

Rambo Reyes and The Child Sex Slave Rescue Industry *Vigilantes Cut Through Red Tape*

By Lynn Packer March 31, 2015



Mark Shurtleff cheering for USANA and Sean Reyes body-guarding for Operation Underground Railroad.

A senior Utah assistant attorney general is said to have opined, “Sean Reyes has become Mark Shurtleff far faster than Mark Shurtleff.”

Yes, the same Mark Shurtleff who wore a badge and carried a concealed weapon. The same Mark Shurtleff who hired his friend to run a police force inside the AG’s office. The same Mark Shurtleff who—instead of prosecuting some suspected swindlers—solicited campaign donations from them.

Where Shurtleff went on stage at a sleazy multi-level marketing convention to lead cheers, Reyes went a step further when, for a weekend, he joined a private military unit to rescue purported sex slaves in Columbia, South America. He carried a badge but kept it out of sight because he was undercover. Afterwards Reyes suggested

Utahns donate to the group, makes appearances at its fundraisers and promotes the entity to Utah police chiefs.

The Deseret News was among all major Utah media who covered the attorney general’s swashbuckling adventure:

Attorney General Sean Reyes made a secret trip to Colombia last October as part of an operation to rescue child sex slaves. Reyes made the dangerous trek with Operation Underground Railroad, a Utah-based nonprofit organization that works with governments around the world in fighting child trafficking.

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The organization set up the sting by posing as wealthy investors in a cartel's plan to build a child sex hotel in the Rosaria Islands off the coast of Cartagena. To celebrate the deal, they planned a party on the small island of Baru, where the traffickers would bring the young girls. Reyes, who speaks Spanish, played the role of translator and bodyguard for the lead investor. "I wanted to get down where I could make a difference, look evil in the eye and stare it down," he said.

Operation Underground Railroad is the brainchild of former CIA and Homeland Security agent Tim Ballard. As a government employee in California he had worked undercover to detect and arrest pornographers and sex traffickers. Ballard, a Mormon, said he was frustrated with bureaucratic limitations on which children he could save. As *LDS Living Magazine* described it:

“So Ballard and his wife went to the temple for guidance. The next morning, in what Ballard describes as a “spiritual download,” he received a clear and undeniable answer: “Find the lost children.”

“I knew exactly what that meant. I was to find those kids who were out of our jurisdictional reach by starting a private, nonprofit organization. I didn’t know how, but something in Utah would lead to this.”

“The family moved to Utah in the summer of 2012, and soon everything fell into place for Ballard to found Operation Underground Railroad, which specializes in rescuing children trapped in slavery.

Before I left the government, I called all my contacts in other countries. I asked if they would still let me come in and operate privately, and they all said yes.”

So the father of six assembled a team of former Navy SEALs, ex-CIA agents, and other operatives with unique skill sets. Despite not knowing where the money would come from, networking and word of mouth quickly led to enough donations to begin operations in January of 2014.”



LDS Living Magazine reported Ballard fasted and prayed before forming Operation Underground Railroad.

Ballard frequently tells supporters and financial contributors that his former employer—Homeland Security’s Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)—“is mired in red tape and bureaucracy” so he left to save children who were” falling out of the purview of the U.S. government.’

Ballard formed the non-profit Operation Underground Railroad, Inc. (O.U.R.), essentially a vigilante unit that fights child sex trafficking, supposedly where ICE and other law enforcement agencies can’t or won’t. (Even though O.U.R. fits the classic definition of vigilante—a self-appointed group of citizens who undertake law enforcement without legal authority, typically because the legal agencies are thought to be inadequate—his vice president of rescue operations disagrees. “We aren’t a vigilante group,” says Doug Turley, “and we never try to force things to happen. We do everything we can, but things will happen on the Lord’s time—that’s when it is the most productive.”)

O.U.R. was modeled after several dozen similar, charitable groups in the United States that raise millions of dollars whipping up public awareness—some say hysteria—by using catch phrases and marketing taglines such as “child sex slave”, “child sex trafficking,” “abolition” and “break the chains.” Most of them describe the problem as an “epidemic “ that ensnares two million children in sex slavery worldwide by traffickers who make billions of dollars.



O.U.R., upper left, is among many anti-child sex trafficking groups that use the break-the-chains, slavery abolition, promotional theme.

Anti-child sex trafficking charity groups often recycle the same, unverified numbers, yet still compete among themselves for donors. Many government agencies—federal and state—that have their own programs to combat child sex slavery—lobby legislatures and Congress for dollars through the tax system’s front door, rather than like charities that vie for donor tax-deductible gifts through the tax system’s back door. While there may or may not be an epidemic of child sex slaves, there certainly is a spate of private and government groups arrayed to eradicate it.

Since its inception in September 2013, Ballard’s so-called jump teams have made more than a dozen incursions into Guatemala, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Columbia, United States and Mexico to assist local authorities in executing sting operations to free victims and arrest bad guys. Utah AG Reyes participated in O.U.R.’s Columbian operation last October.

In a *Salt Lake Tribune* online, TribTalk video interview, Reyes said, “I was the muscle making sure that we portrayed an image of power and prestige.” “I’m not one to sit on the sidelines.” He said he personally frisked traffickers and helped take away their cell phones.

Reyes insists it was “not a political stunt.” But he was quick to recommend viewers donate to O.U.R. while, in the same breath, saying he was not soliciting on the charity’s behalf. “Go check them out,” he said, “and volunteer your time, maybe a small amount of money. I’m not here to pitch fundraising for them.”

Despite Reyes telling viewers that he and his team were “not Rambo jumping out of helicopters” one TribTalk viewer texted, “This was grandstanding, pure and simple. What was the Utah AG doing getting involved in this, except gathering footage for his next round of campaign commercials? If he feels compelled to be Rambo, let him do it on his own dime.”

At the time Reyes was pitching for donors, O.U.R. was not even an approved Utah charity under the state’s Charitable Solicitations Act, a law he is sworn to enforce. No matter, the maximum fine for breaking that law is \$10,000 and Utah’s Division of Consumer Protection will merely ask Ballard’s charity to register. It is a law with almost no teeth—just a nominal fine—and no enforcement. Division Director Daniel O’Bannon told *packerchronicle* that lots of charities fail to register and, after caught, none has been sanctioned during his tenure. “Our goal is to bring charities into compliance and not impose fines,” he said.

If someone violates Utah’s Charitable Solicitations Act “willfully” it’s a criminal, misdemeanor offense. No charity has been prosecuted criminally during O’Bannon’s tenure.

The Money-Raising Machine

Early last year conservative Mormon television commentator Glenn Beck helped solicit more than a million dollars on O.U.R.’s behalf. “They need your tax-free dollars,” he told his viewers, asking them to donate “a dollar, or anything you can, or at least just spread the word. This is just a friend of mine. I am not involved in this charity. I have nothing to do with it other than I believe in the man who is running it, and I believe in the cause.”

Besides Beck's and its own fundraising efforts, O.U.R. has perhaps dozens of independent fundraisers. One wrote, "You can learn more about Operation Underground Railroad by visiting their website www.ourrescue.org. Please support the mission of this foundation with your tax deductible donations." Another fundraiser, Katie Brown, said "Operation Underground Railroad is a (501(c)(3), so your donations are tax deductible."



Glenn Beck with OUR's Tim Ballard raising more than \$1M in what Beck called tax deductible donations.

Section 501(c)(3) is the part of the US Internal Revenue Code that exempts non-profit charities from paying federal taxes. It also permits donors to take deductions for their charitable contributions under federal law 26 U.S.C. § 170. At the time some fundraisers were claiming O.U.R. had 501(c)(3) status, it actually did not. To qualify for tax-free/tax-deductible status an organization must apply to the IRS by filing form 1023 and disclosing its governance, structure and programs that the charity had not done.

But there's another way for non-profit charities to avoid paying income tax and have their donors get tax deductions:



Utah Attorney General Sean Reyes with Tim Ballard, Ed Smart and Elizabeth Smart, raising money for the merging child rescue charities.

Piggyback with another charity that already has exempt status. Until March 3 of this year Operation Underground Railroad did not have 501(c) status on its own but through two entitles that did, first through the Utah entity, Child Rescue Association of North America (CRA) and, later, with the Elizabeth Smart Foundation (ESF).

Just as O.U.R. had failed to comply with Utah's Charitable Solicitations Act in 2014, neither had CRA or ESF. But because state regulators rarely if ever enforce that law; the consequence faced by violators for raising money without being legally registered is that they will be asked to register.

O.U.R.'s fundraising website explained the relationship it had with its first fiscal sponsor. "Operation Underground Railroad is a project of Child Rescue Association of North America, a non-profit organization. Therefore, all donations are tax deductible." Ballard's charity used CRA as its main donation channel until October of last year. A few months later it announced a change on its website:

This month O.U.R. is transitioning to a new program partner called "The Elizabeth Smart Foundation". The Elizabeth Smart Foundation is a 501.c.3 nonprofit organization. This change will in no way affect our operations; we are simply doing it in order to better help the children we rescue and to maintain our non-profit status so that your donations remain tax-deductible. Elizabeth Smart is a survivor of sex slavery and has become one of the greatest advocates against child sex slavery and trafficking. With her foundation now partnering with Operation Underground Railroad, we look forward to increasing the reach of our prevention and rehabilitation efforts.

Operation Underground Railroad's Fiscal Sponsorships

It can be legal and reputable for a non-exempt charity like OUR to team up with a "fiscal sponsor" charity—like Child Rescue or Elizabeth Smart—that has 501(c)(3) status so that OUR donors can get tax deductions.

The exempt, parent entity becomes the "sponsor" and the non-exempt charity becomes a "project" and "grantee."

