

This Is Our Story

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Introduction(s)

Grandma always warned: never share your underwear. Mom advised: go to law school and find yourself a good husband. My husband Joshua said: write this story. I have listened to only some of the sage advice I have received over the years.

In my former life, I was a corporate lawyer with a pathetic dating record.¹ None of my clients had been forced into prostitution, as far as I knew.² I was a tax-paying U.S. citizen with an upright upbringing, good friends, and a reputable job. I am now what the industry calls a “public interest lawyer.” Now, I know the reputation that lawyers have, and I have heard all the jokes. I have also had honest conversations with people from all walks of life about the kind of law that I now practice on behalf of some of the most marginalized and defenseless people in our communities, and it is a very different kind of practice. When I talked with my husband about writing this book, I told him that I wanted to start my part of our story on human trafficking with statistics and hard facts about statutes and international agreements, about the intersection of law enforcement, state agencies and service providers and how they fail to coalesce. My husband has convinced me, and I think rightly so, that you, as an audience, don’t really want to hear about all that.³ People are drawn in by the human dimension, he tells me, and that is what I will try to give you. I have decided to tell my story and to let my clients – and now friends – Rosa

1. Yes, I am a lawyer, therefore I footnote. This is how I was taught to write. I am pretty sure that before law school I didn’t feel the constant need to cite to wherever I first discovered information. Now, after three years in law school and years in practice to boot, I just can’t stop myself. So sue me.

2. I mean, lots of them didn’t seem to have any scruples at all, but most only visited prostitutes in Vegas, far away from their cushy K street offices and comfortable houses in Georgetown.

3. If you do, well then I smell a sequel!

and Mila tell you theirs. Our stories are connected, but each has its own distinct origin. I really don't think that I could do their stories justice, so you will hear their thoughts, to the extent possible, straight from them.

Despite all that they have been through – and you will see that it is more than anyone should ever have to deal with – Rosa and Mila want their stories heard. They want to know that they did not suffer for nothing. Our collective hope is that you will read this book, and you will learn that the trafficking and exploitation of human beings is going on all over the world, and all over the United States. You will see just how easily this same situation could happen in your own community. We hope that if you get to know Rosa and Mila, you will see that we are three women who wouldn't have otherwise met if not for the bizarre confluence of events that led us to convene in the small and wonderful town of Hiawassee Springs. Grab some popcorn and some tissues: it is going to be quite the ride.