

## HOMELESS IN PARADISE

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### PENINSULA PULCHRITUDE - Part 25



**"TRAFFICKER" MEANS 21st-CENTURY UPDATE OF THE 20th-CENTURY "PIMP"**

**By Wanda Sue Parrott**

*having sex for cash  
like a gun held to her head  
breaks a woman's will  
unless she breaks free  
at truck stops or on her own  
finds johns by herself  
or turns herself in  
special victims units help  
break trafficking rings*

**PIMPING** may be passé, but Trafficking is definitely in!

If you wonder what's the difference, and how it might affect people in Paradise, read on to learn things that shocked me: mainly, the sex traders--like proverbial long-shot race horses--are up and running in Monterey County--and if you assume I'm talking Adult Porn, think again!

So, why make such a claim? Three years ago, it was highly disputed when I approached it for this column. Well, last week I met a beautiful young woman named Deborah whose secret life as a sex worker started when she was still in elementary school. And if it could happen to one young girl, couldn't others be suffering the same fate?

Might you know such a victim? How would you recognize her?

Take a lesson from Deborah. "I was the most-exhausted, sleep-deprived child in class, but I was also a most-outstanding student."

Striving for excellence in school was compensation for being an active participant in the least respectful of all careers in which a girl or woman can be involved, she explained.

The Cabrillo College alumnus said, "I got away from my trafficker. . . I continued a life in hiding from my trafficker for a long time."

Now she helps other victims do the same.

### **Traffickers Are Non-Traditional Pimps**

Unlike the traditional pimp, meaning a man who controlled one or more women by selling them for sex and then keeping the money they earned, a trafficker is broadly defined by gender. If a trafficker handles men, he sells them for labor.

If he handles women, he sells them for sex.

In both cases, the victims are dependent on him/her until or unless they do as Debbie did and escape. Historically, all pimps were males. Today, traffickers are mostly male, but a few females also have entered the illicit trade.

### **From Victims to Vindicators**

Today, Deborah Pembrook is Human Trafficking Outreach Manager of the local Rape Crisis Center. We met last week when she was a featured speaker at the 5th Annual Central Coast Foster & Homeless Education Summit held at Monterey Peninsula College.

The annual Summits were started in Monterey County 2015 by Denise A. Lang, a former foster youth, who now serves as Foster Youth Services Coordinator for Monterey County Office of Education. Only 66 people, including members of the academic community, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) volunteers and youth, attended the first Summit in 2015; this year there were 269 attendees representing academics, agencies from the Tri-County area and 21 homeless and foster youth.

The Summits are funded through a combination of state grants (Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program and Education for Homeless Children and Youth), Title IV-E federal funding, and numerous other in-kind services grants such as Hartnell College Guardian Scholar Programs and Rising International. By 2018 the local Summits expanded to include Santa Cruz and San Benito counties; the Tri-County Area was reported to have 12,422 homeless students according to a point-in-time 2017-2018 California Dept. of Education Enrollment Data.

Homeless and Foster Youth are the intended beneficiaries of the annual events, with this year's agenda including a Workshop entitled "Human Trafficking 101" led by Catie Hart, 39-year old survivor of trafficking who invited Deborah to discuss recent changes in the perspectives reflecting how people now view trafficking.

### **Human Trafficking 101**

Deborah said a major paradigm shift is in progress as evolving open-mindedness unfolds about sex work and those involved in it.

Purpose of the trafficking workshop was to focus on signs and symptoms that reveal a student is possibly being exploited by a trafficker.

Sleep deprivation is a key symptom of extracurricular nocturnal activity that's not the homework type. Insight into such trauma will be further explored next week as we dig deeper into the seamy side of life that's beginning to come to light right here in Paradise, not only among students but also homeless women.

For example, last week while the U.S. Open was in its preliminary rounds here on the Monterey Peninsula, a homeless woman who lives in her car told a mutual friend of ours, "I'm gonna get all dolled up, hang out in a hotel, turn some tricks, and bank it all myself."

I said, "She plans to do it in her car?"

"No. She'll simply go to guys' rooms."

"Well, that's a switch," I said, remembering that only three years ago, when I attempted to explore homeless women and sex work, not only did local law enforcement agencies deny such activities existed on the peninsula, homeless women themselves gave me a good you-know-what for mentioning one not-so-good old girl reputed to perform oral sex for \$10 a pop because "you gave all homeless women a bad rap" and "guys are all over us to have sex."

Bob Dylan said it best: The Times, they are a-changing. . . "

Information about the Summit is available at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/>.

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Photo-- Gun to Head Courtesy of Clip Art

This column appears in the weekly edition of The Cedar Times, hometown newspaper of Pacific Grove, California, at [www.cedarstreetimes.com](http://www.cedarstreetimes.com).

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