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Sex (still) Sells: How Sex Trafficking in the United States and Thailand Perpetuates Minority Repression

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Sex (still) Sells: How Sex Trafficking in the United States and Thailand Perpetuates Minority Repression

An Honors Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors in International Studies

By
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Under the mentorship of Dr. Darin Van Tassell

Abstract

Human trafficking is the third most profitable illegal international trade behind drug and arms trafficking. Sex trafficking is the second largest subset of this illegal enterprise and soon may equal or surpass labor trafficking as the prominent subset. This research aims to address four integral components of the sex trafficking and forced prostitution trade: (1) to show how sex trafficking in Thailand is being used perpetually to repress minority women and their communities; (2) to show how sex trafficking of minors (ranging in age from 8-17) in Atlanta, Georgia is shockingly similar to sex trafficking practices in Thailand; (3) to find the economic, political and cultural implications which foster the sex trafficking trade in both areas; and 4) to derive from these commonalities a solution to help mitigate and potentially eliminate these atrocities. The prevalence, severity and cruelty of forced prostitution are issues that the globalized world must address and attempt to solve because this practice infiltrates the culture, economics and politics of the countries it affects. If two locations as different as the U.S. and Thailand can show the same commonalities in terms of how and why women and girls are trafficked, then perhaps these same techniques are being used worldwide. By identifying the commonalities behind sex trafficking from the U.S. to Thailand, this paper aims to outline methods and techniques that can eventually lead to the elimination of this harmful practice.

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Introduction:

Aung wakes up in Bangkok, Thailand in a filthy whorehouse with bruises and cuts all over her body. She remembers a time, only a year ago now but it seems like an eternity away, when she was an 18 year old young woman in the rolling hills of Burma, her only crime trying to find a way to support her family. Now, she is no longer that innocent young woman- but a 19-year old prostitute- forced into sexual slavery after being promised a job as a maid by the man who lived in her village. At the same time in the United States, Sarah is being taken to another client tonight, her fifth today. Little did she know when she escaped the prison that was her family's home two years ago that she would find herself being forced to have sex for money. Now, her daily existence consists of being forced to turn tricks on a corner or being taken to a client's home by her pimp. Two years ago her 13th birthday present to herself was leaving home, but now Sarah wonders how she will escape this new prison.

Sex trafficking is a plague affecting most countries around the world. It is an industry that forces, coerces and tricks young women into having sex for money. These young women and girls suffer innumerable psychological and physical traumas. This is Sarah and Aung's story.



Photo courtesy of: <http://john.do/stop-child-sex-trafficking-09-09-09/>

In Thailand, the majority of women who are trafficked into prostitution are young women from other countries that are brought into Thailand under false pretenses of a better life. These women are oftentimes ethnic minorities in their home countries, as is the case with the Shan minority of Burma (Myanmar). In the United States, the majority

of those who are trafficked into forced prostitution are young girls, some as young as 9, with the median age being approximately 14^{1,2}. This research aims to compare the sex trafficking of ethnic minorities in Thailand to the sex trafficking of children in the United States, with an emphasis on Atlanta, GA. In this research, children will be treated as a minority, because, like ethnic minorities in Thailand, children in the United States have very few tangible rights. When put into an exploitative position, children are rarely able to understand their rights, let alone take advantage of them. As a result, they are a particularly vulnerable population ripe for exploitation from pimps and traffickers.

Literature Review:

Sex Trafficking has been defined as “the commercial exploitation and forced prostitution of girls and women”³. In Asia the prevalence of sex trafficking and the issues that arise from it are most apparent in Thailand. Thailand is on the Second Tier Watch List, meaning, according to the United States Department of State, that is one of the countries around the world whose government does not fully comply with the Trafficking Victims Protection Act’s minimum standards, is making significant efforts to bring itself into compliance with those standards and “a) the number of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing, b) there is a failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons from the previous year or c) determination that a country is making significant efforts to

¹ McClain, Natalie, and Natalie Garrity. "Sex Trafficking and the Exploitation of Adolescents." *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic & Neonatal Nursing*. 40.2 (2011): 243-252. Print.

² Thomas, S. (2013, May 23). Interview by E.B. Hulsey []. GBI agent interview.

³ Mah, Megan. "Trafficking of Ethnic Minorities in Thailand: Forced Prostitution and the Perpetuation of Marginality." *Undercurrent Journal*. VIII.II (2011): 65-72. Web. 30 Oct. 2012.

bring itself into compliance with minimum standards was based on commitments by the country to take additional future steps over the next year”⁴. This extremely lengthy definition basically suggests that Thailand, while it is a country that is attempting to curb the effects and proliferation of the sex trafficking trade, is mostly failing in its attempts to do so. The fact of the matter is that Thailand is a primary destination for sex trafficking in the world and especially Southeast Asia. Estimates of the number of women participating in the sex trafficking field range from a median number of 500,000 a year according to UNICEF⁵, to a low of 200,000 to 225,000 according to the article “Gendering Cross-Border Networks in the Greater Mekong Subregion: Drawing Invisible Routes to Thailand” by Ullah and Hossain, to a high of over 2,000,000 girls and women being involved in the industry⁶.

However, behind these facts and statistics lie an even deeper problem, and that is the issue of the types of girls and women that are being forced into sex slavery in Thailand. My goal here is to not focus on Thai women that are involved in the sex trafficking trade; rather, my purpose here is to focus on what is currently happening with Burmese women in Thailand, and how their involvement in the sex trafficking trade enhances and justifies the repression of minorities in Thailand, and then to further compare this ethnic minority sex trafficking to the trafficking of children in the United

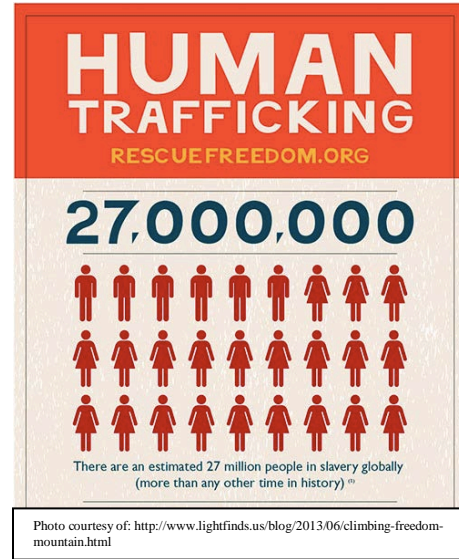
⁴ United States of America. Department of State. *Tier Placements: Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking In Persons Trafficking in Persons Report 2011*. Washington D.C.: , 2011. Web. <www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2011/164228.htm>.

⁵ "Thailand: sex slavery of women and children out of control." *Off Our Backs*. (2005): 7. Web. 30 Oct. 2012. <<https://content.ebscohost.com/pdf2526/pdf/2005/OOB/01Jan05/16092351.pdf?T=P&P=AN&K=16092351&S=R&D=a9h&EbscoContent=dGJyMNLe80SeqLM4zdnyOLCmr0qep7FSsa64TLCWxWXS&ContentCustomer=dGJyMOXp7Um549%B7LHjfPEA>>.

⁶ Mah, Megan. "Trafficking of Ethnic Minorities in Thailand: Forced Prostitution and the Perpetuation of Marginality." *Undercurrent Journal*. VIII.II (2011): 65-72. Web. 30 Oct. 2012.

States. Furthermore, I will show not only how the sex trafficking trade perpetuates the use of sex trafficking as a tool to marginalize and repress minority women, but also how the Thai government has attempted to make strides to end this horrible trend and what the results of such actions have been.

There are numerous political, economic and social reasons why Burmese women oftentimes find themselves embroiled in the sex trafficking trade in Thailand. Politically, Burma (Myanmar) has been in turmoil since it gained independence. This turmoil is especially due to the current military regime, which violates a



plethora of human rights in its repression and abuse of minority ethnic groups like the Shan people. The Shan are an ethnic minority people in Burma who typically live near the border of Thailand, and are able to easily cross the border in the hopes of obtaining a better life and are therefore the most vulnerable for exploitation⁷. The lives of minority women in Burma are especially challenging in the economic filed As is stated in Lisa Rende Taylor’s article, “Dangerous Trade-Offs: The Behavioral Ecology of Child Labor and Prostitution in Rural Northern Thailand” poverty is typically implicated as being one of the primary factors leading to child labor. As a result, this child labor, especially for female children, eventually lends itself to that child being forced or coerced into the sex trafficking industry. Furthermore, according to UNICEF, approximately half of Thai

⁷ *Living on the Edges: Cross-Border Mobility and Sexual Exploitation in the Greater Southeast Asia Sub-Region*. 2006 Edition. Yogyakarta: Southeast Asian Consortium on Gender, Sexuality and Health, 2006. 174-198. Web. 30 Oct. 2012.

poor live in the rural Northeast and a quarter of Thai poor live in the rural North. This fact means that the Northeast and the North of Thailand combined accounts for about 75% of the country's poor⁸. The reason for this primarily stems from the fact that many Burmese refugees have fled to Thailand to escape prejudice and abuse at the hands of the Burmese government. In fact, according to Ullah and Hossain's article "Gendering Cross-Border Networks in the Greater Mekong Subregion: Drawing Invisible Routes to Thailand," the situation in Burma is so bad, and the ethnic minorities have had to face such severe social, political and economic hardships that escape to Thailand, no matter the means, is a matter of survival. In Burma these ethnic minorities are also often subjected to poor living conditions and possible population exploitation due to a lack of education stemming from their minority status⁹.

The exploitation, however, rarely ends once these minorities escape to Thailand. Once in the North and Northeast sections of Thailand, they are oftentimes still subject to the brutal economic conditions of the Thai government's policies on land use and recent commercialization of the rural economy. The result is that Burmese women perceive that the only way to make money is for women and girls to join the more profitable sex industry (this is also a demand-side factor in the prevalence of the sex trafficking trade)¹⁰. Furthermore, according to "Living on the Edges: Cross-Border Mobility and Sexual Exploitation in the Greater Southeast Asia Sub-Region," girls are sometimes encouraged or forced by their parents to enter into the sex trafficking industry in order to bring home

⁸ Jitsuchan, Somchai, and Ammar Siamwalla. "Economic Shocks and Vulnerable Thailand: A Case Study of Rising Food and Fuel Prices." *UNICEF*. Thailand Development Research Institute, 2 2009. Web. 25 Oct 2012.

⁹ *Living on the Edges: Cross-Border Mobility and Sexual Exploitation in the Greater Southeast Asia Sub-Region*. 2006 Edition. Yogyakarta: Southeast Asian Consortium on Gender, Sexuality and Health, 2006. 174-198. Web. 30 Oct. 2012.

¹⁰ Mah, Megan. "Trafficking of Ethnic Minorities in Thailand: Forced Prostitution and the Perpetuation of Marginality." *Undercurrent Journal*. VIII.II (2011): 65-72. Web. 30 Oct. 2012.

money for the family. Also, women are oftentimes approached by an agent who tells them that they would work at an entertainment place, but eventually, while still in Thailand, the women choose to go into selling sex because it is more profitable and would allow them to send more money home to their impoverished families¹¹. While economic factors certainly create the sense of desperation necessary to turn young women and girls to the sex trafficking industry, I believe the cultural and social factors found in Thai and Burmese society are much more telling as to why the sex trafficking trade still exists and thrives. Mah identifies both supply side and demand side factors that lead to the prevalence and acceptance of the sex trafficking of minority women in Thailand.

On the demand side, with an influx of cheap migrant labor from Burma, Laos and Cambodia comes a higher demand for cheap sex. Also on the demand side is the perception by Thai men that minority women somehow attain a more pure and virginal quality than Thai sex workers. This cultural perception, combined with the feeling that “hill-tribe girls” have a certain “exotic otherness” and as such are untouched by disease and infections are the factors, according to Mah, that attribute to the want of minority sex workers in Thailand. Supply side factors are political in that the Burmese military, as aforementioned, has continuously directed military operations against the Shan people close to the Thai border. The supply side of the sex trafficking equation also has a cultural aspect. Because Thailand is an extremely patriarchal society, argues Mah, women tend to consistently have a lower social and economic status, and they are valued primarily for their sexual and reproductive capacities. In societies like this, it is easy to

¹¹ *Living on the Edges: Cross-Border Mobility and Sexual Exploitation in the Greater Southeast Asia Sub-Region*. 2006 Edition. Yogyakarta: Southeast Asian Consortium on Gender, Sexuality and Health, 2006. 174-198. Web. 30 Oct. 2012.

see how an institution like prostitution and, consequentially sex trafficking, would thrive. Issues concerning filial piety, respect for ones elders, are also important in the cultural analysis of the sex trafficking trade in Thailand. As was mentioned in “Living on the Edges: Cross-Border Mobility and Sexual Exploitation in the Greater Southeast Asia Sub-Region,” this filial piety can lead to girls being encouraged or forced by their parents to enter into the sex trade to make more money. All the political, economic and social factors that lead or force women and girls to enter into the sex trafficking industry are inter-related. The political situation in Burma leads ethnic minorities to seek safety elsewhere, and this leads to severe economic poverty and a lack of viable options to sustain a family. In conjunction with these political and economic factors are social factors that not only encourage the subjugation of women (which lends itself to women selling their bodies for money) but also especially emphasize the use of minority women in the sex trafficking trade. All these factors combine to create the perfect storm in which sex trafficking thrives and prospers throughout Thailand on the backs and at the expense of Burmese (among other minority) women.

It is also interesting to note the ways in which traffickers manipulate women into entering the sex trafficking trade in Thailand. The first type of recruitment used is one in which young women and girls are approached by an unknown agent who tells them that they can get higher paying jobs in Thailand. The agent then usually advances the expenses, including transportation costs, bribing of officials and sleeping arrangements during the trip for a group of women. Due to the extensive nature of this type of recruitment, a vast network of recruiters, drivers, policemen and owners of commercial sex establishments are needed. At their destination the women are usually selected for

factory, house or commercial sex work. At this point, the women realize that they have incurred an extreme amount of debt and cannot pay it off with their wages from the factory. As a result the girls either move voluntarily into the sex trade, or are beaten and raped by their pimps until they are forced into the sex trade¹².

The second recruitment strategy is a bit subtler. In this form of deception, the women and girls are approached by neighbors or other acquaintances in their home villages and are asked to travel to Thailand to work; the women are told that they will not be working at a sex establishment; rather, they will be working at a factory or other traditional work establishment. Once there, however, the women typically find that the work is not as easy as they were previously led to believe; they suffer injuries from exposure to hazardous work environments, verbal and physical abuse by homeowners, low pay and long working hours. This results in the girls wanting to leave their jobs. Meanwhile, the agent who transported them keeps a close watch and offers them alternatives if they find their work unsatisfactory. The agent tells them they can go to an establishment where they don't have to sell sex, but in reality, the girls are put in a situation in which they have to sell sex; the agent's fees are paid off by the owner of the sex establishment once the girls are there. It is at this point that the girls find themselves in a situation where they are in a form of debt bondage to pay back the owners of the sex establishment for the agent's fee¹³.

¹² *Living on the Edges: Cross-Border Mobility and Sexual Exploitation in the Greater Southeast Asia Sub-Region*. 2006 Edition. Yogyakarta: Southeast Asian Consortium on Gender, Sexuality and Health, 2006. 174-198. Web. 30 Oct. 2012.

¹³ *Living on the Edges: Cross-Border Mobility and Sexual Exploitation in the Greater Southeast Asia Sub-Region*. 2006 Edition. Yogyakarta: Southeast Asian Consortium on Gender, Sexuality and Health, 2006. 174-198. Web. 30 Oct. 2012.

The third pattern mainly involves older women who, once faced with a severe personal crisis, have only the sex trade to turn to in order to survive. The agents then present them with the option to participate in either direct or indirect sex establishments (a brothel versus a massage parlor) and the women choose which one they would prefer¹⁴.

Unsurprisingly, the women who find themselves (either through force or choice) in this trade are made to experience a plethora of human rights violations. These rights violations range from economic exploitation in the form of debt bondage to their agents and the sex establishment (women oftentimes also never see the majority of the money they make selling sex) to verbal and physical abuse from customers and owners, to abuse by policemen and lack of access to health information and services and extreme reproductive health problems. The verbal and physical abuse the women receive come from a refusal to have sex with certain clients, not wanting to have sex the way a client wants, as well as various forms of rape by clients, brothel owners, agents and policemen. The police in Thailand are aware that these women have no rights, and as a result, traditionally Thai police put the Burmese girls in jail, charge them as illegal migrants, demand bribes and rape them while they're incarcerated. The women in this trade also experience many reproductive and sexual health problems as a result of language barriers and a psychological sense of powerlessness. The women run the risk of reproductive tract infections, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, cervical cancer, unwanted

¹⁴ *Living on the Edges: Cross-Border Mobility and Sexual Exploitation in the Greater Southeast Asia Sub-Region*. 2006 Edition. Yogyakarta: Southeast Asian Consortium on Gender, Sexuality and Health, 2006. 174-198. Web. 30 Oct. 2012.

pregnancy and unsafe abortion¹⁵. Once coerced or tricked into the sex trafficking industry, women and girls have little to no options available to them to escape the cycle of abuse, hopelessness and despair that has fallen upon them due to a lack of resources, rights and support in Thailand.

While the practices and experiences incurred by these women while in the sex trafficking trade are horrific and terrible, it is important to recognize the steps the Thai government has taken to help curb the effects of this despicable enterprise. Specific policies in the national agenda aimed at combating sex trafficking include: capacity building for officials to improve their understanding on the nature of the problem (this would help ensure the efficiency of official's efforts), intelligence exchange among origin, transit and destination countries, improvement and amendment of laws related to human trafficking, campaigns to increase public awareness of the problem, remedy and rehabilitation with an initial fund to assist victims of trafficking and campaigns to eliminate the discriminatory attitudes in society that stigmatize the victims of human trafficking¹⁶. However, what matters is not necessarily what the government of Thailand's policies are, but how they are implemented through law. The government of Thailand has laws like the Prevention and Suppression of Prostitution Act of 1996, the Penal Code Amendment Act of 1997, the Criminal Procedure Amendment Act of 1997, the Anti-Money Laundering Act of 1999 and the Child Protection act of 2003 in place to help combat the issue of human trafficking, but for the purposes of this paper, the pieces

¹⁵ *Living on the Edges: Cross-Border Mobility and Sexual Exploitation in the Greater Southeast Asia Sub-Region*. 2006 Edition. Yogyakarta: Southeast Asian Consortium on Gender, Sexuality and Health, 2006. 174-198. Web. 30 Oct. 2012.

