

The scourge of human sex trafficking had suddenly become noticeable to mainstream America. Smuggling young people into the country and forcing them into prostitution is real. Who thought that slavery had been eradicated in modern society!

HIDDEN INNOCENCE: Human Trafficking

By Francis Dillon

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HIDDEN INNOCENCE

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

FRANCIS DILLON

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PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS APPEARING IN THIS NOVEL

The Berwick Group

Patrick Draper, partner in the firm
Nola Hunter, partner in the firm
John Carver, technical services director
Amanda Gillhooly, office manager
Melissa Borden, investigator, victim advocate
Nathen Kim, investigator
Mark Hurley, field operator
Jan Crauley, field operator
Jerome Hatch, investigator, victim advocate

Victim's Family

Laura Rankin, victim
Lloyd Rankin, father
Liam Rankin, brother
Dr. Dora Barth, psychiatrist

Russian Mafia Family

Andrei Morrow (Morozov),
Albert (Big Junior) Mishin (aka Janus),
Alexander Volkov, mob attorney
Albert Mishin Sr., head man
Margaret Mishin, daughter
Michael (Mikhail) Semenov, business owner

Grover Enterprises

Harold Grover, retired owner
Linda Grover Branch, daughter
Mason Grover, plantation director
Thomas Grover, son
Jeff Eakin, logging foreman
Wes Bernard, retired property manager

Maine Characters

Nora Andrews, hotline caller
Carson Page, real estate owner
Dorina Cebanu, governess for Page
Michael & Betty Dotson, business owners
Ana Djokovic, governess for the Dotsons

Law Enforcement Personnel

Scott Hartley, Homeland Security Operations Chief
Henry Alfaro, US Border Patrol
Clark Dubois, Sheriff's deputy
John Esposito, DEA
Rene Demers, Canadian Border Services Agency
Finnegan O'Connell, SWAT team leader

Tewksbury, MA

Fr. Tom Mulcahey, Pastor, St. Brigid's church
Marie Martinez Hanson, employed by Michael Semenov

Terrorists

Amirah, (aka. The Princess), bomb maker
Henry Akim, driver
Three unknowns

CHAPTER ONE

Dorothy Allen collapsed into the rear seat of the limo taking them to the private Jubail airport, just west of the city. She was weary but jubilant after three days of difficult negotiations. She and her associate, Jason Cutler, left today's meeting with a contract from the local Saudi officials to design a new housing and commercial complex just outside the City of Jubail. Their meeting was the end of a seven-month competitive process. To soothe Saudi anxieties about females, Jason had been the lead negotiator despite the fact that Dorothy was the owner of the firm and had inspired the design that landed them the contract.

As they arrived at the terminal for private aircraft, Dorothy told Jason she was going into the ladies' room to refresh and change into slacks before they drove out to the aircraft. Dorothy had been wearing a head scarf and long abaya-type grey dress for the past three days and longed to change into Western clothes. She had chartered a private plane for this trip to avoid all the hassle of a woman flying commercial in Saudi Arabia. This had worked out well. The flight crew had been alerted and was aboard the Falcon 8X aircraft. The flight plan was to take them to London and then on to Boston.

They both entered the terminal, which was practically empty of people. The terminal was actually divided into a section for Western visitors, which allowed both men and

women to mingle together while coming and going from the airport. The non-Western section was actually walled off from their side and restricted to locals. Dorothy told Jason she would meet him outside at the car. She entered the ladies, lounge, an opulent, gaudy room with couches and dim lighting. She was the only woman in the room. As she was washing her face with a warm face cloth, she noticed a young woman enter the lounge from an opposite door. She had not observed this door when entering because it was covered with the same red velvet covering as the walls. She wore an abaya and a black bourga that covered her face. Dorothy assumed she was a local from her dress. It was not possible to ascertain her age, but she appeared to be somewhat thin, even in the baggy dress, and about Dorothy's height of 5 feet 6 inches.

Dorothy noticed in the mirror the woman's blue eyes as she came closer to her. The woman continued to stare at Dorothy. She finished washing and was drying her hands when the woman spoke. "Do you speak English?"

"Yes, yes I do. I am an American."

"Oh, thank goodness, can you help me?"

Dorothy was taken aback by this bizarre encounter but decided to respond, especially since this woman spoke English with an American accent.

"Why, what is the problem?"

"I am an American too and have been held captive by this horrible prince. I am coming from the women's

lounge on the other side of the terminal and my minder has fallen asleep there.”

“Well, what can I do to help you? I am just visiting here and we are leaving momentarily, flying off to London.”

