

2014 SUMMIT



TOGETHER LET'S STOP TRAFFICK



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PRESENTATION TRANSCRIPT

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Thank you so much. Yes, my husband and I flew in Saturday night from Interpol and the big-- where their big conference on human trafficking, their third major conference, and what I walked away from the meeting with is: the most important thing we can be doing is forging alliances among civil society, which is law enforcement, business, NGOs, the media, and working with government to solve this problem. That's exactly what we're doing here, so together let's stop traffic.

First, I want to tell you a little bit about Airline Ambassadors and how we got involved in human trafficking. Oh, I wanted to say one more thing, it was great to hear Leif's presentation this morning. He came to see our projects in Haiti, where we build seven safe houses for trafficked children in seven different locations in the country, and while we were there we got to see very firsthand the complexities of the human trafficking issue, in extreme poverty, in an area of social unrest, and in the aftermath of a disaster and we got to know it quite well.

So, it's great that the media is playing an important role. Airline Ambassadors is an organization I started to help orphans and vulnerable children in 1996. We're a UN accredited NGO and the only relief and development organization representing the entire airline industry. We began as flight attendants, which I was, just retired last year, for American Airlines, but we have members from all airlines and professions. We provide humanitarian assistance every month directly to children, helping children in need. We've expanded to include many more than just flight attendants and air crew, but to anyone that travels and wants to travel and help others. We have members from 12 major airlines and corporate partners and again we leverage industry assets to help children.

We didn't know anything-- I didn't know anything about human trafficking until the summer of 2009 and on our August mission to Cambodia, every month we saw orphans and vulnerable children, but I had read Somaly Mam's book, Road to Lost Innocence, and learned about the issue and on that trip we saved this little girl here on the right. She's trying to draw clothes on her own body. Her mother worked in the karaoke bars and they call her a karaoke baby. She had no name, no hair, no one to take care of her. She was like an animal.

We took her, we got her medical attention and have her in a safe house and visit her and it was in Cambodia that I saw the reality of human trafficking and decided Airline Ambassadors has to get involved. On our very next mission the following month, we talked about human trafficking in and that flight crew and airlines can play an important role in recognizing the indicators. We promised ourselves we would be aware on our flights out. On every single flight we correctly identified human trafficking; on four different airlines, Delta, US Air, JetBlue, and American. In the case of JetBlue, it was two little children traveling with at first a man, they were handed off to a woman, this we later learned was an inside job; customs was involved and our tip lead to the bust of a pornography ring in Boston, saving 86 children.

We knew then that airline and airport personnel are in a unique position to detect and discern human trafficking. In those first four cases, in every case we went to the flight attendants and we said we think this is a human trafficking case and when they looked at it they said well maybe you're right, but we don't know what to do. And we said we do. And we had the flight attendants inform the pilots and call ahead and we were right in every case. I knew as a flight attendant that the infrastructure is already in place because every year every airline must provide emergency training for their staff.

We have security section of that training where we learn procedures for hijackings and things like that. An easy procedure to implement human trafficking awareness

and reporting could be implemented. I saw that and basically that training could be provided at no cost. After they implemented a short training that's all that's really needed and to teach flight crew how to properly recognize and report human trafficking. We researched the issue a little bit right after that and learned that the United States had signed the Palermo Protocol in 2001, agreeing with 117 other nations, agreeing among other things to stop the use of commercial carriers as to being used in trafficking offenses. Nothing had been done ten years later; nothing.

We also learned that Congressman Smith had authored the National Victims Protection Act, the first legislation in the United States directly on human trafficking. I'm not going to go into the depth of our training with you guys because you're already experts, I'm just telling you the story of how we got involved and what we're facing. So, I went to Congressman Smith and I said can you help me reach out to the airlines. We have found an innovation here that could save thousands of lives and he said you're absolutely right; of course I'll help you and we planned our first briefing in July of 2010.

