

A KNIGHT RIDDER SPECIAL REPORT

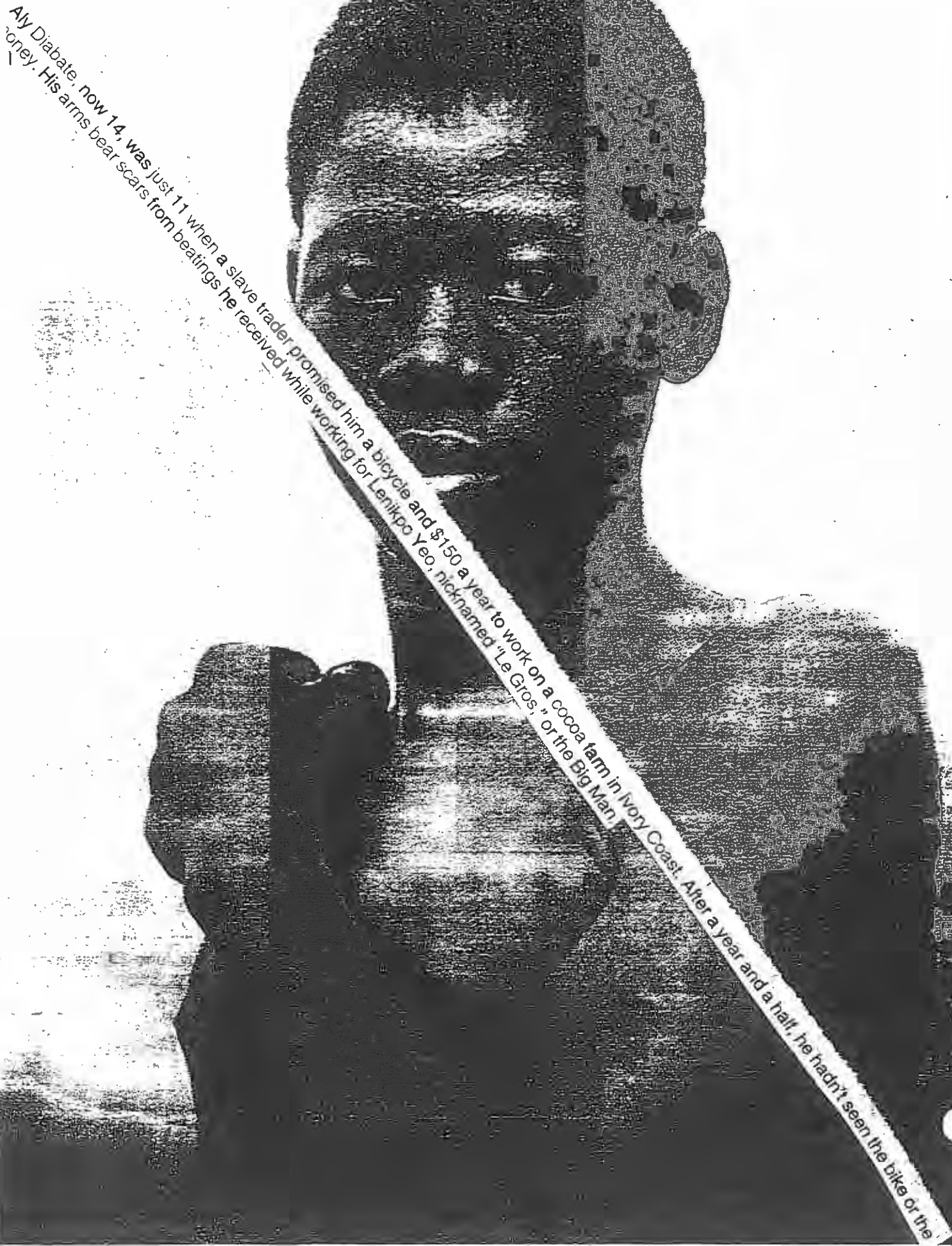
A TASTE OF SLAVERY



Child slavery may taint America's chocolate

*By Sudarsan Raghavan
and Sumana Chatterjee*

Photos by Evelyn Hockstein



Aly Diabate, now 14, was just 11 when a slave trader promised him a bicycle and \$150 a year to work on a cocoa farm in Ivory Coast. After a year and a half, he hadn't seen the bike or the money. His arms bear scars from beatings he received while working for Lenikpo Yeo, nicknamed "Le Gros," or the Big Man.

There may be a hidden ingredient in the chocolate cake you baked, the candy bars your children sold for their school fund-raiser or that fudge ripple ice cream cone you enjoyed on Saturday afternoon.

Slave labor.

Forty-three percent of the world's cocoa beans, the raw material in chocolate, come from small, scattered farms in this poor West African country. And on some of the farms, the hot, hard work of clearing the fields and harvesting the fruit is done by boys who were sold or tricked into slavery. Most of them are between the ages of 12 and 16. Some are as young as 9.

The lucky slaves live on corn paste and bananas. The unlucky ones are whipped, beaten and broken like horses to harvest the almond-sized beans that are made into chocolate treats for more fortunate children in Europe and the United States.

Aly Diabate was almost 12 when a slave trader promised him a bicycle and \$150 a year to help support his poor parents in Mali. He worked for a year and a half for a cocoa farmer who is known as "Le Gros" ("the Big Man"), but he said his only rewards were the rare days when Le Gros' overseers or older slaves didn't flog him with a bicycle chain or branches from a cacao tree.

Cocoa beans come from pods on the cacao tree. To get the 400 or so beans it takes to make a pound of chocolate, the boys who work on Ivory Coast's cocoa farms cut 10 pods from the trees, slice them open, scoop out the beans, spread them in baskets or on mats and cover them to ferment.

Then they uncover the beans, put them in the sun to dry, bag them and load them onto trucks to begin the long journey to America or Europe, where they will become chocolate.

Aly said he doesn't know what the beans from the cacao tree taste like after they've been processed and blended with sugar, milk and other ingredients. That happens far away from the farm where he worked, in places such as Hershey, Pa., Milwaukee and San Francisco.

"I don't know what chocolate is," said Aly.

Americans spend \$13 billion a year on chocolate, but most of them are as ignorant of where it comes from as the boys who harvest cocoa beans are about where their beans go.

More cocoa beans come from Ivory Coast than from anywhere else in the world. The country's beans are prized for their quality and abundance, and in the first three months of this year, more than 47,300 tons of them were shipped to the United States through Philadelphia and Brooklyn, N.Y., according to the Port Import Export Reporting Service. At other times of the year, Ivory Coast cocoa beans are delivered to Camden, N.J., Norfolk, Va., and San Francisco.

From the ports, the beans are shipped to cocoa processors. America's biggest are ADM Cocoa in Milwaukee, a subsidiary of Decatur, Ill.-based Archer Daniels Midland; Barry Callebaut, which has its headquarters in Zurich, Switzerland; Minneapolis-based Cargill; and Nestle USA of Glendale, Calif., a subsidiary of the Swiss food giant.

But by the time the beans reach the processors, those picked by slaves and those harvested by free field hands have been

jumbled together in warehouses, ships, trucks and rail cars. By the time they reach consumers in America or Europe, free beans and slave beans are so thoroughly blended that there is no way to know which chocolate products taste of slavery and which do not.

However, even the Chocolate Manufacturers Association, a trade group for American chocolate makers, acknowledges that slaves are harvesting cocoa on some Ivory Coast farms.

A 1998 report from UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, concluded that some Ivory Coast farmers use enslaved children, many of them from the poorer neighboring countries of Mali, Burkina Faso, Benin and Togo. A report by the Geneva, Switzerland-based International Labor Organization, released June 15, found that trafficking in children is widespread in West Africa.

The State Department's year 2000 human rights report concluded that some 15,000 children between the ages of 9 and 12 have been sold into forced labor on cotton, coffee and cocoa plantations in northern Ivory Coast in recent years.

Aly and 18 other boys labored on a 494-acre farm — very large by Ivory Coast standards — in the southwestern part of the country. Their days began when the sun rose, which at this time of year in Ivory Coast is a few minutes after 6 a.m. They finished work about 6:30 in the evening, just before nightfall, when fireflies were beginning to illuminate the



Nineteen children were working without pay on the farm of Lenikpo Yeo, called "Le Gros." He was arrested, but later freed.

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'The beatings were a part of my life'

Continued from cover

velvety night like Christmas lights. They trudged home to a dinner of burned bananas. If they were lucky, they were treated to yams seasoned with saltwater "gravy."

After dinner, the boys were ordered into a 24-by-20-foot room, where they slept on wooden planks without mattresses. The only window was covered with hardened mud except for a baseball-size hole to let some air in.

"Once we entered the room, nobody was allowed to go out," said Mamadou Traore, a thin, frail youth with serious brown eyes who is 19 now. "Le Gros gave us cans to urinate. He locked the door and kept the key."

"We didn't cry, we didn't scream," said Aly (pronounced AL-ee). "We thought we had been sold, but we weren't sure."

The boys became sure one day when Le Gros walked up to Mamadou and ordered him to work harder. "I bought each of you for 25,000 francs (about \$35)," the farmer said, according to Mamadou (MAH-mah-doo).

you have to work harder
amburse me."

Aly was barely 4 feet tall when he was sold into slavery, and he had a hard time carrying the heavy bags of cocoa beans.

"Some of the bags were taller than me," he said. "It took two people to put the bag on my head. And when you didn't hurry, you were beaten."

He was beaten more than the other boys were. The faint scars on his back, right shoulder and left arm are still visible.

"They said he wasn't working very hard," said Mamadou.

"The beatings were a part of my life," Aly said. "Anytime they loaded you with bags and you fell while carrying them, nobody helped you. Instead, they beat you and beat you until you picked it up again."

At night, Aly had nightmares about working forever in the fields, about dying and nobody noticing. To drown them out, he replayed his memories of growing up in Mali, over and over again.

