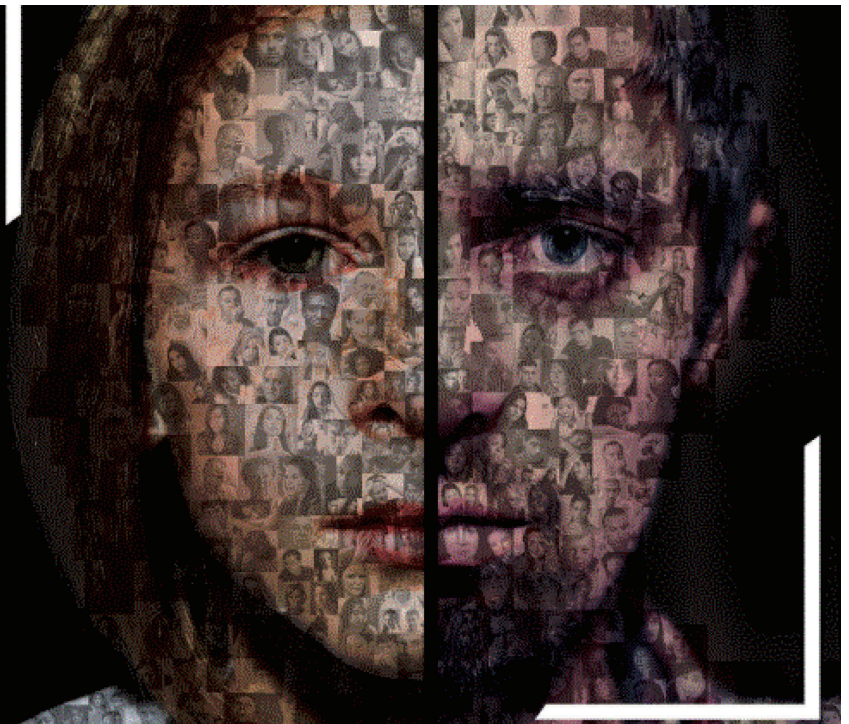


## U.S. Countermeasures Against Trafficking in Persons

Kim Sokolich  
U.S. Department of Justice,  
Office of Overseas  
Prosecutorial Development  
Assistance and Training



## Defining Human Trafficking in the United States



Human Trafficking does not require:

- ▶ Transportation
- ▶ Movement
- ▶ Kidnapping
- ▶ Border crossing
- ▶ Ownership
- ▶ Captivity

Human trafficking is a *crime of exploitation*: compelling a person through force, fraud, or coercion for labor services or commercial sex acts



Human Smuggling is a crime of transportation –  
no exploitation required



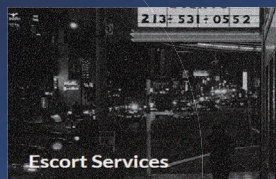
Can smuggled migrants be or become the victims of human trafficking?

**Absolutely**

Victims are found in legitimate and illegitimate industries, including:



