



CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF LAW AND SOCIETY  
BERKELEY LAW

## **CSLS SPEAKER SERIES**

Monday, October 16, 2017

### **NANCY SCHEPER-HUGHES**

Professor of Medical Anthropology Emerita, UC Berkeley

#### **“Why Human Trafficking for Organs is a Protected Crime: The Case of Izhak Rosenbaum, the First and Only Prosecution of Kidney Trafficking in the US”**

On June 22, 2012 I followed Mr. Levy Izhak Rosenbaum and his cohort of supporters as they entered the Trenton Federal District Court to face Judge Anne E. Thompson, for sentencing following his guilty plea in relation to three counts of having acquired, received, and otherwise transferred human organs for valuable consideration for use in transplant; and one count of conspiracy. This case was the first attempt to prosecute a kidney broker whose international syndicate I had been following on the ground as an anthropological human rights activist and Director of Organs Watch since 2001. I had gathered interviews on tape from a dozen kidney buyers, affiliated brokers and kidney hunters in Israel who had paid Rosenbaum \$120,000 to secure a living kidney provider and an illicit transplant in the US. The law that was used to prosecute Rosenbaum – human trafficking for the purpose of procuring a kidney -- pertained only to the organ and not to the recruiting, deception and defrauding of the kidney providers. For eight years before Rosenbaum was accidentally arrested in 2009 in a large police sting of corrupt political figures, I had provided evidence to transplant surgeons in hospitals in major US cities where Rosenbaum had infiltrated the transplant units with hundreds of ‘transplant tourists’. When the surgeons refused to accept the information, I went to UNOS (the United Network for Organ Sharing) and other agencies, to Congress and finally to CBS 60 Minutes. No one believed that such a complex and extensive international crime could be possible given the close regulation of transplant by UNOS. I will explain how and why human trafficking and transplant trafficking were able to exist as a known but protected crime.

**PLACE** Selznick Seminar Room, 2240 Piedmont Avenue  
**TIME** **12:45 – 2:00pm.** Coffee and water provided. Bag lunches welcome.  
**INFO** <https://www.law.berkeley.edu/centers/center-for-the-study-of-law-society/>  
**EMAIL** [csls@law.berkeley.edu](mailto:csls@law.berkeley.edu)

**Jonathan Simon**, FACULTY DIRECTOR | **Rosann Greenspan**, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR