

SELLING INNOCENCE

by

The Cypress Collective

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In cooperation with
Human Trafficking Awareness Partnerships

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Characters do not have names, but rather numbers. This is to protect the innocent.

- #1** Actor serves as a narrator and ensemble.
- #2** Actor serves as a narrator and ensemble.
- #3** A mother who lost her baby directly from the hospital.
- #4** A young boy who lost his eyes to organ trafficking.
- #5** A pre-teen girl who was abducted by a neighbor.
- #6** A mother of a ten year old girl. Also a young victim of sex trafficking.
- #7** A ten-year-old girl on vacation in Mexico. Friend of #8.
- #8** Another ten-year-old girl on vacation in Mexico. Friend of #7.
- #9** A teen-aged girl sold into indentured servitude by her mother.
- #10** Another teen-aged girl sold into indentured servitude by her family.
- #11** A very young girl sold into the sex trafficking trade.
- #12** The friend of a victim of sex trafficking. A "member" of the audience.

Scene One
"In Our Darkest Hour"

(The lights are very dim. Shadows and silhouettes are barely visible, but the voices emerge from the darkness and overlap. Calling for help.)

#1 In the darkness we await;

#4 and #5 (echo) ...In the darkness...

#1 For the ones who conceal our fate.

#2 In the darkness we await;

#3 Cold and alone,

#4 and #5 sitting together

#6 *(after a pause)* but alone

#7 In the distance I hear the screams

#8 *(echoing)* In the distance I hear the screams

#9 Screams for help,
(#10 screams)

#9 screams for salvation

#11 In the darkness we await

#12 twelve of us in the room, twelve of us in silence

#1, #4, #8 In the darkness we wait for the next group of men

#5 But in our darkest hour we are united -

ALL - as one. This is our story.

#10 A story of salvation.

(The lights go black and all exit but #1 and #2)

Scene 2
"Facing Facts"

(A slide appears with the words "Human Trafficking" on it. It flashes several of the key words and phrases used in the transitions throughout the show.)

#1 According to age.com, people are tricked and forced in human trafficking.

#2 Human Trafficking includes slavery, prostitution, and the sale of babies and children. Human trafficking is illegal in **most** countries.

Scene 3 **"Mitchell's Smile"**

(The lights come up on a woman sitting in a hospital chair. She has recently given birth.)

#3 My baby...oh my poor child. I gave birth to a lovely, healthy baby boy. I was in labor for twelve hours. Then one of the nurses who helped deliver my baby stole him. He was sleeping in the hospital nursery. I only got to hold him twice. I can still see his smile.

The nurse...they tell me she was Ukrainian, but I'm not sure...she stole my baby boy in the middle of the night. I haven't seen him since.

I hired an international private investigator. I'm not giving my baby up without a fight. Months have gone by, almost a year. I will never give up hope that my baby can be found.

Almost eighteen months later I heard from the private investigator. He told me he found a trail and may know where my baby went. He said that from the hospital, my baby was taken to Italy to be auctioned off to a group of men. These men are one of the major groups involved in organ trafficking in the world. They bought my baby from the Ukrainian nurse.

I was so confused. At that time I didn't understand how it all worked. From what the officer told me, the baby was auctioned off to some type of an organ farm. The leaders of this farm would sell babies organs.

I was so shocked that someone...another woman....could sell their baby. Not even their baby, but someone, anyone's baby.

I'm never going to see him smile. Never hear his first word. I didn't give him a name when I was in the hospital. I've been thinking about it for several months and finally came up with a name. I call him Mitchell.

I will never give up hope that one day maybe, just maybe, I will meet Mitchell. I'll see my Mitchell smile, give him a hug, or even a kiss. But I will never give up hope. Every night when I go to bed I see his baby face, and sometimes when I close my eyes *(she closes her eyes)* really tight I see him grown up, as a doctor or a lawyer.

I know this will never happen. But it doesn't hurt to hope.

(The lights fade on the hospital scene and come up and actor #4 in another area of the stage. The screen displays a video of a little boy playing at a fair.)

Scene 4 **"Balloons"**

#4 Balloons. That's the last thing I remember. A rainbow of colors, that's what I remember. It began at our town's fair. It came to town a few days ago. It was right across the street from where I lived. My mom told me not to go, but it was only right across the street. It was driving me nuts. I wanted to go. So I walked over there.

