

## **SIGNS OF POSSIBLE HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

### **Airports and Flights**

#### **TRUE STORY: 'Something Doesn't Feel Right'**

At three o'clock on a late summer afternoon two girls, 15 and 17 years old, arrived to check in to a flight at a major airport in California. The customer service airline agent immediately thought that something didn't feel 'right'. First of all, the two teenagers were travelling on their own. Although children sometimes travel unaccompanied, it was unusual that no adult was with them at the check-in desk to make sure everything was fine and to say goodbye. The airline agent also noticed that the girls were only carrying small bags, surprising because their destination was New York – a city over 5,000 kilometers away. Also neither of the girls had any form of ID.

To add to the strange situation, the girls' airline tickets were expensive first-class tickets which had been bought online with a credit card. This wasn't unusual, but the name on the credit card was not the same family name for either of the girls. But the thing that really worried the agent was that their tickets to New York were only one way. The girls were surprised because they had no idea that their tickets did not include a return flight home.

At this point, the customer service agent told the girls that she would not let them board the flight. They seemed confused and started to text a person called 'Drey'. He replied to their text messages and seemed to be telling the girls what to say. 'Drey' was a person the girls had met on the Internet. He had told the girls that they would earn \$2,000 if they would like to come to New York and be models in a music video.

The airline agent contacted the airport police who tried, and failed, to contact 'Drey'. Within minutes, he had already deleted his social media accounts and disconnected his mobile phone number. Police believe the girls could have become victims of human trafficking.

The customer service agent, as a professional airline employee, had been trained to identify signs of human trafficking. If she hadn't suspected that something was wrong and if she hadn't been able to identify the signs, this story may have had a very different ending. The name of the airline agent was Denise Miracle. What an interesting last name...

#### **WARNING:**

Human traffickers often recruit victims, including minors, through social media sites, using lies and false promises of a fantastic job or a romantic adventure. Traffickers will try to target people who are emotionally or economically vulnerable.

Link to video: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKjJTA0eaFw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKjJTA0eaFw)