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Parents as Pimps: Survivor Accounts of Trafficking of Children in the United States

Jody Raphael

DePaul University College of Law, jraphae2@depaul.edu

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Abstract

This article discusses four survivor accounts of survivors of being sold for sexual exploitation by their parents for monetary gain. These narratives, supplemented by other accounts from 100 newspaper stories between 2012 and 2018, reveal the fact that many survivors were sold as very young children, and the abuse continued through their teen years, blurring distinctions between pedophilia and the sex trade industry. In their accounts, survivors described the motivations of their parents as well as the buyers, who used excessive force and violence. Some researchers are beginning to document the existence of parental pimping and its prevalence, which ranges from 3% to 44% among survivors. Some researchers continue to resist labeling parents as pimps and refuse to view the phenomenon as part of the sex trade industry. The findings from this study raise important questions about what cultural factors encourage parents to believe that this activity is acceptable.

Keywords

parents, pimping, parental pimping, child sexual exploitation, child trafficking, prevalence, sex trafficking, minors, abuse, torture

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**PARENTS AS PIMPS:
SURVIVOR ACCOUNTS OF TRAFFICKING OF
CHILDREN IN THE UNITED STATES**

Jody Raphael

DePaul University College of Law, USA

ABSTRACT

This article discusses four survivor accounts of survivors of being sold for sexual exploitation by their parents for monetary gain. These narratives, supplemented by other accounts from 100 newspaper stories between 2012 and 2018, reveal the fact that many survivors were sold as very young children, and the abuse continued through their teen years, blurring distinctions between pedophilia and the sex trade industry. In their accounts, survivors described the motivations of their parents as well as the buyers, who used excessive force and violence. Some researchers are beginning to document the existence of parental pimping and its prevalence, which ranges from 3% to 44% among survivors. Some researchers continue to resist labeling parents as pimps and refuse to view the phenomenon as part of the sex trade industry. The findings from this study raise important questions about what cultural factors encourage parents to believe that this activity is acceptable.

KEYWORDS

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THIS IS A PAPER ABOUT PARENTS AS PIMPS, who offer their children's bodies for sexual exploitation for monetary gain in the United States. This abuse is a problem mostly unknown to the public and is often characterized in the press as one of the deviant parents catering to deviant buyers. After in-depth interviews with four survivors of parental pimping, supplemented by narratives from approximately 100 newspaper reports between 2012 and 2018, I came to the realization that parental pimping is not just a phenomenon of pedophilia, because the activity can continue through the children's teen years, and beyond, blurring distinctions between pedophilia and the sex trade industry. Looking into formal research with trafficked individuals, I found that up to 44% of trafficked samples contain survivors who have been pimped by family members, mainly parents (and most often mothers), meaning that parental pimping is not an insignificant problem. These findings and data raise important questions about just what cultural factors encourage so many parents to believe that this activity is acceptable. For example, everyone maintains that child sexual exploitation needs to be aggressively combatted and eradicated, but many believe that the rest of the sex trade

industry can be left intact (O'Hara, 2018; Coy, 2016). The accounts of these survivors of parental pimping challenge this assumption.

This article is the result of an exploratory examination of the issues based on accounts by survivors of parental trafficking. I use a journalistic style in that much of this paper is my first-hand account of my experiences in educating myself about this topic. Importantly, I believe that by this method the words of survivors of parental pimping are heard loud and clear, which is their wish. I honor the concern for others that motivates their revisiting the horrors they have experienced.

I became engaged in this inquiry in 2012 when a co-worker attended a program on sex trafficking on our main campus, during which a woman now living here locally made comments about her father trafficking her into prostitution when she was a young child. When my co-worker insisted that I had to hear her account, I asked her to have the woman, "Anny," (all names have been changed at the survivors' request, to assure their safety) contact me via e-mail. When we got together, I heard a horrendous story of abuse, exploitation, and violence of a young girl who was forced by a violent father into prostitution from the age of nine to 15. Anny and I met for three hours of in-depth interviews, followed by numerous e-mails over a multi-year period.

After my interactions with Anny, there followed a six-year quest on my part for further information. Holly Smith, a trafficking survivor, referred me to "Elaine," living in the Northeast, whose father ran a prostitution business out of the family garage, with Elaine the victim from the time she was an infant to age 13. I interviewed Elaine over the telephone twice and also exchanged numerous e-mails with her thereafter. Elaine referred me to "Mary Jo," who in a two-hour telephone conversation, told of her life-long severe physical problems from the violence she encountered from her father and his buyers from the time she was under five until age 18. "Wayne" in Pennsylvania, in a two-hour telephone interview and subsequent e-mail correspondence, shared the fright-inducing encounters with his father and buyers until he was six years of age.

From these interviews, seeking to understand the motives of these parents and the buyers better, I collected approximately 100 newspaper reports of parents throughout the country, charged with trafficking between 2012 and 2018. I used these to shed additional light on the motives of parents and to help determine whether the accounts I had gathered were typical.

Part I of this article contains the accounts of four adult survivors of parental pimping that shed light on the motivations of their traffickers. These accounts also demonstrate the severe effects of parental trafficking on children, tweens, and teens. Part II briefly summarizes what is known, through research, about the prevalence of parental trafficking in the United States. In Part III, I briefly discuss the denial of these prevalence statistics. Part IV focuses on the probable motives of parents who sell their own children. It is based on the four survivor accounts and on the reporting in the news articles reviewed. Part V focuses on the buyers who pay the parents for sexual access to the children's bodies, their actions and motives, based on the accounts of survivors and the observations of law enforcement officials in newspaper articles. Part VI provides information, also from news reports, of the actions and statements of law enforcement officials and judges who condone commercial sex exploitation of minors. The last section, Part VII, outlines the questions this information raises for prostitution policy, prevention, and services.

PART I: METHODS OF PARENTS AS PIMPS

In this section, I report on my in-depth interviews with four survivors of parental pimping and my review of media accounts between 2012 and 2018 to demonstrate that these four narratives are not untypical.

Anny: Sold to Pay Her Father's Gambling Debts

During our initial talks, Anny had told me of a murder of a young victim that had occurred while she was being trafficked. Several years later, she came to see me and informed me that she had remembered the location of the house on the edge of a woods to which she had been taken, there to be raped by men while money passed hands. When she was nine years old and until she reached 15, Anny's father drove her, each week, under duress, to the house.

Anny has always lived with the memory of the murder. It was an evening in 1962. She was 11 years old. All the girls were in a circle, wearing no clothes except their underpants. Some angry men threw one girl into the middle of the circle. According to Anny:

The men indicated that the girl had tried to tell the police about the house. They were talking a lot about not telling. They had a probe, a metal pipe or bar, about three feet long. She was forced to stand in the middle of the rug and was hit on the legs, arms, body, she was screaming, it was bloody. They want you to know this is what is going to happen to you if you tell anyone. I'm ashamed to say this. They forced us to hit this girl, to hold the prod. They leaned over; their hand was on your hand. You're hitting her, you're a murderer too. Now you did this too. The girl was on the floor. The men hit her on her head. She went silent.

Rolling her in some material, the men picked up the body and herded the other girls down the steps into the forest preserve. Those resisting, including Anny, were pushed and shoved into cooperating. Was the death an accident? It couldn't have been, because the ultimate destination was a hole that was already dug in a spot between some trees. The girls were required to help throw dirt over the body.

After they were back at the house, one of the men grabbed Anny's face with his hand and squeezed her jaw hard. While making sharp eye contact, he angrily ordered Anny not to ever talk about this event. If she did, she would be killed too. Anny bolted, but after a few yards, the man grabbed her, hit her face, and marched her into the house. There, a woman attendant and a buyer walked her upstairs to a bedroom where the woman put a cool washcloth to her reddened face and combed her hair. Anny told me:

I was left alone with the buyer, who muttered words to the effect that he was going to teach me something. I now know that was oral rape, but as a child, I thought his penis was in fact a knife. It was sharp and choked me. I was cloaked in terror.

Once Anny remembered the address of the murder, I contacted the chief law enforcement officer who had jurisdiction over the forest preserve because Anny has always wanted to find the grave. Anny said:

She shouldn't be buried there. I don't think it is right. She should get a proper burial. I so much want them to find this girl. Perhaps on a spiritual level, she can know that she was not left alone nor forgotten and that her family may come to know about her life. I don't want her to be out there. It is wrong. I would like her to be known that she is not forgotten.

The Sheriff was receptive. Anny explained everything to the department's cold case officer, Detective Sergeant Will Hamilton (name changed to ensure Anny's safety). He heard Anny out, skillfully and tactfully questioning her. Then he put us in his unmarked car and drove us to the house, where we walked the adjacent section of the forest preserve. Anny pointed out the area she thought was the burial site, a heavily treed spot near the river.

