



NATIONAL
CENTER ON
SEXUAL
EXPLOITATION

PROSTITUTION:

*“The Zone” of Raw Male
Physical and Sexual Violence*

“Yes, sometimes I do feel
that they think that
I’m not a person. That
anybody can just hurt me
and just walk away.”*



NATIONAL CENTER ON SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Established 1962

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Dear Reader:

As Linda Fairstein, a Manhattan sex crimes prosecutor, observed in her book *Sexual Violence: Our War Against Rape*, it is unlikely that any “lifestyle exposes a woman to the threat of assault and gratuitous violence as constantly and completely as prostitution” (p. 171).¹ Despite the twenty intervening years since she penned those words and the tremendous amount of effort that has been exerted by activists to expose the harms endemic to prostitution, we find no reason to believe that this situation has changed. Prostitution continues to constitute “the zone” where men may exercise raw physical and sexual power over those they buy for sex.

Studies characterize the violence that animates prostitution as *brutal, extreme, common, stunning, normative, and ever-present*. Indeed, physical and sexual violence across prostitution types is pervasive—whether one is prostituting in Chennai or Chicago, indoors or outdoors, for drugs or to pay the rent, on a street corner, in a car, back alley, brothel, massage parlor, or strip club—both the threat of, as well as actual violence, permeate everyday existence in the zone. In any context outside the commercial sex trade the types of heinous and outrageous abuse experienced by those in the sex trade would be the focus of global opprobrium and action. But in the current order, as long as this violence is contained within the context of the sex trade, where women and other prostituting persons become public sexual property, their trauma is commonly and conveniently reduced to an “occupational health issue” or “workplace violence.”

As you review the statistics on the physical and sexual violence in prostitution provided below, imagine what would happen if 25, 50, or 89% of the females working in schools, financial or medical institutions, at your local supermarket, or favorite restaurant were subject to the same kinds of violence. Would the world tolerate the phenomenon, tell women that the violence was merely an on-the-job hazard, describe their rape as theft of “services,” or thrust the responsibility for the violence on them by coaching them on a myriad of methods to reduce the risk of violence? Such a response is unimaginable for women outside the zone of prostitution, but for women and others inside the commercial sex trade such perversity is the stuff of daily life.

Overwhelmingly, the persons purchased for sex are women (but also include male and female children, transgendered males, and prostituting men), and those doing the purchasing are men. Without question, the vast majority of physical and sexual violence inflicted on those in the sex trade is perpetrated by those purchasing persons for sex—the sex buyers. While sex buyers may be the principle perpetrators of this savagery, in many cases their exercise of violence is given license by institutions, societies, and governments that establish and endorse various regimes of legal and decriminalized prostitution.

Full decriminalization of prostitution, in which the laws regulating the activities of pimps, sex buyers and sellers are eliminated, represents the most egregious response to the commercial sex trade. Such an approach transforms pimps into entrepreneurs and sex buyers into mere customers. While decriminalization may redefine deviant and criminal behavior, it is incapable of transforming pimps into caring individuals who have the best interests of prostituting persons at heart, or metamorphosing sex buyers into sensitive, thoughtful, and giving sexual partners. Decriminalization of prostitution is powerless to change the essential, exploitive nature of commercial sex, and tragically grants it free rein.

As you review the information below, it would be easy to let the redundancy of the egregious violence of prostitution wash over you, to let it become a dull and repetitive refrain. Please fight against the tendency to become anesthetized and indifferent to the atrocities documented here. Please read this and weep for the lives destroyed by prostitution. But then wipe away your tears and stand with us in zealously fighting against the institutions and social forces that sanction the zone of physical and sexual violence commonly referred to as “prostitution.”

Abolition!

Lisa L. Thompson
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NCOSE EXPOSES THE SEAMLESS CONNECTION BETWEEN ALL FORMS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION.

* Shared Hope International. (2007). Demand (43-minute version). Retrieved from <https://vimeo.com/70637039>

Image of prostituted Nigerian woman in Italy retrieved from <http://www.brimtime.com/2013/06/pictures-of-nigerian-ashawo-in-italy.html>

SEXPLOITATION ZONE: PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN PROSTITUTION

