

*See Separate Binder*

Missing Women Commission  
of Inquiry

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**Dr. John Lowman**

**Expert Report and Appendices**

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<b>Missing Women Commission of Inquiry</b>	
<b>EXHIBIT No: 3</b>	
Date:	<i>October 13, 2011</i>
<i>[Signature]</i>	Registrar

# Missing Women Commission of Inquiry

Report by John Lowman, September 9, 2011

## **1. BACKGROUND (your name, address and area of expertise);**

John Lowman, Professor, School of Criminology, Simon Fraser University, 8888 University Drive, Burnaby, V5A 1S6.

Research expertise: prostitution, prostitution law and its enforcement; research confidentiality

## **2. QUALIFICATIONS (a detailed statement of your professional qualifications relating to your area of expertise and the subject matter of your opinion);**

B.A. Sheffield, 1971

M.A. York University, 1976

Ph.D. University of British Columbia, 1983.

I joined the School of Criminology at Simon Fraser University in 1982, was granted tenure in 1987, and was promoted to the rank of Professor in 1991. My CV is included as Appendix 1a.

Beginning in 1977, I have conducted numerous studies of prostitution,<sup>1</sup> prostitution law and prostitution law enforcement in Vancouver and the surrounding municipalities, including eight studies for the Department of Justice Canada and one for the Ministry of the Attorney General of British Columbia. I have published many articles on prostitution, prostitution law and prostitution law enforcement in British Columbia and Canada. My prostitution research program is described under item 4 below.

From 1994 to 2004 I was a member of the Board of PACE (Prostitution Alternatives Counseling and Education), a non-profit society geared to improving the working and living conditions of sex workers and providing help for men and women wanting to exit prostitution. PACE assisted with our survey of violence against sex workers (Lowman and Fraser 1996) and the survey of sex buyers I conducted with Chris Atchison and Laura Fraser from 1996 through 1998. My work on the Board kept me in close contact with female and transgendered sex workers.

I have taught a third-year undergraduate seminar on prostitution in Canada twice a year at SFU since 1985 (excluding sabbatical years). The course examines: survey research on prostitutes, clients, and managers; theories of the causes of sex buying and selling; the history of Canadian prostitution legislation; prostitution case law; Canadian commissions, committees and inquiries into prostitution and prostitution law reform; the international literature on prostitution and prostitution law reform, Constitutional challenges to prostitution law.

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<sup>1</sup> As this report concerns "prostitution," the terms "prostitution" and "prostitute" are used to distinguish the sale of physical sexual services from other kinds of "sex work" and "sex worker," including exotic dancers, porn film industry workers, phone sex providers, etc. The term "street-level sex worker" (i.e. street prostitute) also is used.



In 2001 the DTES had a population of 16,590 (City of Vancouver 2006, p. 6<sup>3</sup>), of whom 9% (n=1380) were aboriginal.<sup>4</sup> Oppenheimer and Strathcona, the two main residential areas in the DTES, are home to 70% of the area's population (City of Vancouver 2006, p. 7<sup>5</sup>). Oppenheimer has one of the lowest per capita incomes for any urban neighbourhood in Canada (PIVOT Legal Society 2004). The City of Vancouver notes that, "As a traditionally low-income neighbourhood, the Downtown Eastside has experienced an influx of problems such as drug addiction and dealing, HIV infection, prostitution, crime, lack of adequate housing, high unemployment, and the loss of many legitimate businesses."<sup>6</sup> The unemployment rate is 22%, as compared to 8% in the city as a whole (City of Vancouver 2006, p. 12).

In sum, many DTES residents live in poverty, are homeless, and drug and/or alcohol addicted. During the Time Period, the DTES was known as "the largest and most heavily concentrated open illicit drug use scene in North America" (Shannon et al. 2008; Strathdee et al. 1997, Wood et al. 2002). In 1997, the drug and HIV epidemics were so severe that health policy makers declared them to be a public health emergency (Pivot 2004, p. 4). VPD reported that, in 1992, the DTES population included over 500 mentally ill persons, 480 sex workers, over 350 Latino refugees, and many alcoholic and dysfunctional residents living in poverty. The large majority of street level sex workers in the community were young female Aboriginals (see q. 9, below).

**4. OPINION (your independent objective opinion regarding the questions set out below including the reasons for your independent objective opinion containing: a description of the factual assumptions if any on which the opinion is based; a description of any research conducted by you that led you to form your opinion; a description of any documents relied on);**

My opinion on prostitution and prostitution law is based on the following studies combined with numerous secondary sources from Canada and other countries.

My first prostitution research project began in 1977 as part of my Doctoral studies in the Department of Geography at the University of British Columbia. The thesis used several examples of crime displacement to establish the influence of laws and law enforcement on crime patterns. One example concerned the displacement of prostitution in Vancouver from indoor locations to the street when the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) initiated investigations of the owners and employees of two cabaret clubs for procuring and living on the avails of prostitution. The *Canadian Journal of Criminology* published an article (Lowman 1986) based on this section of the thesis that examined how the contradictory and sometimes self-defeating nature of Canadian prostitution law resulted in the expansion of street prostitution through the 1970s.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/planning/dtes/pdf/2006MR.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Overall, 3% of Vancouver's population is Aboriginal.

<sup>5</sup> <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/planning/dtes/pdf/2006MR.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/planning/dtes/>

In 1984 I conducted the *Vancouver Field Study of Prostitution* on behalf of the Department of Justice Canada. This was one of seventeen studies of pornography and prostitution, including five regional studies of prostitution, the Department of Justice funded to provide background research for the Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution (the Fraser Committee). The *Vancouver Field Study* was designed to fulfill two main purposes: "a) to describe the form, nature, and experience of prostitution in Vancouver; and b) to describe the activities of agencies and institutions involved with the control of prostitution in Vancouver" (p.1). The study included interviews with Crown attorneys, police officers, social workers, and 48 prostitutes and sexually exploited youth.

After conducting the *Vancouver Field Study*, I embarked on a comprehensive program of prostitution research using both quantitative and qualitative methods to examine prostitution in Canada. This research has involved five inter-related levels of analysis:

- a) The wider origins of prostitution, including the social, cultural and biological factors that might account for why the large majority of sex buyers are male, and the majority of sex sellers are female.
- b) The immediate origins of decisions to buy and sell sex, including the family and social backgrounds of sex buyers and sellers.
- c) The act of prostitution, including the nature of interactions between buyers and sellers and the characteristics of different kinds of prostitution (street, in-call, out-call, etc).
- d) The immediate origins of the social reaction to prostitution, particularly police decisions about which prostitution laws to enforce and when, and Canadian jurisprudence interpreting prostitution law.
- e) The wider origins of the reaction to prostitution, including religious and moral scripts concerning prostitution, and the legislature's rationale underlying prohibition of various aspects of prostitution, but not the act of prostitution itself.

In 1984 I began a long-term study of newspaper portrayals of prostitution from 1900 to the present. The study focuses on the *Globe and Mail* and *Vancouver Sun*.

In 1986 and 1987 I worked with Professor John McLaren (University of Victoria Law School) researching late Nineteenth and early Twentieth century prostitution law and law enforcement in Canada. The project was funded by the Canadian Institute of Advanced Research.

In 1987 and 1988 I undertook the Vancouver component of the evaluation of the communicating law (then *Criminal Code* s.195.1, now s.213), one of five regional studies the Department of Justice funded as part of the evaluation of the communicating law mandated by Bill C-49, the legislation that introduced it. The study included: interviews with relevant stakeholders and key informants (sex workers, clients, managers, police, defence and Crown attorneys, social service providers, and residents in areas of street prostitution); a study of court and Crown files of persons charged under the communicating law in order to examine its implementation and describe the characteristics of persons charged, the characteristics of the offences, dispositions and sentences; coding of news coverage of prostitution to examine media reactions to the communicating law; counts and mapping of street prostitutes and their customers to ascertain whether various law enforcement initiatives reduced street prostitution or merely displaced it; a

study of trends of escort service advertising before and after the communicating law was enacted; a study of “bad trick sheets” (descriptions of “bad dates” contributed by Vancouver street-based prostitutes to a social service organization and a prostitutes’ rights organization); and a history of prostitution law enforcement in Vancouver.

In 1989 I conducted an update of the evaluation of the communicating law for the Department of Justice Canada that involved describing distribution and levels of street prostitution in Vancouver.

In 1990 I conducted a second update of the evaluation of the communicating law for the Department of Justice Canada that involved describing the incidence of street prostitution in the Lower Mainland of BC.

In 1992 I conducted a third update of the evaluation of the communicating law for the Department of Justice Canada.

In 1995 (with Laura Fraser) I conducted a fourth update of the evaluation of the communicating law for the Department of Justice Canada.

In 1993 and 1994 on behalf of the Department of Justice Canada, I performed (with Laura Fraser) an exploratory study of violence against sex workers before and after the communicating provision was enacted. Entitled *Violence Against Persons Who Prostitute: The Experience in British Columbia* the study examined as many data sources as could be located or created describing violence against sex workers, including: newspaper accounts of violence against sex workers; RCMP data on murders and assaults of sex workers; VPD files on deaths of persons known to have prostituted; bad date sheets; VPD files on assaults of prostitutes; and VPD procuring and living on the avails prosecution files to develop a profile of pimp activity. Also, we conducted a prostitute victimization survey examining the incidence and nature of crimes committed against them comparing “high track” (see Q.6 below) and the DTES.

From 1994 through 1997 in collaboration with Chris Atchison and Laura Fraser I conducted an exploratory study of sex buyers, funded by the British Columbia Ministry of the Attorney General. The study involved a self-administered questionnaire, an online survey, and interviews with sex buyers concerning their personal and family background, sexual experiences, sex-buying behaviour, etc. and their attitudes to men and women, sex and prostitution, etc., and self-reported violence by clients.

From 2004 through 2006 I collaborated with Pivot Legal Society to produce the report, *Beyond Decriminalization: Sex-work, Human Rights and a New Framework for Law Reform*. The report analyzes the range of regulatory frameworks that would become applicable to prostitution if it were to be decriminalized or partially decriminalized. We interviewed 84 sex workers and several managers in order to develop a profile of experiences of prostitutes working in different settings (street, escort services, body rub and massage parlours).

**5. APPENDICES (a list of every document relied on by you in formulating your opinion, including this letter).**

Key documents referred to are included in the in Appendix. The Missing Women Inquiry expert report instruction letter is Appendix 1a.

## QUESTIONS

### **Sex Trade Laws in Canada**

**1) Describe the *Criminal Code* (R.S.C. 1985, c. C-46) provisions affecting street sex trade prior to 1972.**

Throughout the Twentieth Century until July 15<sup>th</sup> 1972 when it was repealed, street prostitution was controlled by means of a prohibition on “vagrancy.” As 1954, the *Criminal Code* prostitution vagrancy offence was contained in s.175 (1), which read:

“Everyone commits a vagrancy who:

- (a)...;
- (b) ...;
- (c) being a common prostitute or nightwalker is found in a public place and does not, when required, give a good account of herself;
- (d)...;
- (e) ...

(2) Everyone who commits vagrancy is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.”

**2) Describe the *Criminal Code* provisions affecting street sex trade between 1972 and 1985.**

From July 15<sup>th</sup> 1972 to December 20<sup>th</sup> 1985 the “soliciting law” applied to street prostitution. *Criminal Code* S.195.1 read as follows:

“Every person who solicits a person in a public place for the purpose of prostitution is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.”

**3) Describe the *Criminal Code* provisions affecting street sex trade from December 1985 to date.**

From December 20<sup>th</sup> 1985 to present the “communicating law” (*Criminal Code* s.213) has applied to street prostitution.

*Criminal Code* s. 213 (1):

“Every person who in a public place or place open to public view

- (a) stops or attempts to stop any motor vehicle,
- (b) impedes the free flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic or ingress to or egress from premises adjacent to that place, or
- (c) stops or attempts to stop any person or in any manner communicates or attempts to communicate with any person

for the purpose of engaging in prostitution or of obtaining the sexual services of a prostitute is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.

(2) In this section, “public place” includes any place to which the public have access as of right or by invitation, express or implied, and any motor vehicle located in a public place or any place open to public view.”

**4) Please describe the enforcement policies that were in place during the above noted Time Period.**

In addition to the communicating law (item 3 above) a series of other *Criminal Code* sections prohibit “procuring” and “bawdy houses,” and did so during the Time Period. Enforcement policies related to street prostitution are best understood in relation to these other prohibitions,<sup>7</sup> which are reproduced below:

*Keeping common bawdy-house*

210. (1) Everyone who keeps a common bawdy-house is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years.

(2) Everyone who

- (a) is an inmate of a common bawdy-house,
- (b) is found, without lawful excuse, in a common bawdy-house, or
- (c) as owner, landlord, lessor, tenant, occupier, agent or otherwise having charge or control of any place, knowingly permits the place or any part thereof to be let or used for the purposes of a common bawdy-house,

is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.

(3) Where a person is convicted of an offence under subsection (1), the court shall cause a notice of the conviction to be served on the owner, landlord or lessor of the place in

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<sup>7</sup> Because the VPD vice unit generally handles prostitution offence investigations, there are finite resources devoted to those investigations. Consequently, when the unit focuses on investigation of one kind of prostitution offence, it may mean taking resources away from investigations of other kinds of prostitution offence.



respect of which the person is convicted or his agent, and the notice shall contain a statement to the effect that it is being served pursuant to this section.

(4) Where a person on whom a notice is served under subsection (3) fails forthwith to exercise any right he may have to determine the tenancy or right of occupation of the person so convicted, and thereafter any person is convicted of an offence under subsection (1) in respect of the same premises, the person on whom the notice was served shall be deemed to have committed an offence under subsection (1) unless he proves that he has taken all reasonable steps to prevent the recurrence of the offence.

#### *Transporting person to bawdy-house*

211. Everyone who knowingly takes, transports, directs, or offers to take, transport or direct, any other person to a common bawdy-house is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.

#### *Procuring*

212. (1) Everyone who

- (a) procures, attempts to procure or solicits a person to have illicit sexual intercourse with another person, whether in or out of Canada,
- (b) inveigles or entices a person who is not a prostitute to a common bawdy-house for the purpose of illicit sexual intercourse or prostitution,
- (c) knowingly conceals a person in a common bawdy-house,
- (d) procures or attempts to procure a person to become, whether in or out of Canada, a prostitute,
- (e) procures or attempts to procure a person to leave the usual place of abode of that person in Canada, if that place is not a common bawdyhouse, with intent that the person may become an inmate or frequenter of a common bawdy-house, whether in or out of Canada,
- (h) for the purposes of gain, exercises control, direction or influence over the movements of a person in such manner as to show that he is aiding, abetting or compelling that person to engage in or carry on prostitution with any person or generally,
- (i) applies or administers to a person or causes that person to take any drug, intoxicating liquor, matter or thing with intent to stupefy or overpower that person in order thereby to enable any person to have illicit sexual intercourse with that person, or
- (j) lives wholly or in part on the avails of prostitution of another person,

Is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years.

(2) see footnote <sup>8</sup>.

(3) Evidence that a person lives with or is habitually in the company of a prostitute or lives in a common bawdy-house is, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, proof that the person lives on the avails of prostitution, for the purposes of paragraph (1)(j) and subsections (2) and (2.1).

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<sup>8</sup> 5.2 carries a fourteen year maximum prison sentence for living on the avails of a person under eighteen years of age. (2.1) carries a five year minimum prison term for "aggravated" living on the avails of a person under eighteen.

The owners and operators of indoor venues (see item 5 below for a brief description) are sometimes charged with procuring and bawdy house offences, and workers in indoor establishments also could be charged with various bawdy-house offences. However, charges against people in the indoor prostitution sector are uncommon.

### *A Two-Tier System of Law Enforcement*

In Canada as a whole and in Vancouver in particular there is a two-tier system of prostitution law enforcement. While it has been estimated that 80% or more of Canada's commercial sex trade occurs indoors (Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, 2006, p. 5) – a figure that holds true for Vancouver – the 1997 *Juristat* report *Street Prostitution in Canada* revealed that 92% of all prostitution charges between 1985 and 1995 were for communicating, the street prostitution offence (Duchesne 1997, p. 5). The Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights reported that this pattern of enforcement continued up to the point it prepared its report in 2006 (pp. 52-60). From 1991 through 1996, 95% of Vancouver charges were for communicating (Table 1), with an average of 928 communicating charges each year. From 1997-2002 the average number of communicating charges fell to 234 per annum, suggesting that there was much less of a police presence in Vancouver's prostitution strolls during the Time Period than prior to it.

**Table 1**  
**Prostitution Charges in Vancouver 1991-2002**  
Source: Uniform Crime Reports

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Bawdy House	5	12	19	8	4	5	6	0	1	0	5	4
Procuring	21	39	27	32	26	29	18	6	10	5	11	16
Communicating*	1516	1571	388	341	1211	542	378	60	90	193	263	418

\* In the Uniform Crime Reports communicating charges are reported as "Other prostitution."

From January 1986 to July 1993 VPD laid approximately 3500 communicating charges against clients and prostitutes in the DTES (Taylor 1993, Appendix 1f).

Prostitution law enforcement in Vancouver during the Time Period – as at other times before and since – was partly complaint driven. Because most complaints were generated by residents, one of the main goals of prostitution law enforcement has been to keep street prostitution out of residential areas. As Lowman and Fraser (1995, p.7, Appendix 1g) explained:

...most of the s.213 charges are laid in the "flashpoint" zones, i.e. those areas generating the most complaints about the street trade. The Mount Pleasant prostitution task force, reconvened in the summer of 1995 after a two year hiatus (there were prostitution task forces in Mount Pleasant each summer from 1986 to 1992) is responsible for the enforcement activity along and around Broadway (Figure 1,<sup>9</sup> area 9) and Ontario and

<sup>9</sup> Figure 1 from this report is reproduced as Figure 2 below.

Quebec (area 8). A concerted effort is also made to discourage people from working east of Victoria on Franklin, Semlin and Lakewood (area 1), and residential streets on the west side of the Hastings-Cordova stroll (area 4).

To further this containment policy in the DTES, VPD created a street prostitute tolerance zone in the Industrial Area (see Figure 1, above; area 4, Figure 2, below) to the North of Hastings Street and, via selective enforcement of the communicating law, displaced street prostitution into it. The use of area restrictions in bail and probation orders also helped to displace street prostitution and enlarge some of the strolls (Lowman 1989, pp. 95-101).

The process of creating this tolerance zone began in 1988 when police and social service agencies devised a strategy to displace prostitution from the residences along East Pender Street and Keefer Street between Gore and Heatley Avenues and the two schools in that area. The initial component of this strategy involved posting notices on lampposts asking women involved in street prostitution to treat this as a "No-Go Area" (Lowman 1989, pp. 174-177 and A-434). The notice read:

The many families with kids in Strathcona are very worried by the presence of street prostitutes in our neighbourhood. We are asking you, as fellow parents and members of the community, to avoid certain areas where families live, and children live and play and go to school. The police have agreed to enforce all laws most stringently in residential areas and in particular around the schools and playgrounds. Please keep your business to non-residential areas.

The notices implied that women involved in street prostitution should work in the adjoining streets and alleys where there would be less-than-stringent law enforcement.

Subsequently, police and social workers informed street workers that if they worked in the Industrial Area to the North of Hastings along East Cordova Street and the adjacent alleys between Jackson and Campbell Avenues, they would not be charged with the communicating offence, but they could be charged if they worked in the residential area South of Hastings Street. In a 1997 media release (Appendix 1h) VPD formally acknowledged its strategy for containing street prostitution in the DTES Industrial Area.

The VPD's creation of a street prostitute tolerance zone successfully displaced street prostitution from the residential area on South of Hastings Street to the Industrial Area on the North side. But were there other consequences? At about the same time Pickton was beginning his serial killing of DTES street-level sex workers, our 1995 report on prostitution in the Vancouver Metropolitan Area for the Department of Justice observed:

The response to the re-emergence of prostitution in residential areas has been the crystallization of a policy of containment through selective use of the communicating law and other measures. In the short term, if the street trade is confined to certain areas ... the police are prepared to leave it alone. Scrutiny of patterns of monthly Vancouver Police Department Crime Analysis incident reports ... confirms this pattern...

Without a fundamental change to the law and other prostitution policy, from the police perspective the containment strategy is perhaps the "best" practical enforcement solution

they can offer to deal with the nuisances attributed to street prostitution. It keeps the lid on problems. But should police be put in the position of having to “make” the law this way? Also, because this strategy is geared mostly to solving nuisance problems, it does not address the wider issues raised by the prostitution trade. At the ground level, it means that persons who prostitute are gradually pushed into darker commercial areas where women may become more prone to victimization. (Lowman and Fraser 1995)

It is possible that the displacement of prostitution into this Industrial Area contributed to Pickton’s ability to meet women there without being seen, assuming that is what he did.

Reasoning that clients can be deterred (Taylor 1993), VPD continued enforcing the communicating law against clients in the tolerance zone and in the other Vancouver strolls (see response to question 7, below), with the exception of “high track” (the Richards-Seymour stroll), which at that time was controlled by pimps.<sup>10</sup>

Generally, as long as prostitutes worked in one of several “containment zones” (Lowman and Fraser 1995, pp. 6-7, Appendix 1g) police rarely initiated undercover operations against them for the purpose of charging them with “communicating.”

### **The Sex Trade in Vancouver (1997-2002)**

#### **5) What are the distinct ways women were involved in the sex trade industry in Vancouver during the Time Period?**

In Vancouver from 1997-2002 there were four principal styles of prostitution:

- a) Street prostitution: prostitutes meet their clients on the streets of a prostitution “stroll,” i.e. an area locally renowned as a place where prostitutes wait for customers to approach them in a vehicle or on foot. Sexual services are usually provided in a “trick pad” (a place rented for the purpose of providing sexual services), in a local hotel that rents out rooms for half-hour periods, or in the client’s vehicle parked in a secluded location away from the stroll.
- b) Escort service prostitution: escort services licensed by the City are businesses that introduce escorts to clients. Escort services advertise in print media or on-line for clients. Escorts usually provide *outcall* services, i.e. the escort visits the hotel room or residence of the client and provides sexual services in that location. The majority of escort-client encounters are an hour or less. Approximately 85-90% of escort-client liaisons involve sexual services for payment.

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<sup>10</sup> Because pimps controlled the various street corners in high track it was not possible for police to place a female undercover officer on those corners, as she would be kicked out by the women working in the area – prostitutes cannot meet clients in high track unless they work for a pimp or have earned the status “veteran,” which allows them to work independently (see Lowman and Fraser, 1996). As a consequence, in high track police could not use their usual strategy for enforcing the communicating law against clients, which involved using a female police officer posing as a prostitute to gather evidence against a would-be client who offered to purchase sexual services from her (Lowman 1990).

- c) Massage parlours, health enhancement centers and body rub parlours:<sup>11</sup> some massage parlours and health enhancement centers offer “extras,” i.e. sexual services for a fee. In the majority of venues that offer extras, the provision of extras is the main purpose of the business. Body-rub parlours (of which there was only one in Vancouver during the Time Period) appear to be licensed specifically for the provision of sexual services (Lowman, Appendix 1i). These various venues provide *in-call* services, i.e. the client travels to the place of business and receives sexual services at that location. Some in-call establishments also offer outcall services.
- d) Indoor independents: men and women working independently of a massage or escort business meet clients by advertising erotic services in print media or on-line.

While sex workers may move among these various venues at different points in their lives, or work in more than one style of prostitution simultaneously, most of the women in the DTES work mostly in the street-level sex trade.

**6) For any categories identified in question 5, describe the conditions for each during the Time Period.**

While there is some degree of flux among the various styles of prostitution, it is likely that the majority of off-street prostitutes (escorts, massage parlour/health enhancement center/body rub workers and indoor independents) have little or no street experience (O’Doherty 2007, 2011).<sup>12</sup>

*Street Prostitution:*

Street prostitution in Vancouver is estimated to comprise less than 20% of the overall trade. The street trade is varied, with “high track,” “mid track” and “low track”<sup>13</sup> street prostitution strolls (see response to question 7 below).

During the period 1997-2002 Time Period the high- and some of the mid-track strolls were controlled by men who make a living by managing and/or controlling female prostitutes (Lowman and Fraser 1996, pp. 86-104). Most of the men involved in controlling high track prostitution were African-American men who belong to a distinct subculture that is described in both popular and academic literature on “pimping” (e.g. Hodgson 1997). While the term “pimp” originated in the U.S. version of this subculture, it is often used to depict anyone who profits from the prostitution of another person. The word pimp does not appear in the *Criminal Code*. The activities of a person who would exploit the prostitution of another person are prohibited by the procuring and living on the avails sections of the *Code* (see item 4, above).

<sup>11</sup> Not all massage parlours and health enhancement centers in Vancouver are prostitution establishments.

<sup>12</sup> It is not possible to reach a definitive conclusion in this regard because most research has focused on street prostitution.

<sup>13</sup> These terms, which come from the argot of high track sub-culture, distinguish different levels of stroll according to the prices charged for sexual services. The highest prices are in high track. Low track is a pejorative term used to designate the DTES stroll.

The “professional pimps” of the mid and high-track generally dissuade intravenous drug use by women and youth who work with or for them. In contrast, a large majority of DTES women involved in prostitution used drugs intravenously and/or smoked crack cocaine (as they do today). Street-level DTES women do not generally work for “professional pimps” who seek to control and exploit the prostitution of more than one woman and recruit others into “the Life,” but their relationships with partners may become exploitative and pimp-like:

Several [DTES] women described their intimate partners as glorified “pimps”. While women described these relationships as intimate, attached to comfort, emotions and a sense of trust, these men were also seen to hold significant power over women’s sex work environment and transactions with clients. These relationships were all with drug-involved partners, particularly crack-using partnerships, with the male partner supplying the drugs and controlling supply and the women working to sustain both the drug habit of herself and her partner. (Shannon et al. 2008)

In some cases these started out as traditional boyfriend-girlfriend relationships, with the boyfriend assuming the role of pimp as the relationship developed.

*Outcall Services (escort agencies):*

Escort agencies charge a fee for introducing escorts to clients. The agency may charge an additional “booking on” fee each day before an escort can receive client contact information. Escorts may also be required to contribute to advertising fees. Some agencies impose a system of fines if escorts book on late, and they may have to pay for a driver to take them to and from “dates.”

*In-call Services (massage parlours, health enhancement centers and body rub parlours):*

Most in-call establishments operate under municipal massage parlour or health enhancement licenses. During the time period there was only one body rub parlour license issued in Vancouver. Some in-call venues charge a fee that covers all services, including sexual services; others charge a fee that does not include sexual services, leaving it to the individual worker to negotiate “extra” services.

In most sex-service businesses sex workers operate as independent contractors rather than as employees – which means they do not receive the benefits that other workers enjoy, such as UIC and CPP – although they are often treated more like employees than independent contractors.

*Conceptualizing the degree of “choice” exercised in prostitution*

The varying degrees of choice exercised in Canadian prostitution can be summarized in the following way (Subcommittee on Solicitation Laws 2006, pp. 6-8):

*Sexual slavery* – involves one person using force and/or deception to recruit another person to become a prostitute or control another person’s on-going prostitution in order to profit from it. Debt bondage is an example of sex slavery.

*Survival sex* – describes the choice of a person who has very few or no other options to make money to subsist and/or support a drug habit. Survival sex is driven by poverty and addiction. In the DTES poverty and addiction are reflected and are amplified by the effects of the colonization of Aboriginal people and the destruction of their culture. In a legal sense survival sex workers do “choose” to prostitute, but they make that choice in a set of social conditions they did not choose.

*Opportunistic or bourgeois prostitution* occurs when a person chooses to prostitute in preference to other forms of labour because it is well paid and involves little formal training. Some women prefer prostitution to the low-paid forms of “shit work” they might have to perform otherwise (Jeffrey and MacDonald 2006).

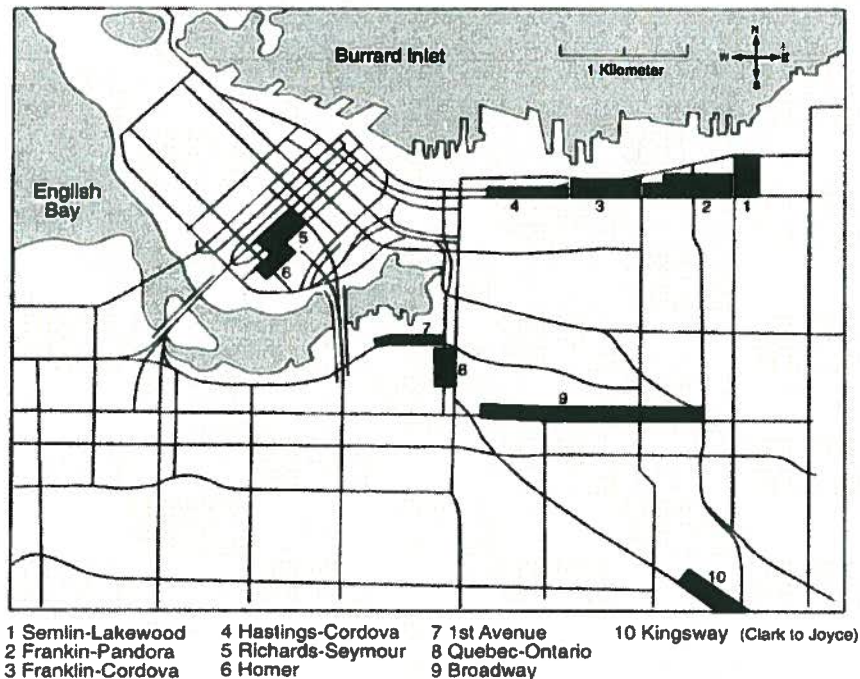
Generally prostitution is shaped by gender, ethnic and socio-economic structures. Most DTES street-level prostitution is survival sex. The women have to deal with multiple problems including drug addiction, poverty, and/or a violent and abusive past. Some of them suffer mental illness. Clearly, they are the most vulnerable to violence by clients or men posing as clients.

**7) What were the locations of the street level strolls during the Time Period?**

Vancouver’s street prostitution strolls from 1992 to September 1995 are described in Lowman and Fraser’s report for the Department of Justice, “Prostitution in the Vancouver Metropolitan Area 1989 to 1995” (Appendix 1g). The following map is taken from that report.

**Figure 2  
Vancouver Prostitution Strolls 1992-1995**

Source: Lowman and Fraser 1995 “Prostitution in the Vancouver Metropolitan Area 1992-1995”



By 1995, prostitution had been displaced out of areas 1 (Semlin-Lakewood) and 8 (Quebec and Ontario).

#### *Stroll Location 1997-2002*

By 1997 the 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue stroll also had fallen into disuse, leaving areas 2 (Franklin-Pandora), 3 (Franklin-Cordova), 4 (Hastings-Cordova, aka the DTES), 5 (Richards-Seymour), 6 (Homer, aka "Boystown"), 9 (Broadway) and 10 (Kingsway). By 2002 the Broadway stroll was no longer used.

#### **The Street Level Sex Trade in the Downtown Eastside (1997-2002)**

#### **8) How many women were involved in street level sex trade in the DTES during the Time Period?**

In 1992 VPD identified over 480 men, women, transgendered persons and youths<sup>14</sup> who worked the DTES streets at some point during that year (Taylor 1993, Appendix 1f). A similar number of persons were likely involved in street prostitution in any given year during the period 1997-2002.

Systematic head counts by the VPD vice unit of the number people working in the stroll during the evening on any given night produced the following averages:

**Table 2:  
VPD Head Counts of Prostitutes Working in the DTES Stroll**

Source: Staff Sergeant Robert Taylor, 1993

1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
7.1	8.5	7.4	9.6	11.9	15.5

In 1995 when we conducted head counts in the DTES, there were, on average, twenty persons visible on the stroll waiting for clients (Lowman and Fraser 1995).

#### **9) What percentage of the women identified in question 8 were Aboriginal?**

VPD's data did not include information about the status of the street-involved women they encountered in the DTES. However several questionnaire surveys of street-level sex workers in Vancouver provide information about the proportion of Aboriginal (including Metis) women in their samples.

Almost 70% of the respondents to Currie et al.'s (1995) DTES survey were Aboriginal.

Of 65 respondents to Lowman and Fraser's (1996, p. 71) victimization survey of street-level sex workers conducted in high track and the DTES, 18.5% were Aboriginal.

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<sup>14</sup> Forty-four persons were under the age of 18.



Cler-Cunningham and Christenen's (2001, Appendix 1j) survey recruited participants from all the Vancouver street prostitution strolls at the time; 31% of their subjects were Aboriginal.

Farley et al.'s (2003; 2005, Appendix 1k) survey of Vancouver street level sex workers recruited mainly from the DTES (it included some persons working in the Franklin and Broadway strolls) reported that 51% of the sample (n=100) was Aboriginal.

The social and economic marginalization of Aboriginal women reflects the multigenerational legacy of colonial oppression in the form of concerted attempts to destroy West Coast Aboriginal culture in the late Nineteenth and much of the Twentieth Century through a variety of coercive mechanisms, including the residential school system.

#### **10) What were the common characteristics of the women involved in the street level sex trade in the DTES during the Time Period?**

Currie et al.'s (1995, Appendix 1c) sample of 85 sex workers provides one of the most detailed descriptions of the characteristics and experiences of street-involved women in the DTES.

Currie et al (1995) interviewed 85 women involved in DTES street-based sex trade about a year after the Vancouver Police Department had identified 480 street-involved women in the area. As Currie and her colleagues interviewed roughly 20% of the population VPD identified, and 70% of the respondents were Aboriginal, Currie's et al.'s sample is probably relatively representative of the Aboriginal women involved in the street-level sex trade in the DTES.

The average age of the respondents was 26 years, their age ranged from 16 to 55 years. 71% were mothers (averaging three child births per person); less than 50% of the mothers knew where their children were; 16% of respondents currently lived with their children. The large majority (88%) of the women lived in the DTES. Roughly one in five (18%) of the participants were homeless; 47% lived in a local hotel.

The women had relatively little formal education: 91% of the women did not have their high school diploma; 40% had completed less than grade ten. A third of the participants said that other family members had worked in the sex trade, either currently or when they were growing up. Most of the subjects were youths when they began prostituting – 73% of the participants entered the sex trade prior to their 18th birthday. All of the participants received financial assistance or some other kind of government support.

When asked about their lifetime experiences, 99% of respondents reported that they had been victims of some form of "violence," with 97% reporting multiple victimizations. Sixty-two percent had been sexually assaulted, 52% had been beaten by a boyfriend, 48% had been beaten by a client, and 14% had been beaten by a "pimp." Seventy-three percent had been "sexually abused" as children (there is no description of what the abuse consisted of). All the respondents had used alcohol and/or drugs at some point in their lives; 94% had used them in the past six months (78% had used alcohol, 75% had used heroin, and 68% had used cocaine).

*Variation in characteristics of women involved in different segments of the commercial sex trade*

To give an indication of the substantial variation of the characteristics of women in different segments of the Vancouver prostitution trade O'Doherty's (2011, Appendix 1e) research with women who had worked exclusively or almost exclusively in off-street prostitution reveals a very different profile of personal characteristics. In this regard Farley et al.'s (2005, Appendix 1k) generalization of a sample of mainly DTES street-level sex workers to Vancouver as a whole is methodologically unwarranted (Lowman 2011, pp. 8-10).

The average age of O'Doherty's respondents was 30 years, ranging in age from 20 to 45 years. In sharp contrast to DTES street-based sex workers, only two of O'Doherty's respondents were under the age of 18 when they started working. The majority (57%) started prostitution between the ages of 19 and 24, and 17% after they were age 30 or older. Only five respondents (21%) indicated that they started prostituting on the street, while 42% began in massage parlours.

O'Doherty's sample differs markedly from Canadian samples of street-based sex workers in terms of respondents' income, race and education. More than half her respondents reported earning over \$5,000 per month, and more than \$60,000 annually. Women working as independents were the most likely to earn more than \$10,000 monthly. The majority (79%) of the 23 women who reported their "race" were Caucasian. The majority were Canadian, of whom 72% were born in British Columbia. Ten percent of the sample identified themselves as South East Asian. There were no Aboriginal women.

This sample of sex workers had much higher levels of educational attainment than any other reported Canadian sample of sex workers: 90% (n=31) had some post-secondary education, 36% had completed either a Bachelor's Degree (n=4), Masters Degree (n=2) or PhD (n=5).

I return to variations in levels of violence against street and off-street prostitutes below.

**11) Were women involved in street level sex trade in the DTES transient or entrenched in that community during the Time Period?**

Only 18% of Currie et al.'s (1995) sample grew up in Vancouver. Of those who migrated to Vancouver, 64% came from outside British Columbia. It appears that many women who migrate to the DTES from other parts of BC or other provinces become entrenched in the DTES street sex trade, especially if they are substance addicted. The DTES is usually where they purchase drugs and the stroll is where they earn the money to pay for them. There is circulation of women among the East Vancouver strolls.

Cler-Cunningham and Christensen (p. 36) found that many prostitutes move from city to city, and some of them work in off-street venues around the Lower Mainland as well as in the street-level trade.

**Violence against Women in the Street Level Sex Trade in the DTES**

- 12) What types of violence do women involved in the street level sex trade experience?  
 13) And at what rate do they experience that violence?

The review of violence against DTES sex workers is based on the research of Currie et al. (1995, Appendix 1c), Lowman and Fraser (1996, Appendix 1d), Cler-Cunningham and Christensen (2001, Appendix 1j) and Farley et al (2003; 2005 Appendix 1k). These studies examine *Criminal Code* offences plus incidents of verbal abuse and harassment that may or may not constitute criminal offences. Lowman and Fraser also provide an analysis of 1616 incidents of “bad tricks” or “bad dates” reported by street-level women to social service providers and prostitutes’ rights organizations.

*Currie et al. 1995*

Currie et al (1995) did not distinguish violence connected to the sex trade from other sources of violence. Nevertheless, their findings indicate that the majority of their respondents had experienced multiple incidents of victimization as a result of their commercial sex activities. Ninety-nine percent of Currie et al.’s respondents had experienced violence during their lifetime (p. 15), while 77% had been victims of violence during the past 6 months. Of those who had experienced violence, 62% were sexually assaulted. The three primary perpetrators of violence were customers, pimps, boyfriends, and other sex workers.

**Table 3**  
**Types of Violence Experienced During Past Six Months (n=65)**  
 Source: Currie et al. (1995) p. 16

Type of Violence	%
sexually assaulted (any sex act without consent, or without agreed terms)	62
beaten by boyfriend	52
beaten by a customer	48
dumped by customer	44
assaulted with a weapon other than a gun or knife	30
assaulted or beat up another person	26
beaten by another sex trade worker	14
robbed	14
assaulted with a gun	14
beaten by a pimp	14
dragged by a car	08
held against their will	06
strangled	04
beaten by police	02

*Lowman and Fraser 1996*

Lowman and Fraser's (1996) study of violence sought to describe the nature of violence against sex workers in British Columbia. Respondents to a victimization survey reported whether they had experienced violence, the type of victimization, and the number of times they had been victimized. In this survey, violent victimization included assault, assault with a weapon, sexual assault, robbery, forcible confinement, strangulation, being dragged by a car, and being dumped by a client in an unknown location. The victimization survey sample comprised 65 street sex workers, of whom 22 had some off-streets sex work experience. None of the respondents worked exclusively in off-street venues; 45% had never worked in off-street venues.

Generally, street-based sex workers were more likely than off-street workers to report having been robbed, sexually assaulted, beaten, strangled, or kidnapped (Lowman and Fraser 1996 p. 74), a result that is similar to some of our earlier findings: whereas 45% (18 of 40) of respondents had never experienced a bad date while working the street, 75% had not experienced a bad date when working in off-street venues (Lowman 1989, p.A-357).

Table 5 shows the victimization experienced by women in the Richards-Seymour stroll (high track) as compared to the DTES.

**Table 5**  
**Types of Offences/ Harassment**  
Source: Lowman and Fraser 1996, p. 78

	Richards		Downtown	
	Count	Pct. of	Count	Pct. of
General harassment	20	69.0	17	70.8
Threat/intimidation	18	62.1	19	79.2
Had/used knife	14	48.3	12	50.0
Had used gun	13	44.8	6	25.0
Strangling	11	37.9	5	20.8
Dumped	11	37.9	12	50.0
Beating	10	34.5	9	37.5
Refused condom	9	31.0	12	50.0
Other weapon	9	31.0	6	25.0
Robbery	8	27.6	11	45.8
Sexual assault	8	27.6	11	45.8
Unwanted acts	8	27.6	9	37.5
Kidnap/confine	8	27.6	8	33.3
Attempt murder	2	6.9	3	12.5
	Total Cases=29		Total Cases=24	

Table 6 shows the classification of 1616 "bad tricks"<sup>15</sup> reported to either the *Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes* or *Prostitutes and Other Women for Equal Rights* (1985-1988) and "bad

<sup>15</sup> "Trick" is a high track term for a client.

date” reported to the *Downtown Eastside Youth Activities Society* from 1988-1993. The information collected was distributed to women working the various strolls in “bad trick sheets” or “bad date sheets” that were handed out to women working the strolls.

**Table 6**  
**Type of Bad Date**

Source: Lowman and Fraser (1996) p. 56

	1985-1988		1988-1993	
	Count	% of cases	Count	% of cases
Physical assault	246	39.7	328	33.4
Sexual assault	176	28.4	242	24.6
Rip-off/money back	101	16.3	197	20.1
Robbed of all cash	128	20.7	151	15.4
Had or used a knife	90	14.5	133	13.6
Verbal abuse/harass.	19	3.1	96	9.8
Threatening	70	11.3	96	9.8
Confinement	83	13.4	85	8.7
Refused safe	37	6.0	68	6.9
Unacceptable request	18	2.9	65	6.6
Had or used a gun	47	7.6	62	6.3
Acted weird/crazy	31	5.0	57	5.8
Had or used other weapon	31	5.0	51	5.2
Thrown from car			50	5.1
Drunk/stoned	33	5.3	35	3.6
Couldn't get off	31	5.0	30	3.1
Chased /followed by car			27	2.8
Pimp/possible pimp			24	2.4
Dumped			23	2.3
Posed as cop	27	4.4	23	2.3
Given drugs/drugged			6	.6
Property damage	5	.8	4	.4
Other	7	1.1	91	9.3
<b>Number of offenses/problems</b>	<b>1180</b>		<b>1943</b>	

Number of incidents reports    ASP/POWER=619    DEYAS=997

The most numerous types of bad dates involved physical and sexual assault, and robbery and theft.

### *Cler-Cunningham and Christensen 2001*

In 2001 Cler-Cunningham and Christensen interviewed 183 street level sex trade workers in study conducted for the Vancouver-based sex-worker organization Prostitution Alternatives Counseling Education (PACE).

Of the street workers Cler-Cunningham and Christensen interviewed, 54% reported being robbed at least once during the time they worked the street, of whom 47% had been robbed in the year prior to being interviewed (p.42). Clients accounted for half of these robberies (p.43). Since entering the sex trade 44% of respondents had been threatened with a weapon while working the street, 40% of whom had been threatened with a weapon during the past year. Fifty-one per cent reported having been physically assaulted in an incident where no weapon was involved at least once while working the street (p.51), 47% of whom had been assaulted within the past year. Sixty per cent of assaults were perpetrated by clients (p. 52). Eighty-three percent reported that they had experienced a client refusing to wear a condom. The 136 women who experienced this problem in the previous year reported 1892 such incidents, an average of almost 14 per person (p.57). Forty-six percent reported having been sexually assaulted in an incident where no weapon was used (p.59), 43% of whom had been assaulted within the past year; 41% had been assaulted in an incident where a weapon was involved, 61% of whom had been assaulted within the past year (p.62). Forty-two percent reported having been kidnapped or confined while working the street (p. 65). Thirty-three percent reported that someone had attempted to murder them while they were working the street (p.67).

### *Farley et al. 2003 and 2005*

A sample of 100 street-level women who worked in Vancouver's East side strolls (DTES, Franklin, Broadway), most of whom worked in the DTES. Ninety percent of the women had been physically assaulted in prostitution. Eighty-two percent of the assaults were by customers. Eight-nine percent had been physically threatened; 67% had been threatened with a weapon. Seventy-eight percent had been sexually assaulted, of whom 67% percent had been sexually assaulted more than five times; 75% of the sexual assaults were by customers. Eighty-eight percent had been verbally abused. Seventy-five percent reported having been physically injured as a result of violence in prostitution.

### *Variations in Victimization in Different Types of Prostitution*

O'Doherty's study of indoor prostitution in the Lower Mainland (2007, 2011) indicates that risk varies considerable in different types of prostitution, with street prostitution being the most risky.

**Table 7**  
**Comparison of Rates of Violence by Prostitution Venue**  
 Source: O'Doherty, 2011, p. 13

Type of victimization	O'Doherty (2007) N = 39			Cler-Cunningham and Christensen (2001), N = 183 Street Pros
	Massage	Escort	Independent	
Threats	20	29	15	71
Threats with weapons	13	17	8	45
Physical assault	17	25	15	51
Sexual assault	13	12	12	46
Kidnapping/confinement	8	21	8	41
Refuse condom	28	37	26	83

Sixty-three percent of O'Doherty's off-street sample had not experienced *any* form of victimization as a result of their sex work. For the remaining 37% the two most common forms of victimization were theft from a co-worker and a client refusing to wear a condom.

When the five women who began working as prostitutes on the street are removed from O'Doherty's sample,<sup>16</sup> in the roughly 270 years<sup>17</sup> that the 34 remaining women had practiced prostitution in massage parlours, escort services and independently, there was just one assault by a client and five incidents where clients had made threats of some kind. In contrast, 48% of Currie et al.'s (1995) sample of street-level women in the DTES had been "beaten by a customer" in the six-month period prior to the survey (see Table 3 above).

**14) Who are the perpetrators of violence against women involved in the street level sex trade? Do they share any common characteristics?**

The perpetrators of violence are predominantly men, although sex workers sometimes victimize each other. There are two main perpetrators of male violence against prostitutes: i) clients and men posing as clients; and ii) pimps.

There is not enough research specifically on men who perpetrate violence against prostitutes to be able to ascertain on what grounds they may be distinguishable from men in general or men who buy sex.

From 1997 we conducted a survey of men who buy sex using traditional survey methods (mail-back self-administered questionnaires) and telephone interviews in the Vancouver and the Lower Mainland, and an on-line survey (Lowman and Atchison 2006, Appendix 1m). The survey included questions about violence the respondents had committed against non-commercial sex

<sup>16</sup> The most illuminating comparison would be of women who had only worked in street-level prostitution with women who had only worked indoors.

