



In Our Backyard: Human Trafficking in America and What We Can Do to Stop It

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In recent years, Americans have woken up to the reality that human trafficking is not just something that happens in other countries. But what most still do not understand is that neither is it something that just happens to "other people" such as runaways or the disenfranchised. The human trafficker is no respecter of faith, education, or socioeconomic status, and even kids who are raised in solid families in middle and upper class suburbs can fall victim. Likewise, labor trafficking happens in our cities, neighborhoods, and rural areas.

Through true stories and years of boots-on-the-ground experience, including at the Super Bowl, anti-trafficking expert Nita Belles teaches readers everything they need to know about human trafficking in the United States and what they can do to join the fight against it. She helps concerned parents, friends, teachers, law enforcement, government officials, and other leaders understand all forms of trafficking, identify risk factors, and take practical steps to keep their loved ones and neighbors safe from predators.

In Our Backyard: Human Trafficking in America and What We Can Do to Stop It **Details**

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From Reader Review In Our Backyard: Human Trafficking in America and What We Can Do to Stop It for online ebook

Melissa says

~Disclaimer: I received this book for free in a giveaway~

I'm very conflicted as to how to review this book. I wasn't sure what star rating I wanted to give it either.

It had some issues.

Pros: Some good resources are provided, warning signs for what to look for, generally strong definitions of the issues, a variety of different kinds of trafficking discussed and I feel the authors heart is in the right place.

Cons: Very negative on pornography (made statements connecting between buying sex and watching porn as though if you do one the other follows. Did have a disclaimers statement, but the was obviously the message the author wanted to send). Very sex worker negative in general. Made claims that most porn workers are treated as slaves (105) and "I have heard of everything from severe injuries to death as a result of the severe violence that is now commonplace in pornography"(113) I cannot find sources to that effect for the USA (at least not from a reputable source) and the author did not source that statement. Author made the statement that even those who choose to go into sex work don't like it. Not okay with legalized sex work. I feel the author should talk to legal sex workers before making these statements. The author got very repetitive at points.

Might be a pro or con depending: religious tones, some resources religion based

Katie Harder-schauer says

I received a copy of this book through Audiofile Sync's summer reading for teens program absolutely free of charge with no strings attached. This is my honest review.

This is a book that pretty much everyone should read, just so that they're aware of how prevalent this problem is. I was astonished at some of the ways human trafficking is perpetrated in the US, and most of the stories included in this book absolutely horrified me. I just have a hard time wrapping my mind around the idea that humans can be that cruel to other humans, which is part of why human trafficking can happen in the first place according to this book.

Read the rest of my review on my blog. --> <http://justanothergirlandherbooks.blog...>

Lindsey says

I don't know where to start.

On the one hand, I'm sure Nita Belles is helping lots of people. On the other, I feel like she's doing lots of

damage. This book was part of audiobooksync's program to get free audiobooks into the hands of the 13+ crowd. I get why this book would be included, but it really grinds me that young women are being told that: 1. their sexuality and bodies are shameful, and wanting to have sex means they're somehow going to end up being pimped out, 2. hip hop culture is 100% to blame.

I'm not christian, and not American, so I'm decidedly not the target audience for this book. Apparently, in the author's view of christianity, people need to be told that they're not inherently better than others, that their humanity is not worth more than that of others. This is in line with some of the worst "christians" I have ever met - the ones that assume that because they are christian, because they go to church, they're somehow worth more than everyone else. That they have a good life because they're christian, and not because they're white and middle class and born that way. I have never in my life needed to be told that a migrant worker, a janitor, a fast food restaurant employee, was equal to me, was worthy of respect and dignity.

The little stabs of racism throughout the book were pretty awful. Slavery in the old south was not better than current slavery because the people involved had some sort of value. Livestock have some sort of value. Feeling the need to point out that other religions were used in defense of slavery (and not just christianity) is a bit of a tell. Hip hop culture does not *create* objectification of women - generally, it's the suburban white rich kids who consume that version of hip hop. Deriding kids who wear their pants "too low" as future pimps is too ignorant for words.

