

Prostitution and
Prostitution Related
charges in Rhode Island,
2000-Present



A Report Prepared by
COYOTE RI

COYOTE RI is a group of current and former sex workers, sex trafficking survivors, and allies advocating for policies that promote the health and safety of people involved in the sex industry. Learn more at www.coyoteri.org.

This report would not be possible without the leadership of Bella Robinson, the hard work of our fabulous intern, Colleen, and the sex workers and trafficking survivors who participated in the focus group.

Table of Contents

Summary

Methodology

Federal

State Felonies

Violence in Rhode Island's Sex Industry: Prevalence, Characteristics, and Interventions

Case Study: Group Home Supervisor as Trafficker

Misdemeanors

Case Study: East Greenwich

Appendix A: Summary of State Charges

Summary

Methodology

An important, yet often overlooked, way of understanding criminal laws is to examine when and how they are applied, who they are applied to, and how those people or those who identify as their victims are impacted. In this project COYOTE RI has used public records requests to obtain charging documents in:

- All but two prostitution related felony cases to be charged in RI by the Attorney General's office over the last five years (we are told the AG's office will provide the two missing cases, but have decided to move on with writing this report).
- What we believe to be a representative number of misdemeanor charges filed by individual police departments. In Rhode Island, police officers act as prosecutors in misdemeanor cases.

We tracked some quantitative measures and a focus group of current and former sex workers and sex trafficking survivors helped us understand the qualitative data.

Felony Charges

Felony cases in Rhode Island are filed by the Rhode Island Attorney General's office. We initially requested charging documents in all prostitution related felony cases going back to 2000, but amended our request to only cover the last five years because of the cost. Eventually COYOTE paid \$2,300.25 and received thousands of pages split across 25 PDFs with the pages out of order and scattered amongst documents.

Beginning on page 506 of the fifth document provided, labeled "Part 1," was a case list. We are in possession of all but two of the twenty two listed prostitution related cases. As of this writing, we are still waiting on the missing two cases which the Attorney General's office has said they will provide.

Included in our request and the respondent records were hundreds of cases of Indecent Solicitation of a Child. While many of these cases were horrifying to read, none of the dozens we reviewed were related to prostitution, so we did not include them in this report.

Misdemeanor Charges

Misdemeanor charges in Rhode Island are filed by police departments, and police officers act as prosecutors. We requested charging documents including narratives in all misdemeanor prostitution related charges filed between 2000 and now from over 30 of the 39 city police departments in Rhode Island, with 24 of those requests completed online or via email. Three of the remaining departments did not have sufficient information available to contact them at all. Ultimately, charging documents were provided by Portsmouth, Tiverton, Warwick, East Providence, North Kingstown, Cranston, East Greenwich, and Newport Police Departments. Smithfield, West Greenwich, Hopkinton, Barrington, Little Compton, and Narragansett all responded that they had no cases under any of the listed charges. Additionally, some misdemeanor charging documents were provided by the Attorney General's office.

Most police departments, and almost all departments contacted by phone, did not respond. The West Warwick police department denied the request. An email sent to the address on the Middletown department's website came back undelivered. As a result, COYOTE was unable to obtain records from Bristol, Burrillville, Central Falls, Charlestown, Coventry, Cumberland, Foster, Gloucester, Jamestown, Johnston, Lincoln, Middletown, North Providence, North Smithfield, Providence, Richmond, South Kingstown, Warren, West Warwick, and Woonsocket. Tiverton provided investigative reports from cases where charges were never filed.

The number of cases we were provided does not align with the numbers of cases reported on the Uniform Crime Report, or COYOTE's own records. For example, COYOTE has tracked 110 prostitution cases from Providence Police Department since 2017, almost twice the combined cases provided by all police departments. For the purpose of this report we believe that the cases we were provided are generally representative, particularly for recent years.

Federal

Federal sex trafficking cases all include force, fraud, coercion, or minors. We obtained these cases to help us understand what abuse and minors look like in Rhode Island's sex industry.