But there are at least three caveats:

- First, the money must be used consistent with the sponsor's IRS approved, charitable purpose. (Facts indicate OUR's purpose is consistent with both Child Rescue and Elizabeth Smart.)
- Second, the 501 (c)(3) organization must retain discretion and control over how the funds are used. (Based on interviews with Jess Larsen and Ed Smart, those entities exercised little discretion and control over OUR's finances.)
- Third, the tax-exempt sponsor should maintain records that establish that the funds were used for its purposes. (Neither Larsen nor Smart had any detailed, OUR financial information about the money they granted.)

In summary, "Abuse is likely to occur whenever a 501(c)(3) organization is used as a conduit for transactions between donors and the fiscal client."

"The IRS has a strict policy against 'conduit' arrangements. When a donation is made by A to B, earmarked for C, it is in reality a donation from A to C, and ...the gift is not a tax-deductible contribution." (Primary source: causeofaction.com)

Last month, on March 3, O.U.R. obtained its own IRS tax-exempt status retroactive to the day it was formed, ending its need for a fiscal sponsor. On March 14 the O.U.R. and the Elizabeth Smart Foundation—announced they had fully merged. The two combined charities have discontinued using Child Rescue Association as a conduit for donations.

Ed Smart is now a vice president and fulltime employee of the united charities. He said Elizabeth Smart Foundation directors resigned and O.U.R. directors will oversee the tactical operations. He said the foundation's upcoming tax return will show that his charity had raised little money and had few expenses while O.U.R. accounts for most of the donations and costs.

Packerchronicle recently obtained a copy of O.U.R.'s application for tax-exempt status. It revealed what the charity's spokespersons would not disclose, that it collected some \$5.4 million in donations its first 15 months of operation. Ballard, as CEO and president, is paid \$125,000 a year plus health insurance. It's COO, Jerry Gowen gets \$120,000 a year and Ed Smart, a vice president and program director for victim rehabilitation makes \$96,000.

The management of the merged charities is largely a Ballard family affair according to the application. Ballard's brother-in-law Todd Reynolds is a director. Another director, Marc Reynolds, is a brother to Todd. Ballard's sister-in-law Tevya Ward is a director and is paid

\$70,000 a year as vice president of finance. One of Ballard's sisters, Julianne Blake is a director. Another sister, Emily Evans is listed as an "employee" and makes \$65,000 a year.

O.U.R.'s Lack of Transparency

Until this march, 2015, Ballard's charity was raising money, running it through Child Rescue Association of North America and, later, the Elizabeth Smart Foundation, to gain tax deduction status, and then getting the funds granted back with little oversight as to how the money was spent.

Until O.U.R. filed and received for it own tax-exempt status this month most of its financial information was secret, not only from the public but also from its two fiscal sponsors who, according to law, were supposed to be overseeing, even determining how O.U.R. was spending its millions.

Neither Jess Larsen with CRS nor Ed Smart with ESF could provide *packerchronicle* with any financial detail about how O.U.R was spending the donations the two were funneling to it. Larsen did not know for sure if Tim Ballard was even being paid and, if so, how much he was making.

Smart referred *packerchronicle* to O.U.R.'s chief operating officer, Jerry Gowen, who declined providing any detail. It was not until the IRS required O.U.R. to prove it has exempt status that the charity finally made public basic, required financial information such as how much it had raised and was paying its officers and directors.

Gowen said it's actually quite common for new charities, new non-profit organizations that are just getting up and running, to work with a parent organization that has their 501(c)(3) status "What they (the Elizabeth Smart Foundation) provided to us is their tax ID number." "So essentially we have been a project under the Elizabeth Smart Foundation. So when people make their donations they go through the Elizabeth Smart Foundation and that's how they're able to get their tax exemption."

Was O.U.R. using its fiscal sponsors as mere conduits to avoid oversight and disclosure?

No, according to CRA's founder Jess Larsen. He said the process was on the up and up. "They were not just raising it through us, they were raising money for us, and then they were separately applying for grants from us," he said. Larsen insists the money flow was not designed to allow O.U.R. to avoid disclosing its finances to the public. Yet Larsen admitted he had little detail about expenditures.

Larsen said he does not want it to appear that his Child Rescue was merely a pass-through entity. "You would not want it to sound like they're siphoning tax-free money to people who don't have tax-free status," Larsen said. "That's where all sorts of problems would happen."

One of the problems popped up when O.U.R. filed its tax return for 2013. The charity had been in existence the last three and a half months of that year. It filed last November, about six months late. And claimed, falsely, it already had tax-exempt status from the IRS. That caught the IRS's attention and prompted a letter to O.U.R. asking it to confirm it really was tax-exempt.

O.U.R.'s San Diego tax attorney, Adam Becker, told *packerchronicle* he doesn't know why the IRS sent that letter.

"They send those letters out all the time in my opinion. I guess they're just saying, 'Hey if you don't get your application in you'll be treated as a (non-exempt) corporation.'"

(The 2013 return shows O.U.R. had received \$925,378 in grants during the three-and-a-half time period, ostensibly from Jess Larsen with Child Rescue. The Child Rescue Association of North America's 2013 return—January 1 to Dec 31— lists grants of \$900,200 for "The Underground Railroad Project" which approximates the \$925,378 in grants O.U.R. reported to the IRS.

C Name of organization
OPERATION UNDERGROUND RAILROAD, INC.
Doing Business As
Number and street (or P.O. box if mail is not delivered to street address)
5727 NORTH 1700 WEST
City or town, state or province, country, and ZIP or foreign postal code
CEDAR CITY, UT 84721
F Name and address of principal officer TIM BALLARD
Tax-exempt status: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 501(c)(3)

OUR falsely claimed to be a tax-exempt organization on its 2013 tax return.

The return said the entity had made \$82,950 in expenditures and had no employees or volunteers. It disclosed that its five officers and directors also received no compensation during 2013 and that the president, Tim Ballard, was spending just one hour a week working on charity business. Ballard resigned as a federal agent on December 10, 2013, but a source says he had been working over a several-month time frame to set up O.U.R., apparently without compensation. Most of the expenses for the three and a half months covered by the return were for office expenses (\$11,590), outside services (a round \$30,000), operation expenses (\$15,627), contract labor (\$6,000) and training (\$5,176.)

The tax return said the charity's books were in the care of Tim Ballard at 5727 North 1700 West in Cedar City at the 801-830-5363 phone number. The address was not Ballard's but his brother-in-law's. The phone number was also not his but that of a consultant who said the use of his number was a mistake. Kelly Wilson, the American Fork accountant who prepared the 2013 declined an interview request.)

Instead of trying to show non-existent proof for the claim it had exempt status, O.U.R. merely applied for it. Despite the return having been filed late and falsely claiming O.U.R. already had 501(c)(3) status, the IRS quickly granted that status on March 3, retroactive to September 6, 2013, the date it was founded.

It often takes six months to a year for the IRS to grant exempt status. It took O.U.R. only about two months. "I've never seen one approved this fast," Becker said. "I have no idea why. We did not ask for it to be approved quickly."

Operation Underground Railroad's Roots

A Reality Television Series

When Tim Ballard and his associates were conceptualizing Operation Underground Railroad in early 2013 the plan was to not only rescue child sex slaves but also to capture the operations on video for a reality television series. Mormon filmmakers Darrin Fletcher, Chet Thomas and Jerald Molen first sought funding for the series from Glenn Beck. They already had a partnership with Beck to produce a children's education program for Beck's cable television and online network.

Co-producer Darrin Fletcher said they began pitching Beck the idea of funding a TV series about a well-armed "jump team" making dramatic child sex slave rescues when "Glenn pounded on his desk pointed, at Chet and me, and said, 'I know what I want. I want a television series and I want you two to produce it for me.'"

Beck asked the filmmaker's company, FletChet Entertainment, to produce a pilot or teaser. (FletChet Entertainment, Inc. is a now-expired Utah corporation that had been formed in 2011.)

At the point FletChet was pitching Glenn Beck Tim Ballard was still working for the government and O.U.R. was still in the planning stages with no actual missions that could be



The Abolitionists' heavily armed jump team preparing to go after bad guys.



Abolitionists jump team training, Dec. 2013.

filmed. So Ballard and FletChet videoed some ex-Navy SEALs and Army Special Ops members undergoing training with automatic weapons. They produced a “teaser” for a series they would title *The Abolitionists*.

O.U.R.’s original concept is reminiscent of the 2008 feature film, *Rambo IV*. In the movie John Rambo assembles a jump team to rescue sex slaves held by their captors in Burma.

The proposed series would star two ex-

Army special ops soldiers—Jason Hepworth and Aaron Thomas—and one ex-Navy SEAL—Steve Hutch—who, armed to the hilt, would swoop in to save kids from sex slavery rings around the world. The three would be assisted by one unidentified undercover operative who would set up the sting as a decoy bad guy seeking child sex or buying sex slaves.

Fletcher, in a September 21, 2013 YouTube donor solicitation video, explained their goal. “Jerald Molen, Chet Thomas and myself are going to make a television series,” he said in the video he said “was used to raise money and awareness for our cause.” “We’ve assembled a jump team,” he said in a video clip that also featured a sound clip of one of the three operatives:



John Rambo assembles a jump team to rescue sex slaves in Burma.

We find children who have been kidnapped, used for sexual slaves, and we go get them. We can extract these kids. I’ve broken up slavery rings. I’ve seen what it does to people. These children deserve better.

