

E. Benjamin Skinner



The first person in history to witness negotiations for the sale of human beings on four continents, E. Benjamin Skinner is single handedly raising awareness of modern day slavery. In his shocking and brutally honest book, *A Crime So Monstrous: Face-to-Face with Modern Day Slavery*, Skinner tells the story of individuals who live in slavery, those who have escaped from bondage, those who own or traffic in slaves, and the mixed political motives of those who seek to combat the crime. Elie Weisel has praised the book as a "Powerful indictment of contemporary slavery (which) must arouse outrage for perpetrators and compassion for their victims."

The basis for a *Nightline* special report and the inspiration for an episode of *Law and Order*, Skinner's *A Crime So Monstrous* takes readers to the outer edges of civilization, revealing the true faces of slavery today. Skinner went undercover at great personal risk, infiltrating trafficking networks and slave sales on five continents, exposing a modern flesh trade. From mega-harems in Dubai to illicit brothels in Bucharest, from slave quarries in India to child markets in Haiti, he explores the underside of a world we scarcely recognize as our own and lays bare a parallel universe where human beings are bought, sold, used, and discarded. He travels from the White House to war zones and immerses us in the political and flesh-and-blood battles on the front lines of the unheralded new abolitionist movement.

In the book and at the podium, Skinner reveals the heart of his story: the slaves themselves. Despite being abandoned by the international community, despite suffering a crime so monstrous as to strip their awareness of their own humanity, somehow, some enslaved men regain their dignity, some enslaved women learn to trust men, and some enslaved children manage to be kids. By narrating their stories—and those of their captors and liberators—Skinner bears witness for them, and for the millions who are held in the shadows.

In 2003, as a writer on assignment in the frontlines of the north-south Sudanese civil war for *Newsweek International*, Skinner met his first survivor of slavery, Muong Nyong. Like Skinner, Nyong was 27 at the time, and pondering what to do with the rest of his life. Unlike Skinner, he had spent the first part of that life in bondage. After meeting Nyong, Skinner traveled the globe to find others like him. Though there are more slaves today than ever before, finding them would prove the most daunting challenge of Skinner's professional life.

Recently named National Geographic Adventurer of the Year, Skinner is a graduate of Wesleyan University. He is currently a fellow at the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at Harvard Kennedy School of Government and previously served as a Research Associate for U.S. Foreign Policy at the Council on Foreign Relations as well as Special Assistant to Ambassador Richard Holbrooke. As a writer engaged in the study of the U.S. and global political economies, his articles have appeared in *Newsweek International*, *Travel + Leisure*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The Miami Herald*, *Foreign Policy* and others. Skinner is donating twenty-five percent of the *A Crime So Monstrous*'s royalties goes to groups dedicated to fighting slavery. He lives in Brooklyn, NY.

"Rigorously investigated and fearlessly reported, *A Crime So Monstrous* is a passionate and thorough examination of the appalling reality of human bondage in today's world. In his devastating narrative, Ben Skinner boldly casts light on the unthinkable, yet thriving, modern-day practice of slavery, exposing a global trade in human lives. The abuses detailed in these pages are repugnant, but there is hope to be found: by giving voice to the victims, Skinner helps restore their dignity and makes crucial strides toward closing this shameful chapter in history."

--Bill Clinton

