



NOW-NYC

Ending the Business of Human Trafficking in NYC: 2007 Campaign

WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

- Trafficking is the business of **exploiting** vulnerable women, men, and children for use as commodities in conditions of sexual and labor servitude. Traffickers use fraud, deception, coercion, threats and force to transport, harbor or obtain a person to perform commercial sex or labor acts against their will.
- The **United States is the second highest destination in the world for trafficked women**. The UN estimates criminal trafficking groups take in 7 billion a year. Eighty percent of victims are women and girls trafficked for sexual exploitation. An estimated **20,000 victims** are trafficked into the U.S. each year. In 2000, the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Prevention Act, was passed to combat the issue on a national level.
- New York is consistently named as one of the top cities that traffickers use as both a point of entry into the U.S., transit location, and as a final destination for victims. According to the U.S. Justice Department, **New York City's JFK Airport is a main trafficking hub**.
- In 2004, only 4 states had laws criminalizing trafficking. In 2006, **27 states had enacted tough anti-trafficking legislation**. As a result of the work of NOW-NYC and the New York State Anti-Trafficking Coalition, the state passed its first ever anti-human trafficking legislation in June of this year.

IN OUR OWN NEIGHBORHOODS:

- **August 2006-** Thirty-one people involved in an international trafficking ring are arrested. Operating at least 10 brothels from Rhode Island to Washington D.C. (two located on 26th St. and 59th St.) traffickers brought Korean women into the country, took their identification and travel documents, forced them into prostitution and threatened to turn them over to "authorities" or hurt their relatives in Korea if they tried to leave. In this case, 67 women were rescued. Some of the brothels, which generated tens of thousands of dollars a month, had special rooms or compartments where the women could be hidden in the event of a raid.
- **April 2006-** Three defendants pled guilty to 27 charges connected with operating a human trafficking ring between Tenancingo, Mexico and New York City from 1991-2004. In one of the largest sex trafficking cases to date, the men admitted to luring young, uneducated Mexican women to NYC. The women were raped and imprisoned and forced to work in NYC brothels seven days a week, servicing up to 25 men a day. The male customers paid \$25 to \$35 for sexual acts with the women. The profits were split between brothel owner and traffickers. Two defendants were sentenced in federal court to 50 years in prison, a third defendant to 25 years.
- **March 2006-** A large brothel in Flushing, Queens housing Korean women who spoke little or no English was shut down after a 10-month investigation by the US Attorney for the Eastern District of NY. The brothel had a "boarding house" where the women, who were illegal and smuggled into the US, were kept. Immigrant documents, the ecstasy drugs and \$800,000 were seized. The brothel, which generated \$4,000 a day, was successful to a large extent because the traffickers had bribed two veteran police officers, who received free sex, drinks, cash and tips on other criminal activity. These officers were charged with public corruption and are awaiting prosecution. This large trafficking operation regularly advertised in the *World Journal*, a daily Mandarin newspaper.

THE MEDIA: THE MARKETING ARM OF TRAFFICKING

- Traffickers supply New York City's large established sex industry with workers, women they've lured to New York with promises of jobs as nannies, housekeepers or models. Traffickers funnel women into brothels to fulfill the shortage of workers and meet the demand of the market.
- The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Services documented 250 brothels in 26 cities, including New York, with trafficking victims in the year 2000.
- There aren't enough American women and girls willing to do sex work to meet the huge demand that exists for commercial sex. Foreign women are brought to the U.S. and then forced into brothels, domestic servitude and sweatshops. Originally told they'll be given jobs as nannies or waitresses, once in the United States, trafficking victims report having their passports and money taken, enduring threats against themselves and their families back home, as well as physical violence.
- Traffickers use mainstream media outlets to advertise their business. Community newspapers grow rich with sex ads. "Adult" advertisements generate up to 35% of these newspaper's gross revenue on a weekly basis. Many papers report that they would be

unprofitable or unable to publish if not for these advertisements. Ads featuring specific ethnicities or “in call only” escort services are most often found to have human trafficking ties according to the Division of Criminal Justice Services in New York.

- The *Village Voice* generates an average of \$80,000 a month on the adult ads that line its back pages, according to the classified ad sales department. Nationally, the Verizon Yellow Pages generates hundreds of thousands of dollars annually on its extensive escort services and massage parlor advertising categories.
- Publications know that they are advertising illegal brothels, and they take advantage by charging up to 3X standard ad rates for their Adult Sections.

John the Blogger:

Websites masquerading as “Hobbyist Boards” are, in reality, a forum for “johns,” a slang term for someone who purchases sex, to exchange tips, hints and advice about brothels around the New York City and New Jersey area. In these forums, the links between massage ads, prostitution, and the human trafficking industry become crystal clear. Here is an example of what one “john” had to say:

- “Getting back to Suny, or Sunshine, I asked her (after, of course) if she minds doing this to men. After much pantomime and language barrier breakthrough, she said, “Oh. For first six months, I cry every night. Now it not so bad.” That was a pivotal moment for me because I realized what a scumbag I am. Then I wished I’d seen Candy again.”

NOW-NYC’s “Trafficking Free, NYC!” Pledge:

- In March, 2007 NOW-NYC presented a “Trafficking Free, NYC!” pledge to publications throughout the five boroughs, compelling New York newspapers and magazines recognize their role as a potential marketer for the trafficking industry, and publicly commit to being “trafficking free” by 2010.
- NOW-NYC provides support to publications and training in identifying human trafficking red flags. Once educated, publications are able to use their own discretion in order to avoid ads obviously related to human trafficking, such as those offering “Young Russian Girls, 24hr Delivery”. This ad appeared in the May 17, 2007 edition of *El Diario/La Prensa*, a daily Spanish-language newspaper.
- NOW-NYC’s “Trafficking Free, NYC!” Pledge doesn’t ask publications to go beyond basic due diligence and their common sense when it comes to choosing which advertisements to accept. For example, NOW-NYC asks merely that publications adhere to long-standing New York State law prohibiting unlicensed businesses from advertising under the “massage” or “massage therapy” title. The law states:
- By simply requiring businesses seeking to advertise with them to first present a valid, New York State issued Massage Therapy license, publications would be able to take a stand against human trafficking in our city. Fifteen publications have already signed on.

TRAFFICKING FREE PUBLICATIONS!

Time Out New York
The Brooklyn Paper
Hoy
Our Town
West Side Spirit
The Westsider
Our Town Downtown
City Hall
Chelsea Clinton News
AVENUE
New York Family
Queens Courier
The L Magazine
The New York Press
New York Magazine

MARKETERS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The Village Voice
El Diario/La Prensa
AM New York
Park Slope Courier
Gay City
El Especialito
Times-Ledger
The World Journal
Sing Tao
Courier Life
Hudson Reporter

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO BECOME ACTIVE IN FIGHTING TRAFFICKING:

Please visit: <http://www.nownyc.org>

You can report trafficking crimes or get help by calling the **Trafficking in Persons and Worker Exploitation Task Force Complaint Line at 1-888-428-7581 (voice and TTY)**. New laws provide options for trafficking victims regardless of immigration status. Operators have access to interpreters and can talk with callers in their own language. The service is offered on weekdays from 9AM to 5PM EST. After these hours, information is available on tape in English, Spanish, Russian, and Mandarin.