

Human Trafficking

Trafficking Terms

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Traffickers — Traffickers are people who exploit others for profit. They can be any demographic, individuals and groups, street gangs and organized crime, businesses or contractors.

Pimp — A person who controls and financially benefits from the commercial sexual exploitation of another person. The relationship can be abusive and possessive, with the pimp using techniques such as psychological intimidation, manipulation, starvation, rape and/or gang rape, beating, confinement, threats of violence toward the victim’s family, forced drug use, and the shame from these acts to keep the sexually exploited person under control.

Pimp Partner — Two pimps who are friends and allow their victims to work together.

Quota — A set amount of money that a trafficking victim must make each night before she can come “home.” Quotas are often set between \$300 and \$2000. If the victim returns without meeting the quota, she is typically beaten and sent back out on the street to earn the rest. Quotas vary according to geographic region, local events, etc.

Serving a Pimp — The actual phone call one pimp makes to another after “taking” his victim.

Squaring Up — Attempting to escape or exit prostitution.

Stable — A group of victims who are under the control of a single pimp.

Automatic — A term denoting the victim’s “automatic” routine when her pimp is out of town, in jail, or otherwise not in direct contact with those he is prostituting.

Bottom or “Bottom Bitch” — A female appointed by the trafficker/pimp to supervise the others and report rule violations. Operating as his “right hand,” the Bottom may help instruct victims, collect money, book hotel rooms, post ads, or inflict punishments on other girls. *“The Bottom Bitch is subjected to the most physical abuse and the one most likely to be killed by the pimp. She had the toughest job of all of us.”* Survivor, Truckers Against Trafficking Conference Billings, MT-June 2018

Branding — A tattoo or carving on a victim that indicates ownership by a trafficker/pimp/gang.

Brothel (a/k/a Cathouse or Whorehouse) — These establishments may be apartments, houses, trailers, or any facility where sex is sold on the premises. It could be in a rural area or nice neighborhood.

Caught A Case — A term that refers to when a pimp or victim has been arrested and charged with a crime.

Seasoning — A combination of psychological manipulation, intimidation, gang rape, sodomy, beatings, deprivation of food or sleep, isolation from friends or family and other sources of support and threatening or holding hostage of a victim’s children. Seasoning is designed to break down a victim’s resistance and ensure compliance.

Reckless Eyeballing — A term which refers to the act of looking around instead of keeping your eyes on the ground. Eyeballing is against the rules and could lead an untrained victim to “choose up” by mistake.

Renegade — A person involved in prostitution without a pimp.

Choosing Up — The process by which a different pimp takes “ownership” of a victim. Victims are instructed to keep their eyes on the ground at all times. According to traditional pimping rules, when a victim makes eye contact with another pimp (accidentally or on purpose), she is choosing him to be her pimp.

Circuit — A series of cities among which prostituted people are moved. One example would be the West Coast circuit of San Diego, Las Vegas, Portland, and the cities in between. The term can also refer to a chain of states such as the “Minnesota pipeline” by which victims are moved through a series of locations from Minnesota to markets in New York.

“John” (a/k/a Buyer or “Trick”) — An individual who pays for or trades something of value for sexual acts.

Lot Lizard — Derogatory term for a person who is being prostituted at truck stops.

Fender Lizard — “A chick that will do anything to get on the back of a guys motorcycle. (A bike prostitute).”

Madam — An older woman who manages a brothel, escort service or other prostitution establishment. She may work alone or in collaboration with other traffickers.

Coercion — Threats or perceived threats of serious harm to or physical constraints against any person; a scheme intended to cause a person to believe that failure to perform will result in serious harm to or physical restraint against any person.

Commercial Sex Act — Any sex act on account of which anything of value is given to or received by any person.

Track (a/k/a Stroll or Blade) — An area of town known for prostitution activity. This can be the area around a group of strip clubs and pornography stores, or a particular stretch of street.

Trade Up/Trade Down — To move a victim like merchandise between pimps. A pimp may trade one girl for another or trade with some exchange of money.

Trick — Committing an act of prostitution, or the person buying it. A victim is said to be “turning a trick” or “with a trick.”

Cousin-in-Laws — Victims of pimp partners who work together.

Daddy — The term a pimp will often require his victim to call him.

Date — The exchange when prostitution takes place, or the activity of prostitution. A victim is said to be “with a date” or “dating.”

Exit Fee — The money a pimp will demand from a victim who is thinking about trying to leave. It will be an exorbitant sum, to discourage her from leaving. Most pimps never let their victims leave freely.

Head Cut — A victim getting beaten down by their pimp.

Human Smuggling — The facilitation, transportation, attempted transportation, or illegal entry of a person or persons across an international border, in violation of one or more countries’ laws, either clandestinely or through deception, such as the use of fraudulent documents.

In-Pocket — Not paying any other pimp than the one controlled by the victim. Not speaking to any other pimp.

Kiddie Stroll — An area known for prostitution that features younger victims.

Loose Bitch — Pimps call a loose bitch a victim who keeps choosing different pimps.

Turn Out — To be forced into prostitution or a person newly involved in prostitution

Out of Pocket — The phrase describing when a victim is not under control of a pimp but working on a pimp-controlled track, leaving her vulnerable to threats, harassment, and violence in order to make her “choose” a pimp. This may also refer to a victim who is disobeying the pimp’s rules.

Family/Folks — The term used to describe the other individuals under the control of the same pimp. He plays the role of father (or “Daddy”) while the group fulfills the need for a “family.”

Pimp Circle — When several pimps encircle a victim to intimidate through verbal and physical threats in order to discipline the victim or force her to choose up.