- Indicative of the violence inherent to prostitution, a manual providing health and safety tips for prostituting persons produced by the St. James Infirmary, a San Francisco based agency, instructs prostituting persons to:
 - “Be aware of exits and avoid letting your customer block access to those exits.
 - Be aware of where your client is at all times, as much as possible.
 - Shoes should come off easily or be appropriate for running.
 - Avoid necklaces, scarves, across-the-body shoulder bags or anything else that can be accidentally or intentionally tightened around your throat;
 - Approach the driver’s window, keeping enough distance to avoid being grabbed, assaulted with spit or spray paint, or pleasing ‘window shoppers.’
 - Study the customer, the car, and the door-lock system.
 - Circle car completely before entering so you’re clear on how many passengers are in the car—and take the license plate number or pretend to. If you can, text-message all license plates to a safe person.
 - Do not carry a weapon that can be taken away from you and used against you. If you are threatened or being attacked, use your voice. Make a lot of noise. Scream! Turn on the car lights. Hit the horn. Try to get the door open, attack and run. Attack soft areas, such as throat, eyes, Adam’s apple, nose, testicles. Kick shins, stamp on instep; poke with fingers, nails, keys, spray hair spray in his face. Do not let him restrain you; if you see rope, handcuffs or bindings, fight like hell!”²
- Semi-structured interviews of 47 prostituted women (aged 18-36) conducted in three Canadian provinces revealed violence or threats of violence from pimps, intimate partners, sex buyers, others in the sex trade, members of the public, institutional social service providers, and police. Investigators did not ask questions specific to abuse and violence—the information emerged in response to questions such as, “How did you become involved in prostitution.” Investigators report that the amount of violence and abuse that emerged was “startling.”
 - 47% of the women reported that their intimate partners physically, sexually, verbally, and financially abused them;
 - 23% were coerced into prostitution by boyfriends;
 - 19.2% of these women also reported being assaulted, sexually assaulted, or propositioned by a police officer.
 - More than 50% of the women reported experiencing violence from sexual buyers, including being: stabbed or cut, raped, gang-raped, raped at gunpoint, forced to engage in degrading sexual acts, choked/strangled, beaten, kidnapped, stalked, held with a gun to head, tied up, tortured, beaten with objects (e.g. baseball bat, crowbar), and run over.
 - One woman stated, “I figure I probably should have been dead at least 10 times.”³

A photograph of a woman with short dark hair and red lipstick being choked by a man with a shaved head. The woman is looking upwards with a distressed expression. The man's hand is wrapped around her neck. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

*“I figure I probably
should have been dead
at least 10 times.”*

- In Karnataka, India, 3,852 females in prostitution participated in an integrated behavioral-biological assessment survey (IBBAs) in 4 different districts, and 7,638 prostituting females participated in 691 polling booth surveys (PBS). These surveys found that 11% of the prostituted females surveyed in the IBBAs and 26.4% in the PBS reported having been beaten or raped in the past year. Participants in the IBBAs reported that the main perpetrators of violence were: clients (56.2%), regular partners (22.8%), ‘rowdies’ (6.9%), the police (6.6%) and pimps (3.0%). Those who were raped were more likely to be younger, be non-local to the area, and have more than 10 clients per week. Higher rates of violence and rape were connected to non-condom use, as well as higher incidents of anal sex and gonorrhea infection.⁴
- A study of 222 prostituted women (aged 18-59) in Chicago, who were currently in prostitution or had been within the past five years, reported violence across seven common prostitution activities (escort, exotic dancing, prostitution from one’s own residence, street, hotels, drug house, and survival sex). Violence was reported by the women in all prostitution venues. The 12 most common forms of violence included: slapping; punching; hair pulling; pinching; spanking; kicking; ripping clothes; throwing Å; threats with weapons; threats of rape; inserting fingers/objects; and rape.
 - 80% of women in street prostitution had been threatened with a weapon at least once,
 - 64.4% were rape; 55.4% were threatened with rape;
 - 50% of women in escort prostitution had been raped, and 39.9% were threatened with either a weapon or rape;
 - 21% of women engaging in prostitution in their residence had been raped 10 or more times;
 - Sex buyers were responsible for 62-100% of violence against women in street-based prostitution;
 - Sexual buyers were responsible for 30-100% of violence against women in exotic dancing;
 - Perpetrators of violence were most commonly sex buyers, intimate partners, neighbors, and least commonly police.⁵
- Of the 43 prostituted women interviewed in the study, 72.1% reported severe abuse at the hands of pimps, male sexual buyers, or boyfriends. The acts of abuse include being: raped, beaten with objects, threatened with weapons, and abandoned in remote locations.⁶
- A comparative study of 46 formerly prostituted females (indoor prostitution only) and a control group (CG) of 31 age and education matched South Korean women found that of the prostituted women:
 - 78.3% experienced serious economic crisis including homelessness/CG 9.7%;
 - 82.6% were kept under surveillance or in captivity/CG 3.2%;
 - 71.7% were threatened with harm against those close to her or herself/CG 9.7%;
 - 65.2% had their daily activities such as eating, sleeping, and using toilets were controlled/CG 0%;
 - 54.3% physical appearance, body weight, and clothing controlled/CG 0%;
 - 69.6% experienced unexpected/ uncontrollable sexual/ physical attack/CG 6.5%;
 - 78.3% were emotionally abuse, shamed, neglected, and spoken ill of/CG 3.2%.⁷
- In-depth interviews with 16 women (aged 20-38) incarcerated for prostitution-related offenses or on other charges but known to engage in prostitution, in a Midwestern county jail in the U.S., revealed that:
 - 93.8% had experienced some sort of sexual assault;
 - 75% had been raped by one or more sex buyer;
 - 62.6% raped in another context on the streets;
 - 37.5% had been kidnapped and held captive;
 - 61.2% had been beaten;
 - 31.3% punched or kicked;
 - 31.3% stabbed or slashed;
 - 25% hit with an object like a bat or brick
 - 1 woman had been tortured with electric shock.
- The authors observed that, “Once a prostitute has consented to any exchange of sex for money, these women see many men as assuming that she has given up the right to refuse consent in any situation. Once her sexuality has been ‘purchased,’ her body ‘belongs’ to the purchaser to use. This was the constant theme in the interviews. Many women encountered men who treated their agreement to engage in some form of sex as permission to abuse the women’s bodies in any way they wished, as long as they gave the women monetary compensation (p 11-12).”⁸
- An investigation into the morality rate of women in prostitution revealed that the leading cause of death was homicide (19%) and found that actively prostituting women were nearly 18 times more likely to be murdered than women of similar age and race during the study interval. The homicide rate for women in prostitution of 204 per 100,000, was many times higher than that for women and men in occupations with the highest workplace homicide rates in the U.S. in the 1980s: 4 per 100,000 for female liquor store worker and 29 per 100,000 for male taxi cab drivers.⁹
- In a Midwestern city in the U.S., 13 women (aged 18-40 years old) who were engaged in street prostitution participated in a survey on violence, risk, and survival strategies. Twelve (92.3%) of the women reported sex buyer-related violence. Violence was described as common, frequent, and pervasive.
 - 92.3% slapped, punched, kicked, hit;
 - 61.5% choked, beaten;
 - 61.5% raped or repeated attempted rape;
 - 61.5% assaulted and robbed;
 - 38.4% tortured with perversion;*
 - 30.8% pushed out of moving vehicle;
 - 23.1% tied up against will;
 - 23.1% beaten with blunt object;

