

# Stop Trafficking !

Anti-Human Trafficking Newsletter



Awareness

Advocacy

Action

August 2018 Vol. 16 No. 08

This issue highlights the role money plays in various types of human trafficking and in efforts to find perpetrators.



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## Follow the Money

### Adoption Fraud

Two U.S. families each decided to adopt Ugandan orphans in order to give them a better life. The Davises, a couple from Ohio with four children of their own, adopted Namata from the *God's Mercy Orphanage*. Stacey and Shawn Wells, a West Virginia couple with two

children, also adopted a 7-year old girl, Violah, from the same orphanage. In both cases they had gone through an adoption agency in Strongsville, OH, the *European Adoption Consultants (EAC)*, founded by Margaret Cole. Cole was greatly admired for her ability to place foreign-born children with good families around the U.S. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K8-meQDiedA>)

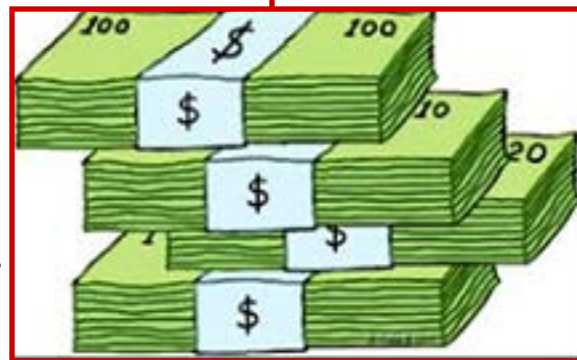
In each case the EAC agent had explained to the prospective parents that the girls had been neglected, unloved and abused by unfit mothers, who were willing to give over parental rights to adoptive parents.

But as the orphan girls adjusted to life in the U.S. and improved in their ability to speak English, the adoptive parents began to sense

Adoption cont. pg. 2

### Orphan Fraud

There are an estimated eight million children residing in orphanages internationally and four out of five children in these orphanages are not orphans. It is well documented that many of these children are taken from their families by recruiters



and sold into orphanages for the purpose of profit. These children are known as 'paper orphans' and their plight is global.

In 2003, *Save the Children* reported that 85% of children in orphanages in Uganda had identifiable and traceable family, while in Ghana, the number of child care homes had significantly grown from 5 in the 1990's to over 110 in 2010 correlating with news reports that, 'running an orphanage in Ghana has become a business enterprise, a highly lucrative and profitable venture,' and that, 'children's welfare at these orphanages has become secondary to the profit motive.'

Orphanages have also been known to actively recruit for children. In Nepal, children are removed from their biological families under the guise of education, and placed in orphanages

Orphans cont. pg. 3



## Awareness

### Adoption *cont. from pg. 1*

something was not right. Each child spoke fondly of a loving and attentive mother back in Uganda. Viola, for example, shared that she and her mom would go to church together, cook together, and her mom always walked with her to school. She described the day she and her sister were taken away from their mother. *"Her description of her home just did not match the EAC paperwork,"* Stacey Wells recounted.

They sought help and found an agency in Uganda that worked to reunite children with their parents. Keren Riley, a UK native, had lived in Uganda since 2010 and operated the *Reunite* agency. She had set up a *GoFundMe* page (<https://www.gofundme.com/7cp4dc>) to share stories of reunification and gain help from donors. In September 2016, Shawn Wells looked at the Facebook page of *Reunite*. It had the story of a woman, who said her children were taken away against her will. Shawn called his wife over to the computer. They were shocked. *"That's Viola's mother,"* Stacey said. *"That's her."*

The Davises too, with the help of *Reunite*, were able to set up a Skype call for Namata with her mother. During that conversation the Davises learned that the mother had no idea her child had been adopted and that she no longer had parental rights. Namata cried, saying, *"My mother was tricked."*

The mothers of Namata and Viola told that they had learned through a village member that their daughters could go to the U.S. for an education and then return home to help their families. It was an answer to a dream, since in both cases the women's husbands had died and they were left to care for their children on their

own. They had no idea they had been tricked, had sent their daughters to an orphanage, and had given over parental rights.

Riley from *Reunite* confirmed that in Uganda local facilitators prey on vulnerable mothers, often widows, promising educational opportunities for their children. These traffickers included police, lawyers, teachers, and local leaders. Complicating matters, there is no word for "adoption" in the language many Ugandan villagers speak, so the mothers were easily deceived.

