

**Dr. Kate Transchel:** I have the great pleasure of introducing you to the most courageous woman that I have ever met and perhaps one of the most beautiful. She herself was trafficked and I'll let her tell you that story. She is not just a survivor of trafficking; she is a liberator and she has used her experience to liberate others. She is currently with shared Hope international, but she is an internationally recognized spokeswoman for people who have been trafficked and for service providers. She does trainings with law enforcement and everybody else you can think of. She's currently a student finishing her degree in criminal justice at Loyola University in Chicago and it is my pleasure to introduce her to you, come on up Shamir. Shamir McKenzie.

**Shamere McKenzie:** Good evening everyone. Everyone have dinner? Yes, yes, you have dinner? Okay, no? Who did have dinner? I'll share.

I just want to thank all the organizations: Soroptomist, STOP, and you guys just for being here tonight and I am very excited about tonight. I came here last year and with my flight and everything it was... kind of threw me off a little bit. So last year, I was kind of nervous, but I guess you thought I did well you invite me back. So I just want to thank Kate. Kate has been putting up with me from last year. And as she'll tell you sometimes it really hard to get in touch with me. Sometimes I take forever to respond to e-mails. That's the life of a busy person. I also want to recognize my friends Tatiana Faults. She is here today if you guys are in her session before. I had to slip out because Celeste took me to a Jamaican restaurant ya'll, oh. So I got to say thank you to Celeste. And I'm Jamaican.

And so I just got to go right in the housekeeping rules little. Rule number one, I'm Jamaican, so certain words I say will sound different. Okay, do not make fun of me. If you are recording, do not make a YouTube video about it. I will find it. Rule number two, I like to walk around.... I'm wearing heels tonight, they're not so high tonight, but if I should fall, don't take a picture and put it on Facebook, twitter, or Instagram, okay? That's another rule. And I want to shout out my team right here, everyone in this section just wave. My team right here, this is my team. That's the Shamere and in this team we share a lot like lotion. So before I came on, everyone had to wear some Shamere lotion. So if anyone else would like some lotion, you would like some lotion sir. Yes, you could have some lotion, you are now part of the team, welcome. You know for different organizations people do handshake, people do different things, for the Shamere team, you have to wear some lotion. So anyone else? And this is all Emily... Allison's, see she is new to the team, I.... This is all Allison's idea so anyone else would like to join, you know, we're one big happy family as we all should be this is life right. So tonight, I am here to talk about the issue of human Trafficking right? Anybody been here all week, learn some stuff. Before I start, who was here last year? ahh... you guys are going to hear some repeat stuff. Who is new? New team, okay! People from last year, we buddies, we go way back right, right? We go way back. So we're going to talk about the issue of human trafficking and human trafficking has a lot of spokes to it, right? We have labor trafficking, sex trafficking, domestic servitude, but tonight I am going to talk about the issue of sex trafficking cause that's what I know, right? I'm sure they wouldn't invite a doctor to talk about farming... just doesn't go. We're gunna talk about sex trafficking, but before we get into that, I want to let you all to know that... Kate said I'm a student, I'm with an organization, but forget about all which heard about me and I just want you to see me as an individual, just as a person, just like you, I have 2 eyes, I have a nose, I have a mouth, I have a heart, I believe just like you, I'm no different. So forget everything you've heard about me, forget about everything you heard and just look at me as an individual, as a human being cause of one thing we can all identify within this room is that were all human beings and when we talk about this issue of human trafficking we're talking about human beings.

Okay. So culture, everyone familiar with that word culture. So you know I said I'm Jamaican right and Celest took me to a Jamaican restaurant. So I'm hyped right now, I had the Jerk Chicken and the curry gold, I had the sampler so I am.... So if I am taking any pictures this is your photo-op. no? Okay... There we go. Okay, you only get one 'cause I'm about to release. Okay, okay alright, alright, alright, alright... So like I said, I'm Jamaican. That's my culture. What are some cultures that I hear?

**Audience member:** Latino

**Shamere McKenzie:** Latino. "Hola Papi. Como estas? Muy bien. Hola." Any other cultures?

**Audience member:** African-American

**Shamere McKenzie:** African-American. "What's up? What's up? Alright." Any other cultures

**Audience Member:** Russian

**Shamere McKenzie:** You're Russian. [Inaudible] Am I saying it right? I know, she thought me that and I could never get it right. Okay, any other cultures?

**Audience Member:** Puerto Rican

**Shamere McKenzie:** Puerto Rican. "Boricua, Morena, dominicana..." Any other cultures.

**Audience Member:** Greek.

**Shamere McKenzie:** Greek. I don't know any Greek. Teach me something.... Never on Sunday... well, hmm okay.... Well she's Greek. Anyone else?

**Audience Member:** Fiji.

**Shamere McKenzie:** Fiji. Should hope I'll have a house in Fiji. Anyone else?

**Audience Member:** Irish

**Shamere McKenzie:** You're Irish? St. Patty's Day. I learned something very interesting of St. Patrick's Day in class last week. I always thought St. Patrick's Day was about one big celebration and everyone would come together to drink, but what I learned was that St. Patrick's Day was connected to slavery. "What! St. Patrick's Day is connected to slavery? That's my issue. I should have known that, right." Okay, what I ask about culture and we have several different cultures in the room. What are some things that are specific to culture? I gave you one hint already, for me its food right. What is something else? Art, music, religion, lingo, symbols right? So these are some ways in which we can identify culture when I say Jerk Chicken it's like "ohh..." If I comment and talk to you, "well from where I come... [Inaudible]." They are gonna be like "oh, I guess she is Jamaican." And so when we talk about culture there's there's some indicators for specific cultures that if you're familiar with that culture, you can identify with that culture right? Well when we talk about sex trafficking, it's a culture soldier and It's a culture that exists right here in the United States right and for many of us we're like "Oh my gosh! This is happening in America and I don't know about it." Well that's because it's a culture, and if you're not part of that culture you won't be able to identify, right? So don't feel bad like, "Oh my gosh, I just learned about this week and it's been happening for years and I haven't done anything." It's okay because it's this subculture that exists within our American culture right? So it's okay, but now that you know after tonight, right. So this culture exists and a part of this culture, right, there's a language. There are rules and there's a code of conduct, right, and their consequences for disobedience, but you see our American culture, this overall culture, that the sex trafficking culture is a part of kinda supports the sex trafficking culture. Do you believe that? "Our American culture supports the sex trafficking culture." Some people said yes. Who says no? Yes? Oh my goodness.... Security. Yes sir

**Audience member:** Agreeing with you [inaudible].

**Shamere McKenzie:** You're agreeing. So you are agree that our American culture supports the sex trafficking culture. He's on to something... he he is on the right path. Our culture, and for those who disagree I'm going to prove it to you right now. When you hear the term **bachelor party**, what comes to mind?

**Audience:** Strippers. Drinking. Strippers and drinking.

**Shamere McKenzie:** Let me ask it again. Rewind... when you hear the term **bachelor party**, what comes to mind?

**Audience:** Strippers. Single men.

**Shamere McKenzie:** That's number 2. When I hear the term **bachelor party**, what comes to mind?

**Audience:** Single men. Las Vegas. Strippers.

**Shamere McKenzie:** Okay okay thank you thank you thank you. Collectively, I asked that question 3 times, right. When you hear the term **bachelor party**, what comes to mind? The first two times, collectively, everyone said strippers. Now I didn't plant people in the room "whenever I ask this question, say this." Collectively, I heard strippers, right. And I said maybe "I'm speaking in Jamaican, they don't really understand. Let me speak in English." And I asked a second time and people said strippers, collectively again and when I asked the third time that's when people started saying "wait, that's probably not the answer she's looking for." How come the first time nobody said marriage? Bride, groom. Bachelor's party. Hello! What's the whole purpose of the bachelor's party? Someone is getting married. "I do," like, you know, the alter, whited dress. You know, how come no one ever says on my first time asking the question, and I ask this question whenever I give these talks just to show us all how our American Culture supports this sex trafficking culture. Another way our culture supports the sex trafficking culture is because we glamorize "Pimping," right? "Pimp My Ride." when I say "pimp my ride" what does that mean. Fancy car. Making your car look good. So we have TV shows like "Pimp My Ride", "Pimp My Cellphone", and "Pimp My House." Right? The National Geographic Channel had "Pimp My Fish Tank." Okay, so we glamorize the word pimp to make it seem like it's something good, when really a pimp is someone who abuses, rapes; he doesn't even see you as a human being, but that is the individual who we are glamorizing. This is our culture people and I just proved it, right? Another way, anybody heard of Hooters? I think Hooters is going to sue me because I keep on using this example, but Mr. Hooters Jesus is my defense. Hooters, for the life of me, if your chicken is that good.... I can't remember when was the last time I ate at Hooters. It's been a long time, but if your chicken is that good, why is it that your girls have to wear short shorts or have big boobs? Somebody said something over here? Cause that's the meeting of hooters? So sex sells right? That's basically what you're saying, you're not wrong and guess who are the buyers? We are the buyers, right. I ain't got to trafficking yet. I gotta lead you there, right? I gotta take you there, right. But sex sells and we are the buyers, right.

