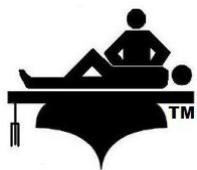


# Somatic Arts and Sciences Institute

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## Human Trafficking: Awareness and Reporting

A Continuing Education Course for Massage Therapists



# 1 CE Hour

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## **Instructions**

Thank you for enrolling in this massage therapy continuing education course offered by the Somatic Arts and Sciences Institute. To earn your 1 hour of continuing education credit you will need to read this book and take the quiz.

## **Target Audience**

This continuing education course has been designed to meet the educational needs of massage therapists, specifically, the Human Trafficking requirement for the state of Florida.

## **Degree of Difficulty**

Beginner/Entry Level

## **Course Description**

This course is an in depth study of human trafficking, with an emphasis on identifying it in the massage industry and the necessary steps to report it to the proper authorities.

## **Educational Objectives**

Upon completion of this continuing education course, the massage therapist should be able to:

- Identify the steps that a massage therapist can take to report suspected Human Trafficking.
- Explain the moral and ethical obligation that massage therapists have to combat Human Trafficking in their community.
- List the Red Flags of Trafficking in the massage industry.

## **The Unique nature of this course**

Since our school opened in 2008 all of the continuing education courses offered by the Somatic Arts and Sciences Institute have been reviewed and approved by the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork (NCBTMB). We have always felt that the high standards the NCBTMB has for their approved providers was a perfect way to ensure our own quality control.

Unfortunately this course is not approved by the NCBTMB. Even though it is required by the state of Florida for massage therapists, it is in a subject that the NCBTMB feels is outside of the acceptable content for their approved providers.

On this issue we agree with the Florida Board of Massage Therapy. We feel that this is a very appropriate subject for massage therapists to study.

What follows is a statement issued by the NCBTMB, which illustrates why this course has not been submitted to them for approval:

**Burr Ridge, Ill. (November 8, 2019)—NCBTMB has issued the below statement regarding Human Trafficking:**

*According to the Department of Homeland Security, human trafficking is modern-day slavery and involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some type of labor or commercial sex act.*

*NCBTMB acknowledges that human trafficking is a very serious and horrible epidemic worldwide. It takes many forms including labor, domestic servitude, and commercial sex trafficking. NCBTMB condemns all forms of human trafficking.*

*Human trafficking is an illegal activity. Those that are perpetrators of this crime disguise and hide their activities in many different areas, including massage therapy, thus potentially giving our industry a negative image. Though NCBTMB was one of the first organizations to bring light to human trafficking in the massage therapy profession and understands the importance of awareness, at this time we will not accept or approve continuing education regarding human trafficking.*

*Continuing education accepted by NCBTMB needs to elevate the profession through knowledge of sciences, different techniques, business and other areas massage therapists can master to elevate themselves. NCBTMB's Board of Directors understands the significance of, and is sympathetic to, human trafficking in the massage industry but does not feel it has a place in Board Certification, the highest voluntary credential in the massage therapy profession.*

*NCBTMB works to advance the mission of massage therapists who work to support clients' health and well-being and ensure they are a vital component of healthcare and wellness.*

*NCBTMB stands with other professional organizations' missions to distinguish massage therapists from sex traffickers hiding under the guise of massage therapist. The first step is to stop calling these businesses massage parlors and treating the people working in the establishments as massage therapists*

*offering sexual acts because it detracts from the important work that we do to provide health and well-being to our clients.*

## **Chapter 1: Human Trafficking Defined**

### **What Is Human Trafficking?**

Human trafficking is the illicit trade of men, women, and children for the purpose of forced labor, sexual slavery, or commercial sexual exploitation for the trafficker or others. It takes many forms such as forced commercial labor, forced prostitution or sexual slavery, child surrogacy or even organ and tissue removal for sale.

Human Trafficking can occur within a country or trans-nationally, making it a global challenge for law enforcement. The Department of Homeland Security describes it this way:

*Human trafficking involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some type of labor or commercial sex act. Every year, millions of men, women, and children are trafficked worldwide – including right here in the United States. It can happen in any community and victims can be any age, race, gender, or nationality. Traffickers might use violence, manipulation, or false promises of well-paying jobs or romantic relationships to lure victims into trafficking situations.*

*Language barriers, fear of their traffickers, and/or fear of law enforcement frequently keep victims from seeking help, making human trafficking a hidden crime.*

*Traffickers use force, fraud, or coercion to lure their victims and force them into labor or commercial sexual exploitation. They look for people who are susceptible for a variety of reasons, including psychological or emotional vulnerability, economic hardship, lack of a social safety net, natural disasters, or political instability. The trauma caused by the traffickers can be so great that many may not identify themselves as victims or ask for help, even in highly public settings.*

In the Chapter 2. we will be focusing on Human Trafficking in the massage industry which is where it impacts us the most, but in this chapter we will be taking a broader look at the issue.

### **The Scope of the Problem**

One component of human trafficking is forced commercial labor. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO) this form of human trafficking is the most common and generates over one hundred billion dollars a year for international organized crime syndicates. [1]

So what exactly is considered ***forced commercial labor***?

In the words of the ILO; "all work or service which is exacted from any person under the threat of a penalty and for which the person has not offered himself or herself voluntarily."

The ILO has identified three basic elements of forced commercial labor and they are ***Work, Menace*** and ***Involuntariness***.

***Work or service*** refers to all types of work occurring in any activity, industry or sector including in the informal economy.

***Menace*** of any penalty refers to a wide range of penalties used to compel someone to work.

***Involuntariness***: The terms "offered voluntarily" refer to the free and informed consent of a worker to take a job and his or her freedom to leave at any time. This is not the case for example when an employer or recruiter makes false promises so that a worker take a job he or she would not otherwise have accepted.

The ILO goes on to identify the following exceptions to the "forced labor" definition:

Compulsory military service.

Normal civic obligations.

Prison labor (under certain conditions).

Work in emergency, situations (such as war, calamity or threatened calamity e.g. fire, flood, famine, earthquake).

Minor communal services (within the community).

Forced labor imposed by state authorities.

Although the ILO generally considers forced labor imposed by state authorities to be an exception, they do see the following as illegitimate examples of that exception:

- as punishment for the expression of political views, for the purposes of economic development,
- as a means of labor discipline,
- as a punishment for participation in strikes,
- as a means of racial, religious or other discrimination.

Forced commercial labor can be imposed on adults and children, by State authorities, by private enterprises or by individuals. It can be seen in all kinds of economic activity including domestic work (housekeepers, gardeners, nannies, etc), construction, agriculture, manufacturing, and even forced street begging. It can be found in every country of the world.

Forced commercial labor is different from sub-standard or exploitative working conditions, which of course can also be found everywhere. Various indicators can be used to ascertain when a situation amounts to forced labor, such as restrictions on workers' freedom of movement, withholding of wages or identity documents, physical or sexual violence, threats and intimidation or fraudulent debt from which workers cannot escape.

The ILO estimated that 24.9 million victims are trapped in modern-day slavery.

14.2 million are in labor exploitation in industries such as agriculture, construction, domestic work and manufacturing.

10 million children are in forced labor

According to the International Labor Organization, child workers, minorities, and illegal immigrants are at considerable risk of more extreme forms of exploitation. Statistics shows that over half of the world's 215 million young workers are observed to be in hazardous sectors, including forced sex work and forced street begging. [2] Ethnic minorities and highly marginalized groups of people are highly estimated to work in some of the most exploitative and damaging sectors, such as leather tanning, mining, and stone quarry work.[3]

Of course you do not see too many children being forced to work in stone quarries in the United States, but that doesn't mean we don't have a lot of forced labor in our country. The vast majority of our forced labor is in the realm of sexual servitude, and as such, is largely hidden from the public eye. We will get

to that soon, but for right now, we will continue to focus on forced commercial labor.

In the United States forced commercial labor thrives in industries that routinely employ undocumented (illegal) immigrants, where U.S. law requires little or no regulation or monitoring of working conditions, and where a high demand for cheap labor exists. The sectors in which non-sexual forced labor is most prevalent are domestic household servitude, agriculture, sweatshop, and factory work. Forced labor in these industries is perpetuated by the large potential for profit, and by the small risk of being prosecuted for the crime.

After sexual servitude the second highest occurring incidents of forced labor in the United States occurs in the area of domestic services. This is driven by a high demand for cheap and exploitable household help and is exacerbated by a lack of legal protections for domestic workers, many of whom are in the country illegally and fear being exported.

The agricultural sector also experiences a very high occurrence of forced labor in the United States. This is partly due to the absence of labor standards and regulations in the industry, and to the increasing number of undocumented immigrant farm workers that have no legal protection. Since they have entered the United States illegally they do not seek help when forced to work without pay and in poor conditions. Many do not speak English and are unaware of their rights and fear deportation. All of these factors cause many agricultural workers to live in a situation of poverty and powerlessness that is easy to exploit.