Health Care



Escort Services



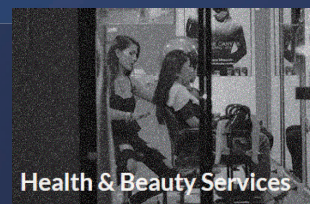
Hotels & Hospitality



Commercial Cleaning Services



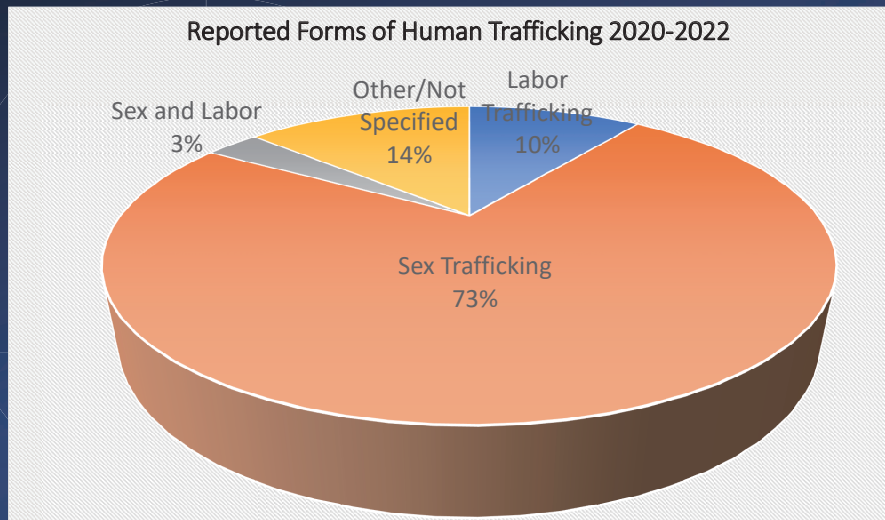
Restaurants & Food Service



Health & Beauty Services



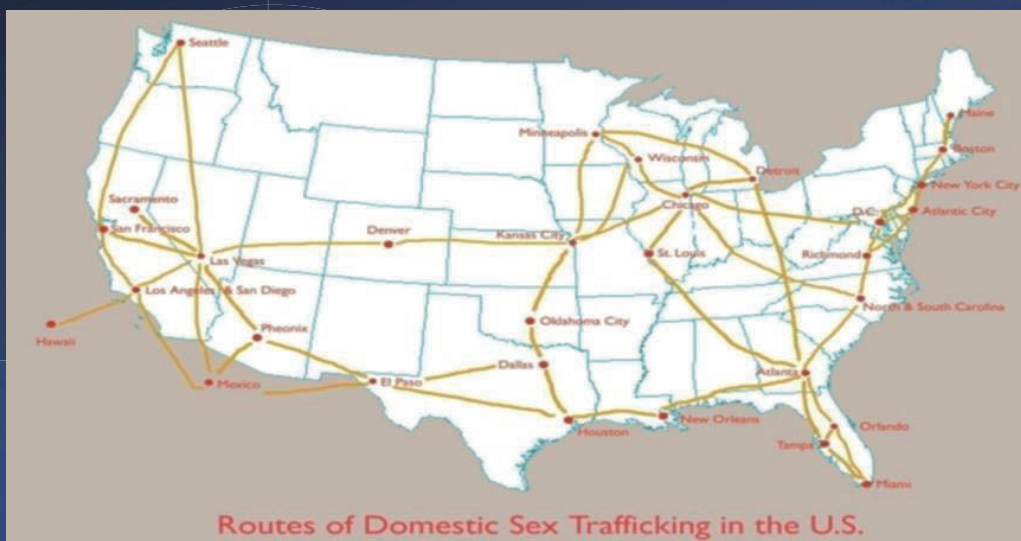
# Human Trafficking in the United States



Source: Hotline Trends Report 2023, Polaris Project.org

Image credit: Polaris Project.org

## Sex Trafficking in the United States







Human trafficking victims can be any age, race, gender identity, sex, ethnicity, nationality, immigration status and socio-economic class.