¹⁶ Thailand. Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. *Thailand's Efforts on Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking*. 2010. Web. <http://rcsd.soc.cmu.ac.th/workshop2010/assets/images/Handout/TIP_report_Thailand.pdf>.

of legislation that matter the most are the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2008 and the Second National Policy, Strategy and Measures on Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons of 2011-2016. The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2008 is pivotal in the fight against sex trafficking in Thailand because it helps establish legitimate legislative bodies to combat the issue of sex trafficking. The first legislative body it establishes is an Anti-Trafficking in Persons Committee which has the powers to make recommendations to the Cabinet on how to prevent and suppress trafficking, make recommendations to the Cabinet on the revision of laws, rules, regulations or restructuring of government agency responsible for the prevention and suppression of trafficking in persons, to establish strategies and measures for the prevention and suppression of trafficking in persons, to establish laws concerning the receipt, payment, fund raising and management of Fund, and to lay down rules concerning the report on financial status and administration of the Fund for the purpose of implementing the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act. The Fund is to be established to support the prevention and suppression of human trafficking as well as welfare protection for trafficked victims¹⁷.

The other legislative body is the Coordinating and Monitoring of Anti-Trafficking in Persons Performance Committee which is responsible for preparing and monitoring the performance of agencies concerned, and preparing and monitoring the implementation of plans and guidelines regarding the capacity building for personnel responsible for prevention and suppression of trafficking in persons. This act also establishes heavier penalties on all offenders involved in human trafficking, establishes the idea that victims

¹⁷ Thailand. Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. *Thailand's Efforts on Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking*. 2010. Web.
<http://rcsd.soc.cmu.ac.th/workshop2010/assets/images/Handout/TIP_report_Thailand.pdf>.

may claim compensation from the offenders for any damages, and claims that victims will be provided shelter, physical, psychological, legal, educational and healthcare assistance¹⁸. The Second National Policy, Strategy and Measures on Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking Persons serves as a guideline for government and non-government agencies to cooperate in combating human trafficking¹⁹. While all these laws, legislation and recommendations are being enacted in Thailand, the greatest threat to the true and real implementation of these acts is the sheer amount of police corruption along Thailand's borders with Burma, and police/government official corruption throughout the country.

As was mentioned in previous paragraphs, one of the major aspects of trafficking girls over the Burma border involves bribing policemen and police corruption and abuse of the trafficked women. The only foreseeable way to remedy this problem is to wipe the slate clean, discharging all the border officers systematically and implementing new border officers that have been given the education and preparation ensured in the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act. The same can be said for corrupt police officers in the major cities where the sex trade is implemented like Bangkok. While this venture may be a costly and difficult transition at first, it is a pivotal move that must be made if there is ever to be a true decrease in the widespread and influential nature of sex trafficking. Without widespread police support, sex traffickers will have a much more difficult and expensive time attempting to traffic young girls and women. As a result the women

¹⁸ Thailand. Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. *Thailand's Efforts on Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking*. 2010. Web.

<http://rcsd.soc.cmu.ac.th/workshop2010/assets/images/Handout/TIP_report_Thailand.pdf>.

¹⁹ United States of America. Department of State. *Tier Placements: Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking In Persons Trafficking in Persons Report 2011*. Washington D.C.: , 2011. Web.

<www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2011/164228.htm>.

would have to pay more money to the agents to find them jobs in Thailand, an increase that these women cannot afford. The demand and supply for sex workers would therefore decline. While solving police corruption will not eliminate the demand or supply for the sex trade entirely, it is nonetheless a pivotal first step to take to try and solve this deplorable issue.

In the United States, 14-17 year olds represent the largest proportion of juvenile prostitutes, while approximately 14,500-17,500 victims are trafficked every year²⁰.

While there has been an extensive amount of research about sex trafficking in Thailand, far less research has been done about sex trafficking in the United States, and even less has been focused on Atlanta specifically, even though it is one of the major trafficking hubs in the country. With Atlanta's centralized access through Hartsfield-Jackson airport, its presence as a transportation connector with I-75, I-85 and I-285, its frequency of hosting conventions and sporting events, and proliferation of adult entertainment, Atlanta is a prime hub for sex trafficking, providing convenience for the exploiters to trafficking children in and out of the city and also a revolving market of customers²¹.

In the United States trafficking involves both cross-border trafficking and the trafficking of domestic United States citizens²². However, like trafficking in Thailand, there are similarities in the types of girls who are trafficked, and how they are trafficked. These similarities can be seen in the fact that there are certain characteristics, certain patterns and traits that make a young girl more easily exploited and also in the fact that

²⁰ McClain, Natalie, and Natalie Garrity. "Sex Trafficking and the Exploitation of Adolescents." *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic & Neonatal Nursing*. 40.2 (2011): 243-252. Print.

²¹ Boxill, Nancy, and Deborah Richardson. "Ending Sex Trafficking of Children in Atlanta." *Journal of Women and Social Work*. 22.2 (2007): 138-148. Print.

²² McClain, Natalie, and Natalie Garrity. "Sex Trafficking and the Exploitation of Adolescents." *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic & Neonatal Nursing*. 40.2 (2011): 243-252. Print.

there are specific, deliberate techniques that traffickers and exploiters take to manipulate these girls.

Risk factors associated with potential sexual exploitation and trafficking include poor family functioning, a history of sexual abuse, low socioeconomic status, and poor school achievement as well as a general feeling of not being safe in homes or communities and emotional distress²³. There is also a growing awareness that the phenomenon of sex trafficking can be attributed to a large set of cultural and economic forces that include coercion, manipulation, deception, initial consent and family pressure²⁴. Interestingly enough, these are all forces that are also found in the sex trafficking trade in Thailand. Studies have shown that there are also warning signs that a girl is currently being trafficked or has been trafficked and is in or has been in forced prostitution, these include: homelessness, the presence of a much older boyfriend or a significant age disparity in an intimate relationship, signs of violence and/or psychological trauma, criminal behavior, history of family violence, chronic running away, tattoos, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, history of abortions, substance use, access to material things that youths typically cannot afford, history of child sexual abuse/rape, not attending school, frequent absences or academic failures²⁵.

Pimps and exploiters in the United States, much like those in Thailand, use deliberate techniques and target specific populations to exploit young girls and force them into prostitution. First, traffickers typically recruit in areas where victims are most

²³ Boxill, Nancy, and Deborah Richardson. "Ending Sex Trafficking of Children in Atlanta." *Journal of Women and Social Work*. 22.2 (2007): 138-148. Print.

²⁴ Boxill, Nancy, and Deborah Richardson. "Ending Sex Trafficking of Children in Atlanta." *Journal of Women and Social Work*. 22.2 (2007): 138-148. Print.

²⁵ McClain, Natalie, and Natalie Garrity. "Sex Trafficking and the Exploitation of Adolescents." *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic & Neonatal Nursing*. 40.2 (2011): 243-252. Print.

vulnerable and therefore are looking for a way out. These communities include those ridden with poverty, homelessness, drug use and lower literacy rates²⁶. Traffickers also use two main techniques to entice or force their victims into prostitution. The first of these is fitness pimping, which involves using kindness and psychological games to lure adolescents into the sex industry. This includes the promises of gifts in the form of clothing, food, shelter, trinkets, cash and drugs. Essentially the trafficker tries to lure the victim with whatever he thinks she wants, needs or desires. The result is often that the girl feels obligated or indebted to her trafficker or pimp²⁷. Another type of pimping is guerilla pimping. In this type of pimping, the trafficker uses violence, threats, intimidation and/or aggression to recruit and then enslave the victim²⁸. These two types of trafficking have also been seen in trafficking situations in Thailand, where oftentimes traffickers combine a type of fitness pimping (in that the trafficker acts as though he is the victims' friend and trying to do her a favor) and guerilla pimping (in that the fitness pimping transitions to guerilla pimping when the victim cannot pay her debt). While those are the two most common forms of trafficking in the United States, another called familial prostitution is also present. In this type of trafficking, a parent or guardian will sell a child or force that child to perform sexual acts in exchange for drugs or money²⁹. Like in Thailand, pimps oftentimes take their victims to seemingly legitimate businesses, but are in fact fronts for forced prostitution. Pimps in the United States use escort and

²⁶ McClain, Natalie, and Natalie Garrity. "Sex Trafficking and the Exploitation of Adolescents." *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic & Neonatal Nursing*. 40.2 (2011): 243-252. Print.

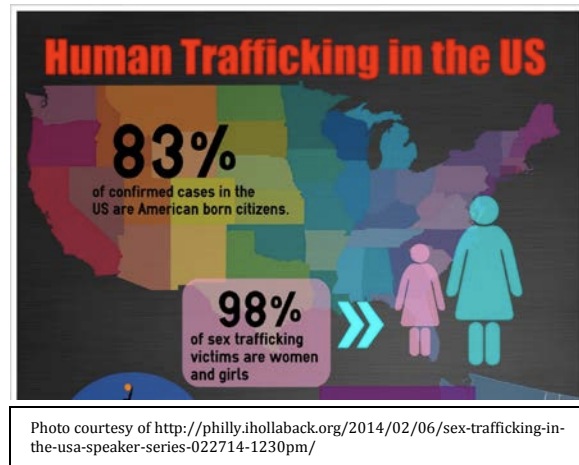
²⁷ McClain, Natalie, and Natalie Garrity. "Sex Trafficking and the Exploitation of Adolescents." *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic & Neonatal Nursing*. 40.2 (2011): 243-252. Print.

²⁸ McClain, Natalie, and Natalie Garrity. "Sex Trafficking and the Exploitation of Adolescents." *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic & Neonatal Nursing*. 40.2 (2011): 243-252. Print.

²⁹ Kotrla, Kimberly. "Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking in the United States." *Social Work*. 55.2 (2010): 181-186. Web. 19 Oct. 2013.

massage services, pornography, nude dancing, stripping to exploit children, similarly to how Thai exploiters use strip clubs, massage services and brothels to exploit Burmese minority women³⁰.

Similarly to Thailand, the United States (and especially Atlanta) does not just have economic aspects that make sex trafficking an attractive trade, but there are also cultural and societal factors that perpetuate the practice and allow it to continue to flourish. Unlike Thailand, however, the main issue that allows trafficking to continue is one of demand, not necessarily supply. Supply factors are important, however, it is argued that the demand for trafficked minors is what allows this industry to continue to thrive and if those demand side factors were somehow eliminated the issue of trafficking could eventually cease to exist. In the United



States, there is a “culture of tolerance” that supports sex trafficking markets. This culture of tolerance means that the community as a whole has to tolerate to some extent the fact that trafficking and exploitation exist³¹. This can be manifested in a refusal to call the police or even recognize what is staring a community directly in the eyes. Another issue in the demand for trafficked victims is a culture that glamorizes

³⁰ Hardy, Veronica, Kevin Compton, and Veronica McPhatter. "Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking: Practice Implications for Mental Health Professionals." *Journal of Women and Social Work*. 28.1 (2013): 8-18. Print.

³¹ Kotrla, Kimberly. "Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking in the United States." *Social Work*. 55.2 (2010): 181-186. Web. 19 Oct. 2013.

pimping and prostitution, which only further normalizes commercial sex³². Another cultural problem that becomes a hindrance when attempting to battle sex trafficking in Atlanta is an issue of perception. Not only do law enforcement officials tend to struggle with identifying these women as victims, but eventually the victims cease to self-identify as victims and instead begin to believe that this lifestyle is something they want³³. The reasons for the dilemma in perception will be further discussed in the experimental section.

While trafficking is a prevalent issue plaguing the United States, the federal government has fully supported and enacted legislature to attempt to combat trafficking, unlike the situation in Thailand, where rampant corruption leads to an inability to enforce the laws. The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 was the first attempt by the United States government to define exactly what trafficking is, and specifically addresses sex trafficking as an integral issue affecting the country. The VTVPA defines human trafficking as “(a) sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age; or (b) the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery”³⁴. It is important here to note that the language of this law indicates that any minor under the age of 18 being used in a commercial sex act is a trafficking

³² Kotrla, Kimberly. "Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking in the United States." *Social Work*. 55.2 (2010): 181-186. Web. 19 Oct. 2013.

³³ Kotrla, Kimberly. "Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking in the United States." *Social Work*. 55.2 (2010): 181-186. Web. 19 Oct. 2013.

³⁴ Kotrla, Kimberly. "Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking in the United States." *Social Work*. 55.2 (2010): 181-186. Web. 19 Oct. 2013.

victim (this is important when law enforcement becomes involved and has to identify a victim as either a prostitute or a victim of forced prostitution)³⁵. In addition, it is with this law that a “pimp” became synonymous with a trafficker, a pivotal step in addressing the cultural implications of forced prostitution in the United States³⁶. The VTVPA also established strict penalties against traffickers, adding 10 additional years to penalties, making punishments for traffickers up to 20 years imprisonment. In addition, it states that if the trafficker kills his victim, or if the violation includes kidnapping or an attempt to kidnap, aggravated sexual abuse (or attempt to commit aggravated sexual abuse), or an attempt to kill, the trafficker can be imprisoned for life³⁷. The VTVPA also worked to strengthen the services available to victims of trafficking and established an Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking, while also worked to create programs to raise awareness nationwide about and among potential victims of trafficking, the dangers of trafficking and the protections that are available for victims of trafficking³⁸.

Since 2000, additions and reauthorizations to the VTVPA have occurred in 2003, 2005, 2008 and 2013. The Trafficking Victims Protections Reauthorization Act of 2003 established a federal, civil right of action for trafficking victims to sue their traffickers, added human trafficking to the list of crimes that can be charged under the RICO statute, included additional provisions for the protection of victims and their families from deportation, and required that the Attorney General report to Congress annually on the

³⁵ Kotrla, Kimberly. "Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking in the United States." *Social Work*. 55.2 (2010): 181-186. Web. 19 Oct. 2013.

³⁶ Kotrla, Kimberly. "Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking in the United States." *Social Work*. 55.2 (2010): 181-186. Web. 19 Oct. 2013.

³⁷ United States. Department of State. *Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000*. 2000. Web. <<http://www.state.gov/j/tip/laws/61124.htm>>.

³⁸ United States. Department of State. *Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000*. 2000. Web. <<http://www.state.gov/j/tip/laws/61124.htm>>.

activities the U.S. government is taking to combat trafficking³⁹. The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005 began a pilot program for sheltering minors who have been trafficked, included grant programs to assist state and local law enforcement fight trafficking, expanded measures to combat trafficking internationally by including provisions to fight sex tourism, including a \$5 million pilot program for treatment of trafficking victims abroad⁴⁰. The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 focused mainly on prevention strategies by making requirements that the government provide information about workers' rights to all people applying for work and education-based visas, established new systems to gather and report human trafficking data, and also reauthorized expanded protections available with the T visa, and required that all unaccompanied alien children be screened as potential victims of human trafficking⁴¹. This Act also enhanced sanctions against traffickers and expanded definitions of types of trafficking to allow for more swift and efficient prosecution⁴². The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2013 passed as an amendment to the Violence Against Women Act and established and strengthened programs to ensure that U.S. citizens do not purchase products made by victims of trafficking and prevent child marriage, while also establishing emergency response provisions within the State

³⁹ "Current Federal Laws." *The Polaris Project: For a World Without Slavery*. Polaris Project, n.d. Web. 16 Feb 2014. <<http://www.polarisproject.org/what-we-do/policy-advocacy/national-policy/current-federal-laws>>.

⁴⁰ "Current Federal Laws." *The Polaris Project: For a World Without Slavery*. Polaris Project, n.d. Web. 16 Feb 2014. <<http://www.polarisproject.org/what-we-do/policy-advocacy/national-policy/current-federal-laws>>.

⁴¹ "Current Federal Laws." *The Polaris Project: For a World Without Slavery*. Polaris Project, n.d. Web. 16 Feb 2014. <<http://www.polarisproject.org/what-we-do/policy-advocacy/national-policy/current-federal-laws>>.

⁴² "Current Federal Laws." *The Polaris Project: For a World Without Slavery*. Polaris Project, n.d. Web. 16 Feb 2014. <<http://www.polarisproject.org/what-we-do/policy-advocacy/national-policy/current-federal-laws>>.

Department to respond swiftly to disaster areas and crises where people are especially vulnerable to trafficking and strengthened collaboration with state and local law enforcement to further ease charging and prosecuting traffickers⁴³. While the reauthorization acts mentioned above target human trafficking as a whole, the United States also has the PROTECT Act (Prosecutorial Remedies and Other Tools to End the Exploitation of Children Today) of 2003 which enhances penalties for those engaging in sex tourism with children within the United States and in other countries, established the Amber Alert System and gave transitional housing to child victims of sexual assault⁴⁴.

The state of Georgia, according to the Polaris Project, is a Tier One state in terms of their advances in combating trafficking. This means that the state has passed significant laws to combat human trafficking, but should also continue to take steps to improve and implement those laws. Georgia code 16-5-46 and 19-7-5(b)(4) address the issue of trafficking in Georgia for labor or sexual servitude and define sexual exploitation⁴⁵. Georgia code 16-6-13.3. states that any proceeds or money from pimping will be detained and will not be subject to conveyance, sequestration, or attachment, while state code 35-1-16 requires the Georgia Bureau of Investigation to acquire, collect, analyze, and provide information to and for the Sexual Offender Registration Review Board. This Act also transfers personnel and equipment from the Sexual Offender

⁴³ "Current Federal Laws." *The Polaris Project: For a World Without Slavery*. Polaris Project, n.d. Web. 16 Feb 2014. <<http://www.polarisproject.org/what-we-do/policy-advocacy/national-policy/current-federal-laws>>.

⁴⁴ "Current Federal Laws." *The Polaris Project: For a World Without Slavery*. Polaris Project, n.d. Web. 16 Feb 2014. <<http://www.polarisproject.org/what-we-do/policy-advocacy/national-policy/current-federal-laws>>.

⁴⁵ "Georgia." *The Polaris Project: For a World Without Slavery*. N.p.. Web. 16 Feb 2014. <<http://www.polarisproject.org/state-map/georgia>>.

Registration Review Board to the GBI⁴⁶. House Resolution 1151 creates the Human Trafficking Study Commission, whose job was to examine the state of Georgia's status in terms of trafficking, to determine who is being trafficked, why, and to propose the best ways to serve victims. The commission was temporary and was dissolved on January 1, 2013, and the members of the commission were not given compensation or payment for their time spent researching trafficking, and was to propose any legislation on or before December 31, 2012⁴⁷. Georgia code 17-17-6 notifies the victim of their pretrial release and of victims' rights and the availability of victims' compensation and services⁴⁸. While it seems as though Georgia has many laws and codes in place for the victims once they have been found, there is almost no legislature dictating how long the sentences of the traffickers in Georgia should be and very little legislation in place to help eliminate the underlying problems behind sex trafficking.

On the Front Lines: Interviews

In this section, I examine the nature of sex trafficking in Georgia by comparing and contrasting three interviews that were done for this research. In one interview I spoke with Allison Hood, the program coordinator for the non-profit organization YouthSpark which works to bring awareness to the issue of sex trafficking in the Atlanta area, help rehabilitate formerly trafficked and prostituted girls, educate police officers in

⁴⁶ Legislative Services Committee. "Summary of General Statutes Enacted at the 2012 Session of the General Assembly of Georgia", Atlanta (2012): 20 Web.

<<http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/20112012/2012SumDoc.pdf>>.

⁴⁷ State of Georgia. House of Representatives. *House Resolution 1151*. 2012. Web.

<<http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/20112012/127671.pdf>>.

