

The Truth About Sex

Trafficking: What They Don't

Tell You

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Why This Matters

- Trafficking is hidden in plain sight
- Most people believe the Hollywood version
- Less than 1% of victims are rescued



Sex trafficking isn't rare—it's invisible. Most people think of it as violent kidnappings or something that only happens "over there." But the truth is, it's happening in schools, homes, and communities everywhere. According to the International Labour Organization, over 4 million people are trapped in forced sexual exploitation worldwide—and in the U.S., most victims never even realize what's happening until it's too late.

What Sex Trafficking Really Looks Like Bullet Points

- Not kidnapping vans
- It starts with trust
- Victims are groomed emotionally



Traffickers don't always use force. Instead, they groom their victims—slowly breaking down boundaries through affection, gifts, attention, or even fake job offers. They make their targets feel chosen, special, or loved. Then they use manipulation, guilt, threats, or shame to gain control. It's psychological, and often, the victim believes they're in a relationship—not in danger.

Where It Happens Most (U.S. Focus)

- Major trafficking hubs in the U.S.
- Common in hotels, malls, schools
- Victims often live at home

The U.S. is one of the top destinations and sources for sex trafficking. Cities like Atlanta, Houston, and Las Vegas are major hotspots. But it doesn't just happen in urban areas—trafficking rings exist in suburbs and rural towns, too. Many victims continue attending school, living with family, and using social media—while being controlled behind the scenes.



Online Tactics & Social Media

- Traffickers use Instagram, Snapchat, Kik
- Start with compliments or fake job offers
- Move to manipulation or blackmail



Social media is one of the main tools traffickers use to find and groom victims. They might start with flattery or fake modeling contracts. Once trust is built, they request inappropriate photos or personal info—and then use it for blackmail. Some victims are even “sold” through private messaging apps or livestream platforms without ever leaving home.

Common Myths vs. Facts

- Myth: Only women are trafficked
- Myth: Traffickers are strangers
- Myth: Victims are taken abroad

Fact: Boys, LGBTQ+ teens, and even young adults are also trafficked.

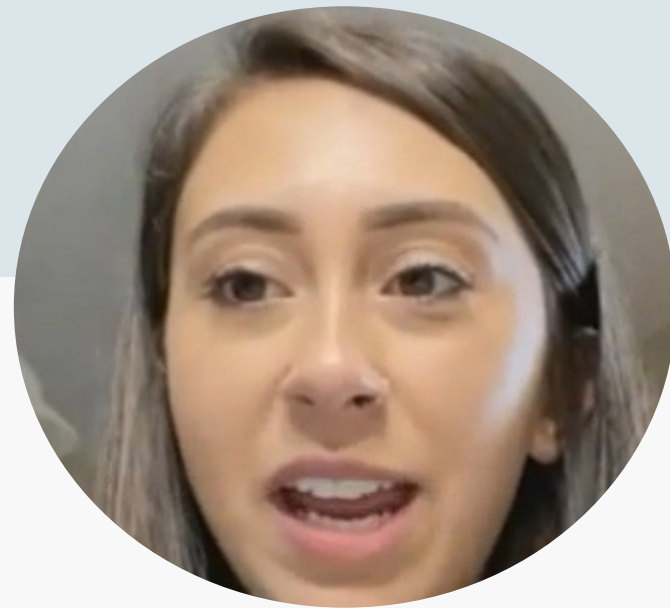
Fact: Most traffickers are someone the victim knows—boyfriends, family, friends.

Fact: Many victims are trafficked within their own neighborhoods, not across borders.

These myths are dangerous because they hide the truth and delay help. Knowing the facts can save lives.



Survivor Stories



Brooke Axtell

Brooke Axtell was trafficked at age 7 by a trusted caregiver-her nanny. She was sexually abused and sold to multiple men over time. Her trafficker groomed her through manipulation and fear, and it took years for Brooke to recognize what happened.

After surviving, she found healing through therapy, writing, and advocacy. She now runs She is Rising, a nonprofit that supports survivors of sexual abuse and human trafficking.

Elizabeth Moore was trafficked by her own father starting at age 18. He manipulated her, isolated her, and later exploited a 16-year-old friend she introduced him to. He used threats and emotional abuse to maintain control. Elizabeth eventually escaped and chose to speak out. She now shares her story to raise awareness about familial trafficking and help protect other victims.



Elizabeth Moore



Hadassah

Hadassah was lured into a trafficking situation during a trip to Texas with individuals she believed were friends. They abandoned her at a hotel, where she was sold to a trafficker who confiscated her ID and phone, effectively cutting her off from the outside world. Enduring months of abuse and witnessing violence against others, Hadassah found the courage to escape on July 4th by fleeing up a highway. Now, Hadassah shares her story to raise awareness about the realities of sex trafficking and the importance of vigilance and support for victims.

Hidden Tactics – Pageants & “Dream” Opportunities

- Traffickers pose as pageant or modeling scouts
- Target young girls with big dreams
- Some programs are real—others are traps

Beauty pageants, modeling competitions, and talent searches have been used as covers for trafficking. Victims are often promised fame or scholarships but are instead manipulated and recruited. The industry appeal makes these setups hard to detect. Families are lured in with hope, not realizing the real danger behind it.



Acting, Influencing, & TV Show Scams

- Fake auditions & castings target youth
- Scammers pose as producers or talent agents
- Real show names are sometimes used to gain trust

Traffickers also pose as casting directors or talent agents for shows, modeling gigs, or YouTube series. Victims may be promised roles or contracts and are contacted through DMs or fake agencies. In 2021, one predator used the names of Disney shows to lure dozens of minors through social media. This shows how even big-brand names can be misused.



Job Listings & Disappearing Websites

- “Legit” job sites can still be used for scams
- Victims are sent to remote interviews
- Websites sometimes vanish afterward

Not all job scams are obvious. Some traffickers create professional-looking sites that show up on Google, complete with fake reviews and logos. Victims show up for interviews—often alone—at abandoned buildings or isolated areas. In one real case, the job looked valid online, but after the person didn’t fall for it, the entire site disappeared days later. These setups are temporary, and that’s what makes them so dangerous.



They're Not Missing-They're Right in Front of Us

- Sudden changes in behavior or personality
- Isolation from friends, family, or school
- Fearful, anxious, or overly obedient
- Doesn't talk about home life or gets defensive
- Has unexplained items (money, clothing)-or nothing at all



Victims of trafficking don't always run away or scream for help. They might smile. Go to school.

Sit next to you in class.

Some are trafficked by people pretending to love them. Others are trapped by family. Some have flashy gifts to cover up the truth-others have nothing and no voice.

You can't always tell by looking.

Trafficking hides in plain sight. That's what makes it so dangerous. We have to notice the little shifts, the silences, and the people who suddenly start disappearing without ever leaving.

Mission Going Forward/Questions+Resources

- Polaris Project: <https://polarisproject.org>
- National Human Trafficking Hotline: 1-888-373-7888
- Follow: Thorn, Love146, and A21
- Ask me anything

If you or someone you know may be in danger—or if you want to learn more—these resources can help.

Ending sex trafficking starts with knowing the truth and spreading it. Thank you for listening, and please feel free to ask any questions.



I realized I don't need to wait for a title or career to protect others—I can start now. I plan to continue educating others, raising awareness on social media, and supporting organizations that help survivors. If traffickers are active every day, we can't afford to stay quiet. One voice can start a ripple. That's what I've learned.