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Human Trafficking in the News

Woman sues Portland motel for \$4 million, alleging pimps operated there unfettered

A woman who says she's a victim of sex trafficking has filed a \$4 million lawsuit against a Portland motel, alleging it failed to prevent pimps from forcing her to have sex with countless men at the motel for more than a year.

No safety in the suburbs: child sex traffickers prey on innocence

No doubt, when you hear the term "sex trafficking" or "sex worker" you probably have an image of a certain type of girl. And although it's true that girls in the foster care system are the most at risk, experts now say girls in the suburbs and even rural areas are more vulnerable than ever. And that is Jessika's story.

Utah Attorney General says human trafficking remains a problem

Although it is often thought of as a foreign issue, there is still a large problem with human trafficking in Utah, the state's top law enforcer says. "Human trafficking, modern-day slavery, has never been in greater number than it is today," Utah Attorney General Sean Reyes said during a panel discussion Tuesday. Yet "more than ever, we have new and emerging assets in the fight, new technologies, new techniques, new partnerships that give me a lot of hope."

[Click here to read these articles on our website](#)

Who deserves this year's Harriet Tubman Award?

TAT is looking for the person to honor as the winner of the 2019 Harriet Tubman Award presented by Protective Insurance. Do you know someone in trucking or busing whose direct actions have helped save or improve the lives of those

enslaved or have prevented human trafficking from taking place? Please contact TAT immediately with the name and pertinent information. The award presentation is in May.

To be considered for the award, the nominee -- and/or additional people involved in the situation that resulted in making a call to the National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH) or local law enforcement -- must be employed by the trucking/travel plaza or busing industries. He/she must be able to provide all the details requested for the event or situation. These will be vetted by TAT's award selection committee.

The award carries with it a \$2500 check from TAT. Protective Insurance will provide two Harriet Tubman Awards each time the award is presented, one for the winner and one for the school/company or fleet headquarters, as well as a dedicated award ceremony during the Protective Insurance Protective 500 gala event, held in conjunction with the Indianapolis 500 event. It will also provide hotel accommodations for the award winner and a guest with full Protective 500 access to events, dinners and the Indianapolis 500 race. Protective will also promote and market the award to agents, brokers, policyholders, risk and safety managers and fleet executives.



HAVE YOUR DIRECT ACTIONS, OR THOSE OF ONE OF YOUR TAT-TRAINED DRIVERS OR TRUCK STOP EMPLOYEES, HELPED A VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

If yes, let us know about it! You could be eligible for our prestigious Harriet Tubman Award that includes a fabulous prize package.

Created to honor members of the trucking and busing industries whose **DIRECT ACTIONS** impact those victimized by human trafficking.



For more information, visit

<https://truckersagainsttrafficking.org/harriet-tubman-award/>

Largest coalition build to date held in Alabama; second Alabama build in planning stages



Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall watches from the back of the room as CB

TAT cohosted its largest coalition build (CB) to date in Montgomery, Alabama in February in partnership with the Office of the Alabama Attorney General and the Alabama Trucking Association. Held in downtown Montgomery, the CB included approximately 100 members of the trucking, busing and truck stop industries, as well as law enforcement. The half-day event reached maximum capacity over a week prior to the build,

Director Esther Goetsch presents. closing registration and moving the Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall to ask TAT to consider returning to Alabama for a second CB in another part of the state.

General Marshall opened the meeting by calling all attendees to action in the fight against human trafficking in Alabama. Following the meeting, he and some of his staff met with Esther Goetsch, TAT coalition build director, to discuss strategies for implementing TAT's Iowa MVE model in total.



The FDP was available for tours.

Survey results from the CB were positive, and one Intelligence Analyst from the Alabama Fusion Center commented, "Although I work with human trafficking investigations daily, this training showed me the importance of the trucking industry in combating this crime and enhanced my knowledge through a survivor's perspective."

Participants at the event also had the opportunity to tour TAT's [Freedom Drivers Project](#).

TAT participates in Southwestern States Industry Day



TAT Deputy Director Kylla Lanier (center) is pictured with a number of high-level Mexican Federales with whom she was able to discuss the importance of trucking in the fight against human trafficking.

TAT Deputy Director Kylla Lanier presented for TAT at a conference called Southwestern States Industry Day Feb. 13, put on by the Calexico Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Facility of the California Highway Patrol.

Law enforcement and transportation agencies were in attendance from New Mexico, Nevada, Arizona, California and Colorado, along with trucking industry representatives from companies that work in both Mexico and the United States, members of USDOT, the Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration (FMCSA), the

Mexican Federales, the SCT (the Mexican DOT) and CANACAR (the Mexican equivalent of the American Trucking Associations).

While the entire day's presentations were regulatory except for TAT, Lanier believed it was an excellent opportunity for TAT. "It was great to network with the different state patrols," she said. "What was also

significant was that USDOT/FMCSA, the Nevada Highway Patrol and Arizona DOT had our materials at their booths. I also got to speak with a large number of the Mexican officials, both law enforcement and CANACAR, about Guardianes del Asfalto, the program of Consejo Ciudadano that works with the trucking industry in Mexico concerning human trafficking. They all expressed great interest and immediately saw the value of educating the trucking



industry on the issue to help combat the crime. The audience of about 110 really seemed to connect that human trafficking is not only an internal issue within each of our respective countries, but a crime that crosses the border in both directions. It was invigorating to meet with people who are already TAT champions and also to connect with those who had never considered the trucking industry an ally in this fight and help them see the value of their participation."

Planning on attending the Mid-America Trucking Show? Visit with TAT!

