

ASU OFFICE OF SEX TRAFFICKING  
INTERVENTION RESEARCH

# Trick Roll Study: Forced Criminality in Sex Trafficking Situations



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# **Trick Roll Study: Forced Criminality in Sex Trafficking Situations**

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# Key Findings

Criminal records of sex trafficking victims are known barriers to exiting sex trafficking situations. The link between committing crime while being a victim of sex trafficking, forced criminality, has received little research attention. One aspect of forced criminality in sex trafficking situations includes ‘trick rolls’ which are the robberies of sex buyers. With the purpose of exploring forced criminality, this study examined 467 trick roll cases which are robberies conducted in a prostitution situation perpetrated by the sex seller, during one year in Las Vegas, Nevada. Using crime databases and working knowledge of the LVMPD Vice and Sex Trafficking Investigations Unit, 36 percent of the identified suspects in the trick roll cases were found to be known victims of sex trafficking. Trick roll cases involving sex trafficking victims were found to be more likely to involve multiple suspects (including their sex trafficker), begin at a bar/club or casino floor, involve the theft of more valuable items, more likely involve a weapon, and more likely to involve the injury of the sex buyer. A total of **\$4.4 million** worth of money and goods were stolen in the 467 trick rolls. An average of **\$9,497** per trick roll was stolen. Implications for criminal record expungement or limited liability as well as law enforcement initiating a victim-centered focus for property crimes are discussed.

One aspect of forced criminality in sex trafficking situations includes ‘trick rolls’ which are the robberies of sex buyers.

## Introduction

Sex trafficking is a complex crime that includes elements of prostitution, power, money, violence, and often co-exists with other criminal activities. Sex traffickers have been found to work independently, in small groups with other traffickers known as pimp circles, or as part of organized criminal groups including gangs and brothels. Victims of all ages have been found to be from varied socioeconomic, race, gender, and sexual identity and orientation backgrounds. Sex trafficking always includes the exchange of sex for something of value (money, drugs, security, a place to stay, clothes, etc.) with a sex buyer. Aspects of sex trafficking including victim recruitment, discrete use of violence and forced retention activities of sex traffickers, the vulnerabilities of sex trafficking victims, and the characteristics of sex buyers which have been well explored in the research literature. One aspect of sex trafficking situations that has received limited research is forced criminality, or circumstances where other crimes are committed by the sex trafficking victims while in the coercive or violent relationship with the sex trafficker. The U.S. Department of State (2014) described forced criminality as an under-identified method used by human traffickers to retain their victims and suggested it is a distinct characteristic of sex trafficking situations.

Sex traffickers have been found to work independently, in small groups with other traffickers known as pimp circles, or as part of organized criminal groups including gangs and brothels.

Forced criminality involves more than a forced or coerced commercial sex exchange. It includes the enticing, forcing, or coercing a victim to commit other crimes. These crimes can include any crime, but have most often been identified by victims as including shoplifting, theft, robbing sex buying customers, recruiting and trafficking other victims, transporting or dealing illegal drugs, pick-pocketing, and selling of stolen items. Forced criminal activities occurring within sex trafficking situations are reported to be driven by the force, fraud, coercion, and enticement imposed by the sex trafficker over the victims each of whom participate for a number of reasons (Roe-Sepowitz, 2019). Sex trafficking survivors regularly describe their traffickers using forced criminality in their sex trafficking situations as an additional form of control to create fear in the victim that if they leave they will be exposed as having broken the law, as a method of forcing the victim to show their loyalty to the sex trafficker, or simply to contribute additional money or goods to the trafficker. In some cases, the consequences for the victim are serious if they refuse to participate in the forced criminal behavior including their sex trafficker beating and sexually assaulting them as punishment (Roe-Sepowitz, 2019).

The reasons sex trafficking victims have suggested forced criminality is used by sex traffickers in sex trafficking situations include (Roe-Sepowitz, 2019):



The victim has a desire to please the trafficker, with whom they are in love or of whom they are afraid.



Getting the victim to commit crimes is a strategy used by the sex trafficker to keep the victim in their control due to the victim’s fear of being caught or limiting the victim’s exit opportunities due to their criminal history.



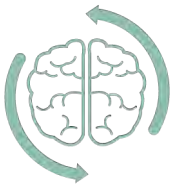
The other crimes bring in money or contribute things to the ‘family’ or trafficking enterprise and contributing to the family is a core rule and expectation in sex trafficking stables (a trafficker with multiple victims).



Forced criminality crimes, including recruiting other victims for their trafficker, demonstrates their commitment and loyalty to the trafficker.



The criminal activities are part of the required quota (minimum amount to be earned each day) for the victim outside of commercial sexual exploitation. For example, and if they bring in a watch or cash, the trafficker is satisfied.



The trafficker exploits the victim’s knowledge of other vulnerable people and expects or forces the victim to recruit the vulnerable people into the sex trafficking situation as new victims.



By meeting their quota for the day by stealing valuable items from sex buyers, the victims do not have to stay visible while looking for more customers which has the risk of possible detection and arrest.

## Forced Criminality

Two types of forced criminality have been identified in a brief report of a Sex Trafficking Survivor Roundtable (Roe-Sepowitz, 2019) including 1) the forced recruitment and trafficking of other victims, and 2) *trick rolls* or the robbing of sex buyers.

## Recruiting Other Victims

Sex traffickers have been found to force or coerce their victims to recruit other victims as a part of the overall sex trafficking victimization (Roe-Sepowitz, 2019). This can be considered by the trafficker as a deepening of loyalty or as a core expectation within the sex trafficking situation, along with bringing in money from exchanging sex. For the sex trafficking victims who recruit others, including children, and act in many of the roles of trafficker (recruiting, grooming, trafficking), feelings of fear and trepidation prevent them from asking for help from others due to the awareness of their own criminal involvement. This technique is often categorized as becoming a 'bottom' or 'bottom bitch'. Being forced, coerced, or enticed to recruit and victimize other victims has been described as a part of the brainwashing of the victim by the sex trafficker as a means to bring them into the sex trafficking lifestyle (Roe-Sepowitz, 2019). Some victims reflected that by doing what their trafficker asked or told them to do to recruit other victims, they were able to survive the situation, and it was just another in a long list of demands by the trafficker (Roe-Sepowitz, 2019). If they didn't comply and recruit and exploit other victims, they would be violently punished by their sex traffickers. The victims were taught by the sex traffickers that by getting other victims for their trafficker they could develop a sense of freedom and control over their own situations (Roe-Sepowitz, 2019).

