

Consider the real world enforcement of these absurd policies in which the “victim” is also the criminal. On February 2, 2005, the Associated Press reported that in Nashville, Tennessee, “Police have paid confidential informants thousands of dollars to engage in sexual encounters with prostitutes as part of a crackdown on the sex business in Nashville, drawing criticism from the top prosecutor.... Police spent almost \$120,000 over three years to foster the encounters.....” Many men may wonder where they can apply for the job.

Is this what radical feminists and religious conservatives intended to help the “victims of sexual exploitation”? Unfortunately, the Tennessee prostitution enforcement technique is not an aberration. A Spokane, Washington judge ruled that it was acceptable for police agents to engage in sex to carry out prostitution investigations “as long as they didn’t try to trap anyone into the crime.” The judge stated “It may violate public morals, but personal beliefs can’t be substituted for the law.”

Prostitutes are routinely used by the police as informants as well. In 1987, a federal appeals court ruled that “it is unrealistic to expect law enforcement officers to ferret out criminals without the help of unsavory characters,” and so it is permissible for law enforcement agents to pay a prostitute- at taxpayer’s expense- to engage in a sexual relationship, as long as such exploitation of the victim (the prostitute) benefits the police.

Former San Diego Police Chief Bob Bergreen, commenting on the investigation into the possible involvement of some San Diego Police Officers in the murders of some prostitutes, stated “dealing with prostitutes, especially on an informant basis- is a very large part of our business... and that perhaps citizens in a largely conservative community like San Diego may have a hard time understanding that.”

How do the police determine which women it is acceptable to “exploit” - that is, allow the prostitute

to continue plying her trade in exchange for her cooperation- and which women should be “rescued” by paying male informants- at taxpayer’s expense- to have sex with her in order to arrest her and charge her with a crime?

International sex worker activists wholeheartedly agree that whenever “forced” prostitution takes place, the law must protect such victims, but it is a serious mistake to conflate prostitution and trafficking as if they were synonymous because they are not. It helps not one single victim of trafficking to insist that they are.

If consenting adult prostitution was no longer a crime, there would be sufficient law enforcement resources available to investigate, arrest and prosecute those who truly victimize children, young women or any other persons by *forcing* them into ANY type of activity- including garment manufacturing “sweatshops,” domestic labor and picking crops. It is the act of *coercion* which creates the victimization of those forced into these activities, and it is coercion -not the activities themselves- that is the crime and thus the rightful concern and target of law enforcement!

It is time to decriminalize private, consenting adult prostitution, and stop the rescue of women who don’t wish to be rescued.

To learn how you can help us in the fight for decriminalization, visit our website:  
[www.iswface.org](http://www.iswface.org)

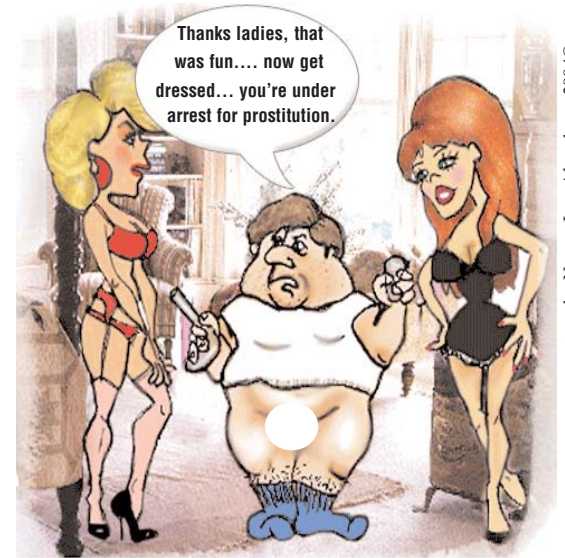
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cartoon by Norma Jean Almodovar 2004©

Who Will Rescue Us from  
 Those Who Wish to Rescue  
 Us Against Our Will?

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IF PORNOGRAPHY AND PROSTITUTION  
ACTIVITIES AMOUNT TO SLAVERY AND  
EXPLOITATION' ..... WHY DO NASHVILLE  
TENNESSEE COPS HIRE MEN TO HAVE SEX  
WITH PROSTITUTES IN ORDER TO ARREST  
THE PROSTITUTE?

by Norma Jean Almodovar, prostitutes rights  
activist and retired prostitute, and founder of  
ISWFACE

Recently, the Los Angeles Police Department was given a three year grant "to fund the training of officers to better identify exploitation of immigrants, including 'hidden crimes' of forced prostitution and slavery," so such victims can be rescued. Note the word "forced."