<sup>17</sup> If their average age was 30 years and their average age of entry in prostitution was 22, then on average each respondent had worked for eight years.

partners and commercial sex partners, and their experiences being victimized by their sex partners (Lowman and Atchison 2006, 267-272).

There were 77 respondents to the Lower Mainland survey, 77% of whom reported that they had never assaulted, raped, robbed, forcibly confined or murdered a non-commercial sex partner. Of 23% of men who had committed one or more offences, 8.1% said it was a single incident, 8.1% reported that it had happened on two or three occasions, and 6.8% had committed four or more offences. The most common forms of violence were robbery and assault.

Eighty percent of the respondents reported that they had never committed an offence against a prostitute, 10.5% reported committing one offence, 6.6% reported committing two or three offences, and 2.6% reported four or more. The most frequent offences were refusal to pay for services (13.2%, or n=10) and robbery (9.8%, or n=6). One respondent claimed to have murdered a prostitute.

While much more research of this sort is needed to see if these findings are typical, they suggest that a small proportion of clients perpetrate a large proportion of the incidents of violence against prostitutes.

**15) What personal characteristics make women involved in the street level sex trade vulnerable to violence?**

Research on violence against sex workers in Canada suggests that women involved in the survival sex trade are the most prone to violence. They are much more likely than other sex workers to engage in risky behaviour because of their immediate need to raise money for subsistence or to support a drug habit.

As VPD Staff Sergeant Taylor noted in 1992 in a report on community reactions to street prostitution, "market supply [of DTES street-level sex workers] exceeds demand, in that the price of sexual services has remained constant over several years; and it is believed that prostitutes in the lower priced market will sometimes barter as low as \$20 if they are desperate for money." Sometimes the price of a sexual service is determined by the price of a hit of crack, which may be as low as \$10. In contrast, women working high track would earn between \$100-200 each date, depending on the type of sexual services

Because of their lifestyle and personal characteristics, survival sex workers in the DTES are unable to work in the more exclusive and safer forms of off-street prostitution or, like their counterparts in high track, pay for rooms in local hotels for half-hour increments where they provide services to their clients, as the room rental rate is more than the fee that some DTES prostitutes receive for their services. Analysis of men charged under the communicating law reveal that the large majority of Vancouver men purchasing sexual services in the DTES are from the blue collar lower socioeconomic status neighbourhoods on the East side of the city (Lowman 1990).



**16) What external conditions make women involved in the street level sex trade vulnerable to violence?**

One of the primary external factors making prostitutes vulnerable to violence is prostitution law itself. While prostitution itself is legal, it is difficult to practice because of the laws that circumscribe it. The bawdy house, procuring, and living on the avails laws are a direct impediment to establishing safe working conditions for street-based sex workers.

Take, for example, the case of *Grandma's House*, a charitable society established in 1998 by Jamie Lee Hamilton<sup>18</sup> to help survival sex workers in the DTES. I was called as an expert witness to testify in the subsequent trial of Ms. Hamilton for keeping a common bawdy house, a charge that was laid in 1999. At about the same time *Grandma's House* opened fears that a serial killer was preying on the area's sex workers was rife on the street, and the Vancouver media were beginning to report the disappearance of numerous street-based women. We now know that 10 women disappeared from this area in 1997, nine disappeared in 1998, and 6 in 1999.<sup>19</sup> Ms. Hamilton told me that women would sometimes arrive at *Grandma's House* bloodied and bruised after a bad date. Some of them started requesting Ms. Hamilton if they could bring dates to *Grandma's House* so that they could conduct their business safely: with other people around, they would be able to get help if a date turned bad.

In the ensuing trial Ms. Hamilton challenged the Constitutionality of the law. She argued that bawdy house law has two purposes: the prevention of public nuisance and prevention of the exploitation of sex workers (for a historical analysis of the law's intent, purpose and interpretation, see Russell 1980). Because *Grandma's House* was not in a residential area, it was not a nuisance, she argued. And because no profit was involved – the charge for the room was sufficient only to cover costs for rent, bedding, towels etc. – it was not exploitative. Indeed, its purpose was to protect sex workers from harm while avoiding the creation of a public nuisance in the process. By criminalizing this conduct, the bawdy house law was overly broad, she claimed, an affront to the principles of fundamental justice, and thus in violation of the Constitution.

In 2004 the charges against Ms. Hamilton were stayed, so we do not know how the court would have ruled on this argument. *Grandma's House* closed nonetheless, making it difficult to figure out where street-based sex workers are supposed to work and how they can conduct their work safely, as they do not have the resources to set up an indoor location nor the personal characteristics required for escort service and massage parlour work. As Currie et al's (1995) research revealed, many of DTES women are drug and/or alcohol dependent, and are homeless or live in rooming houses. The message seems to be that the only way they can get help is if they stop the legal act of prostitution.

The closure of *Grandma's House* forced the street-based sex workers who used its services to perform sexual activities elsewhere, the most likely place being in cars – the very place they find themselves most vulnerable and in the greatest danger. The spike in enforcement of the bawdy house law in Vancouver during the 1970s (Lowman 1986) probably had a similar effect.

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<sup>18</sup> This account is based on my personal communications with Ms. Hamilton.

<sup>19</sup> These figures were compiled by then Detective Inspector Kim Rossmo of the Vancouver Police Department.

Our research demonstrated that this isolated ‘one-on-one’ interaction is the one that poses the greatest risk of violence to the sex worker. Our analysis of the content of the ‘bad date’ sheets (Lowman and Fraser 1996) revealed that 86% of violent acts involved a lone client, and that 98% of violent acts occurred when the victim was working alone, without the help of a ‘buddy.’<sup>20</sup> These are precisely the circumstances that create the opportunity for both “situational” and “predatory” violence to occur (these two broad categories of violence are discussed on p. 26 below).

While the primary “cause” of violence against sex workers is the man who wields the fist or knife, Canada’s criminal laws pertaining to prostitution create conditions that enable violence to flourish, and in that sense materially contribute to it. The prosecution of *Grandma’s House* shows how enforcement of the bawdy-house law resulted in the closing of a work environment designed specifically to protect street-based sex workers from violence at a time a serial killer was preying on them.

While change of the bawdy-house law would not guarantee that all street-based women would be able to take advantage of safer work locations, it would nonetheless remove a significant barrier to creating a safer work environment for street-based sex workers.

*Bedford v. Canada [2010] ONSC 4264: The material contribution of law to violence against prostitutes*

In 2010 Madam Justice Susan Himel presided over a Constitutional challenge to the communicating law, the bawdy house laws, and the living on the avails laws (*Bedford v. Canada*). Justice Himel concluded that the evidence presented demonstrated on a balance of probabilities that the risk of violence towards prostitutes “can be reduced, although not necessarily eliminated” (para. 300).

The two factors that appear to most affect levels of violence are: i) location or work venue; and 2) individual working conditions. While working indoors generally is safer than working on the street, variations in off-street work also affect the level of safety. The court concluded that in-call work involving a person operating independently from a fixed location appears to be the safest way for a prostitute to work in Canada (paragraph 300).

After weighing the evidence Justice Himel found the following “facts” (para. 421):

1. Prostitutes, particularly those who work on the street, are at a high risk of being the victims of physical violence.
2. The risk that a prostitute will experience violence can be reduced in the following ways:
  - a. Working indoors is generally safer than working on the streets;

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<sup>20</sup> A buddy or “spotter” is another prostitute or third party monitoring the whereabouts of the first prostitute, to ensure that the first prostitute does not go missing for a prolonged period of time. If the prostitute does go missing, the buddy or spotter will have some information, such as a car description or license plate, she was last seen with.

- b. Working in close proximity to others, including paid security staff, can increase safety;
  - c. Taking the time to screen clients for intoxication or propensity to violence can increase safety;
  - d. Having a regular clientele can increase safety;
  - e. When a prostitute's client is aware that the sexual acts will occur in a location that is pre-determined, known to others, or monitored in some way, safety can be increased;
  - f. The use of drivers, receptionists and bodyguards can increase safety; and
  - g. Indoor safeguards including closed-circuit television monitoring, call buttons, audio room monitoring; financial negotiations done in advance can increase safety.
3. The bawdy-house provisions can place prostitutes in danger by preventing them from working in-call in a regular indoor location and gaining the safety benefits of proximity to others, security staff, closed-circuit television and other monitoring.
4. The living on the avails of prostitution provision can make prostitutes more susceptible to violence by preventing them from legally hiring bodyguards or drivers while working. Without these supports, prostitutes may proceed to unknown locations and be left alone with clients who have the benefit of complete anonymity with no one nearby to hear and interrupt a violent act, and no one but the prostitute able to identify the aggressor.
5. The communicating provision can increase the vulnerability of street prostitutes by forcing them to forego screening customers at an early and crucial stage of the transaction (paragraph 421).

Justice Himel concluded that the three impugned provisions prevent prostitutes from taking precautions, some rudimentary, that can reduce the risk of violence towards them. Consequently, "Prostitutes are faced with deciding between their liberty and their security of the person. Thus while it is ultimately the client who inflicts violence upon a prostitute, in my view the law plays a sufficient contributory role in preventing a prostitute from taking steps that could reduce the risk of such violence" (paragraph 362).

Justice Himel's decision striking down the impugned prostitution laws is currently before the Court of Appeal for Ontario.

*Two Categories of Violence Against Street Sex Workers: Situational and Predatory*

Lowman and Fraser (1996) concluded that violent victimization of street-based sex workers can be classified into two broad categories:

- a) *Situational violence* occurs when a dispute that arises during the course of a transaction escalates into violence. This dispute might take the form of a disagreement about services performed, price paid, etc. It is not premeditated. This kind of violence is much more likely to occur when the location of the provision of sexual services is not monitored in some way by a third party, as it would be in an indoor location such as a massage parlour.

b) *Predatory violence* is premeditated. Sometimes it is financially motivated, such as a planned robbery. On other occasions it is designed to hurt – or kill – a prostitute. The offender poses as a client in order to get the intended victim to a secluded location where he can carry out an attack.

Predators target the unregulated and mostly unmonitored prostitution strolls where they can pick up a street worker without being seen. They know that they will be able to find women who will enter their cars – and thus come under their control – relatively easily. They apparently believe that if these women go missing, there is little likelihood of anyone noticing, and even if they do notice, police will be reluctant to mount an investigation. Serial killer Gary Ridgway exemplified this attitude.

In 2003 Gary Ridgway, the “Green River Killer,” pleaded guilty to murdering 48 women in and around Seattle, all of whom apparently were involved in street-level sex work when he picked them up (the first of the victims bodies to be found was on July 15<sup>th</sup> 1982). While there has been speculation that Ridgway murdered women in Vancouver, a city he is known to have visited and just a three-hour drive from Seattle, the statement he read to the court when he plead guilty provides a telling example of a predator’s reasons for choosing street-based sex workers as victims:

“I killed the 48 women listed in the state's second amended information.

In most cases when I killed these women I did not know their names. Most of the time I killed them the first time I met them and I do not have a good memory of their faces. I killed so many women I have a hard time keeping them straight.

I have reviewed information and discovery about each of the murders with my attorneys and I am positive that I killed each one of the women charged in the second information. I killed them all in King County. I killed most of them in my house near Military Road, and I killed a lot of them in my truck not far from where I picked them up.

I killed some of them outside. I remember leaving each woman's body in the place where she was found. I have discussed with my attorneys the common scheme or plan, aggravating circumstance charged in all of these murders. I agree that each of the murders I committed was part of a common scheme or plan. The plan was I wanted to kill as many women I thought were prostitutes as I possibly could.

I picked prostitutes as my victims because I hate most prostitutes and I did not want to pay them for sex. I also picked prostitutes as victims because they were easy to pick up without being noticed. I knew they would not be reported missing right away and might never be reported missing.

I picked prostitutes because I thought I could kill as many of them as I wanted without getting caught. Another part of my plan was where I put the bodies of these women. Most of the time I took the women's jewelry and their clothes to get rid of any evidence and make them harder to identify. I placed most of the bodies in groups which I call clusters. I did this because I wanted to keep track of all the women I killed.

I liked to drive by the clusters around the county and think about the women I placed there. I usually used a landmark to remember a cluster and the women I placed there. Sometimes I killed and dumped a woman intending to start a new cluster and never returned because I thought I might get caught putting more women there.” [http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/news/local/links/statement\\_of\\_defendant.pdf](http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/news/local/links/statement_of_defendant.pdf)

We can infer from his reasoning that Ridgway avoided sex-work environments where third parties were present for fear that he would be seen and identified. Like Ridgway, the Yorkshire Ripper (Peter Sutcliffe, 13 convictions), the Spokane killer (Robert Lee Yates, 13 convictions), the Genessee River killer (Arthur Shawcross, 12 convictions), the New York State killer (Joel Rifkin, 9 convictions) and Robert Pickton (6 convictions, 20 murder charges stayed, and may have murdered as many as 49 women) focused overwhelmingly on street-involved women. They did not go to body rub parlours or escort services to find victims (Lowman forthcoming).

Since 1980 in British Columbia, approaching 150 street prostitutes have gone missing or are confirmed homicide victims. The street trade is estimated to account for between 5-20% of prostitution in the province. If the risk of murder is as great in off-street locations as it is on the street, we would now be reading about the murder or disappearance of between 600 and 2850 escort service and massage parlour workers during that period. However, we have found no murders of massage parlour workers, two murders of escorts and one of a woman working alone in an apartment, in which case street prostitutes are somewhere between 200-950 times more likely to be victims of homicide than their off-street counterparts.

These murder patterns also suggest that instead of having an opportunity to become serial killers, the men who murder indoor sex workers are usually apprehended relatively quickly, unlike the men who target street workers, who rarely leave tracks.

### **Missing Women Police Investigations (1997 - 2002)**

#### **17) Describe the relationship between police and the women involved in street level sex trade in the DTES during the Time Period?**

Currie et al (1995), Lowman and Fraser (1996) and Cler Cunningham and Christensen (2001) provide information about the relationship between police and DTES street level sex workers.

#### *Currie et al. (1995)*

Roughly half of the victimized women in Currie et al.'s sample had reported at least one incident of violence to police. Of the women who did not report violence to the police, 33% said their decision not to report was because police treated them disrespectfully (p. 18), and another 27% did not believe that police would be effective, in which case 'why bother?' Over 89% of respondents said that they had a negative perception of police. Many of the women spoke of inappropriate police conduct. No other service providers elicited such a negative response. The results may indicate a lack of police accountability and absence of sensitivity training (p.39). Sixty-seven per cent of street workers believed that implementing a buddy system would be the most effective way to eliminate or minimize the number of negative incidents experienced by prostitutes (p.41). However, under the current legal framework, any organized buddy-system could be illegal.

*Lowman and Fraser (1996)*

Lowman and Fraser asked their respondents how often they told anyone about incidents where they had been victimized. Table 8 summarizes the results, which suggest that a minority of incidents in both high track and the DTES are reported to the police.

A further set of questions asked respondents the extent to which vice officers and uniformed patrol police care about the safety of sex workers (pp. 83-84). When it came to vice officers, 11.1% said that "Most/all officers are concerned," 68.5% said "Some are concerned, and 20.3% said "None are concerned." Similar results pertained to perceptions of uniformed patrol officers: 11.3% said that "Most/all officers are concerned," 71.1% said "Some are concerned, and 20.7% said "None are concerned."

**Table 8**  
**Who Respondents Told About Victimization**  
 Source: Lowman and Fraser, 1996, p.80

	<b>Richards</b>		<b>Downtown Eastside</b>	
	Count	Pct. of	Count	Pct. of
Friend	18	58.1	15	65.2
Uniform police	11	35.5	10	43.5
Man/family	10	32.3	8	34.8
Street nurse	8	25.8	3	13.0
Hospital/doctor	8	25.8	5	21.7
Nobody	8	25.8	4	12.3
Vice	7	22.6	8	34.8
Counsellor	4	12.9	2	8.7
Prostitute group	4	12.9	5	21.7
Parent	2	6.5	1	4.3
Agency owner	2	6.5	1	4.3
Social worker	1	3.2		
Rape Relief/Shelter	1	3.2		
Other	3	9.7	7	30.4
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>280.8</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>294.7</b>

Cases: Richards-Seymour 31; Downtown Eastside 24

*Cler-Cunningham and Christensen (2001)*

Cler-Cunningham and Christensen (2001) found that street-level sex workers reported to the police relatively few of the incidents of criminal victimization they experienced (p. 71). When asked whether vice squad officers care about prostitutes' well-being, 16% felt that most or all officers were concerned, 58% said that some of them were concerned, and 25% said none of them are concerned (p. 73). Comments about uniformed officers were similar (p. 77).

**18) Given the characteristics identified in question 10 and the relationship between the police and the residents of the DTES, what unique investigative techniques should the police have used when investigating missing and murdered women in the DTES during the Time Period?**

The murdered and missing DTES women comprise one of the most marginalized groups of citizens in Canada. On the basis of the research reviewed in this report, I offer two comments about the investigation of murders of street-level sex workers:

- i) homicides that involve a victim who did not know the offender prior to the interaction that led to her death are much more difficult to investigate than situations where the victim and offender were already known to each other; and
- ii) because of this difficulty, the investigation of crimes against street-level sex workers on the DTES would benefit from an approach that involves much closer monitoring of activities on the stroll rather than taking investigative action only after a body is found or a person reported missing.

*Difficulty of investigating "stranger" homicides*

In 1995 I interviewed VPD detectives about their experiences investigating murders of street-level prostitutes as part of our study of violence against sex workers for the Department of Justice (Lowman and Fraser 1996, pp. 44-46).

VPD detectives suggested that there are several factors that make a prostitute homicide investigation relatively more difficult than investigation of other murders and manslaughters. One homicide detective estimated that 75% of what turns out to be useful evidence in a homicide case comes from the crime site rather than the site where the body is dumped if it is not left at the scene.

In the case of street level sex worker murders, investigators often do not have access to the death scene, in which case they must rely on information available at the body dump site. In a situation where the offender meets the victim on the street, they may have had no prior contact. When the street prostitute's first meeting with the offender is also her last there are few ways to connect the offender to her. If the crime scene is a vehicle there may be no witness to identify that vehicle as offenders approach potential victims who are standing alone on the street – which is partly why serial killers like Gary Ridgway target street prostitutes.

These kinds of factors go part way to explaining why the clearance rate for prostitute homicide cases is comparatively low. The clearance rate comprises the percentage of cases where police charged an accused, identified the accused subsequent to their death, or the accused was committed to a psychiatric institution. The general clearance rate for murder is relatively high compared to other crimes. It was highest in the mid-1960s when it stood at 90%, but has declined since then. In 2005 it stood at 73%. In contrast, the clearance rate for sex worker homicides in B.C. in 1994 stood at 34% (Lowman and Fraser 1996).

*The investigation needs to be based on adequate intelligence*

Given these difficulties, it may not be so much the unique aspects of the investigation once a body has been found or a person reported missing that would result in more effective investigations and an improved prostitute homicide clearance rate. One of the greatest impediments to more effective investigation would seem to be the adversarial relationship that the quasi-prohibition of prostitution in Canada creates. It would require police working with this population rather against it, both to prevent homicide and increase the likelihood of investigative success when homicides do occur.

**19) In November 1999, you opined that 3-4 serial killers were responsible for the missing women in the DTES (source: Daniel Wood, "Vancouver's Missing Prostitutes" *Elm Street* 52:95 (November 1999) 2.) (copy attached). What was the basis for your opinion?**

My comment to Mr. Wood was based on the following information:

- i) Our research on violence against persons who prostitute for the Department of Justice (Lowman and Fraser 1996) suggests that Pickton's serial murder spree was but part of a much larger pattern of murder of street-based sex workers. By 1993 when we were conducting the violence research for the Department of Justice, we discovered 50 homicides.<sup>21</sup> Thirty-nine of these occurred between 1985 and 1993, as compared to eleven between 1970 and 1984. It appears that 43 of the homicides involved street-based sex workers. Charges had been laid in seventeen of these homicides. Although no person was charged with more than one homicide, our examination information about the men charged led us to believe that at least two of them (Brian Allender and Trevor Rodney Peters) may well have committed more than one homicide.
- ii) In 1995 RCMP and VPD publicly stated that they believed there were links between the homicides of three street-level sex workers (Tracy Olajide, Tammy Lee Pipe and Victoria Younker), the bodies of whom were discovered in the Fraser Valley that year, thus raising the possibility that a serial killer was responsible.
- iii) In 1997 Duchesne (p. 8) reported that 63 prostitute murders were recorded in Statistics Canada's Homicide Survey between 1991<sup>22</sup> and 1995,<sup>23</sup> 50 of whom appear to have been killed by clients (or men posing as clients). Eight were thought to have been killed by pimps or in drug-related incidents. The remaining deaths were attributed to husbands, common law spouses and boyfriends. Sixty of the 63 victims were female, seven of whom were aged 15-17 years. Although few men were charged with more than one homicide, there is a strong possibility that one or more of them are serial killers.
- iv) In March 1999 the Supreme Court of Canada ruled on the question of whether a doctor could violate psychiatrist-patient confidentiality (*Smith v. Jones* [1999] 1 S.C.R. 455). The case involved a man who told a psychiatrist that he had turned his basement into a dungeon in

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<sup>21</sup> I use the term "homicide" here as some murder charges were subsequently reduced to manslaughter.

<sup>22</sup> Prior to 1991 the Homicide Survey did not include information about the victim's occupation.

<sup>23</sup> The Homicide Survey reveals that in the eighteen year period 1991-2008, there 141 prostitutes homicides "as a result of their profession."



preparation for his decision to become a serial killer of prostitutes. The psychiatrist sought permission to violate his normal expectation of psychiatrist-patient confidentiality so that he could inform the court of the offender's intentions so that the court could consider classifying him as a dangerous offender, in which case he would be imprisoned indefinitely.

In light of the aforementioned information and well over a hundred murders of street-level sex workers in BC and elsewhere in Canada, I believed that there was a distinct possibility that several serial killers could have been responsible for the disappearance of dozens of women from the DTES.

**20) Did you have any information or contacts that would have helped the police in conducting the missing women's investigation during the Time Period?**

**21) If so, was this information in the public domain? If not, did you have any contact with the police with respect to this information during the Time Period?**

(Answers to questions 20 and 21 are combined.)

One interaction I had with the RCMP suggested that we may have had information that could have been useful for investigating violent crimes against prostitutes, although this information was in the public domain.

Our research on violence for the Department of Justice (Lowman and Fraser 2006) included a descriptive analysis of "bad date sheets" (see Table 6 above) compiled by two prostitutes' rights organizations (ASP and POWER) and the social service agency DEYAS (the Downtown Eastside Youth Activities Society) for the period 1985-1992. The sheets were handed out on Vancouver strolls to provide information to street-level sex workers about potential bad dates that others had reported. When two RCMP officers from the North Vancouver detachment learned that we had collected this information they contacted me to ask if we had recorded car license plate information from the bad date sheets; we did record this information.

While I do not remember which year this interaction occurred, it indicates the breakdown of communications that sometimes occurs between police and NGO's providing services for street-level sex workers. Because the RCMP would not pay the postage they were not sent copies of the sheets as they were released.

When I listed the license plate numbers to see if any were repeated in different bad date reports, we found five that were repeated several times. I provided the plate numbers to the officers.

### **Public Opinion of Women Involved in the Sex Trade (1997 - 2002)**

**22) What was the public perception of women involved in the sex trade during the Time Period? In answering this question, please describe how you assess public perception.**

National public opinion surveys utilizing stratified random samples provide the most reliable measure of Canadian public opinions about prostitution. However, none of the national surveys that are available (Peat Marwick 1984; Environics 1986, 1995, 2005; Angus Reid 2009, 2010,

2011) were conducted during the Time Period. The two surveys conducted on either side of the time period (Environics 1995, 2005) suggest that there has been a shift of public opinion when it comes to the legal status of prostitution. In 1995, 55.5% of the Environics sample responded that prostitution should be illegal compared to 40.3% who thought it should be legal. In 2005 the balance of opinion had shifted: 50.7% of Canadians thought that prostitution should be legal compared to 46.2% who thought that it should be illegal.

Newspaper reports provide another source of insight into public opinion about prostitution. Vancouver newspaper discourse on prostitution is discussed in Lowman's (2000) paper on "Violence and the Outlaw Status of (Street) Prostitution in Canada" (Appendix 1n).

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### **List of Appendices**

1a. John Lowman curriculum vitae.

1b. Missing Women Commission of Inquiry expert report instruction letter.

1c. Currie et al. (1995) "Assessing Violence Against Street Involved Women on the Downtown Eastside/Strathcona Community Ministry of Women's Equality, DEYAS and WATARI, Vancouver.

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## **Education**

**B.A.** Geography 1971 Sheffield University, England  
**M.A.** Geography 1976 York University, Ontario  
**Ph.D.** Geography 1983 University of British Columbia

## **Employment**

### **Simon Fraser University, School of Criminology**

1982-1983: Limited Term Instructor  
1983-1987: Assistant Professor  
1987-1991: Associate Professor  
1991-Present: Professor

1990-1993: Director, Criminology Graduate Programs

## **Teaching**

### **Undergraduate Courses**

101: Introduction to Criminology (1984)  
104: Sociological Explanations of Crime and Deviance (1983-1989)  
302: Critical Perspectives on Crime and Deviance (1983-2008)  
312: Criminological Perspectives on Social Problems (1983-1988)  
313: Specific Types of Crime: Prostitution (1989-2007)  
317: Prostitution in Canada (2008-2009)  
345: Theoretical Perspectives on Punishment (1999-2009)  
412: Crime, the Media and the Public (1995)

### **Graduate Courses**

800: Theories of Crime (1992-1993)  
801: Advanced Criminological Theory (1986-1987)  
810: The Phenomena of Crime (1984)  
811: The Geography of Crime (1985)  
830: Law and Social Control (1990-1998)

### **Graduate Supervision**

Senior supervisor or supervisory committee member for numerous Master's and Doctoral Degree students.



## **AWARDS**

### **Prizes**

1997 Simon Fraser University *Sterling Prize for Controversy* (\$5,000) in recognition of research on prostitution and the law. The Sterling Prize is awarded for research that provokes controversy or contributes to its understanding.

### **Scholarships**

1968-1971 Hampshire County Council Undergraduate Scholarship  
1978-1979 Canada Council Doctoral Scholarship  
1979-1980 Social Science and Humanities Research Council Doctoral Scholarship  
1980-1981 Killam Doctoral Scholarship

## Research and Publications

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- Panelist for session entitled, "Sexwork, a Legitimate Means to Earn a Living?"

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MISSING  
WOMEN  
COMMISSION OF  
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John Lowman  
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May 30, 2011

**VIA EMAIL**

Dear Professor Lowman:

**Re: Missing Women Commission of Inquiry - Expert Report**

We write to request your independent expert opinion with respect to a number of issues relating to women involved in the sex trade in the downtown eastside of Vancouver and the missing women investigations conducted by police forces between 1997 and 2002 (the "Time Period"). We require your report by August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011.

**Background**

The Commission was mandated to inquire into and report on the conduct of the missing women investigations. Specifically, the Terms of Reference direct the Commission to conduct an inquiry into the following matters:

- 4(a) to conduct hearings, in or near the City of Vancouver, to inquire into and make findings of fact respecting the conduct of the missing women investigations;
- (b) consistent with the British Columbia (Attorney General) v. Davies, 2009 BCCA 337, to inquire into and make findings of fact respecting the decision of the Criminal Justice Branch on January 27, 1998, to enter a stay of proceedings on charges against Robert William Pickton of attempted murder, assault with a weapon, forcible confinement and aggravated assault;
- (c) to recommend changes considered necessary respecting the initiation and conduct of investigations in British Columbia of missing women and suspected multiple homicides;
- (d) to recommend changes considered necessary respecting homicide investigations in British Columbia by more than one investigating organization, including the co-ordination of those investigations.

The missing women investigations are defined as “the investigations conducted between January 23, 1997 and February 5, 2002, by police forces in British Columbia respecting women reported missing from the DTES.”

### **Format of Opinion**

We ask that your independent expert report be set out under the following headings:

1. BACKGROUND (your name, address and area of expertise);
2. QUALIFICATIONS (a detailed statement of your professional qualifications relating to your area of expertise and the subject matter of your opinion);
3. ASSUMED FACTS, IF ANY, AND DOCUMENTS REVIEWED (including the instructions and documents you have relied on);
4. OPINION (your independent objective opinion regarding the questions set out below including the reasons for your independent objective opinion containing: a description of the factual assumptions if any on which the opinion is based; a description of any research conducted by you that led you to form your opinion; a description of any documents relied on); and
5. APPENDICES (a list of every document relied on by you in formatting your opinion, including this letter).

### **Scope of Opinion**

As an independent expert you are not permitted to:

- express opinions beyond the scope of your expertise;
- allocate fault or responsibility to a particular participant in the Inquiry; or
- advance arguments in the guise of opinions for or against a particular interest.

### **Questions:**

What follows are the specific questions we would like you to answer. Unless otherwise indicated, **please answer these questions as they relate to the Time Period (1997-2002).**

#### **Sex Trade Laws in Canada**

- 1) Describe the *Criminal Code* (R.S.C. 1985, c. C-46) provisions affecting street sex trade prior to 1972.
- 2) Describe the *Criminal Code* provisions affecting street sex trade between 1972 and 1985.
- 3) Describe the *Criminal Code* provisions affecting street sex trade from December 1985 to date.



- 4) Please describe the enforcement policies that were in place during the above noted Time Period.

**The Sex Trade in Vancouver (1997 – 2002)**

- 5) What are the distinct ways women were involved in the sex trade industry in Vancouver during the Time Period?  
 6) For any categories identified in question 5, describe the conditions for each during the Time Period.  
 7) What were the locations of the street level strolls during the Time Period?

**Street Level Sex Trade in the Downtown Eastside (1997 – 2002)**

- 8) How many women were involved in street level sex trade in the DTES during the Time Period?  
 9) What percentage of the women identified in question 8 were Aboriginal?  
 10) What were the common characteristics of the women involved in the street level sex trade in the DTES during the Time Period?  
 11) Were women involved in street level sex trade in the DTES transient or entrenched in that community during the Time Period?

**Violence against Women in the Street Level Sex Trade in the DTES**

- 12) What types of violence do women involved in the street level sex trade experience?  
 13) And at what rate do they experience that violence?  
 14) Who are the perpetrators of violence against women involved in the street level sex trade? Do they share any common characteristics?  
 15) What personal characteristics make women involved in the street level sex trade vulnerable to violence?  
 16) What external conditions make women involved in the street level sex trade vulnerable to violence?

**Missing Women Police Investigations (1997 – 2002)**

- 17) Describe the relationship between police and the women involved in street level sex trade in the DTES during the Time Period?  
 18) Given the characteristics identified in question 10 and the relationship between the police and the residents of the DTES, what unique investigative techniques should the police have used when investigating missing and murdered women in the DTES during the Time Period?

- 19) In November 1999, you opined that 3-4 serial killers were responsible for the missing women in the DTES (source: Daniel Wood, "Vancouver's Missing Prostitutes" *Elm Street* 52:95 (November 1999) 2.) (copy attached). What was the basis for your opinion?
- 20) Did you have any information or contacts that would have helped the police in conducting the missing women's investigation during the Time Period?
- 21) If so, was this information in the public domain? If not, did you have any contact with the police with respect to this information during the Time Period?

**Public Opinion of Women Involved in the Sex Trade (1997 – 2002)**

- 22) What was the public perception of women involved in the sex trade during the Time Period? In answering this question, please describe how you assess public perception.

If you have any questions regarding the nature and scope of your engagement, please contact us.

Yours truly,

Missing Women Commission of Inquiry

Per: 

Karey Brooks  
Associate Commission Counsel

**D.E.Y.A.S.**  
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# **Assessing the Violence Against Street-Involved Women in the Downtown Eastside / Strathcona Community**

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**and funded by  
The Ministry of Women's Equality,  
DEYAS and Watari**

**March 1995**

**A research project initiated and supported by the following agencies:  
DTES Women's Centre, DEYAS, Ray-Cam Community Centre,  
Vancouver Native Health, Vancouver Native Liaison Project, Watari,  
WISH (FUC) and YWCA Crabtree Corner**

# Introduction

**"Prostitution is an inherently dangerous activity. The injuries that Ms. F. sustained are precisely the kind of injuries which one might well expect to sustain while carrying out that [prostitution] course of conduct. Ms. F. placed herself in a vulnerable position, after soliciting. In all of the circumstances, she contributed directly to the circumstances giving rise to this incident.**

**...It is found that she placed herself in the position where she could reasonably expect to have been injured, in a manner similar to that which, in fact occurred."**

*(Ruling of Worker's Compensation Board, Criminal Injury Section, 1993)*

There are reported to be over 500 women working in the sex trade in the Downtown Eastside / Strathcona community. These women face increasing threats of emotional, physical, sexual and systemic abuse. Violence is considered to be an expected outcome of the sex trade.

A coalition of service agencies formed a steering committee in the summer of 1993 to address the issue of violence against street-involved women. This coalition consisted of: DEYAS, Watari, YWCA Crabtree Corner, Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, WISH ( First United Church), Vancouver Native Health, Ray-Cam Community Centre, and the Vancouver Native Police Liaison Unit Storefront Project. These agencies recognized the increased violence against this group of women in the community. They also recognized that there were few services in the community that provided direct support or intervention to this population. In order to facilitate programs and direct support for these victims of violence, they determined that the women must have an opportunity to directly state their needs.

The steering committee agreed to jointly "own" a research project in order to provide a more responsive, holistic service approach to the needs of street-involved women in the community.

These agencies identified and agreed upon five issues which they believed were directly related to the violence against women in the community. These included: personal information / demographics, degrees of violence, support services, police services, shelter and housing and HIV / AIDS.

The project was broken down into three phases:

### **Phase I: Research Design and Training**

#### **a) Interviewer Training**

*March 15th - April 15th, 1993*

In March, 1993, two women from the community were hired to assist with the project. Both were on financial assistance and were hired in conjunction with the Ministry of Social Services top-up program, called Employment Plus. The training included an introduction to services and the community consultation process, some basic word processing training, facilitation training (for the group interviews), and basic data / library research techniques. Later, in Phase II - prior to the one-to-one interviews, they received basic interview training (including listening and probing skills).

#### **b) Research Design**

*April 16th - June 15th, 1993*

This included gathering information and building a relationship with street-involved women in the community. Many of the women have been exploited by other researchers, the media and service agencies, and it was critical to encourage participation and awareness of the project and its goals.

This occurred through:

- Steering Committee and other service agencies
- Community meetings and,
- predominantly through our visibility.

The Research Team spoke to women in the cafes, on the street, at agencies, and other "safe" places within the community. The subsequent word-of-mouth spread information regarding the project to other street-involved women. This provided the foundation of support necessary for the development of survey questions assessing the violence which these women face repeatedly - and sometimes daily. It was imperative to the integrity of the project and its very goals to have women from the community not only participate in the interview process, but to assist in the design and the development of the process itself. This resulted in Phase I being extended to a longer time period.

The extension allowed for the facilitation of six group interviews (consisting of over 60 street-involved women). These groups were held at a local community centre, restaurants and hotels, and were highly successful. The

information from the focus groups led to the prioritization of issues which the women believed were most directly related to their victimization.

These issues became the basis of our in-depth one-to-one interviews. The emphasis was on:

**1. Demographics**

- a) why they began and when
- b) family background
- c) child abuse

**2. Services**

- a) use of
- b) issues
- c) barriers
- d) solutions

**3. Housing**

- a) definition of adequate housing
- b) lack of housing
- c) choice of housing
- d) relationship to violence

**4. Alcohol and other Drugs**

- a) usage - when ( age )
- b) reasons for use
- c) change in usage during work periods
- d) relationship to violence
- e) services - barriers and solutions

**5. AIDS / HIV**

- a) fears of
- b) relationship to violence
- c) services - barriers and solutions

**6. Training**

- a) level of education
- b) services and programs - barriers and solutions

**7. Police and Police Services**

- a) usage
- b) treatment and follow-up
- c) reporting
- d) services - barriers and solutions

## **8. Restraining Orders**

- a) definition of sexual assault - regarding spouses / partners

## **9. Bad Dates**

- a) definition of
- b) frequency
- c) circumstances
- d) solutions

## **10. Miscellaneous**

- a) victimization within the population
- b) service priorities

## **Phase II :- Implementation of Surveys**

### **a) Testing, finalization of interview**

*June 16th - July 1st, 1993*

This process included the testing (10 women were interviewed), wording, length and format. After we modified the interview, we consulted the Project Steering Committee and received final approval.

### **b) One-to-one interviews**

*July 2nd - August 7th, 1993*

Two community-based women assisted with the recruiting and interview process. These women received honoraria for their time, their communication skills, and their participation. This also provided the research team with invaluable contacts and networks (and a growing trust for the project itself).

Interviews were conducted in a variety of places, including cafés, hotels, apartments and local service agencies. We did not place any stipulation on the location of the interview, rather we focused on places both convenient and safe for the women. There were no specific interview times. Interviews were conducted seven days a week and at times that were appropriate to the women.

Eighty-five one-to-one interviews were completed during this five week period. The total number of participants in the project was 145.

### **Phase III - Analysis and Evaluation**

*March to September, 1994*

This included the compilation of the data, analysis and final reporting to the Steering Committee. Liaison occurred with community groups, street-involved women and youth in the formation of recommendations, information and data analysis.

### **Phase IV - Follow-up and Implementation**

*October, 1994 - ongoing*

Almost all of the participants wished to be contacted prior to the distribution of the final report results. Unfortunately, there is no funding currently available, and the Research Team is seeking funding to provide an adequate follow-up with the participants, and with community service providers. The team also believes that additional funding for a support group - facilitated by survey participants - is a necessary extension of this project. While conducting the surveys, long-term issues such as child abuse, spousal and family violence surfaced. For many of the women, this was their first opportunity to talk about them and to address them. The focus groups provided the women with an avenue to talk to other women who have similar experiences.

The Research Team also recommends that various provincial Ministries and service providers be educated with regard to the results and ramifications of this research project. This may expedite the process of change and decreased victimization of street-involved women in the community.



# Methodology

This project obtained data using three different information-gathering techniques: a service provider advisory group, participant focus groups and the participatory women's interview / survey.

All three techniques facilitate and encourage honest, open discussion regarding violence against women in the community, as well as the individual needs and necessary services to be provided to street-involved women. The participation of all of these people became as important as the information that the project gathered.

## a) Service Provider Advisory Group

The coalition of a group of community-based agencies began prior to the design and development of the needs assessment. This group initially identified areas and issues which they believed were relevant to the violence against street-involved women. They also provided a project framework, experiential information, and advice on all aspects of the project. This greatly facilitated the research process, and also provided additional legitimacy and front-line support to the research team.

## b) Participant Focus Groups

Participant focus groups were not part of the original research design. They were added during phase one of the project to assess the appropriateness of the steering committee's recommendations. After one such focus group, the project was re-designed to support and include additional participant focus groups. In total, six focus groups were held involving over 60 street-involved women.

The focus groups provided street-involved women with the opportunity to participate in the design, development and structure of the research. It also provided the research team with face-to-face contact, visibility and recognition amongst other women in the community. The focus groups were extremely flexible. They were held in different locations throughout the community, such as Ray-Cam Community Centre, local cafés, and even hotels. The focus groups varied in length from 1½ to 3 hours. Besides encouraging direct participation and involvement, it also became a mechanism for peer support, information-sharing and service referrals amongst the women.

The focus groups were loosely structured and open-ended. This allowed the research team to gain valuable information which resulted in changes to the original framework outlined by the steering committee. Also, it allowed the research team to pre-code potential responses based on the women's input.

### **c) Participatory Individual Survey**

This was the qualitative and quantitative information-gathering tool used by the research team. It was developed as a result of the data provided by women from the focus groups.

The survey questions were both structured and open-ended. This served two purposes: a) it allowed the women's responses to be quantified and b) it provided valuable insights, experiences and recommendations by the women.

The interview process itself was very flexible. Interviews were conducted in places where the women felt comfortable. These included the streets, cafés, hotels, agencies and even in the local parks. The time frame for a completed questionnaire varied substantially, ranging between one and four hours.

In addition to our research team, and the steering committee, two other women from the community provided assistance with recruitment and outreach. Our steering committee provided additional outreach. The interviewers also varied the hours, days and times when they were available and visible in all areas and streets within the community. In all cases, an honorarium was provided to the participants to acknowledge their time, knowledge, and assistance to the project.

Our target group consisted of community-based women who were currently involved in the sex trade or sex trade activities. There were no age restrictions, nor limitations on physical gender.

From our research regarding women involved in the sex trade, as well as the estimates provided by direct service providers, we estimate that over 600 women are involved in the street sex trade in the community throughout any given month (recognizing that the time and frequency varies within the month). If this is accurate, our project reached approximately 1/4 of all women involved in the sex trade in this community.

In analyzing the survey data, only cumulative percentages are given. Because the number of individual participants was high relative to similar studies (n=85) and the frequency of responses on any given question was never below 75, the author believes the responses to be highly significant and adjusted the responses accordingly.

# Limitations

There were four major limitations to this research project:

- budgetary
- time
- sample population
- project focus

Time and budget were the two primary constraints of the research project. After modifying and enhancing the project to include focus groups, the length of the project increased from 5¼ months to 8 months. The focus groups also placed a great financial strain on other areas of our project by increasing the number of participants in our project. (We initially budgeted honoraria for 100 street-involved women; our actual project facilitated the participation of 145 women). This meant that the research team had to minimize additional costs and decrease contract costs. For example, after phase two of the project, there was little personnel funding to complete the study. This resulted in the principal researcher "volunteering" her time for the final analysis and report writing, and subsequently, a lengthy delay in the final research report (4 months).

Our sample population and the project's focus are also a limitation of the study. Previous research has revealed that information provided by study participants on such highly personal topics may affect the participant's responses. Their responses may be affected by: internal situations (moods and feelings about the topics, previous abuse, or even current alcohol or drug use), and external situations (no shelter or accommodation, recent traumatization). In addition to this, interviews can be difficult to interpret because it can be argued that subjects do not necessarily understand their own actions. (*Lowman, Taking Prostitutes Seriously, p.102*) As well, the questions themselves can bias the responses. The research team believes that this bias was minimized due to the design support and testing of the target population.

Finally, the interviewers expressed the need to de-brief or counsel the women after they participated in the study. Many of the interviews precipitated the need for therapeutic counselling, advocacy and referrals to services in the community. Any additional studies involving this topic and target group would be remiss if they did not include the staff necessary to provide support, counselling and advocacy for the participants.

# Study Results and Analysis

## Demographics

All of our respondents were currently involved in the sex trade. The sex trade was clearly defined by the women as providing sex or sexual gratification in exchange for money, or something of value (this could include alcohol, drugs, or even shelter).

The average age of the participants was 26. The age range of the respondents was between 16 - 55 years of age.

Almost 70% of the respondents were aboriginal, and 27% were Caucasian.

Most of the respondents (71%) were mothers, with the average number of births per person more than 3. Only 16% of the women currently lived with their children. Less than half of the women knew their children's whereabouts.

The majority (88%) of the women were living in the Downtown Eastside / Strathcona community. Almost 18% were homeless and 47% were living in a local hotel. Almost half of the women shared their accommodation with their boyfriend / spouse and economically supported him in varying degrees.

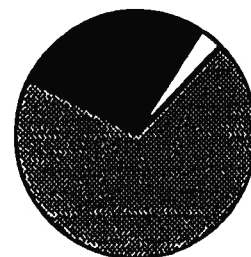
Only 18% of the women had grown up in Vancouver, and 64% of those who had migrated to Vancouver, had come from outside the province.

The participants' family backgrounds varied significantly. Almost 50% had lived with one or both of their parents, and almost 26% had lived in multiple resource settings (such as group homes, foster homes, residential schools). There also appears to be a generational pattern in the women's involvement in the sex trade, with 1/3 of the women having family members currently working in the sex trade or when they were growing up as a child.

Seventy-three percent of the women began working in the sex trade before their 18th birthday, citing economic reasons for their involvement (74%) and their abandonment or runaway status at an early age (17%). This is consistent with the 1984 Vancouver survey conducted by Lowman for the

*Sex Trade: providing sex or sexual gratification in exchange for money, or something else of value.*

**Racial Breakdown**



■ Aboriginal  
■ Caucasian  
■ Other

*Street-involved women are community members, mothers, and victims of abuse.*

"Almost all of the female members of my family worked the streets or are still working."

"My mother was a junkie and a prostitute, she put me on the street when I was 12 so that I could help her pay the rent."

Crazy, I broke up with the ole man when I was 17 and he supported me. Well I'm on my own, I gotta support myself now."

*Runaway phenomenon: a hypothesis asserting that for one reason or another, sex trade workers tend to leave or runaway from home at a relatively early age. Once on their own, these youth must survive with no money, little education or job skills, and no shelter. Many see the sex trade as a viable economic alternative.*

Fraser Committee, where he found that almost 70% had "turned out" before their 18th birthday. (Lowman, *Vancouver Field Study of Prostitution*, 1984).

These two variables are consistent with other studies researching an individual's entry into the sex trade. In Earls' study, two factors were pivotal to entry into prostitution: a) economic alternative - the need to fend for themselves and b) early sexual experiences (abuses) of sex trade workers. (Earls, *Canada's Mental Health*, December, 1990).

All of the women interviewed were on financial assistance or receiving some form of government support.

All of the women expressed an interest in making it better for other sex trade workers, especially youth involved in the sex trade.

1. **Recommendation:** Because only 18% of the women grew up in the DTES / Strathcona community, other communities, including reserve communities must address the health, medical and social issues related to the sex trade and provide appropriate prevention and intervention services for women and children.

## General Questions - Violence

### Have You Ever Been a Victim of Violence?

99% of the women had been victims of violence  
1% had not been victims of violence

### If YES, what types of violence have you experienced?

65% stated that they had experienced physical, sexual and child abuse  
17% had experienced physical, sexual and emotional abuse  
11% experienced violence in the form of child, emotional, and sexual abuse  
5% experienced violence in the form of child, physical or sexual abuse  
1% experienced violence in a single form of abuse, such as emotional, physical, sexual or child

Almost all of the women (97%) had experienced multiple forms of violence, with 73% citing the sexual abuse which they experienced as a child. This is extremely high compared to previous research studies gathering information on intrafamilial sexual abuse. For example, the 1984 Vancouver Field Study found that only 42.4% reported sexual acts/abuse from their family. The author suggests that this study's research group was larger (n=85) and that this project's interviewers had fewer non-responses (only 1 participant did not reply) than the Vancouver Field Study.