## Trick Rolls

The act of committing a 'trick roll' (also referred to as a 'lick' or 'hitting a lick') or robbing a sex-buying customer (also referred to as a 'trick') by a person commercially exchanging sex has been reported to be a core expectation of sex traffickers (Roe-Sepowitz, 2019). Trick rolls can include taking the belongings of the sex buyer while with them, observing the sex buyer open a safe and then returning to the room (with a stolen room card or inside help from housekeeping) when the victim isn't there, or 'setting up' the sex buyer by allowing their trafficker to enter the room (or car or house) where they are with the sex buyer at which point the trafficker robs the sex buyer. Sex trafficking victims have reported that while robbing a sex buyer puts them in grave danger of violence from the sex buyer, it is expected by the sex trafficker and may be preferable to having sex with additional sex buyers by allowing them meet their quota with stolen goods instead of money from selling sex (Roe-Sepowitz, 2019).

*This study explores one year of police documented trick rolls (robbery-based crimes committed in conjunction with a prostitution-related context) in Las Vegas, Nevada.*

## Study Development

In an ongoing study at the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD), ASU researchers, in partnership with the LVMPD Vice and Sex Trafficking Investigations Unit and the Southern Nevada Human Trafficking Task Force, identified trick rolls by sex trafficking victims as an emerging issue within sex trafficking cases. These cases were identified when victims of sex trafficking from former or active human trafficking cases were also identified as suspects in robbery cases involving a commercial sex selling situation. The LVMPD Vice and Sex Trafficking Investigation Unit reported that the charges were complicating the prosecutions of sex traffickers as the criminal activities of the victims impacted their reliability as victims. *With the understanding that the trick rolls were part of the victimization in sex trafficking situations, the research team endeavored to answer the following research questions:*

1. In what percentage of the trick roll cases was a suspect that committed the crime identified?
2. Were the suspects of the trick roll cases identified by law enforcement as known victims of sex trafficking (in a current or past sex trafficking case)?
3. Was a sex trafficker (known to law enforcement from a current or past sex trafficking case) also identified as a suspect during the trick roll?
4. Did the sex trafficking victim suspects work alone?
5. Where did the suspects first make contact with the sex buyers in the trick roll cases? Did this differ for suspects who were known sex trafficking victims?
6. What were the characteristics of trick roll crimes including frequency, the ways property was taken from the victims, what property was taken, was the victim drugged, was a safe involved, and were weapons or violence used, and how did these characteristics differ if the suspect was a known sex trafficking victim?
7. What was stolen in the trick rolls? What was the value? Did this differ if the suspect was a known sex trafficking victim?
8. Are there trends within the reported trick rolls regarding time of day, locations of the crime, the places of origin of the victims, and techniques of the suspects?
9. What are the characteristics of the victim (sex buyer)?

*The Arizona State University Institutional Review Board approved this study.*



Study

The LVMPD Vice and Sex Trafficking Investigations Unit identified all of the cases in their records database that included elements of trick rolls during a one-year period between October 1, 2017, and October 1, 2018. To be included in the study, the trick roll cases must include a criminal charge from Table 1 and an indicator of prostitution involvement.

The indicators of prostitution involvement generally fell into these three categories:

Security at the hotel or responding patrol recognized the suspect as a victim of sex trafficking.

The victim reported that they had participated in soliciting the purchase of sex from the perpetrator of the crime against them.

Evidence collected during the investigation of the crime indicated there was a solicitation/prostitution element to the relationship between the victim and the suspect(s).

Table 1: Crimes included in trick roll study.

Theft below \$3500
Theft \$3500+
Petit Larceny
Larceny
Grand larceny
Use of a credit card without consent
Extortion
Possession of a motor vehicle without consent
Robbery
Conspiracy battery
Attempted robbery
Grand theft auto
Robbery with a deadly weapon
Burglary



The comprehensiveness of the **trick roll** cases reported to law enforcement in Las Vegas during the year the data was collected is not clear. There appear to be a number of reasons an individual would not report to law enforcement a trick roll or a robbery that was perpetrated while they were attempting to buy or had bought commercial sex. *These reasons include:*

The case was not reported to law enforcement but they may have reported to security in their hotel.

Shame or embarrassment regarding their involvement in buying sex.

A desire to not be linked to the solicitation of prostitution which is a criminal offense in Las Vegas, Nevada

Disclosure of their involvement in a criminal offense as the report will become public record and the public may learn about their sex buying behavior.

Possible reasons for sex buyers who are victimized in a trick roll to report the crime to law enforcement may include the desire to get a police report to collect insurance on the items stolen, a lack of concern about the public knowing their involvement in a solicitation situation, and a lack of knowledge that it is illegal to attempt to or purchase commercial sex in Las Vegas, Nevada.

A total of **518 trick roll cases** were identified by the LVMPD Vice and Sex Trafficking Investigation Unit. Not all of the cases met the criteria for the study and 51 cases were excluded because they did not include an element of prostitution.

The final number of cases that met the criteria for inclusion (a crime listed in Table 1 and an indicator of prostitution involvement) during the time period (October 1, 2017 – October 1, 2018) was 467. The **467 cases**, including the crime reports (including police report, evidence collection data, victim interviews, suspect interviews), were collected by the LVMPD Vice and Sex Trafficking Investigations Unit and the research team entered them into SPSS and analyzed the data to explore trends, similarities, and differences between the cases.

### The data collected from the case files included:

Where did the crime occur?

Who was involved in the crime- victims and suspects (including their demographics)?

Were the suspect(s) identified?

Were the suspect(s) apprehended?

How did the sex buyer (victim of the trick roll) meet the robbery suspect?

What was stolen (electronics-phones, laptops, tablets, money, chips, wallets, luggage, clothes, watches, credit cards, automobiles, or miscellaneous items)?

What was the value of the property stolen?

How was the property stolen?

Was a hotel safe involved in the crime?

Was the victim injured, poisoned/drugged, or was a weapon used?

What type of crime was committed? (*see Table 1, page 6*)

Once the case data was collected from the 467 trick roll crime reports, the suspect list was compared to all historical sex trafficking arrests and victim reports conducted by the LVMPD Vice and Sex Trafficking Investigations Unit, along with detectives and intelligence staff in the Unit reviewing the list and searching crime histories and databases to determine their involvement in current or past sex trafficking cases. The information was used to identify if the suspect(s) were known sex trafficking victim(s), and if the suspect(s) were known sex trafficker(s).

