



Urban Justice Center

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Ms. Julia Ormond
[ADDRESS REDACTED]

January 16, 2007

Dear Ms. Ormond:

I am writing to thank you for your participation and your well-informed discussion in *Human Trafficking: A Global Challenge in Our Own Backyard*, hosted by Vital Voices and the Center for Global Affairs at NYU in New York City on November 30, 2006.

I am a Staff Attorney with the Sex Workers Project (SWP) at the Urban Justice Center in New York City. At the SWP, we utilize a human rights model, and work to protect the rights and safety of sex workers who by choice, circumstance, or coercion are involved in sex work. Through our Anti-Trafficking Program, we advise and represent individuals trafficked into sex work, focusing on the intersection of immigration and criminal issues that affect them. In addition, we conduct outreach to local communities, and train community-based organizations and law enforcement on legal and other issues related to the problem of trafficking in persons.

The SWP is a founding member of the New York Anti-Trafficking Network, a group of 90 organizations and individuals advocating on behalf of survivors of trafficking and providing direct services. We are also a member of the New York City Community Response to Trafficking, a local trafficking awareness project that brings together community-based organizations and criminal justice agencies.

As a Staff Attorney at the SWP, the bulk of my work consists of facilitating the burdensome requirement of cooperation with federal law enforcement by advocating for women who have been trafficked and are willing to speak with law enforcement about their cases; filing T visa applications for those who want to remain in the United States; and conducting trainings and advocacy for all first-responders based on the extensive expertise we glean from working directly with clients.

I, along with others on our staff, attended the event at NYU. We were thrilled to see how knowledgeable you are on the complexities of the root causes relating to trafficking, and the nuances of the role that coercion plays in the trafficking problem. We were also impressed that you portrayed the realities of persons trafficked into all sectors, not solely into sex work. As advocates working directly with persons who have been trafficked, we found your input highly accurate, realistic and lacking any voyeuristic language.

We also appreciated that you avoided politicizing the issue and instead focused on the unbiased realities of the people who are trafficked without trying to moralize the problem, especially concerning those coerced into sex work. In order to eliminate the root causes, it is imperative that a realistic picture is shown to the world regarding human trafficking. Unfortunately for many trafficked persons, the U.S. today is ineffectively focused only on trafficking into sex work, with no consideration of the larger issues at play, including economic forces and migration policies.

The short cut of your documentary film, *Hidden in Plain Sight*, shows that you took a comprehensive approach to trafficking and that you captured the wide variety of labor sectors that draw on trafficked labor.

We would like to help you in your work on trafficking and would be happy to help promote your film. We are often asked to recommend film, television, and print resources on trafficking in persons, but we often hesitate to do so, as we feel that much of the information produced is exploitative. We were pleased to see your film as it seemed to report direct realities from persons involved without any manipulation towards salacious images, and we are eager to see the final version.

If we can help you in any way promote awareness on the issue of human trafficking, especially focusing on ways that actually help people on the ground, we would be happy to do so.

I have enclosed fact sheets on the work that we do and information on topics surrounding trafficking in persons. Thank you again for your ongoing involvement in and commitment to this issue. Please feel free to contact me at 646-602-5626 or at spatel@urbanjustice.org. You can also obtain more information on the Sex Workers Project at www.sexworkersproject.org.

Sincerely,

Sapna Patel, Esq.
Staff Attorney
Sex Workers Project
Urban Justice Center