

# Traffickers' strategies to keep women mentally enslaved

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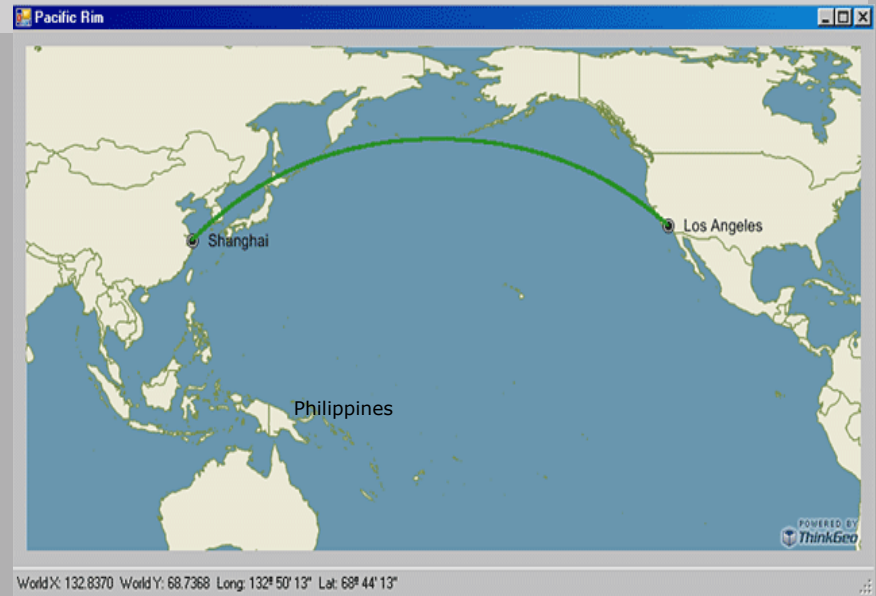
# Trafficking

- “**Low risk, high profit**” criminal enterprise (\$32 B per annum)
- The California Legislature **defined human trafficking** as: "all acts involved in the recruitment, abduction, transport, harboring, transfer, sale or receipt of persons, within national or across international borders, through force, coercion, fraud or deception, to place persons in situations of slavery or slavery-like conditions, forced labor or services, such as forced prostitution or sexual services, domestic servitude, bonded sweatshop labor, or other debt bondage."
- **California**: one of the main destinations in U.S. for trafficking
  - **Sex trafficking: 56%**
  - **Labor trafficking: 44%** (underreported and under-investigated; may be 3.5 times more)
- **The 2012 California Attorney General report found:**
  - **1277 survivors** (over 2 years)
  - 80% **women**
  - 38% non-American
    - Top three: Mexico, Thailand, **Philippines**



# Philippines

- Population: 102 M (2015)
- **Below poverty line: 39%**
- Migrants: 10 M (est.)
  - Domestic workers: 1.4M
- **GDP per capita PPP (2014):**
  - Philippines: \$2,765
  - United States: \$54,370



# Case of Angela



- Born 1979 and raised in Bacolod City, Philippines
- 5<sup>th</sup> of 6 children, poor family
- Hard to find employment
- Didn't marry
- Father fell ill
- At age 26 (in 2005), offered opportunity to go to the US: "like winning the lottery"

# What happened to Angela

- Arrived at LAX airport, met a woman who gave her a big hug
- Then woman took Angela's passport "for safekeeping"
- Trafficker said Angela owed \$12,000 for passage and would have to work in her "board and care" facility for 10 years
- Angela worked for 2.5 years, 18-hour days, \$300 per month, slept on a couch in corridor, caring for elderly residents



# Yet Angela also:

- Was given about one day off per month
- Was allowed to buy a cellphone
- Could call her mother and siblings & send money home
- Could shop alone in the mall...



**So why did she stay in servitude?**

# Traffickers' tricks

## 1. Degrading, de-humanizing

*You are nothing; you don't exist*

# No voice...





# Traffickers' tricks

## 2. Creating fear of "worse situation" if Americans find out

*They will give trouble, put in jail*

# **Worse situation...**



# Traffickers' tricks

**3. Fostering distrust of everyone—even a Filipina doctor**

***Must say everything is fine; smile***

**Can't trust anyone...**



# **Traffickers' tricks (cont'd)**

- 4. Living next door, so can pop in any moment**
- 5. Not being physically abusive, so there are no telltale "wounds or scars" to suggest abuse**
- 6. Threatening to call police and say she was robbed if any attempted escape**
- 7. Giving a timeframe (10 years), like a prison sentence, to give hope for eventual freedom**

# The timeframe...



# **Angela's coping strategies**

- 1. Became numb; lost touch with her real emotions**
- 2. Maintained a mask of smiling—even though she felt like a volcano was erupting inside**
- 3. Lied to everyone about her situation**
- 4. Never said “no” to the trafficker**
- 5. Counted down the years; kept her hope alive**

# The aftermath

**A retired neighbor sensed something was wrong and alerted the FBI**

**Angela wore a wire for 6 months to help FBI prosecute the trafficker**

**Afterwards, Angela lived in a CAST shelter for 18 months to regain her humanity**

**Angela is now part of a CAST Survivors caucus, speaks out regularly about trafficking and works as a certified nurse assistant**





# What CAST did for her...



# Conclusions

1. **Traffickers are experts** in psychological manipulation, so physical restraints not needed
2. **Tricks include:** Dehumanizing, creating fear of Americans, fostering distrust, avoiding physical marks, giving hope of an endpoint
3. **Victims can become:** numb, fearful, prison mentality, lying to everyone, lost
4. **What can be done? A few ideas...**
  - U.S. consular officers: info about traffickers' tricks and immigrants' rights
  - TV shows in host countries: show trafficking and countering myths
  - Families: agree on "code words" with loved ones prior to emigration

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