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Forced Labor Passes
Invisible in USA

David Batstone

Last week I took part in an extraordinary event in Fort Walton Beach, Florida, that the Florida Coalition on Human Trafficking organized. Probably half of the participants were law enforcement officers from county, state and federal agencies around the country. The rest came from community groups and government offices that have programs to address human trafficking.

It was refreshing to meet law enforcement officers who understood the value of community engagement and showed genuine concern for those trapped in bondage. The overall spirit of the two-day event can be put simply: Find creative and effective ways to work together so that we can undermine trafficking rings and help the survivors.

And the Florida Coalition could not have chosen a more appropriate site for its event. The region is rife with individuals brought into the United States from Latin America and Eastern Europe. Nearly half of the victims are pressed into construction, agricultural field work or labor as hotel maids. The commercial sex industry ensnares the rest.

I spoke at length with a local county sheriff. He reported to me that scores of

Abolitionist of the Week: Duane Franks

Triathlon Trainer Helps Athletes plan their Escape from Alcatraz!

Several members of The San Francisco Bay Club and Bay Club Marin will take part in the Escape from Alcatraz Triathlon and do it for a worthy cause this year by donating and raising awareness to the Not for Sale -- Free to Play Campaign. "Our athletes are honored to contribute to the important mission of Not for Sale. It's easy to take our freedom to play for granted" says Duane Franks, founder of Trifiniti triathlon training at the Bay Clubs. "Jumping off the boat and swimming from Alcatraz to San Francisco is the perfect symbol for this worthy cause," he adds.

In addition, Franks who coaches athletes of all abilities, including six-time Escape from Alcatraz age group winner Kathy Winkler is donating 50% of June's swim video lessons to the Not for Sale Campaign. For additional information on Trifiniti services, contact Duane Franks at 415.433.2200 ext. 419 or trifiniti@sfbayclub.com.

FREE TO PLAY is free to be alive, free to be a child. Athletes, teams, lovers of the outdoors, and all active individuals are coming together to use their passions and gifts to stand up in the fight against slavery. To learn more about this important movement visit www.notforsalecampaign.org

**Tell the World:
People are Not for Sale**



young girls are trafficked from Russia and Romania under the guise of either a J Visa ("cultural visa") or a guest worker visa. Once they arrive into the United States, they are told of a heavy debt they owe their "sponsors," and that debt grows as they are charged exorbitant rates for their shoddy housing and food (over which they have no choice). In essence, they never get paid a gainful income despite arduous work weeks.

The traffickers make enormous sums of money off these "temporary laborers." The sheriff tracked the income amassed by one single operator in his Florida county: \$17 million annually.

Sadly, the sheriff shared with me that it is exceptionally difficult to arrest and prosecute the trafficker for what it is, as forced labor, or slavery. Because the laborers usually are paid some low wage, the courts usually do not consider them as "trafficked" but rather as victims of "labor exploitation." The sheriff admitted that he almost has given up trying to make a trafficking case stick, but pursues the trafficker on some other related criminal act, such as immigration fraud or tax evasion.

It is patently obvious that we need to craft criminal legislation to address the violation of debt bondage. Ironically, constitutional law in India has some very good regulations against debt slavery. Maybe we could borrow their laws and then model to them how to enforce them!

Our [tee shirts](#) allow you to make a statement about fighting modern day slavery!

100% of profits go to support abolitionist work on the front lines.

Global Spotlight: Cancun's Dark Side



Mexican Journalist Stands Up to the Traffickers

Heather Gehlert
AlterNet

Lydia Cacho Ribeiro, one of Mexico's leading defenders of women's and children's rights, often risks her own life to tell the stories of those who cannot speak out for themselves. Cacho runs a crisis center and shelter in Cancun, a spring break hotspot where white, sandy beaches and breathtaking coastal views give way to a harsher reality - one of sexual exploitation, domestic violence, human trafficking and child pornography. Her 2005 book, "The Demons of Eden," exposes Cancun as a destination for child sex tourism. AlterNet interviews Cacho:

In "The Demons of Eden" you expose a ring of child prostitution and pornography in Cancun. How did you become aware that this was happening?

LCR: There was this young woman that went to the police and told them she had been raped since she was 13, and now she knew that the guy who used her also for child pornography was still doing that to other kids, including her little sister and her neighbor. So, as with what happens in many, many cases in Mexico, the

police leaked this information -- the words of the kid -- to some of the local press in Cancun. So, I learned about the case in the local press first, and I started writing about it -- talking about the rights of the victim. And pretty soon this young woman looked for me and she asked me for help as a journalist. She said she wanted somebody to tell her side of the story because the press was distorting the story and saying that the kids were provoking this pedophile. I never, ever thought I was gonna write a book about that. I've been working as a journalist for many years, and I almost never write about the victims unless they tell me they want to share their stories.

