Know What You’re Buying

INTRODUCTION

I. Attention

A. [ATTENTION-GETTER] Chocolate seems like something we just can’t get enough of. It’s rich, delicious, and satisfies that sweet tooth. But, for some people in the world today, chocolate is a matter of life and death. Let’s take 11-year old Ibrahim from Mali who dreamed of the day he would be able to buy a bicycle. When he was offered a job to work at a cocoa farm, it seemed that he would be able to buy that bicycle he’d always wanted. The man offering the job ended up being a trafficker, who sold Ibrahim into forced labor on a cocoa farm. Ibrahim and other trafficked boys worked all day long doing back breaking cocoa farming, were hardly fed, and were beaten on a daily basis in order to prevent them from running away (“Trafficking…”). The cocoa these children were forced to help produce eventually takes the shape of that chocolate bar, which could be sitting on the shelf of our neighborhood grocery store. Many slave-produced goods like this might be in your home and many of us don’t even realize it.

B. [THESIS STATEMENT] Today I’m going to tell you why we as consumers should be more aware of where our products are coming from.
C. [REASON TO LISTEN] As a nation, we are consumers. As college students, we shop. And we all like to feel good about our purchase. But how good can we feel if we’re contributing to human trafficking or child labor? There are ways to still feel confident about what we buy while knowing that we’re helping our fellow human beings.

D. [SPEAKER CREDIBILITY] Being a more conscious and intentional consumer is a pretty new thing to me. I’ve been passionate about helping victims of human trafficking and raising awareness for a while, but like many people its connection to the consumer was unbeknownst to me. By talking to people involved in the advocacy of stopping trafficking and doing quite a bit of research on my own, I’ve come to the conclusion that all of us hold the tools right now to be advocates for change.

E. [PREVIEW] I’m going to talk to you about the realities of human trafficking today and how you can ensure you’re not contributing to it by being conscious in your purchasing.

[TRANSITION: So, now that you know what I’m going to be talking about today, let me tell you all about what’s happening with human trafficking and child labor in the world right now.]

BODY

II. Need

A. “Human trafficking is a booming international trade,” according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime’s 2007 brochure “The Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking.” While many of us have never actually seen this crime take place, it is a reality that is making “billions of dollars at the expense of
millions of victims” (*Global Initiative*). Many of them are children like Ibrahim, and it occurs every single day around the world.

1. According to the US Department of State in their June 2009 annual *Trafficking in Persons Report*, the International Labor Organization, or ILO, estimates that “there are at least 12.3 million adults and children in human trafficking at any given time” (“Trafficking…”).
   a. This human trafficking can be in the form of bonded labor, forced labor, sweatshop labor, and/or sexual servitude.
   b. The International Labor Organization (“Trafficking…”) also estimates that $30 billion is being made annually in profits from human trafficking.

2. On the other hand, in the realm of child labor, which can be forced or bonded labor, the ILO estimates there to be 218 million child workers in the world (*Department of Labor*).
   a. Of these children workers 22,000 of them die each year from their work (*Department of Labor*).

B. Human trafficking around the world prolongs, in part, because of the high demand for consumer goods.

1. The United Nations also stated “criminals profit while satisfying consumer demand” (*Global Initiative*).
2. Many of the goods that are produced for us in the United States are made outside of the country.
a. This “consumer demand” is one that desires prominently cheap goods. However, this demand puts pressure on foreign companies to keep prices low, even at the expense of the rights and freedoms of workers.

b. Traffickers see this demand and step up to meet it, making profit and stealing money and freedoms from the lives of primarily women and young children.

C. We are creating conflict in our values when we allow these things to continue.

1. In other words, we have a moral duty to help each other through fighting the global problem of human trafficking (Global Initiative).

2. Secretary Hilary Clinton said in her letter at the beginning of the Department of State’s report that “bringing an end to the global trade in people is a priority for the United States” because of our values on human rights and democracy (“Trafficking…”).

3. Therefore, we should be ensuring that we aren’t supporting the global business of slavery, which opposes those values, by what we buy.

