

LIBERTY PARK INN®

A Syndicated Column

Name: Sex Slavery

By: David Henry © 2012

“What do you think about this article on sex slavery, David,” John asked as he held up the newspaper for me to see?

“I read that article, John,” I responded. “That’s terrible. It’s hard to imagine this is actually happening in our country.”

“Yes,” John agreed. “I never realized before how dangerous these sex traffickers are. Apparently these girls experience a violent existence that includes beatings, broken teeth and bones, being cut with a knife and all kinds of other things like that.”

“Yes,” I replied, “and this article also points out that these girls are fed drugs and alcohol by their captors to keep them numb and submissive.”

“But I still don’t understand why these girls don’t just leave,” John wondered.

“I guess a stronger, evil person has overpowered the will of a more vulnerable person,” I replied. “These girls live in fear. Apparently they’re afraid to leave.”

“I guess you’re right, David,” John replied, “but it still makes me feel sick to even think about it.”

“Me too,” I agreed.

Just then Aaron came by and said “I saw that article too, and it’s awful what’s happening, but as an attorney, I know our legal system isn’t helping with the problem either.”

“What do you mean,” I asked?

“I’m referring to the inequities in our handling of these sex cases. We arrest these girls and treat them as sex offenders, but we seldom arrest the ones they are working for. Too often these dangerous predators get no punishment at all, while their girls go to jail.”

John added, “One good thing this article points out is that people are beginning to become aware of this problem. Even Obama is trying to bring attention to this issue.”

“That’s good,” I said. “I’m glad our

president has announced these new initiatives. Hopefully we can get some idea of how big this problem is so we can fix it.”

Just then, Sylvia, a psychologist who used to work at a psychiatric hospital and now works at a home for troubled girls entered the lobby.

“Hey Sylvia,” I said. “You might be interested in this discussion. We’re talking about this newspaper article on sex slavery.”

“Yes,” Sylvia said. “That’s a subject that’s near to my heart. The key issue here is shame. These girls feel trapped because they feel ashamed of what they were forced to do. And it’s especially terrible that they feel this way since many of them did absolutely nothing to bring this on themselves.”

“We were just discussing that question,” I replied. “Why do girls stay in these situations?”

“Shame is the reason,” Sylvia replied. “It’s that shame that keeps them captives. Shame leads to depression, isolation, loneliness and self-loathing. These girls experience guilt and condemnation and they often blame others around them for their problems in an effort to cover their own feelings of shame. And there is also a feeling of deadness in their souls. I deal with this all the time. Most of these girls were sexually abused in some way when they were younger.”

“That’s interesting,” I replied.

Sylvia continued, “One of the key issues these girls have to face is the need to deal with the hurts they’ve experienced and to forgive the ones who have hurt them. This is really a key part of helping these girls to find inner healing and to gain true freedom for themselves. Not forgiving someone who has hurt you is like drinking poison and hoping the person you hate will die.

“But these girls also need to own up to what they’re actually guilty of, which is usually a completely different matter.

“Unfortunately, our legal system doesn’t understand this. They arrest these young girls and put them in jail. That’s not what they need.”

“What do you think they need,” I asked?

“They need therapy. Psychologists know that people who engage in sex crimes were almost always abused themselves. In other words, most offenders were also victims before they became offenders. If we treat the victims with therapy, why do we treat the offenders with jail time? It makes no logical sense.”

“Hey, Aaron,” I asked, “what’s the re-arrest rate for people accused of sex crimes?”

“Very high,” Aaron answered.

“That’s no surprise,” Sylvia replied. “Our legal system is doing it wrong. They are doing nothing to fix the real problem. As long as we put these people in jail instead of treating them with the proper therapy, we will continue to have a very high re-arrest rate. You can count on that.”

“Really,” I wondered out loud?

“Yes,” Sylvia continued. “But on the other hand these sex traffickers who are using these poor girls are true predators. They are dangerous and they should never see the light of day again once they are caught.

“But we should provide therapy, not jail, for these girls and also for the family members and friends who abused them when they were younger. Jail time will never help these people or our society. These sex offenders are also victims. They should be receiving treatment.”

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The subject this week is a very difficult and emotional issue. But it is one that is currently getting headlines and it is one that we desperately need to address. Our extremely high recidivism rate in this area is proof that we have not been doing it right. We need to reassess what we are doing and find solutions that will really work.

Liberty Park Inn® is a syndicated column about issues and current events featuring conversations in an imaginary hotel. You may contact the author through his website at www.libertyparkinn.com.