Less common but still present are the sweatshop factories in which employers violate labor laws. This is another economic sector that utilizes forced labor in the United States. While nothing can excuse the greed of U.S. corporations that engage in this practice, from a purely economic standpoint, low-cost imports that create competitive pressures on U.S.-based manufacturers are part of the reason for this situation. American companies must compete with developing nations that pay their factory workers pennies, and with labor unions and government regulations driving up the cost of legitimate labor, unscrupulous corporations feel justified in using this form of commercial forced labor. Legal loopholes exist that allow manufacturers to profit from forced labor without being held accountable for violating the law. For example, large corporations avoid legal repercussions when using an outside firm that is sub-contracted to produce their product. If that sub-contracted firm is using illegal forced labor and is shut down, the corporation is immune to prosecution, because it's not their company that was using forced labor, it was a company they hired to produce a product and nothing more. The means of production was the responsibility of the

small sweatshop owners.

Sympathy for undocumented immigrants in the legislative bodies of the U.S. government has created a “look the other way” environment in the manufacturing sector that has allowed forced labor to prosper in this country. While this may seem paradoxical, the unfortunate reality is that lawmakers are reluctant to crack down on businesses that utilize undocumented immigrants for forced labor because they would also have to deal with the presence of the illegal immigrants themselves.

At any given time, tens of thousands of people work as forced laborers across the United States [1]. Many of them feel trapped and unable to escape their situation because they are uneducated, do not speak the language, have no social or family network, fear deportation, and do not trust or have knowledge of the outside world. In addition to these factors, many perpetrators use repeated threats and verbal abuse, involuntary confinement, torture, and sexual assault to force their victims into submission. All of these conditions can cause forced labor victims to lose their sense of control, and to become increasingly dependent on those who hold them captive, which oftentimes delays or prevents them from escaping their situation.

It is important to recognize that even though undocumented immigrants in the United States are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking and forced labor, they are not the only person being trafficked. As you will read in the next section, the child welfare system in the United States has been supplying sex traffickers with children via the foster care program for decades [5].

### **Sex trafficking**

Sex trafficking is a category of human trafficking wherein the victims are not just used for labor, but for the purpose of sexual exploitation, including sexual slavery.[4]

In this particularly heinous form of human trafficking the victim is forced into a dependency on their traffickers and are forced to provide sexual services to paying customers. There are three types of activities defined as sex trafficking crimes: **acquisition**, **transportation** and **exploitation**.

Sex trafficking is one of the biggest criminal enterprises in the world. [1] It includes child sex tourism (CST), domestic minor sex trafficking (DMST) and other kinds of commercial sexual exploitation of children, and prostitution.

In 2012 the ILO reported 20.9 million people were subjected to forced labor, and

22% (4.5 million) are victims of forced sexual exploitation.[6] Later in 2016 they reported that of the estimated 25 million people in forced labor, 5 million were victims of sexual exploitation. [7]

The covert nature of sex trafficking makes accurate statistics nearly impossible, but law enforcement generally agrees that the cases that have been reported are only the tip of the iceberg. The global commercial profits for sexual slavery are estimated to be \$99 Billion. [8]

Most victims find themselves in coercive or abusive situations from which escape is both difficult and dangerous. Locations where this practice occurs span the globe and reflect an intricate web between nations, making it very difficult to construct viable solutions to this human rights problem.

### **The Victims**

There is no single profile for victims of human trafficking. Most are women, though it is not uncommon for males to be trafficked as well. Once a victim has been ensnared by the traffickers they could be exploited all around the world, being shuffled from place to place by an intricate web of criminal networks.

The victims are diverse, ranging in ages and backgrounds, including ethnic and socioeconomic. Despite the diversity in victims, there are specific demographic traits that places a person in a higher risk category for exploitation. Homeless and runaway youth, foreign nationals (especially those of lower socioeconomic status), and those who have experienced physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, violent trauma, neglect, poor academic success, and inadequate social skills. [9]

An academic study conducted with a group of Canadian sex workers found that 64 percent of them had been in the child welfare system as children (this includes foster and group homes).[9] This study illustrates how children in or leaving foster care are at a higher risk of becoming a sex worker.[9]

Similar research conducted in the United States has proven that the situation here is no different. For example, more than 50 percent of domestic minor sex trafficking victims have a history of homelessness. [10]

Family disruptions and instability such as death of a parent or divorce place minors at a higher risk of entering the industry, but home life in general influences children's risk. In a study of trafficked youth in Arizona, 20 to 40 percent of female victims identified with experiencing abuse of some form (sexual or physical) at home before entering into the industry as a sex slave.[10]

Of the males interviewed, a smaller proportion, 0 to 30 percent, reported former abuse in the home.[10]

The ILO estimates that of the 20.9 million people who are trafficked in the world (for all types of work, not just sex trafficking) 5.5 million are children.[11] The ILO states that the Children are a greater risk for obvious reasons, they are smaller and easier to intimidate, they are naive and easier to deceive, they have no income and are therefore vulnerable, their youth translates to “product longevity” for those that benefit from it financially and worst of all, they fill a specific “product niche” that predators are willing to pay more for.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics states that 100,000 children who fall under the age of 18 are trafficked daily in the United States, and only 150 child trafficking cases have been brought to court. [12] Many children who are trafficked are also at higher risk of turning to prostitution, a crime that many of them face criminal charges for, even under the age of 18.

The main motive of a woman (in some cases, an underage girl) to accept an offer from a trafficker is better financial opportunities for herself or her family. A study on the origin countries of trafficking confirms that most trafficking victims are not the poorest in their countries of origin, and sex trafficking victims are likely to be women from countries with some freedom to travel alone and some economic freedom.

There are numerous fake businesses that sound realistic that convince people to apply for the job. Some places have a reputation for holding an illegal business in order to attract their victims.

### **The Confluence of Human Trafficking and People Smuggling**

An important distinction needs to be made between human trafficking and the smuggling of people.

In many countries, including the United States, there exist underground networks that smuggle undocumented immigrants into the country. Most of these immigrants are impoverished migrant workers, seeking to earn more money in the United States as a menial workers. Others are political refugees fleeing oppressive regimes or countries ravaged by war and civil unrest.

To many people in the United States these immigrants are chasing the “American Dream” which has led law makers in the past to ignore the issue of people smuggling into the country, and in some extreme cases, even to support it.

In theory, the smuggling of undocumented immigrants looking for a better life and the exploitative trafficking of forced laborers are very different, but in many cases, they are being done **by the same criminal networks**.

The largest organization of people smugglers in the United States is the criminal organization known as Mara Salvatrucha, or MS-13.

MS-13, is an international criminal organization that started in Los Angeles, California, in the 1970s and 1980s. MS-13 is defined by its cruelty, their motto is "Mata, roba, viola, controla," which means "kill, steal, rape, control."

As an international gang, its history is closely tied to United States–El Salvador relations. In 2018, the gang's US membership of up to 10,000 accounted for less than 1% of the 1.4 million gang members in the United States, and a similar share of gang murders. They have a long and very brutal history of child sex trafficking.

In 2011, Alonso "Casper" Bruno Cornejo Ormeno, an associate of MS-13 from Fairfax, Virginia, was sentenced to 292 months in prison for child prostitution. Ormeno recruited juvenile females into a prostitution ring by locating runaway children.[13]

Rances Ulices Amaya, a leader of MS-13, of Springfield, Virginia, was convicted in February 2012 for trafficking girls as young as 14 into a prostitution ring. He was sentenced in June 2012 to 50 years in prison for child prostitution. The girls were lured from middle schools, high schools, and public shelters. Once acquired by Amaya, they were required to have sex with as many as ten men per day.[14]

In September 2012, Yimmy Anthony Pineda Penado, also known as "Critico" and "Spike", of Maryland, a former "clique leader" of MS-13, became the eleventh MS-13 gang member to be convicted of child prostitution since 2011. [15]

MS-13 and other criminal organizations take advantage of wandering migrants and prey on their desperation to make it into the United States, using manipulation or threats to exploit them for profit. Posing as *Coyotes* (people who smuggle immigrants into the U.S.) these gangs view immigrants as highly vulnerable individuals who will do whatever they can to cross a border, seek employment, or locate and reunite with family members. [16]

A study conducted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) revealed that many of the migrant women were forced to pay smugglers high fees or were extorted and/or physically or sexually assaulted as they made their way from Mexico to the U.S. Many of them reported being held captive near the border, where the very smugglers they paid to take them to the U.S. forced them to contact their families back home, demanding they send ransom money. [17] These unfortunate women were “held captive until they consent to further demands by the traffickers” and of course, many of them couldn't pay.

According to the UNHCR, “many undocumented Mexican migrants and perhaps the majority of all Central American migrants are trafficked as they head north.” [17] They describe being forced to smuggle drugs into the U.S., enter the sex trade, or work for gangs to deceive other unsuspecting travelers. In addition to being forced to commit crimes, they are often raped repeatedly throughout their journey or even executed if they refuse to carry out the wishes of their captors or if they can't afford to pay the fees demanded of them. [18]

Many of the women in the UNHCR study said they took contraceptives before fleeing their homes to reduce the risk of becoming pregnant if they were raped throughout their journeys [19].

We include this to illustrate the point that the illegal smuggling of migrants and the trafficking of humans for exploitative purposes may sound very different in theory but the reality is that they overlap. The people who pay criminal organizations (“Coyotes”) to smuggle them into the U.S. In search of safety or economic opportunity are being taken advantage of and exploited just as much as the young woman in Thailand that is being lured into sexual slavery with the promise of a lucrative job as a domestic servant in another country.

