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Lydia Cacho's Role in the Transformation of Human Sex-Trafficking

Antoinette Josephick

Well Behaved Women Seldom Make History

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Abstract

Lydia Cacho (2014) is a Mexican investigative journalist and feminist who fights for woman, children and human rights. She is known for exposing the Mexican child pornography run by wealthy businessmen through her book *Demons of Eden*. Cacho (2014) was raised by supportive parents and especially looked up to her feminist mother. Her remarkable work as a journalist exposing serious issues in Mexico and around the world have lead her to become one of the most important feminists in modern times. She continues to pave a way for victims of sexual exploitation to come forward and tell their stories. Cacho (2014) made a great feat for human rights with her determination and bravery.

Key Words: *mexican, journalist, feminist, expose, human rights, bravery.*

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Lydia Cacho: Well Behaved Women Seldom Make History**Reasoning behind choosing Cacho**

When initially deciding which women to write this paper about, I desperately wanted to write about a woman I had learned about in the course. Women such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Malala Yousafzai usually came to mind. Despite learning about these amazing women and many more, I ultimately decided it would be better to educate myself on other feminists around the world. After simply googling "International feminists" I found an article listing Lydia Cacho, a feminist from Mexico, among other outstanding feminists as "International feminists who are making our world a more equal place" (Sathish, 2015). I had never heard of Cacho before but after briefly reading into her story I quickly realized how strong, dedicated and driven she is. Despite going through hellish obstacles and multiple life threatening ultimatums, she never stopped fighting for herself and for every other woman and child around the world.

Before digging deeper into Cacho's cause, I immediately found it interesting that she was an investigative journalist and feminist from Mexico. I had never heard of a feminist that doubled as a journalist, nonetheless one from Mexico. I specifically wanted to choose a woman that was not from America and Mexico hit home for me. A close friend of mine is originally from Mexico and I have always yearned to learn more about her home country and the people of it, without the false media projections. I believe choosing Cacho as my woman to research about was very important for me, intellectually and personally. Over the course of the semester, I had dabbled in the thought of possibly taking up a career in journalism. Finding Cacho seemed as if it

was a sign telling me that that could be me one day, changing the world one journal article at a time.

Cacho's Upbringing

Lydia Cacho (2014) was born in Mexico City, Mexico on April 12, 1963 to a French-Portuguese Psychologist mother and Mexican engineer father (McGeough, 2014, para. 12). Growing up with a feminist mother made her into the woman she is today, a Mexican investigative journalist, author and feminist advocating to end violence against women and children (Scott, 2007). She learned how to strategize, empathize and network from her mother and was taught discipline and toughness from her father (McGeough, 2014, para. 12).

In Cacho's (2014) book *Slavery Inc.*, she tells a story about when she was seven years old. Her mother would tell Cacho (2014) and her sister Sonia to stay away from the "child-snatcher" (p. 1), an old woman who stole children in the neighborhood, when playing outside. She became socially aware of various issues in Mexico while growing up thanks to her mother who actively taught and exposed her to such issues. From a very young age Cacho (2014) knew about child abduction and more than forty years later, she would realize it was one of the biggest problems of the twenty-first century (p. 1).

Due to her intense lifestyle, Cacho (2014) lost multiple people by her side; two husbands and multiple friends have left her side while making her journey (McGeough, 2014, para. 11). Regardless, Cacho has endless support from her family consisting of her father, five siblings, two adopted daughters and their children (McGeough, 2014, para. 12). Her tough job would be infinitely harder without the support of her family and admitted that "it makes a huge difference when you live with a family as great as [hers]" (McGeough, 2014, para. 12).