So we have.... So another example, and Tatiana don't answer this question. What's the first Hip-Hop song to perform at the Oscars? And if you were here last year, don't answer the question. You're out of it. What's the first Hip-Hop song to perform at the Oscars? "It's Hard Out Here for a Pimp." First Hip-Hop song to perform at the Oscars, now my phone was giving trouble and normally I have it in my SD card and I would play it for you, but if you listen to the lyrics to that song, it describes the life of Human Trafficking, sex trafficking. "Take her out the hood, Keep her looking good. Wait I got a black girl, and a snow bunny too. You pay the right price and they'll both do you." Oscar! The highest level of award you can receive. Oscar! That was the first hip-hop song to perform at the Oscar and guess what nobody called up Mr. Oscar and said "Hey, that's not acceptable, we're not gunna accept that as a people, as Americans. We're not going to accept that." Nobody called him up. It's okay, in fact people were dancing. "You know it's hard out here for a pimp." Isn't it hard out here for single moms? Isn't it hard out here for college students, right? I mean, when we listen to our music, last summer what was the number one song on the billboard charts? "Blurred Lines," nice beat right. Nice song right? When you blur something out what are you doing? You're hiding something there, hidden message right there. What are you blurring out there, sir. And don't get me wrong, I was in my car and I was like, "Blurred lines..." right. Until I heard the word pimp and that's when my ears perked up. It was like "Pimp in this song and I'm jamming to it. No!" Right? So I went home and I started to do some research and I went online and I found this organization that looks at these songs that are out there and how they have an impact on people. And this organization broke down this song to say, the same lines that are in blurred lines, right, "I know you want it," whatever the other line is, is the same term... "Oh you're a good girl" just came back. "I know you want it." Right? Some of the lines, you guys know the song. ... Are the same terms a rapist use on the victim. Right? But blurred lines is the number 1 song on the billboard charts.

And this is how it seeps into our culture, right, before it even gets to this bigger picture of sex trafficking, right? We accept it in that way, "Oh it's just music." Right? You're glamorizing rape, isn't that what you're doing? And people argue with me for this song, you know, like, "Oh no Shamere its just music. He is just making music.... Blah blah blah okay." Right? But are we glamorizing rape. Yes ma'am?

**Audience Member:** [inaudible]

**Shamere McKenzie:** No, can't speak to that, don't know nothing about it, but I'm going to look that up. Can you write it down for me? Okay.

So we have this music, we have this thing that strip clubs are okay, right. Bachelor parties, everyone wants to go to a strip club, you guys said it, right? We have restaurants such as Hooters and let's not talk about some of the commercials that we see on TV, right? Popular one, everyone knows Herbal Essence commercial right? Everyone knows that one right? If you are selling shampoo that's supposed to be for your hair, why all the extra stuff? Why does it have to be sexual? It's shampoo for god sakes, right? So we have it in such a way that this tel-lie-vision gives it to us, right? This newspaper, our media and the media does good things.... Tel-lie-vision does good things too, right, but they push that on us and we receive it. So by the time we gets trafficking, we are desensitized to trafficking. It's happening around us and we're like, "That's normal." Right? And then we call this thing human trafficking. When you first heard human trafficking, what did you think about? Who learned about this their first time this week? Ma'am when you heard human trafficking, what came to mind?

**Audience Member:** [inaudible]

**Shamere McKenzie:** Okay, that's what came to mind? Anyone else? You want to share their first time you heard about human trafficking? Did you think about sex trafficking or what you learned today? Sir?

**Audience Member:** [inaudible]

**Shamere McKenzie:** That's the answer I was looking for. Every time I ask people, "When you heard human trafficking, what came to mind?" That's exactly what they say, right? Very few people give the answer sex trafficking. She's paying attention in class, teacher, professor if she is in your class extra credit, right? So when we hear human trafficking we think movement and for the life of me, I don't know why they don't call it slavery because that's exactly what it is. Slavery and one year I was in DC... I don't know if you were there with me Tatiana cause I broke down; this woman was walking past and she's like "Well I don't know why they call it modern-day slavery because it's just human trafficking. Why do they have to call it slavery?" "Why do they have to call it slavery" and that was my first... that was in my first, when I first started speaking so sometimes I wasn't so bold cause I still had that shame and fear and all that stuff inside. I couldn't rise me up to say, "Excuse me. Let me tell you why it's called slavery." Right? A lot of people debate that, no, it's not slavery." because slavery is something in the American culture we really don't talk about because it is uncomfortable. That's that ugly truth that we keep over there. In fact Shamere, it was abolished." Right? "Why are we talking about something that was abolished? It's illegal in America on the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment." Any historians? You guys know this right? But it is slavery, right? And it is very parallel to chattel slavery, right? You are given a new name, right? You are stripped of your identity and you are given a new name. Right? And they bought some of the slaves off Africa and they took on the name of their plantation owner, right? The pimp no longer called me "Shamere McKenzie," I'm now called Barbie, right? Chattel slavery, you work for long hours, right? Little pay no money, right? Sex trafficking... long hours, no pay. We will talk about the no pay. You're like, "what? These girls charge. They make money." We'll talk about it in a second. Right? So you guys... I don't have to go through the list, right? You guys are following the parallel, right? Cause ya'll payed attention in history class unlike me. Alright, good. I got kicked out of history class in high school. So we see the parallel of why it's called slavery and when you think about human trafficking, I want you to think that it is slavery. It is slavery when someone else is being exploited... start of capitalism, I just learned that. It felt good saying that, right historian? Right? When you use slavery, exploit someone else, for someone else's profit. Exploitation, right? So when we hear sex workers, really is it work? Its exploitation and that's how language is

important. When we define things and where when we see things... language is important. So instead of calling it human trafficking, and I still want to find out who came up with this name, right; we should call it slavery. Because when I walk down the street and wear a shirt that says human trafficking, the first thing that they say to me in the airport is "Ma'am, what, what is human trafficking?" and I wear my shirts and STOP made some great shirts this year and I will be wearing it because I like people to ask me that question, but people shouldn't have to ask me that question if we called it the right name, slavery. So I saw someone wearing the "Slavery Sucks Shirt. Yes, that's my favorite shirt I like to wear 'cause it says exactly what I want to say. "Slavery Sucks." And when I wear that shirt, the conversation I get, "Yes! I should take that to my boss." Like on my way here in the airport. I bought a pizza. The guy called the other lady from the back, I'm like, "Oh lord what did I do this time." He's like, "You see that shirt? We should get those and wear it for the boss." I said "Don't get me into any trouble." Right, but people could understand when we talk it, when we call it exactly what it is. Slavery, right? Now this sub culture that I am talking about and I now that everybody want to hear this story what happened to me, I'm getting there, but I can't get into the story unless I set it up. So when I get into the story, you can understand what I am talking about cause remember, it's culture.

This sex trafficking culture you really don't know about it. So I gotta set it up so when I start using terms and words you understand right? So part of the sex trafficking culture, there is a language. Member that's one of the things in culture right? There's a language. Pimp, everyone knows pimp, right? In the legal courts we call them traffickers. That's the legal terms for them. Pimps, why we call them traffickers? They are pimps, right? I remember sitting down when the FBI came and got me and said, "So your trafficker...." "Traffic-who?" "So your pimp." "Now I know what you are talking about." Right, so we have that term, pimp- trafficker used interchangeably. Buyer, john, trick are three other words that are used interchangeably, but for the life of me, I don't know why they call them John. John is the name of a good person for god sakes. Any Johns here? He is a good guy, right? He's a good guy, right? I had breakfast with a former law enforcement guy this morning named John and he was doing great work and he works on this issue. That's John, right? But it's a word that, okay, it's there, gotta use it. John, buyer, trick, right? Guys that purchase sex, right? Lot-Lizard, heard of that term? Lot-Lizard is a girl that works the truck stops, right? So tonight I am wearing black and white, and if I were to go up to a truck and be exploited by that truck driver, right? He will go on the radio and say "Lot-Lizard, black and white." So the other truck drivers know that there is a girl working the truck stop wearing black and white. Lot-Lizard. Right? Wife-in-law. Wife-in-law is a term used to describe all the girls in the same stable. Wife-in-laws. So if you have one pimp and the pimp has 6 girls; all the girls refer to each other as wife-in-law. Term that's not used in our culture, mother-in-law, father-in-law, and sister-in-law; never heard wife-in-law, right? Wife-in-law, pimp, what are some other nice terms? Bottom-girl or let me give it to you what the real thing is, I'm not sugarcoating anything tonight. Bottom-Bitch. Lord forgive me. Bottom-Bitch is the pimp's most trusted girl. Right? She has been with the pimp the longest, she's normally the one who makes the most money. She's normally the one that acts in the absence of the pimp. And when I mean act in the absence of the pimp, she'll book the hotel room if the pimp happens to be locked up in jail. She collects the money in the absence of the pimp. She ensures that the other girls know the rules, right? So that's the bottom girl, right? So we have... and those are like the most common terms, so when I share my story you'll probably hear me say wife-in-law, bottom-girl, or, or those type of terms so you guys can, can identify. And especially that term wife-in-law is a term that we should really keep cause if you happen to be in your community and let's say you go to the grocery store and you hear someone on the phone like " My Wife-in-law is not here or got lost last night." Red flag. Right? You should keep that term because those are some indicators. They can be some indicators for you.