Women's sexuality is not shameful. Women who actually choose to do sex work would benefit from legalization; it would keep them safer and penalize those who seek to take advantage of them. Possibly a world where women are given equal value to men, which many evangelical christian religions do not do, would actually see the eradication of the circumstances which lead women to choose this work. I noted that Ms. Belles did not relay the experience of anyone who did this work by choice, other than to handwave it as them being brainwashed. We'll notice that prostitution is not currently legal, and yet, here we are, with human trafficking happening.

People don't need to be from "a good, christian home" to be worthy of our empathy. Some people are in bad circumstances, and become victims. Some people just make a string of bad choices, and end up becoming victims. Some people never learn how to make good choices. This doesn't make any one person any less worthy of our help than any other.

Those who have been victimized do not need to forgive those who victimize them. Generally, if someone is pushing you to forgive someone who's hurt you before you're ready, it's for their good and not yours.

Lastly, I'm a victim of abuse. I know several victims of abuse. The narrative that victims of abuse are hurting, and need to hurt someone, is pile of complete BS that diminishes the pain that those of us who suffered abuse and decided that our experience is a guide in how to NOT treat people, EVER, because we don't ever want anyone to feel like that. Even a heathen like me understands that.

The version of christianity that Nita Belles subscribes to seems to be a bit perverted. She claims a master's degree, but lists no institution. I'm left suspicious that this master's is either from a non-accredited institution (see: Kent Hovind, among others,) or one that discourages critical thinking. Either way, this woman could benefit from a slightly wider realm of experience.

Elisabeth Warner says

It was eye opening! I definitely want to write a longer review on my blog, but for the most part I feel more led to prevent human trafficking than I do treating people who have been trafficked. We can STOP this!

Laurie says

An Audiobook Sync free audiobook for their YA summer program: week 4

Powerful and painful to read, this was full of good information and I think is an excellent addition to this set of free teen reads for raising awareness. The author was from my own state of Oregon making some of the stories shared, including one on the grounds of an unnamed high school in my city, hit that much closer to home. Having volunteered time for several years to a local center for child abuse assessment and counseling, I feel very strongly about this and appreciate such a comprehensive look at, analysis of, and awareness raising of trafficking and modern day slavery is so many of its forms. I also loved hearing about TAT (Truckers Against Trafficking) and the other examples of combating this depravity.

Melissa Erin Jackson says

This is a good (feels like a terrible word to use, given the subject matter) crash course in the topic of human trafficking. The book can be a little repetitive, and was a bit more religious-leaning than I prefer, but wasn't over the top. Some of the author's personal opinions seep into the narrative at times too, so it doesn't always feel like an objective read. But she's very passionate about the subject, and her desire for the victims to find the care they need is clear, which makes up for a lot.

Recommended to anyone who is curious about the horrors of human trafficking.

Kathleen says

"Human trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transporting, obtaining, or maintaining of a person by means of force, fraud, or coercion for purpose of involuntary servitude, debt bondage, slavery, or a commercial sex act or any commercial sex act in which the person performing the act is under eighteen years old. And while the word trafficking denotes movement, physical movement is not a requisite. ...trafficking is the exploitation of vulnerability. Trafficking by its very nature implies movement - and the movement is from vulnerability to the exploitation of that vulnerability."

"Average age for entry into sex trafficking is 12-14 for girls and 11-13 for boys."

An organization called Slavery Footprint has a quiz you can take to find out how you have unsuspectingly helped to perpetuate human trafficking. This free information is at www.slaveryfootprint.org.

"Each of us can do something, whether it's talking to our neighbors about the issue of human trafficking, donating time and/or money to anti-trafficking groups, or praying to stop this atrocity."

As consumers we can insist on fair-trade products. "Purchasing fair-trade products is one of the best and safest ways to ensure that the goods we purchase are not tainted with slavery."

"This [Human trafficking] is the second-largest and fastest-growing crime in the world."