The Davises determined that they would do the right thing and give Namata back to her biological mother. They turned to CNN for help. CNN investigated and found that many children were being taken from their homes in Uganda on the promise of better schooling, placed into orphanages even though they were not orphans, and sold for as much as \$15,000 each to unsuspecting American families.

Both the Davises and the Welles recalled, when they had first gotten the call from EAC, the agent had been very abrupt and demanded an immediate confirmation of their intent to adopt. The Davises realized that the referral form had been dated exactly one week after the call from EAC saying Namata was available for adoption. Their adopted daughter had still been at home and was only taken to the orphanage after EAC had found a "buyer." The Ugandan government would later



determine that the referral form had been forged and was not actually signed by Ugandan police.

The U.S. State Department said EAC "failed to adequately supervise

its providers in foreign countries to ensure that they didn't engage in the sale, abduction, exploitation or trafficking of children." EAC had exhibited "a pattern of serious, willful or grossly negligent failure to comply" with standards for international adoption and that it failed safety procedures that prevent "solicitation of bribes" and "fraudulently obtaining birth parent consent." According to the U.S. State Department, EAC failed to take the proper steps to make sure birth parents consented to the termination of their parental rights in accordance with applicable laws. *"Failure to provide adequate supervision contributed to many of the violations."*

Four months after the State Department took action against EAC, the Ugandan government shut down *God's Mercy Orphanage*. (<http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2017/images/08/07/ministry.letter.pdf>) It charged the orphanage with "trafficking of children," "operating the children's home illegally" and "processing guardianship orders fraudulently." The government also found that all of the guardianship orders processed for children from *God's Mercy Orphanage* were done through a Ugandan law firm. Their lawyer denied any wrongdoing by the orphanage and insisted that neither she nor EAC ever trafficked children.

A study from 2015 by the Ugandan government, sponsored by UNICEF, found that Ugandan parents were being "bribed" and "deceived," often with financial incentives, and that the orphanages were complicit. The report showed orphanages did not always properly verify information about children's histories before taking them in.

The Ohio attorney general's office filed suit in June 2017 to dissolve the EAC adoption agency altogether. (<https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/3765897/EAC-Lawsuit.pdf>)

The State Department allegations effectively brought to a close an agency that had placed more than 2,000 children from a dozen countries, including Democratic Republic of Congo, Guatemala, Haiti, Russia and Uganda. Tax records from 2000 to 2015 show that

Adoption *cont. pg. 3*



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## Awareness

### Adoption *cont. from pg. 2*

EAC reported more than \$76.1 million in revenue and more than \$76.3 million in expenses over that period.

CNN was unable to interview Cole, but did find Debra Parris, who had identified herself to Namata's adoptive parents as the director of EAC's African adoption program. In videos ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-AMc4-EG\\_TY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-AMc4-EG_TY)) Parris said, "I take five or six sets of parents with me and get to see children experience their parents for the first time. For us, that is a reward at the end of the day." But when CNN questioned her, she was no longer willing to talk. She denied being EAC's Africa head and having a role in organizing Ugandan adoptions. Instead, she said, "There were people in Uganda who took care of adoptions." Had the adoptive and birth mothers been lied to? "No. Absolutely not," said Parris.

The Davises still speak to Namata via Skype every couple of months. The Wellses have kept in touch with Violah, too. When asked how she felt since Namata's return, her mother said with a smile, "I'm very, very, very happy." Violah's mother echoed that sentiment. "I'm very happy and very grateful." (<http://www.cnn.com/2017/10/12/health/uganda-adoptions-investigation-ac360/index.html>)



Violah's mother welcomes her daughter home and thanks Mrs. Wells.

### Orphans *cont. from pg. 1*

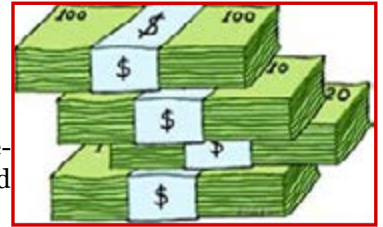
to attract orphanage volunteers and funding. In Malawi, a comprehensive national survey of 104 institutions stated that 52% of the facilities were actively involved in recruiting. While many orphanages in Cambodia have turned to 'orphanage tourism' as a way to attract more donors with almost all centers funded by overseas donors.