Focus Group

A focus group of seven current and former sex workers and sex trafficking survivors reviewed some of the documents and the data in this report and helped provide context and understanding. The group included:

- At least four women who worked in the industry as minors.
- At least four women who have worked with pimps in the past.
- At least two women who identify as survivors of sex trafficking when they were minors.
- All members had experience interacting with police as sex workers or sex trafficking victims.
- Three women of color.
- All members worked in the industry as cis women.

Challenges

The amount and type of data in the documents varied between police departments and cases. For example, almost all of the cases involving minors included the information that they were runaways from group homes. One case included information that the minor had snuck out of their parents' home. The other cases did not include any information about the minor's custody or living situation. This made some data points difficult to track.

Federal Cases

Federal Sex Trafficking Cases in Rhode Island, 2000-2020

Since the inception of the federal sex trafficking law in 2000, thirteen cases with twenty defendants have been charged in Rhode Island. Because the federal sex trafficking law defines trafficking as the use of force, fraud, coercion, or minors in the sex industry, federal cases can help us understand what abuse within the sex industry looks like.

When did they happen?

The majority of cases were charged in 2015 (10), followed by 2016 (3), and 2017 and 2014 (2). There was additionally one case in 2013. During this time Rhode Island had a sex trafficking task force, with federal money allotted to sex trafficking investigations.

How did police find these victims?

Of the seventeen cases, none were discovered through prostitution stings or prostitution investigations. All but two cases (with four defendants) were reported to police. In the only case where a minor was kidnapped and forced into prostitution, the minor victim called the group home she had run away from for help. In other cases reports came from the victim's family (3), friends (4), emergency room staff (1), and two reports seemed to come from a customer or driver. Customers and drivers often have access to much more information about a trafficking crime than a victim's friends or family, but they are at risk of being charged with felonies if they come forward. Two cases, with four defendants, were discovered during the course of other investigations, one where a customer was being extorted by a pimp, and one where police were called to a disturbance when a family tried to forcibly take a minor victim from a pimp.

Violence or Minors?

The good news is that these cases would indicate that force, fraud, and coercion are fairly absent from Rhode Island's sex industry. The bad news is that all but one of these cases (with two defendants and two adult victims) involved minors.

There were three cases involving force, fraud, or coercion. In two of these cases the trafficker used deception to lure the victims to a new environment - in one case a trafficker lied to induce homeless women from another state to come live with him in Rhode Island, and in the other case the trafficker used a teenage boy to convince two minors to sneak out and smoke marijuana and then threatened them with a taser. Victims in both cases were vulnerable due to homelessness, addiction, and being afraid of their parents. Both cases involved significant threats of violence, but did not allege that any physical violence occurred.

In the third case, a minor who had run away from a group home was kidnapped from a train station. While there were no allegations of violence towards the minor victim, the victim

described seeing an adult victim beaten. That adult victim was indicted on one charge of conspiracy to sex traffick a minor.

In the case where two adult women were trafficked, someone who seemed to be a customer or driver made a report to police. This indicates an intolerance for abuse in the Rhode Island sex work community, and underlines how important it is for members of the community to feel safe making such reports to police.

Conspiracy

In five of the cases someone was charged with conspiring with the trafficker. In all but two of the cases, these people were drivers or drug dealers or friends who were not accused of participating in any abuse. In one case, an adult sex trafficking victim was charged with conspiring to traffick a minor even though the charging documents also described her being beaten for turning down a client.

Recruitment

Recruitment was mostly by introduction (5) or online (4). Several of the charging documents did not explain how the victim was recruited. In cases of introduction, it appears that the minors sought out pimps. Online recruitment was by Facebook, except for one case that originated on a dating website. Two adult homeless women were recruited from the streets. In one case, a runaway was actually kidnapped.