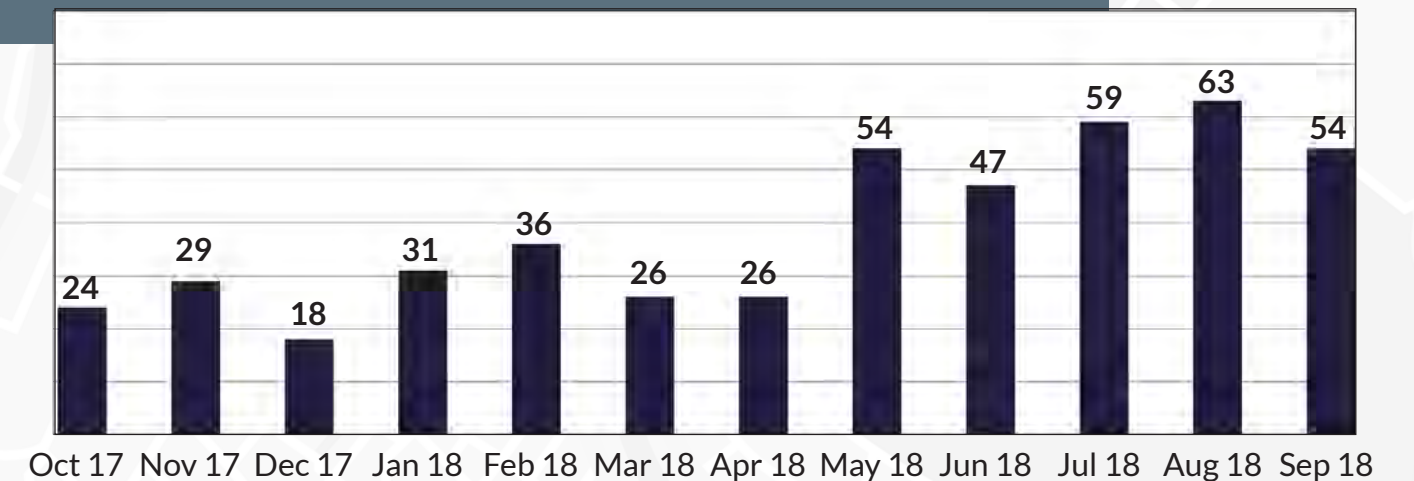
### Analysis

The analysis for this study included using descriptive analysis to explore the trick roll case details, along with t-tests and chi-square analyses to identify differences between the trick roll cases involving known sex trafficking victims and cases involving suspects not identified as sex trafficking victims.

### Findings

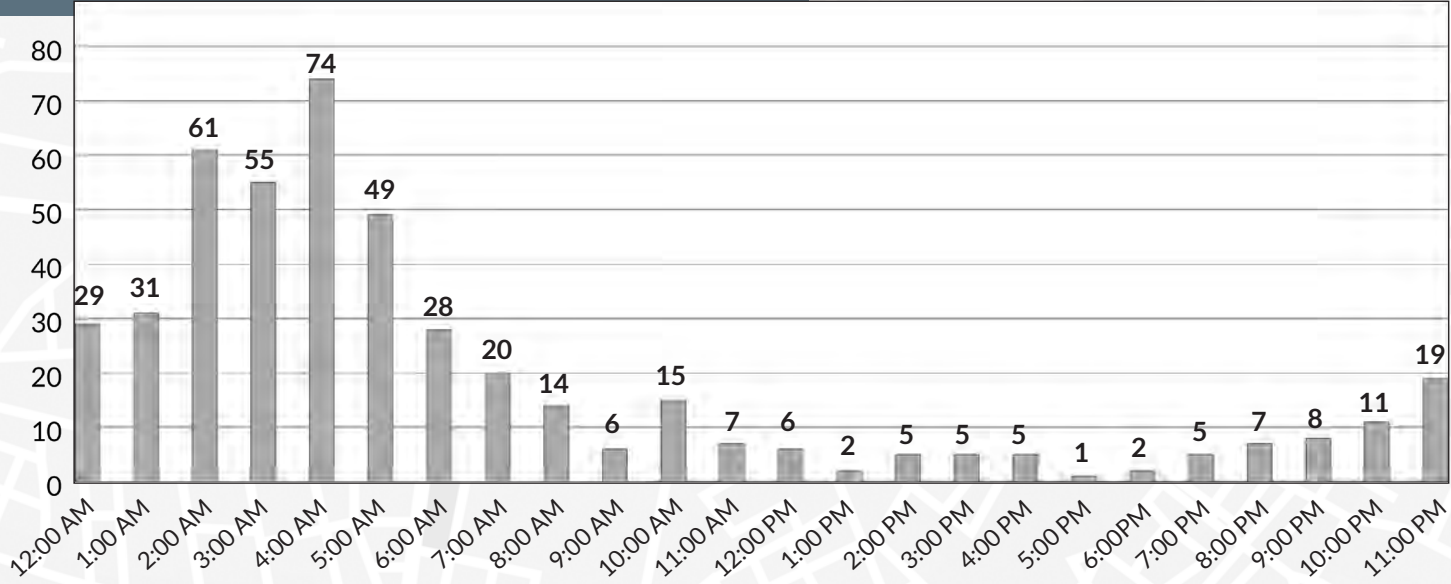
The 467 trick rolls were documented over 12 months with the highest number of cases (n =63) in August and the lowest number of cases (n =18) in December with an average of 38.9 trick rolls per month.

Trick Rolls by Month In Las Vegas referred to Vice Unit  
10/2017 to 10/2018 N = 467



Trick rolls most often occurred in the early morning hours of the day with the majority (n = 239, 51.2%) occurring between 2 am and 5 am.