The first step, Will said, would be letting cadaver dogs loose in the forest preserve. Cadaver dogs are trained to smell human decomposition, meaning they can locate body parts, tissue, blood, and bone. Even if the body is no longer there, the dogs will pick up the scent that spreads to tree roots and remains there. The dogs' instruction takes eighteen months to two years. We're told that when they pick up a scent, they are trained to either sit down or bark. Dixie and Penny Lane have been flown in today with their trainer to undertake the search. The FBI is also on the scene.

When I told friends and relatives that the Sheriff's Department would use the cadaver dogs, flown in from another location, they asked why, with all the major crime problems out there, the sheriff's department and the FBI were willing to expend scarce resources on such a cold case. Our interaction with both departments revealed an unexpected deep sympathy and humanity. If the bones could be found, explained Will Hamilton, the DNA might ultimately match that of a family with a missing daughter. Hamilton said:

You've got these young kids who struggle through their short lives. Now they're anonymous. They don't have a headstone saying they were ever on this earth. I want them to have some dignity and respect, so the world knows they once lived...I believe in the dignity of the deceased; everyone deserves a proper burial. There is always value in taking care of homicide victims.

I wondered whether this concern for human life had permeated the entire sheriff's department, and later determined that it probably did. Such caring brought the evident lack of empathy of parents who pimp their children into high relief.

Anny and I were invited to observe the dogs at work. When we arrived at the forest preserve, we were told the two dogs, one a German shepherd, the other a Labrador retriever, each two-and-a-half years old, had already identified one area under a large tree near a major road. One dog had barked in another spot that Anny had previously indicated as the probable burial site. Following a night of soil aerating, the dog that howled near the tree and the road now yapped in the place where the first dog barked the day before.

The next step, we were informed, would involve digging in the section the dogs identified away from the road and near the river. Were human bones to be found, the coroner can determine whether they are from a juvenile or an adult. We would just have to be patient. Anny was okay with that; she said she had been waiting for over 50 years already. Finding the bones was not simply a matter of curiosity for

Anny. There is no way to overstate how important this is to her. For Anny, it is a matter of simple justice, of remembering, honoring, and atonement. For Detective Sergeant Hamilton, it was to be no different.

Grooming Anny: Anatomy of Coercion

Over a series of meetings lasting over a five-year period, Anny explained to me her father's coercive tactics and their effects on her.

Anny's father groomed her for her money-making role by sexually molesting her from the age of three on a frequent basis. For Anny, her father's attention did not engender love, bonding, or a sense of being special. Instead, it began a long, complex nightmarish ordeal of fear and intimidation as he gained power and control by overpowering her wishes and autonomy. Anny states there were always memories that were "clear as a bell" that she never lost. One was when she ran away from home at the very young age of three-and-a-half.

My father had fallen asleep after painfully molesting me with his hands. All I remember is that I needed to get away from that house and I ran, and I ran, and the next thing I remember is that it was dark and I was in the back seat of a police car, kicking and screaming as the policewoman was trying to hold me in the back seat and deliver me to my parents.

The more Anny resisted, and the angrier she became, the more aggressive her father's behavior became. Another clear memory she had was a time when she was five years old. Her father brought her to the basement where the washing machine was stationed in the three-flat. Anny recalls:

He did something with me there. He turned off the lights and locked me in there and kept me there for the duration of the day, and it was only many hours later that he let me out. That was a first remembered experience of being confined by him.

Anny also remembers being locked in the janitor's room of her apartment building between the ages of four and five: "He was hurting me, and he left me in there for hours and I was terrorized." There was another episode in the basement, "involving a chase and tying me with ropes to a chair, and a pole. It was rape." She remembers another incident when she was 14. "My father came up behind me. He started kissing me and groping in my pants and all that."

She attempted to run away many times, but in every instance, the police brought her back to her parents. Never was there any follow-up. The authorities believed her parents that Anny was disobedient and ran away because she was facing punishment. And she tried to talk to her mother, teachers, and aunts, but her complaint was discounted: "You're having nightmares, your father loves you, he would never do anything like that."

Anny's father, an industrial engineer, was a gambler who lost a lot of money in poker, billiards, and pool games. He was so in debt that her mother threatened to leave him. She remembers someone threatening-looking coming to the house, demanding money. Anny says she was a scrawny and underdeveloped nine years of age who looked a lot younger. Around this time, her father would say, "We have to go to work; we have to go to work." Due to his threats, Anny had to get into the car. He drove to a house in an isolated area at the edge of a forest preserve with a river

running through it. Anny was taken to the house weekly for the next six years. She believes the house was run by a local syndicated, mafia-controlled child sex ring. Anny knows she cannot categorically prove this assertion, but that proper research might uncover the necessary evidence. Anny recalled:

At the residence, there were 12 to 15 other girls. Upon entering, all the girls' clothing came off, making them extremely vulnerable. The lighting was a sort of yellow-orangey hue. The girls started out in a circle. Anny remembers the humiliation rituals. Men would order the girls to crawl like animals and pretend they were dogs. The terror on the youths' faces is etched in her mind and soul to this day.

Then Anny was taken to a small room, with a bed and ropes to tie her if she didn't cooperate. Sometimes there were groups, and sometimes there was one man. In the room, she kicked and screamed, and tried to run out the door, to no avail. "I would try to fight back. That excited them; they seemed to get more aroused by the violence."

In one episode, Anny experienced a near-drowning. When she was ten years old, Anny became upset as a buyer entered the room. She flailed, hit, screamed, and fought him off to the extent that he called for help. Two men and a woman arrived and hauled Anny off to the bathroom in the house. They filled the bathtub with scorching hot water, put the naked Anny in, and held her head under. She could not breathe and thought she was dying, and soon passed out for 30-60 seconds. When she came to, she was allowed to pull herself out of the tub, after which she was dried off. In the bathroom, her sight was blurred and the light hurt her eyes. One man had a camera and had filmed the water torture and the events that soon followed when she was taken back to the room. Anny recalled:

I was woozy. I had no energy left. When the buyer was penetrating me, another man was photographing me. When I saw the camera, I was filled with shame, horrendous shame. Using the camera was part of the torture. They sure were experts in creating bad feelings.

After that time, buyers used water torture as a means to ensure Anny's compliance.

They would beat me. The ropes were painful. They would take my head and hold it down in a bowl of water that was in the room. These men were basically rapists.

Anny viewed each sexual encounter as an attack as if somebody was coming at her with a knife. She also sees each act as sadistic because imposing the sexual organ on a child always causes her (him) to be injured. All the buyers were violent to some degree, but not all were sadistic, she says; however, all were un-empathetic about what the girls were going through. Moreover, Anny explained, the buyers were enjoying a sense of power. "There is always a power imbalance; this is not consensual. They must be seeking it." Anny saw them paying her father directly.

In the house, there was one room with a camera dedicated to making pornography. Today Anny says quietly, "I was in that room."

Although Anny needed eyeglasses, her father would not let her wear them when she was in the house. One time she was looking at the perpetrator with her glasses on, and her father beat her, saying, "You don't need glasses for what you are here for."

During these years terror was Anny's constant companion. If she told anybody, she was told she would be killed. She told me:

I didn't want to do any of these things. I knew that was wrong to be hurting little girls, I knew that was wrong, and the terror of what I saw was being done to other girls. It was humiliating...I did talk with the other girls. They were all there against their will.

Dissociation was the key. "I used dissociation to survive. I wouldn't be alive if I hadn't found a way to alter my sensations so I could separate from what was happening." Disassociation helped her to keep going, but at school, it created problems, because although she was there physically, she was not capable of concentrating or absorbing anything due to her pain and alternating numbness.

During high school, I was being controlled by the perpetrators, and I was under tremendous threat that were I to speak of what was going on, I was going to be killed in a very painful way. I would try to talk and nothing would come out. If you can't tell the secret, then you can't talk about anything.

Six years later, Anny's father told her she was getting on a plane to France, where she was going to be met by somebody who was going to finish "grooming" her. She had overheard talk about Southeast Asia and she had the idea that she was going to go there from France, and there would be \$50,000 for her father, something in that range.

Terrified, Anny decided she had to try again to disclose what was happening. She went to her friend's house down the street.

I decided I was going to tell them. My fantasy was that I would tell them, they were going to call the police, and the police would come and arrest my father and all those men. I was shaking in my boots. I got myself over there, I am ready to open my mouth. I go to say the first word, my jaw opens to say the words, and traumatic amnesia occurred and I didn't come to for about six hours. The fear was that powerful. But it became the beginning of my escape. If you are unconscious in a hospital, you are not going to get on a plane. And now I have the protection of the doctors and nurses in the hospital.

