



# Sex Trafficking in Hawai'i Part II: The Stories of Survivors

April 10, 2019

Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz



Office of Juvenile Justice and  
Delinquency Prevention



# NCJTC Presents...

NCJTC



# Sex Trafficking in Hawai'i Part II: The Stories of Survivors

April 10, 2019

Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz



Office of Juvenile Justice and  
Delinquency Prevention



# Webinar Information

This webinar is supported under Cooperative Agreement number 2017-MC-FX-K003 from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of OJJDP or the U.S. Department of Justice.

# **AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program**

## **Mission**

To safely recover missing, endangered, or abducted children through the coordinated efforts of law enforcement, media, transportation, and other partners by using training and technology to enhance response capacities and capabilities and increase public participation.

# During the Webinar

- All attendees will be muted.
- If you desire to ask a question, please use the questions section of the GoToWebinar dialogue box, typically on the right side of your screen.
- Questions will either be answered directly by a panelist or asked to the presenter who will answer during the Q & A portion of the presentation.

# Certificate of Attendance

- We offer a Certificate of Attendance on our live AMBER Alert TTA Program webinars.
- To receive your certificate you must:
  - **Attend the entire live webinar; and  
(no certificates are available for the recorded webinars)**
  - **Complete the survey at the end of the live webinar.**
- Certificate of Attendance will be emailed within 2-weeks of the live webinar event.



# Post Webinar Information

- At the conclusion of the webinar, a short survey will appear.
- We ask that you complete the survey in an effort to gather information to better serve you all in preparation for future webinars.
  - *Please complete it before signing off.*
- You will also receive a link to access this webinar and related webinar material within two weeks.



# Poll Questions

- Poll questions may be asked during the webinar.
- They are asked so we can better understand the audience and provide the most useful information to you.
- As they will only be open a short period of time, please respond promptly.





Poll



**Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz,**  
**MSW, PhD**  
**[dominique.roe@asu.edu](mailto:dominique.roe@asu.edu)**

- Associate Professor
- Director – Arizona State University Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research
- Subject matter expert:
  - White House
  - US Department of Health and Human Services
  - SAMHSA
  - Office of Victims of Crime (OVC)
- City of Phoenix Human Trafficking Task Force
- Arizona Governor's Human Trafficking Council

# **Sex Trafficking in Hawai'i**

## **Stories of Survivors**







# Authors

**Dominique Roe-Sepowitz, MSW, Ph.D.**

Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research  
Arizona State University

**Khara Jabola-Carolus, J.D.**

Hawai'i State Commission on the  
Status of Women

*Funding for this study was provided by the Kaimas Foundation, 2018.*



# Overall Purpose and Goals

## Purpose:

In-depth study of sex trafficking in Hawai'i.

## Goals:

- Circumstances in Hawai'i where sex trafficking exists.
- Qualitative and quantitative information
- Sex trafficking experiences of victims in Hawai'i.
- Recommendations by the participants for Hawai'i.
- Explore the findings.
- Ideas for cohesive, concerted, and data-driven plan.



# From the participants:

“Someone took advantage of me, it is so obvious I am a victim.”

“When I was 15 I thought I had it together. I knew what I was doing and I was down for my man.”

“I called to report her missing, they told me “if she wants to be out by herself, then let her.”

“You just don’t get out of this. That doesn’t happen. I would get my ass beat.”





# **Part I: Sex Trafficking in Hawai'i**

## **Exploring Online Sex Buyers**



# Part I: Exploring Online Sex Buyers

## Statistical methodology

- Backpage.com
- Received calls for 24 hours
- Oahu: 58 ads
- Big Island: 2 additional ads

# Part I: Exploring Online Sex Buyers Continued

## Enormous Response

### Oahu

- 756 contacts
- 407 unique numbers
- 72% - 808 area code

### Big Island

- 206 contacts
- 113 unique numbers
- 60% - 808 area code

Estimated: 1 of 11 men in Hawai'i



Poll

# Part II: The Stories of the Survivors

- Mixed methods study
- Survey & record interviews
- IRB from Arizona State University
- Identify and contact victims
- Girls and women trafficked in Hawaii



# Research Questions

A large, faint, white chalk-style thought bubble graphic is centered on the slide. Inside the bubble is a realistic image of a lit lightbulb. The background of the slide consists of alternating horizontal black and light gray bands.

- How sex trafficking happened?
- Who bought sex from them?
- Who sold them?
- Where and how they were sold?
- What factors preceded their victimization?
- How did they exit and heal?