"The fight to free about 27 million people living in slavery - from nearly every nation and territory on earth - seems like a truly impossible task. Even the notion of freeing the hundreds of thousands of trafficked individuals in this country [USA] seems unattainable. ...people are making a difference. I see part of our job as anti-trafficking activists as making it hard to be a trafficker. Together we can do this.

If awareness is raised and industries are united against trafficking; if children are aware and tell someone responsible when they are approached; if the nation becomes so aware that we designate dollars for servers for runaways so they don't feel their only option is to get help from a trafficker; if the nation becomes so aware that we designate dollars for professional and loving shelters for both minors and adult survivors; if we all speak up at every opportunity instead of turning a deaf ear - we can do this."

"We can stop human trafficking in our backyard in our lifetime."

Human trafficking is not just something that happens in other countries. Neither is it something that just happens to "other people" such as runaways or the disenfranchised. Even kids in your own neighbourhood can fall victim . But they don't have to.

Through true stories and expertise from her many years of experience, anti-trafficking expert Nita Belles teaches you everything you need to know about human trafficking in the United States, helping you identify risk factors, take practical steps to keep your loved ones and neighbours safe from predators , and recognize trafficking around you in order to help fight it.

"The aptly titled IN OUR BACKYARD is superb. Belles compellingly calls for action based on the truth that every human life is of equal, enormous value." - Quote by Mark Lagos, former US ambassador and director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (TIP)

The book IN OUR BACKYARD by Nita Belles is both shocking and "eye opening". Everyone should read it.

4****strong stars

Nita says

This is a book I wrote. For reviews go to: <http://nitabelles.com/page5.php>

Isis says

I got this book through the Audiofile Sync summer program of audiobooks for teens, drawn to the subject because of the recent excellent essay in the *Atlantic*, My Family's Slave, about a Filipino family who immigrated to the US along with their slave. I found this book interesting but exasperating; the subject matter is fascinating, but the way it's presented here is more emotional than factual, more personal than informative, and more scattered than it should be. Which is not a bad thing, to a certain audience! It's just that I'm not that audience.

Human trafficking is a hidden tragedy that takes a terrible toll on many lives, and most Americans are not

aware of how many people are essentially slaves, let alone how to spot victims and how to aid them. The statistics in the book are horrifying and informative, and the case stories are heartrending. That said, the book feels disorganized, as the stories are not presented in any coherent grouping (e.g. forced prostitution, forced labor, etc.) and the information on what can be done is both repetitive, as it appears at the end of many chapters, and also seems rather nonspecific, except in the particular case of pornography (more later). There's an awful lot of "I did X" and "I feel Y", reflecting on the author's experiences with trafficking victims, which makes the book sometimes feel like a personal manifesto.

Speaking of personal manifesto, Belles is anti-pornography and anti-legalized-prostitution, stating that the majority of sex workers are coerced and that pornography leads to buying sex from coerced sex workers. She is also clearly religious and approaches much of the material from a religious viewpoint. I disagree with both of these positions.

I would have liked to see more of a systematic overview of human trafficking, with separate sections on forced prostitution, forced industrial/commercial labor, and forced personal labor, with guides at the end of each section on how to spot possible slaves and how to aid them. Belles gave a long list of websites of organizations that will help people overcome "addiction to pornography"; I would have loved a list of websites that list companies which use forced labor, for example, those who exploit agricultural workers or who bring them in under false pretenses. I would like to have seen more about those who fight trafficking in the courts and in the legislature, and in particular interviews with FBI or police personnel who work on bringing those who exploit others to justice.

Danica Page (One Page at a Time) says

Very informative and well written. Human trafficking is an issue and it's definitely one that we can help prevent.

Amanda H says

I think every parent and teen should read this book to help educate themselves and others to the human trafficking that goes on around us. Nita does a wonderful job of combining true stories with ways to become involved. I highly recommend this book.

Katherine says

I received a free download of this audio book from Audio Sync YA summer series.

I have very conflicted feelings about this book.

pros:

- This is an important topic and important dialog that needs to be happening.
- This book thoroughly addresses WHAT is happening in slave and sex labor/trade industry, WHERE it is happening (in our backyard. not just far away. it affects people in our cities, neighborhoods and schools.),

HOW it happens, and WHO is at risk.

