Kirsta Leeburg Melton

PROFILE

- 26-year prosecutor focused on child physical and sexual abuse, adult sex cases, human trafficking, and intimate partner violence from assault to capital murder.
- Strong leader recognized for ability to cast a coherent vision and marshal disparate agencies and individuals behind a unified set of goals.
- Skilled, engaging, and galvanizing public speaker and instructor.
- Legislative coordinator, drafter, and lead advocate for Texas' anti-trafficking policy agenda.
- Fluid writer with broad grasp of the law and underlying public policy.
- Leader who advances long term outcomes while maintaining up-to-date knowledge of operational details to ensure agency and team accountability.
- Proven problem solver with ability to manage complex ecosystems and advance multiple priorities simultaneously.

EXPERIENCE

Institute to Combat Trafficking
Seeking Justice for Trafficking Victims and Ensuring Accountability for Traffickers
Founder and CEO
Austin, Texas January 27, 2020-Present

- Train law enforcement to identify victims and prepare triable human trafficking cases by assisting in lead generation, case development, preparation of legal documents, evidentiary analysis, witness question preparation, and victim placement.
- Prepare human trafficking cases for prosecution by assisting with charging decisions, discovery, case structure, witness preparation, evidentiary development, trial strategy, jury selection, legal briefing, and motions.
- Try human trafficking cases to jury verdict with or for District and County Attorneys upon request.
- Assess, audit, and evaluate communities and organizations interested in engaging on the issue of human trafficking.
- Assist in identification of populations, businesses, and locations vulnerable to trafficking as well as risk factors significant for future trafficking.
- Create and implement community or organization specific anti-trafficking policies and solutions, to include citywide immersive training, educational materials, capacity building within victim serving organizations, coalition building, and connection to statewide resources.
- Promote policies that advance the eradication of human trafficking.
- Provide expert consultation and testimony on trafficking-related issues.
- Counsel survivors and survivor-serving organizations on criminal procedure, interactions with law enforcement, assessment of criminal conduct, evidence gathering and case development.
- Advise civil counsel on the dynamics of human trafficking, interacting with the criminal system, working with victims, and conceptualization of potential lawsuits.

Office of the Attorney General of Texas
Deputy Criminal Chief, Human Trafficking and Transnational/Organized Crime Section (HTTOC)
Austin, Texas November 2015-December 31, 2019
Assistant Attorney General for Human Trafficking, Criminal Prosecutions Division
Austin, Texas January 19, 2015-November 2015

- Developed, trained, and supervised HTTOC attorneys, analyst, victim advocate, and special initiative staff, and coordinated with dedicated HTTOC law enforcement officers.
- Directed ongoing long-term investigations/prosecutions of trafficking defendants and transnational criminal organizations to include Backpage.com.
- Provided legal advice and prosecutorial direction to both internal and external law enforcement during human trafficking investigations.
- Prepared, indicted, and prosecuted all human trafficking cases where the Office of the Attorney General of Texas was invited into the prosecution.
- Developed anti-trafficking policy agenda for the state of Texas.
- Managed, evaluated, and advised on all legislation pertaining to human trafficking.
- Acted as inter-agency liaison and consultant on human trafficking issues for local and state offices as diverse as Bell County Juvenile Probation and the Texas Supreme Court.
- Testified as a resource witness on human trafficking legislation as requested by the Texas legislature.
- Trained law enforcement, prosecution, the judiciary, juvenile probation, medical, hospitality, and the public on human trafficking.
- Collaborated with university researchers on projects focused on trafficking.
- Created human trafficking documentary training for state-wide distribution.
- Fostered and supported anti-trafficking efforts statewide, to include: creating and hosting prosecutor training conference, hosting coalition builds for trucking, energy, and law enforcement, providing training for the McCain Institute and Howard Buffett Foundation's Initiative to Combat Modern Slavery, creating and implementing citywide immersive human trafficking training.