The young woman started to cry. “Please, please help me. Take me with you. My family will reward you. I just need to escape before they find I am gone. My name is Laura Rankin. I was kidnapped and forced here under false pretenses. You must help me,” she pleaded.

Dorothy was not one to be shy about women’s issues, but also concerned about getting involved in a private matter in this country of male chauvinists. However, Dorothy had recently read about the scandal of human trafficking and that it was rampant in the Middle East. She wondered if this was one of those examples where a young woman had been kidnapped. Laura had taken off her bourga and now Dorothy could see that Laura was a pretty young woman with blond hair and fair complexion. She looked so sorrowful standing there, and she reminded Dorothy of her own niece. Oh God, what to do, she thought. I could land in jail, the contract lost, this is not right. Why me, Lord?

“The hell with it,” she muttered on impulse. “Get out of those clothes and put on these slacks,” she said. “I also have a big soft hat in my bag.”

Laura didn’t need to be told a second time. She dropped her abaya and pulled on the slacks Dorothy held out to her. Fortunately, she had a white blouse under her

dress, and with the large black hat and sunglasses, she looked quite like a Western woman. Dorothy threw Laura's clothes in a trash bin as they exited the lounge on the western side of the terminal and headed for the car.

Dorothy held Laura by the arm and marched outside the terminal to the open door of the back seat of the limo. "What's going on," whispered Jason. "Who is this?"

"Shut up and get in the car," hissed Dorothy. "Get us to the plane, now!" Jason looked shocked, especially since he had never seen his boss act like this. Recovering, he ran around to the passenger side and got into the front seat of the limo, directing the driver to their aircraft. The women remained silent.

They left the limo and climbed into the aircraft. The crew was ready to leave, but the sudden appearance of another passenger caused a bit of a stir. "Who is this?" said the pilot. "We don't have her on the manifest. We could get into a lot of trouble with the locals if she is not supposed to be leaving with us."

"How about you fly the plane and leave the locals to me," said Dorothy. "This woman is an American and was kidnapped and brought here under duress. We are taking her home. Now get moving."

The co-pilot, Sharon Johnson, said, "She's right, Tom. It may not be legal, but we can't leave this girl here. Come on, we have clearance to leave and we can be out of Saudi airspace before anyone knows she is missing."

Grumbling to himself, the pilot went forward, seated, and signaled to the ground crew he was ready to start engines. Unfortunately, they had to wait about ten minutes for several Saudi military fighters to land before they could proceed along the taxiway. While this was a private airport, the other side of the runway was a Saudi military base, and they had preference over civilian aircraft.

Finally getting clearance, they proceed along the taxiway. However, they had only begun to move a short distance when the tower directed them to stop and shut down. The tower informed the pilot that Saudi customs had not received their paperwork and was coming out to the plane to resolve the issue. Looking back in the mirror, the pilot saw a car with flashing yellow lights making its way along the taxiway to their aircraft. "I told you this was trouble," he said. "Now what are we going to do? I filed all the necessary papers, but we have a stowaway on-board. How are we going to explain that? They could arrest all of us and impound the plane. I shouldn't have listened to you women."

"Don't worry," said the co-pilot. "I'll go open the door and see if I can sweet-talk us into the air. Give me the paperwork and let's see if I can head off an inspection of the plane."

As she opened the aircraft stairway, a sour looking Saudi stood there in uniform. He came up the stairway into the plane and asked, "Who are you?"

“I am Sharon Johnson, the first officer,” she said. “May I have your name, please, and what can we do for you? I have copies of all our paperwork here. I’m sure it all is in order.”

“You fly this plane!” he exclaimed. He ignored her request for his name. These American women never know their place, he thought.

“Yes, I am the co-pilot, and Captain Tom Anders is our pilot.”

“I want to speak with him. Go get him,” he ordered.

Just then the curtain from the galley parted and a female flight attendant in black slacks and a white blouse, with the two top buttons opened, stood there with a tray and two glasses of iced tea. “Hi there, general,” she said. “My name is Callie. Can I get you something to drink?”

The official looked flustered but recovered quickly. “I am a Captain,” he said. “Who are you and what are you doing on this aircraft?”

“Why, I am the flight services officer for this crew. I am getting iced tea for my passengers. Would you like some too? It would only take a minute, honey,” she said with her best southern drawl.

Callie is tall and full breasted, her long blond hair pulled up in a bun behind her head. The official just stood there and stared at the front of her blouse. She shifted slightly to give him a better look and offered him a glass of tea.

He started to accept but pulled his hand back quickly. “I have no time for this, where is the Captain?”

At that point, Jason came forward and introduced himself. “My partner and I have chartered this plane. Is there a problem here, Captain?”

“We have a report that two women came out to this plane in a car. Your documents show only one female. Where is the other woman?”