Fletcher shared his belief that awareness generated by the reality series would disrupt child sex slave trafficking throughout the world:

Through this series, we will shine a light so bright on the evils of sex slavery, that the monsters, fully exposed to the public eye, won’t be able to continue doing business as usual. Using cutting edge computer technology that identifies the black markets of child porn production, and using the latest in undercover sting operations, stuff you thought only existed in the movies, our jump team will take this bright light into the darkest corners of the earth and will liberate these children while dismantling their captors.

The Abolitionists film team had a lot of street cred via Mormon Academy Award winner Jerry Molen, best known for working with Stephen Spielberg on *Schindler’s List*, *Jurassic Park* and *The Minority Report*.

The Abolitionist jump team's first operation was scheduled for the last week in November 2013. "Let's go get some bad guys," Thomas and Fletcher's Facebook posting said. It was followed with another that said, "The op was cancelled for various reasons. Can't go into all the details..." But the team continued training and began shooting video for the series in Washington, D.C.



Jerry Molen, Academy Award-winning executive producer, with co-producers Chet Thomas and Darrin Fletcher on the Glenn Beck Show, Sept. 2013. Beck has a business partnership with the three but, ostensibly, no direct financial interest in the Abolitionists.

That same November the television producers claimed they had found a distribution channel and would soon go into production. In the meantime they asked for money. "If this cause moves you please help by donating anything you can at www.operationundergorundrailroad.org." (That website has since been dismantled and replaced with ourrescue.org.)

That November 2013 Glenn Beck solicited what he called tax-free dollars for O.U.R. and directed his listeners and viewers to the operationundergorundrailroad.org web site. So already, without a single operation under its belt, Operation Underground Railroad's money-raising machine was in full swing.

On that program Beck did not reveal Ballard's name. Ballard had not yet quit ICE and it was envisioned that he would be the undercover operative working with the jump team. Beck told the story a clandestine meeting a "friend" had set up to disclose who he really was and what he did really. The meeting took place at a hotel in the spring of 2013 while Ballard was still a federal agent.

"So I got to this hotel, and went into this conference room," Beck told his audience. "He's there with a slide projector and screen and a couple of people. The door closed and he said, 'I have to tell you I'm not who you think I am.' This is one of the most surreal, movie kind of moments in my life."

The friend, Ballard, told Beck he was working for the federal government, combatting child sex traffickers. Ballard talked about one of his first missions where a "monster" was taking a 5-year-old boy and his 10-year-old sister from the United States into Mexico to for "drug cartel parties" in Mexico and used as "sex toys." Beck said the two were trafficked back and forth as sex slaves.

Beck said his friend was in on the rescue, going in undercover, attending the sex party, and as soon as money changed hands "Navy SEALs dropped out of the ceiling" and saved the children. Beck added that American kids were being kidnapped and shipped all over the world, without citing any proof his statement was based in fact.

Beck told his audience said he did not have enough money to fund the television series startup venture. So he appealed to his listeners and viewers. They responded by donating \$300,000 the first day and upwards of a million before Beck's fund-raising campaign peaked.

A few in Beck's audience were skeptical and told him so by posting comments on his Facebook page:

Everything about this story is implausible. He's rescued children on "hundreds" of missions? The government was funding him as an agent, but he quits, and now he wants private donations so he can "Rambo" them with the help of some of his "elite" military friends?

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I wished this was true, but I am suspicious. As a federal agent I worked all over the world & you just don't "drop out of the ceiling" when you're in someone else's country. I would be the first to join if I thought this was valid, as I still have contacts around the world. Too good to be true.

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Hate to say it, but I get a funny feeling that Glenn is being scammed. Child abuse is terrible, but this story from Glenn's friend doesn't seem legit. He may be getting conned... child abuse tugs on a very emotional string.

Beck's plea for financial help caught the attention of some of the members of the Special Operations Community Network (SOCNET), a chat room for former Army, Navy, Marine and Air Force soldiers involved with special operations. Some former special forces personnel were already involved with other charities who were rescuing sex slaves.

An Army buddy just emailed me a link to their website and suggested I make a donation to a good cause, as well as forward to our unit's Facebook group so the rest of the fellas can get in on the action too, if they're so moved. (Soot, 15 November 2013)

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Here's a link to the org's "team leader" page where they provide the identities of several former "Army Sepc Ops" and Navy SEAL service members—"We are going to go into foreign Nations and disrupt operations of organized crime groups which may have contacts with security services. And here are our photographs showing face on internet. Because there is no facial recognition software in use anywhere."If it is not joke, I wish very much the photographs are false. (Johanj 15 November 2013)

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If you guys fucking fall for this shit again, I swear to God the ridicule that I unleash will reverberate in the signature lines of half the membership here for an eternity. I mean- they have fucking video game profiles. What else do you need to see? Cute little tag lines like "We call him Ssssssam because he is so intense he just hisses like a stick of dynamite". We've been down this road before folks... (MakoZeroSix 21 November 2013)

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The profiles shown on the link cited in Soot's original post look like something out of a video game promotion. My thoughts exactly. Plus the cia guy profile made my head explode. And the Navy SEAL's rank is sgt? WTF? (Verfitatem Cognoscere, 14 November 2013)

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I've seen them in the news quite often. They have a new movie detailing their successes recently, it's playing at the Sundance Film Festival. Utah's Attorney General, Sean Reyes, recently went with one of them on their op posing as a translator. I dunno guys, seems pretty legit to me. Last posts here are well over a year old, but I thought I would rez this thread and ask if there is some more info anybody in the know could provide regarding this org now that they've been around a while. (Stampe 29 January 2015)



OUR's profile of Navy Seal/Master Sergeant Steve Hutch

The posting about the Navy SEAL's rank refers to O.U.R.'s profile of Steve Hutch. It says he was a master sergeant with the but the SEAL's don't use the sergeant rank like the Army.

It turns out that the names and ranks of the three strike force members are fake. Darrin Fletcher said that should have been obvious to potential donors visiting his site. "All of those are phony names, obviously," he

said. He disclosed that the anonymous undercover operative pictured on the web was, in fact, Tim Ballard.

Jess Nelson, O.U.R.'s fiscal sponsor who was involved in discussions early on, thought the names were real. "I can't imagine them making up names. I don't have any reason to think they are not real people," he said.

By time Operation Underground Railroad began striking at overseas targets in early 2014 it had nixed the idea of carrying weapons. "I didn't know if foreign governments would let us carry firearms," Fletcher said.

A new concept emerged. O.U.R. would use local law enforcement to show a force of arms and make arrests. Team members would decoys instead of paramilitary although they called it a jump team. Instead of sticking with only combat veterans to go undercover they also used guests who had no military experience, including women, to pose as child sex traffickers.

The Abolitionists
September 21, 2013 ·

Here is the trailer to *The Abolitionists*.
<http://youtu.be/rgNuhOKzVz0>

The Abolitionists
A new television series from the producer of *Jurassic Park* and *Schindler's List*. To donate visit
<http://www.OperationUndergroundRailroad.org>

By April 2014 Glenn Beck told his viewers and listeners that funding for the movie and for the operations were separate. Besides, he told his audience, a single donor was financing the movie. Plus, the series would not appear on his TheBlaze network. The producers were going for a bigger audience.

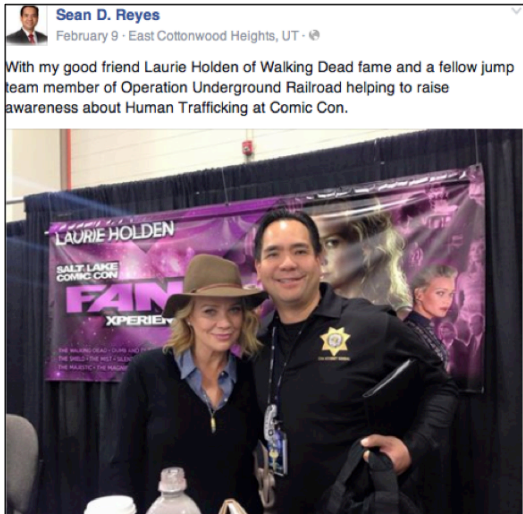
The single donor turned out to be one of O.U.R.'s directors, Ryan Welch, through his family's Sled Investment Group, LLC. Sled was formed in Utah in July 2013. Welch declined comment.

The outlet for an ongoing TV series they had told donors about fell through. Plan B was to make a full-length motion picture but continue to shoot segments for a television series.

FletChet Entertainment, Inc.'s Connection to O.U.R.

Abolitionists' co-producer Chet Thomas says he and his co-producer/director Darrin Fletcher are now talking to distributors about releasing *The Abolitionists* movie to theaters nationwide. And they're also editing television episodes in the hope a network or cable will pick up an ongoing series.

We love the O.U.R. team; they love our team. We actually work extremely well together. We're a little incestuous in that sense. We consider ourselves all one team.



Attorney General Sean Reyes' Facebook page. Wearing a badge he promotes *The Abolitionists* movie at Comic Con.

At pre-release screenings of the movie *The Abolitionists* it's difficult to detect any difference between the non-profit Operation Underground Railroad, Inc. and the for-profit Abolitionists, LLC. Tim Ballard attends the screenings that also serve as O.U.R. fundraising events. Utah Attorney General Sean Reyes has also made numerous charity/movie promotional appearances to promote the movie and the charity, sometimes wearing his AG police jacket and badge.

The close connection between the movie/TV venture and the charity could violate tax law. A 501(c)(3), tax-exempt organization can lose that status if it serves a private interest more than insubstantially. Tax law is complex and non-profit, tax-exempt charities, in certain

circumstances can legally engage in joint ventures with for-profit organizations. But if an exempt organization provides more than an incidental benefit to the for-profit entity the organizations tax-exempt status could be revoked by the IRS and tax deductions disallowed.