Some of the rules, right, these rules make no sense. Don't look a pimp in the eye, it's disrespectful. Right, and that's when you are talking about the pimp that you are under his control. You don't look him in the eye, right? If you are talking about another pimp, you don't look at that pimp in the eye either because then you are out-of-pocket. Which is another language, another term because then you're out-of-pocket means you're not in compliance with your pimp. Right, you step, you're out of bounds, you step right outside the rules and regulations of the pimp. Out-of-pocket and so if you look another pimp in the eye while you are on the street or working someplace else, you're out-of-pocket. That means you have to go with this pimp. It's automatic, like, like, it's the rule. Pimps know this and they'll say, "Well you're coming with me because your bitch looked me in the eye." Don't walk on the side walk with a pimp. Have you

ever heard the term “Hoes up...” no, see I had to switch that word around, sorry. “Pimps up, hoes down.” Right? It has several different meanings to that. The side walk is a little higher than the street. So the hoes have to walk on the street. And the pimps because they are the big bad pimps walk on the sidewalk, right? It also goes to show the hierarchy like the pimp is the big man; he’s over you and you’re down there. That’s the other type of term for... one of the rules; out-of-pocket or don’t walk on the side walk. You don’t hand your pimp money in public, that’s obvious, right. Anyone watching, especially you student who are going to be the eyes and ears of the community to report to law enforcement, right. You can identify that, “Why is she giving him that money in public? That doesn’t sound right?” Right? And there are a bunch of other rules, but those are some of your basics and those rules can get you into a lot of trouble with your pimp, right? And for different pimps, those are some of the rules that, that I can say that’s common among pimps, but you have different pimps that set their own pimps, right? That girls must like, like for my pimp, we couldn’t wear our underwear hanging off our butts. Like sometimes you go to the strip club and you see girls with their underwear down here. Like for us, it had to be on our hips. We couldn’t wear our hair curly, it had to be straight. We couldn’t wear fingernails, it had to be French cause it’s more classier. Classier, really.

So those are some of the words. So for me, I’d hear about trafficking and I was a college student, right? Like many of you here, right. I was in college, third year and I was on a full athletic scholarship. Injured my hamstring, right, was in jeopardy of losing my scholarship, then I met prince charming simply by crossing the street. So when we hear about when these girls get in, there are different way these girls are recruited by pimps, right? I was simply crossing the street, and of course kidnapping happens and of course drugs play a factor, but pimps have different ways in which they recruit. And I was recruited by crossing the street. And I saw a car and this car looked like a friend of mine’s car and I’m looking at the car and the car stops. And this guy get out and he introduces himself, “Good afternoon, young lady. How are you doing? I’m such and such... and you are?” He is polite and he got off the car. He did not roll down the window, my type of guy, right. You know these guys know a days they are like “Yo... Psss.” “Who are you talking to?” Right? So when he got off his car, extending his arm introduce himself, right? My type of guy, “I am Shamere and you are?” Right? And that’s how we begin, we exchange numbers. We began talking. He didn’t come and say, “I’m the big bad pimp, you gonna work 12 hours a day for me. I’m a beat you to death.” Pimps don’t do that, right? They are very smooth in their recruitment. Right? They know how to approach you, right? And for me over the period of time, we had great conversations. Didn’t know he was a pimp for weeks, right. We talked about subjects that I liked to talk about. Politics, “Who was running for President, what? I can’t stand this one. He’s not doing what he is supposed to do.” Great, love that type of conversation. Single parents in the community. I love having those type of conversations, that’s the conversation we’re having. “Why are there high rates of African American males incarcerated?” That’s an issue I care about too. Those were the type of conversations we had. Intellectual conversations I would call them. So there was no red flag to me that this guy was a pimp and for all I knew at the time, a pimp was what I saw in music videos. Cause the tel-lie-vision taught me what the definition of a pimp was. So that was my lie. So when I said to him, you know, after having this conversation, you develop a friendship like when you meet someone and talk to them every day, sorta sharing things. So I started sharing things; that I had injured my hamstring and I was in jeopardy of losing my scholarship. “Oh no, no, no, don’t worry about that. I’ll pay for school.” He is polite, he’s a gentleman, we have intellectual conversations, and he want to pay for school. Jackpot! Yes, I got me a good one. Ooh, yeah.” Never knew that by saying yes...’cause I also said “Wanna pay for school?” he said, “Don’t worry. All you have to do is just dance.” And for many of us in college, when the [inaudible] office contacts us and says “Your bill is \$10,680.” “How am I going to pay this bill?” My parents don’t have that money, they already gave me all they had to pay my \$43,000 tuition. “Where am I going to get this from? Oh you know what? Stripping.

Stripping is okay. I can dance my way through college. I thought so too. Strip clubs are legal for Christ sakes. I’m not doing anything illegal. I could dance my way through college.” So when he made that offer that I could dance my way through college, I said yes. Nothing wrong with dancing. A lot of girls dance their way through college. And all I needed at that time after going through financial aid and [inaudible], all I need was \$3000, please, right? He said, “Okay”, I had an off-campus apartment. So “don’t worry you don’t need an off campus apartment cause you gone have to pay rent. I have a basement you could live in.” Move me into his basement apartment, right. Okay, no problem. Jackpot for real. Until that very first

day he put me to work. Put me in a strip club and for the first 2 hours I made \$300. I started doing the math, "\$300. 2 hours. So if I work x amount of hours. 4 hours. That's \$600." So I started doing the math and I'll get to 3000 like that. So he like, "We're coming out of the strip club and were going someplace else." I'm like, "Alright, Maybe we're going to another club." Cause at that club it's what you call a "Titty-bar." And a Titty-bar is where, strip club, where guys go in and they are not allowed to touch the girls at all. So the girls just walk around and shimmy and they shimmy and the guys give them money. So I'm like "Psh... that's all I got to do is shimmy and shimmy and shimmy and collect dollar bills and \$300 in 2 hours. Good deal to me." Right? So when he took me out of the strip club he brought me to this house and I'm like, "Hmm this really doesn't look like a strip club, but okay." In the car he said, "Its 10 dollars for a wall dance," And everyone asks that question "What's a wall dance?" The guy just basically stands by the wall and the girl rub up on the guy. That's basically it. And a lap dance, everyone knows a lap dance right?" And so he's like "It's \$10 for a wall dance and \$20 for a lap dance." So I'm going around and this is a three story house; empty house, no furniture, house full of men and I'm like "You wanna dance? Do you want to dance?" And nobody wants to dance and I'm just going around like "Hey, wanna dance? Wanna dance? Hey, you wanna dance." Nobody wants to dance, right. Until this one guy had the nerve to ask me how much it was for a blowjob. See at that time I didn't know Jesus, so the words coming out of my mouth were not "Halleluiah, thank you Jesus." It was some of those other words. So I started cussing this guy out, like cussing this guy out. So prince charming over here overheard the conversation and said, "Come here." "Did you hear what that guy asked me?" "Yeah. You gone you go over there and do whatever that guy said to do and by the way it's \$50." "Who you think you are?" I start cursing him out. The pimp. "I ain't doing that. That is not what we signed up for and I don't want to do that." "Oh yes you are." "Then I'm leaving." I took one step. Hands around the neck. (Oh, I'm sorry engineer, I'm sorry.) I took one step, right? And his hands around my neck, brought me back to my position. "You really think you can get out of here, alive." "Yes, watch me." Brought me back to my position, started choking me up. "You can never leave me and if you leave me, I will kill you. You ain't gunna make it out of this house alive." Alright, the panic kicked in. You know at times we tell to ourselves, "If I'm in this situation I'ma do this, and that and that..." and when we are in that situation that is not what we do. Because history would tell you they dropped off the bad slaves in Jamaica, right. So I'm one of them that was fighting everybody like, "It's in my blood through slavery. What boom... what boom..." right? But for this time, I was a fighter cause when I came from Jamaica at 6 years old, the kids used to make fun of me and I used to run home and tell my mom, "They make fun of my accent." And she'll tell me, "Beat them up and they'll stop." Right? She says, "Make an example out of one and they will stop." Right? I was a fighter. Right, but at this time there was a man threatening my life and that fight froze cause he threatened me. So I'm there and I'm not trying to swing at him. I'm not trying to do all this crazy stuff, right? I froze and I'm like, "What am I going to do?" I went back to this guy. Imagine a girl just cursed you out and now she is coming back for help. "I don't want to hear anything you say." After pleading with the guy, I said, "Please, please, let's do some dancing so I can get this money. My life is on the line." And when I said my life is on the line. That is when the guy was like "Alright." Cause I guess he knew the situation. I don't know. Right?

That night I went home, I said "Well, I'm home now. Those big bad bodyguard looking guys aren't at the door." Cause when I walked into the house, there was these big bodybuilder looking guys and when I thought I could run and he said "You won't make it out of here alive" I remembered those guys, right? So now I'm home like, "Me and you baby. Just pots, and pans, and knives. Nobody bodybuilder looking guy. I could take you on, what's up?" Right? So I was going in my head... so I went into his room and I was like, "You know, talked about dancing stuff and I was cool with that, but this prostitution stuff I don't want to do that and so I'm just gunna leave." And he got up off the bed very calmly and he said, "Bitch you think you can leave me?" "Dude you must not have heard what I said, I said that I don't want to do all this extra stuff so I am going to leave. We talked about this in the club, we talked about it here. There's no more conversation, I'm done." Right? And again, see I'm hard headed, my mother will tell you that. I don't I don't learn, I stepped away and again he began choking me and brought me to my position and again I tried to step away. This time he punched me in the face. I said, "Oh no you didn't. You punched who? It's on." So I punch back, rule number 1: don't hit a pimp. That's Shamere rule, don't hit back cause when I decided to hit back, that's when he brought down the house. He started... if you, you look at me up close and personal in this eye, if I look this way you will see a dark spot. That's how hard he choked me; I popped a blood vessel in my eye. A big red thing and I didn't know what it was until I went to a doctor's visit and he said "What's this brown spot." "I don't know." And the doctor explained that's what it could be.

Right? He had on Timberland boots and he just started kicking the life out of me. I was unconscious and I lost all control of my bodily functions. When I woke up, I found myself laying in a puddle of urine and I'm like, "Where am I? How did I get here? What's going on?" Monster that just beat the crap out of me, came running over. "I'm so sorry. I don't know what happened to me. I lost it. I'm sorry. Please forgive me." Right? So prince charming that I met with the... come out the car and extend his hand, turned into a monster. Beat the crap out of me and the turned back into prince charming, apologizing, that he won't do it again. And guess what, I believed him, right?

Because even though I was 21 years old, I was still naïve cause the human brain doesn't fully develop until you are like 24-25, right? Insurance companies knew this a long time ago. That's why they don't want you renting their cars if you're under 25. They know that if you get behind the wheel, you... your brain is not fully developed to make that rational decision when you are behind the wheel. So they said, "Under 25, no. and if you do get your license, we gone jack up the prices cause we could make money cause your brain ain't fully developed." I mean it's a part of growing up, but it's capitalism, people find all different ways to make money. Right? And so I believed this guy, and people would say, "You're 21, you're old enough. You should know better and why don't you just leave." But this torture, and when I say "torture" its torture in every sense of the word torture, okay? This enslavement, its slavery in every sense of the word slavery. Happened for 18 months. 18 months of wanting to leave and not leaving, can't leaving, don't know how to leave. 18 months of severe beatings, 18 months of rape, 18 months of sodomy, 18 months of near death experiences. That's why I got to praise God cause how else am I here? Those were the conditions. So when you say slavery, right and we think about the conditions that were taking place during historical slavery, they are the same in 21<sup>st</sup> century slavery. You guys, you guys are with me? You guys are with me? Cause sometimes I get into this thing and I kinda lose them, right? But its slavery. And I don't need to go through the, the experiences like some people want to hear. "And what else happened. What else happened?" I don't need to go through that of different, different experiences. Just know it was 18 months of slavery, you're with me? During those 18 months, I tried to come up with ways of trying to get out. The first time I tried running away, the punishment was being sodomized and after he sodomized me, he laughed at me and sent me on the street. So running away was really not something thought about for like about 6 months after that experience. Right, he would make me cook his breakfast after we came off the track. Track, that's another term. Track is the place where the girls work. Also called a hoe-stroll, the blade. Track, where the girls work. Right, so after I came off the track... see why I told you I had to set it up that way. Tell you about the language. These words come out. After I came off the track, he would have me make him breakfast and I would think, "I should put rat poisoning, steel wool, bleach." Put something to kill him, but then I realized I was still smart. Cause even though I thought I was dumb for getting into this situation, I realized I was smart enough to think, "Well I can't kill him with his food because if he doesn't die and the doctor said, "You're here because of something in your food." He's gonna know it was me and I'm gone die, out the window. That's not an option.

Okay, it happened again where after months I developed the courage to run away again, but I had the cellphone that he gave me. You heard what I said, cellphone, I had a cellphone ya'll. I could have called my momma. Could I? I could have called the police. Could I? Because what we don't understand about slavery is this; we could understand when someone is in physical bondage. We could understand when we see chains and handcuffs and someone is tied in and locked into a place, but what we can't understand is psychological control. Another form of slavery. That's what kept some slave intact during historical slavery and when someone could have that much control over you, where they give you an item that you could, you can use for your own escape and you don't? You should understand the type of control this man has. You should understand why it's called slavery. So it's not just physical control, it's psychological control. Having a phone, I can dial 911 on this phone, come and get me, and I do not because I'm scared for my life and the life of my family. So, running away? This time I ran away, he called me. I said I'm not coming back. And each time I run away, I would lock myself up in a hotel room. I'll make sure I had enough money, and lock myself in a hotel room and I would not leave. Because I was so fearful that if I walked through the door, he would be right at the door. That's how fearful I was of this man. So he would always say, "You could come back. Come back, what happened last time won't happen. "You could come back, I promise." Prince Charming kicks in. And guess what, y'all? I went right back. And when I went back, he didn't do anything. He didn't punish me. In fact, okay, he kept his word. And that is what pimps do. They build up your trust. During that recruitment process, they make you think they



are so great. When you're in that life, they will beat you down to death and build you right back up. Okay? And that's what's taking place, and I came back. And I said, "Oh, this is still not working. I want to leave. I am not comfortable. I want to go."

And I met some gangsters, yeah! Jamaican gangsters, yeah! We know how to get stuff done! I met these guys, and these guys, I told them, "Man, I'm trying to get away from this pimp. I'm at this hotel." Guys came over. Guys sent his hitman. The hitman comes, he gives me a 9mm, put in the clip he said, "All you gotta do is cover me. Bring this back, just hold it, cover me. We're gonna rob him and kill him." Yes! I got a gun, I got another guy, that guy got a gun! What you gonna do now, player? Who's in charge now? Excited in the hotel room. All I gotta do is what, cover you, you gonna do the job? Good, let's go get him. Now by this time, this started out in New York, but pimps travel. They go where the money is. This time, we're living in a gated community in Florida. So you think pimps only are in urban neighborhoods. No, we're living in a very nice gated community in Florida. I have the password to get in, of course. So the hitman is in the car, and he's like, "Yeah, man. They sent me from Jamaica, sent for me from Jamaica just to do things like this." I'm like, "Yes! When should we go and do this?" Everything that this pimp did to me, I'm playing in my head. I remember this beating and that beating and that beating and that beating, payback! I got to the gate, and my conscience kicked in. "Um...I'm sorry, Mr. Hitman but, um..." "I can't do this." "What do you mean you can't do this?" "Uh, I'm sorry but I can't do this. I can't kill nobody. I can't be the cause of someone else dying." So even though this guy was so evil to me, and I had the courage before to get the courage to actually go to the place, I couldn't carry out the mission. Because what if he doesn't die? Oh, crap. And my pimp played the role as if he is the baddest guy in the world. So I'm thinking, suppose he gets the gun from this guy and then he tries to kill me. So I'm play it in my head and I was like, "I can't do this." As a result, Mr. Hitman raped me at gunpoint. I said, "Alright, gangsters, ain't gonna work!" "That's not gonna work." I said, "Aha!"

I was in this strip club in Miami. My quota, I should've covered all these terms with y'all. Quota is the set amount of money that a girl has to make each day or night or location. So quota, he'll put you in a club and he was like, "Bring \$500 out the club." So they're not gonna say what your quota is but they'll tell you what the money is out for that club. And at that time, my quota for this club was \$1,500. And I could talk a guy out of \$200 'cause that's the clientele that came in this club. The guys that came to this club paid \$65,000 a year to rent one room in this club, that when they come to the club, they could only be in there for an hour. That's the type of guys, guys with money were coming to this club. And I'm not glamorizing the amount of money I made, I say this to tell you, to show you the operation, okay? My quota was \$1,500. I said, "Whoa! I'ma stop makin' money. "'Cause if I stop makin' money, he's not gonna want me "no more 'cause I'm not makin' no money!" Good idea, right? No? So I went from making \$1,500 a night in that club to bringing home \$200. When I brought home \$200, he's like, "What is this?" "\$200? Out of this club? Not happening." And he would come in the club, he knows what's happening in the club. He would come in the club and see the amount of guys, the type of guys, the cars that are pulling up to the club. So you could tell that's guys with money that's coming up in here. "What is this?" "Man, I don't know, nobody wants to talk to me." Went from bringing home \$200 to \$0, jackpot, I'm out! He's like, "Really? No money? You're in this club from 6 o'clock, pm, to 4am, and you bring home \$0?" He's like, "Barbie, you talk a man out of \$200. What's happening?" "I don't know, nobody wanna talk to me. Nobody wants nothing, I don't know." He says, "Alright," he took me out of the club, puts me on South Beach. That's better! Because you see, strip club provides the customers. So he said there's nothing wrong with strip clubs. They are supporting sex trafficking 'cause they are providing the platform where pimps could put the girls in, and where guys could come in. So it's legal. You can't have sex in our facility. But when the man is sweeping up every night, he's seeing all the condoms and the condom wrappers. Management ain't saying nothing. In fact, they'll put a sign, "No sexual activities allowed." They don't care, they're making money. Because when you go into the champagne room, you have to pay the club a fee to get in the champagne room. And that money doesn't go to the girl. You pay the club that fee, and then that girl has to negotiate her own fees with the customer. Profiting off of it. So club owners really don't care. They're making their money. So he put us on South Beach, and I'm like okay. When he puts you on South Beach, he puts you out there from morning. You're not coming home until you make your quota. He doesn't put you out there and say, "Here's \$20 "for breakfast and lunch, and if you don't make "enough money, here's some more money for dinner." He puts you out there with \$0 because eating food, you have to ask permission to eat. So the other girl and I that were there, we would make friends, South Beach everybody hanging out, we