⁴⁸ "Georgia." *The Polaris Project: For a World Without Slavery*. N.p.. Web. 16 Feb 2014.

<<http://www.polarisproject.org/state-map/georgia>>.

the Atlanta area to recognize victims of trafficking, and has created Angela's House, the first safe house in the Southeast for victims of child prostitution or child sex trafficking⁴⁹.

In another I spoke with Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) Special Agent 3 Sara Thomas, who works in the Child Exploitation and Computer Crimes Division. She has worked for the GBI for six years and has been with the Labor and Sex Trafficking division since its founding in 2011; in

just that first year 500 cases were opened, with additional cases being opened every year⁵⁰. In my final interview, I spoke with Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Victim



Assistant Specialist agent Alia el-Sawi. She has a combined eight years of experience fighting trafficking between her three years of work with HSI and five years with a local non-profit called Tapestry; currently, she serves all trafficking victims for the Special Agent in Charge (SPIC) Atlanta office which covers all of Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina⁵¹. Although the emphasis of this article has been to compare Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking, or DMST in Atlanta, Georgia to the trafficking of ethnic minorities in Thailand, my interview with Ms. El-Sawi has inspired me to also compare DMST and Burmese trafficking in Thailand to the trafficking of foreign women into Atlanta in this section.

⁴⁹ Hood, A. (2013, May 22). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. YouthSpark interview.

⁵⁰ Thomas, S. (2013, May 23). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. GBI agent interview.

⁵¹ el-Sawi, A. (2013, June 25). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. HSI agent interview.

Why Atlanta? What is it about Atlanta that makes the sex trafficking and forced prostitution industry so profitable and popular in the United States? Atlanta is the fifth city in the nation for child sex trafficking in every ethnicity and is number one for Hispanic child sex trafficking, according to a recent statement by HSI⁵². The average age for a child to be forced into prostitution in Georgia is twelve years old, with victims ranging from eight to seventeen years old⁵³. In all the interviews that were conducted, transportation facilities, aspects of Atlanta's culture and popular tourist attractions were cited as reasons for both the ease of trafficking girls in Atlanta and the high demand for trafficked girls. Like Thailand, Atlanta, Georgia is a transit, destination and source city for trafficking. Atlanta is a source location because there are domestic United States citizens that are victims of sex trafficking (DMST), a transit city because of the airport and highways that go through and the amount of people that go in and out of the city on a regular basis, and a destination city because both domestic and foreign born nationals are brought to the Atlanta area due to the excessively high demand⁵⁴.

Every interview specifically mentioned the presence of Hartsfield-Jackson airport, the busiest airport in the world and the fact that Atlanta has all the major interstate running through it (I-75, I-85 and I-20) as reasons why transporting the girls is so easy^{55, 56, 57}. The popularity of the airport makes the facilitation of sex trafficking and the delivery of girls easy and convenient. It was also mentioned that the sex trafficking routes typically follow drug trafficking routes, with especially Hispanic girls being

⁵² Thomas, S. (2013, May 23). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. GBI agent interview.

⁵³ Thomas, S. (2013, May 23). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. GBI agent interview.

⁵⁴ el-Sawi, A. (2013, June 25). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. HSI agent interview.

⁵⁵ Thomas, S. (2013, May 23). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. GBI agent interview.

⁵⁶ el-Sawi, A. (2013, June 25). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. HSI agent interview.

⁵⁷ Hood, A. (2013, May 22). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. YouthSpark interview.

trafficked from Mexico into Texas, being taken onto I-20 into Atlanta, and then taking I-85 to I-95 up and down the East Coast⁵⁸. This is not only true for I-20, but any trafficker going into or out of Atlanta can follow I-75, the major north-south highway through the Great Lakes and Southeast region of the United States, while traffickers using I-85 can go through Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina and into Virginia.

In each interview, Atlanta's popularity as a tourist destination and as a convenient place for conventions and sporting events also makes it a place where the demand for trafficked girls is increased. All the women I interviewed mentioned that whenever there is a huge convention or a major sporting event like the Final Four or the Super Bowl, there tends to both be a higher demand for girls and law enforcement officials receive a higher case load. In conjunction with this, all of the women interviewed mentioned that sex trafficking functions as a business and therefore abides by the laws of supply and demand. Traffickers will take their girls to wherever they are prone to make more money, which is in areas that have the large amounts of tourists, the conventions and the sporting events and the easy means to get there. Unfortunately, Atlanta's attractiveness as a convention location and major sporting events acts as a double-edged sword in this regard. While the overall economy in Atlanta is helped by these attractions and events, by the same token the illegal sex trade and forced prostitution of young girls is also able to flourish.

Additionally, Atlanta's culture is one that both condones and glorifies sex. It is a very "sexualized" city according to Allison Hood at YouthSpark. An example of this "sexualization" is in the fact that Atlanta has the highest number of exotic dance clubs

⁵⁸ Thomas, S. (2013, May 23). Interview by E.B. Hulseby []. GBI agent interview.

per capita, which gives Atlanta a reputation for being a sex hub⁵⁹. In addition, Atlanta has a unique music culture, one that is not found in many other areas around the United States. While saying that the hip/hop and rap culture of Atlanta causes sex trafficking is incorrect, it is worth noting that these artists and their songs certainly glamorize the problem. As a result, a culture is created that encourages some young boys to want to grow up and be pimps, while also encouraging others that it is acceptable to purchase sex or to have sex with a child⁶⁰.

Certain aspects of child sex trafficking in Atlanta were mentioned in every interview. These include: the demographics of the sex trade, past victimization and negative home lives, acquisition of travel documents and identification, guerilla vs. finesse trafficking, and psychological and physical abuse.

In terms of demographics, all the women interviewed agreed that demographics play a pivotal role in the patterns of how girls are trafficked and by whom they are trafficked. For example, Hispanic brothels typically take girls that are also from Hispanic backgrounds and cater to “Johns” (the buyers of sex) that are not Hispanic. In the case of Asian spas, the spas themselves are legitimate businesses but they’re acting as a front for the illegal forced prostitution business. Typically these spas traffic other Asian women and cater to the Asian population. Street prostitution and online prostitution are the types of prostitution where the ethnicities mix because the trafficker is trying to appeal to as many clients as possible⁶¹. Also, Allison Hood pointed out that the trafficker is typically going to be someone from the same ethnicity or someone who lives in the same

⁵⁹ el-Sawi, A. (2013, June 25). Interview by E.B. Hulseby []. HSI agent interview.

⁶⁰ Thomas, S. (2013, May 23). Interview by E.B. Hulseby []. GBI agent interview.

⁶¹ Thomas, S. (2013, May 23). Interview by E.B. Hulseby []. GBI agent interview.

community because these are the men who are most able to identify the most vulnerable girls and exploit their weaknesses⁶².

In terms of bringing girls and women into the United States, Alia el-Sawi stated that the ethnicities of the girls that are brought into Atlanta is incredibly dependent upon the demographics of the Atlanta area. In other words, while victims typically come from poorer and less developed countries, specific ethnicities are targeted for Atlanta based on Atlanta's demographics. For the Asian spas, primarily South Korean women and some Chinese women are brought into Atlanta, whereas in DC there are many Thai, Malaysian and Cambodian women. In terms of Hispanic women that are trafficked, Mexican women comprise most of HSI's cases, but there has been an increase in women trafficked from Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and the Dominican Republic⁶³.

Modern-day slavery in America

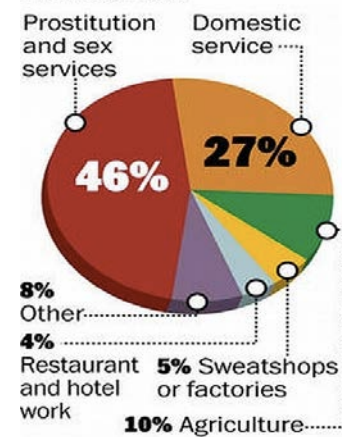


Photo courtesy of: <http://inyourlightministries.org/endslavery.html>

An interesting commonality that most of the victims share is some prior history of abuse or negative home lives. These girls are especially vulnerable to the finesse method of trafficking, which will be explained in greater detail later. What makes these girls particularly vulnerable to exploitation is the simple fact that the trafficker will wait outside of schools and look for the girls that appear vulnerable. They (the trafficker) will latch on to whatever her needs and wants are, whether that be food, money or affection and exploit it to convince her to be with him⁶⁴. What makes a girl with a prior history of abuse easier to exploit and abuse further is the fact that they have already been

⁶² Hood, A. (2013, May 22). Interview by E.B. Hulseley []. YouthSpark interview.

⁶³ el-Sawi, A. (2013, June 25). Interview by E.B. Hulseley []. HSI agent interview.

⁶⁴ Thomas, S. (2013, May 23). Interview by E.B. Hulseley []. GBI agent interview.

manipulated, they already have some of those emotional or physical scars and oftentimes they're looking for a way out of their current situation or looking for someone to take care of them⁶⁵. This is where the exploiter then steps in and offers her what she wants or needs, at least for a time, and then begins to abuse her and force her into prostitution⁶⁶. At this point, however, she already trusts or loves the offender and so dealing with this change is incredibly confusing especially for a twelve to seventeen year old girl who is still developing physically and mentally⁶⁷. Again, this is all a part of the finesse style of pimping which will be addressed later.

In terms of the traffickers, their methods of exploitation and how they trap the girls into these lives is similar across the board, whether they be in Thailand, trafficking a girl in the United States or trafficking a foreign girl into the United States. With respect to entrapment, a similarity amongst all exploiters is that they take the identification and/or travel documents of the girls they traffic^{68, 69}. For domestic victims, their drivers licenses are taken and they're afraid of being detained by police officers and they also have no way of proving their US citizens⁷⁰. In terms of victims that are brought into the United States, traffickers will take the women and girls' passports, papers and any other form of identification⁷¹. As a result, because the women are terrified of being deported, they don't speak English and their traffickers have convinced them that the police are untrustworthy and cruel, they are unable to escape their captivity⁷². Traffickers around

⁶⁵ Hood, A. (2013, May 22). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. YouthSpark interview.

⁶⁶ Hood, A. (2013, May 22). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. YouthSpark interview.

⁶⁷ Hood, A. (2013, May 22). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. YouthSpark interview.

⁶⁸ Thomas, S. (2013, May 23). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. GBI agent interview.

⁶⁹ el-Sawi, A. (2013, June 25). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. HSI agent interview.

⁷⁰ Thomas, S. (2013, May 23). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. GBI agent interview.

⁷¹ el-Sawi, A. (2013, June 25). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. HSI agent interview.

⁷² el-Sawi, A. (2013, June 25). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. HSI agent interview.

the world also use the same methods of trafficking their victims: guerilla pimping, finesse pimping or a combination of the two.

The guerilla method of pimping is where the women and girls are beaten and abused from the beginning, whereas the finesse method is more psychological and manipulative. When traffickers use this variety of pimping, they often look for the girls that are missing something at home, pretend to care about them, buy them gifts, earn their trust, even pretend to be in a real relationship with the girls before forcing them into prostitution^{73, 74}. Girls that are trafficked from other countries are also susceptible to this technique, as Ms. El-Sawi explains with girls that are trafficked from Mexico, their traffickers will pretend to be their boyfriends, even going so far as to meet her parents and introduce her to their parents (a lot of times the uncles, cousins, fathers and brothers are also involved). Once they have gained the girl's trust they then suggest a move to the United States for better jobs, more money, etc., get the travel documents and within the first twenty-four to forty-eight hours force the girls into prostitution⁷⁵. This is not an extreme difference from the trafficking methods exploiters will use in Thailand where the men either offer "legitimate" jobs to the women or are from the same village and therefore are able to gain the woman's trust.

In both scenarios the traffickers use a calculated form of deception, manipulating the women or girls into trusting them and then, upon crossing the border almost instantly force them into prostitution. The traffickers utilize whatever method works to entice, exploit and keep their victims. If there are multiple victims, traffickers will change the methods for each girl- in my interview with Ms. Thomas, she gave the example of an

⁷³ Hood, A. (2013, May 22). Interview by E.B. Hulsey []. YouthSpark interview.

⁷⁴ Thomas, S. (2013, May 23). Interview by E.B. Hulsey []. GBI agent interview.

⁷⁵ el-Sawi, A. (2013, June 25). Interview by E.B. Hulsey []. HSI agent interview.

exploiter who had five victims and treated each of them differently to make them continue prostituting. The first girl was physically abused, the second one he kidnapped and handcuffed to the bed, refusing to uncuff her unless she performed sexual acts. The third, because he considered her overweight, would not let her eat unless she made money. The fourth girl came from a very negative home life and so the exploiter psychologically abused her, saying that no one would ever love her after this experience and he was the only one who would ever care about her. The fifth girl had a child, and so the exploiter threatened to harm her child if she refused to prostitute for him. This is just an example, but on the whole exploiters will look at each victim on an individual level and use whatever methods available to control her⁷⁶. Whether it's guerilla pimping or finesse pimping (which typically transforms into guerilla pimping once the girls are in prostitution), the effects on these girls range from short term to long term physical and psychological issues which will be discussed in the following paragraphs⁷⁷.

It has been addressed that the girls who are trafficked experience extreme psychological and physical abuses, some of which are carried with them years after they have escaped forced prostitution. While each girl has a unique experience because traffickers treat girls differently, several psychological issues have been seen with girls throughout the Atlanta area. All the interviews mentioned psychological trauma ranging from PTSD to anxiety and/or depression issues, as well as many former victims needing therapy. Alia el-Sawi and Allison Hood both explicitly mentioned girls having issues with trauma based PTSD following their experiences in forced prostitution. Every interview mentioned girls having to go through intensive mental health therapy. Ms. El-

⁷⁶ el-Sawi, A. (2013, June 25). Interview by E.B. Hulseby []. HSI agent interview.

⁷⁷ Hood, A. (2013, May 22). Interview by E.B. Hulseby []. YouthSpark interview.

Sawi mentioned some girls experiencing depression, suicidal thoughts, reoccurring nightmares, while Ms. Thomas also mentioned depression, as well as feelings of shame and guilt with the girls and women she has worked with. These same feelings of shame and guilt are also experienced by women who have been trafficked to Thailand and are worried about the perceptions families, friends and their communities may have once they come back. Ms. El-Sawi mentioned the same fear amongst women that are trafficked into the United States, which is why there are programs available for trafficked victims to get a T-visa, which, in addition to many other programs, allow the women and girls to stay in the United States and become more stabilized.

Due to the traumatic and horrific nature of forced prostitution, these girls are often either forced to take drugs or seek out drugs as a way of numbing their pain^{78, 79, 80}. Some girls are “forced to engage in smoking marijuana, taking cocaine, ecstasy is also a common one” because, in the trafficker’s mind, the clients will enjoy it more if the women appear to enjoy themselves⁸¹. This then leads to a “dependency of drugs or alcohol so they develop substance abuse issues”⁸². While some girls are forced to take drugs, others choose to take drugs or abuse alcohol as a means of numbing the pain and escaping (psychologically) from their lives when they are unable to really escape^{83, 84}. In either circumstance, drug rehabilitation is employed to get the women off of their

⁷⁸ el-Sawi, A. (2013, June 25). Interview by E.B. Hulseley []. HSI agent interview.

⁷⁹ Thomas, S. (2013, May 23). Interview by E.B. Hulseley []. GBI agent interview.

⁸⁰ Hood, A. (2013, May 22). Interview by E.B. Hulseley []. YouthSpark interview.

⁸¹ el-Sawi, A. (2013, June 25). Interview by E.B. Hulseley []. HSI agent interview.

⁸² el-Sawi, A. (2013, June 25). Interview by E.B. Hulseley []. HSI agent interview.

⁸³ el-Sawi, A. (2013, June 25). Interview by E.B. Hulseley []. HSI agent interview.

⁸⁴ Thomas, S. (2013, May 23). Interview by E.B. Hulseley []. GBI agent interview.

dependency, with women who sought out the drugs or alcohol themselves typically struggling more to get off of drugs and alcohol ^{85, 86}.

Another difficulty that arises from the extreme psychological abuse, deception and manipulation the girls experience is trouble developing normal and healthy relationships after their experiences^{87, 88}. Ms. Thomas said “a lot of our victims have had a lot of trouble being in a normal relationship after that, because they’ve been in an environment where they’ve learned to manipulate people or they may be scared that they’re going to be manipulated and forced back into that situation” while Ms. El-Sawi added “even young girls have trouble with their future relationships...they either have lack of trust in general or they may enter relationships that are unhealthy.” In a few circumstances, some women have become so terrified of men that they decide to date women instead⁸⁹.

Additionally, in both the YouthSpark and GBI agent interview, it was noted that one of the issues that arises when trying to combat trafficking is that the girls often have trouble self-identifying as victims. According to Sara Thomas, “your biggest problem...with this type of crime, victims don’t self-identify as victims...because they are coming from a negative situation, or a negative home life they’re not willing to say that they’re a victim or understand that they’re a victim.” Allison Hood from YouthSpark also says that the girls “if they feel like what they’re doing is wrong or dirty they will start to blame themselves and forget that they are victims...a lot of children may never realize that they’re being victimized, they might think it’s their fault” and this

⁸⁵ el-Sawi, A. (2013, June 25). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. HSI agent interview.

⁸⁶ Thomas, S. (2013, May 23). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. GBI agent interview.

⁸⁷ el-Sawi, A. (2013, June 25). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. HSI agent interview.

⁸⁸ Thomas, S. (2013, May 23). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. GBI agent interview.

⁸⁹ el-Sawi, A. (2013, June 25). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. HSI agent interview.

feeling is only exacerbated by the fact that “there are still a lot of issues in our culture in and around rape and sexual abuse, sending messages...that it is their fault so the children are picking up on these messages.”

Like psychological abuse, many of the physical abuses experienced by the girls in Atlanta leave lasting effects. In all the interviews that were conducted, beatings, rapes, and cuts were mentioned as a means the exploiters use to keep the women in their control. Allison Hood at YouthSpark, Alia el-Sawi of HSI and Sara Thomas of the GBI all mentioned working with women who have been forced to have sex at gunpoint or held at gunpoint for extended periods of time. Alia el-Sawi talked specifically discussed women and girls being beaten, punched, kicked, choked, and had their hair pulled. Ms. El-Sawi also went into greater detail, saying that much of the lasting physical problems the girls experience have to do with the usage of at home remedies for anything from abortions, STD's and STD prevention to eliminating bruising. She explained that there was a case where a pimp poured acid on a girl's vaginal region as a mechanism for curing vaginal warts. In regards to STD prevention, Ms. El-Sawi said that “a lot of the women are told that if they use Monistat on a daily basis ...it will keep them from getting an infection or an STD” while some women will use a regular douching substance, “and then at night filling it with rubbing alcohol.” Another common trick to get rid of bruising the trafficker or clients cause is to put IcyHot cream over the bruises⁹⁰. In terms of long term physical scars, Sara Thomas said that she has worked with victims who have iron marks on their face or bodies, nail marks, scars from cuts (in one instance, the exploiter threw beer bottles at a girl every day, and one day when she decided to avoid the beer bottle, he stabbed her in the leg and made the other girls rub salt in her wound) and

⁹⁰ el-Sawi, A. (2013, June 25). Interview by E.B. Hulseby []. HSI agent interview.

tattoos. These tattoos are a means of branding the girls with the offenders name, street sign, nickname, etc⁹¹. In addition, all the women I interviewed mentioned that the girls who have been in forced prostitution often suffer from vaginal and/or anal trauma and suffer from miscarriages. These miscarriages stem from trauma as a result of forced at-home abortions and repeated rapes^{92, 93}. While STD's are a part of daily life while a young girl is in forced prostitution, the side effects of STD's are present in some cases for the rest of their lives. Some STD's are bacterial and therefore can be treated with antibiotics, but they have gone untreated for so long that symptoms like infertility have already arisen, while some that viral, like Herpes, Hepatitis and HIV/AIDS cannot be cured with antibiotics, but rather the symptoms can be treated as they appear. In the case of HIV/AIDS, a cure has yet to be found, and therefore if a girl contracts HIV/AIDS while in forced prostitution, it stays with her the rest of her life.