Other Findings

- None of the victims were immigrants.
- In two cases police had the opportunity to identify a victim during a traffic stop and did not.
- In almost every case, information was subpoenaed from Backpage and Backpage provided the information on the same day.
- There was one case where a minor was actually kidnapped, which is very rare (see case study).

RI State Felony Charges

The Data

Of the twenty total state felony prostitution related charges filed since 2016 provided to us by the Attorney General's office, only five were for trafficking of a minor, representing four cases. Two cases were for patronizing a minor, but both of these cases happened outside of the commercial sex industry. Whether for minors or adults, the most common thing defendants were charged with was driving.

The Law

Under RI 11-67.1-3 a person is guilty of trafficking of a minor if they recruit, transport, transfer, harbor, receive, provide, obtain, isolate, maintain, or entice a minor in relation to prostitution.

Under RI 11-34.1-7 a person is guilty of pandering or permitting prostitution if they induce someone into prostitution or if they drive, rent to, or receive money from a prostitute. This is so broad that a person who forces someone into prostitution and a person who babysits for a prostitute could both be charged with pandering or permitting prostitution.

The Law is Overbroad and Results in Unwarranted Charges

Of the twenty cases, only three had any allegations of force, fraud, or coercion within the sex industry. In a fourth case involving violence, a man sexually assaulted a minor in a park and told bystanders who intervened that he would have paid her. The remaining cases were charged simply for giving a minor a ride or being in association with them, or for running a place of prostitution or driving sex workers for money.

Peers Charged with Trafficking Each Other

In one case, two youth ran away from a group home. One was eighteen, the other fifteen. The eighteen year old, Isabel, texted her nineteen year old friend, Lorraine, to come and get them. Lorraine had just left her pimp, and the two runaways wanted to work with her. At some point, the girls had a falling out with Lorraine, and parted ways. The fifteen year old, unable to rent her own hotel room, moved into the room of Andrea, an eighteen year old sex worker, and began working independently.

Isabel turned herself in to the group home and told police where to locate the fifteen year old with Andrea. Isabel, Lorraine, and Andrea were all charged with sex trafficking of a minor. These eighteen and nineteen year old sex workers are far from the popular definition of "sex trafficker," but they represent the majority of those charged with trafficking a minor under Rhode Island state law over the last five years.

Several members of COYOTE's focus group worked in the sex industry as youth, on their own or with others. "When I was a minor working with another minor (splitting the hotel room and getting a small cut), or having other students from my high school drive me to my motel for the day, I can't imagine either of us being charged with trafficking for it" said one focus group member. "In reality, it was making me safer or at least feel safer because in one case I had another girl in the room and in the other case I was getting rides from people I trusted. And they

were making some money by driving me. I just...think it's evil to charge for trafficking in that case. And it's also just not trafficking. There was no force or coercion. It's just not trafficking.”

Prosecutorial Discretion

In 2017 Reysean Williams, a supervisor of a DCYF contracted group home, was arrested for trafficking several minors who he had recruited from the group home. A young adult man who he had also recruited from the group home, Leandro Gomes, was acting as his driver and enforcer. During questioning by police, a witness described Gomes using force and coercion to prevent a minor who was trying to leave from doing so.

Gomes was not charged with trafficking - he was charged instead with the lesser crime of pandering. Isabel, the eighteen year old who ran away from a group home (it is unknown whether or not it was the same group home that was supervised by the pimp), worked alongside her peer, who she was not accused of abusing, and then assisted police in locating her, received no such leniency.

Recommendation

- Rhode Island's state trafficking of a minor statute could be brought in line with federal law by adding a “reckless disregard” clause, or it could be entirely eliminated as the federal law is sufficient and the state law is redundant.
- Rhode Island police and prosecutors should be instructed to prioritize cases where force, fraud, or coercion are used against minors, and to treat their non-abusive peers as valuable potential witnesses and reporters in cases where minors are being abused.
- Rhode Island police and prosecutors should be instructed to consistently monitor group home staff and prioritize the investigation and prosecution of abusive group home staff. Youth should find state care to be safer than and preferable to the sex industry.

