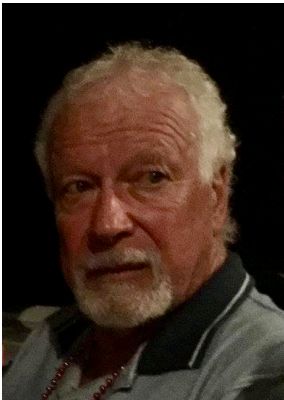


Amazing Grace, the song that was written by a former enslaver.

‘Ironically, this stirring song, closely associated with the African American community, was written by a former enslaver, John Newton. This unlikely authorship forms the basis of *Amazing Grace*, a Broadway musical (written by Broadway first-timer Christopher Smith, a former Philadelphia policeman, and playwright Arthur Giron) which tells Newton’s life story from his early days as a licentious libertine in the British navy to his religious conversion and taking up the abolitionist cause.’ - Wikipedia



Claude Vandame

I’ve spent years in East Germany, when East Germany was a nation. I’ve seen the soul destroying street level effect of human trafficking first hand.

It has been quite the eye opening journey going through this technology jam with people I still reflect upon as kids. I am thoroughly amazed at what computer code and machine thinking has done for the human condition. Traffickers can hide from human eyes in the near endless press of civilization, but they can’t evade the machines.

What little I was able to contribute amounted to my life experience and perspective. Our decision to use banking data to sniff out trafficker accounts came in large part from my life long observation that when in doubt, follow the money. Money tells a storey. Criminal activity is always about the money. Now the younger generations have the technology to use this information.



Brittanie Passmore

I used to take yearly vacations to Mexico with friends. Every time my group went, girls as young as mid teenagers would approach my guy friends, offering sexual services. The first time this happened I tried to help the young girl. But the brute reality quickly became apparent, as when she saw I wasn’t interested in her services she looked with terror further on the beach, where a large man was watching us. The whole world of human trafficking is sickening and heart breaking.

My only wish after going through this life altering experience with these four awesome people, besides ending human trafficking once and for all, was that I had time to dig into the fantastic toolset of IBM Cognos. How a machine learning engineer looks at raw data and is able to quickly induce relationships from it is intimidating. IBM Cognos appears to be a tool that allows non-coders to handle data nearly as masterfully. As our data scientist said “(IBM) Cognos is to data, what the GUI was to the computing world of the 80’s.”

My contribution was keeping everyone motivated and on target, and not relying entirely on Jesse (our data scientist) to do everything. I was also the one contacting every source of banking transactions we could think of for data. When we hit a solid wall of silence and hard no’s, I ensured we all remembered how little this disappointment was compared to what had provoked all of us to be here.



Zachary Passmore

When I travelled through southeast Asia and especially through certain parts, seeing so many women driven to the sex trade really reminded me of how lucky we are in Canada. When I found out that the majority of these girls were trafficked and wouldn't even see any of the money they earn by selling their bodies, I cried. The horror those young faces knew as I backpacked through those areas was insane enough. Thank goodness I was ignorant at the time, and believed that at least these girls made a good living for such a dangerous, destructive profession.

It's been awesome to explore means to help solve the human trafficking problem. Between what data coders can do and what really intuitive tools like what IBM Cognos offers, I believe that it will be in our lifetime that human trafficking is stamped out. In my own life I'll be keeping Cognos in mind as I look down my personal road in the 2020's.

I contributed the CSV datafile, and in our 'desperate hour' it was my idea initially to create 'trial' banking data. I also offered comedic relief and 3AM entertainment when spirits were low.



Bitia Catana

This has been one of the emotionally hardest journeys I have ever been through. I've cried more than I want to admit, reliving losing girlfriends to the sexual slave trade, seeing those broken eyes in pictures on the faces of recovering victims. Hearing the stories from survivors and experts alike haunt me. If my father didn't have a good job in America as I grew up, I would have been a victim too. I'd be another girl desperately trying to get my family out of a dangerous area controlled by the drug cartels, responding to an advertisement or a person selling false hope.

I was the one who so strongly pushed that we investigate banking transaction data, once Claude came up with the idea. The drug traffickers worked the same way, always follow the money. Though my lovely stupendous team said I was the soul of Team Amazing Grace, I was also the reason we came up short in the end. I was the one so emotionally invested in finding and following a money trail, keeping us on that route into the second weekend of the data jam, when the banks had all said no and now were closed. It was a lesson in reality checking for all of us, especially me. Thank goodness for teamwork and quick thinking and a great scientist who liked to say "Sleep is for wusses."



Jesse Passmore

That we, Team Amazing Grace, ended up with the most basic of data analysis on a fabricated dataset that barely resembles actual banking data, is ok. That we did not end up using the phenomenal tools of IMB Cognos at our disposal, is ok. That we only operated as a team in the final 48 hours of the data jam, operating on a mission that has profound meaning for all of us, is ok. We did come together as a strongly linked team in the end, we learned a tremendous amount about the difficulty in acquiring banking transaction data of any sort. We also saw over the past 10 days, a willingness to give up time, energy and sleep for a cause greater than all of us; by many machine learning engineers around the world, and other experts in their respective fields. Team Amazing Grace subjectively came up short, but I truly believe the future is a brighter one now.

For what meaningful solution we were able to procure in the final hours of the final day, the honour is all yours Team Amazing Grace. The only honour that is mine and mine alone is to have been your 'scientist' throughout this ordeal of relentless travails. Our efforts were not in vain so long as we keep this cause in our hearts. The greatest evils only exist when good people do nothing, and that's something none of us will ever do.

Thank you Claude for participating in a data jam when you abhor anything to do with technology. Your memory is a national treasure.

Thank you Britt for being the kind, sweetly toned birch tree over the phone to the wall of officious banking personalities, never losing hope nomatter how uncaring or cold the no.

Thank you Zach for your infectious humour. It saved us. More than once. Your resourcefulness is profound. You should be an astronaut.

Thank you Bitia most of all. I speak for all of us, you were the soul of our dream. You brought something special to our discourses that will affect all of us for the rest of our lives.