## Chapter 2: Human Trafficking in the Massage Industry

So far in this course we have discussed human trafficking for purposes of forced commercial labor and sexual slavery. As promised, we will not look at the effect of Human Trafficking in the Massage Industry.

According to Polaris, a non-profit organization dedicated to fighting human trafficking, there are more than 9,000 suspected ***Illicit Massage Businesses*** (IMBs) exploit tens of thousands of women as sex slaves. [20]

In a study conducted by Polaris, the organization analyzed more than 17,500 Mandarin-language website ads fraudulently recruiting women into jobs within massage establishments in three port cities: Flushing New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles in California. Approximately 8 percent of the recruitment ads they reviewed specifically stated that no sexual acts were required for the job, but twice as many had ads that were directly linked (owned by the same companies as) commercial sex websites. This linkage proves that the ads were fraudulent meeting the legal standard of ‘force, fraud, or coercion’ necessary to prove human trafficking.

The victims are typically women ranging in age from 30-50 that have migrated to the United States from China, Korea, Thailand or Vietnam. Many of them came to the United States as visitors with H1B or H2B visas that have expired. They are lured to the United States by criminal organizations that pose as legitimate recruiters for large companies and advertise openings in the United States on social media platforms.

After seeing an ad in their home country promising a lucrative job as a legitimate massage therapist the victims are directed to an “employment agency” where the “recruiter” handles all of the travel details for them. The visas are procured and the airline tickets are arranged. Of course these women do not have the means to pay for this investment, so they are “directed” to a money lender who gives them a loan, sometimes for as much as \$50,000 and they are told they can pay it back when they get to the United States. They are often accompanied by members of the organization on the plane. Since they often do not speak English they have to rely on this person, who typically holds onto their ID and travel documents.

When they arrive in the United States they are taken to their “new home” where they can stay while they work at their new “spa.” They are of course charged for room and board, which makes it even harder to repay their debt. Soon afterwards they learn the true nature of their employment in the United States

and since they do not have their travel documents, an ID or even speak the language they feel very trapped. [21]

According to Polaris, the victims are often moved to different cities and states every few years to keep them under the radar of law enforcement and to prevent them from making connections with local people that might be able to help them. In some cases the victims actually sleep at the establishment, and are forced to provide sexual services to 6-10 customers per day. [22] In exchange for their work they are credited “payment towards their debt” which of course includes the costs of their transport to the United States, lodging (in often in the business, under constant surveillance), food, etc. To give you an idea of the types of conditions these women are forced to endure, a police raid of the Jade Spa in Dallas in October of 2019 found “seven young women sleeping on tattered slivers of insulation.” [23]

For many it is a never ending cycle. The women are shuffled from one IMB to another, sometimes in different states. Their exploitation generates an estimated \$2.8 billion in annual revenue in the United States for business owners and operators who operate largely with impunity in American cities. Polaris estimates the illicit massage business to earn some \$2.5 billion in revenue in the United States. Their research as of December 2019 found that approximately 1,000 more suspected IMBs marked as “open” and “erotic” than the 9,000 suspected IMBs at the time of their 2018 study.

### **Hiding in Plain Sight**

It's easy to imagine these IMBs as being rundown buildings in a red light district of a big city far away from you, but the truth is they are quite unremarkable in appearance and probably closer than you think.

In the last few decades more and more IMBs have begun popping up in suburban strip malls and shopping centers, tucked discretely between your favorite fast food restaurant and that chain of coffee shops you like to visit on your breaks. That's what's scary about them, they do such a good job of looking like a legitimate business you wouldn't give it a second glance.

These IMBs can maintain the outward illusion or propriety because they are widely advertised to their target clients on the internet. They do not need neon signs advertising sexual services on their building like you would expect to find in a red light district, instead they have ads running in Craigslist.com, Backpage.com and other websites and aps specifically used to market “massage parlors.”

One of the amazing things about the internet is its ability to allow businesses to use **Targeted Marketing** to advertise a specific product to a very specific clientele, and the criminal organizations that are running these IMBs are adept at using it.

This means that anyone looking to purchase commercial sex is only a few clicks away from any number of websites that can direct them to the business they are looking for. In many instances there are downloadable apps that allow the users to leave embarrassingly detailed reviews of the both the businesses themselves and the individual women that are being exploited within them. The large amount of fake massage businesses, combined with the lax attitude of law enforcement towards them, has allowed the widespread association of massage therapy with prostitution, and that hurts all of us.

Only recently has law enforcement begun to really look into the connection between IMBs and human trafficking. What they have found is that the two industries are intricately connected. As efforts to increase awareness and combat human trafficking in the United States trend in a generally positive direction the sheer pervasiveness and persistence of the Illicit Massage Industry presents two questions:

Why is this illegal industry prospering in our country?

What can be done to stop it?

It is in the best interest of all of us to educate our community leaders about the difference between legitimate massage businesses and the those illegitimate businesses that are mere fronts for forced labor and sex trafficking.

If you are the owner of your own massage therapy business you are most likely well aware of the suspicion law enforcement and your community leaders (city council, zoning enforcement, etc) has regarding massage therapy already. In our small town in California, to apply to open a massage establishment you must go through rigorous background checks and meet with the chief of police personally before it is signed off. In our city ordinance, massage therapy is still included with "Dance Halls, Billiard Clubs, Money Lenders and Card Houses" as businesses that need special permission to operate.

The national massage therapy organizations that exist are well aware of this situation and have done a great deal to improve the public image of massage therapy over the previous decades. They have done a great job educating the public about the difference between legitimate, registered businesses and fronts

for labor and sex exploitation but there is still a long way to go.

Part of the problem is that in many cases local law enforcement and community leaders think of IMBs as simply prostitutes pretending to be massage therapists as a cover for their crimes or in some cases, female massage therapists that have “broken bad” and succumbed to the temptation for bigger paydays. In both cases, they are either unconcerned or even tacitly sympathetic, as many do not feel prostitution should be illegal in the first place. They are largely ignorant of the fact that these are fronts for **major international organized crime operations**.

The American Massage Therapy Association put it this way, “perpetrators have used the guise of operating a massage therapy business to carry out their crimes...”. This “guise of legitimacy” is what makes the crime of human trafficking in the Illicit Massage Industry (IMI) so successful. Researchers and investigators have found that the perpetrators driving the IMI are not one-off bad actors. Rather, the perpetrators driving the IMI are large-scale, well-organized criminal networks more akin to the mafia, operating “massage” business operations as fronts for providing sexual services. Investigative journalists note these operations are “built to survive police raids.” [25]

What do they mean by “built to survive police raids?” Its a classic pattern that has been used by organized crime for decades. The IMBs operate as semi independent cells in the criminal network. If one is raided, the authorities are typically only able to prosecute one or two “managers” who run that specific IMB, so the network as a whole is not affected. They lose some of the women they were exploiting and a few local assets (the managers) but it's easy enough for them to start a new business in the next town over, or sometimes in a new neighborhood in the same city.

It should be noted that national law enforcement agencies like the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) are very aware that licit massage businesses are often staffed with trafficked women, it's the local law enforcement that might hold the misconceptions.

According to Polaris, evidence suggests that many, if not most of the thousands of women presently engaged in commercial sex in IMBs are victims of human trafficking.

Most of these women are immigrants lured away from desperate poverty in their home countries with the promise of financial opportunity in the USA. AS

previously stated, they are often brought in with illegally obtained work visas, and once in the United States, are under the financial and direct physical control of the criminal organization. They are often physically and mentally abused, and are very isolated because of the language barrier. They are told as soon as they land that they are in the country illegally (despite being told otherwise when recruited) and that they will be arrested if they speak to the authorities.

Since they do not speak the language and know very little about the United States they do not try to escape. For those coming from China (where the majority of them are from) there is an understandable fear of the government, so this is a very effective tactic for keeping them in line.

### **After the raid**

When law enforcement finally does raid a local “massage parlor” arresting several women that work there, the news media takes the story and runs with it, including the names and photos of the women there.

Many local law enforcement jurisdictions are just now learning about human trafficking in IMBs. They may not know the right questions to ask or even that they should ask at all.

Meanwhile, victims of IMB trafficking are living in extreme fear and constant shame. They know little about how law enforcement works in the United States or about their rights. Remember, many of them are from China where they have very few rights in regards to law enforcement. This is compounded by the fact that the traffickers deliberately deceive them from the moment they arrive, telling them that the police will not help them, and instead will arrest and deport them.

These women do not exist in a vacuum, they have families back in their home countries, including children and husbands. The traffickers often threaten to harm their families back home or threaten to expose and shame the women to their families back home if they speak up or cooperate with law enforcement.

The result is that when the law enforcement agency does charge in to shut down an IMB the women there are extremely reluctant to come forward and disclose that they are trafficking victims. Instead, they are booked on charges related to prostitution — and the media may have access to their names, sometimes their pictures, and that’s all. There is no way for reporters to know if they are victims of human trafficking.

Arresting the women that work in these IMBs is basically arresting the victims of

crimes, not the perpetrators. The “managers” of the IMBs are arrested are not the ringleaders behind the trafficking, they are most likely older women that were once trafficked themselves but have “been promoted” to a position similar to a “house madame” in a brothel. They have the same reluctance to finger the true traffickers for fear of reprisal to their families back home. As one law enforcement official once put it, “Closing these massage parlors is a lot like arresting a low level street drug pusher. The supplier, the ones importing the drugs, are nowhere to be found. It's the same situation, the traffickers, the ones that set all this up and bring in these women, they are nowhere near the scene.”

### **A very cold money trail**

By now you might be wondering how these IMBs can operate with such impunity. It's a valid concern, and the answer is, they know how to manipulate the laws in our country.

Most of these IMBs are organized as LLCs, or Limited Liability Corporations. In many states, trans-national business organizations can legally create an LLC and that LLC is what leases the building and buys any equipment needed.

When they are raided law enforcement finds the LLC is owned by a corporation in another country, and there is practically nothing that can be done about it. Of course appeals can be made to sister law enforcement agencies in the other country, but the corporations that do these kind of things are often just phony shell corporations themselves so they are rarely if ever followed up on.

### **Local trafficking victims**

You have probably seen the “Asian” themed IMBs we have been alluding too in this course so far, they are pretty common in larger U.S. cities. However human trafficking is not limited to international operations, many people born and raised in the United States fall victim to human trafficking operations each year.

In the previous chapter we mentioned that the child welfare system in the United States has been supplying sex traffickers with children via the foster care program for decades. It's not our intention to speak ill of the many well meaning foster parents out there, selflessly serving young people whose families have been devastated by loss and instability. There are lots of good people out there doing this, and we do not want to paint them all with this broad brush. However, we would be remiss if we failed to point out what law enforcement already knows, that human traffickers in the United States specifically target young people, especially girls, in the foster care system.

Polaris estimates that 60 percent of child sex trafficking victims have a history in

the child welfare system – the topic is understudied and thus, not effectively addressed.

The relationship between human trafficking and the foster care system can be traced to a variety of factors. While there is no question that human trafficking spans all demographics, ages, and economic levels, there are a number of risk factors that increase the likelihood of human trafficking for an individual, most of which pertain to foster youth. Those who engage in human trafficking prey on the most vulnerable individuals. We have seen so far how they prey on the impoverished people in developing countries, luring them to the U.S. With promises of employment. In the case of foster children, many of which have already suffered a great deal of isolation and abuse before and after entering the foster care system, the traffickers offer friendship, “support” and a promise of a family structure.

Foster youth lack a steady home or school life and often have little or no support networks. Human traffickers recruit foster youth directly from group homes with false promises of money and a family structure.

Tragically many youth in the foster care system have already been conditioned to view themselves as a paycheck, and many have also been subjected to abuse and exploitation in the past, both by biological and foster parents. This puts them at an even greater risk.

Of the many factors that work together to push foster youth into the waiting arms of human traffickers, prior sexual abuse is the most common. Prior sexual abuse has been cited as the leading cause for entry into sex trafficking. An estimated 65-95 percent of sex trafficking victims were sexually assaulted as children.[26]

In one survey conducted by a youth shelter in Las Vegas they found that 71 percent of the domestic minor sex trafficking survivors had been sexually abused. [27] The National Institute of Justice backs up this finding and added “persons who were sexually abused as children are 28 times more likely than their non-abused peers to be arrested for prostitution.”

Victims of childhood sexual abuse are generally brought into sexual exploitation in early adolescence with the average age for boys and transgender girls (from boy to girl) being slightly younger than girls. For boys and transgender girls, the average age is between eleven and thirteen, and for girls the age rises to between twelve and fourteen. [28]

When the traffickers approach them, it is as a someone offering friendship and a

support system, a “family” that they never had. In a process called “grooming” they gradually introduce the youth into sexual exploitation.

Their entry into human trafficking often begins with trading sex for essential items such as food and/or shelter, but can quickly evolve to victimization by organized trafficking operations. One study conducted in the U.S. and Canada found that one-fifth of homeless youth were victims of sex trafficking. The situation is exasperated by the fact that states do not always report when a foster child is missing, despite provisions in federal law that mandate it.

Homelessness is also a major risk factor for youth. For many youth in foster care, “aging out” occurs when they reach either 18 or 21 (depending on the state) and when that happens, they are shown the door by their foster parents. In most cases, there is nowhere for them to go but the street. The traffickers know this, and they know where the foster homes are.

The foster children who have runaway, aged out of the system, or otherwise find themselves on the streets are a greater risk of being trafficked, particularly in the commercial sex trade. In many cases they are presented with the choice of sleeping under a bridge or in an alley, or taking up sex work and sleeping in a bed.

Another reason why there are so many foster youth being drawn into human trafficking is the lack of communication between government agencies and state governments. While there are federal regulations, foster care policy is primarily the domain of the states and therefore, protections, resources, and reporting requirements vary by state and information is not always effectively shared between agencies and jurisdictions.

### **In their own words**

Disclaimer: The following passages contain first-person accounts from victims of sex trafficking. Names have been altered to protect their identities. Homeland Security Investigations worked in collaboration with the FBI on their case.

*Tonya-15*

*Tonya spent night after night in different hotel rooms, with different men, all at the command of someone she once trusted. She was held against her will, beaten and made to feel like she had no other option at the time, all by the man she thought she loved.*

*She felt she deserved it. Tonya felt she couldn't escape. Afraid and confused, she thought the emotional and physical abuse she endured was her own doing.*

*Tonya (a pseudonym) was a victim of human trafficking. “He made me feel like I was doing it because I loved him, and in the end, we’d have a really good [financial] reward,” Tonya said.*

*When Tonya was 13, she met Eddie (a pseudonym) at the apartment she was living in with her mother in the Dallas, Texas, area. His estranged wife was the property manager. Tonya was classmates with Eddie’s stepdaughter, so the two would often see each other at the apartment and in the local grocery store. It was there that the two first exchanged numbers.*

*“It was a casual relationship at first. You could see there was a mutual connection. I thought he was cute,” Tonya recalled. “I could tell he was really flirtatious with me. We would talk and flirt a lot, but it was not much more than that until we met again when I was 15.”*

*Things began to change one night when Tonya ran into Eddie at a bar. The two reconnected, the flirting picked up where it left off and Tonya went home with Eddie that night. Tonya was a runaway at the time, so she eventually moved in with Eddie and the two began a relationship.*

*It was a “normal” arrangement at first. Tonya would cook, clean and look after Eddie’s kids from time to time. However, it was when the two were at a party filled with alcohol and drugs that the relationship took a turn.*

*“He approached me and told me in so many words, ‘I want you to have sex with this guy for money,’” Tonya said. “I was very uncomfortable and I kept saying no, I didn’t want to do it. He kept telling me, ‘If you love me, you’ll do this. It’s just one thing. Just try it.’”*

*After nearly 30 more minutes of constant pressure, Tonya agreed to have sex with the man. What she thought would be a one-time thing became an everyday routine for the next few weeks. Night after night and bar after bar, Tonya would go out with Eddie while he advertised her to potential “suitors.” Tonya thought she loved him. She felt she could deal with the physical toll the trafficking took on her body. It turned out that the hardest part to deal with was the emotional and psychological effects.*

*“Being able to sleep with that many people and live with myself and get up every day and keep doing it and just lying there being helpless was so hard,” Tonya said.*

*Help eventually came for Tonya in the form of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Special Agent Keith Owens. The Grand Prairie, Texas police department had received a tip about Eddie's crimes and passed the case on to HSI Dallas. Owens and his team took over, moved in and arrested Eddie.*

*"As a special agent with HSI, I believe it is a duty and an honor for me to assist and protect survivors like Tonya against human traffickers who wish to exploit their innocence for greed, control and money," Owens said. "Any individual or group who wishes to prey upon the vulnerabilities of any man, woman or child and force them into a life of sex or labor trafficking should be prosecuted to full extent of the law. HSI continues to lead this charge."*

*Eddie pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 12 years in prison on May 29, 2015. During the sentencing hearing, Tonya had to testify. Having to hear and see the man who trafficked her was difficult, especially not knowing what the outcome would be and whether he would be convicted.*

*"Telling people publicly about what I'd been through made me feel more ashamed because I'd never told anyone or was open about it," Tonya said. "Keith and [HSI Dallas special agent] Allison [Schaefer] were the only two people I've really told everything to."*

*Tonya feels her life is a little better now. She doesn't think or talk about what she's been through and doesn't want people to know that was once a part of her life. Her focus is on moving forward.*

*"I want to finish getting my GED and go to community college, take on journalism, go to college and study political science and pre-law," she said. "I just want to live a normal life, accept my past and not run from it."*

*Eventually, Tonya knows that she will have to talk about her experience again. If she has kids one day, she wants to be able to tell them what their mother went through. She wants them to know what to look out for and how to avoid going through something as awful as she did.*

*Until then, she passes along her words of encouragement to anyone who may be experiencing what she did. She wants any victims out there to know they are not alone.*

*"You're worth something. You're very important to someone," Tonya said. "No matter what he says, it's not true. You're worth something."*

### **Laura 21 years old**

*I was 17 around when I met 'Robert.' It started off with me and my friend meeting him for social purposes. It just went on for about nine months and we were living in different hotels the entire time and I don't even remember how many men there were. I was a runaway and wasn't living anywhere stable, so since I was underage most of the time, I sort of needed him in order to get hotels and move around.*

*I had already been a prostitute since I was 15 and I think I just didn't even know what was right or wrong and how I should be treated. Towards the end, he held me against my will in a hostage situation and forced me to prostitute and took all the money and just beat me severely.*

*The last time I saw him, he was just beating me until he was absolutely tired. I was covered in bruises, my face was completely disfigured and it's causing me issue with my back to this day because of the way he was beating me and torturing me. That was probably the worst. There was a client in the room and he was having an issue with something I couldn't do because I was all beat up. I didn't want to do it anymore. I didn't want to do anything. He wanted the money back. When Robert and him were talking I ran out of the room and somehow was able to run faster than him.*

*I didn't tell anyone. I kept it to myself until I got a call from the FBI that he'd been arrested for something else and asked would I talk. Having to go face everything and realize how serious everything was. For the longest time I didn't even think it was that serious.*

*At the trial, it felt empowering to look at him the entire time. I'm sure it drove him crazy. He can never touch me but he had to look at me and listen and it made me feel good.*

*I had to learn that if I don't at least have some kind of love and value for myself, no one ever will. My advice to other girls would be to let people help you. It's not your fault and that you didn't deserve it. It's OK to be hurt about it because a lot of people will act like it never happened, because that's what I was going to do too.*

### **April-15**

*"I was 15 at the time and was a runaway. 'Tom' wanted to be a pimp, so I would be in his room in his apartment and he would not let me go out for anything. He tried to intimidate me by threatening to beat me up if I tried to leave. I was*

*scared of him so I wouldn't leave. He would drop me off at a hotel while he went to work.*

*It lasted from March until June or July. Sometimes it would be every day, sometimes he would say, 'not today, but tomorrow.' Out of the week, maybe 4-5 times a week, I was with different men.*

*I just felt like that it was my fault and I deserved it and nobody would ever believe me or try to help me, so I just let them control how I thought about myself. They were always verbally abusive and putting you down and it got to the point that I actually started believing it. Just letting someone control your own freedom take over just what you do. I couldn't leave the room. It was like 'wow, I'm letting someone make me feel so scared.'*

*I never called the police because I felt it was my fault. I felt at the time like I had to stay. One day the FBI ended up coming to my house and contacted me because my name came up in their investigation.*

*You have to know your self-worth. It's OK to ask for help. They don't know they are a victim. They feel like it's their fault. We are victims. You can have the worst past, but that doesn't mean you can't have a successful future."*

### **Examples of "Massage Parlors" Raided by ICE and Homeland Security**

The following are examples of criminal arrests for human trafficking in the massage industry.

*ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The owner of an Annandale massage parlor used as a front for prostitution was sentenced to 30 months in prison Friday, followed by two years of supervised release.*

*The case was investigated by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), which participates in the Northern Virginia Human Trafficking Task Force; the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation (IRS-CI); and the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS). They were assisted in the investigation by the Fairfax County Police Department.*

*Susan Lee Gross, aka Ju Me Lee Gross, 48, of Trinidad, Colo., pleaded guilty in October to transporting women to work as prostitutes at her massage parlor and laundering the proceeds from that illegal activity. Gross also agreed to forfeit \$248,409 in illicit proceeds.*

*"Ms. Gross became rich by exploiting Korean women and then hiding her illicit gains from the government," said U.S. Attorney Neil H. MacBride. "Houses of prostitution like Peach Therapy area blight on the community. This case is a result of an ongoing investigation into the sale of sexual services at northern Virginia massage parlors as part of my office's crackdown on sex trafficking in the region."*

*"Ms. Gross, through her business, Peach Therapy, provided sexual services under the guise of operating a massage parlor," said John P. Torres, special agent in charge of HSI Washington, D.C. "HSI will work with our law enforcement partners to investigate those who seek to profit by providing services through illegal means."*

*"Individuals such as Ms. Gross, who use structuring and money laundering to conceal the true source of their money run the risk of federal prosecution and imprisonment," said Thomas J. Kelly, special agent in charge of the IRS-CI Washington, D.C. Field Office. "IRS Criminal Investigation is committed to unraveling money laundering schemes and assisting our law enforcement partners to ensure that the type of criminal conduct engaged in by Ms. Gross is not ignored. Today's sentence is a reminder to criminals that money laundering schemes will be vigorously investigated and prosecuted."*

*According to court documents, Gross owned and operated Peach Therapy, which was advertised as a massage parlor but was merely a front for prostitution. Customers obtained sexual services from Gross and the women she employed at Peach Therapy. Prices for various sex acts varied, but some women earned \$800 per day in cash.*

*Gross advertised the various sex acts performed at Peach Therapy on erotic websites, and she recruited women to travel from such places as Georgia, North Carolina, New York and New Jersey to ensure the business was fully staffed and operational. All of the women Gross recruited were originally from Korea, some of them were unlawfully present in the United States, and most were uneducated and lacked language and employment skills. Gross used security cameras at Peach Therapy and trained the women she employed to yell if they saw the police approaching the business. Gross laundered the profits generated by Peach Therapy to hide the source and nature of the wealth she amassed through her illicit activities.*

*On Feb. 14, Gross's co-conspirator, Jin Seob Oh, was sentenced to 24 months of imprisonment for his role in the offenses. Oh drove many of the women to and from Peach Therapy and assisted in moving the prostitution proceeds.*

*Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael J. Frank prosecuted the case on behalf of the United States.*

*Founded in 2004, the Northern Virginia Human Trafficking Task Force is a collaboration of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies - along with nongovernmental organization - dedicated to combating human trafficking and related crimes.*

**Kansas massage parlor owner sentenced on federal prostitution charge**

*WICHITA, Kan. — A Wichita massage parlor owner was sentenced Wednesday to 10 months' time-served for trying to recruit a Chinese-speaking woman to perform sexual services at her business.*

*Ping Liu, 44, of Wichita, Kansas, pleaded guilty to one count of attempted coercion and enticement to prostitution. Liu was also ordered to serve five years' probation.*

*In her plea, she admitted that during a phone conversation conducted in Mandarin Chinese she arranged for a woman posing as a job applicant from New York to come to Wichita to work at Q Massage, 3833 W. 13th in Wichita. Liu told the applicant that the job included providing sexual services to customers. Liu told the applicant she would pick her up at the airport in Wichita.*

*In her plea, Liu also admitted twice offering to perform sexual services for undercover Wichita police officers who came to the massage parlor posing as customers.*

*This investigation was conducted under HSI's Operation Predator, an international initiative to protect children from sexual predators. Since the launch of Operation Predator in 2003, HSI has arrested more than 14,000 individuals for crimes against children, including the production and distribution of online child pornography, traveling overseas for sex with minors, and sex trafficking of children.*

**Chicago-area massage parlor operator convicted of human trafficking**

*CHICAGO – A suburban massage parlor owner was convicted in federal court on Monday of multiple crimes against four foreign women whom he mentally and physically abused while forcing them to work for him between July 2008 and January 2010. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) led the investigation in coordination with the Cook County State's Attorney's Office and the Cook County Human*

## *Trafficking Task Force.*

*The defendant, Alex Campbell, 45, was found guilty of three counts each of forced labor, harboring illegal aliens for financial gain, confiscating passports and other immigration documents to force the victims to work, and one count each of sex trafficking by force and extortion. The jury deliberated for nearly three hours last Thursday afternoon following a three-week trial in U.S. District Court. The trial showed that Campbell, who formerly operated the Day and Night Spa on Northwest Highway in Mt. Prospect, Ill., used violence and threats of violence to force three women from the Ukraine and one from Belarus to work for him without pay and, at times, for little to no subsistence.*

*Campbell, also known as "Dave" and "Daddy," formerly of Glenview, Ill., remains in federal custody without bond and faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 15 years in prison and a maximum of life on the sex-trafficking count alone, and prison terms ranging from a maximum of five to 20 years on each of the remaining counts.*

*"Forced labor and sex trafficking prey upon vulnerable women and are tantamount to modern-day slavery," said Gary J. Hartwig, special agent in charge of HSI Chicago. "The jury has vindicated the rights of four women who suffered mental and physical abuse, sexual exploitation, extortion and threats of deportation, all so Alex Campbell could make a profit. HSI is at the forefront of the government's fight against human trafficking. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to combat this serious crime."*

*"I commend the prosecutors and investigators for their dedication and teamwork in working with the victims to bring this case to trial and achieve a successful result," said Patrick J. Fitzgerald, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois.*

*"The Civil Rights Division is committed to bringing human traffickers to justice and to protecting the victims of modern-day slavery," said Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. These crimes against the individual rights of the most vulnerable members of our society will not be tolerated in the United States."*

*Cook County Sheriff Thomas J. Dart, whose sheriff's police initiated the investigation, said "I am extremely proud of the concerted effort and cooperation by both my office and those in the federal agencies that were involved in this case. Human traffickers are in our neighborhoods and harming our communities by using what appear to be legitimate businesses as fronts for their operations. I*

*hope this conviction sends a strong message that these criminal acts will not be tolerated in Cook County.*

*All four victims testified as government witnesses at trial, as well as co-defendant, Danielle John, 25, who pleaded guilty before trial to two counts of harboring illegal aliens for financial gain and is also awaiting sentencing.*

*The testimony and evidence showed that Campbell recruited and groomed foreign women without legal status in the United States to become part of his "Family," which he claimed was an international organization that would provide them with support. He offered them jobs in his massage parlor, a place to live, assistance with immigration and lured each of them to enter into a romantic relationship with him. After gaining their trust, he forced the victims to get tattooed with his moniker, which he said made them his property and allowed him to stop paying them. The women were forced to work long hours every day and do as Campbell instructed them, and they were beaten and punished if they disobeyed him.*

*Trial testimony established that Campbell confiscated passports and identity documents from three of the victims, as well as harbored and transported them to ensure their continued labor. Campbell forced one victim to engage in commercial sex acts with customers at other massage parlors, but not at the Day and Night Spa, which testimony showed he operated "cleanly" to avoid problems with law enforcement. He extorted another victim to pay him more than \$25,000 to leave the "Family" by threatening to send a sexually-explicit video recording to her parents in Belarus.*

*HSI's Victims Assistance Program helps to coordinate services in support of human trafficking victims. In April 2009, ICE was recognized for its commitment to assisting victims of crime with a Federal Service Award from the U.S. Department of Justice National Crime Victims' Service Awards program.*

*In 2010, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) launched the Blue Campaign. The Blue Campaign, named for "the thin blue line" of law enforcement, is an outreach effort to bring public awareness to the crime of human trafficking through education and reporting guidelines.*

### **Owners of massage parlors in Massachusetts arrested in connection with human trafficking, prostitution**

*BOSTON — The owners of two massage parlors – one in Wellesley, Mass., and the other in Revere, Mass. – have been arrested in connection with human*

*trafficking and prostitution. This investigation is being conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Massachusetts State Police detectives assigned to the Massachusetts Attorney General's office and the Wellesley Police Department.*

*Zhen Lai, 37, of Quincy, Mass., and Joseph Girouard, 55, of Revere, were arrested this afternoon by HSI special agents and the Massachusetts State Police. Lai was arrested in Quincy and Girouard was arrested in Somerville, Mass. Lai and Girouard are each charged with one count each of trafficking in persons for sexual servitude and keeping a house of ill fame.*

*"Today's arrests are the result of the great partnership HSI has with the Massachusetts Attorney General's office and Massachusetts State Police in our unyielding resolve to bring human traffickers to justice," said Bruce M. Foucart, special agent in charge of HSI Boston. "Human trafficking can exist anywhere, as shown with this investigation. HSI will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to ensure that those who commit these crimes are held accountable for their actions."*

*"We allege that these individuals ran two massage parlors that were thinly veiled fronts for prostitution," said Massachusetts Attorney General Martha Coakley. "Further, these two defendants allegedly profited from sexual services provided to clients by women they employed. We would like to thank HSI and our local police partners for assisting in the investigation and arrests."*

*"This investigation was a model of collaboration and cooperation between investigators from the Wellesley Police Department, HSI and the attorney general's office," said Chief Terrence Cunningham, Wellesley Police Department. "Thanks to Attorney General Coakley's attention to the human trafficking issue and her unwavering determination to bring individuals involved in the exploitation of women to justice, this is not just another prostitution prosecution."*

*The arrests are the result of an investigation into allegations of human trafficking and prostitution at Sun Spa, also known as Sun Studio, in Wellesley and Bodywork in Revere. Authorities allege that Lai and Girouard jointly operated the two massage parlors. During the course of the investigation, authorities developed evidence indicating that these massage parlors were allegedly offering sexual activity between masseuses employed by Lai and Girouard and their clients in exchange for cash that was characterized as "tips." Investigation also revealed that Lai and Girouard advertised the two spas on websites known to advertise prostitution.*

*This afternoon, federal, state and local law enforcement executed search warrants at the two massage parlors. Following the execution of the search warrants, authorities arrested Lai and Girouard.*

*Human trafficking is one of the most heinous crimes that HSI investigates. In its worst manifestation, human trafficking is akin to modern-day slavery. Victims pay to be illegally transported into the United States only to find themselves in the thrall of traffickers. They are forced into prostitution, involuntary labor and other forms of servitude to repay debts – often entry in the United States. In certain cases, the victims are mere children. They find themselves surrounded by an unfamiliar culture and language without identification documents, fearing for their lives and the lives of their families.*

HSI relies on tips from the public to dismantle these organizations. Trafficking victims are often hidden in plain sight, voiceless and scared.

### **ICE HSI Charlotte nets 125 human trafficking arrests in FY 2019**

*CHARLOTTE – In fiscal year 2019, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the principal investigative component of the Department of Homeland Security, arrested 2,197 criminals associated with human trafficking, a 38 percent increase from the previous year. HSI Charlotte made 125 of those arrests, which was the 4th highest number of human trafficking-related arrests among HSI field offices.*

*Arrests included:*

*Zerrell Ross Fuentes and his associates for sex trafficking three minor victims. In November 2019, Fuentes was sentenced to 30 years in prison, and two females associated were sentenced to 10 and two years in prison, respectively, for their roles in the trafficking scheme.*

*Thuy Tein Thuy Luong, the business owner of a nail salon, and a co-conspirator for allegedly engaging in forced-labor and financially benefitting from trafficking in persons. The victim in this case alleged that she was repeatedly physically assaulted by her employer and forced into a debt contract for \$180,000.*

*HSI uses a victim-centered approach in its trafficking investigations, where equal value is placed on both the identification and stabilization of victims as well as the prosecution of the traffickers. Through HSI Charlotte’s investigative work, the field office identified and/or assisted nearly 30 victims of human trafficking in FY 2019.*

*“Traffickers treat human beings as commodities. They use force, fraud or coercion to prey on people’s vulnerabilities,” said HSI Special Agent in Charge Ronnie Martinez. “HSI Charlotte will continue to focus its efforts on eradicating this heinous crime that affects men and women, the young and old, as well as U.S. citizens and foreign nationals.”*

*While human trafficking can occur in a variety of scenarios and industries, indicators of trafficking activities often look the same across cases. Educating the public to recognize the signs is crucial to identifying victims and bringing traffickers to justice. HSI developed the Strategic Trafficking Outreach Program (S.T.O.P.) to raise awareness, as well as educate the public on how to report instances of suspected trafficking.*

*Every day, HSI agents around the globe work to uncover, dismantle and disrupt human trafficking. They come face to face with the worst of humanity – traffickers profiting from the forced labor and commercial sex of their victims using physical and sexual abuse, threats of harm and deportation, false promises, economic and psychological manipulation, and cruelty.*

*Human trafficking victims have been found in communities nationwide in the agriculture, hospitality, restaurant, domestic work and other industries, as well as in prostitution that is facilitated online, on the street, or in businesses fronting for prostitution such as massage parlors. Overseas forced labor can be used to produce the consumer goods that are in our homes and workplaces. The victims are men, women and children of all ages and may include U.S. citizens and foreign nationals. Many of them may have thought they had found a good paying job or a better life, only to have their hopes and dreams dashed and placed into modern-day slavery.*

### **Chicago woman extradited from Hong Kong on charges of operating Indiana prostitution ring**

*HAMMOND, Ind. – A Chicago woman was extradited to the United States last week from Hong Kong to face charges of operating a prostitution ring in Indiana.*

*These charges resulted from an investigation conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and the FBI.*

*Rita Law, 55, of Chicago, was charged in a sealed complaint filed Oct. 17 in the Northern District of Indiana with transporting an individual for the purposes of*

*prostitution.*

*According to the complaint, which is now unsealed, Law is suspected of operating a prostitution ring out of three massage parlors in northwest Indiana. Law was arrested October 18 after deplaning from a Cathay Pacific airline flight in Hong Kong. The HSI Attaché Hong Kong Office coordinated with the Hong Kong Department of Justice and the Hong Kong Police Force to arrest and extradite Law back to the United States to face the charges contained in the complaint.*

*Significant assistance in this investigation was provided by the HSI Attaché Hong Kong Office.*

*Assistant U.S. Attorney Susan Collins, Northern District of Indiana, is prosecuting this case.*

### ***2 women arrested on charges of operating a brothel in Dallas***

*Dallas man remains in federal custody on related conspiracy, sex trafficking and racketeering charges*

*DALLAS — As part of an ongoing investigation into sex trafficking in the Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas, Metroplex, on Aug. 26, members of the North Texas Trafficking Task Force arrested two women on federal charges outlined in a just-unsealed superseding indictment, returned by a grand jury last week, related to their operation of the Doll House massage parlor in Dallas.*

*These arrests were announced by U.S. Attorney John Parker of the Northern District of Texas. The following agencies are investigating this case: Texas Department of Public Safety, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Dallas Police Department, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and the Dallas County Sheriff's Office; all are members of the North Texas Trafficking Task Force.*

*During Friday's operation, defendant Connie Su Moser, aka "Vivian" and "Song Ye Hong," 63, was arrested at her home in Lewisville, Texas. Defendant Kum Shugars, 67, was arrested at the Doll House. Moser is the owner of the Doll House; Shugars is one of the managers. In addition to the arrests, the Task Force seized about \$420,000 from Moser's home, about \$70,000 in her bank accounts, and her 2015 Lexus automobile. Moser and Shugars made their initial appearance in federal court Aug. 29. Moser was detained, and Shugars has a detention hearing before U.S. Magistrate Judge Paul D. Stickney Sept. 1.*