# Methodology

## Participants

- Two islands
- 100% experienced trafficking
- 15 women
- 7 family members
- Life history surveys
- Face-to-face interviews
- Interviews recorded and transcribed
- Surveys entered

# Findings

100% of victims were trafficked in Hawai'i

77.3% of victims were Native Hawaiian



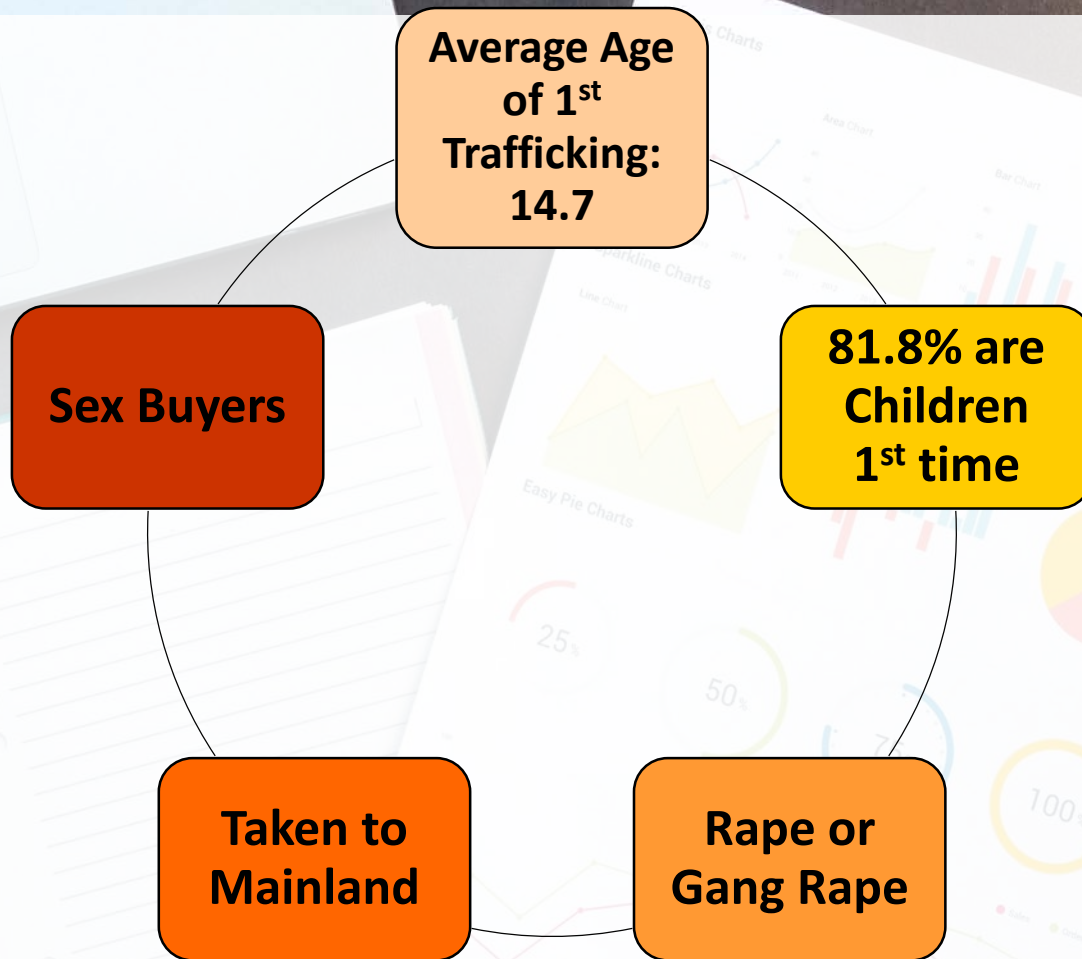
# Findings - Childhood Experiences

## Findings

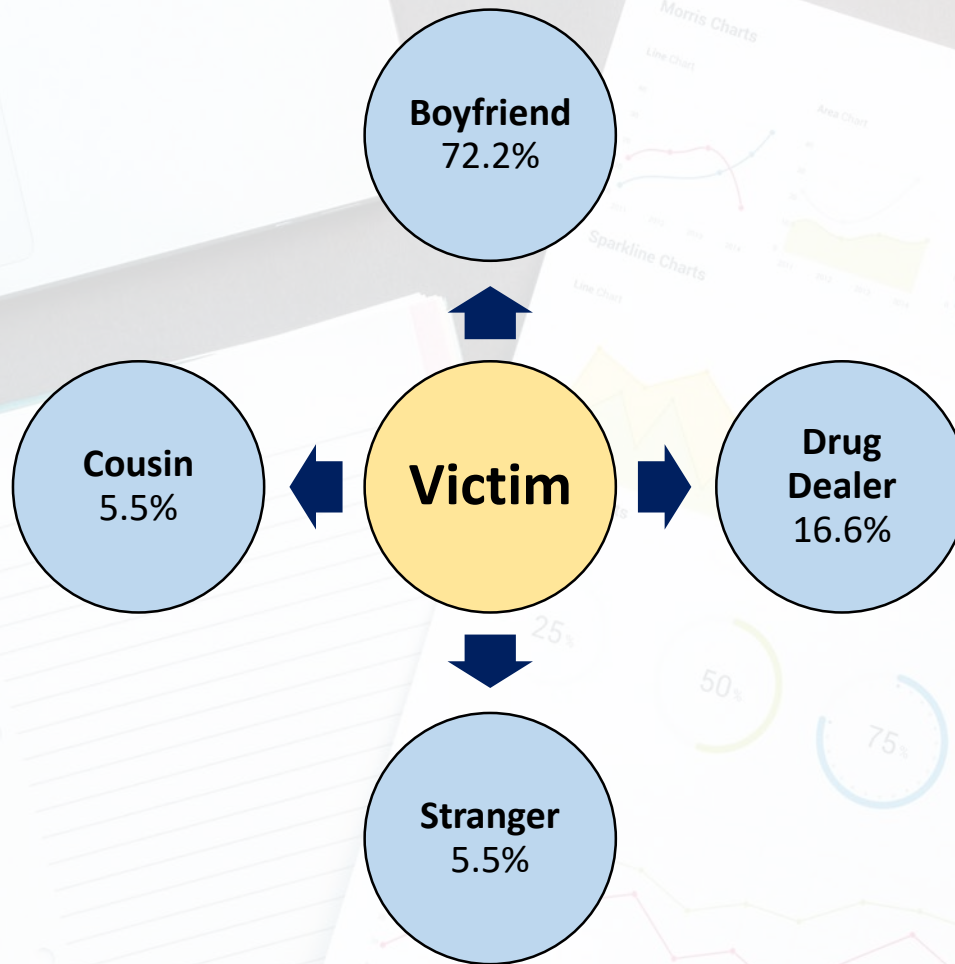




# Findings - Grooming and Sex Trafficking



# Findings - Relationship with Traffickers

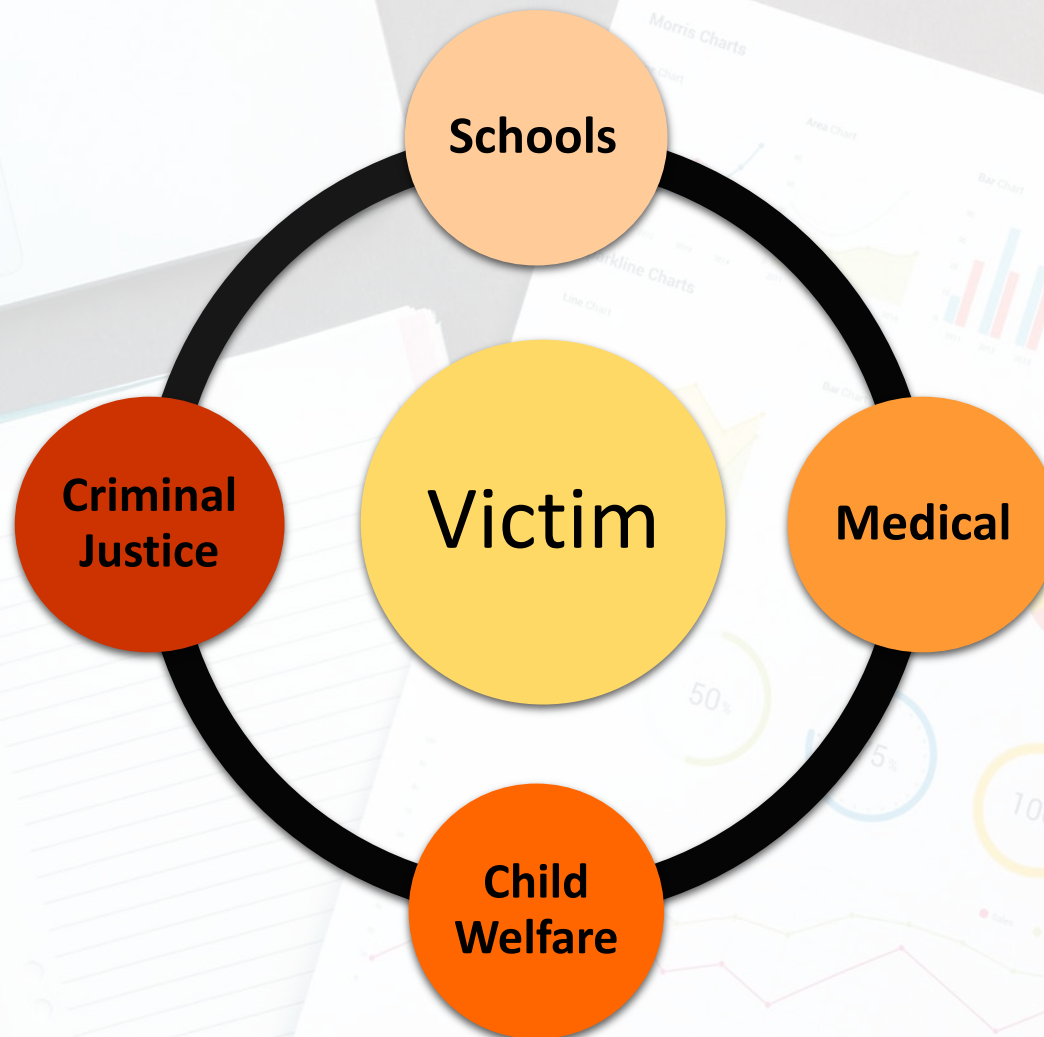


# Findings - Victims Were Sold in Multiple Venues Including:

- Street prostitution
- Strip clubs
- Bar prostitution
- House parties
- Websites
- Flop/drug houses
- Hotels
- Telephone girl
- Brothel
- Game room
- Pornography
- Hostess bars
- Webcam
- Escorts
- Car shows
- Business offices



# Findings – Systems



# Highlights

- Abused during childhood
- Lured into sex trafficking
- Intense violence while trafficked
- Challenges to exiting and healing
- Corruption
- Points of contact with victims
- Gaps in services

# Implications

- Sex trafficking is happening in Hawai'i
- Victims have disruptive childhoods
- Survivors are extremely resilient