O.U.R.'s tax attorney, Dan Becker, said he was unaware Ryan Welch was ever on his client's board. He was also asked if Tim Ballard's role with the Abolitionists, LLC was a conflict of interest. Becker pointed to the entity's conflict of interest policy, which, he said, spells out the procedure for disclosing conflicts of interest.

The policy, which he provided, requires officers and directors to affirm they understand "that the Organization is charitable and that in order to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities that accomplish one or more of its tax exempt purposes." The policy warns directors that they are to "protect the interest of Operation Underground Railroad, Inc...when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer or director. Or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction." It says officers and directors have a duty to disclose actual or possible conflicts with the governing board. The board would then investigate the proposed transaction or arrangement. If the board determines a person has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict "it will take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action."

The policy does not say whether any actual or potential conflicts must be disclosed to donors or taxpayers. O.U.R.'s officers and directors won't say either. The charity's press person Shannon Shupe had arranged an interview with Ballard, his attorney and accountant. But as questions piled up she cancelled it. "We are currently in the midst of fielding numerous interviews with major national news media outlets and it's a struggle for me to carve out time with Tim for these meetings because of the exorbitant amount of time

he spends rescuing children,” she said. O.U.R. COO Jerry Gowen also discontinued returning calls.

A tax-exempt organization that is willing to serve as a non-exempt project’s fiscal sponsor by allowing use of its tax-exempt status is supposed to provide oversight and control over how the money is spent. Otherwise the parent entity is merely serving as a money conduit. It’s because all taxpayers subsidize tax-exempt charities and have an interest that charities are not used to illegally evade taxes.

The IRS imposes the most restrictions on 501(c)(3) charities because they not only can operate tax-free but allow their donors to get tax deductions as well.

When a tax-exempt charity becomes a fiscal sponsor of a non-exempt charity it becomes responsible for making sure the funds it grants that charity are not misused. Some



Child Rescue Assoc. founder Jess Larsen exercised no financial control over the millions his charity funneled O.U.R.

tax experts believe fiscal sponsors—such as Jess Larsen’s Child Rescue charity—not only have a duty to *monitor* funds they pass on to their “project” or “program” entities—like Tim Ballard’s O.U.R. —but they also have a duty to *control* the funds as well. One expert tells agents for non-exempt entities that piggyback on tax-exempt entities, “You will not have direct control over funds your fiscal agent receives on your behalf, and will need to deal with the fiscal agency to arrange disbursement.”

Another says sponsors must retain discretion and control as to the use of the funds and must maintain records that establish that the funds were used for 501(c)(3) purposes.

As of March 3 this year O.U.R. is responsible for protecting its own 501(c)(3) status. Before that Child Rescue Association and, later, the Elizabeth Smart Foundation were responsible for assuring that the money O.U.R. raised through them was being used for charitable purposes. It was the sponsors’ job to make sure no tax-deductible donations inured to the benefit of the for-profit movie production company or that no officer or director had an improper tie to a for-profit venture.

It turns out that neither Jess Larsen nor Ed Smart controlled or monitored O.U.R.’s expenditures. Both sponsors permitted O.U.R. to fully control the passed-through donations. In the absence of Larsen and Smart having those records *Packerchronicle* asked O.U.R.s to provide that financial detail. O.U.R. declined.

Larsen, whose heads the charity that funneled the most money to O.U.R. in 2014, said he has not been tracking O.U.R.’s expenditures. He said he had no responsibility to control how O.U.R. spent money. “I did not have control,” he said, “it is not fair to call me a parent.” But Larsen did say, “We definitely require financial accountability from O.U.R.”

Larsen has yet to get that financial accountability. He said he only needs to get it, all at once, in the form of receipts, in about May of this year after O.U.R. files its 2014 income tax return. He concedes there was no ongoing monitoring of money.

Larsen says, however, when O.U.R. does provide financial details, he will account for every penny. “My requirements include the actual records and receipts, all receipts. We will get itemized expenditures and receipts.”

Every single penny? he was asked.

“Yes.”

But what if he finds some of the money was misspent? He said he would consult an attorney.

Tim Ballard's Mission

The Hyping of Operation Underground Railroad

Tears frequently flow when Tim Ballard describes the suffering he sees child sex slaves experience at the hands of depraved traffickers. He talks openly of the fasting and prayer that precede a jump team strike to rescue the kids. "I know the Lord is with me and my team," he told a reporter. "When you're on the Lord's errand, he blesses you."

Ballard grew up in the Pasadena, California suburb. *The Deseret News*, when it pronounced Ballard a "Hero of 2014," said Ballard's mother Melanie thought Tim would grow up to be a lawyer because, even as a child, he was obsessed with the idea of right and wrong: "He would always wear a Superman cape," she said. "He was the conscience of the family, he sees right and wrong as very black and white," she told the newspaper.

Ballard told *The Deseret News* he graduated from Brigham Young University in Spanish and political science with a 4.0 GPA, served an LDS Church mission in Chile and went on to win a scholarship at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, where he earned his master's degree in international politics, summa cum laude.

Before Ballard ever appeared on Glenn Beck's show to pitch saving sex slaves he was a guest to promote his book, "The Lincoln Hypothesis." The book attempts to make the case that Abraham Lincoln was inspired by God and had read the Book of Mormon and accepted the gospel of Jesus Christ (Mormonism). Ballard says it is significant that right after Lincoln purportedly read the Book of Mormon he issued the Emancipation Proclamation to Free the slaves.

Ballard's belief in the God-inspired righteousness of freeing the slaves is part of the impetus behind his calling his team *abolitionists* and naming his organization *Operation Underground Railroad* after the network of secret routes and safe houses abolitionists used to help 19th Century Negro slaves escape to freedom.

(At the time Ballard formed O.U.R. there was already an anti-child sex slavery charity named "The Underground Railroad" so he added "Operation" to his charity's name.

Other modern-day child-slave rescue groups have also referred to themselves as abolitionists. The "New Abolitionists" movement is an expression evangelicals and other activists have long used to describe their efforts to combat modern-day slavery.)

Ballard calls donations to his charity "sacred dollars." He wrote on his website that "during missions, OURrescue jump teams rent only 1 room for the whole team, eat cheap food, and more to cut operational costs as much as possible to help your tax-deductible



dollars go farther in freeing enslaved children,” he wrote on his website. It’s one of a star-studded list of representations that may not be completely true, perhaps even false.

★The one-hotel-room claim.

It’s almost certain that most of Ballard’s jump team members do not share a single room. At times the number of decoy partiers he takes along could number near a dozen. (One source says O.U.R. deploys three ten-man teams.)

It could be that Ballard, as God’s instrument, believes he is justified in fudging the truth to raise awareness and get funding to free child sex slaves. Ballard’s single-hotel-room budget pledge is not the only time he’s fudged facts that are often passed along by news reporters as true.

There is a danger associated with misrepresenting facts to get money. Anyone seeking other people’s money in Utah—whether from investors or donors—risks running afoul of Utah’s Communications Fraud statute. The law prohibits taking other people’s money with the use of “fraudulent pretense, representations, promises or material omissions.” Just as salesmen are not free to say anything to get people to part with their money, neither are fundraisers, even those raising money for charities. All are subject to prosecution for failing to provide prospective donors material and truthful facts.

The victims of charity communications fraud are not the donors, who may have given even if they knew the truth. They get their tax deductions. The primary victims are taxpayers who depend on government agencies to protect them from tax cheats.

★The we’re-the-only-ones claim.

One of Ballard’s pitches, repeated in the trailer for his movie *The Abolitionists*:

“if me and my team don’t find these kids and go for these kids no one is going to.”

The truth is there are many child rescue charities and law enforcement agencies that use “jump teams” to rescue children involved with illegal prostitution and pornography. Many also use citizen hot lines, computer software and other means to try to locate and save children being used for illegal activity.

Indeed, so many tax and donation dollars are going to child rescue some experts wonder if a lot of it is not being wasted. Government agencies, including many in Utah and private charities alike, compete for grants and donations.

★The millions-of-victims claim.

Then there’s the numbers game. Is Ballard truthful and accurate about the numbers he uses to stir donor concern? A sampling of his and his associates’ quotes in the media:

• **Ballard says that the statistics give him reason enough to do the work he does—over 27 million men, women, and children are currently slaves in some form, and 2 million of them are children,” he told the Mormon Channel.**

• **Currently, there are an estimated 27 million enslaved humans in the world. Human trafficking is growing as the second fastest criminal enterprise in the world and is an estimated \$32 billion-a-year global industry.**

- Today there are 27 million slaves, according to Ballard. Of those slaves, roughly 10 million are commercial sex slaves. Out of the 10 million, about 2 million are children
- Ballard told Glenn Beck’s viewers, “Most people have no concept of “how real and how huge” of an issue child sex trafficking is. Nearly two million children are trapped as sex slaves, and roughly 90% of them fall out of U.S. jurisdiction.
- There’s two million children being exploited commercially for sex,” Ballard said.”
- “It’s estimated there are one hundred thousand children who are in the commercial sex trade here in the United States,” Ballard said on NBC’s Meredith Vieira Show.
- “Every year 800,000 children are imported into the U.S. as sex slaves,” says Matt Osborne, O.U.R. V.P. for intelligence,



Matt Osborne tells tea partiers 800,000 child sex slaves are imported into the U.S. every year.)

The last figure—800,000 child sex slaves a year imported into the U.S.—would be hardest to fathom. The charity’s vice president for intelligence and foreign missions, Matt Osborne, gave that number to a Texas Tea Party group in January. That would amount to 4 million sex slaves in five years or an average of 80,000 in each state over just five years.

