is one of our first goals for a lot of these kids.

**Julian Sher:** So if they’re choosing, it’s not like their choosing as we said yesterday like gee should I go to Disneyland today, get a degree or should I walk the track? It’s a choice between bad choices, and they make choices.

**Kim Biddle:** I think it’s important to look at who this victim is. This victim is someone who’s gone through so much complex trauma. They’ve done research that has shown that they have a higher level of post-traumatic stress disorder than POW’s from the Vietnam War. These are kids who have been raped 15 times a day, believed that this man loved him. This is a man that has approached her much like a typical pedophile grooming where the child gains trust, gains affection, gains a connection with someone who tells them that they are beautiful and loved and special and then begins to manipulate.

You really have a child who is going through a domestic violence type mindset, adding on Stockholm’s syndrome, because then he becomes violent. In Stockholm’s Syndrome, you relate to your captor, because it’s the safest choice for you, and you have someone who’s being tortured like a prisoner of war. I’ve had girls that have permanent scars from their head down to their toes from beaten by chains on a daily basis. There’s a high level of trauma. They’re locked in basements. They’re not given food for weeks. They’re not given

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water. They're locked in trunks of cars and driven in the hot sun as punishment. They're forced to give each other abortions.

The level of trauma on this girl is beyond what you can imagine. When we look at a woman who's 32 and is in a bad relationship, domestic violence relationship, do we judge her and say, well she's choosing? Yeah on some level but even a grown woman who is in a domestic violence relationship, it takes on average eight times for her to leave that violent situation, because there's an unraveling of lies that needs to occur which is where victim services is so critical to help that child unravel the lies that they've bought along the way, so it's unfair to say well sure she's choosing. Yeah she's physically walking back to the track, or she's physically walking herself back to the pimp. But because she physically has no choice.

We've had girls stand up in Commissioner Pratts court and say please put me on house arrest. Give me an ankle bracelet that tells everyone, myself included, that I cannot leave or everyone will know. That's the only way you're going to be able to keep me inside. They know. I've had girls be put at placements and say please send me back to the juvenile hall. I need to go to juvenile hall; I can't have freedom, because I know that my pimp knows. If my pimp knows, I will either need to go to him or be killed. It's like you can't look at a child choosing when there's not a freedom to choose in the beginning.

**Emilio Mendoza:** When we're looking at the issue of choice, we also have to look at the issues of our own professionals. They're in that mindset, the minor's choosing to be in this life. When you work with our colleagues in the professional field, and we talk to them about issues of human trafficking, they're still in that state that Michelle told you. Well it's great. You're dealing with foreigners or different countries and so forth. When you start to actually educate them, bring some level of awareness, bring in the resources, and you say, let's look at the model of what you already know about human trafficking and the global aspect of what you're thinking. It's another part of the world.

You start talking about the issues of luring your victim, giving them false promises. You're going to bring money to your family. I'm going to give you a glamour life. All of these aspects that are part of it from coercion to threat to retaliation that is known on the foreign side are the same things that are being employed by your pimps here. The exact same things. They create that co-dependency, that isolation from everybody else. They beat them. They have them captive. They threatened their families. They're same, exact characteristics of the ones you think about to the ones that are being done in our streets.

While predominantly we think about those kids that we see out in the streets, there are other victims out there that are here in our country. Those are the ones that are actually going into part of what we would refer to as a pimp but maybe housed and actually caged in some location. Then they'll take them to midnight parties where they have a select population that goes to these parties, and they pay for sex. You won't see them out of the streets, they're actually in clubs.



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We have to keep ourselves ahead of all these criminals and the ways their thinking of how to exploit these minors. So when you talk about that aspect of working with that population, you try to hit home on those things that are important to our partners like greater prosecution, access to victims when you're dealing with our CPO's and NGO's, and from our perspective what security measures or protective measures we can place in probation and child protective services.

**Julian Sher:** Based on what you all just said, let me raise the controversial question which is the issue of detention. The description of the victim that you just described, and it was one of the first questions one of the girls asked me yesterday, she said, "So how come I'm here in jail, and the pimp and the john are out there?" We don't arrest or jail victims of spousal abuse or rape victims, who refuse to testify, refuse to flip for whatever reason, and yet in various places, Los Angeles may be a little more caring, but in most jurisdictions across the country, these girls are either detained, sometimes outright arrested. One way or the other, there are bars between them. We don't have Nola or Rachel Lloyd from GEMS. I'll try to play a bit of devil's advocate to represent them. Can any of you address that issue why are we detaining? Let's not use the word arrest necessarily, but why are we detaining these girls if they're victims?