HG: When you were arrested in 2005, after the book was published, the police drove you to a jail about 20 hours from your home. What was going through your mind at the time? What were these people telling you on the way?

LCR: I thought they were going to kill me. I was sure they were abducting me illegally even though they are policemen. I've been a journalist for 20 years and I was born in Mexico 44 years ago, so we tend to not trust police just because we have enough evidence of a lot of police selling their services to private persons to just kill people or abduct people or things like that. So I thought they were doing that.

So now you have federal agents protecting you. How many of them?

LCR: Three of them. I was already protected by federal agents. When they arrested me, they had been with me for 10 months. And what happened was, they let me go. They called their boss and the boss said, "Oh, yeah, let

her go." So they let me go even though I yelled at them. I mean, they were pretty far away. I just yelled -- "You have to follow me; don't let me go alone." And they just did. They are now all supposedly being investigated by the police, but nothing will happen.

What kind of precautions do you have to take when you travel?

LCR: I travel everywhere in Mexico in an armored vehicle. It's a #7 armor, which is -- I think 9 is like the top armor. It means I cannot open the windows of the car because they are too heavy and the doors and everything. They have to open them for me. So that's how I go about in my country.

Read the entire interview on [AlterNet](#)



Campaign News: Abolitionist Mobile Game Company

Ryan Kim
San Francisco Chronicle
May 21, 2007

Playing Muncher on your cell phone doesn't feel like a socially conscious thing to do. It's just plain fun, in the same way Pac-Man is. But there's a little secret connected with the game from San Jose's GenPlay Games. Half of GenPlay's revenue from the games will go to fight child slavery. The money is being donated to five anti-slavery organizations that partner with the Not for Sale Campaign: International Justice Mission, Hagar International, the Polaris Project, CAST and Free the Slaves.

Executives said the idea has been kicking around for a while after many of them began hearing about the growing problem of child slavery. "The realities of what was happening to defenseless children sold into a life of bonded labor and the price tag put on them for a profit led us to act," said Michelle Lee, director of marketing. "We were convinced that in our own small way we could help these children come out of modern-day slavery." The game has been out for only about a month, so it's too early to say how much it will contribute to anti-slavery work. But you shouldn't feel obligated to get the game just to support a good cause. It's also a lot of fun playing a caterpillar stalking through a maze as you eat up mushrooms and take down evil caterpillars. It's the kind of simple fun made for a cell phone. The game is available from most phone service providers, including Sprint, Cingular/AT&T, Boost, Bell, Virgin and Helio. Munch away.

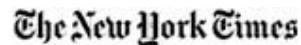


To read more, [link here](#)

Contact info@notforsalecampaign.org for information about how your company can join the abolitionist cause!

Breaking News: New York State Fights the Traffick

After years of shameful recalcitrance, New York will take the lead in the nation's effort to combat sex and labor trafficking with a new law that targets this modern form of slavery. The issue is an urgent one. Each year, thousands of people are brought into the United States -- often through New York -- to be used for forced sex or labor. Yet New York has lagged behind at least two dozen states in enacting laws to go after the traffickers and help their victims.



Federal law enforcement tends to focus on the largest trafficking rings rather than local brothels and sweatshops, and federal efforts need bolstering in any case. But attempts over the last two years to pass anti-trafficking legislation in New York ended in failure. Assembly Democrats resisted imposing tough new criminal penalties, and the Republican Senate objected to providing services for trafficking victims. Given Albany's penchant for partisan gridlock, the deadlock might have continued for many more years absent a muscular nudge from Gov. Eliot Spitzer. The result is being applauded by both prosecutors and victims' advocates and will give the state one of the strongest anti-trafficking laws in the country.

A conviction for sex trafficking would bring a penalty of 3 to 25 years in prison while labor trafficking would be punishable by three to seven years. Coercing victims into prostitution by force would be treated as a felony sex trafficking offense, as would luring victims with promises of jobs or by providing them with illegal drugs. Language added at Mr. Spitzer's behest also takes aim at "prostitution tourism," clarifying that selling travel-related services

to facilitate prostitution abroad is a felony.

The measure is not perfect. It does not include the proposed Safe Harbor law, which would place young children exploited by pimps and johns in safe houses, instead of sending them to the juvenile equivalent of prison. Still it's a significant milestone. The Legislature should lose no time in formally voting on it, and send it to Mr. Spitzer for his signature.

New York Times Op-ed, May 21, 2007