*The other defendant charged in this case, Allen Nash, aka "A-1," 29, also of Dallas, is charged with one count each of sex trafficking children, transporting a minor to engage in commercial sex acts, felon possessing ammunition, and sex trafficking through force, fraud or coercion. Nash and Moser are also each charged with one count of conspiracy to commit sex trafficking. Moser and Shugars are also charged with one count of use of a facility of interstate commerce in aid of a racketeering enterprise.*

*The indictment alleges that from about April 1, 2014 through Jan. 1, 2015, Nash recruited, enticed, harbored and transported an adult victim knowing and in reckless regard that force, threats of force, fraud and/or coercion would be used to cause that adult victim to engage in a commercial sex act.*

*The indictment further alleges that from about Oct. 4 through Oct. 7, 2014, Nash recruited, enticed, harbored and transported victim Jane Doe, who, as Nash knew, was under the age of 18, to engage in a commercial sex act. During that time, Nash knowingly transported victim Jane Doe from Texas to Louisiana to engage in a commercial sex act, and during that time, Nash, a convicted felon, also illegally possessed ammunition.*

*Nash and Moser allegedly conspired, from about April 11, 2014 through Dec. 9, 2014, to sex traffic an adult victim.*

*The indictment further alleges that from about June 1, 2012 through March 1, 2015, Moser and Shugars used facilities of interstate commerce, to include cellphones and the internet, to promote, manage, establish, carry on and facilitate a prostitution enterprise.*

*An indictment is an accusation by a grand jury; a defendant is entitled to the presumption of innocence unless proven guilty. If convicted, however, the maximum statutory penalty for conspiracy to commit sex trafficking is life in prison. The statutory penalty for each count of sex trafficking children and transporting a minor to engage in commercial sex acts is not less than 10 years and up to life in federal prison. The statutory penalty for sex trafficking through force, fraud or coercion is not less than 15 years and up to life in federal prison. The felon in possession of ammunition count carries a statutory sentence of not less than 15 years. The maximum statutory penalty for use of a facility of interstate commerce in aid of a racketeering enterprise is five years. Each count also carries a maximum \$250,000 fine.*

## Chapter 3: Your Ethical Obligation to Report Human Trafficking

An ethical obligation is something that someone is required or compelled to do based on a predetermined set of standards of what is right and wrong. For example, doctors have an ethical obligation to do no harm while diagnosing and treating patients. [29]

As massage therapists we have ethical obligations conferred upon us based on our status as licensed individuals. Anytime you engage in a profession that needs to be regulated (the word license means “permission”) a code of ethics typically goes along with it.

If you are a member of the NCBTMB or the AMTA or another body of massage therapists you will most likely be familiar with their code of ethics. They all stress the importance of maintaining healthy boundaries, obtaining from sexual relations with clients, doing things that you know are harmful to your client, engaging in medical practices that are outside of your scope of practice, etc.

But in this chapter I am not referring to a code of ethics that is published by a national massage therapy organization. I am referring to a deeper and more meaningful code of ethics.

So in this chapter I am going to introduce two concepts that you may have heard about in a philosophy class in college, or one of my other ethics courses, if you have been lucky enough to take one. They are **Negative Responsibility** and the **Categorical Imperative**.

Many people have a sense of right and wrong and feel ethically compelled to act when they see something that they feel is wrong or unjust. For example, if you were to see someone beating a helpless child with an extension cord, you would most likely intervene, or at the very least, call child protective services later. If you didn't take some action you would most likely regret it later.

### **Negative responsibility**

The term “Negative responsibility” is used in business and medical ethics classes to describe the sin of omission, or in other words, allowing something bad to happen when you have the power to stop it. [30]

In other words, negative responsibility is the idea that we are not only responsible for the things we do, but we are also responsible for things we don't do, or allow to happen.

A good example of this is the saying by the philosopher Edmund Burke:

*“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.”*

To see this idea in our world, imagine that your massage client started having a heart attack at the beginning of your massage session. If you decide to take that moment to check your voicemail and send a few text messages instead of calling 911 and the man dies you had a negative responsibility. You didn't kill the man, but you allowed him to die by doing nothing.

Understanding who the victims are

As we said in the previous chapter, the women that are performing the sexual services in these IMBs are victims of human trafficking, not the perpetrators of it. So if you had an opportunity to help them, would you take it? I'm guessing you probably would, because you're a good person. Right? Of course you are.

### **Categorical imperative**

This is another very important term in the study of ethics that was given to us by the philosopher Immanuel Kant. A categorical imperative is a moral law that is unconditional or absolute for all people, the truth of which cannot be disputed, no matter what justification you come up with for doing so.

The idea behind the categorical imperative is that it is supposed to provide a way for you to evaluate moral actions and to make moral judgments. It is not a command to perform specific actions -- it does not say, "never steal", or "never run red lights". It is a formal mental procedure we can go through when making a decision to see what the moral/ethical choice is.

Let me break down the idea for you in a simple way.

An imperative is a command. Say your boss at the day spa tells you "Perform a hot stone massage on the client waiting in room B."

According to the philosopher Kant, this kind of a command is an abbreviation, because it doesn't tell the entire story-which would be "Perform a hot stone massage on the client waiting in room B, so that he can pay for it and I can give you part of the money."

This is what Kant called a "hypothetical imperative" meaning that the command depends upon the goals to be fulfilled. Hypothetical imperatives are commands that apply only in particular circumstances, for particular people who happen to have these desires, and goals. In the example above, you are only obligated to obey the imperative if you are interested in the result, which is getting paid for doing the hot stone massage.

This is different from a ***categorical Imperative*** which is universal and impartial -- universal because all rational people would act in precisely the same way, and impartial because their actions are not motivated by their own desires, but because they believe it is the right thing to do (or not do, if the imperative is a negative).

So in the above example, "Perform a hot stone massage on the client waiting in room B" is a hypothetical imperative, your choice to obey the imperative really only matters to you desire to get paid and not get fired.

When you go in to do the massage the client tells you that he just opened his own day spa and he really liked your massage and he would like for you to come and work for him. He also wants you to make copies of all of your boss's client intake forms and bring them with you, so that he can make sure you have enough clientele to stay busy.

In this second example there is a categorical imperative, because what the man is asking you to do is to steal your employers' client list. We know that it is a categorical imperative because we can submit it to the test of universality.

It's like when you were a kid and you did something to another kid and a grown up asked you "how would you like it if someone did that to you?"

The grown up was trying to teach you a ***categorical Imperative***, because in their eyes what you did was wrong, no matter what your excuse was for doing it.

In the example above, you can ask yourself "How would I feel if I owned a business and someone that worked for me left and took all of my clients with her?"

This helps us make moral and ethical decisions in the real world because every person who breaks a law or does something unethical generally feels justified in doing it, but that doesn't make it right.

In the example above you might say "But those clients like my massage, and I'm the one doing the massage, so why shouldn't I leave and take them?"

Keep in mind that categorical imperative is NOT a description of how everybody does behave, as an ethical theory; its purpose is to help people decide how they ought to behave.

A lot of people like to compare the ***categorical imperative*** to the **Golden Rule**, one of the foundational principles of Christianity that greatly influenced western ethics- "*Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.*"

So these two philosophical ideas, ***negative responsibility*** and the ***categorical imperative*** both demonstrate the idea that we should do something to help the victims of human trafficking. If we know about it and do nothing, we are just as guilty as the people that are doing it (the negative responsibility) and rescuing a

woman that is being forced into prostitution against her will is something that is always right (a categorical imperative).

It's very easy to ignore human trafficking in the massage industry. They are not out advertising it in the streets (in most cases) and other than getting the occasional creepy call from someone looking for a "massage parlor" there isn't a lot of impact on you.

But think for a moment about how these women are recruited in their home country. These are not women that were asked if they wanted to come to the United States to be prostitutes. They were massage therapists, or women that wanted to be massage therapists. Just like us. The only difference is that they lived in a country where there were much fewer financial opportunities and that made taking the risk to come to another country to work seem reasonable. It's not a risk any of us are likely to take, but we live pretty comfortably here.

As we stated before, the opportunity to come here and work is presented to them in a very "legitimate" looking way, and once they are here they are trapped without a visa, without money, and without speaking the language. They are then threatened with the safety of their family back home or threatened with physical violence.

In cases of domestic trafficking, the people are often very young and are deceived by people they loved or felt they could trust.

If it were you or I in their place, we would want somebody to do something.

So what can you do? Great question, the answers are in the next chapter.

## Chapter 4: Recognizing The Red Flags Of Human Trafficking

### Know and Recognize the Signs of an Illicit Massage Business

Some clients like to talk, and sometimes they like to talk about other massage therapists or massage businesses. I know from my own experience owning a Spa in a small town that many of our clients knew about the other, “questionable” places in town.

If you hear rumors of red flags in your community, there is nothing wrong with making a tip to local law enforcement. If the charges are unfounded, no harm will come to the owner of the business, and it will be better for them in the long run if the police check them out and find nothing wrong, especially if there are rumors flying around the community about them.