Every interview mentioned the supply and demand nature of sex trafficking. Not only do traffickers go to places with the most demand (which is, again, why Atlanta is such a profitable location), but it was also mentioned that it is impossible to eliminate the sex trade altogether without eliminating the demand first^{94, 95}. Eliminating demand, however, is a matter of changing the culture of the United States and Atlanta away from a sexualized city that glamorizes the pimping and trafficking industry.

The only way to do that, according to all the women I interviewed, is to educate both the public and police officers. Proper identification of victims is key, which is one reason for educating police officers and the public. If police officers don't know what to

⁹¹ Thomas, S. (2013, May 23). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. GBI agent interview.

⁹² el-Sawi, A. (2013, June 25). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. HSI agent interview.

⁹³ Thomas, S. (2013, May 23). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. GBI agent interview.

⁹⁴ Thomas, S. (2013, May 23). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. GBI agent interview.

⁹⁵ Hood, A. (2013, May 22). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. YouthSpark interview.

look for or what they're looking at, they may mistakenly identify a trafficked woman as one who chooses to be a prostitute⁹⁶. Educating the public is also an integral aspect of fighting sex trafficking for the same reasons that it is important to educate police officers. The public needs to know what to look for, know what they're looking at if they see a woman that's forced into prostitution, and then have no fear of calling the police to report a potential crime^{97, 98}. Education is also important in schools, so that potential victims can be made aware that sex trafficking is a prevalent issue in the Atlanta area and be able to recognize when or if they are in a potentially exploitative situation⁹⁹.

Hand-in-hand with education is prevention; if the general populace and potential victims know what to look for, the potential victims would hopefully be able to identify a bad situation before being manipulated and deceived by traffickers, and even if they do become trafficked, with an educated public theoretically they will identify and report any issues they see¹⁰⁰. An additional hope is that education and enlightening the public of these atrocities will also work as a means to decrease demand for child sex slaves. With police being properly educated on how to identify trafficked victims, they can prosecute the pimps effectively and also send the victims to appropriate hospitals, rehabilitation centers, connect them with non-profits like YouthSpark, and help them get reintegrated into society¹⁰¹. Another mechanism that could be useful in preventing and educating the public would be to install a uniform database that reports the exact numbers of girls and women who are trafficked every year. This database would include information from all

⁹⁶ Hood, A. (2013, May 22). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. YouthSpark interview.

⁹⁷ Hood, A. (2013, May 22). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. YouthSpark interview.

⁹⁸ Thomas, S. (2013, May 23). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. GBI agent interview.

⁹⁹ el-Sawi, A. (2013, June 25). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. HSI agent interview.

¹⁰⁰ el-Sawi, A. (2013, June 25). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. HSI agent interview.

¹⁰¹ Hood, A. (2013, May 22). Interview by E.B. Hulsesey []. YouthSpark interview.

government agencies in the Atlanta area that work to fight human trafficking, as well as local NGO's and non-profits.

Analysis and Conclusion: What does this all mean?

The primary goal of this research is to show that sex trafficking of domestic minors in the United States and Burmese minorities in Thailand are two sides of the same coin. Both cases occur in two countries with different GDP's, level of corruption in government, history, etc., but they display the same basic patterns in regard to who traffics victims, who is victimized, and how they are treated while in forced prostitution and the methods employed to keep these young women and girls in slavery. In both cases, a vulnerable minority group in the population (children in the United States, ethnic minorities in Thailand) is targeted and exploited to fulfill the devious sexual fantasies of "Johns." While in sexual slavery, they are beaten down psychologically and verbally with threats to themselves and/or family, made to believe that their home communities will ostracize them with the knowledge of their past, and verbal abuse. They are abused physically with beatings, rapes, branding, tattooing, cutting and various other forms of assault. These physical and psychological abuses can lead to lasting feelings of shame, guilt, depression, substance abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder, physical scars, sterility due to numerous at-home abortions and sexually transmitted infections. The pimps in both cases maintain control over their victims by seizing all forms of identification, threats of imprisonment and/or deportation and/or threats of harming the victim's families. The traffickers in both cases employ one of two types of trafficking, guerilla or finesse (usually with a combination of the two depending upon the circumstance-

anything to trap the victim), to traffic girls and exploit basic transportation routes to facilitate the trade with relative ease. In Atlanta, the availability of multiple national highways and the busiest airport allow the trade to flourish with ease, while in Thailand fluid borders (aided by corrupt policemen) result in the same success for traffickers.

The one noticeable difference between the two cases is the role of law enforcement and government in combating trafficking. In the United States, multiple law enforcement departments are at work constantly to educate the public and fight forced prostitution. In the state of Georgia in particular, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation and Homeland Security Investigations have specific sex trafficking divisions. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has a sex trafficking division that works to combat trafficking on a nationwide scale. Thailand, on the other hand, is riddled with corrupt police officers who take bribes from brothel owners to keep the business protected and border patrol officers that both take money to help traffickers facilitate their trade and have been known to rape and sexually assault trafficked girls as a part of their “initiation” into the trade.

The government’s role in addressing the issue of trafficking is entirely different in both cases. The United States is a Tier 1 state according to the Trafficking in Persons Report of 2013, which means that the state has made a concerted effort to adhere to international laws regarding trafficking and actively fight this illegal trade, but there are still improvements to be made¹⁰². As mentioned in the literature review section, the state of Georgia is listed, according to the Polaris Project, as a Tier One state in terms of their advances in combating trafficking. This means essentially the same thing as the

¹⁰² United States. Department of State . *Trafficking in Persons Report*. 2013. Web. <<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/210742.pdf>>.

Trafficking in Person's Tier 1 evaluation for the United States government. Thailand, by contrast, is listed as being part of the Tier 2 Watch List by the Trafficking in Persons report. Again, this means that the government does not comply with all the minimum standards for combating trafficking and the state has not shown significant "efforts to address human trafficking" compared to the previous year, and as a result was placed in the Tier 2 Watch List for the fourth consecutive year. Thailand was only given a waiver to prevent being downgraded to a Tier 3 because the government has written a plan that (if implemented) would presumably help the trafficking situation in that country¹⁰³.

The polar opposite approaches to combating trafficking in the two countries illustrate why a universal plan to combat trafficking is pertinent to ridding the abomination that is sexual slavery and servitude. It is not efficient for every government around the world to have a different approach to combating sex trafficking. If one country is making active strides to eliminate the causes of trafficking and intercept traffickers in their actions while another is either not doing anything or (worse) has officials and/or officers that are actively working to keep these institutions in place and help pimps exploit and transport innocent young women and children into the country, these atrocities can never be completely resolved. The practice of enslaving people and selling them as a commodity can never end if the demand is still present. Demand will remain present if governments sit idly by and allow the practice to happen or encourage the trade to continue. If one country makes it too difficult for traffickers to exploit girls, they will simply move to a country in which it is easier to do business. These pimps are intelligent economists if nothing else and should be understood as such; they will not

¹⁰³ United States. Department of State . *Trafficking in Persons Report*. 2013. Web. <<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/210742.pdf>>.

hesitate to go to the place where law enforcement is minimal, facilitation is relatively easy and demand is high. States that refuse to enforce international laws concerning trafficking only serve to help the traffickers accomplish their goals to exploit and abuse women for monetary gain.

Another important difference between sex trafficking in Thailand and in the United States should be noted. With almost everything else the same, in the United States it is common for ethnicities to traffic like ethnicities, as was discussed in my interview with Sara Thomas, the GBI agent. Asian traffickers traffic other Asians, Latinos traffic Latinos, African Americans traffic African Americans and Caucasians tend to primarily traffic Caucasians (with the notable of online prostitution and street prostitution, which often mixes up ethnicities to appeal to the greatest number of clients possible). In Thailand, however, Burmese women are specifically trafficked because they are different than the clientele. Like ethnicities are not trafficking like ethnicities, and if anything, it is the complete opposite. These young women and girls are chosen because of the “exotic otherness” attributed to hill tribe women and the perception that they are pure and untainted by disease (contrary to the perception of ethnically Thai prostitutes, who are viewed as STI infested and impure). This is an important difference to note in terms of the patterns that guide trafficking in both countries.

My proposed solution to combating trafficking on a unified and global scale begins with education. All of the women I interviewed identified educating the public as an integral part of fighting trafficking. If girls are educated on the risk factors of trafficking, they can more easily identify if they are in any direct danger of being a victim themselves and presumably remove themselves from that position. If the public knows

how to identify a trafficked victim or a situation that looks suspicious, they are more likely to alert the police to the problem. If law enforcement officials are educated about what a trafficked victim looks like, they can address the problem in the appropriate way and find the appropriate channels to help rehabilitate the victim afterwards. Furthermore, public education can decrease demand for purchased sex as a whole, thereby diminishing the client base and profits that could be gained from the trade. Again, traffickers are businessmen. If the trade is no longer profitable, they are likely to move on to another illegal activity that poses fewer difficulties for more profit.

While this research primarily focused on comparing DMST in the Atlanta area to that of trafficking Burmese minority women in Thailand, further research should be done to look at victims who are trafficked into the United States. Additionally, it is important to note that foreign victims trafficked to the United States experience many of the same treatments, fears, etc. as Burmese women trafficked into Thailand, and as such the comparison is an interesting one that warrants further research. These women are often from poorer countries, ethnic minorities in the United States, and/or they have been subjected to extreme deception (having been told their trafficker loves them/is their boyfriend or that they are going to a legitimate job in the United States)¹⁰⁴.

Another facet of sex trafficking that is rarely discussed but is an integral part of the trade is the trafficking of young boys. While the primary focus in sex trafficking research is young girls and women, young boys and adolescents are also trafficked. However, because of the minimal information and research being done about this aspect of trafficking, it is increasingly difficult to recognize boys that are being exploited and identify their traffickers.

¹⁰⁴ el-Sawi, A. (2013, June 25). Interview by E.B. Hulsey []. HSI agent interview.

Am I here to solve the problem of sex trafficking and forced prostitution entirely? To make a comprehensive program that is guaranteed to eliminate sex trafficking? No. I only hope to lay a foundation for a proposed solution to trafficking. My research has led me to the conclusion that a comprehensive and uniform approach to trafficking is the only way to ensure that it is addressed effectively worldwide and (hopefully) solved sometime in the future. Though minor details about trafficking may vary from country to country, the basic building blocks of the trade are present everywhere. It follows, then, that the same tools can be used to dismantle and destroy those blocks worldwide, with education being the first step of the comprehensive and uniform approach that could resolve this issue in our lifetime. As Nelson Mandela once said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." The battle against trafficking begins first with education, then reform, and finally a set of policies for global change.

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Appendix

YouthSpark Interview

5/22/13

E – What is your name?

A – Allison Hood

E – What is your position/job title?

A – I am the program coordinator for our programs to prevent child sex trafficking

E – I did a little bit of research online, but what is YouthSpark exactly?

A – We were created about 10 years ago in early 2000- 2001 and we were originally known as the juvenile justice fund. We changed our name to YouthSpark about a year ago in early 2012. We were created here at the Fulton County Juvenile Court by some of the Chief Judges, elected officials and concerned citizens. They wanted a non profit organization that could meet the needs of the children of the families coming through the Juvenile Court that the Juvenile Court was unable to meet. You know when you are a Juvenile Court agency you cannot always do things and there was a gap between the services the court was able to provide and what the children and families needed. One of those was that the Judges noticed that there was a lot of under aged girls coming through getting charged with prostitution and in GA the legal age of consent for sex is 16 so when that is the case and you are charging 10, 11 and 12 year olds with prostitution there is a disconnect that is not right. And the Chief Judge at the time, Nina Hixson, she presided over her 1000th case of child prostitution so at that point she said enough is enough, we can't have this anymore. We worked to create Angela's House, which is the first safe house in the Southeast for victims of child prostitution or child sex trafficking. Oh my goodness there are mosquitos out here. So that was in the early 2000 and for a long time we worked on victim services, working with girls who had been victimized and sexually exploited to rehabilitate them through this residential program. And then around 2007 one of our really large funders came to us and we agreed with him that if you just keep saving victims, there will always be more victims to save. And that's important and it matters so much even if you are only saving one girl, it matters for the one girl. We 100% believe that, but we want to see systemic change. Until you start addressing the issue from a systemic point of view, you are never going to make a huge difference. Just like in any social change, you have to address it from a systemic view point. So we started really looking at the demand side. So who is buying sex who is selling these girls for sex and why is this happening. And so we have commissioned the first research to quantify the issue looking at the number of girls that were being sexually exploited in the Atlanta area and the first count found that there were 250 girls being exploited around the Atlanta area each month. We commissioned the Superior Group to do that research and they found that girls are being exploited through four major portals: on the street, through Craigslist at that time – the adult services section has since been shut down but girls are still sold on there and on that page, in hotels and through escort services. And then that wasn't enough, we were able to use that research to get funding through the

State and that is really important you know if you are going to go to lawmakers and say we need funding this issue, you need something to back it up, you can't just say this is a social issue, you have to have some sort of data and I'm sure you know that from your research. And so then we started working with lawmakers and Senator Renee Undermann has been a really big champion for us on the legislation side of things and when she first started talking about it on the Senate floor, they just did not want her talking about it. Georgia is a pretty conservative state and sex is sort of a taboo subject, but things have really changed since then, we have passed some really great laws so we have some really fantastic Senators and State Representatives here on the State level who are really committed to making sure we have the protection in place that we need for the girls and boys and that the appropriate measures are in place to prosecute the pimps and the buyers. Anyways, so after that we commissioned research to look at the number of men who are buying girls and we found we commissioned the Georgia Demand Study, again through the Superior Group again, and found that 7200 men purchased sex either knowingly or unknowingly from adolescent girls each month. But I can give you more statistics about that, we have some documents upstairs that you can look at. So with that information we started doing things like training law enforcement officers around the State, so that they would know how to recognize victims. A lot of times when they would be picking girls up, the girls would say there were 18 or 19 or they would have documents saying there were 18 or 19, but they really were not – they were 13 or 14. So helping them to know how to recognize victims and then also how to you know pick up the pimps and buyers. And so since then we trained over 3000 law enforcement officers across the state and in over 50 counties since then the GBI has picked up that training and integrated it into their requirement curriculums so that is really fantastic and that is what we want to see. When we create a program, we want it to be implemented into the appropriate state agency or non-profit agency so that it becomes part of the system. And in December 2010, the Governor's Office for Children and Families created the Georgia Connection which is the statewide system of care for all girls and boys who are victim of child sex trafficking. We are the first state to have a statewide response like that, kind of a centralized response which is really important, I think, because then all victims are automatically referred there and then the agency is able to place them with the appropriate services so you know you have one agency doing one thing really well instead of having a bunch of different agencies doing the same thing. And there are some safe houses in the State. Wellspring living has one, and Living Water for Girls. We transferred ownership of Angela's House to The Villages which is another non-profit organization because they were already helping to run it and since then I think they have made some changes, and so it still functions as a safe house. We still have more beds than any other state in the country here in Georgia. So Georgia has a really fantastic response and when they created the Georgia Care Connection, we are really excited about that of course to have that system in place so we transitioned to more prevention work. So we have a group called YouthSpark Voices that runs here at the Juvenile Court and it is for girls ages 11-17 who are considered higher risk for becoming victim of sexual exploitation and they are referred to us by their probation offices to at the Juvenile Court. So they have a number of red flags like running away, shop lifting, truancy, contact with an older male, that sort of thing and we work with them before they are exploited to educate them about vulnerabilities and to educate them on the issue and then really we

have the strength and talent perspective. We want to empower their strengths, talents and skills so that they can you know have normal lives, just like any kid deserves. We don't think that any child ever wakes up at 16, 18 or 21 and wants to be prostituted. So our main focus right now is on prevention and that is through YouthSpark Voices our direct services, youth empowered education and disabling demand for prostituted children through our future not a past program which is the legislative side of things doing lots of training through different groups, research, advocacy, that sort of thing.

E – OK, now some of these questions after this one are going to dive more in depth on a lot of the stuff you just said, so I don't want to seem like it is redundant

A – Ok, Ok, sure

E – I just need more info – so what are some of the common demand side factors for sex trafficking – like what makes Atlanta or the State of Georgia as it were a very profitable destination and transit place – like what makes it so easy I guess to facilitate trafficking?

A – Uh, there are a lot of different causes. Sex trafficking, as I am sure you have found, is a difficult thing to quantify. Girls are not going to just come up to you and be like - Hey I 'm 14 years old and I'm being prostituted, you know. So it is not easy, but we do find that Atlanta is just a big destination in general for anything. We have Hartsfield Jackson, which is the busiest airport in the country and it is really if you want to have sex with a child, it is easier to fly to Atlanta than it is to fly to Cambodia if you are in the US. We have all these bid interstates here, 75, 85, 285, 20 so there is a lot of people coming in and out of Atlanta. There is a lot of conventions, sporting events here. They have Savannah as a seaport so there is just a lot of traffic through the city in general. We have a lot of strip clubs here. Atlanta is a sexualized city in general. That is something we are really interested in looking at is the way our culture plays into this issue. You know what makes boys grow up and think that is ok to buy sex from a human being.

A – And I think a lot of people assume that sex trafficking is an inner city problem or an urban problem but it is not. When we did the Georgia Demand Study to find out who was buying sex, we found that 47% of the men who were buying it were from outside the perimeter, which is a predominantly middle class like area.

E –So obviously trafficking is an enormous industry in Atlanta and other parts of the world. How or why is it challenging to find traffickers and their victims? Like how is it able to thrive the way it does, especially in a city like Atlanta where you have multiple different kinds of law enforcement's out there, you have the centralized attack of the problem, so like why is it still able to thrive?