Bexar County District Attorney's Office
Assistant Criminal District Attorney, Family Justice and Victim Protection Division
San Antonio, TX January 17, 2000-December 31, 2014

- Evaluated, prepared, pled, or tried all human trafficking-related cases for Bexar County.
- Founded and led the Bexar County District Attorney's Human Trafficking Unit.
- Coordinated regional law enforcement and non-profit response to human trafficking as Chairperson of the Alamo Area Coalition against Trafficking.
- Evaluated, prepared, indicted, pled or tried all criminal cases relating to the physical and sexual abuse of children, sexual assault of adults and domestic violence, ranging from felony assault to capital murder for the felony district Courts.
- Assisted and advised law enforcement in their preparation of family justice and human trafficking cases.
- Researched all legal issues related to cases, prepared, and argued memoranda of law, briefs and motions in pretrial hearings, motions to revoke probation and DNA writs.
- Supervised and trained misdemeanor attorneys assigned to domestic violence courts and mentored junior felony attorneys.

Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, LLP
Associate
Washington, D.C. September 1998-January 2000

- Participated in all aspects of federal criminal antitrust practice, including conducting pre-indictment investigations, preparing witness files, researching, and drafting legal memoranda on substantive criminal and antitrust issues, and interviewing witnesses.
- Conducted all aspects of internal corporate investigations, including interviewing company employees, drafting final reports on antitrust implications of corporate behavior, and negotiating with corporate counsel.
- Litigated pro-bono cases, including drafting and arguing TROs, and negotiating settlements with U.S. Attorney's Office.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- *Assistant Adjunct Professor*: Modern Day Slavery, UGS Signature Course, University of Texas, Fall 2022-Spring 2023, Spring 2025-Fall 2026.
- *Assistant Adjunct Professor:* Human Trafficking. Texas State University Fall 2025-Fall 2026.
- *Faculty*: Full Court Press Expert Witness Training: Building Capacity for Expert Witnesses in the Fields of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Human Trafficking, Stalking, and Non-Fatal Strangulation, University of Texas, Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. 2020-Present.
- *Guest Lecturer College/University*: University of Texas School of Law, University of Texas School of Social Work, University of Texas San Antonio, Baylor Law School, Texas A&M School of Nursing, Texas A&M Central Texas, Texas Christian University, Texas State University, Cornell University, St. Edwards University, University of Texas Health Science Center, South Texas College, Tarrant County College, Northeast Lakeview College. 2010-Present as requested.
- *Human Trafficking Instructor*: State, local, national, and international law enforcement, students, probation and detention officers, educators, the judiciary, legislators, hospitality, medical professionals, attorneys, intelligence officials, business leaders and the public. Have personally trained 30,000+ people in 300+settings from intimate gatherings to national conferences. 2010-Present.
- *Criminal Law Instructor:* Criminal procedure, report writing, courtroom testimony, protective orders, witness preparation, use of experts, voir dire, interviewing witnesses, case preparation, prosecutor perspective, dynamics of intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and child abuse. 2005-Present.
- *Featured in Training Tools*: Human trafficking training films which have been viewed by hundreds of thousands of people to include the Office of the Attorney General of Texas' *Be the One in the Fight Against Trafficking*, The Texas Young Lawyer's Association's, *Slavery out of the Shadows: A Spotlight on Human Trafficking*, TAT's (Truckers Against Trafficking) *Trucking Industry Training DVD* and *Law Enforcement Training DVD*.
- *Intern Supervisor*: Undergraduate and graduate school interns receiving unpaid summer work experience, paid employment, or academic credit. 2010-2021.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

