

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

**The State of Human Trafficking in the United States**

**Jocelyn White:** We first met Julian last year at a conference. We were so captivated by his passion and desire to know about this world that is so evil and dark. A lot of people want to turn their eyes and ears away yet he is willing to go to those hard places, and ask hard questions, so he can know what's really needed to end slavery. We were so captivated by his passion and his heart for this cause.

I read both of his books *Somebody's Daughter* and *Caught on the Web*, and I highly, highly recommend them. You will glean so much information from both of those books, so I definitely recommend you visit his table and get one of those before this conference ends. When he comes up, would you give him the best welcome and encouragement as he leads us and sets the stage for today? Will you please join me in welcoming Julian Sher.

**Julian Sher:** Thank you. Thank you all. I don't know if the DOJ wants an investigative journalist to stand in for a representative from the DOJ, but I will do my best as I said last night at 11:00PM with a curveball and the Skirball. I am an investigative journalist. As part of my investigations, I've gone to Afghanistan. I've gone to Baghdad. I've been all through Africa, Somalia, Nigeria. I was in Kosovo twice right after the war. You get to see a lot of horrible things and horrible place. I want to read you a quote from the latest *Trafficking and Persons Annual Report* by the State Department about one of the countries that I've visited and of course in my investigations.

*"This country is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children both local citizens and foreign nationals subjected to forced labor, debt bondage, involuntary servitude, and sex trafficking. Trafficking in this country can occur in many illicit and illicit industries or markets, including brothels, massage parlors, street prostitution, hotel services, hospitality, agriculture, health, and domestic services among others."*

I think as you can probably figure out that country wasn't Thailand or Nigeria or any other places I've visited. It was the United States of America. That is the description in the U.S. State Department's most recent report about what's going on here in America. What's so powerful about what Jocelyn and Peter are trying to do, and what you're trying to do, is point at a dark mirror to people who don't want to see what's in our own backyard. That human trafficking isn't something that just happens out there. Sex trafficking isn't just something that happens to other people or foreign victims. It's also happening right here in our own backyard.

This struck me and permit me as both a journalist but also as a foreigner. Some of you may have figured out from my accent, I'm Canadian. I'm not American. I don't want to make a political comment, but what strikes me about the debate, especially here in California and across the country over illegals, is all the attention that's being paid about all these illegals who are coming here. We should deport them or what should we do with them? My

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understanding certainly is that most of these people that we're talking about are actually people who came here voluntarily who are struggling to try to come here and make a life. They may or may not be illegal and what you should do about them is for your politicians and your people to decide. I'm struck by how few politicians and how few media outlets are debating the tens of thousands of people who are coming here and are being forced to come here. There's not discussion about that. There's just a discussion about these people who are struggling to come here.

That goes to the main theme today that we refuse to look at the problem in our own backyard. Some of the statistics available. Slavery is not dead. 12.3 million victims of human trafficking according to the State Department. 27 million people held in slavery worldwide. The latest statistics from the Federal Government for the last fiscal year. Notice how the numbers go down in terms of how hard it is to do investigations. The last fiscal year, we're talking 2011, so it's the latest statistics 900 investigations involving 1,350 suspects. They opened up out of all those cases 125 human trafficking cases, 118 defendants. That represented a 19% increase. In the end, 70 convictions were secured in forced labor and adult sex trafficking cases. That's in an increase, and we'll talk on the panel about how hard it is, but look at those numbers. We start with over 1,000 investigations, and it ends up 70 convictions. That's how hard the work is. What happens to these people who are convicted? The average sentence was 11.8 years, but it does increase to as much as life.

I woke up this morning, and I was listening to the radio on the way in. Some of you may have seen the headline in today's paper *Sex Trafficking Ring Alleged*. They just announced that eight gang members were arrested for running a sex ring using local girls many of them minors. What's interesting about this story, thank God it finally made it to the front page, is again it shows the victims are domestic but also who's getting into this, the gangs. Most of them are members of the Crips and what the police chief said is gangs are getting into it, because it's less dangerous than drugs or as one FBI agent told me when I was doing research for my book, sex traffickers is the new drug trade. Drug dealers got smart and realized they can make much more money and stand a lot less chance of getting caught if they got into the sex trafficking business.