"I was always thinking about my parents and how I get back to my country," he said.

but he didn't think about trying to escape.

"I was afraid," he said, his voice as faint as the scars on his skinny body. "I had seen others who tried to escape. When they tried they were severely beaten."



Siaka Traore, 16, plants cotton on the farm of Dote Coulibaly. Siaka was tricked into slavery. He said he tried to escape, but was caught and intimidated and has never tried again.

Le Gros (Leh GROW), whose name is Lenkpo Yeo, denied that he paid for the boys who worked for him, although Ivory Coast farmers often pay a finder's fee to someone who delivers workers to them. He also denied that the boys were underfed, locked up at night or forced to work more than 12 hours a day without breaks. He said they were treated well, and that he paid for their medical treatment.

"When I go hunting, when get a kill, I divide it in half — one for my family and the other for them. Even if I kill a gazelle, the workers come and share it."

He denied beating any of the boys.

"I've never, ever laid hands on any one of my workers," Le Gros said. "Maybe I called them bad words if I was angry. That's the worst I did."

Le Gros said a Malian overseer beat one boy who had run away, but he said he himself did not order any beatings.

One day early last year, a boy named Oumar Kone was caught trying to escape. One of Le Gros' overseers beat him, said the other boys and local authorities.

A few days later, Oumar ran away again, and this time he escaped. He told elders in the local Malian immigrant community what was happening on Le Gros' farm. They called Abdoulaye Macko, who was then the Malian consul general in Bouake, a town north of Daloa, in the heart of Ivory Coast's cocoa- and coffee-growing region.

Macko (MOCK-o) went to the farm with several police officers, and he found the 19 boys there. Aly, the youngest, was 13. The oldest was 21. They had spent anywhere from six months to four and a half years on Le Gros' farm.

"They were tired, slim, they were not smiling," Macko said. "Except one child was not there. This one, his face showed what was happening. He was sick, he had (excrement) in his pants. He was lying on the ground, covered with cacao leaves because they were sure he was dying. He was almost dead. ... He had been severely beaten."

According to medical records, other boys had healed scars as well as open, infected wounds all over their bodies.

Police freed the boys, and a few days later the Malian consulate in Bouake sent them all home to their villages in Mali. The sick boy was treated at a local hospital, then he was sent home, too.

Le Gros was charged with assault against children and suppressing the liberty of people. The latter crime carries a five- to 10-year prison sentence and a hefty fine, said Daleba Rouba, attorney general for the region.

"In Ivorian law, an adult who orders a minor to hit and hurt somebody is automatically responsible as if he has committed the act," Rouba said. "Whether or not Le Gros did the beatings himself or ordered somebody, he is liable."

Le Gros spent 24 days in jail before being released pending trial. Rouba said the case against Le Gros is weak because the witnesses against him have all been sent back to Mali.

"If the Malian authorities are willing to cooperate, if they can bring two or three of the children back as witnesses, my case will be stronger," Rouba said.

Mamadou Diarra, the Malian consul general in Bouake, said he would look into the matter.

Child trafficking experts say inadequate legislation, ignorance of the law, poor law enforcement, porous borders, police corruption and a shortage of resources help perpetuate the problem of child slavery in Ivory Coast. Only 12 convicted slave traders are serving time in Ivorian prisons. Another eight, convicted in absentia, are on the lam.

The middlemen who buy Ivory Coast cocoa beans from farmers and sell them to processors seldom visit the country's cocoa farms, and when they do, it's to examine the beans, not the workers. Young boys are a common sight on the farms of West Africa, and it's impossible to know without asking which are a farmer's own children, which are field hands who will be paid \$150 to \$180 after a year's work and which are slaves.

"We've never seen child slavery. We don't go to the plantations. The slavery here is long gone," said G.H. Haidar, a cocoa buyer in Daloa, in the heart of Ivory Coast's cocoa region. "We're only concerned with our work."

The Chocolate Manufacturers Association, based in Vienna, Va., at first said the industry was not aware of slavery, either. After Knight Ridder began inquiring about the use of slaves on Ivory Coast cocoa farms, however, the CMA in late April acknowledged that a problem might exist and said it strongly condemned "these practices wherever they may occur."

In May, the association decided to expand an Ivory Coast farming program to include education on "the importance of children." And in June, the CMA agreed to fund a survey of child labor practices on Ivory Coast cocoa farms.

Finally, in late June, the CMA announced some details of the joint study, which will survey 2,000 cocoa farms in Ivory Coast. "Now we are not debating that this is true," CMA President Larry Graham said when asked about cocoa farm slavery. "We're accepting that this is a fact."

Ivorian officials have found scores of enslaved children from Mali and Burkina Faso and sent them home and they have asked the International Labor Organization, a global workers' rights agency, to help them conduct a child labor survey that's expected to be completed this year.

But they continue to blame the problem on immigrant farmers from Mali and on world cocoa prices that have fallen almost 24 percent since 1996, from 67 cents a pound to 51 cents, forcing impoverished farmers to use the cheapest labor they can find.

Ivory Coast Agriculture Minister Alfonse Douary calls child slavery a marginal "clandestine phenomenon" that exists on only a handful of the country's more than 600,000 cocoa and coffee farms.

"Those who do this are hidden, well hidden," said Douary (Doo-AH-tee). He said his government is clamping down on child traffickers by beefing up border patrols and law enforcement, and running education campaigns to boost awareness of anti-slavery laws and efforts.

Douary said child labor in Ivory Coast should not be called slavery, because the word conjures up images of chains and whips. He prefers the term "indentured labor."

Ivory Coast authorities ordered Le Gros to pay Aly and the other boys a total of 4.3 million African Financial Community francs (about \$6,150) for their time as indentured laborers. Aly got 125,000 francs (about \$180) for the 18 months he worked on the cocoa farm.

Aly bought himself the very thing the trader who enslaved him had promised: a bicycle. It has a light, a yellow horn and colorful bottle caps in the spokes. He rides it everywhere.

Aly helps his parents by selling vegetables in a nearby market, but he still doesn't understand why he was a slave.

When he was told that some American children spend nearly as much every year on chocolate as he was paid for six months' work harvesting cocoa beans, he replied without bitterness:

"I bless them because they are eating it."

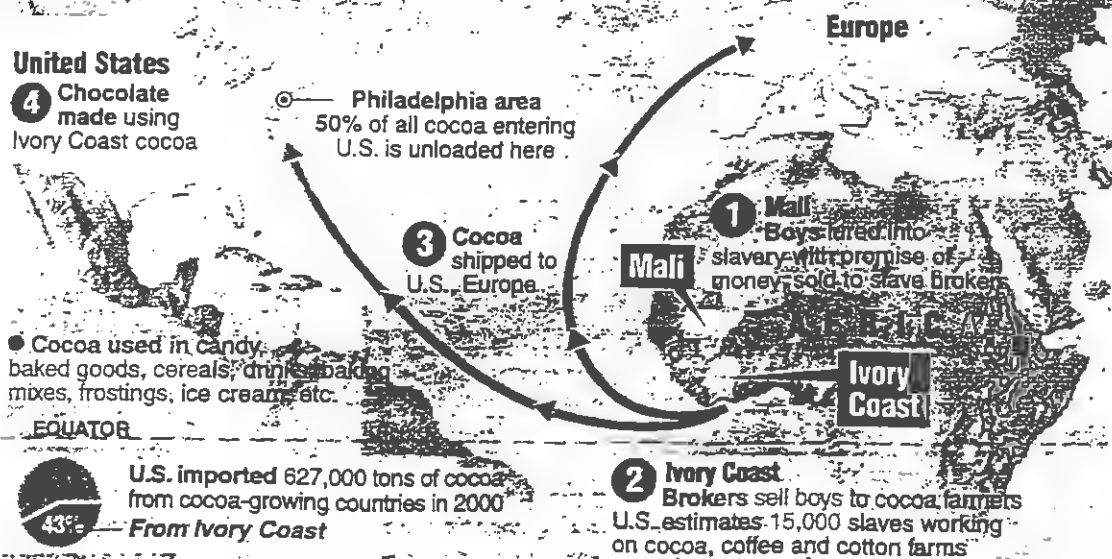
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Mombi Bakayoko, 15, harvests cocoa pods on a farm he worked on for nearly a year. In early June, he returned to his home in Mali after he fell ill.

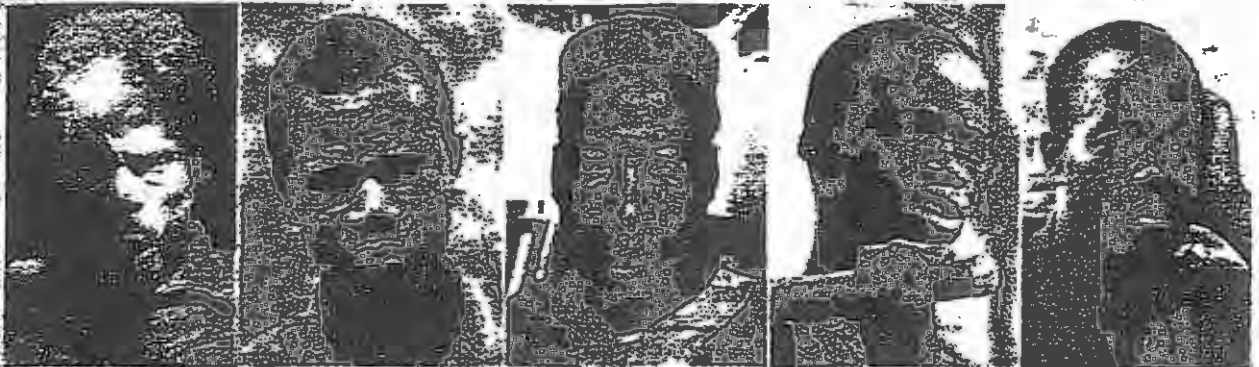
How slave-grown cocoa gets into chocolate

Cocoa grown and harvested by slave boys in Ivory Coast makes its way into the chocolate products sold in the United States and other industrialized countries.