Events that shaped Cacho as a Woman

Growing up as the daughter of a feminist, Cacho (2014) learned a lot from her mother. She understood social issues and learned about self dignity from a young age (Scott, 2007). She stated that her experiences educated her (Scott, 2007), making her the woman she is today. In 1999, Cacho (2014) was abducted from a bus station in Cancun, raped and severely beaten (McGeough, 2014, para. 7). It is believed she was assaulted due to her earlier published writings that protested against social issues. In 2005, Cacho (2014) was again abducted, this time being mocked with guns. The kidnappers put the guns in her mouth and genitals, undressed her and even debated shooting her (McGeough, 2014, para. 14). The kidnappers ruthlessly teased Cacho (2014) for 20 hours. When she finally arrived to what was believed to be "safety" at the hands of two female Puebla police officers, she was once again taken advantage of (McGeough, 2014, para. 17). She was forced to strip in front of the male officers and was raped again (McGeough, 2014, para. 20). While being kept in detention in Puebla, she was visited by two women; a journalist and senator. Both women tried convincing Cacho (2014) to confess that she was not harmed while at the prison in Puebla (McGeough, 2014, para. 19), warning her that the governor of Puebla would kill her if she did not comply. She later found out that a female state attorney arranged the rape (McGeough, 2014, para. 25). At this point Cacho (2014) realized that not just men will go to serious lengths to gain power; women also crave power and will tear down other women to get it.

Cacho (2014) was a strong woman with a voice; she had already published her book *Demons of Eden* in 2004 exposing a businessman child pornography and prostitution ring. While at the prison in Puebla, she was asked to confess the book was all lies or else she would be locked up by Puebla's governor in order to silence her (McGeough, 2014, para. 22). She had dedicated so much time and research to the book, she was not going to sign the statement. More

than 100 young girls were abused by Jean Succar Kuri, a multimillionaire Cancún hotelier who was put to life in prison in light of Cacho's (2014) *Demons of Eden* book release (McGeough, 2014, para. 13). Cacho (2014) was bribed a month before the book's release with one million dollars by a stranger. Of course she declined the offer and seven months later, Cacho (2014) was then abducted and taken to the prison in Puebla. (McGeough, 2014, para. 13).

Cacho (2014) went through what seem to be some of the hardest challenges to overcome in the span of only a few years. Some women would have given up in her situation but thankfully Cacho (2014) never did. Cacho (2014) actively tries to cease global sex trafficking and even spent "five years tracking down small and large international mafia operations by listening to the stories of survivors of sexual exploitation" (p. 3) as stated in her book *Slavery Inc.* Cacho's (2014) main intention was to follow the trail of a criminal phenomenon that was born in the twentieth century. By continuing her work in journalism and advocating for gender inequality and putting an end to sex trafficking, she creates a space for other woman to be willing to share their voice on such topics.

Cacho's Accomplishments

With seven book publications discussing sex-trafficking, human rights and feminism, Cacho (2014) is a very accomplished women. She won the Amnesty International International Ginetta Sagan Award for Women and Children's Rights in 2007, as well as the IWMF (International Women's Media Foundation) Courage in Journalism Award. She received various other awards in the upcoming years for using her work to bring attention to corruption that shields the exploitation of women and children.

Cacho (2014) has more than twenty years experience as a workshop teacher and speaker. She has toured the world visiting universities and making speeches advocating for "peace,

freedom of expression and ethical commitment to change the world” (“Qualifications as an international speaker”). Cacho (2014) has also spoken at the United Nations General Assembly, UNESCO, and the European Union. She was appointed by the UNODC and the Spanish Government as Ambassador for the Blue Heart Campaign against sex trafficking. Notably, Cacho (2014) was the first woman to take a human-rights abuse case to the Mexican Supreme Court in 2007 over her treatment in Puebla (McGeough, 2014, para. 24).

Cacho (2014) has been presented with multiple awards on behalf of her fearless behavior including being a recipient of the PEN/Pinter Prize as an International Writer of Courage and receiving The International Hrant Dink Award. Both awards were given due her risk-taking in pursuing her beliefs.

Cacho: A Well Behaved Woman?

Cacho relates to the course title, *Well Behaved Women Seldom Make History*, very easily. From exposing a child pornography and prostitution ring, rejecting life threatening bribes and having political fire shoot straight towards her, Cacho (2014) was quite remarkably not well behaved. She was not afraid nor ever regretted exposing the issues she talked about in her books. Being raised by a feminist mother deeply influenced her and her actions. Cacho's (2014) braveness and determination helped her make a difference in the world of sex trafficking. Without her, Mexico and the rest of the world would be at a loss in terms of moving forward for human rights.

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