One possible reason for this variance may be the relationship which the research team had with the respondents. Many of the women had received direct services and support (referrals, brief counselling, and crisis intervention) from the researchers. This may imply that the participants had a greater belief in the team being able to help the women or make changes based on the information which they provided.

2. **Recommendation:** To implement more prevention and intervention services to children who are victims of sexual abuse. The data suggests that many of the women ran away or left home due to intrafamilial sex and sexual abuse. Support, outreach and intervention services specifically dealing with child sexual abuse must be available or an option for children. Since most of the street-involved women grew up outside Vancouver, all communities should implement or enhance child protection and support services.

■ Sexual Abuse as a Child



*"My stepfather raped me. Every time he did, he gave me a cigarette burn. He told me that it was to remind me of my first love."*

*"I didn't start working until I was 17. When I was 6 my auntie sold me for \$5 to a dirty old man, though. Then my cousins did it. It never stopped."*

*"I was physically assaulted and choked. He wanted to kill me and then have sex with me when I was dead".*

*"This guy offered me \$10 for a blow job. I agreed and got into his van. There were 5 other guys waiting there. They raped me and I didn't even get the \$10."*

*Many of the women stated that they had also been the perpetrators of violence, with almost 1/4 physically assaulting another person or persons (many of whom were other sex trade workers) in this six month time period.*

**If YES, have you experienced any in the past six months while you were working?**

77% of the women had been victims of violence in the past 6 months  
23% had not been victims of violence in the past six months

**If YES, what have they been?**

62% had been sexually assaulted (which was defined as any sexual act without their consent, or without the terms agreed to)  
52% had been beaten by their boyfriend  
48% had been beaten by a customer  
44% had been dumped by their customer or trick  
32% had been assaulted with a knife  
30% were assaulted with the use of a weapon other than a gun or knife  
26% had been the assaulter / beaten up another person  
14% had been beaten by another sex trade worker  
14% had been robbed  
14% had been assaulted by a gun  
14% had been beaten by a pimp  
8% had been dragged by a car  
6% had been held against their will  
4% had been strangled  
2% had been beaten by police

The frequency of these acts of violence varied from individual to individual, but most women had been victims of numerous forms of abuse in the previous six months (the average number of incidents stated per person was seven).

The three primary perpetrators of this violence were tricks / customers, boyfriends / partners and other sex trade workers.

## General Questions - Services

Did you ever want help with these [violent] experiences?

75% of the women stated that they had wanted help for some of their violent experiences.

25% did not want any help for them.

The women who wanted help with their traumas, received or wanted support / services from the following persons or places:

67% went to their friends for support

53% accessed a service agency or counsellor

49% went to the police

42% were admitted to a hospital

27% went to a social worker

11% asked their family for help

9% got a restraining order\* on their victimizer

2% received help from a stranger

2% used the bad date sheet

\*Only 25% of the women believed that the restraining order was effective, citing inappropriate responses by the police and inadequate evidence as reasons for its failure.

There appeared to be consensus that few services were available to assist street-involved women. Interestingly, the police were rarely voluntarily approached for help but were involved in 80% of the cases where the women were hospitalized. The primary sources of voluntary support were through friends and service agencies.

3. Recommendations: Since almost 2/3 of the women seek support or help from their friends and peers, peer support training must be made available to street-involved women. This training would include peer education, community resourcing, and information on how to respond or provide the best care and support to peers who have experienced traumas. To maximize the amount of street-involved women who receive peer support training, it could be made available through existing agencies and services through informal workshops and be accessible to women on a voluntary, as-needed basis.

*"Had a restraining order on my ex-husband. He kept coming around and the police weren't responsive. They knew that I was Native and that I had a criminal record, so they were not too concerned. I just stopped calling."*



*"Society and even counsellors have certain opinions of working girls and they make me feel uncomfortable."*

*"I hitchhiked to the hospital after I was brutally raped and the receptionist told me that, 'hookers don't get raped.'"*

#### **If no, why did you not use these services?**

- 33% felt that they were treated with disrespect, felt judged and were embarrassed by the service or persons
- 27% did not believe that services were effective
- 20% did not know of any services which were available to help with violent experiences
- 13% did not want the police involved
- 7% believed that no one would care
- 7% were afraid to tell anyone

There was a lack of trust for services. The women perceived their treatment as disrespectful and prejudicial. There was also a feeling that the services were not effective in helping them with past experiences (see Worker's Compensation article, page 3).

#### **If YES, why did you use these services?**

- 58% stated that they trusted it
- 56% stated that it was because the service deals with women
- 51% liked / appreciated how they were treated
- 49% had used the service previously
- 38% had seen the service agency's staff in the community / around (visibility)
- 36% had heard of the service from a friend
- 20% were taken there involuntarily by police and/or ambulance
- 4½% felt safe
- 2% had their social worker take them or refer them

#### **Do you like any services?**

- 89% stated that they liked some services
- 11% did not like the services

#### **If Yes, why?**

- 87% believed that they were helped
- 79% liked the people
- 74% trusted the service
- 74% found the service/staff respectful and non-judgmental
- 50% felt that the staff/service were like friends
- 18% stated that it was because of the service's location (provided within the community)
- 18% liked the service

11% liked the service because of its cultural sensitivity  
5% stated that it was because it dealt with women

This indicates that women used services primarily because of trust, treatment of staff, style and delivery of service and the service's location. It is interesting to note that although 70% of the women were aboriginal, only 11% specified cultural sensitivity as a positive characteristic of services in the community. Generally, the women stated that they did not care about their cultural needs at a primary service level. The women did respond, though, that cultural sensitivity might be more important to them at a non-crisis stage of service (secondary service level) such as education and training.

*Trust, staff, service delivery  
and location are critical  
components of effective service.*

4. **Recommendation:** That all staff at service agencies or services which are or could be used by women in the community (including police, Ministry of Social Services workers and hospital services) be required to take training on how to provide appropriate care and services for street-involved women. Many women cited the DEYAS Needle Exchange and the van staff as examples of direct, appropriate and respectful service.
5. **Recommendation:** That all government, health and legal services working with street-involved women be aware of and required to learn of new resources and services available to women.
6. **Recommendation:** A system be implemented to prevent service discrimination and any violation of women's rights.

If NO, why not?

87% felt that the service/staff was degrading and/or that the service was disrespectful to street-involved women

50% did not trust the service/staff

50% did not like the people

25% felt that the service was too bureaucratic (too many structures, questions and forms prior to receiving service).

Do you believe that any of these services helped you?

93% of the women stated that the services helped them

7% of the women believed that the service did not help them

If YES, which ones?

*"I would like a place open at night and on the weekends where you could just go and have a coffee and talk to the other girls."*

A variety of services were listed as providing services which helped them. The four services which the women cited the most frequently were:

- 60% specified DEYAS
- 50% specified the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre
- 31% specified the YWCA Crabtree Corner
- 19% specified Women's Information Safe House

**What, in your opinion would have improved these services?**

- 56% believed a 24 hour drop-in which was open nights and weekends would improve these services
- 39% believed that more services specifically for street-involved women would make a difference
- 31% would like to see more staff/service providers who are sensitive, compassionate and non-judgmental to their street-involved lifestyle, as well as more formerly street-involved women trained and taking active roles as service providers/staff
- 30% would like to see an increase in shelters for street-involved women which would be sensitive to their needs ( i.e. single moms)
- 18% believed that counselling services could be more accessible
- 17% suggested longer hours/extension of hours at these services
- 4% believed that legalizing prostitution would improve services for street-involved women
- 2% would like to see more services for juveniles

It is evident that an increase in street-level services as well as an extension of hours in existing services is critical for street-involved women. Accessibility (time and location) and staff treatment appear to be the most important requirements for appropriate service and service delivery.

The author believes that some women's services are ignorant of the barriers which they create for street-involved women. For example, during the course of the study, the author accompanied one of the survey participants to a battered women's shelter at 11:00pm. The woman was asked a series of questions by the shelter's intake worker. These questions were both threatening and inappropriate such as, "Are you married?" [No], "What is your home address?" [No home and no address], and "Do you use drugs?" After 1 hour of questions, the woman was deemed inappropriate for that shelter's service because of her drug use history. She left and spent the night after her battering sleeping under the Georgia Street viaduct.

7. **Recommendation:** To request more emergency shelter and transitional housing for which are respectful of the issues and specific needs of street-involved women.

8. Recommendation: To request specialized training of any and all services and service providers who could be accessed by women.
9. Recommendation: That a drop-in facility specifically for street-involved women be opened. This facility should be accessible during the evenings and over the weekends when other services are not available. This facility should be staffed by trained community members ( and street-involved women), and have an in-house counsellor as well as direct access to emergency shelter or accommodation for street-involved women.

The women's recommendations also support some of the previous recommendations regarding housing and drop-in services for sex trade workers in the Safer City Task Force Report, January, 1993.

## Housing / Housing Services

### What do you consider to be adequate housing?

The participants clearly defined the characteristics which comprise adequate housing. They are:

- its own bedroom (96%)
- its own bathroom (92%)
- be safe / secure (92%)
- have its own kitchen (92%)
- be clean (87%)
- not shared (81%)
- be spacious (68%)
- be affordable (10%)
- be in a good location (79%) - most women did not believe that there was adequate housing in the Downtown Eastside / Strathcona community for them.

*"Living in a hotel is dangerous, you have to share bathrooms, they are dirty and they have used rigs [needles] in them. A woman threatened to stick me with a needle there last week and she said to me: 'ever heard of AIDS?'"*

### Do you think that you are living in adequate housing?

86% of the women do not believe that they are living in adequate housing  
14% of the women believe that they are

Sixty-five percent of the women responded that they are living in a hotel in the Downtown Eastside or are without any shelter or accommodation (21%). [Note that the women's response to their current housing situation varies slightly with their initial responses in the demographics section (21% as compared to 18%). The interviewers believe that the latter response to be more accurate due to the increased comfort of the participant at the mid-point of the interview.]

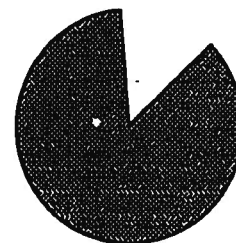
### In your opinion, have you experienced any violence related to housing in the past six months?

38% said that YES, they had experienced violence related to housing  
62% of the women said that NO, they had not

### If YES, what were the circumstances?

100% of the women who responded stated that they had been assaulted by another person or persons other than their boyfriend / spouse

■ Inadequate Housing



*"There is a lot of sexual harassment, homophobia and racial discrimination in housing, especially with hotel rooms."*

48% had been discriminated against or harassed by housing management / staff

19% were assaulted by their boyfriend / spouse / partner

14% were harassed by persons other than the management

**Have you used any services to find housing in the past six months?**

72% had not used any housing services

28% had used a housing service in the past six months

Although only a small proportion of women used any form of housing service, 79% used it to obtain housing within which was affordable / low income, 33% because of the discrimination which they faced as street-involved women, 31% needed a place and 14% wanted to find accommodation in a better location.

The reasons given for not using any housing services were the women's own inability to (no money for accommodation) as well as the lack of information or knowledge about housing services.

**In your opinion, what would make housing services more effective?**

77% believed that more affordable housing ( which would shorten wait lists, and ensure faster placements) for street-involved women would make a difference

50% of the women believed that housing services could be more accessible, and provide more outreach (information) on their services to street-involved women

26% stated that housing services would improve if there was no discrimination against street-involved women

14% believed that an increase in their housing allowance through Ministry of Social Services would facilitate better housing services

**If you could live anywhere, where would you live?**

52% would live anywhere outside the Downtown Eastside/Strathcona area

21% would like to live in the suburbs of Vancouver

13% would live in BC, outside Vancouver

5% were happy where they currently were

5% wished to live anywhere in Canada, as long as it was outside the province of BC

4% wanted to live outside Canada

Ninety-five percent of the women were not satisfied with their current living situation, and most would like the opportunity to find housing outside their work area.

10. **Recommendation:** That more low-cost / social housing be available to women from the Downtown Eastside/Strathcona community. This housing could be located outside the community and be accessible to all women regardless of their street-involvement, financial or familial status.
11. **Recommendation:** That more transitional housing and emergency shelters be available to women in the community. Many women stated that they took more risks when they had no shelter or accommodation secured.
12. **Recommendation:** Because few women knew of any services available to help with housing, existing services should increase their access, provide more information, and outreach to street-involved women in the community.
13. **Recommendation:** That penalties be enforced against landlords who discriminate against or violate tenant rights.

*"Where do you expect me to live on \$325 bucks? Do you expect me to be in a safe place?"*

*[Note: \$325 is the maximum shelter allowance that is currently provided to welfare recipients.]*

## Alcohol and Drugs

Have you ever, even once, used alcohol and other drugs?

100% stated that YES, they had used alcohol and / or other drugs

If YES, when did you start using alcohol and other drugs?

70% were 14 years or under when they began drinking, with 91% of the women beginning as minors (defined as anyone under 19 years of age).  
The average age was 15, but the median age was 13 years of age.

If YES, have you used in the past six months?

94% of the women stated that they had used drugs in the past six months  
6% had not used any drugs in the past six months

If YES, what do you regularly use?

Three types of drugs dominated the women's responses: alcohol (78%), heroin (75%), and cocaine (68%). Intravenous (IV) drug use was the medium which was most used by the women to consume drugs. In addition to these three drugs, Talwin and Ridelin (known as T's and R's), prescription drugs, hash /pot and hallucinogens were used by over 1/3 of the women.

Why do you use alcohol and other drugs?

93% used them to escape reality / emotional pain and/or to forget about work

30% believed they were addicted

18% liked the high/low feeling of the drug or drugs

10% believed that it was part of the lifestyle

4% used them to forget about the past

*"I have to fix to go to work to deal with it and I have to work because I am addicted to heroin."*



"I use it to numb my feelings to go out and work so that I can feel brave."

"I use the drugs as an escape. It helps me to forget reality. I can focus on drugs and avoid other people's expectations of me."

### Does your usage change when you are working?

84% said that their usage changed when working  
16% said that their usage did not change

Almost all of the women (96%) believed that their usage increased while they were working on the street. Of these women, 80% said that they used more in order to work, and 20% believed that they used more when they work primarily because they have more income or money at that time.

In the 1984 Field Study, only 51% of the Vancouver Prostitutes stated that they used drugs while working as a way of escaping the realities of their work (Lowman, 1984:726). This difference may indicate the following: a) drug usage amongst sex trade workers is increasing over time, and/or b) there is a geographic difference in drug use between the general Vancouver population of sex trade workers and the Downtown Eastside / Strathcona population of sex trade workers. Interviews with the police and service providers indicate that the latter is true. Service providers acknowledge increased drug use, specifically intravenous drug use in the Downtown Eastside / Strathcona community.

This feedback is also supported by the 837,859 syringes being distributed and returned through the DEYAS needle exchange program in the first 3 quarters of 1994. (Telephone interview, Judy McGuire, DEYAS, October, 1994).

### When you use (drug or drugs of choice), how often do you use it/them?

In order to compare the women's individual responses, their input was changed to a common time period, in this case, the month.

72% used between 151 - 600 times per month  
17% used drugs between 31 - 150 times per month  
4% used between 16 - 30 times per month  
4% used less than 15 times per month  
3% no response

### Most of the time, when you are using (drug or drugs of choice), about how much do you use at one time (in dollar terms)?

Only 91% of the women provided an answer for this question, and of those who did respond, their monetary amounts varied considerably over time. Their responses were also standardized using the day as the denominator.

31% spent between \$100 - \$200 per day  
20% used under \$100 per day  
19% spent between \$200 - \$300 per day

14% used over \$500 worth of drugs every day  
10% spent between \$300 and \$400 per day  
7% spent between \$400 and \$500 dollars per day on drugs

The frequency and type of drug usage by the women varies dramatically from the findings of the Juvenile Prostitution Survey, which stated that "heavy drug and alcohol use may be less prevalent among this population than might otherwise have been anticipated" (*Committee on Sexual Offences Against Children and Youth, p.1021*).

Our findings show that 50% of the women are spending between \$100 to \$300 per day on alcohol and other drug consumption.

**Have alcohol and other drugs ever been the cause of/or resulted in violence against you or to you?**

91% responded that alcohol and drugs were the cause of, or resulted in violence

9% did not believe that they were related to any of their violent experiences

Many of the women referred to more than one incident or experience when responding to this question. One hundred percent of the women were victims of physical assault as a result of another person or persons under the influence of alcohol and other drugs. These assaults were instigated by: customers, partners and / or pimps, drug dealers, or other sex trade workers. In addition to the assaults and beatings, many of the women stated that their own drug usage had led to their victimization, such as: 37% overdosed due to drugs in the past six months and 58% believed that they were assaulted / victimized because of their own drug use / intoxication. Also, 14% of the women believed that they had committed acts of violence due to the influence of alcohol and other drugs.

When asked to estimate the frequency of the violence which the women had experienced over the past six months, many were unable to keep track counting them all (23%), and an additional 51% of the women had experienced between 2 and 10 acts of violence related to alcohol and / or other drugs. Only 13% had not experienced any violence related to alcohol and other drugs in the past six months.

**Have you ever sought help for your alcohol and drug use?**

78% of the women sought help for their alcohol and drug use  
22% did not seek any service / help

*100% of the women who had experienced violence related to alcohol or other drugs were victims of physical assault.*

*"I wanted to go to detox, but by the time I could have got into detox, I did not want to go anymore."*

*"I could never get into detox when I wanted to, so when I wanted to detox, I would go to jail to try and kick the habit. It gave me an escape from the lifestyle, gave me a place to sleep and food to eat."*

*According to the 1991 Census Canada statistics, the Downtown Eastside/ Strathcona community's population is an almost equal distribution of men and women. Despite this only 6 (9%) of the 66 adult detox beds available in the DTES/Strathcona community are for women.*

### **What was the help you sought?**

Over half of the women (56%) responded that they had tried more than one alcohol and drug service. Services which the women accessed or tried to access included Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous (64%), detoxification centres (60%), treatment centres (41%) and/or an alcohol and drug counsellor. Interestingly, only a small percentage of women attempted to access alcohol and drug clinics (6%), and a small percentage of women attempted the methadone program, group therapies and the hospital as alternate methods of support.

When asked whether or not they were able to use the alcohol and drug service which they sought help from, 42% of the women were unable to because of wait lists, their inability to receive immediate service and / or the attitude of the staff at the service.

According to the 1991 Census Canada statistics, the Downtown Eastside/ Strathcona community's population is an almost equal distribution of men and women. Despite this only 6 (9%) of the 66 adult detox beds available in the DTES/Strathcona community are for women.

### **What, in your opinion, would make the alcohol and drug services more effective?**

One hundred percent of the women who responded to this question wished to see a more comprehensive service, which would include more flexible hours and service, a drop-in / shelter component and an ability to receive individualized care for their alcohol and drug issues.

100% believe that there should be more services for women with alcohol and drug issues.

85% would like to see alcohol and drug services and their staff who are respectful, non-judgmental and accommodating to the needs of street-involved women.

73% of the women would like to see more mobile alcohol and drug services and more outreach services to women in the community. The women recommended more alcohol and drug outreach workers and more mobile van services to support and provide additional alcohol and drug services to sex trade workers.

49% would like to see a detox service which allows the children / support for their children

48% would like to be able to detox with their husband / partner

45% would like to be able to detox outside their work area.. The six female detox beds available for women from the community are within the women's work area.

10% would like to see better follow-up care or care after they accessed a service

4% of the women would like to see medical services which are better able to respond to the women's individual alcohol and drug needs

3% of the women would like to see more services which were culturally specific

14. **Recommendation:** That more detox services be provided to women in the Downtown Eastside / Strathcona community. These detox services should be flexible, individualized and more respectful of the women's individual needs. The Downtown Eastside Street Youth Detox is a model of service which most closely reflects the needs of the respondents (see Appendix B).

15. **Recommendation:** That all Alcohol and Drug Program (ADP) staff be required to take training on how to provide appropriate, sensitive and respectful services to street-involved women.

16. **Recommendation:** That more funding is provided for alcohol and drug services for women in the community. These services should be community-based, flexible and accessible to street-involved women. For example, only 6% of the women accessed clinical forms of alcohol and drug service.

17. **Recommendation:** That comprehensive services and peer support education include alcohol and drug education, harm reduction and resource information.

18. **Recommendation:** Since almost all of the women use alcohol and drugs and most have had children, there needs to be an increase in education and harm-reduction regarding drugs and pregnancy. Community programs like YWCA Crabtree Corner and Sheway should receive increased funding and increased mobility to street-involved women in the community.

*"Detox was like being in jail, it was difficult. There needs to be more after-care, and support to help build new lives."*

*"Some detox workers treat people bad because they do not know the street and they put you down and judge you."*

*"Being able to detox with husband / partner is important and having that extra support would make difference for me. These run against partners going in together are ridiculous!"*

*"At the detox, people always talk about wanting a fix or a drink. It is not a supportive atmosphere. They should have day trips outside the detox to the park, swimming or even bowling."*

*"There needs to be training programs and services that deal with people with alcohol and drug problems, like having training and ongoing support instead of just not accepting people."*

## HIV/AIDS

The first set of questions were asked in order to assess the women's own awareness and beliefs about HIV / AIDS. Ninety-nine percent of the women were familiar with HIV / AIDS and all of these women had some fears or concerns regarding the HIV virus.

When asked to specify what their concerns were, the women said that they were concerned about:

- 91% contracting it from a customer
- 76% getting a customer to practice safe sex
- 74% other sex trade worker's usage of condoms
- 33% having the disease and other workers finding out or having a knowledge of it
- 32% about being assaulted because of the disease or fear of disease by a customer
- 31% about transmitting the virus to others
- 14% sharing of needles for intravenous drug use
- 6% were concerned about condom breakage
- 4% about their friends/co-workers dying because of it

In your opinion, have you experienced any violence directly related to HIV/AIDS in the past six months?

- 31% had experienced violence which they believed was related to HIV/AIDS
- 69% had not experienced any violence which was related to HIV/AIDS

The circumstances relating to HIV/AIDS violence were:

- 71% were victimized while attempting to get a customer to practice safer sex
- 64% fear of their customer(s)
- 14% related to abuse / violence of the police
- 7% assaults by other workers for their unsafe sex or HIV status
- 7% condom breakage

What do you believe would eliminate or reduce the violence?

One in five women were pessimistic about anything affecting the violence related to HIV / AIDS, but of those who did think that the amount of violence relating to HIV / AIDS could be affected, suggested the following:

*"Some men do not want to use condoms so that you have to trick them into using them"*

*"A lot of men will offer to pay more money if they don't use a condom. If they won't they find someone who is more desperate or who is more intoxicated."*

*"Working women are worried about others with AIDS working. One woman was chased out of the area, because she bragged about having AIDS and did not want to use condoms".*

*"The police told a potential customer not to touch me because I had AIDS, and my boyfriend had HIV written as the reason for his unemployability right on his form at Social Services."*

*"There is a man who has AIDS and he gets very violent with the girls because he blames them for it."*

*"Other girls ask for used points on the street because they do not want to have to go to DEYAS for more needles while they are working. They want a fix right away and then after that they worry that they might get AIDS."*

*"Some women don't use condoms because they are so desperate for a fix or they are so stoned and drunk and are not concerned at the time."*

- 85% wanted an expansion or extension of needle exchange services
- 68% believed that more worker and customer education was necessary
- 38% would like to see more women working in groups or buddying up
- 28% believed that legalization / brothels would decrease or minimize the violence
- 23% believed that increased education and training of the police would help
- 16% would like to see street lighting improved or enhanced
- 5% believe that enhancing alcohol and drug services would help the violence related to HIV / AIDS

These responses indicate the women's awareness of, and use of, the current needle exchange service (DEYAS) in the community. This coincides with the women's consumption of drugs intravenously. The participants' concern continues to focus on harm reduction strategies, such as Needle Exchange services and education services.

The 1994 report of the Task Force into Illicit Narcotic Overdose Deaths in British Columbia also concluded that the use of and expansion of needle exchanges reduces the level of risk to IV drug users including transmission of infectious disease and criminal activities, as well as physical violence related to IV drug use. (*Task Force Report Into Illicit Narcotic Overdose Deaths in British Columbia.*)

19. **Recommendation:** The immediate expansion of DEYAS Needle Exchange services. The success of the DEYAS needle exchange is apparent in their over 100% needle return rate in 1993-94 (more needles are being returned than are given out). Expansion of existing services and increased mobility to the Needle Exchange might minimize the harm against unsafe fixing.
20. **Recommendation:** Increased HIV/AIDS education specifically for sex trade workers and for their customers. Peer education and training should be provided to women with regard to HIV, AIDS and other related issues in an appropriate, respectful manner.
21. **Recommendation:** That the City of Vancouver increase lighting in areas where women are working which are inappropriately lit.

## Training

Ninety-one percent of the women did not have their high school diploma. Forty percent of these women had completed grade nine or lower.

Only 44% of the women had received any training or skills education since being involved in the sex trade.

The training which these women received was:

32% went to community college

24% began a GED / upgrading their high school education

24% attended lifeskills / specialized training programs for women

15% received some training / skills in prison

12% received on-the-job training

6% obtained some caregiver / support worker training

In your opinion, has the absence of training / education affected your involvement in the sex trade?

60% stated that YES, it had affected their involvement in the sex trade

40% felt that it had nothing to do with their involvement

Of those who believed that it had affected their involvement, one hundred percent believed that it had to do with financial reasons such as: supporting their family, being unemployed and needing money, and/or not able to live on welfare.

*"It is more than being educated that people end up on the street, it is about having no choice."*

In addition to this:

63% did not believe that they had the education or skills necessary to get a job

60% did not have a resume or the other job skills necessary to find a job

59% believed that their self-esteem was lower because of their lack of education

22% stated that their husband or boyfriend didn't want them to have a job

Ninety-three percent of the women were interested in a training program if it was available to them, especially in the areas of lifeskills (67%), self-esteem (62%), caregiver / social services training (50%), on-the-job training (38%), GED / upgrading (33%), or specialized programs such as technical services, and business programs (30%).

What in your opinion could improve current training programs and services?

72% wanted more (individualized / specialized) programs for street-involved women

52% believed that there should be more advertising / outreach about current programs

36% would like to see more affordable or free training programs for women

34% believed that there should be easier access to programs for street-involved women

33% would like to see more support (day-care/ funding) while they were going to school

22. Recommendation: To expand or provide more life skills training programs (similar to Vancouver Native Health's program specifically for street-involved women in the community). This program would include community resource education, peer support education and other transitional skills and supports such as upgrading.

23. Recommendation: To increase access to existing programs by providing outreach and accessible information about training programs and services available for women.

24. Recommendation: To increase the incentive / monetary amount available for persons who are on financial assistance and wishing to take a training program. [Currently, the Ministry of Social Services will only allow a \$100 training allowance.]

*"Welfare should be more helpful in trying to get training for people instead of penalizing you for it."*



## Police / Police Services

Have you used Police Services in the past six months?

37% said that YES, they had accessed the police  
63% had not accessed Police for services during this time period

If YES, why?

49% accessed Police because of a bad date, physical and/or sexual assault  
21% asked for help over domestic violence  
17% had been involved with Police involuntarily due to warrants for their arrest, etc.  
7% had been robbed  
7% knew some of the Police (There was one officer in particular who was highlighted by the women as trustworthy and respectful. It was his involvement which made accessing the police an option for them.)

For the majority of women, they did not access the Police or their service because of the following reasons:

44% do not believe that they get help from them and/or that it was a waste of time  
34% do not trust them  
25% avoid the Police  
17% did not believe that they had a need to

What are your perceptions of Police Services?

Eleven percent of the women responded positively towards the Police and their services (that they are okay and that the Police do a good job).

The remaining 89% of the responses were negative:

86% stated that the service was inconsistent / dependent on the Police Officer  
74% did not trust the Police  
72% did not believe that they were taken seriously because of their occupation as a sex trade worker  
64% of the women believed that the Police were disrespectful to them  
58% believed that they were harassed by the Police  
47% of the women perceived the police as uncooperative to their needs



■ Had not accessed Police

*"It is dangerous to report to police because you will be called a rat. This puts you in danger on the street."*

*"A policeman was sitting across the street while two girls were being beaten by about 14 gang-involved men. I asked him why he did not respond, he said 'they deserved it for being on the street' and he just drove away... The police only become involved when the community is affected or the media gets involved."*

*"As if I'd report a bad date to the Police...the bad date was a cop."*

*"Police should learn more about street people and try to be more understanding instead of jumping to conclusions."*

*"Police tell johns that they could get AIDS from the girls to try and scare them off."*

*"It is a waste of time and money for police to hassle johns because it is consensual sex between adults. It is a waste of taxpayer's money."*

*"I think that most women would rather report bad dates to the Bad Date Sheet than to the Police."*

*"Police should try and protect working girls instead of trying to get rid of them and move them."*

To understand the context for the women's beliefs or perceptions of the Police and their services, the women were also asked:

**What are your perceptions of the City Police and their services towards your customers?**

Again, only a small proportion (15%) of the women responded positively with regard to the Police's treatment of their customers. Almost half (49%) of the women felt that their customers were harassed, and almost 25% believed that they were treated with disrespect by the Police.

**What are your perceptions of the City Police and their Services Towards other sex trade workers?**

Only 7% of the women believed that the Police were doing a good job and the remainder of the responses were consistent with their personal experiences with the Police.

**Do you currently report all crimes or traumas to the Police?**

83% of the women did not report all crimes or traumas to the Police.  
17% of the women reported some of the crimes or traumas to the Police.

**If Yes, why do you report them?**

50% only reported the extremely serious assaults (i.e. when they are hospitalized or need medical assistance)  
42% wish to have bad dates prosecuted  
8% because of common sense / safety of themselves and others

**If NO, why not?**

65% of the women did not report any crimes/traumas because of their distrust in the Police and the Police Services and that they believe it to be a waste of time  
19% avoid the Police and their services entirely  
11% did not want to be seen on the street as a "rat" or a "snitch"

**What, in your opinion, could improve the services of the Police?**

Sixteen percent of the women did not believe that anything could improve the Police's services to street-involved women, but the other 84% articulated that they could be improved by:

- 97% wanted more respect for themselves and other street-involved women / that they should take bad dates seriously
- 89% believed that there should be more education and training of the police about street-involved women
- 35% would like an increase of female officers on the force
- 26% believed that the Police should have more flexibility to meet their individual situations and needs
- 9% wanted increased Police staffing
- 6% wanted fewer female officers
- 2% believed that the response time for street-involved women could improve

The women's responses support the general perception that sex trade workers do not trust the Police and the Police Services. Eighty-nine percent of the participants had had negative experiences related to the Police. Many of the women spoke of inappropriate conduct and incidents by Police to them or to other street-involved women. Interestingly, no other services or service providers elicited similar responses. The results seem to indicate a lack of accountability as well as an absence of sensitivity training and personal and professional Codes of Conduct for the Police and Police services.

25. **Recommendation:** That the police be required to take training on how to provide appropriate, respectful services to street-involved women. That a staff screening process be implemented for officers who are on police teams which work with street-involved women.
26. **Recommendation:** That the police be educated and trained on the community resources and services that are available to women.
27. **Recommendation:** That the Police develop and follow a Code of Conduct for their officers and service providers. Simultaneously, that an independent review of any and all officers involved in inappropriate conduct be implemented.

*"Ever hear of dumping by the Police? Some people dump women off at the University of British Columbia (UBC) or Stanley Park. This puts the women in a dangerous position and at risk of further harm."*

*"I don't use the police because I don't trust them. It is more trouble than it is worth., besides, they probably won't do anything anyway."*

*"I saw a 15 or 16 year old get backhanded by a cop and the cop told her to 'go home and be a good girl'."*

## Bad Dates

In order to obtain a clear understanding of what constitutes a bad date, the women were asked to define it. They responded that it was any date which involved any physical, sexual or emotional acts of violence as well as any form of robbery / financial loss as a result of a customer. This definition includes unpaid sex, kidnapping, harassment, dumping and even death.

98% of the women had been victims of violence as a result of a bad date  
2% of the women had not been victimized by a bad date

When asked to remember how many bad dates that they had in the last six months, the women responded:

36% had between 2 - 5 bad dates  
24% had one bad date  
13% had over 20 bad dates or too many to count  
11% had between 6 - 10 bad dates  
10% had none  
6% had between 11 - 20 bad dates

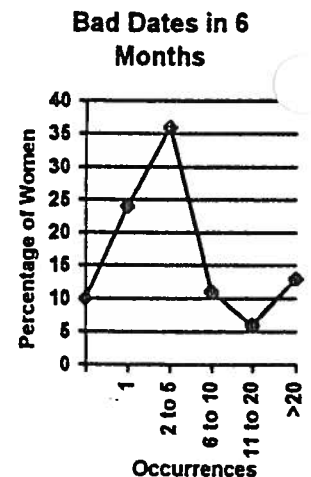
When asked what the circumstances of the bad date were:

94% of the women had been physically beaten or assaulted  
90% of the women stated financial loss / robbery for at least one of their bad dates  
89% of their bad dates were a result of sexual assault / gang or group rape  
80% were dumped  
48% were assaulted with a weapon (knife, gun or other weapon)  
26% were assaults identified by the customer's culture  
11% were held against their will  
4% were a result of their dates intoxication

What, in your opinion, could be done to eliminate or minimize the number of bad dates?

Eleven percent of the women did not believe that anything could be done to decrease the number of bad dates. The other women responded with a number of recommendations to decrease the number of act of violence which they experience while working. These included:

67% implementing a buddy system amongst working women



*"Some girls rip off dates and then the date comes back, picks someone else up and takes it out on them."*

- 62% wanted more street-level and mobile outreach services such as the needle exchange van
- 62% would like more intervention / education for young persons entering the sex trade
- 43% would like to see additional training and education relating to the sex trade for the Police
- 41% recommended a safe house or shelter for street-involved women
- 30% suggested a drop-in specifically for street-involved women
- 24% want an increase in community education about the sex trade
- 20% suggest that legalization would provide the women with more control over their own situation / dates
- 18% believe that women should avoid certain situations all together
- 18% would like to see more reporting of bad dates and in turn, more prosecutions of bad dates
- 16% recommend better lighting in areas where women are known to work

The survey participants reiterated their concern for young girls and boys entering the sex trade. They suggested that information, service and interventions occur so that these young persons can "get out before it is too late". There was a sense of urgency by the respondents, and a common understanding that children on the streets needed immediate support.

*Criminal Code section 212.4 states that, "Every person, who, in any place, obtains or attempts to obtain, for consideration, the sexual services of a person who is under the age of eighteen years is guilty of an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years." (S.212.4, Martin's Criminal Code)*

There is a section in the Criminal Code, 212.4 regarding the procurement of sexual services of a person who is under the age of 18 years of age. This implies that the emphasis is on charging the customer with sexual abuse, rather than stigmatizing or criminalizing the child involved in the sex trade for solicitation.

Bill C-49, amending Section 195.1 of the Criminal Code of Canada came into effect on January, 1986. The purpose of this amendment was to control street solicitation.

A report by John Lowman in 1989 for the Department of Justice assessed this law. He suggested that its enforcement had been costly, discriminatory and ineffective. (*Background on Soliciting, p.1, Downing*).

These legislations were enacted to minimize: a) street-level sex trade and b) the number of children being sexually abused by consumers of the sex trade. Unfortunately, C-49, which charges the sex trade workers has resulted in 2800 arrests. The Bill 212.4, which is in place to protect the youth, has led to only 4 arrests. (*212.4 Discussion Paper, October 12, 1994*)

28. **Recommendation:** Increase the number of mobile outreach services in the community. This could be modelled after the DEYAS Needle Exchange mobile van service. This mobile service could provide crisis intervention, support to street-level women in remote work areas.
29. **Recommendation:** Provide a safe house or emergency shelter for street-involved women. Many of the women stated that they took greater risks when they did not have any shelter or accommodation, this might provide the women with another option to minimize the risks which they take.
30. **Recommendation:** Develop a drop-in which was available to women during the evenings and through the weekends. This drop-in would provide peer support, crisis intervention, on-site counselling, advocacy and referrals for shelter / accommodation.
31. **Recommendation:** That a review of the legislation concerning solicitation (Bill C-49) occur, to assess the law from the perspective of the sex trade workers and the legislation's impact on violence against the women.
32. **Recommendation:** To provide more intervention and services for young persons (minors) who are entering or currently in the sex trade. This should be a comprehensive service with a drop-in component which is both responsive and flexible to the youth's needs. The Downtown Eastside Youth Alcohol and Drug Services model could be used for this service. (See Appendix C)
33. **Recommendation:** To increase public awareness and community education about their duty to report (Child and Family Services Act) any children in need of protection. this would include reporting of children involved in the sex trade.

## General Questions - Violence

Within the sex trade, do you believe that some persons are victimized more than others?

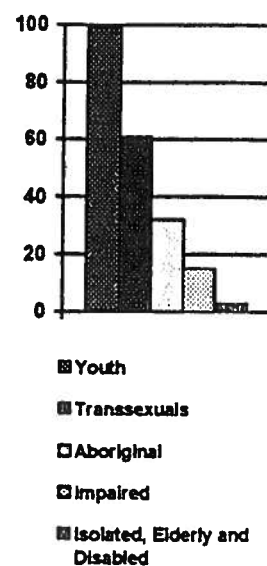
Ninety-seven percent of the women believed that some identifiable groups of persons were victimized more than others. The groups identified by the women were:

- 99% believed that girls and boys (youth working in the sex trade) were more at risk of being victimized than adult sex trade workers
- 61% believed that transsexual / transvestites were more victimized than other sex trade workers
- 32% believed that aboriginal women were more victimized than other cultures in the sex trade
- 15% believed that persons noticeably under the influence of alcohol and drugs were more at risk of being victims of violence
- 3% of the women believed that women working in remote areas, older women, and mentally disabled women were also at higher risk of being traumatized

What do you think should be done about this?

Twenty-three percent of the women did not believe that anything could or would decrease the acts of violence against these high risk groups. An additional 22% did not know what could be done to minimize the traumas against these groups of persons. The remainder of the women, though, made the following recommendations:

- 72% recommended more support systems and services for young people to get off the street
- 40% believed that there should be more community education/tolerance, community/public reporting of victimizers and support
- 22% would like an increased police response to high risk groups / frequent victims
- 20% would like an increase in the number of street workers
- 12% would like prostitution legalized
- 12% would like a drop-in facility specifically for street-involved women



*"There needs to be more tolerance in the services down here for transsexuals and transvestites."*

*The Statements of Principle of the BC Caucus states that the sexual procurement of a child is sexual abuse.*

*"Someone jumped me, put me in a neck hold, dragged me into an alley and stole \$80 from me. He then began beating me with a board. I screamed for help, and while he was putting a plastic bag over my head, I saw others watching. But no one helped me."*

*"If you admit that you have an alcohol and drug problem, the Ministry will get your kids taken away. This just becomes another reason to hit the street."*

**34. Recommendation:** That a street level service for high-risk groups of individuals be implemented, using the model of the Downtown Eastside Alcohol and Drug Service. This coincides with the recommendations made with regard to bad dates.

**35. Recommendation:** That the community be educated in providing support and reporting any acts of violence against street-involved women. This might include information / workshops provided at non-traditional places in the community, such as cafés, stores, and non-health services. Information might decrease the acts of violence or increase the amount of intervention by the community when they witness acts of violence against street-involved women.

The United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child in article 34: States Parties that undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. For these purposes States Parties shall in particular take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent

- a) the inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity
- b) the exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices;
- c) the exploitative use of children in pornographic performance and materials

*(UN Convention on the Rights of a Child, 1989, p.15)*

**What, in your opinion, would be the most immediate solutions, or steps to help eliminate or minimize the violence against street-involved women?**

The following are the priorities of the survey participants. These are also prevalent in their recommendations for improved services and decreased victimization of women involved in the sex trade.

- 100% of the women stated that the enhancement or provision of the **basic necessities** (safe/affordable housing, food, money and day care) was the first, most important step to help eliminate the violence.
- 85% believed that an **individualized detox service** for women in the community as well as more specialized alcohol and drug services was also a priority in the elimination / minimization of violence against them.
- 66% suggested more **training / transitional programs** available to street-involved women.



- 56% believed that increased community education regarding the sex trade was also important
- 33% recommended a safe house or drop-in
- 31% recommended improving Police services through education, increased response time and increased sensitivity
- 13% recommended that prostitution be legalized and brothels allowed
- 4% advocated for stiffer weapons control / laws

**If you had a million dollars, what would you do with it?**

This question was asked in order to provide the women with an opportunity to de-brief and with the intent of ending the interview on a positive note. Interestingly, over 90% of the women wanted to use the money to help others, specifically young person prior to their "entrenchment" in the sex trade.



# **Violence Against Persons Who Prostitute: The Experience in British Columbia**

This study provides information about violence against people who sell sexual services (particularly street-involved women and youths) before and after the enactment of the communicating law (*Criminal Code* section 213) on 20 December 1985. Using a variety of information sources -- some of which relate to British Columbia, others to Vancouver -- we describe patterns of violence against persons who prostitute, the offenders involved, measures being taken to prevent violence, and some of the difficulties being experienced in the process. The report deals with information available as of December 1994.

## **1. Scope of Study**

### **Violence:**

“Intense or severe force; severe or injurious treatment or action; an unfair exercise of power or force; an inordinate vehemence of expression or feeling.”

Living Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary, 1973-74 edition.

In the present study our main focus is on violence against persons as a result of their involvement in the sex trade. No doubt there are many ways in which an understanding of a person's experiences prior to their beginning to prostitute is relevant to understanding the violence associated with the sex trade, but they lie outside the ambit of this study.

In addition to considering violence against sex trade workers in the most obvious sense -- i.e. murders, assaults, threats and so on -- we also examine other problems, such as drug overdose death, because the sex and illicit drug trade often overlap. Over the past two years or so a growing number of heroin and other illicit drug overdose deaths have occurred in Vancouver and around British Columbia. A substantial number of the overdoses were of people who appear in Vancouver Police Department (VPD) records as having been involved in prostitution. We provide information about the connection between illicit drug use and prostitution where possible. Also, we touch on other aspects of the lifestyles of women involved in prostitution that increases their vulnerability. Many women involved in prostitution are homeless. Their homelessness shapes their lifestyle. Many street-involved women live in hotels on the Downtown Eastside and report that they are victimized more in these living situations than they would be in others. Thus we include in this report information (mainly from Currie et. al., 1995 -- see p. 56 below) about violence and housing.

Nevertheless, the largest part of the report deals with the *criminal victimization* of people during the course of their involvement with the sex trade (acknowledging that several of the murders included in our information are probably more related to the drug trade than they are to prostitution). The *Criminal Code* offences of concern to us include: first and second degree murder (s.231), manslaughter (s.232), attempted murder (s.239), uttering threats (s.264.1), assault (s.265), assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (s.267), aggravated assault (s.268), sexual assault (s.271), sexual assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (s.272), aggravated sexual assault (s.273), forcible confinement (s.279), robbery (s.343), and extortion (s.346).

Also, we examine the offences of procuring and living on the avails -- s.212. (1) (a) through (j)<sup>1</sup> and (2) -- and offering to obtain the sexual services of a youth (s.212. (4)) regardless of whether they involve elements of criminal violence as defined in the above Canadian Criminal Code sections.

## ***Study Design***

### **The study includes the following components:**

- 1) Interviews with various key players (three people who prostitute, one pimp,<sup>2</sup> seven police officers, six service providers).
- 2) Review of Vancouver Police Department records on sexual assaults of prostitutes.
- 3) Review of Vancouver Police Department records on prosecutions for procuring and living on the avails of prostitution.
- 4) Descriptive analysis of "Bad Trick Sheets" for the period 1985-1993 published at various times by ASP (Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes), POWER (Prostitutes and Other Women for Equal Rights) and DEYAS (Downtown Eastside Youth Activities Society).
- 5) Review of newspaper articles on prostitution, particularly those mentioning violence against prostitutes, for the period 1900-1993, with descriptive statistical analysis for the period 1964-1993.
- 6) Review of RCMP Violent Crime Unit MACROS database on murders and assaults in British Columbia involving known prostitutes and pimps.
- 7) Review of the findings of the study of violence against street-involved women on the Downtown Eastside (Currie et. al., 1995).
- 8) Prostitute victimization survey.

### **Among other things, the research attempts to answer the following questions posed by the Department of Justice Canada:**

- a) Has there been an increase of violence against prostitutes since the enactment of the communicating law in December 1985? Who are the perpetrators of this violence?
- b) In what ways, if any, has the relationship between police and prostitutes changed since the enactment of the communicating law?
- c) Have prostitutes been forced to work in more remote areas since the enactment of the communicating law? Do prostitutes work in greater isolation? Are some strolls more dangerous than others? How willing are prostitutes to report their victimization to the police?
- d) Has the communicating law had an effect on the incidence of pimping and the modus operandi of pimps? Have there been more arrests of pimps in recent years?

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<sup>1</sup> The *Criminal Code* sections are reproduced on p.97.

<sup>2</sup> The term "pimp" does not appear in the *Criminal Code*, which prohibits living in whole or in part on the avails of the prostitution of another person. But on the street, a distinction is made between "boyfriends" (relationships with a partner that are not deemed to be exploitive) and what we call "career" or "professional" pimps, men who set out to make a living by "managing" and exploiting prostitutes.

- e) Is alcohol and illicit-drug use/abuse a factor in the violence prostitutes experience?
- f) What are the difficulties in discovering, investigating and prosecuting offenses involving violence against prostitutes?
- g) What social and legal strategies would police, social service workers and prostitutes like to see introduced to combat violence against prostitutes?

