Chapter 2: The Business of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking

The marketplace of victimization operates according to the economic laws of supply and demand, much like any legitimate market. As in any market, supply and demand for commercial sexual services are correlated; supply, while it can and will affect the market structure, increases to meet a growing demand for sexual services throughout the world. Evidence suggests that supply is becoming younger in response to buyers’ demands for youth due to perceptions of healthiness and vulnerability.  

The sex trafficking of U.S. children is driven by demand for the commercial sex acts they perform. The supply of women and children in the sex industry serves as the fuel for this criminal slave trade. Buyers of commercial sex services present the demand, traffickers move victims like products to the markets to satisfy the demand, and facilitators allow the trade to occur in a myriad of ways. As the demand increases, traffickers must increase the supply of victims. The buyer views the victim as a dehumanized product for immediate consumption and disposal. If buyers were not seeking commercial sexual services, then sex trafficking would cease to be a profitable venture.

“I was watching the stock market last night, and I thought, you know, just from a purely cost-benefit analysis, investing in child sexual exploitation, as an exploiter, is just an incredible investment … It costs nothing to do it … and they’ll [the victims] just keep bringing in the money … It’s sickening really.”

— Sharmin Bock, Deputy District Attorney and head of Human Exploitation and Trafficking (HEAT) Unit, Alameda County, California

In a sexually charged society that both encourages promiscuity and covets the innocence of youth, it follows that the demand for young victims will rise to meet the cultural glorification of underage sexuality. An example of the demand effect created by buyers can be found in the activities surrounding large events, such as the Sundance Film Festival held in Salt Lake City, the Ultimate Fighting Championships held in Las Vegas each year, and the Super Bowl held in different cities each year. Law enforcement noted that during these events traffickers move victims into the city in response to the expected increased demand resulting in a higher incidence rate of adults and minors arrested for prostitution in both locations.

In Atlanta, Georgia, a study was completed in 2005 on the incidence of domestic minor sex trafficking in the city. The study mapped geographic locations where the sex trafficking of minors was taking place.

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41 DEMAND: A Comparative Examination of Sex Tourism and Trafficking in Jamaica, Japan, the Netherlands, and the United States, (Shared Hope International: July 2007), pg. 15.
42 Id. at pg. 1.
43 Remarks by Sharmin Bock, Shared Hope International National Training Conference on the Sex Trafficking of America’s Youth (Dallas, Texas: September 15-16, 2008). Transcript on file with authors.
44 Snow, Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Assessment Report — Salt Lake City, Utah, pg. 71; DEMAND, (Shared Hope International: July 2007), pg. 71.
The results showed high concentrations of commercial sexual activity in areas where youth are present, such as malls and schools, but an extraordinarily high number of identified commercial sex activity was situated around adult entertainment venues, which includes strip clubs, adult video stores, etc. This study demonstrates the power that demand has in the business of domestic minor sex trafficking.46

**Who are the buyers?**

The buyers of sex from juveniles can be anyone — professionals, students, tourists, military personnel, a family member. Predators can be individuals that interact with children in the regular course of a day. Many predators are created or encouraged through online solicitations, temptations, and exploitation, leading them ultimately to act out the visual exploitation through physical sexual exploitation of children. This diversity of the buyer makes it particularly difficult to identify perpetrators. For example, Hillsborough Kids, Inc., a private foster care service in Florida, has been involved with several cases involving caregivers producing pornography of their child, mothers being paid for the sexual abuse of their child, and one case of a mother selling her child to another trafficker.47

The diversity of buyers allows them to blend into communities, making them difficult to identify. In the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Larry Hillblom, one of the founders of DHL Worldwide Express, would locate and pay mothers of prepubescent girls in several countries to contact him after their daughters’ first menstruation so he could return to deflower them. The victims were known as “Cherry Girls,” and the practice allegedly was not limited to Hillblom. The mothers were paid for the sexual exploitation of their daughters; the mothers fit the definition of a trafficker/pimp, accepting money for sex with their young daughters. Allegedly some of the “Cherry Girls” were CNMI residents.48

