

Rafael Bautista

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Rafael Bautista and I am a human trafficking survivor. I am originally from Mexico City.

My trafficker first hired me to do office work. I had been doing restaurant and dishwashing work at this time, so moving up to an office job seemed like the American Dream. The man who trafficked me first seemed like an angel. But he lied to me, pretending to be a good person that cares for others but he was fake. When I began working for him, he had me move into his house, telling me it would save rent money. But shortly after I moved in, he stopped paying me. In addition to the office work, he forced me to clean the house, cook, wash clothes, and drive him around. He would make threats about getting me killed or deported because I was undocumented. He would tell me that I did not have any rights because of my legal status and would make it clear that if I refused to do what he said Immigration would pick me up and I would end up dead in my country. I suffered this abuse for 2 years.

I worked every single day during the two years that I was forced to work for my trafficker. He would tell me “there is no day off.” My work tasks were all-consuming. I was forced to work at minimum 18 hours a day, and sometimes more. I could only sleep 3 or 4 hours per night and otherwise I would be working, either at the office or at his house.

At the very beginning, my trafficker did give me some wages—I received \$ 800 for 2 weeks of work. I had worked at least 12 hours per day during those weeks. After those first payments, he stopped paying me entirely, and when I eventually escaped two years later, I had no money to my name.

I escaped with nothing but the clothes on my body. I had no papers or records that would have shown how much and for how long my trafficker forced me to work for him without pay. I can't imagine any trafficker who would put this information down in writing. But I knew all of that information because I lived it and I don't remember having a DAY OFF. There were a few other people who witnessed how I was forced to work for him, but they were his family members and other employees—people who were on his side and would not have spoken on my behalf. I would never have gone back to them after I had escaped anyway; I just needed to stay away.

When I escaped, I was blessed to meet a social worker who helped me understand that I was a victim of 21st century slavery. I relied entirely on public programs for short-term housing and benefits like food stamps and counseling, but it was not enough. It was a difficult time for me to rebuild my life and get back on my feet after escaping my trafficker with no money or possessions at all.

I know that some organizations will provide some of the basic needs for survivors, but receiving lost wages from the Board would help survivors to provide for their loved ones and cover personal and basic needs like educational classes, to become a self-sufficient individual that can be restored and reintegrated to society in a positive way.

Monica Anderson

Hello, my name is Monica Anderson and I am a human trafficking survivor. I was forced into human trafficking when I was kidnapped in 2006 at the age of 15. Over the course of two years, being arrested and going to juvenile hall 16 times, my trafficker and his sister never left my side. They made sure I was not able to leave. He forced me into the commercial sex industry and kept me in the life with daily beatings and keeping me drugged. My trafficking ended in 2008 when I became pregnant and my trafficker caused my miscarriage with his physical abuse. He made me work a few days afterwards and told me to go outside and make his money. Through all of the abuse, I kept telling myself this person cared about me but when I lost my baby, I realized that this person didn't care. He came close to taking my life numerous times but when I experienced the loss of my baby, it was a different experience. The one thing that could love me unconditionally was taken away from me.

During the 18 months I was forced into sex work, I would work seven days a week. There was never a day off. Every day, I would work for 13 or 14 active hours, not including travel time—I had a daily quota that I had to meet and if not, I would be physically punished. The men would pay me and I would give the money to my trafficker or his sister after every unwanted sexual encounter. I had to make him \$1200 every day or I couldn't stop working. I never kept or received any of the money that was paid for my forced sex work during this time. Every dollar went to my trafficker.

There were no documents that could have proven to other people the details of what was done to me during the time I was trafficked. No one was recording how long I worked every day or how much money my trafficker made off of me. All I had was my memory and my word, but I knew these details vividly. It's been 8 years since I was forced into sex work and I still easily remember these facts because I still have the scars from the abuse and I still live in the neighborhood where I was trafficked. It's a constant reminder of the things I had to endure, the men I was forced to have sex with, and the girls I used to see being exploited, some are still out there.

I've been out of the life for 8 years. I still struggle with the physical pain that I never had the money to get medically fixed. I went to therapy and received free services until I was 21, after that, I had no way of receiving additional therapy because of limited resources. This lost income money could help human trafficking survivors with the support they need after their victimization. Recovery has no time limit, as I still struggle with my trauma at times. There is so much that this money can help with, it will make recovery much easier and less stressful on the one that was victimized.

Annika Mack

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I am Annika Mack and I am a survivor human trafficking. When I was 18 years old I was targeted by traffickers for the life of prostitution. I was trafficked four and a half months. I was kept against my will completely by physical force and fear. I was forced to work every night, I was sold to 4 to 6 dates per day. Each date lasted about 30 minutes. I was forced to make a quota every night. During the first month of my trafficking my quota was \$750. For the remainder of my trafficking my nightly quota was \$1750. I was paid cash by the men who bought me, but I had to give all the money to my trafficker. I was not allowed to keep any of the money. I escaped from my trafficking when I was dropped off near a hospital. I spent a month there recovering from the physical abuse from my trafficker.

There were no records of the number of dates or days or weeks that I was forced to work. I only knew all of that information because I was told to make a quota and I knew that I worked every night. There was another female trafficked with me but I have no knowledge of where she is and I do not think she would testify to what had happened to me or herself.

When I escaped trafficking I had no income or close family. I also needed to change my social security card because my trafficker put debt in my name. For 10 months I relied on public programs and random sources of support including homeless shelters, non profits, and federally funded programs. When my new social security number came in I was able to get a job and start rebuilding my life. If I was able to get lost wages compensation after escaping trafficking I would be able to start the process of rebuilding my life much sooner, and the stress of those 10 months wouldn't have existed. I support fixing the regulations so other victims of human trafficking can receive this important compensation.