Violence in RI's Commercial Sex Industry: Characteristics and Successful Interventions

Prevalence of Force: State Charges

The good news is that only two cases out of the twenty one state cases involved allegations of physical force or violence relating to the commercial sex industry. Both cases involved vulnerable people who relied on perpetrators for housing: one victim was a homeless woman who had recently been released from jail, and the other was a youth who had run away from a group home.

There were additional cases which involved violence but did not relate to the commercial sex industry, such as a strange man at a park attacking a teenager and then telling bystanders who intervened that he would have paid her. To call this, or other cases of child molestation that are not related to the commercial sex industry, sex trafficking of a minor does a disservice to both the victim who is told that they have been sex trafficked and to the public who are led to believe that these children are being forced into the commercial sex industry. These cases should be charged under the applicable laws (kidnapping, sexual assault, etc) and the element of paying the victim should be a benchmark for an enhanced sentence rather than a separate charge.

Prevalence of Fraud or Coercion: State Charges

There were only two cases involving allegations of fraud or coercion. The perpetrators in both cases were professional pimps, and both victims were minors.

Choice and Circumstance

In an additional case, a massage parlor manager required sex during job interviews. Police interviewed several workers, and most said they understood going into the interview that sex was part of it and they consented. One said she felt like she had no choice but to consent if she wanted the job, and another said she refused to have sex with him or clients and still got the job. This woman described offering no or only very limited sexual services and said that the manager did not try to coerce her into doing more, but did advise her that women who offered more services got more clients and made more money.

Federal

Two federal cases (over the last 21 years) involved threats or implied threats of violence, and two involved fraud - perpetrators lying to get victims to go with them or to do sex work when they wouldn't have otherwise.

Does this accurately represent the extent of force, fraud, and coercion in Rhode Island's commercial sex industry?

Since at least 2015 Rhode Island has had a Sex Trafficking Law Enforcement Task Force, comprised of ICE and FBI agents, local police department officers, the Rhode Island Attorney General's office, and the local US Attorneys' office. According to the Uniform Crime Report, police made 354 prostitution arrests in just 2015-2019. According to Day One, the Sex Trafficking Law Enforcement Task Force "has recovered and worked directly with more than 200 child victims and more than 100 adult victims in Rhode Island" between 2015 and 2019.

While the two cases involving force and the four cases involving fraud or coercion likely do not represent all of the force, fraud, or coercion that has occurred, it seems safe to conclude that after interacting with 300 victims and arresting 354 sex workers and trafficking survivors in just one four year period, the Task Force would have found more cases of force, fraud, or coercion if it were a common occurrence.

Case Study: Group Home Supervisor as Trafficker

Sex workers and sex trafficking survivors overwhelmingly distrust police officers, correctional officers, parole officers, etc. Focus group members brought up experiences with sexual assault by police officers and group home workers and managers, and expressed frustration at the lack of accountability in these cases. In these records there was one case involving a police officer and one involving a group home supervisor.

Group Home Supervisor

According to a Justice Department Press Release, Reysean Williams was a twenty eight year old supervisor of a DCYF contracted group home in Pawtucket. Williams recruited a young man who aged out of the group home to act as his driver and enforcer while he continued to supervise and recruit minors from the group home. Although Williams was charged with trafficking only one minor, a woman who claimed to be his girlfriend told police that there was another minor in the house who wanted to leave but was prevented from doing so. Williams carried out his pimping business in the official group home van.

Before Williams was caught, police received reports through DCYF that multiple girls were recruited to work for a pimp who worked at a group home. Although he was only charged with trafficking one minor, Williams shaped a generation of group home girls' understanding of authority and corruption. A focus group member shared her experience trying to keep Pennsylvania youth safe, saying "the Allegheny County Department of Human Services did nothing and still continues to fund Adelphi [a group home for youth] after 2 people submitted their personal abuse experience connected to actual sex trafficking by employees."