Time of Day Trick Rolls N = 467



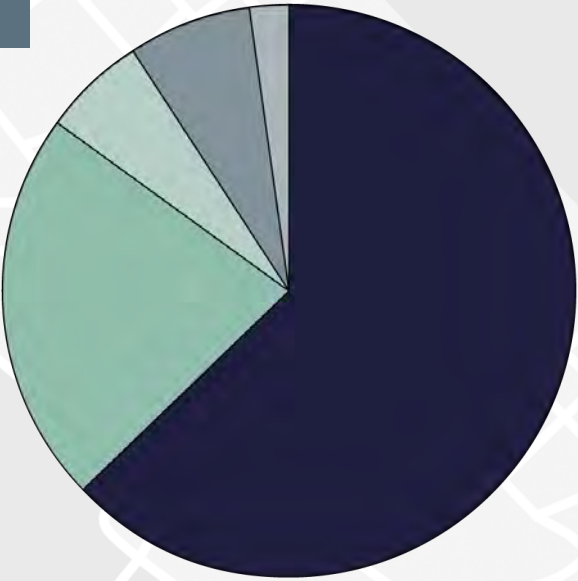
The suspects in the 467 trick roll cases were charged with the following arrest charges as their primary charge. The most common arrest charge for trick roll cases was Larceny (217, 56.5%), followed by Petit Larceny (166, 35.5%).

Arrest Charges	#	%
Larceny	217	46.5
Petit Larceny	166	35.5
Robbery	31	6.6
Robbery with a deadly weapon	16	3.4
Use of a credit card without consent	14	3
Burglary	11	2.4
Theft below \$3,500	4	0.8
Extortion	3	0.7
Possession of a motor vehicle without consent	3	0.7
Theft \$3,500 +	1	0.2
Grand theft auto	1	0.2
Total	467	100



Identified Sex Trafficking Victims (n=77) Race

- African American, 56, 63%
- Caucasian, 20, 22%
- Hispanic, 5, 6%
- Asian, 6, 7%
- Other, 2, 2%



From the 467 trick roll cases, there were 684 suspects described by the victims. In 134 (28.7%) of the trick roll cases, 212 suspects were identified by law enforcement. Suspects were identified when they were apprehended at the scene or fleeing the scene or from video footage from the hotel or casino where the trick roll occurred. The majority of the identified suspects were female (83.5%) and 15.5 percent were male.

Race was available for 88.6 percent of the identified suspects, with the majority, 68.1 percent (128) being African American, 21.3 percent (40) Caucasian, 5.8 percent (11) Asian, and 1 percent (2) identified as other race. The suspects had Driver’s Licenses from all over the United States, but location of current residency was not clear. The ages of the suspects ranged from 14 years old to 46 years old with an average of 24.4 years old. There were three suspects under age 18 (age 14, 15, and 17).

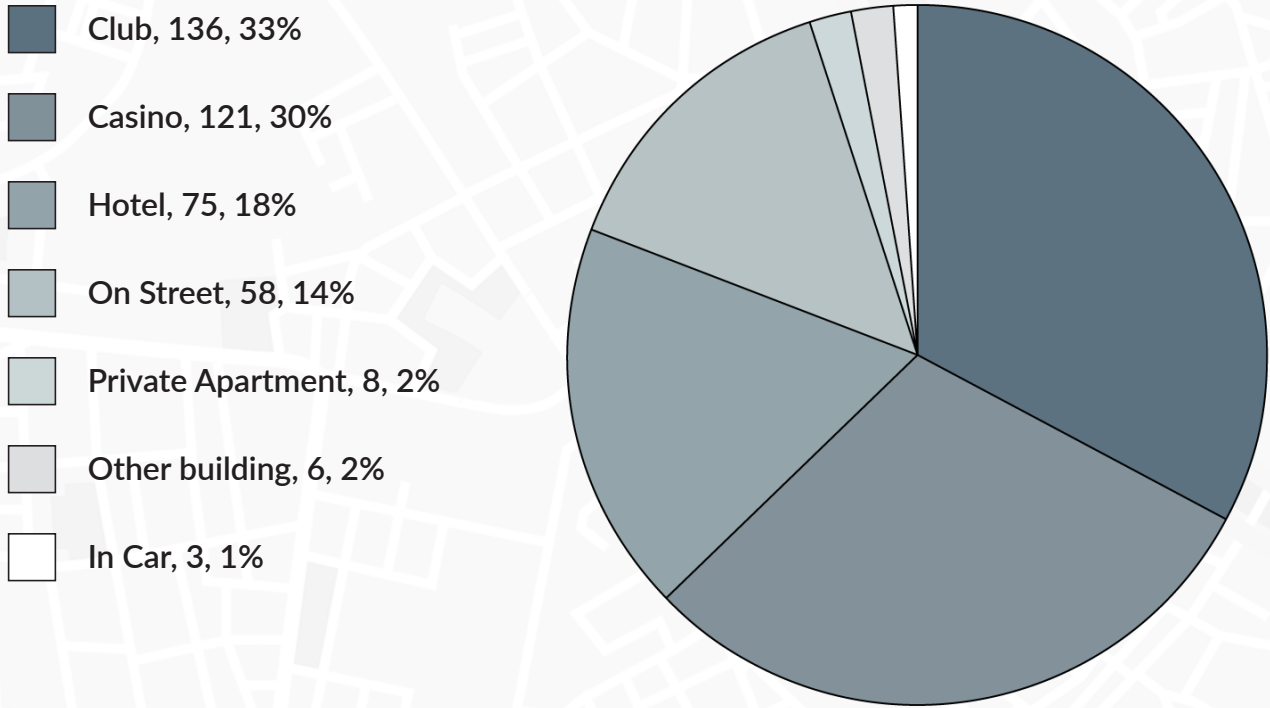
In the trick roll cases with suspects identified, 77 (36.3%) of the total 212 suspects were identified by the LVMPD Vice and Sex Trafficking Investigations Unit as known victims of sex trafficking.

All of the known sex trafficking victims were female (77) and nearly three quarters (72.7%) were African American. The average age of the suspects did not differ between those identified as sex trafficking victims compared to those who were not identified as sex trafficking victims.

Sixty-two known sex traffickers were linked to the 61 trick roll cases with identified victims of sex trafficking as suspects. Four sex traffickers were linked to multiple trick rolls with the same sex trafficking victim and one was linked to three sex trafficking victims in four different trick rolls. Only one of the sex traffickers was a female, her sex trafficking victim (also a female) was involved in four different trick rolls during the one-year data collection period. Thirteen (21.3%) sex traffickers were involved, identified, and arrested along with their sex trafficking victims during the trick rolls. Trick rolls with identified sex trafficking victims as suspects were found to be significantly more likely to have multiple suspects in the trick roll (33, 55% vs. 154, 37.8%),  $\chi^2 (6, N = 467) = 6.42, p < .011$ . The average number of suspects in the trick roll cases involving known sex trafficking victims as suspects ranged from one to four with an average of 1.75 ( $SD = .816$ ) compared to the trick rolls that did not involve known sex trafficking victims with a range from one to six suspects with an average of 1.42 ( $SD = .602$ ).