- Member: U.S. Department of Transportation funded Multidisciplinary Task Force developing and launching a validated human trafficking screening tool for law enforcement. UC San Diego TREDS and TAT. 2024-2026.
- Member: National Science Foundation funded Multidisciplinary Research Team examining the intersection between sex trafficking and information technology. Baylor University. 2021.
- Chairperson: Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Coordinating Council. September 2019-December 2019.
- Chairperson: Texas Statewide Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force. 2017-2019.
- OAG Representative: Texas Statewide Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force. 2015-2016.
- Steering Committee Member: Central Texas Coalition against Trafficking. 2017-2019.
- Chairperson: Alamo Area Coalition against Trafficking, the regional coalition of state, local and federal law enforcement, victim services organizations, governmental agencies, academics, business, and faith-based organizations, dedicated to the fight against human trafficking in Bexar and the surrounding counties. 2012-2014.
- Founding member: TAT (Truckers against Trafficking), a national non-profit recognized by the United Nations, the White House, the U.S. Congress, and the State Department for its work in the education and mobilization of the trucking, busing, and energy industries in the fight against trafficking.
- Assisted in the formulation of and legislative promotion of 2011-2019 changes to the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure and Penal Code related to human trafficking.
- Consulting resource for students, academics, non-profits, legislators, and the media, regarding human trafficking law, its application, ways to improve it, and the realities of trafficking in Texas.

PUBLICATIONS

- Author and Editor: *Human Trafficking Investigation: A Practitioner's Guide to Making the Case.* CRC Press. September 2024.
- Author and Editor: SAFVIC Human Trafficking Curriculum. February 2024.
- Author: *Working Together to Win Together: The Essential Partnership between Law Enforcement and Prosecutors in Human Trafficking Cases*. Police Chief Magazine. October 2022.
- Author: Courtroom Testimony, Protective Orders, & Report Writing Film Scripts, Texas Municipal Police Association Training Series. 2020.
- Ghost writer: *How Texas can end human trafficking, one hero at a time*. Dallas Morning News. 1/10/2017.
- Co-author: *Texas Can Help End Modern Day Slavery*. Houston Chronicle. 9/19/2016.
- Co-Author: Red Flags for Human Trafficking. Office of the Attorney General of Texas. 2017.
- Co-Author: *Be the One in the Fight Against Trafficking* Campaign, Office of the Attorney General of Texas. 2018.
- Author: *Slavery at Our Doorstep*, Texas State Bar Advanced Criminal Law Seminar. 2016.
- Author: *Not for Sale* Brochure and Campaign, Office of the Attorney General of Texas. 2015.

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Recipient of U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Victims of Crime, Human Trafficking Law Enforcement Fellowship. 2021.
- Recipient of the *Celebration of Courage Making a Difference Award* from New Life Refuge Ministries, Corpus Christi. 2018.
- Selected as an International Fellow by the National Association of Attorneys General Training and Research Institute. 2017.
- Recipient of the Texas Coastal Bend Border Region Human Trafficking Task Force Award for the trial of *State v. Jovan Miles*, Corpus Christi. 2017.
- Recipient of the Bexar County Juvenile Probation Chief's Award for leadership of the Alamo Area Coalition against Trafficking, San Antonio. 2014.

ADDITIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

Criminal District Courts, Travis County
Judicial Law Clerk
Austin, TX February-August 1998

- Evaluated attorney pleadings.
- Researched evidentiary and substantive criminal issues.
- Prepared judges for motions hearings and trials.

Longley & Maxwell
Law Clerk
Austin, TX September 1996-April 1997

- Researched and prepared legal memoranda, motions, and pleadings for class action litigation.

U.S. Department of Justice, Antitrust Division
Honors Program Paralegal
Washington, D.C. October 1993-July 1995

- Conducted and documented over 2000 witness interviews to locate affected markets in monopoly investigation.
- Analyzed 4c documents for merger reviews.
- Prepared initial market analysis for a wide range of industries.
- Founded Division tutoring program pairing Justice Department employees with inner-city elementary school students in need of mentoring and academic assistance.

EDUCATION

The University of Texas School of Law/Lyndon Baines Johnson School of Public Affairs
J.D. and M.P.Aff., August 1998, Admitted to Practice in Texas

- Law G.P.A. 3.76/Public Affairs G.P.A. 3.8.
- Order of the Coif.
- Member, *American Journal of Criminal Law.*
- Teaching Assistant for Admiral Robert Inman.

Cornell University
B.A. American Government, May 1993

- Graduated Cum Laude in Government and with Distinction in all Subjects.