Another focus group member commented, "It's hard for me to have a clear view of what happened with the pimp because I didn't encounter minors while I was on the street (that I was aware of). The only information I have that I can contribute to that story is this: all the men and women who I met on the street while I was on the street (including myself) was on the street by their own wills, having come from a very very poor or very very unsafe home with no resources and nowhere to turn to. The street life (prostitution, drug-dealing, etc) was their (and my) way of surviving. I can also say this: there should be services offered to minors of very poor or dangerous homes so that they can be given the resources, the guidance, and the support system to follow their dreams."

The large majority, possibly all but one, of the minor trafficking victims in state and federal cases had run away from group homes. Any serious attempt to end youth involvement in Rhode Island's sex trades must involve making group homes safe for children. "We need to abolish the entire children's and youth system across the country," said another focus group member. "They are built by abusers to enable the abuse of children deemed less privileged...in their eyes this means less worthy and undeserving of protections. Their goals are to restrain and jail children...scare them to not talk about the abuse they experience at the hands of our broken foster system. You

can't fix this...abolishing the entire children's and youth system, including kid jails...is necessary to help end and prevent child sex trafficking.”

Prostitution, Soliciting, and Loitering Misdemeanors in Rhode Island, 2000-2021

The Data

Records requests were sent to charging agencies in Rhode Island, including the Attorney General's office and all municipal police departments, for charging documents that they filed in misdemeanor prostitution related cases since 2000. The Attorney General's office provided charging documents only going back to 2016. Some police departments were very thorough and sent police reports for cases where charges were never filed. However, the sixty nine total misdemeanor charging documents provided are less than Rhode Island reported on Uniform Crime Report each year. It is possible that Rhode Island over reported prostitution related arrests, as has happened in at least one other state.

The Laws

This section pertains to the following statutes:

- 11-34.1-2. Prostitution
- 11-34.1-3. Procurement of sexual conduct for a fee.
- 11-34-11. Loitering for indecent purposes in or near schools
- 11-34.1-6 Soliciting from a vehicle
- 23-20.8-3 Practicing massage without a license

The Cases

Of the cases provided, more than half were in 2017-2021, indicating that the current moral panic around sex work has resulted in increased arrests of marginalized Rhode Islanders. Of the sixty nine cases records were provided for, the statute most often charged was prostitution (twenty charges), with the next most frequent charge being massaging without a license (nineteen charges).

Only seven cases of procurement (customers) were charged, indicating that despite the common rhetoric demonizing clients of sex workers, sex workers are arrested more than four times as often as clients. Of the seven procurement charges, one seemed to be a mistake and was actually a charge against a sex worker, another was against a man who harassed and solicited a minor on the street (a later, similar case was charged as trafficking - inducing a minor into prostitution), two cases were the result of police approaching people in cars during other investigations. Only two were the result of prostitution stings. Because customers are so ideally placed to identify victims within the sex industry (and may be the only people who have contact, alone, with victims who are isolated and controlled) it doesn't make sense to alienate them from police with a law that is barely used.

There were two cases of soliciting from a motor vehicle. In both cases, the defendants were accused of following and harassing people (one minor, one adult). In the case of the minor the defendant was charged with a felony for attempting to induce a minor into prostitution and a DUI. In both cases, the following, harassment, and intimidation were what prompted the victims to contact police for help, not the solicitation.

Twelve charges were for loitering. The loitering statute was used broadly to include pimps, security workers, friends, and other sex workers who waited outside while sex workers worked. Having someone waiting outside is something that sex workers do for safety, and those safety measures should not be criminalized.

Of the nineteen charges of massaging without a license, eighteen came from Cranston. One person was charged twice in one month. In one case, the police narrative clearly painted a woman as a victim, but still charged her. In more than one case, police describe “dispersing” customers from the scene. This was also true in some prostitution cases and a case of trafficking of a minor, raising questions of equal protection.