I was so excited when I got across the street. All the colors. It was amazing. I saw this clown with lots of colorful balloons. Reds, greens, blues. It was great. I went over to the clown and he asked me if I wanted a balloon. I shook my head yes. He told me the only way I could have a balloon is if I went with him to find my mom. He told me he saw her and she was at the fair. He told me that my mom went in to the haunted house. He led me to the doors of the ride. I didn't want to go in there, but I had to find my mom so that I could get a balloon.

He led me into the haunted house. It was really dark and a light purple color fell over everything. I was very scared. I never liked haunted houses. The clown led me in to a room off to the side of the hallway. He said that it was a short cut and not to be scared. He said it would lead right to my mom.

I walked into the dark room. I heard the man shut the door behind me. Then a dim light flooded the room.

All that I remember next was being gagged and shoved onto the ground. I felt the man pick me up and put me on a table.

Everything else is blank. I remember waking up and feeling grass beneath my fingers. But everything was dark. I heard my mom scream. (scream) I heard her feet run over towards me. She picked me up and started to sob.

He had stolen my eyes. The clown had stolen my eyes.

Now I'll never be able to see again. All the colors are gone. Everything I ever saw, gone. I'll never even see my mother's face again.

The only colors I remember is that of the balloons that the man had before he stole my eyes.

(The video goes black and the lights fade. The screen repeats words from the following transition.)

Scene 5 **"Organ Trade"**

#1 International organ theft is a multi-billion, yes, billion dollar business where organs are being taken and harvested without permission from both living and dead people. Some brokers charge between \$100,000 and \$200,000 per transplant for wealthy patients. A kidney sells for almost \$5,000. In India about 2,000 people sell their organs each year. In most countries it is illegal to pay a donor for an organ. In Iran organ trade is legal.

(the lights fade)

Scene 6 **"Never Again"**

(This scene is acted out as the narration is spoken.)

#5 I got off the bus one day. It was a normal day. Everything was the same as it always was. My neighbor was mowing the lawn. He called me over and asked me if I could help him with some boxes. I politely declined and told him I had some homework to do. As I started to walk away, he called to me and said it would only take a minute and that he had no one to help him. I decided to help him because I thought it was the right thing to do.

I went into his house and he gave me a box to carry to his van. I walked to the van and the door slid open and I was pushed inside. My only thought at that moment was that I had to get out. A blindfold was pulled over my eyes,

ropes were tied over my arms and legs and my mouth was gagged. I didn't know what to do. I tried to get the ropes untied or do anything that would help me get away.

We drove for what must have been three hours. I had no idea where they were taking me. When we stopped they took me into a small, dark room. I wasn't sure where or who I even was. I was kept in that room for what seemed like a few days. I could only feel the cold concrete beneath my body. As time went on I finally heard sound from within the house. I heard the creak of a door open and then a violent slam. I heard two voices that I thought were speaking Spanish. They untied me and pulled my blindfold off.

Before I knew it my clothes were ripped off my back. I was raped at the age of 15. I can never call myself a virgin again.

Every morning I was raped and forced to do countless chores while being beaten. This was my life as an indentured servant for the next two years.

Scene 7

"A Day at the Beach"

(Actor #6 plays the mother, Actor #4 plays the guard, and actors #7 and #8 play Marilyn and her friend. The scene is played on the beach and, eventually, in the compound room. The other actors will play the girls in the compound room.)

#7 My best friend and I were on vacation in Mexico with our families. We were so excited. We never thought anything could go wrong. When my mom proposed we go to the beach that morning, I didn't have to think twice. Every little girl loves the beach. *(she grabs a beach towel and runs over to her mother and best friend.)*

#6 I know it sounds silly, you two, but it's really very serious. You can't just go running off whenever you feel like it. You're only ten years old and we don't know the people around here. Whenever you go somewhere you guys will tell us, and if we don't like where you're going you won't go. Understand?

#7 and #8 Yes ma'am.