Once out of the hospital Anny continued in high school, and graduated, but had great difficulty because she frequently passed out. Within a year, though, she was able to escape from home and went to another state. After a suicide attempt, leading to a lengthy hospitalization, she was misdiagnosed and put on inappropriate antipsychotic medications. When Anny told the doctor of her abuse memories, he did not believe her. He tried to obtain corroboration from her parents but of course, they denied the allegations. Only after her father died in 1975 of a brain aneurysm was she able to begin some kind of recovery. But trauma-informed

therapy did not really start until 2001. And how do you ever put behind you so many years of constant terror, humiliation, and violence?

Back to the Forest Preserve

Eventually, Detective Sergeant Will Hamilton told us that 16 people, using approved archaeological methods, dug in the second forest preserve area identified by the cadaver dogs. It was a tough dig, he said because the soil soon became hard clay that could not be penetrated; they could only go down about 12 inches when usually they are able to dig a couple of feet before reaching clay. As the soil doesn't change in 40 years, the conditions would have been the same for the perpetrators, Hamilton explains. It would have been a shallow grave, with maybe about six inches of soil on top of the body.

No human bones were found in the area, but animal bones were. With the grave so shallow, Hamilton explains, the body could have been moved by animal predators. Or flooding could have moved it around or exposed it to predators. The human odor, however, would still be present in the soil. Flooding is not an unusual occurrence in this part of the forest preserve so near the river. Animal predators might have moved the body buried so shallowly, and the bones could have been dispersed through a large area of the heavily treed park.

So what was the final result? According to Sgt. Hamilton, it remains possible and does not disprove, that a human burial did occur in the forest preserve. We will have to be content with that.

But the exercise was life-affirming. Will Hamilton believed Anny's account, an important event, and took steps based upon it. His empathy and basic humanity seem so far removed from the indifference of buyers single-mindedly pursuing their goals with children and teens. How dissimilar they seem! Will assures Anny, "As long as I am here, this case will never go away." And Anny is grateful:

Thank you, Sgt. Hamilton for believing me, for your empathetic understanding and willingness to help society grow in its awareness of a social problem that may never be eradicated, but can get controlled in such a way that doors open to victim services and perpetrator prosecutions.

Wayne: Terrifying Violence

I interviewed Wayne, another victim of parental pimping, over the telephone in an emotional two-hour conversation. Seeking privacy, Wayne stayed outside in the bitter cold to give me his account.

Wayne says his first memory was being violently raped by his father when he was three years old. It began with inappropriate touching and exposure and then proceeded to violent penetration. They were in the bathroom, and Wayne screamed so loudly that his mother heard his cries, came in and saw the blood. His father replied, "Woman, this is my house, we will do what I want." These rapes were repeated so often that Wayne developed ways to lock it out. As he explains, "I would go off in my own little world to escape everything."

When he was four, his parents dropped him off at his uncle's house, where his relative raped him orally and then sodomized him. "It was a very brutal, cold, horrifying experience." Once both his parents returned, he was told to get into his father's van. Wayne observed his uncle giving his father money while his mother looked on.

It progressed from there, from relatives to other men in the area. Wayne remembered a time when there was a gathering of about 40 to 50 people, mostly men, at the home of a friend of his father's. He and another boy were there. The youth, about the same age, had his shirt off and was crying.

The boy and I were taken into separate rooms. I was told to get down on my knees and one by one, men entered the room and forced me to perform oral sex on them, and this went on for a while. I remember trying to get through it all by counting the men-there were 18.

Wayne's mother started inviting men to the house, and later he realized that she must have been involved in the family business too, an unwelcome conclusion for Wayne.

Years of trauma therapy have been necessary before Wayne could become functional. Posttraumatic stress disorder, with flashbacks and night terrors, persisted; depression remained a problem. "Some of the therapy sessions were so intense that I came close to vomiting," Wayne explained. "I cried a lot; I screamed a lot. It was necessary." Breaking the silence and talking about the abuse-not burying it-was a necessary path to recovery, but a painful one.

Mary Jo: Permanent Blindness

Another parental pimping victim, Mary Jo, told me over the telephone that in the early years she did not fight the sexual attention of her father. She thought she was special, loved her parent, and wanted to please him. When her father started to bring buyers to her it seemed just like a part of life. Mary Jo explained:

You are brought up to brush your teeth. It seemed normal to me. I didn't like it, it was at times painful or at times violent, but it was authority I didn't question.

Mary Jo's father would buy her clothes, take her to basketball games or concerts, and out to eat. She felt special and he said he was the only one who cared about her. At the same time, there was fear: "I was emotionally attracted to him and afraid of him at the same time." Her father said that if she ever told anyone she would get in trouble because she was breaking the law too. Later, as she aged, the actions of her father and the buyers became repulsive.

When she was still under the age of five Mary Jo's father transported her to buyers, and at other times she was asked to stay home from school and the men came to the house. At some of the places to which she was taken Mary Jo says there were other children and two to four men participating. She was also transported to hotels but not nearly as often as to private homes. It wasn't full vaginal assault until she was nine. Before that, it was oral and penetration of objects. At the same time, Mary Jo was subjected to daily sexual assault by her father. As she began to resist, the buyers could be violent. For example, when she refused to swallow a man's semen, she was taken by the hair and dragged off the bed and taken to her father, who said he "would take care of this." As in Anny's situation, water torture was the punishment. He took Mary Jo to the bathtub, ran the water, and starting drowning her, lifting her back up and then back down, torturing his daughter. And that wasn't the only time. Her head, she says, would be banged time and time again. Mary Jo was prostituted until age 18.

She started to cut herself when she was between 14 and 18, and she also suffered from sexually transmitted diseases. As Mary Jo attempted suicide so often, it is a wonder, she said, that she didn't die from so recklessly cutting herself. At 10 years of age, she developed an eating disorder, which continued for 10 years-anorexia and then bulimia. Eventually, she developed toxic optic neuropathy from the malnutrition, giving her permanently foggy and blurry vision.

Mary Jo has told her story many times to the public; she is dedicated to reducing the amount of sex trafficking. Given what she has endured, her upbeat personality is a wonder. Unlike the fathers of the other interviewees, Mary Jo's father is still alive and in the area. To-date she has not gone to law enforcement to report him but said she might have to go if she heard he was in a relationship in which a young girl was in the home.

Elaine: Advertised via C.B. Radio

Like Mary Jo and unlike Anny, Elaine loved her father and all the special attention she received.

I wanted to show everyone I loved my father for taking me fishing alone, for tucking me in every night, and for restraining my older "Sissy" when she punched me. I was too young to know that his "love" was predicated on his abuse and my obedience.

Elaine believes her father's sexual abuse began when she was an infant and ended only when he left home to live with a girlfriend when she was 12 or 13 years old. Elaine fought the sexual assaults from her father and those of the buyers.

I was drugged and forced to drink alcohol so I would not fight back. I was forced, completely forced. Plus, any humanity I felt was beaten out of me. I was convinced that I deserved the abuse. In order to survive, I needed to be obedient.

For Elaine's father, the prostitution venue was the truck stop on a highway running by their house in an Appalachian village. Elaine was advertised via C.B. radio using code and hidden on the steps of the concrete mechanic's well in the floor of their garage, concealed by a parked car and oily blankets. "The hidden space provided privacy for the men and covered me should any 'unwanted visitors' arrive unannounced." Eventually, the business was expanded to gatherings for pedophiles held in an empty factory, to which she was transported in the family van, where the children would be forced to stand in a line to be chosen. When she resisted, alcohol and drugs were used to ensure her cooperation.

Elaine experienced unspeakable levels of violence at the hands of her father and other men.

I remember being doused in gasoline-he took Polaroid pictures of me-and then I was submerged in water. I was gang-raped by my father and two of his friends; I was tied to a table; I remember them raping me with beer bottles.

The power imbalance between the young victim and the buyer is an important aspect of the transaction, says Elaine. The age difference allows the buyer to purchase dominance and control; he has the illusion of dominating another person.

Two decades of trauma followed for Elaine. She was suicidal. Memories of the abuse were “like a movie running in the back of my head. It was always there.” She became involved in unhealthy relationships until the age of 30. Trauma-specific therapy eventually erased the movie and enabled her to proceed to a healthy marriage, adoption of a son, and the recent achievement of a Ph.D. degree at a major university.

Newspaper Accounts Confirm These Survivor Accounts

A review of recent newspaper reports between 2012 and 2018 detailing parental pimping charges finds the overwhelming majority of cases involved tactics similar to those of the parents of Anny, Wayne, Mary Jo, and Elaine. The following were chosen to illustrate that their stories are typical of the violence suffered at the hands of traffickers and buyers. Murder frequently occurs in these cases.