Kathryn van Doore, a research professor, points out that the profit in the orphanage business comes from volunteers and foreign funding. Volunteering in orphanages is a popular activity for people traveling to developing nations and, as such, orphanages are frequently established in locations that are popular with western travelers to make it easier to volunteer. Volunteering with children in orphanages is often used to attract funds. Some orphanages are established for the sole purpose of satisfying the western desire to volunteer. In these centers, children are portrayed as 'paper orphans' in order to garner international funding.

Van Doore's research argues that the recruitment of children with biological families into orphanages for the purpose of 'orphanage tourism' should be regarded as a form of child trafficking under international law. The reason that this has not been regarded as a form of child trafficking previously is because to meet the legal requirements of trafficking, the purpose of the act of recruitment must be exploitation. Exploitation is defined as, at a minimum, prostitution, sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. Thus, the argument that recruiting a child into an orphanage is child trafficking has not been an easy fit, and has not been made legally until now.

Van Doore argues that the effects on children of 'orphanage tourism' should be regarded as a form of exploitation. While volunteering in an

orphanage is usually regarded as an



admissible activity, in fact it causes children a lot of harm. Children in orphanages are often trained to perform traditional dancing and forced to perform for visitors and volunteers. Some children are sent out to beg for funds in bars at night or hand out flyers advertising their orphanage. Some orphanage operators have deliberately kept children malnourished to attract more sympathy and thus more money. Even where orphanages are well run, over sixty years of research tells us that the very process of institutionalization is harmful to a child's development.

Orphans and orphanages have become a business in some developing nations. Like any business, the demand for the product, in this case, orphanage tourism, has driven the market. To satisfy the demand, children are taken from families with the promise of education or returning in the future, and manufactured or produced as paper orphans to reside in orphanages and solicit funding. The aim of van Doore's research is to illustrate that this unnecessary separation should be categorized as a form of trafficking, with the demand driver for such trafficking into orphanages being 'orphanage tourism.'

(<http://compact.org/resource-posts/does-volunteering-in-an-orphanage-create-a-demand-for-child-trafficking/>)

Kathryn van Doore is an international children's rights lawyer and an academic at Griffith Law School, Australia. She researches the intersections of child rights, institutionalization and human trafficking. She is a co-founder of *Forget Me Not*, an international non-governmental organization focused on child protection and the deinstitutionalization of children in Nepal, Uganda and India. (<http://forgetmenot.org.au>) Her article, "Paper orphans: Exploring child trafficking for the purpose of orphanages," appeared in the *International Journal of Children's Rights*. Vol 24, Issue 2, pgs. 378-407, 2016



## Awareness

## Scholarship Fraud

In 2017 Chab Dai's (<http://chab-dai.org>) Case Management Support Project worked on a case that stood apart from other cases. It involved 19 well-educated students, both youth and adults, females and males. They were recruited from Cambodia to study *Clothing and Fashion Design* at a Chinese university under scholarships and internships through Ipat, a private Cambodian institute. Ipat had a MOU with Yantai Nanshan University. The Cambodian students learned of the opportunities via radio advertising.

Each student paid \$2500 to Ipat for the four-year course. The payment was to cover passport and visa expenses and the plane fare. In return they were promised \$550 scholarships to help pay for school fees and living costs.

When they arrived in China however, they were required to work in a factory located on campus. There were no scholarships, no classes, and they only had a few hours to study the Chinese language in the evenings as they were forced to work during the day.

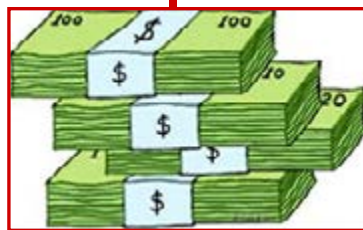
One victim described their plight, "At the university we were only allowed to study Chinese language for 1.5 hours every evening. Instead we were forced to work in the factory from 7:20AM-11:30AM and again from 1:00PM-5:20PM. We worked under very strict conditions and control. We also had to work in the weekends. We received 1500 Yuan per month. This amount was not enough to support our living costs and school fees. If we wanted to take a day off, the factory would reduce our salary. We asked the school

and factory if we could take Sundays off, but we were not allowed. If we were sick and wanted to take a sick day of, we had to have a letter from a hospital. It was all so hard. We knew that we were in trouble! Therefore, we tried to contact Mr. Simanann of Ipat, in order to solve the problem for us. However, our problems never got sorted out. Mr. Simanann promised to solve the problems with university, but he did not.