Comments Chief Bratton, "We have to take it beyond just arresting the prostitute," and identify instances of coercion. The chief said that, over the course of his career, he "might have failed to realize that some prostitutes were victims of traffickers." The operative word here is "some," because not all- or even most- prostitutes are victims of sexual exploitation.

The "rescue and reformation" of prostitutes has always been a big business. In the late 19th century, "fallen women" (prostitutes) had literally hundreds of Rescue Organizations vying for their souls and the money that went with their "salvation." Most of those prostitutes unlucky enough to be so rescued could count on a life of slavery as inmates in the laundries, asylums and penitentiaries built by "faith based" organizations who raised thousands of dollars from the church-going public, horrified by the stories of the "poor, betrayed and fallen women" of the streets. It wasn't until the mid 1990's when an inadvertent act of greed uncovered the scandal in Ireland of the Magdalen laundresses - "Maggies" as they were called- whose slave labor in the laundries had enriched the coffers of the local Catholic Churches there for well over 100 years.

In the later part of the twentieth century, a curious phenomenon occurred: the far left radical feminists, who had been for many years preaching the gospel of prostitution as a violation of human rights and sexual exploitation- got in bed with religious conservatives who were all too happy to accept the new wording for their age-old moral crusade against prostitution. The religious conservatives had, for the most part, lost the public's sympathy with their crusade against personal moral choices such as homosexuality and abortion, and needed a new holy war to inspire their congregations. But to reach the general populace, the wording needed to be altered so as not to be perceived as just another "moral" campaign. The radical feminists had the jargon already constructed- "anti- trafficking" was a fight against the sexual degradation of women and children- not a fight against immoral behavior, and thus could the public be persuaded it was imperative to pass new laws and spend of millions of dollars to "rescue" the "sexually exploited." Whose heart strings wouldn't be stirred at the thought of young children and women forced to perform sex acts upon evil, lust-filled men? Who wouldn't be justifiably disturbed at the thought of greedy pimps making billions of dollars off the sale of those poor, exploited persons?

There was only one problem: prostitutes had begun fighting for their rights in the early 1970's and had become vocal about wanting to decriminalize consenting adult prostitution. Around the world, prostitutes' rights organizations were started by young, articulate, politically savvy women and men who believed the original feminist creed of self-determination. We had the audacity to think that the mantra "my body, my choice" for abortion rights also applied to us and our bodies. Can you imagine our surprise when we were told that there is no such thing as "choice" to engage in commercial sex?

"Sexual exploitation" is a subjective concept and requires the use of other inflammatory and deceitful words to reinforce it. So radical feminists and religious conservatives adopted a take no prisoners

approach, and simply disallowed from being heard the voices of us activists who favor decriminalization of all private, consenting adult commercial sex.

Radical feminists and religious conservatives insist that no distinction be made between consenting adult commercial sex and true sexual slavery. Using skewed law enforcement statistics- which do not differentiate between consenting adult prostitutes and those persons of any age who are coerced into sex slavery- the global community is duped into believing that there are "possibly millions" of trafficked victims worldwide who are nothing short of "modern day slaves." Without clarification, these statistics can certainly shock and alarm the misled public. However, there is a monumental difference between sex slavery and consenting adult prostitution.

Imagine if laws made no distinction between rape, child sexual abuse and consenting adult sex; how would it help the victims of rape and child sexual abuse to arrest every adult person who engaged in consensual sex? If arresting the victim and consenting adult prostitute alike is a viable solution for eliminating sexual exploitation as it applies to prostitution, shouldn't this strategy be applied to the victims of rape and domestic violence? Modern day slavery encompasses many forms of coerced labor besides prostitution, such as sweatshops. Surely if it would lead to the abolition of sweatshops, our wise leaders would pass laws against all commercial garment manufacturing, and cops would set up sting operations to arrest persons caught sewing commercially.

Conservative columnist and National Review Editor Rich Lowry states in a recent article on trafficking, "... a bipartisan coalition is forming in Congress to foster tough 'demand side' enforcement of U.S. anti-prostitution laws by ensuring that male perpetrators such as johns and pimps *are as systematically prosecuted as are female victims.*" If prostitutes are victims, why are prostitutes prosecuted in the first place?