Buyers can also be situational in that they believe, assume, do not ask or simply do not care whether a prostituted female is an adult or a minor. They can find themselves in an environment offering commercial sex and they avail themselves of it. This may be the case with U.S. military troops, such as those in Saipan which serves as a rest and recreation spot due to its proximity to military bases in Guam and surrounding areas. In addition, military contractors providing equipment storage and readiness positioning just off the Saipan coast make regular shore visits to Saipan. Both are reported buyers of commercial sex. Participants in the CNMI assessment stated, however, that “military is not the problem,” and that they have “the prostitution problem 24/7 without the ships … the buyers are mostly tourists and some locals.”49 Exploitation crimes cannot be linked solely to sex tourism, or visiting troops; what makes these crimes so disturbing is that the buyers can be within communities, from any background, and can go relatively unnoticed by those around them.

One justification made by buyers of commercial sex is that the exchange actually “helps” the victim by providing her income; however, this “help” leaves the victim with a lifetime of physical and psychological

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46 Remarks by Stephanie Davis, Policy Advisor on Women’s Issues for Mayor of Atlanta, Georgia. Shared Hope International National Training Conference on the Sex Trafficking of America’s Youth (Dallas, Texas: September 15-16, 2008). Transcript on file with authors.

47 Reid, Joan, MHLC. Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Assessment Report — Clearwater, Florida (Shared Hope International: January 2008), pg. 43.


49 Id., pg. 67.
trauma. Furthermore, perpetrators are often systematic abusers of youth. For instance, at a homeless youth shelter in Salt Lake City, girls report regular solicitations by men at least 20 years their senior.\(^{50}\)

One form of domestic minor sex trafficking that is frequently overlooked is referred to as “survival sex.” This describes the situation of children exchanging sex acts for something the child needs to survive, such as food, water, or clothing. Runaway and homeless youth are at extremely high risk for this type of exploitation. Though some argue that there is a mutual benefit inherent in this type of commercial sexual exploitation, the fact that an adult is exercising control over a vulnerable youth to secure a sex act makes it a crime. In fact, a survey of runaway and homeless youth in Salt Lake City in February 2008 found that of the 32% of youth who had been victimized through “survival sex,” 50% indicated that they had been sought out and solicited by the adult perpetrator.\(^{51}\)

In New Orleans, groups of nomadic homeless youths known as “gutter punks” gather regularly at “the wall” located at the end of Elysian Fields by the Mississippi River on Thursday through Saturday nights. In the winter, about 30 of the average 100 people at “the wall” include vulnerable runaway girls who have aligned with a gang of tough guys to feel protected. Reportedly, the gutter punk groups will sexually exploit these girls through prostitution for money and basic needs.

An added danger for the homeless youth at “the wall” is in the form of predators from outside the homeless population. The sexual exploitation is not limited to female victims, but also can include males. Interviewees recalled a man who frequented the food lines sponsored by the Homeless Assistance Unit of the New Orleans Police Department at “the wall.” He would recruit young boys to work for his construction business, providing some minors with shelter and a job. Later it was told by the other teens at the wall that the work would turn into “some kind of sex thing.” These boys had also received services at Covenant House, a service provider for homeless youth in New Orleans with which the Homeless Assistance Unit works in partnership, but were suspended from the shelter for repeatedly violating shelter rules. This man at “the wall” preyed on the population of teenage boys who were most vulnerable and had almost nowhere else to turn.\(^{52}\)

Closely related to survival sex is the situation of “couch surfing” which is the term used for a homeless or runaway youth’s temporary utilization of the apartment or home of a friend, family member, or acquaintance for a place to sleep. This occurs when the resident of the apartment or home requires the child to engage in a sex act in order to stay.\(^{53}\) For instance, Buffalo assessment participants cited “couch surfing” as the most common situation in which minors are commercially sexually exploited.

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\(^{50}\) Snow, Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Assessment Report — Salt Lake City, Utah, pg. 56.

\(^{51}\) Id., pg. 55.


