

# The Essence of Evil: Sex with Children Has Become Big Business in America

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*[“Children are being targeted and sold for sex in America every day.”—John Ryan, National Center for Missing & Exploited Children](#)*

*Children, young girls—[some as young as 9 years old](#)—are being bought and sold for sex in America. The average age for a young woman being sold for sex is now 13 years old.*

This is America’s dirty little secret.

Sex trafficking—especially when it comes to the buying and selling of young girls—has become big business in America, the [fastest growing business](#) in organized crime and the [second most-lucrative commodity traded](#) illegally after drugs and guns.

As investigative journalist Amy Fine Collins notes,

“It’s become [more lucrative and much safer to sell malleable teens than drugs or guns](#). A pound of heroin or an AK-47 can be retailed once, but a young girl can be sold 10 to 15 times a day—and a ‘righteous’ pimp confiscates 100 percent of her earnings.”

Consider this: [every two minutes, a child is exploited in the sex industry](#).

According to *USA Today*, [adults purchase children for sex at least 2.5 million times a year](#) in the United States.

Who buys a child for sex? [Otherwise ordinary men](#) from all walks of life.

“[They could be your co-worker, doctor, pastor or spouse](#),” writes journalist Tim Swarens, who spent more than a year investigating the sex trade in America.

In Georgia alone, it is estimated that [7,200 men \(half of them in their 30s\) seek to purchase sex with adolescent girls each month](#), averaging roughly 300 a day.

On average, a child might be [raped by 6,000 men during a five-year period of servitude](#).

It is estimated that [at least 100,000 children—girls and boys—are bought and sold for sex in](#)

[the U.S. every year](#), with as many as 300,000 children in danger of being trafficked each year. Some of these children are forcefully abducted, others are runaways, and still others are sold into the system by relatives and acquaintances.

“Human trafficking—the commercial sexual exploitation of American children and women, via the Internet, strip clubs, escort services, or street prostitution—is on its way to becoming [one of the worst crimes in the U.S.](#),” said prosecutor Krishna Patel.

This is an industry that revolves around cheap sex on the fly, with young girls and women who are [sold to 50 men each day for \\$25 apiece](#), while their [handlers make \\$150,000 to \\$200,000 per child](#) each year.

This is not a problem found only in big cities.

It’s happening everywhere, right under our noses, in suburbs, cities and towns across the nation.

As Ernie Allen of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children points out,

[“The only way not to find this in any American city is simply not to look for it.”](#)

Don’t fool yourselves into believing that this is merely a concern for lower income communities or immigrants.

[It’s not.](#)

It is estimated that there are [100,000 to 150,000 under-aged child sex workers in the U.S.](#) These girls aren’t volunteering to be sex slaves. They’re being lured—forced—trafficked into it. In most cases, they have no choice.

In order to avoid detection (in some cases [aided and abetted by the police](#)) and cater to male buyers’ demand for sex with different women, pimps and the gangs and crime syndicates they work for have turned sex trafficking into a highly mobile enterprise, with trafficked girls, boys and women constantly being moved from city to city, state to state, and country to country.

For instance, the Baltimore-Washington area, referred to as [The Circuit](#), with its I-95 corridor dotted with rest stops, bus stations and truck stops, is a hub for the sex trade.

No doubt about it: this is a highly profitable, highly organized and highly sophisticated sex trafficking business that operates in towns large and small, [raking in upwards of \\$9.5 billion a year in the U.S. alone](#) by abducting and selling young girls for sex.

Every year, the girls being bought and sold gets younger and younger.

The average age of those being trafficked is 13. Yet as the head of a group that combats trafficking pointed out,

"Let's think about what average means. That means there are children younger than 13. [That means 8-, 9-, 10-year-olds.](#)"

"For every 10 women rescued, there are 50 to 100 more women who are brought in by the traffickers. Unfortunately, they're not 18- or 20-year-olds anymore," noted a 25-year-old victim of trafficking. "[They're minors as young as 13 who are being trafficked.](#) They're little girls."

Where did this appetite for young girls come from?

Look around you.

Young girls have been sexualized for years now in music videos, on billboards, in television ads, and in clothing stores. Marketers have created a demand for young flesh and a ready supply of over-sexualized children.