An old, 2007, State Department report does use an 800,000 figure. But it includes *adults* and children, it includes

labor slaves and sex slaves, and it includes *all borders* in the world, not just those adjoining the United States.

(Osborne is ex-CIA. He told the group he quit after having “lost a lot of confidence” in President George W. Bush and Barrack Obama. He also told he gave up regular pay from the government and healthcare to join O.U.R. He did not tell them O.U.R. pays him \$110,000 a year and includes health insurance.)

Other charities and government agencies often use the same numbers to raise funds to combat the sexual exploitation of children. Some numbers come from the U.S. federal government. By law the U.S. State Department is required to issue an annual Trafficking in Persons report. In 2007 Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice reported:

A wide range of estimates exists on the scope and magnitude of modern-day slavery. The International labor Organization (ILO)—the United Nations agency...estimates there are 12.3 million people in forced labor, bonded labor, forced child labor, and sexual servitude at any given time; other estimates range from 4 million to 27 million.

Wikipedia says, “The International Labor Organization estimates that there are as many as 1.8 million children sexually trafficked worldwide, while UNICEF’s 2006 State of the World’s Children Report reports this number to be 2 million.”

What Ballard and Osborne and other fundraisers don’t say is that some experts and the U.S. State Department are backing off last decade’s numbers. The U.S. State Department’s 2014 Trafficking in Persons Report warns news reporters about what it calls the “numbers game,” the same game it once played.

“Reporters often lead with numbers,” the report says, “but reliable statistics related to human trafficking are difficult to find.”



Tom Gillen with the Center for Human Trafficking Awareness. “Don’t get caught up in the numbers.”

Floridian Tom Gillen—who’s been training law enforcement officers in human trafficking since 2004—warns, “Don’t get caught up in the numbers.” Gillen, who is director of the Central Florida Catholic Charities Criminal Justice Office and teaches at St. Petersburg College Center for Human Trafficking Awareness, told *packerchronicle*, “I hate those approximate numbers because you can make up anything you want. And the reason that they use those numbers, in my opinion, is as a marketing tool to get people to give to their cause.”

There are a lot of non-profit organizations that are popping up, they are coming out of the woodwork, raising money, saying that they are rescuing people, and doing this or doing out and what we’re finding out is that they are really not doing a whole lot of anything. They are getting wealthy off their donations.

Gillen doesn't like the idea of charities forming rescue teams, often with former military. “To me that’s the job of law enforcement,” he said, “finding them, rescuing them.”

They investigate and then they rescue the victims. Then you have the non-government organizations (NGOs) such as Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, Lutheran Family services, those types of organizations actually work with law enforcement hand-in-hand and care for the victims and work them through the trial and prosecution process. It’s a joint effort.

Gillen was asked about the videos some charities, including O.U.R. make of dramatic rescues.

“Those are the things that bother me,” he said. There have been quite a few of those videos that organizations produce and then they use those to even make more money.”

Gillen was told that Utah Attorney General Sean Reyes went on one of O.U.R.’s missions and appeared in a promotional video.

“Wow, that’s scary,” he responded.

Ballard often tells reporters and donors the problem is getting worse.

If it is getting worse then the hundreds of millions being poured into the problem by government and private groups around the world is not helping much.

There is one indication, although anecdotal not scientific, that it’s getting better. The FBI’s report on the number of minors arrested for prostitution and commercialization, while a tiny indicator, shows the number arrested dropping every year, from 1,158 in 2008 to 161 in 2012.

★The child-is-a-slave claim.

O.U.R.'s signature promotional photograph shows Ballard with a purported child slave he rescued in Haiti. "Finally this little boy realized that I was there to rescue him. He ran into my arms and buried his head in my neck as we both sobbed," Ballard says.

But was the child really being sold into slavery?

Ballard tells the story of how an LDS bishop's 3-year-old son in Haiti had been kidnapped after church services. The kidnappers demanded a ransom, it was paid, but the child



O.U.R.'s signature marketing image: Tim Ballard holding a child he rescued from a Haitian orphanage.



Working undercover at a Haiti orphanage, Ballard pays \$20-30,000 to buy two "slave" children.

was not returned. Ballard's team, working with Haitian police, went there to find the child. "We believe the child was sold to traffickers...for slave labor," Ballard said in an interview with The LDS Church's Mormon Channel.

Pretending to be traffickers, Ballard's team went to an unlicensed orphanage police suspected might be used to traffic kids. "There were 15 kids, a lot of them on the verger of starving, horrible conditions, we were told pick which one you want, fifteen thousand dollars, out the back door, right now, no questions asked." Ballard bought two children before the police came in, made arrests and "liberated" the kids. "

Ballard describes the sting operation in a YouTube promotional video. As it shows kids in the orphanage Ballard talks Haitian children being groomed as sex slaves. "These

kids can be raped twenty, thirty, forty times a day," he said, "this is the greatest plague on the earth today. Thousands are smuggled out every year." He said sex travelers come to Haiti and "they take these children for a night or two nights, and they're paying double or triple what it costs to get an adult prostitute."

When Ballard appeared in an interview with Fox News reporter Chris Wallace, Wallace seemed a bit skeptical.

Ballard: In Haiti, for example, we had traffickers sell us children for fifteen thousand dollars. We walked out with the kids, a two year old and a three-year-old.

Wallace: "Wait, wait. A two-year-old, three-year-old. Sex slaves?"

Ballard: "They didn't care what we did with them."

Ballard offered no proof the Haitian children he freed were being trafficked for sex or labor or just being sold for adoption. What Ballard knew or should have known and disclosed is that many Haitian orphanages were involved in illegal *adoption* trafficking. Especially after the 2010 earthquake, parents would abandon their children at orphanages in the hope they would be adopted by wealthy foreigners and then raised outside of extreme poverty.

One scam example was an Idaho woman who established a charitable orphanage in Haiti. She was convicted for adoption trafficking by a Haitian court after allegedly trying to smuggle 33 children out of the country.

★ Another credibility matter: Ballard failed to disclose that neither his charity nor the two fiscal sponsors he used to get tax-exempt and tax-deductions was registered in the state as required by law. Even if it is a law the state chooses not to enforce.

★ Neither do any of his web pitches disclose Ballard is a partner with the for-profit Abolitionists, LLC. Although he did say if the movie makes money part of the proceeds will go to O.U.R.

★The we're-developing-software claim.

Ballard's claim to have or be developing special software to detect bad guys is also rather fuzzy. Last month *LDS Living* magazine reported, "In addition to executing rescue missions around the world, Ballard's team is developing software that will track child pornography and lead law enforcement to the pornographers."

If that statement is true the company is unwilling to describe its software development program. COO Jerry Gowen was vague. "We're trying to leverage technology that exists," Gowen said. He called the existing technology "baseline", but he didn't know the product's name, and would only say that O.U.R. had used some "domestically." "Tim has some great plans on how to make that better," he said.

Does O.U.R. have programmers? Gowen was asked. "We're just starting that process now working with folks on government side and some large technology companies who are willing to partner with us."

The company was more certain about its technology eleven months ago when the web news outlet VentureBeat (VB) did a story. VB reported that "the heart of OUR is the startup's data mining platform. The technology acts as a sniffer, which they deploy against



Tim Ballard and Elizabeth Smart meet with an Imperial County Sheriff's sergeant in April, 2014.

networks that child traffickers and pedophiles use to communicate with each other. CPS can monitor communications through ISPs. And through its data mining protocols, Ballard and his team can isolate, and monitor, the most egregious offenders."

The story featured a photo of Tim Ballard and Elizabeth Smart meeting with Sgt. Ray

Loera with California's Imperial County Sheriff's Office. "The law enforcement officers made quick use of the software," the story said. A Sheriff's sergeant told VB's reporter, "He brought the technology here that allowed us to make the case. From what I've seen, this is a very effective tool for law enforcement. And as a result of using it, we made a good arrest." "Ballard calls the software a child protection system (CPS)," the article said.



Brazilian Federal Police officers trained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, and Florida's Child Rescue Coalition to use CPS software.

What the VentureBeat reporter didn't know of didn't choose to report is that it was not O.U.R.'s software but, instead, that of Child Rescue Coalition (CRC) of Florida (not to be confused with Utah's Child Rescue Association of North America.) Child Rescue Coalition's software, CPS, was first developed by a Wyoming law enforcement agency, further developed by TLL, LLC of Florida and then acquired by the child rescue charity.

Child Rescue Association once licensed O.U.R. to distribute the software—its open source and free—and train law enforcement agencies to use it. But when O.U.R. inferred in its marketing that the O.U.R. developed the software, CRC asked it to stop. The Florida charity believed O.U.R.'s fundraising was improperly highlighting CRC's product. But when O.U.R. continued, CRC pulled the license.

As late as January of this year, however, O.U.R was again saying it is developing a software it will give away free while showing a PowerPoint slide that labels its software "CPS."

On an O.U.R. Facebook posting last month, Tim Ballard said their new data mining software is named STARS, which stands for Sex Traveler Apprehension and Retention System. He said the term "stars" is also symbolic "in that stars were used in the original underground railroad." He said his charity has been meeting with "executives from major high tech companies and government officials as well as U.S. senators and congressmen," in connection with the software. "It will be a game changer," he said. "It's going to be huge."

★The O.U.R.-masterminded-the Columbian-sex-trafficking-sting-operation claim.

Yet another candor cloud hangs over O.U.R.'s most publicized of the 13 rescue missions it conducted in 2014, the raid in Columbia. It's the one Reyes was on. So how did it all go down?

The basic facts are O.U.R. did participate, it was a big operation, purported child sex slaves were freed and bad guys were arrested. But the rest of the story is rather muddled, warranting a closer look.