### Sample “Red Flags” of an illicit massage business

- The landlord of the massage business states that the tenet is an overseas company.
- The landlord of the massage business reports that they pay their “in cash.”
- People that work near the massage business state that they believe the women “live” on site.
- The massage business is open late at night.
- The massage business has no female clients.
- None of the massage therapists speak English, or speak very little.
- There are security cameras facing the outside of the building (to warn if police are coming).
- Is the business listed on questionable websites like craigslist.com or backpage.com?
- Are the massage prices ridiculously low compared to the local going rate?

These are just a few **possible** red flags that might indicate a local massage business is using forced labor. Keep in mind, these are just possible red flags and should not be taken as a positive sign of anything. There are many wonderful Day Spas run by immigrants pursuing the American dream. Their

English might not be great, and they might be undercutting their competition to get ahead, that doesn't mean they are engaged in human trafficking. It just means it might be worth a second look.

These are all possible red flags that indicate a massage business might be illicit. There are also possible red flags that indicate a woman might be a victim of human trafficking.

### **Possible red flags of a trafficking victim**

- She appears to be under someone's control? Escorted by a man or an older woman that is clearly not a relative?
- She has visible bruises, especially “come along bruises” [31] Does she have excessive scars or fresh cuts or burns?
- She has little or no contact with friends or family.
- She claims to be a massage therapist, but has little knowledge of anatomy or the proper name of massage strokes (tapotement, effleurage, etc).
- Will only take cash for a massage, pedicure, facial, etc.
- Appears distressed if she doesn't get a tip.
- Does not manage her own money or money is largely controlled by someone else.
- Is not in control of her own identification or travel documents.
- She works excessive hours.
- Does she live at her worksite? Does she live with her coworkers or her employer? That's not typical!
- Has little/no English language skills or knowledge of the local community.
- Appears to have little privacy or are rarely alone.
- Has visible injuries or scars, such as cuts, bruises, or burns.

- May have injuries around the head, face, and mouth from being struck in the head or face. (Sex slaves' scars tend to be hidden, as on the lower back).
- Has an untreated illness or infections. Examples: Diabetes, cancer, TB.
- Has poor health and/or diseases associated with unsanitary living conditions.
- Uses drugs – victims are often given drugs to keep them dependent.
- Has STDs, HIV/Aids, pelvic pain/inflammation, rectal trauma, urinary difficulties, abdominal or genital trauma.
- Exhibits submissive behavior or fearful behavior in the presence of others.
- Exhibits emotional distress such as depression, anxiety, panic attacks, confusion, phobias, disorientation, self-inflicted injuries or suicide attempts.
- Is branded with a tattoo of a man's name.
- Exhibits feelings of helplessness, shame, humiliation, shock, denial, or disbelief.
- Performs "out call" massage at hotels, motels and without a portable table (or bolster, massage creme/oil or anything else you would need if she were actually a massage therapist).

As with the possible red flags for a business, ***none of these are definitely*** signs that a woman is a victim of human trafficking, but they are enough to raise concerns.

If you visit a massage establishment or a spa and you see some of these red flags there is nothing wrong with making the call to law enforcement.

If you meet a woman that has some of these red flags that she might be a victim of trafficking, remember that she will most likely be very reluctant to talk about it. If you ask her if she needs help or if she is being forced to work without pay or forced to do sexual acts, she will probably deny it. They are conditioned to do that, so a better tactic is to be friendly and conversational.

If she is willing to talk to you, the following questions can be helpful:

- Can you leave your job or house when you want?
- Where did you get those bruises or is anyone hurting you?
- Do you get paid for your employment? Is it fair? How many hours do you work?
- (If foreign national) How did you get to the U.S. and is it what you expected?
- Are you being forced to do anything you don't want to do?
- Are you or your family being threatened?
- Do you live with or near your employer? Does your employer provide you housing? Are there locks on doors or windows from outside?
- Do you owe debt to anyone?

If you suspect they are a victim of human trafficking, take the following actions:

Ask the person if you can help them find a safe place to go immediately.

If they need time, create an action plan with them to get to a safe place when they are ready.

### **IMPORTANT SAFETY TIP**

If you notice suspicious activity in your community, call the ICE Tip Line at 1-866-DHS-2-ICE or report tips online.

Do not confront anyone that you suspect of being the perpetrator of human trafficking (this does not include the victims, obviously).

It's also important to remember that actions taken by you should not include anything that would potentially harm trafficking victims, such as attempting to go in and investigate an IMB yourself, or setting up a protest outside an IMB. The goal is to move not towards quick-fix solutions, but toward lasting systemic change.

### **Offer to cooperate with Law Enforcement**

If you notify your local law enforcement of a business or situation that you feel may involve human trafficking be very specific about the red flags you have observed. In this instance, your knowledge of the massage field can be very helpful. For example, if you know that a “massage therapist” is visiting a motel routinely with no equipment as described in the red flag above, let the police know what they should be taking with them, and why it is suspicious.

### **Raise public awareness**

You should shut down “happy endings” jokes immediately, even among your friends. If a friend makes a “happy ending joke” take the opportunity to share what you know about human trafficking in IMBs. If you see one in a movie or on TV, write a letter or use social media to call it out.

Call out your local media (the press) when they expose potential victims. When you see an article reporting on a “prostitution arrest” at an IMB, and it shares the photos, names, ages, or any other identifying information of potential victims, write a letter to the editor asking the newspaper to recognize that human trafficking is common in IMBs and that the news outlet should adopt a policy that protects potential victim identities.

Get involved in local politics. You can call your city council or even your state representative to suggest victim-centered, exploiter-focused approach to eliminating human trafficking in IMBs. Make sure you let them know that NEW MASSAGE REGULATIONS are not the answer! IMBs do not follow the existing laws and rules, so adding more burdens to legitimate massage therapists is not helpful.

## **Summary of Human Trafficking: Awareness and Reporting**

Ultimately, ending trafficking in IMBs begins with understanding that this is all of our problem and that we are all part of the solution.

Do your best to support services for survivors. This might mean making a donation to your local service providers individually, or you can encourage your workplace or social groups to consider a donation, to ensure that service providers have the resources they need to help survivors of IMB trafficking.

It is also up to each and every one of us to examine our complacency when it comes to businesses in your community that may be utilizing human trafficking. We can ignore the scourge of modern slavery in our midst or we can call it out, and call it unacceptable, and do something about it. Human trafficking in illicit massage businesses is complicated, and law enforcement can't do it without the eyes and ears of people like us, who know what professional massage is supposed to look like.

## **Certificate of Completion and Transcript**

In order to receive your certificate of completion and an updated transcript for this course you must complete and pass the quiz.

Once we have received your quiz we will generate your certificate and transcript and both will be emailed to you. If you completed the last quiz during our business hours (Monday-Friday 8:00 am-5:00 pm Pacific Standard Time) it should be emailed to you within a few minutes.

If you complete the last quiz after business hours, or on a weekend it will still be emailed to you as quickly as possible. We check the system every hour until midnight most days so it should go out within an hour of you taking it.

If you take the last quiz after midnight you will probably have to wait until the next morning, we do sleep.

Please give us a full 24 hours before you call us if you have not received your certificate and transcript. We pride ourselves on being very fast, but if there is a condition beyond our control (the Internet Service Provider is down, etc) it may take us longer than usual.

Also please be aware that many people wait until the last minute to do their courses. For this reason, the last few days of the month (28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, etc) are usually very, very busy times for us so our turn around time may be a little slower-but it should still be within 24 hours.

If it has been more than 24 hours and you still have not received your emailed certificate, by all means call us! The number is (209) 777-6305.

## **Lost Certificates and Transcripts**

If you need another copy of your documents emailed to you we will gladly do that for free at any time, just go to the contact page on our website and ask for it.

## **Course Evaluation**

We would like to hear some feedback from you. You can complete the evaluation online by clicking this link:

<http://www.sasionline.com/courseevaluation.html>

If you are using the “embedded” version of this course you will not be able to click the link above but there should be one you can access on the webpage itself.

Thanks for taking our course; we really appreciate your business and we hope you come back to us next time you need continuing education hours.

We would also love it if you would “Like us” on facebook, you can find us at [www.facebook.com/beyondmassageschool](http://www.facebook.com/beyondmassageschool).

## **Errata**

If you found a typo PLEASE LET US KNOW what page it is on and the paragraph and we will fix it ASAP. This book has 45,000 words in the course content alone. Some of those are going to be misspelled. We’re not perfect, but we strive to be- so help us out.

## **Help and Technical Support**

We have worked hard to make this course as easy to use as possible, but it does rely on technology and sometimes there are factors that are out of our control (like your local internet provider, your computer, your browser version, the device you are using etc).

**If for some reason you are not able to access the quiz you can call us and let us know, and we will problem solve it for you. We have office hours, Monday-Friday 8:00 am-5:00 pm PST but you can call or email for help at any time after hours, I monitor the system every hour until I go to sleep, so call if you need to and I will do my best to help you. The number is (209) 777-6305.**

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[31] A "Come along bruise" is a bruise on the upper arm, forearm, or neck that is clearly in the shape of fingers. It is evidence of being pulled in a direction against the persons will.