Faces of cocoa slavery

Some of the people interviewed for this project and some of their own words.



Le Gros

Farmer, 50, is the Big Man, real name Denko Yao, officials freed 19 boys who worked on his farm.

Dote Coulibaly

Farmer, 39, says he bought Brahim Male and Siaka Traore for \$28 each to work on his farm.

Siaka Cisse

Slave broker, 60, former bus driver distributes children to local farmers in Daloa, Ivory Coast.

Brahima Male

Slave, 13, has worked dawn to dusk on Dote Coulibaly's farm for two years; might be paid at year's end.

Siaka Traore

Slave, 16, expected "a good time" in Ivory Coast, but has been a slave for two years.

SOURCE: Kyrin Fiddes, Washington Bureau, KRT Photo Service
 Research: JUDY TREIBER, Graphic: TODD LINDEMAN



Mombi Bakayoko

Former slave, 15, returned to Mali in June after working 11 months on a farm.

Aly Diabate

Former slave, 14, now home in Mali, slave on Le Gros farm for more than 18 months.

Zai Mathias

Former slave, 15, sleeps on bench because he can't afford the \$15 bus fare home.

Mamadou Traore

Former slave, 19; recalls beatings on Le Gros farm.

Slaves may also pick coffee beans

Chocolate isn't the only American staple tainted by slavery. In addition to being the king of cocoa, Ivory Coast is the world's fourth-largest Robusta coffee grower, after Vietnam, Indonesia and Uganda. The two crops often are grown together, so the taller cacao trees can shade the coffee bushes, and on some farms, young slaves harvest coffee beans as well as the cacao pods that yield cocoa beans.

Robusta beans are blended with milder Arabica beans to make ground coffees and also are used to make espresso and instant coffees. About 5 percent of Robusta beans come from Ivory Coast. During the first three months of this year, nearly 1,844 short tons of coffee beans were shipped from Ivory Coast to Charleston, S.C., Houston, and Long Beach and Oakland, Calif., according to the Port Import Export Reporting Service.

As with cocoa, there's no way to tell whether a shipment of coffee beans contains beans picked by slaves or those picked by paid workers.

Some industry executives say that who picked the coffee beans is no concern of theirs.

"This government and this industry is not responsible for what happens in a foreign country at all," said Gary Goldstein of the National Coffee Association, which represents the companies that make Folgers, Maxwell House, Nescafe and other brands. "We don't enforce their labor laws. ... Isn't it the Ivory Coast government's job to enforce its own laws?"

Others say they don't think slaves are picking coffee beans in Ivory Coast.

"I am 99.9 percent certain that you are not drinking coffee from a farm that exploits child labor or uses slavery," said Celcius Lodder of the London-based International Coffee Organization.

"It might be the case but I don't know," Lodder added, saying he doesn't underestimate the problem. "If it is happening, then by all means let's fight them."

Some companies already have turned elsewhere for their coffee beans.

"We buy no coffee from Cote d'Ivoire (the official name for the former French colony), and we have not for approximately five years," said Sylvia Wulf, the vice president of marketing for the coffee and tea division of Chicago-based Sara Lee Corp., which supplies more than 200 million pounds of coffee to more than 100,000 restaurants in the United States. "We made a decision that it was not an area of the world we wanted to do business with, based on some of the practices that we are learning more about."

Glendale, Calif.-based Nestle USA, which makes Nescafe, said it doesn't use Ivory Coast Robusta beans in the coffees it sells in the United States, though it does use them elsewhere.

Maxwell House, a unit of Philip Morris' Kraft Foods, based in Northfield, Ill., did not respond to inquiries about the origins of its coffee. Neither did Folgers, part of Cincinnati-based Procter and Gamble. Shipping records show that 337 short tons of green Ivory Coast Robusta beans were sent to Folgers through Houston on March 18. There were no list-

ings for Maxwell House in the shipping records examined.

Many coffee companies are reluctant to divulge the sources of their beans because they blend them according to their own recipes, known as "signature taste profiles."

"The signature taste profile is considered proprietary," a company-held secret no different from the formula for Coca-Cola, said Goldstein of the National Coffee Association.

He added that the coffee market fluctuates so wildly — with droughts one year and too much rain another — that the supply and quality of a particular bean are never assured. So companies reformulate their blends to try to get a consistent taste. All these factors make it difficult for the industry to tell customers where their coffee came from, Goldstein said.

Asked about that difficulty, Thomas Donaldson, a professor of business ethics at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton business school, said: "Whatever trade secrets, whatever branding leverage comes from not saying a source pales alongside the specter of child slavery."

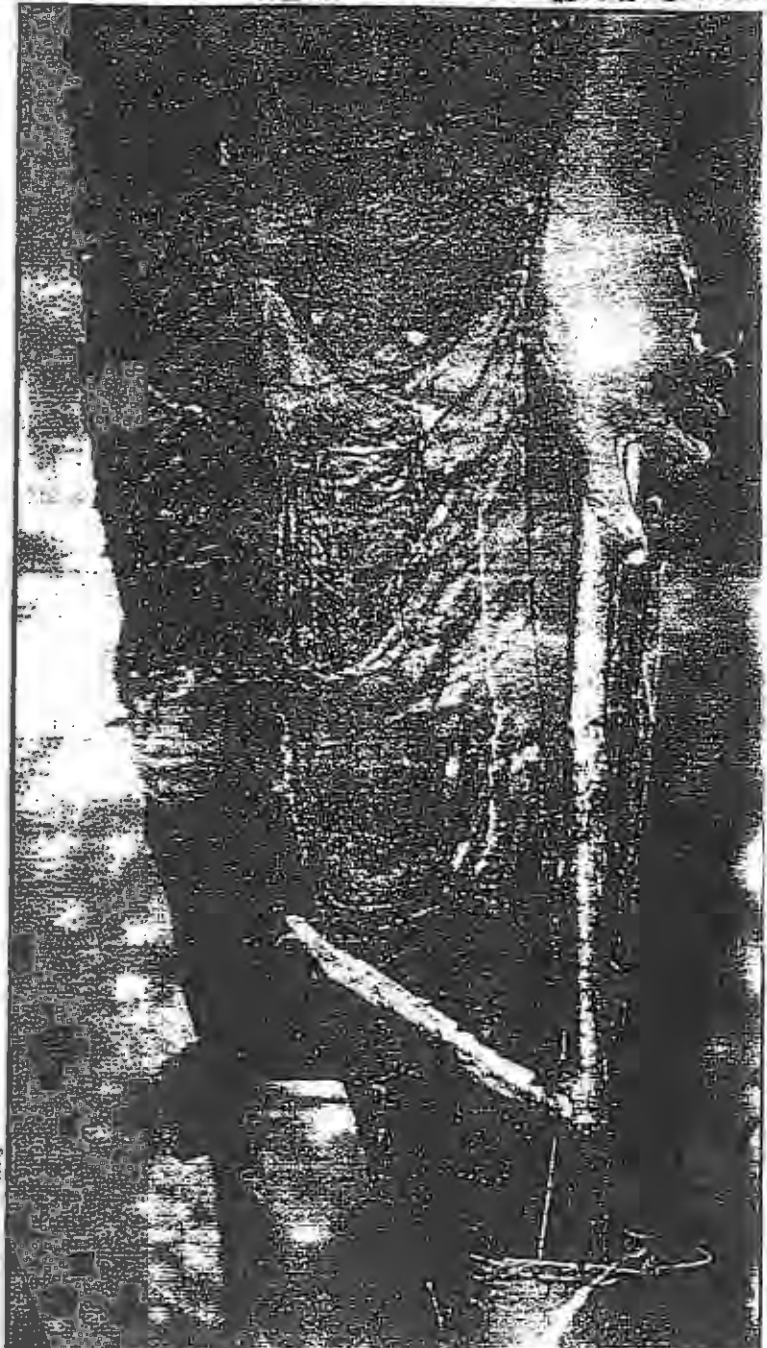
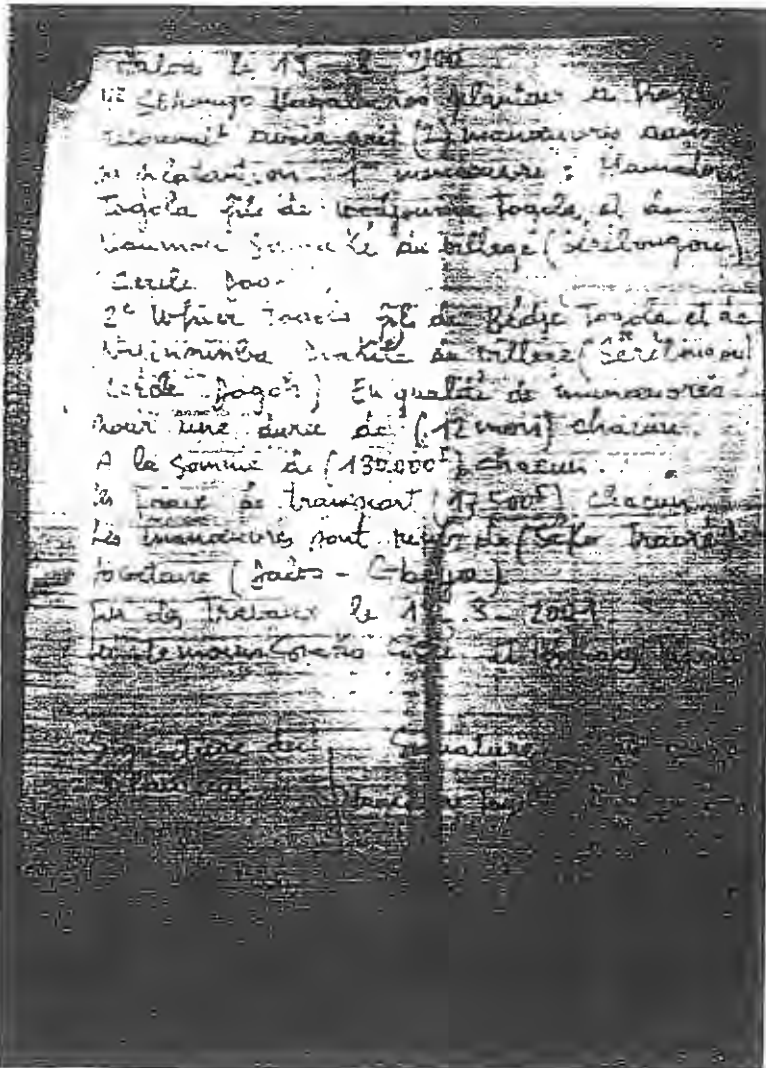
— Sumana Chanerjee and Tish Wells



A worker at the Society of Commercial and Agricultural Producers' warehouse in Ivory Coast stands next to bags of coffee beans.