- 15.4% kidnapped and held hostage;
- 15.4% stabbed repeatedly;
- 15.4% crashed through glass
- Torture with perversion included being stuffed into a trunk, having a knife inserted into the vagina, being forced to sit on a gear shift anally, being burnt on the chest as a brand, and being severely bitten on the vagina and nipples.¹⁰
- A study of 854 individuals (women, girls, and transgendered people) currently or recently in prostitution in nine countries (Canada, Colombia, Germany, Mexico, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, United States, and Zambia), investigated their lifetime history of sexual and physical violence. Some of those interviewed had been trafficked for the purpose of prostitution and were engaged in legal prostitution. Types and amount of violence experienced in prostitution are as follows:

*“Why commit suicide?
I’ll work in prostitution
instead.”*



- 71% physically assaulted;
- 57% raped; of those raped, 59% were raped more than 5 times;
- 64% threatened with a weapon;
- 88% verbal abuse;
- 49% had pornography made of them;
- 47% were upset by attempts to coerce them perform something a sex buyer had seen in pornography;
- In Germany, where prostitution is legal, 59% responded that prostitution is not safer with legalization;
- 89% wanted to exit prostitution.
- Equating prostitution with death, one woman stated, “Why commit suicide? I’ll work in prostitution instead (p. 53).”¹¹

- One hundred street-based prostituted women and children were interviewed in Vancouver, B.C. regarding their experience of violence in prostitution. The study found that 52% of those interviewed were Canada’s First Nations (Native Indians) persons, whereas the general populace of Vancouver is only 1.7-7% First Nations. Respondents reported a history of prostituting in multiple venues, including: escort, massage, and street-level prostitution. Types and amounts of violence experienced while in prostitution included:
 - 90% physically assaulted; 82% of assaults were perpetrated by sex buyers;
 - 88% verbal abuse;
 - 67% threatened with a weapon;
 - 78% raped; of those raped, 67% were raped more than 5 times;
 - Of those raped 76% were raped by sex buyers;
 - 67% had pornography made of them while in prostitution;
 - 64% upset by attempts to force them to perform something a sex buyer had seen in pornography;
 - 95% wanted to exit prostitution;
 - One woman reported: “What rape is to others, is normal to us (p. 254).”¹²
- Violence perpetrated by sex buyers within the last year was reported by 36% of 278 women (aged 18-49) surveyed in street-based prostitution in Miami. Forms of violence most commonly reported were being ripped off, beaten, threatened with a weapon, or raped by a sex buyer. The level of violence experienced within the past three months jumped to 71.2% when boyfriends, drug dealers, other street people, relatives, and police were included as perpetrators.¹³
- Of 294 prostituting women (aged 18 and above) interviewed in Miami, FL, it was reported that 75.5% had been victimized by someone during the previous 90 days (data not shown), and that 51.7% had experienced physical violence from sexual buyers in the last year.