#6 Good. *(She kisses the girls on the tops of their heads and sets up at the beach just offstage left.)*

#7 We got there and set up our spots and told our moms that we were going to go play in the water. We ran off. *(mom exits)* I wasn't even paying attention to how far away we were getting from our parents until a man approached us. He looked Mexican and was wearing a security guard uniform.

(#4 enters with convincing accessories creating the security guard look)

#4 Where are your parents, little girls?

#7 I looked around, but couldn't see them. I got a little panicked and looked to my friend. She looked worried too. *(to the guard)* We don't really know. They were just behind us lying down. I guess we ran too far down the beach.

#4 I help you. Come. We look for them on camera.

- #7** I was a little reluctant, but my friend seemed at ease. It must have been the uniform. He started walking away and she immediately followed, but I hesitated. She looked back and encouraged me to follow.
- #8** Come on, he's a cop.
- #7** We could just go back and look for them. *(to the audience)* I guess she didn't hear me because she just kept on walking. I reluctantly followed. I wasn't really sure about this man, but I couldn't let my friend go with him alone. I finally caught up to them. *(to her friend)* We could just go back and look for them.
- #4** No. Too many people on beach to find them now. We look on cameras.
#7 Why are we going to the parking lot?
- #4** Cameras are off beach. Down the street. Anyway, you don't ask questions. I help.
- #7** I shut up and kept walking. When we finally got to the parking lot I noticed he was leading us to a van with a painter's logo on it. I immediately knew we shouldn't have followed. I grabbed my friend's arm, turned, and ran for it. She was shocked and yanked her arm away, but then she realized something was wrong and she started running too. It didn't take long for the man to catch up to us. The parking lot was completely empty, and so far away from the beach that no one heard us scream.
He shoved us into the van and locked us in. I was screaming for so long that my throat hurt and I couldn't speak. My friend was crying for so long that she exhausted herself and ended up falling asleep. I huddled up next to her and cried. I eventually passed out too.
When I woke up we were still driving. I couldn't tell if it was dark outside or not. I woke my friend.
(back in the scene) Wake up, wake up.
I was shoving her around and finally she woke up. She looked around the van, then at me. She grabbed my hand and started crying. I held her for awhile. I almost fell asleep, but then the van stopped, the motor turned off and everything went quiet. I heard muffled voices and then footsteps.
Someone opened the van doors and two men came in, pinned us down, tied our hands and feet, and blindfolded us. *(They do so. As they carry the girls in, the ensemble joins them in the room silently.)* They carried us inside and threw us down on a cement floor. We couldn't see anything, so we had no idea what to do. I could hear her crying.
- #4** Shut up, little girl.
- #7** I started screaming at him not really saying anything. He kicked me in the stomach and I thought I was going to throw up. I heard the door close and I knew we were alone. I began to cry, then Lindsey started to cry, too. About ten minutes passed and a man came in. He took the duct tape off of our mouths.
- #4** You scream, I put it back on. Understand.
- #7 and #8** Yes.
- #4** I untie your hands and feets next. Do not look at me. Do not take off the blindfolds until I leave the room. Okay?

#7 Yes. He removed the ties from my hands and feet and left the room. I looked around. I thought we were alone, but we weren't. The room was filled with girls. They all looked different ages. Some were asleep, but other were just staring at us. One girl had a baby strapped to her. She didn't look much older than me. I remember thinking this was what Hell was.

A couple of weeks later they took my best friend. (*#4 comes in and takes #8 out of the room of girls*)

I never saw her again.

(the lights fade to black on this scene and come up in a different area of the stage on #9. She is the living memory of a 15 year old girl.)

Scene 8 **"Unload Her"**

#9 All life comes to an end. All life. But what did I do to deserve this? Do I deserve this? Did I deserve to be locked up like this? To be forced to do unspeakable things?

All my life I was a good girl. Well, to be locked up like this, obviously, I wasn't. My father died when I was little. He left our mother with nothing. No money. Nothing. My mom was forced to go out and find a job. In the Ukraine people don't give women high paying jobs. We had to fight to keep our house and everything we owned. My mom could barely afford to keep us fed. Let alone pay any bills. I took care of my younger siblings.