“Oh, that’s easy to explain,” interrupted Callie. “Captain, honey, you just didn’t look in the right section of the manifest.” She drew up real close to him and looked at the paper he held in his hand. “See, I am the other woman, but my name is under the crew section: right here, it says Callie Drohan. First officer, Sharon Johnson is on there too. There is only one woman in the passenger section, Ms. Allen.”

The captain drew back from her. “You, you were in the car?” said the official.

“Sure enough, sugar,” she said. “I heard you had a gorgeous ladies’ lounge and I just wanted to see it before we left this wonderful place. So, I rode back with Ms. Allen to the plane.” Callie’s sarcasm was lost on the official.

The captain looked around and only saw two women plus the co-pilot. However, he spied the black hat on the seat and asked, “Whose hat is that?” He had been told one of the women had a large black hat.

“Why, sugar, that’s my Guido Sarducci hat,” said Callie. “You remember him, that cute looking Italian priest on Saturday Night Live. My husband bought that hat for me to keep me from getting sunburned. I have such tender skin and this climate isn’t good for my complexion.” She gave him the loveliest smile as he stared again at her chest.

Perplexed, having no idea what Callie was saying, he drew himself up and, with his officious voice, told Jason to inform the pilot he could leave. He turned abruptly, exited down the stairway without saying anything and entered his official car. His companion, a major, looked at him and said, “Well?”

“There must be some mistake, major. There are three women on the plane, but two were crew members and only one passenger. That woman seen with the large black hat is a crew member. She is a crazy woman. They even have a female pilot. Americans!” He shook his head as they drove back to the terminal.

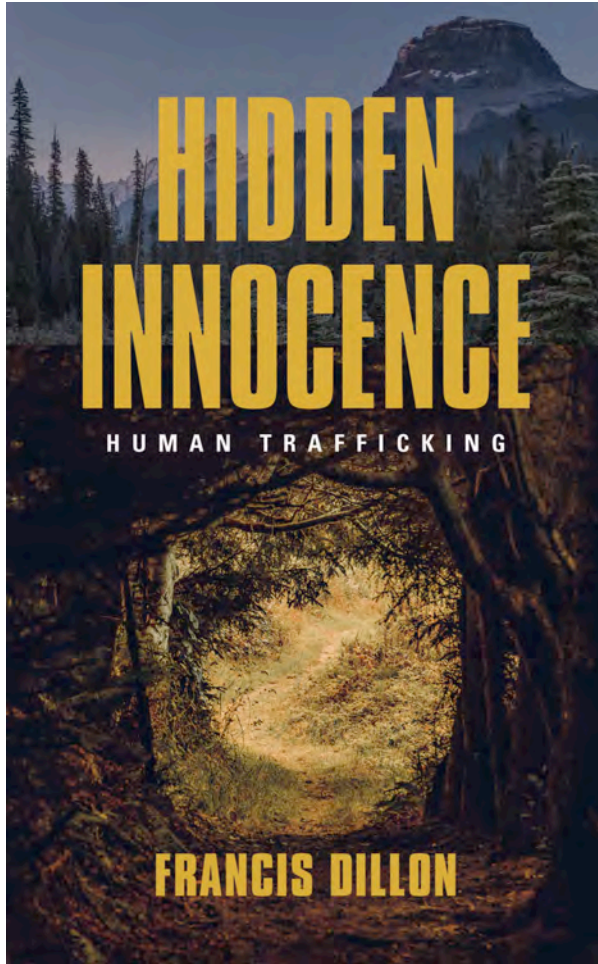
“I think the chaperone for the missing woman was wrong,” said the major. “Maybe she left the missing woman somewhere else. The chaperone won’t admit she fell asleep in the lounge but can’t explain why she didn’t notice her companion was missing. No big deal for us. We didn’t do anything wrong and we checked that aircraft. The Prince has lots of women and he can always buy more of them.” They both laughed at that remark and drove back to their office.

Sharon Johnson closed the stairway so they could get underway. "Callie, that was the best performance I ever saw," she said. "I know you were from Atlanta but that 'Southern sweet girl act' was just wonderful. Keeping that guy from going back to the tail section prevented him from noticing the hatchway into the baggage compartment."

"Well, I thought if I undid a couple of buttons on my blouse and cozy up to that pig, maybe we could get out of here without a problem. Did you see him staring at me? Can you imagine living here? Oh, shall we let our stowaway out of the baggage section?"

"Wait until we get out to the end of the taxiway," said Sharon. "I'll have Tom stop before we get onto the active runway. You get her out and seated in the cabin and buzz me when we are good to go."

"Ok, great," said Callie. "I am ready to leave this crazy place."



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