Labor Trafficking Case Study: Domestic Servitude

August 21, 2014  
3:15 – 4:15 PM EST  

**Presenters:**  
Kathleen Morris, WARN Program Manager, International Rescue Committee – Seattle  
Megan Bruneau, Human Trafficking – VICE/High Risk Victims Unit, Seattle Police Department  
Ashley Garrett, Human Trafficking Team Lead, OVC TTAC

The material presented during today’s webinar session will be available on the Human Trafficking Learning Community.

The session will be recorded and will begin shortly.

As with all technology, we may experience a momentary lapse in the Webinar session. In the event of a problem, please be patient and remain on the line. If the problem persists, please contact HumanTrafficking@ovcttac.org for technical assistance. The Webinar session will resume shortly.
Tip of the Month:

Customized Training and Technical Assistance

OVCTTAC
Customized training and technical assistance

- In-person trainings, workshops and
- Peer to peer mentoring
- Strategic planning facilitation
- TA in needs assessments, program design and development, evaluation
- Webinars and conference calls
- Phone/email consultation
- Information and referral
OVCTTAC Task Force Capacity Framework

- Identify victims
- Assist victims
- Investigate and prosecute traffickers

Knowledge of Human Trafficking

Multidisciplinary Collaboration

Specialized Skills
CTTA Eligibility Criteria

- TTA will help build capacity and response to crime victims
- Victim service providers, criminal justice professionals, and allied professions that serve victims of crime
- Requesting organization contributes resources or funds to the delivery of requested assistance
CTTA Application Process

- Collaborate with respective OVC or BJA grant monitor on request
- Call OVC TTAC prior to application to discuss needs
- Complete on line application – www.ovcttac.gov
- MUST submit 90 days in advance of request
Victim-Centered & Multi-Disciplinary Response to Human Trafficking
Case Study: Domestic Servitude

Detective Megan Bruneau
Human Trafficking Vice/High Risk Victims Unit
Seattle Police Department

Kathleen Morris
Program Manager
Washington Anti-Trafficking Response Network
International Rescue Committee in Seattle
I. Introductions
   - WashACT Collaboration

II. Case Study: United States v. Almeda
   - Initial identification
   - Stabilizing survivor
   - Victim-centered interviews
   - Investigation
   - Prosecution
   - Ongoing Support
   - Outcomes
Seattle Police Department (BJA grantee) takes a victim-centered approach to investigating human trafficking cases through a dedicated human trafficking detective and its Vice High Risk Victims Unit.

Washington Anti-Trafficking Response Network (WARN), a coalition of non-governmental service providers lead by the International Rescue Committee in Seattle (OVC grantee), provides comprehensive services to victims and survivors of human trafficking in WA and educates communities to allow better access to services for victims of human trafficking.
Poll Question: Introductions

- What best describes your professional role in anti-trafficking work?
  - Non-governmental victim service provider
  - Law enforcement
  - Law enforcement or system-based victim specialist
  - Federal prosecutor
  - State/local prosecutor
  - Federal government staff (non-law enforcement)
  - State/local government staff (non-law enforcement)
Mission Statement

The Committee's mission is to ensure that victims of trafficking receive all resources available to them; and that human traffickers are identified, investigated and prosecuted to the utmost extent of the law.
Co-chairs:
Seattle Police Department (BJA grantee)
WARN (IRC Seattle) (OVC grantee)
U.S. Attorney’s Office

Member organizations:
• Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs): WARN Partners and other Service Providers; Community Activism Groups
• Federal Law Enforcement: HSI, FBI, IRS-CID, DOL, State Dept.
• Local Law Enforcement Agencies: Seattle PD, King County Sherriff, State Patrol, Tacoma PD; Lakewood PD, etc.
• State & Federal Governmental Agencies: Department of Labor/Wage and Hour; Washington State Attorney General’s Office, Health and Human Services/ACF
• County Prosecuting Attorney’s Offices & Other County Agencies
• And more...
WashACT Collaboration at Work

Client Identification & Referral
WARN Response
Law Enforcement Response
Investigation & Prosecution
Survivor Outcomes
  ○ Conviction of Traffickers?
  ○ Restitution?
  ○ Safety
  ○ Short-term benefits
  ○ Long-term housing
  ○ Immigration Relief
  ○ Family reunification
  ○ Job Training & Job Search Assistance
  ○ Education
  ○ Self-sufficiency?
Poll Question: Collaboration

- Do you work as part of a multi-disciplinary task force to respond to human trafficking cases?
  - Yes
  - No
United States v Almeda