A – I do think we have a much better response now and I think we are seeing a lot more cases. Law enforcement are able to recognize things that are sort of suspicious and are picking up on things a lot more quicker now because they have received the training that they need. So we are definitely seeing successes in this area. But I think one thing that is hard is you know we have not really seen the gorilla style of pimping that was popular in

the 70's, 80's or 90's there was, the pimps were just beating the girls and that sort of thing. Now, especially when you hear or you pick up a really young girl, her brain is still developing and she is already experienced trauma because a lot of girls who are victims of sexual exploitation are also victims of child abuse, either sexual or physical or emotional, some sort of childhood neglect or abuse. And so their brains haven't developed and haven't developed in the way they were meant to and so let's say you know you were abused a five years old so you run away when you are 12, 13 or 14 and this guy finds you in the street and says he cares about you and is going to love you and he is going to take care of you and he is going to make sure that your dad never rapes you again, will you develop that bond with him and then he starts having sex with you and you develop that bond further and so these girls get hooked on love because, and we have heard pimps say that as a parent you might ignore your child, you might be too busy for them, I will spend the time it takes to listen to them to get them to do what I want them to do. So these pimps are willing to invest time into the girls, whatever it takes to get them addicted to that.

E – And they develop their trust – it is like a sense of trust between the pimp and the girl.

A – Right, right

E – I was reading an article, and for the life of me I can't remember the name of that style of pimping, but I remember it was gorilla vs. insert name here.

A – Yeah, I'm really not sure what the name is either. But it is kinda similar to a domestic violence situation. People used to say why doesn't she just leave? It is not that simple.

E – Because you become psychologically dependent upon and trusting of that person.

A – right, and especially when you are a child. You know the domestic violence situations are a lot of adults who can't get out, understandably, and so it is no easier when you are a child, it is much more difficult. And when that is all you know, when that has been your reality. I think that, I am really proud of the work we have done at our agency, but the state as a whole has, I think we have shown that we are really committed to this issue, but I think that as we fight it further it will take asking a lot of hard questions because you know if the men who are buying sex are in your community or they look like you it is hard or you know them, those are difficult questions that you have to ask. What makes them think that it is ok to do this? What is our culture? What are the messages we are sending to children that let them grow up thinking it is ok? So I think, you know we have done a lot of really hard work, but there is still so much to be done.

E – It almost necessitates like a shift in minds and that is very challenging to accomplish on a cultural statewide level.

A – Yeah, and because it is so profitable, because like, you know it is the 3rd most profitable criminal activity after drugs and guns and I think it is making it's way to

number 2 because you don't have to re-up your product, you can sell a human being over and over again.

E – Sorry I am trying to take very abbreviated notes, but I don't know how much I trust this recording

Are these certain commonalities amongst trafficking victims? You mentioned it earlier they are exposed to abuse as a child, you mentioned stealing, running away that kind of stuff so are those I guess the only factors that could make a child vulnerable to being trafficked or are there other factors as well.

A – Yeah there are other factors. One thing we always say is that you can't put this issue into a box. Both the girls and boys that are being exploited and the men and women that are buying and selling them, because it looks different for every situation and we don't want to make it sound like it is an urban problem or that it just happens to girls who come from low socioeconomic statuses or who are runaways and that sort of thing I mean it looks different for everybody, whoever you are it happens to somebody who looks just like you, it happens in your community and the people who are going to exploit the people in your community are going to be people in your community, an Asian person isn't going to come exploit a person from an African-American community, a Hispanic guy isn't going to come exploit a white girl, typically it is going to be someone who looks like them because abuse tends to happen in your community. Those red flags are certainly things, you runaway there is a high likelihood you'll be picked up. Childhood abuse tends to be something that a lot of victims have already experienced. So those are the two big things that we say, but it looks different for everybody. It could just be a girl from a wealthy family whose parents don't have enough time for her, sometimes other middle school or high school students recruit their friends if they are already caught up in it, sometimes it might be a family member or a friend who's exploiting you.

E – What is the average age of trafficked children in the state of Georgia?

A – Well the average age of entry into prostitution is 12-14. So that means that the girls are all different ages.

E – But the average age they get into the trade is 12-14?

A – So even when, I think there is a lot of judgment even for adult prostitution, people are either very judgmental of those women or, our culture also really romanticizes the pimping and that sort of things, i.e. "Pretty Woman", but so when you see a woman who is 21 or 25 or something, that prostitute being prostituted, she probably didn't wake up that day and decide to be prostituted, she was probably 12, 13 or 14 when she started being exploited, so I think that's important to remember.

E - Why are children an easy target for trafficking?

A – When you've already experienced a lot of abuse, children are I don't want to say easily manipulated, in general children are a vulnerable population for any sort of abuse, adults are supposed to take care of children, and so when you need something and you trust an adult to take care of you and then they exploit you that can be very confusing. Because that's not what its supposed to look like. Especially if you have been raised to respect your elders or trust adults, that's what you want to do.

E – You mentioned earlier their minds haven't yet developed necessarily to understand the difference between what should be happening and shouldn't be happening because they've been abused in the past, and that kind of leads them to more so trust people that could potentially traffic them?

A – And I think also too, if they feel like what they are doing is wrong or dirty they will start to blame themselves and forget that they are victims, a lot of people, a lot of children may never realize that they are being victimized, they might think its their fault that they have done something to deserve it or that they like it or that they asked for it. They are still a lot of issues in our culture in and around rape and sexual abuse that sort of thing, sending messages to even adult women that it is their fault so the children are sort of picking up on these messages and feel like they may have done something to deserve it. So that may make them, that gets them trapped even further.

E – So how, we talked earlier about gorilla vs. more I guess like I don't want to say parental, but mental, but mentally manipulative forms of trafficking as opposed to physically just like grabbing a girl and saying your trafficked. We discussed that earlier so how are children being trafficked other than just like mental or psychological manipulation like are there certain locations where girls are more likely to be trafficked, like in the mall or like in do you know what I am trying to say?

A – Yeah, I think that it happens everywhere. I mean girls are advertised on back page and other surfaces a lot and at times they might be at sex parties. The guy who is exploiting them might invite some guys over or your uncle might or stepfather might invite a friend over and you might not realize what is happening, that you are being trafficked or exploited. What else was I going to say, Oh and sometimes girls will get picked up, like runaways, they might get snatched up off the street. I mean it does all of those things that you hear about do happen but it is a lot more diverse than people realize, or you might start staying with somebody and they will say will now how are you going to pay me back for this? Our rent check is due this month, so what are you going to do about it? Or I just need you do this favor for me, I love you and I owe this guy some money and it would really help me out if you would just have sex with them. It will just be one time. And then the next thing you know, a couple that is an Atlanta couple that was just indicted for trafficking a child. They were letting her stay with them and then they said that in order for them to pay the rent she had to have sex with the men that came to their house and they were advertising her on back page.

E – I had a question in my head and it just went woo. So in 30 minutes when I come up with the question again, I'll be back to that page, but how, we kinda mentioned this

earlier again with you explaining exactly what YouthSpark does, so how is the issue of trafficking being addressed by organizations such as YouthSpark and other government agencies and are there steps that can be taken to increase the efficiency of preventing trafficking in Georgia, stopping or preventing trafficking in Georgia? I know you said GA is one of the better places in the US for combating trafficking, but are there steps that you think they can be taking to increase that efficiency and what are some of the issues with the way trafficking is being addressed now?

A – Well one area I think that needs to be addressed, and this is something that we are wanting to explore next is what happens to boys, but I mean, boys who are victimized because sex trafficking in general is very under reported, as you might imagine, and even more so for boys because I think there is a lot more stigma attached to that. And so we are wanting to look at how boys are exploited, the number of boys exploited and then like I said earlier, the messages that boys receive when they are younger, just like we want to prevent the girls from being exploited, we want to prevent the boys from thinking it is ok to grow up and buy somebody. So those are some areas that I think need to be addressed. So looking at the cultural messages, more research needs to be done. It is a difficult think to quantify so we, I think we need new data on that and it's being discussed. The attorney general's office here is Georgia, Attorney General Sam Olens just created the Georgia's Not Buying It campaign to address the demand side as well. So, it will be interesting to see what he does with that. We have been working with him on that and he, we trained the hotel employees before the NCAA tournament was here before the Final Four tournament so the city ambassadors find that when there are big sporting events in town like the Super Bowl or March Madness, there is a lot more trafficking that occurs.

Sam Olens is the Attorney General of the State of Georgia and created the campaign Georgia Stop Buying. His office has been really committed to the issue.

E – I should look that up. Yeah, that is another avenue I want to explore I guess is more so the demand side factor because obviously you can look at the factors that lead girls into forced prostitution and what happens to them in prostitution, but like we have been saying this whole conversation, it is almost of a higher priority. If you stop the demand obviously then the actions stop happening so

A – It is the law of economics – supply and demand. If there is not a demand for something, there will not be a supply.

E – Right - if you are not making any money on it then

A – As long as there is a demand for younger girls.

E – Right – back to arms dealing and arms dealing

What are some of the things or I guess traumas that girls are exposed to while in the sex trafficking – forced prostitution?

A – Oh, I mean they are beaten, raped, held at gunpoint, thrown out of a moving vehicle. It is not just the pimps that are abusive, it is the men who are buying sex. A lot of, I mean you never know what a guy is going to think when he is purchasing sex. For a lot of them they will see obviously this girl is used to being abused and they think they can do whatever they want to them. It is very dangerous.

E – Are girls, again when I was doing research, Tai prostitutes are often drugged to the point where they have no idea what is going on. Is that a commonality with girls in the State of GA as well or are they completely 110% aware of what's happening?

A – No men don't - I think there is definitely some of that or their pimps might get some of the girls addicted to some drugs so that there is that added bondage as well. I don't think most of these girls are aware, they wouldn't be able to call this exploitation. I mean if you ask them if they are being exploited they might not tell you that.

E – I guess that was a really terrible way of phrasing that. I mean are they conscious, I mean mentally conscious?

A – Oh, uhm...

E – While the acts are happening. I guess are they like strung out when it is happening?

A – Some of them are. The drugs are definitely involved in a lot of cases. And this isn't the same thing but trauma based perspective is being talked about a lot more in this arena and I think that it's something important. Just like with any form of abuse, there is a lot of disassociation and that sort of thing.

E – So obviously there is a lot of physical abuse, we talked earlier about psychological abuse but what kind of psychological and emotional abuses, if any are these girls facing, if any?

A – Well like I said before I think it is more that they are getting the girls to trust them and getting them in that relationship. So manipulating them that way so when you think about emotional abuse, you might not think about that because just on the surface, and especially to the girls, it might seem like it is very loving and good hearted and that they really care about you, but of course they don't. So the pimps are like I can leave the door open and leave and that girl probably won't walk out because she is so addicted to me. And addicted not in the sense of drugs but she thinks she wants to be here and I have her trained because she hasn't experienced love before. And of course if the pimp sets a quota and the girl doesn't meet it that night, he beat her and sends her back out until she does. So there is definitely abuse around that.

E – there are two more questions left. I don't know how quickly you need to go. You said you were busy this morning.

A – That's ok -actually they are not coming in until later so it's fine.

E – Are there, and again we discussed physical and emotional and psychological trauma happening while they are being trafficked are there lasting physical, psychological and emotional traumas that occur with trafficking.

A – Yeah, yes certainly. I think the biggest is the trauma based PTSD. You probably haven't been able to go to school so you have lost out on your education, you know if you are having to be out on the street all night, you're not going to be able to go to school the next day, although some of the girls are in school. But those are two big things that we find is the emotional trauma in general and then the impact it has on your education, which has much bigger effects for down the road. You are not able to get a good job and now days you can't do anything unless you have a high school diploma really and a lot of time an undergraduate degree.

E – Are there any, again this is something I figured out with sex trafficking in Thailand, the girls are more prone to getting STD's and AIDS and other sort of issues like that because they are ethnic minorities and they don't have the rights necessary to negotiate safe sex or there is a language barrier there so they like can't verbalize negotiating safe sex or they don't get the option because if they try their pimps beat them. So are there any sort of issues that you see like that with former child prostitutes. Are they able to negotiate safe sex easier or more efficiently than they would in a Thailand situation or are they equally, like they can't negotiate.

A – I think, I mean, they don't have rights, they don't have a say in this, they don't have a voice. The language barrier is not usually there, although there are some women who are trafficked internationally to the US. Of course, but for domestic girls, the language barrier isn't an issue, but they don't have a say in what happens to them. So they don't the ability to ask for protection or anything like that. They aren't given that opportunity.

E – So obviously, would you say the girls are at a higher risk for getting HIV AIDS or other STD's than other adult prostitutes or would you say other children of that age in general cause hopefully 12 – 14 year olds who aren't being trafficked aren't having sex.

But so would you say they are more apt to have those problems than say adult prostitutes?

A – I'm not sure what statistically the numbers are on that in comparison with adult women.

E – And this going to seem I'm hoping for the best situation, but do the traffickers get the girls STD screened – is that with porno's and porno stars they do STD screening, on a I don't know how often it is, but they do it just to make sure they are not giving it to whoever they are having sex with on camera. Does that happen in the trafficking world?

A – I have never heard of that happening, that doesn't mean that it doesn't, but I have never of anything like that.

E – And this is again pulling from the Thailand research I have done if the girls contract an STD or they get AIDS or whatever, because the traffickers test them and if they get those, they are more likely to be beaten, they are beaten more frequently because they are blamed for contracting the STD in Thailand. And so if they get an STD or whatever, especially with the minority women, because the minority women, I guess they are considered more pure and virginal as compared to ethically Thai prostitutes who are already considered to be like STD AIDS ridden. If the ethnic, minority women get an STD it is their fault and so they get kicked out, they are living on the streets or they just get beaten until they are dead kind of thing, so they get STD screening, so I was just wondering.

A – yeah, I've never heard of that happening.

E – Are girls, that have been trafficked, and again we have kinda already answered this question when talking about the fact that they don't get a lot of school or they don't perform well in school if they are going to school because they are busy at night, so are girls that are trafficked more likely to suffer from drug addiction, alcoholism, not finish school or like have suffer for unemployment or underemployment. Like are they more likely to have very low paying jobs, are they cause I guess the point of my research also is to study whether being in the sex trade continually represses people and so in Thailand, the ethnic minorities they're perpetually kept down at a lower scale partly as a result of trafficking. So with children I'm wondering if the experiences they have as a child being trafficked keep them in a perpetually lower socioeconomic status in the US. Like if it is similar.

A – I don't know if there is hard data on this and this would be good research projects to have about the drug addiction, alcoholism. Like I said, we do find that like the education pieces one of the biggest impacts. I think in states that don't have as good as a legislative response as Georgia does, if you are getting charged with prostitution, you have all these things on your record that certainly makes it more difficult to go to school or get a job, something like that. Even if you haven't been exploited for a few years, if you haven't been sexually exploited for a few years, but you have this on your record and that prevents you from getting a job or if you have to tell the employer why you got that charge, then that just re-exploits you all over again. And that's not right. It's not these children's fault that this happened to them so they shouldn't have to deal with that 10 – 15 years later. And I think just because of the stigma around prostitution and the idea that it is these children's fault that so many people still have, or that it doesn't exist because people want to turn a blind eye to it the victims are not treated well, in general, I think by a lot of society. You don't always to admit that it happens, we tend to think it just happens over there or in another city even, or in Southeast Asia, but not here to our girls by our men.

E – yeah I noticed I did a poster presentation this spring outlining what I'm doing for the research and so many people stopped by and wanted to talk about Thailand and what's wrong with Thailand and I'm like well 50% of the poster is dedicated to GA and I mean

it happens in GA too and I just saw like when you see people's minds being blown in front of your face, it happened with like 15 people. I was like but really though it's not just a Thailand issue, it happens in GA, that's the point of this and they were like what?

A – Yeah, we have done so much work to raise awareness, but we find and I'm surprised, even when I tell people what I do there's so many people who don't know about it, that it happens here.

E – People are just like Oh well that, that doesn't happen here in a first world country where everyone has rights, nobody gets exploited – that happens over there. Like you said it's an over there issue for a lot of people.

What is your opinion, cause I was reading some of the articles and they said that one of the main issues in combating trafficking and helping these girls once they are out of trafficking is fighting the stigma that they are criminals that they are delinquents and changing the perception to them being victims. So obviously we talked about this and this might be redundant, do you think it is a challenge that is faced and what do you think is the best way to perhaps shift this perspective to where the victims are seen as victims and not as

A - I think the first thing is just to raise awareness about the issue in general, to know that it happens here and to really understand the issue in detail to understand that these children are victims. Because I think when you start to talk about it, it is a really uncomfortable subject and I think a lot of people aren't going to want to hear about it, but I feel like that is the least that we can do is educate ourselves on the issue and become aware about it so that when you are armed with the facts and you really understand the issue you will realize that these girls really are victims and they are not criminals. I think that a lot of what that goes into that is having resources available for them because when you hear that your state has resources for these girls, you will start to think of them as victims, not criminals. We don't tend to have a lot of resources for people that we think are criminals. And when the legislation is there that says these girls are victims and not criminal, and the men who are buying and selling then are criminals, I think that helps with the mind set. And I think we have to look at the movies and the music and the music videos that we have in our culture and the way we talk about things, the way that pimping is glamorized, the jokes that people make, those sorts of things because they contribute to it as well.

E – I am really out of shape writing.

A – Yeah, I'm used to using my computer for everything.

E – Yeah me too. The last I got, I'm sorry I hate to make you repeat yourself, but again I don't trust this recording. But so the last I've got is you have the resources for girls, because having resources helps to change the mind set cause you don't typically provide resources for criminals, what did you say.

A – I think having the legislation in place where it states that those girls are victims not criminals and that the men who are buying and selling them are the criminals in fact when you have people who are high profile like lawmaker saying those things and that is in fact the law in your state or your country that goes a long ways. That's not going to fix it completely, but that helps people shift their mind set and the way they think about it.

E – Now and you mentioned this when you were talking earlier and it just came to mind and it has to do with the changing of the semantics when we are talking about sex trafficking you said that when girls are charged with prostitution, right and it shows up on their record and they have to explain to their future employer, yes, I got charged with prostitution, I was trafficked, would changing the name of the crime perhaps help or not charging them for a crime in the first place. Does that make any sense? Because obviously if the trafficked girls are charged for a crime, it is always on their record and they can't do anything about that.

A – Right

E – But also prostitution is so very much associated in a negative connotation so even if they say to their employer, I was trafficked and that is why I was charged with prostitution it wasn't just because I was chillin' on a street corner when I wanted to, that kinda thing. Do you think changing the name of the crime, or not charging them in the first place is a way perhaps to combat that?

A – Well I think that not charging them in the first place and in Georgia there is not a high likelihood that if it is underage girl, that you are going to get charged with prostitution because so much work has been done. Actually they passed the juvenile code of rewrite this year and one of the provisions of that was expunging or sealing records of juveniles who are convicted of prostitution. So we are really excited about that, that's really great. But to your point about the importance of semantics, yes, 100% there is no such thing as child prostitutes. There are victims of child sex trafficking and victims of commercial sexual exploitation. When you say child prostitute, that implies a choice and that implies that these girls want to be out there and that they have some sort of agency in this and that is just not the case. So we want people to start talking about it differently.