Mamadou Togola, 16, stands in a field at dusk following a long day working on an Ivory Coast cocoa farm. Harvesting cocoa and other crops has left his pants, right, in tatters. Mamadou left his home in Mali to search for a job. A trafficker brought him to the Ivory Coast town of Daloa, where he signed this contract, below, agreeing to work on a cocoa farm for a year for about \$170, less expenses. The contract is written in French, a language Mamadou does not speak or read.



Blame for slavery gets passed along 'chocolate chain'

How could modern society allow youngsters to be enslaved to produce a crop that becomes the very food — chocolate — that symbolizes happiness, luxury and romance?

It can happen because it's nearly hidden. The enslaved boys whom Knight Ridder found worked mostly on small farms scattered in remote parts of Ivory Coast. Few people get to the farms, even those in the cocoa trade. If they visit and see children at work, it's nearly impossible to tell if the children are members of the farmer's family or have been bought by the farmer, who may or may not pay them after years of work.

That allows everyone along the chocolate chain to pass blame and responsibility for the boy slaves to someone else. Farmers who use slaves blame the people responsible for the price of cocoa. Middlemen who deal with farmers say they don't see any slavery. Ivory Coast government officials who enforce slavery laws say it's foreigners who are selling and using slaves in their country. Cocoa suppliers say they can't be responsible because they don't control the farms. Chocolate companies say they rely on their suppliers to provide cocoa untainted by slave labor. The trade associations blame Ivory Coast's unstable political situation. And consumers don't have an inkling that their favorite chocolate treats may be tainted by slave labor.

Sekongo Nagalouro doesn't think the boys working on his Ivory Coast farm are slaves. It's true that he gave a trafficker money for them. And it's true that he hasn't paid them yet for the work they do. But he intends to pay them at the end of the year from his crop profits, he said. Provided he can take care of his family and future crop expenses first. It all depends, he said, on the price of cocoa.

"Maybe there are some people who think this is modern-day slavery, but I don't think so," Nagalouro said.

Many who acknowledge that slavery exists offer the same explanation: the low price of cocoa.

"We cannot blame the farmers for exploiting these workers," said Abdelilah Benkirane, commercial director of the Society of Commercial Agricultural Producers

of Daloa, one of Ivory Coast's biggest cocoa and coffee buyers, which exports 80 percent of its purchases to the United States and Europe. "The farmer has no influence on the global system. The system dictates the price."

Ivory Coast government officials concede that slaves work on some of the country's cocoa farms. But they believe that slavery is a small — though spreading — problem confined mostly to farms run by foreigners.

"Thank heavens, the proportion of this type of criminal farmers remains very low still," Ivory Coast Agriculture Minister Alfonse Douaty told members of the cocoa industry who were meeting in London in May. "One must also observe that a minuscule part of the native population is starting, nevertheless, to get involved."

Douaty also blames cocoa prices, and says other nations must help.

"At an international level, we must also combine our efforts in committing to prices which provide sufficient income to the basic producer, so as to avoid perpetuating poverty in exporting countries and thus creating the conditions which lend themselves to the development of slavery in whichever form it presents itself."

People who work in the cocoa and chocolate industries aren't sure there really are slaves harvesting the beans they buy and process.

"You damn Americans with your Nike shoes think there is child slavery in chocolate," said Valerie Issumo, who goes into the fields as a buyer in West Africa for ED&F Man, a top cocoa processor. "I have never seen any child slaves in all my travels through Africa."

"Everyone we have talked to in the

country who has worked there years and years has never seen this practice," said Larry Graham, president of both the National Confectioners Association and the Chocolate Manufacturers Association of Vienna, Va.

"If it exists, then we are going to correct it," Graham said, "... starting with government action, working with

NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) and educating farmers. ... That is, if there is a problem."

Weeks later, Graham conceded that slaves do work on Ivory Coast cocoa farms. "Initially, there was quite a lot of debate about whether this was true and how serious it was," he said. "... Now we are not debating that this is true.

We're accepting that this is a fact."

"We buy a finished product long beyond the bean," said Gary Regenbaum of Mom 'n Pops candy company of New Windsor, N.Y., which buys chocolate to coat its lollipops. "I have never considered where the beginning of this product came from. ... I'll look into this and make every effort to stop it."

Most distant of all from the farm is the consumer, who has little reason to think about who harvested the cocoa beans that went into the gaily wrapped chocolate at the candy counter.

"In Canada, Europe, America, what we have on our shelves is cheap, such as coffee, chocolate bars," said Michel Larouche, the West Africa regional director for Save the Children Canada. "If we put a stop to child trafficking the prices of certain things — cotton shirts, coffee, candy bars — will rise. The reality is if your products are this cheap, it's because of this situation.

"Are (the companies) responsible?" Larouche said. "It's hard to say one is responsible. It's easier to look at who is not responsible.

"Every time one closes his eyes and buys a product made by children, then he is also responsible. He becomes an accomplice."

— Sumana Chatterjee
and Sudarsan Raghavan



The children and nephews of the farmer called "Le Gros" carry lumber on his farm near Bangolo. He had trouble finding people to harvest his cocoa after he was arrested for working 19 youths on his farm without pay. Ivorian authorities forced him to pay the boys.

Promises of paid jobs, better life

By Sudarsan Raghavan and Sumana Chatterjee
Photos by Evelyn Hockstein

BDALOA, Ivory Coast businessmen called "locateurs" wait in the little bus station in the large border town of Sikasso, Mali, where crammed mini-buses leave for Ivory Coast every 30 minutes. They search the crowds for children traveling alone, looking lost or begging for food.

"Would you like a great job in Cote d'Ivoire?" they ask, using the official name of the former French colony. "I can find you one."

The dusty alley behind the bus station is brimming with vendors selling everything from food to cigarettes. There are cobblers and shanty kiosks selling bootleg tapes of West African pop music. Chickens and dogs abound, and dust mingles with the scent of raw meat.

There also is a dark warehouse with blackened walls and a thick wooden door covered with tin sheeting that locks from the outside. Malian officials say slave traders sometimes keep their young victims here overnight so they can't escape.

Kadi Samaka, a sidewalk vendor, sits in front of the warehouse and sells the peanuts she roasts in a black kettle. She has watched adults bring children carrying bags to sleep in the warehouse.

"Sometimes, the men buy the children some food," said Samaka, 19. "The next morning, they take the children and go."

Samaka said she doesn't intervene. "The children looked happy," she explained, shrugging.

"Slavery is so much a part of the structure of society that it becomes invisible," said Beth Herzfeld of Anti-Slavery International, a non-profit group in London that formed in 1839 and provided moral and material support to the American abolitionist movement.

That is a part of Africa where children, out of respect, will do anything to help their parents. Many men have two or three wives and dozens of children, and it's common to see boys and girls as young as 6

selling coconut milk in shells on the streets.

Virtually all the boys who wind up working on cocoa farms come from poor farming families and seldom get any schooling. Boys of their background generally start working in their parents' fields between the ages of 12 and 15.

When times weren't so bad, Malian parents who were too poor to afford proper schooling placed their children with better-off families to learn skills such as farming. The apprenticed children were treated properly and almost always returned home.

And for decades, the more prosperous Ivory Coast has offered children from Mali and other African countries not only a living but also a chance to see the world outside their villages, to learn new skills and to bring home some money after a year or two.

But hard times "have enhanced the greed of people," said Ndolamb Ngokwey, the deputy regional director for West Africa for UNICEF. Slave trading "is a kind of perversion of a traditional practice, which is now becoming a very visible problem."

"In the Malian mentality, when your child leaves your family, we think he's going to be safe with other adults," said Malian child welfare official Sibiry Dembele. "We cannot consider an old man doing harm to the kid. Even today, it's difficult to convince some Malians that their children were being trafficked."

Most of the slave traders are Malian men, but women and Ivorians also work in the trade.

Maliens don't need passports or visas to enter Ivory Coast. In theory, children younger than 18 cannot cross the border unless they are accompanied by an adult, who must show identification. If the adult is a relative, no questions are asked about children traveling with him. If not, the children must have permission from their parents to cross the border.

That's why the traffickers often order the children to call them "uncle" or "aunt." And a few bucks often can convince the authorities, as well.

"The police sometimes check the IDs, and sometimes they are the ones taking bribes," said Felix Ackebo of UNICEF.

Once they are across the border, the traffickers usually hand over the children to other traders, who deal them to Ivorian and Malian immigrant farmers in cocoa and coffee-producing regions such as Daloa, where signs advertising Nestle Quik dot the streets.

Traffickers bring as many as 10 boys a month to Siaka Cisse's small, ramshackle house in Daloa, which doubles as his son's furniture shop. From there the 60-year-old former bus driver distributes smuggled children to local farmers.

Disoriented and scared, the boys trust Cisse because like many of them he speaks Bambara, a Malian tribal language.