would go and make friends with people hanging out so they could buy us food. We're starving. So we make friends with this guy and we're at the table eating with him, the cell phone goes off. When the phone goes off, we get scared 'cause we're doing something wrong. We dash underneath the table, and this guy is like, "What is wrong with y'all?" He calls the phone, he says, "Yeah, bitch, I see y'all. Come to the car." We're like, "Holy crap." We're sitting down eating. We better have some money to bring to the car. Go to the car, he says, "How much money y'all got?" And he would use terms like bread, "How much bread y'all got?" "Nothing." "And you're over there eating?" Eating, yeah, that's the Jamaican way of saying it, shh. "You're over there eating?" The girl that got in the front seat, he started beating her up immediately. He dropped her off at another club. He turns around to me in the back, he says, "What am I gonna do with you?" I said, "Just let me leave." He said, "Yeah, you wanna leave? I'll let you leave. I'm a give you \$5,000 and you can leave." Sounds great, right? He's allowing me to leave and he's giving me \$5,000. Right? Not quite so... he brings me to the house and while he brings me to the house he went upstairs and I'm downstairs like this, "What is going to happen?" because the last the last girl he told that, when he was finished kicking her in the living room, her body was just bouncing around like you are sorting dirty cloths. I'm like, "I already know that trick foo." Like, "Uh-nu. You gonna do something to me and when I was down there. I heard the click of the gun.

I had a previous encounter with that gun. Because the one time I thought I was bold and told him I did not want to drive. Because he used to make me drive the girls to the strip clubs or to the track. But I don't want to drive, I am tired. Because we would work from twelve noon until seven AM every day. And when you get home at seven, you wake back up at ten, get ready to be at the club by twelve noon. So I was tired. And while I am driving to different cities these girls can sleep. I can't sleep. Right? So I told him, "I don't want to drive." Says, "Alright choose, death or driving". I said, "Kill me." I mean...what else is there to live for? At that point...my mind...I was ready to die when I had that encounter with that gun. And he said, "Open your mouth." And I opened my mouth. He put the gun in my mouth and he pulled the trigger. Now I thought I was dead. I was like, "Yeah fool, can't do nothing now. I can see you but you cannot see me." I am dead. Right? So I am on the wall, gun in mouth, gun goes off and I am just like mhm. Dead people....you can see these people in real life when you are dead man. He is right there. Right? Now, I am thinking I am dead and I am in Dead World. Until, he starts beating me with the gun. I am like hold up man. I am not supposed to feel this when I am dead. And that's when I realized that I wasn't dead because he started beating me with the gun. He realized the gun wasn't loaded. So this time, I am standing downstairs and I heard the click of the gun and I said uh huh I had a previous encounter with that gun. He is making sure the gun is loaded...run! That time I did not want to die. My body said run. So I am running around in this gated community. And I met this guy and I call him my life saver. If you are here, raise your hand. I'm Shamere McKenzie, the girl you helped. Alright he is not here, ok. I met this guy who was in his garage with his two year old daughter. And he said, "What are you doing? Why are you running around here?" I said, "I am running around from my ex-boyfriend who is trying to beat me up." See pimps program you to tell lies. They program you what to tell the law enforcement. They program what to tell regular people. And even in that moment of fear for my life I still told the person who was trying to help me a lie. I'm running away from my ex-boyfriend who is trying to beat me up. The guy said no, no, no ,no, no you cannot run around in here; he's going to catch you. This is a gated community. Come in here!" Pulls the garage down. That guy gave me food, put me in a hotel room, and gave me a phone to call my momma. And that's how I got out.

Now I'm out, scared as hell. I would call this man at least once a week. Cause he told me if I leave he would kill me and my family. So, I would call him to make sure he's not trying to kill me. And when I call him he would be like, "Bitch get off my phone, you are on the phone with the police." And when he started saying that I was like uh oh he's worried about the police, he ain't coming after me. I would still call until six months later the FBI raided my house and arrested me. Yeah, that's the same look I had. Right? My mom had just did surgery on her gallbladder, goldstones, whatever you call that gall something that's right here. I hate sciences, alright. Um...my mom had just done surgery and I hear, "Are you Shamere McKenzie?" My mother is like, "No...no...no." This fool just sent somebody to my house, it is on. Right? I am thinking it's the pimp outside my house. I go under my bed, I took ever shoe...[inaudible] my perfume bottle I am going to spray whoever that is in the eye, head wrapped. I was ready. Come out my room,

Note to readers: This next section was enhanced with the 'speaker' to help identify the speaker Shamere

McKenzie was the speaker for herself and the FBI.

FBI: "FBI are you Shamere McKenzie?"

**Sharmere McKenzie:** "This fool. Yes, I am Shamere McKenzie."

FBI: "We need to talk to you. Do you know Corey Davis?"

**Sharmere McKenzie:** "Who is Corey Davis?"

I did not even know my pimps real name.

FBI: "Who is that?" "Alright, do you know somebody named Magnificent?"

**Sharmere McKenzie:** "Yeah, I know who that is."

FBI: "What? Well this is what he is about....what is it about?"

**Sharmere McKenzie:** "What is it you want to know? I will tell you everything."

FBI: "Um, we gonna need to talk to you down by the courthouse. You are under arrest".

**Sharmere McKenzie:** "No. No. No. No. That is not how you talk to me. You don't put me under arrest to talk to me. I know my rights as a citizen of the United States. No that is not how you talk to me."

FBI: "Yes, you are under arrest."

**Sharmere McKenzie:** Go down to the courthouse. I don't even remember what the indictment was. I gotta look at that. But, I had to...when the FBI raids your house and locks you up for a case like this. You have to do three business days in prison. So now I am wondering, wait...wait I told you all I would tell you all everything you all want to because I know I am telling the truth. I am ready to tell the truth, so I think. I am ready to tell some of the truth. Right? The prosecutor is not in she is on vacation. You all set this up real good, huh? So now you really have to go to jail because she is the only one who can raise this. I get to jail and it is re victimization all over. Cause now you can see where I am clearly the victim here but the victim is now behind bars in chains and handcuffs. Right? And to make it even worse some of the things...protocol of prison to check for contraband makes you feel even worse. Right? The first shower you take is two minutes. I'm like, "Um...excuse me miss you do not want to give me soap? Can I have me a washcloth?" "McKenzie two minutes." "What?" That was my first encounter right there. I am like I need a washcloth to take a shower...soap. I am like there and she is like you have two minutes. That's your washcloth with soap. I am like oh my gosh. Why I am here? The shower goes off. I did not even take a shower for the first night in prison. And I cried for the first two days. Why I am here? Why am I the one in this prison? Where is this guys? Right! Three days turned into three weeks that I am in prison. My attorney finally said, "Why are guys keeping her? She is not a flight risk." They let me out. We are going to send you to DC we are going to get you some services. Well they did not send DC....we are going to send you. You have three options DC, South Carolina, or San Francisco. California was too far from the east coast. I should have come here. I probably would have met some of y'all. But, that was too far from my family. So I chose DC. Right? Went to DC they put me with Polaris Project to give me services. They talked about trafficking. What the heck is trafficking? What is this? While I am there in three weeks I got a job at a law firm, I was going back to school, the FBI likes we need you to take a plea or we are taking this to trial. Now if I had known what I know about trafficking now back now then. I would have been like let's go to trial player. But after spending three weeks in prison under those conditions where...and I love to eat. Do you remember the first thing I talked about when I got up here is food, right? I love to eat. And when they only feed you at 5:00 AM, 11:00 AM and 4:00 PM, prison is not for me. Ok, that alone tells me that prison is not for me. Cause after 4:00 PM I need something else to eat. Ok. So, when they were like if you do not take this plea you are going to go back to prison. I'm like alright I'm going to take this plea. Plea to the Man Act, which is supposedly a lower charge. The Man Act is taking minor over the state line

for illegal commerce.

**Sharmere McKenzie:** "Minors, there weren't no minors first of all."

FBI: "Yes, there was."

**Sharmere McKenzie:** "Mr. FBI let me tell you my pimp said he didn't deal with minors and in fact there was a situation where this girl came home and she was 17 and he told us to take her back so he don't deal with minors."

FBI: "Yes he does cause there was a girl there who was 12 years old."