Because we could not pay the money the university required, the university delivered a letter informing us to pay on time otherwise they would take legal actions against us. Because of this letter we had to work so hard to get the required money to pay for the university. We actually did not take a single course in *Clothing and Fashion Design*. We realized that something was wrong and nothing was like Mr. Simanann had told us. Everything was an empty promise.

"Eight of us managed to escape and reached the Cambodian Consulate by train after one day of travel. At the Consulate we were provided with a place to sleep and enough food. We requested our Consulate to settle the issues for us. An official from the university came to the Consulate and they agreed that we should not pay for the university fee and also that they would pay us salary for the time that we had worked in the factory."

The staff of Chab Dai went to the International Airport of Phnom Penh to meet and accompany the students to the Anti-Trafficking Police for the purpose of lodging complaints against the director and owner of Ipat, who was arrested by Phnom Penh Anti-Human Trafficking Police. He has been detained and awaits further legal procedures. (<http://chabdai.org/blog/2017/1/5/when-well-educated-students-gets-trafficked-to-a-chinese-university>)



## Drug Treatment Fraud

In December 2017 *NBC Left Field* reported on an investigative study of fraudulent 'sober' homes and addiction treatment centers in Florida. Since the investigation began in 2015 over 30 owners or workers in such facilities have been arrested and charged. When the *Affordable Care Act* went into effect there was the addition of a provision for mental health parity. Insurance companies were to reimburse for sexually-transmitted disease (STD) tests, for drug addiction testing and treatment, as well as for massage therapy.

But traffickers realized, if a 'so-called' treatment facility obtained one \$30 testing kit from a local pharmacy, it could provide insurance companies with proof of the client's addiction and treatment results and gain reimbursements. Should a relapse occur, the insurance benefits began anew when the client re-entered treatment.

For five urine tests on one client in a week the insurance payment could reach \$7,500. With six addicts tested, reimbursements would reach \$45,000 per week or \$2,340,000 per year, if unregulated. Traffickers could hold clients against their will and supply them with drugs so they remain drug-dependent. They could also use these clients for sexual encounters against their will in local motels.

So began the phenomenon of 'body snatchers' or 'junkie hunters' and the movement of addicts into and out of 'sober' home facilities in Florida, termed the 'Florida shuffle.' The Delray Beach 'Florida Shuffle' has since spread to other states across the U.S.

One victim told her story in a 13-minute video from NBC News: <https://www.facebook.com/NBCNews/videos/299554727200456/> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PsqvllyTQwY>



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## Awareness

### Labor Exploitation in Private Prisons

Within the debate of penal labor, one commonly ignored aspect is the use of labor in contract facilities, also known as private prisons, which account for 11% of federal inmates. Given the profit-making nature of private prisons, there is a question of whether penal labor in private facilities is exploitative.

Despite having 5% of the world's population, the U.S. holds 25% of the world's prisoners and has the highest incarceration rate in the world. On the national level, the *Federal Bureau of Prisons* (FBOP) began contracting with private prisons in 1997 to deal with issues of overcrowding and increasing incarceration rates. Today, the FBOP has contracts with eleven privately operated facilities across the country, run by three corporations: *CoreCivic* (formerly the *Corrections Corporation of America – CCA*), *Geo Group Inc.*, and *Management and Training Corporation*.

Unlike the public prison system, private prisons operate as a for-profit business and increase profits by cutting the cost of prisoner accommodation. Private prisons argue that they “save taxpayers an average of 5% to 15% of costs [on prisons].” Yet, numerous studies show the opposite and journalistic accounts, as well as federal audits, indicate that private prisons provide poorer quality services.

Across the country, including in private prisons, inmates are required to work if they are physically able. Most perform institutional maintenance, such as food service, groundskeeping, housekeeping, and administrative

services, all of which contribute to the day-to-day operation of the institution. However, despite working at least seven hours a day and working jobs that would otherwise be paid minimum wage outside of prison, inmates are paid between \$0.12-0.40 per hour for these duties.