**Sources of information**

- Databases:**
- Vancouver Sun* news 1964-1993.  
Profile of numbers of articles mentioning a) prostitution and b) violence against sex trade workers (treats each article as a case.)
  - Vancouver Sun* news 1975-1993.  
Examination of prostitution news themes.
  - Vancouver Sun* articles 1975-1993 and *Province* 1984-1993.  
Profiles of murders and assaults (treats each incident as a case).  
For case scenarios, see Appendix 1 (murders) and Appendix 2 (other violence).
  - VPD data on assaults of women known to prostitute.  
Descriptive statistical profile, and case scenarios (Appendix 3).
  - Bad Trick Sheets 1985-1993.  
Descriptive statistical profile of incidents.
  - VPD information on prosecutions for living on the avails and procuring.  
Descriptive statistical profile of offenders and offences.  
Case scenarios (Appendix 4).
  - DEYAS/WATARI 1993 Downtown Eastside survey of street-involved women 1993.  
Descriptive statistical profile of victimization.
  - Prostitute Victim Survey 1994.  
Descriptive statistical profile of victimization.
  - RCMP data on murders and assaults of women known to prostitute.  
Descriptive statistical profile.
  - VPD data on causes of death of women known to prostitute.  
Descriptive statistical profile.
- Interviews:**
- a) Prostitute victim survey (for question schedule see Appendix 5);
  - b) Vancouver police -- interviews with members of patrol, the vice squad, sexual offenses squad, and the homicide division;
  - c) Service providers in Downtown South and the Downtown Eastside;
  - d) Interviews with women involved in the sex trade (for transcripts see Appendix 6).

## 2. Violence in the News

In constructing portraits of violence in the sex trade, we have drawn from several ongoing studies of prostitution in Vancouver. One of these studies examines Vancouver newspaper articles mentioning prostitution or prostitution law enforcement. Articles were identified by searching the daily editions of the *Vancouver Sun* from 1900 to the present (searches of the *Province* are still being conducted). All but two of the annual searches of the *Sun* are complete (although searcher reliability checks have yet to be undertaken<sup>3</sup>). For the purposes of the present study, we use this collection of articles in two ways:

1) A study of the long-term trends in the **number of articles** mentioning prostitution, the news themes dealt with, and the number mentioning violence against sex trade workers. In this analysis, *each news article constituted a case*.

2) To provide information about **incidents of violence** against sex trade workers. In this analysis, *each incident constituted a case*.

Because of the sheer volume of information at our disposal (several thousand articles) we limit the analysis of long term trends in the number of articles to an examination of *The Vancouver Sun*. The analysis of the number of articles covers the period 1964-1993, while the analysis of prostitution news themes is limited to the period 1975-1993.<sup>4</sup> Also, we have examined the whole body of prostitution articles back to 1900 to see how many talked about violence against prostitutes.

The study of violence cases covers the period 1975-1993. Information for the period 1964-1984 was drawn exclusively from the *Sun*. Information about incidents occurring between 1984 and 1993 was drawn from the *Sun* and *Province*.

### *Criteria for Including Articles for the Thematic Analysis*

The analysis of prostitution news themes was generated from articles collected in daily searches of *The Vancouver Sun*<sup>5</sup>, for the years 1975 to 1993. These searches yielded 1607 articles that specifically mentioned, even if only tangentially, any incident about, or any individual involved in the sex trade (including "exotic dancers"). Occasionally in a series of articles relating to a specific incident published over several months, only one or two of the articles made a connection with prostitution (e.g., the "alcohol murders" described on p. 20). In such cases, we included only those articles that *specifically* mentioned persons or incidents related to prostitution.

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<sup>3</sup> The reliability check will involve the random selecting of two months each year to yield a measure of the accuracy of different searchers (of whom there have been over twenty) and give an indication of the amount of error in the overall search.

<sup>4</sup> This is an update of the study by J. Gordon and J. Lowman (1993).

<sup>5</sup> Daily searches of the *Province* were also conducted for the period 1984 to 1993.

## *Coding of News Themes*

In our thematic analysis, we examine temporal patterns in the number of articles on violence, and the attention given to violence in comparison to other prostitution news “themes.”<sup>6</sup>

The thematic analysis identifies the major news themes appearing in all articles mentioning prostitution. We coded each article as having up to three themes, assigned in order of importance. Since our objective was to provide an overview of major news themes relating to prostitution, not an exhaustive analysis, in the small number of articles (less than 3%) containing more than three themes (for example, the *Sun*'s five part series on prostitution published in 1993) we included what we judged to be the three most important.

For the purposes of the thematic analysis, all articles were coded. Articles making any mention of violence against sex trade workers, regardless of whether violence was a major news theme, were then distinguished from the others, so that we could examine temporal variations in the number of times violence against prostitutes was mentioned at all, and the number of times it constituted a main news theme. We defined ‘violence’ as any mention of a crime committed against prostitutes that involved some level of physical force or threat of force, or any article that talked generally about violence in the sex trade, be it associated with pimps, customers or other prostitutes. The ‘violence’ category did not necessarily include articles mentioning “procuring” or “living on the avails of prostitution,” even in the case of youths, unless it mentioned an element of force or threat of force.

## *Long Term Trends*

In addition to examining trends in the number of articles mentioning prostitution back to 1964, we have reviewed our complete collection of *Vancouver Sun* articles for mentions of violence against prostitutes. Although we will not calculate the annual numbers of articles prior to 1970 until we complete searcher reliability checks, preliminary analysis reveals distinct temporal fluctuations in the number of articles mentioning prostitution. Since 1900 there have been two main periods of talk about prostitution in the *Sun*. The first is from 1900 to 1920, the period of the social purity and anti-white slavery campaigns, and the second from 1976 to the present time, during which much of the concern about prostitution has been about the street trade and its effect on residential neighborhoods. During the intervening years from 1920 to 1975, there was also a substantial number of articles in certain years. In the 1920s and 1930s, these articles talked mostly about brothel prostitution, campaigns by municipal politicians to suppress brothel prostitution, and inquiries into allegations of graft and corruption in the Vancouver Police Department. From roughly 1940 to 1975, in most years, relatively few articles mentioned prostitution, but there are some notable exceptions -- for example, in 1959 there were 58 articles, many of which were prompted by the Vancouver Police Chief's publicizing his belief that “call-girl” prostitution was widespread in Vancouver. Here we will not speculate on the reasons for the fluctuations in the amount of news on prostitution prior to 1970. Rather, this description of the ebb and flow of articles forms a back drop against which to talk about fluctuations in the number of articles mentioning violence against prostitutes. In the case of violence, the temporal pattern is quite different.

*Prior to 1970, we found only 12 Sun articles mentioning specific incidents of violence against prostitutes.<sup>7</sup> One of these describes a murder in Seattle,<sup>8</sup> the remainder are local stories, of which six relate to procuring*

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<sup>6</sup> For an examination of the relative emphasis given to offences committed against prostitutes, and the way violence against prostitutes is represented in the news, depicted in news reports, see Gordon (forthcoming).

<sup>7</sup> We have not yet examined articles prior to World War II for general discussions of violence against prostitutes, although presumably use of the term white “slavery” can be taken as a reference to force and coercion, or at least the threat of it. Certainly much of the desire to censure prostitution at this time related to a disapproval of exploitation of prostitutes.

<sup>8</sup> “Murder in Red Light Area,” *Vancouver Sun* 29 March 1910, p.1.

and living on the avails offences,<sup>9</sup> four deal with two murders (one of which was in 1910, the other in 1959),<sup>10</sup> and one with a girl "sold into white slavery."<sup>11</sup>

Figure 1 (p.7) shows the number of *Sun* articles mentioning prostitution from 1964 to 1993. Because we have not finished searcher reliability checks, the figures for the years 1964 to 1973 are provisional. Searches for the years 1969 and 1974 have yet to be completed. Our provisional figures indicate that from 1964 to 1973 there was an average of only seven articles per year mentioning prostitution. The number increased substantially in 1975, when there were 37 articles, and again in 1976, when there were 98. Many of the 1976 articles related to the closing of the Penthouse Cabaret after police charged the owners and several employees with procuring and living on the avails of prostitution.<sup>12</sup> In the following two years, the number of articles mentioning prostitution declined. From November 1978 to July 1979 there was a strike, and in 1979 only 15 articles mentioning prostitution appeared in the *Sun*. From 1980 to 1984 the average number of prostitution articles each year was 56. From 1985 (the year of the enactment of the communicating law) until 1990, the annual average more than doubled to 124. The annual average from 1990 to 1993 (108) was similar, primarily because of the effect of the 156 articles that appeared in 1992, the largest number in any year for which we have records. We can see from these totals that there has been more talk about prostitution since 1985, the year in which the communicating law was enacted, than there had been in any of the twenty years immediately prior to it.

Figure 2 (p.8) shows the number of articles from 1964 to 1993 mentioning violence against prostitutes. The first mention of violence against prostitutes occurred in 1975. From 1975 through 1983 there was approximately seven articles mentioning violence each year, then there were 15 in 1984, thirty-two in 1985, thirty-one in 1986 and forty-one in 1987. From 1988 to 1993, the annual average number of articles mentioning violence against prostitutes rose to 55.

Figure 3 (p.9) shows the number of articles mentioning violence against prostitutes as a proportion of the overall number of articles mentioning prostitution. Here we see a similar trend to the number of articles mentioning violence, but expressed this way, we can see more clearly how the overall proportion of articles mentioning violence also has increased. From 1964 to 1975, violence against prostitutes was not mentioned at all. From 1975-1983, 14.7% of the articles mentioned violence. From 1984 to 1987, the proportion rose to 29%, and from 1989 to 1993 it rose again, to the point where half the articles mentioned violence against sex trade workers.

As one might expect, many of these news stories are incident driven. Figure 4 (p.14) shows the number of murders, and Figure 5 (p.23) the number of incidents involving other kinds of violence against sex trade workers reported in the *Sun* from 1975 to 1983, and in the *Sun* and *Province* from 1984-1993. Clearly, part of the reason for the increased attention paid to violence against sex trade workers is the growing number of murders in British Columbia from 1982 onwards, since which time 50 have been reported in the Vancouver newspapers (from 1988 to 1994 there were 38). We have little doubt that the increased murder rate since 1964 is a reflection of an increase in the actual number of murders of women involved in prostitution, rather than a change brought about solely by news reporting -- although the increase may reflect both influences. That prior to 1982 back to 1900 we can locate mention of only two

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<sup>9</sup> "Cumyaro, Lee Get Remand" *Vancouver Sun* 30 September 1925, p.1; "Court Acquits Husband," *Vancouver Sun* 6 May 1936, p.2; "Judgement Reserved," *Vancouver Sun* 8 April 1939, p.17; "Woman Wants Month, Gets Three," *Vancouver Sun* 2 March 1944, p.9; "3 Girls Seized in Vice Raid," 27 February 1959, p.27; "Girl Stays in Jail for Safety," *Vancouver Sun* 16 April 1970, p.28.

<sup>10</sup> "Woman Murdered For Her Money," *Vancouver Sun* 5 December 1910, p.1; "Murdered Girl Called 'Call Girl'" *Vancouver Sun* 1 April 1959, p. 27; "Still Loves Woman He Allegedly Killed," *Vancouver Sun* 4 April 1959, p.15; "Casagrande Wins Life in New Trial," *Vancouver Sun* 8 April 1959, p.27.

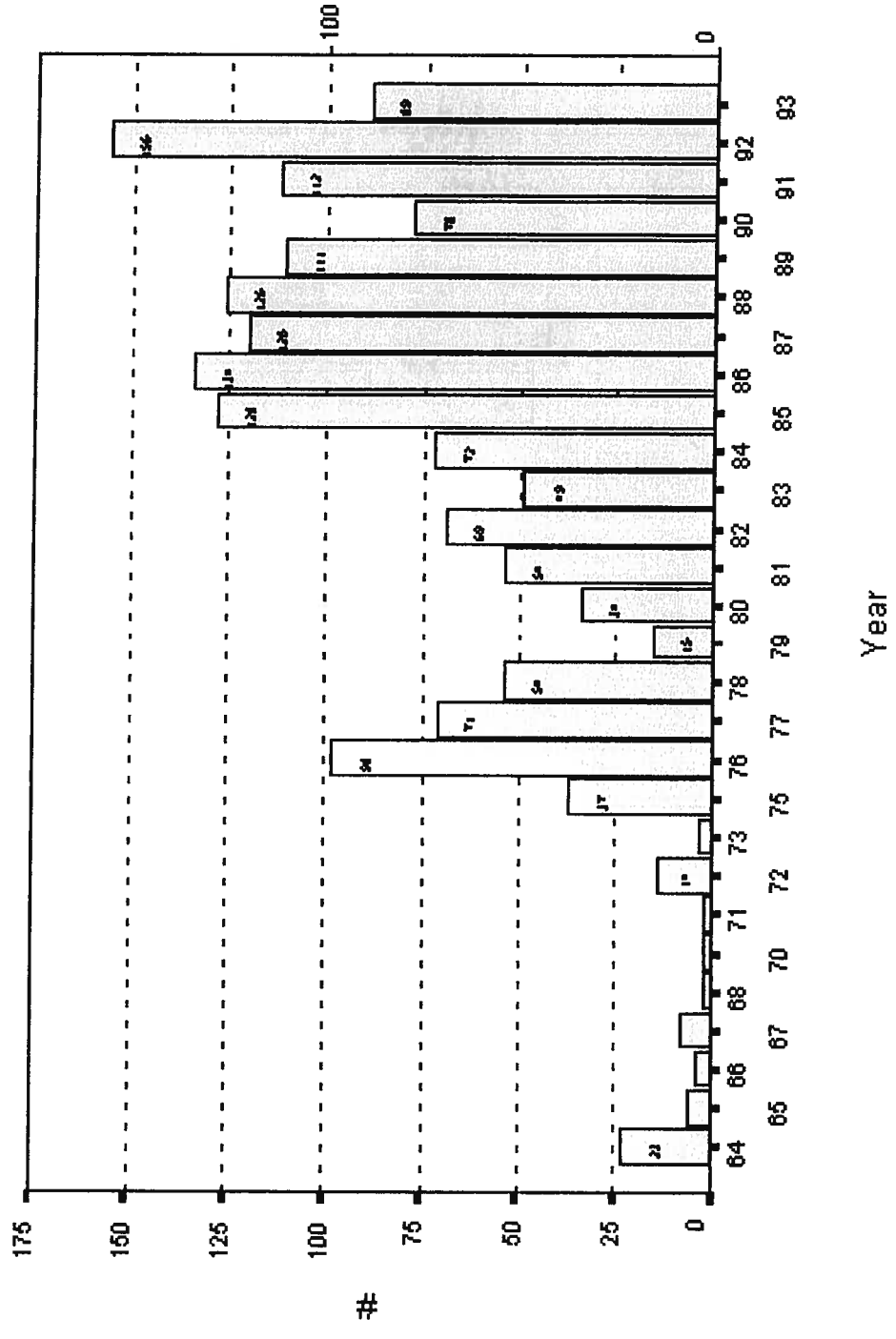
<sup>11</sup> "Girl Was Sold For \$500," *Vancouver Sun* 5 August 1910, p.9.

<sup>12</sup> For details, see Lowman 1986.



FIGURE 1: NUMBER OF ARTICLES MENTIONING PROSTITUTION

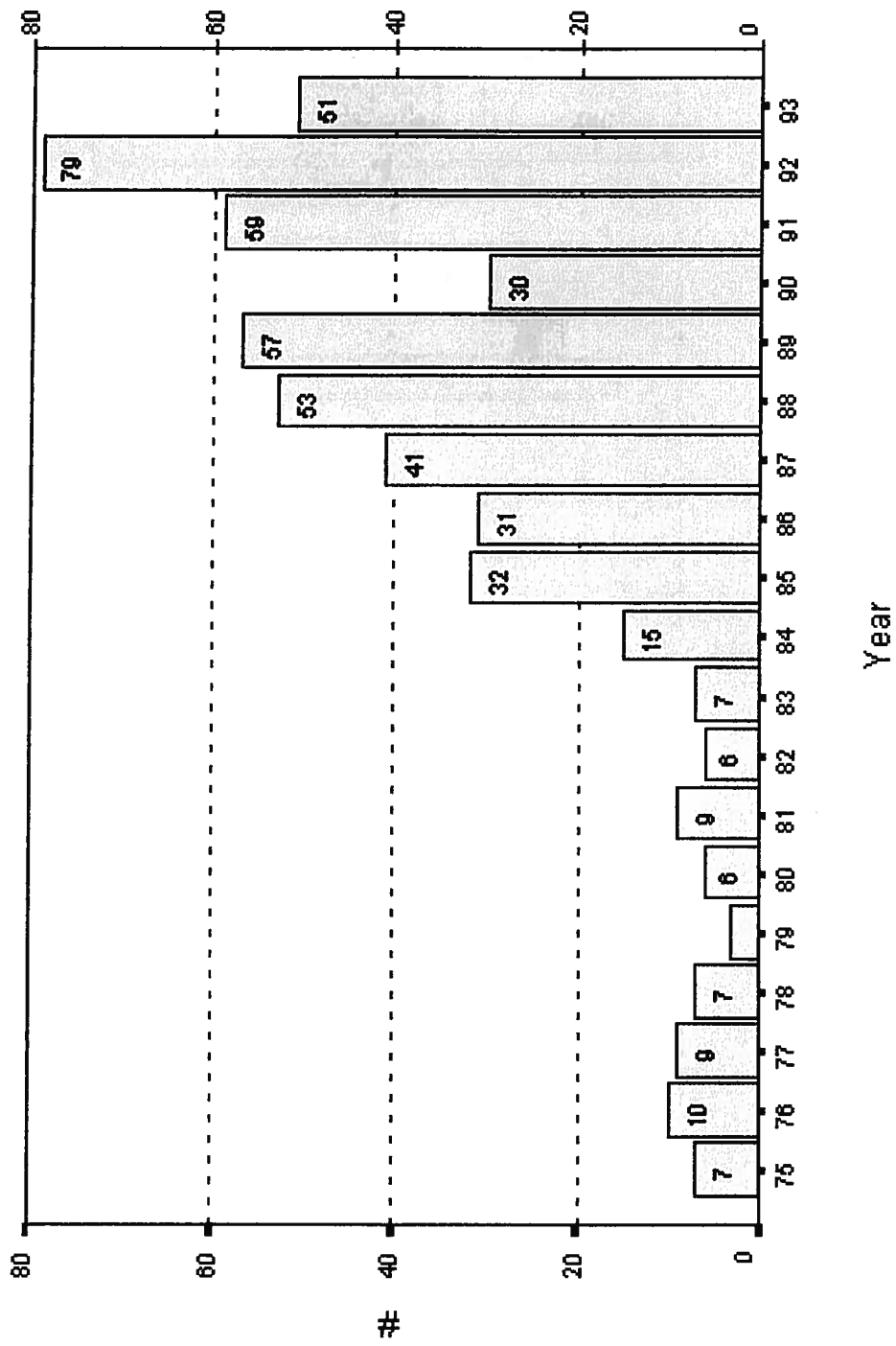
THE VANCOUVER SUN, 1964 - 1993\*



\* Source: Gordon and Lowman, 1993

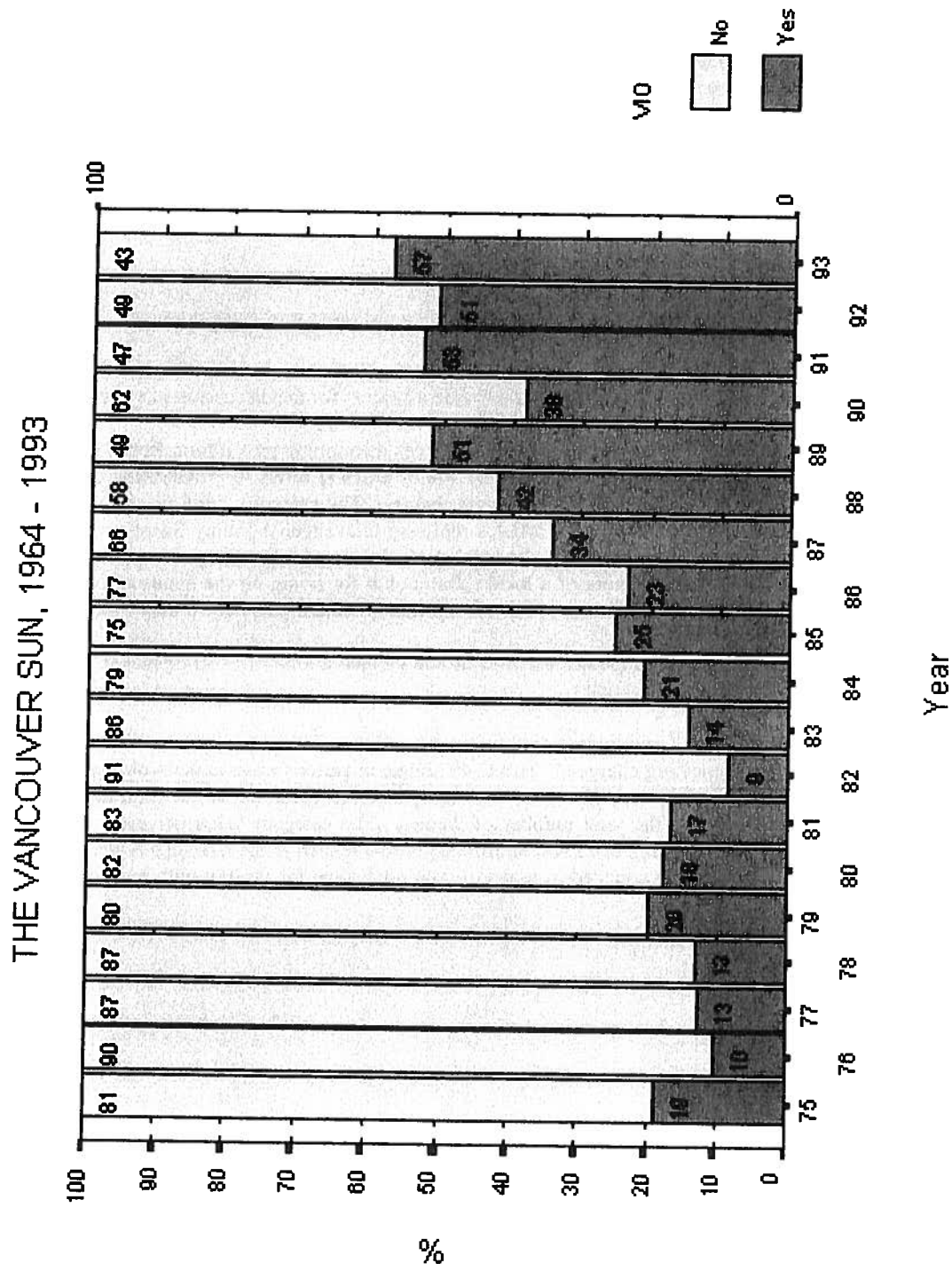
FIGURE 2: NUMBER OF ARTICLES MENTIONING VIOLENCE

AGAINST PROSTITUTES, VANCOUVER SUN 1964 - 1993\*



\* Source: Gordon and Lowman, 1993

FIGURE 3: PERCENTAGE OF ARTICLES MENTIONING VIOLENCE



murders of sex trade workers in Vancouver newspapers does not mean to say that they were not murdered. There may be some error in the searches. And even if there is not, it may be that sex trade workers were murdered, but the connection of the victims to prostitution was not reported as such. We have some evidence that murder victims identified as prostitutes in police information systems do not always find their way into the newspapers as “prostitute” victims. For example, RCMP data (Figure 6, p.31) reveal murders in British Columbia of women identified as prostitutes that are not reported in the *Sun* (these records show murders in 1975 and 1979, neither of which we have found mentioned in the newspaper<sup>13</sup> -- but this might be because the RCMP data relate to the date of death, whereas the newspaper data relate to the first date the newspapers mention a death). But even if we add these two to the murders reported in the *Sun*, the overall pattern doesn't change -- it is still one of substantial increase after 1984.<sup>14</sup>

## Trends in News Themes

Although our main focus here is on violence against prostitutes, it is useful to examine themes of prostitution news reporting more generally to provide a context for the discussion of violence.<sup>15</sup>

Table 1 shows the main news themes of the 1607 articles mentioning prostitution from 1975 to 1993. The category “prostitution mentioned incidentally” (7.2% of articles) refers to articles where prostitution was mentioned, but did not constitute one of the main themes. The category “high profile cases and stories” relates to specific incidents, such as the articles reprising televangelist Jimmy Swaggert's liaisons with a prostitute, a Vancouver woman patrolling the local strolls looking for her daughter, stories about the police investigation and trial of the owners of a local cabaret club for living on the avails of prostitution, and a series of articles about the trial and conviction of a Florida prostitute who had serially killed seven men.

The coding of up to three news themes for each article yielded a total of 2150 themes in the 1607 articles (an average of 1.34 themes per article).

In Table 1 the four themes “government discussion of legislation,” “nuisance aspects of street prostitution,” and “soliciting/communicating charges,” “Bill C-49” relate in various ways to the problems associated with the street prostitution trade. Generally, these four categories represent talk about “nuisance,” and between them account for 26.7% of the total number of themes. The category “alternatives to the present law” (9.3% of news themes occurring in 12.4% of articles) is also related to the nuisance issue, much of the talk about legal alternatives being couched in terms of their advantage for dealing with nuisance (and, in some cases, with violence).

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<sup>13</sup> And there may be more: we were not able to obtain the names of the murder victims from the RCMP database, so we cannot cross-reference this with other information at our disposal.

<sup>14</sup> Note: although the murder information for the period 1975-1983 is from the *Sun* only, the addition of *Province* articles for the period 1984-1994 does not affect the number reported during this period (all the murders reported in the *Province* are also reported in the *Sun*).

<sup>15</sup> This material is taken from Gordon and Lowman (1993) and Gordon (forthcoming).

**Table 1**  
**Main Themes of Vancouver Sun Articles Mentioning Prostitution, 1975-1993**  
**n=1607**

	Count	% of Themes	% of Articles
Violence against prostitutes	338	15.7	21.0
Nuisance aspects of street prostitution	222	10.3	13.8
Alternatives to present law (legalization/decriminalization)	199	9.3	12.4
Soliciting/Communicating charges	148	6.9	9.2
Government discussion of legislation	134	6.2	8.3
Youth issues	132	6.1	8.2
LOA or procuring	117	5.4	7.3
AIDS	96	4.5	6.0
Penthouse Cabaret case	89	4.1	5.5
Bill C49	71	3.3	4.4
Bawdy house	77	3.6	4.8
Outcry against violence	42	2.0	2.6
Law enforcement re violence	34	1.6	2.1
Violence by prostitutes	29	1.3	1.8
Green River	20	.9	1.2
Fraser Committee recommendations	20	.9	1.2
Green River links to Vancouver	10	.5	.6
High profile cases and stories	50	2.3	3.0
Sun special series	15	.7	1.0
Prostitution mentioned incidentally (i.e. not a theme)	116	5.4	7.2
Other prostitution	191	8.9	11.9
<b>Total themes</b>	<b>2150</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>133.8</b>

Violence against persons who prostitute was mentioned in 501 articles (31% of the total), and was classified as one of three main themes in 338 of these (21% of the total). Most of the articles in which violence constituted a main theme were about specific incidents, such as murders and sexual assaults, and/or police investigations and trials emanating from them. The various violence themes ("violence against prostitutes," "outcry against violence," "law enforcement re violence," "Green River," "Green River links to Vancouver") accounted for 21.4% of the total number of themes.

## ***News Reports on Cases of Violence Against Sex Trade Workers, 1975-1993***

Using as the primary information source articles from *The Vancouver Sun* for the period 1975-1993 we have constructed a case by case profile of murders and other violent crimes against sex trade workers.<sup>16</sup> In this analysis it is the incident (rather than the article) that constituted a 'case.' Here, we are not as much interested in the number of articles dealing with a particular case as we are in gleaning from them information about the various incidents reported. For this reason, we included information from *The Province* for the period 1985-1993, since these articles were also available to us. In the case of murders, both newspapers covered the same incidents, although in varying amounts of detail. In the case of other types of violence (the largest proportion of which were sexual assaults) the coverage of the two newspapers overlapped in about 50% of the cases. In some years, the *Sun* covered more incidents than *The Province*. In other years, *The Province* covered more incidents.

The analysis focused on articles about specific incidents, and police investigations and trials emanating from them. We followed each case through time by examining all relevant articles from one or both newspapers. The reporting of murders of women identified as prostitutes was generally comprehensive, covering all aspects of each case, from the discovery of the victim's body, through the police investigation, to the reporting of subsequent court and sentencing proceedings in those cases where a suspect was arrested. In many of the murder cases, a considerable amount of information was reported, ranging from discussions of the victims' and offenders' lifestyles, comments made by friends and family of the victim and offender, to details about the offence, investigative efforts, and the evidence presented in court.

### **News Information About Murders of Sex Trade Workers**

We present information from news articles on murders of persons reported to be involved in the sex trade in two ways: a) scenarios of cases as news articles described them (Appendix 1); and b) a descriptive statistical profile of murder cases drawn from these case scenarios. The descriptive statistical information is summarized in three groups of variables. First, a series of variables describes the victim and the murder:

- the date of the first article reporting the murder;
- the municipality in which the murder occurred;
- the victim's age;
- the type of sex trade worker murdered;
- the prostitution stroll in which the victim worked (where applicable);
- the location in which the body was found;
- and the description of the murder.

The second set of variables describe investigative information:

- did the police believe the case was linked to other murders?
- was there a suspect?
- the number of suspects;
- the suspect's age and gender;
- what charges were laid, if any?

Third, a set of variables describes the number of cases going to trial, the disposition of these cases, and the sentences imposed.

Figure 4 (p.14) shows the number of murders of sex trade workers in British Columbia reported in the *Sun* and *The Province* from 1975 to 30 November 1994. As previously noted, prior to 1982, there were only

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<sup>16</sup> The amount of time devoted to different kinds of violence is taken up by Gordon (forthcoming).

two murders of sex trade workers mentioned in the newspapers, one in 1910, the other in 1959. And the previous caveat also bears repeating. This does not mean that there were no such murders -- there may have been, but they were not reported as such.

The fifty victims ranged in age from 15 to 41, the average being 25.7 years. 54.2% of the victims were between 15 and 25 years of age (Table 2). There were four youths (one was 15 and three were 17 years old). All but two of the victims were female. Two transsexuals were reported as being murdered (one in 1993 and one in 1994).

**Table 2**  
**Age of Victim**

Age	Count	Percent
<18	4	8.7
18-20	7	15.1
21-25	14	30.4
26-30	8	17.4
31-35	9	19.6
36-40	3	6.5
>40	1	2.2
Not stated	4	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Mean = 25.72

Table 3 shows the type of sex trade worker murdered. We do not know if the dancers were involved in prostitution as such, or that their murders had any direct relationship with their work in the sex trade. Similarly, while a reporter may have been told that a murder victim worked as a prostitute, we do not know if the murderer was a would-be trick, or whether the incident was connected to some other aspect of street economy (police believe that several murders relate to the illicit drug trade). In terms of the type of women murdered, perhaps the most striking aspect of this information is the large proportion of street prostitutes. There are only two known escort service women, probably an indication that escorts are not as vulnerable to attack as women who meet their tricks on the street.

**Table 3**  
**Type of Sex Trade Worker**

	Count	Percent	Percent (missing values excluded)
Street prostitute	26	52.0	78.8
Escort	2	4.0	6.1
Exotic Dancer	5	10.0	15.2
Type not specified	17	34.0	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

FIGURE 4: NUMBER OF MURDERS OF SEX TRADE WORKERS IN B.C.  
 REPORTED IN THE VANCOUVER SUN AND PROVINCE, 1975-1994

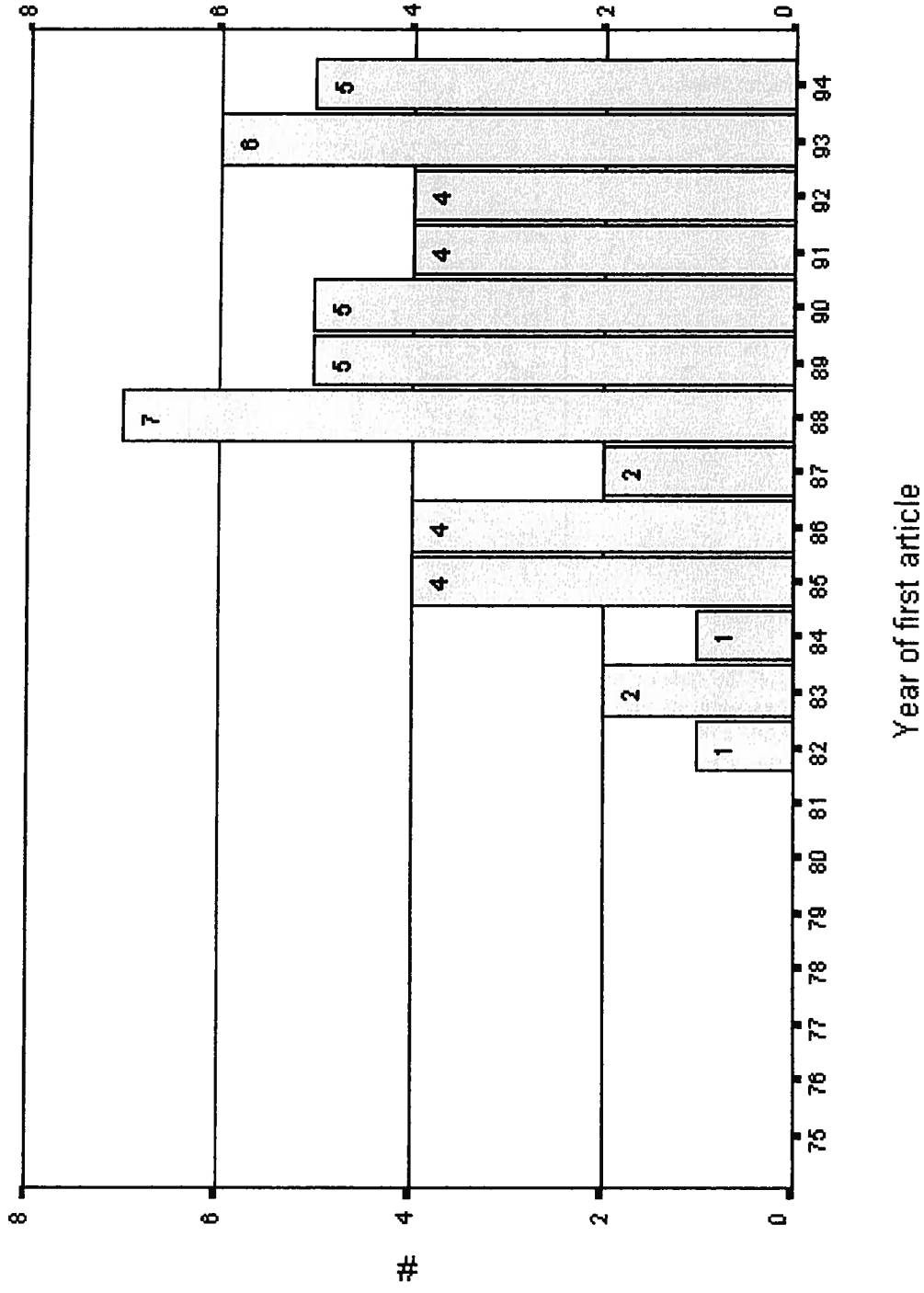




Table 4 summarises the description of the murder given in the news report. In nine cases, the news reports did not provide details of the incident, and in six cases the news reports stated that the cause of death was not known (as was the case with two dancers found a long time after their death) or not specified. That left 35 cases where information was provided about the cause of the victim's death. The majority of women were strangled, beaten, or stabbed to death.

Of the 14 women who were stabbed, news reports described seven as cases of "overkill," a term used to describe situations of seemingly "excessive" force where many more wounds are inflicted than would be necessary to bring about a person's death (some victims were stabbed 30 to 40 times and one was stabbed 99 times). Three victims were mutilated and dismembered. One of the escorts appearing in these statistics died as the result of an overdose administered by a man who was eventually convicted of manslaughter. The other was killed by a man who attempted to kill a second escort, who subsequently identified him. Although there was an attempt to have him declared unfit for trial, he was eventually given a life sentence. He hanged himself in 1991 while in custody.

**Table 4**  
**Details of Murder (n of cases =41)**

	Count	% of Responses	Pct of Cases
Stabbed	14	23.8	34.2
Beaten	12	20.3	29.3
Strangled	11	18.6	26.8
Sexually assaulted	7	11.9	17.1
Mutilated	3	5.1	7.3
Tortured	2	3.4	4.9
Shooting	2	3.4	4.9
Drug overdose	2	3.4	4.9
Cause of death unknown	6	10.2	14.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>143.9</b>

Because news reports often mention alcohol and illicit drugs, we recorded the number of cases in which the victim was reported to be a substance "user" or "abuser" (Table 5). In 33 cases, substance abuse was not mentioned. In one case, a reporter found it worth noting that the victim was not a substance abuser.

**Table 5**  
**Was the Victim Reported to be a Drug or Alcohol User/Abuser?**

	Count	Percent
Yes	16	32.0
No	1	2.0
None reported	33	66.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 6 shows the strolls mentioned in connection with the murder victims. The Hastings Street stroll is mentioned in 34.6% of the cases for which this information is available. Another 19.2% mention Mount Pleasant, the other east Vancouver stroll. Several victims worked on strolls in other cities in B.C. such as Kelowna or Prince George; these are recorded as "Other". None of these news stories mentioned the Richards-Seymour area. While there is a lot of missing information in this regard, this does suggest that murder victims come disproportionately from the east Vancouver strolls (Mount Pleasant and Strathcona).

**Table 6**  
**Stroll Where Victim Was Thought to Have Been Picked Up (# of victims = 26)**

	Count	Percent	Percent (missing values excluded)
East Hastings	9	18.0	34.6
Mt. Pleasant	5	10.0	19.2
City of Victoria	4	8.0	15.4
Granville	2	4.0	7.7
West End	1	2.0	3.8
Richards-Seymour	0	0.0	0.0
Other	5	10.0	19.2
Not reported	24	48.0	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Thirty-two victims were discovered in outdoor locations, and sixteen indoors (Table 7). Eighteen victims were found in Vancouver, and 16 others in the surrounding municipalities (Table 8). It may be that many of the latter were picked up in Vancouver and killed and/or dumped elsewhere; in five cases there was some evidence that offender killed the victim in one location and dumped them somewhere else. Twenty-one of the 26 women identified as working on the street were dumped outdoors (three of the remaining five were found in a hotel room, and the other two in the victim's residence), as were ten of the other victims. Deaths of six women from Victoria, four from other Vancouver Island communities and six from other communities in the interior of B.C. were also reported.

**Table 7**  
**Where Victim Was Found**

	Count	Percent	Percent (missing values excluded)
Outlying Suburbs*	10	20.0	20.8
Victim's home	8	16.0	16.7
Alley	6	12.0	12.5
Park	6	12.0	12.5
Street location given	5	10.0	10.4
Hotel room	5	10.0	10.4
Remote park/woods	4	8.0	8.3
Trick's home	3	6.0	6.3
Remote road	1	2.0	2.1
Not reported	2	4.0	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\* Industrial areas, undeveloped areas in municipalities surrounding Vancouver

**Table 8**  
**Region Victim Found**

	Count	Percent
Vancouver	18	36.0
Other Lower Mainland	16	32.0
Victoria	6	12.0
Other B.C. Mainland	6	12.0
Other Vancouver Island	4	8.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

One issue that recurs in news about murders of persons thought to be associated with the sex trade is whether a serial killer is responsible. There are many known serial killers of prostitutes in North America. If murder is one of the most newsworthy crimes, serial murder is especially so, particularly since Jack the Ripper captured the imagination of English journalists a hundred years ago. In Vancouver newspapers in the early 1980s there was speculation about whether the Green River killer, who is thought to have killed 49 prostitutes in Washington, also killed women in Vancouver. One Green River suspect who died while in a Washington State prison on other charges was known to have been in Vancouver quite frequently, hence speculation that he may have been responsible for several British Columbia murders from 1982 to 1984. Of the fifty murders reported in the newspapers, there was speculation in fourteen that there might be links to other cases. In 34 cases, no such speculation was reported. One article reported that forensic evidence suggested links among four murders. In two instances, such links were explicitly denied (Table 9).

**Table 9**  
**Are Links to Other Cases Established?**

	Count	Percent
None reported	34	68.0
Possible	14	28.0
No Link	2	4.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In trying to ascertain how many cases have been brought to some kind of resolution, we recorded the number of times suspects were mentioned, the number of offenders mentioned, the sex and age of accused persons, the number of charges laid, convictions obtained, and sentences. Table 10 shows that "suspects" were mentioned in 15 of 43 cases (in other words, police were reported as having some kind of "lead" in the case).

**Table 10**  
**Is a Suspect Mentioned?**

	Count	Percent
Yes	18	36.0
No/none specified	32	64.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 11 shows the number of suspects identified, and Table 12 their gender. The two females identified in Table 12 killed a third woman.<sup>17</sup> 90% of offenders were male. All but two of the victims were female; two transsexuals were also murdered, one in 1993 and one in 1994. The ages are available for only thirteen accused (Table 13); the average age was 34.6 years.

**Table 11**  
**Number of Offenders/Suspects (n=18)**

	Count	Percent
One	16	30.0
Two	2	4.0
Unknown	32	64.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 12**  
**Sex of Suspect/Offender**

	Count	Pct of Response	Pct of Cases
Male	18	90.0	100.0
Female	2	10.0	11.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>113.3</b>

**Table 13**  
**Age of Accused**

Age	Count
24	1
25	1
27	1
28	2
31	2
32	1
33	1
38	1
47	1
50	1
56	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>

<sup>17</sup> The murdered woman had been at a party the previous year at which two men killed a fourth woman (the reason given in the story is that she was murdered for using drugs intravenously after she had been told not to). The two accused women cut the victims throat, and left her in a ditch.

Table 14 shows that charges were laid in 17 of 50 murder cases (in one case, two persons were charged), but in six of these seventeen, information was not given about what charge had been laid. Also, in three instances the initial charge was later reduced. In these instances, the reduced charges were recorded. In those instances where a charge was mentioned, there were six charges for first degree murder, four for second degree murder, and one for manslaughter (Table 15). The reported outcomes of ten of these cases are shown in Table 16. If we examine the 26 cases involving persons identified as street prostitutes, we find that, to date, suspects were mentioned in seven cases. In all of these cases charges were laid and convictions obtained. In five other instances where convictions were obtained, we do not know if the victim worked the street or not.

**Table 14**  
**Cases in Which Charges Were Laid**

	Count	Percent	Percent (missing values excluded)
Yes	17	34.0	94.4
No	33	2.0	5.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 15**  
**Type of Charge Laid**

	Count	Percent (missing values excluded)
1st degree murder	6	54.5
2nd degree murder	4	36.4
Manslaughter	1	9.1
Not stated	6	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As of 1 December 1994 news reports indicate that convictions were obtained in seventeen cases (in four cases the men turned themselves in).

Table 17 shows the sentences.

**Table 16**  
**Number of Cases in Which Convictions Were Obtained**

	Count	Percent	Percent (missing values excluded)
1st degree murder	3	6.0	25.0
2nd degree murder	4	8.0	33.0
Manslaughter	5	10.0	42.0
Not stated	5	10.0	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 17**  
**Sentence in Years**

	Count	Percent	Percent (missing values excluded)
Life	8	16.0	72.7
Two and a half years	1	2.0	9.1
Five years	1	2.0	9.1
Ten years	1	2.0	9.1
Not reported	2	4.0	Missing
Not applicable	37	74.0	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Of the fifty murders of sex trade workers in British Columbia we have identified in the Vancouver newspapers since 1982, sixteen men and two women (both in the same case) were convicted. The eighteen convictions in seventeen cases represent a 34% conviction rate. Fourteen of the convictions (in thirteen cases) occurred between 1990 and 1994. As of the time of writing we are not aware of any outstanding charges. But that does not mean there are none, only that none have been reported. Because we do not know if other charges are pending in some of these cases, it is difficult to know if this conviction rate is also the "clearance" rate (i.e. cases where police have charged an accused, identified the accused subsequent to their death, or the accused was committed to a psychiatric institution). In Canada, the clearance rate for murder in 1991 was 77% (Canadian Center for Justice Statistics 1992a, p.4).

### ***The "Alcohol Murders"***

There was one case that received considerable coverage in *The Vancouver Sun* in 1987 and 1988 which might be considered serial murder of street-involved women, including several known to have prostituted. The *Sun* published two special reports<sup>18</sup> on a series of alcohol poisoning deaths of mostly aboriginal women in the Downtown Eastside, which at first were thought to be "accidental." In 1987, police began investigating one of these deaths, apparently at the behest of the parents of a woman who had just died. It was subsequently reported that they had previously investigated several of the other deaths.

In October, 1988, the *Sun* ran a series of articles on the second degree murder trial of GPJ, a 56 year old, described as a chronic alcoholic with a long history of criminal convictions, including sexual offenses.<sup>19</sup> Police arrested GPJ in November, 1987 on charges relating to the death of VLB, who died as the result of acute alcohol poisoning during a night with GPJ. It was reported that he had offered her \$50 for sex, and that she subsequently drank herself to death while with him. Similar fact evidence submitted at the trial showed that he often offered "alcoholic women" money as an inducement to drink.<sup>20</sup> Newspapers also reported that police investigated GPJ four times in as many years for other similar deaths in Vancouver.<sup>21</sup> In fact, between eight and ten other women, most of them aboriginal, were reported to have died from alcohol poisoning as a result of drinking with GPJ, dating from as far back as 1965.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Robert Sarti, Kim Pemberton and Chris Rose, "After the party, beating and death", December 12, 1987, p. A1; and "A Friend Without Pity", December 12, 1987, p. A2.

<sup>19</sup> *The Vancouver Sun* Special Report, "Death by Alcohol", October, 1987 p. A1-A 13.

<sup>20</sup> Chris Rose, "Alcohol defense a surprise, man says", *Vancouver Sun*, Oct. 20, 1988, p. A8.

<sup>21</sup> Chris Rose, "Barber linked to drink deaths, trial told", *The Vancouver Sun*, October 7, 1988, p. A 10.

<sup>22</sup> Chris Rose, "Death trial told of money-to-drink-offer", *The Vancouver Sun*, Oct. 8, 1988, p. A1, and "Race bias charged in [GPJ] case", *The Vancouver Sun*, October 22, 1987, p. A1.

GPJ was found guilty of manslaughter in VLB's death. The B.C. Supreme Court Justice ruled that GPJ "...preyed upon native Indian women for his sexual gratification", that he "...got some kind of perverted satisfaction in watching these women drink themselves into insensibility" and that he "...knew that too much alcohol could cause the death of [VLB]", who was not known to be a drinker.<sup>23</sup>

Newspapers suggested that some of the women who died in GPJ's company were associated with prostitution.<sup>24</sup> However, although it was noted that GPJ paid some of the women for sex, or as an inducement to drink with him, there was only an indirect link made between prostitution and the deaths. None of the women who died were described as "prostitutes". The articles focused more on the difficult conditions in which GPJ's victims lived, and then died, in the Downtown Eastside.