I want to show you a video. I'll try to show you the video in the afternoon panel. It shows a sting operation in Las Vegas. Myth about when it comes to domestic sex trafficking as compared to labor trafficking is that it's a foreign problem. It's not. The overwhelming majority up to 90% of the girls and women who are trafficked in America are American girls. How many are there? We don't know. You can find out exactly how many women by best estimates have been raped. You can find out what the statistics are about breast cancer. We don't know how many young girls are being trafficked or being sold into labor slavery.

Why? Because they don't count. We don't count people who don't count. Even though Congress has been mandated and was authorized to do a study, there have been no statistics ever issued. The best estimate is about 100,000. Some people say maybe as much

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as 300,000, but we don't know. You can't solve a problem if you don't analyze it and do the statistics.

The other myth is that it's a victimless crime, and we're going to talk about this all through the conference and especially in the afternoon panel. What I want to show you is this was a picture of a young woman taken by a Denver policeman and look what happens to her in the course of a couple of years through the effect of drugs, beatings. That's the real face of *Pretty Woman*. That's what they don't show you in the Julia Roberts myth. We'll talk this afternoon about some of the other statistics.

And the choice issue. That's going to be a big issue. I had the honor yesterday with Michelle to go out to one of the juvenile halls to talk to about 40 or 50 of the girls, and that was the hottest topic that they raised. Is it a choice, and it's one of the issues I want you to think about. What does choice mean? What does choice mean for you this morning if you're deciding if you're going to take a double latte or an espresso and is this the same kind of choice that girls make when it comes in?

Nobody dreams of becoming a prostitute much less being victim of sex trafficking. I got a letter from a young girl in a detention center and one of the things she said is, "*I got introduced to my pimp at the age of 13 with nowhere to go while on the run. During the four years I was on the track, I lost babies, multiple rapes, beatings, and being kidnapped by different pimps,*" what she finally says is that she realized that she never had a childhood, so did this young girl have a choice? Certainly not in the way I would define choice.

The final thing I want you to think about when it comes to human trafficking whether it's labor or sex trafficking is the unequal triangle. It almost always takes three people to engage certainly in sex trafficking and also in any form of human trafficking. You have the victim. When it comes to sex trafficking, you have the pimp, and you have the client, and it's going to be the same in human trafficking. You've got the victim who's trafficked, the person who's bringing in the facilitator, the smuggler, and you have the client whether it's going to be an agricultural farm or a hotel. What's striking is that unequal triangle, because what happens is that who pays the price of most of the prosecutions and persecutions? It's the victim who gets arrested more often than not, particularly in sex trafficking. They face the real pain and punishment not the pimps. We're going to talk about that at one of the future panels and also not the johns.

Up until 2009 how many johns were charged under the Federal Trafficking Statutes? Zero. Now think about that. You cannot have sex trafficking unless somebody is buying the product. No prosecution's again until one brave federal prosecutor figured out a way to do it. Finally, I just want to leave you with a note of positive and triumph, and we'll talk about this more in the panel in a moment. One of the girls who's featured in the book *Maria* is still struggling. She escapes from her pimp, decides to work with the FBI. Her work and the work of other young girls who are rescued by the FBI out of Las Vegas and Atlantic City will eventually lead to the conviction of her pimp for 25 years. The FBI is doing that now

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consistently working with ICE, working with local and regional police forces across the country.

Let me read a letter I got from one of the other young women who is recruited by her older sister into Knowledge's...That pimp is named Knowledge...Into his network and then she ended up training Maria and the other girls. She's now out of the life. She testified. She's doing well out on the West Coast. She talks about how it hasn't been easy to escape. *"Rather than being labeled a poor girl who is just a child my label is felon, sex offender, ex prostitute. Needless to say, it has been hard, but I've come a long way. I had to start by gaining enough confidence to make eye contact with people and then go from there. It's like learning to live all over again."* Now she has a young boy, and she's actually doing a lot of talks to other sex abused victims.

I want to end on that positive note, and we're going to hear some other positive stories from our panelists coming up in a moment. I'm going to introduce them one by one. I'm just going to give you their names and they're going to introduce themselves when we do our first question. Thank you for tolerating my impromptu, last minute talk. John Richmond will do a much better job in terms of an overview of human trafficking.



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