

Trade of Innocents

(Monterey Media)



Cambodia has a rich cultural history, yet the Southeast Asian country has become known as a centrum for human trafficking. *Trade of Innocents*, released last fall and now on DVD, uses the Buddhist nation as a backdrop to shine a light on the deplorable trade that ensnares 2.1 million children—many as young as age 4—each year.

Based on a true story, the movie follows an American couple who relocate to Cambodia following the murder of their 7-year-old daughter. Determined to put a dent in the multimillion-dollar trafficking industry in Cambodia's capital city of Phnom Penh, trafficking investigator Alex (Dermot Mulroney) and his wife, Claire (Mira Sorvino), set out to rescue young girls amid an uncooperative local police force and lax cultural attitudes toward the problem.

As Alex and his team attempt to bring down some of the perpetrators, including a psychotic ringleader named Duke (brilliantly portrayed by Trieu Tran), Alex is informed that, despite his noble efforts, he fights a losing battle because of the countless impoverished families willing to do whatever it takes to survive. He sees firsthand how even women and children who escape the brothels often re-enter the industry just to provide for their families. And as long as there is demand for it, local predators will find a way to supply it.

Trade of Innocents isn't a feel-good movie by any stretch of the imagination. It is a dark, disturbing look at the reality of the sex-slave trade in Southeast Asia. It is, however, a compelling film that speaks to the heart of getting involved to help innocent young girls and boys escape their daily horror. The film challenges Christians and nonbelievers alike to take action and be advocates for those who don't have a

voice.

Rated PG-13, the movie is scattered with implied violence, most of which is off-screen. *Trade of Innocents'* best attribute, however, is its stirring depiction of everyday life for millions of innocent children who need our help.