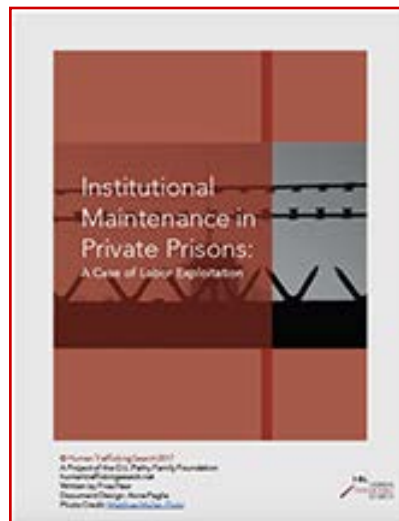


Photo: ([https://www.bop.gov/inmates/custody\\_and\\_care/work\\_programs.jsp](https://www.bop.gov/inmates/custody_and_care/work_programs.jsp))

In any other for-profit corporation, individuals who maintain the daily operation of the corporation's facility would be required by law to be paid minimum wage for their work. However, private prisons have managed an exception to the rule.

In 2017 Firas Nasr of *Human Trafficking Search* published a study, *'Institutional Maintenance in Private Prisons: A Case of Labor Exploitation'* ([http://humantraffickingsearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Institutional-Maintenance-in-Private-Prisons\\_Final.pdf](http://humantraffickingsearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Institutional-Maintenance-in-Private-Prisons_Final.pdf)).

The study found that the required working conditions outlined by the FBOP for private prisons violate



international labor standards. In the case where an inmate refuses to work a job, they may face disciplinary action. Journalist accounts have documented this in local facilities, indicating that inmates face considerable repercussions for rejecting a job assignment, including jobs that may be dangerous to them.

Human rights advocates attest that *Immigration and Customs Enforcement's* (ICE) private-prison contractors are also running a scheme that employs immigrant “illegal aliens” as a captive workforce in federal detention centers.

One detainee testified about daily labor at Aurora from 2012 to 2015, when he first did “cleaning work” without pay, and was then promoted to a \$1-a-day job cleaning and waxing the floors. He recalled,

“The guards told us that if anyone didn't do the work, they'd be put in segregation.” He saw 10 detainees placed in confinement for failing to “voluntarily” scrub their pods.

A recent class-action lawsuit against a San Diego facility managed by the private contractor *CoreCivic* (formerly *Corrections Corporation of America*) described roughly 100 immigrants doing tasks like laundry and managing the commissary shop, for the standard dollar-per-day wage. They also allegedly worked “voluntarily” to clean their own pods without pay, under the threat of “severe mental pain and suffering,” inflicted through “solitary confinement” and “physical restraint.” Lawyers argued that this “voluntary” system violated federal and California human-trafficking laws.

In a 2012 investigation of four ICE detention facilities in Georgia, the ACLU of Georgia described ICE detainees' being held in unsanitary, inhumane, isolating conditions, and regularly forced to work full-time for about \$1 to \$3 a day. Because of sparse rations, ACLU reported, “some detainees began to work in the kitchen just so they could eat more.... one detainee lost 68 pounds.” Their “volunteering,” in other words, involved literally working for food.



## Awareness

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### Prisons *cont. from pg. 5*

According to the *Project on Government Oversight* (POGO) prison labor routinely occurs in both government-run and privately contracted facilities. But a key difference is that federal prison authorities report extensively to the public on conditions of detention. Prison contractors, as private businesses, have relatively little oversight and operate opaquely (even as they profit massively from government contracts).



The Thirteenth Amendment explicitly states that people who have been convicted of crimes can be forced to do labor. But detainees should not fall under the same category and lawyers argue that they deserve minimum wage for their work.

The ICE detainee workforce may swell in the coming months. In just the first half of the year, ICE arrests rose by some 40%, with a sharp rise in arrests of individuals without criminal convictions. Yet relatively stagnant deportation rates suggest more are languishing in detention facilities. DACA recipients, losing the reprieve they were granted under Obama, may find themselves uprooted from their legal jobs and put to work cleaning cell blocks. Compared to the Obama administration's more limited enforcement priorities, planned mass raids may target an unprecedentedly broad range of noncitizens, including ordinary families and even asylum seekers. Meanwhile, reports of detainee abuse and inhumane treatment persist, and deaths in detention have spiked, mostly in private facilities.

