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More on the Great Sex Trafficking Scam in the U.K.

Friday, October 30, 2009
By Robert Franklin, Esq.

In [this](#) BBC Newsnight interview, moderator Jeremy Paxman questions former British MP for Europe, Dennis McShane and Nikki Adams of the English Collective for Prostitutes about the recent article in *The Guardian* showing that the Home Office had, over many years blown out of all proportion the problem of human trafficking for sex in Britain (*BBC*, 10/21/09). That article revealed government documents showing that a massive sweep of English brothels by dozens of law enforcement agencies and that resulted in the arrests of over 400 people, had netted not a single person who had coerced anyone into prostitution.

So Paxman understandably wants to know how McShane and so many others could have trumpeted the claim that 25,000 women per year were trafficked into the U.K. for the purposes of prostitution. Tellingly, McShane never gets around to defending the claim other than to say that he was simply quoting, presumably the Home Office figures that have so distorted national dialogue and policy on the issue.

Indeed, throughout the whole interview, McShane never provides any guidance as to how much trafficking, if any, is going on. At one point he tries to change the entire topic to that of rape (where have we seen that before?), but never gets close to explaining how, if so many women are trafficked into the U.K. each year, such a vast police effort could locate none of them.

Nikki Adams, for her part, has some ideas about that. She and her organization have defended sex workers in court and attempted to help them in many ways for years. She says that in all that time of helping prostitutes in the United Kingdom, she has encountered a grand total of two who had been coerced into the trade. Her very strong opinion is that essentially all prostitutes engage in sex for hire as their free choice for the purposes of earning an income. That view, of course, accords with the findings (or non-findings) of Operation Parameter Two, the police sweep of houses of prostitution, that found no traffickers whatsoever.

As a brief aside, clearly some level of sex trafficking goes on in Britain, but as recent events have made clear, the level is nowhere near that claimed by the Home Office and numerous other organizations.

Interestingly enough, when McShane inquired incredulously whether Paxman believes that Amnesty International and other organizations were just making up figures about sex trafficking, Adams quietly responded that there are “a lot of vested interests”

at work. The interview was cut short, so neither followed up on that statement, but what I believe Adams to have been saying was that certain entities have developed entrenched interests, both financial and “moral” in the issue of sex trafficking.

We see this frequently. As but one obvious example, in the United States, DV shelters, advocates, and those who claim to provide treatment, receive massive sums of money from state and federal governments as well as private fundraising. For them to admit the truth about domestic violence – that it is nowhere near as pervasive as they’ve claimed all along, that their approach to it has no hope of solving the problem and that they ignore, as a matter of policy, half the population who need services – would be to seriously jeopardize their livelihoods. Likewise, they’ve staked out certain intellectual positions – that women don’t perpetrate and men aren’t victims of domestic violence - from which it would be embarrassing to climb down.

And so it is with sex trafficking in the U.K. I don’t pretend to know what the financial arrangements are, but the intellectual ones are clear. Countless people in the Home Office and elsewhere, as well as a welter of NGOs have staked out the position that sex trafficking is a pervasive blight on British society. For them to acknowledge the painful (for them) truth, to in effect say “never mind,” would be to display greater reserves of character and honesty than I suspect they’re capable of.

And if Dennis McShane’s performance on BBC NewsNight is any indication, my suspicions are correct.

Thanks to Kendall for the heads-up.

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