	LAST 30 DAYS	LAST YEAR
Cornered	21.1%	42.9%
Ripped off	18.0%	32.0%
Escaped from violent date	17.3%	28.2%
Beaten	10.2%	25.5%
Threatened with a weapo	6.1%	14.6%
Raped/gang-raped	4.4%	13.9%
Shot at/cut	3.1%	7.5%
Victimized by any means	31.6%	51.7% ¹⁴

- Sixty-seven percent of 57 women involved in street prostitution in Chennai, India, reported experiencing one or more episode of violence, including being hit, kicked, burned, raped, gang raped, and involuntarily restrained while prostituting. These acts were perpetrated by sexual buyers, pimps, madams, and police. Ninety-five percent of the women reported neglect by their husband, lack of support from husband, death of a husband, violence by husband, or alcohol- or drug-addicted husband.¹⁵
- A study of 106 women involved in street-based prostitution conducted in New York City reported types and amounts of violence experience while in prostitution included:

ABUSE BY INTIMATE PARTNER (45)	LIFETIME	IN THE PAST YEAR
Physical abuse	57.8%	20.0%
Sexual abuse	42.2%	8.9%
Physical and sexual abuse	73.3%	22.2%
ABUSE BY SEXUAL BUYERS (106)		
Physical abuse	45.3%	23.6%
Sexual abuse	34.9%	20.8%
Physical and sexual abuse	50.0%	32.1% ¹⁶

- A study in San Francisco interviewed 130 prostituting persons (women, men, and transgender men, aged 14-61) regarding violence in their lives and symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Types and amounts of violence experienced while in prostitution included:
 - 82% physically assaulted; 55% of physical assaults were perpetrated by sex buyers;
 - 80% of physical attacks by pimps and sex buyers resulted in serious injuries;
 - 83% threatened with a weapon;
 - 68% were raped; 48% were raped 5 or more times;
 - Of those raped, 46% were raped by sex buyers;
 - 49% had pornography made of them while in prostitution;
 - 32% were upset by attempts to make them act out pornography;
 - 88% wanted to leave prostitution.¹⁷