It gets worse. I did her makeup. So now I'm really thinking I'm dumb. Because how can I be looking directly in somebodies face, all up in their personal space doing their makeup and cannot tell that this girl is 12? To this day that thing bothers me. How can I look at a 12 year old and cannot tell that you are 12. Well when you put a wig on somebody, right? And they have been going through this with days, of days with no rest. That 12 kind of looks different. Somebody had to break that down to me. Cause I was like man I am stupid. I didn't know a 12 year old. How dumb can you get? Right? So they said for crossing minors...taking minors across stat line for illegal commerce it's the Man Act and I should take a plea to conspiracy to the Man Act. The conspiracy...the Man Act says you knowingly and willingly transported minors across state lines. Don't take my word for it look it up. Right? Now, did I know that there was minor? No. He told us to take back a 17 year old girl. Right. Two, did I willingly? Did any part of this story sound willingly to you? Right? Transporting minors across state lines. So now I am a felon. You're looking at a felon. If you have never met a felon before, hello. Right? So the system now sees me as a criminal and they still do to this day. I am still a felon. I just got off of probation as of January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014. Right? So...it gets worse y'all. So now I am not only a felon you are also looking at a sex offender. Yeah, I said it. A sex offender. Even though I never physically assaulted anyone. But that sex offender list is something else we need to look at. Cause it is very broad. Man if you pee in public in certain states you may have to register as a sex offender. It is not only people who molest and abuse little kids that are sex offenders. Right? So now I am a sex offender but not in the state of Illinois. Illinois says it is a conspiracy so I don't have to register. Every other state I have to register. But those are some of the barriers I have to face having been a victim, right? Got out now I have to deal with a felony. Can't get a job, can't apply for certain scholarships. Now since I moved to Chicago I can't even live in certain places cause I...you have to pass a background check and that felon comes up. Right? So finally, Shared Hope International decides to hire me. And that's how come I gained employment. Cause I had lost my job at the law firm. Right? Remember we had that recession? Remember when everything was going crazy in the country. Yeah, lost my job then. For two years I was unemployed. Food stamps was my best friend. Huh? Ok. Right? And Shared Hope International saw...I... well before Shared Hope became involved I met Kevin Bells. And if you were here last night you probably saw his book in the back, "The Slave Next Door" My story is in that book on page 82...84. Barbie and the Gorilla Pimp. If you read it he spells out my name Shamere McKenzie. Alright.

And when I met Kevin he says, "Man, what's going on?"

And I'm like "Kevin, I am unemployed like can't find a job."

He's like, "You know you can use your stories to save others and generate income."

**Sharmere McKenzie:** "Kevin now you stupid because nobody wanna sot hear about what happened to me. I am hoe, I am a prostitute. That's look down upon in America."

Right? Kevin shows me how to setup speaking engagements like this and so that's why I said thank you. Right? And began telling my story to help others. Right? So when I talk and I talk about this in this context like I am already a felon, they already see me as a sex offender but I refuse to let another girl be called a felon and a sex offender. Right? I refuse. So if I gotta share it to everybody I walk on the street on so

another girl don't have to walk in my shoes because I know how hard it is. Right? So I got into the movement and I am using my story to advice policy at Shared Hope International. I'm doing all this training with law enforcement, testifying before congress. I've done like a lot of stuff. Right? But I don't want to get into bragging rights over there. But the point is we talk about restoration for girls. It just doesn't stop when the girl comes out. It is an ongoing process. And for me even standing before you today it is an ongoing process. When I got to Chicago for the first two months this is Chicago...Loyola University heard about my story cause Kevin called them up. John Donahue met with the president and they decided to offer me a scholarship. Right? For the first two months...I moved to Chicago in January I slept on my friends couch. Couldn't to find a place to stay cause I can't pass a background check. First half of the semester D's in every class. Right? So it is an ongoing process. I am even worried about next semester. Cause next semester Loyal says its a half scholarship. Uh how am I supposed to pay for the other part of my scholar...other part of my tuition? And remember school is what...is what is what pathway that connected me with that trafficker. Right? That is what he preyed upon. So pimps prey upon your weakness. It could be whatever. And you guys are in college, you gotta understand when somebody comes to you with a story that seems too good to be true it may just be too good to be true. Go with your gut feeling. If your gut feeling tells you that something is not right than it probably isn't right. And pimps will come to you because they know that tuition. Man Bursars sending you that letter... that reminder, right? And it's so easy when we are in that place of vulnerability and someone comes to you with an opportunity for us to say man yup. There is a survivor that got trafficked because someone offered her a job for makeup. She went in and she had a regular interview. She even did makeup on somebody else and they were like now we are going on the road. She went on the road...trafficked. Right? So when we hear these things we got to ask ourselves. What are we going to do about it?

Now this is my story and trafficking is my issue. But what is your issue? Is it homelessness? Right? Is it kids who have been abused? What is your issue? Because there are a lot of issues for us to talk about. It is not just trafficking. What is your issue? What are you doing about your issue? And I know you are college students. You have papers to write and tons of classes. You are like Shemar... are like really? I am in school, I have papers to write and I got finals coming up to study for. And now you are about to ask me what is the solution? Please. Let me give you some practical solutions. When you go home tonight number one, and go look at yourself in the mirror. I do this all the time. And look at yourself and say to yourself I am the change. As of a matter of fact don't wait for you to go home turn to the person beside you and say I am the change. Y'all don't sound too sure about that. Turn to the person beside you and say I am the change. Because you see what we don't understand is that change starts with self. When we hear about these things we start pointing fingers at everybody else. Barrack Obama I don't know why they elected him as president. He should be doing something about this. Or law enforcement in Chico, I don't know why we have law enforcement here cause they ain't doing nothing about it. But if we want to see a change about something we have to be the change. And until we have what's called citizenship literacy. Right? Now all you know about trafficking. Right? So you can't say you don't know. Citizenship literacy. Right? We know... and we know as a people have to realize we have power. Right? That's what America was built upon. That is the foundation of America. We say America is the best country in the world. Why? Because of our democracy. Well let's put our democracy to good use. Right? We have power. Our elected officials...our tax payer...our tax payer's money keeps them there. You can call up your elected officials and ask them, "Mister so and so what are you doing about human trafficking?" Because they will tell you that is not an issue in my state. My constitutes are not saying anything about it. Have a letter writing campaign and they will see how many letters are coming in their office. Oh my gosh, John Brown, Tim McCain all these people have this issue with trafficking. I gotta to do something about it. Your chief of police here...if you think the police department is not doing anything...you know why police officers say it is not a problem in their community because citizens are not complaining. That's why they pay attention to prostitution. Because they say, "You know what citizen called and said these prostitutes need to get off our streets." But think about the next time you even think you see a prostitute on the street. Think...a lot of people say they want to be there. They are smiling. They look happy. You know what goes on behind that smile. You know what happened just right before she came on the street. You know what happened if she take off that makeup and you see the scars on her face. So instead of calling the police and saying we need to do something about these prostitutes call them and say, "Mr. Chief of Police." And I guarantee you Chico...cause I heard some stuff. I guarantee you all students say I am run up my cellphone bill up for a good cause. Right? And I am going to call the Chief of Police whatever his

number is and we going to call him and we going to have his phone blown off. I guarantee you he will do something in Chico. And forget about students cause he is probably going to say well you know what...they are just the students from Chico University, they don't even live here. Take it to the community and say listen we had human trafficking week on campus, this is what I learned. I am a student. Right? And I want you to...this is happening in your community, you live here. I go back to New York, I go back to Chicago, I go back to wherever you come from. But you live here. Is this what you are going to allow to happen in your community? It ain't mine. You're paying tax dollars to build up this community or to support this community. Your tax dollars pay this law enforcement officer that is here. What are you doing about it? Right? It's our community. And if you are from another state, call up your own representative. If you don't know what to write go to Sharedhope.org, we have...we know every single elected official. The letter is already written for you. You just have to put your name and the date and hit send. Right? Now that's on the policy level. Now I get...to breath. Cause that's my peace. I love policy. I think there needs to be laws in place to protect the innocent. Right? But on another level we can activate our god given skills and do something. If you are a writer, write about it. Right? If you are a doctor provide pro bono services. Right? If you have a house with an extra room...they say there is housing. There is no place for these girls to go when they are locked up. Then offer your home. Right? If you are a counselor...I am telling you the psychological part...as you all can see I am still dealing with it, right? Offer those services, right? If there is an organization that you know that provides services to victims. Have a drive for that organization. It's not always about money. Sometimes it is food, clothes. Something as simple as a socks drive. Often time these girls come off the street, they are in these stilettos. Or sweatpants, you could do a sweatpants drive, a sock drive. They are in these clothes. They are cold. Their feet...they have been walking around for hours. A pair of socks means a lot. Let's say you don't want to do socks, you are into business. Go to your family members and say, "Hey, do you got an old pair of suit, an old suit, old pair of pants, old pair of shoes?" Cause when they come into these programs, right? They are gonna to need a job. They are gonna to need to go on a job interview, right? If your parents have businesses ask your parents to hire survivors. Right? Not every survivor wants to be like Shamere and be up here and tell you what happened. They want to have normal lives. Right? I am abnormal, I know it. You don't have to tell me. I am abnormal. Right? And when you interact with survivors for God sakes remember that they are human being. They are not your little puppies. We are not your little puppies. Or your little Barbie doll or your little toys. Oh this little survivor. And Carissa talked about it last night. When she said, "Survivors don't need your pity. Because that's how people react and respond and I can understand the natural response when you first hear a story. You are like oh my gosh. But when you go back and you say aww you little survivor. You're putting that survivor right back into the victim spot and that is why I call myself a liberator. Right? Because I have gone through...pass the victim. I ain't a survivor, I am doing more than surviving. Talk about sleeping on somebodies couch for two months. Right? I am liberating. Because we gotta to understand that together...when we talk about...if I saw I am the change you say that you are the change and you say that you are the change than that means that we all want to change something, right? And together when we. When we come together change can happen. Change can happen. They used to say it takes a village to raise a child. That quote is out the window in America. And then we wonder why our kids...we call these kids bad kids now. If we go back to the principal of it takes a village to raise a child than maybe we won't have so many bad kids. But no one cares...it's not my problem. I don't...why these kids they are so loud on the bus. Have you ever quietly said excuse me I know I am not your parent but I think you are beautiful young lady and I have been observing you and if you can tone it down a little bit. In a nice way, an empowering way. Because if you go to somebody and be like yo you are so loud shut up. Do you think they are going to listen to you? When I walked on the street and many times I get guys that are trying to talk to me with their pants under their butt. "Yo yo yo ma, yo what's up? You know that you are beautiful right?" And I am like, "You know what I think you are very handsome too. But can I just do a little exercise with you?" "Yo...yo...for real? Yo, you gonna give me your number?" And I am like, "Maybe if you do this exercise with me." And I go in my bag and I take out my mirror and I say, "Look in this mirror and what do you see?" "Man I see a handsome dude who is trying to get your number." Right? And I'm like and I see that handsome guy too. And I see far more than that handsome guy but you going to pick your pants up because you see if you want to talk to a girl like me then there are certain things that I do not expect and that's your pants down. Right? And I'm telling y'all and I'm telling y'all more times than none these guys will pick their pants up and be like, "There are up now, what's up with the number yo?" Right? But ladies I mean...Imagine if more ladies will say that to guys. These guys will pick their pants up because the girl I

want ain't gonna talk to me. Right? That's what I am talking about these little things that we can do in our community, ok?

