

## 2023 Conference to Combat Human Trafficking

### AGENDA

Day 1, December 12, 2023

8:00 am **Registration**

**BTI Institute**

8:30 am ***Welcome***

**Mike Aspland**

Executive Director  
Institute for Homeland Security  
Sam Houston State University

8:50 am ***Introductions and Conference Overview***

**Kevin Clement**

9:00 am ***The DHS Center for Countering Human Trafficking***

**Synopsis:** *The DHS Center for Countering Human Trafficking is the U.S. government's first-ever integrated law enforcement operations center directly supporting federal criminal investigations, victim assistance efforts, intelligence analysis, and outreach and training activities related to human trafficking and forced labor. Based in Washington and led by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the center is staffed with law enforcement officials from Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and subject matter experts and support staff from 16 DHS components—all focused on the "4 Ps" of the center's mission: prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnerships.*

**Presenter:**

**Doug Gilmer**

Senior Law Enforcement Liaison  
DHS Center for Countering Human Trafficking  
Email: [Douglas.Gilmer@dhs.gov](mailto:Douglas.Gilmer@dhs.gov)

9:30 am **Break**

10:00 am ***Prosecuting Human Trafficking Cases: Challenges and Lessons Learned***

**Synopsis:** *A prosecutor's perspectives on the legal challenges and difficulties in attempts to prosecute cases involving human trafficking. This presentation provides lessons learned, best practices, and considerations for law enforcement officers in the field.*

**Presenter:**

**Brody Burks**

Assistant Attorney General  
Office of the Texas State Attorney General  
Office: 512.466.4191  
Email: [Brody.Burks@oag.texas.gov](mailto:Brody.Burks@oag.texas.gov)

**11:00 am**     **Panel: Developing Effective Legislation to Prosecute Human Traffickers**

**Synopsis:** *Best practices in legislation to counter and prosecute human trafficking.*

**Moderator:** **Jessica Vaughan**, Director of Policy Studies, Center for Immigration Studies

**Panelist:** **Shea M. Rhodes**, Director/Co-Founder, Villanova Law Institute to Address Commercial Sexual Exploitation, [Shea.Rhodes@law.villanova.edu](mailto:Shea.Rhodes@law.villanova.edu)

**Panelist:** **Brody Burks**, Assistant Attorney General, Office of Texas State Attorney General

**Panelist:** **Frank Russo**, Associate General Counsel, Conservative Political Action Coalition (CPAC)/ Director of the CPAC Foundation's Center for Combating Human Trafficking

**12:00 am**     **Lunch**

**1:30 pm:**     **Exploitation of Unaccompanied Alien Children: The Vetting Process**

**Synopsis:** *Tara Lee Rodas served as a federal employee for more than 20 years. While serving at the Pomona Fairplex Emergency Intake Site in Pomona, California, Tara volunteered to help place Unaccompanied Children with sponsors in the United States. Tara saw, firsthand, how lack of transparency, lack of oversight, flawed policies, and deficiencies in HHS' Unaccompanied Children Program resulted in children being placed with suspicious sponsors and suspected trafficking rings throughout the United States.*

*Ms. Rodas testified as a whistleblower before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration Integrity, Security, and Enforcement on how open-border policies enable the exploitation of Unaccompanied Alien Children.*

**Presenter:**

**Tara Lee Rodas**

**2:00 pm**     **Unaccompanied Alien Children (Policies, Effectiveness, Accountability)**

**Synopsis:** *A candid discussion of the processing, health and welfare, movement and accountability of Unaccompanied Alien Children entering the United States.*

**Moderator:** **Jessica Vaughan**, Director of Policy Studies, Center for Immigration Studies

**Panelist:**     **Richard Mantei**, Office of the Attorney General, State of Florida

**Panelist:**     **Ammon Blair**, Senior Fellow, Texas Public Policy Foundation

**3:00 pm**     **Break**

**3:30 pm**     **Waiting for You Online: Media Platforms and Human Trafficking**

**Synopsis:** *Online recruitment has existed for as long as there has been widespread access to internet platforms. The National Human Trafficking Hotline has recorded recruitment in all types of sex and labor trafficking on social media platforms. Traffickers may build an intimate relationship with a victim through social media. Traffickers will often share their exploits, as well as other useable evidence on their social media. This discussion will focus on using their social media to exploit their behavior and hold them criminally accountable.*

**Presenter:**

**Joseph Scaramucci**

Director of Law Enforcement Engagement

**Day 2 – December 13, 2023**

**8:00 am**      ***The Traverse Project: Combating Human Trafficking using Cybersecurity and Intelligence Analyst Tools and Techniques***

