



Gang Trafficking Case Study - Overview of Criminal Investigation, Services Provided, and Victim Engagement

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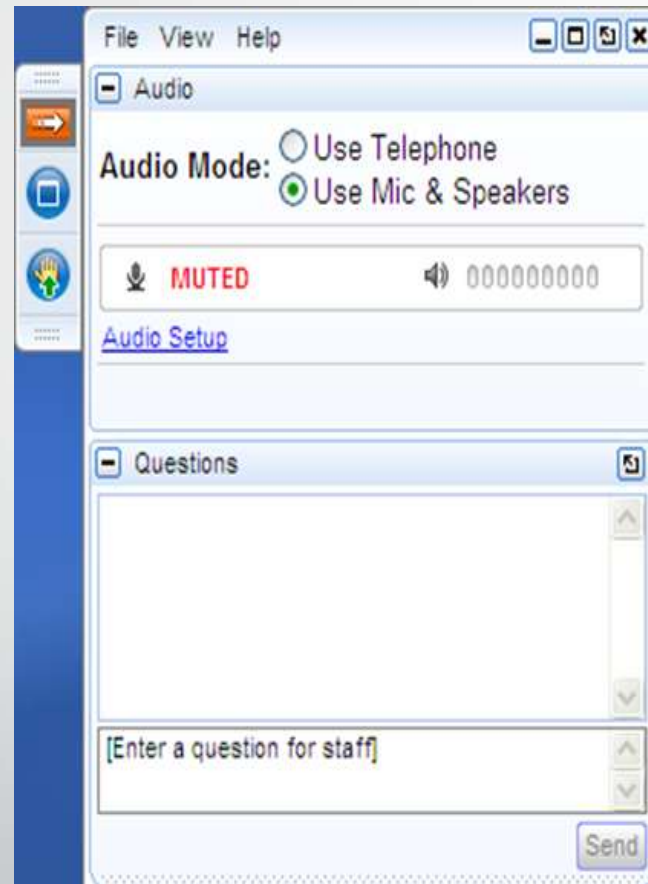
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Case Study:
United States v. Villanueva, et al
2013



Synopsis


- 14 year old used in commercial sex for 2 week period in January 2013
 - Street walking
 - Internet based prostitution
 - Explicit photos on internet
 - National hotel chain
 - Raped by traffickers and others
 - Multiple offenders and locations
 - Gang related

1st interview with child

- Victim, 14, was at a residential facility in Orlando
- DCF did initial interview and determined HT victim
- Contacted law enforcement
- First LE interview about 2 weeks after recovery

Interview

1. Provided general timeline
2. Nicknames of suspects
3. General locations of where crime occurred



“This went for what seemed like years, if you looked at a calendar though it would only add up to two weeks.”

-14 year old victim of sex trafficking

Recruitment

- *She bought me food, she got me clothes...like whatever I wanted she got*
- *I just thought that it was out of sympathy...that she was a friend and wanted to help out...she was older and has kids, so I thought...*
- *She knew that I was a minor*
- Victim did not know suspect's name or where she lived

Befriended by adult female

- Called her “mommy” or “Snow”
- *She’s a cool white girl*
- *She knows I don’t like being home...she’d just come and get me and we’d chill with one of her homeboys*
- *She’d bring me back or we’d stay with them whatever*
- It became a routine

Snow introduces her to the gang

- *Snow's* drug contact lived at this house and *Snow* took the victim here
- House used as a Nine Tre Gangster/ Billy Bad Ass hangout
- *Snow* knew a pimp named Knowledge was there
- "*She's ready*"



At "Studio"

- Provided with the drug molly... immediate effect on the victim
- Victim believed she was the life of the party
- Fascinated that this was a gang house and these were gang members:

Nine tre gangsters



Wasn't convinced she was a victim???

- *They never hit me, just verbally abusive*
- *Made me sleep on the floor*
- *Wouldn't let me use the phone or get on Facebook*
- *Made me stand in the bathroom all night when they left the house*
- ***I'm far away from (home), I can't walk home and that's the threat that got me***

1st Interview



1:19:26-1:24:13

- Not convinced she was a victim
- In love with one of the traffickers/gang members "Hood"
- "X" is another trafficker and OG of gang

Very scared of the fact that suspects were gang members

1:05:42-1:06:55

- *If you catch them, I'll be terrified because they're bloods...a gang*
- *They can be locked up but the rest of the gang is out there...and then I'll become an enemy*
- *When I go to school, anything can happen...they can just roll up and shoot me*
- *They have that fear in me still.*



Investigation and Treatment

- Victim provided a lot of information that needed to be corroborated
- Victim's **1st** residential treatment
- We continued to meet but didn't discuss case again for 6 weeks

Treatment Timeline



- 1st Stay Residential Treatment - 6 months
- 5 months out of treatment
- 2nd Stay Residential Treatment - 5 months
- Group Home Stay - 6 months

Devereux – 1st Stay

Per her therapist.

- The child was able to make parallels to various stories from Rachel Lloyd's book "Girls Like Us" and identify that she was taken advantage of.
- After identification as a victim... Scared and adamant about not testifying, or even talking about the exploitation.
- Through consistent visits by law enforcement and attorneys and through consistent collaboration between law enforcement and care providers, she eventually became ready.
- Empowered by information on the legal process and by what to expect in preparation to participating in court. Also, continuous reassuring to help her feel safe and supported.