The private-prison lobby anticipates a 450% expansion of ICE-contracted detention capacity, focused on family detention, according to the San Diego lawsuit, described as a “*get into jail and work for free card*” for the prison industry.

The 2017 Nasr’ study makes recommendations on how to rectify such abuses (see pg. 8).

(<https://www.thenation.com/article/ices-captive-immigrant-labor-force/>)

(<http://humantraffickingsearch.org/labor-exploitation-in-private-prisons-a-blog-series/>)

([http://humantraffickingsearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Institutional-Maintenance-in-Private-Prisons\\_Final.pdf](http://humantraffickingsearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Institutional-Maintenance-in-Private-Prisons_Final.pdf))

### Elder Guardianship Abuse

The victims are seniors. The abusers may include financial predators and agents of the *Elder Guardianship* system — attorneys, professional guardians, medical experts, and others who are paid out of the senior’s assets.

Anyone may file to deem a senior incapacitated. The entire process from filing an incapacity petition to plenary guardianship, where all rights are removed, can happen within days.

There are good judges but many are overworked and some actively aid the exploitation. Once judged as incapacitated, it is almost impossible to reverse that decision. The senior’s assets are used to pay those assigned to oversee his/her care.

### Florida Guardianship System

*Petitioner:* Anyone may petition the court to find an elder incapacitated and name a guardian. It can be the *Florida Department of Adult Protective Services*, which investigates anonymous tips alleging elder abuse or neglect. It can also be a family member, or a facility providing care for the elder.

*Family Members:* They have priority over guardianship. If family members disagree, or are considered

unfit, a professional guardian is usually named instead. Often family members are not notified of a guardianship hearing until it is too late to intervene.

*Probate Court Judges:* They handle guardianships, trusts, and estates. They have power to make decisions about a person’s capacity without having to meet that person. They also approve all fee petitions and many of the guardian’s actions.

*The “Alleged Incapacitated Person:”*

If determined by a judge to be incapacitated, the person loses all rights to make personal and financial decisions and becomes a ward of the state. This individual’s assets are used to pay the fees of all attorneys, medical experts, and the guardian.



*Guardian:* The judge can appoint a “*plenary guardian*” — who makes all decisions for the rest of the ward’s life — or a “*limited guardian*” — who might be responsible only for finances, or be a “*guardian of the person,*” responsible for medical care, housing and other matters of daily life.

*Petitioner’s Attorney:* Files the paperwork and arranges for the examining committee to visit the person. Locates a guardian who agrees to take the case. This lawyer remains involved until the guardian takes over and the case is closed.

*Examining Committee:* In Florida, the panel typically consists of a court-approved medical doctor, nurse and social worker, who must agree on a finding of incapacity. In Sarasota County, the doctor usually is paid \$325 and the others get \$200 for the visit and report. They may also testify in court hearings.

*Guardian’s Attorney:* Asks the court to approve such actions as the liquidation of assets, and handling of any legal questions.

*Ward’s Attorney:* The judge appoints an attorney to represent the prospective ward. The Florida guardianship statute gives an individual the right to choose an attorney, but in practice

Guardianship *cont. pg. 7*



## Advocacy

### Guardianship

cont. from pg. 6

the judge can reject that choice in favor of someone who specializes in guardianships. It is rare for the initial court-appointed attorney to ask a judge later to re-open the case or restore an individual's rights.

**Additional Attorneys:** If a guardianship case is complex – and the ward has enough assets to pay for them – lawyers can be retained by the family or ward to reopen the case and try to reverse a judge's orders. The *petitioner* and the *guardian* or their *attorneys* can also hire additional legal representation to handle aspects of the case, at the ward's expense.



(<https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.documentcloud.org/documents/1376061/the-elder-guardianship-system-in-florida.pdf>)

### Largest Case of Victim Restitution

In May 2018 a woman, who was trafficked for forced labor for 10 years across the United States, was awarded \$8 million by a federal judge in Kansas – the largest sum ever awarded to a trafficking victim in the country.

