

AUGUST 2023

THE RED CORD

ISAIAH 61:1



UNMASK THE BEAST

A predator is a being that relentlessly stalks its vulnerable victims seeking to exploit them for personal gain. The predator may be unseen, but only a click away on a computer screen. Today, traffickers have hidden their faces to groom their victims through online apps and take their time building a relationship and trust. It is often over time that this relationship is built and a victim falls prey to clever disguises.

Traffickers may be wearing one or more of the following faces:

What masks do traffickers use to lure victims?

1. "The Friend" -- Using Victims to Recruit Others: A victim is told to recruit others to replace her current work requirement. This happens in schools when a student befriends a vulnerable student and creates a trust with this person. Then she will invite them over to a party or sleep over. The purpose is to expose the victim to the trafficker which can give opportunity for a grooming process to start.

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2. “The Planner” – Using Disguised Meetings: This could happen through a “random” text or direct message from someone looking to “meet up” to buy or sell merchandise. Watch for red flags when selling or buying from Facebook Marketplace and other online shopping sites. This can also look like being invited to a party at someone’s house you do not know.

3. “The False Advertiser”-Using Enticing Opportunities: This could be modeling opportunities, or jobs offering high pay with little to no previous work experience required. Or it could be an advertisement for someone with knowledge of a foreign language offering free accommodations, free visa or travel procurement. The opportunities can be advertised in legitimate newspapers using a registered business as a front.

4. “The ‘Loverboy” – Using False Relationships: This trafficker uses blind dating and online relationships, sugar daddy/sugar baby websites. They invest their time and resources to buy their victim’s trust, flatter her, and shower her with love, romance and promises of a better life until they are comfortable enough to make their move.

5. “The Family Member”- Sale by Family: Parents may sell a child out of greed and receive a monthly income. These families often build relationships with traffickers and will intentionally misrepresent the nature of the work to entice other families to sell their children. Traffickers will target families that are poverty-stricken or dependent on drugs.

6. “The Needy Person” - Seeking help in disguise: This could look like a homeless person asking for money or a ride. It could be someone asking for directions or someone who needs to use your cellphone in an “emergency” situation.

7. “The Religious Abuser” – Using Religious Beliefs: This is when religion is used to control a victim and/or abuse of power. This could be having a victim take an “oath”.

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Victims make all kinds of promises such as they won't run away; they will obey their trafficker; they will keep silent and never speak to officials; They will pay back all the money they owe their trafficker. Indeed, the girls believe that breaking the oath would cause grave, if not fatal consequences, for the victims' families and would be in danger of going to hell.

All of these masks are in use today in our state, in our country, and around the world.

Unmasking the Beasts at the Border

In recent years, we have tracked human trafficking on the rise between the US and Mexico. Mexican traffickers, often called "coyotes," take advantage of desperate situations of poverty or hardship in Mexico and promise safe passage to a new life in the U.S.

<https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1144&context=ppr>

Trafficking is "distinct from the smuggling of willing migrants from one country to another, (because) human trafficking refers to the use of coercion for the purpose of labor, sexual, or other exploitation.

Once in the U.S., coyotes hand over their victims to pimps, who then trap the victims through violence or debt bondage. Girls are often moved along a trafficking route to keep them trapped, vulnerable, and unable to find help. Frequently, these girls are victims of abuse, both sexual and physical, and of extreme manipulation. This manipulation often occurs because the pimps frequently take their victims' passports, using the threat of deportation as a technique to keep their victims from going to the police.

So how do we decrease the decrease trafficking between Mexico and the United States?

1. improve bilateral cooperation between the two countries.
2. improve enforcement mechanisms in both countries.
3. increase public awareness and education on human trafficking in both countries.

The Red Cord provides multiple opportunities to raise awareness concerning human trafficking. Please check our website for free resources and plan to attend monthly free local trainings. Also, consider attending the Freedom Gala in September to hear firsthand information from authorities and victims.

Please read the August blog for more information about masks traffickers wear.

What about the current popular movie, "The Sound of Freedom"? Is it true? Continue reading to learn The Red Cord's thoughts position.



Ahsha Morin

1. What is the most common mask traffickers' wear?

The mask of developing TRUST! To gain someone's trust will give an opportunity for a trafficker to gain control over a victim. The victim will then feel more like sharing information and secrets that the trafficker can use against them. What does it mean for a trafficker to groom someone? They will use tactics of trust, coercion, fraud, and force to groom a potential victim. Child grooming is befriending and building an emotional connection with a minor, and sometimes the child's family, to lower the child's inhibitions with the objective of sexual abuse.

2. How does The Red Cord help people see beyond the surface to see who poses a threat and hides behind "masks" to traffic vulnerable victims?

We offer educational training to the public and parents about the topic of trafficking and what traffickers look like and their grooming tactics. In our training, we discuss different kinds of traffickers and the different ways they groom people and children.

3. What should people do if they expect they are being groomed?

Report it! Keep all photos, text messages, direct messages and any other information that can be useful to law enforcement. They can then use this material to build a case against the
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trafficker. Report to your local law enforcement or local human trafficking task force.

The Heart of the Red Cord



Responding to “The Sound of Freedom”

The Red Cord encourages people to see the movie. It's essential, however, to view the film, for what it is—a depiction based on one person's experiences. It cannot serve as a comprehensive representation of human trafficking and exploitation, nor should it be considered the ultimate solution to this grave issue. The fight against human trafficking and exploitation encompasses numerous perspectives and stories that together create a full picture.

We have to remember that this a local fight. We can prevent children before they need rescue through education and awareness. This is the heart of The Red Cord. The Sound of Freedom brings a level of awareness to the overall trafficking issue, but does not depict the trafficking situation of grooming, online contact and where parents can be the first level of protection for their children. Contact The Red Cord today to see how you can help the fight and keep your kids safe.



AUGUST EVENTS

Community Training, Tuesday, August 15 6:30 – 7:30pm, Fort Sill Federal Credit Union, 1614 NW 67th St, Lawton.

Unlock Freedom Youth- Holy Cross Church, Lawton - open to community Sunday, August 20 1:00 – 2:30pm.

Save the Date, The Red Cord Freedom Gala, Saturday, Sept. 30.