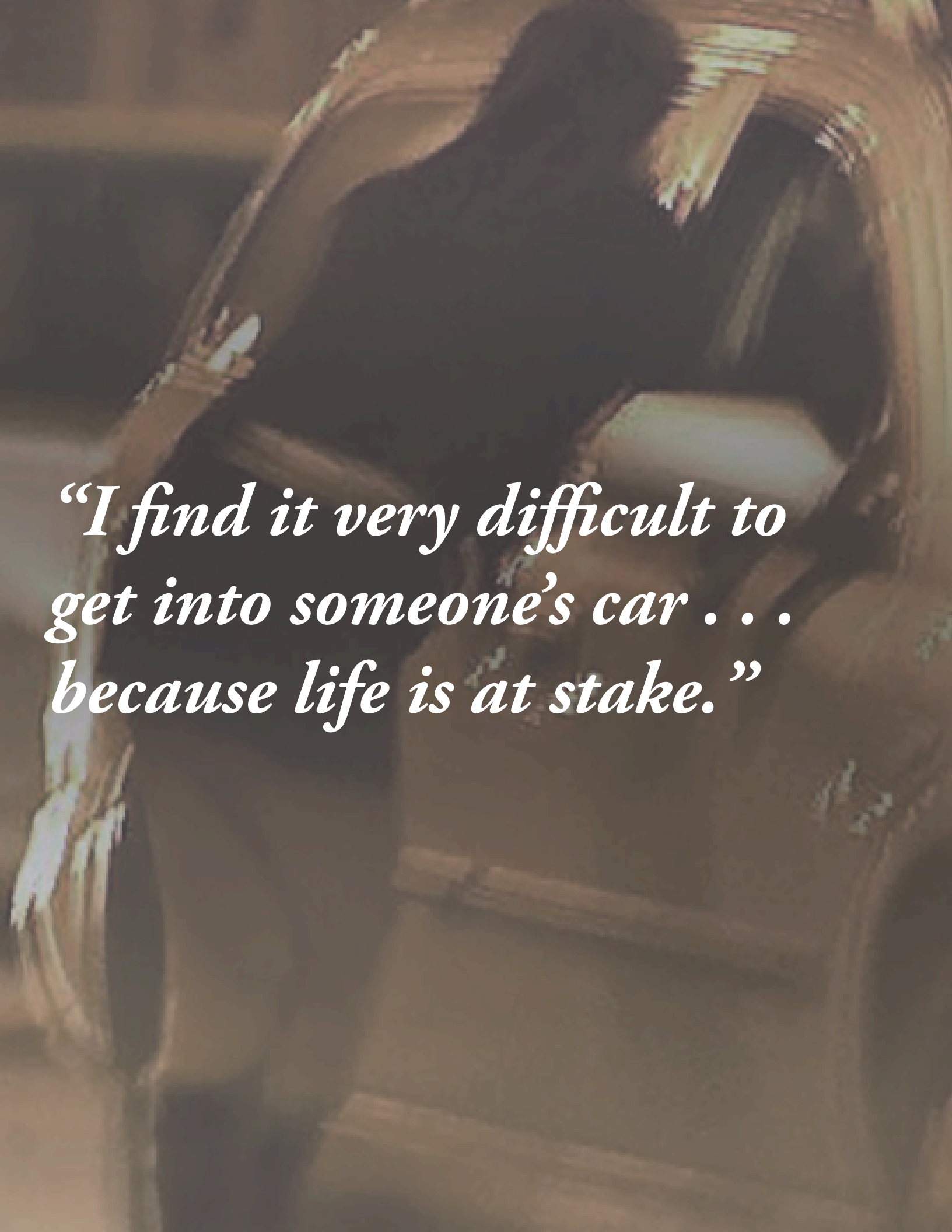


*“What rape is to others,
is normal to us.”*

- Of 303 prostituted females (aged 15 and above) interviewed in New Zealand, 58% reported that they felt pressure to accept a client when they did not want to (53% street-based; 59% indoor-based). Females in street-based prostituted refused sex buyers more often than indoor-based women (85% compared to 55%). One or more violent events were reported by 83% of those surveyed. Types and amounts of violence included:
 - STREET-BASED:
 - 54% - refusal to pay (after provision of sex act)
 - 42% - money stolen by sex buyer
 - 41% - physically assaulted
 - 65% - threatened with physical violence
 - 23% - held somewhere against their will
 - 82% - verbal abuse
 - 27% - raped
 - 21% - forced to have unprotected sex
 - INDOOR-BASED:
 - 46% - refusal to pay (after provision of sex act)
 - 25% - money stolen by sex buyer
 - 21% - physically assaulted
 - 26% - threatened with physical violence
 - 13% - held somewhere against their will
 - 52% - verbal abuse
 - 8% - raped
 - 9% - forced to have unprotected sex.¹⁸
- A comparative study of prostituting females from three U.K. cities reported that the violence ratio between outdoor and indoor prostitution was 81% to 48%. Fifty percent of street prostituted women and 26% of indoor prostituted women reported violence by clients in the last six months, and only 34% of women reported violence to the police (44% of street and 18% of indoor prostituted women).
 - OUTDOOR:
 - 47% slapped, kicked or punched;
 - 39% threatened with physical violence;
 - 37% robbed;
 - 27% beaten;
 - 24% threatened with weapon;
 - 25% held against their will;
 - 20% strangulation;
 - 20% kidnapped;
 - 28% attempted rape;
 - 22% raped vaginally;
 - 5% raped anally.
 - INDOOR PROSTITUTION:
 - 14% slapped, kicked or punched;
 - 14 % threatened with physical violence;
 - 10% were robbed;
 - 1% were beaten;

8% threatened with weapon;
 15% held against their will;
 6% strangulation;
 2% kidnapped;
 17% attempted rape;
 2% raped vaginally;
 6% raped anally.¹⁹

- Women and children can be controlled in indoor prostitution in ways they cannot on the street. Indoor prostituted women can be locked in their rooms, heavily drugged, restrained, beaten, and remain invisible trafficking victims.²⁰
- Of 200 prostituting women in Tamil Nadu, India, more than 95% reported experiences of violence. The forms of violence experienced include beatings, acid attacks, stabbing or cutting with knives, breaking arms or legs, sexual harassment, rape, hitting with hard objects, throwing stones, shaving heads, putting chili powder in the eyes, beating the soles of feet and then forcing them to jump up and down, and murder.²¹
- A study of 325 actively prostituting females, in Miami, Florida, reported types and amounts of violence in prostitution in the last 12 months that included:
 - 41.5% violent sex buyer;
 - 28.9% robbed;
 - 24.9% beaten;
 - 13.8% threatened with a weapon;
 - 12.9% raped;
 - Drug-using women in street prostitution experienced 43 times higher rates of rape and 13 times higher rates of physical assault than the national average of women.²²
- A study of 72 females involved in street-based prostitution in Sydney, Australia, found that violence while prostituting was experienced by 85% of the women, and only 35% of these incidents were reported to the police. The types and amounts of violence included:
 - 65% physical assault;
 - 40% were rape at gun/knife point;
 - 33% were raped without a weapon;
 - 44% were raped in their personal lives;
 - 29% robbed;
 - 21% attempted rape;
 - 13% were threatened/attacked with a weapon;
 - 71% witnessed serious injury to or death of another person (while in prostitution or in personal lives).²³
- In a comparative study sex buyers were more likely than non sex buyers to express a preference for impersonal sex, had greater hostile masculinity, greater self-reported likelihood of raping, and a greater history of sexual aggression.²⁴
- Fifty-four percent of murders of women in prostitution were perpetrated by strangers, compared to only 6.8% of female, nonsexual murder victims.²⁵