**Catherine Pratt:** I think the answer is that we should be, but the reality is that at this point for better or worse, the best services that we have available for them are administered through the Juvenile Justice System through probation, my court, and I think that at this point, that's where they're getting the most help. Another issue is getting them to stay in a placement is very, very difficult. It takes a little bit of time for them to set down roots. The tools that the Department of Children and Family Services have in order to contain them for a period of time while they set down those roots are less than what I have available to me.

We're trying to minimize the amount of time that they spend in custody, and one of the things that we are doing that I think is very effective is that as soon as they are arrested, before they even come to court for arraignment, before they're even technically charged, they're meeting with Kim or someone along the lines of Kim in the hall to talk to them about what they need, what they've been through. We also start very early having them talk to the potential placements where we may be sending them so that they have talked to these people for two, three, four times before I actually order the placements. They have a little bit of a connection. They have a little bit of an investment. They're willing to stay for at least one night. Then it's a day at a time sort of thing after that.

**Julian Sher:** Somebody else want to address the detention?

**Emilio Mendoza:** Certainly. I think when you draw comparisons to rape victims and domestic violence and things of that nature; you've got to remember that we as a society and the laws of our nation have always taken special interest in protecting children. They have always taken even greater effort when they're victims of a crime or abuse or neglect. It is the responsibility, Child Protective Services, to ensure that those children are going to be

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safe. The last thing we want to do with Child Protective Services is to cut off any tool that is available to us to protect that minor. If you have law enforcement, prosecutors, CBO's, whatever option is out there, we're going to utilize it.

We don't know at what stage of reluctance we're coming across with that minor. Is it a new minor that just started or is it one that has already the bottom for the pimp? We just don't know and so for us to close our doors on the issue of incarceration is not a wise one but at the same time, we also have to ensure that we're cultivating new resources that can provide services for those that are ready to accept that service. It's very important that we work with probation and with our partners and wherever that need is it whether it be incarceration or with child protective services or a lockdown facility where we're working towards it, or whether district attorney says you work through it, and then we're going to do a diversion where we remove the solicitation charge. Whatever's out there, we just can't close our doors. I don't think that anybody will say that we only want to incarcerate them. It's what's in the best interest.

**Julian Sher:** If it is detention, it's detention for protection not punishment.

**Emilio Mendoza:** That is correct.

**Michelle Guymon:** I was just going to ask a question actually of everybody in the audience. For those people who think that we should absolutely not detain, raise your hand just to kind of see. Okay. And how about those who think detention should be an option, raise of hand. Okay. And how many people think that the victim or the survivor's voice is important in the decision that's made anybody. Okay, so I think we can all agree about that, and I think just like Emilio says and everyone else says, I know there's a bit push to keep kids out of juvenile justice. I agree with that, and I hope someday down the road that we have a community based response that responds to that that includes housing. That's the biggest part. There's great services for kids and families, but there's just not the housing piece. That's right now what the two systems kind of pay for is the housing piece, because they've run from something not to something.

I think sometimes in court, I know one case, in particular, in Commissioner Pratt's court where the girl had no confinement time. At the moment she realized she had no confinement time, she slumped in the courtroom chair. Then she sat back up and she said, "*Then you can't help me, so just let me go.*" That was not an option. That kid begged to go somewhere secure, because she was on home detention actually and stuck with it. The moment she got that ankle bracelet out, this guy found her and gave her consequences, beat her bad. Tattooed, rapes and let her know don't ever. If your back where you can get to me, don't ever. It will lead to death. She said, "*The only way I'm going to stay alive is for me to stay secure.*" We didn't have that option, so she told Commissioner Pratt, "*Then just let me go. You can't help me.*"

**Dana Harris:** I very strongly believe that Juvenile Hall isn't necessarily the best answer, but the bottom line is I'm a cop. My number one concern is to take this animal

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that has abused one of these girls. What I have to do is my investigation and as far as the care with the girl, I give Kim a call. I say Kim take care of this little girl. My experience has been that when the girls are released, and they're not confined, this animal has done something atrocious to them. If I don't have, or if we don't have, charges that are pending, or some form of confinement of that young lady, eventually she's going to leave so the domestic violence cycle and how often they go back, she's going to go back. When she goes back, I lose the case. Lose the case and the guy goes free, he starts all over again. Not only does he beat her, now he's going to pick up another one, and he's going to pick up another one. It's going to perpetuate. Locking them up isn't the best thing, and we have to figure out something better, but the bottom line is we have to keep them.