Kendra Ross, now 27, was exploited by a group named *'The Value Creators'* (TVC), originally the *'United Nation of Islam.'* TVC headquarters is based in Kansas City. Royall Jenkins, the head of TVC, governs all aspects of members' lives -- where they live and work, how they speak, what they eat and whom they marry. He claims that he was abducted by angels or scientists, who took him through the galaxy and

told him he was *"The Supreme Being."* No lawyers showed up to represent Jenkins or TVC at the trial.

Ross was separated from her mother at age 12 and forced to work in the organization's bakeries and restaurants in Kansas City, Atlanta, Newark, Harlem, Tennessee, and Ohio. Later, when she was 20, TVC pushed her into a forced marriage with another member of the group. Ross was finally able to escape TVC when she was 21, finding a shelter for trafficked victims.

Betsy Hudson, Ross' lawyer, said, *"They stripped her of 19 years of her life, forced her to work for no pay, and subjected her to inhumane conditions,"* adding that Ross suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder. At trial her lawyers sought damages for her ten years of unpaid labor.

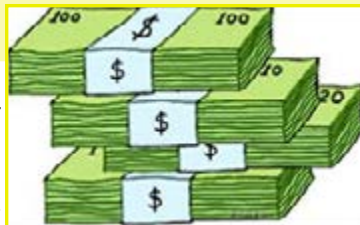
The judge awarded Ross \$453,517 for restitution, \$2.92 million for emotional distress, \$3.37 million for punitive damages, and nearly \$1.2 million for racketeering damages and unpaid

over-

time. After she testified, U.S. District Judge

Daniel D. Crabtree told her, *"The way you were treated was despicable. It is not the way we treat each other in America. It is not the way we treat each other in Kansas."* Then Crabtree stepped down from the bench, walked over to Ross and shook her hand. He said, *"It is an honor and privilege to meet you."*

Since 2003 federal laws permit victims of trafficking to file civil suits against their captors. Martina Vandenberg, founder of the *Human Trafficking Legal Center*, said her group has tracked nearly 280 suits involving human trafficking, and Ross's case was *"the highest single-victim verdict that*



*we've heard of."* In the Center's civil suit database, Vandenberg said 93% were related to claims of forced labor.

After the verdict, Ross issued a statement saying, *"To all of the members who are still a part of The Value Creators, and those who have left, it is not too late to get out, to be free and get help, justice and closure."*

(<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/true-crime/wp/2018/05/30/human-trafficking-victim-forced-to-work-10-years-for-no-pay-award-ed-8-million-by-federal-judge/>)

### University Researcher Links Sex Ads to Bitcoin Data



In August 2017 it was reported that Rebecca Portnoff, a doctoral candidate in computer science at the University of California, Berkeley, developed the first automated techniques to identify adult ads tied to human trafficking rings by linking the ads to public information from Bitcoin, a cryptocurrency.

As websites for online classified ads selling sex, such as Backpage and Craigslist, are widely used by traffickers and Bitcoin is the primary payment method for online sex ads, Portnoff's effort is an important first step toward developing a set of freely available tools to help police and non-profits identify victims of sexual exploitation on websites.

Without the new tools, law enforcement efforts to trace and disband human trafficking rings are hindered by the pseudonymous nature of adult ads, the tendency of ring leaders to employ multiple phone numbers and email addresses to avoid detection and the difficulty in determining which online ads reflect willing participants in the sex trade and which reflect victims forced into prostitution.

The technology helps answer, *'Is the pimp behind that post for Backpage also behind this post on Craigslist? Is he the same man who keeps receiving Bitcoin for trafficked girls?'* The work relies on a machine-learning algorithm

Bitcoin cont. pg. 8



## Action

### Bitcoin *cont. from pg. 7*



rooted in stylometry, which is the analysis of an individual's writing style to identify authorship; and then on a second algorithm that utilizes publicly available information from the Bitcoin mempool and blockchain, the ledgers that record pending and completed transactions.

Stylometry can provide confirmation of authorship with high confidence, and, in the case of online trafficking ads, allows researchers and police to identify cases in which separate advertisements for different sex workers share a single author: a telltale sign of a trafficking ring. And, as all Bitcoin users maintain accounts, called wallets, tracing payment of ads that have the same author to a unique wallet could help identify ownership of the ads, and thus the individuals or groups involved in human trafficking.