Author and lecturer Jerome Elam told of molestation from his wealthy stepfather beginning at age five and occurring twice a day. Soon thereafter he was forced to interact with others. “The first time I was trafficked as a child, I was handcuffed to a truck stop bathroom for six hours, raped and sodomized and abused,” he explained (Menino, 2015).

Eventually, his stepfather took him to a Hollywood pedophile ring of which he was a member, where he was drugged, raped, and used for the production of child pornography. And, like Anny, Elam witnessed a murder by the leader of the ring, Duke, who enjoyed choking children until they became unconscious:

I watched one day as a friend of mine named “Steve” suffered the consequences of Duke’s rage. Steve had defied the authority of the lower-ranking members and barely escaped with his life and this time he had become the nexus of the unstoppable fury of a psychopath. Duke calmly walked over to Steve placed his hand around his neck and as he lifted him off his feet I heard the last words my friend would ever say “Please no!” he pleaded but once Duke had taken action there was no stopping him. The color drained from Steve’s face and as the last ounce of life drained from him his bowels released their contents spilling all over Duke’s clothing. Steve’s last act had been his final revenge and I will always remember the look in his eyes as he lost his hold on the tortured life we all endured and finally found freedom (Elam, 2014).

Jessa Dillow Crisp, sold to buyers between the ages of 10 and 21, also witnessed a murder: “I had somebody very close to me tortured and she eventually died in front of my eyes” (Burrows, 2017).

“Melissa” was trafficked from age 12 when a parent sold her to a prostitution ring. She recalled:

I was handcuffed to a metal twin-sized bed in a Dallas warehouse with fourteen other girls. Each one of us was given no more than an ice-cold shower a day along with minimal food and at night we would be dolled up to prance around the next group of men. There was no end in sight. Then one night, a customer had the fantasy of burning a child to death and he

chose me. Having been burned I was tossed into a garbage [can] and left to die because I was no longer profitable. I underwent a series of extensive surgeries in order to heal (Joy, 2012).

Todd Barkau, now serving 25 years in prison, trained the 12-year-old daughter of his live-in girlfriend to serve as a bondage-domination-sadism-masochism-dominatrix. Activities included bondage, beatings, burning, and genital mutilation. Barkau watched and photographed the paid encounters. Her mother, who turned a deaf ear to her daughter's pleas to halt the activity, shared in the profits (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2010).

Thanks to a tip, authorities in Amite, Louisiana discovered a 22-year-old autistic woman kept in a six-by-eight-foot cage resembling a dog kennel, covered with branches behind a mobile home. The enclosure contained a mattress and a five-gallon bucket into which she would defecate. Newspaper reports claimed that her captors, all relatives, were collecting the victim's food stamps and other government benefits. Moreover, they had forced her to perform sexual acts on several people for pay, and based on evidence from social media, planned on taking her to some undisclosed location for sexual acts with a large group of people. Reportedly the victim had the intelligence of a young child. When found by law enforcement, she was an emaciated figure with bug bites on every inch of her body (Miller, 2016).

Michael Salter (2013), an academic who studies organized sexual abuse perpetrated on children like Anny, calls it sadistic abuse, "a manifestation of ideologies of masculine sexual aggression operant within groups of abusive men, and means whereby violence against children and young adults was infused with pleasure and fantasies of absolute domination over others" (p.137). Indeed, abusers appeared "to find particular pleasure in inhibiting or preventing the child from exercising any agency to shut out the persistent efforts of the abusers to invade both physically and mentally" (p. 137). Lacking agency, the children then become dehumanized, legitimate objects of hatred and sexual violence.

PART II. PREVALENCE OF PARENTAL PIMPING

I wanted to know just how prevalent parental pimping is in the United States. In this section, I present a range of data from research reports about the prevalence of parental pimping within samples of trafficked persons.

Wayne, the victim interviewed above, believes that the phenomenon of parents as pimps is unknown and underreported in the U.S.

It doesn't come up that much. It is not given the attention it deserves. Because of the veil of silence and secrecy that goes along with any crime that is family-oriented, that is why it is not reported so much. Family control is more common than most people think.

Part of the problem is that researchers often fail to explore the issue. Government reports on court cases involving traffickers fail to mention the relationship of perpetrators to their victims (Banks & Kuckelhahn, 2011; Motivans & Snyder, 2018). The FBI in its Crime in the United States Reports (2016) also does not provide information about whether arrested human traffickers are family members. Nor do non-governmental studies provide any more elucidation. In a six-year

analysis of sex traffickers of minors based on court cases, for example, Arizona State University researchers (Roe-Sepowitz, et al., 2017) fail to discuss relationship characteristics. This myopia is repeated in another study of federal trafficking cases filed between 1998 and 2005 (Small, Adams, Owens, & Roland, 2008), and continues in a recent study from another state (Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services, 2018).

There are, however, a number of recent prevalence trafficking studies that do explore family relationships in the United States. In these samples of trafficking victims, we find a wide range-3% to 44%- of individuals trafficked by family members, mainly parents. And in this research, younger girls in non-urban areas are more likely to be trafficked by their parents than those in urban areas, and at younger ages. As these victim samples aren't representative, their findings cannot be used to ascertain a general prevalence figure for the larger population of trafficking victims. But they do indicate that parental pimping is not an insignificant problem within research samples of trafficked individuals.

In a survey of Internet sex crimes (Mitchell, Finkelhor & Wolak, 2005), researchers reviewed 796 cases during a one-year period handled by law enforcement as revealed in a national survey. Most of the activity involved disseminating child pornography images to other offenders online. Forty-four percent involved family member perpetrators, who included grandparents, aunts, uncles, parents, stepparents, and parents' intimate partners. The majority of family members were from small towns; other offenders-acquaintances-were from urban areas, which makes sense as younger children are more dependent on their caretakers, and greater time away from the family occurs during adolescence. These findings were replicated in a study of 40 adjudicated juvenile females in a southern, rural state. Of those trafficked, all the rural victims were trafficked by family members; in urban areas, none were (Sprang & Cole, 2017).

Between November 2011 and September 2012 Covenant House (2013) surveyed 174 youth aged 18-23 in its crisis center and drop-in programs in New York City. Twenty-three percent met the definition of a trafficking victim. Of these, immediate family members accounted for 36% of the traffickers.

Researchers (Reid, Huard & Haskell, 2015) reviewed case files between 2007 and 2013 from four social services agencies located in major metropolitan areas in southern and central Florida which provide case management and counseling services to juvenile sex trafficking victims. Sixty-seven percent of the case files had information on the traffickers. Thirty-one percent of these traffickers were relatives, with 63% of these females, all but one a mother. The range of ages at initial exploitation by relatives was wider (4-16 years) in comparison to youth trafficked by nonrelatives (11-17 years). Not surprisingly, the average ages of initial sex trafficking of youth exploited by family members were younger (11.5 years of age) than those exploited by non-relatives (14.73 years of age).

In a report on domestic minor sex trafficking in Las Vegas (Kennedy & Pucci, 2007), an organization providing shelter for at-risk youth stated that as many as 30% of domestically trafficked youth receiving services through its organization are exploited by family members.

Researchers (Mitchell, Jones, Finkelhor & Wolak, 2011) studied a national representative sample of Internet-related child sexual exploitation cases ending in arrest (n=569). Twenty-six percent of the cases involved coercive family members.

Polaris operates a national human trafficking hotline. In 2016 it received reports of 8,542 victims of human trafficking, 21% of whom for which information is known were recruited by family members (Polaris, 2017). During the next year, the figure had risen to 24% (Polaris, 2018).

In New York State researchers (Gragg, Petta, Bernstein, Eisen & Quinn, 2007) surveyed service providers and law enforcement agencies in selected counties in upstate New York and four New York City boroughs to identify commercially exploited children they had identified and served during a two-month period in 2006. A vast difference was found between rural and urban sites. In upstate New York, 16% of the exploiters were family members or parents' partners, whereas 7% were family members in the New York City area. Fifty percent of the victims in the rural areas were 11 years of age or younger at initial exploitation; in New York City, 43% were 14-15 years of age.

In a study of 1,675 victims in active criminal trafficking cases in U.S. courts in 2017 (Feehs & Richmond, 2018), 75% of court files revealed the relationship between the defendant and the victim. In these 14% involved defendants who trafficked their children, spouses, intimate partners, siblings, or other family members.

Researchers (Kennedy, Klein, Bristowe, Cooper & Yuille, 2007) interviewed 54 women in western Canada, the majority of them currently active in the sex trade industry in Vancouver. Over 12% reported being forced to work on the streets by their mothers, fathers, foster parent, or older sibling.

Raphael & Reichert (2008) interviewed 100 women up to 25 years of age who were under control of a pimp at the time of the interview. Ten percent said they were recruited by a family member.