### **Other Violent Crimes Against Prostitutes**

Generally, news reporting about other violent crimes against prostitutes (Table 18) was far less comprehensive than news about murders, and there were fewer articles pertaining to each case. As in the analysis of individual news articles on "violence", we included an article in this analysis if it mentioned the occurrence of some form of threat, force or coercion (i.e., it mentioned behaviour that could be classified as a violent criminal code offence as listed above on p. 2). Living on the avails, procuring and bawdy house offences were mentioned only if some form of threat, coercion or force was described in the article (the total number of LOAP, procuring and bawdy house articles in the Sun from 1975 to 1993 is shown in Table 1, p. 11)

Some of the violence cases seemed to be much more newsworthy than others, with *sexual assaults* being the most often reported offence. Also, there was a relatively large number of special interest stories describing the nature of the incident(s) and offender(s). One involved a youth prostitution ring run by a gang; another involved a prostitution ring that brought women into Canada under the pretext that they would be given jobs -- the work turned out to be prostitution.

Generally, the reporting of sexual assaults and other cases was stimulated by the arrest of a suspect, or by evidence disclosed at a preliminary hearing or trial. In many instances there was only one article about an incident, it being prompted by a trial or a sentencing hearing.

As with our analysis of murders, we present information in two ways: a) a series of scenarios describing violent offences against persons reported to be prostitutes (Appendix 2); and b) a statistical summary of information drawn from the news articles. The descriptive statistical information was similar to that extracted from articles about murders, except that in this case we distinguish cases involving customers (or men who met a victim by posing as a customer) and "pimps" -- men charged with procuring and/or living on the avails, or otherwise identified as a "pimp."

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<sup>23</sup> "Race bias charged in [GPJ]Jordan case", *The Vancouver Sun*, October 22, 1987, p. A1.

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, Rose, Pemberton and Sarti, "Bodies in the Barbershop", October 22, 1987, p. A12.

The first group of variables included:  
the date of the first article about the case;  
the type of offence;  
the number and age of victim(s);  
the area the victim was picked up;  
and the municipality in which the offence occurred.

The second group included details about the police investigation:  
whether there was a suspect;  
the number of suspects;  
the gender of the suspect(s);  
information on whether this was a repeat or multiple offender;  
and whether charges were laid.

The third group of variables describes whether the case went to trial and, if it did, the disposition, and the sentences imposed.

Figure 5 shows the number of violence cases described in *The Vancouver Sun* from 1975 to 1983, and the *Sun* and *Province* from 1984-1993. In the case of the *Sun* there is a distinct pattern: a cluster of 13 cases from 1976 to 1978, and then a silence from 1979 to 1984 when only three cases were discussed. After 1984, there was a marked increase, followed by an average of about 13 cases of violence against prostitutes being reported by one or other paper each year (many cases covered by one paper are not necessarily covered by the other -- in some years the *Sun* covered more cases than the *Province*, in other years, the *Province* covered the greater number). As one might expect, insofar as the pattern of the number of articles on violence is to some extent incident driven, the general pattern is much the same as the pattern of the overall number of articles mentioning violence (Figure 2).

Table 18 shows the types of offences mentioned in coverage of the various cases. Sexual assaults were involved in nearly 70% of the cases mentioned, assaults in 24% of cases, and robbery in just under 10%.

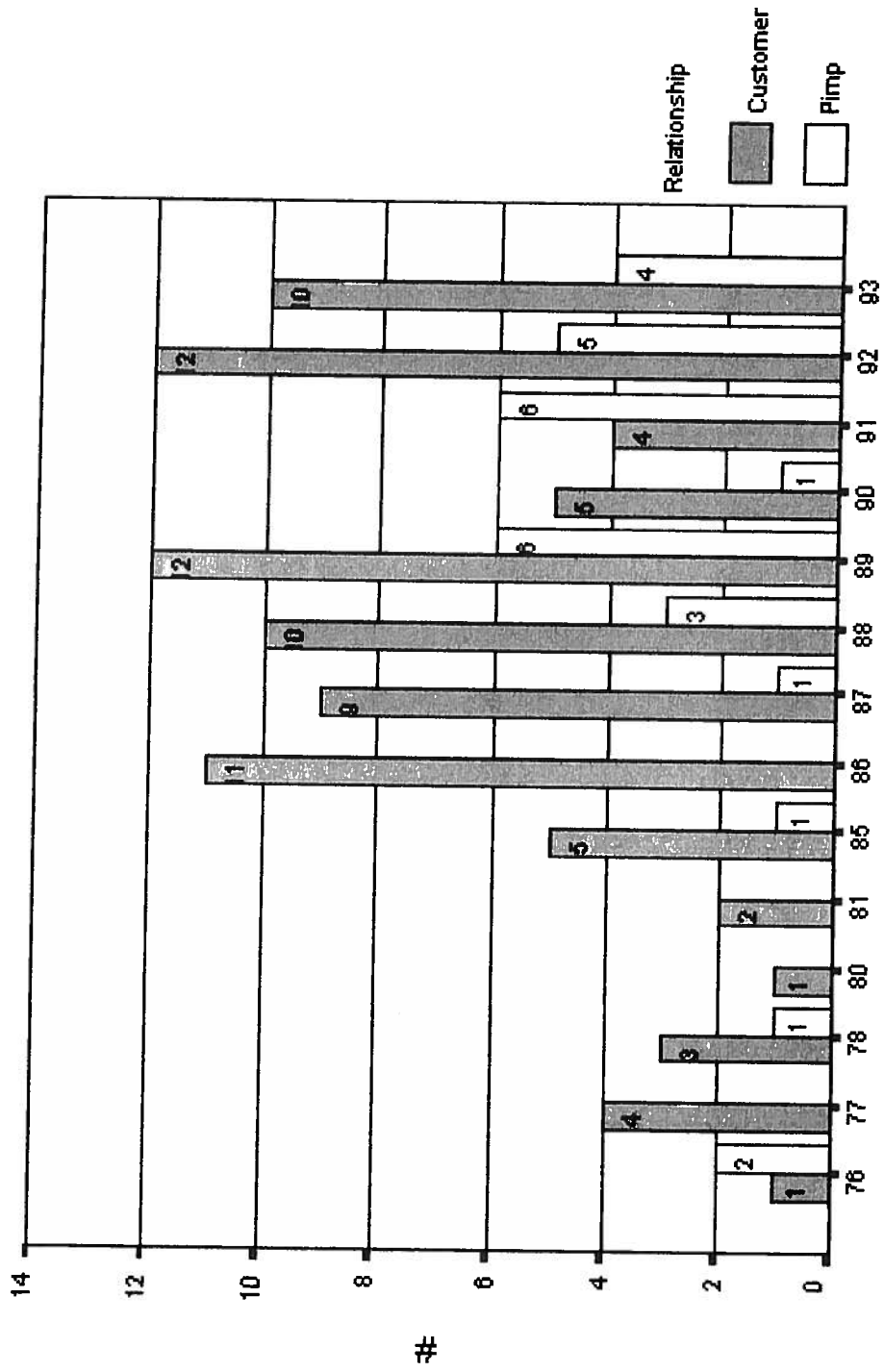
**Table 18**  
**Type of Offence**

	Count	% of Responses	% of Cases
Sexual assault (all)	87	39.8	69.6
Assault (all)	30	13.7	24.0
Robbery	12	5.4	9.6
Procuring	9	4.1	7.2
Exercising control	7	3.2	5.6
LOAP	14	6.3	11.2
Bawdy house	1	.5	.8
Murder*	3	1.4	2.4
Attempted murder	6	2.7	4.8
Uttering threats	10	4.5	8.0
Kidnap/confine	14	6.3	11.2
Use of weapon	13	5.9	10.4
Possess weapon	2	.9	1.6
Extortion	4	1.8	3.2
Indecent act	4	1.8	3.2
Other	5	2.3	4.0
Total responses	221	100.0	176.8

\* Three of the persons charged with assault were also charged with murder



FIGURE 5: # OF REPORTED VIOLENCE CASES INVOLVING PIMPS OR CUSTOMERS, VANCOUVER SUN 1975-93; PROVINCE 1984-93



Year of first article

If we compare the proportion of different kinds of offence mentioned in these articles to the proportions of different kinds of offences mentioned in the DEYAS Bad Date Sheets, offences reported to the police, and charges laid (Table 19) we see that sexual assault is the most newsworthy crime, apparently being over-reported in relation to its incidence vis-à-vis assaults and robberies.

**Table 19**  
**Types of Offences Reported in Different Sources**

Source	Assault		Sexual Assault		Robbery	
	# of Cases	% of Cases	# of Cases	% of Cases	# of Cases	% of Cases
Newspapers (1976-93)*	30	24.0	87	69.6	12	9.6
Bad Date Sheets (1988-93)	328	33.4	242	24.6	151	15.4
Reports to VPD (1990-93)	227	39.5	201	35.0	110	19.2
Charges (1990-93)	88	45.1	65	33.3	25	12.8

\* 95 of 125 incidents (77%) were during the period 1986-1993

Rows do not necessarily add up to 100 since not all cases involved the three offence categories listed here.

Table 20 shows the relationship of the victim to the offender. In this group of cases, 71.8% involved would-be customers and 24.2% involved men identified as pimps.

**Table 20**  
**Relationship of Suspect to Victim**

	Count	Percent
Customer	89	71.8
Pimp	30	24.2
Other sex trade work	3	2.4
Other	2	1.6
Not stated	1	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 21**  
**Age of Victims (where reported)**

Age	Count	Pct. of Cases
13	1	1.2
14	1	1.2
15	5	5.8
16	4	4.7
17	11	12.8
18	8	9.3
19	5	5.8
20	6	7.0
21	6	7.0
22	9	10.5
23	1	1.2

Age	Count	Pct. of Cases
24	4	4.7
25	3	3.5
26	2	2.3
28	1	1.2
32	2	2.3
33	2	2.3
34	1	1.2
36	3	3.5
Youth*	11	12.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\* This category describes persons whose ages were not specified but who were referred to as "juveniles".

The victims of customers ranged in age from 13 to 36 years with an average age of 19.2. The victims of pimps ranged in age from 14 to 36 years with an average of 16.9. 54% of the pimp cases involved youth victims, as compared to 32.8% of the victims of customers. (It should be noted that several victims were described only as "juveniles" without an age being reported. The ages of these individuals was calculated by determining the average age of youth victims of both customers and pimps separately, where the ages were given, and using this average age to describe these "juveniles in order to provide a more accurate figure for average age of victim).

78.4% of customer cases involved charges relating to one victim, as compared to 68% of pimp cases (Table 22).

**Table 22**  
**Number of Victims**

Number of Victims	Customers		Pimps	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
1	69	78.4	17	68.0
2	12	13.6	4	16.0
3	2	2.2	2	8.0
4	3	3.4	1	4.0
5			1	4.0
6	1	1.1		
24	1	1.1		
Not reported	1	Missing	5	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 23 shows that 86.6% of the offences committed by customers and pimps occurred in Vancouver, which is hardly surprising given that the information is drawn from the *Vancouver Sun* and *Province*.

**Table 23**  
**Municipality In Which Offence Occurred**  
**(Customers and Pimps)**

	Count	Percent
Vancouver	103	86.6
Other Lower Mainland	7	5.9
Victoria	7	5.9
Other Vancouver Island	1	.8
Other B.C.	1	.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As with the study of murder cases, victims appear to be drawn disproportionately from Mount Pleasant and Strathcona, the two East Vancouver strolls. Only 3 victims were thought to have been picked up in the Seymour-Richards stroll. We also see here 10 victims picked up in the West End, a stroll that was active from the late sixties to 1984, at which point the BC Attorney General, using a nuisance injunction, threatened action against persons meeting customers on West End streets. It was not until 1984 that the

Richards-Seymour stroll developed. Up to this time, the three main strolls were the West End, the Downtown Eastside and the Georgia-Hornby intersection. The Georgia stroll developed in 1976 after the closure of several Vancouver cabarets where prostitution flourished. These cabaret closures were partly responsible for the considerable increase of street prostitution in Vancouver during the 1970s. It was the late 1970s and early 1980s' counterpart of the Richards-Seymour "High Track" to the extent that it was reputedly controlled by "black" professional pimps (see footnote 26), who we refer to here as "player-pimps." It is noteworthy that Georgia does not even appear in the list of areas mentioned in Table 24. The Georgia stroll disappeared in 1984, after the boundary of the area where the nuisance injunction would take effect was moved from Burrard Street to Granville, thus displacing the Georgia-Hornby stroll. At first, the women working in this area moved east to Georgia and Richards, then subsequently south along both Richards and Seymour Streets into the area that is currently reputed to be Vancouver's main "black pimps" stroll (see interviews Appendix 6a and 6b). This stroll is located in several blocks adjacent to the Penthouse cabaret, the nightclub from which prostitution had been removed at the end of 1975 -- prostitution had come full circle.

**Table 24**  
**Stroll Victim Thought to Have Been Picked Up In**  
**(Cases Involving Customers Only)**

	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
East Hast/Strath/East End	18	39.1	42.9
West End/Davie	10	21.7	23.8
Mt. Pleasant	13	28.1	30.9
Seymour Richards	3	6.5	7.1
Granville	2	4.3	4.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>107.8</b>

Table 25 shows the reported gender of alleged offenders. The information provided here is consistent with every other source of information at our disposal: the vast majority of offenders are males (in this case, 93.5% of all offenders, including 100% of the customers). All the victims mentioned in these stories were female. The five cases involving male and female accused were pimp-related. The three female alleged offenders were identified as prostitutes assaulting or threatening other prostitutes.

**Table 25**  
**Gender of Alleged Offender (Customers, Pimps and Others)**

	Count	Percent	Percent (missing values excluded)
Male	115	92.0	93.5
Female	3	2.4	2.4
Male and female	5	4.0	4.1
Not reported	2	1.6	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

33.7% of customers and 46.7% of pimps were reported to be known (or suspected) repeat or multiple offenders (Table 26).

**Table 26**  
**Reported as Possible Repeat or Multiple Offender?**

	Customers		Pimps	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Yes	30	33.7	14	46.7
Not known	59	66.3	16	53.3
Total	89	100.0	30	100.0

Charges were laid in 95% of the cases reported in the *Sun* and *Province*. Given that charges are laid in only a small proportion of the offences that occur, the fact that a charge was laid would seem to be the key event triggering news coverage of violence against women who prostitute.

**Table 27**  
**Were Charges laid (Customers and Pimps)?**

	Customers		Pimps	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Yes	72	94.7	29	96.7
No/none reported	1	5.3	1	3.3
Total	73	100.0	30	100.0

Of the 101 cases in which police laid a charge against a pimp or customer, at least 63 cases went to trial (Table 28). Others may have gone to trial, but were not reported as having done so, or had not done so before the end of 1993, the point at which our analysis ends.

**Table 28**  
**Did Case Go to Trial (Customers and Pimps)?**

	Count	Percent
Yes	63	63.0
No/not reported	37	37.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 29 shows the outcome of the sixty cases that actually went to trial (three persons, all “customers,” were found unfit to stand trial). Convictions were obtained in 48 cases. There were eight acquittals, and in two cases the Crown stayed the charges. We do not know the outcome of two other cases.

**Table 29**  
**Outcome of Trial?**

	Customers		Pimps	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Guilty	40	78.4	8	80.0
Not guilty	6	11.8	2	20.0
Stay of proceedings	2	3.9		
Not reported	2	Missing		
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 30 displays the convictions obtained. Forty customers were convicted on 66 counts. All but one of the customers were convicted of sexual assault. Eight persons were convicted for either procuring and/or living on the avails of prostitution.

**Table 30**  
**Types of Convictions**

	Customers		Pimps	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Sexual assault	39	100.0		
Assault	5	12.8		
Robbery	5	12.8	1	7.1
Procuring			4	28.6
LOAP			6	42.8
Aggravated assault	3	7.6		
Murder	1	2.6		
Assault bodily harm	1	2.6		
Exercising control			1	7.1
Kidnap/confine	3	7.6		
Indecent act	3	7.6	2	14.2
Theft	3	7.6		
Sex ass. bodily hrm	1	2.6		
Attempted murder	2	5.1		
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100.0</b>

n = 40 customers; 8 pimps

We have been able to ascertain the sentences of 30 customers and seven pimps (Table 31). All but four customers received two years or more of prison time, with the average sentence being five years and six months. The average pimp sentence was two years and three months. Since not all cases are reported in the newspapers, it remains to be seen if these are representative of the sentences given to men who sexually

assault prostitutes. Also, it remains to be ascertained how they compare to sentences for sexual assaults of women who are not identified as prostitutes.

In order to provide information about attitudes to sexual assaults of prostitutes, we scrutinized news stories for descriptions of Judges' remarks when they passed sentence. On several occasions over the years one Judge in particular was reported as saying specifically that a victim's work as a prostitute in no way excused or mitigated the actions of an accused. Again, however, we do not know if these comments are representative.

**Table 31**  
**Reported Custodial Sentences of Men Convicted**  
**of Violent Crimes Against Prostitutes**

Months	Customers		Pimps	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
06	1	2.9		
12	1	2.9	2	28.6
15	2	5.9		
18	1	2.9	1	14.3
24	3	10.3	1	14.3
30	1	3.3	1	14.3
36	3	10.3	1	14.3
48	3	10.3		
54	1	3.3		
60	3	10.3	1	14.3
72	3	10.3		
84	2	5.9		
96	2	5.9		
108	1	2.9		
144	1	2.9		
192	1	2.9		
216	1	2.9		
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100.0</b>

This sentencing information does suggest that the Courts have been willing to take action against men who sexually assault prostitutes. It still remains to be determined what proportion of these offences are reported, and actually make it to court.

### 3. RCMP Data on Murders and Sexual Assaults

The Violent Crime Unit at RCMP "E" Division Headquarters in Vancouver provided information from its computerized Major Crime Recording System (MACROS) about sexual assaults and murders in British Columbia of persons thought to be involved in prostitution. Sexual assaults were added to this information system if they were committed by someone thought to be a repeat or "predatory offender." Initially, only stranger-to-stranger cases were recorded in MACROS. The prostitute murders were added to the system as part of a special project. There was no audit of this database to determine its completeness.

MACROS has since been replaced by VICLAS (the Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System). We were provided with an inventory of information contained in MACROS, from which we selected relevant variables to yield descriptions about: the date and type of offence; the characteristics of the victim and the offender; the means by which an offender contacted a victim; and the body recovery scene, or place where the offender released the victim. Using the variable "victim lifestyle" to identify persons thought to have been involved in prostitution, we obtained information about 29 murders and 47 sexual assaults in British Columbia recorded in this database. The murders cover the period 1975 to 1993. All but two of the sexual assaults were from 1991 to 1993 (five in 1990; fourteen in 1991; 19 in 1992; and seven in 1993).

The murders occurring in 1975, 1979, 1981 (Figure 6) apparently do not appear in newspaper reports on prostitution (Figure 4).<sup>25</sup> Police have not solved any of these cases, and there is no information about where they occurred. Also, the RCMP database does not include all the murders we have discovered in other sources of information up to 1993.

Table 32 shows the municipality in which the murder victim was found, or where an assault occurred. Although there is a lot of missing information, none of the murder cases are specifically recorded as coming from the Lower Mainland other than Vancouver. The Lower Mainland outside Vancouver was the area that had the largest number of cases reported in newspapers (Table 8).

**Table 32**  
**Municipality**

	Murders		Sex Assaults	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Vancouver	8	61.5	24	53.3
Other Lower Mainland			13	28.9
Victoria	3	23.1	4	8.9
Other Vancouver Island			1	2.2
Other B.C.	2	15.4	3	6.7
Not stated	16	Missing	2	Missing
Total	29	100.0	47	100.0

<sup>25</sup> However, it should be noted that the RCMP database provides the date of death, whereas the newspaper analysis records the first date a newspaper article appeared describing a particular incident (it is possible that the death occurred in a different year than the first newspaper article describing it).



FIGURE 6: NUMBER OF PROSTITUTE MURDER INVESTIGATIONS

RCMP MACROS DATA - 1975 - 1993

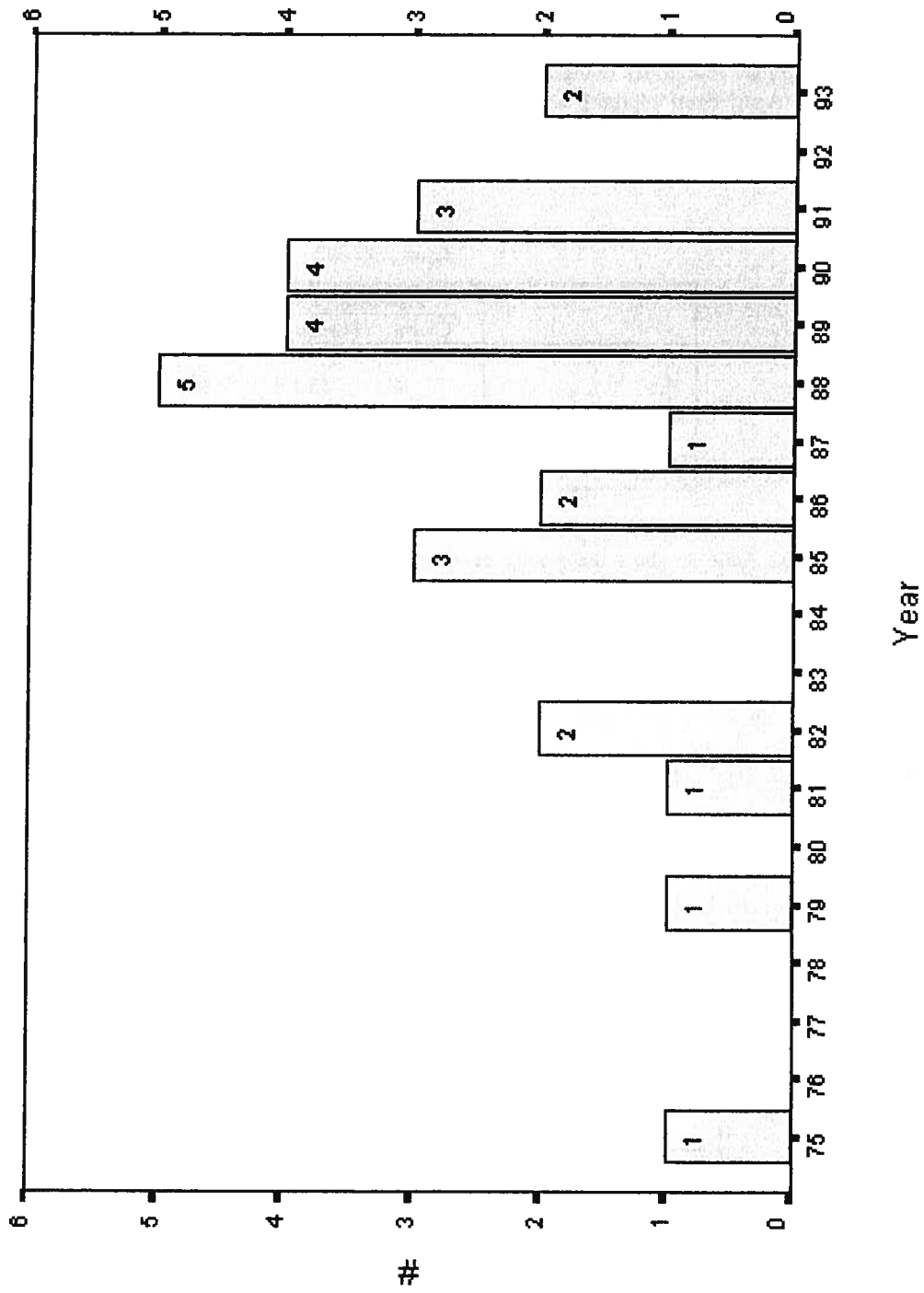


Table 33 shows whether a case was “solved” (i.e., a case where police believe they know who the offender was -- in some cases a person has been convicted). Only 14% of the murders have been solved. In contrast, police solved 68% of the sexual assaults included in this database. This high clearance rate is partly an artifact of the way cases find their way into this data base -- the police are more likely to classify the case as “predatory” if they know the identity of the offender (although the modus operandi of the offence also may lead police to classify the offence as predatory even if they don’t know the identity of an offender). Apart from anything else, these data do indicate that men are being convicted for sexually assaulting sex trade workers.

**Table 33  
Case Solved?**

	Murders		Sexual Assaults	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Yes	4	13.8	32	68.1
No	25	86.2	15	31.9
Total	29	100.0	47	100.0

Table 34 and Table 35 show the gender of victims and offenders. In the case of sexual assaults, all the victims were female, all the offenders were men. Among murder victims, there was one male (perhaps a transsexual), and among the murderers, one female.

**Table 34  
Gender of Victim**

	Murders		Sexual Assaults	
	Count	Prct	Count	Prct
Female	28	96.6	47	100.0
Male	1	3.4		
Total	29	100.0	47	100.0

**Table 35  
Gender of Offender**

	Murders		Sexual Assaults	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Female	1	11.1		
Male	8	88.9	44	100.0
Not Stated/Unknown	20	Missing	3	Missing
Total	29	100.0		

Murder victims ranged in age from 17 to 41 years of age (10% were youths), with an average age of 23; sexual assault victims ranged from 15 to 37 years (19% were youths), with an average age of 22.5 (Table

36). Murderers ranged in age from 23 to 46, with an average age of 28.7 years; men who sexually assaulted prostitutes ranged in age from 17 to 45, with an average age of 27.3 years (Table 37).

**Table 36**  
**Age of Victim**

	Murders		Sexual Assaults	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Under 18	3	10.3	9	19.1
18-20	8	37.9	11	42.6
21-25	8	65.5	13	70.2
26-30	5	82.8	9	89.4
31-35	2	89.7	3	95.7
36-40	1	93.1	2	100.0
41-45	2	100.00		
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 37**  
**Age of Offender**

	Murders		Sexual Assaults	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Under 18			1	2.9
18-20			4	9.5
21-25	4	44.4	13	30.9
26-30	3	33.3	15	35.7
31-35	1	11.1	7	16.6
36-40				
41-45			2	5.8
46	1	11.1		
Unknown	20	Missing	5	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<b>Mean Age</b>	<b>28.7</b>	<b>27.2</b>
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Table 38 and Table 39 show the "race"<sup>26</sup> of victims and offenders. The majority of victims of both sexual assaults and murders are Caucasian. But First Nations women, who constitute somewhere between 1% and 2% of Canada's population, comprise 27% of the victim population (also this is probably greater than their proportion in the general population of street-involved women). Known offenders are overwhelmingly Caucasian.

<sup>26</sup> There has been a considerable amount of debate in social studies about use of the concept of "race," because it is a socially constructed, not a biologically given category (for discussion see Li 1990, and Miles 1989). In this study, we use what are normally thought of as "racial categories" because our subjects use them to signify people. For example, the "race" of the offender is one of the categories included on the form used by police to make a report to Crown Counsel, and reports published in ASP, POWER and DEYAS Bad Date Sheets (see p.52 below) usually identify the "race" or "ethnic origin" of the accused.

**Table 38**  
**"Race" of Victim**

	Murders		Sexual Assaults	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Caucasian	18	62.1	33	70.2
Native	8	27.6	13	27.7
Black	1	3.4		
Metis	1	3.4	1	2.1
Mulatto	1	3.4		
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 39**  
**"Race" of Offender**

	Murders		Sexual Assaults	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Caucasian	8	88.9	36	81.8
East Indian			3	6.8
Native	1	11.1	1	2.3
Black			1	2.3
Oriental			1	2.3
Other			2	4.5
Not stated/Unknown	20	Missing	3	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Just over 80% of the sexual assault victims were single, separated or divorced, as were 68% of the murder victims (Table 40). Only one murder victim and three sexual assault victims were recorded as living with children (Table 41). 25% of known murderers, and 38.5% of sexual assault offenders were recorded as being married, or living in a common-law relationship (Table 42).

**Table 40**  
**Victim's Marital Status**

	Murders		Sexual Assaults	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Single	12	42.9	30	76.9
Married/c.Law	9	32.1	7	17.9
Separated/Divorced	7	25.0	2	5.1
Unknown	1	Missing	8	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 41**  
**Who Victim Lives With**

	Murders		Sexual Assaults	
	Count	Prct	Count	Prct
Lives alone	11	33.3	9	32.1
Spouse/partner	12	36.4	7	25.0
Roommate	6	18.2	4	14.3
Family	3	9.1	3	10.7
Children	1	3.0	3	10.7
Parent/guardian			1	3.6
Relatives			1	3.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 42**  
**Offender's Marital Status**

	Murders		Sexual Assaults	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Single	2	25.0	14	53.8
Married/C.Law	2	25.0	10	38.5
Separated/Divorced	4	50.0	2	7.7
Not stated/unknown	21	Missing	21	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 43 shows the various police recorded descriptions of the 29 murder victims and 47 sexual assault victims identified in the RCMP database. Of 29 murder victims, eighteen (62%) were described as drug dependent, and ten (34.5%) as alcohol dependent. The corresponding percentages for sexual assault victims were 30% and 13%.

**Table 43**  
**Police Descriptions of Victim's Lifestyle**

	Murders		Sexual Assaults	
	Count	Percent Cases	Count	Percent Cases
Prostitute	29	100.0	47	100.0
Drug dependent	18	62.0	14	29.8
Alcohol dependent	10	34.5	4	8.5
Socializer	8	27.6	2	4.2
Street person	5	17.2		
Other criminal activity	5	17.2	6	12.8
Transient	3	10.3	2	4.2
Drug dealer	2	6.9		
Night person	2	6.9	2	4.2
Average citizen	1	3.4		
Other	1	3.4		
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>29</b>		<b>47</b>	

Table 44 through Table 48 depict various characteristics of the offences: where the victim and offender met each other, the location of the incident, where the victim and offender parted company (in the case of murders, the body dump site), and details of the offence (amount of force used, weapons involved, and description of the attack). As with other indicators of victimization of different types of sex trade workers, Table 44 reveals that most of the cases finding their way into this database involve women who met their assailant on the street (92% of the murder victims for which this information is available, and 80% of the sexual assault victims).

**Table 44**  
**Initial Contact Scene**

	Murders		Sex Assaults	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Street/lane	11	84.6	31	68.8
Prostitution stroll	1	7.7	7	15.6
Highway			3	6.7
Parking lot			1	2.2
Woods/park/beach			1	2.2
Hotel/motel			1	2.2
Bar/club	1	7.7	1	2.2
Not stated/Unknown	16	Missing	2	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 45 shows the location of the offence. In the case of murders, six of the twelve occurred outside (in a vehicle, parking lot, remote area, park etc.) and six inside (two in hotels and four in residences). Only six of the 45 assaults for which this information is available occurred in a hotel or residence, the other 39 occurring outside (19 of these in a vehicle).

**Table 45**  
**Location of Offence**

	Murders		Sex Assaults	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Vehicle	1	8.3	16	35.6
Parking lot	1	8.3	6	13.3
Residence	3	25.0		
Woods/park/beach	1	8.3	6	13.3
Hotel/motel	2	16.7	3	6.7
Car in parking lot			3	6.7
Street/lane			2	4.4
Playground			2	4.4
Wharf/industrial area			2	4.4
Offender residence			1	2.2
Victim residence	1	8.3	2	4.4
Construction site	1	8.3		
Remote area/river	2	16.7	2	4.4
Not stated	17	Missing	2	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Of the twenty-eight murders for which information is available, seven of the bodies were located in hotels (two) or residences (five), and twenty were found outside -- fourteen in woods/parks and remote areas, and six others in secluded locations in urban areas (Table 46).

**Table 46**  
**Body Recovery Location/ Release Location**

	Murders		Sexual Assaults	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Vehicle			10	22.2
Woods/park/beach	8	28.6	7	15.6
Street/lane	2	7.1	7	15.6
Parking lot	2	7.1	5	11.1
Remote area/river	6	21.4	3	6.7
Car in parking lot			3	6.7
Residence	4	14.3		
Playground			2	4.4
Hotel/motel	2	7.1	2	4.4
Wharf/industrial area	1	3.6	2	4.4
Victim residence	1	3.6	2	4.4
Road/highway/ditch	1	3.6	2	4.4
Other	1	3.6		
Not stated	1	Missing	2	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 47 describes the amount of force used during the commission of the crime. One striking feature of this information is that police use the term "overkill" to describe the force brought to bear in 37% of the murder cases described here. As the term implies, much more force is used than would be necessary to kill someone, acknowledging that in murders such as these -- most of which involve direct contact in the form of hands, club or knife (Table 48) -- there are likely to be substantial defence wounds. In reading the details of cases police described as overkill, one is left with the impression of an attacker in a blind rage, acting out a hatred that only he can understand.

**Table 47**  
**Amount of Force Used**

	Murders		Sex Assaults	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Minimal			28	63.6
Moderate			14	31.8
Severe/deadly	15	62.5	2	4.5
Extreme/overkill	9	37.5		
Not stated/Unknown	5	Missing	3	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 48**  
**Weapons Used**

	Murders		Sex Assaults	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Knife	8	47.1	19	67.9
Club/pipe	3	17.6	3	10.7
Handgun/revolver	1	5.9	3	10.7
Rifle/other gun			2	7.1
Other	5	29.4	1	3.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Also made available to us from the RCMP database was information about some of the details of the offences committed (types of sexual acts, whether victims were burned or bitten, and so on). We decided not to reproduce this information here. However, we would note that, while many of the offences described in this database are, of course, "sexual" in nature (its content is restricted to murder and sexual assault) less than half the murders involved an obviously physically "sexual" element (penetration, etc.).



## 4. VPD Information on Deaths of Persons Known to Have Prostituted

### "ATTENTION HEROIN USERS"

VERY STRONG HEROIN IS NOW AVAILABLE, MANY PEOPLE HAVE DIED FROM OVERDOSING ON THIS; PLEASE USE CAUTION, TRY SMALL AMOUNTS UNTIL YOU KNOW THE STRENGTH OF THE HEROIN

IN QUESTION: BE SAFE  
(from a DEYAS/Native Health Flyer, 1993)

In Vancouver over the past two to three years, the Vancouver Coroner's office has dealt with a substantial increase in the number of people dying of drug overdoses. From the mid to late 1970s, police sources suggests that the attrition of the heroin supply from Southeast Asia translated into a considerable reduction of heroin available in Vancouver. When it was available, it was "cut" by suppliers to the point that it was usually less than 10%, and often less than 5% pure. In the 1980s, the most common intravenously injected drug on the Downtown Eastside was a combination of Talwin and Ritalin, the so-called "poor man's heroin." Although these are prescription drugs, doctors and pharmacists facilitated the street trade by prescribing and/or otherwise supplying substantial quantities of the two drugs. At the same time action was taken against Talwin-Ritalin distributors in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the supply of heroin was increasing substantially. Heroin became relatively cheap, and the supply sufficiently great that it was distributed without being heavily cut. Through this period, the supply of cocaine also seems to have greatly increased.

Being completely unregulated in any way, one consequence of readily available, inexpensive and relatively pure heroin is that overdosing is much more likely. Information from the Coroner's office suggests that over the past two years, there has been a considerable increase in illicit drug overdose deaths. In 1993 there were more than 400 illicit drug overdose deaths in British Columbia (200 of which were in Vancouver), as compared to 155 province-wide in 1992.<sup>27</sup> An unknown, but probably substantial proportion of these deaths were women who prostitute. The Downtown Eastside prostitution stroll that has existed since the Second World War has always had the reputation of being a "hypes" stroll. Studies of prostitution in Vancouver have, to varying degrees, noted a convergence of drug use and prostitution. For example, in her 1974 study of prostitution in Vancouver, Monique Layton (1975) found that 47 of 93 of her participants were heroin users (and another thirteen had used heroin in the past, but were not doing so at the time of Layton's study). Of the 85 participants in the victim survey conducted on the Downtown Eastside in 1993 (Currie et. al. 1995; see p.59 below), 75% had used heroin at least once in the past six months, and 68% had used cocaine.

Apparently, it would be possible to go through the records of the Vancouver Coroner's office to get some idea of how many women involved in prostitution have died from drug overdose, since the files often contain information about the lifestyle and/or occupation of persons who died. However, were it to have been made available to us, we did not have the resources to collect this information.

Some information about illicit drug overdose deaths is available from the Vancouver Police Department Vice Unit. Because the Vice Unit has assigned to it a record keeper, and because of the detailed records she keeps, we do have some information about the causes of death of women known to have been involved in prostitution. Whenever the record keeper receives information that a person on file has died (for example after police have attended a death scene, and determine that a murder or an overdose death has occurred), a record is put on file. We have been provided with a summary of these records. The most striking feature of this information (Table 49) is that the main cause of death given in these files is "drug overdose." The second most common cause is murder. Some of the overdose deaths may have been

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<sup>27</sup> Greg Middleton, "Coroner plans a probe into dope deaths" *The Province*, 9 January 1994, p.A6; Neal Hall, "Surge in crime blamed on price of heroin" *Vancouver Sun*, 29 November 1994, p.B1.

murders, the consequence of a “hot cap” (a much stronger dose sold, or otherwise administered, to a person deliberately in order to cause their demise).

**Table 49**  
**Type of Death**

Cause	Count	Percent
Overdose	60	51.3
Murder	32	27.4
Possible overdose	10	8.5
Accident	6	5.1
Disease	3	2.6
Possible murder	2	1.7
Suicide	2	1.7
Other	2	1.7
Unknown	55	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 50, which provides more detailed information about the main cause of death, indicates that of the 25 overdose deaths for which there is a record, heroin was responsible for 16, cocaine was the cause of six deaths, and in three other cases the two drugs were mixed. It was possible to ascertain the cause of death of eighteen murder victims: seven were stabbed (two of whom were mutilated), seven were strangled, and four were beaten to death.

**Table 50**  
**Main Cause of Death**

	Count	Percent
Heroin	16	27.1
Cocaine	6	10.2
Heroin+cocaine	3	5.1
Other drugs	4	6.8
Strangled	7	11.9
Stabbed	5	8.5
Beaten	4	6.8
Mutilated	2	3.4
Other murder	1	1.7
Fell	2	3.4
Other accident	3	5.1
Cardiac arrest	2	3.4
Other disease	4	6.8
Not specified	113	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Of the 172 persons known to have died, there were 156 females, 15 transsexuals (transsexuals and transvestites are not distinguished) and one male. Twenty-eight of the murder victims were female, 4 were transsexual, and one was male.

The year of death is shown in Table 51.

**Table 51**  
**Year of Death**

Year	Murder	Other	Year	Murder	Other
1972	0	2	1985	2	2
1974	0	2	1986	3	2
1975	0	1	1987	2	3
1977	0	1	1988	5	10
1978	2	10	1989	3	14
1979	0	15	1990	2	7
1980	1	1	1991	2	0
1981	2	1	1992	3	20
1982	3	6	1993	2	12
1983	1	4	??	0	8
1984	1	5	Total	34	138

When we cross-referenced the murders listed in the VPD files with those reported in the *Sun* and *Province*, we discovered that of the 34 murders listed in the VPD data set, only nineteen were reported in the two newspapers. Of these nineteen women, fourteen are known to have worked the street. Another woman was described in the newspapers as an exotic dancer, but is recorded as a prostitute in the VPD files. Table 52 shows the years in which the nineteen murders occurred. Two deaths listed in the VPD information as cause "unknown" are reported as murders in the newspapers. If we include these two, then there are 21 incidents common to the two sets of information. This leaves fifteen murders listed in the VPD files that are not included in our newspaper data (several of which presumably occurred outside British Columbia, and would thus not be included in our newspaper records), and twenty nine in the newspaper data that are not included in the VPD files (nine of these murders occurred after July 1993, the date when the VPD list was compiled).

**Table 52**  
**Year of Death of Persons Reported as Murdered in Vice Unit Files and Also Reported in the *Sun* or the *Province***

1983	1
1985	2
1986	2
1988	5
1989	3
1990	2
1991	1
1992	1
1993	2
Total	19

There are several reasons for the discrepancy in the two sets of data. To begin with, the information drawn from the *Sun* and *Province* relates only persons found murdered in British Columbia, whereas the VPD information includes persons in their files reported to have been murdered elsewhere (Table 53) of whom there were at least three. From 1988 to 1993, the newspapers reported 31 murders in British Columbia of persons identified as prostitutes, the Vice Unit files identify seventeen. Of these seventeen, thirteen appear in Vancouver newspapers (the missing four are likely to have occurred outside B.C.). Of course, the Vice Unit statistics *relate only to persons known to have worked in Vancouver*, while the newspapers report murders from around British Columbia regardless of whether a person prostituted in Vancouver -- hence the greater number of murders reported.

**Table 53**  
**Where Found**

	Count.	Percent
Vancouver	5	14.7
Burnaby	2	5.9
Victoria	2	5.9
Surrey	1	2.9
Squamish	1	2.9
USA	2	5.9
Other Canada	1	2.9
Not reported	20	58.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100.0</b>

From a comparison of newspaper reports, Vice Unit files, and RCMP data it seems reasonable to draw the following conclusion: assuming that persons murdered do not appear under different names in the newspapers and VPD information (in the RCMP data, names of victims were not available), then at least 67 persons who have been involved in prostitution in British Columbia at one time or another have been murdered since 1978 (the first date of any prostitute murder in British Columbia that we have been able to discover, other than the ones in 1910 and 1959 mentioned in footnote 10) including sixty since January 1982. Of the sixty-seven murders, fifty-five occurred in British Columbia<sup>28</sup>.

Of course, it is *not* possible to ascertain if all the murders are directly related to prostitution. A VPD report written in 1992 suggests that at least three of the Vancouver murders since 1984 are related to the drug trade, not to prostitution as such, as may be the case with some of the other murders around British Columbia.

<sup>28</sup> In addition to the fifty mentioned in the *Sun* and *Province*, there are apparently five others -- two in VPD data and three in the RCMP MACROS database discussed on p.30 above.

## 5. Rates of Homicide: Comparing Prostitute and Non-Prostitute Victims

Although our research mandate did not include a comparison of murder rates of various categories of female victims, we provide some cursory information about the homicide rates of apparently non-prostitute women and women known to have prostituted, because it highlights the relative vulnerability of the latter.

For the purpose of this exercise we have extrapolated information from several *Juristat Service Bulletins* (Canadian Center for Justice Statistics, 1992a, 1992b, 1994). Because this exercise has involved extrapolation of secondary data (at some point we would like to return to the primary data to repeat this analysis) its results must be regarded as tentative.

"Homicide in Canada 1991" (Canadian Center for Justice Statistics, 1992a) reveals that from 1981 to 1990, B.C. accounted for an average of 99 (15.3%) of the 647 homicides that occurred each year (p.6). The figures for the gender breakdown of victims from province to province are not provided with these data, but we do know that 36% of 1991 homicide victims nation-wide were female (p.2), a proportion that is fairly consistent through time (e.g. Canadian Center for Justice Statistics, 1994). If the proportion in British Columbia has been the same, then approximately 36 females on average were murdered each year in B.C. from 1981 to 1990. From 1981 to 1984 we discovered four murders of females identified as sex trade workers (including two strip dancers). From 1985 to 1990, there were 27 murders of women identified as prostitutes, an average of 4.5 per year. Assuming our calculation of the average number of females murdered in B.C. is correct, then of the total number of females murdered in B.C. each year, 12.5% were known to have been involved in prostitution. Presumably, this represents a very large over-representation of these women among the ranks of female murder victims.

It is difficult to accurately estimate relative homicide rates of women known to have been involved in prostitution as compared to apparently non-prostitute women. But some very general estimates can be made. In 1990, the homicide rate of adult females (who comprise 87% of all female victims) was about 1.9 per 100,000 (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1992b, p.11); the equivalent rate for adult men was 4.0. In this same year, 5 adult females known to have been involved in prostitution were murdered in B.C. (from 1985-1990 the B.C. average was 4.5 per year). We do not know if the murders of these women were related to their suggested involvement in prostitution, nor do we know how many women prostituted in British Columbia that year. We do know how many women were prosecuted for communicating in various years in British Columbia, and in the case of Vancouver, how many were repeat offenders. In 1986 and 1987, Vancouver police charged 838 different people with communicating for the purpose of selling sexual services, of whom 644 were adult females (Lowman 1989, p. A-332). From these numbers, together with information from prostitution surveys about interview subjects work habits, Rossmo and Routledge (1990) used a variety of statistical models to estimate street prostitute populations. Depending on how migration is accounted for, they estimated that somewhere between 1300 and 2600 persons worked as street prostitutes in Vancouver at any one time during this period.

The Rossmo and Routledge estimate gives a rough bench mark for estimating different risks of victimization. If we double their figure to (gu)estimate the British Columbia total at this time (when Vancouver accounted for most of B.C.'s. street prostitution, with much of the rest in Victoria), and then remove 23% (to account for youths, males and transsexuals), the number of adult women involved in street prostitution would be somewhere between 2000 and 4000. According to these figures, the murder rate per 100,000 adult women involved in street prostitution was anywhere from 112 to 225, roughly sixty to one hundred and twenty times the rate of other adult women (indeed, it is more than this, since the rate for adult women is inflated because it is calculated from the total number of murders of adult females, not the total minus the number of women known to have been involved in prostitution). Without the benefit of murder data from other cities and provinces, it is not possible to ascertain whether these rates differ markedly from other provinces, and if they do, whether the differences are consistent with interprovincial variations in general murder rates over the past ten years (Canadian Center for Justice Statistics, 1992a).

## 6. Investigating Murders of Sex Trade Workers

In the late 1980s and early 1990s a prostitutes' rights advocate criticized police for not giving the same amount of attention to prostitute murder investigations as they do to investigating the murders of other women. We should point out from the outset that, since our focus is exclusively on crimes against prostitutes, we cannot throw any light on claims about how much energy police devote to murders involving different types of victims. Instead, we provide a general description of recent police investigations of murders of sex trade workers.

Various RCMP and municipal police forces have been involved in the investigation of murders of sex trade workers. Each time a murder victim is found, a homicide investigation occurs. We talked to Vancouver police about some of their experiences investigating the murders of sex trade workers, and the difficulties experienced in the process. But first, we describe some of the more general efforts of B.C. police forces as it became obvious that an unprecedented number of sex trade workers was being murdered around the province.