**Julian Sher:** We talked about the issue of choice when I raised the question, and Commission Pratt answered it very eloquently, it's not really a choice for these people here. It's not like oh gee should we send them to this evil, crowded, dangerous juvenile hall or this wonderful shelter where they get help. It doesn't exist. When I started research on the book, the latest statistics show...You know how many beds there work that's just beds where there are professionals who can help these girls not just an open door but that are trained? There were 50 in the entire country. I think were up to now about 100. In the rare place like in Minneapolis, there's a group called *Breaking Free* that has an open door policy where the girls can come. The police are there, because they trust *Breaking Free* if they find a girl. They can bring her to a shelter. They'll get trained. That girl can often serve later as a witness, but you're talking maybe 50 to 100 in the entire country, so we don't have that choice.

Let me raise one other issue that we sort of touched on this morning, and a couple of other people, and it's related to this. If you have the victim versus criminal, we've talked a bit about how we have to change our attitudes towards the girls as victims, but that still means there is actually crime going on here. The crime is being committed by the pimps but also the johns, the men, the demand. You can't do that paradigm shift if you're just helping the victims and not going after the real criminals. Ken talked very eloquently about the real bad guys, the pimps, but I'd like to ask any of you to talk about the demand side. How do we deal with the demand side of the criminal equation?

**Ken Turner:** What you said there is perfect. I mentioned my boss before. I'm going to embarrass him again Lieutenant Andres Dawson, he put together an operation that you all say, some of you read in the paper. Basically it was for lack of a better phrase National Day of Johns. Over a four day period, we arrested 46 males who basically solicited undercover police officers for the purposes of prostitution. I don't know about you, but that's pretty darned good. I don't say it for that fact. I say it that yes it is coming, and we are arresting the johns.

A lot of the problem is this and what we see in different cities where they actually you want to solicit someone, an undercover officer? You go to jail for prostitution? Guess what? You're soliciting these girls, your names in the paper. Your photos in the paper. You think that would happen here? You would think that would stop the demand. Like Kim was saying

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before, you take away the demand guess what? They're going to move on to something else, because these guys are predators, and they are opportunists.

If I can speak for my boss, watch out in the next couple of months, because we do have a couple of operations. We specifically, especially in Los Angeles and I know you guys do in Long Beach, we specifically target these johns. We go to these areas, especially where we know through our intelligence into our investigations where these guys are actually soliciting the girls and as you see on the tape, they're soliciting the young girls. They're asking for young girls. We're actually making arrests of these guys, putting them in jail, and trying to do especially with our city attorney's office which is very aggressive, getting the maximum sentence available for these guys. Then we keep going and keep going until we get as many people as possible. As with these pimps, these johns make me sick, and I can't stand them. Just keep your eyes out in the next couple of months.

**Dana Harris:** I just want to add something too. In the training that we do, we want to make sure that we're politically correct with the right words. We're really using the term survivor much more and the term victim a lot less. We have to figure out another term for these johns, because the reality is every single one of them, they know what they're buying which makes them pedophiles which makes them rapists. Those two words are already taken, so we got to figure out another name other than john.

**Julian Sher:** Words are important. That's a very good issue. We often said that if a 22 year old high school teacher or 24 year old high school teacher had sex with a 14 year old in his class, we know what the headline would say. It wouldn't say john seduces girl. Right? But that same 24 year old goes on the track and buys a 14 year old and he's laid off. That one reference that Kim made, in Minneapolis, you drive on one of the highways, and it says if you get caught buying prostitutes, your face could appear here, and it's [www.johnpics.org](http://www.johnpics.org). They put up pictures, so it's the shaming and naming which is one possibility.

Let's try to deal with the future. After the girls have gone through parts of the system and they're beginning to see for the first time people like Ken and Dana on their side, and they go before the judge. The judge refers them. Kim I guess I want to ask some of you what happens after to try to help those girls both to heal but also to make sure they don't go back into the life?