And now I am trying to shut up now. I feel like I am talking too much. What's my time looking like? Ok. These are just some of the actions step that you can build. The students of STOP It....Ashley, right. I was so happy last night when I sat there and they call up all the students. Right? And she's like and I am Ashley, and I am president. Right? That mean world to me. You know what that mean the world to me. I met Ashley last year, we had dinner together. And Ashley was just a member, where you even a member? You were a member, right? A member last year of STOP right? This year she is president. Ok. She is like forget about being am member I am president. That's how much I care about because I'll be president because I will lead this organization in this way because we need to do something about this. Right? So what what...what...what...what...what...what is your gift? Ashley clearly saw she was a leader. Clearly she thought of herself as a leader and wants to lead STOP in a way to continue. What is your gift? You don't have to answer me? What is your gift? Maybe you are an artist and terms of rapping yeah know them raps songs that I just talked about earlier, maybe you want to sing about this in a positive way. And it's so funny because today I was listen to uh to an online radio. And I heard Nas have this song that I have to find about raising his daughter in the right way. Or spending more time with his daughter. I don't know about the song I got to find it. And I am like word, Nas has song like this? Bout spending more time with his daughter, right? So maybe that's you. Right? Or maybe you want to go to school and just be a gynecologist because I can tell you many girls cannot have children because the reproductive damage. So I am going to ask you one more time, what is your talent? What is your gift? And how are you going to use it to help someone else? Someone paved the way for many of us to be sitting in this room right now. So that we can be sitting the chairs that you are sitting on sombody came up with the idea. The lights that are here someone came up with so that we are not sitting in darkness what do you have that you can give back to pave the way for someone else? And that's how I'm going to close tonight by asking you that question. What do you have? What talents and gifts do you have that you can utilize to pave the way for someone else? Thank you so much for having me. My team. Thank you. Thank you. And does anyone have any questions?

**Shamere McKenzie:** Yes, does anybody have some questions? Yes.

**Audience Member:** I have two questions.

**Shamere McKenzie:** Ask away.

**Audience Member:** Okay I have two questions. The first one is how did the law enforcement... how did they figure out your case, like how did they discover your portion of it. My other question is what ever happened to your pimp? Shamere McKenzie: Oh, i keep on forgetting that part when I talk. The 12 year old girl that I talked to you about, when she ran away, she went to the police. That's how the investigation started and it's FBI, they know everybody'd buisness and then my pimp is currently 24 years in prison.

**Audience:** [claps]

**Shamere McKenzie:** Tell me about it. Any other questions? Yes ma'am?

**Audience:** [Inaudible]

**Shamere McKenzie:** Everyday is a struggle. Like when people that once you come out that's it. You give a survivor a job and I'm in school, even while in Chicago going back to school this semester, I had to like, " Shamere, that is not an option." Right? cause you're like, "okay, if I get some money and I could just throw... hey I can pay double your rent even though my credit is messed up and I have a bad background check." They won't take my money, but I don't have no money. So constantly, right? And sometimes you may be walking down the street and you may see something that reminds you of the life.

That'll take you back to that place. So restoration is an on-going process. For the rest of my life, I'm gonna be faced with things that remind me of the life. For the rest of my life. So everyday is just like a challenge to live, to look passed that, to hear other girls' stories and not try beat somebody up. Any other questions? yes ma'am?

**Audience:** Were you in contact with your family during this time?

**Shamere McKenzie:** Oh yes, he allowed me to call my mother.

**Audience:** [Inaudible]

**Shamere McKenzie:** My mother... when he allowed me to call my mother he told me to tell my mother that he was my boyfriend and he was taking care of me, but when my mother would ask certain questions and I would freeze, he would tell me what to say and my mother would say, "Is somebody telling you what to say.?" and I'm like "No." and she was like, "Well this is not the daughter that I raised. She doesn't want anybody to take care of her." So my mother felt that there was something wrong and she went to the police, but the police said, "She is over 18, there is nothing we could do. You're in contact with her. she's not kidnapped."

**Audience:** Shamere?

**Shamere McKenzie:** Oh yes. yes. yes.

**Audience:** Over here. Do you want your lotion back?

**Shamere McKenzie:** Asked my team? team?

**Audience:** But my question is, in terms lobbying, I guess gift would kind of be politics and lobbying and legislators to change the language, California recently passed a law that would, put pimps behind bars for a longer period of time, for like 15 years instead of 8 years, so what kind of words should we be using since you know a little bit more about the words, instead of trafficking using slavery. What other... how else should you, or should I approach legislators. what kind of terms are we going to be using for legislation coming up cause I know there are a lot of assembly men that are running for election that I know I could talk to and say, "Hey these are some of the bills that I would like to see introduced."

**Shamere McKenzie:** Actually every legislative session, right, and you can track what is your.... cause each state has their own legislative session. So from states its from January to March and you need to find when is California's legislative session is, that's number 1. And find out what bills are introduced. right? When you find that out, you could go to that time those bills are being introduced, cause numbers says a lot. Right? So when you show up and say I care about this, legislators see that. Also, right, shared hope international, that I work for, we have the protective innocence challenge, right and I also want to say like the only reason I could be here today is because of the connections through people. Like there's somebody that's playing a role in every area. I wanna go back to school. Somebody payed for my books.



Like "Shamere I want to give back, I don't know, like what do you need help with, but here's \$500 for your books." right? Somebody payed for my books. So and that's so off point, but Shared Hope International, right? And I guess that why I said that because they have helped me in some many ways. They have what's called the Protective Innocence Challenge and they focus specifically on domestic minor sex trafficking, right, and what they do is they analyze state laws, all the 50 states, including Washington D.C, cause we know legislators are busy. They don't got no time for this, right? And so we analyze their laws and then what we do is, we provide a recommendation on how states can improve their laws and we look at 6 areas of law. Provisions for victims, right? Criminalization of victims, they should not be criminalized victims, hello, right? It's a barrier to restoration. Provision for buyers. Are there harsh enough penalties in place for buyers, pimps and facilitators? Such a strip clubs. Right? And tools for law enforcement and prosecutors. Right? You can even take are protected innocence recommendations and bring it to your legislator and saying, "listen, I know you have 50,000,000 issues. Someone already did the work for you. Can you, like, look over this recommendation that this organization did and see if you want to pull some things out of it?" Because the first year we did the protective institute...let's see 2014, 2013, 2012, 11... It was in 2011 where we did the Protective Innocence Challenge in 2011 it was a first year we put this, this challenge out. 239 bills were introduced relatin' to this issue.

We put out the second year, over 700 bills were related to this issue. And many states looked our framework and implemented if not all of it but some of it. Right? Because just like you, these legislators this is new to them. Our Trafficking Victims Protection Act was only past in 2000. That's when the United States recognized that human trafficking was a problem. That's just the other day. I could remember 2000. Right? You're right, I can't remember the eighties.

### **Audience laughter**

**Sharmere McKenzie:** All right? So you can take that, right? Or work...or find out what organization here in California is working on the issue. And team up with that and say, "Hey, what you think can help California?" Proposition 35 worked. Do you know why? Because a group of people came together. And tell them this is what we want! And this is how it should be done! And have all of these people supporting it and guess what, they're gonna have to do it. And challenge them. You ain't doing it. You know I know some people who can get you out of your job, right Mr. Legislator. Don't let me take it to the community. And I say that because, and I shared this last year, in Maryland, right, there was this legislator ... there was this piece of legislation for restitution. Right? And the chief would not introduce this piece of legislation. And what that is is when we arrest pimps. No not restitution assets forfeiture, sorry. That's two different things. What we were asking for assets forfeiture is when we arrest this pimp, we want their house, their car and any other assets. And that goes into a pool to split between law enforcement, service providers or whoever it depends on the state on how the money is divided up. Right? For four years of this legislator would not introduce this bill. Even though 17 members of his 22 member committee said I am for it. Because as the chief of the committee he had the power of what to introduce. So you know what happened? It went to the community. Right? And his constituents star blown up his phone. "Introduce the bill Chairman Velario [phonetic spelling]." That's his name. Out of Maryland. "Introduce an asset forfeiture! Introduce asset forfeiture! What's happening? Introduce the bill!" Best believe he introduced the bill. Right? Cause his power will be taken away. So sometimes we got to remind them, "fool, like really?" Your power that you're trying to sit down on to not introduce the bill it can be taken away if I go back to my community. We vote you in and we can vote you out. Cause you are not doing what we want-we the people. Isn't that what they say the United States? "We the people of the United States," right? Isn't that what they say? Right, people got power.