In July 1987 the RCMP established the Unsolved Female Homicide Task Force (UFHTF) to ascertain if a serial killer was responsible for the unsolved murders of 12 prostitutes, two exotic dancers, and three women thought not to be connected with prostitution, all of whom had been murdered since 1982. In 1990, after another woman known to prostitute was found on the bank of the Seymour River in North Vancouver, a 21 man unit was established to investigate the case, including four officers from the UFHTF. A newspaper report<sup>29</sup> in 1990 indicated that Task Force did not believe that a serial killer was operating at the time, and the two or three murders that seemed to be linked were associated with the illicit drug trade, not with prostitution.

When the Task Force was formed in 1987 it had twelve officers assigned to it. They began their investigations by working with officers from various police forces assigned to investigating the homicides. Task Force efforts were then organized into five investigative teams examining: a) victim profiles; b) suspect profiles; c) modus operandi/crime scenes; d) cause of death/forensic evidence; and e) amassed general evidence (phone numbers, residential addresses, business addresses, vehicle descriptions and license plates).<sup>30</sup> During the first year of task force activity, police traveled around Canada to interview friends' relatives and families of victims, and follow up leads on suspects.

We have not been able to ascertain exactly when the Task Force was disbanded (apparently it was 1991 or 1992), but we do know that it was before 1994 when we began this project. Newspaper references to the activities of the Task Force indicate that it was in operation for at least four years. We do not know how many people were on the Task Force at any given time.

Besides Task Force activities, various RCMP detachments were involved in the investigation of several of the murders because bodies were dumped in their jurisdiction.

The most comprehensive document we have about the activities of the Vancouver police is a report on murders of prostitutes by the Police Chief. The report was submitted by the City Manager to the City Council for information purposes after members of the School of Social Work at UBC sought information about what was being done about murders of prostitutes.

The report begins by noting that from 1 January 1985 to 31 March 1992 26 murders of women believed to be prostitutes had occurred, nine of whom had been found in the Vancouver police jurisdiction (4.2% of the homicides during this period). From 21 February 1985, when a Mount Pleasant prostitute was stabbed to death, to 3 April 1988 no murders of prostitutes occurred in Vancouver (or if they did, the bodies were

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<sup>29</sup> Neal Hall, "Mounties assign 21 officers to find 18th prostitute's killer" *Vancouver Sun*, 11 April 1990, A5.

<sup>30</sup> Neal Hall and Kim Pemberton, "B.C. task force busy working on unsolved murders." *Vancouver Sun*, 6 February 1989, p. A1, A10.

dumped elsewhere). Then during the remainder of 1988 there were five murders in Vancouver. Most of the 26 murders the Task Force had been assigned to examine remain unsolved.

The VPD Major Crime section worked with the RCMP Task Force on the 1985 murder, "which resulted in a "much closer working relationship between the RCMP Serious Crime Section and the Vancouver Police Major Crime Section." It was determined that the 1985 murder was probably drug related.

After the five 1988 murders, the VPD homicide squad submitted a request for six extra detectives to assist with the murder investigations. From information obtained from a variety of sources, and the "same unusual manner" in which the killer operated, two of these murders were linked, and determined to be related to the drug trade, not to prostitution. A request was made to mount an undercover operation to get information on these two murders, but apparently did not lead to an arrest.

A review was conducted of the other four Vancouver murders being examined at that time, and all available information fed into the RCMP computer system. In April 1990 two detectives went to Houston to interview a suspect who was wanted on Canada wide warrants for sexual assault. The suspect refused to talk to detectives. He is now serving a lengthy sentence for rape and murder, and remains a prime suspect in at least one Vancouver homicide.

In 1989 no murder victims were found in Vancouver, then another murder occurred in 1990.

In early 1991 the RCMP "STAIRS" computer program was replaced with the Major Crime Organizational System (MACROS -- see p.30 above) which facilitates the connection of unsolved homicides and sexual assaults, should connections exist.

In February 1991 a conference was held in Victoria to examine unsolved murders of women thought to be prostitutes. Officers from the Vancouver Police Major Crime Section, Vancouver RCMP Serious Crime Section, Colwood RCMP, Saanich Police, Esquimalt Police, and New Westminster Police attended the conference. In October that year, representatives from the RCMP, and officers from Vancouver, Seattle, Ontario, New York State, South Carolina and the FBI met with officers from the B.C. Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island to profile the outstanding unsolved murders in B.C. of women thought to be prostitutes. The purpose of the week long conference was to establish if there were any clear groupings of cases among the twenty-six unsolved homicides, analyse crime scenes of the grouped cases, develop investigative strategies, and identify offenders. The conference concluded that the murders were not the work of a single offender, but of many offenders, some of whom may be responsible for more than one offence.

In Vancouver another murder victim was found in November 1991, and another in January 1992. In the latter case, police made an arrest immediately.

In December 1991 detectives attended a meeting in Seattle organized by the Washington State attorney General's Department to discuss homicide investigations in Portland Oregon (particularly a suspect recently taken into custody), and consider if there were any links between homicides in British Columbia, Washington and Oregon.

### ***Difficulties Experienced Investigating Murders of Prostitutes: The Police Perspective***

In discussing murders of prostitutes with Vancouver police, we asked how these kinds of murder investigations differ from others, and what particular investigative difficulties they present. According to our police sources, murders of prostitute tend to be difficult to solve for the following reasons:

- a) Often, police investigators do not have access to the death scene, only the body dump site. One homicide detective estimated that 75% of what turns out to be useful evidence in a homicide case comes from the crime site rather than the dump site. When an investigator does not have access to the crime site, the victim usually becomes the main source of trace evidence. These difficulties may be compounded by other people who attend the dump site (fire fighters were mentioned in this context) who disturb trace evidence, and may generally contaminate the site.
- b) The anonymity of the suspect and victim. People tend to notice what is out of place. In areas of street prostitution, prostitutes tend to become “anonymous” in the sense that they are not noticed when they climb into a vehicle. The most common crime scene is a vehicle, but in very few cases are witnesses available to identify the vehicle. The offender often has total control of the crime scene, and he takes it with him, usually without much trace, after he has dumped the body.
- c) If the offender was a prospective trick, it is unlikely that he will have met the victim prior to the incident. Because they were strangers when they met, and because their first meeting was also the victim’s last, there are few ways to connect the offender to the victim.
- d) Likely witnesses, usually other street-involved people, are perceived as unreliable. To begin with, they do not hold the police in high regard. Also, there can be severe consequences for “ratting” on peers in the illicit drug economy and/or the street sex trade. Because many street-involved people are nomadic, it is difficult to know if they will show up for court dates. And whether they are around or not, illicit drug users are not perceived to be particularly reliable witnesses. One police source commented that another reason that drug users and other street-involved people do not make reliable witnesses is that they do not perceive the flow of time in the same way as straight people, because they usually don’t wear watches, and they have no structured daily routine with familiar time benchmarks by which to locate particular events. The problem is that exact times are often vital components of evidence.
- e) Several generic issues also impinge on the handling of homicides involving sex trade workers. A common police lament is that the rights of the individual supersede the rights of the state, and that police do not have the laws they need to get the job done. For example, one officer lamented that police in Canada, unlike their US counterparts, are not able seek warrants to compel suspects to provide blood and DNA samples, with the result that sometimes they are unable to successfully conclude a case even when they feel very confident they know the identity of an offender. As to whether there is a serial killer or killers at work in B.C., the opinion is that certain suspects are responsible for more than one murder.

As to the problems created by tracking offenders across police jurisdictions, one gets the impression that problems of information exchange can occur. There may be a certain amount of competitiveness between the RCMP and municipal police forces. We have heard more than one municipal officer suggest that contact with the RCMP sometimes appears to be something of a one way street -- as one officer put it, they like to get information, but are not quite so eager when it comes to providing it. We do not know how representative this sentiment is. However, we would note that many of the murders identified in police files and from our review of newspaper articles involve multiple jurisdictions, with the jurisdiction in which a body is dumped taking the main responsibility for any particular investigation. Obviously the need for cooperation is greatest in a situation where an offender might be operating in several jurisdictions, and even in the case of a single murder, it might be necessary to obtain evidence in several different police jurisdictions.



## 7. V.P.D. Information About Assaults on Prostitutes

Our synopsis of newspaper stories on violence against prostitutes (Appendix 2) gives an idea of the sorts of incidents deemed newsworthy enough to cover. When we compare the types of incidents reported in the news to other sources of information (police reports and Bad Date Sheets) we found that most of the news stories are about trials of men for sexual assault of women identified as prostitutes. We provide an alternative portrait of crimes against prostitutes by summarising Vancouver Police Department Vice Unit descriptions of offences reported by prostitutes in 1992 and 1993.<sup>31</sup> This exercise has yielded a more detailed description of incidents than those provided in news reports, and provides information about offences other than sexual assaults. The main characteristics of the incidents are summarized in Table 54 through Table 63 below, and case scenarios are provided in Appendix 3.

The study of Vice Unit files for 1992 and 1993 yielded 61 cases (29 in 1992, and 32 in 1993). In 58 of these 61 cases there was one victim, and in the other three there were two. Fifty-nine of the cases involved female victims, and two involved transsexuals.

Table 54 shows the "race" (see footnote 26, p.33) of persons reporting assaults, sexual assaults, robberies and other offences. 80% of the women for whom this information was available were Caucasian, and 17% were aboriginal.

**Table 54**  
**"Race" of Victim**

	Count	Percent	Percent (missing values removed)
Caucasian	28	45.9	80.0
Native	6	9.8	17.1
Chinese	1	1.6	2.9
Not stated	26	42.6	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Of the 43 complainants for whom this information was available, five (12%) were over 30 years of age, and only three (7%) were under the age of eighteen years (Table 55). This percentage of youths is smaller than the proportion appearing in VPD statistics on charges for communicating (s.213). Between 1986 and October 1992, Vancouver police charged 2714 different individuals (236 males and 2478 females) for offering to sell sexual services in a public place. Of these, there were 336 females under the age of 18 years (12.4% of the total), and 18 males (0.7% of the total).

If youths are more susceptible to violence, as many people seem to believe, their apparent under-representation in these reports would appear to indicate one of the following: 1) either youths are less likely than adults to report victimization to the police; or 2) they do not get victimized at the same rate as adults; 3) they are over-represented in arrest statistics because the police tend to use s.213 to target youths as a way of trying to get them off the street; and/or 4) these data are not representative.

<sup>31</sup> It should be noted that these do not represent all cases involving prostitutes, but only those appearing in Vice Unit files (others will appear in the files of the Sexual Offences Squad only).

**Table 55**  
**Age of Victim**

Age	Count	Percent	Cum. Percent
Under 18	3	7.0	7.0
18-20	9	21.0	28.0
21-25	18	41.9	69.9
26-30	8	18.6	88.5
31-35	5	11.6	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 56 shows if a description of the alleged offender is contained in the police report. As of the time of writing, police had laid charges in only nine cases (Table 57).

**Table 56**  
**Suspect Description Provided?**

	Count	Percent
Yes	23	37.7
No/none reported	38	62.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 57**  
**Were Charges Laid?**

	Count	Percent	Percent (missing values removed)
No	11	18.0	45.8
Yes	9	14.8	37.5
Not stated	4	6.6	16.7
	37	60.7	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 58 indicates that the majority of incidents involved would-be customers (96.5%). Occasionally career pimps do pose as tricks in the process of trying to recruit women, but in this particular instance, the two men described as "pimps" kidnapped a woman on the street in an incident related to a dispute between them and her man.

**Table 58**  
**Offender Type**

	Count	Percent	Percent (missing values removed)
Customer	55	90.2	96.5
Pimp	2	3.3	3.5
Not stated	4	6.6	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 59 supports all the other information at our disposal regarding the number of offenders involved in various incidents. As one would expect, the large majority of offenders (89.5%) act on their own. This is very similar to the proportion (88.3%) mentioned in Bad Date Sheets (Table 73). Only three of the men identified by these complainants are known to be repeat offenders (Table 60), although many more of them may be.

**Table 59**  
**Number of Offenders**

	Count	Percent	Percent (missing values removed)
1	51	83.6	89.5
2	4	6.6	7.0
3	1	1.6	1.8
5	1	1.6	1.8
Not stated	4	6.6	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 60**  
**Repeat Offender?**

	Count	Percent
Yes	3	4.9
No/not reported	54	88.5
Suspected	4	6.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As with most of our other information about where women experience the highest rate of bad dates, by far the largest number of complainants appearing in these files had been working in one of the East Vancouver strolls (Table 61). Of the 35 women for whom we have this information, 63% had met the attacker in one of the Downtown Eastside/Strathcona area strolls, and another 25% had been working in Mount Pleasant (i.e., in North Mount Pleasant/1st Avenue or Fraser/Broadway). Only one complainant came from the Richards and Seymour stroll.

**Table 61**  
**Area Victim Picked Up**

	Count	Percent	Percent (missing values removed)
Hastings/E. Side	22	36.1	62.9
N. Mt. Pleasant	6	9.8	17.1
Fraser/Broadway	3	4.9	8.6
Kingsway	2	3.3	5.7
Richards/Seymour	1	1.6	2.9
Other	1	1.6	2.9
Not stated	26	42.6	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 62 shows the types of offences reported, and Table 63, the weapons used in the commission of certain offences. Twenty-seven cases (44%) involved assault, and 22 (36%) involved sexual assault.

**Table 62**  
**Type of Offence**

	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
Assault	23	33.8	37.7
Assault causing bodily harm	3	4.4	4.9
Aggravated assault	1	1.5	1.6
Sexual assault	22	32.3	36.1
Theft	2	3.0	3.3
Robbery	10	15.0	16.4
Attempted murder	1	1.5	1.6
Threatening	4	5.9	6.6
Procuring minor	1	1.5	1.6
Confinement	1	1.5	1.6
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>113.1</b>

Offenders used weapons in 36% of the incidents reported to the police. The corresponding figure in information collected from Bad Date Sheets was 25% (Table 70).

**Table 63**  
**Weapon Used**

	Count	Percent
Knife	9	14.8
Club/hammer/pipe	6	9.8
Gun	4	6.6
Other	3	4.9
None reported	39	63.9
Total	61	100.0

It should be noted that the incidents described above are drawn from the Vice Unit files and do not include all the incidents reported to Vancouver police. For a summary of all the reports for the period January 1990 to July 1993 see Table 71, p.57 below.

Our main purpose in describing police information about assaults is to provide a quantitative portrait of the experience of violence. In Appendix 3 we provide brief descriptions of these incidents constructed from witness statements in police Reports to Crown Counsel. Also, we interviewed a woman who had reported several incidents of assaults and sexual assaults to police, with varying police reactions (for a transcript of the interview, see Appendix 6c). In the case of a robbery she reported to police, she felt fobbed off, and badly treated. Police did not investigate her complaint. In another instance, on her behalf a social service worker reported a sexual assault by a trick to the police. Police carried out an investigation and laid charges against a man who is also accused of assaulting another woman. In the case of our interview subject, the man was acquitted; the other case has yet to come to trial.

## 8. Bad Date Sheets

“Ladies it is getting crazier out there. Please be extra careful. Have someone spot for you. If you have a bad date, please give as much information as possible. You can report a bad date to the Needle Exchange Van, or the youth street workers, or you can call our office...”

DEYAS Bad Date Sheet

Various organizations have published “bad trick” or “bad date” sheets in Vancouver. The first organization to do so was the “Alliance for Safety of Prostitutes” (ASP) in 1983. This organization disbanded in 1986, at which point “Prostitutes and Other Women for Equal Rights” (POWER) took over the collection and distribution of bad trick information. An analysis of ASP and POWER bad trick sheets for the period January 1985 to April 1988 was undertaken as part of the evaluation of the communicating law in Vancouver (Lowman 1989, pp. 10-11; 127-128, A-560-564), and is reproduced in Table 64 through Table 75, alongside more recent information. In 1988, the Downtown Eastside Youth Activities Society (DEYAS) began publishing a bad date sheet, and has regularly done so since that time. As the collection of information for the DEYAS sheet became more systematic, it gradually became the main vehicle for reporting bad tricks on the Downtown Eastside, and the POWER sheet was discontinued. Consequently, we have restricted the latter part of our analysis to the DEYAS sheets. Because the DEYAS sheets differ in their geographic coverage from the ASP and POWER lists -- the DEYAS sheets deal primarily with information from the Downtown Eastside and some from Mount Pleasant -- our tables distinguish 1985-1988 ASP-POWER information from 1988-1993 DEYAS information.

The various bad trick sheets are quite similar in the information they provide about bad dates, although the DEYAS sheets also provide women on the street information about services available from local agencies.<sup>32</sup> Also, the DEYAS sheets are constructed from information provided on small forms requesting standardized information.<sup>33</sup> Social service providers hand out the forms around the strolls, and they are available in local service agency offices. Sometimes DEYAS uses the Bad Date Sheets to circulate other kinds of information. For example, one sheet requested that women avoid working in locations where their activities cause problems for other residents. One sheet requested women not to turn tricks in the parking lot of a local grocery, and not to fix or leave needles or condoms in the local school grounds and parks where children play and might pick them up.

The purpose of our analysis is to describe the types of offences and offenders being reported, including the reported “race” or “ethnic origin” of the offender (see footnote 26), the date of the sheet (the ASP/POWER sheets did not give the date of the incident), the characteristics of the incident, whether it is known if the incident involved a repeat offender, the number of offenders and number of victims involved, the area in which the woman was picked up, the type of person victimized (male, female, transsexual, youth), and the estimated age of the offender.

Table 64 shows the areas where the persons reporting bad dates were picked up by the offender.

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<sup>32</sup> The sheets include information about the route of the Needle Exchange Van and times it will wait at various locations, addresses of various service provision agencies, news about new programs, HIV/AIDS testing and counselling, and so on. With the growing Latin American population in Vancouver, some of the information is provided in Spanish.

<sup>33</sup> Including: a) the date; b) the number of males involved; c) estimated height, weight, ethnic origin, hair colour, cut of hair, mustache/beard, eye colour, scars and other identifying features; d) the location the person was picked up; e) the location the person was taken to; f) whether the date paid, and how much; g) type of vehicle, colour, number of doors, and license plate number; and h) a description of what took place.

**Table 64**  
**Area Where Victim Picked Up**

	1985-1988		1988-1993	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Mt. Pleasant	115	42.6	155	19.1
Downtown Eastside	64	23.7	625	76.8
Seymour/Richards	75	27.8	9	1.1
Granville	5	1.9	2	.2
Columbia/Cordova	4	1.5		
Whalley			17	2.1
Other	7	2.6	6	.7
Not Stated/Unknown	349	Missing	183	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>997</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Differences in the volume of reports coming from each of the strolls probably reflects differences in the constituencies of the organizations collecting the bad date information as well as differences in the incidence of bad dates in different areas. ASP and POWER volunteers collected reports from each of the strolls existing at that time. The preponderance of reports from Mount Pleasant is probably as much a reflection of the better links POWER had with the women working in that area, than it is a reflection of the rate of bad dates in different areas (though there may well be different area rates). Because DEYAS is a community based organization, most of the information for its Bad Date Sheet comes from the Downtown Eastside.

Some of the difference in the volume of bad dates probably also reflects temporal changes in the number of people working the various strolls. Table 65 shows the average weekly counts of people working various strolls each year from 1985 to 1993, and the number of people in each stroll expressed as a percentage of the average total weekly counts. Table 66 shows the averages for the two periods 1985-1988 and 1988-1993.

**Table 65**  
**Counts Of Vancouver Street Prostitutes, 1985-1993<sup>34</sup>**

	85	%	86	%	87	%	88	%	89	%	90	%	91	%	92	%	93	%
Rich-Symr	16	37	8	33	25	49	26	57	35	60	24	50	26	50	30	43	21	30
Hastings	6	14	3	12	7	14	7	15	9	15	15	31	15	29	23	33	33	44
Mt. Pleasant	14	32	9	37	11	22	5	11	4	9	4	8	4	8	13	19	10	14
"Boystown"	7	16	4	16	8	16	8	17	10	17	5	10	7	13	4	6	7	10
	43		24		51		46		58		48		52		70		71	

Rich-Symr = Richards/Seymour;

Hastings = Hastings Street corridor from Main to Victoria, various strolls;

"Boystown" in 1984 = West section of the West End stroll. 1985-present = Drake/Homer;

Mount Pleasant = Includes Ontario/Quebec, Broadway between Cambie and Commercial and 1st Avenue.<sup>35</sup> (1st Avenue is one block north of Mount Pleasant).

<sup>34</sup> Counts are conducted each Thursday between 10.00 p.m. and midnight. In 1984 weekly counts were conducted from January to June; in 1985 they were conducted from April to July and October to December; in 1986 in all months except September and October; in 1988 from January to March and June to August; and in 1989 from June to December. In all other years, a count was conducted every week. Each count consists of an enumeration of all persons seen working during a single traverse of all streets and back alleys in each of the major strolls. Visible trick and police presence are also recorded.

One of the most noticeable changes in the number of people in the different strolls is the progressive increase in the number working on the Downtown Eastside and other strolls further east along and around Hastings that have developed over the past five years. There has been a corresponding reduction in the number of people working in Mount Pleasant, although the development of a stroll in a commercial area North of Mount Pleasant (1st Avenue) since 1991, has meant an increase of the number of women working in the general area since then.

**Table 66**  
**Counts of Vancouver Street Prostitutes.**  
**Averages for the Periods 1985-1988, and 1988-1993**

	85-88	88-93
Richards-Seymour	44%	48%
Downtown Eastside	14%	28%
Mt Pleasant*	26%	11%
Boystown	16%	12%

\*Includes 1st Avenue, Ontario/Quebec and Broadway between Cambie and Commercial

Table 67 shows the average number of bad dates reported each month. If the unusually high 1988 figure for the ASP/POWER bad date sheets is removed from the calculation, the overall averages for the 1985-1987 period are similar (14.7 as compared to 13.5). Of course this similarity probably does not mean very much, as the DEYAS information comes mostly from the Downtown Eastside, ASP and POWER collected information from all the strolls in use at the time.

**Table 67**  
**Number of ASP and POWER Bad Trick Reports Per Month**

	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1988*</u>
Monthly Means	13.3	17.4	13.4	28.0

\*January to April  
 Overall mean 1985-1988 = 18

**Number of DEYAS Bad Trick Reports Per Month**

	<u>1988**</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1994*</u>
Monthly Means	5	11.5	11.7	19.0	15.0	19.5	14.3

\*January to May  
 \*\* The low number here is likely a reflection of the fact that this was the first period that records were kept  
 Overall mean 1989-1993 = 13.5

In our previous presentation of information contained in ASP and POWER bad trick sheets (Lowman, 1989:127) we examined the reported "race" of offenders. We do so again here because the forms used to submit information to DEYAS have a space to record an offender's "ethnic origin," although the categories used (Caucasian, Asian, Latino, East Indian) refer to what traditionally would have been called "race." Our previous interest in these categories related to reports by women who prostitute that certain groups of men were more likely to be bad dates than others. This led to our comparing the frequencies of the "races"

<sup>35</sup> Late in 1991 women were moved by police from the Quebec, Ontario, 3rd to 5th Avenue area to 1st Avenue. Although it lies just outside Mount Pleasant, for the purposes of this analysis we include it as a Mount Pleasant stroll.



reported in bad date sheets with the equivalent categories of would-be customers charged under the communicating law (then, s.195.1; now s.213). We have reproduced the 1985-88 data here, and the equivalent information from the DEYAS sheets for the period 1988-93 (Table 68). In the DEYAS information, we find a smaller percentage of Caucasian males than we did in the earlier trick sheets, and a larger percentage of "Asians."

**Table 68**  
**"Race" of Bad Trick**

	1985-1988		1988-1993	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Caucasian	454	75.2	572	62.7
Indo-Pakistani	54	8.9	87	9.5
Oriental/Asian	35	5.8	93	10.2
Black	25	4.1	54	5.9
Native American	10	1.7	24	2.6
Latino/Mediterranean	0	0.0	60	6.6
Other	26	4.3	84	2.5
Not Stated/Unknown	15	Missing	23	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>997</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 69 depicts the gender of persons reporting bad dates (female youths are recorded separately). Few males show up as complainants in the DEYAS information since the male stroll ("Boystown") is located close to the Richards-Seymour stroll, outside the Downtown Eastside.

**Table 69**  
**Type of Prostitute Involved**

	1985-1988		1988-1993	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Adult Female	504	91.8	900	93.8
Youth female	17	3.1	52	5.4
Male	21	3.8	4	.4
Trannie	7	1.3	4	.4
Not Stated/Unknown	70	Missing	17	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>997</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 70 describes the types of offences committed. Physical assault and sexual assault are mutually exclusive categories. 68% of the incidents reported to ASP/POWER, and 58% of the incidents reported to DEYAS involved some kind of assault, sexual or otherwise. The corresponding proportions of incidents involving some kind of weapon were 27% and 25%. 37% of ASP/POWER reports, and 35.5% of DEYAS reports involved robbery or an attempt by the offender to get their money back.

In the evaluation of the communicating law, we were unable to establish how many incidents prostitutes reported to police, apart from a ten month period in 1987 during which time they reported 39 incidents (Lowman, 1989:127). However, a much more detailed record of complaints made by prostitutes to police is available for the period January 1990 to July 1993 (Table 71). During this time, DEYAS reported 738

incidents on Bad Date sheets. Given that more than one charge could have arisen from many of these incidents, one can speculate that if an accused had been identified in every case, police might have lain somewhere between 1000 and 1400 charges had all these incidents come to their attention.

**Table 70**  
**Type of Bad Date**

	1985-1988		1988-1993	
	Count	Percent of Cases	Count	Percent of Cases
Physical assault	246	39.7	328	33.4
Sexual assault	176	28.4	242	24.6
Rip-off/money back	101	16.3	197	20.1
Robbed of all cash	128	20.7	151	15.4
Had or used a knife	90	14.5	133	13.6
Verbal abuse/harass.	19	3.1	96	9.8
Threatening	70	11.3	96	9.8
Confinement	83	13.4	85	8.7
Refused safe	37	6.0	68	6.9
Unacceptable request	18	2.9	65	6.6
Had or used a gun	47	7.6	62	6.3
Acted weird/crazy	31	5.0	57	5.8
Had or used other weapon	31	5.0	51	5.2
Thrown from car			50	5.1
Drunk/stoned	33	5.3	35	3.6
Couldn't get off	31	5.0	30	3.1
Chased /followed by car			27	2.8
Pimp/possible pimp			24	2.4
Dumped			23	2.3
Posed as cop	27	4.4	23	2.3
Given drugs/drugged			6	.6
Property damage	5	.8	4	.4
Other	7	1.1	91	9.3
<b>Number of offenses/problems</b>	<b>1180</b>		<b>1943</b>	

Number of cases

ASP/POWER=619

DEYAS=997

It is not possible to make a direct comparison between VPD data on offences reported by prostitutes and the DEYAS trick sheets. To begin with, the VPD statistics relate to the number of potential offences and charges, not to the number of incidents. More importantly, VPD data relate to information coming from all the prostitution strolls -- it is not possible to tell how many complaints emanated from different areas. In contrast, DEYAS data relate mostly to incidents occurring on the Downtown Eastside; they provide no information about the Richards-Seymour area.

**Table 71**  
**Crimes\* Reported by Prostitutes to Vancouver Police Department**

	1990			1991			1992			1993 (Jan-July)		
	No Chrg	Chrg	Total	No Chrg	Chrg	Total	No Chrg	Chrg	Total	No Chrg	Chrg	Total
Agg Sex Ass		1	1		1	1	0	1	1	2		2
Sex Ass BH	9	3	12	15	10	25	11	7	18	3	4	7
Sex Assault	20	9	29	31	7	38	24	15	39	21	7	28
Agg Assault	2		2	3	1	4	2	2	4	1	1	2
Assault	15	4	19	18	13	31	31	20	51	15	10	25
Ass Bod Hrm	12	4	16	20	11	31	18	12	30	2	10	12
Robbery, Gun	1		1	3		3	1	1	2	1		1
Rob, Other Weapn	2	2	4	13	4	17	4	2	6	11		11
Robbery	11	6	17	12	6	18	14	1	15	12	3	15
Kidnap	1			2	1	3	3	3	6		2	2
Extort				1		1						
Threat Phone				2	1	3	1		1	1	1	1
Threat	3	1	4	3	4	7	2	2	4	2	2	2
	76	30	106	123	59	182	111	68	177	71	37	108

\* The offence type was classified by police according to the complainant's description

During the three and a half year period that some 1000-1400 offences were reported on DEYAS Bad Date Sheets (77% of which came from the Downtown Eastside and the remainder from Mount Pleasant) a total of 573 alleged offences were reported to police from all the Vancouver strolls (including Richards-Seymour which accounted for about 43% of the weekly head count population during this period) and 192 charges were laid.

Table 72 shows the number of known repeat offenders (as identified either by the person reporting the bad date, or through our check for license plate numbers reported on more than one occasion). The two data sets reveal similar proportions of known offenders.

**Table 72**  
**Number of Known Repeat Offenders**

	1985-1988		1988-1993	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Yes	109	17.6	203	20.4
No	510	82.4	794	79.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>997</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 73 describes the number of offenders involved, and indicates that in the large majority of cases, only one offender was involved.

**Table 73**  
**Number of Offenders Involved**

	1985-1988		1988-1993	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
One	531	86.2	872	88.3
Two	61	9.9	78	7.9
Three	14	2.3	22	2.2
Four	6	1.0	9	.9
Five	3	.5	1	.1
More than five	1	.2	6	.6
Not stated/Unknown	3	Missing	9	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>997</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 74 also reveals a striking similarity between the two sets of information -- in the vast majority of cases (about 98%), only one victim was involved.

**Table 74**  
**Number of Victims Involved**

	1985-1988		1988-1993	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
One	589	98.2	959	98.2
Two	11	1.8	13	1.3
Three			3	.5
Not Stated/Unknown	18	Missing	20	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>997</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 75 depicts the victims' estimates of the age of the offenders they encountered. Roughly three quarters of prostitutes (75.4% and 71.5% respectively) estimate the majority of offenders to be under 40 years of age. This is consistent with the age profile of 220 men charged with communicating in 1986 and 1987 -- 68% of these men were under forty years of age (Lowman, 1989:127). And it is consistent with information about the age of offenders from all the police databases at our disposal.

**Table 75**  
**Perceived Age of Offender**

	1985-1988		1988-1993	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Teens	6	1.5	9	3.1
Twenties	179	44.1	101	34.7
Thirties	121	29.8	100	34.4
Forties	46	11.3	35	12.0
Fifties and up	19	4.7	14	4.8
Young/younger	28	6.9	23	7.9
Old/older	7	1.7	9	3.1
Not stated/Unknown	213	Missing	706	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>997</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## 9. The 1993 Survey of Violence on the Downtown Eastside/Strathcona

No portrait of violence against sex trade workers would be complete without a first hand account of their experiences. Unfortunately, we did not have sufficient funding to conduct an interview survey with a representative sample of sex trade workers from Vancouver's various strolls, and from persons working in the off-street prostitution trade. Instead, we conducted a short self-administered questionnaire survey in the Richards-Seymour area and in the Downtown Eastside (see p.68). However, we learned that during 1993 an extensive interview survey had been undertaken of violence against street-involved women in the Vancouver Downtown Eastside/Strathcona community. We have received permission from the sponsors and other people associated with this research to include here a review of its findings.

In the summer of 1993 a coalition of local service agencies<sup>36</sup> formed a steering committee to examine violence against sex trade workers. The committee determined that there were few services in the community available to deal with violence, and reasoned that street-involved women should be given an opportunity to identify the types of programs that would cater to their needs. The committee proposed that this opportunity take the form of a survey of street-involved women, and that the subjects of the research should help design it. The B.C. Ministry of Women's Equality provided core funding.<sup>37</sup> The study was conducted in 1993 (Currie et. al., 1995). Its purpose was to:

- 1) provide an opportunity for sex trade workers from the community to provide information about their victimization and to make recommendations to improve or develop necessary services;
- 2) compile and analyze both qualitative and quantitative information, and to make recommendations based on the direct involvement of street-involved women;
- 3) provide information to the steering committee and other community-based agencies to enable the community to develop or enhance services for sex trade workers and other victims of violence in the community; and
- 4) identify issues related to violence for street involved women, as well as current gaps in service. (p. 3)

### *Method*

Initially the steering committee identified topics to be covered by the survey (personal information/demographics; nature of violence; support services; police services; shelter/housing; and HIV/Aids); others were added during the interview design process. Two community women were hired as interviewers, and a process of consultation with street-involved women initiated. The research team contacted women through local service agencies, on the street, in local cafes and by word of mouth, and held community meetings to introduce local women to, and get them involved in the research. To give local women an opportunity to participate in research design, six "group interviews" were held, involving 60 women. Through the experience of these group interviews, information priorities were identified, and a draft interview schedule was prepared. Besides facilitating the research, the focus groups also provided an opportunity for women to share information with each other, share their experiences, and offer each other support.

The interview question format was adjusted and finalized after ten women were interviewed. Of a population of at least 500 street-involved women, researchers contacted 60 in group interviews, and 85

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<sup>36</sup> These included the Downtown Eastside Youth Activities Society, Watari, YWCA, Crabtree Corner, Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, Wish (First United Church), Vancouver Native Health, Ray-Cam Community Center, and the Vancouver Native Police Liaison Unit Storefront Project.

<sup>37</sup> Other funding and resources were provided by DEYAS, Watari, and the BC Ministry of Social Services "Employment Plus" program.

individually. Since almost seventy percent of the individual interview sample are First Nations people, this study stands out for its information about native women involved in the sex trade in Vancouver.

Below we review the main findings of the Downtown Eastside/Strathcona study. We have focused on the findings of the study that relate to violence against persons in their capacity as sex trade workers.

The summary statistics presented here relate to the 85 participants who were interviewed individually (and to various subsets of their responses).

### ***Some General Characteristics of the Participants***

The women interviewed ranged in age from 16 to 55 years (the average was 26). Other characteristics of the participant group include the following:

- Almost 70% of the respondents were aboriginal. 27% were Caucasian.
- 71% were mothers (averaging three child births per person); less than 50% of the mothers knew where their children were. 16% of participants currently lived with their children.
- 88% of the participants lived in the Downtown Eastside/Strathcona community. 18% of the participants were homeless, and 47% lived in a local hotel.
- 18% of the participants grew up in Vancouver. Of those who migrated to Vancouver, 64% came from outside British Columbia.
- 91% of the women did not have their high school diploma; 40% had completed less than grade ten.
- A third of the participants said that other family members had worked in the sex trade, either currently or when they were growing up. 73% of the participants entered the sex trade prior to their 18th birthday.
- All of the participants received financial assistance, or some other kind of governmental support.
- When asked about their lifetime experiences, 99% of respondents reported that they had been the victims of some form of “violence” with 97% reporting multiple victimization. 73% had been “sexually abused” (no definition is provided) as children.

### ***Violence Related to the Sex Trade***

When asked whether they had experienced violence in the last six months while prostituting, 77% said that they had (with an average of seven incidents per person). The main perpetrators were customers, boyfriends-partners, and other sex trade workers. The incidents are summarized in Table 76.

**Table 76**  
**Types of Violence Experienced During Past Six Months (n of respondents=65)**

Type of Violence	Percent
sexually assaulted (any sex act without consent, or without agreed terms)	62
beaten by boyfriend	52
beaten by a customer	48
dumped by customer	44
assaulted with a weapon other than a gun or knife	30
assaulted or beat up another person	26
beaten by another sex trade worker	14
robbed	14
assaulted with a gun	14
beaten by a pimp	14
dragged by a car	08
held against their will	06
strangled	04
beaten by police	02

When asked if they had sought help from anyone about these incidents, 75% said that they did. Table 77 summarizes the persons/places that victims “received or wanted support/services from.”

**Table 77**  
**Help About Violence**

Help Sought	Percent
went to their friends for support	67
accessed a service agency or counsellor	53
went to the police	49
were admitted to a hospital	42
went to a social worker	27
asked their family for help	11
got a restraining order on their victimizer	9
received help from a stranger	2
used the bad date sheet	2

The interviewers noted that when police became involved, it was generally not because women approached police for service; rather, they became involved in those incidents where a woman was hospitalized (police became involved in 80% of such incidents). The general perception is that few services are available for street-involved women. Although respondents had varying opinions as to the value and effectiveness of different services, 89% said that they liked some of the services available, and 87% of these thought that they had received help at one time or another.

## Housing and Violence

86% of respondents believed they did not have adequate housing.<sup>38</sup> Only 5% were happy where they were currently living, and the vast majority (95%) wanted to live outside the Downtown Eastside.

65% of the survey participants lived in a hotel on the Downtown Eastside, or without any shelter or accommodation. As to the question, "Have you experienced any violence related to your housing over the past six months?" 38% of the participants said "yes." In particular, respondents perceived living in Downtown Eastside hotels to be quite dangerous. A recent newspaper article estimated that roughly 2000 single women live in hotels and flophouses in the Downtown Eastside. A local woman was reported as saying it was safer sleeping outside than in some of the hotels: "It was all that sexual stuff -- you have to always be on the defensive. You have to keep your guard up or be completely loaded. It was a nightmare."<sup>39</sup> The article continues, "Women face constant danger in hotels. Several men and women usually share one bathroom -- often without a lock on the door. Some women feel safer picking the least-threatening looking man in a bar and sleeping with him for the night. Prostitutes sometimes find shelter with their tricks."

## Alcohol and Drugs

All of the respondents had used alcohol or illicit drugs at some point in their lives, and 94% had used them in the past six months (78% had used alcohol; 75% heroin and 68% cocaine). 70% were 14 years or under when they began drinking. Over a third of the women used some other form of drug including Talwin/Ritalin (T's-and-R's), marijuana/hash, and hallucinogens. The large majority of women who used heroin, cocaine and T's-and-R's administered the drug intravenously. Table 78 describes the reasons respondents gave for using drugs.

**Table 78**  
**Reasons for Substance Use (n of respondents=66)**

Reasons	Percent
used them to escape reality, emotional pain and/or to forget about work	93
believed they were addicted	30
liked the high/low feeling of the drug(s)	18
believed that it was part of the lifestyle	10
used them to forget about the past	4

Of the 84% of respondents who said that their drug use changed when they were working, 96% said that their use increased while they were working, and of these, 80 % said that they used more in order to work, the other 20% reasoning that they used more when they worked the street because working provided the money to buy drugs. Table 79 depicts the number of times the respondents used their drug of choice each month. Over 70% of the respondents who used cocaine and heroin, used from three to twelve doses per day.

<sup>38</sup> 80% of respondents provided a definition of "adequate housing." They defined adequate as: a place that had its own bedroom (96% of respondents), bathroom (92%), and kitchen (92%) and is safe/secure (92%), clean (87%), and not shared (81%).

<sup>39</sup> Wendy McLellan "Women's hearts in safe haven" *The Province* 20 November 1994, p. A12.



**Table 79**  
**Frequency of Drug Use: Number of Times Per Month (n of respondents=66)**

# of Times	Percent
less than 15	4
16 - 30	4
31 - 150	17
151 - 300	39
301 - 600	33

Table 80 depicts the respondents' estimates of the cost of their drug use per day (many respondents noted that these expenditures varied considerably over time). The average cost (calculated from the mid point in each dollar range) is roughly \$240.00 per day.

**Table 80**  
**Respondents' Estimates of Cost of Drugs Per Day (n of respondents=62)<sup>40</sup>**

Cost per day	Percent
under \$100	20
\$100 - \$200	31
\$200 - \$300	19
\$300 - \$400	10
\$400 - \$500	7
over \$500	14

When it came to the relationship between drug use and violence, 91% of respondents reported that alcohol and drugs were the cause of, or resulted in violence against them. 87% of respondents reported at least one incident in the past six months. When asked about the number of incidents over the past six months, 23% of these respondents said that there were too many to remember, and another 51% reported between two and ten incidents. Of the 91% reporting incidents of victimization related to illicit drugs and alcohol, all of them were victims of a physical assault by a person under the influence of drugs or alcohol (the incidents were instigated by customers, partners and/or pimps, drug dealers, and other sex trade workers). 58% of respondents believed that their own intoxication had contributed to their victimization, and 14% reported that they had committed acts of violence because they had been intoxicated. The report also says that 78% of respondents had sought help to deal with their alcohol and illicit drug use and goes into some detail about the types of services that respondents would like to see provided. All the respondents felt that there should be more alcohol and drug services, and that they need to be more comprehensive, more flexible in their operating hours, more individualized, and less judgmental in the way that they go about providing for the needs of street-involved women. The report also notes that while there are roughly the same number of men and women in the Downtown Eastside, of 66 adult detox beds available locally, only 6 were for women. 73% of respondents said that more mobile services should be made available.

## **HIV/AIDS**

Questions were asked about the respondents' awareness of, and concern about HIV/AIDS. 99% of the women were familiar with HIV/AIDS, and all of these women expressed concern about contracting the HIV virus. Table 81 summarizes these concerns.

**Table 81**  
**Respondents Concerns About HIV Infection**

<sup>40</sup> The scale with non-mutually exclusive categories is taken from the original report.

HIV Concerns	Percent
contracting it from a customer	91
getting a customer to practice safe sex	76
other sex trade worker's usage of condoms	74
having the disease and other workers finding out about it	33
being assaulted by a customer because of fear of the disease	32
transmitting the virus to others	31
sharing of needles for intravenous drug use	14
condom breakage	6
about their friends/co-workers dying because of it	4

31% of respondents reported that, over the past six months, they "had experienced violence that they believed was related to HIV/AIDS." Of these respondents, 71% said that the incident related to a customer's refusal to wear a condom. When it came to combating AIDS, the majority of respondents thought that more education was needed, and that the local needle exchange program should be expanded.

### Training

91% of respondents did not have a high school diploma. Only 44% had any training or skills education since becoming involved in the sex trade. 60% stated that lack of training and education did affect their involvement in the sex trade, and 93% of respondents stated that they would be interested in some kind of training program if it were available to them.

### Police Services

37% of respondents had used police services in the previous six months. The reasons for their involvement with police are summarized in Table 82.

**Table 82**  
**Reasons for Involvement With Police (n of respondents=31)**

Why Police Were Involved	Percent
bad date, physical and/or sexual assault	49
asked for help over domestic violence	21
involuntary involvement due to arrest warrants, etc.	17
robbed	7
knew and trusted certain police officer	7

When asked about their perception of police services, 11% of the respondents said police were OK and that they did a good job. The remaining 89% of respondents reported negative feelings towards the police. Table 83 describes their feelings.

**Table 83**  
**Reasons for Negative Attitude to Police (n of respondents=75)**

Why Negative Towards Police	Percent
police service is inconsistent, quality depends on the officer	86
did not trust the police	74
sex trade workers not taken seriously by police	72
police are disrespectful	64
had been harassed by the police	58
police unresponsive to needs of street-involved women	47

Only 15% of respondents thought that the police treated street-involved women positively; in contrast 49% thought that police treated them disrespectfully. Table 84 describes the suggestions of respondents about how police services could be improved.

**Table 84**  
**Suggestions About How Police Services Might Be Improved**

Suggestions	Percent
more respect for street-involved women and police should take bad dates more seriously	97
more police education and training re street-involved women	89
increase number of female officers	35
more police flexibility to meet individual situations and needs	26
increase number of police	9
less female officers	6
better response time for street-involved women	2

## Bad Dates

98% of the women had been victims of violence as a result of a “bad date” at least once while they had been working. A bad date was defined as, “any date which involved any physical, sexual or emotional acts of violence as well as any form of robbery/financial loss as a result of a customer. This definition included unpaid sex, kidnapping, harassment, dumping and even death.” Table 85 depicts the number bad dates experienced by respondents during the past six months.

**Table 85**  
**Number of Bad Dates During Past Six Months**

# Bad Dates	% of respondents
none	10
one	24
2-5	36
6-10	11
11-20	6
over 20 or too many to count	13

Table 86 summarizes the types of incidents experienced, and Table 87 describes respondents' opinions about what could be done to reduce the number of bad dates.

**Table 86**  
**Types of Bad Dates During Past Six Months (n of respondents=76)**

Type Of Bad Date	Percent
physically beaten or assaulted	94
financial loss/robbery	90
sexual assault/gang or group rape	89
dumped	80
assaulted with a knife, gun or other weapon	48
held against their will	11
intoxication related bad date	4

**Table 87**  
**What Can Be Done to Decrease Number of Bad Dates?**

How to Decrease Dad Dates	Percent
nothing	11
implement a buddy system amongst working women	67
more street-level and mobile outreach services	62
more intervention/education for youth entering the sex trade	62
additional police training and education re the sex trade	43
safe houses or shelter for street-involved women	41
a drop-in specifically for street-involved women	30
increase in community education about the sex trade	24
legalization would provide the women with more control over their own situation/dates	20
women should avoid certain situations all together	18
more reporting and more prosecutions of bad dates	18
better lighting in areas where women are known to work	16

The respondents were very concerned about youth entering the sex trade, and wanted to see young people “get out before it is too late.”

### **Differential Vulnerability of Sex Trade Workers**

97% of the women believed that some identifiable groups of persons were victimized more than others (Table 88).

**Table 88**  
**Persons Believed To Be The Most At Risk Of Violence**

Most at Risk	Percent
girls and boys working in the sex trade	99
transsexual/transvestites	61
aboriginal women	32
persons noticeably under the influence of alcohol/drugs	15

Other persons mentioned as having a higher risk of being victimized were women working in remote areas, older women, and mentally disabled women.

When it came to what should be done about violence in the sex trade, 23% believed that nothing could or would be done to decrease violence against these high risk groups, and another 22% said they did not know what could be done. Table 89 summarizes the suggestions of the remaining 47 respondents as to what could be done to assist high risk groups. Table 90 shows the steps recommended to help minimize violence against street-involved women.

**Table 89**  
**Suggested Help For High Risk Groups (n of respondents=47)**

Suggested Help	Percent
more support and services for youth to get off the street	72
more community education/tolerance/reporting of offenders	40
better police response to high risk groups/frequent victims	22
increase the number of street workers	20
legalize prostitution	12
create drop-in facility specifically for street-involved women	12

**Table 90**  
**Steps Recommended To Help Minimize Violence Against Street-Involved Women**

Suggestions for Minimizing Violence	Percent
safe/affordable housing, food, money and day care	100
individualized detox and more specialized alcohol/drug services	85
more training/transitional programs for street-involved women	66
increase community education regarding the sex trade	56
safe houses and drop-ins	33
improve police services by better education, better response time and increased sensitivity	31
legalize prostitution and allow brothels	13
stiffer weapons control/laws/penalties	4

To end the interview, women were asked, "If you had a million dollars, what would you do with it?" This question was asked in order to provide the women with an opportunity to de-brief, and to end the interview on a positive note. The answers give a good indication of the feelings of these women about the rigors of prostitution on the Downtown Eastside -- over 90% wanted to use the money to help others, particularly young people prior to their entrenchment in the sex trade.

