

# TAKEN

Directed by Pierre Morel  
Distributed by Twentieth Century-Fox  
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As long as liberty is valued less than life, slavery will survive. It's an indelible scourge. Governments can ban human trafficking and make serious inroads, but the ultimate earthly laws are not decreed in courts or congresses, but in the dark corners of the human heart.

Women, because of their more docile character and propensity for submission, are more likely to be enslaved. In *Taken*, the girls will do anything to just avoid pain. They are afraid and have no hope, so they yield and try to act happy.

But for all its endurance, slavery is resoundingly condemned. So how can it endure? Perhaps it is because greed for money and greed for sex are the great common denominators for man. How can we stop sex trafficking? According to *Taken*, tolerance of corruption is a major problem, as represented in the character of Jean-Claude, the French official. But more immediately, young women must be more circumspect. *Taken* has a cruel sense of humor. Upon their arrival in Paris, we learn that Kim is a virgin. Her deflowered friend Amanda is boy-crazy and wants to get busy with a handsome Frenchman they just met. She chides Kim for her prudery, wondering what her friend is waiting for.

Well, if it is sex Amanda wanted, that's what she got. Even before the kidnappers arrive Kim realized that this was not a good idea. But Amanda flirted, revealed information, and invited further meetings because she craved sex. It was her own lust that made her a slave to lust. As an audience we feel nothing but scorn for her, what with her flippancy, faux insouciance, and casual lies. When Bryan finds Amanda dead, it's a guilty relief. He's having enough trouble saving his own daughter. It's just as well that he doesn't have to drag this one out of the hell hole she dug for herself.

*Taken* subtly adds one more element to the mystery of slavery's endurance. There is always greed and lust. But there is also Islam. The criminals who trap nubile foreigners in Paris are from Albania, a Muslim country. And the bloated sheik who buys Kim is a Muslim.

Now, there is sex trafficking in Europe, but it is primarily an exploitation of poor Eastern European women who are lured west by promises of legitimate employment. Snatching tourists is brash. It's probably not happening now. But it could happen if authorities in government turn a blind eye. And we already know that Islam's treatment of women is atrocious. They are veiled, beaten, mutilated, humiliated, and left uneducated. In some Muslim lands, like Sudan, slavery is not a sordid aberration, but an established fact of life. Tolerance for such barbarism is a product of, and reinforces, the sad treatment of Muslim women in their own households.

Regardless of the root causes, this is a world where men barely manage to overcome their despairing aches for money and sex. We always seem to be on the verge of societal meltdown. We all have to take our precautions; how can we blindly trust? *Taken*, while being an exciting adventure yarn, also is a cautionary tale for young women who think they can turn off the fun whenever they want.