\(^{53}\) Andolina Scott, Karen, MSW, Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Assessment Report — Buffalo, New York (Shared Hope International: July 2008), pg. 37.
The Role of Technology

“With the advent of the Internet, the problem with child pornography has exploded. Ten years ago, we thought that the problem had but disappeared. The Supreme Court of the United States in the early ’80s said that child pornography is not protected speech, it’s child abuse, and as a result it disappeared from the shelves of America’s bookstores ... the adult bookstores. It was cracked down on, in terms of its distribution through the mail, so that it had all but disappeared. Then came the Internet, and with that sense of anonymity and the ability of people to connect with each other, like-minded individuals, and trade images, the problem with child pornography has exploded.”

— Ernie Allen, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

The Internet and other technological advancements have opened an avenue to commercial sexual exploitation previously unattainable by most people. Individuals viewing child pornography have found comfort in the cyber-community which brought justification and normalcy to their thoughts and desires, bonding the group together. “Anyone can be exposed to child pornography online very, very easily ... we’re growing sexual abusers. They’re growing. They’re being cultivated and nurtured and watered and fed on the Internet.”

This anonymity and community aspect to the Internet makes it a powerful tool for traffickers, buyers, and facilitators.

Before the Internet, buyers had to leave their homes to purchase pornographic materials, have photographs developed, or seek out other methods of indulging in their exploitative fantasies. Today, the widespread availability and affordability of digital cameras and video cameras, as well as the technology to develop film at home, makes the production and distribution of child pornography easy and inexpensive. Much of this homemade pornography is finding its way onto the Internet as well. With nearly 70% of Americans accessing the Internet, the accessibility to commercial sex markets on the Internet is staggering.

“65% of the johns [buyers] that go on the Internet are more responsive if the ads have age descriptors like “young” or “barely legal” attached to them — 65% are more responsive to that.”

— Kaffie McCullough, A Future. Not A Past/Juvenile Justice Fund

Furthermore, the resources buyers and traffickers have access to can expand the forms of exploitation to which youth are exposed, as reported in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands where high-powered technology normally used for scuba diving and other tourist activities was purported to be used to make pornography of local youth.
Deterring demand.

Buyers of commercial sex acts from an adult or a minor typically receive little or no penalties. The prosecution of buyers is egregiously low and those engaged in the purchase of sex acts with minors face minimal risk of criminal repercussions. Children exploited through prostitution report they typically are given a quota by their trafficker/pimp of 10 to 15 buyers per night, though some service providers report girls having been sold to as many as 45 buyers in a night at peak demand times, such as during a sports event or convention. Utilizing a conservative estimate, a domestic minor sex trafficking victim who is rented for sex acts with five different men per night, for five nights per week, for an average of five years, would be raped by 6,000 buyers during the course of her victimization through prostitution. Most buyers of sexual services from minors receive little or no punishment, while many of the child victims are arrested and charged with the crime committed against them.

One story is particularly revealing. Police in Las Vegas approached a parked truck after observing it pick up a girl. The police report reflects that the 50-year-old man was observed with $45 in cash hanging from his pocket and lotion on his hands. The 12-year-old girl stated that he was paying her for sexual services. The police arrested the girl for prostitution and sent the man on his way. Later the juvenile public defender pressed the issue with the prosecutor’s office and an arrest warrant was issued for the man but he was not able to be located. This was a crime of domestic minor sex trafficking, though to date only a few cases against buyers (“johns”) of commercial sex from a minor have been pursued under the federal law, and none have yet resulted in a conviction.59

The demand for commercial sex acts with minors typically manifested through prostitution is not considered by the majority of law enforcement officers to be a main aspect of the problem of domestic minor sex trafficking. As a result, core strategies to investigate and pursue buyers of children are not in place. In addition, law enforcement operations and investigations done at the local level are mainly focused on buyers of adult commercial sex, therefore, frequently there is no disaggregated numbers of buyers of sex from minors versus buyers of sex from adults. Buyers have also been recruited to testify in adult sex trafficking cases further insulating themselves from prosecution.60