In one 2017 prostitution case, Providence police spoke with a booker who pretended to be the worker she was booking for. When police entered the workers’ hotel room, they discovered that she did not speak English and only had a Chinese Passport for ID. She was arrested for prostitution, but there was no corresponding charge or mention of an investigation of her booker. There is no record of her charge in the Rhode Island Judiciary Public Portal, raising a question of whether she was deported as a result of this arrest.

In a 2014 massage parlor case, two women were so afraid of East Greenwich police officers that they climbed out a window and one fell, resulting in a broken ankle and other injuries to her foot and leg (see included case study).

Most of the prostitution cases resulted from online stings, with three being from strip clubs and only one being a sting of a street based worker. The lack of arrests of street workers is particularly disturbing when considering the reports that some officers use the threat of a prostitution arrest as a way to exploit street based workers for free sex (see included letter

Recommendations

The prostitution, procurement, loitering, soliciting from a motor vehicle, and massaging without a license statutes should be removed entirely.

East Greenwich: A Case Study

In 2014, East Greenwich Police Department carried out an investigation into a massage parlor that ended with a woman falling from a roof injuring her leg and breaking her foot, and police following an ambulance to the hospital to charge her with misdemeanor prostitution. According to East Greenwich Police Department's response to a 2021 records request, this was their *only* prostitution arrest since the year 2000.

EGPD reports receiving anonymous complaints that a massage business offered happy endings. In response, they conducted "several weeks" of surveillance, identifying the women coming and going by their license plate, drivers license photos, and photos in online advertisements. Eventually, two undercover officers booked massages with two women. One woman offered a handjob, and the other woman offered no extra services. This demonstrates that women working in parlors have agency to choose what services they offer to whom and at what price. After receiving the massages and leaving, officers returned to the door with their badges. The two women escaped through a back window, and one fell 20 feet to the parking lot, injuring her leg and ankle and breaking her left foot. Police followed the ambulance to the hospital and charged her with prostitution and obstructing an investigation before turning her over to the care of the hospital. She was later sentenced to one year of probation.

The case foreshadowed a 2017 case in New York city where Yang Song, a masseuse, fell from a fourth story balcony and died. Song's family explained that she had previously been sexually assaulted and pressured to become an informant by a police officer who threatened to arrest her.

There are many reasons for sex workers and sex trafficking survivors to fear police: in a 2016 survey eleven percent of Rhode Island sex workers reported having been sexually assaulted by police. The stigma associated with a prostitution charge can make it impossible for workers to access housing and employment outside of the underground economies, and causes them to face discrimination in child custody, education, and access to financial instruments. It is not surprising that some women would rather jump from a building than come face to face with a police officer.

We asked focus group member's to explain why a sex worker or sex trafficking victim may prefer jumping twenty feet to encountering a police officer. Here are their responses:

- "I was arrested in 2004. I was sitting on the bed opposite of the undercover cop when their recording device fell. 🤖
After multiple attempts to get me to talk, I refused without a lawyer...they finally gave up. The undercover cop that arrested the woman before me walked over to the night stand that the cop recording device fell from and used hand motions to display that the girl before me "was so fucked up when I was doing her her legs went everywhere". This cop actually motioned with his arms how her legs flailed and hit the night stand. The officer actually banged his hand off the night stand for dramatic effect during his admission of raping someone who was "too fucked up" to consent.
I sat on a hotel bed, handcuffed, listening to a cop describe raping an alleged prostitute that was "so fucked up". At what point of "so fucked up" are the police held accountable for raping someone who couldn't possibly consent to the violent assault levied by those

who are paid to protect and serve? Rape is always a crime, except nobody is holding police accountable for raping during arrest.

This makes me wonder how many sex trafficking victims are also being raped by the police and then wrongly identified as a prostitute and punished accordingly by the very same police who just raped them? This is what "saving" sex trafficking survivors looks like. Survivors of a form of rape, sex trafficking, further abused and then criminally punished for being a victim of a crime?