## Human Trafficking Vulnerabilities

Mental Health Disorders

Lack of Education

Past Sexual, Emotional, and Physical Abuse

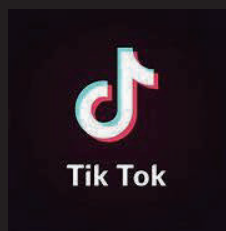


Homelessness and Under-resourced

Involvement with Criminal Justice System

Familial or Personal Substance Abuse

Family Rejection due to religion or LGBT Identification



## Recruitment Methods

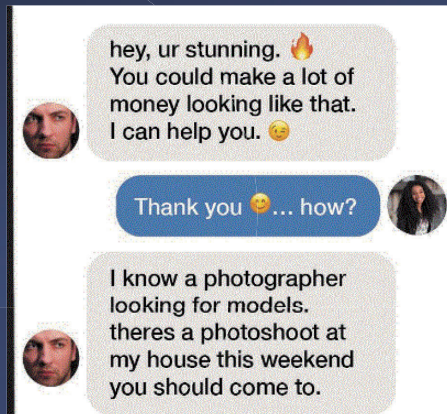


# The Exploitation

Promises of romance, love, and acceptance

Promises to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter

Exploiting a position of authority or a close relationship



Offers of Independence, Luxury Items, Cash

Exploiting Vulnerabilities (substance abuse) or Depression

Promises of job opportunities, travel, visas

## Victims bond with their Traffickers

- Daddy says stay in pocket<sup>7</sup>
- Daddy says im a princess
- Daddy says he loves me
- Daddy says were forever
- Daddy says im hos (illegible)
- Daddy says hes my king
- Daddy says I own him
- Daddy says that's my dick
- Daddy says never leave
- Daddy says im gorgeous
- Daddy says im his mami
- Daddy says don't fag off<sup>8</sup>
- Daddy says im his one and only
- Daddy says don't do drugs
- Daddy says finish school
- Daddy says make him proud
- Daddy tells me soo much he just wants the best for me. I want to give daddy everything he deserves in me. One day were gonna be square and do good. Together my daddy said.<sup>9</sup>



# Investigating and Prosecuting Human Trafficking in the United States

## The Challenges

### 1) Identification



## Indicator Cards

- Law Enforcement
- Medical Providers
- Transportation Industry
- Hospitality Industry
  - Schools

Victims of human trafficking may look like many of the people you help.

### Classic presentations found in trafficking victims:

- Bruises in various stages of healing caused by physical abuse
- Scars, mutilations, or infections due to improper medical care
- Urinary difficulties, pelvic pain, pregnancy, or rectal trauma caused from working in the sex industry
- Chronic back, hearing, cardiovascular, or respiratory problems as a result of forced manual labor in unsafe conditions
- Poor eyesight and/or eye problems due to dimly lit work sites
- Malnourishment and/or serious dental problems
- Disorientation, confusion, phobias, or panic attacks caused by daily mental abuse, torture, and culture shock

Report suspicious activity to local law enforcement, or call 1.866.347.2423



[www.dhs.gov/bluecampaign](http://www.dhs.gov/bluecampaign)

Human trafficking is happening  
**IN OUR COMMUNITY**

**GET INFORMED**  
DHS.GOV/BLUECAMPAIGN



FORCED LABOR | SEX TRAFFICKING | DOMESTIC SERVITUDE

REPORT SUSPECTED TRAFFICKING | VICTIM SUPPORT CALL  
**1-866-347-2423** | **1-888-373-7888**  
or text INFO or HELP to BeFree (233733)

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## Identification through Investigations

PROACTIVE

V  
S

REACTIVE



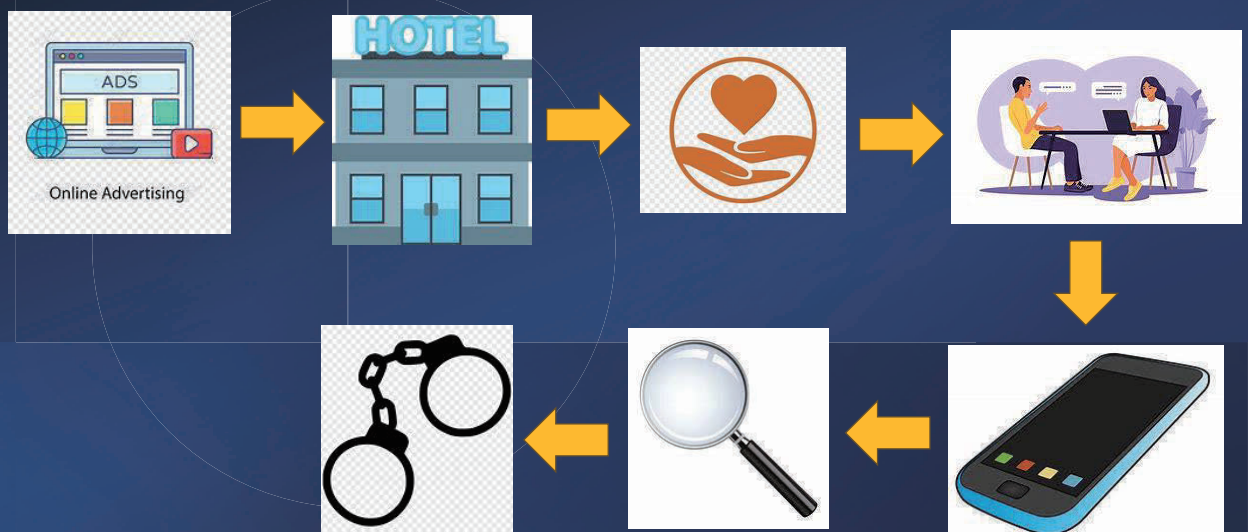
## Proactive Sex Trafficking Investigations