E – Now we have mentioned a lot about the legislature that has been passed in GA. Can you, we just mentioned Juvy court rewrite, are there like other specific laws in GA, and I know that's asking for you pull out the memory banks because laws are very awkward worded, but can you remember any specific laws in GA that pertain to trafficking.

A – yeah, the biggest one and I think, I believe the landmark one, I think was passed in 2011 was HB200 and that one, you can look it up and find the exact wording, but that provided for resources for victims, harsher penalties for traffickers and buyers and allowed prosecutors to prosecute under the RICO statute and it required it made the law enforcement training mandatory and it did some other things, but I can't remember them

off the top of my head, but that is the biggest piece that has been passed. This year they passed the Juvy Code Rewrite with the expungement provision and also the posting of the human trafficking hotline making it mandatory to post human trafficking hotline number in a number of different establishments including adult entertainment venues.

E – and it is mandatory to be posted where again?

A – There is a list of venues that have to post it, but it includes adult entertainment establishments.

E – OK. I can give you, if I think of it, I will ask you in a minute, but I'm going to give you my contact information, so if you want any follow-up info on what I'm doing or if you just think about something that your like OMG I need to tell Emily this because she clearly wants to know about it, you can email me or call me.

GBI Agent Interview

05/23/13

Name: Sara Thomas

E: Job Title

S: Special Agent 3

E: Where do you work and for what division?

S: GBI child exploitation and computer crimes division

-handle all forms of child exploitation cases, child sex trafficking, child pornography cases, traveler cases

E: how long have you been working for the GBI?

S: 6 yrs.

E: How many cases involving sex trafficking have you worked on in 6 years?

S: difficult to answer, 2011- started new unit, labor trafficking, sex trafficking, adults, juveniles everything.

- in 1 fiscal year, from July 2011- July 2012, opened 500 cases, don't know how many were specifically child sex trafficking. Majority were

- only been doing child exploitation and trafficking cases since July 2011

E: In your professional experience, have you noticed any commonalities among victims of trafficking? Is there a specific ethnic group, economic status, etc. that's shown or seen more than others for people who are trafficked? If so what are those similarities and why do you think these patterns occur?

S: Department of Justice study, identified average victims and suspects. Research indicates that majority of victims are females, come from very negative home life, are run aways or known as "throw-aways" something was so bad at home that it pushed them out of there and helped get them to where they are now. Avg. age for GA = 12 years old. Youngest= 8 yr. old victim. Victims all the way up to 17 years old. Ethnicity, no exact statistics, majority of cases, victims are African American females. Could be because we're based in Atlanta, those are girls we're coming into contact with.

E: In interview yesterday, woman said that the traffickers are oftentimes of the same ethnicity or economic class, or same community as victims. Do you think that is accurate?

S: Is to an extent, but there are so many different types of trafficking. It's split up into demographics. For example, in some parts of the country you have a Hispanic brothel.

They most of the time cater to other Hispanics. Wont take girls from other ethnicities, won't cater to commercial buyers, "Johns" that are not of a Hispanic background. With Asian spas, which is a legitimate business that's acting as a front for illegal services, "happy endings" or big signs that say "free showers, massages", truck stops, etc. they may only cater to Asian population, but if they have business as well they may accept customers of other ethnicities. With street prostitution and online prostitution the ethnicities mix. I've heard from a lot of our exploiters that they want a girl from every ethnicity because it's a business mindset to them. They no longer see the victims as people, they see it as a way to make money, so they're going to get one African American female, one Caucasian female, one Asian female, one Hispanic female so that way they can reach all of their target audiences. And we typically see that where the offender is African American or Caucasian reaching out to grab all the other different types of ethnicities, and that's oftentimes different than what you see with Hispanic or Asian populations.

There's so many different types. Street prostitution is going to act completely different than internet prostitution, and Asian spas and Hispanic brothels with operate differently because they run their businesses differently and cater to different audiences, treat their victims differently and recruit their victims differently. So we have to break them off into little subcategories when we're working cases. So if we're working with an Internet exploitation case, we know that it follows this specific pattern. It's like drug trafficking, where it depends on the location, the ethnicity, all the demographics of the victims and the offenders.

E: And they don't always follow the same patterns either?

S: And it depends on how they're trained by other exploiters, especially with African American males, they grow up in an environment where pimps and prostitution are glamorized, and they want to be like rappers like 50 cent, which is different from Hispanic brothels where they get recruited within families and they grow up within that area.

E: Are more children trafficked in the state of Georgia than adults?

S: The state of Georgia is very bad on both sides. The FBI named Atlanta one of the hubs for human trafficking in 2005, and there are FBI reports. HSI recently said that we are in the top 5 for every single ethnicity and we're number 1 for Hispanic child sex trafficking. So there's definitely a very high amount of cases on both sides. We have a lot of children that come out of the juvenile system and then continue on. They may start it, and enter into the life at 12 years old, but they're still doing it at 19 years old. So it kinda depends.

E: What was the name of that report that mentioned that the state of GA was in the top 5 for trafficking of every ethnicity and number 1 for trafficking of Hispanics?

S: FBI's 2005 report, HIS in one of their law enforcement bulletins said we were in the top 5 for all ethnicities and #1 for Hispanics. There's not a lot of great studies done in

GA. I know that GBI and Dept of State is working on a more current study, just because we're learning how to do the methodology, we're learning about the victims and all that. There's a study done by the Shapiro group a few years ago that's heavily scrutinized because of the way they collected their data, so I don't know if we know the extent of the problem we have. Everyone in law enforcement and NGO's and government will tell you that we have a huge problem in GA. We see a lot of victims, we work a lot of cases. There's no doubt. But I don't know how we rank legitimately to other states and how bad the problem is.

E: What's the most common method of trafficking and why are girls trafficked? How does the trafficking actually occur? Guerilla vs psychological trafficking?

S: There's two different types. The majority of our victims come from very negative home lives, so that makes them more susceptible to the finesse technique, and like you said you have two different types. There's the finesse attempt and then there's the guerilla attempt or exploiter, as we call it. So when a girl comes from a negative home life, and who hasn't been shown a lot of affection, if someone approaches them and says "you're so pretty, let me take you to get your hair done or your nails done" and show them a little bit of affection, they're more likely to latch on to that because it's the first time they've ever experienced something like that. So we see a lot of girls recruited by a "Rico Suave" type of recruiter and the girls, it's very hard to get them out of that situation because they love their offender, they think it's their boyfriend, they think they're going to get married, they think it's something stable for them and they're in a healthy relationship when they're not. And typically it progresses from that finesse style to the guerilla pimping. So once he has the girl, and she says she no longer wants to continue selling herself for money, or committing sex acts or anything that he asks her to do, then it turns into a very violent situation where he may kidnap her, hold her against her will, physically abuse her, psychologically abuse her, take her drivers license, cut off communication with family, anything to break the ties that she has with other people, other outlets. As for psychological and physical abuse, it depends on the victim. If you and I were to walk into a school, we would be able to see that that child is missing something. I don't know what it is, I don't know how we know that, but we can see the vulnerable children. And offenders do the same thing. They wait outside of schools, they recruit girls from schools, they wait outside of bus stops they go to homeless shelters and they prey on the victims that are lacking something, whether it's food, money, affection, something and the offenders look at that victim on an individual basis. So even if they have 3 or 4 girls under their control, they're going to look at that particular victim and say "how can I control that victim," force them, of course, intimidate them to stay in the situation. It goes back to that business mindset. How can that offender continue to make money off of that victim. Sometimes it's physical abuse, sometimes it's psychological abuse. One of the first cases I worked there was an offender from Indiana who travelled all up and down the East coast and he had 4 victims, eventually 5, and he treated each of them very differently to get them to continue prostituting. The first one he physically abused, the second one he literally had kidnapped and handcuffed to a bed and she wasn't allowed to be un-handcuffed unless she was participating in sexual acts. Another girl who was what he described as a little bit overweight, he wouldn't let her eat

unless she went out and made money for him. For psychological abuse with the other girl, she came from a very negative home life, dad left, mom didn't want to have anything to do with her, and he told her that "no one else is going to love you after this. I'm the only person that cares about you." And she believed him. And the last girl he ended up holding her child over her head saying that he was going to hurt her child and she believed him. So they really do look at the victims on an individual level to see how they can control that victim.

E: What are some of the factors that make Atlanta a prime location for trafficking and why is it so easy to keep these girls hidden, how is it so easy, how is it able to flourish so much that this continues to happen?

S: For Atlanta specifically, that's a question that a lot of researchers have tried to answer, and the best that we can come up with in my unit is that it goes back to that business mindset. Offenders are going to go where there's the most money. So we have the airport, which makes transport really easy, and can bring people in and out. We have all the interstates, so it makes it very easy to get here and to go other places. It follows the drug trafficking routes typically, so a lot of cases you see narcotics coming up from Mexico, into Texas, they jump onto hwy 20 and come up to Atlanta, and then can take 85 to 95 all the way up and down the East Coast. So because of all our major interstates, that makes us a hub for a lot of illegal activity, including your child sex trafficking. We have a lot of businesses, a lot of tourism here, so the coca cola factory, final four was just here, so when we have a very large flux of tourism there's going to be more money to be made and more child sex trafficking. Atlanta has a very interesting music culture. And by no means am I saying that your rap or your hip hop industry is responsible for human trafficking or has any part in it, but, there's a culture in Atlanta that you don't have in a lot of other areas. I went through for one of my presentations one day and thought it would be interesting to take all of the rap and/or hip-hop artists that are from Atlanta or Atlanta based that sung about pimping or prostitution in a positive light. And even putting it in 6 point font taking out all the spaces so it was just a jumble of letters across the PowerPoint screen, it wouldn't fit. So it shows the significance of the problem. There's a lot of artists that are glamorizing the problem, so it creates that culture of wanting to grow up and aspire to be like some of the other pimps and grow up in that life. We have a very large, actually, we have the largest concentration of colleges and universities in the US down in the SE, so that brings a lot of people as well. We found that whenever we have like the Final Four or the Super Bowl or when there's a game or a conference coming where there's a large group of people we have a higher case load, so when Final Four came, we had more victims, because the offenders are going to go where they can make the most money. And we see that a lot in our internet cases where they actually bring girls from out of state to the Atlanta area.

E: And why or how are the pimps and traffickers able to keep this whole thing completely underground?

S: Your biggest problem is going to be that with this type of crime, victims don't self-identify as victims. They may know that they're in a situation that they don't like, but

because they are coming from a negative situation, or a negative home life they're not willing to say that they're a victim or understand that they're a victim. So even when we rescue these girls and these boys we're still the bad guys, because we're taking them away from their family or the guy they love or the pimp or the offender and they just want to continue in that life but don't like what they're doing so they don't make the connection that they're a victim. Another big problem is the culture, until the entire country takes a stand and says no absolutely not. It is not ok to purchase sex for money, there's always going to be that supply and demand, so they can hide within that culture within that glamorization or it being ok to purchase a person for sex. So in a lot of these communities where it's ok to have pimps and it's ok to prostitute and sell yourself, there's less people willing to call the police and say something is going on in that community or that victims are being exploited. And unfortunately there's not a lot of knowledge out there about it either, which is why we do a lot of community education programs. If you don't know what you're looking at and you don't know the warning signs, then you're not going to know that it's trafficking because the victims aren't willing to self identify. So there's a catch 22 with all of it, you have a society, or parts of our society that are accepting or glamorizing the problem, which is causing more. You have the supply and demand side which is causing more, and then the fact that a lot of people don't know what's going on or think that it's happening in another country. And even when they see the problem they don't know what they're looking at. They may just think it's a domestic abuse situation or a guy and a girl that's arguing. And this type of crime, when it comes down to the victims, not only do they not self-identify, but this all comes down to control. How can the exploiters and offenders control the victims? So once they're in the situation it's very hard for the victims to ask for help. Cause then they have their driver's license taken, they're documents maybe being held by the offender. They may be afraid of being deported, they may be afraid of being shamed to their family members, that sort of thing.

E: What sorts of conditions are the girls exposed to? For example, what kind of locations are they kept in, what sorts of physical and/or psychological abuses are they subject to when they're in forced prostitution?

S: It depends on the type of case and the demographics. We've had victims who, the GBI didn't want this case, but it happened in the state of Georgia where the girls were locked in a dog cage, handcuffed in bed, handcuffed in the bathroom. The majority of our girls go from hotel to hotel to hotel, and don't really have a healthy lifestyle. So they're always on the move, the only clothes that they have are the ones the exploiters have bought for them. They're eating McDonalds all the time, they don't have very healthy eating schedule. A lot of them do drugs, a lot of them smoke, a lot of them consume alcohol as an escape, so not a very good lifestyle. But for where they're kept, that all depends on the exploiter. We've had girls that charge \$3,000 dollars, and on the other side of that we've had girls that are charging \$5, so their lifestyles can be very different between two. And ultimately it's a negative situation, whatever they're in. Even if they're being kept in a mansion being fed filet mignon every day, it's still a negative situation that they're in. You mentioned what types of physical and

psychological abuse are they going through. The physical, we've seen very very dramatic injuries. Because they use that as a way to control the victims. Either to control the victim that he's abusing or the other victims to kind of show the other victims "if you don't do what I say then this is what's going to happen to you" so we've had victims that have had iron marks on their face and on their body, we had a 14 year old victims from Ohio that had nail marks, scars on her neck, had bite marks up and down her arms. We could actually see the indentions of his teeth where he bit her. And those are permanent scars. Cuts are very very bad injuries because it goes back to it being a way for them to control their victims. We had a victim who the exploiter threw beer bottles at her every night and one day she just decided she was tired of it, so she ducked and he picked up the broken beer bottle and stabbed her in the leg and then wouldn't take her to the hospital and then had the other girls put salt in her wound. Which, it is just a way to control, so it leaves you very bad injuries. A lot of STD's, a lot of vaginal trauma, anal trauma, miscarriages, and that sort of thing. With psychological, that depends on the girl. If it's the more attachment based and the offender realizes that he has to appeal to her love for him, or if she has very low self-esteem then he's going to attack that, if she doesn't have a family or a family that doesn't want to talk to her, he may go in that direction too. But every single victim we've had there has been physical or psychological abuse. Typically there's both, and it's a long road for recovery after that. It's not as though we can just take them out of the situation that they're in and then they're fine. They have a lot of therapy, a lot of treatment, a lot of drug rehab, a lot to overcome from that psychological and physical abuse.

E: What are some of the lasting physical, psychological and/or emotional impacts that stem from being trafficked and how do you go about trying to start the healing process?

S: Different with every single victim because their experiences are different, but with psychological abuse, there's usually a lot of shame, a lot of guilt, depression, anger, all those feelings for the situation that they've been in. It may be towards the offender, it may be towards us involved, or it may be towards their family members. We've had several victims whose parents actually sold them to cover a drug debt. So they were very angry at that parent for putting them in that situation. A lot of our victims have, had a lot of trouble being in a normal relationship after that, because they've been in an environment where they've learned to manipulate people or they may be scared that they're going to be manipulated and forced back into that situation. It just depends on all the experiences that they've been through. We've had a lot of victims relapse back into drugs because that was the environment that they were in. The healing has to come on their own time and their own progression. What we do with our victims, we work very closely with our victim services, with hospitals like Children's Healthcare of Atlanta and with our NGO's or faith based organizations, so whenever we get a victim we immediately address all of her immediate needs, "are you hungry? Are you thirsty? Have you slept? Do you need anything? Do you need medical assistance?" and then we take them over to Children's Healthcare of Atlanta and have them physically examined to make sure that they don't have any injuries, they don't have any STD's, they don't have any trauma, anything that needs to be addressed right away and then we ask the victim if they would be comfortable or willing to go to one of these treatment centers, or a home or

centers for CSEC victims and they're all volunteer based, so we can never force a victim to get out of a life, we can never force them to go to one of these homes, it's entirely up to them and if they're willing to take that step, and once they're there, these organizations and these facilities evaluate the individual on an individual level, ok, so "does the victim need rehabilitation? Does she need counseling? Does she need therapy? Do we need to bring in a family member to sit down and kind of have that intervention or that treatment with a family member?" So they really look at, "ok what has the victim been through?" they sit down and meet with us and we sit down and explain the situation the victim has been in, they sit down with the victim and get their take on the situation, what can they do to make the victim more comfortable or what do they need and come up with a path based on that situation. So if a victim likes to paint or is able to express herself by drawing, they make take that artistic path and try and help her that way.

E: So lasting physical impacts would be things like STD's, HIV/AIDS, and as you mentioned literal physical scars...?

S: And miscarriages is another big one that we see. Tattoos is another big one. A lot of our offenders are branding or tattooing their name, their street sign, their nickname, something to brand these girls and putting it on their body, and of course they have that tattoo forever. We had a 14 year old victim recently out of Philadelphia where the offender tattooed "Cash only" across her entire back.

E: So would miscarriages, that is stuff that happens well after they're out of sexual exploitation, so I guess I'm wondering how miscarriages are a physical impact from this, like how does being trafficked lead to a higher potential for having miscarriages?

S: My best recommendation for that is to talk to one of our sexual assault nurses from CHLA (?) and I can give you all of that contact information, I just haven't seen too much of the after effects. We've had victims that have gone through the process when we first started 2 years ago, but we're only just now starting to see them. The miscarriages that have come up in cases have been ones that girls were telling us about while they were still there.

E: Ok

S: But from the question you just asked, I know that our girls go through a lot of sexual trauma, so they're at a higher risk of STD's and miscarriages later on than say a girl that hasn't gone through that experience. But the girls that are actually still in that situation, have miscarriages a lot because they're either physically abused to the point that they're having them or they're just in a very negative situation that isn't conducive for the pregnancy, so their risk is higher there too. But both physical trauma and psychological trauma from that miscarriage on that particular victim continues on for the rest of their life. But one of the SANE nurses can definitely tell you the specifics of the physical changes and the trauma and all that.

E: can you get me the contact info for one of those nurses?

S: You can call over and talk to any of them over there they're great, it's the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta and Scottish Wright, and they're SANE nurses, which is your Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner, I believe, but they have a center over there that just deals with CSEC victims, which is your Commercially and Sexually Exploited Children. So they do all the forensic interviews, all of the medical examinations, they would be a great resource for you.

Debbie Rosingnol (?) is the main woman over there, and she knows me very well. All the women over there, the examiners, the interview, everyone over there is phenomenal and will help you out however they can, they're such a pleasure to work with.

E: Are children that have formerly been trafficked more likely to suffer from drug addiction, alcoholism, be unemployed and/or not completing school or going to college more so than children who have not suffered through trafficking?

S: That's a very good question, one that I would love to see some research on, I don't know and I don't want to tell you something that isn't true, I would just be guessing. I think with those it all comes down to the environment that you're in, so because a lot of our victims come from a very negative home life where there's less money or more poverty or more psychological abuse, more sexual abuse, any time we see those variables we see what you were asking. That they're less likely to go to college, less likely to have better [jobs] that sort of thing. So I would make that connection, but again it may just be a coincidence so I don't know.

E: Like correlation does not equal causation that sort of thing?