The Colombian Rescue Mission *Who invited whom?*

On October 11, 2014 Operation Underground Railroad executed its most successful and most publicized sting of the year. ABC, CBS, Fox and other major media reported on the raid that Utah Attorney General Sean Reyes participated in.

LDS Living Magazine said, “Ballard’s team found tremendous success on nearly a dozen operations last year, but the crowning achievement of Operation Underground Railroad in 2014 occurred on October 11, when, in cooperation with the Colombian government, they executed the largest-known human trafficking bust to date.”

Glenn Beck announced, “The group recently completed their biggest mission yet, rescuing 55 children in Colombia. “

Utah’s Fox13 reported, “During a recent mission in Columbia in October, the team infiltrated a sex party, rescuing 123 child slaves and arresting 15 traffickers.”

Rolling Stone’s story said “the mission, dubbed Operation Underground Railroad, was the creation of former CIA and Homeland Security agent Tim Ballard, who recruited ‘a ragtag group of volunteers’ that featured two CrossFit instructors from Utah, a door-to-door salesman, and (Laurie) Holden, who portrayed “Andrea” on *The Walking Dead* for three seasons.”

Fusion News said, “The sting was spearheaded by former CIA agent and ex-Homeland Security investigator Tim Ballard, who organized an elaborate fake bachelor party and requested underage prostitutes sent to a vacation house full of hidden cameras. The ruse worked. With the help of a team of mostly U.S. volunteers, Colombian authorities collared the suspected traffickers and rescue dozens of victims, most of whom are girls.”

Glenn Beck’s reporter, Mark Mabry said, “Tim architected this particular plan from its inception months ago as part of the largest one-day sting operation in child trafficking enforcement history.”

Trying to decipher who actually spearheaded the raid is almost like Abbot and Costello, in their comedy routine, trying to figure out who’s on first.

ABC news provided a bit more detail: “The operation was a joint effort between the U.S. government, the Colombian government, and two NGO’s, according to ICE.”

From ABC viewers learned that the U.S. and Colombian governments headed the operation as a joint effort with two NGOs or non-governmental organizations: O.U.R. along with Breaking Chains from San Diego.

Adding to the confusion is the fact that four months earlier O.U.R. participate in a related sting operation that led up to the big in October. An ABC *Nightline* crew



Hidden camera video: blurred-out faces at a Colombian sex party. O.U.R. decoys execute the sting operation.

accompanied the May 2014 mission but held that story until October 14, right after the October 11 bust.

The *Nightline* report indicated O.U.R. was one of several organizations that participated and that ICE, Ballard's former employer, the one he said was mired in red tape, also took part.



"No one is doing anything," Ballard tells ABC *Nightline* reporter David Wright.

ABC *Nightline* reporter David Wright asked Ballard whether non-government jump teams should even be involved with going after law breakers. "I can imagine a lot of our viewers looking at this and saying, 'Gee, what a noble thing, but still being kind of skeptical, like there's something that doesn't sit right, like it feels like this should be the work of government.'"

Ballard responded:

"It absolutely should be. And if the governments were doing it we would not try this. No one is doing anything and no one will do anything."

An investigative reporter would have asked Ballard how he could say governments were doing nothing when American and Colombian governments were supervising that very operation. If Wright asked that question the answer did not appear in his *Nightline* piece.

Ballard says the Colombian government asked his charity to set up the sting operation. His head of intelligence, Matt Osborne, told the Texas Tea Party group, "We go in with the permission of local governments. We don't ask the permission of the U.S. government or U.S. Embassies, but we inform them and they often times work with us."

O.U.R. has to downplay any ICE involvement because Ballard quit ICE so his hands would no longer be tied by restrictive government rules and regulations on overseas missions.

Back to the October 11 raid:

A press release issued by the U.S. government two days after the operation put its spin on the mission's leadership:

An international undercover law enforcement operation culminated Saturday with the arrests of 12 individuals involved in sex trafficking and the rescue of 55 sex trafficking victims, all minors. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Attaché Office in Colombia and the Colombian Attorney General's Technical Investigative Corps Transnational Criminal Investigative Unit (CTI TCIU) conducted the operation that was carried out simultaneously in Cartagena, Medellin and Armenia, all Colombian cities.

Eleven Colombian citizens face charges for human trafficking of minors, pimping and pandering. Details regarding the remaining individual are not being disclosed pending the completion of the investigation.

At the bottom of the press release the government praised O.U.R. and the San Diego child rescue group Braking Chains for their contribution:

Breaking Chains and Underground Railroad, both U.S. nonprofit organizations dedicated to eradicating the sexual exploitation of children, assisted with this case. The Colombian Navy and Coast Guard also participated.

Packerchronicle asked O.U.R.'s chief operating officer why his charity's press statements seem to indicate his organization led out, but the U.S. government's statement to the news media seems to portray it as a joint U.S. (ICE) and Colombian attorney general operation with O.U.R. and another charity playing supporting roles.

"Tim will tell you this: we're fine with anyone taking credit," Jerry Gowen said.

Where O.U.R.'s Osborne says his group is the one to ask for U.S. support, if needed, with missions on foreign soil, ICE's spokeswoman said it was the other way around on the Colombian operation. Barbara Gonzales who works out of ICE's Miami office, said her agency along with the Colombian attorney general, asked for O.U.R.'s help with stings in two

cities while Columbia's equivalent of the FBI, the CTI, asked for the Utah organization's help in the third. She summarized the strikes that took place simultaneously in three cities:



In Medellin and Armenia, ICE HSI Bogota Colombian Attorney General's Technical Investigative Corps Transnational Criminal Investigative Unit (CTI TCIU) initiated the investigation based on intel received from a source. We then called OUR to help with the operational portion of the case. In Cartagena, CTI initiated the investigation

and called OUR to help facilitate the operational portion of the case. In both instances, OUR informants were given judicial authority to be able to use the evidence in a court of law in Colombia and the United States.

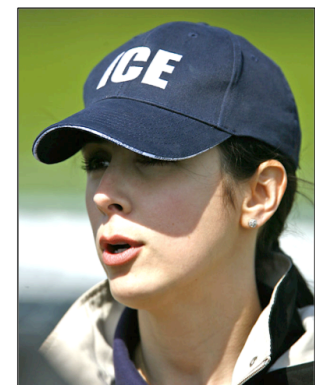
Clearly the relationship between ICE and O.U.R., which thinks ICE too severely limits the types of child sex slaves it can rescue, is a work in progress. Gonzales was asked to provide the rules or regulations that govern how her agency works with private charities.

"There is no written policy," she said.

What about written contracts or agreements that govern each mission?

"We don't divulge details surrounding our investigative techniques," she replied.

Another ICE spokesperson, Andrew S. Muñoz, says it's not true, as Ballard suggests, that an American must be involved as a



Spokeswoman Barbara Gonzales says ICE called OUR, not the other way around.

trafficker or sex slave before ICE will help a foreign government rescue children. “ICE’s Homeland Security Investigations is committed to protecting children from child predators both domestically and abroad,” he wrote in an email. “To that end, HSI partners with foreign law enforcement and nonprofit organizations like Operation Underground Railroad that focus on this same mission.” “We have worked with OUR and they’ve been instrumental with many cases that led to the rescue of children and the arrest of predators.”

Packerchronicle asked Muñoz about the press kit for the about-to-be-released movie, *The Abolitionist*, which says Ballard left Homeland Security after years because it was “mired in red tape and bureaucracy” so “Tim left to begin saving the children that fell out of the purview of the US. These children constitute over 90% of those lost to child sex slavery.”

Is your department mired in that kind of red tape, Muñoz was asked?

“Please contact Mr. Ballard for an explanation of his comment,” Muñoz replied. “In general, as a federal law enforcement agency that operates internationally, there are laws, regulations, diplomatic protocols and complex jurisdictional issues that HSI special agents must navigate and comply with while conducting an investigation.”

Ballard claims that his group not only can save more children than the U.S. government, but also at a much lower cost. He told the *Cache Valley Daily* it is surprisingly cheap to free sex slaves “Each mission costs between \$15,000 and \$25,000,” he tells reporters and his network of fundraisers. O.U.R.’s purported low operational cost is part of its marketing pitch.

Glenn Beck’s reporter, Mabry, wrote:

Tim wanted the freedom to move more nimbly and even to free kids outside of the U.S. government’s jurisdiction. So Tim left the government to push the issue faster. His speed to save has skyrocketed and the efficiency of dollars spent to children saved has increased exponentially.

Other figures the group provides range up to \$40,000 pegging the cost per saved child at \$1500 to \$2,000. (One of their estimates says it costs another \$10,000 per mission to follow up. “Each rescue operation costs about \$25,000, but that is not the end of the rescue. Each rescued child needs physical, social, and mental support, which costs the organization another \$10,000 per trip,” the charity says.)

Running the numbers: In 2014 O.U.R. says it ran 13 missions and saved 252 children. Taking the high number on the cost-per-mission estimate range and assuming O.U.R. played the dominant role in the rescue of the 252, then the cost of 23 missions would have cost the charity about \$520,000. Taking the high number from the cost-per-rescued-child range, the operations would have cost O.U.R. \$504,000. So both of the charity’s calculation methods result in about the same estimated cost.

But O.U.R.’s newly released executive salary figures show it has budgeted to pay its executives—not including what it might be paying contract jump team members—\$716,000 a year, not including additional costs for their health insurance which can run about \$17,000 per employee. That could add another \$100,000 or so to O.U.R.’s salary budget.

Using their figures, the projected costs for salaries alone would be about \$55,000 per mission. That would not include actual operational expenses for air travel, car rental, hotel, meals, any pay for permanent jump team members, software development, office overhead, and what must be a substantial amount for marketing.