“I find it very difficult to get into someone’s car . . . because life is at stake.”

- In Antwerp, Belgium, a brothel operator installed biometric scanners in his state-of-the-art 51-roomed brothel; the scanners insure that only legally registered prostituting women use the rooms. Each room is also equipped with a panic button next to the bed, which when pushed calls police and sets off a red flashing light in the brothel’s control room. Ironically this brought comfort to one prostituted woman who said, “In the old days I worked in a place where you were lucky if the electricity worked and I feared for my life If something should happen to me and I turn up dead tomorrow—the technology here means that police will know exactly who I am.”²⁶
- Among a study of 32 formerly prostituted women (aged 19-45) interviewed for a study in Vancouver, British Columbia, some reported violence in massage parlors in which the sexual buyers would assault them and the owners told them to endure it. Some reported abuse from the owners themselves, including being pushed down a flight of stairs.

The same study found that in pimp-controlled prostitution, that pimps beat “their” women regularly, often without any precipitating factors, to show them who was in control and to inculcate fear of attempting to exit the trade. Some beatings involved utilization of a pimp stick—a coat hanger that has been unraveled and doubled over; occasionally the pimp stick is heated on a stove to increase the degree of pain. One interviewee reported being unable to look at wire coat hangers and having to stock her house only with plastic hangers, even years after exiting the industry.²⁷

- Two hundred females formerly and currently involved in street prostitution in the San Francisco area, 73% reported 193 cases of rape. Allusions to pornographic material on the part of the rapist were made in 24% of the cases of rape reported. Respondents provided this information without any solicitation from or reference to pornography on the part of the interviewer. The consistent pattern that emerged revealed that assailants referred to pornographic materials he had seen or read and then insisted that the victims not only enjoyed the rape but also the extreme violence.²⁸
- A study conducted of 50 women (aged 19-46) incarcerated for prostitution in a large, northeastern American city found that:
 - 58% were verbally abused by a sex buyer;
 - 36% were hit;
 - 30% were robbed or had a weapon used against them;
 - 32% have had a sex buyer attempt to rape them;
 - 26% were raped;
 - 53% were regularly beaten by pimps.
- One woman continued to prostitute despite a knife wound from a deranged street person. Her next sex buyer was concerned, not with the fact that she was injured, but with the possibility that her bleeding would damage his upholstery.
- The women unanimously stated that they would not recommend street prostitution to other women.²⁹
- A study of 1000 prostituting females (aged 16-40), found that younger females were more likely to report rape (8.2%) within the last month, compared to 3% of older prostitution females.³⁰