Neither Cisse nor the farmers ask where or how the traffickers got the children. Virtually all the boys are illiterate, but Cisse gets them to sign — usually with a scratchy squiggle — a "contract" scrawled in French on notebook paper. It says they agree to work for about \$180 a year. But they eventually discover they may not be paid that year, and that many will never be paid at all.

Cisse (SEE-say), who has 20 children of his own, said he receives only a small "gift" from each farmer — \$1 or \$2 per child. But a boy named Mombi Bakayoko said his master paid Cisse about \$13 for him, and another \$20 "transport fee" to the trafficker who brought him to Ivory Coast. Other boys said Cisse gets an average of about \$12 per child.

If any children he placed get paid, Cisse makes sure it's in front of him. Three children he placed said they had to give him a cut of what they had earned.

"I have no deal with the kids," responded Cisse, a stout man in a lime green robe and a purple Muslim skull cap. "The farmers pay me."

Does he see anything wrong with dealing in children?

"I don't know their ages," he said. "I only pick sturdy kids."

Cisse said it's not his fault if farmers abuse the children. He said he had gone to farms four times in the past three years to retrieve children after they sent messages to him through people traveling to Daloa.

Why?

"Lack of food, for example." What did he do with those children?

"Found them work with other farmers." He said he did that at the boys' request.

Cisse said he hadn't trafficked in young teens for the past year, because local Malian elders expressed concern.

"Ever since the Malian committee told me not to deal in kids, I've stopped bringing 15-year-olds," he said, smiling.

When a reporter told Cisse that one of his clients had produced two contracts, one for a 15-year-old and one for a 16-year-old, both prepared and signed last year by him, he appeared startled.

He paused, then casually responded: "That could be. Unless see them, I don't know."

Then he flashed a warm smile and asked politely: "Where are they?"

The two teen-agers were 30 miles away on cocoa farmer Sekongo Nagalouro's small, sun-dappled plantation.

"I need labor, and since there's this offer from the fixers, we get these kids to work here," Nagalouro explained. "I treat them well."

Nagalouro (Naa-gah-LOW-row) said he plans to pay the boys at the end of the year, but only if he makes enough money for his family and for expenses for the next season's crop.

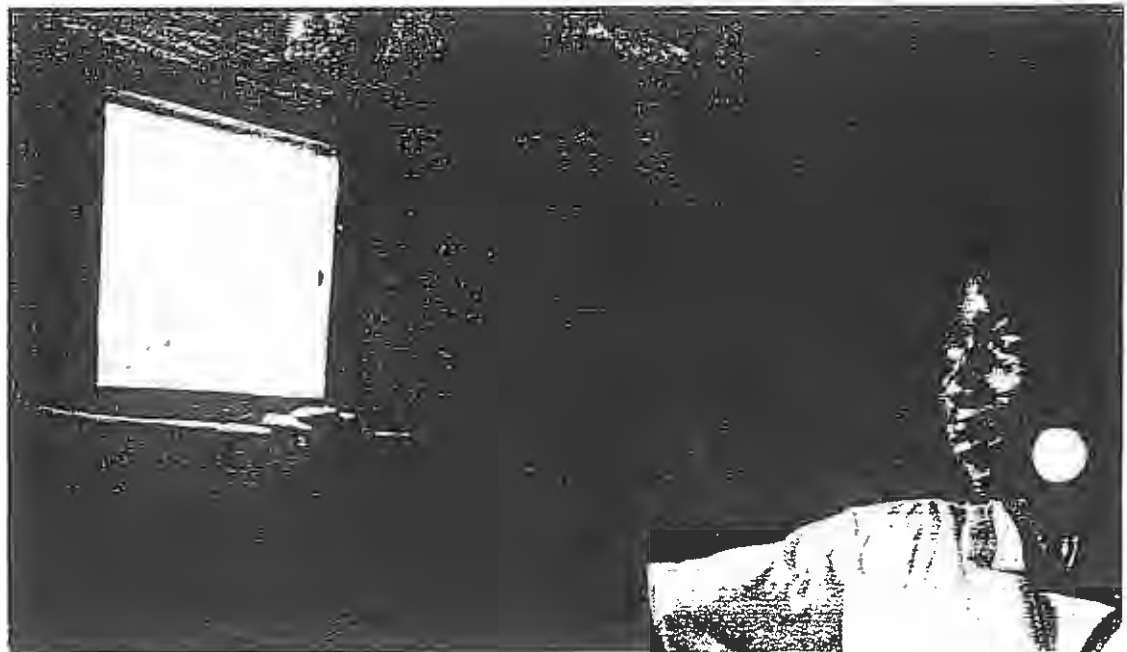
He now sells his cocoa beans for a little more than 30 cents a pound. Last year, he got about 45 cents; the year before, 50 cents. If there's a problem with him being able to pay the boys, he said, he'll discuss it with Cisse, not with them.

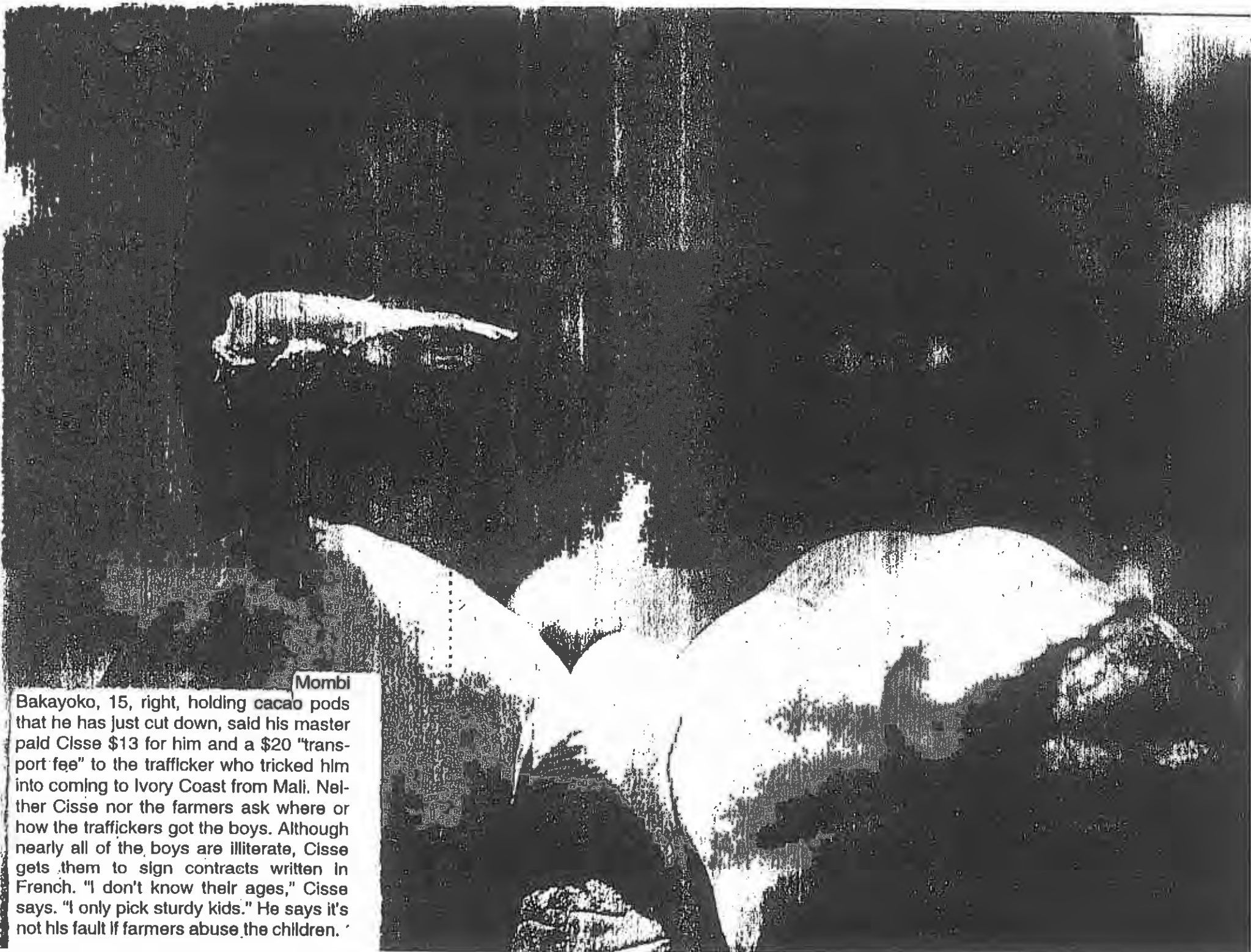
"Maybe there are some people who think this is modern-day slavery, but I don't think so," said Nagalouro. "What agreements the kids have with those who brought them here (to Ivory Coast), I don't know about. All I know is when they are available, I go and get them."

SEE PART TWO OF THIS STORY ON PAGE



Foussemy Cisse, 15, above, clears fields on an Ivory Coast cocoa farm. At right, Mombi Bakayoko stares out of the tiny window in the mud-brick house where he lived while working on another Ivory Coast cocoa farm. Mombi said he couldn't leave for nearly a year because his master confiscated his identity card.





Mombi

Bakayoko, 15, right, holding cacao pods that he has just cut down, said his master paid Cisse \$13 for him and a \$20 "transport fee" to the trafficker who tricked him into coming to Ivory Coast from Mali. Neither Cisse nor the farmers ask where or how the traffickers got the boys. Although nearly all of the boys are illiterate, Cisse gets them to sign contracts written in French. "I don't know their ages," Cisse says. "I only pick sturdy kids." He says it's not his fault if farmers abuse the children.

Some are acting to free child slaves

One recent day in the village of Bediala 20 miles northeast of the town of Daloa in central Ivory Coast, a group of Malian elders gathered under a mango tree for an unusual meeting.

A member of the local Malian immigrant committee in Daloa had come to enlist their help.