**\*\*Priority is always victim rescue and safety\*\***

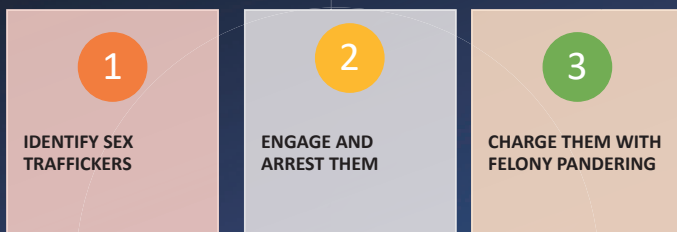
### Rescue Operations

- Provide Victim Services (no arrest)
- Obtain Statement
- Identify Trafficker
- Follow up with additional Investigation

## Proactive Sex Trafficking Investigations



## “Pandering” Proactive Investigations

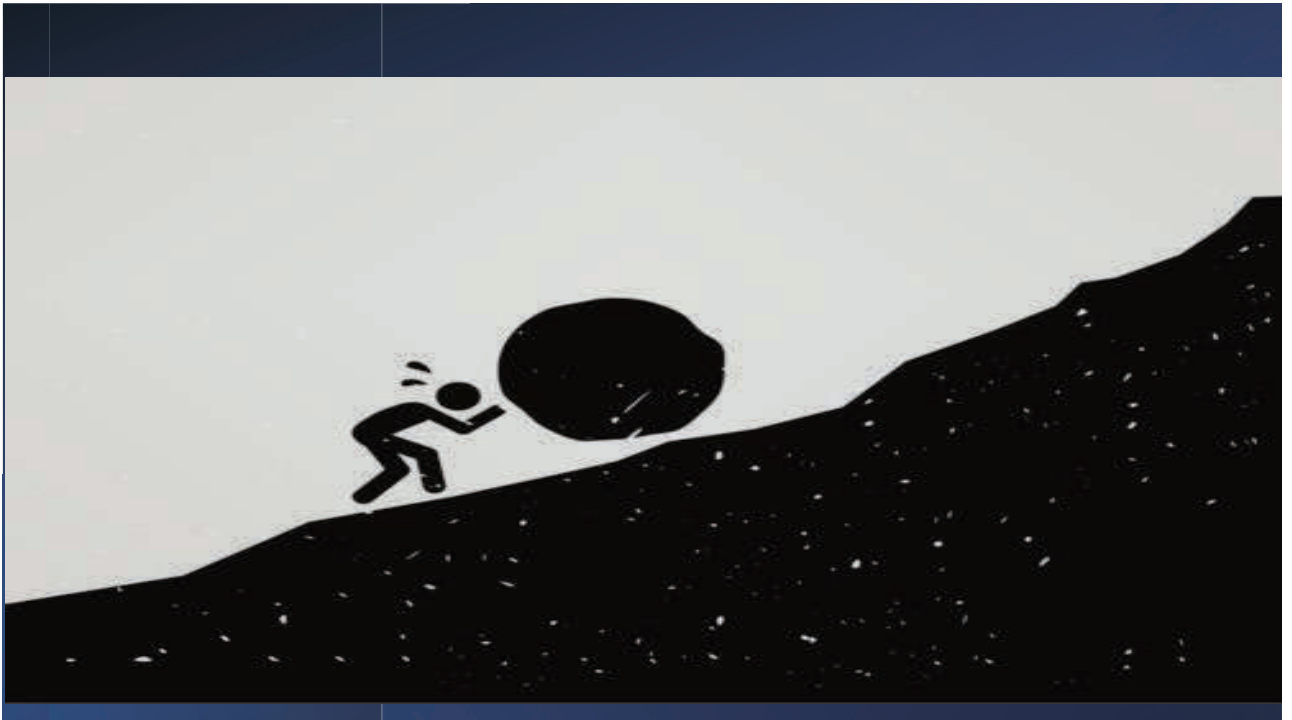


## Felon in Possession Firearm Investigations



## Challenges

- 1) Identification
  - Educating Community Partners
  - Community Awareness
  - Proactive Investigations
- 2) Victim Cooperation



## A Trauma-Informed Approach

- Understand trauma and how it affects victim responses





## A Trauma-Informed Approach

Problem Focused Perspective	Trauma-Informed Perspective
Aggressive Behavior	Always Aware of Threats and Relies on Anger to Stay Safe
Refuses Help	Shame or Fear is triggered when help is offered
Returns to Abuser	Trauma bonded to Abuser
No motivation	Has depression or PTSD and avoidance is a way to manage discomfort
Avoids law enforcement	Fear of law enforcement or a way to manage stress and re-triggering
Disengaged	Could be experiencing dissociation from trauma

## A Trauma-Informed Approach

- Understand trauma and how it affects victim responses
- Avoid re-traumatization
- Increase effectiveness and efficiency of interaction with victims
- Improves victim cooperation and leads to better investigations

## The Challenges

### 1) Identification

- Educating Community Partners
- Community Awareness
- Proactive Investigations

### 2) Victim Cooperation

- Trauma-Informed Approach
- Victim Rights and Services

## Crime Victim's Rights Act 18 USC § 3771

- Right to be reasonably protected from the accused
- Right to reasonable, accurate and timely notice of any public proceedings
- Right to not be excluded from such public proceedings unless the court, after receiving clear and convincing evidence, determines that victim's testimony would be materially altered
- Right to be reasonably heard