- Law enforcement efforts not effective
- Sex trafficking in Hawai'i needs attention



# Implications

- Health care professionals failed to identify victims
- School personnel failed to identify victims
- Lack of services for victims
- Geographic and cultural factors are unique
- Most victims are Hawaiian women and girls



Poll



# Recommendations

## Potential interventions identified by survivors:

- Peer support
- Reduce stigma and shame
- Strength of family
- Training and collaboration
- Provide resources and services
- Fund early intervention
- Address risk factors
- Increase education
- Enhance laws
- Increase protection services

# Recommendations

**Recommendations from the research team include:**

- Prosecute participating police and judicial officials
- Develop statewide training
- Develop centralized data collection
- Develop statewide database
- Fund prevention and early intervention
- Fund statewide coordinator position

# Recommendations

**Recommendations from the research team include:**

- Conduct outreach
- Develop community and survivor problem-solving
- Create network to support victims
- Create residential and outpatient services
- Conduct additional research



# Exiting, Healing, and Hope

- Challenges getting out
- Formal and informal help
- Six attempts to fully exit
- Mental health challenges
- Relationship challenges
- Stigma and shame exists
- Strength and resilience are key





**Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz,  
MSW, PhD  
[dominique.roe@asu.edu](mailto:dominique.roe@asu.edu)**

# Thank you for your participation!

For assistance, please contact us:



AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program (AATTAP)  
(877) 712-6237 | [askamber@fvtc.edu](mailto:askamber@fvtc.edu) | [ncjtc.fvtc.edu/AMBER](http://ncjtc.fvtc.edu/AMBER)

*This presentation was produced with grant funding awarded under the AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program provided by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.*

*Neither the U.S. Department of Justice nor any of its components operate, control, are responsible for, or necessarily endorse this presentation (including, without limitation, its content, technical infrastructure, policies, and any services or tools provided).*

*Additionally, points of view or opinions expressed are those of the presenter(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the National Criminal Justice Training Center of Fox Valley Technical College.*