## 10. 1994 Survey of Victimization of Women Who Prostitute

The Downtown Eastside/Strathcona survey provides an intimate view of the experiences of street-involved women in one Vancouver community. It is particularly interesting for its representation of street-involved aboriginal women, who are usually under-represented in Canadian surveys of persons who prostitute. Indeed, of the various Vancouver strolls, the Downtown Eastside area probably has the highest proportion of street-involved First Nations women. It is also likely the area with the highest proportion of intravenous drug users (aboriginal and Caucasian). Many of the women who work in Strathcona do so independently -- they don't necessarily have to have "a man" to work the street, although many of them have a partner with whom they share their money. Such a relationship may be exploitative, and a person sharing the earnings of a woman who prostitutes is susceptible to being prosecuted for living on the avails. No doubt, some of the women who work in the various stroll areas in Strathcona and further east (Hastings-Commercial and Hastings-Victoria) are "pimped" (police sources say that the women working in the Hastings-Vernon area are pimped) but, for the most part, the social world of the East side strolls (particularly the Downtown Eastside) is quite different from the "Uptown" strolls (Seymour-Richards and First Avenue-Quebec-Ontario<sup>41</sup>).

One question raised by information we have culled from newspapers -- in particular, the finding that, of the main strolls, the Downtown Eastside is the area most often identified in accounts of murders (Table 6) and assaults (Table 24 and Table 61) of prostitutes, and Richards-Seymour the least often mentioned -- is whether victimization is differentiated by area/street-community. To this extent, and in the interests of making our portrait of violence in the sex trade as comprehensive as possible, we would have liked to have conducted interviews with a broad range of persons working in various strolls, in escort services, body rubs, and so on, to supplement the information from the Downtown Eastside survey. Unfortunately, with the resources at our disposal, this was not possible. Instead, we conducted a short self-administered questionnaire with an eye to providing information about differences between areas, and about the relative dangers of street as compared to off-street prostitution.

The survey was carried out with the assistance of "Prostitution Alternatives Counselling and Education" (PACE) -- a charitable society founded by former prostitutes to help people in the sex trade, and after they have left it. Representatives of PACE helped to design, pretest and circulate the survey (for a copy of the questionnaire see Appendix 5).

At first, we tried leaving questionnaires in the offices of various service providers with stamped envelopes addressed to PACE. When it became clear that we were not getting much of a response this way, a PACE representative and assistant spent time in two local cafes asking women for their assistance with the survey. We quickly ended up with 65 participants. Because we wanted to compare experiences of women working the Downtown Eastside with women working the Richards-Seymour, PACE concentrated on these two areas.

Our efforts did not extend to other prostitution strolls in Vancouver and surrounding municipalities, or to Boystown because we did not feel we could get large enough samples in each of these areas for comparative purposes.<sup>42</sup>

The questionnaire asked some general questions about subjects: their age, "race" and gender; how long they had been turning tricks, and when they turned out. Since we anticipated that many of our subjects would have had some kind of experience in off-street prostitution (escort services, bars, massage parlours),

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<sup>41</sup> Referred to as "North Mount Pleasant" in our Tables, even though it is just North of the boundary of Mount Pleasant, because prior to being relocated on First Avenue, this stroll was originally just inside Mount Pleasant on Ontario and Quebec between 3rd and 5th Avenues.

<sup>42</sup> It is quite likely that there are differences among these various areas (one service provider working in New Westminster and Burnaby says the young women he knows believe that these suburban strolls are not nearly as dangerous as the Downtown Eastside), and it may well be that male prostitutes do not experience as many bad dates as females.

we divided questions about victimization into two groups distinguishing on-street and off-street experiences. In the case of both on- and off-street experiences, we asked respondents to estimate how many out of every hundred are “bad dates,” and to indicate which of a series of offences and/or types of harassment they had ever experienced. We then asked respondents to indicate who the perpetrators were, who they had told about various incidents, what kind of help they had received, what kind of measures they took to prevent bad dates, how the sex trade could be made safer for the people involved in it, and what kinds of people they think are most vulnerable to violence. We also asked several questions about respondents’ attitudes to the police.

We discuss various methodological and interpretational issues in the process of presenting our findings.

### *The Respondents*

Table 91 shows the age of the participants, which ranged from 16 to 43 years, with an average age of 24.1. 67% were twenty-five or younger.

**Table 91**  
**Age**

	Count	Percent	Percent (missing values removed)	Cum. Percent
Less than 18	4	6.2	6.3	6.3
18-20	18	27.7	28.6	34.9
21-25	20	30.7	31.8	66.7
26-30	14	20.1	20.6	87.3
31-35	5	7.6	8.0	95.3
36-40	1	1.5	1.6	96.9
41-45	2	3.1	3.2	100.0
Not stated	2	3.1	Missing	
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Mean 24.1    Median 23.0

Table 92 shows the number of years our subjects had been turning tricks. The average (calculated from the mid-point of each age range, an interpreting “more than 10” as 11.5 years) is from five to six years.

**Table 92**  
**Years Turning Tricks**

	Count	Percent	% (missing values removed)	Cum. Percent
Less than one year	10	15.4	15.6	15.6
between 1-3 yrs	15	23.1	23.4	39.1
between 3-5 yrs	10	15.4	15.6	54.7
between 5-10 yrs	17	26.2	26.6	81.3
more than 10 yrs	12	18.5	18.8	100.0
Not stated	1	1.5	Missing	
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 93 shows the age at which our subjects considered themselves to have turned their first trick. 60% had done so before their eighteenth birthday, and 85% prior to turning twenty. A quarter of the participants had turned their first trick at age 14 or earlier. The average was 16.5.

**Table 93**  
**Age Person Turned Their First Trick**

Age	Count	Percent	Cum. Percent
6	1	1.5	1.5
12	5	7.7	9.2
13	6	9.2	18.5
14	4	6.2	24.6
15	9	13.8	38.5
16	8	12.3	50.8
17	6	9.2	60.0
18	11	16.9	76.9

Age	Count	Percent	Cum. Percent
19	5	7.7	84.6
20	2	3.1	87.7
21	4	6.2	93.8
22	1	1.5	95.4
23	2	3.1	98.5
26	1	1.5	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Mean 16.5    Median 16.0    Mode 18.0

Table 94 shows what has traditionally been referred to as the “race” of respondents (we did not use the term “race” on the questionnaire). As already noted, the concept of “race” has been widely debated because it is a socially constructed, not an “objective” analytic category. However, because “racial” categories come up over and over again in the discourses we have examined (e.g., in police reports to Crown counsel, in bad date reports made by women who prostitute, and so on), we included these categories in the victim survey. The categories “Metis” and “Mulatto” were added by respondents. All but one participant answered this question. That they did so without comment suggests that these are “commonsense” categories used on the street (as they are just about everywhere else). The majority of respondents (62.5%) were “white.”



**Table 94**  
**"Race" and Gender of Respondent**

	Count	Percent	Percent (missing values removed)
White	40	61.5	62.5
Aboriginal	7	10.8	10.9
Metis	5	7.7	7.8
Black	4	6.2	6.3
Oriental	3	4.6	4.7
Mulatto	3	4.6	4.7
East Indian	1	1.5	1.6
Other	1	1.5	1.6
Not stated	1	1.5	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 95 depicts the gender of our subjects, 90.8% of whom were female, one was male, three were cross dressers, and two were transsexuals.

**Table 95**  
**Gender of Respondent**

	Count	Percent
Female	59	90.8
Cross dresser	3	4.6
Transsexual	2	3.1
Male	1	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 96**  
**Main Areas Worked In/Work Styles (n of respondents=65)**

	Count	Pct of Response	Pct of Cases
Richards/Seymour stroll	38	31.9	58.5
Hastings/East End strolls	32	26.9	49.2
Regulars	15	12.6	23.1
Quebec/1st Ave stroll	9	7.6	13.8
Bars/clubs	8	6.7	12.3
Escort/massage/ads	7	5.9	10.8
Boys Town	3	2.5	4.6
Surrey/Burnaby/New West strolls	2	1.7	3.1
Fraser/Broadway stroll	1	.8	1.5
Other	4	3.4	6.2
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>183.1</b>

Realizing that many women work in more than one area, we asked which area(s) the participant mainly worked at the moment (Table 96). 58.5% of the participants mentioned the Richards-Seymour area, and 49% mentioned the Downtown Eastside (in other words, only five respondents mentioned both areas).

Only one person worked the Fraser/Broadway area at the time they were interviewed, although 13 of them had done so at one time or another (Table 97). Only three of our participants have worked in Burnaby, Surrey or New Westminster.

**Table 97**  
**Other Areas Worked (n of respondents=65)**

	Count	Pct of Response	Pct of Cases
Nowhere else	23	15.6	35.4
Quebec/1st Ave	22	15.0	33.8
Escort/massage/ads	19	12.9	29.2
Richards/Seymour	15	10.2	23.1
Bars/clubs	13	8.8	20.0
Regulars	13	8.8	20.0
Fraser/Broadway	13	8.8	20.0
Surrey Burnaby New West	1	7.5	16.9
Hastings/East End	9	6.1	13.8
Commercial nr Skytrain	6	4.1	9.2
Other	3	2.0	4.6
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>226.2*</b>

\* Adds to more than one hundred because respondents could report more than one area

While all the respondents had worked the street -- 29 (45%) had worked only on the street -- 36 respondents (55%) had some experience of working in off-street locations (ads, bars, massage parlours, escort services) currently (15 persons; 23.2%) or in the past. We felt that this was a large enough sample to allow some comparison of rates of victimization on and off the street, which we present below. Then we examine area differences in reports of victimization.

### ***Comparison of On-Street and Off-Street Experiences***

Interviews conducted in 1988 with women who prostitute suggest that, while they experience violence and exploitation in various kinds of off-street prostitution, generally street prostitution is more dangerous. Of the 50 women murdered in British Columbia since 1982 who were identified as having been involved in the sex trade (Table 3), only two were escorts (and six were cabaret dancers). Because we do not know the ratio of escorts to women who meet customers on the street, it is impossible to express these figures as rates, and thus impossible to know if escorts are statistically under-represented among the homicide victims.

We asked respondents to estimate the number of bad dates they experienced on the street and, where relevant, the number they experienced when working off-street. Because of the size of our sample, we cannot examine differences in levels of victimization in different types of off-street prostitution. After posing questions about the *rate of "bad dates"* on and off the street, we asked whether respondents *had ever experienced certain kinds of victimization/harassment*, and then asked who the perpetrators had been.

We constructed the list of types of victimization from reports on “Bad Trick Sheets” (described above) and from information provided by interview subjects in previous studies.

Another way to have arranged these questions would have been to link the question about “bad dates” to the question about victimization/harassment, and reversed the order in which they were asked. In other words, we might have asked how many respondents had experienced various kinds of victimization, and then asked out of every hundred tricks, how many times they were victimized, for each kind of victimization. In a separate question, we could have asked how many times respondents were victimized in various ways by persons other than dates. The advantage of doing this would have been that we would have avoided the possibility that participants vary in the way they define “bad dates.” However, in the interest of keeping the questionnaire short, we decided not to proceed this way.

Table 98 displays the estimates of the rate of bad dates per every hundred on and off the street. The difference is very small (12.2 per hundred on the street and 10.4 otherwise -- but note that the respective median values are four and two).

**Table 98**  
**Percentage of Bad Dates**

% Bad dates	On Street (n=58)			Off Street (n=25)		
	Count	Percent	Cum. Percent	Count	Percent	Cum. Percent
0	2	3.4	3.4	4	15.4	15.4
1	6	10.3	13.8	3	11.5	26.9
2	11	19.0	32.8	8	30.8	57.7
3	6	10.3	43.1	2	7.7	65.4
4	6	10.3	53.4	1	3.8	69.2
5	5	8.6	62.1	2	7.7	76.9
6	1	1.7	63.8			
7	2	3.4	67.2			
10	7	12.1	79.3	1	3.8	80.8
13				1	3.8	84.6
15	1	1.7	81.0			
20	2	3.4	84.5	1	3.8	88.5
25	1	1.7	86.2			
40	1	1.7	87.9			
50	5	8.6	96.6	2	7.7	96.2
75	2	3.4	100.0			100.0
Don't know	1	Missing				
Not stated	6	Missing		11	Missing	
No off-street				29	Missing	
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

On-Street Mean 12.2    Median 4.0    Mode 2.0

Off-Street: Mean 10.4    Median 2.0    Mode 2.0

We find some support for the notion that street prostitution is relatively more dangerous when we examine what types of victimization our respondents have experienced when working on and off the street (Table 99). While working the street, a much larger proportion of respondents reported having been robbed, sexually assaulted, beaten, strangled, and kidnapped, and were more likely to have reported being involved in an incident where a weapon was used, or being the victim of an attempted murder. The highest

incidence of off-street victimization was in the categories “Refused condom,” “Threat/intimidation,” and “General harassment.” It should be noted that because we asked respondents which kinds of victimization they had ever experienced, as opposed to how many times they experienced various kinds of victimization, it is possible that the variations identified here reflect differences in the relative amounts of time respondents spend working on and off the street, not different rates of victimization/harassment.

**Table 99**  
**Types of Offences/Harassment**

	On-Street (n=62)			Off-Street (n=22)		
	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
General harassment	43	12.4	69.4	11	20.6	50.0
Threat/intimidation	41	11.8	66.1	9	15.7	40.5
Had/use knife	32	9.2	51.6	2	4.1	9.1
Dumped	27	7.8	43.5	1	2.0	4.5
Refused condom	26	7.5	41.9	7	14.7	31.8
Beating	24	6.9	38.7	3	6.1	13.6
Robbery	23	6.6	37.1	2	4.1	9.1
Sexual assault	23	6.6	37.1	2	4.1	9.1
Had used gun	22	6.3	35.5	3	6.1	13.6
Unwanted acts	21	6.0	33.9	4	8.2	18.2
Kidnap/confine	20	5.7	32.3	1	2.0	4.5
Strangling	19	5.5	30.6	1	2.0	4.5
Other weapon	17	4.9	27.4	2	4.1	9.1
Attempt murder	6	1.7	9.7			
Other	2	.6	3.2	1	2.0	4.5
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>561.3</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>222.7</b>

Table 100 shows the persons responsible for various types of victimization/harassment. As one might expect, tricks are the main offenders. Boyfriends and pimps are mentioned by a quarter of the participants.

**Table 100**  
**Who Committed the Offences/Harassment?**

	On-Street (n=61)			Off-Street (n=21)		
	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
Trick	56	43.1	91.8	18	66.7	85.7
Uniform police	16	12.3	26.2	2	7.4	9.5
Other STW	16	12.3	26.2	1	3.7	4.8
Boyfriend	13	10.0	21.3	1	3.7	4.8
Vice	9	6.9	14.8	1	3.7	4.8
Man/pimp	8	6.2	13.1			
Resident/business	7	5.4	11.5	2	7.4	9.5
Agency owner	1	.8	1.6	2	7.4	9.5
Spouse	1	.8	1.6			
Other	3	2.3	4.9			
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>213.1</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>128.6</b>

Table 101 shows the protection measures used by our participants.

**Table 101**  
**Protection Measures Used**

	On-Street (n=61)		Off-Street (n=22)	
	Count	Pct of Cases	Count	Pct of Cases
Trust my senses	53	86.9	17	73.9
Work with friend	40	65.6	8	34.8
No drunk/stoned tricks	33	54.1	8	34.8
No drink/drugs	31	50.8	8	34.8
Carry weapon	24	39.3	8	34.8
Trick pad	21	34.4	4	17.4
Spotter	16	26.2	3	13.0
Mace/pepper spray	8	13.1	3	13.0
Other	7	11.5	3	13.0
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>382.0</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>175.0</b>

Roughly half the respondents avoid being drunk or stoned while they are working, and roughly the same number avoid drunk or stoned tricks. About 65% of the participants work with a friend when they work the street, and almost all of them try to “trust their senses” to identify potential bad tricks.

### *Comparing Richards-Seymour and the Downtown Eastside*

One of the most striking aspects of the information yielded by questions about work styles and locations is that very few of the women who work on the Downtown Eastside ever work in the Richards-Seymour or First-Quebec strolls (both of which are controlled by player-pimps), and vice versa. According to all the information at our disposal, the Richards-Seymour stroll and the Downtown Eastside are two very different social worlds.

Every indication is that there has been a considerable expansion of street prostitution on the Downtown East Side since 1983. Prior to World War 2, most of the sex trade occurred in brothels. There probably always was some street prostitution on the Downtown East Side. After the Second World War and up to the mid-1980s there was a well-established stroll around the edge of Chinatown (Gore, Keefer, East Georgia, Union). Police records indicate that the area has always been known as a "hypes" stroll (heroin up to the 1970s, Talwin and ritalin in the 1980s, with a resurgence of relatively cheap, widely available, and very pure heroin in the 1990s). In 1986, the stroll moved east from the streets it had traditionally occupied, into a mainly residential and gentrified area. This relocation occasioned the first signs of local organized resistance to the street prostitution trade. In 1988, through a process of negotiation with local street-involved women, the stroll was relocated along Hastings street and to the alleyway north.<sup>43</sup> A series of police task forces each summer in Mount Pleasant from 1987 through 1989 has displaced more and more prostitution into Strathcona. This trend has continued into the 1990s. Area restrictions imposed as part of bail and probation orders have further contributed to an expansion of street prostitution both to the North of Hastings Street on each side of the viaduct, and east out of Strathcona into Grandview-Woodlands to the areas around the Clark, Commercial and Victoria intersections. In 1992 police identified a total of 480 people (44 of them youths) working as prostitutes in the Downtown East Side.

As noted earlier (pp. 21-22), the Richards-Seymour stroll has been in use since 1984 when a civil nuisance injunction was used to displace prostitution out of the West End of Vancouver.<sup>44</sup> The setting of the injunction boundary, first at Burrard Street, and subsequently at Granville also helped to displace the stroll at Georgia and Hornby, which had been run by player-pimps, into the Richards-Seymour area.

The Richards-Seymour stroll is mostly run by player-pimps (see interviews Appendix 6a and 6b), with some independents (most of whom work in the transgender/transvestite area). Women on the Downtown Eastside are usually independents, although many of them have boyfriends who could, by virtue of sharing money with their partners, be said to live in part on the avails of prostitution. Women in the Richards-Seymour area are mainly alcohol, cocaine and marijuana users. Some don't use drugs at all. Street nurses report that the women they encounter in the Richards-Seymour area are not usually heavily stoned in the way women on the Downtown Eastside are, which is mainly an area of intravenous heroin and cocaine use (although smoking heroin -- "chasing the dragon" -- is becoming more popular). Women on the Downtown Eastside are described as generally "more desperate" and not nearly as discriminating as their counterparts in the Richards-Seymour stroll.

Among our respondents, 30 female subjects and one transsexual listed as a "main area" the Richards-Seymour stroll (approximately one third also listed the player-pimp controlled 1st Avenue stroll as a main area) but did not work the Downtown Eastside, and 21 females, two cross dressers and one transsexual listed the Downtown Eastside as a "main area," but did not work either the Richards-Seymour stroll or 1st Avenue.

Our main interest in comparing these two geographically and culturally distinctive groups was to see if there were any differences in the way they describe their experience of victimization. When it comes to estimating the number of bad dates in every hundred (Table 102), we found only a small difference between the two groups. When we calculated the figures for the female subjects only, the average for Richards-Seymour was 12.5 per hundred, the average for Hastings was 15. However, it is worth noting

<sup>43</sup> For a description, see Lowman 1989, pp. 174-177.

<sup>44</sup> For a description of these displacements, see Lowman (1984).

that average value of the Richards-Seymour group is inflated by what appear to be two statistical anomalies (the two participants who estimated that 75 in every hundred dates were bad, as compared to 21 of 26 respondents who estimated the number of bad dates to be 10 or less per hundred). If we remove these two anomalies, the average is 7 per hundred, a rate about half the Downtown Eastside equivalent.

**Table 102**  
**Percent of Bad Dates (females only)**

% Bad dates	Richards-Seymour			Downtown Eastside		
	Count	Percent	Cum. Percent	Count	Percent	Cum. Percent
0	1	3.7	3.7			
1	3	11.5	15.4	2	10.5	10.5
2	2	7.7	23.1	6	31.6	42.1
3	5	19.2	42.3			
4	1	3.8	46.2	3	15.8	57.9
5	2	7.7	53.8			
6	1	3.8	57.7			
7	2	7.7	65.4			
10	4	15.4	80.8	2	10.5	68.4
13						
15	1	3.8	84.6			
20				2	10.5	78.9
25	1	3.8	88.5			
40	1	3.8	92.3			
50				4	21.1	100.0
75	2	7.7	100.0			
Not stated	4	Missing		2	Missing	
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 103 describes the types of offences and harassment experienced by women in the two areas. While there are quite a few differences between respondents from the two areas in these responses, there is no clear direction to the differences.

**Table 103**  
**Types of Offences/ Harassment**

	Richards		Downtown Eastside	
	Count	Pct. of Cases	Count	Pct. of Cases
General harassment	20	69.0	17	70.8
Threat/intimidation	18	62.1	19	79.2
Had/used knife	14	48.3	12	50.0
Had used gun	13	44.8	6	25.0
Strangling	11	37.9	5	20.8
Dumped	11	37.9	12	50.0
Beating	10	34.5	9	37.5
Refused condom	9	31.0	12	50.0
Other weapon	9	31.0	6	25.0
Robbery	8	27.6	11	45.8
Sexual assault	8	27.6	11	45.8
Unwanted acts	8	27.6	9	37.5
Kidnap/confine	8	27.6	8	33.3
Attempt murder	2	6.9	3	12.5
	Total Cases=29		Total Cases=24	

Table 104 shows the protection measures used by women in the Richards-Seymour area as compared to the Downtown Eastside. A larger proportion of women on the Downtown Eastside carry weapons or mace than their Richards-Seymour counterparts.

**Table 104**  
**Protection Measures Used**

	Richards		Downtown Eastside	
	Count	Pct of Cases	Count	Pct of Cases
Trust my senses	26	89.7	19	82.6
Work with friend	18	62.1	15	65.2
No drink/drugs	14	48.3	16	69.9
No drunk/stoned tricks	12	41.4	18	78.3
Trick pad	9	31.0	8	34.8
Carry weapon	7	24.1	13	56.5
Spotter	4	13.8	9	39.1
Mace/pepper spray	2	6.9	4	17.4
Other	4	13.8	2	8.7
Total responses	96	100.0	104	100.0
Total cases	31		24	

Also, a larger proportion of the Downtown Eastside respondents use a spotter, perhaps a reflection of the much more spread out stroll areas they work in (the Richards-Seymour stroll is relatively tightly contained in a roughly six block area; the Eastside strolls are spread out in some twenty to thirty blocks along and around Hastings street (the number and specific areas changing through time). Also, women on the



Downtown Eastside were more likely to mention that they avoid alcohol and drugs while they are working. This may reflect the much heavier alcohol and drug use on the Downtown Eastside (if a person is not a heavy user/drinker, it probably would not occur to them to avoid drug or alcohol use when working). A larger proportion of Eastside respondents say they avoid drunk and stoned tricks.

### ***Talking About Victimization***

No doubt, the more serious the bad date and the more bad dates a person experiences, the more likely they are to tell someone about it. As of the time of writing we have not had an opportunity to examine these relationships statistically. Table 105 indicates that there are some differences in the two populations in terms of how likely they are to tell other people about victimization. 74.2% of Richards-Seymour respondents rarely or never told anyone as compared to 41.1% of Downtown Eastside participants. And fully 33.3% of the latter group always told someone about their victimization, as compared to only one person (3.2%) in the former.

**Table 105**  
**How Often Do You Tell Anyone About Victimization?**

	Richards		Downtown Eastside	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Never	8	25.8	4	16.7
Rarely	15	48.4	6	25.0
Sometimes	2	6.5	4	16.7
Often	5	16.2	2	8.3
Always	1	3.2	8	33.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 106 shows who the participants told about bad dates. Not only did a higher proportion of Eastside respondents talk to someone about bad dates and other incidents than their Richards-Seymour counterparts, but also a higher proportion had reported at least one incident to the police. If we were to do the survey again, we would ask how many times a formal complaint had been made to the police, and what had happened as a result. Roughly a quarter of the subjects had talked to a hospital or doctor as a result of a bad date or some other incident.

**Table 106**  
**Who Have You Told About Victimization?**

	<b>Richards</b>		<b>Downtown Eastside</b>	
	Count	Pct. of Cases	Count	Pct. of Cases
Friend	18	58.1	15	65.2
Uniform police	11	35.5	10	43.5
Man/family	10	32.3	8	34.8
Street nurse	8	25.8	3	13.0
Hospital/doctor	8	25.8	5	21.7
Nobody	8	25.8	4	12.3
Vice	7	22.6	8	34.8
Counsellor	4	12.9	2	8.7
Prostitute group	4	12.9	5	21.7
Parent	2	6.5	1	4.3
Agency owner	2	6.5	1	4.3
Social worker	1	3.2		
Rape Relief/Shelter	1	3.2		
Other	3	9.7	7	30.4
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>280.8</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>294.7</b>

Cases: Richards-Seymour 31; Downtown Eastside 24

Table 107 shows our respondents opinions about who helped them when they told other people about victimization. Of 21 people who reported incidents to Vice officers, seven thought that, on at least one occasion, police had been helpful. Of 21 our respondents who reported incidents to uniform police, 10 thought that, on at least one occasion, they had been helped by doing so.

**Table 107**  
**Who Actually Helped?**

	<b>Richards</b>		<b>Downtown Eastside</b>	
	Count	Pct of Cases	Count	Pct of Cases
Friend	12	48.0	9	39.1
Uniform police	6	30.0	4	17.4
Man/family	6	24.0	5	21.7
Agency owner		1	4.3	
Street nurse	4	16.0	3	13.0
Nobody helped	4	16.0	4	17.4
Vice	3	12.0	4	17.4
Hospital/doctor	3	12.0	2	8.7
Counsellor	2	8.0	1	4.3
Prostitute group	2	8.0	2	8.7
Social worker	1	4.0		
Rape Relief/Shelter	1	4.0		
Parent	1	4.0		
Other	2	8.0	4	17.4
	<b>47</b>	<b>194.0</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>169.4</b>

Cases: Richards-Seymour 25; Downtown Eastside 23

When it came to who had not been helpful (Table 108) eleven mentioned uniform police, and eight offered the same appraisal of vice officers.

**Table 108**  
**Who Did Not Help?**

	<b>Richards</b>		<b>Downtown Eastside</b>	
	Count	% of Cases	Count	% of Cases
Uniform police	5	33.3	6	46.2
Man/family	5	33.3	3	23.1
Street nurse	4	26.7		
Vice	4	26.7	4	30.8
Hospital/doctor	3	20.0	3	23.1
Agency owner	2	13.3		
Counsellor	2	13.3	1	7.7
Parent	1	6.7		
Social worker	1	6.7		
Prostitute group	1	6.7	3	23.1
Other	1	6.7	2	15.4
	29	193.4	22	169.4

Cases: Richards-Seymour 15; Downtown Eastside 13

***Perceived Risk of Victimization***

In response to our question about the relative vulnerability of different kinds of people to violence, 45 (69.2%) of our respondents suggested that that certain types of people are more vulnerable (Table 109).

**Table 109**  
**Type of Person More Likely to be Victimized (All respondents)**

	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
Girls	30	20.8	65.2
Boys	23	16.0	50.0
Transvestites	22	15.3	47.8
Adult women	12	8.3	26.1
Drug users/junkies/drinkers	11	7.6	23.9
Certain Races unspec	9	6.3	19.6
Adult men	8	5.6	17.4
Natives	3	2.1	6.5
Transsexuals	1	13.2	41.3
Other	7	4.9	15.2
Total responses	144	100.0	313.0

The general consensus was that youths of both sexes and transvestites are the people most vulnerable to violence.

***Opinions About How to Make The Street Safer***

Table 110 shows our respondents' opinions about how to make the streets safer for them. We offered 19 ways that this might be achieved and, on average, respondents ticked about 6 of them. The most frequently selected category was "safe houses/trick pads," i.e., safe places to turn tricks.

It would seem that one of the most obvious ways of reducing violence would be to get prostitution off the street so that it can be monitored and, in the process, rendered more safe.

**Table 110  
How to Make Street Safer (All respondents)**

	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
Safe houses/trick pads	44	10.7	69.8
Be allowed to work in well lit area	40	9.8	63.5
Change laws	38	9.3	60.3
Better lighting	33	8.0	52.4
Self owned escort	32	7.8	50.8
Community education	29	7.1	46.0
24 hr drop ins	24	5.9	38.1
More outreach vans	22	5.4	34.9
Police education	20	4.9	31.7
Educated Vice	20	4.9	31.7
24 hr crisis lines	20	4.9	31.7
Transition houses	20	4.9	31.7
More outreach services	14	3.4	22.2
Prostitute patrols	14	3.4	22.2
More drop ins	13	3.2	20.6
City run security	11	2.7	17.5
More Vice	6	1.5	9.5
More patrols	6	1.5	9.5
Other	4	1.0	6.3
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>650.8</b>

Other categories chosen by a majority of respondents included "be allowed to work in well lit area" (63.5% of the respondents), "law change" (60%) and "self owned escort" (50.8%). Respondents also gave police and community education a relatively high priority, as they did 24-hour drop-ins and outreach vans. Less than one in ten respondents mentioned a need for "more vice" or "more patrols."

### ***Perceptions of the Police***

Our final set of questions dealt with opinions about police. Table 111 shows that there is no difference in the appraisal of Downtown Eastside and Richards-Seymour respondents as to the extent to which vice officers care about the safety of sex trade workers. Slightly more than two thirds of the respondents think that at least some of them are concerned, and one woman wrote, "The ones who care are terrific." Nevertheless, these answers also show that 87.5% of the respondents believe that at least some vice officers are not concerned about the safety of sex trade workers.

**Table 111  
Do Vice Care About Your Safety?**

	Richards		Downtown Eastside	
	Count	Pct. of Cases	Count	Pct. of Cases
Most/all are concerned	3	9.7	3	13.0
Some are concerned	21	67.7	16	69.6
None are concerned	7	22.6	4	17.4
Not stated			1	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 112 shows the same information for uniform patrol police. Again, the majority of respondents think that some officers are concerned about their safety, but the implication of this answer is that some are not. Overall, about 90% of the respondents think that at least some police officers are not concerned about their safety.

**Table 112  
Do Uniform Police Care About Your Safety?**

	Richards		Downtown Eastside	
	Count	Pct. of Cases	Count	Pct. of Cases
Most/all are concerned	2	6.5	4	16.7
Some are concerned	21	67.7	17	70.8
None are concerned	8	25.8	3	12.5
	31	100.0	24	100.0

Table 113 describes respondents' feelings about vice and uniform police. Generally, we see the same pattern of answers as above -- the majority of respondents have mixed feelings about police: some are OK, some are not, some can be trusted, some cannot. A little over a third of the respondents do not trust most police officers, uniformed or otherwise. Again on this score, there was no discernible difference between respondents from Richards-Seymour and the Downtown Eastside. On some measures, both groups give vice a somewhat more positive appraisal than they do uniform officers.

**Table 113**  
**Opinions About Police (All respondents, n=65)**

	Vice		Uniform	
	Count	Pct. of Cases	Count	Pct. of Cases
Don't trust most of them	22	34.4	25	38.5
Most are disrespectful	19	29.7	18	27.7
It varies/not consistent	17	26.6	22	33.8
Most are respectful	16	25.0	13	20.0
Most are helpful	15	23.4	10	15.4
Most do a good job	14	21.9	10	15.4
Most harass me	14	21.9	10	15.4
Trust most/most OK	13	20.3	9	13.8
Most are uncooperative	12	18.8	12	18.5
Most don't take me seriously	11	17.2	12	18.5
Most take me seriously	9	14.1	6	9.2
Other	3	4.7	2	3.1
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>258.0</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>229.3</b>

Table 114 shows our respondents' opinions about how police could improve. Overall, 14% of the respondents did not think vice could improve, and only 6% felt the same way about uniform officers. Generally, our subjects would like to see a more respectful and more understanding police force.

**Table 114**  
**How Could Police Improve? (All respondents, n= 65)**

	Vice		Uniform	
	Count	Pct. of Cases	Count	Pct. of Cases
Should be more respectful	36	56.3	33	51.6
Be more understanding	36	56.3	41	64.1
Need educating	26	40.6	25	39.1
Don't need improving	9	14.1	4	6.3
More female Vice	4	6.3	4	6.3
Should be more Vice	3	4.7	3	4.7
Other	10	15.6	11	17.2
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>193.9</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>189.3</b>

To conclude the questionnaire, we asked four open-ended questions: a) What changes, if any, would you like to see in the operation of escort services? b) What services do you think these should be for sex trade workers? c) Who would be the best person for sex trade workers to approach for help when they have bad dates? And d) Is there anything else you would like to say about the above issues, or any other issues you feel are important? In each case we report the responses given by four or more persons.

Regarding escort services, there were 3 types of responses given by four or more persons (giving a total of 20 responses). Eleven respondents suggested that escort operators should take a much smaller cut from the women who work for them. Generally, escort services are regarded as unreasonably exploitative. Five persons thought that escort owners should be more concerned about the safety of their employees. Four persons thought that only self-owned escort services should be permitted to operate.

Regarding services for prostitutes, there were 9 types of response given by four or more persons (for a total of 60 responses). Twelve persons thought that there should be safer places to turn tricks, thereby reinforcing the earlier findings presented in Table 110: the most frequently mentioned way of making the streets safer for sex trade workers would be to identify safe locations for them to turn tricks. Ten respondents urged that there be better and more accessible non-judgmental medical services, five mentioned the need for a 24 hour drop-in center (a place to eat, shower, and get warm), five mentioned the need for other sorts of places to get shelter and warmth (heated bus shelters or other covered areas), five urged that prostitution be legalized, four said there should be safe houses for abused women, four said more educational/vocational training programs are needed, and the same number urged police to take street-involved women more seriously.

As to who the best type of person sex trade workers might turn to in the event of bad tricks, there were six types of response given by four or more people (for a total of 50 responses). Thirteen persons mentioned services run by ex-prostitutes, and twelve mentioned police -- although every one of these respondents qualified their answer in some way by saying that the police would be OK to report bad dates to, as long as they actually act on such reports. Nine respondents mentioned the DEYAS Bad Date Sheets as a useful non-judgmental way of doing something about bad dates. Eleven respondents mentioned friends and other prostitutes as the best people to report bad dates to, and eight mentioned crisis centers and various kinds of counsellors and other service providers -- as long as they are properly trained and non-judgmental.

When we asked if there was anything else respondents wanted to say about the issues raised in the questionnaire, there were four general responses: a) pleas for more understanding of people who prostitute (8 respondents); b) comments about the need for law change so that if women decide to prostitute, they can do so in safety (8 respondents); c) 12 respondents mentioned the need for safer places to work (several respondents were critical of prosecutions of local hotel operators for bawdy house violations, and viewed such initiatives as increasing the amount of danger faced by women having to turn tricks in cars); and d) comments about the need for police to take bad tricks more seriously and be more helpful.

## 11. VPD Procuring and Living on the Avails Prosecutions

We extracted information about prosecutions for living on the avails and procuring from Vancouver Police Department Vice Intelligence Unit files on "pimps" for the period 1989-1993. Between 1981 and 1987 in Vancouver, police charged only twelve people with the pimp-related offences of procuring and living on the avails of prostitution. In 1988 there was something of a change in the Vice Unit's philosophy of prostitution law enforcement, as can be seen in the relative attention paid to various prostitution offences, with a marked change occurring in 1988 (Table 115). The Uniform Crime Reports indicate that from 1989 to 1993 sixty-four persons were charged with procuring offences, as compared to only five from 1984 to 1988 (see footnote 45 for an explanation of how these data are recorded). In the past five years there has been a much greater effort devoted to enforcing the law against the exploiters of women who prostitute than there had been in the previous five years.

**Table 115**  
**Prostitution Uniform Crime Report Offences,**  
**Persons charged in Vancouver 1984-1993<sup>45</sup>**

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Bawdy house	11	1	3	4	3	5	4	5	2	0
Procuring	1	1	2	0	1	12	9	11	12	20
Other (s.213)	2	4	883	1362	1329	1010	996	1420	1466	212
Total	14	6	888	1366	1339	1027	1009	1436	1480	232

There is also a distinct change in the pattern of communicating law (s.213) enforcement. From 1986 to 1992 Vancouver police laid between 883 and 1466 communicating charges, with an average of 1209 a year. In 1993 the number fell abruptly to 212, marking another shift in the VPD's philosophy of prostitution law enforcement. In light of a general sense of disillusionment with the results of communicating law enforcement -- particularly because of the perception that the sentences handed out did not merit the labour being put into law enforcement -- emphasis shifted to enforcement of much more labour intensive laws against procuring and living on the avails. During 1993, communicating law enforcement was for the most part restricted to individuals working outside the informally recognized prostitution strolls, for gathering intelligence about new faces on the street, and against youths. In 1994 with the resurgence of neighborhood lobby group activity against the street prostitution trade, particularly in Mount Pleasant, there will likely be more s.213 charges than there were in 1993. Given that the rhetoric of these groups is as much about "shaming the johns" as it is about displacing street prostitution out of certain areas, it gives police additional impetus to pursue the perceived exploiters of women who prostitute. The result may be that communicating law enforcement increasingly focuses on customers.

<sup>45</sup> The data relate to persons charged, not the number of charges. Following UCR scoring rules, if a single incident involves several charges, only the most serious charge is scored. The persons charged data record the number of people for whom the police have filed a report to Crown Counsel. The recording as such does not imply that an information is sworn, or an individual is prosecuted or convicted. For a variety of reasons, such as insufficient evidence or lack of availability of a witness, Crown might not act on a police recommendation to lay a charge.



## ***Scenarios of Prosecutions***

At the time we scrutinized their records, the VPD Vice Unit information system contained a total of 159 files on "pimps." 84 of these files contained a "Report to Crown Counsel" indicating what charges police recommended that Crown proceed with -- we do not know how many charges the Crown did proceed with, although it would appear to be a large proportion of these. Some of the Reports identified several accused, each of whom might be charged with more than one offence. Information about prosecutions is drawn from the Report to Crown Counsel made out by police. The remaining 75 files contained intelligence reports on suspected/known pimps emanating either from CPIC checks by patrol police during traffic checks, or from Vice Unit personnel during on-going investigations. Also, some files contain information provided by immigration officials at highway border crossings and the Vancouver International Airport. The information presented below is compiled primarily from police Reports to Crown Counsel. Information is presented in two forms:

- a) a descriptive statistical profile of offenders, victims, incidents and cases.
- b) scenarios of cases constructed from witness statements taken by investigating officers (Appendix 4). We have constructed scenarios of 77 of the 84 cases<sup>46</sup> in which police filed a Report to Crown Counsel.

In addition to constructing a profile of prosecutions for living on the avails and procuring from information from Vice Unit files, we have attempted to describe some of the main dynamics of the pimp-prostitute relationship. To this end we conducted interviews with two women who talk about their experiences working in escort services and working for player-pimps (transcripts of the interviews are contained in Appendix 6).

## ***Characteristics of Pimping Investigations***

We construct this portrait of pimping investigations from discussions with four Vice Intelligence Unit officers and from the VPD's internal manual, *A Guide to Pimping Investigations*. Our description of pimp prosecutions follows the *Guide*, supplemented with information from the interviews conducted with officers who currently or recently worked on the Vice Unit.

The *Guide* describes the Vice Unit as deliberately stepping up its enforcement of laws against pimps. In 1988, after the "Pimp Program" was established, police charged 12 individuals. Our review of Vice Unit files shows that police charged five people with pimp related offences in 1989, 25 in 1990, 16 in 1991, 15 in 1992, and 54 in 1993 (Table 116).

In developing the Pimp Program three main steps were taken: a) changing the attitudes of police officers towards persons who prostitute; b) developing a departmental strategy for pimping investigations; and c) developing a strategy for gathering evidence and bringing a case to trial.

## **Recognition of the Need to Change Police Attitudes**

The *Guide to Pimping Investigations* suggests that the first and foremost requirement in improving the quality of investigations is:

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<sup>46</sup> We started recording the scenarios after having finished the first seven case files. Since the files were ordered alphabetically, the exclusion of seven cases should not bias the description in anyway.

... a change in attitude on behalf of the police investigator. The greatest deterrent to the successful conclusion of pimp investigations is an investigator's negative attitude towards the main witness -- the prostitute or potential prostitute. If the police investigator believes that the prostitute is the cause of her own problems and deserves the consequences of her own actions, it is most likely this attitude will manifest itself in the investigator's behaviour. This attitude will be easily detected by the victim and will result in the victim's unwillingness to sign on [*i.e., sign a statement against*] her pimp. Furthermore, an investigator possessing this attitude will most likely be unwilling to dedicate himself/herself to the arduous task of witness management. (VPD 1990, p. 2)

## **The VPD Vice Unit Strategy**

The *Guide* outlines four components of the departmental strategy for its "Pimp Program:" a) police management; b) the media; c) social services; d) Crown Counsel.

a) The *Guide* suggests that one of the most crucial elements is support by Police Management of the investigation unit:

"This support should manifest itself in the authorization of the necessary overtime, recognition of effort and performance of individual investigators ..., [and] authorization of expenses for witness management and informant development. Furthermore, it is essential that appropriate vehicles are leased to create a suitable image for the Squad." (VPD 1990, p. 3)

b) The *Guide* suggests that: attempts should be made to garner positive media coverage by providing information on pimps arrested, including "information of an unusual nature, or an element of human interest;" ride-alongs should be made available to journalists to help them understand the police perspective on prostitution; and journalists should be apprised of upcoming trial dates, sentencing hearings and so on. According to the *Guide*, positive media coverage would: i) demonstrate police concern for victims of pimps; ii) encourage sex trade workers to provide information about pimps; iii) discourage pimp violence against women who prostitute; and iv) provide information that increases public support for activities of the police department.

c) Support of social service workers is described as being invaluable for identifying youth victims of pimps; also, the Department of Social Services can provide financial support to help relocate victims, and provide temporary placement of youths in safe houses.

d) As the Crown is a crucial player in the Pimp Program, the *Guide* suggests that the Crown Counsel office should be encouraged to: i) assign a specific prosecutor to monitor all upcoming vice cases; ii) offer advice on the legalities and the preservation of evidence; iii) assign a prosecutor to handle all pimp-related proceedings; iv) provide Vice Unit ride-alongs to increase prosecutors understanding of the street scene.

## **The Investigation**

The *Guide* describes eight components to a successful living on the avails of prostitution (LOAP) and/or procuring investigation:

- a) Understanding the pimp-prostitute relationship;
- b) Initiation of cases;
- c) The interview with the main witness;
- d) Obtaining corroboration of evidence;

- e) Deciding whether to proceed with charges;
- f) Witness management;
- g) Arresting the pimp;
- h) The trial.

### ***The pimp-prostitute relationship***

Interviews with Vice Unit detectives reveals that one of the main concerns in a living on the avails cases is establishing that the pimp-prostitute relationship is a *parasitic* one.<sup>47</sup> Although the *Guide* does not say so, the distinct subculture it describes is that of the so-called "Black Player" involved in "the Game" (cf. Milner and Milner, 1971; Layton, 1974). The pimp subculture described in the *Guide* represents the style of management on the Richards-Seymour stroll (for a description, see the interviews in Appendix 6a and 6b). However, many of the prosecutions appearing in VPD files do not involve men fitting into this particular subculture, although the relationship with the women they manage/control is apparently interpreted by the courts as being no less parasitic. While other pimp styles are quite different in certain respects, many of the attitudes and values that underlie the management/control of women who prostitute are probably quite similar.

The *Guide* portrays the pimp as a man to whom status symbols (large money rolls, expensive automobiles, flashy dress and jewelry) are very important, and who is committed to the values of "the game:"

The pimp relies heavily on the concept of the pimp mystique. This mystique ensures that the pimp/prostitute relationship is such that the pimp's needs will always take precedence of those of the prostitute. The pimp personality consists of various artificial characteristics and manipulative techniques that psychologically induce women into the compelling lifestyle of the pimp. Such techniques of "flashing,"<sup>48</sup> "pratting" and charisma are significant components of the pimp's aura. "Flashing" is an eye-catching style that involves the display of expensive clothes, cars, jewelry and bank rolls (all of which the pimp perceives as his tools to induce the prostitute's attention). Once the woman's attention is drawn to the pimp, he then begins his "pratting" which is the pretense of rejection in order to strengthen desire. The pimp then achieves "charisma" by remaining a mystery, a puzzle and not divulging any significant information.

The *Guide* describes the majority of prostitutes as young (15-25 years of age), materialistic, often with a background of sexual abuse, possessing few life skills and education, having no money or clothes, no boyfriend, and as being emotionally vulnerable. The *Guide* suggests that:

The majority of girls have a love relationship with their pimp. The pimp uses guile, charm, promises and flashy treats to lure the woman. He typically meets a lonely girl, treats her, charms her, pretends to care for her and then perhaps the next day has her working as a prostitute for him. The seduction process usually includes a young girl having little clothing, no money, no food... The pimp offers his protection and the attraction of being entertained in various bars. In a few days, she's offered a job and introduced to the process, rules and attractive earnings of prostitution.

In order to maintain the girls under his control, the pimp uses the principles of degradation, dependency and competition as well as threats and violence.

Although pimps sometimes use praise to control their prostitutes, they usually resort to negative techniques. Furthermore, the pimp increases the prostitute's dependency by encouraging her to rely on him for all her needs. For example, clothing is taken from the

<sup>47</sup> As per the dictates of common law (R. v. Celebrity Enterprises [1978] 2 W.W.R. 562 (B.C.A.A.)).

