

# Slavery in the USA today?



Eliza is a 14-year old Mexican girl. She was working cleaning hotel rooms when a man, Rogerio Cardena, approached Eliza's parents, telling them about a well-paying job he could get for Eliza, doing the same work north of the border in the US.

Eliza was eager to go. Her parents were reluctant. But the smooth-talking man said Eliza would be in "good hands". Eliza was taken to Houston, TX and from there to Orlando, FL. It was then that Eliza was told she would have to work as a prostitute until she paid off the \$2,200 debt for her passage out of Mexico.

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**Globally 27 million people are enslaved. That number is equivalent to the entire population of our neighbor, Canada.**

- **Slaves may have made the bricks that were used to build the factory that assembled the TV you watch.**
- **Slaves in Latin America may have made the charcoal used to temper the steel that made the springs in your car and the blades in your lawnmower.**
- **Child slaves may have picked the coffee beans that were roasted to supply your morning cup of coffee.**
- **A young girl may have been sold into a brothel in Asia to be resold every night, earning \$10,000 for her owner but only misery, abuse and illness for herself.**
- **A 7-year old Pakistani boy may have been one who spent 10-14 hours per day chained to a rug-weaving loom to help make the carpet in your home.**

**Yes! Today the US government estimates that 20,000 people are trafficked annually into the US through deception, fraud and coercion.**

**These people are promised good-paying jobs, but are then held against their will or are forced to work for little or no pay.**

**Those enslaved in the USA may be working in many venues. Indentured slaves can be found in sweatshops (clothing manufacturing), in commercial agriculture settings (fields, processing plants, canneries), in ordinary neighborhoods (maids, baby sitters), on construction sites, in restaurants and as custodial workers, or in the sex industry (under the guise of massage parlors, escort services, adult bookstores, modeling studios, or bars and strip clubs).**

*"The trade in human persons constitutes a shocking offense against human dignity and a grave violation of fundamental human rights."*

Pope John Paul II

*"Trafficking in persons – in which men, women and children from all over the globe are transported to other countries for the purposes of forced prostitution or labor – inherently rejects the dignity of the human person and exploits conditions of global poverty."*

US/Mexico Bishops Pastoral Letter  
11.2002

*"Forced labor in the US is hidden, inhumane, widespread and criminal."*

Study by Univ. of CA, Berkeley Human Rights Center and Free the Slaves 09.2004

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