

BORDERS: An Insider's Guide to International Trafficking

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Even well-known corporations traffic overseas laborers into the United States. This modern-day slave trade has very little to do with literal captivity, and much more to do with broken contracts, power and control. To gain a fair picture of what's going on, report the phenomenon from multiple angles.

The Government:

1. Know the bureaucracy. Which government agency permits these laborers to enter the country? The State Department? Department of Homeland Security? Under what program? What's the program's stated purpose? What are the regulations?

The Employer:

1. Did the employer find these laborers directly? Through a middle-man/recruitment service? What was the employer's agreement with the recruitment service? Was there a contract?
2. Are they aware of the conditions of the workers they've brought over? Why? Why not?
3. What is the employer's reputation? Have they gained contracts elsewhere? Where?

The Middle-Man:

1. Collect any documents they produce-- especially promotional materials, contract agreements and training documents. You never know what will be useful later. Often, these documents may give you a sense of daily life for the workers and recruiters. Sometimes alert you to a bait-and-switch.
2. Find out what important documents they don't produce. Does it fail to produce itemized pay stubs? Can they explain why?
3. What did they promise their workers? What did they promise the employer?

The Laborers:

1. What were they promised when they signed on to go to the United States? By whom?
2. Are they willing to talk? Are they afraid? Why or why not?
3. How do they live? Who controls their living quarters?
4. How are they used to living in their home countries?

Most importantly, make an exhaustive search for ALL PUBLIC RECORDS available on your subjects.

1. Run the names of the recruiters and their corporations through state corporate records files. Get incorporation papers, UCCs.
2. Run the names of recruiters, their companies and recruits through court files. Check for bankruptcies.
3. Run everyone through Autotrak, Accurint, etc. Search addresses, not just names.
4. Do a clip search through Lexis-Nexis, search Google, etc.
5. Check with state regulatory agencies for info on employer, as well as lobbying records, congressional records, bill filings, and campaign finance reports. File FOIA requests on government officials.