"We are searching for Malian children who are working on the plantations, young children who are without their parents," said Drissa Diarra, 46, who sells lumber in Daloa.

Some elders nodded.

"Children who are being badly treated," Diarra continued (pronounced Dee-AR-uh). More elders nodded.

"Have you seen any young children in this situation?"

The elders whispered among themselves, then summoned some young people in the village and asked them if they knew of any such children. A half-hour later, the elders had a name: Mombi Bakayoko, 15, who was working on a plantation about 10 miles away.

Diarra went to see Mombi (MOM-bee), who was working long hours for no pay, had barely any food and hadn't seen his parents in nearly a year. His master wasn't there, but Mombi couldn't escape because he didn't have any money, didn't speak French and didn't know where he was. To make sure he didn't try to leave, his master had confiscated his identity card.

Diarra had no legal authority to free Mombi, but he made a mental note to return. He hoped to negotiate Mombi's release, or at least ensure that the boy got paid.

There are 126 Malian immigrant committees in Ivory Coast, including one in virtually every town and village in the country's cocoa-producing regions. They ordinarily deal with villagers' day-to-day problems, but foreign child-protection agencies and the Malian government have tapped them to fill a void: West Africa governments are just awakening to the child slavery problem and lack the resources to eradicate it.

The government of Mali first became aware that Malian children were being enslaved in 1991, said Sibiry Dembele, a Malian child welfare official in the town of Sikasso, a hub for child trafficking. But an emergency plan to identify offending farms and send people into Ivory Coast to free the children and bring them home wasn't launched until April 2000, and it was done mostly with support from foreign donors such as Save the Children Canada.

The Malian government has "no specific budget up to now" to fight child trafficking, said Dembele (DEHM-beh-eh). "Unfortunately, this plan is not as operational as we wish. There is the political will to face the problem, but finances are lacking."

Between January and May, 324 minor boys were repatriated to Mali, said Dembele, some from farms and some who were stopped after they had been taken across the border with Ivory Coast. Malian immigrant committees played a role in identifying and freeing a number of them, Dembele said.

Although the committees have no formal power, they wield authority in the immigrant community and among farmers who use Malian workers. Most committee members are respected elders who work closely with Malian government officials.

Many Ivory Coast farmers put their own children to work in the fields, and don't think they are doing wrong by exploiting the children they get from traffickers. They seldom inquire where the children come from or how old they are. Committee members explain that the children have been delivered by slave traders and urge the farmers to find other workers. But the poor economy and the depressed prices of cocoa and coffee make it hard to get farmers to stop using child slaves.

Young slaves who manage to escape know from word-of-mouth to contact the local Malian committees for help.

The committees provide escaped and freed slaves with temporary jobs selling vegetables or carrying boxes, and they raise money to send the children home. For each child, the committees solicit dona-

tions for the 9,000-franc (\$13) bus fare back to Sikasso, 2,500 francs (\$3.50) in pocket money and 1,500 francs (\$2) for food.



Drissa Diarra works to free enslaved children working on farms in Ivory Coast.

Mombi went home to Mali on June 6, a month short of his one-year contract. When Diarra, along with a Knight Ridder reporter, revisited the farm on June 10, Mombi's master, Sanon Soro, said the boy was sick and couldn't work anymore. Soro said he had offered Mombi medical treatment.

"I told him: 'If you die, people will blame me. They will call me a criminal.'"

But Mombi insisted on going home.

Soro gave the boy back his identification card, which he said he had taken for "safekeeping." He also said he paid Mombi \$150 after deducting \$13 for the month the boy couldn't work and another \$13 that he had paid a child trafficker for Mombi.

Even freedom doesn't end the suffering of some former child slaves.

Many of the boys return home exhausted. Aly Diabate and Mamadou Traore, who were freed from a cocoa farm, were as thin as skeletons when they got home to Mali.

"You could see their bones," said their village chief, Kassoum Diabate, who's no relation to Aly. "We thought they would die soon."

Psychologists and child-trafficking experts say bondage kills something inside a child.

"They are not sure of themselves. They have no confidence. They have fear," said Ibrahim Haidara, a psychologist who works for Save the Children Canada in Sikasso.

Aly (AL-ee) still remembers the cacao branches snapping in the air, the sharp crack they made on sun-baked skin and the sting that scarred his childhood. "When I came back from the plantation, for a long time I was having nightmares," said Aly, 14. "I can still feel the beatings."

Save the Children Canada is building a rehabilitation center in Sikasso, called Horon So ("Freedom Center"), to treat former child slaves for psychological problems and let them become children again. A counseling method is simply to let them play with one another.

"These kids have been robbed of what is most precious to them. Their childhood has been stolen," said Michel Larouche, the West Africa director of Save the Children Canada. "Now they have to find their smile again, their family, their life. They have to laugh."

Some children, however, never regain what was taken from them. Mamadou's father died while he was a slave in Ivory Coast. When villagers told him, the day he returned, he didn't cry.

Eighteen months of whippings, beatings and lies had hardened his soul and snatched away his innocence.

"What can I do?" asked Mamadou (MAH-mah-doo), in a low, emotionless voice that suddenly seemed deeper and older than his 19 years. "He's dead. It is God's will."

— Sudarsan Raghavan



Above left, Zei Mathias lies on a bench outside a mosque in Daloa. This is his bed. Zei was sold to a farmer but escaped. Now he lives on the street and does odd jobs, trying to earn \$15 for his bus fare home to Burkina Faso. Above right, Mamadou Traore, 19, above, was luckier. He was freed by authorities from the farm of Le Gros. He returned home to Mali, thin and exhausted. At left, Siaka Traure, 16, and Brahima Male, 13, share a bed in their mud-brick hut.

Two teens fall into slavery's trap

BDALOA, Ivory Coast
Brahima Male and Siaka Traure met two years ago in the little bus station in Sikasso, Mali, where slave traders wait. Siaka was 14 and Brahima was just turning 12, and Siaka packed his nice olive green shirt because he thought he was going to have "a good time" in Ivory Coast.

A locateur offered them work as welders or carpenters. Neither boy had any experience at those trades, but the locateur said his "big brother" in Ivory Coast would pay them each about \$170 a year, 120,000 francs.

He offered to take them there for free.

The two boys were taken to wait in a warehouse near the bus station for a few hours. More boys came, until there were 15. Then they drove off in two white mini-buses with two men in each vehicle.

"The locateur told us that if we were stopped by police, we should tell them that he was our elder brother," said Siaka (Sec-AH-ka).

When they neared the border, the boys were ordered to get out and take motorcycle taxis. They continued on a back road and slipped into Ivory Coast undetected. The taxis took them to a nearby village, where the white mini-buses were waiting to take them on to the town of Korhogo.

"I was suspicious, but I was also scared," said Brahima (Bruh-HEE-muh). "We were already across and I didn't know how I could run away. I had no money."

Dote Coulibaly was waiting in Korhogo. He needed two boys to work on his cocoa and coffee farm near the village of Ourouta.

Coulibaly (COO-lee-baa-lee) said he bought Brahima and Siaka for \$28 each, but the boys said he paid that much for both of them. Whatever the



Brahima Male, left, and Siaka Traure eat a meal of corn gruel by lantern after a day of working on Dote Coulibaly's cocoa farm. They were tricked into working on the farm and haven't been home in nearly two years.

price, two days later they found themselves on his farm.

"When we arrived, he had not told us the whole story," Brahima said. "He told us we would work only in the cocoa and coffee fields. But there were also cotton, yam, corn and rice fields. When you finish one field, you go to another and another."

Brahima is a tall, thin boy with muscular arms and a cherubic face. He has been enslaved on Coulibaly's farm nearly two years. He shares a windowless mud hut with Siaka, and he doesn't ask much from life. He just wants to leave.

But he seldom thinks of trying to escape. When Siaka tried to flee last year, Coulibaly beat him, Siaka said.

"He tied me behind my back with

rope and beat me with a piece of wood," said Siaka, peeling back his shirt to show the scars on his left shoulder and arm. "Then he took a small gun, and said, 'I'm going to kill you and dump you in a well.'"

Coulibaly denied that he beat Siaka. But he didn't apologize for intimidating and bullying Siaka and Brahima into submission.

After all, he said, he paid \$28 each for them.

"If I let them go, I'm losing money, because I spent money for them," explained Coulibaly, 39, wearing grimy khaki pants and holding a machete. "It will hurt me to lose them. So when I have the feeling that a person is trying to run away, I find that person and ask

them why they want to leave."

"One day, Siaka tried to run away," he continued. "I sat him down and said, 'If you really don't want to work, you give me my money and I'll let you go.' Siaka said, 'I'm sorry, I'm sorry.' But I kept telling him to give me my money.

"Then I said, 'You know I spent money on you. If you try to escape, I'll catch you and beat you.' After that, we were on better terms. He's never been impolite to me since then. ... I just frightened him."

Coulibaly flashed a toothy smile and shrugged, as if he expected his visitors to understand.

He feeds the two boys adequately, and he gave them \$18 each to celebrate two Muslim holidays. They used the money to buy sandals and soap.

But when their year was up last September, he told them that two of his relatives had died and he had had to pay for their funerals and other expenses. So could the boys please wait until January to be paid?

When January came, Coulibaly said he would pay them at the end of this year. But he admits he may have a hard time raising the \$680 he owes them for two years' work. Last year, he made only \$570, and the economy is getting worse.

"These days you cannot make predictions anymore," said Coulibaly.

He doesn't watch the boys as closely now. Since he owes them money, he knows they won't run away.

"If you leave, you are the loser and he'll be happy," said Brahima, his voice fading in the rustle of the wind.

So Siaka and Brahima never venture very far from their master's farm.

"Daloa is Paris to us," said Brahima, as he sat beside a big red termite hill and watched Siaka work in the olive green shirt he had brought for the govt. in Ivory Coast. It is in tatters.