Using respondent-driven sampling, a technique thought to provide a sample closer to being representative, researchers in Ohio (Williamson, Belton & Burns, 2012) reported on 115 youth (out of a total sample of 328) who became involved in the sex trade while under the age of 18. Of these, 8.7% were recruited by a male family member who did not sell himself.

In a review of 1,450 juvenile arrests in 2005 for prostitution-related activities, researchers found 3% of the cases involved family member coercion (Mitchell, Finkelhor & Wolak, 2010).

Researchers in Kentucky interviewed 323 professionals serving at-risk youth and/or crime victims (Cole & Anderson, 2013). Interviewees were asked to state the relationship between victim and trafficker in the three most recent cases they had encountered at their agency. The majority (61.9%) reported a familial relationship for at least one of the recent cases, including 46.3% who mentioned a parent or guardian relationship and 19.4% who cited other relatives.

Table 1: Percentage of Victims Trafficked by Family Members by Study

Sample	Percent Trafficked by Family Member
Arrests for Internet Sex Crimes (Mitchell, et al., 2005)	44%
Covenant House Youth (Covenant House, 2013)	36%
Trafficked Girls in So. And Central Florida (Reid et al., 2015)	31%
Arrests for Internet-facilitated Exploitation (Mitchell et al., 2011)	26%
Polaris Hotline 2016 (Polaris, 2017)	21%
Trafficking cases in NYC and Upstate NY (Gragg et al., 2017)	16% upstate, 7% NYC
Women in Western Canada (Kennedy et al., 2007)	12%
Girls Under Control of Pimp in Chicago (Raphael & Reichert, 2008)	10%
Ohio Youth (Williamson et al., 2012)	8%
Juvenile Arrests 2005 (Mitchell et al., 2010)	3%

Most of these data samples in Table 1 are comprised of youth, which might skew the results; obviously, the younger the individual, the more likely she or he is to have been introduced to the sex trade by a relative. However, since research with samples of prostituted persons finds the overwhelming majority to have entered prostitution before the age of 18 (Coy, 2016), this may not be a serious limitation. Given these prevalence data, how many youth might be trafficked by parents or other relatives? Using the National Trafficking Hotline data for 2016, 5,551 sex trafficking cases were uncovered. Information on the trafficker was known for 2,123 of the victims. Of these, 464, or 21%, involved familial trafficking (Polaris, 2017). In the next year (Polaris, 2018) in a sample where information was known, 24% of the recruiters were family members. Were this percentage to hold up for the entire sample, 1,166 victims of parental pimping would have been reported to the hotline in 2016, and 1,949 in 2017. It must be remembered, however, that hotline reports do not represent the total scope of trafficking, but only reported cases.

PART III. DENYING FAMILY INVOLVEMENT AS PIMPING

My review of research reports brought the issue of denial to my attention. In this section, I provide some examples of academic researchers who interpret parental pimping data in ways that deny its prevalence.

Despite these data from research reports, some academic researchers are resistant to labeling parents as pimps, working assiduously to contest the statistics. Consider the work of Elzbieta Gozdiak at the Institute for the Study of International Migration at Georgetown University.

Anthropologist Elzbieta Gozdiak (2016) interviewed 140 children who were in the U.S. sex trade, most of them girls, who had traveled to the U.S. from countries

around the world. She found that none had been kidnapped or physically forced, notably because all had been brought to the U.S. by family members. Only three girls indicated that their parents played no role in their involvement in the sex trade industry. She wrote, “Sex work is an economic strategy for the whole family in this society, not an abuse of girls and women by their kin” (Gozdziak, 2016, p. 58).

Astonishingly, she went on to laud the advantages for children working in the sex trade:

Migrant children who move for work may have positive experiences that provide them the opportunity to develop skills and even an income that they can spend on necessities. However, Western antitrafficking advocates often see them as “child laborers” and “victims of trafficking,” rather than as working children (Gozdziak, 2016, p. 32).

Lastly, Gozdziaak pointed out that since the age of sexual consent is much lower in the children’s countries of origin, cultural customs of early marriages should be taken into account. Her conclusion: practitioners and policymakers should support, rather than condemn or criminalize, these movements of children.

In an article on child labor in Ghana, Okyere (2017) repeated Gozdziaak’s cultural argument. Definitions of trafficking must, he says, reflect local customs and conditions. “Out of poverty, parents become comfortable with sending their children into bonded labour as the shortest means of solving their own economic and social hardships” (Okyere, 2017, p. 99). Use of children 10 and under in gold mines is thus not exploitation: “Identification of child trafficking is therefore largely reliant on what actors deem to be ‘child exploitation’ based on their personal, cultural and political morals or value judgements” (Okyere, 2017, p. 95).

Anthropologist Heather Montgomery took a similar tack. She interviewed boys and girls between the ages of eight and 13 in Thailand who lived with their parents and sold sex on a part-time basis to Western men. These children were not trafficked, she wrote but had migrated with their parents many years previously to find employment in the tourism industry (Dempsey, 2017).

Sociologist Ronald Weitzer (2007) also emphasizes that youth in the sex trade have been “facilitated” by relatives, friends, or associates, but he believes they “have a qualitatively different relationship with workers than do predators who use force or deception to lure victims into the trade” (Weitzer, 2007, p. 454). Because they have not been coerced by a stranger, Weitzer does not consider these youth to have been trafficked. Eluding Weitzer are the facts: the violence and coercion used by parental pimps as well as the degree of harm to the children of this practice, as evidenced by these survivor accounts.

PART IV. MOTIVES OF PARENTS

In this section, I delve into accounts of parental pimping to try to determine the motives of parents who sexually exploit their children for profit.

In news write-ups of sex trafficking cases, prosecutors, judges, and testifying psychologists are often quoted venting their disgust with parental perpetrators. The crimes have been called “unforgivable” (Farberov, 2017). Parent perpetrators are demonized as sick and perverted (Now8news, n.d.). “You have committed the

most disgusting and despicable act that can be committed,” exclaimed one judge (Wilson, 1993). A prosecutor in one case said, “There are some crimes so horrible that the defendant doesn’t deserve a second chance” (Fisher, 2016). Even the journalists writing up the cases cannot hold themselves back from a personal opinion: “Both of these individuals are the scum of the earth and I really have no other words for them or their actions,” wrote one (Uwumarogie, 2014). “The Sunshine State has a new candidate for its most despicable criminal of the year,” opined another reporter (Elfrink, T., 2012).

Demonization of parental pimps, however, encourages the public to consider them as weird outliers. This depiction buries the monetary motivations of parental pimps, obscuring the organization of the sex trade industry in the U.S. that encourages their acts. In addition, it masks some individual characteristics of pimp parents that help explain their actions and provide clues to prevention. This section reports on a survey of Internet newspaper reports of parental pimping the author undertook between 2012-2018 in an effort to shed light on the motivations of parental pimps beyond those revealed in the stories of Anny, Wayne, Mary Jo, and Elaine.

Need for Money

A common reason for parental pimping described in newspaper reports is money. This is not to say that all or most of parental pimps are poor persons. Anny’s father, for example, was employed as an engineer (but had a serious gambling habit), Wayne’s father was a mechanic, and Mary Jo’s a businessman. Money can be quickly obtained in the sex trade industry because of demand from buyers and the ease of attracting them through the Internet. And the money isn’t insubstantial. “Come sleep with daddy’s little girl,” the ad on Craigslist advertised in the Casual Encounters Section. The father wanted \$1,000 for a two-hour encounter. When the undercover police officer arrived at the apartment complex, he observed the four-year-old girl lying under a blanket in a groggy state, dosed with sleeping pills (Salinger, 2015). “Daddy’s Little Girl” appears to be a common Internet code phrase; Elaine says she had a nightgown that repeated the moniker.

Thus, the industry is structured to make quick and easy money; in other words, the very existence of the sex trade industry, despite its illegality in most of the U.S., encourages parental pimping. Yet none of the newspaper articles describing parental pimping cases, reviewed for this article, focuses on the buyers of sex and their motivations, or the sex trade industry as a whole.

A mother and father in Georgia offered their 14-year-old daughter to the manager of a used car lot so they wouldn’t have to make payments on a minivan purchased two years before. The child was also trafficked to other men. According to the sheriff’s department, there were drugs involved in the family and the car dealer was a recovering alcoholic with a criminal record. In exchange for drugs, money, and food, another father was convicted of selling time with his young children to a 70-year-old neighbor (Now8News, n.d.).

From a decision in a case in the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit (*United States of America v. O’Connor*, 2011) we learn of one mother’s money-making plan. In exchange for free rent, O’Connor allowed her landlord to sexually abuse her 12-year-old daughter and photograph the assaults; he beat the child when she refused to participate. When she complained to her mother, O’Connor responded, “It’s better than being homeless.”