A CASE STUDY OF FORCED LABOR
Initial Contact

- Referral from Seattle PD
- WARN reached out to survivor to assess needs
  - Immediate needs
- WARN worked to explain rights and options
- Survivor was extremely fearful and traumatized
- Safety concerns
- Connected survivor with pro bono immigration attorney to discuss options
- Survivor decision to report to law enforcement
Advocacy with Law Enforcement Process

- Interpreter
- Advocacy and support around victim interview with law enforcement
- Explanation of rights and options
- WARN responded to law enforcement requests for victim cooperation with investigation and supported victim through process
- WARN’s support allowed victim to provide key evidence to support investigation and prosecution
• What are the main reasons for using trusted, vetted, court-certified interpreters in law enforcement interviews? (Check all that apply)
  ○ Quality evidence collection
  ○ Victim-centered approach
  ○ Allow victim to fully express themselves
  ○ Your NGO partners want you to ...
• Interpreter

Interview conducted at IRC’s (NGO) office

○ WARN advocate present
○ AUSA, HSI agent, and SPD detective

• Topics discussed

○ Role of prosecutor
○ Explanation of investigation
○ Charging decisions
○ Victim rights
○ Safety
○ Immigration relief
○ Continued Presence
Victim-Centered Interviews

- Explain role of interpreter as neutral person
  - Safety issues related to interpreter
- Allow victim to tell story in her own voice
- May need to conduct multiple interviews to develop rapport, comfort, safety, and understanding of factual evidence
- Victim may not tell story in narrative or linear fashion
- Allow victim to take breaks during interview, to be comforted, and to be silent
- Do not make promises, other than desire to thoroughly investigate and prosecute
- Offer referrals to immigration relief and civil legal services
Mambukal Barangay - Murcia, Philippines
Initial Interview

- Life in the Philippines
- Job offer and immigration paperwork
- Arrival and control
- Work requirements and conditions
- Restrictions and barriers to escape
- Eventual escape
Forced Labor – Domestic Work

- Working conditions
- All cooking, cleaning, landscaping and childcare
- Physical and emotional toll
- No independence and no freedom of movement
- Kept hidden from outsiders
- Sleeping arrangements
United States v. Almeda
Initiation of Investigation

- Survivor’s fear of retaliation and family’s safety.
- Victim-centered investigation
- Treated as a missing person case
- Contacting Almeda family members
- Locating witnesses
- Interviewing “rescuers”
Locations where forced labor occurred
Law Enforcement Response

- Partnership and collaboration
  - SPD, HSI, USAO, WARN
  - HSI in the Philippines utilized
  - Department of Labor
- Victim-Centered Approach throughout
- Evidence gathered
  - Money transfers to Survivor’s family by Almeda’s wife
  - VISA paperwork (both submissions) filled out for Survivor
  - House montage
  - Phone records of Survivor’s texts to the Nurse
- Some Almeda family members re-interviewed
- Grand Jury utilized
Stabilizing Survivor

- Emotional support
- Explanation of rights and options
- Housing, food, medical care, counseling, ESL, connection with community, and other needs
- Intensive case management
- Immigration legal advocacy
- Survivor was highly traumatized and afraid. WARN made sure process was explained thoroughly and repeatedly so that victim could make informed decisions
Supporting Survivor

- Day to day case management
- Continued emotional support and explanations
- Immigration status and rights explanation
- Meetings with attorneys, DOL
- Negotiating restitution
- Support and advocacy at all law enforcement meetings
- WARN’s support allowed victim to feel safe and work to recover, make decisions and envision a better life
Prosecution

Meeting to discuss prosecution
- AUSA
- Investigators: SPD & H.S.I.
- WARN advocates

Considerations
- How strong is the case?
- What does the survivor want?
Romulo Almeda Sr pled guilty to knowingly hiring an alien for employment and did so with knowledge that she was not authorized for any employment in the US. All in violation of Title 8, United States Code, Section 1324a(a)(1)(A)

All 7 other Almeda family members considered “payors” with Almeda Sr to Survivor (payee) for restitution of over $90,000 (owed wages).
Supporting Survivor Long-term

- Continuing case management
- Continued emotional support and explanations
- Building community
- Immigration status and rights explanation
- Education, life skills, alternative housing, victim advocacy, supporting choices
- WARN’s support allowed victim to feel safe, pursue safe employment, and plan for future
- Advocacy and support throughout prosecution and beyond
Outcomes

- Conviction
- Sentence
- Survivor Restitution (!)
- Safety
- Self-sufficiency
- Long-term immigration status
- Community awareness
- Excellent case study ;-)
Contact

Detective Megan Bruneau
Human Trafficking – VICE/High Risk Victims Unit
Seattle Police Department
megan.bruneau@seattle.gov
206.684.8667

Kathleen Morris
WARN Program Manager
IRC in Seattle
kathleen.morris@rescue.org
206.623.2105