

prostitute's story

How can the guards be ignorant of the goings on? There must have been trouble in the past.

Not in the two years that I've been there. I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that most of us are older girls. We've had experience with the harsher realities so now, in this place, we feel that we've got it made in the shade.

It's a nice safe environment where we don't have to deal with anyone we don't like. If we don't like someone, (a client) if he comes across as strange, we just tell him to leave.

There's no pimp hanging over our heads, forcing us to make money. We just do it for ourselves.

How many women work there and what's the age range?

There are six. We range in age from 25 to 50.

To 50? Really? Does she work full time or does she do something else?

She's full time. She does really well too.

How much do you earn in a month?

It depends. I've cut back to working only one day a week but it's anywhere from \$700. in an average month to \$1000. in a good month.

What happens if you get arrested?

Bail and that sort of thing is already taken care of. I have things set up as a precaution but once your name's in the paper, it's in the paper.

What kind of overhead do you pay to your place of work?

I pay them \$20. per client no matter what I do. For example, a "complete" is \$50. so I make \$30. and the house makes \$20. A straight massage is \$30. so I only make \$10. -(laughing) I hate those straights.

Do you ever solicit anything more than a "straight"?

Never, some girls do but I think it's tacky. They're the ones that get fired a lot too.

It's obvious that prostitution will always exist because the people who come to us are the judges, lawyers, and businessmen.

Do you ever get depressed about your work?

Yes I do but I've become so used to it and I've rationalized it so much in my own mind. How else am I going to support myself and my children? I've got a standard of living to maintain and I do a lot with my money.

I buy a lot of clothes and send them overseas to families that I've met. When you've got 15 or 20 people counting on you, you can't just say no, you know?

I kind of wonder about my supposed selflessness, I mean, I get so much out of it that I feel it's actually an indirect selfish thing on my part. I get depressed about that in a way - you know, like you try to search for the ultimate altruism in a way.

How will you earn a living when you give up prostitution?

I'll probably go back to waitressing in a hotel but it's the same thing. You still put up with the snide and sexist remarks, pinches on the ass, fondling, and that sort of thing. That privilege supposedly comes with the price of the drink. As it is now, that privilege is granted at my price - not the price of the drink.

It's just a job...it's not my career or anything.

Has AIDS got you scared? What kinds of precautions do you take?

I used to worry about it until I talked to my doctor. He said that with the use of a condom for oral sex, and a condom with spermicide for genital sex, I would be alright. I don't kiss clients on the lips.

Do your clients mind the use of condoms?

No, and if they did, that's too bad, they can go somewhere else.

I think they actually appreciate the care that I take, but sometimes I get the feeling that they're insulted that I'm more concerned about my health than theirs. If I make it sound like it's for their benefit then they don't mind, but if I explain that I don't want to catch anything, they get quite insulted. It's almost like I'm a nonentity - if it's for them, it's alright. It's really strange.

How do you feel about pornography?

Well, there's eroticism and then there's pornography. I think that anything which depicts pain or degradation, of one form or another, is pornography. On the other hand, anything which depicts sexual pleasure and joy isn't pornography.

I get a lot of people who come in for spankings, a lot of them like me to swear at them and degrade them.

Maybe beauty is in the eye of the beholder - to an extent, but I can't condone fetishism or evil things. A lot of people equate sex with evilness and badness. I find that a lot at work. They come in for the sin.

How do you handle that?

It's hard sometimes. It all depends on how much they're going to pay me. Actually, I'm not too good at it, other girls seem to do better at it than I do. I'm more the wholesome nice girl. They see that I'm hard working and that I'm going to school and they seem to admire my way of going about it.

We're all whores in one sense or another.

You're planning to do graduate studies overseas, will you keep working?

No, I have, at the most, another year.

How are your grades?

Well, I'll just say that I'm going in to Honors next year. (Elizabeth's GPA is 8)

RESUME

Name: Elizabeth [REDACTED]
Address: [REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]

Education:
Graduated from Secondary School, Edmonton, Alberta.
Class of [REDACTED], valedictorian, prom queen, voted most likely to succeed.
Graduated from the University of Alberta with a B.A. Honours in [REDACTED]
Completed an M.A. in Political Science at the University of [REDACTED]

Most recent employment:
- Prostitute, Edmonton, Alberta.

Hobbies:
- Charities and music

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How would you describe your experience at the university?

You lose yourself in this business, you've got to have something outside of it to be able to pull yourself up from it and say "This is why I do it."

I've got a good family and I've got a brain - I was really surprised to find that out. I may not be able to articulate yet, but I have a brain. I have so much behind me and I have so much to learn - it's exciting to me.

I see so many people at the university that are there because they don't think they have a choice - family pressure and all that. I say, if you want to do something else, do it. Go for it.

I'd just like to say that a lot of people at the university are going to read this article and think that I get by easily and that it's not fair to them. It's *not* easy, it's a choice that I made and I'm the one who faces the consequences of my actions. I'm totally responsible for what I'm doing - I haven't been coerced in to this. Every time you read something about prostitution all you read about is this poor hooker, this poor female victim. I know that happens but it doesn't happen to me.

I'm not educated, this is my first year back in school and I'm anxious to learn. I want to be able to talk like I hear those people talk over there. (at the university) Sometimes I have something I want to say but I can't say it (in class) and yet, there'll be someone sitting next to me who's 10 years younger than I am who can talk and talk and they're not saying a damned thing.

Is there anything else you'd like to say?

There are a lot of really sad people in this world and money isn't going to make them any happier. I know people that pull in \$6000. or \$7000. a month out of this business and yet they're miserable.

I have lost my innocence but I still have sense of humor. Travel has a lot to do with my sense of well being. That's what I recommend to anyone - travel. It's a beautiful world, you know?

by Kathleen Beechinor