Portnoff and her collaborators deployed their automated author identification techniques on a sampling of 10,000 real adult ads on Backpage, a four-week scrape of all adult ads that appeared on the advertising website during that time, as well as on several dozen ads they themselves placed as a point of comparison. They reported an 89% true-positive rate for grouping ads by author and a high rate of success in linking the ads they placed themselves to the corresponding transactions in the Bitcoin blockchain.

([http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-08/20/c\\_136539698.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-08/20/c_136539698.htm))



**Toll-Free 24/7 Hotline**  
**National Human Trafficking**  
**Resource Center**  
**1.888.3737.888**  
**Text "BeFree" (233733)**

### Action for Prison Reform

#### Recommendations for Stakeholders

- Hold the *Corrections Corporation of America (CCA)*, *Geo Group Inc.*, and *Management and Training Corporation* accountable.
- The *Federal Bureau of Prisons (FBOP)* indicated it would stop using contract facilities. But over 100 state-contracted private facilities still operate.

#### Recommendations: FBOP

- Mandate that private prison corporations pay inmates the prevailing wage for institutional upkeep.
- Adjust the pay grades and maintenance pay to reflect current income inflation (wages remain at October 1990 levels).
- Revise required working conditions to eliminate forced labor in private (and public) facilities.

#### Recommendations: States' Departments of Corrections

- Mandate that corporations pay inmates minimum or prevailing wages for institutional upkeep.
- Eliminate contracts with private penal corporations (data shows that they are less cost effective and less quality effective).
- Require contracting companies to include in budgets the actual amount they would have to spend on institutional upkeep without inmate labor.

#### Recommendations: Anti-Trafficking Practitioners

- Demand action by the FBOP and state departments of corrections to increase inmate salaries for institutional maintenance jobs to a prevailing wage.
- Advocate ending the use of contracted facilities.
- The U.S. TIP report should consider penal labor in private prisons when determining country rankings

#### Recommendations: Academics

- Conduct research on the *Prison Industrial Complex* and the private prison industry to highlight unjust issues and advocate for reform.
- Demand colleges and universities divest from the prison industrial complex and private prison industry.
- Academics involved with anti-trafficking

### Informative Web Sites: (Each contains information related to human trafficking)

#### Exploitative Adoptions

<https://clevelandmagazine.com/in-the-cle/the-read/articles/families-in-crisis-when-foreign-adoption-goes-wrong>

#### Slave Labor in Prisons

<https://www.economist.com/news/united-states/21718897-idaho-prisoners-roast-potatoes-kentucky-they-sell-cattle-prison-labour>

<http://correctionalnews.com/2018/01/09/corecivic-class-action-tennessee/>  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/04/opinion/migrants-detention-forced-labor.html>

#### Guardianship Abuse

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-teri-kennedy/is-elder-guardianship-a-n\\_b\\_11970144.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-teri-kennedy/is-elder-guardianship-a-n_b_11970144.html)

#### Virtual Currencies and Financial Crime:

#### Challenges & Opportunities

[https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/rusi\\_op\\_virtual\\_currencies\\_and\\_financial\\_crime.pdf](https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/rusi_op_virtual_currencies_and_financial_crime.pdf)

organizations should integrate advocacy and event-planning around prison reform and ethical labor practices in private (and public) facilities.

#### Recommendations: Private Companies and Contractors

- *Companies* concerned about the ethical or public relations implications of having prison labor in their supply chains (i.e. via goods that are manufactured in prisons or by contractors using prison labor) should find alternatives to prison labor or ensure that their suppliers comply with minimum standards in terms of wages and working conditions for prison labor.
- *Investors* should divest from the private prison industry and other industries that fuel the for-profit prison industrial complex.

([http://humantraffickingsearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Institutional-Maintenance-in-Private-Prisons\\_Final.pdf](http://humantraffickingsearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Institutional-Maintenance-in-Private-Prisons_Final.pdf))

**Stop Trafficking!** is dedicated exclusively to fostering an exchange of information among USCSAHT members, organizations and concerned persons, collaborating to eliminate all forms of human trafficking.

To access back issues, go to:  
<http://www.stopenslavement.org/past-issues-chronological.html>  
 To contribute information, please contact:  
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