

Porn is Videoed Prostitution and Fully Decriminalised. That Doesn't Make it Safe.

Thursday 10 October 2019, by [Scarlett X](#) (Date first published: 4 September 2019).

As a survivor of commercial sexual exploitation, both within prostitution and the porn industry, I find the claim that decriminalisation of third parties such as pimps to be necessary to 'keep all women safe' absolutely ludicrous.

This is why.

In the UK, the pornographic industry is largely fully decriminalised. Only pornography which features child abuse, necrophilia, bestiality or life-threatening acts is subject to criminal laws concerning its distribution and possession.

Seen as a commercial industry and a legitimate business enterprise one would expect, if the pro-lobby's claims were true, that pornography would be the safest area of the sex trade for the women within it.

Not true.

In my experience the porn industry was by far the most abusive and toxic form of prostitution I was involved in. The fact that it was legal did not give me 'workers rights' as a 'performer' but it did provide an unregulated environment for pimps and pornographers to abuse and exploit at will.

This was an open secret. At the time I was involved the two most sought after female performers had originally been trafficked into the industry at 14 and 15. I heard the procuring of fake ID for minors being discussed among pornographers and was privy to a conversation in which it was stated that young women 'fresh out of the care system' were the most likely to be amenable to working within the industry. This blatant abuse and grooming of vulnerable girls and young women I never heard condemned once by those - primarily men - who organised, made and distributed porn films.

Porn is no different in essence to prostitution; there are other people involved and one has a camera recording every minute of the abuse meted out, but ultimately it is simply prostitution on camera. There is also a great deal of overlap when it comes to the individuals involved. Most female porn performers are also 'escorts' and vice versa. Many of the pornographers I met also managed escort agencies, brothels or advertising sites. Brothels were of course considered the riskier venture as they are illegal in the UK. Decriminalising them won't make the women exploited in them any less vulnerable to abuse, but it will put more legitimate profits into the hands of those who already sexually exploit and abuse women and, often, girls.

That porn is becoming more and more violent is no secret and yet often I still hear the excuse that 'it's only acting.'

It is not acting. The girl being choked is really choking. The woman in the 'painal' scene really is

pleading with the man who is anally raping her to stop because it hurts. The clue is in the name. Facial abuse, gang rapes and torture are not 'acted' and yet somehow the screen acts as a buffer, helping the viewer to dehumanise the woman on whom this abuse is being inflicted. She is a 'performer', with no agency on set beyond the ability to perform and be consumed by a male gaze that demands more. More pain. More suffering. More degradation. The fact that it is male demand which drives the industry can be seen acutely in the escalation of violence within pornography.

I was, essentially, gang raped on camera. This is still no doubt floating around in the digital ether for men to masturbate to. One of the afore-mentioned most popular 'actresses' cried on my shoulder after a shoot in which she had been made to crawl through faeces while being verbally abused. This was in the mainstream industry, considered by many to be safer and even 'glamorous' when compared to amateur 'gonzo' porn.

This is what happens when we legitimise the sex trade. Profit takes precedence over human rights. And a lack of fear on behalf of third parties means abuse goes unseen, unheard and unchecked.

For women caught up in other areas of prostitution who may never go anywhere near a porn set, this affects them too. Punters will often seek out a prostituted woman to enact the violent scenes they have seen in a porn movie, inflicting on them the abuse they were previously only able to masturbate to.

Like the prostituted woman, the porn actress finds her 'no' means little once the cameras are rolling. In fact her 'no' may even be required to meet the demand for ever more abusive scenarios. I learned the hard way that whatever boundaries were established beforehand, once the camera starts rolling all bets are off. The fact that in this case the 'punter' is also being paid as a fellow 'performer' does not absolve them of responsibility for the abuse they inflict.

In some cases the male 'performers' are in fact just regular punters. Videoed 'sex parties' where regular men can show up and pay a fee to 'gangbang a pornstar' have become popular in sex clubs around the country. The pornographers and pimps who set up these enterprises make money in ever more ingenious ways, finding new avenues for exploitation and abuse. The punters and viewers, of course, drive the demand for rougher, harder and more extreme images and experiences.

I left the porn industry after having my drink spiked while on set. To this day I have no idea what happened to me while I was unconscious, but I have no doubt it's floating around on a website somewhere.

'Rape porn', by the way, isn't illegal, as long as the physical violence shown isn't extreme enough to threaten life.

Pornography and prostitution make a mockery of our sexual consent laws.

Explain to me again how this makes women safe?

Scarlett X

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