[TRANSITION: While human trafficking is a huge and overwhelming global problem, there is something we can do to assure we are not contributing to it.]

III. Satisfaction

A. As college students and consumers, I realize that it isn’t completely realistic to say, “Just stop shopping,” so I’m going to tell you all how to exercise that purchasing power you have in order to help improve the global human trafficking condition.
1. By being more conscious consumers, we can help these men and women by promoting awareness of unethical products, made by persons in slavery or child labor.

2. By purchasing goods that aren’t produced in human trafficking environments, such as fair trade products, we thwart the production of those goods, and stop the demand for cheap, trafficked labor and/or child labor.

   a. Fair trade products are those that uphold ethical standards and promote better trading conditions in developing countries. Buying fair trade is one way of making sure you aren’t purchasing from human trafficking or child labor environments.

   b. According to the US Department of Labor, the most common items produced by trafficked individuals include cotton, sugar cane, tobacco, coffee, rice, cocoa, carpets, footwear, and gold. They’ve “identified 122 goods produced with forced labor, child labor, or both, in 58 countries” (Department of State.).

   c. The website TradeAsOne.com has everyday items you can buy online that are fair trade.

   d. You can look for fair trade goods at your local stores like Whole Foods and Trader Joe’s, which offer items like coffee and sugar that are fair trade and 100% slave-free.
3. Another way to exercise your purchasing power is to buy products made by trafficking survivors in order to bring them empowerment as free craftsmen and women.
   a. (Show websites)
   b. A large majority of human trafficking occurs in poorer countries. So, for those who’ve escaped the life of slavery, becoming financially stable is a huge problem.
      i. There are organizations that promote and teach them a craft, which they then sell in order to support these men, women, and children.

4. The Defense of State even suggests that by these efforts we can also encourage more ethical business behavior ("Trafficking…"), which may mean a decrease in the amount of associations businesses have with slave-based production.

[TRANSITION: So, if we were to become more conscious in our purchases, you might be wondering what it might actually do to global human trafficking…]

IV. Visualization
   A. Imagine there being no more need for child workers. Instead, those 22,000 kids would be spending their childhood alive and free of the hazards of work.
      1. Ibrahim might not have ever gone through that traumatic separation from his childhood had the need for workers not been there.
   B. Those trafficked men and women could have families.
C. By becoming more conscious and intentional with our purchases, we can ensure that we are upholding the values of helping others.

1. Rather than walking around without a care, we will know that what we’re buying is affecting the lives of others, and in a positive way.

2. The money that comes out of our pockets won’t be ending up in the hands of traffickers and exploiters. Instead, we will know that our money is going to ethical work environments and to strengthen the lives of victimized individuals.

**CONCLUSION**

[TRANSITION: Now that you’ve seen how the world can be without unethical consumerism, let’s review what I’ve talked about with you today.]

V. **Action**

A. [SUMMARY] I’ve told you about this need to stop human trafficking, how being a more conscious consumer can help bring about change in global trafficking, and what it would look like if that consumer demand was gone. But, today I really want you to become an activist to help end human trafficking, and here’s what you can do.

B. [CALL TO ACTION] So, before you go shopping today or tomorrow, remember to do so intentionally and buy products that are fair trade to encourage a more ethical global marketplace.

1. If you need a new pair of shoes and you’re tempted to go to the mall, consider the cute and comfortable pair you could get through TOMs shoes. What’s more, think of the life you could be changing with that purchase.
Think of the life you’re changing when they give a pair to a child in need in return.

2. Tomorrow morning at your favorite coffee spot, ask them if they have a fair trade brew. Many coffee places today house at least one fair trade brew including Starbucks.

3. And, I urge you to pass on the information you’ve heard today!

C. [CLINCHER] A lot of people are against sweatshops. We all cringe at the idea of child labor and feel defensive for those who are sold into sexual slavery. It sickens us. But, are we really doing anything about it? Martin Luther King, Jr. had a dream that we should continue to pursue. Being aware and intentional with your consumerism is just one step in becoming a modern day abolitionist in this present civil rights movement.
REFERENCES

(In MLA Format)


