

## ***Not Alone: Working Together in the Fight Against Human Trafficking***

### **What is labor trafficking?**

**Juan Carlos Jiminez Luna:** [in Spanish] I was a very vulnerable person considering that the person who trafficked me was part of my blood family. It was easy for them because I had trust in them, and it was how they brought me into the situation I experienced.

I was twenty-four years old when I decided to come here to the United States due to the situation that I lived in, and the corruption and the economy in Mexico, but the strongest reason was to be able to help my family. For a while, I was alright with the person who trafficked me. I was a stevedore for corn crates that would come.

The moment when I realized that they were trafficking us, as trafficking, was when I witnessed the threats. Because at times, when they would beat us, they would pretend they were helping us with the swelling in our arms, and sometimes I would witness that and I'd even think well maybe they know something I don't, but at the moment that I saw their gun in their legs, so that they wouldn't have to pay us, that's when I understood what was going on was wrong.

I got so sick to a point of dehydration. I kept throwing up and no one took me to the hospital. It was one friend of mine who ended up taking me. And he said "Oh, the doctor says that if you had arrived one hour later, you would have died."

I knew that I had rights but I did not know where to call or who to talk to. Where I was they taught us that everyone who arrived to visit were either immigration patrol or people from the government.

There I met one person, David Patrick, through the catholic church and Linda Prieto, who was doing her doctorate there and was volunteering. When she told me everything, that's the point where I saw a way out. Through those people, it was that I began to learn about what they were doing to us, that I was being trafficked. I first escaped, and they helped me to make a legal case against those people who had trafficked me.

It is something very hard, what one goes through when we are being trafficked. That's why I'm involved and I don't care that people see me, that they know my name. I want people to

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listen to me and that my voice be elevated and heard so that I can help prevent other people from experiencing what we have lived.