When O.U.R. is part of a joint operation with government agencies, the cost per mission should also include what the governments pay for salaries, overhead and other expenses. It seems that O.U.R.'s the cost per mission and per saved child figures are vastly understated.

O.U.R. did post general financial information on its website. It disclosed that in 2014 it spent 65% of its income and invested the remaining 35%. Based on income numbers *PackerChronicle* obtained elsewhere, it means the charity may have spent \$2.6 million last year. Of that, it said, 11% was in salaries or about \$355,000. That did not include health insurance that was part of some \$290,000 for ten full time employees, employee benefits, training and office expenses. An estimated \$236,00 went to marketing and fundraising.

Because O.U.R. lists "employee benefits" for ten full-time employees separate from salaries it could be the charity is paying upwards of \$592,000 to officers and employees according to the expenditures on its website.

But the salary information in O.U.R.'s application for tax exempt status shows the much higher figure—at least \$716,000 a year is being paid to the seven executive and insiders or employees. It's unclear whether any jump team members or other employees are also paid.

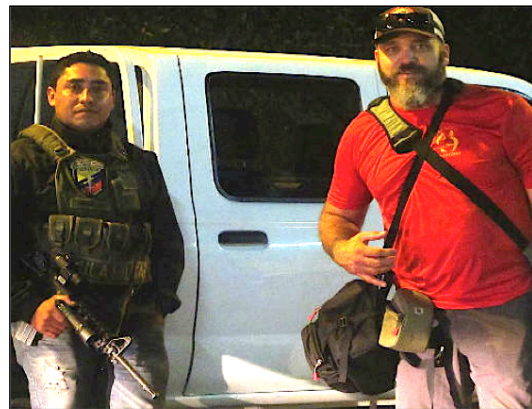
Back again to the Colombia operation.

Where Tim Ballard was in charge of the O.U.R. decoys in Cartagena, Matt Osborne was in charge at Medellin. CBS News was with Ballard's team. St. George Utah news columnist Dallas Hyland covered the Medellin bust.

Hyland went along with the dual mission of writing a story and helping shoot video for the television series. But on site he agreed to a third function: jump team bodyguard. He played that role for the Medellin sting just as Sean Reyes played a bodyguard in the Cartagena raid. Utah's Fox 13 News quoted Hyland, "I'm certain that if (the child sex trafficker) knew our meeting with him was the precursor to possibly spending decades in prison, he would have killed us, or had us killed."

Hyland became converted to the cause. "I don't advocate vigilante justice at all but I do advocate that sometimes there comes a time when people need to come together and take matters into their own hands and step up," he said in an interview with KUSU FM radio in Logan. And just like Reyes he asked listeners to contribute. He said as a journalist he does not normally plug causes. But he asked those listening to his interview to go to ourrescue.org and consider offering support.

Hyland said Osborne told him he wants journalists go along. "We're very transparent, we'll open our books," Osborne said Hyland told him. (*PackerChronicle* asked to see O.U.R.'s financial records and was flatly denied access. COO Gowen was asked if he



St. George reporter Dallas Hyland with an armed Colombian law enforcement officer.

would provide minor financial detail like salaries. "I'm not going into detail in what people are making and what their salaries are," he said.)

KUSU also interviewed Matt Osborne. He said, "We want to be most transparent organization possible. Because in this day and age there is a lot of cynicism. Today there is a lot of cynicism about non-governmental organizations, about non profits and where does the money go." He added that no O.U.R. funds were used to make the soon-to-be-released motion picture. He said when it comes out "a major part of those proceeds will go to O.U.R." He hoped movie profits would be enough to cover administrative costs and salaries.

No matter who gets primary credit for the October 2014 Colombian operation it was a big story in Latin America. One reason was the beauty queen contestant angle. A typical story lead read:

Colombian authorities supported by United States Immigration and Customs have dealt a blow to child prostitution in the Caribbean city of Cartagena, arresting nine, including a former beauty pageant queen.



Beauty queen contestant Kelly Johana Suárez Moya busted by O.U.R and Colombian authorities.

Colombia's *El Tiempo* newspaper reported, "Colombian authorities have been fighting hard against a very well established sex tourism business in the country and especially in Cartagena. The investigation started a year ago when US Immigration and Customs started following the movements of an American that would travel frequently back and forth between Cartagena and Miami. The American would meet a taxi driver that would give him explicit recordings of young boys and girls."

The paper called it a "pimp ring." " Among those arrested was 20-year-old Kelly Johana Suarez, who last year was a contestant for Miss Cartagena. Suarez is accused of recruiting youth in the slums of Cartagena to go to parties with foreigners. Authorities suspect that Suarez used a modeling agency as a front to recruit youth for sex tourism. "

Besides participating in a beauty contest Johana was in a music video for "La Luz" with Grammy award-winning signer Juanes, who has sold over 15 million albums worldwide.

A *Daily Beast* web headline shouted, "Beauty Queen Ran Child Sex Ring." Reporter Jason Batansky who lives in Bogota wrote that her legal counsel claims she attended the party as a guest and has no involvement in any child prostitution ring.

Batansky also reported that "sex tourism is a thriving industry in Colombia, with sex tourists from around the world traveling to Colombian cities like Cartagena and Medellín for sexual trysts. Just last year, U.S. Secret Service staff was caught in a prostitution scandal during President Obama's trip to Cartagena for the Summit of the Americas."

Batansky's story said the statement Johana made at her 2013 beauty pageant "takes on a dark layer of irony given the charges facing her."

At the time she told the audience, “Me preocupa el tema de los jóvenes en riesgo de mi comunidad y planeo trabajar en campañas puntuales de sensibilización,” which roughly translates to “I care about at risk youth in my community and I plan to work on campaigns to raise awareness.”

Sean Reyes and Victor Rax

Utah Attorney General Sean Reyes told reporters his interest in joining Operation Underground Railroad on a sting arose out of the Victor Rax case. Rax, Guatemalan, was arrested last year and accused of being the mastermind of a sex and drug trafficking ring involving teen boys who were mainly undocumented Latinos. (Rax died of an apparent suicide while in jail awaiting trial.)

“My desire is that by doing that (participating in the Columbia sting) it will prevent other Victor Raxes from coming into the state of Utah,” Reyes told *The Deseret News*. He told *The Salt Lake Tribune* “Rax was abducting children from different countries.” Reyes said that Victor Rax, showed the problem of child sex slavery striking close to home.

A year ago *packerchronicle* reported how Rax became a poster child in Reyes’



successful attempt to keep the legislature from moving his police force to Utah’s Department of Public Safety (DPS) that otherwise investigates such crimes.

The AG’s office vigorously opposed the bill, H.B. 100, proposed by Rep. Richard Greenwood (R-Roy), a former highway patrolman. It would have transferred part of the AG’s police force to DPS.

As previously reported (see part 33 of the series on the AG’s office), opposition to the bill was swift. It included the AG’s office staging the arrest of a bad guy and follow-up press conference to

underscore the success of its police agency. The AG’s office also helped solicit opposition to the proposed law from the Utah Chiefs of Police Association and Fraternal Order of Police.

On Tuesday, February 11, 2014, the AG’s strike force struck. It executed search warrants and arrested Guatemalan Victor Rax, 42. The AG’s office tipped Salt Lake’s Fox 13 in advance of the impending arrest which a Fox cameraman caught on video. Fox’s report said police called Rax “one of the scariest guys they’ve ever investigated,” accusing him of molesting teenage boys then blackmailing them into dealing drugs to school children. The report said Rax had been deported from the United States seven times.

Law enforcement officials are usually careful commenting about suspects ‘guilt or innocence. Not this time. Investigations chief Ken Wallentine in an on-camera



The anti-House Bill 100 press conference. Ken Wallentine, AG Investigations Chief at the microphones; AG Reyes, far right.



Reyes: "This was not choreographed in any way."

interview told Fox that Rax is a "rabid wolf", a "very evil man", "a rapist, an elite in Guatemalan prison gangs", and "there's a strong belief that he murdered his own mother." "Wallentine said he believes Rax would still be on the street without the strike team's efforts," Fox reported.

Two days later, the same day a legislative committee was slated to discuss H.B. 100, AG Reyes held a press conference. A press release about the media event announced in all caps: "UTAH ATTORNEY GENERAL'S SECURE STRIKE FORCE LOCKS UP WANTED INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL."

The press conference was a page ripped right out of Reyes-predecessor Mark Shurtleff's playbook: Call a press conference, line up a bunch of law enforcement officers and politicians behind a podium, and then pitch some program that will likely escape in-depth news media scrutiny.

At first glance the press conference looked like a Reyes, tour de force PR exhibition. It was staged at the Salt Lake County jail where the international criminal ensnared by Reyes' strike force sat waiting arraignment. Two Utah legislators, strike force leaders, and uniformed representatives from outside law enforcement agencies formed the backdrop for news cameras.

Rax's arrest was exhibit A later that afternoon when Wallentine appeared at a legislative hearing on Reyes' behalf. "The message from Mr. Reyes, 'If it ain't broke don't fix it,'" Wallentine told the House Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Committee that was considering a bill to move the strike force from the AG to Public Safety.

Reyes told reporters at the press conference that his strike force had taken down a "monster." "The state of Utah is safer today than it was a couple of days ago," he said. "Our school children are safer today." Then he tied the arrest to the pending legislation:

"There are questions whether the strike force—the SECURE team—is best housed in the attorney general's office. There's a bill being considered to move the team to the Department of Public Safety."

Reyes added, however, that the arrest and press conference "was not about that." A *Salt Lake Tribune* reporter wondered if the press conference was timed to the proposed legislation.

"This was not choreographed in any way," Reyes replied.