A TASTE OF SLAVERY

Below, Siaka Traure, 16, left, works alongside Dote Coulibaly, the farmer who bought him. Siaka and another slave, Brahim Male, 13, haven't been paid in nearly two years. Coulibaly, right, says he may have a hard time raising the \$680 he owes them. Last year, he made \$570 and the economy is getting worse. He said he can't let the boys leave. He paid \$28 for each of them. "If I let them go, I'm losing money, because I spent money for them."



What it takes to make chocolate

A good deal of manual labor is required to get cocoa beans ready for shipment to factories, where they are processed into chocolate.

On the farm

Harvesting

■ Young farm workers use a long-handled knife to reach and cut melon-sized pods from cacao trees.

Breaking pods

■ Workers split woody pods with machete: scoop out beans; a pod yields about 40 beans

Fermenting, drying

■ Workers cover beans with burlap or leaves to ferment them; after about a week, beans are spread out to dry, then put into large bags for delivery to buyers

It takes about 400 cocoa beans to make 1 lb. of chocolate

© 2001 KAT

SOURCE: Knight Ridder Washington Bureau. KAT Photo

At the factory

Blending, roasting

■ Beans cleaned; different types blended to recipe specifications, then roasted; shells removed, leaving the meat or "nib"

Grinding

■ Nibs ground to release cocoa butter, creating non-alcoholic cocoa liquor that solidifies into cakes

Chocolate

■ Cakes pressed to remove butter, then pulverized into cocoa powder; chocolate made by mixing cocoa powder with cocoa butter, sugar, milk, nuts and other ingredients

Should I boycott chocolate?

Q: So now I understand that the chocolate products in my grocery store may be made from cocoa beans harvested by child slaves in the African country of Ivory Coast. What can I do to stop something that's happening so far away?

A: The first thing many people think of is a boycott: they stop buying chocolate.

But experts say that probably would be counterproductive, hurting the very people you are trying to help.

A more effective means of fighting slavery may be the pressure of public opinion. You can write to the companies that make the chocolate products you eat, demanding that they take steps to halt slavery and assure themselves and consumers that they will deal only with farmers who don't use slaves. You also can write to your members of Congress and to the White House.

Q: Why not a boycott? The last time I found out something I didn't like about a product, I just stopped buying it.

A: Lots of experts say boycotting chocolate could make things worse for the boys working on cocoa farms. People from Anti-Slavery International and UNICEF and cocoa industry analysts say that if many people stop buying chocolate, it could drive down the price of cocoa. That means less money for everyone involved in cocoa production, especially the farmers. Farmers who use slaves already say it's because they don't make enough to pay the boys. If the farmers make even less money, more boys may work for nothing.

Q: How can I find out if my favorite brand uses cocoa from Ivory Coast?

A: Most chocolate manufacturers use some Ivory Coast cocoa because their particular chocolate recipe is a blend of beans from all over the world. Unless the label specifically says it uses only cocoa from some other country, there's a good chance your chocolate has Ivory Coast cocoa in it.

If you want to be sure, you can contact the chocolate company. But many of them wouldn't tell us when we asked them the same question.

Q: Is there any way to know whether the Ivory Coast cocoa in a particular piece of chocolate came from a farm that

employs slave labor?

A: There's simply no way to tell. Cocoa beans picked by slaves are mixed in with those picked by paid workers. That happens out in the farm regions and at the warehouses in Ivory Coast. So the slave cocoa beans could be in any sack, in any shipment, and wind up in any chocolate bar or fudge brownie mix. The cocoa suppliers say they can't guarantee that their shipments don't contain slave cocoa.

Q: Is anyone doing anything about this?

A: Several things are starting to happen. Many U.S. chocolate companies say they can do little on their own and turned to their trade group, the Chocolate Manufacturers Association. The CMA has decided to help fund a study of 2,000 cocoa farms in Ivory Coast and 1,000 cocoa farms in Ghana to determine the extent of child slavery and to look for solutions.

The trade group also is working with the World Cocoa Foundation, a nonprofit organization it set up to promote cocoa farming, and the U.S. Agency for International Development, the agency that delivers U.S. assistance to developing countries, to encourage farmers not to exploit child labor.

And in recent months, the Ivorian government has begun sending suspected slaves back to their home countries, particularly Mali and Burkina Faso. The government is working through groups of Malian elders who live in the cocoa region and have been increasingly active in trying to find Malian boys who are enslaved or mistreated. They then alert Ivorian police, who may raid the farms and help send the boys home.

Q: What about the U.S. government? Is it doing anything?

A: In 1999, President Bill Clinton signed an executive order prohibiting federal agencies from buying products made using forced or indentured child labor, but cocoa and chocolate are not on the list of banned products. The federal government does buy cocoa products — the Defense Department alone buys tons for the troops.

The Labor Department is spending \$4.3 million on programs to eliminate child labor in West Africa. But it can't spend any money in Ivory Coast because the U.S. government banned direct help to that country in December 1999 after its democratically elected government was overthrown in a military coup. So the Labor Department is working with the International Labor Organization, a global workers' rights agency, which in turn works with organizations in Ivory Coast to train people not to exploit children.

—Sumana Chatterjee

NESCAFÉ®



Nestle billboards and signs dot the dusty streets of Daloa, Ivory Coast. Nestle USA, which makes Nescafe, says it does not use Ivory Coast coffee beans in the coffee it sells in the United States, though it does use them elsewhere. Below, Hershey, Pa., is home to Hershey Foods Corp., the No. 1 chocolate manufacturer in the United States. The company said it was shocked by reports of child slavery on cocoa farms.

Chocolate, cocoa firms, industry groups respond

Here's what companies involved in chocolate production had to say about young slaves being used on farms in Ivory Coast, world's largest grower of cocoa beans. Though a number of the companies use Ivory Coast cocoa, there is no way to know if the cocoa they buy came from farms that use slaves.

TRADE ASSOCIATION: Chocolate Manufacturers Association, Vienna, Va.

WHOM IT REPRESENTS: American chocolate makers.

RESPONSE: Since Knight Ridder began asking about slavery in early May, the association's position has evolved. Officials first said they were not aware of slavery in cocoa production in Ivory Coast. Then they echoed the position of Ivory Coast government officials that the practice was small and confined to foreign-owned farms in Ivory Coast.

In recent weeks, the association has decided to expand a farming program for Ivory Coast farmers to include education on "the importance of children." And in early June, the board voted to allocate money to survey Ivory Coast farms to determine the extent of child slavery there.

COMPANY: Hershey Foods Corp., Hershey, Pa.

ROLE: No. 1 chocolate manufacturer in the United States. Also processes cocoa. Would not say if it uses cocoa from Ivory Coast.

RESPONSE: Is working with the Chocolate Manufacturers Association to address the issue. Will allocate money and personnel for the association's investigation.

"Issues like this are extremely important to us," said John C. Long, vice president of corporate communications.

"This is a very complex issue without any solution that is quick and easy."

COMPANY: Mars Inc., McLean, Va.

ROLE: No. 2 chocolate manufacturer in the United States. Also processes cocoa. Uses cocoa from Ivory Coast.

RESPONSE: Did not respond to questions or requests for comment. A Knight Ridder reporter saw bags of Ivory Coast cocoa beans being shipped to a Mars facility in Pennsylvania.

COMPANY: Russell Stover Candies of Kansas City, Mo.

ROLE: No. 3 chocolate manufacturer in the United States. Buys from suppliers who use cocoa from Ivory Coast.

RESPONSE: Tom Ward, company president, said its supplier contracts prohibit the use of child labor to produce any ingredients or materials. Ward said child slavery "is just not acceptable" and that he might hold his supplier legally liable for delivering tainted goods.

COMPANY: Nestle USA of Glendale, Calif.

ROLE: Chocolate manufacturer. Supplies chocolate to other manufacturers and small confectioners under the brand Peter's Chocolate. Also processes cocoa. Uses cocoa from Ivory Coast, has a warehouse in Daloa, Ivory Coast, and is a big presence in that country.

RESPONSE: Did not respond to questions or requests for comment. A Knight Ridder reporter saw bags of Ivory Coast cocoa beans labeled for shipment to Nestle.

COMPANY: Brach's Confections Inc. of Chattanooga, Tenn.

ROLE: Makes chocolates and candies under the brands Brach and Brock. Could not be determined if it uses Ivory Coast cocoa.

RESPONSE: Did not respond to questions or requests for comment.

TRADE ASSOCIATION: CAOBISCO, Brussels, Belgium.

WHOM IT REPRESENTS: European Union trade association for manufacturers of finished chocolate, confections and biscuit products.

RESPONSE: "I don't mind paying more to the right people," said David Zimmer, CAOBISCO's secretary general. "The industry has no problem about paying more for the cocoa as long as we can get quality and sustainability. If it means you build another safeguard, then build it in." CAOBISCO is working with the other European trade groups to study the problem and find a solution, he said.

TRADE ASSOCIATION: Cocoa Merchants' Association of America, New York.

WHOM IT REPRESENTS: Buyers, traders

and cocoa speculators.

RESPONSE: "It would not be appropriate for the association's board of directors to comment on cocoa companies," said Thomas P. Hogan, chairman.

COMPANY: Cadbury Schweppes PLC of London.

ROLE: Chocolate manufacturer. Makes Cadbury chocolate bars, Cadbury Eggs.

RESPONSE: Does not buy cocoa from Ivory Coast. Has a long-standing human rights policy prohibiting the use of forced labor, especially for children.

COMPANY: Lindt & Sprungli (USA) Inc. of Stratham, N.H.

ROLE: Chocolate manufacturer; makes Lindor Truffles. Parent company of San Francisco-based Ghirardelli Chocolate Co. Buys cocoa from Ivory Coast.

RESPONSE: Supports the European Cocoa Association's efforts to investigate the extent of the problem and develop remedies with Ivory Coast. Lindt spokeswoman Sylvia Kalin said the company primarily uses Caribbean cocoa and some from Ivory Coast. She did not know the source of Ghirardelli's cocoa, and no one from that division is permitted to speak to the news media.