If you're planning a trip to Louisville, Kentucky for the Mid-America Trucking Show (MATS) March 28-30, be sure and visit TAT's booth in the West Wing of the Kentucky Exposition Center, booth #62088. TAT staff will also be available at Kenworth's Everyday Heroes Truck, positioned in the South Wing lobby. We'd love to see you!



TAT turns 10!



In 2009, 10 years ago this month, six women -- five of them from one family -- agreed that it made perfect sense to try and engage the members of the trucking industry in the fight against human trafficking. They were a massive industry; they traveled every road in the country regularly and were trained to be observant while doing it; they often frequented places where traffickers worked to sell their victims; and, if trained to understand what they were seeing and what to do about it when they were confronted with a trafficking situation, they could be of immense benefit to law enforcement in recovering victims and arresting perpetrators. These women saw truck drivers as the eyes and ears of America's highways ... potential everyday heroes!

The women funded their efforts from their own resources; at the time, they had no outside support. They knew only one person in the trucking industry -- a man who owned a company selling software to trucking. Using his contacts, he provided them their first publicity: an article in

Fleet Owner and one in *The Trucker* and a radio interview on Sirius FM. He also gave two pieces of advice: attend the large trucking shows and don't charge for your materials. We followed his advice.

The six co-founded Truckers Against Trafficking (TAT) as an initiative of Chapter 61 Ministries, a family organization they started in 2007 to fight issues of injustice, with an emphasis on human trafficking. Their first action step was a letter-writing campaign to state trucking associations and national trucking/truck stop organizations, explaining trafficking, what trucking/truck stop operators could do to stop this crime and providing some undercover footage of survivors being recovered from a truck stop and their resulting interviews. Christian Truckers Network volunteered to put up the first TAT website.

Trucking's response was positive from the start. By 2011, TAT was growing so quickly and taking so much time, that the women dissolved Chapter 61 Ministries, and Kendis Paris took over as executive director. She put together a board of directors, which included trucking representatives, and took TAT through the 501c3 process. TAT took off and has been expanding ever since. A look through the [2018 annual report](#) will show the growth and impact achieved in this past decade.

"While the statistics and stories clearly show this program is working, as I reflect on 10 years of growth, I keep coming back to all of the incredible people we've met and worked with who have helped make TAT what it is today," Paris stated. "From the drivers to the CEOs, from shippers to safety directors, from law enforcement personnel to truck stop employees, from Attorney Generals to survivors, our board members, team members, our NGO, state agency and industry partners, have all done a remarkable job of combating human trafficking from within their sphere of influence. TAT is happy to serve by educating, equipping, empowering and mobilizing this mobile army of transportation professionals, who truly are changing systems and actively discovering and disrupting human trafficking networks. We have much to celebrate!"

Happy Birthday to TAT and a huge thank you to all of you who have played an integral part in all of the milestones achieved in this first decade! The successes of this grassroots effort belong to all of us!

Upcoming Events

March 4 - Southwest Transit Association/Texas Transit Association Annual Conference, El Paso, TX, Annie Sovcik, BOTL director, presenting

March 5 - Illinois State Police Train the Trainer, Springfield, IL, Kylla Lanier, TAT deputy director, and Annika Huff, survivor-advocate, presenting

March 5 - Michigan Association for Pupil Transportation spring conference, Midland, MI, Laura Cyrus, TAT corporate engagement director, presenting



March 5 - Equinor Human Trafficking conference, Houston, TX, Ashley Smith, TAT oil and gas program manager, presenting

March 5 - Vistar Truckers Against Trafficking Training, Englewood, Colorado, Helen Van Dam, FDP director, presenting

March 6 - Toledo Transportation Club Event, Toledo, OH, Laura Cyrus, TAT corporate engagement director, presenting

March 7 - Active on Demand carrier meeting, Ypsilanti, MI, Laura Cyrus, TAT corporate engagement director, presenting

March 7 - American Association of Port Authorities, Tampa, FL, Kylla Lanier, TAT deputy director, presenting

March 11-12 - USDOT Advisory Committee on Human Trafficking, Washington, D.C., Kendis Paris, TAT executive director, participating

March 11 - Colorado Port of Entry Officers training, Golden, CO, Helen Van Dam, TAT FDP director, presenting

March 12 - Illinois State Police Train the Trainer, Springfield, IL, Kylla Lanier, TAT deputy director, and Annika Huff, survivor-advocate, presenting

March 13 - Association of Energy Service Companies East Texas Chapter meeting, Kilgore, TX, Ashley Smith, TAT oil and gas program manager, presenting

March 17-18 - UPS Management Conference, Atlanta, GA, FDP and Susan Dold, TAT systems administrator, attending

March 19 - Weatherford Global Sustainability Forum, Houston, TX, Ashley Smith, TAT oil and gas program manager, presenting

March 20 - Louisiana coalition build, Baton Rouge, LA, Esther Goetsch, TAT coalition build director, Beth Jacobs, TAT field trainer, Annie Sovcik, BOTL director, presenting, FDP attending

March 22-25 - Pennsylvania State Police training, State College, PA, Kylla Lanier, TAT deputy director, and Annika Huff, survivor-advocate, presenting

March 28-30 - Mid-America Trucking Show, Louisville, KY, TAT staff

TAT's work is made possible through the generous support of our corporate sponsors, foundation partners and individual donors. Our education, training, legislative engagement, and advocacy efforts would not exist without those who invest in the change that we work towards each day. If you are interested in learning more about how you can provide financial support, please visit our [corporate engagement webpage](#) or contact Laura Cyrus at 612-888-4828 or lcyrus@truckersagainsttrafficking.org to explore our giving opportunities.

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