Trick Rolls: Location of First Contact



Location of First Contact

In 407 of the trick rolls, the location of the first contact between the sex buyer and the trick roll suspect was identified in the report with 60 cases, 12.8 percent missing that information. The most common first contact location was identified as a club (136, 33.4%). This included bars and nightclubs within and outside of hotels and casinos. In 121 (29.7%) cases sex buyers met the suspects of the trick roll on the casino floor while gambling (including, tables, slot machines, and video machines). Hotels were the location of first contact in 75 trick rolls (18.4%) and included meeting the suspect(s) in their hotel lobby, near the elevators, and in the hallway of their hotel.

For 17 (22.6%) of the trick rolls with the first contact between the sex buyer and the suspect was in a hotel, the date was set up using a website (Facebook, Craigslist.com, Backpage.com, Grindr, Doublelist, Tinder, AdamforAdam, Sugardaddy.com, Seeking Arrangements, Mojo Village, Meetme.com) or an escort service website. On street meetings (58, 12.4%) included in front of hotels, as sex buyers were leaving clubs and bars, on the strip, on the side of the road, and walking across bridges between hotels. Other buildings (6, 1.3%) included a gas station, a CVS, a Z-Mart, a fast food restaurant, a 7-11 store, and a parking garage. In car (3, 0.6%) included sharing a rideshare, sharing a taxi, and getting into someone's car the sex buyer didn't know.

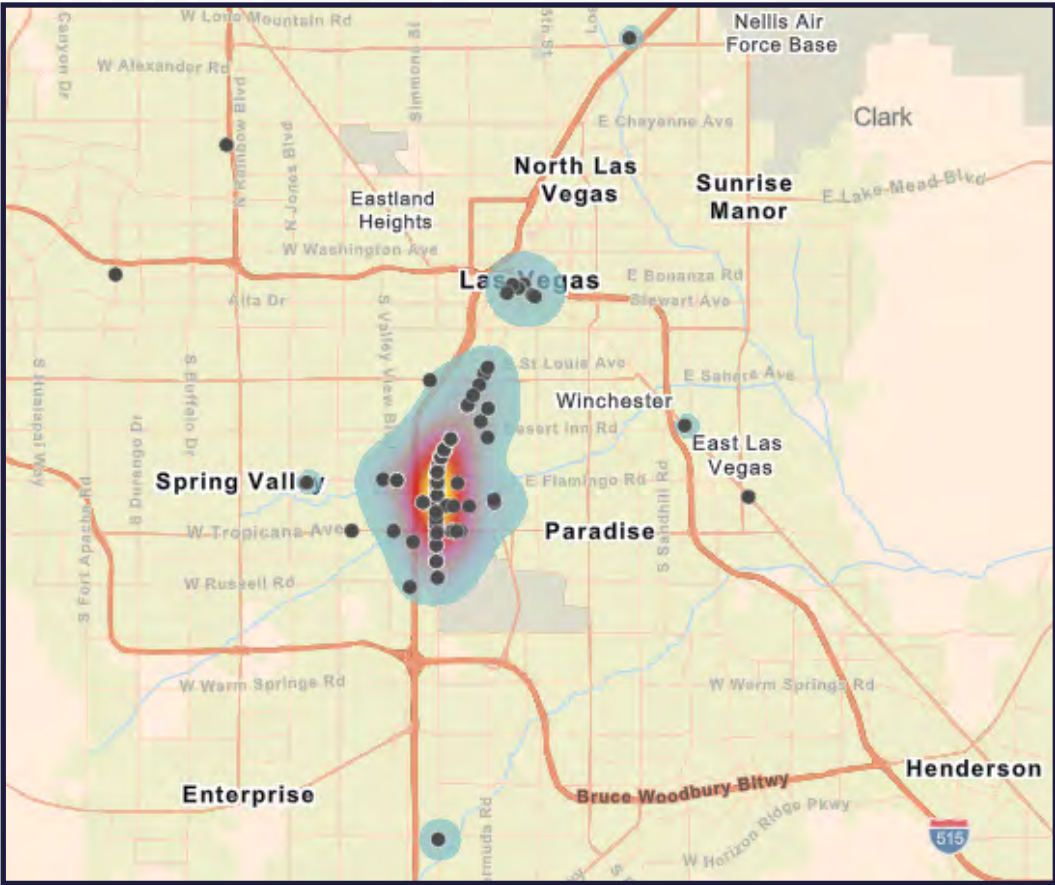
*In 407 of the trick rolls, the location of the first contact between the sex buyer and the trick roll suspect was identified in the report with 60 cases, 12.8 percent missing that information.*

There were some differences found between the location of first contact with cases where the suspect(s) are known sex trafficking and cases in which it is not known if the suspect is a sex trafficking victim. The trick roll cases with known sex trafficking victims as suspects were more likely to have the first contact between the sex buyer and the suspect location to be a casino.

First Contact Location	Cases Sex Trafficking Victims are Suspects (n =57)		Other Cases (unknown if suspect is sex trafficking victim) (n = 350)	
	#	%	#	%
Club	12	21.1	124	35.4
Casino	25	43.9	96	27.4
Hotel	13	22.8	62	17.7
On Street	3	5.3	55	15.7
Private Apartment	4	7	4	1.1
Other Building	0	0	6	5.2
In Car	0	0	3	0.9

Map of the Trick Roll Incidents

The 467 trick roll locations were concentrated on Las Vegas Boulevard in Las Vegas, Nevada.



# What was Stolen

In each of the 467 trick roll cases something of value was taken from the victim by the suspect(s). In many cases, multiple things were stolen from the sex buyers including cash, chips, electronics, watches, clothes, suitcases, automobiles, and credit/debit cards. The total value of what was taken from sex buyers in the 467 trick rolls had a total value of \$4,427,103. The average value of what was stolen was \$9,497.87 per trick roll.



In 290 (62.1%) of the trick roll cases, cash was stolen with a total of \$916,899, with the largest amount of cash stolen during one trick roll being \$90,000. The highest value of items and cash taken during a single trick roll was \$146,650.

There were 48 (10.3%) trick rolls in which casino chips were stolen with the total value of stolen chips being \$139,627 with the largest amount of casino chips stolen during a trick roll being \$23,000.



Electronics including phones, laptops, external hard drives, and cameras were stolen in 101 (21.6%) trick rolls.