Word spread that a man from the U. K. was looking for young women to come home with him and work. I could send money back to my family. My mother took advantage of this and sold me to this man. He said that when we got to the U. K. I would be his housemaid and get paid 200 Euros a week. It seemed too good to be true. At the time, I wish that I knew it was.

I was put on a train. Once we were out of sight, the man that came to my village blindfolded me and tied me up. I knew that there was something wrong. Later on, when the train stopped, the man told some other men to unload me. "Unload". Like I was a package, not a human. The men who took me off the train left the blindfold on and put me into a car.

We drove for what seemed like forever. I was finally dragged out of the car and pushed into a house. They shoved me up several flights of stairs and into a room with ten or twelve other girls.

I spent years in this room. With daily rapes and beatings. Every day at least six men would come in and would choose me to escort them. I was raped and beaten until I was emotionally numb.

Then one day I was fed up with being raped. When the next man came into the cold, dark holding room and chose me, I refused to go with him. Then another man came in and hit me more times than I could count. I still wouldn't go. Finally, the man got fed up and threw me against the wall.

All life comes to an end. But why my life? Why here? Why like this?

(The lights change again to another portion of the stage where a small table with a sewing machine comes on. #10 sits at the sewing machine.)

Scene 9 **"The Garment Factory"**

#10 Back in Mexico, my family and I were suffering from poverty and diseases. I was only fifteen when my mother sold me to a strange man for a couple hundred dollars, hoping that I could send as much money as possible back to my family.

When I arrived at the airport in Southern California a strange man picked me up. He took me to an old, beat up car and told me...*(a voice-over plays the following "You owe me for doing this. For giving you this opportunity to help your family.")*

But those were lies.

He took me to a small, run down factory, and right then and there, I knew this was going to be a disaster. I was forced to sew dresses from 4:30 to 12:00 at night. If I did not sew fast enough, or produce things to their satisfaction, he would beat me, or take away my meals for the entire day. I was not allowed to leave the factory. Taking a shower meant pouring a pitcher of water all over my body. The sleeping conditions were horrible.

The other women and I are forced to work and sleep on the floor with just a blanket. The rooms had cockroaches. After a year of this torture, I grew numb and I just didn't care any more. I lost hope.

Eventually, I heard rumors that one of the girls in the factory had been raped. I had to get out of there before something like that happened to me.

I ended up jumping out of a two-story window. I blacked out when I hit the ground. I woke up in a hospital to find that I had broken both of my legs, had some hand fractures, multiple teeth fractures and a collapsed lung. Even though I was in extreme pain then and I will most likely have permanent pain from my injuries.

My jump from the factory window saved my life. The hospital authorities called the police and I was rescued from my torturous experience. I was eventually deported back to Mexico and I shared my story with many others in my village so they would not suffer the same fate that I did.

(The lights fade to black and the screen projects facts about forced labor. #2 speaks with the projections)

Scene 10 **"Billions and Billions"**

#2 27 million people are in slavery today. 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders each year. "Free the Slaves" estimates 2.4 million people were victims of human trafficking from 1995-2005.

32 billion dollars is made each year in human trafficking according to the Global Alliance Against Forced Labor. 15.5 billion is made in industrialized countries and 9.7 billion dollars in Asia.

Each forced laborer makes a profit of between \$13,000 and \$67,000 for their captors.

(The slides change focus to sex trafficking. A picture of a little girl with too much make-up)

Scene 11 **"Mommy's Make Up"**

(A young girl/#11 sits and plays with her doll.)

#11

A young girl of age seven lived in Nepal with her father and seven siblings. Her father had very little money and could not support her and the large family. He was forced to sell her. The little girl was very upset. To make her feel better the daddy lied to her and told her that she was going to a great place and was going to feel better. The little girl started to get very excited.

A woman friend of the daddy came to pick up the girl and take her to the family she had been sold to. The little girl was full of excitement. They travelled for three days until they finally arrived at their destination.

The little girl looked at the new house and found that it was old and dirty and the little girl's excitement melted away.

Suddenly the little girl was pushed into a room all by herself. The little girl noticed a window and looked outside. On the front stoop of the building she saw seven or eight other little girls standing there. They all had sad and scared faces. Some of them were crying. The little girl backed away from the window and fell asleep on her bed.