**Synopsis:** *Human trafficking producer nations are often developing and do not have the resources to combat the organizations that traffic humans globally. Methods used to combat human trafficking need to be focused, data driven, coordinated, measurable, and intelligence-based because the networks that fuel global human trafficking are constantly getting better at avoiding detection. Traverse Project is approaching the problem from a different perspective; we are utilizing skill sets of cybersecurity professionals and intelligence analysts to focus their work to combat trafficking. Our Civil Cyber Defense volunteers and university students utilize data analytics, academic resources, and intelligence gathering tools to identify, map, and disrupt the transnational networks that support human trafficking.*

**Presenters:**

**Tiffany Strauchs Rad** (BS, MA, MBA, JD)  
Adjunct Instructor, University of Maine and U.C. Berkely  
[trad@berkeley.edu](mailto:trad@berkeley.edu)

**Austin Shamlin**  
CEO and Founder, Traverse Project  
[Austin.Shamin@traverse.org](mailto:Austin.Shamin@traverse.org)

**9:00 am**      ***Using Digital Exhaust to Combat Human Trafficking***

**Synopsis:** *Digital exhaust is the data produced as a byproduct of other digital activity. There are methods and technology to harvest the digital exhaust to detect and interdict criminal activity. The presentation is an examination of a historic use of digital exhaust to map cartel traffic, and the introduction of using the signals emitted by smart phones, smart watches, vehicles, and other digital devices.*

**Joel Aud**  
BTI Fellow  
Principal  
Lean Tail Labs  
[JoelAud@gmail.com](mailto:JoelAud@gmail.com) | 512-818-9971

**10:00 am**      **Break**

**10:30 am**      ***Case Study: The Use of OSINT to Detect and Unravel Human Trafficking Networks***

**Synopsis:** *This presentation highlights the power of including open-source into the framework of an investigations process and how that data can provide a different perspective understanding of the criminal activity being investigated. The presenters organize the spectrum of human trafficking to five major components: Commercial Sex, Labor Trafficking, Child Sex Trafficking, Organ Harvesting, and all other forms of Exploitation. Accessing information that is publicly available through advertisements,*

*social media platforms and the dark web is a powerful tool to provide context to an otherwise vague investigation. By adding non-traditional, open-source intelligence, investigators can see an activity, person, organization, action, event, or product through a different lens*

**Presenter:**

**Christopher Kemp**

Director of Enterprise Operations  
Anti-Human Trafficking Intelligence Initiative  
[chris@followmoneyfightslavery.org](mailto:chris@followmoneyfightslavery.org) |  
<https://followmoneyfightslavery.org>

**11:30 am**      **Lunch**

**1:00 pm**      ***Pathway – Centralized Access to Human Trafficking Services***

**Synopsis:** *The Pathway Referral Network, a United Against Human Trafficking program, is a cloud-based platform connecting trafficked individuals to service providers through one central system, paving a pathway to coordinated care where inter-agency collaboration is celebrated. Entities are vetted before being placed on the Pathway. This technology is allowing the human trafficking survivor services to cast a wide net that extends nationally.*

**Presenter:**

**Ken Henry**

Chief Communications and Partnerships Officer  
United Against Human Trafficking  
[KHenry@UAHT.org](mailto:KHenry@UAHT.org) | 832.324.2369

**2:00 pm**      ***Human Trafficking and Seafood Slavery in Southeast Asia***

**Synopsis:** *Dr. DiGeorgio discusses the issue of human trafficking and seafood slavery in Southeast Asia and the multiple conditions/factors that perpetuate this activity. Also, she draws connections to our own US markets and the connection to fish as a multi-billion dollar a year industry. She will examine some of the mechanisms in place to combat seafood slavery and ways to engage to raise awareness about this modern day form of human trafficking.*

**Presenter:**

**JoAnn DiGeorgio-Lutz, Ph.D.**

Department Head and Professor of Political Science  
Department of Liberal Studies  
Texas A&M University at Galveston  
P.O. Box 1675, Building 3007  
Galveston, TX 77554  
[Digeorgj@tamug.edu](mailto:Digeorgj@tamug.edu) | 409.740.4463

**3:00 pm**      ***Combating Human Trafficking: Future Research Needs***

**Synopsis:** *The closing session is an open discussion between law enforcement operators, NGO representatives, and prospective researchers on technology and research needs that would assist operators in combating human trafficking.*

**Facilitator:**

**Kevin Clement**

Executive Director, Strategic Partnerships  
Borders, Trade, and Immigration Institute

[KClement@uh.edu](mailto:KClement@uh.edu) | 512.626.5413