S: Exactly. I was trying not to bring out any of my psychology mumbo jumbo on you.

E: Part of my research is treating children like a minority and the reason I'm doing that is to show how sex trafficking perpetuates minority repression, so in that since children are being treated as minorities, for the purpose of this research. So do you think that children should be treated or considered like a minority and by the same token how might treating children like a minority be beneficial in combating sex trafficking?

S: In what sense are you talking about treating them like a minority?

E: In Thailand, in order to combat the trafficking of ethnic minorities, they have a lot of programs that are specifically catered to trying to target those minority women so they don't initially, so they're less prone to being initially put into the sex trade, so a better way to phrase that question is: if children were considered a minority, would there be more or more efficient programs to prevent children from being initially involved in the sex trade?

S: I think we already are treating them as a minority, because most of the CSEC homes are geared specifically towards people under the age of 18. It's very difficult if we come

across a victim who's 18 or 19 years old to find a placement for her or him. So a lot of the research, a lot of the services, the victim services, resources that we have, our unit only focuses on under the age of 18, so I really think they are already being treated as a minority. And a lot of that is coming down through Washington and is just kind of the culture of how we're combating trafficking right now. WW's focused on the sexy topic of child sex trafficking because it is a horrific topic, there's a lot of great organizations like Out of Darkness that only focuses on 18 and above, but I've seen that we have a very strict distinction between the two, and the majority of resources and services and everything fall to under the age of 18. Which is actually good because they're very very different. Children growing up, a 12 year old victim growing up will be very different from an 18 year old victim or 20 year old victim because of how they're developing, what they've been through, and different things like that. So 2 very very different problems, if you look at it from very far away, yes it's all sex trafficking or it's all human trafficking, but as far as the specifics they're very very different. The good thing about that is that it lets us focus on how to specifically help the victim, how do we address the problem, how can we stop the problem, such as us going into schools and talking to victims in middle school and high school and saying that it's not ok to sell your body. You can't put yourself on an online website because there are negative consequences of that and this is what they are. And basically educate them on it.

E: One of the main problems in combating trafficking in Atlanta has been the shifting of perceptions from the girls being offenders to being victims. It's hard to treat a problem if the victims aren't being seen as such. Do you think this is an issue and what do you think can be done to make that shift in perspective happen?

S: That's one of the first things GBI started addressing. That is a huge huge problem, even among law enforcement. So if you get a police officer that comes into contact with a victim on a traffic stop and just sees her as a prostitute and arrests her, she's not going to ask for help, she's going to have a very negative view of law enforcement because that officer didn't help her or him and it's just throwing her in jail, putting something else on her record, putting her in an environment where she may be picked up or recruited by someone else in the prison or the juvenile detention center, so it's not helping the victim at all, but without that education, a lot of law enforcement officers don't understand what they're looking at, and it goes back to victims not self-identifying as victims. So unless people know what to look for in the community and the medical centers and schools, law enforcement, basically general public, unless you know what you're looking for and know how to identify the victim it's very very difficult. So and we have to change our mindset, so once we're able to identify "ok, this is child sex trafficking" or "this is labor trafficking" "this is human trafficking" that then changes our mindset so that then that officer that was looking at the girl as "ok this is just a prostitute" is now thinking, "no, this is a commercially sexually exploited child or victim" and that's two very very different things. When people think of prostitutes they're thinking of high heels, the short skirt, scandalous clothing, drug addicted, that the girls or victim wants to be there and they really don't see that as a problem, they see that as the victim having a problem, when someone hears sexually exploited child or victim, they want to help, they want to get that victim out of that negative situation, they start seeing a child rather than a high-

heeled, short skirt, drug-addicted prostitute. So it's all about mindset. If we're not seeing them as victims we're not helping them, we're actually doing a disservice to them, which is why we do a lot of training programs where we go out and we train law enforcement, we train hospitals, we train schools, different things like that. I actually teach about 3 days a week going out and doing formal trainings or community awareness just to change that mindset that you were talking about.

E: I spoke to a woman yesterday from YouthSpark about perceptions, and she gave me an example of how being in the sex trade and being in forced prostitution affects these girls in the future, because if a minor is charged with prostitution it has to show up on her record, so when she goes and tries to get a job, the employer either won't hire her or the girl is forced to explain what happened and that continues the exploitation, and from that I asked, if these girls are being charged with a crime, would it make a difference if you changed the language of the crime from prostitution, because saying someone is a prostitute implies a choice, it implies the short skirt, high heels and drug addiction, but if you change the language of the crime from prostitution to either it not being a crime (because they're a child) or changing it to something else, do you think that would help in changing the mindset at all?

S: No, and there's a lot of debate about this, so this is all just personal opinion, I apologize if it's insensitive at all. The problem, I think, is a mindset issue, and an education issue, that the people coming into contact with these victims have to be able to identify them as victims. I don't think the problem is with the law, because you can't help somebody unless they're ready to accept help. So let's say you get a girl who is not willing to get treatment, she's not willing to give up that life, she wants to do this, this is her choice, what do we do with her? Well at that point it may be a safety issue, it's a lot better for us to arrest her and to put her in a secure facility like a juvenile detention center where we know where she is, we know that she's not being forced to prostitute, we know that she is being fed, that she's sleeping and that she's not having sex for money. And then we can come back and talk to her the next day or a few days later and start that process with them, where there's very few victims who as soon as you pick them up say "yes, I need help please help me" and then they start going through that. We may come in contact with girls 5, 6, 7, 8 times before they're saying "ok, I understand that I'm making bad decisions" and they're teenagers who have been through very bad experiences. So take a normal teenager and amplify all the emotions and everything so sometimes we unfortunately do have to arrest them, and usually it's for a safety issue or it's because the offender is very very dangerous and has threatened to kill that victim and we need to know that they're in a secure facility. So, changing the law I don't think will help, it's more of a mindset and educational problem. The problem comes down to when officers or people are treating victims as prostitutes. We can't consider every single prostitute or person that's selling themselves as a victim. They have to meet the criteria of being a victim, that's force, fraud or coercion or is under the age of 18. So a lot of people just want to legalize prostitution and they think that that will help because then victims won't have it on their record and that sort of thing, but, and again I'm trying not to say anything that's too offensive, it's a huge debate, I just don't think that it'll effectively help the problem.

E: That's like people that say that legalizing pot will get rid of pot.

S: A lot of our victims, because they don't self identify as victims, when we rescue or when we recover them say they want to be doing this, "this is my choice," well, no you're in an environment that's conducive to your choice. You may think you want to do this, but you don't. I mean, I don't know any female out there that wants to have sex with 50 guys per day. She may say she does, but once you get a victim out of that situation, 3 or 4 years down the road they can look back and say "yes, I was in a bad situation" but the state of mind that they're in at that time, they're not ready for it. They're not ready to accept help, they're not ready to understand that they're victims and see that there's other things out there. Law enforcement gets a lot of criticism for arresting victims, and at GBI we've taken the standpoint that we're going to help the victim, first and foremost before anything else. So we don't like arresting victims, we try not to, but it is an option as a last result, so if it comes down to safety or something like that sometimes we have to do it.

E: That makes sense.

E: What are some of the ways that the GBI and the unit you work in, what are some the ways in which you work to find girls who have been trafficked, prevent trafficking and work to decrease trafficking as a whole. You already mentioned that if you have to, there's arresting, what are some of the other methods that ya'll employ?

S: The GBI has original jurisdiction, which means that we can go out and we can work these cases without being requested by another agency, so we're different in the sense that we can work proactively and we can work reactively. Reactive cases are if we get called by a police department, a parent, the national call center for missing and exploited children, some sort of lead or case where we get information that a child is being exploited. Proactively we do a lot of undercover operations, where we go out and we identify victims ourselves.

E: Do you think the techniques that ya'll use to find girls who have been trafficked, prevent trafficking, etc. are effective? And do you think that there are any other methods that maybe ya'll haven't used that would help further prevent and stop trafficking?

S: Absolutely. We're brand new. I mean, the four of us have been doing this for 2 years, so we were getting resources from the FBI, from Homeland Security, we take all the information we can get and we basically hit the ground running, so any advice or information we can get from another agency that's been doing this longer, we jump all over it. The FBI taught us how to do a lot of our undercover operations, and so then we incorporate that. There are always better practices and better ways to do things and we're 100% open to them because we're so new, and at the end of the day it boils down to the victims, so whenever we find out about a new way of doing it or a new website that we can look out for victims, we jump all over that. We've been very successful in the GBI and then working with other task forces, we're on the FBI match task force, so we're

deputized through FBI so I think working as a group in all the different organizations really helps. Because it's a very significant problem, and working together with other agencies with some of their techniques, with some of their best practices really helps, and I think that makes us effective. I was actually up in Baltimore about a month ago, and it was experts from all around the US. They brought in at least 30 of us, and it was basically sit down and discuss best practices in law enforcement and data collection. We had a lot of researchers there to figure out what everyone is doing well in the US and what is everyone doing very badly and to learn from one another. So we discussed a lot of the question you just asked. What's the GBI doing well, what's it not doing well, and went around the room to all the different experts throughout the US. It has to be a group effort.

E: Some of the research that I've done in regards to Thailand suggests that a more centralized approach to combat trafficking is more effective than the more decentralized approach that is often seen in the US. What is your opinion on that and do you think that a more centralized response to trafficking would be more effective or not?

S: Our offenders network with each other. So the exploiters, the pimps, they network, they work in groups, they share information they share victims, so we have to do the same thing. It is very very ineffective for one police officer to say "this is my case, I don't want any help on it, I'm not working with other people" and being very possessive of that case. Our victims typically travel, they're going to go where the money is and the exploiters are going to go from city to city typically or from different areas, so with this type of case you have to work together. Because of different jurisdictions, different resources, different information, that sort of thing. IF a victim goes into Alabama, I don't have a lot of information and resources in Alabama, so if I work with an officer from that city in Alabama, they know that area, they know who the local offenders are, they may be able to track down a victim or her family so it really does have to be a group effort. And not only just between law enforcement. Victim services, your faith based organizations, medical treatments; it really is a group effort from every single aspect. We have to take it from the approach that we're here to help the victim and we're going to do whatever we need to do to help the victim, and that's what's important, and it comes down to getting the offender off the street and getting them out of that situation, making sure no other victims get put in that situation, educating the public on it, getting her back in school, getting her treatment, getting her services, so it's not just like a normal case where a child is being molested, get her out of the situation put her back with her parents and end of case. It's the full circle deal when it comes to this.

Thesis Interview – HSI Agent

E: What is your name?

A: Alia el-Sawi

E: What is your job title?

A: Victim assistant specialist for Homeland Security investigations

E: Do you have a specific region that you specialize in?

A: Yes. I serve all trafficking victims as well as victims of federal crimes that come through HSI for the SPIC Atlanta office, which is the special agent in charge office, which covers all of Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina.

E: Do you have a lot of information about sex trafficking more so in the ATL area or in regards to Thailand?

A: Probably within the Atlanta area and more so within the foreign born population, you know, folks coming in from overseas and eventually coming around to the Atlanta area, metro Atlanta area or Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina in general. In terms of information about Thailand, I mean, it's kind of limited. We do have an attaché office that covers Thailand, but in terms of my work there, it's pretty limited.

E: Ok, how long have you been working for HSI?

A: for about a little over 3 years, but prior to that, for about 5 years I was working for a local non-profit, NGO, called Tapestry, and I served as their anti-human trafficking coordinator, and so I've got about I guess 8 and a half years of experience just based on human trafficking.

E: Awesome, ok, have you noticed any commonalities among victims who have been trafficked? Is there a particular ethnic group, economic status, etc that's more commonly targeted than others? If there are any of those what are they and why do you think those similarities occur?

A: ok, well based on the trends, I'll focus a little on the Atlanta/metro Atlanta area, there certainly are some trends that the trends are usually amongst various ethnic groups, so you have certain trends that occur within the Latino community, certain trends that we see within the east Asian community and so forth. But I would say that one commonality is that most of the time, when people are being brought to the US, they're usually coming in from a less developed, economically depressed country and they're being brought into a wealthier, more economically stable country, such as the US. So most of the time you'll see that folks are coming from Central and South America, East Asia, South East Asia, parts of the world, Africa, parts of the world that are countries that may not have as

strong of, I guess, they may not be as wealthy, the education level may be lower or there may be less opportunities for women or young children or people of certain socio-economic status, so with that being said you'll see that most of the time people are being brought from those parts of the world to the US or to West Europe or Japan, just more developed countries.

E: what are the specific trends, you mentioned that there are specific trends among the Asian community, the Hispanic communities, can you elaborate on what the trends among those specific communities are?

A: Sure, I'll use the example of East Asian communities, so for instance with the spa cases that we see around the Atlanta/metro Atlanta area, the Asian massage parlors in the Georgia area, we see that they're primarily South Koreans, there are some that are Chinese, but most the time it's South Koreans that work in those Asian massage spas. Whereas in DC you may run into more Thai or folks from Malaysia or Cambodia, but here I think it's based on the demographics and the folks that have come and established, have been established here and so most of the time they will owe some type of debt back home like in Korea and they're trying to work off or pay back that debt and so usually they will go through, um, like a broker or like a loan shark and then they'll borrow that money to try to pay off that debt the they have at home, but then a lot of times the broker/loan shark plays into the roll of being a trafficker because they'll say "well if you wanna pay off your debt here in Korea quicker, there are opportunities for you to work in the US" and so eventually they'll come here, the broker takes care of preparing all of their visa paperwork, they're passport. A lot of times their paperwork and documents isn't something that they physically have in their hands and there's usually a third party that's dealing with them here in the US once they arrive, so they travel here and one thing that we've noticed is that the women will be switched out from one spa to another. So they may work at one spa, you know, in Atlanta for a month but then may go up to Chicago for another month, and that's because the spas like to kind of keep it different for the clientele that come in, as well as the fact that they don't want to leave a woman there for too long because if there was an enforcement action or a raid that was conducted, then it would be a lot more difficult to find the women that are victims. And with those Asian spas I would say that they mix up the women that are doing it voluntarily and have chosen to do that type of work and mix in those that are forced and doing it against their will and have been deceived. And with all of the spas that we see, most of the time the standard rate for sex is the same, the set up is usually the same, and the amount of money the house mom or the "mamasan", the amount of money that she collects and turns over to the spa owner is pretty much the same and the women do get to keep half of the portion that they make, but they're made to pay off this debt with a 10% interest. And that's common, a 10% interest each month is very common with all the spas, the spa cases that we've worked. And so those are just a few of the same trends. The fact that the women sleep at the spa, they don't leave, that's another common issue that we see.

So, I hope that kinda explains a little bit of that.

E: It does

A: And let me know if I need to slow down at all.

E: No you're fine, I'm just writing down little notes/key phrases to transcribe later.

A: And I think you were asking about the Latino community and the trends?

E: Yes

A: Um, so those are pretty interesting as well, and I would say that, again, based on demographics, most of the cases of the sex trafficking cases that we get, the women are Central American, specifically from Mexico, but we've seen an increase in women and young girls from Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and the Dominican Republic. You know, we've had a few, not as many, from South America, like Brazilians, Columbia or Venezuela, but I would say that most of them are from Central America, specifically Mexico. And the way that those operate, is in two different ways. Either the women are made to work on a weekly basis, and they're switched out every week with another group of women, and they travel from city to city or they work at a specific establishment for 2-3 months and then they move different locations. So the method of enticement is the same all across the board, and that's romance. And a lot of times, back in their home countries, the trafficker will meet a woman or a young girl back in Mexico for instance in a public place, it could be a public park, her place of employment, a night club, and they'll lead the women or young girls to believe that they want to establish a relationship with them, and so they do the typical things that any guy would do during the dating process, you know, take them out, wine and dine them, meet their families, the girls/women have the opportunity to meet the trafficker's family, so it seems like this is a legitimate relationship, so then a lot of times the traffickers will say "well, how about we move to the US, make some money, earn a better standard of living and then eventually move back home and build a beautiful home and start a family" so naturally if you're in a relationship with someone, you're thinking "hey, this is my boyfriend and there's potential that we're going to get married and start a family why not take on that opportunity" so the traffickers will facilitate the women/young girls being brought in by smuggling them through the Mexican border, if there are any ID's or things required, then a lot of times they'll make false documents and make the arrangements for all of that, as well as the arrangements in the Atlanta/metro Atlanta area. So the trafficker will literally bring in one woman at a time, but we've seen a lot of times that maybe this trafficker has family business with his brothers, in laws in this business, uncles, cousins, fathers, and so each one of them is bringing in a woman on a monthly basis, every 2 months, however often, and they bring them in usually within the first 24-48 hours, they will force the young girl or woman into prostitution so the girl has no idea that this is what she's coming here for. She's thinking that she's coming to work, they're both coming to work to help themselves out. And usually the house will already be established, there may be a female there that kind of, shows them what they need to do/wear, and how they need to go out there and make money, and the women are either driven around by like what they call "taxi drivers" or they call them "libreros" which means deliverables and they basically deliver the woman to the different johns, because otherwise, if you think about it, and when I say johns I mean the guys that are buying the

sex services. But if the women are in the brothel and they have the one location where the men come to them, that may cause a lot of attention from neighbors and police and what not, so this is a kind of covert way of doing things to just have them delivered. There are some houses, apartments that do operate as a brothel where the men come to them, but we've seen that the trends are that most of the time the women are delivered. And sometimes when I was saying earlier they may be switched out on a weekly basis, because one pimp/trafficker has the women that he's recruited, say 5/6 women, and then he will send them to another house like in Charlotte, North Carolina for another week, and they'll basically trade out and he'll get the women from Charlotte. And it's kinda interesting how they do that, but a lot of time they have to meet a certain quota, the average quote with them, the Latino community is about 25-30 men a day every day. And the average rate is \$30-\$35 for a juvenile and for an adult it's usually \$30, and it's usually 15 minutes. That's the standard length of time. So that's kind of how that works in the Latino community.

E: Ok, What would u say is the average age for girls that are brought into the US?

A: Um, ok, so I'll just go back to the 2 different groups that I was talking about, the Latino and the E. Asian, because that's most of what our cases are with the foreign born nationals. So, with the Latinos it's usually mid 20's in terms of the adults. So anywhere from 23-idk it could be 28 or early 30's, but rarely anything past 32. In terms of the minors within the Latino community, I would say between 14 and 17. We have had a skew that has been 11, 12, 13, but I don't think I've experienced working with anyone younger than 11. And that's in terms of when they come here to the US, some of them may have been forced to work in prostitution in their home countries originally and then were brought over. And with that we've heard girls that have said "yeah, I was recruited and made to work in Mexico when I was 10 and I was brought here when I was 15" so they are still a minor here, but they started off younger. With the Asian massage spas it's a little different. I would say the average age is in the mid 40's, um, we've had a few that have been in their late 30's, but most of the time they've been in their mid-40's, even 50's, but that's about the average age. In terms of minors I haven't experienced working with any minors working at the Asian massage spas yet, um, I know on one occasion, we had 2 that we interviewed that came in on a student visa, and they were in their early 20's like 21 or 22. But that was a rare case because most of the time the women that work at the spa are brought here on a tourist visa or a visitors visa that only last for a few months and once it expires they're considered "overstayed" and then they're undocumented at that point, but that was the first time I saw students working in a spa. But that's typically age we see.