During 134 (28.7%) trick rolls, 145 watches were stolen with the highest valued watch stolen worth \$130,000.



Nine motor vehicles were stolen in trick roll cases ranging from a Hummer to a minivan.

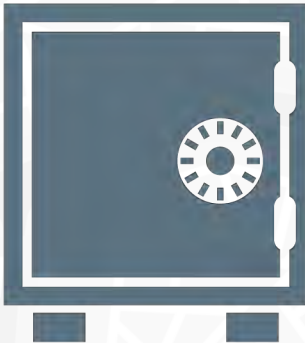
In 134 (28.7%) trick roll cases a credit or debit card was stolen with a total of 273 credit/debit cards stolen ranging from one to 11 cards taken.



Fifty driver's licenses were stolen and 13 passports (five from the United States four United Kingdom, and one each of China, Canada, South Africa, and Australia).

In the 134 cases where suspects were identified, we compared the types of items stolen and the values by suspects being known sex trafficking victims and suspects not identified as sex trafficking victims. In the trick roll cases where the suspect was a known victim of sex trafficking, on average, more valuable items/more money was stolen than in trick roll cases where the suspects were not identified as sex trafficking victims (\$11,346 vs. \$9,337). Suspects identified as known sex trafficking victims were also more likely to take chips x2 (1, N =134) = 5.702,  $p < .027$  and electronics x2 (1, N =134) = 7.85,  $p < .005$  than in trick rolls with suspects who were not known sex trafficking victims.

Other elements found in the trick roll cases included the use of a weapon, breaking into a hotel room safe, reported drugging by the victim, and physical injury of the victim. Weapons included knives, tasers, pepper spray, a gun, a blow dryer, a high heeled shoe, and a sharp object. In twelve (0.3%) trick roll cases the victim was taken to the hospital for injuries.



Elements of the trick roll	#	%
Broke into room safe	55	11.8
Reported drugging/poisoning of the victim	54	11.5
Physical injury of victim	42	8.9
Use of a weapon	29	6.2

When comparing the elements of the trick rolls cases involving suspects who are sex trafficking victims ( $n = 60$ ) with the trick rolls involving suspects who are not known sex trafficking victims, there were some significant differences. The trick roll cases involving the sex trafficking victims as suspects were significantly more likely to involve a weapon (12, 20% vs. 20, 4.9%)  $x^2(1, N = 466) = 18.57, p < .001$  as well as involve physical injury to the sex buyer (11, 18.3% vs. 29 (7.1%)  $x^2(1, N = 466) = 8.34, p < .004$ . In the 12 trick rolls involving a suspect who is a sex trafficking victim and a weapon was involved, four cases were found to have a known sex trafficker also involved in the trick roll who was caught and arrested along with the suspect.

Elements of the Trick Roll	Cases Sex Trafficking Victims are Suspects ( $n = 60$ )		Other Cases (unknown if suspect is sex trafficking victim) ( $n = 407$ )	
	#	%	#	%
Physical injury of victim**	11	18.3	29	7.1
Use of a weapon**	12	20	20	4.9
Reported drugging/poisoning of the victim	6	10	47	11.7
Broke into room safe	7	11.9	48	12

$p > .05, ** p > .01$

## The Child Sex Trafficking Victims

Three trick roll cases involved minor children under age 18 (14, 15, and 17 years old) who are automatically sex trafficking victims due to their age. Two of the three minor suspects met their victims on dating websites (Plentyoffish and Mojo Village). The other minor suspect met her victim on the casino floor. Two of the minor suspects were linked by the LVMPD Vice and Sex Trafficking Investigations Unit to known sex traffickers. Their victims were ages 72, 65, and 55 and were all from the United States. In none of the minor suspect cases was a weapon used.

## Who are the Sex Buyers/Victims of the Trick Rolls

Information about the sex buyers included their victim situations, gender, age, race, where they were from and in some cases, their occupation. There were 499 victims (sex buyers) identified in the 467 trick rolls. Multiple victim situations included a father and son sharing a room, friends or siblings sharing a room, two cases of a husband and wife, and co-workers sharing a room. The victims were primarily males (488, 97.8%) and 11 (2.2%) female victims. The suspects in the trick rolls involving female victims were nine females and two male suspects. In 27.6 percent (129) of the trick roll cases, the victim was not from the United States. The age of the victims ranged from 20 to 82 years old with an average age of 39.3 years. The race of the trick roll victims varied between those targeted by suspects who were known sex trafficking victims and suspects who were not known victims.

Race of Trick Roll Victims	Cases Sex Trafficking Victims are Suspects (n =60)		Other Cases (unknown if suspect is sex trafficking victim) (n = 407)	
	#	%	#	%
White	11	73.3	323	79.4
African American	7	11.6	38	9.3
Asian	6	10	33	8.1
Hispanic	2	3.3	18	4.4
Native American	0	0	1	0.2
Other	0	0	18	4.4

## Sex Buyers Origins

More than a quarter (140, 28.9%) of the sex buyers were from outside of the United States from 38 countries with the following nine having the most sex buyers.

Residency Country	# (n =140)	%
United Kingdom	39	27.9
Canada	17	12.1
Australia	16	11.4
Mexico	8	5.7
Germany	7	5
Denmark	5	3.6
India	5	3.6
Saudi Arabia	3	2.1
New Zealand	3	2.1



Of the 345 sex buyers from the United States, they were from 29 different states with the largest numbers with the most frequently reported state of residency being California (80, 23.2%).

Residency State	#	%
California	80	23.2
Nevada	50	14.5
Texas	18	5.2
Florida	17	4.9
Illinois	16	4.6
New York	15	4.3
Arizona	15	4.3
Pennsylvania	10	2.9

Residency State	#	%
Colorado	9	2.6
Georgia	8	2.3
New Jersey	8	2.3
Ohio	8	2.3
Utah	6	1.7
Virginia	6	1.7
Washington State	6	1.7
Minnesota	6	1.7

## Occupations of the Sex Buyers

The occupations of the sex buyers were included for 85 of the sex buyers. Their occupations included stock broker, airline pilot, radio broadcaster, IT engineer, attorneys, police officers, mechanics, business owners, doctors, real estate agents, military member, and airline employee.

# Trick Roll Case Narratives by Known Sex Trafficking Victims

The following cases involved suspects that were known victims of sex trafficking.