One promising practice was found in Fort Worth, Texas, where prosecutors described a pending case involving two buyers of sex with children. The abusers were arrested and charged on a local level with aggravated kidnapping, engaging in organized criminal activity, and prostitution. The prosecutors stated that sexual assault of a minor (a second degree felony) or aggravated sexual assault of a minor (a first degree felony) charges may also be appropriate for buyers purchasing commercial sex from minors. These charges carry punishments of incarceration for two to 20 years for the second degree felony, and five to 99 years for the first degree felony.61

59 Seven indictments were secured from a federal grand jury in Kansas City, Missouri, and one in Seattle, Washington, in the first quarter of 2009.
60 Andolina Scott, Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Assessment Report — Buffalo, New York, pg. 42.
Due to the lack of initiative against buyers and the difficulty in prosecuting them, prosecutors have become creative in charging buyers or have initiated new laws to fix the gap. For example, in California, Section 675 of the California Penal Code was passed which provides an additional term of imprisonment in the state prison of one year if prosecutors can prove that the sex offense committed with a minor was in exchange for money or other consideration.

Arrests of buyers for purchasing children for sex acts through prostitution are fewer than arrests of buyers of children exploited through other forms of domestic minor sex trafficking, especially pornography. The distinction between types of commercial sexual exploitation of children is a false one as research indicates that perpetrators of sex acts with children do not limit themselves to one form. Rather, these perpetrators engage in abusive behavior in a multitude of ways that have profound traumatic and dangerous consequences for these child victims and the community at large.

While buyers are infrequently prosecuted for commercial sex acts with a minor, there have been cases where pornography has helped form a case against a perpetrator. Assessments conducted by Shared Hope International found that prosecutions of buyers of commercial sex with minors were initiated primarily in relation to child pornography, enticement, or sexual abuse and neglect of a minor. Media reviews conducted in each of the assessments consistently showed coverage of purchases of child pornography but very little reporting on the purchase of sex acts from a child exploited in prostitution.

Investigative Challenges to Arresting Buyers

When a community is willing to pursue buyers of sex with children, there are investigative challenges that must be overcome. The lack of innovative investigative methods and tools is a gap reported by law enforcement and prosecutors to Shared Hope International in each assessed location. Traditional investigation methods to capture prostitution and solicitation involve the use of decoys — undercover police officers — placed in prostitution zones to nab prospective johns. However, a barrier to the use of this technique exists because of the inability to legally place a minor as a decoy. This permits an automatic legal defense by a buyer who can claim that he solicited an adult decoy. Thus, it is necessary that police officers interrupt a commercial transaction in progress with a minor in order to identify the buyer of a child.

— Alexandra Gelber, Assistant Deputy Chief of the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, U.S. Department of Justice


prostituted child. It is rare that a commercial sex act is interrupted in progress. Nevertheless, even when it is, such as in a case in Las Vegas in which a 12-year-old was arrested with a 50-year-old man, cash in plain sight, lotion on his hands, and a confession by the buyer, prosecutors tasked with prosecuting the juvenile for prostitution had to push prosecutors aggressively to bring a case against the buyer.\textsuperscript{64}

Law enforcement reported that a major challenge in identifying buyers lies in the difficulty in verifying the age of young women as minors. Age verification is made difficult by the widespread use of fraudulent identification provided to the girls by the traffickers/pimps to establish their age as an adult. The first arrest of a prostituted minor is critical for proper identification — if entered into the system as an adult, her identity is altered and subsequent arrests reinforce the false identity. Steps are being taken by the FBI through the development of a database which is accessible more broadly to law enforcement in an attempt to improve information sharing. The transient nature of the trafficking markets keeps traffickers/pimps below the radar of most law enforcement as they move with their victims from city to city evading detection and preventing the girls from becoming identified minors to law enforcement or service providers. Often, sex trafficking cases cross jurisdictional lines making cooperation between local, state, and federal law enforcement necessary.\textsuperscript{65} However, many local law enforcement agencies report they have never pursued federal charges in cases involving the buyer in a domestic minor sex trafficking case. This was noted to be a result of lack of knowledge of the federal law, lack of communication between local and federal agencies, and/or lack of evidence sufficient to prove sex trafficking.