There I am with Congressman Smith and the Vice President of American Airlines at the time and we did another congressional briefing to embassies with Congressman Pitts later that year. At first it was great; American issued a in-flight magazine article and did implement a bulletin that we wrote for them in the flight attendant manuals. And Delta later signed the ECPAT Code of Conduct and as we know has implemented training, online training, for their flight crew, but what we saw is that they didn't do enough.

Later that year CNN called me for an interview. I called American, I said I'm so excited, I'm going to wear my uniform and say that American's the first airline that's training their staff, and they called me back, they said no you're not. They said we've changed our mind. We don't want our brand associated with a negative issue. Was what they said then. So, we began to do it ourselves and we came up with what we think is the first industry-specific training especially for airline personnel, but that

training applies to all transportation industry, busses, taxis, trains, etc. and we reviewed it with DHS, Customs Border Protection, Congress, the state department, OAS, and others.

And we learned from those reviews that DHS was about to come out with the Blue Campaign for airlines and we wanted our training to be consistent and to teach the same procedures that they were going to teach, so we adapted it. Our first training for flight crew was in 2011, before the Super Bowl in Dallas, and we had standing room only. There was so much interest we had to turn people away. It was eight hours long, but there was amazing interest from flight attendants, pilots, agents, hoteliers, passengers, people, frequent travelers attended. We did distribute 10,000 wallet cards; we've developed wallet cards and flash cards with the report line number and with indicators of human trafficking. And we did get the support of the flight attendant unions representing 90,000 flight crew.

Since that time, we've provided 25 trainings, airport trainings in different cities, including the first training of flight crew in Europe in Kiev, Ukraine last summer, and in London also this year, and in 23 countries-- our last major training was at Sacramento Airport and then in October we just did one in Chicago at the S.A.F.E. Conference. I'm going to share with you a few of the slides from our training to give you a feel of it. I'm not going to go into depth, just to give you an idea. We teach that thousands of victims are transported across international borders annually.

Many traffickers move their victims frequently to keep them powerless and they often use the speed and convenience of commercial air travel. Busy airports are natural distribution hubs for human trafficking. It's happening right before our very eyes. A trafficker might even-- because in the United States a child under 18 doesn't have to fly with identification, trafficker might put one of his victims as to look like they're part of an athletic team, moving them through they're not even questioned. Who can help? Everyone; flight crew, agents, any one that works at an airport or any transportation hub.

Many of you fly frequently for business and pleasure. I'd be happy to give you a wallet card, a flash card. You can help too by recognizing and reporting human trafficking. We explain the basics of human trafficking because a lot of these people haven't-- don't understand it, or really don't know much about it, that traffickers see people as commodities and exploit their vulnerabilities. We talk about the tactics that traffickers use, luring victims with promises of jobs and a better life, how they use the internet. They abduct and detain victims sometimes using drugs, as you know, and violence and they transport victims using every mode of transportation.

We have a pool of about 12 survivors that work with us as trainings and the survivors actually give this portion of the training so it comes alive for people that are taking it. Those survivors can explain more realistically why they don't escape, why they're afraid. They're afraid their families will be harmed. They're afraid. They may not know the language. Traffickers move them to locations where they don't have a support network. The Stockholm syndrome. You know most of these things. We talk about the physical damage to victims, but also the psychological damage.

Our main trainer, Petra Hensley, was abducted from the train station in Prague at 16 years old. She was drugged and put in a van, handcuffed and found herself handcuffed to a mattress in Prague; she didn't know where she was. The girl next to her was killed. She didn't tell her family. Didn't even tell them what happened. She broke out of a window and saved herself, but for 14 years she is still recovering from the effects of human trafficking which often times can last a lifetime. That's why early identification is so important.

We teach the indicators of a victim, especially in an airport setting. They may be afraid of uniformed security, frightened, ashamed, or nervous, have scripted stories, wearing inappropriate clothing, or claiming to be an adult when they're really-- you can see that they're a child. We have examples of all of these. We teach who are the traffickers and we explain, when we're doing a full training, we explain that they can be anyone willing to exploit another for profit.