Later her mother rented her out to two strangers in a hotel room, while she sat nearby, speaking only to remind her daughter to follow the men's orders. According to her daughter, a great deal of money changed hands. While the second man sexually assaulted the girl and then forced her to perform oral sex, her mother was said to have sat in the room eating donuts and watching television.

At five years of age Mimi Diaz was sexually exploited by her mother for money. When she was older, the child said she realized that she was to supply the money for food, housing, and clothing as the breadwinner in the fairly large household. Those buying her body were not only strangers. One of her biggest buyers was her biological father, who was by legal order supposed to have no contact with his daughter. She recounted:

My mother had an agreement with my father. For \$450 to \$500 each weekend I would go and stay with my dad and the agreement was that I would do whatever it took to make him happy. I did some very, very wrong, disgusting and dirty things that no child should naturally ever be involved in, that no teenager should ever be involved in, that no adult should ever be involved in (Greszler, 2015).

To coerce obedience to her schemes, her mother, she said, put her in tubs of ice and she was made to kneel on rice for hours. Her mother even killed pets to keep her in constant fear and prevent her from leaving.

A father in Texas forced his 16-year-old daughter to offer truck drivers sex for money after he learned she was sexually active. As he advertised her online, he told her, "Well, if this is how you're going to act, we might as well make money off of it" (Sokmensuer, 2017).

Rozlind Saumalu was sold by her mother from age three on. She described her experience this way:

We would go into the building. It was dark. We would go down some stairs into the basement, where there were different men down there. And that's when, for financial gain, she would allow these men to do whatever they wanted to do to me...Every bone in my body was either broken, fractured or bruised (Moore, 2014).

Her mother worked for the federal government and her father was a police officer.

Need for Drugs

Drugs are a frequent theme in accounts of parental pimping. Time and time again police arrest mothers for selling their young daughters to drug dealers, who then supply the narcotics to them.

In one case in 2016 a mother was out of cash and was addicted to heroin. She later pled guilty to handing over her 11-year-old daughter to a drug dealer for sex in exchange for the drugs (WLWT5, 2016). Prosecutors said she took elaborate steps to make her daughter appear even younger than 11, as the dealer, apparently, was interested in little children whom he filmed when they performed sexual acts on him. Corcoran's daughter was sodomized, raped, forced to perform oral sex, and frequently videotaped in the drug dealer's home.

A Denver mother forced her 13-year-old daughter and her friend to have sex with gang members, who paid her in crack cocaine, methamphetamine, or cash. One of the girls said she exchanged sex for drugs about 100 times. Neighbors suspected what was happening inside the apartment; the smell of crystal meth cooking was so intense neighbors said they had to leave (NBC2, 2010). Yet none called social services.

Teresa Vanover pimped out two mentally disabled teen daughters, 15 and 13, at a neighborhood barbershop, collecting as little as \$20 an encounter to support her crack cocaine habit. The owner of the barbershop was also said to be complicit in the scheme (Huston, 2016).

Patricia Brown of Chicago allowed a man to have sex with her 10-year-old daughter in exchange for liquid heroin, cocaine, cash, and a pair of Bo Jackson designer athletic shoes. Prosecutors said she watched the sexual exploitation, telling her daughter she would kill her if she did not do as she was told (Wilson, 1993).

One of the more dramatic cases occurred in Florida in 2012 when a homeless man flagged down a police cruiser and reported that a six-year-old child was being sexually abused by several men in her own home in what was virtually a drug house. He told the police that he was present when the mother, Dalina Nicholas, accepted \$20 from a man and told her daughter to get naked and lie on a living room mattress so the man could have oral sex with her. He also saw the mother taking drugs. When law enforcement questioned the girl, she confirmed the man's account of what had occurred in the house (Elfrink, 2012).

Forty-nine-year-old Renee Collins was charged with trafficking her 14-year-old daughter in exchange for cocaine. Court documents indicated that the girl is diagnosed with cerebral palsy and autism, is partially deaf, uses corrective leg braces, and has the mental capacity of a two-to-three-year-old (Pratt, 2018), raising the question of whether buyers were truly interested in sex as opposed to something else.

In these cases, drug dealers are sometimes involved in parental pimping operations. After a long history of drug arrests, Suzanne Calana, 37 years of age, had lost custody of her daughter. But the girl ran away to live with her mother and the two engaged in sexual activities with men while in the same room, in exchange for money. The teen told law enforcement she often sold her body to give the money to her mother for drugs. According to the arrest report, her mother eventually moved the teen in with a drug dealer, who forced the girl to earn at least \$150 a day, while he also served as a pimp for her mother. The teen became addicted to cocaine, crack cocaine and Xanax (Ovalle, 2014).

Increasingly, opioids are being implicated in human trafficking. Experts believe that opioids are an effective coercion tool for traffickers because they numb both emotional and physical pain; clinicians have noted clear links between the current U.S. opioid epidemic and trafficking, as described below:

Addiction has a complex relationship with human trafficking: it can exacerbate a trafficked person's vulnerability, be part of a captor's means of coercing a captive person to submit, be part of a captor's means of incentivizing a captive person to remain captive, and be used by the captive person as a mechanism of coping with the physical and mental traumas of being trafficked. The first explanation appears to be the most common, although research is limited (Stoklosa, MacGibbon & Stoklosa, 2017).

As a result, efforts are underway to train clinicians to screen for trafficking in cases of opioid addiction coming to their attention.

Parents Were Themselves Abused

Parental pimping cases help us identify another factor: many of the perpetrators are themselves pedophiles or have been previously involved in the sex trade industry, sometimes as victims themselves. For these individuals, prostitution has become normalized; their daughters' bodies are seen as legitimate commodities for financial gain.

Both Wayne and Mary Jo have inklings that their families' pimping was an intergenerational business. Mary Jo's father was abusive to him, and her grandfather participated in abusing her and accompanied her father on trips to deliver Mary Jo to customers. Wayne now believes that his father's very large family was involved in activities involving sexual exploitation. Within the extended family, he said, there was a lot of "implied incest. I got the feeling that there was more going on." Was his father abused? "It is a probability."

Elaine knows it for a fact. She said:

My parents were the town drunks. I am certain that my father was exploited as a child; his mother was the town prostitute. My father had pictures of naked women in his workshop, and around his locker at work. We were very poor, but I think my father did this more for the feeling of power—after a lifetime of feeling powerless from being poor and abused himself. My father finally had something of great value in me—a daughter that he could abuse and pimp out.

As a result of her horrific abuse, Elaine is fierce in her determination to bring the intergenerational abuse to an end in her family.

I grew up in intergenerational poverty, substance abuse, mental illness, discrimination, all of it, that was the norm for me. It was my commitment to myself that I was going to have something different. I was determined to feel happy and safe in my home. When I was about 10 I went to a friend's birthday party in her home. My friend's mother was a professor at the local university. Their home was filled with books and children's artwork on the walls; we had so much fun at the party. This was the first time I ever remember feeling happy and safe in a home. I knew that is what I wanted in life.

Sometimes journalists attend court hearings and we are privy to statements from the defendants during sentencing hearings. There some reveal perpetrators' earlier victimhood, but this defense is not effective.

Some parental perpetrators formerly participated in prostitution. Amy Floyd Morgan, who took money for more than a year from a 44-year-old man so he could sexually abuse her young daughter in Alabama, used to perform striptease under the stage name "Jewel" at a gentleman's club in Florida (Farberov, 2017). Another mother, Kelsey Wheeler, who agreed to a three-way encounter along with her three-year-old, worked on and off in prostitution since she was 15 years of age (Liedle, 2017). As for the couple who trained the woman's young daughter as a dominatrix, the mother was a former stripper and her partner said he was

victimized as a child, which “led him to a life of self-loathing and substance abuse” (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2010). Raven Kalia’s parents took her to a film studio where she was sexually abused in front of cameras beginning at age four and later trafficked by her parents and other members of an organized crime ring. Both parents had been similarly abused themselves. She said:

That was normal to them. They had dissociated in the same way I did; they were in denial. Unlike my generation, they didn’t have access to counseling when they were young and weren’t born in a time when child abuse was beginning to be acknowledged by society. It’s important to recognize that they weren’t born evil—they were damaged (Calvi, 2013).

Like Raven’s parents, other perpetrators claim to be victims of sexual abuse and exploitation. Dalina Nicholas, whose six-year-old daughter was found abused in what was virtually a drug house, said she had been abused as a child herself (Elfrink, 2012). Natasha Hillard of Gary, Indiana, who let a 39-year-old man abuse her two children, four months and three years of age, said she was a victim of child sexual abuse and is mildly mentally retarded (Uwumarogie, 2014). A father trafficked his teenage daughter, who had a mild intellectual disability, to truckie friends to make money. The judge rejected his claim that he abused his daughter because he himself had been a victim of sexual abuse at the hands of his mother (Lowe, 2010).