\textit{“Despite the difficulties in identifying them, it is imperative to target ‘johns.’ They might not want to cooperate, but they certainly do not want to go to jail and they should be identified, not only because they should be charged ... but because you can use that charge and everything against them, also. Most of them are married [and] everything else. Let them get you to the juveniles if you have to.”}\textsuperscript{66}

— Special Agent Chris Johnson, Federal Bureau of Investigation

The anonymity of buyers presents one of the greatest challenges to investigation and arrest. For obvious reasons, victims often do not know or remember the buyers’ real names, addresses, or other identifying information. This can be due to the trauma of the sexual exploitation the victim is undergoing or to the evasive techniques of the traffickers/pimps in orchestrating the commercial encounter with the buyer. The Salt Lake City Police Department Vice Unit standardly checks call records of cell phones in possession of arrested juveniles and arrested traffickers/pimps with the hope that the records will lead to identifying buyers. However, traffickers/pimps limit the interaction between a prostituted juvenile and a buyer. Unlike pornography which frequently leaves a financial trail that can be traced to the buyers, prostitution is done on a cash basis and buyers frequently use fake names leaving law enforcement with limited evidence.\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{64} Kennedy and Pucci, Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Assessment Report — Las Vegas, Nevada, pg. 54.
\textsuperscript{65} Reid, Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Assessment Report — Clearwater, Florida, pg. 25.
\textsuperscript{66} Remarks by C. Johnson, Shared Hope International National Training Conference on the Sex Trafficking of America’s Youth. Transcript on file with authors.
\textsuperscript{67} Snow, Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Assessment Report — Salt Lake City, Utah, pg. 71.
Domestic minor sex trafficking has its own culture, rules, and “heroes.”

Researchers and experts in the field report that trafficking of U.S. children is a well-established business. High demand for the commercial sexual exploitation of children created by buyers equates to large profit margins. It is not surprising then that as the trafficking of children becomes more profitable — sophisticated rules, culture, and a hierarchy surrounding the crime would emerge.

“The Game”

“The Game,” which is slang for the environment and established rules of trafficking/pimping, is handed down to traffickers/pimps through various means. Several books written by self-proclaimed pimps with criminal records are available describing how to manipulate and traffic women and children. The Pimp Game: An Instructional Guide is one such book that can be purchased online at Amazon.com for the incredible price of $280. The Pimp Game teaches aspiring traffickers how to successfully groom a child for commercial sexual exploitation.

“You’ll start to dress her, think for her, own her. If you and your victim are sexually active, slow it down. After sex, take her shopping for one item. Hair and/or nails is fine. She’ll develop a feeling of accomplishment. The shopping after a month will be replaced with cash. The love making turns into raw sex. She’ll start to crave the intimacy and be willing to get back into your good graces. After you have broken her spirit, she has no sense of self value. Now pimp, put a price tag on the item you have manufactured.”

The language and rules of pimping recaptures the debilitating psychological and physical manipulation used by slave masters. Organized and sophisticated teaching methods are used to pass down the culture and “rules of the game,” which are rules created by traffickers/pimps in order to best work together in an illegal business venture and avoid arrest by law enforcement. An example of one such rule is called “choosing up.” This rule dictates that a prostituted person who makes eye contact with another pimp becomes “owned” by that pimp. If the original pimp wants his slave back, then he must pay a fee to the new pimp. This fee is imposed ultimately on the errant prostituted girl who is then required to compensate her original pimp for the money he paid for her return — usually, a penalty charge is added to the fee for the disrespect she showed to the pimp by looking at another pimp.