"All it takes is one look at MySpace photos of teens to see examples—if they aren't imitating porn they've actually seen, they're imitating the porn-inspired images and poses they've absorbed elsewhere," [writes Jessica Bennett for Newsweek](#). "Latex, corsets and stripper heels, once the fashion of porn stars, have made their way into middle and high school."

This is what Bennett refers to as the "[pornification of a generation.](#)"

"In a market that sells high heels for babies and thongs for tweens, it doesn't take a genius to see that [sex, if not porn, has invaded our lives](#)," concludes Bennett. "Whether we welcome it or not, television brings it into our living rooms and the Web brings it into our bedrooms. According to a 2007 study from the University of Alberta, as many as 90 percent of boys and 70 percent of girls aged 13 to 14 have accessed sexually explicit content at least once."

In other words, the culture is grooming these young people to be preyed upon by sexual predators. And then we wonder why our young women are being preyed on, trafficked and abused?

Social media makes it all too easy. As one news center reported,

"Finding girls is easy for pimps. [They look on MySpace, Facebook, and other social networks.](#) They and their assistants cruise malls, high schools and middle schools. They pick them up at bus stops. On the trolley. Girl-to-girl recruitment sometimes happens."

[Foster homes and youth shelters have also become prime targets](#) for traffickers.

Rarely do these girls enter into prostitution voluntarily. Many start out as runaways or throwaways, only to be snatched up by pimps or larger sex rings. Others, persuaded to meet up with a stranger after interacting online through one of the many social networking sites, find themselves quickly initiated into their new lives as sex slaves.

[Debbie](#), a straight-A student who belonged to a close-knit Air Force family living in Phoenix,

Ariz., is an example of this trading of flesh. Debbie was 15 when she was snatched from her driveway by an acquaintance-friend. Forced into a car, Debbie was bound and taken to an unknown location, held at gunpoint and raped by multiple men. She was then crammed into a small dog kennel and forced to eat dog biscuits. Debbie's captors advertised her services on Craigslist. Those who responded were often married with children, and the money that Debbie "earned" for sex was given to her kidnappers. The gang raping continued. After searching the apartment where Debbie was held captive, police finally found Debbie stuffed in a drawer under a bed. Her harrowing ordeal lasted for 40 days.

While Debbie was fortunate enough to be rescued, others are not so lucky. According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, [nearly 800,000 children go missing every year](#) (roughly 2,185 children a day).

With a growing demand for sexual slavery and an endless supply of girls and women who can be targeted for abduction, this is not a problem that's going away anytime soon.

For those trafficked, it's a nightmare from beginning to end.

Those being sold for sex have an [average life expectancy of seven years](#), and those years are a living nightmare of endless rape, forced drugging, humiliation, degradation, threats, disease, pregnancies, abortions, miscarriages, torture, pain, and always the constant fear of being killed or, worse, having those you love hurt or killed.

Peter Landesman paints the full horrors of life for those victims of the sex trade in his *New York Times* article "[The Girls Next Door](#)":

Andrea told me that she and the other children she was held with were frequently beaten to keep them off-balance and obedient. Sometimes they were videotaped while being forced to have sex with adults or one another. Often, she said, she was asked to play roles: the therapist patient or the obedient daughter. Her cell of sex traffickers offered three age ranges of sex partners-toddler to age 4, 5 to 12 and teens-as well as what she called a "damage group." "In the damage group, they can hit you or do anything they want to," she explained. "Though sex always hurts when you are little, so it's always violent, everything was much more painful once you were placed in the damage group."

What Andrea [described next](#) shows just how depraved some portions of American society have become.

"They'd get you hungry then to train you" to have oral sex. "They put honey on a man. For the littlest kids, you had to learn not to gag. And they would push things in you so you would open up better. We learned responses. Like if they wanted us to be sultry or sexy or scared. Most of them wanted you scared. When I got older, I'd teach the younger kids how to float away so things didn't hurt."

Immigration and customs enforcement agents at the Cyber Crimes Center in Fairfax, Va., report that when it comes to sex, the appetites of many Americans have now changed. What was once considered abnormal is now the norm. These agents are tracking a [clear spike in the demand for harder-core pornography on the Internet](#). As one agent noted,

“We’ve become desensitized by the soft stuff; now we need a harder and harder hit.”