It is not uncommon for parent perpetrators to offer the defense that they were being controlled by another and coerced into participating in the trafficking of their children. Although judges summarily reject this defense, knowing what we do of domestic violence, these scenarios could well be accurate. Dalina Nicholas’s mother told the court, to no effect, that her daughter was a drug addict being held hostage by drug dealers in her own home:

These drug dealers kept returning and basically they took over her home. She was as much a victim as her daughter was...I was told by my granddaughter that my daughter was beat by these people (Elfrink, 2012).

A jury also didn’t buy the story of a Washington State woman convicted of trafficking her six-year-old, who claimed that her husband forced her to sexually exploit her daughter. The woman was not a U.S. citizen and said she feared she would be sent back to Tonga if she didn’t cooperate with her husband (Heraldnet.com, 2016). And in a case involving the transport of a teen from Florida to the Super Bowl venue of New York City, the judge refused to believe that a pimp had orchestrated the trip and required the mother to participate: “I don’t see Miss Ostolozza as a victim in any way, shape or form—she is the perpetrator of this crime” (Rosenberg, 2015).

From these accounts, clearly, the context is the profits to be made from trafficking and the parents’ normalization of this commodification of their children’s bodies. Acceptance of trafficking stems from their prior experiences in the sex trade as well as from the reality of the large demand for children and teens’ bodies. In the only study done so far on women convicted of sex offenses (Cortoni, Sandler, & Freeman, 2015), two-thirds of the group which had promoted prostitution in young girls were found to have had long histories of prostitution themselves. The authors float the hypothesis that their offending “may therefore simply reflect the

view that sex is a commodity to be exploited for financial gain rather than reflect the presence of a deviant sexual interest in underage youth” (Cortoni et al., 2015, p. 8).

PART V. MOTIVES OF THE BUYERS

As we have seen, the parents are responding to the demand for their offsprings’ bodies. In this section, I try to briefly explore the motivations of those who buy the bodies of tweens and teens for sexual exploitation. As these men are not pedophiles, it is important to gain some sense of their motivation. The experiences of law enforcement provide some especially useful information.

From survivor accounts, law enforcement interviews, and necessarily limited Internet comments by buyers, we can piece together some ideas about the motivations of men who contract with parents for access to children, tweens, and teens.

For obvious reasons, men interested in individuals under the age of 18 do not believe it is safe to talk about their desires on Internet chatrooms. Now and then, however, comments do appear. To the buyers, the girls are sexually desirable, but the men know they themselves are not. It’s an opportunity, said one, “to hook up with a young lady who truly rocks your world who otherwise wouldn’t look twice at you. Priceless” (USA Sex Guide Milwaukee, 2014). A 51-year-old buyer acknowledged:

There is no way a twenty-year-old would ever go on a date with me, never mind sleeping with me. But when I go to a twenty-year-old prostitute and show her the money, she doesn’t say “no,” and I get what I want: a date with a hot chick (Malarek, 2009).

Some men understand the power they have over young girls in prostitution, as evidenced by these comments on an Internet johns’ board:

How many of you guys could possibly think a 20 something young lady would just absolutely love burying her face in the crotch of several random 50 to 60-year-old guys and shoving our cocks down their throat each day or having them climb on top of them and sweat like a hog (GottaRun, 2015).

Wrote another:

Asian, a young BSW [Black street walker] has been in jail for a while now. When she gets out she will be very needy and easy to take advantage of. Face it, we mongers [those who buy sex] are taking advantage of these providers and it’s a good thing. We benefit from their poverty, if they weren’t poor, they would not be out in the streets giving cheap bbbsjcm [bare back blow job come in mouth] I know it sounds messed up. I actually like beggars and needy SW. I use it as a bargaining tool and an opportunity to haggle with them and get excellent service for dirt cheap (ParrotRange, 2015).

Trafficking survivors noted the buyers’ lack of empathy for the children and youth; they seemed unable to put themselves in their places. Anny has always been struck by the attitude of the buyers. She described one buyer:

He looked at me, he was getting dressed, as if, business as usual, apathetic, not empathetic, he could have cared less. I felt invisible...It is a sexual turn on for them, it is a sense of power. There is always a power imbalance; this is not consensual.

Elaine agreed that part of it is the need to feel powerful, which the age difference facilitates. The buyer, she explains, is buying dominance and control, purchasing the illusion of dominating another person.

Georgia researchers (Schapiro Group, 2010), have demonstrated some men's interest in sex with young teens. Believing that interviews with men who purchase sex were not likely to reveal information because they probably not divulge anything about buying sex from children, the group devised a different research plan. It placed ads on Craigslist and backpage, mimicking other ads, crudely describing paid sex services with a young female; a picture was included. Two hundred and eighteen men, with a mean age of 33, called in over a two-month period in fall 2009. This set-up enabled the researchers to discuss age preferences with the callers. Forty-two percent directly shared a preference that the female be young, although many made clear that she be at least 18. The operators taking the calls had three escalated warnings they then issued: "We're talking about the really young girl, right?" "She does not look like she's 18;" and "I don't believe this girl is actually 18, and I have no reason to believe she is." Forty-seven percent of respondents who were subjected to the mini-experiment continued pursuing the sex purchase despite all three warnings. The researchers concluded:

The results of this mini-experiment are harrowing. Nearly half of men who respond to advertisements for sex with young females would knowingly purchase sex from an adolescent female (Schapiro Group, 2010, p.12).

Undercover law enforcement officers conducting stings confirm they receive more calls from potential sex buyers for ads for younger girls:

Sometimes we'll put up a juvenile ad and our adult ad-and [it] never fails, the juvenile ad that we have specific language that talks about "young" or "daddy's little girl" or some kind of language like that-that ad always gets more calls than the [ad for the] 30-year-old does (Martin, Melander, Kar-nik, and Nakamurs, 2017, p. 86).

Furthermore, law enforcement officers undertaking stings say that buyers of sex from juveniles request more violent and degrading sex acts more often than in cases involving adults:

We placed an ad and during the conversation [with the buyer], we suggested that we also had a female with us that was 16 years old. And we ended up with, I think, seven arrests? Yeah, seven felony arrests. And talking to those individuals and doing those investigations, those were the real sickest of the sick, I think it's fair to say. Their sexual fantasies were way [off] the chart. And there's a couple of them that if we [had not arrested them], I think they would've probably...really done some bad things to some juveniles, if they were true. The fantasies they had were just over the top, with bondage and stuff like that (Martin, et. al., 2017, pp. 94-5).

Another law enforcement officer described a sex buyer who intended to purchase sex from a girl he believed was 16 years old. The buyer showed up at the agreed-upon (sting) location with duct tape, a tarp, and rope in his car trunk. The investigators believed it was possible that he intended to kidnap and even murder the youth (Martin, et. al., 2017).

Law enforcement officers involved in sting operations see the horrors of the sex trade industry that are often hidden from the public. One posed as a mother in an Internet chat room willing to sell her two 12-year-old daughters. During the Internet conversations, Ohio man Jeff Doland revealed that his form of sexual gratification was dunking the girls in water. He “liked watching the bubbles,” and would then lift the children from the water when they were unconscious (Associated Press, 2007).

According to Pastor Flip Benham, Alabama Senatorial candidate Roy Moore dated very young girls “because there is something about a purity of a young woman, there is something that is good, that’s true, that’s straight and he looked for that” (Delk, 2017). That a man of the cloth would think that this rationale would provide a defense for an older man dating 14-year-old girls shows the extent to which sex with young teens is now acceptable. Moore’s own justification was perhaps even more interesting: he said he never dated “any girl without the permission of her mother” (Kirby, 2017). Most children and young teens are brought to assignments by a parent. Arnold Bell, who at the time was chief of the FBI’s Internet sex crimes unit, confirmed that abusers ingratiate themselves with children’s parents to gain access to their victims:

Sometimes pedophiles feel the parents are consenting on behalf of their kids. They think it’s OK because the parents are allowing it. It allows them to justify what they’re doing in their own heads, but it’s completely invalid in court. It’s completely invalid in any sense (Goldman, 2007).

PART VI. IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO ENABLE PARENTAL PIMPING

Survivor accounts and news reports make clear that in addition to parents and buyers, societal acceptance and/or indifference also play a role in facilitating parental pimping. It soon became clear to me that the survivors could write the book on the many ways that society condoned the actions of their parents. This section briefly explores the role of societal acceptance/indifference.

Philosopher Elizabeth Minnich (2017) reminds us that extensive evil requires massive societal support:

No one person, no few people, can commit genocide, keep a slave-based economy going, or a worldwide child pornography trade. It simply is not possible. And we already know that there are not enough monsters to do the work of extensive evil in some way that would cut way down on all that work, all that need for reliable personnel (p. 100).