Traffickers employ a common language to provide a basis of understanding and to facilitate transactions between traffickers/pimps. Below is a sampling of terms used by pimps in the sex trafficking of children:

- A “circuit” or “track” is a defined area known for prostitution activity. This can be the area around a group of strip clubs and pornography stores, or a particular stretch of street. Within a county, it can be a series of cities that the traffickers move the exploited minors. It can also be a chain of states, such as the “Minnesota Pipeline” in which victims are moved through a series of states from Minnesota to markets in New York.
- A “ho line” is a loose network of communication between pimps, chiefly by phone, inter-city and

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interstate. The traffickers often use changing slang and code words to confound law enforcement along the “circuit.” The “ho line” or network is used to trade, buy, and sell women and children for sex.

- The “kiddie stroll” or “runway” is an area of the track featuring kids under 16, and often much younger.
- The process of “seasoning” involves the combination of psychological manipulation, intimidation, gang rape and sodomy, beatings or deprivation of food and sleep, cutting off from family, friends, and other sources of support, and threatening or holding hostage of victims’ children. The purpose is to break down a victim’s resistance and ensure that she will do anything she is told.
- A “stable” is a group of prostituted girls under the control of a single trafficker or pimp.
- “Bottom girl”: The girl in a stable who is tasked by the pimp with supervising the others, reporting rule violations, and often helping to impose punishment on them.

Of great concern is the glorification of the “pimp” culture in American mainstream society. “Pimp” has
become synonymous with cool, which masks its true meaning. Below are examples of ways the “pimp” culture has infiltrated society, from celebrity affiliation to popular websites.

The word “pimp” has become synonymous in popular culture with “improve” or “better.” In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Pimps have a significant number of psychopathic qualities. Experts have identified a long list of psychopathic criminals, including “serial killers, rapists, thieves, swindlers, con men, wife beaters, white-collar criminals, hype-prone stock promoters and boiler-room operators, child abusers, gang members, disbarred lawyers, drug barons, professional gamblers.” Pimps, however, are not on this list. A leading expert on psychopaths established a list of psychopathic behavioral indicators that can be captured through the Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R). These include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Glibness, superficial charm</th>
<th>Failure to accept responsibility for actions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Grandiose sense of self-worth</td>
<td>Promiscuous sexual behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pathological lying</td>
<td>Lack of realistic, long-term goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cunning/manipulative</td>
<td>Poor behavioral controls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Callous, lack of empathy</td>
<td>High need for stimulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of remorse or guilt</td>
<td>Irresponsibility</td>
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Comparing the behaviors outlined in the PCL-R to the documented drives, tactics, and behaviors exhibited by pimps, it is reasonable to consider their potential categorization as psychopaths. Though pimps exhibit every characteristic on the PCL-R, very little research exists on pimps in general or their psychopathic tendencies. In fact, only one study could be located on the subject. The study analyzed 22 male prisoners incarcerated for pimping. The subjects were assessed through an interview process with the PCL-R. More than one-third of the 22 participants met the PCL-R characteristics resulting in the diagnosis of psychopath. This study concluded that significant concern should be given to victims under pimp control due to the high rate of psychopathic characteristics in pimps. These psychopathic qualities would make it difficult for a prostituted woman or child to break free from a pimp due to the psychological and emotional attachment and expectation of violent retaliation. Furthermore, the research projected that psychopathic pimps are likely to “minimize their offenses, especially with regard to the impact of their offenses on the prostitutes. They are also likely to deny the sexual nature of their offense and transfer responsibility to their prostitutes. Psychopathic pimps may verbalize the belief that they are providing a service to those involved, but the reality is that the prostitute is little more than property to them.” The recognition of pimps as psychopaths cannot be ignored.

72 Id. at pg. 34.
75 Id.
Demand for youth in commercial sex markets is creating large revenue sources for highly violent criminals and criminal networks. This provides resources and incentive to dangerous criminals, such as a man in Pensacola, Florida, who drugged and raped a 17-year-old girl who had accepted a new friend’s invitation to spend the night where the trafficker posed as the friend’s father. He had arranged in advance to sell the girl for $300,000 to another trafficker.  