Rep Greenwood later said it was clear to him that the press conference was called earlier in the day to counter his bill that was before the committee that afternoon. "It was obviously all a sham, just a show, the timing is extremely suspicious," Greenwood said.

That afternoon the legislative committee took up Greenwood's proposal. Greenwood told the committee for which he is vice chair that when he was trained in law enforcement



AG Reyes rips a page from the Shurtleff playbook.

he was taught that a separation between investigators and prosecutor is important. There are checks and balances, he said. "You have the fox guarding the hen house," he said of prosecutors and investigators being in the same unit. "We have investigators who serve the attorney general. We have prosecutors; the attorney general is their boss," he said. Greenwood believes that having separate bosses helps ensure a separation of powers.

Rax died, never had his day in court, and Reyes never explained why it took his agents several years to arrest the man he portrays as Utah's most notorious sex and drug trafficker.

So how many child sex slaves are being smuggled into Utah every year? Reyes told the press he didn't know.

Packerchronicle asked an ICE spokesman how many child sex slaves have been rescued in Utah the past four or five years.

He did not count the child drug dealers that Reyes alleged had been raped.

"There have been two victims in the past five years that ICE has been involved in rescuing," Andrew Muñoz said. That case involved a sting operation conducted by the St. George Utah Police Department, Washington County Sheriff's department and Homeland Securities Investigations. A Las Vegas man pled guilty with pimping a 17-year old Las Vegas girl (the child sex slave) and a 20-year old Las Vegas woman, driving them to St. George and Salt Lake City for acts of prostitution. The Las Vegas man and his accomplice pled guilty to human trafficking and other charges. The 17-year-old was released to her parents.

Reyes' would not comment on his role in the Columbian sting. His campaign adviser Alan Crooks, who also made the trip playing the role of a business partner, also declined comment.

Child Sex Slave Charity Scams and Hoaxes

Ever since millions of dollars began flowing to government and charitable anti-child trafficking organizations there have been several scandals and hoaxes.

In 2011 the Dallas Women's Foundation warned that the country's human trafficking epidemic was going to hit the city for Super Bowl XLV. The group warned that 100,000 hookers were headed to Dallas, 38,000 of them child sex slaves.

Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Homeland Security and state and local police agencies formed a task force to stop the charge. The wave never hit. Yet fundraisers continue to repeat the myth for subsequent Super Bowls and other major athletic events. Dire warnings are great fundraising tools.

The Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women, a network of nongovernmental organizations, published a report in 2011 examining the record on sex trafficking related to World Cup soccer games, the Olympics and the Super Bowl. It found that, "despite massive media attention, law enforcement measures and efforts by prostitution abolitionist groups, there is no empirical evidence that trafficking for prostitution increases around large sporting events." It concluded:

Despite the lack of evidence, this idea continues to hold great appeal for prostitution abolitionist groups, anti-immigration groups, politicians and some journalists. The resilience of this inaccurate claim could be due to:

- Its usefulness as a fundraising strategy;
- Its effectiveness in grabbing the media and the public’s attention;
- Being a quick, easy way to be seen ‘doing something’ about trafficking;
- Being a more socially acceptable guise for prostitution abolitionist agendas and anti-immigration agendas.

One web site established to debunk sex trafficking myths said “various anti-prostitution groups: Traffick911, Not for Sale, Change-org, Polaris Project, and the Dallas Women’s Foundation...are anti-prostitution groups that tell lies in order to get grant money from the government and charities to pay their high salaries, and get huge amounts of money into their organizations.”

The U.S.’s Invisible Children charity (IC) is now phasing out after being accused of manipulating facts to stop Uganda’s Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) from abducting children, turning the girls into sex slaves and the boys into child soldiers. The IC called for the arrest of LRA leader Joseph Kony and asked for greater U.S. involvement against the LRA. The group helped convince President Obama to sign the "Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act" and send military troops to Central Africa. The President told the people in attendance "We have seen your reporting, your websites, your blogs, and your video postcards—you have made the plight of the children visible to us all," according to a Yahoo news story.

The Washington Post recounted how IC “took the world by storm” with the viral video it posted in 2012:



Was Pres. Obama duped by a slick PR campaign into signing the "Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act"?

The organization started after three young, inexperienced filmmakers produced a DVD whose target audience came to represent a new demographic for charitable giving: American teenagers, most notably young, white, middle- and upper-class girls and young women. Through adeptly produced media campaigns that relied heavily on sensationalized films, a strong social media presence and regular collaboration with celebrities, their message resonated strongly with this demographic. The organization’s capacity for grass-roots mobilization on an African conflict was almost unprecedented. In doing so, they managed to bring a great deal of attention to the conflict.

But after hyping figures and misrepresenting facts Invisible Children faced a backlash and is fading into oblivion.

Even major news outlets run child slavery stories without checking the facts. In 2006 ABC News reported on two girls it said had been abducted into prostitution. “Debbie, which is not her real name, is one of thousands of young American girls who authorities say have been abducted or lured from their normal lives and made into sex slaves,” ABC reported. “While many Americans have heard of human trafficking in other parts of the world -- Thailand, Cambodia, Latin America and Eastern Europe, for example -- few people know it happens here in the United States.”

But, according to a *CounterPunch* report, “Phoenix Police Department press releases describe Debbie as a runaway. Police spokesman Andy Hill told me earlier this week that she was having problems with her family. She left home willingly with a friend, the girlfriend of a pimp, and a few hours later was herself dragooned into prostitution.”

“The vast majority of U.S. kids who get involved with prostitution are runaways; this has been so for a very long time. That fact makes for yet another stale story. So it was left out of Primetime’s report because it didn’t fit the boogie-man theme pushed these days when sex trafficking gets discussed — in the media and lately by the feds as well.”



In May 2014, Newsweek reported that Somaly Mam, Somaly Mam Foundation founder, fabricated part of her personal history.

It was *Newsweek* that published what is perhaps the most publicized sex slave exposé. A cover story last year debunked the story of Somaly Mam, a Cambodian whose 501(c)(3) foundation raised millions to fight sex traffickers. Among her supporters were presidential-candidate-to-be Hillary Clinton, actresses Meg Ryan and Susan Sarandon and *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof.

Mam’s autobiography, “The Road of Lost Innocence,” was an international best-seller. It told her story of how she was sold into sex slavery. She said her grandfather put her in a brothel where she was forced to work ten years as a prostitute. She claimed to have been tortured with wires hooked to a car battery.

Mam had purported victims tell chilling stories about beatings and gang rapes. One claimed an angry pimp gouged out one of her eyes.

Newsweek found medical records that debunked that story. Another “victim” “confessed that her story was fabricated and carefully rehearsed for the

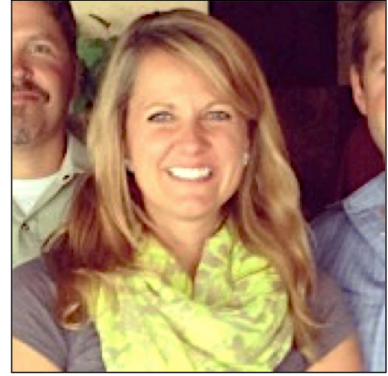
cameras under Mam’s instruction, and only after she was chosen from a group of girls who had been put through an audition.”

As for Mam, herself, *Newsweek* found a relative and childhood friend who said she spent her youth in school not a brothel.

Newsweek said at the heart of the questions surrounding Mam is a debate within the nonprofit sector on the acceptable tactics for fundraising and educating the public.

Mam was also criticized for how her charity managed money. *The Cambodia Daily* reportedly Mam’s personal financial compensation rose from \$0 in 2008 to \$85,000 in 2009, \$96,000 in 2010, and \$125,642 in 2011. Her deputy, Bill Livermore, who later left to form his own anti-trafficking organization, was paid \$72,375 in 2009, \$166,655 in 2010 and \$149,580 in 2011.

Laura Parker serves as vice-president of communications for the anti-trafficking organization, The Exodus Road. The Colorado Springs, Colorado-based charity deploys undercover investigators who claim to rescue sex slaves on four continents. Parker believes the Somaly Mam scandal was inevitable but makes anti-trafficking fund raising more difficult. Some excerpts of Parker's thoughts:



Laura Parker, co-founder, The Exodus Road, promotes freedom from sex slavery through covert investigation and rescue.

For two years now I have been using words (both written and spoken) to tell stories and raise money for our start-up nonprofit. I'll be honest, the world of fundraising is much more brutal than I expected. The soil of charitable work and mission efforts is ripe for fraudulent or exploitative storytelling, and perhaps the Somaly Mam scandal is to be expected.

For me, personally, it was the moment a child finds out Santa is really just Mom and Dad sneaking around after the kids are in bed. If Somaly Mam can fool the world for two decades, who can I trust in the counter-trafficking world? When people see that an award-winning advocate can fool the world (including the experts) for two decades, public trust of charities is dealt a major blow.

The intense pressure can get nonprofit communicators into trouble; it can drive them to embellish the truth. Storytellers have learned that donors, whose financial gifts are the organization's lifeblood, typically prefer the Hollywood story to the (sometimes) mundane reality of bringing about long-term positive change.

Conclusion



If it's true, as Operation Underground Railroad suggests, that 800,000 child sex slaves are being trafficked into the United States every year, that's shocking. And someone should do something about it. Which is what O.U.R. says it's doing.

If it's not true that 800,000 child sex slaves are being trafficked into the United States every year, it's also shocking. Shocking that anyone would raise money

using misrepresentations and material omissions. And someone should do something about it.

The Utah prosecutor best equipped to handle suspected charity fundraising communications fraud and state income tax evasion cases is Sean Reyes.

Oops.