Devereux - Behavior

- Easy to talk to and build rapport.
- More ideal victim mentality. Presented as a survivor.
- Used sexuality to gain access to needs and wants. Child using innuendo, flirtation, and attempt to use physical proximity and contact when asking for items and/or privileges.
- Male staff would not meet with her one on one, and usually would meet with her in the presence of an adult female to role model.
- Several months of social skills trainings via role play, coaching, and redirection teaching how to appropriately request needs and wants.

Primary barriers to treatment

- Child was in love with one of the traffickers
- Child's fear of the gang and them hurting her
- Child's loyalty to Snow and disbelief she was used by her
- Child's poor relationship with her mother
- Child's use of drugs as means of coping and to make her appear older
- Child's feelings of entitlement due to her looks

Discharge

- Brought into treatment and made progress
- Leader in STRIVE Group
- Ready for a lower level of care
- Outpatient referrals made

Investigation

- Using victim's interview and a variety of investigative techniques, 2 locations and multiple suspects were positively identified
- Victim had responded very well to treatment and was invaluable in building a criminal case
- Her being in a program with counseling on site was a tremendous advantage to the investigation
- She was very EMPOWERED seeing her testimony being shown to be accurate and true

Social Media

- The victim's Facebook account was used to show connections between her and 3 of the traffickers
- The traffickers pages were accessed during the investigation and photos were used to demonstrate the relationship that existed among the traffickers
 - This showed the group's organization and connection to one another
 - Showed pictures of money, gang signs and affiliations, drug use, and weapons
- YouTube videos also showed how the group interacted with one another

Corroborate

- All suspects positively identified
- Computer and cell phones seized
- Nailed down the timeline, established locations, located and interviewed crucial witnesses
- Hotels receipts, phone records, Facebook...
- Goal: **PUT EVERYTHING ON MY SHOULDERS AND OFF OF HERS**

Her final day...escape



- Victims run from house and finds a family nearby...uses phone and is taken to safety
- Witness and responding deputy were identified and interviewed

Out of Treatment

- No outpatient services in place.
- She began leaving home at night periodically.
- Was warned about being sent back to treatment if she missed curfew again.
- Offered a ride to Miami.
- After about a month, she was found by law enforcement.
- Brought back residential treatment facility.

Devereux DELTA Program

Devereux has fully implemented a specialized DELTA Treatment Track at the Viera Campus to meet the unique needs of this population.

- Individual therapy 2x per week
- STRIVE Group
- Substance Use Education Group
- Art Therapy Group

What does DELTA Mean to Devereux



LEADERSHIP

D = Dedicated
E = Empowered
L = Leader
T = Triumphant
A = Advocate

SKILL BUILDING

TREATMENT

Devereux - Second Stay

Per her therapist.

- Intensive individual, family, group therapies and medication management.
- Easy to build rapport with, very talkative and open.
- Initially presented at the pre-contemplative stage of change, as she seemed very focused on earning money.
- Later on in treatment, child began to realize how “the life” was negatively affecting her own life, as well as her family.
- Went from COMPLETELY resistant to fully engaged.

Devereux - Behavior

- She did not find anything wrong with what she was involved in. The people she was with were her friends
- Her way of looking at “the life” changed from her first time in treatment
- Continued to use flirting, innuendos, and tried to be in close proximity with preferred male staff to try and gain attention or gain access to things she wanted
- Got involved in extra curricular activities. Reported that choir and God were things that really helped pull her out of that way of thinking her second time in treatment

Barriers to Treatment

- ANGRY
- Believed being a star in the sex industry was her best option
- Believed tricking and taking care of herself without parents was the best option for her
- Belief she was better (older, more mature) than all the other kids
- Belief she could use her looks to get what she wanted and get out of what she didn't want. Belief that because she is "pretty" she could get whatever she wanted out of life (Reinforced by mom)
- Preoccupation with being the prettiest. Preoccupation with clothing, shoes, hair, etc.
- At first, she showed up for required groups and individual sessions, did not buy in as she did not believe she had anything to work on

Discharge

- Bought in to Treatment and made progress
- Graduated STRIVE Group
- Child did not want to go home
- Mom did not want her to go home
- Suggested she step-down to a lower level of care before home

Step-down. Devereux Group Home

Per her therapist.

- Going back to “the life” was still in the back of her mind.
- A powerful breakthrough moment was when she testified against her perpetrators. Child felt empowered and proud that she was able to face them.
- By sentencing, she was told a lot more about what happened. Anger switched to traffickers.
- Toward the end of treatment, child began to focus on her own educational goals and returning to her family.

Trial preparation

- Keeping victim stable...got shaky knowing she had to air her vulnerability and manipulation
- Lined up witnesses from across nation and coordinated them in Orlando
- Jail calls

Trial

- September 2014...4 days
- 1 suspect plead guilty to his charges...provided substantial corroborating testimony
- Victim testimony was incredible
- All 3 convicted & Sentenced: 8 years to 19 years
- Learned rest of the story...

Human Trafficking Convictions

- All 4 convicted through Middle District of Florida. Villanueva sentenced to **18 Years in prison. The other defendants ranged in sentences from 8-12.5 years**
- Convicted with *Conspiracy to Commit Sex Trafficking of a Minor and Sex Trafficking of a Minor*

Successes

- Does not want “the life” for herself
- Opportunity to see a different life for herself
- Reaching out for help; asking for a program
- Empowered by trial
- Still communicating with her investigator


Thank you for listening!

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