This is why we run from the police. The police are not a safe space, they do not protect and serve. The police utilize their power to target and rape or worse. This is why we run. As a sex trafficking survivor, we need protection from the police. As an alleged prostitute, we need protection from the police." ~ Gabrielle Monroe

- "I've been lucky that I've never witnessed or endured injuries as a result of a police sting. However, I understand why these women would run. I will list the following reasons that I have come across:
 1. Police lie. Not all police. But of about 17 police officers that I've come in contact with due to motor vehicle infractions and criminal activity, I only met one police officer who gave an accurate report as things actually happened. The majority of the time the reports are grossly underdramatized (if you fit their description of a sweet, pretty girl even if you're a criminal) or grossly overdramatized (if you're an activist, are not a racist, and/or will not give a fake story about someone to get out of your charge). These girls probably ran because they knew they might not fit the description of someone who's charges are normally dropped and knew the cops would throw the book at them (write them up for worst charges than they actually committed). Both stereotypes by officers have happened to me which is how I know.
 2. Police will take as much from you as they can; the law doesn't apply to them. Circa 2012, I witnessed an officer pulling a friend of mine over (who was an African American man) for having a car-light out. All car lights were working however. The officer had the man come out of the vehicle for a pat down. The officer found a \$100 bill in the offender's pocket. The officer put the \$100 bill right into his own pocket. When my friend started calling him out for taking his money, the officer arrested him and charged him with disturbance of the peace. My friend was arrested for BEING robbed. The officer was African American too. I was caught by police for committing prostitution in 2013 and the police kept the money they found in my room as "evidence". In 2019, a patron in the gentleman's club I was working was an undercover officer who was hired to complete a sting. I happened to be the woman who approached him so he paid me for the VIP room. I did not offer nor give any extras as it explained in the police report. The club was a nude club, so this officer accepted a nude dance from me, enjoyed the dance,, witnessed that I did not offer nor do any illegal activity, and still arrested me anyway. I took him to trial and won. The prosecutor actually apologized to me. But I was \$1500+ in the hole from the lawyer fees plus all the money that I had missed out on during the months I was unemployed while the trial was going on. Is "sorry" appropriate? No. These officers should not be told/insinuated to that they're being sent in to arrest for a certain charge. That arrest is to be made no matter what and the bounty that the officers find, they may keep. Instead, legislation should be passed to create efficient checkpoints so that if a sting is designed and the offenders are indeed innocent or guilty of only a lesser charge (or even guilty of the proposed charge or a greater charge), the offender may only be convicted according to his/her actual guilt. The women who ran probably knew the officers would take them for all their worth and leave them with nothing.

3. There are far more horror stories with the police than fair stories. We hear weekly, if not daily, about officers unrighteously shooting, harming, or framing citizens. Very very rarely do we hear about someone who was saved by police officers. These women very well may have heard only the horror stories and assumed (maybe rightfully so) that their interaction with an officer will equal an interaction with a gangster.”