Criminal gang activity in the U.S. that has been known primarily for drug trafficking is now expanding to include the lucrative sex trafficking of girls. For example, in Fort Worth, Texas, members of the local Varrio Central gang began befriending young runaway girls and supplying them with drugs. Once the girls were addicted to the drugs they would beat and gang-rape the girls to prepare them for prostitution. The victims, one just 14 years old, were transported to various low-income apartment complexes in the area to be sold for sex for fees ranging from $30 to $50. The three teen suspects pled guilty to a reduced charge of compelling prostitution; unfortunately the charge of human trafficking was dropped missing an opportunity for precedent in Texas. In addition to Fort Worth, Texas, fairly extensive gang involvement has also been noticed in other locations, such as Boston, Massachusetts, and Oakland, California. Law enforcement and prosecutors from these cities and others report that rival gangs are induced to form partnerships for the trafficking of domestic children as the profit margin is so high.

Traffickers of foreign-born (international) victims are indiscriminate and will traffic domestic victims as well. In San Antonio, Timothy Gereb pled guilty to sex trafficking and through a plea bargain was sentenced to 10 years. Gereb had a quota of recruiting 10 girls to sell to a brothel in Louisiana. When Gereb and his accomplices were only able to traffic two girls from Mexico, he began recruiting local girls from the San Antonio area to fill his quota.

Evading Detection

Traffickers/pimps communicate with one another and warn each other of places to avoid due to high police presence. In an effort to evade law enforcement, traffickers/pimps will often stay in cities for a short period of time. Specific traveling routes known as “circuits” have been identified. A well-known circuit is the Western Circuit, which includes: Seattle, Washington; Portland, Oregon; San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego, California; Hawaii; Phoenix, Arizona; Denver, Colorado; and Salt Lake City, Utah; and extends internationally up to Vancouver, Canada. It is critical to note again, however, that the movement of victims is not necessary to establish a case of domestic minor sex trafficking.

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80 Id. at pg. 33.
81 Remarks by Linda Smith, Shared Hope International National Training Conference on the Sex Trafficking of America’s Youth (Dallas, Texas: September 15-16, 2008). Transcript on file with authors.
82 Snow, Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Assessment Report — Salt Lake City, Utah, pg. 23.
Local Traffickers Are Often Assisted by Facilitators

Facilitators, or accomplices, avoid direct responsibility for sex trafficking crimes by creating distance from the immediate criminal activity but they profit from and make possible the sex trafficking of children. Some common facilitators in the crime of DMST include taxi drivers, hotel workers, and owners of adult sexual entertainment venues. Taxi drivers in Las Vegas receive commissions for bringing buyers to illegal suburban house brothels. The commission reportedly is one third of the $300 charged to the buyer by the brothel. Traffickers pay premiums to facilitators for locating underage girls for their customers.

Additionally, there are institutional facilitators that act in much the same way to enable the operations of traffickers/pimps. In some cases, governments themselves may be institutional facilitators in choosing to prioritize the value of the revenue-producing commercial sex markets over the enforcement of applicable regulations or enforcement of laws, choosing instead to look away or plead ignorance. In Dallas, where adult entertainment venues are highly profitable and add substantial revenue to the city through licenses and taxes, a 12-year-old was found being exploited in a strip club called Diamond Cabaret. The club management claimed to believe the 12-year-old was over 18 years of age. It came to light that the city ordinance regulating sexually oriented businesses did not provide for the revocation of the business license for employing someone younger than 18-years-old. Accordingly, no action was taken against the club. However, in response to community furor over the case, new provisions were presented to the city council, that would make it easier for an adult cabaret to lose its business license for employing minors. The two traffickers of the 14-year-old were charged with felony counts of sexual performance of a child, as well as

83 DEMAND., (Shared Hope International: July 2007), pgs. 4, 98.
85 DEMAND., (Shared Hope International: July 2007), pg. 93.
facilitating organized crime. Additionally, one was charged with two counts of aggravated sexual assault and aggravated kidnapping, while the other was charged under the prostitution statute.\textsuperscript{87}