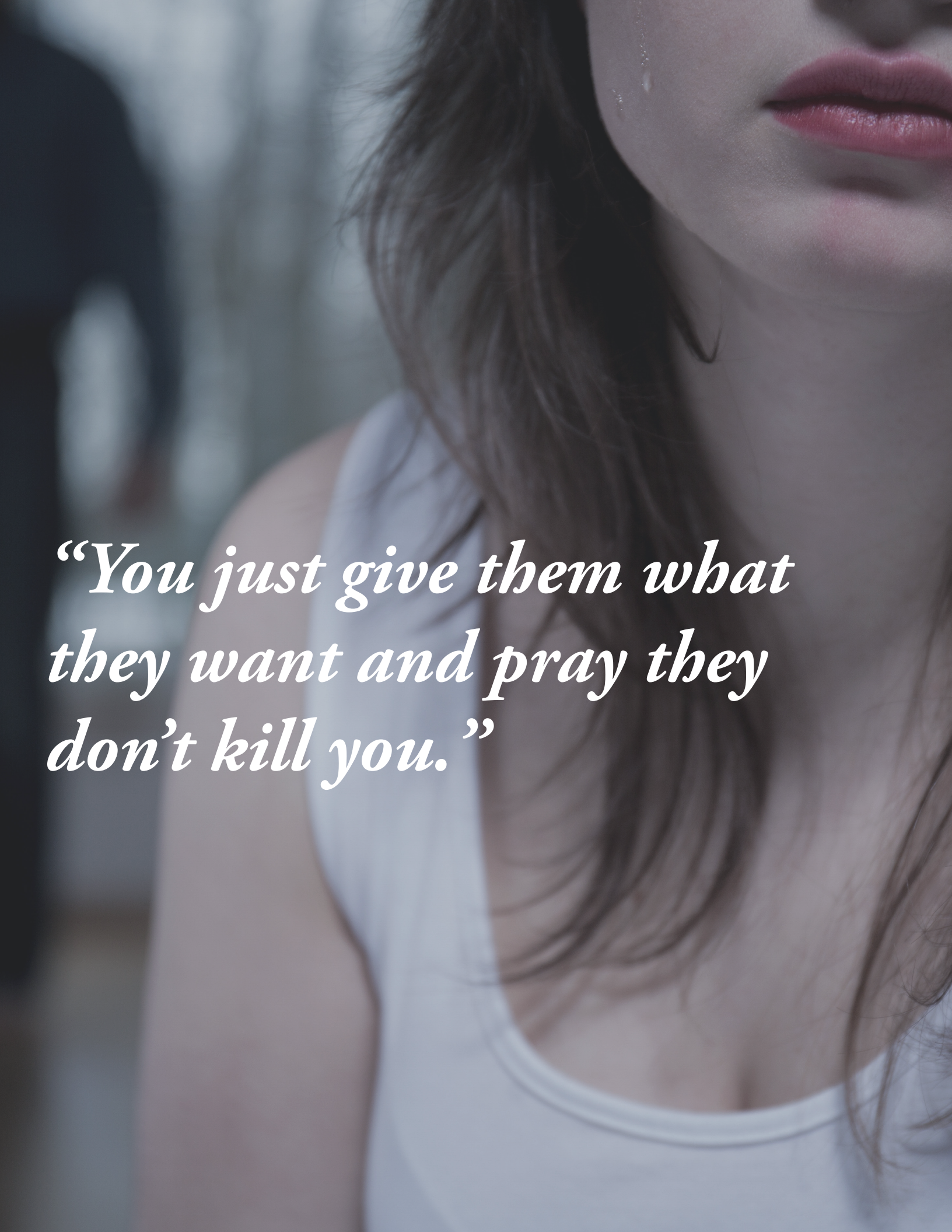
- A Canadian commission found that the death rate of women in prostitution due to violence and drug overdose may be 40 times higher than that of the general public.³¹
- Interviews of 100 individuals (females (42%), males (32%), and transgender males (26%)) involved in street-based prostitution in inner city Washington, D.C., found high incidents of violence. Since entering prostitution, 61% reported being physically assaulted, with the majority being perpetrated by sexual buyers (75%). The violence in prostitution was reported as follows:

	FEMALE n=42	MALE n=32	TRANSGENDER n=26	SAMPLE n=100
Physically assaulted	85.7%	28.1%	65.4%	61.0%
Customer	80.6%	62.5%	70.6%	75.4%
Someone Else	13.9%	37.5%	29.4%	21.3%
Pimp	5.6%	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%
Threatened	90.5%	84.4%	88.0%	87.9%
Threatened with a weapon	73.8%	78.1%	88.0%	78.8%
Raped in prostitution	73.8%	12.5%	34.6%	44.0%
Times rape in prostitution				
Once	22.6%	75.0%	66.7%	36.4%
2-5	61.3%	25.0%	22.2%	50.0%
6-10	6.5%	0.0%	11.1%	6.8%
11-19	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%
Over 20	6.5%	0.0%	0.0%	4.5%
Who raped you?				
Customer	71.9%	0.0%	60.0%	60.0%
Someone Else	34.3%	100.0%	40.0%	58.0%
Pimp	3.1%	0.0%	20.0%	4.0%
Upset when asked to do something seen in a pornographic video	26.2%	53.1%	30.8%	36.0%
Hurt with words	52.4%	37.5%	57.7%	49.0%
Safer if prostitution legal	42.9%	62.5%	50.0%	50.0%
Wanted to exit prostitution	67%	91.0%	73.0%	76.2% ³²