We teach participants how to recognize traffickers. They may answer questions for their victim, observe the victim persistently, give evasive answers, may not know the child's name or personal information, they may be posing as a relative. Flight attendants have correctly identified trafficking situation with every one of these indicators. What, we teach, what they can do as a flight crew. To be observant of passengers, especially women and young children and who they're traveling with, whether someone accompanies them and controls their every movement, and to initiate pleasant and non-threatening conversation.

Well actually, as a flight attendant that's part of our job; it's called phase three. So, you're not suspect; you get to spend time with individuals much more than a law enforcement person would. And if there are indicators of potential human trafficking and their gut feels something's wrong, they're taught to report to the captain the details of the passenger's seat number and why they think this situation may warrant professional evaluation. The pilots are taught to by cockpit radio contact the station operation command and let them know they think there may be human trafficking on the flight and to call the DHS tip line, 866-347-2423. We give the tip line out also to the flight attendants and pilots because the problem is that SOCC is not trained at this time.

When I was at EPTs last year, at emergency procedure training, I went in to Station Operation Command and I said what would you do if a pilot radioed in a case of human trafficking? And the guy looked at me and he said I wouldn't do anything at all, that has nothing to do with aircraft security, that's not my job. So, this has to be changed. We also teach participants what not to do. Not confront; do not confront anyone. Do not try to rescue a victim, do not display unusual concern or alarm, and do not put yourself in danger.

So, we teach this vast army of boots in the air, you might say, to be aware and be discreet, and to be an intelligence force that's transmitting intelligence to law enforcement. We know that the protocol works. There's one case where a girl was

working from Chicago from Fort Lauderdale as a flight-- as number one flight attendant, and a young girl gets on who's very naive, never been on an airplane before. And in the course of conversation she found out that the girl had been given a first-class ticket by her boyfriend in Fort Lauderdale and Kim said, oh who's your boyfriend? Well, I've never actually met him, I met him on Facebook, and he sent me this ticket. Oh really? Is he picking you up? Well no, he's not a citizen. He's having a car pick me up. Do you have a cell phone? I'm a little worried about you later. Well no, but he's going to give me one later. How does your mother feel about this? Well she doesn't want me to go, but she can't stop me; today is my 18th birthday. Well, when she walked off that airplane, Kim felt a pit in the bottom of her stomach. She said something's wrong. No one would help her; the agent wasn't interested, the supervisors weren't interested, but her husband happened to be an agent and he could pull the, what we call the PNR, the record locator on this seat and he found out that the ticket had been bought by a woman in South Carolina with the e-mail account love me, love me good.

We went to and found associated twitter page that was horrific. I was-- this girl called me three days after this incident and she said I can't sleep at night, I think something might have happened to the girl. I said we have to call this in! So with her on the phone we called the DHS hotline. One day later, one day later I got a call back saying thank you, the information the flight attendant gave allowed us to identify the victim and the trafficker and it was really important. So, we know it works.

Another example is on American Airlines daily flights from Moscow to Chicago there were generally four to five young girls coming to get modeling jobs. In every case they couldn't speak English-- or work on TV, that was what they'd been told. And their itinerary said they were to take a bus from Chicago to New York. Sandy Fiorini, who's now one of our trainers, recognizes those potential human trafficking. She called the hotline and a customs agent, undercover customs agent, was assigned to stem the flow of human trafficking in and out of Moscow. Which was these girls

were being trafficked into the sex trade and the trafficker was covering his bases by not being with them and by being in New York.

Just recently, Delta has implemented the online training with the DHS online training. So flight attendants are getting some training and this came up on Facebook: Last night my crew and I saved two little boys that were part of a human trafficking ring. We went by our gut and instinct and that may have saved their lives. They were being smuggled out of Tegucigalpa and being sent to New York. Something just seemed wrong. The addresses on their unaccompanied minor forms were fake!