- We, as a community, often know this exists. But we want to believe it is happening elsewhere. We've heard of the impact of large events like the super bowl drawing in the sex trafficking industry. It is uncomfortable to realize that while that is true, it is also happening modern day in our towns and cities.
- It provides a lot of resources for if you want to learn more, what to help the fight, or think you see someone in slave trade or sex trafficking.
- In addition to being a dialog our society needs, it also is an important dialog to have with our children, and it gives a guide to this as well.
- It shows our impact (for positive and for negative) on the sex trade industry.

cons:

- I received this book from a series that is geared for children over the age of 13. While this is an important dialog to have with children (whether we want to believe it or not, children are at risk of the industry), this book is NOT appropriate for children. There may be literature on this topic but, in my opinion, this book is WILDLY inappropriate for the teenage population. I am deeply disturbed that hundreds or thousands of early teenage children may have received a free download of this book. I view it as a beneficial resource for adults in the community as a guide, but not for children.
 - A total pet peeve of mine, "As we will discuss it chapter 8..." Are we going to discuss in chapter 8? Then maybe we don't need to discuss now. We certainly don't need to discuss how we are going to discuss it later. Minute detail, but completely annoying to me!
-

Marianna says

In Our Backyard is an extremely eye opening book. It is a non-fiction novel about the exploration and explanation of Human Trafficking in our society. It was shocking. It was horrifying. It was eye-opening. While I have always been aware of the exploitation and trafficking of people, I did not truly grasp the extent and depth of this issue. I truly did not realize how well and deep rooted this issue is within our society.

Human trafficking is a huge problem and one that every child, woman, and man need to be aware of and educated in. Thank you to Audiobooksync.com for giving this Audio Book away during their summer reading program. Without this program, I most likely, would never have come across this book and the extremely valuable information it contains.

The content of this book educated me in seeing certain realities in a different light and with greater empathy than I had previously had. It brought much needed awareness into my mind which I have shared with my two daughters. I am more aware and better educated about identifying and assisting people in trouble. I feel empowered to make a difference.

This book should be required reading in every middle school and high school. Every parent should own it. Every person with a beating heart should read it. We, as a society, owe it to our children, women, and others who are trafficked, to learn about this atrocity and not allow perpetrators to get away with this horrible crime.

I highly recommend this book to everyone.

Andrew Willis says

Great overview of the problem and ways to address it.

Sarah says

I downloaded this audiobook through the Sync download promotion (<http://www.audiobooksync.com/>) currently going on. (I think Sync's title selection or promotion could have been a little tighter, a bit better planned-- it's marketed as a YA program but nearly half the titles would easily appeal to a much wider audience. If it's a YA program, pick more YA titles. If it's an all-ages program, stop sticking "teens" in all your promotional materials.)

This is an introduction to the topic, and not very graphic, so while it is accessible for teens, I'd call it a general or adult nonfiction. The audio is also very good-- the narrator is easy to listen to and does a good job with different speakers quoted in the book; her generic-kid or generic-man voices are not overt or over-the-top, and the regional dialects or accents she uses are also neither distracting nor caricature. Her narration is slow, appropriate to the weighty content.

I have previously read *Trafficked* (<http://blustocking.blogspot.com/2013/...>), also about human trafficking, but that talked mostly about one person's situation in a non-US country. I have a college friend who has become very active in anti-trafficking in a major US city. A few years ago, I suggested to her that a good outreach would be to go to library conferences and talk to library staff, as people who work in a public place-- maybe the nearest warm or cool place for people without a safer place to go. Another person belittled that idea saying library staff "already know" and "know what to look for." Um, it's not covered in library school, it isn't part of the in-house training at any library I've worked at. I've read two whole books, non-required reading, and still feel unprepared. It's kind of hard to imagine the numbers and statistics referenced in this book. But it happened here (<http://www.peninsuladailynews.com/cr...>).