Any other questions? Yes. Ask your question girl. Don't be shy. Ask your question girl. You know you want... Oh, OK come see me afterwards. It's all right.

Yes, Ashley President.

**Audience member:** So when is your book coming out?

**Audience laughter**

**Sharmere McKenzie:** That is my que. Goodnight y'all.

So I mean, to be honest I so far The Slave Next Door that my story was published in. I stories actually in a textbook to teach college students about this issue. I story just came out last month in this other book called Survivors Slavery by Laura Murphy. Who is my other mentor. I got introduced to her by Kevin. And so now I'm the director of historians against slavery she was approached by a publisher to work on a book with me. And I don't know. I'm gonna...I haven't heard about what that opportunity is. Yet I'm meeting with her next Friday to see what the publishers talking about. But for me when I write my book, my goal is to be an attorney. And when I write my book I want that piece to be in my... I don't wanna write a second book. I hate writing. I don't even journal. Right? My...Karissa asked me last night, "You are journaling all of this right?" I'm like, "No my journal is Facebook." Because everything that happens I put it on Facebook. That's my journal. I can go back on Facebook and I can read all of my status updates. That's my journaling. Right? So and if you guys have Twitter please follow me, Miss Touch of Class, right?

So the book...like really, I want to graduate law school can be an attorney before I write this book. Because what that goes to say is that other young girl who was thinking I've been through this and the pimp already told her, "You will be nothing and can be nothing that a prostitute." Right? My pimp told me that. Pimps tell the girls that all the time. I want when that girl picks up my book and reads my story and see that we have the same struggles. And I came out, went through and became an attorney that she can do it too. I'm not writing a book to just to say, "I'm writing a book, hey all." A book as a way to, to get money and whatever, like, I mean, that's [several words mumbled] my life...drama, hello like, it will sell without that right? But I don't want my book to be just about that. I want the book to serve-to help somebody else. And like Tatiana says all the time, "But you can write a second book. Like you have a lot to be proud of. You're successful right now." And I'm like, "Naw". I want that girl to say, "This is my dream. And I followed through my dream. And if I can do it, you can do it too. Yes.

**Audience applause**

**Sharmere McKenzie:** Yes honey. Ask your question.

**Audience member:** [inaudible] obviously you've come a long way [inaudible] what were some of the, I guess, mental barriers that kind of got in the way to where you're now. You're like a ball of fire.

**Sharmere McKenzie:** [laughing] Thank you, well. Like the only way that I said before the only way I could have this energy is through support. And that support has come in various forms. But the first thing for me was counseling. And a lot of people are not canceling especially in the African American community were like only crazy people go to counseling. Right? I'm just keeping it real y'all. Right? And.... [Laughs] I guess it's not just in the African American community, this is your community too. All right. And for me when I was at the Polaris Project, counseling was mandatory. And I had six counselors before I found the right one. Because I cussed out every one. She sat down and said, "Shamere what you wanna talk about?" I be like, "Bitch, you the one with the PhD. What you want to talk about today?" Right?

**Audience laughter**

**Sharmere McKenzie:** I'm trying to tell you all. It is traumatic. Trafficking is a traumatic situation. The trauma that you go through, right? 'cause you have to understand the impact of trauma on the brain it causes you to do some things you, you wouldn't normally do. Right? Trauma manifests itself in different ways. Mine was through my mouth. I cussed out everybody. Right? That counselor when I asked her,

“What you wanna talk about? You got a PhD. What you want to do? What you want to talk about? Let’s talk, about you.” She shut down, she didn’t know how to handle me. She crossed her legs, she had her little chart and she said.....”okay.” I fell asleep. I said, “When you figure it out let me know.”

### **Audience laughter**

**Sharmere McKenzie:** I fell asleep. And when my 45 minute session was up she woke me up and she said, “Shamere you are free to go.” I said, “Oh thank you, I’ll see you next week.” Right? Because, and I mean, like [inaudible] it manifests itself in many ways. And if you don’t have a trauma informed counselor to understand, look, this is her trauma manifesting, like, right? She has some things that cause her. ‘Cause when I look back at some of the things that I did and said...I’m like “Damn Sharmere, you are horrible.” Right? But that is how my trauma manifested. And I have to deal with that. And if I want to be a contributing member of society that is where I need to start. And look at myself and focus on dealing with that trauma. ‘cause if I don’t deal with it I can’t help anyone else. Right? Then I had support, such as Tatiana that I can call at three in the morning. Right? If I’m going through something it is best for me to call her she’s going to be like. And if I don’t call her she’s gonna call me if she sees my Facebook status. Right? So, she’s gonna send a text, “So hey, are you okay.” And I’m like, “Why is she asking me if I’m OK?” “Well I saw your Facebook.” “Oh, well that is nothing.” See, right? So I have support, so, like, shared hope has been so supportive. Right? I’m going back to my job in DC for the summer. Who leaves a job, goes to college and the job say come back for the summer? Right? And so I have other people who, like, so in to my life in such a way it is ridiculous. Like when I first started speaking, Kevin Bell’s organization Free the Slaves, they gave me money to buy suits. They are like, “You have to look presentable. You just don’t walk in t-shirts and some jeans. Who is going to take you seriously? You’ve got to look presentable.” Right? And just having those types of conversations is building a survivor up to a leader. Seeing past the stuff.

Any other questions? Yes.

**Audience member:** [Inaudible]

**Sharmere McKenzie:** How old am I? Old enough to be your mama. [laughs]

### **Audience: laughter**

**Sharmere McKenzie:** I joke around this issue a lot because it’s a hard issue. It’s a difficult issue. I’m going to answer your question. It is a difficult issue. And people receive well when they hear jokes and stories and stuff like that. So I don’t want you to sit here ... and I’ve been to a training one time when this law enforcement officer was talking. And he put up all the stories of these little kids like, stories and stories. And this old lady ran out and started crying. I don’t want anyone to ever walk out of my talk and start crying. I want people to be motivated. So that is why a joke a lot in my talks. If I’m comfortable with it, you’re gonna be comfortable with it. If I’m laughing at my own adversity, you are going to feel okay. Right? And it just goes to show when survivors have support they can rise above it. So I am 30. I’m going to be 31 in July. Any other questions? Yes dear.

**Audience Member:** [inaudible]

**Sharmere McKenzie:** I didn’t hear the first part.

**Audience Member:** even though it’s still hard [inaudible] motivate people.

**Sharmere McKenzie:** Yes because I know my struggles. And I know this trouble of having a felony. I know the struggle of having a sex offender registry. I know the struggle of having been victimized by the pimp and still victimized through the system. And that is why I do what I do. And that’s why I’m going into policy because some of this stuff has got to change. We can’t criminalize victims. We don’t criminalize victims for any other crime. Why are trafficking victims criminalized? That’s what I realize is my passion and that’s where I want to go to bring about change.

Yes, you want to ask know honey, yes.

**Audience member:** [inaudible] do people look at you differently?

**Sharmere McKenzie:** I'm sure some people do but with my personality do you really think someone will be bold enough come to me [inaudible] [laughing]. No, no. I'm sure people do but I've been speaking now - this month makes three years that I've been speaking. And I've never had someone come and been disrespectful and unofficial respect, right? Like trying to be nice and really don't know how to talk and ask certain questions. But no one has ever been like, "You are a whore" or "You're a prostitute." If that's where you're going. No.

Yes.

**Audience member:** You don't look a day over 20. [Inaudible]

**Sharmere McKenzie:** I don't look like 20? It's because I'm suckin' in... It's the spanks. I'm telling you it's this spanks. Well thank you.

**Kate Transchel:** We can take one more question [inaudible]

**Audience member:** I was just follow up to the young lady's question. I can project... Would you say that more people look at you positively since you've started speaking or more people are judgmental or disrespectful since you started speaking?

**Sharmere McKenzie:** More people are positive since I started speaking. I mean, the judgment, I mean people are always good to have something to say. And for me, I'm like, I don't care what you say about me because what I'm doing is helping somebody else. So you can call me, and I mean really as a Christian you really doesn't matter. It's what god thinks about me. So call me whenever.

**Audience applause**

**Kate Transchel:** Alright. Thank you Shamere. Let's thank Shamere one more time.

**Sharmere McKenzie:** Thank you.

**Audience applause**

**Kate Transchel:** but wait don't go away we also need to think the STOP students who have putt so much effort in to this. I would like all of the STOP students to stand up. Those of you who are back behind the curtain come where people can see you. Without them we would not have this event, we would not have this club. This is a student activist club. They have also now branched out into the communities. So if you're not a student and you want to join STOP you can do that as well. Meetings are every Monday night, I mean the first Monday of every month at the Peace and Justice Center. So thank you very much you guys.

And I also want to thank my colleague Janja Lalich please stand up. I know you're making faces at me.

**Audience applause and cheers.**

**Kate Transchel:** She is actually the person who started this movement on campus over oh so many years ago. And it is her dedication and her leadership that made this possible tonight and we are deeply grateful for that which she has done.