She woke up to the old woman putting make up all over her face. The little girl was very confused and a bit worried. She wanted to see her daddy and sisters again.

The old woman brought a man into the room. He told her to take her clothes off, but she didn't want to. The man took off his belt and started to beat the little girl. The man and woman left and the little girl started to cry again. Suddenly the door opened and another little girl was shoved into the room. The little girl told her what just happened. They decided it was best not to tell anyone because if they did then things would get even worse.

The little girl could only resist for so long. Eventually she had to do what they said. Then the little girl had a baby of her own. The doctors at the hospital called the police. The little girl never saw her own baby. I was that little girl.

(the lights fade on the little girl and her doll. Unexpectedly, a young girl emerges from the audience.)

Scene 12 **"Naïve"**

People are always saying teenage love isn't real, or they say it won't last, but it's more real than anyone can imagine! It's raw, beautiful, and fun. I know because I was in love with the most beautiful boy I knew. He was a senior on the basketball team at my high school. I was one of those awkward freshmen, and had frizzy hair. Yet he always made a way to get to talk to me because he said I made him laugh. Before I knew it, we were dating, and I was head over heels for him. It was two months when he asked me to come to his house.

I had visited before when his parents were home, but this time they weren't. The rule for me was to never go over his house when his parents weren't home, but he was begging, and looked so sad, and I trusted him. You know how rules are made for a reason? Well I learned that lesson the hard way. When I got to his house it was quiet, but that didn't change anything. He then locked the door, still nothing had changed. Then he began to get aggressive with me, pushing me toward his bedroom, I was a little worried, but brushed it off thinking he was merely in a bad mood. When we went into his bedroom I immediately felt his hand on the back of my neck- pinning me in place. The other hand was locked on my jaw forcing some type of liquid down my throat. It made me pass out. I woke up and everything was blurry, and vague. I felt my hands and feet being held. And felt someone on top of me. I suddenly realized I was being raped, but with the drug in my system I couldn't scream, or even resist. I then passed out again. The next

time I woke up, everything was clearer. I saw a couple of his friends sitting around, with him holding a knife to my throat. His friends were the ones that were holding me down, but all got a profit from my rape. He then began to warn me, pressuring the knife to my throat, that if I didn't come over at 2 a.m. every night for my "duty", he would harm, or kill my family. One night I stayed home, the next morning I woke up to find my sister dazed with a broken arm. For two years I had allowed myself to be raped in fear and shame. He even kept me under the pretense of dating. I never expected that to happen to me from him. I trusted him, and even loved him! I'm not a slut, or a slacker, but I never deserved this from him, or anyone. My only reprieve was that in my junior year, my parents decided to move-meaning all of us were safe. I'll always have those scars, never again will I trust so easily.

Scene 13 **"Right Before Your Eyes"**

#6 Who am I? Most of you probably don't know. You probably wouldn't have even noticed me in the crowd. You can't tell by looking at me what all I have been through. If I were to tell you that you were sitting directly next to a victim of sex trafficking what would you say? You probably wouldn't believe me. You may not realize it, but it's all around you. You just have to open your eyes and see it.

#12 In school they fail to warn us of the dangers of sex trafficking. Many people are oblivious to the fact that it is everywhere. Girls and boys are trafficked every day, sometimes for sex. I'm sure most kids think "Oh, it'll never happen to me." I thought like that too. I figured I was immune to every bad thing around me and nothing and no one could ever hurt me. I believed that until it happened to someone I knew, and cared about. I thought that way till it happened to my best friend. She was taken....

#6 (*overlapping*) When I was taken it was just another ordinary day. I went to school, did my work, and laughed with my friends like every other girl. I had no warning or no one tell me what fate I had in store for me. It just happened. I went biking home from school with my best friend like every other day, but today I didn't make it home. We lived in the same neighborhood.

#12 (*overlapping*) We lived in the same neighborhood so we always biked home together. We decided to stop at the corner store for a snack before going home. We parked our bikes outside the store and went in to buy our food, but when we came back out....

#6 (*overlapping*) But when we came back out, only Emily's bike was where we left it, and mine was nowhere to be seen. I spotted it in the parking lot next to a parked white van. I ran over to get it, leaving Emily outside the store. I grabbed my bike and kicked the kickstand up, but when I turned around....