The 57-year-old victim from Nevada met the 33-year-old female suspect (from Northern California) on Seeking Arrangements and they corresponded for 2 months online. They planned to meet up in Las Vegas and they agreed to have sex for \$1000. They went up to his room and he said he would pay \$500 before and \$500 after. They agreed to have sex without a condom. When the suspect said she wanted a condom, he got angry. He set \$750 and his wedding band on the table and went to the bathroom to change. The suspect put the money in her bra. When he came out he noticed it was gone and got angry. He tried to grab it from her. They fought, she punched him in the face and bit him, leaving visible injury. She then left the hotel room and got into a car driven by her sex trafficker. Police arrived on scene and arrested her. The victim later decided he did not want to press charges.



A 55-year-old male met the 14- year-old minor female suspect on “Mojo Village” and has engaged in 4 or 5 acts of prostitution with her in the past. The victim invited the female suspect to his room and once she arrived the victim gave her \$200. While in the room, the female trafficking victim began acting ‘weird’. At some point the female trafficking victim opened the hotel room door and two unknown black males entered the room. An unidentified male ‘pistol whipped’ the victim in the head. While the victim was struggling with the unidentified male, the other male suspect and the female suspect were going through his belongings. At some point the victim was able to get out of the room and began yelling for help. The suspects fled the scene and the minor suspect and one of the adult males was apprehended by law enforcement.

A 39-year-old male from Minnesota met the 21-year-old female suspect in the bar of the Four Queens. The victim took the suspect back to his room and they were in there together for 45 minutes. As the suspect was leaving, the victim turned away from the door and when he turned back around there was a 25-year-old male adult in his room. The second suspect (male) punched the victim in the face and told him to empty his pockets or he would kill him. The second suspect took the victim’s belongings and left. Police were able to positively identify both suspects and both were arrested and taken to jail.



A 30-year-old male from Utah met a 20-year-old female and another female (never identified) on the Fremont Street Experience and they asked if he wanted to have some fun. The victim took the two women to his hotel room. The two women were in the victim’s hotel room for 18 minutes, where they pepper sprayed him and took \$1,000 from his backpack before running from the hotel room.



A 48-year-old male from Reno met the 18-year-old female suspect at a casino on the Strip and he brought her back to his room at another hotel on the strip. Once apprehended by police, the suspect stated that the male victim was trying to sexually assault her in the hotel room, so she grabbed a steak knife while running out of the room. When the victim followed her, she stated that she stabbed him to get away from him. The victim stated that he was trying to make a deal for prostitution, but that the suspect then grabbed his money and ran out of the room. The victim stated that he chased the suspect out of his room to get his money back and she stabbed him in the hand, chest, and arm.



A 34-year-old white male from Las Vegas met an 18-year-old female through Meetme.com and made a date to buy sex from her at a hotel off of the strip where he had rented a room. After 30 minutes of being in the room with the buyer, three men burst in with guns with laser pointers and robbed the sex buyer of \$380.

*There were nearly 40 trick rolls reported to law enforcement per month, more than one per day.*

Overall the frequency and financial implications of this study were surprising. There were nearly 40 trick rolls reported to law enforcement per month, more than one per day. The total financial impact of the trick rolls was \$4,427,103 with an average of \$9,497 worth of stolen goods per trick roll. The enormity of the financial cost of trick rolls requires further attention to these crimes. The human costs are also important to explore and forced criminality was found to be present in nearly 40 percent of the trick roll cases.

The trick roll cases explored in this study resulted in the identification of 212 suspects and 77 (36.3%) of them were identified by Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Vice and Sex Trafficking Investigations staff as sex trafficking victims. We found the most common characteristics of the sex trafficking victims that perpetrated the trick rolls to be an average age of 24-years-old with three suspects being under the age of 18. The identified sex trafficking victims were most likely to be African American and were more likely to have a sex trafficker at the crime event (at the scene) than trick rolls perpetrated by persons not identified as sex trafficking victims. The perpetrators of trick rolls were most likely to make first contact with their victims (sex buyers) in clubs/bars or on the casino floor.

The majority of the sex buyers were Caucasian and 28.9% were visiting Las Vegas from countries other than the United States. In the trick roll cases involving sex trafficking victims as perpetrator, the value of the stolen items was significantly higher than trick rolls not perpetrated by suspects identified as sex trafficking victims. Trick rolls with sex trafficking victims as the suspect were also more likely to involve the use of a weapon and result in an injury to the sex buyer. In most cases, this was due to the sex trafficker being involved in the crime and harming the sex buyer.

**Limitations of the Study**

The findings from this study should be interpreted with some caution due to some limitations in data collection. This study describes the trick roll cases referred to the LVMPD Vice and Sex Trafficking Investigations Unit and it is not clear on how many cases were never reported to LVMPD or were only referred to security at the crime location. Other cases may have been referred to LVMPD Property Crimes Unit or Convention Center Unit and never referred to the Vice and Sex Trafficking Investigations Unit. The tools used to determine if the suspect was a sex trafficking victim included records searches and accessing the knowledge of a seasoned human trafficking investigations unit. However, these are limited and it is impossible to conclude that all of the suspects who were not identified as sex trafficking victims were not victims. They may have been new to the area, recently been sex trafficked, or simply stayed hidden from law enforcement. The details of each trick roll case varied due to many factors related to the sex buyer including their desire not to implicate themselves as sex buyers and their intoxication or use of illegal drugs. The values of what was stolen was assessed in the crime report by the sex buyer and law enforcement and the research team did not confirm values of items stolen.

This study explores the role of known sex trafficking victims engaged in forced criminal activity other than prostitution. This study shows that more than a third of suspects that were identified in trick rolls were known victims of sex trafficking. This confirms the anecdotal reports by sex trafficking survivors that forced criminality, including stealing from sex buyers, is part and parcel with prostitution in sex trafficking situations. These findings also justify the advocacy for supporting sex trafficking victims to have their criminal records expunged due to the elements of coercion and force at the time of committing the crime under the control of the sex trafficker. The U.S. Department of State (2014) suggested that victims of trafficking should not be considered liable for their involvement in criminal activities that are the direct consequence of their victimization. This limited or no liability stance supports the laws passed in a number of states in the U.S. that allow victims of sex trafficking to have their criminal records expunged for the periods of time when they are able to provide evidence that they were a victim of sex trafficking. When these policies are implemented, sex trafficking victims are able to obtain better paying jobs and live in safer places, both contributing to more successful re-entry into the community and present fewer pressures to return to the sex trafficker or sex selling situation.

