

Ideas

with Paul Kennedy

Friday July 29, 2016

Blood and Earth - Kevin Bales

What do the shrimp on your plate, the cell phone in your pocket and the rising pollution levels in the developing world have in common? Kevin Bales says, in a word: slavery. Paul Kennedy talks with the author of *Blood and Earth: Modern Slavery, Ecocide and the Secret to Saving the World*. **This episode originally aired February 11, 2016.

"Americans energy-rich lifestyle and the by-products of livestock farming contribute the most to global warming. But every slave holder cutting down mangroves for shrimp or fish camps in the protected forest is increasing the likelihood of that catastrophe as well.

Slavery and environmental destruction are doing a deadly dance. The scale of their joint disaster is so great that it simply has been too big to see until now. It is also subtle, a creeping erosion of life wrought by the hands of millions of slaves compelled to destroy their own livelihoods even as they destroy any chance of arresting global warming."

Kevin Bales has spent decades travelling the world meeting with slaves and slaveholders. He is the co-founder of **Free the Slaves**, the largest abolitionist organization in the world, and lead author of the **Global Slavery Index** which estimates

the number of slaves in 167 countries. It seems almost impossible that today more than 35 million people are slaves.

Kevin Bales says that those of us living in comfortable, consumer-driven societies must shoulder some of the blame. We want our electronic toys, clothes and food to be plentiful and cheap. These material wants enslave people and help maintain business models that rely on cheap, and even free, labour.

Blood and Earth: Modern Slavery, Ecocide, And The Secret To Saving The World is published by Random House.

About the image gallery:

In 2008 CBC national reporter **David Gutnick** spent time in Mauritania, Togo, and Ghana putting together stories on slavery. In Mauritania it turned out that his interpreter was a slave owner. In a small village in Togo, David met with former child slaves who had escaped and formed a club to educate parents about child trafficking; and in Ghana David followed anti-slave activist Jack Dawson as he went from village to village along the shores of Lake Volta looking for children as young as four and five years old who were forced to fish. David is now a producer with IDEAS.

Related websites:

- [Global Slavery Index](#)
- [Kevin Bales](#)
- [United Nations Human Trafficking Portal](#)

Watch Kevin Bales Ted Talk: How to Combat Modern Slavery



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