Shared Hope International found only one example (of the ten assessments across the country) where a facilitator was arrested. The case involved one person who allegedly transported a domestic minor sex trafficking victim and was charged under a state statute that criminalizes facilitation of transportation for the purposes of human trafficking. The case was still pending at the completion of the Fort Worth assessment.\textsuperscript{88}

Traffickers/pimps, facilitators, and buyers are using the Internet and other technology, as well as magazines, to expand their marketing base. These marketing methods can act as a facilitator as well and make procuring illicit materials relatively easy. One service provider reported that over a two-year period, an 800% increase was seen in the number of children reporting that technology was used in some way to facilitate prostitution.\textsuperscript{89} Online classified advertising websites have come under heavy criticism for their roles in facilitating prostitution of minors and adults — an illegal activity that they are not stopping. In Illinois, Sheriff Dart of Cook County has recruited pro bono lawyers to file suit against Craigslist under a public nuisance theory, alleging that their maintenance of an Erotic Services webpage is tantamount to the pimping of women and children.\textsuperscript{90} Atlanta, Georgia, Mayor Shirley Franklin attacked Craigslist in a public letter for the role it plays in facilitating the prostitution of children in Atlanta.\textsuperscript{91} Craigslist defends its practice of requiring a valid credit card and a working telephone number to place an advertisement for adult services and quickly responds to law enforcement requests for tracking information in investigating pimping activities. In addition, Craigslist added the following warning language on its “Erotic Services” webpage:

\begin{quote}
Unless all of the following points are true, please use your “back” button to exit this part of craigslist:
\begin{enumerate}
\item I am at least 18 years old.
\item I understand “erotic services” may include adult content.
\item I agree to flag as “prohibited” anything illegal or in violation of the craigslist terms of use. This includes, but is not limited to, offers for or the solicitation of prostitution.
\item I agree to report suspected exploitation of minors to the appropriate authorities.
\item By clicking on the links below, I release craigslist from any liability that may arise from my use of this site.
\end{enumerate}
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{88} Stevens, Eve, Smith and Bing, Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Assessment Report — Fort Worth, Texas, pg. 53.

\textsuperscript{89} Remarks by Andrea Hesse, Alberta Family Services, Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Alberta (PSECA) Program, Alberta, Canada. Shared Hope International National Training Conference on the Sex Trafficking of America’s Youth (Dallas, Texas: September 15-16, 2008). Transcript on file with authors.


Human trafficking and exploitation of minors are not tolerated — any suspected activity will be reported to law enforcement.
(Emphasis in original.)

One of the greatest challenges for law enforcement in identifying victims of domestic minor sex trafficking is the use of technology — most notably the Internet — in marketing the victims of commercial sexual exploitation of all ages. Traffickers/pimps with small and large operations are now accessing larger, more complex networks. Prostitution is steadily moving off the streets making it increasingly difficult to find the perpetrators. In addition, images in the advertisements are difficult to identify as minors.

As the criminal market of sex trafficking becomes more sophisticated, the less readily visible it becomes. With the increases in demand and usage of the Internet, increasingly younger children can be sold on the Internet without attracting the attention of authorities. An officer with the Boston Police Department noted that traffickers/pimps will “groom a girl and put them [on the street] to train them ... but our intelligence is showing it is more Internet. And so that’s a trend that we had to go reduce, do our investigations through the Internet investigations.” Sexual services are not the only thing advertised online, as pimps, madams, and escort agencies recruit new members through their own websites, MySpace accounts, and Facebook accounts. Furthermore, nine of ten assessments completed by Shared Hope International document the use of Craigslist to facilitate domestic minor sex trafficking, with just the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands not reporting cases in which this great facilitator is involved.

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92 Remarks by C. Johnson, Shared Hope International National Training Conference on the Sex Trafficking of America’s Youth. Transcript on file with authors.

93 Remarks by Sergeant Detective Kelley O’Connell, Boston Police Department, Shared Hope International National Training Conference on the Sex Trafficking of America’s Youth (Dallas, Texas: September 15-16, 2008). Transcript on file with authors.