For law enforcement, considering that suspects in a crime may not be held responsible due to their victimization is a complex process. This data suggests a new point of detection to find and identify sex trafficking victims by interviewing the suspects in trick roll cases. This study has the potential to change the lens by which law enforcement operates through when responding to crimes committed by persons in prostitution and potential sex trafficking situations. The LVMPD Vice and Sex Trafficking Investigations Unit has initiated a new set of actions for suspects identified in trick roll cases including a victim-centered interview and resource distribution.

**Law Enforcement Implications**

This study presents a difficult scenario for law enforcement, that a perpetrator of a crime is at the same time a victim of another crime which led to the crime they perpetrated. This scenario also presents in domestic violence situations when a perpetrator of violence has also been a victim or in less common situations a kidnapping victim acting on behalf of their kidnapper. In prostitution stings, law enforcement faces this scenario regularly but for property crime offenses, considering the perpetrator of the crime through a victim-centered lens is a new approach and will require training and community support. This in-depth exploration of the elements of trick rolls in Las Vegas can assist LVMPD in working and communicating with business and community members to prevent trick rolls as well as accurately track patterns. Certain locations appear to have higher probability of first contact between the suspects and the sex buyers including bars/clubs and in casinos. This information can assist with communicating risks to potential sex buyers and for security staff to infer that a third of persons selling sex in those locations are likely to be sex trafficking victims. Bars/clubs and casinos can be a larger part of the detection and recovery of sex trafficking victims and their staff can be a source of reporting (to law enforcement), safety (offering a safe place and victim assistance to be engaged), and support (offering community resources).

There is much to be found in this report for law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies interested in ensuring justice – both for the victims of the robberies and for the sex trafficking victims forced into criminal acts through a complex social process of sex trafficking victimization. From this data emerges a number of implications for practice for those agencies addressing the complexities of these cases in local jurisdictions.

The key implication of this study is that nearly 40% of all “trick rolls” involve a victim of sex trafficking identified as a robbery suspect. This link of sex trafficking victimization to committing violent crimes has not yet been explored in the research literature. As with other investigations, responding officers must first objectively assess the situation to determine what crimes have been committed. Once the assessment that articulates the elements of robbery is completed, officers must consider if there are any mitigating factors that might explain the behavior of the suspect including the possibility that they are a victim of sex trafficking. These mitigating factors would prompt the initiation of a parallel investigative action intended to identify their trafficker and provide support and services to assist the victim.

Faced with dual investigations in opposition with each other, the first would focus on a “victim” of a crime (the sex buyer) who was also committing a crime by purchasing sex but is seeking justice for their property loss. The second investigation focuses on an identified sex trafficking victim who a suspect in a crime who with the correct approach and questioning may reveal that they were acting at the direction and/or under the duress of their trafficker. Investigators must disentangle this knot. It is crucial that law enforcement continues to document the incident for informational purposes only to 1) further other investigations into related robberies, 2) establish the elements of forced criminality as part of sex trafficking victimization and 3) document in law enforcement databases the identifying information, relationships and path of movement patterns of all involved parties. Moving away from the robbery investigation and towards a sex trafficking investigation, responding law enforcement are encouraged to take a victim-centered approach to interviewing the suspect in trick roll investigations. Once the indicators of sex trafficking arises, interviews with the sex trafficking victim should be conducted forensically and using trauma-informed interviewing techniques to elicit the information necessary to explore their victimization and their current needs.

***This study leads into a discussion about criminal intent.*** Intent is commonly sought as an element of any criminal offense. However, in sex trafficking situations, intention is difficult to determine as the victim may lack a sense of agency that would enable them to make a free choice to engage in a criminal act.

The data in this study also revealed those who engage as sex buyers come from a variety of locations outside of Las Vegas, Nevada. Ninety percent of the sex buyers did not live in Nevada and nearly 30 percent of the sex buyers were visitors from outside of the US. This implies that as a destination city whose economy is based in entertainment, Las Vegas is likely to experience a higher percentage of collateral crime related to sex trafficking victimization. This research revealed a concentration of forced criminal activity in the center of the Las Vegas strip.

While this may appear expected, law enforcement should look at concentration evidence in conjunction with mobility evidence to help make strategic decisions regarding investigations. Primarily, the data illustrates there are environmental conditions that encourage sex trafficking activity and create the conditions through which other forced criminal activity may occur such as “trick rolls.” These conditions – entertainment locations where inhibitions tend to be lower – cannot be changed. However, law enforcements’ understanding, and therefore its response to such conditions, can and should be changed. For example, the research indicated in Las Vegas there is a likelihood that “trick roll” or other sex trafficking related activity may be reported to casino security instead of to the police. This offers law enforcement the opportunity to engage local knowledge in a perceived lesser consequence environment that may further sex trafficking investigations. Additionally, the concentration/mobility paradigm may be used as a predictive analytic to help law enforcement more effectively target locations most likely to

experience forced criminal activity related to sex trafficking. Destination locations in local jurisdictions – local casinos, bars and clubs, entertainment districts, strip clubs, local “blades,” etc. – should all be proactively patrolled with frequent contacts made to identify those hovering around the periphery of the known sex trafficking landscape particularly bars/clubs and on the casino floors as information sources or future victim/witness/suspects. This will require targeted training for entertainment site staff, casino security, and law enforcement to focus on looking for sex trafficking victims.

Finding sex traffickers and sex trafficking victims from outside the local jurisdiction during other crime investigations enables law enforcement to identify mobility trends, itself a known element of sex trafficking. Utilizing intelligence databases, open source intelligence and well-known sex trafficking websites, law enforcement can follow a sex trafficking pattern that has brought the trafficker and victim to their jurisdiction and gather critical evidence that articulates the elements of sex trafficking both locally and regionally. Cellphone data is also valuable evidence and can hold location-based data, evidence of financial transactions, website passwords, photos, and texts; call records capturing negotiations for sex trafficking deals.

## Conclusion

In more than one out of every three trick rolls with a suspect identified, a known sex trafficking victim was identified as a suspect. This finding supports that forced criminality is a part of many sex trafficking cases and indicates that more research is needed to explore this issue. A victim-centered approach by law enforcement investigating these property crimes is indicated by the findings of this study. Along with the new approach, trick roll investigations are an opportunity to proactively identify sex trafficking victims

*Ninety percent of the sex buyers did not live in Nevada and nearly 30 percent of the sex buyers were visitors from outside of the US.*

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