

# Signs of Enslavement

MANY OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE told their stories in this book were rescued from slavery because a neighbor, friend, coworker, or client noticed that their situation seemed unusual or exploitative. With the aid of a stranger or a friend's courage and intuition, many survivors are able to escape the most gruesome conditions. The list of potential warning signs given here might alert you to the possibility that someone is enslaved.<sup>1</sup> Though any one of these conditions might not indicate slavery, each one of them is a sign that should be an alert to abuse, exploitation, and even possible human trafficking.

Be alert if a person

1. Appears to be working without pay.
2. Is not free to change employers.
3. Is being held against his or her will.
4. Shows signs of employer abuse, either mental or physical.
5. Appears to be malnourished among people who are not.
6. Wears the same clothes every day or does not appear to own many personal possessions.
7. Is not allowed to leave his or her home.
8. Is being watched or followed when he or she leaves home.
9. Works an excessive number of hours.
10. Is afraid to discuss himself or his work situation.
11. Has been abused or threatened for refusing to work.
12. Has an unquantifiable debt related to his or her work situation.
13. Has been transported across national borders.

14. Has had his or her passport or legal documents confiscated by an employer.
15. Lives in fear of his or her employer.
16. Has had his or her family members threatened.
17. Seems to have an unusual sense of obligation to his or her employer despite exploitation.
18. Seems to be treated differently than other members of a household.
19. Appears to be confined to a relatively meager living space, such as the basement or garage.
20. Is a child and performs most or all of the domestic work in a household.

If you meet a person who exhibits these signs, it is typically better to inquire about his or her well-being rather than to ignore the signs. If you think you have encountered a case of modern-day slavery, you should contact the **National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline** at 888-373-7888.

# Suggestions for Further Reading and Viewing

## MODERN-DAY SLAVE NARRATIVES

- Bales, Kevin and Zoe Trodd, eds. *To Plead Our Own Cause: Personal Stories by Today's Slaves*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2008.
- Beah, Ishmael. *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008.
- Bok, Francis. *Escape from Slavery: The True Story of My Ten Years in Captivity and My Journey to Freedom in America*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2004.
- Cadet, Jean-Robert. *Restavec: From Haitian Slave Child to Middle-Class American*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998.
- Fernando, Beatrice. *In Contempt of Fate: The Tale of a Sri Lankan Sold Into Servitude, Who Survived*. Merrimac, Mass.: Bearo, 2004.
- Lloyd, Rachel. *Girls Like Us: Fighting for a World Where Girls Are Not for Sale, an Activist Finds Her Calling and Heals Herself*. New York: HarperCollins, 2011.
- Mam, Somaly. *The Road of Lost Innocence: The True Story of a Cambodian Heroine*. New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2008.
- Nazer, Mende. *Slave: My True Story*. New York: Public Affairs, 2005.
- Muhsen, Zana. *Sold: One Woman's True Account of Modern Slavery*. London: Little, Brown, 1994.

## ON MODERN SLAVERY

- Bales, Kevin. *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.