- The 31 females (77%) and transvestites (23%) in prostitution (street-based (80%) and indoor (20%)) in Belgrade and Pancevo, Serbia, reported using a sex buyers sorting strategy to reduce risk to avoid the “messy,” “dirty,” and “dangerous,” in favor of the “married,” “normal,” and “clean.” All individuals reported experiencing violence linked to their prostitution involvement. One prostituting transvestite stated, “I find it very difficult to get into someone’s car . . . because life is at stake.”³³
- Women in prostitution are a target group for serial offenders, such as:
 - Arthur Shawcross (New York), “Genesee River Killer,” who between 1988 and 1990 killed 11 women in prostitution;
 - William Lester Suff (California), “Riverside Prostitute Killer,” was convicted of 12 murders of women in prostitution and was suspected of committing 10 others (Mendoza, 2002);
 - Saeed Hanaei (Iran), confessed to strangling 16 of the 19 prostituting women who had been murdered in Mashad in 2001;
 - Gary Ridgway (Washington) the “Green River Killer” pleaded guilty to the murders of 48 women from 1982 to 1998, most of whom were involved in prostitution.³⁴
 - Robert Pickton (Canada), convicted of murdering 6 women (20 additional counts were stayed) and who is suspected of murdering more than 30 women.³⁵ Most of his victims were involved in prostitution.³⁶

“I don’t want to have to go out and keep selling my body like this anymore. It’s degrading. . .I’m afraid If I keep doing this that I’m going to get to a point so low that I won’t want to bring myself back. . .It’s very degrading, it makes you feel like you’re nothing.”





“You just give them what they want and pray they don’t kill you.”

- A study of 18 women involved in stripping in the Midwestern U.S. found that male sex buyers, managers, staff and owners used diverse methods of harassment, manipulation, exploitation, and abuse to control the women. Types and amounts of abuse experienced by the women included:
 - 100% physical abuse on an average of 7.7 times;
 - 100% sexual abuse on an average of 4.4 times;
 - 100% verbal abuse on an average of 4.8 times;
 - 100% propositioned for prostitution (78% propositioned every day);
 - 78% stalked by a person associated with the club;
 - 61% attempted sexual assault by a person associated with the club;
- 100% of the women witnessed violence in the club, of which it was reported that there were no consequences for the male perpetrators.
- The abuses suffered by the women, included:
 - Grabbed by breasts, buttocks, and genitals;
 - Licked and pinched;
 - Costume pulled off;
 - Coins thrown at her
 - Garbage thrown at her;
 - Men exposing their penises;
 - Men masturbating in front of;
 - Penetrated vaginally and anally with fingers and objects;
 - Forced to masturbate a man;
 - Rape;
 - Followed to her car;
 - Followed home;
 - Followed in her private time;
 - Sent letters, given gifts, and called against their wishes;
 - Sexually abused and exploited by owners as a condition of work
 - Called cunt, slut, whore, pussy, bitch, and more. ³⁷

- Thirty-five women (aged 23-41) involved street prostitution participated in a study conducted in inner city Hartford, Connecticut. Researchers found that:
 - 90% experienced violence from sex buyers;
 - 60% had been raped while in prostitution;
 - 75% reported physical abuse by husbands and boyfriends;
 - 25.7% were victims of incidents in which they were nearly killed by sex buyers;
 - 25% had friends who were murdered while in prostitution;
 - The women witnessed daily occurrences of violence directly related to the protection of drug territories, settlement of drugs debts, and concurrent violence that influenced their lives.
 - One woman stated, “I don’t want to have to go out and keep selling my body like this anymore. It’s degrading. . .I’m afraid If I keep doing this that I’m going to get to a point so low that I won’t want to bring myself back. . .It’s very degrading, it makes you feel like you’re nothing.”³⁸
- U.S. Army Field Manual No. 2-22.3 expressly bans U.S. military personnel from perpetrating acts of torture including forcing an individual to perform or simulate sexual acts or to pose in a sexual manner, as well as exposing an individual to outrageously lewd and sexually provocative behavior in any context. It

also prohibits forcing the detainee to be naked, perform sexual acts, or pose in a sexual manner in interrogations. Any single act of such sexual abuse is a violation of the code. Yet, such acts—serially committed—are the quintessence of what pimps do. Thus, in respect to the sexual abuse that they perpetrate or orchestrate on behalf of sex buyers all pimps can be said to be torturers.³⁹

- “At the 15th International AIDS conference in Bangkok (July 2004), several sex worker groups presented information about the occupational health and safety of prostitutes. Members of Bangkok organization EMPOWER instructed women in bar prostitution (one type of indoor prostitution) how to insert and pull out razor blades from their vaginas. This is understood to be a job requirement in the bar-show setting where tricks are sexually exited by the possibility of genital mutilation of Thai women.”⁴⁰
- A sex-shop owner who also rented rooms to prostituting women in Amsterdam, lamented the government’s requirement of a pillow in rooms where sex is sold saying, “You don’t want a pillow in your room. It’s a murder weapon.”⁴¹
- A woman in prostitution woman stated, “You just give them what they want and pray they don’t kill you.”⁴²
- The perception of persons in prostitution as disposable people was captured in this statement from a sex buyer, “For me, being with a prostitute is not a relationship. It’s like having a cup of coffee, when you’re done, you throw it out.”⁴³

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