- Right to confer with the attorney for the government in the case (prosecutor)
- Right to restitution (mandatory in trafficking cases)
- Right to proceedings free from unreasonable delay
- Right to be treated with fairness and with respect for the victim's dignity
- Right to be informed in a timely manner of any plea bargain or deferred prosecution agreement

## Visas for Victims of Trafficking in Persons



Victims of human trafficking may be eligible for relief under U.S. immigration law through a Victims of Trafficking in Persons (T) Visa if they assist in investigations or prosecutions of human trafficking violators.

## Victim Services through NGOs

Crisis Response

Transportation Assistance

Assistance  
Obtaining Medical  
Care

Safety Planning

Counseling

Coordination with  
other Entities

Relocation  
Assistance

Housing  
Assistance

Educational  
Services

Case Management

Court Support

Assistance  
obtaining  
identification



## Challenges

- 1) Identification
  - Educating Community Partners
  - Community Awareness
  - Proactive Investigations
- 2) Victim Cooperation
  - Trauma-Informed Approach
  - Victim Rights and Services
  - Corroboration

## Avenues of Corroboration

- **Digital devices (phones, computers, etc.)**
- **Surveillance Footage, Hotel Records**
- **Journals, contracts, records**
- **Airport/travel docs**
- **Physical evidence: cash, condoms, drugs, passports**
- **Geolocation information**
- **Social media (PRESERVE)**
- **Prostitution Advertisements**



## Avenues of Corroboration

### Witnesses

- Family/Friends/other victims
- Hotel Staff, Neighbors, Property Managers
- Rideshare drivers
- Doctors/SANE Nurses
- Law Enforcement/First responders



### Expert Testimony

- Can describe effects of trauma
- Explain why a victim recants or is inconsistent

## Are other Offenses Available?

- Child Pornography Offenses
- Money Laundering
- Tax Offenses
- Fraud
- Drug Offenses
- Felon in Possession of a Firearm
- Witness Tampering/ Retaliation/  
Obstruction