#12 (*overlapping*) But when I turned around after getting on my bike, Tabitha was gone. I looked everywhere. Then I came across her bike laying there on the road abandoned. I also found her backpack, but I didn't find her. The white van that was parked was gone. I knew she wouldn't leave me there so I had to face the fact. Tabitha was taken, gone, and I couldn't do anything about it.

#6 (overlapping) There wasn't anything I could do about it. The men in the van were too strong for me. I was too weak. The inside of the van was cold and dark. I couldn't see anything cause there was a bag over my head and I had been tied up with some kind of rope. All I could do was sit there and cry. I knew I wasn't coming home any time soon.

#12 (overlapping) I knew Tabitha wasn't coming home any time soon. The cops were swarming our street day in and day out, and still nothing. I wish I could do something to help find her, but I felt so small compared to what had my best friend locked away. I knew she must be suffering. She needed me. I could not be there for her, and that killed me.

(#6 has made her way to the stage now and this next segment plays in "real" time.)

#6 It's been days now that I have been away from my family and friends. Days and days of torture and humiliation, and days of loneliness and pain. The boss, well at least I think he's the boss, has me caged in a little closet. I have been here with no food or water. He takes me out only to show me to old disgusting men who want to rape me and take my pride. I haven't felt much of it because I think my soul has left me. I think it left my body and is now somewhere with my family. Cause this girl I am now is definitely not the girl I was when I was biking home with Emily. Hopefully, one day that girl will return to this body, but until then I have to wait.

#12 My best friend. The girl I could tell everything to. The one person I trusted with everything. She's gone. I need her here with me. How could they take her from me? They are not just hurting her they are also hurting everyone who cares about her and wants her home safe. I miss her so much. These people who take girls are selfish and need to be locked away forever. No girl deserves to go through whatever she's going through now. No girl deserves to die that way! They need to be caught. Tabitha and everyone else who are victims of sex trafficking must be heard. People must be more aware. Then maybe another girl's best friend won't be taken from her. It's up to everyone to make a difference. Find a way to set her free, and bring her back home to me.

#6 Emily, I'll always be here with you. You just have to open your eyes and see me.

(#1 emerges from the darkness at the back of the stage)

Scene 14

"A Chance to be Saved"

#1 A study done by the U. S. Department of State estimated that there are one million victims of the sex trade every year. Eighty percent are women and young girls.

The U. S. Department of Justice states that half of the victims are children. Seventy percent of female victims are trafficked into the commercial sex industry and thirty percent into forced labor. The U. S. Department of Justice estimates that 1.6 million runaway/throw away youth have been trafficked since 1999.

#10 Human trafficking is not just something that happens in developing countries. It happens everywhere. People think that this can't happen to them or that we shouldn't worry about people being stolen from their families.

- #3** It is estimated that 27 million innocent people are being held in human trafficking today and it is the fastest growing international crime.
- #4** Every day more and more people are stolen from their families and forced into some form of human trafficking. All those innocent people... their lives stolen. Someone has to speak for them.
- #6** My sister was found after three years and uses the horrific stories of her sex trafficking to educate others.
- #5** Human Trafficking is a real thing. It does happen to real people. Real people are kidnapped and forced into human trafficking every day. The average age of entry into sex trafficking in the United States is 13.
- #7** We need to become united to fight this. As a nation we need to promote awareness of Human Trafficking.
- #11** What if it was your son or daughter being stolen and forced to do unspeakable things? Every trafficking victim is someone's child.
- #9** It has hurt us, but it has made us stronger inside.
- #10** We need to expose the men and women who steal kids from their families, and force them to do unspeakable things. If anyone knows or suspects any form of human trafficking, please contact your local authorities.
- (local authorities contact information appears on the screen) Add Crimestopper's Number: 800-780-TIPS.*
- #8** Do this for the families of the victims of Human trafficking. Help those who are victimized by this crime. And in the memory of those people who lost their lives.
- #12** These were our stories, based on actual cases. Told to help spread the word. We are all united. We need to help those in trouble. Now help the people with real stories and real problems. We can help. We can put a glimmer of hope in the victims' eyes. We can let them know there is a chance - A chance to be saved.

THE END