This trend is reflected by the treatment many of the girls receive at the hands of the drug traffickers and the men who purchase them. Peter Landesman interviewed [Rosario](#), a Mexican woman who had been trafficked to New York and held captive for a number of years. She said:

“In America, we had ‘special jobs.’ Oral sex, anal sex, often with many men. Sex is now more adventurous, harder.”

A common thread woven through most survivors’ experiences is being [forced to go without sleep or food until they have met their sex quota of at least 40 men](#). One woman recounts how her trafficker made her lie face down on the floor when she was pregnant and then literally jumped on her back, forcing her to miscarry.



[Holly Austin Smith](#) (image on the right) was abducted when she was 14 years old, raped, and then forced to prostitute herself. Her pimp, when brought to trial, was only made to serve a year in prison.

[Barbara Amaya](#) was repeatedly sold between traffickers, abused, shot, stabbed, raped, kidnapped, trafficked, beaten, and jailed all before she was 18 years old.

“I had a quota that I was supposed to fill every night. And if I didn’t have that amount of money, I would get beat, thrown down the stairs. He beat me once with wire coat hangers, the kind you hang up clothes, he straightened it out and my whole back was bleeding.”

As David McSwane recounts in a [chilling piece for the Herald-Tribune](#):

“In Oakland Park, an industrial Fort Lauderdale suburb, federal agents in 2011

encountered a brothel operated by a married couple. Inside 'The Boom Boom Room,' as it was known, customers paid a fee and were given a condom and a timer and left alone with one of the brothel's eight teenagers, children as young as 13. A 16-year-old foster child testified that he acted as security, while a 17-year-old girl told a federal judge she was forced to have sex with as many as 20 men a night."

One particular sex trafficking ring catered specifically to migrant workers employed seasonally on farms throughout the southeastern states, [especially the Carolinas and Georgia](#), although it's a flourishing business in every state in the country. Traffickers transport the women from farm to farm, where migrant workers would line up outside shacks, [as many as 30 at a time](#), to have sex with them before they were transported to yet another farm where the process would begin all over again.

This growing evil is, for all intents and purposes, out in the open.

Trafficked women and children are advertised on the internet, transported on the interstate, and bought and sold in swanky hotels.

Indeed, as I make clear in my book [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#), the government's war on sex trafficking—much like the government's war on terrorism, drugs and crime—has become [a perfect excuse for inflicting more police state tactics \(police check points, searches, surveillance, and heightened security\) on a vulnerable public](#), while doing little to make our communities safer.

So what can *you* do?

Educate yourselves and your children about this growing menace in our communities.

Stop feeding the monster: Sex trafficking is part of a larger continuum in America that runs the gamut from homelessness, poverty, and self-esteem issues to sexualized television, the glorification of a pimp/ho culture—what is often referred to as the pornification of America—and a billion dollar sex industry built on the back of pornography, music, entertainment, etc.

This epidemic is largely one of our own making, especially in a corporate age where the value placed on human life takes a backseat to profit. It is estimated that the [porn industry brings in more money than Amazon, Microsoft, Google, Apple, and Yahoo](#).

Call on your city councils, elected officials and police departments to make the battle against sex trafficking a top priority, more so even than the so-called war on terror and drugs and the militarization of law enforcement.

Stop prosecuting adults for victimless "crimes" such as growing lettuce in their front yard and focus on putting away the pimps and buyers who victimize these young women.

[Finally](#), the police need to do a better job of training, identifying and responding to these issues; communities and social services need to do a better job of protecting runaways, who are the primary targets of traffickers; legislators need to pass legislation aimed at prosecuting traffickers and "johns," the buyers who drive the demand for sex slaves; and hotels need to stop enabling these traffickers, by providing them with rooms and cover for their dirty deeds.

That so many women and children continue to be victimized, brutalized and treated like human cargo is due to three things: one, a consumer demand that is increasingly lucrative for everyone involved—except the victims; two, a level of corruption so invasive on both a local and international scale that there is little hope of working through established channels for change; and three, an eerie silence from individuals who fail to speak out against such atrocities.

But the truth is that we are all guilty of contributing to this human suffering. The traffickers are guilty. The consumers are guilty. The corrupt law enforcement officials are guilty. The women's groups who do nothing are guilty. The foreign peacekeepers and aid workers who contribute to the demand for sex slaves are guilty. Most of all, every individual who does not raise a hue and cry over the atrocities being committed against women and children in almost every nation around the globe—including the United States—is guilty.

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