E: now I hate to ask this and make it sound like this, but why so old for the East Asian women?

A: this is just based on my own personal speculation, but I think because a lot of them with the spas, a lot of these women have been working there for a lot longer and have been in this spa industry for a while. Most of the women that I've interviewed have been there no less than 5 years, I've interviewed some that have been in the work for 10 years,

10+, so that could be part of it. I think to, just based on appearance, a lot of the East Asian women, and again this is based on my personal opinion, but they may not look as old as they are. Their appearance looks a little younger. And one of the trends I failed to mention before, but a lot of the women that work in the spas sometimes are made to have some type of plastic surgery done. That's very common and that could be another aspect of it, does it matter how old they are, they're looking pretty good especially with plastic surgery, that way if they're not super young it's not as obvious because a lot of spas will be in clear daylight in a strip mall, so if there are a lot of younger looking women, debatable 19 or 20, look like they could be minors, then it's going to bring more attention.

E: What's the method of enticement for East Asian population?

A: I would say paying off a debt. Every single one I've interviewed has had some type of debt back in their home country. Whether personal debt from taking out a loan for a home or it could be credit card debt, whatever the debt may be they owe a type of debt back in their home country and it's kind or like say I have some kind of credit card debt, student loans that I want to pay off, and so I go through someone and basically try to work out a way for me to work off my personal debt quicker, and that turns into once they get here, an additional form of debt. So it's a debt that they're never able to pay off that they think initially that coming here to work is going to pay everything off almost immediately because it's easier to make money here, they may be able to earn more, and some of the women that I've interviewed, when they said they were going to work in a spa, some of them knew they were going to work in a spa, but they went through a school in Korea and got their licensing, so they thought they were going to legitimately be giving massages, but instead it turns into a brothel. That's how the method of enticement is, through the loans or the debt that they owe plus a lot of them know they're coming to work here at some place they think is going to be legitimate.

E: What kinds of conditions are girls exposed to? What physical, psychological and emotional abuses are girls exposed to in forced prostitution?

A: Most of them, obviously experience emotional, verbal, physical and sexual abuse. A lot of times I've noticed that the victims may have had some type of prior history of victimization and is then at risk in a different way, so then they've grown up in a household where domestic violence occurs, or they were sexually abused as a child, molested, they may have been raped, and so that heightens their vulnerability. A lot of times they've had some past trauma and then they're either recruited or enticed into forced prostitution or just manipulated and forced, because of that vulnerability. A lot of the women I've worked with have severe trauma, have to go through intensive mental health therapy, I've had some that have experienced depression, have had suicidal thoughts or ideations, there have been several that have had difficulty with sleeping, reoccurring nightmares, PTSD is very common as well, so I would say that the emotional and psychological part is almost always going to be a factor. In terms of the physical abuse, that's also very prevalent. I've only had a few that haven't experienced physical,

most of them have, but sometimes the psychological coercion is just as powerful as the physical because if you think about it a lot of these women are young girls, if they are brought here and have difficulty communicating with others or aren't allowed to communicate to outsiders, then they're kind of in this bubble where they're not able to speak to outsiders, they have the linguistic barriers, the cultural barriers that they're dealing with. So it's hard enough to move to a completely foreign country where you don't know anyone, you don't have a support network and so they fear that if they leave their trafficker they're going to be either homeless or left without a support network or no where to go, so it's kind of a catch 22 because they're stuck and so that's why the psychological aspect of it can be just as intense as the physical. In terms of the physical though, it a lot of times could be beating, punching, pulling hair, kicking, choking, there's a lot of victims I've worked with that have been threatened at gun point of have been made to have sex with men at gunpoint. Knives, other weapons that could be around, some are drugged and then forced to engage in smoking marijuana, taking cocaine, ecstasy is also a common one so that it kind of in the traffickers mind makes it a little more enjoyable by the woman or young girl because what clientele is going to come in and want someone crying and depressed, so that's another issue that they deal with is the dependency on alcohol or drugs so they develop substance abuse issues. Some of them may go out of their way to take drugs on their own or develop alcoholism on their own just simply as a numbing effect because they're trapped and it's the only way they can go through with what they're having to do. Another part of the physical aspect is all of the victims I've worked with, with the exception of one has contracted some sort of STD/STI, sometimes multiple, and a lot of times the traffickers won't necessarily take them to the doctor for medical treatment, and so that's something we have to deal with right away because some have gone maybe years with one of these STD/STI's or forced into at home abortions or given at home remedies to deal with things. I had one victim that developed vaginal warts and the home remedy was that the trafficker just poured acid on her in her vaginal region and told her that was going to take care of it. A lot of the women are told that if they use Monistat on a daily basis, sometimes twice a day, that that will keep them from getting an infection or STD, so they may use that as well as douching, using like a regular douche but then using that substance, the liquid that comes with it at one point of the day, and then at night filling it with rubbing alcohol and using that and that's an at home remedy that they told them works. A lot of times if they beat them they'll just put the icyhot cream on their bodies and tell them that will help get rid of the bruising so they don't look like they have bruises all over them. So these are just a few things in terms of the physical in addition to the other things I mentioned.

E: what are some of the lasting physical, psychological and emotional impacts of being trafficked?

A: I would say with the lasting first and foremost would be the emotional and psychological trauma that they've gone through. We've had some women and young girls that have been out of the situation for a few months or a couple of years and still have nightmares, I just had one young girl who was a minor when we encountered her, and she's been out of it for 3 years, and is just now starting to have reoccurring nightmares where her trafficker is out of prison and is coming after her and trying to kill

her. And so the PTSD is probably one of the most apparent. Another thing is trusting men. A lot of them women I've dealt with, even young girls have trouble with their future relationships. They either have lack of trust in men in general or they may enter relationships that are unhealthy. I've had a number that I've had enroll in programs for domestic violence because although they may have been out of their trafficking situations for a while, they end of meeting an individual where another form of violence occurs so they end up in a domestic violence situation. And I think that's just because, again, it's the reverse type of vulnerability that existed due to their trafficking situation, so I would say that I've had a few in terms of the physical that have found out that they can't have kids because of the abortions that they were forced to have, I've known of a couple that have been so terrified of men that they've decided to date women instead. And I would say that there are just a few, but that's not the same all across the board. It's different for each person that you deal with based on their experiences.

E: would you say that depression or anxiety issues are prevalent with victims?

A: Absolutely.

E: would you say that victims of trafficking are more likely to experience substance abuse problems or would you say that a lot of the girls/women do struggle after they get out of trafficking or do they use those drugs as a means to cope with the fact that they're in forced prostitution and then stop once they're out?

A: It depends, I would say it's half and half. I've seen those that have continued even after going through substance abuse counseling that have reverted and relapsed into the alcoholism and drug addiction, but there are those where it's been successful and getting away from that, they never wanted to take the drugs and they were forced to take the drugs, it's a lot easier for them to go through counseling, but those that sought it, sought out the drugs on their own and developed addiction on their own, they have struggled the most.

E: we're talking about women that are taken from other countries and brought into the US, so would you say that language barriers are very prevalent issues when trying to get out of forced prostitution? And when dealing with clients is it harder to discuss terms with a language barrier? Are language barriers a huge issue when it comes to forced prostitution?

A: In terms of dealing with clients, rarely are they the ones that are facilitating the money and for how long and what not, that's usually set up by the trafficker or the madam. But in terms of outside of their trafficking, once they escape/once they're rescued, yes language ends up being a barrier because a lot of times they weren't ever able to communicate or leave or go out on their own without their trafficker and usually the traffickers facilitate everything, those traffickers that for instance did allow the girl to go out to see a doctor if they have something, they would accompany them and speak on their behalf, and the women/young girl would not be the one that's communicating anything because the trafficker would act like he's her boyfriend. I would say language

is a barrier because if you don't speak the language it makes it a lot more difficult to reach out to someone for help and certainly makes it more difficult to reach out to law enforcement for help and you're probably not likely to reach out to law enforcement for help because the traffickers told you for so long that you're here illegally and he can have you deported, and you don't speak the language so how are you going to be able to help yourself.

E: what you just said is interestingly similar to how trafficking works in Thailand, because in Thailand one of the main things is that girls that're trafficked are minorities, and they're there illegally and don't speak the language, so the similarity there is really interesting.

A: that's very true, and I'm sure that you've gotten to look at the TIP report for this year, the Trafficking in Persons report for this year for 2013 for Thailand.

E: What's that again?

A: the TIP report, the Trafficking in Persons Report. If you Google the 2013 TIP report, it should come up, the State Department puts it up every year and places countries in different tiers, with Tier 1 being best and Tier 3 being worst. Thailand falls under Tier 2 watch list, which isn't that great, because they're almost at Tier 3 which is the worst. Tier 1 is a country has complied and established some laws/legislation to outlaw human trafficking, there have been some services set up in place. Tier 3 is not abiding by Universal protocol, they're not going by the Palermo, they're not going by setting up prosecutions to combat this issue, so I would strongly encourage you to look into this. It'll show the rankings per year. From 2005-2009, they were in Tier 2, but 2010-present they've been bumped up to Tier 2 watch list, so rather than improving the country's trafficking, based on conditions it's gotten worse. And it's got a lot of literature that'll talk about the different types of trafficking as well. It talks about the three- pronged approach with the prosecution protection. Talks about NGO's established, number of victims identified, etc.

E: In regards to HSI, what are the ways in which you guys try to go about fighting trafficking in the states?

A: We've got various ways. First of all we have designated units or groups assigned to human trafficking, so we have agents that are trained first at the academy plus we have online training on human trafficking, plus consistent training by attending seminars and conferences based on improving your knowledge and investigative skills concerning trafficking. By training our agents, we've got all the tools and equipment necessary for surveillance, we have an 800 number where if people suspect that they've seen a trafficked victim they can call, an agent can screen it and then pass it on to our unit. We also work with local & state law enforcement a lot and we train them on what to look for and the signs of identifying a potential trafficking situation, so that way when they're out on the streets all the time they're our eyes and ears so it's important to work with local law enforcement on this. We also have established an amazing network with our local

NGO and non-profit service providers, and they usually take care of the holistic needs and direct services with the victims so it's helpful when we refer the victims that we encounter during an enforcement operation or a raid and refer them to a social service organization for basic assistance and vice-versa they encounter a victim that's called their hotline or that has reached out to them then they refer them to us and provide the tips so we can investigate the case. Similar to the state department with the 3 pronged approaches, prosecution, protection and prevention those are the 3 pronged approach that we also take. We're always looking to prosecuting these cases, we work very closely with the US attorney's office (they're very aggressive in combating these cases) we work with local DA's that also take on these cases, we have established number of outreach materials, different cards we distribute, different brochures, bulletin boards, posters, that have the human trafficking indicators on them we have those available in several languages (20+ languages) so if someone is in that type of situation they are able to read that info and reach out for help. We've established task forces that meet on a quarterly basis and go through case debriefing and talk about strategies to come, so those are just a few of many ways we have tried to combat this. And I know the DHS has launched something called the Blue Campaign and it's a whole initiative based on outreach that was launched 2 years ago just taking a united effort of every arm of homeland security working together to combat this, so it's not just HSI, but its forced removal operations, border protection, border patrol, FEMA, secret service, all the different agencies have different outreach materials and ways and training to identify any potential victim.

E: what makes ATL such a good destination/profitable place for trafficking to occur?

A: well, you mentioned that Atlanta falls under transit, destination and source city. This is a part that you can link to us and Thailand because Thailand falls under all 3 as well, and you'll see that in the TIP report, that the reason we fall under all 3 is because in terms of source, we have those victims that are domestic, US citizens, they're GA girls that are recruited and then forced into sexual servitude. We're a transit city because the fact that Hartsfield airport is the busiest airport in the world, so we are a hub. We have folks coming in and out of our city that makes us more of a transient city. Destination because we have whether its domestic girls from here or other states or foreign born nationals from overseas that're brought to the Atlanta area, that's all because of the airport, Atlanta is a growing city, if you look at the city of Atlanta, it has the highest number of exotic dance clubs per capita, so it has that reputation of being a sex hub. You can look on craigslist or backpage and see ratings for Atlanta and the spas and the escort services and we have a bunch of business men that come in for conferences and conventions and may be contributing to the problem by being part of that demand. So as long as we have that demand we'll continue to have that supply, Atlanta will continue to have that supply. We have naturally being a city that's growing we have all sorts of concerts and sporting events and athletic events and so all of that contributes to folks that are demanding different women or girls from various parts of the world, various ages, and so that contributes to the sex tourism part of things, because when the final 4 was here, there were different advocacy groups that were handing out pamphlets and whatnot just so that people knew what human trafficking was. Studies have shown that when there are big sporting events or big conferences or conventions or whatever it is that the numbers go

up with trafficking victims because there's more of a demand for it. We have tourists in town and they're looking for that kind of thing, then the numbers increase in those that are being victimized. That's what makes Atlanta the way that it is. The same goes for the labor aspect, because we have the rural areas in Georgia where we might have the migrant workers or factory workers in sweat shops. So I think it's based on our location, on our demographics and based on our reputation.

E: How do you think is best to curb demand for trafficking? Is there a way to do it and what is that way?

A: Yes. It's by educating people. It's about educating people that this is occurring in, not only the state of Georgia, because in July 2007 we had state legislation that was passed outlawing human trafficking and we also have the Trafficking Victims Protection Act established in 2000 that outlaws human trafficking under federal guidelines, so by educating people on what human trafficking is, the result of engaging whether you're a clientele, whether you're assisting or facilitating basically indicating that the repercussions are and there are severe penalties out there. Prevention would be another part that we need to focus on because if there are methods of prevention, which goes hand in hand with education, then it educates those who could be more vulnerable on how to identify if they're in a dangerous situation or where they may be targeting. Like kids in school need to be made aware, educators need to be aware so they can teach some of the kids, even if it's school counselors, because, unfortunately with the younger population we've had a few kids that have been recruited in school. That's not uncommon. So I think that the key part in increasing our numbers and help eliminate this issue is to educate and I can't stress that enough.

E: How many girls on average are trafficked every year to Atlanta?

A: that's hard to say because I don't think I have an exact answer for that because it's not just our office that combats human trafficking, GBI does, FBI, Dept of Labor, there are those victims that go to non-profits and NGO's and never end up reporting the case to law enforcement, and work with local law enforcement. So it's hard to say how many victims come to Atlanta, I know that the numbers based on the DOS, DHS, Dept. of Health and Human services and DOJ estimate between 14,500 and 17,500 individuals are trafficked annually to the US, but in terms of just Atlanta, I don't think I can give you the specific number, I can tell you that our case load varies sometimes we may get 3-4 victims a week, sometimes we may go a week without getting any calls on victims, sometimes we have 1 case that involves multiple victims, but that's difficult to say. The one thing we could use as part of our prevention method because if we were to say we have x number of victims in the Atlanta area, this is an issue that we need to put more \$ more resources into then I think the local government, the state of Georgia government has more ammo, there's more ammo to say this is an issue that we need to target and there needs to be more financial support for it. So having a way to track these numbers and establish a uniform data base would be helpful.

E: One of the things I've seen while researching is a psychological approach to combating trafficking, and also the idea of changing the mindset of ppl that these girls

aren't prostitutes, they're victims. Do you think that's an issue, combating the overall mindset of people from prostitution which implies a choice and free will vs. victims?

A: Let me be clear in terms of the government viewpoint on this. There are 2 different schools of thought, you have the faith based communities that believe that all prostitution is sex trafficking, however, that's not how the government perceives it. We take cases as there are prostitutes that do it voluntarily under their own free will and aren't forced or manipulated into it, and there are those that are forced or manipulated or coerced into it, and the reason being is that you're taking so much away from a true person that is forced into prostitution by lumping them and putting them into the same category as those that do it voluntarily and I have interviewed hundreds of women and young girls and I can tell between those that are doing it on their own vs. those that are being forced into it. I don't know if that answers your question or not, but in terms of the women we've worked with, who were in the situation and got out, we are able to explain that they were victimized at one point by their trafficker but now they're able to heal and go through the necessary channels to help restore their lives and make their own choices. Choose what job they want, where they want to live and we've been successful in relaying that to the victims we've been dealing with and taking them out of the mindset of still being a victim and instead seeing themselves as survivalists.

E: what happens to the women and girls after they're rescued? Do they get citizenship? Are they sent back to their home countries?

A: with the victims, they're connected to social service providers so they're able to get direct services in case management needed. They're set up with health care assistance, mental health assistance, if they have kids or are pregnant prenatal assistance, food, shelter, clothing, any basic or holistic needs they go through job training, the whole works and then I also help them by applying for something called continued presence. With that it's basically a temporary form of immigration relief that only law enforcement can apply for during the investigative period for that victim. So if we're investigating the case, it gives them temporary status during the period and it can be renewed for a year, it can be revoked if that individual isn't a victim and with that I apply for employment authorization documents. So it's basically a card they get that lasts for a year that says that they can work here legally in the US. So it's helpful to have this continued presence because it allows them to stay here legally and work and in the meantime I refer them to an attorney. I work with a pool of pro bono attorneys that take these cases and apply for a T visa. The T visa lasts for 4 years, after 3 years they can apply to become a legal permanent resident which is basically a green card holder, and after that they can apply to become a US citizen. And there are also derivatives that come with that, so if you are under the age of 21 and a victim of trafficking, you can apply for your parents, siblings and spouse on your behalf. If you're an adult and are over the age of 21, you can apply for your children and spouse. So with the T visa, basically it's a process. You get the continued presence for a year, and along with that is employment authorization documents if you have an employment authorization document you can apply for social security which then allows you for a state ID, for drivers license, it also triggers something, when I apply for continued presence it triggers something through the

department of health and human services that they generate what's called a certification and that allows that individual to apply for public benefits like trash assistance, Medicaid, food stamps, and it's temporary because it's based on their income but it's a way to stabilize them so they can get on their feet so they can then they can get to working. So the whole idea is to stabilize them, so there is a path for them to stay here by this T visa, the T- non-immigrant visa. If they want to go home, that's another option, we work with a local organization that can help facilitate their travel back. I work with an organization called international organization for migration IOM, based out of DC and for the victims that we work with that want to return back home, sometimes they'll go through them because they help with the reintegration process. So they work with a local NGO back in their home country that will set them up with counseling and help with their holistic needs. Those are the two things, but a lot of times they'll want to stay here because if they return back to their own countries they may face additional fear or threats from the traffickers or people associated with traffickers, so if we've already locked up the trafficker there may be people like his family in the home country if they're from the same country or they may experience some other type of hardship like being ostracized like if you were from a country like Pakistan where it's frowned upon if you engage in sex before marriage when you've been in the prostitution industry, if you were to return back home then the community members or family may shun you or may be ostracized from the community based on the fact that you're no longer a virgin.

E: Thank you very much for speaking with me today!