**Kim Biddle:** Probably the biggest pitch I would say is what's really needed, and I think everybody's eluded to that is permanency. These kids, because they don't have those families, because they don't have attachments, the faith based community, everybody, needs to really get involved with these kids through mentoring, through connection, through whatever, because that's really what they need. That's just the whole idea of permanency. I think that's really something that community needs to really work towards and take on, but that permanent connection I think is going to be critical to their success.

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These girls are running away from home for a reason, and they're running into the situation, because they're looking for love. For a place to belong, for an identity, for a place to call home. That's why the pimps will say, she's not going to tell you anything. She's not going to trust you. Why? Because I gave her what she needed. I gave her clothes. I took her to get her nails and hair done, and I put a roof over her head. All's she's doing is helping us make money.

What we need to do moving forward in aftercare is for one, we need to be providing wraparound services, support, and the basic needs this child needed before this pimp sought her out then gave her everything she needed. These girls will say, he was the first person to ever do that. She's 12, she's 13 years old. He was the first person to give me attention. He was the first person to tell me that they loved me. He was the first person to take me shopping.

A lot of these girls come from impoverished areas within our county. No one's taking them to get clothes for school. Do you know how traumatic it is for a 12 year old girl to not be able to go to school with clean clothes and their hair done? A lot of these girls are African American girls too, and they need to be able to get their hair done. It is highly traumatizing. If this dude comes along and offers her these things that are really foundational needs of her, physically and of her emotional health, he's won her over. We need to provide that. We need to give her a sense of belonging that doesn't exploit her.

We just recently through the first Human Trafficking Survivor Conference had 40 girls from Los Angeles County attend this conference. One of the most impactful things that one of the girls said, she stood up at the end and she said, "You know for the first time I realize what love looks like and feels like for the first time in my life." 16. Because she never knew that growing up in a healthy way, and then he presented it in a way under that banner of love that was not healthy. For the first time, we gave her a contrast. That's what these girls need. They need a contrast of what love is supposed to look like and feel like.

These girls are highly intelligent. They're natural born leaders. A lot of them are honor students. They're smart. They're choosing how to live their life on purpose. They're making choices on purpose, because they think this is the best and the only way. If we provide them a contrast of healthy relationships, healthy love, the ability to actually go to college to think about their future, to dream for the first time, you give them the opportunity to be a child for the first time. I have had girls; I bring coloring books whenever I go to court with a girls that testify. I know you're thinking a 16 year old. They love it 100% of the time. They all always say, I have not had time to be a child, and they love it. They love getting the opportunity to just be a kid and to dream and to think for their future. You give them that opportunity for the first time, and I they will thrive.

**Emilio Mendoza** I think that we should also incorporate the idea that we need a systems change with our own infrastructures. All of us here are part of a specialized group within our departments, but we can all agree that we need to train our entire agencies. The



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reality is while we identify some from an operation or someone from the street, the great majority of our first responders do not have much awareness on the subject matter. We need to create systems of change where we have policy and practice that coincides with collaborations with outside agencies.

To be more specific about our department, a great majority of these children are going through the probation department. Some do come to us directly, and when they go through the probation department, we had decided that we needed to be more progressive in our efforts to provide a provision of service. Traditionally, if we identify a minor to be a 600, a kid which is under the supervision of probation, children's services would wash their hands and say good luck to you. The same thing on the probation side. They determine it's a 300 minor, a victim of abuse or neglect, probation will say good luck to you. There was very little communication going on. We have what we call a 241.1 Court and that brings the two agencies together through people like Commissioner Pratt, and some of our people in dependency court, that say maybe we need dual supervision. Maybe we need greater emphasis on probation for safety issues and placement, or we need more service oriented services through children's services, through awareness and training and the systematic changes that occur through working with partners.

I could tell you when I first started to do my responsibilities that I do now, everybody had this common language of Community Based Organization's or faith based organizations. I started introducing the thought of NGO's, nongovernment organizations, and they're just puzzled. They didn't realize that there's a greater community out there that can help our kids and the population we serve. I'm looking at systemic changes in order for us as helpers to provide that level of service to identify people like him and all of our partners here. That's what we're shooting for.

**Julian Sher:** Yesterday when I speaking to the girls I said, "You're not going to believe this I said, but you have no idea how lucky you are to be in Los Angeles." I think you could see from the kinds of people who are working and fighting hard to protect those girls how fortunate you are here in Los Angeles to have a team like this, so let's give them a big round of applause. Thank you. Jocelyn will introduce our next event.

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