COMPANY: Godiva, a division of Campbell Soup Co., of Camden, N.J.

ROLE: Makes luxury chocolates. Buys from suppliers that use cocoa from Ivory Coast.

RESPONSE: "We do not raise cocoa firsthand," said John Faulkner, spokesman for Godiva. "We have a long-standing policy to ensure that our supplies are in compliance with labor laws and regulations. Any supplier that is not in compliance would need to change their practices."

Godiva is working with the Chocolate Manufacturers Association to investigate the problem in Ivory Coast.

COMPANY: World's Finest Chocolate of Chicago.

ROLE: Makes chocolates used in school fund-raisers. Uses Ivory Coast cocoa.

RESPONSE: "If that labor practice is going on, I think that is a huge concern . . . to us as a company and to our industry," said Ed-

World's Finest Chocolate. Opler cautioned that "we have to take steps to make sure that is the case."

He said his company supports the Chocolate Manufacturers Association's efforts to survey Ivorian cocoa farms' labor practices.

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COMPANY: Archibald Candy Co. of Chicago.

ROLE: Makes chocolates, including Fannie May, Fannie Farmer, Laura Secord and Sweet Factory brands. Would not say if it buys chocolate made from Ivory Coast cocoa.

RESPONSE: Is working with the Chocolate Manufacturers Association to investigate child slavery in Ivory Coast, according to Dome Communications Inc., its public relations firm.

• • •

COMPANY: See's Candies Inc. of San Francisco.

ROLE: Makes chocolates and candies. Could not be determined if it uses Ivory Coast cocoa.

RESPONSE: Asked that questions be sent by e-mail, then did not respond to them.

• • •

COMPANY: Ben and Jerry's Homemade Inc. of South Burlington, Vt., a division of Unilever N.V.

ROLE: Gourmet ice cream manufacturer, including a wide variety of chocolate-based flavors. Could not be determined if it uses Ivory Coast cocoa.

RESPONSE: Did not respond to questions or requests for comment.

• • •

COMPANY: Sara Lee Corp. of Chicago.

ROLE: No. 1 frozen baked-goods manufacturer uses cocoa and chocolate in its products. Could not be determined if it uses Ivory Coast cocoa.

RESPONSE: Did not respond to questions or requests for comment on cocoa. The company stopped buying coffee beans from Ivory Coast five years ago.

"We made a decision that it was not an area of the world we wanted to do business with, based on some of the practices that we are learning more about," said Sylvia Wulf, vice president of marketing for Sara Lee's coffee and tea division.

COMPANY: Maxfield Candy of Salt Lake City.

ROLE: Chocolate manufacturer, supplier of chocolate for Mrs. Fields Cookies. Buys from suppliers that use Ivory Coast cocoa.

RESPONSE: Terry Mitchell, president of Maxfield, said he was upset to hear that child slavery is used in the production of cocoa. He said he would be willing to change suppliers if companies cannot assure him that his chocolate is free of child slavery.

European Cocoa Association, Brussels, Belgium.

WHOM IT REPRESENTS: Roughly 75 percent of the European chocolate processors, manufacturers and traders. Some American firms, such as Cargill, also have joined.

RESPONSE: Association Secretary-General Robert Zehnder said the industry is concerned that the slavery issue may ignite a consumer boycott of cocoa and chocolate products.

In response to news reports and public pressure in Europe, the association is pushing for an investigation of the problem and what it can do to combat it. It's also pressing the Ivorian government to unite small farms into small cooperatives, perhaps cutting out middlemen and ensuring more money for farmers.

COMPANY: Archer Daniels Midland of Decatur, Ill.

ROLE: The world's leading grinder and processor of cocoa beans ships directly from Ivory Coast to plants in the United States and Europe. Sells under its own name and under the Ambrosia, De Zaan and Merckens brand names. It processes cocoa beans to make chocolate, cocoa powder and cocoa liquor and then sells them to chocolate manufacturers and food processors.

RESPONSE: Is working through its trade associations on child slavery issues.

"I think that is an abhorrent practice that we find objectionable," said ADM spokesman Larry Cunningham.

The company often works directly with farmers to streamline its supply chain, bypassing middlemen in an effort to direct more profit to the farmers and reduce the temptation to use slave labor.

• • •

COMPANY: Cargill of Minneapolis.

ROLE: One of the top five global processors of cocoa beans; ships directly from Ivory Coast to plants in the United States and Europe. Sells under its own name and under the brand Wilbur Chocolates Co. It processes cocoa beans to make chocolate, cocoa powder and cocoa liquor and then sells them to chocolate manufacturers and food processors.

RESPONSE: Directed all questions to the European Cocoa Association, of which it is a member.

• • •

COMPANY: Barry Callebaut of Montreal; Swedesboro, N.J.; St. Albans, Vt.; and Zurich, Switzerland (where it's headquartered).

ROLE: One of the top five processors of cocoa beans. Supplies cocoa and chocolate to manufacturers such as Godiva as well as smaller U.S. manufacturers. Buys cocoa beans from Ivory Coast and has processing facilities there.

RESPONSE: The company's director of corporate quality, Willy Geraerts, said he could not guarantee to his customers that its cocoa beans were not harvested by slave children.

"When the cocoa comes to us, it is such a long chain, and before it gets to us, controlled by middlemen along the way. I don't think that any company today ... can give this guarantee," he said. "What we don't control we cannot guarantee."

Barry Callebaut is working with its trade group, the European Cocoa Association, to study the problem and find a solution.

• • •

COMPANY: Blommer Chocolate Co. of East Greenville, Pa., Chicago (where it's headquartered) and San Francisco.

ROLE: One of the top five American processors of cocoa beans. Supplies cocoa and chocolate to manufacturers such as Hershey, Mars and Nestle, as well as smaller manufacturers throughout the country. Could not be determined if it uses Ivory Coast cocoa.

RESPONSE: A company official, who did not want his name used, would not answer questions about slavery or Blommer's source of cocoa.



Gary Guittard, CEO of Guittard Chocolates, is chairman of the Chocolate Manufacturers Association.

has been harvesting cocoa for almost a year with no pay. In the off-season, he's forced to work on rice and corn fields. If he's fortunate enough to go home, he said, he would never return to Ivory Coast.



Contact information

Here are the mailing addresses and Web sites, where available, of cocoa and chocolate companies and their trade organizations, and organizations involved in the issue of child slavery in Ivory Coast.

NONGOVERNMENT GROUPS THAT WORK ON CHILD SLAVERY

Anti-Slavery International

Thomas Clarkson House, The Stableyard, Broomgrove
Road, London, SW9 9TL, England

Tel: (44) (0)20 7501 8920

<http://www.anslavery.org>

Save the Children Canada

1411 Yonge St., Suite 300, Toronto, Ontario M2P 2A8

Tel: (416) 221-5501 or (800) 668-5036

<http://www.savethechildren.ca/en/index.html>

COCOA AND CHOCOLATE COMPANIES AND TRADE GROUPS

National Confectioners Association/Chocolate Manu- facturers Association

1800 Old Dominion Road, Suite 300, Vienna, Va. 22182

Tel: (703) 991-5011

<http://www.candy.com/>

Cocoa Merchants Association of America Inc.

26 Broadway, Suite 707, New York, N.Y. 10004-1703

Tel: (212) 368-2145

<http://www.cocoamerchants.com/>

International Cocoa Organization

22 Berners St., London, W1P 3DB, England

Tel: (44) (0)20 7637-3211

<http://www.icco.org/>

ADM Cocoa

17500 W. Cammen Ave., Milwaukee, Wis. 53225

Tel: (414) 358-5700

<http://food.admworld.com/cocoa/>

Cargill Corp.

Cargill Office Center, P.O. Box 9300, Minneapolis,
Minn. 55400-9300

Tel: (612) 747-1575

<http://www.cargill.com/>

Bonne Callebaut

40 Industrial Park Rd., St. Albans, Vt. 05478-1875

Tel: (802) 524-9711

<http://www.bonne-callebaut.com/>

Blommer Chocolate Co.

600 W. Kinzie St., Chicago, Ill. 60610-3985

Tel: (800) 621-1600

<http://www.blommer.com/>

Gilbert's Chocolate Co.

2000 Gilman Rd., Bensenville, Calif. 94010

Tel: (949) 636-2462

<http://www.gilberts.com/home.htm>

Wm. S. Evans Co.

10000 Evans Ave., Dallas, Texas 75243

Tel: (972) 342-1111

<http://www.evanschocolate.com/index.shtml>

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Facts about Ivory Coast

Name: Republique de la Cote d'Ivoire (in English, Republic of Ivory Coast)

Geography: 124,502 square miles, roughly the size of New Mexico. On the southern coast of West Africa bordered by Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia and Mali.

Language: The official language is French. Dioula and 60 other dialects also are spoken.

Ethnic groups: Baule, Bek-Senoufo. There are roughly 16 million people in Ivory Coast; 20 percent are workers from outside the country.

Religion: 60 percent Muslim, 22 percent Christian, 16 percent indigenous.

Exports: Cocoa, gold, rubber, palm oil, coffee, tropical woods.

Imports: Food, fuel, consumer goods from France, Italy, Germany and the United States.

Cities: Abidjan, Bouake, Yamoussoukro (the official capital).

Ports: Abidjan, Aboisso, Dabou and San Pedro.

Government: Ivory Coast gained independence from France in 1960. It was known as one of the most prosperous and peaceful countries in West Africa. In December 1999, the military, led by Robert Guei, overthrew the government. Guei held presidential elections in 2000, but barred key opposition candidates from running. After Guei was run out of power, he subsequently tried to shut down the elections and declare himself the winner. Candidate Alassane Ouattara, the current president, was placed in the post.

—Compiled by researcher Lisa Wells.