Who are the enablers? In addition to buyers with cash, there is the criminal justice system supporting purchasers: police officers and judges buying sex from minors; some judges providing leniency and understanding to buyers, even pedophiles; and Internet sites providing pimps and traffickers with platforms to advertise.

In addition, ignorance on the part of some members of the public, who want to believe that teens and tweens in the sex trade industry are volunteers, supports parental pimping. Mary Jo decried the fact that some members of the public do not see sex trafficking and are blind to the business aspect. “It is easier for the public to see the children as runaways or acting up, promiscuous.” These misconceptions about paid sex with tweens and teens, normalizing child exploitation, empower both pimp parents and their buyers. Furthermore, Wayne said believes that buying sex from youth in the U.S. has now been accepted.

The sex industry is more twisted than people really understand. There are some people who think that consent should be lowered so that it is easier for adults to engage in sexual activity with kids. That disturbs me.

Here are but a few examples of these supporters of child commercial sexual exploitation gleaned from a review of newspaper reports between 2012 and the present.

Four years ago, Andrew Demers, 74, a 26-year veteran twice named Trooper of the Year, and former chief of the Maine State Police, entered a guilty plea for sexually assaulting a four-year-old child multiple times, receiving a four-year prison sentence (Brogan, 2014). Michael Diebold, police chief of Leechburg, Pennsylvania, was caught in a sting operation when he responded to an advertisement from a 14-year-old girl, who was actually a law enforcement officer. Diebold knew her purported age, and allegedly sent several images to the undercover officer, including photos of an erect penis in various stages of undress (Yan and Nottingham, 2018). A secret service officer, sometimes on duty in the White House, thinking he was corresponding with a 14-year-old girl, texted explicit pictures of himself to her as well as other minor girls. He begged the girl to send him pictures of herself wearing only her underwear and asked to meet her in a park (Hazen, 2015). The officer told the girls he had a particular sexual interest in 14-year-old females.

Former Kentucky judge, school board member, and conservative political activist (possibly serving as Donald Trump’s campaign head in Campbell County), Tim Nolan was sentenced to 20 years in prison for sex trafficking 19 teen girls (Wartman, 2018).

For seven years, young men in Arkansas saw their traffic citations and misdemeanor charges dismissed, as long as they agreed to perform community service. As their community service, the judge would require the men to collect aluminum cans or litter off the ground. While they were doing it, he took pictures of them in embarrassing positions that he found sexually stimulating. Police believe the number of victims could be in the hundreds. One of the men testified at the sentencing hearing that the judge threatened his life if he didn’t recant details he had given state investigators about being forced to pose for photos. Another victim said the judge took photographs of him from behind and asked him to pose naked. The judge received a five-year prison sentence (Schmidt, 2018).

Sometimes judges from the bench minimize the harm of commercial child sexual exploitation. Montana Judge John McKeon allowed a guilty plea in a case in which a father had repeatedly raped his 12-year-old daughter. He then sentenced him to 60 days in jail, giving him credit for the 17 days he had already served, explaining his belief that community-based psychiatric treatment afforded a better opportunity for rehabilitation of the offender. A recall petition was stopped in its tracks when the judge took his planned retirement a month later (Andrews and

Barbash, 2016). Orange County, California Judge M. Marc Kelly presided over a jury trial of a defendant accused of sexually assaulting a three-year-old girl, a charge that carried a minimum sentence in California of 25 years to life. Facts presented at the trial convinced the jury that the girl entered the garage where Rojano-Nieto was playing video games. He locked the door, pulled down the girl's pants, and began sodomizing her. At the same time, the girl's mother was looking for her daughter, but the defendant had put his hand over the child's mouth to prevent her from calling out for help. When the mother went to look elsewhere for her daughter, the defendant made the girl fondle him. Later, the girl later started complaining of pain.

In court the judge opined that the defendant didn't intend to harm the girl:

However, in looking at the facts of Mr. Rojano's case, the manner in which this offense was committed is not typical of a predatory, violent brutal sodomy of a child case. Mr. Rojano did not seek out or stalk [the victim]. He was playing video games and she wandered into the garage. He inexplicably became sexually aroused but did not appear to consciously intend to harm [the victim] when he sexually assaulted her. There was no violence or callous disregard for [the victim's] well-being (Phillip, 2015).

The judge noted that the defendant's life had featured family disruption that made him insecure, socially withdrawn, timid, and extremely immature. For these reasons, Judge Kelly reduced the sentence to 10 years. Eventually, an appeals court ruled that the man should be re-sentenced to at least 25 years. Along with the appeal, there was a grassroots recall effort, which fizzled when organizers failed to gather enough signatures to place the measure on the 2016 ballot (Puente, 2017). Judge Kelly has since been moved to Family Law Court in Orange County where presumably he will not be sentencing further defendants (City News Service, 2017).

Wayne viewed this judge "as a sympathizer serving the community of predators:"

It is common for abusers to minimize and normalize their own behaviors, often blaming children for flirting or teasing. There is no sense of personal responsibility, and the judge, in this case, feeds into it. This is what creates an environment where predators are pretty much free to do as they please with minimal consequences. The abuser's past may have some bearing on his behavior, yet his conscious choice to commit child rape cannot be excused. Many people endure much worse hardships in life and never abuse anyone.

And Wayne would undoubtedly also label Leavenworth County (Kansas) District Judge Michael Gibbons similarly. In leniently sentencing a 67-year-old man for soliciting sex with two girls, ages 13 and 14, the judge called the girls "aggressors" who didn't suffer substantial harm. In fact, he observed, they probably intended to rob the defendant (Rizzo, 2019).

PART VII. IMPLICATIONS FOR LAW AND POLICY

This preliminary inquiry demonstrates that many trafficking researchers and members of the public have missed the issue of parental pimping. Does it matter? The material uncovered here explodes some firmly held views that have serious

implications for policy, prevention, and services. This section briefly outlines the questions and issues these data raise.

First, although parents sell their children's bodies at very young ages, many continue to do so after they grow up. Anny was coerced until age 15, Mary Jo up to the age of 18, and Elaine until 12 or 13. In 54 news accounts of parental pimping reviewed between 2012 and 2018 in which the age of the survivor was mentioned, 64.8% involved girls over the age of 12. Although this is not formal research, it is suggestive that parental pimping likely involves children up to the age of 18 or older; some of the accounts involved girls trafficked by parents from early childhood until the ages of 19 and 21. This means that the buyer base may change over time, but the commodification does not.

Second, labeling familial sex trafficking of minors as child sexual abuse without acknowledging the commercial element may allow the parents to be charged with offenses that carry less severe penalties (Sprang & Cole, 2018).

Third, even when the commercial element is recognized, parents are often labeled as deviants, which precludes an analysis of which factors in our culture encourage them to believe their actions are acceptable. Labeling all the buyers as pedophiles also takes the focus away from cultural elements "related to dominant expressions of entitled masculine sexuality" (Coy, 2016, p. 585). One such element, for example, is contemporary pornography, which some experts believe is normalizing children as legitimate sexual partners for adult men, who are not pedophiles (Taylor, 2018). Quoting Gail Dines, Taylor wrote: "Once he clicks on these sites, the user is bombarded, through images and words, with an internally consistent ideology that legitimizes, condones, and celebrates a sexual desire for children" (Taylor, 2018, p.158).

Maureen O'Hara (2018), along with Coy (2016), Jeffreys (2000), and Itzin (2001) have identified a deep nexus between commercial sex and exploitation of children and adults:

I would suggest that a deep level of connection between these two aspects of the sex trade lies in the fact that the sexual commodification of women, and in some cases men perpetuated by this trade helps to create cultural contexts in which the attitudes that underpin the sexual commodification of children are more easily created and maintained. To use Kelly's terminology (2016), cultural acceptance of the sexual commodification of adults helps to create a "conducive context" for the sexual commodification of children...As the commercial sexual exploitation of children is so integral a part of the wider sex trade, I suggest that it can only be effectively challenged by an approach to policy and law that aims to work towards the reduction and long-term eradication of the wider sex trade, by reducing demand (p. 115).

From this information on parental pimping, it is clear that before commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth can be eliminated, the focus needs to be placed on eliminating all the cultural forces that sustain it, which these survivors have so ably and courageously described in their accounts.

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Jody Raphael is Senior Research Fellow Emerita, Schiller DuCanto & Fleck Family Law Center, DePaul University College of Law. She has been researching in the areas of violence against women and sexual exploitation of women and girls since 2001, and is the author of four books and numerous research articles. Her latest book is *Rape is Rape: How Denial, Distortion, and Victim Blaming Are Fueling a Hidden Acquaintance Rape Crisis* (Chicago Review Press paperback).

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