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From: Beverly LaHaye Institute [Dot.Commentary: The Sex Fields of San Diego]
To: [Redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, May 07, 2003 3:08 PM
Subject: Dot.Commentary: The Sex Fields of San Diego



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Dot.Commentary

Women's Issues From A Feminine Perspective
A weekly publication of the Beverly LaHaye Institute
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The Sex Fields of San Diego
Sex Slave Operation Thrives in Migrant Strawberry Fields
 By Janice Shaw Crouse, Ph.D.

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The migrant workers call them the "reed beds." Others use the overly euphemistic term, "fields of love." They are squalid, little nests among the golden reeds surrounding the strawberry fields near San Diego. You'd drive right past them and never notice the towel wrapped around an oil pipeline marking the passageway through the reeds. You'd notice the passageway and not notice the caves among the thickets. But there is no way to miss the stench of discarded trash into the ground. And the trash is everywhere -- empty beer bottles and plastic bags overflowing with condom packets. The silent testimony to the cruel underworld of sexual trafficking. The sleazy evidence reveals but a glimpse into the horror of little girls, aged 9 - 18, who are kidnapped and forced to service 20-35 men per day in unimaginable sexual slavery.

Even though this travesty happened right in our faces, it took an investigative report by the *El Universal*, a Mexican newspaper, to reveal the awful details of a sex trafficking ring that operated for 10 years in the migrant camps and suburbs of San Diego. San Diego is a hotbed for sex trafficking because of its proximity to Mexico, its military bases, its large migrant population, and its white "good ole boys" who will pay a premium to take the virginity of a little girl. Three Mexican brothers have made a fortune apparently by violating the law, exploiting the children of their home country. There is evidence linking the Salazar brothers -- Julio, Tomas and Luciano -- to duping of hundreds of girls for a prostitution and drug operation that is focused on San Diego, but extends as far as Nebraska.

Two men are determined to stop the Salazar brothers and they have spent three years getting the evidence that they need. Christopher Tenorio is a U.S. Department of Justice prosecutor for the Southern District of California. Rick Castro is deputy sheriff of San Diego County; in my conversations with him, I learned that he is committed to doing everything possible to end the scourge of sex trafficking in San Diego County. Because they are tenacious and because they speak Spanish, these two men were able to work with local law enforcement to shut down 25 houses where the victims of sex trafficking were housed and through which they were being transported. When the authorities went in, they found dozens of empty condom boxes, each box holding a thousand condoms. They also found stopwatches used to limit to 10 minutes the amount of time a girl serviced a "client."

Sadly, many of the child victims have babies that are immediately snatched from the mother and held hostage so that if they escape, she is told that her baby will be killed. In addition, the young girls who are held in the sex rings are told that they will be given \$1500 transporting costs for getting across the border from Mexico into the United States. All the girls are aware of the price of escape; most have seen attempted escapees punished. Julia, a 17-year-old, was beaten with a hook until the flesh of her

back was ripped off.

A similar beating gave the authorities the opening they needed to break open the Salazar trafficking ring. The police received a brutally beaten young girl, Reyna, who had escaped from prostitution at one of the farm labor camps. One of the workers described her as "an agonized human being drowning in pain." At age 11, after the death of her mother, Reyna's father gave her to a corrupt man who raped her. Afterwards, one of the Salazar operatives pretended to fall in love with her and brought her to the United States. She was forced, as a 15 year old, to serve 20 men per hour from 8 to 2 daily.

Two of the Salazar brothers, Tomas and Luciano, are currently in jail. The oldest brother, Julio, who is believed to be the head of the operation, managed to escape during the raid conducted in cooperation between the FBI, INS and the San Diego County Sheriff's Department. He is a legal immigrant and has a legitimate tow truck business that provides good cover. Authorities believe the Salazar brothers continue to run their "business" from behind bars and that Julio, too, continues business as usual -- drugs, prostitution, and sex trafficking. Sex slavery is big business and criminals can make a fortune through unspeakably cruel exploitation of young girls. The problem has taken a deadly turn. The murdered bodies of young Mexican girls are turning up with signs of torture and children are turning up in Mexico with similar patterns of abuse.

Officers Tenorio and Castro are concerned that the deaths are connected to and will be linked to the sex trafficking business. As the investigation continues and this San Diego ring is just one of the cases that could be exposed in every major city of the United States, the State Department estimates that over 50,000 little girls and women are brought into the United States every year for sex slavery. Modern elites disagree when the President states unequivocally that prostitution is inherently harmful to women; meanwhile, the sex industry creates a demand that is increasingly insatiable and increasingly focuses on younger girls -- to the shame of any politician. Rhetoric about children emphasizes special agendas over the overwhelming needs of young children whose potential, or even their existence, is being destroyed in strawberry patches and slum brothels.

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Thank you,
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5/7/2003