- “I was handled roughly during a sting operation, officer stated I was resisting arrest that resulted in me 5’2 and 140 lbs being body slammed against a car by a 6 foot man. The officer never read me my rights and tried to get me to incriminate myself without legal representation.
The fear of losing my kids due to arrest would make me want to jump out the window too.
Cops are never in a position to “help” there is no line between victim and criminal.”
- “#1 my kids. I've always had family court custody/visitation issues because I had my kids while in foster care-I aged out at 24 1/2. The idea that a prostitution charge could impact my being with my children would make me risk it all to get away if my place was being raided. #2 the idea of being put on probation for prostitution. I served a lot of time on probation/parole. If I was on probation/parole the idea of a violation. If off, the idea of going back on. I would jump quick. #3 I have spent days in central processing with no food, in overcrowded & unsanitary pens sleeping on cold hard floors. The idea of jail ALWAYS made me run. I would most likely instinctively jump out the window if I was in an incall location that was being raided and there was no other way out. Probably the first out. #4 Police are never kind. They invoke an inherent flight response in me. They never approach us as potential victims. We are criminals first despite what our circumstances may be. They are unnecessarily violent. I've been pepper sprayed on approach to be arrested, cuffed till I bled from both wrists. Not one officer ever asked was I being forced to do the work, if I was a victim. **Sad part is, most of my rap sheet I was being trafficked.** Nobody ever asked, I never thought they'd help if I told them.”
- “I can see someone jumping out a window for a number of reasons. A prostitution charge can really jeopardize your future and like Jae said, cause you to lose your kids, job, be kicked out of school, lose your housing, all because you're making a living by doing something that people do for free every night.
For black and minority sex workers and poor sex workers, police have an even worse track record of beating, abusing and traumatizing them. Sometimes the trauma of police interactions is worse than whatever the police like to tell themselves they're "rescuing" us from. Add in legal fees that you'll have to work to pay off, and everything else associated with being arrested.
I'd be more understanding if people were actually being harmed or scammed. But it sounds like this business was operating quietly and everything was consensual. Men were paying for orgasms, big deal. I probably will pay for a sex worker too one day- I hope too! Why are we destroying lives over this?? The man could have gone out and had an affair and tricked the woman into thinking he wanted a relationship when he really just wanted to get off- that would have been perfectly legal. These people could have met at a bar and went home together and she could have given him a handjob for free. That would have been perfectly legal. Why is it wrong for her to profit off of

something that harms NO one, there is an extremely high demand, and ***people can do it for free as much as they want **"

It is, however, unacceptable for those tasked with improving public safety to spend so many hours surveilling and receiving services from sex workers and then frightening them into jumping from buildings because of consensual, private, adult sexual behavior. No one should lose their life or sustain a serious injury because of a moral/victimless crime.

1. ZC, 2016, pandering - Cousin/pimp/worker, accused of placing ads and driving her cousin, who says that she told ZC she did not want to work anymore but ZC told her she needed the gas money from driving her. Originated with prostitution sting.
2. GK, SOS, DJS, LJ, 2019, pandering - Massage parlor busts, no allegations of force, fraud, or coercion.
3. AG, 2019, patronizing a minor - he assaulted a minor at a park and then said he was going to pay her - no commercial sex industry involvement.
4. SB, 2019, patronizing a minor - he solicited a minor on snapchat, they met up for sex, he paid her, later she reported to police.
5. LP, AK, IR 2018, trafficking a minor - group home escapees/peer network
6. JI, 2017, trafficking a minor - 26yo "boyfriend" of underage worker, driver for her and an adult worker
7. JG, 2017, trafficking a minor - Two minors ran from group home to trap house. Girls said they were 17 and 19 but were really 14 and 17. He is accused of raping one of the girls 3 times, placing ads and setting up dates for the older girl, taking them to a bar to meet an older man for a "lapdance" (actually sex), assaulting girl to get money from her.
8. YG, 2017, trafficking a minor - adult colleague of underage worker, no force, fraud, or coercion
9. LG, 2017, pandering - driver and enforcer for group home pimp, accused of preventing a minor from leaving
10. JM, 2017, pandering - seemingly adult victim of group home pimp, was in car with minor victim
11. DB, 2016, pandering - market facilitator, let adult worker use his phone to place ads, used his girlfriend to drive worker to calls
12. MC, 2020, pandering - massage parlor bust "detective interviewed all three females and they stated they were not forced or threatened to work at this establishment."
13. KJ, 2017, pandering - details unknown, tried to induce police officer
14. EM, 2017, pandering - domestic violence spilled over into car accident/road rage. He was housing a homeless woman on her release from jail and wanted her to work at a truck stop but she refused.
15. JK, 2017, pandering - he was running a massage business with two locations. Workers had complete control over their schedules, services, and rates, he placed ads. One worker felt manipulated into having sex with him at job interview, others did not, one worker had refused to have sex with him at interview and was not forced.
16. TB, 2016, pandering - driver