Flight attendants may be the last line of defense for these kids. You may be a person to save their life. So they were thrilled. But, there still challenges. Delta Airlines did sign the ECPAT code, for example, and does provide the Blue Lightning online training for crews, but human trafficking is still not highlighted in any airline in the United States in emergency procedures; even in Delta-- because some of the Delta girls are our trainers, it's not mentioned; it's not highlighted at all in their emergency procedures and it needs to be.

Oh, I wanted to say something earlier, I forgot. In our brochures, we also give out the Polaris number, the National Human Trafficking Hotline, but the reason we use the DHS hotline is that in an airline situation you have a window of 10 minutes to 30 minutes to identify trafficking and rescue, potentially, a victim and this is the line that they'd like any air crew or any uniformed personnel to call because it results in an immediate law enforcement response. But, the problem is, it's still not being highlighted. This is what we want to get to the bottom of.

I'll give you a quick case, in March I got a call that there was a human trafficking incident coming down from Corpus Christi to Dallas. To make a long story short, four girls were boarded, two from El Salvador, two from Guatemala, onto a flight; all going in four different locations. Two of the girls were found in the bathroom crying

and flight attendants can open up the door, and, through a translator, heard their stories. When we heard those stories we got the other two, and all four girls said that their mothers had sold them and they didn't know the person that was going to pick them up. The flight attendants did an excellent job. They told the pilot and the girls were questioned when they landed, which I think was excellent. The disturbing part happened after that.

The flight attendants were asked to sign a confidentiality agreement and not speak about the case and AA afterwards sent a message to all flight crew, telling them that never to ask any questions of an unaccompanied minor and that they were all traveling as part of a refugee resettlement program. So, I think it's kind of hiding your head in the sand. We need to-- I think airlines at the highest level want to hide their heads in the sand, just not deal with the issue. They're nervous because, as I said before, they don't want their brands associated with a negative. They fear flight attendants will profile passengers and they'll end up in a lawsuit; they'll accuse somebody, even though we train them not to make a public accusation.

We need your help in helping them understand that the social responsibility in training their flight crews reduces their risk in having trafficking occur on their airplanes. Airline Ambassadors has provided wallet cards and flash cards to every airline. If they would use them, that would help them implement this. At the recent Interpol conference, I just walked away-- Dave and I just came in from, we realized that human trafficking is part of a much bigger picture of human rights. It's linked to smuggling and terrorism, drug trafficking, arms trafficking, and that human slavery, the new numbers out of the ILO are 150 billion dollar business. Vast increase in labor trafficking.

At this conference we focused a lot on the fisheries, there's thousands of young men in the Southeast Asia that are being lured for good jobs onto fishing boats and they may not come back for 12 years. When they get sick, they're thrown overboard. They're treated inhumanely and as slaves. Also, we learned about the kids in Ghana

that are in West Africa that are being recruited to work in the cocoa fields and we learned awful things about Oregon trafficking.

Basically, and labor trafficking again is about twice, at least twice what sex trafficking is now; they're all part of the same over-arching issue, though. Partnerships in community policing are vital. Like we said before, NGOs, the media, business, it's necessary for us to collaborate. I'm so happy and honored to be part of this summit, where you're trying to do just that. And they talked about the importance of early victim identification. That's exactly the innovation that we've identified with mobilizing air crews. So far, we've provided 25 airports trainings. Most of them in the United States and we've trained 2000 front line workers and so, that would figure to conservatively 2 million passengers scanned annually that wouldn't have been as a result of our trainings.

Customs agent has 15 to 30 seconds with the-- to make that assessment, which really isn't long enough, like the flight attendant does. We need funding and support to continue. And oh! One of the things we did, and that's why I was happy to hear about Leif saying he helped somebody with the petition, at the S.A.F.E. conference October 31st, we launched a petition to be signed by all concerned members of the public and air transport workers that airlines should train their staff.

We know now it won't cost any money. It would protect them in case of a negative case. So, please go onto our website, airlineambassadors.org, and sign the petition.