<sup>48</sup> Note, these are the terms of US pimp subculture. Several US "circuit pimps" do operate in Vancouver, but most of the men charged in Vancouver for living on the avails are Canadian. Nevertheless, a large proportion are identified in police reports as "black."

prostitute as well as other personal property, such as phone books with family phone numbers and addresses. This is used as a bargaining device to ensure that the prostitute remains with the pimp. (VPD, 1990, p. 5)

The player-pimp's game has three main stages: 1) catching a woman (usually the catch is emotional); 2) turning her out, usually by making her feel she is indebted to him by virtue of the things he does for her;<sup>49</sup> and 3) maintaining and managing her subordination. From information we have gleaned from various interviews over the years (also see Appendices 6a and 6b) violence most often comes into the relationship in the process of maintaining and managing a woman's subordination. A particularly graphic example of this comes from a sixteen year old who lived with an alleged pimp for three months before she started to work the streets. Once she had turned out, the relationship with her man also turned:

Within a week of me starting to work the streets he started to assault me. He basically treated me like he did his dogs. He called me 'stupid' or 'dozy.' He would also slap me on my back and shoulders. Sometimes he would put his hands around my neck and start to choke me. Most of the time I didn't want to go out to work. Sometimes I would tell him so, but generally my attitude showed it and his response was always violent.... He had quite a lot of mood changes during this time. One minute he would want to sleep with me, then he would put me down, calling me "useless" and telling me I could be replaced. I had sex with him when he demanded almost every day. He insisted on unprotected sex. The money I made was mostly used to purchase alcohol and drugs (coke, marijuana) and furniture payments. The only things he ever purchased for me were nylons and I was allowed to keep about \$10.00 from my first date so that I could buy a sandwich and a pack of cigarettes. On a regular basis he slapped me with an open hand, punched me with a fist, hit me with a broom handle, and played games with me. He would take a quarter, flip it up and down and get me to call heads or tails... If I won I wouldn't get beaten up, or if he won, I would. I didn't go to the police because I was and still am afraid of him.

She estimated she made up to \$400 a night and gave him about \$30,000 in the time she worked for him. He said she could leave, but that the "leaving fee" would be "a nice car." She decided to sign on the accused after he beat her up in an alleyway, leaving her semi-conscious, with a bleeding lip and a broken nose.

The strong impression one gets talking to women who have worked for player-pimps is that the pimp-prostitute relationship is all "game." Emotional attachments are described as always strategic -- a means of manipulation -- and thus not really matters of emotion at all. Presumably some women do work with a man for a lengthy period, and it would seem reasonable to suppose that they would not characterize the pimp-prostitute relationship in these terms.

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<sup>49</sup> Sometimes the process of catching will be initiated by a woman who already prostitutes, in which case she is said to "choose" a pimp, and may have to pay an introduction fee (see e.g. Appendix 6a interview transcript), the value of which is commensurate with the man's status in the hierarchy of managers. She might do this by virtue of wanting to be able to work in a particular stroll (such as the Richards-Seymour stroll), or because she feels she needs a manager, or perhaps because she is infatuated with a particular man.

### ***Initiating charges***

According to the *Guide*, cases are usually initiated in one of three ways: through communicating (s.213) charges; by referral of information from patrol officers; and by walk-in complaints.

Vice officers can use section 213 to target prostitutes, particularly youths, known to be working for pimps. "Charging the female allows the investigators to determine the state of mind of the prostitute and her willingness to escape her present lifestyle."

Vice officers explained that, because of the substantial amount of time required in procuring and living on the avails prosecutions, they want to ensure that a victim-witness is sufficiently motivated to see a case through to its conclusion.

Patrol police carrying out routine duties sometimes come into contact with prostitutes, including those who have been victimized by pimps. Because of the suggested complexity of procuring and living on the avails prosecutions, patrol police are urged to pass on potential prosecutions of pimps to the Vice Unit.

Walk-in complaints are made by prostitutes wishing to sign on usually because of assaults and other abuses.

### ***Interviewing the victim-witness***

The *Guide* notes that interviews with witnesses in living on the avails and procuring cases follow the same format as witness interviews, but with several important exceptions. In pimp cases, the victim and main witness entered prostitution by choice, even if this choice was deeply influenced "by the deceit and cajoling from her pimp." Also, she is likely to have had, and may still have, a deep emotional bond with him. VPD Vice Unit officers viewed this emotional attachment as one of the main difficulties with pimp prosecutions. The *Guide* thus cautions investigators to be mindful of the emotional dimensions of the pimp-prostitute relationship at all times when interacting with the main witness, and describes the main components and/or objectives of the interviews as follows:

- a) to establish rapport;
- b) to explore the willingness of the victim to change her lifestyle;
- c) to expose the pimp's game;
- d) to obtain the elements of the particular charge;
- e) to obtain a written statement from the victim;
- f) to explain the plan of action to the victim.

The *Guide* provides advice on the demeanor the investigator should display in the process of exposing the pimp as an exploiter: don't be authoritarian; don't moralize; don't be judgmental; don't make promises you can't keep; and don't use phrases like "trust me." Instead, the investigator should try to: establish a strong and confident image; make the victim feel safe; use humour as a way of creating a more relaxed interview situation; be empathetic to the victim's situation; and discard the square image.

Also the *Guide* advises that officers should not offer to drop s.213 charges in return for an accused's offer to give evidence against her pimp.

If pimping is a "head" or "skull" game, as it has sometimes been described (see, e.g., Layton 1974), the pimp prosecution is no less so. According to Vice Unit officers we interviewed, much of this game involves gaining a young woman's trust, which means finding out enough about her to break through the value system of the street scene and, if she's involved in "the life," the values of the player-pimp. One of the most difficult obstacles is the value system which prohibits giving information about a pimp to the

police (signing on the pimp), informing, or ratting, being one of the most serious offences in the operation of any illicit or semi-licit economy (as it is in many licit occupational value systems, including the police). Casting him/her in the role of lay psychologist, the *Guide* advises the investigator to probe the victim-witness for information about her family background (background of parents, quality of childhood home life, incidence of sexual abuse, etc.) and the nature of her relationship with her pimp, with an eye to establishing her motives for signing on him. Given that the victim is usually the main witness, without whose testimony there would likely be no case, investigators try to ensure that a victim-witness is sufficiently motivated to see the case through to its conclusion, a process which may take well in excess of a year to complete.

Because prostitute witnesses may experience a change of heart about whether to see a case through to its conclusion, the *Guide* warns against using high-pressure tactics to obtain a statement, or to make any promises that cannot be kept -- to do so would only undermine the victim's trust of the investigator and thus jeopardize the whole proceeding.

The *Guide* suggests that a good written statement would:

- a) be extremely detailed;
- b) include information about the background of the victim/witness;
- c) include pertinent details on the alleged pimp;
- d) include information as to whether the victim/witness was involved in prostitution prior to meeting the accused;
- e) provide information pertaining to the essential elements of living on the avails and procuring charges;
- f) name all associates who could connect the alleged pimp and prostitute;
- g) describe all information which could corroborate the main witness's testimony.

The *Guide* suggests that during the initial interview, the victim-witness should be told in some detail what will be expected of her if a case is to proceed to trial, whether the alleged offender will be arrested, where she will stay (sometimes police install the witness in a safe house), what role she will have to play in court, and any resources that will be provided to her in the process.

### ***Obtaining corroboration of victim-witness statements***

Having secured the main victim-witness's statement, the next step for the investigator is to secure evidence that will corroborate as many facts as possible in her statement. For example, testimony could be sought from persons who had observed the witness and alleged pimp together (other prostitutes, hotel clerks, etc.). Existence of prior s.213 charges would establish that the victim was known to VPD as having prostituted. Evidence from on-going surveillance or patrol checks might reveal that the alleged pimp was already known to have been in the company of a prostitute or prostitutes (as per the evidence requirements of the living on the avails section). Investigators also try to recover hotel or plane ticket receipts that might link the victim and accused. Sometimes Vice officers mount an undercover operation in which the victim presents marked cash to the alleged pimp so that it can be recovered when police lay charges. At this point, police might also be able to recover the victim's clothing from the alleged pimp's residence thereby further establishing a link between the two parties.

### ***Deciding whether to proceed with charges***

The decision whether to lay a charge is based upon a series of objectives. The *Guide* lists these in descending order of importance as the following:

- a) to assist the victim in changing her lifestyle and leaving prostitution;

- b) to assist the victim in removing herself from the physical and psychological control of a pimp;
- c) to charge the pimp and bring him before the courts.

However, the *Guide* goes on to note that even if a statement is gained and all the evidence corroborated, depending on the victim's emotional and psychological state, it may not be in the best interests of the victim to proceed with charges. Also, it may not be wise to proceed with charges if the victim is a sole witness, or if the victim's evidence is not corroborated. Other factors should also be taken into consideration: what support is available to the victim? Can the victim be adequately protected? Is it likely that the victim will follow through with the case, and be available for all necessary court appearances? In several cases where police decided not to lay charges, they did, nevertheless, help the complainant to relocate outside Vancouver.

### ***Witness management***

The *Guide* describes "Witness management" as one of the most crucial and difficult aspects of pimp investigation:

The nature of the victim's lifestyle, background and psychological state makes the task of witness management extremely difficult. Therefore, the witness must constantly be 'nurtured' in order to ensure their attendance in court as well as maintain their new lifestyle (P.12).

Vice officers are required to be available on a 24 hour basis, and to that end carry pagers at all times in order to provide support to the victim-witness in any situation that might arise. The *Guide* suggests that investigation teams be limited to two detectives. This way investigators may establish a more intimate relationship with a victim, who may have nowhere else to turn for support. The investigator is expected to provide psychological support (the *Guide* notes that "the witness/victim will usually develop a psychological bond to the investigator") and act as a "resource person to help with practical everyday problems" (p.12).

The investigator is also responsible for witness protection. It is widely believed, both by police and women who work with pimps, that if a woman signs on her pimp, she may be murdered. The *Guide* suggests that pimp prosecutions require a witness protection program, including safe houses for temporary accommodation, and relocation and living expenses so that a witness can take up residence outside the city, often in another province, until the trial is over.

### ***Arresting the accused***

The *Guide* suggests that LOAP and procuring arrests should generally follow the same protocol as other arrests. But also they should be made in such a way as "to make a psychological impact" on the accused, in order to "reduce the probability that the pimp will contact the victim." Because pimps are known to be violent and may possess weapons, police make "a high profile entry" whenever possible. A high profile entry may be achieved by teaming up Vice officers with the Emergency Response Team in order to effect an arrest.

Investigators are urged to impress on the accused that the victim is under protection of the Vice Squad, and any interference with the victim/witness will be "dealt with to the full extent of the law" (p.13). After the arrest, the investigator determines the accused's financial situation (cash and assets) and citizenship status.

### ***The trial.***

Again, the *Guide* portrays witness management as one of the most important aspects of the trial. Witnesses often travel from outside Vancouver to attend the trial. Vice officers contact victim-witnesses directly to make travel plans, pick them up at the airport, bus or train station, and make hotel arrangements, all with an eye to increasing the victim's confidence that her interests are properly safeguarded. One of the investigating officers accompanies the victim-witness during her stay in Vancouver through the duration of the trial. Investigator's are also encouraged to be present in the courtroom so that friends of the accused cannot intimidate the witness.

### ***Main problems encountered during pimp investigations***

In talking about problems encountered during pimp investigations, police sources say the biggest problem is the lengthy period cases take to come to trial. Because of the fear that pimps will take reprisals against women who testify against them, witnesses may be geographically relocated. As a consequence, the investigation team may have to spend a considerable amount of time with victim-witnesses who have to travel into Vancouver to attend both a preliminary hearing and a trial. Many of the women who sign on pimps would like to leave their life in prostitution behind them, but cannot when a preliminary hearing, and/or trial is still pending. The preliminary hearing, the victim-witness's first experience dealing with an often hostile defence attorney, may be traumatic. One vice officer noted that many women do not want to return for the trial once they have been "raked over the coals at the preliminary hearing" by a defence attorney. In both pimp trials we observed in the summer of 1993, defence attorneys described victim-witnesses in very negative terms, sometimes reducing them to tears in the process. The essence of the two defense attorneys' cases was that victim witness testimony is not believable -- "why would anyone believe the testimony of a prostitute?" In both cases, the defence tried to claim that victim-witnesses were jilted lovers, and that their motivation for accusing the defendant was that he had rejected them. We do not know how representative these cases are, but in neither one was the argument successful -- both accused were found guilty.

One detective observed that it would be difficult to deal with some of the problems described above, because they reflect the adversarial structure of the criminal trial process. Nevertheless, the observing of two trials left the impression that a trial may be as much or more about the moral character of the victim as it is about the behaviour of an accused. One Vice Unit officer suggested that the process could be improved by treating procuring and living on the avails cases should be treated in the same way that we have been told spousal assault cases are currently treated (indeed, when assaults are involved, they should be treated as spousal assault cases) -- they must be dealt with by the court within sixty days. This would help circumvent all the problems created by the long delays in bringing cases to trial. Also, he suggested that a single prosecutor should be assigned to handle all living on the avails and procuring cases (as things stand, the trial may not be conducted by the same Crown attorney who handled the preliminary hearing).



## ***A Quantitative Portrait of Persons Charged With Procuring and Living On the Avails***

In Vancouver, the pimp program began in 1988, since which time a concerted effort has been devoted to living on the avails and procuring law enforcement. The analysis of cases that follows concentrates on the five year period 1989-1993.

Table 116 through Table 133 provide a descriptive statistical profile of offender and victim characteristics (age, "race," occupation, gender, citizenship, marital status, and criminal record) and characteristics of prosecutions (number and types of charges, number of offenders, number of victims, type of witnesses) in the 84 "pimp"-related cases from 1989 to 1993 that involved police filing a report to Crown Counsel recommending that charges be laid. These 84 cases involved 115 offenders. In the Tables below, we present information about offenders, cases, and charges.

According to the *Guide* on pimping investigations, between 1981 and 1987, police charged only 12 persons with procuring and/or living on the avails of prostitution. Table 116 shows that, from 1989 to 1993, 115 offenders were charged with procuring or living on the avails offences (or other offences related to these cases, such as threatening or assault) in 84 different cases. For three of these we do not have information about what charges were laid, and although eight other cases were related to a pimping investigation, none of the charges laid were for either procuring or living on the avails. That leaves 73 cases in which charges for procuring or living on the avails were laid. This is a larger number than is reported in the Uniform Crime Reports, which show 64 cases through this period (12 in 1989, 9 in 1990, 11 in 1991, 12 in 1992, and 20 in 1993). The difference may be a reflection of UCR scoring rules: If a single criminal incident involves a number of violations of the law, as do sixteen of the 73 cases where a procuring or living on the avails charge was laid (including weapons offences, assaults, threatening, attempted murder, and other charges), then only the most serious incident is recorded. Also, as noted earlier, the Crown may not have acted on all the cases police referred for prosecution; attrition of this sort may also account for some of the discrepancy between the VPD statistics and the UCRs.

**Table 116**  
**Year of Case**

Year	# of Accused	# of Cases	# LOAP Accused
1989	5	6	5
1990	25	21	16
1991	16	10	9
1992	15	12	9
1993	54	35	38
Total	115	84	77

Table 117 shows the number of offenders associated with each case. 75% of the cases involved only one accused. Ten of the fourteen cases in which there were two accused involved a man and a woman acting in concert to exercise control over another woman or a girl. One of the cases involving five offenders related to a house where three adult men and two male youths enticed six female youths to prostitute for them. The other (not shown in the case scenarios in Appendix 4) involved a single man and four women who worked for him. The four women threatened an undercover police officer posing as a prostitute, and they were all charged for doing so (also, police recommended that two of them be charged for trying to extort money from the police woman posing as a prostitute by telling her that she had to work for their man). The man was charged with living on the avails.

**Table 117**  
**Number of Accused Associated With Cases**

# of Accused	# of Cases	Percent
1	64	76.2
2	14	16.6
3	3	3.6
4	1	1.2
5	2	2.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 118 shows that the accused ranged in age from 14 to 46 years of age. From 1989 to 1993 eleven youths were referred to Crown to be charged for procuring offences. The Uniform Crime Reports indicate that only four youths were charged under s.212, suggesting that the Crown did not proceed with some of the cases referred to it by police. 86% of the accused were between 17 and 36 years of age. The average age of males charged with living on the avails was 25.0 years.

**Table 118**  
**Age of Accused**

Age	Count	Percent	Percent (missing values excluded)	Cum. Percent
14-17	11	9.6	10.2	10.2
18-21	26	22.6	23.8	34.0
22-25	31	26.9	28.4	62.4
26-29	17	14.8	15.6	78.0
30-34	12	10.4	11.0	89.0
35-38	5	4.3	4.6	93.6
39-42	3	2.6	2.7	96.3
43-46	4	3.5	3.7	100.0
Not stated	6	5.2	Missing	
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Of the 115 individuals referred to Crown by police, 99 were charged with one of the procuring offenses or for living on the avails. 59% of these individuals were charged under more than one section of s.212, or with more than one offence under a particular section (Table 119). Seventy-seven persons were referred to Crown to be charged with living on the avails of either an adult or a youth (of whom four were accused of living on the avails of more than one person). Of the 77 persons accused of living on the avails, 74 were males; four were under the age of eighteen (3 males and one female).

**Table 119  
Number of Prostitution-Related Charges**

#	Count	Percent	Cum. Percent
0	16	13.9	13.9
1	31	27.0	40.9
2	42	36.5	77.4
3	19	16.5	93.9
4	3	2.6	96.5
5	1	.9	97.4
7	3	2.6	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Charges are generally laid under subsections j, h, d and a. 68% of the cases involve at least one charge of living on the avails. There were also 34 charges for living on the avails of a youth (Table 120). The relevant *Criminal Code* sections are reproduced below.

**Table 120  
Prostitution Charges Referred to Crown\***

	Count	Pct. of Response s	Pct. of Cases
212(1)(a)	20	9.8	20.4
212(1)(d)	34	16.6	34.7
212(1)(h)	42	20.5	42.9
212(1)(I)	2	1.0	2.0
212(1)(j)	67	32.7	68.4
212(2)	34	16.6	34.7
212(4)	4	2.0	4.1
210	2	1.0	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

212(1) Every one who

(a) procures, attempts to procure or solicits a person to have illicit sexual intercourse with another person, whether in or out of Canada,

(b) inveigles or entices a person who is not a prostitute or a person of known immoral character to a common bawdy-house or house of assignation for the purpose of ... prostitution,

(c) knowingly conceals a person in a common bawdy house ...

- (d) procures or attempts to procure a person to become ... a prostitute,
  - (e) procures or attempts to procure a person to leave their usual place of abode ... with intent that a person may become an inmate or frequenter of a common-bawdy house ...
  - (f) on the arrival of a person in Canada, directs or causes that person ... to be taken to a common bawdy-house ...
  - (g) procures a person to enter or leave Canada, for the purpose of prostitution,
  - (h) for the purpose of gain, exercises control, direction or influence over the movements of a person in such a manner as to show that he is aiding, abetting or compelling that person to engage in or carry on prostitution with any person or generally
  - (i) applies or administers to a person or causes that person to take any drug, intoxicating liquor, matter or thing with intent to stupefy or overpower that person in order thereby to enable any person to have illicit sexual intercourse with that person, or
  - (j) lives wholly or in part on the avails of the prostitution of another person, is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to a term of imprisonment not exceeding ten years.
- (2) ... every person who lives wholly or in part on the avails of prostitution of another person who is under the age of eighteen years ... is liable to a term of imprisonment not exceeding fourteen years ...

For three of the 84 cases reviewed here, we do not have information about what charges police referred to Crown. Eight cases (involving 16 individuals) did not involve a prostitution offence, although they find their way into these files because they emanated from a pimp-prostitute relationship (e.g., an assault, a threat, or a weapons charge). This leaves 73 cases where a procuring or living on the avails charge was laid. Non-prostitution charges were laid against 47 individuals (Table 121). The types of charges are displayed in Table 122.

**Table 121**  
**Number of Non-Prostitution Charges Referred to Crown**

#	Count	Percent	Cum. Percent
0	68	59.1	59.1
1	18	15.7	74.8
2	14	12.2	87.0
3	7	6.1	93.0
4	8	7.0	100.0
Total	115	100.0	

**Table 122  
Other Charges**

	Count	Pct. of Response s	Pct. of Cases
266 assault	20	20.2	42.6
264 uttering threats	19	19.2	40.4
271 sexual assault	13	13.1	27.7
279 forcible confinement	11	11.1	23.4
267 assault with weapon	7	7.1	14.9
423 intimidation	5	5.1	10.6
268 aggravated assault	4	4.0	8.5
280 abduct person under 16	3	3.0	6.4
139 obstructing justice	3	3.0	6.4
346 (1) extortion	2	2.0	4.3
87 possession of weapon	2	2.0	4.3
239 attempted murder	1	1.0	2.1
343 robbery	1	1.0	2.1
343 theft	1	1.0	2.1
151 sexual interference	1	1.0	2.1
145 (1a) escape custody	1	1.0	2.1
140 (1) mischief	1	1.0	2.1
355 possess stolen property	1	1.0	2.1
86 (2)careless use/storage of firearm	1	1.0	2.1
145 breach undertaking	1	1.0	2.1
269 cause bodily harm	1	1.0	2.1
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>210.6</b>

Table 123 reveals that pimping cases mainly involve men. Although 19 of the 115 individuals referred to Crown counsel were female, only three of them were referred to Crown in a situation where (ostensibly) no male was involved (these three female youths tried to coerce a fourth youth into turning tricks -- the victim was hospitalized after being beaten by the other three). All the other females involved in these cases were prostitutes allied with a man who was charged with living on the avails.

**Table 123  
Gender of Accused**

	Count	Percent
Male	96	83.5
Female	19	16.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Given that the "race" of an accused is identified in the police Report to Crown, we have summarized that information here. Of the 19 females involved in these cases, 15 were white, one was native, and three were not identified. This leaves 33 Caucasian, and 44 African American males, who together constitute about 80% of the male contingent (Table 124). The reported occupations of the accused are given in Table 125.

**Table 124**  
**“Race” of Accusedas recorded in Police Report to Crown Counsel**

	# Male	Percent	# Female	Percent
Black	44	45.8	0	0.0
Caucasian	33	34.4	15	93.7
Oriental or Asian	7	7.3	0	0.0
Mulatto	3	3.1	0	0.0
Phillipino	3	3.1	0	0.0
East Indian	1	1.0	0	0.0
Native	0	0.0	1	6.3
Other	5	5.2	0	0.0
Not stated/unknown			3	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 125**  
**Reported Occupation of Accused**

	Count	Percent	Percent (missing values excluded)
Pimp	32	27.8	45.7
Unemployed	4	12.2	20.0
Sex trade worker	12	10.4	17.1
Square job	7	6.1	10.0
Welfare recipient	4	3.5	5.7
Other	1	.9	1.4
None specified/unknown	45	39.1	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 126 shows the nationality of persons referred to the Crown indicate that large majority of accused are Canadians. All six Americans are males. Table 127 reveals that 87% of the persons for whom we have information were single, and Table 128 shows that 83% had a criminal record.

**Table 126**  
**Citizenship of Accused**

	Count	Percent	Percent (missing values excluded)
Canadian	89	77.4	88.1
American	6	5.2	5.9
Landed immigrant	4	3.5	4.0
British	1	.9	1.0
Other	1	.9	1.0
None specified/unknown	14	12.2	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 127**  
**Marital Status of Accused**

	Count	Percent	Percent (missing values excluded)
Single	87	75.7	87.0
Married/common-law	11	9.6	11.0
Separated	1	.9	1.0
Divorced	1	.9	1.0
None specified/unknown	15	13.0	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 128**  
**Does Accused Have A Record? (n=87)**

	Count	Percent	Percent (missing values excluded)
Yes	72	62.6	82.8
No	15	13.0	17.2
None specified/unknown	28	24.3	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In every instance where police referred a living on the avails or procuring case to Crown Counsel, the principal witness was the victim (or victims). S.212 cases do not proceed without victim testimony. Table 129 portrays the number of victims (i.e., persons who had been procured, or had someone live on the avails of their prostitution) listed as available to give evidence against the accused.

**Table 129**  
**Number of Victims Involved (n of cases=107)**

	Count	Percent (missing values excluded)	Cum. Percent
1	70	65.4	65.4
2	24	22.4	87.9
3	2	1.9	89.7
4	5	4.7	94.4
6	6	5.6	100.0
Not stated	8	Missing	
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 130 displays the number of police witnesses involved in each case, and Table 131 the number of other people listed as potential Crown witnesses to provide evidence corroborating the allegation that an accused procured or lived on the avails of prostitution. Such witnesses included hotel clerks or apartment building managers able to establish that an accused had rented a room with a victim (evidence that the accused was habitually in the company of a prostitute), telephone pager company representatives able to provide evidence that the accused had rented a pager which the woman then used, and witnesses of assaults and threats (for example, a parent or foster parent, friends of the victim, social workers, and so on).

**Table 130**  
**Number of Police Witnesses (n of cases=88)**

	Count	Percent (missing values excluded)	Cum. Percent
0	1	1.1	1.1
1	5	5.7	6.8
2	21	23.9	30.7
3	22	25.0	55.7
4	15	17.0	72.7
5	14	15.9	88.6
6	5	5.7	94.3
7	5	5.7	100.0
Not stated	27	Missing	
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100.0</b>	



**Table 131**  
**Number of Civilian Witnesses, Excluding Victim (n of cases=87)**

	Count	Percent	Percent (missing values excluded)	Cum. Percent
0	18	15.7	20.7	20.7
1	26	22.6	29.9	50.6
2	19	16.5	21.8	72.4
3	7	6.1	8.0	80.5
4	5	4.3	5.7	86.2
5	2	1.7	2.3	88.5
6	3	2.6	3.4	92.0
7	1	.9	1.1	93.1
9	6	5.2	6.9	100.0
Not stated	28	24.3	Missing	
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 132 shows the ages of the victims. The most notable feature of this information is the high proportion of proposed charges involving victimized youths -- almost half the victims were under 18. This indicates that not only has there been a deliberate shift in Vancouver Police Department priorities away from street prostitution to pimping and living on the avails, but that there has been a deliberate attempt to target the exploiters of youths.

**Table 132**  
**Age(s) of Victim(s) (n of cases=104)**

	Count	Percent	Percent (missing values excluded)
Adult (18 and over)	51	44.3	49.0
Youth (under 18)	47	40.9	45.2
Both youth and adult	6	5.2	5.8
Not specified/unknown	11	9.6	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 133 depicts the various strolls mentioned in witness testimony and in police Reports to Crown Counsel. This information would seem to indicate that women and girls controlled by pimps work in all the strolls at one time or another. However, police, service providers and street-involved women all agree that the degree to which Vancouver's different strolls are controlled by pimps varies a great deal. The so-called "High Track" is exclusively controlled by pimps -- very few "renegades" are permitted to work there. Similarly, the First Avenue stroll is mainly pimp controlled. Elsewhere in Mount Pleasant, however, free-lance women operate.

**Table 133**  
**Strolls Mentioned in Statements**

	Count	Pct. of Response s	Pct. of Cases
Vancouver unspecified	31	23.3	27.2
Street unspecified	20	15.0	17.5
Richards Seymour	14	10.5	12.3
Mt Pleasant North*	12	9.0	10.5
Eastside	11	8.3	9.6
Bawdy House	11	8.3	9.6
Surrey	7	5.3	6.1
Broadway	6	4.5	5.3
New Westminster	4	3.0	3.5
Bar/club	2	1.5	1.8
Apartment/house	2	1.5	1.8
Escort	2	1.5	1.8
Hotel	1	.8	.9
Other	10	7.5	8.8
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>116.7</b>

\* Includes 1st Avenue

The Downtown Eastside and along Hastings into East Vancouver, although treated in our statistics as a single entity, is actually several strolls, some of which are controlled by professional pimps. Many of the women on the Downtown Eastside have boyfriends, and although no doubt some of these relationships are exploitative, most street-involved women would not consider these men to be pimps. They team up with one woman and share their money, as would any couple who lived together be they girlfriend and boyfriend, husband and wife, or a couple of the same sex. Nevertheless, such boyfriends, to the extent that they are habitually in the company of a prostitute and may live partly on her avails, are susceptible to prosecution for living on the avails.

## 12. Criminal Code Section 212(4): Enforcement Issues

Every person who, in any place, obtains or attempts to obtain, for sexual consideration, the sexual services of a person who is under the age of eighteen years is guilty of an indictable offence and is liable to a term of imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years.

In 1984, from a public opinion survey conducted by Peat Marwick, it was estimated that roughly 90% of Canadians agreed that purchasing or offering to purchase sexual services from a youth should be a criminal offence. After conducting extensive research on prostitution, the Committee on Sexual Offences Against Children and Youth (1984) and the Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution (1985) both recommended that obtaining or attempting to obtain for consideration the sexual services of a youth should be criminalized.

The Canadian legislature acted upon these recommendations, and on 1 January 1988 what is now section 212(4) came into force.

### *Enforcement of s.212(4) compared to s.213 (the communicating law)*

While s.212(4) apparently has wide public support, the most noticeable thing about it is that police rarely enforce it, because of the perceived difficulty of doing so. For example, during the first six years of the new law's existence, there were apparently only six charges in Vancouver for offering to purchase the sexual services of a youth. Compare this to the enforcement of s.213, which prohibits communication in a public place "with another person ... for the purposes of engaging in prostitution or of obtaining the sexual services of a prostitute." During the six years after the enactment of the communicating law in Vancouver, no less than 7409 charges were laid. During this time, police charged 2714 persons for offering to sell sexual services, of whom 354 (13%) were youths.

The general consensus among police sources is that s.212(4) is difficult to enforce because, to achieve a conviction, a youth who had been propositioned would have to testify against the accused. Youths would be reluctant to do this (why would they alienate their potential source of income?). A youth might be more inclined to testify if police waited until a sexual act took place, and then intervened, but the officers we spoke to felt that they would be abrogating their duty if they let a youth get in a car and proceed to sell sexual services.

At various recent meetings in relation to the "Vancouver Project," a provincially funded initiative to provide more services for street-involved youth, service providers have voiced concerns about the approach to the sexual procurement of youth that has evolved over the past six to eight years in Vancouver. Men who sexually procure youths (an indictable offence) do so with virtual impunity. In contrast, youths who are sexually procured have been targeted by police using s.213 (a summary offence), because they feel that a conviction for communicating is the only way they can get a handle on a youth. The net result, however, is that the victims of sexual procurement are criminalized while the persons procuring their services are not. Service providers have expressed considerable reservations about the message sent out to street-involved youth in the process. Often homeless, in flight from home conditions they describe as intolerable, they are further alienated from square society by the process of criminalization. Service providers point out that the message given to the sexually procured youth in the process is that they are to blame for the circumstances confronting them.

While it may be that there are difficulties in enforcing s.212(4), concern was voiced by one service provider about whether enough of an effort has been made to bring cases to court to see what evidence might secure convictions. After all, he pointed out, it is not necessary that a sex act occur, it is an offence to as much as offer to pay a youth for sexual services. Would it not, therefore, be possible to overhear a conversation between a youth and a man talking to him/her through an open car window? Commenting on

this suggestion, one police source suggested that investigators cannot get warrants to enable them to use long range listening devices for such purposes.

Regardless of what the case might be, we would note the following. When police authorities across Canada experienced problems with the "soliciting law" from 1978 to 1985, they were very vocal in urging the legislature to change the evidence requirements of the street prostitution law so that they could get convictions. Similarly, they have been quite vocal about changes that are needed to the current communicating law in order to give it "more teeth." Alongside the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, many police departments have called for s.213 to be made into an indictable or hybrid offence, for minimum prison sentences for second and subsequent offenders, and so on. Why has no equivalent lobbying effort been made by police authorities to have s.212(4) modified? Part of the answer is that law enforcement patterns are a reflection of more general social and political priorities.

In Vancouver, prostitution law enforcement has tended to be complaint driven. That is one reason not much attention is given to the off-street prostitution trade. Until 1994, there has not been much concern expressed by anyone about the sexual procurement of youth. Again a comparison of s.212(4) and s.213 is revealing.

During the two years after the communicating law was enacted, a total of 254 *Vancouver Sun* articles talked about prostitution, of which eighty-six discussed the communicating law. These included on-going stories about how many charges had been laid, and speculation about why the law was not working. The news coverage of s.212(4) provides a stark contrast, given that it, too, is not "working." From 1986 to 1993, of the 926 *Vancouver Sun* articles that mentioned prostitution, only six referred to 212(4), and three of these were stories about the government's more general legislative package, of which 212(4) was but a part. The other three articles talk about enforcement of s. 212(4). Two of these were about a politician charged in Quebec. That leaves just one local article -- it talked about problems Vancouver police were experiencing with the new law, the only article prior to 1994 to do so.

There are signs that priorities are changing. The provincially funded Vancouver Project is one such sign, and various government and related committees, in focusing more on customers generally, have become more aware of the problems associated with s.212(4). Also, in Vancouver there has been an important shift in the VPD's philosophy of law enforcement, with emphasis shifting away from the prosecution of prostitutes and their customers under s.213, focusing instead on the exploiters of women who prostitute.

Nevertheless, up to 1993 the very different experiences with the enforcement of Canadian's two newest prostitution laws provides a powerful commentary about attitudes to prostitution. From this experience it would seem that concerns about public propriety, property values and control of the streets have far outweighed concern about the sexual procurement of youth.

### **13. Violence and the “Outlaw” Status of Prostitution**

In this final section of the report, we move away from examining the various data bases at our disposal to discuss anecdotal information that speaks to broader questions about why women who prostitute are vulnerable to various kinds of violence. In the process, we begin to interpret some of the patterns emerging from our empirical investigations, and talk about how the quasi-criminal status of prostitution in Canada -- its “outlaw” status -- helps to create and perpetuate a milieu conducive to violence as a way of resolving conflicts and exercising power in the sex trade.

#### ***Male Violence Against Women***

Most of the violence described in this report is part of a continuum of *male violence against women*. No doubt violence extends to the male prostitution trade (both transvestites and males who dress as males), and to transsexuals. Many survey and questionnaire respondents believe that transsexuals and transvestites are more susceptible to violence than other sex trade workers. However, most of our information is about *female* victims, and to the extent that the large majority of sellers of sexual services are female and buyers male, our comments focus on male violence against women and youths who prostitute.

But how should violence against persons who prostitute be conceptualized? Is it a matter of violence against women in general or “prostitutes” in particular -- or should the two even be analytically separated? Then there is the matter of the reaction to prostitution: How much does the “prostitute” status of the female victim influence the way that police, courts and various factions of the public view, and respond to this victimization?

In very general terms, there are two main perpetrators of violence against persons signified as prostitutes: customers (or men who pose as customers), and manager-exploiters (pimps). We consider violence by customers first, and then consider the role of violence in the outlaw culture of the professional pimp.

#### ***Customer and Would-Be Customer Violence Against Persons Who Prostitute***

In very general terms, customer violence can be described as situational or predatory, although these are not mutually exclusive categories.

*Situational violence* occurs when a dispute arising during the course of a transaction escalates into violence. The dispute might take the form of a disagreement about services performed, price paid, and so forth. It is “situational” in the sense that it is not premeditated. This might be the case with some sexual assaults, assaults, and robberies.

*Predatory violence* is premeditated. It may be financially motivated -- a planned robbery -- and/or it may be misogynist, sexual or serial. The offender sets out with a plan of action, he knows what he is going to do before he does it, and he knows where to find victims: the unregulated and mostly unmonitored prostitution strolls of a city like Vancouver. The choice of a *prostitute* as a target is, at least partly, a reflection of differential opportunities: women who prostitute are relatively easy targets.

In some cases, situational violence may help to precipitate pre-planned incidents. Also, it should be noted that situational violence is not entirely situational. It is predicated on a series of values about women, sex, and prostitutes that the offender -- a “trick” -- brings to the situation. While an offence might not be premeditated, it is predisposed by certain attitudes towards women and sexuality. Some of these values,

without which a dispute might not escalate into violence, may be no less misogynist than the attitudes of a man who deliberately sets out to find a woman to hurt.

We term predatory sexual violence against prostitutes "misogynist" because, as one 31 year veteran of the VPD put it, the maliciousness and viciousness of some of the sexual assaults and murders is "beyond belief." He described the behaviour of many of the men who assault prostitutes as "very physical... very intimate ... and designed to hurt." Take the case of a Victoria taxi driver recently given a life term for the second degree murder of a prostitute:

Court was told M\*\*\* fantasized about a pure, eternal heterosexual romance. He idealized women but despised them when he felt rejected.

On Dec. 8, 1993 he picked up P\*\*\* and paid her \$50 for sex. When P\*\*\* tried to leave before M\*\*\* had finished the sex act, he exploded into anger, and the pent-up hatred he had of women poured out.<sup>50</sup>

He stabbed his victim 32 times and then slit her throat.

In another recent case, D\*\*\* was convicted of three counts of sexual assault with a weapon (two involving prostitutes) three counts of confinement and one of robbery. D\*\*\* "pointed a gun at one victim when he ordered her to get into his vehicle. He then pressed the gun against her head as he forced her to perform an oral sex act." In the other assaults D\*\*\* "pressed a sharp knife against the victim's head as he forced her to perform ... sex acts."<sup>51</sup> In passing a sentence of fourteen years, the Judge described the premeditated assaults as "extremely serious" in nature, with each victim "subjected to prolonged terror."<sup>52</sup>

The impression of several police sources is that the reaction of the criminal justice system to violence against prostitutes has changed over the past ten years or so. Courts tend to look at sexual assault cases, including those involving prostitutes, differently now. Even in the case of prostitutes, one detective suggested, the courts acknowledge that "no" means "no," regardless of the status of the victim. Over the past ten years one Judge has been quoted on several different occasions as saying that his court would not tolerate offences against prostitutes. But, "Change is a long process," one officer continued, "and there are still Judges sitting now, especially at the Provincial Court level, who live in the 1950s." And even if there is a growing amount of respect for women victims, "Much of the defence in sexual assault cases is based on defamation of victims." Our in-court observations of two living on the avails cases yielded a similar conclusion, although we do not know if this anecdotal information is representative.

As to the extent to which violence against prostitutes is a matter of violence against women in general rather than "prostitutes" in particular, we would resist too much of an analytic separation. We have come across several cases where men who have sexually assaulted prostitutes have convictions for assaulting other women too. For example, a man convicted in 1989 of killing a female jogger in Saanich was charged with two different assaults on prostitutes (both in 1986) for which he was out on bail awaiting trial at the time he committed the murder. He was convicted of both assaults, and was serving a lengthy sentence at the time police realized he was responsible for the murder.<sup>53</sup> Seen in this light, although the victim was a prostitute, any woman would have done. In this case, violence against prostitutes ought to be understood as part of a continuum of violence against women more generally. But we would also note that, to the extent that most people feel the need to justify their actions to themselves, it is likely that some men are more easily able to rationalize violence against a "prostitute," because of her moral-political

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<sup>50</sup> Canadian Press "Life term for killer cabbie" *Province*, 18 November 1994, p. A11.

<sup>51</sup> Larry Still "'Dangerous, violent' serial rapist convicted." *Vancouver Sun*, 22 December 1994, p. B4.

<sup>52</sup> Claire Ogilvie, "Serial rapist dealt fourteen years for attacks on three women," *Province*, 6 January 1995, p. A10.

<sup>53</sup> Just as this report was being finished, Melanie Carpenter, a woman working in a Surrey tanning salon, was abducted. She was later found murdered after having been sexually assaulted. Fernand Auger, the man who is thought to have murdered her (he committed suicide) had a record for assaulting prostitutes (S. Bell and H. Munro "Pursued by twin dragons: a bleak past, grim future" *Vancouver Sun*, 18 January 1995, p. A2).

marginalization, than against some other woman. The de facto criminal prohibition of prostitution plays a major part in this marginalization.

The current Canadian Criminal Code effectively outlaws prostitution -- technically, prostitution is legal, but it is almost impossible to prostitute on an on-going basis without breaking the law. This system of quasi-criminalization makes this marginalization more complete in several ways:

1) It contributes to legal structures that tend to make the prostitute responsible for her own victimization, and thus reinforces the line of argument that says that, if a person chooses to prostitute, they deserve what they get -- they are "offenders" not "victims". One example of this is the interpretation of the *Criminal Injury Compensation Act* reported below.

2) It makes prostitution part of a black market. As such, it is left to primitive market forces, and creates an environment in which the most brutal forms of manager-exploitation take root.

3) It encourages the convergence of prostitution with other black markets, particularly the trade in illicit drugs. Once the price of a habit-forming mind-altering substance is driven up by criminal prohibition, a drug like heroin can be as demanding a "pimp" as any man.

4) It alienates persons who prostitute from the protective service potential of the police -- why would prostitutes turn to the police for help when the police are responsible for enforcing laws against prostitutes? For a prostitute to report an assault or robbery might entail admitting that they were committing an offence (communicating -- s.213), or violating a bail or probation area restriction. Criminal law sanctions encourage an adversarial relationship between prostitutes and police.

All in all, the de facto criminalization of prostitution creates a set of attitudes on both sides of the law that alienates each from the other. To conclude our report, we take up various aspects of these issues in more detail.

### **One Interpretation of The Criminal Injury Compensation Act: An Example of Making the Victim Responsible**

One graphic example of the tendency to hold the prostitute responsible for the offences committed against her is provided by a recent decision under the *Criminal Injury Compensation Act*. In denying compensation for injuries sustained in an assault, the presiding judge reasoned:

Prostitution is an inherently dangerous activity. The injuries that Ms. F. sustained are precisely the kind of injuries which one might well expect to sustain while carrying out that course of conduct. Ms. F. placed herself in a vulnerable position, after soliciting. In all of the circumstances, she contributed directly to the circumstances giving rise to this incident.

Without excusing the conduct of Mr. B in any way, section 4(1) of the Act is a mandatory provision, requiring that such circumstances be taken into account in determining whether or not to award compensation. After carefully considering all of the circumstances, no compensation shall be awarded to Ms. F. It is found that she placed herself in the position where she could reasonably expect to have been injured, in a manner similar to that which in fact occurred. In the result, no award shall be made. (Decision under the Criminal Injury Compensation Act, 8 July 1993 (S.J. Decoste), cited in Currie et. al., 1995).

The most revealing part of this judgment is the argument that prostitution is *inherently* dangerous. For something to be "inherent" it must have an intrinsic or innate quality, inseparable from that to which it is attached. Unless one defines the act of payment for sexual services as a form of "violence," there is nothing about the act of prostitution that is *necessarily* dangerous.

An alternative view is that certain types of prostitution are dangerous partly because of the kinds of attitudes displayed in this sort of reasoning. Although prostitution is legal, the person who prostitutes is held responsible for the criminal offences perpetrated against them. Prostitution per se is not inherently dangerous. Rather, it is more or less dangerous depending on the circumstances in which it occurs. The law itself is partly responsible for making certain types of prostitution dangerous. One of the problems with the current configuration of prostitution law is that it is written in the negative -- it tells people what they cannot do, but not what they *can* do. Although prostitution is legal, the legislation gives no indication as to where the sellers and buyers of sexual services should meet, or where they should conduct their business. Prostitution is legal, as long as you do not prostitute.

### **Is Victimization of Prostitutes Taken Seriously By Police?**

In the late 1980s a prostitutes' rights advocate was quoted in the press as accusing British Columbia police of not giving the same amount of attention to the murders of prostitutes as they did to other homicides. The implication is that police do not treat prostitute victims the same way they treat other victims, and that crimes against prostitutes are not considered to be as "serious" as other crimes. Because we have not undertaken a study of different kinds of homicide investigation, nor studied the attitudes to prostitutes of a representative sample of police officers -- particularly uniform patrol officers -- we cannot directly speak to these issues, although we can report the comments of officers we interviewed. Also, we make some more general comments about how the outlaw status of prostitution together with concerns about nuisance, public propriety and property values create an antagonistic relationship between street prostitutes and police. We conclude that street-involved women are more susceptible to violence because of this antagonism. This antagonism finds its roots in the contradictory structure of criminal law and the refusal of legislators to identify the circumstances in which the legal act of prostitution can take place.

When we interviewed Vice Unit, Homicide and Sexual Offence Squad officers, we heard much the same viewpoint. As one officer put it, "A prostitute is no different from the girl next door. How come the word 'prostitute' comes to mean everything about this woman? She's a daughter, a sister, and maybe a mother too." Asked whether police treat prostitute murder victims differently from other victims, our subjects were adamant that police do not classify a person's worth by what they do for a living. Nevertheless, there was a general consensus that, "The prostitute's is a high risk lifestyle -- if it wasn't, we wouldn't be sitting here talking about fifty homicides. But the fact that the lifestyle brings risks, that doesn't mean to say a prostitute deserves to be a victim."

As we have already noted, we do not know if these attitudes are representative of police attitudes more generally. We believe that, in Vancouver anyway, there is no single "police attitude to prostitutes" but many different attitudes. But no matter what the balance of those attitudes, interviews and questionnaires with street involved women leave little doubt that there is widespread and strongly felt distrust of police. We would attribute much of this to the adversarial relationship between police and prostitutes produced by the criminal prohibition of prostitution.

Having said this, we would also note that street-involved women do report that some police officers are helpful. Our records indicate that men are prosecuted for crimes against prostitutes, and including four police officers in British Columbia over the past six years (one RCMP, two VPD officers, and a reserve). In 1988 one VPD officer was found guilty of extorting sexual favours from a seventeen year old prostitute while he was on duty, and was sentenced to six months. In 1991 another Vancouver officer was sentenced to five years for charges of extortion, sexual assault (two counts) unlawful confinement (two counts), theft, and robbery. While interviews with street-involved women suggest that the majority of them do not trust most police officers, they rarely complain of the kinds of incidents brought to light in the trials of these two officers. Some women have, however, reported that, when invited, a police officer exposed himself, or



allowed a woman to touch his genitals in the process of s.213 enforcement.<sup>54</sup> Police sources doubt that this happens very often.

### **The Clifford Olson Case**

One of the most graphic cases illustrating claims that prostitute victims sometimes do not get taken seriously comes from the Vancouver press in the summer of 1994 when a story broke about the claims of Kim Werbecky, one of Clifford Olson's victims. Werbecky claimed that in April 1981 charges against Olson were dropped because the Crown considered Werbecky a "liar and a tramp" after learning that she had been a "child prostitute."<sup>55</sup> The reporting of the case was particularly emotive because, in the four month period following the Crown's dropping the charges, Olson murdered ten children.

A few days later the *Province* reported that the Solicitor General would investigate Werbecky's allegations.<sup>56</sup> The same article reported that the local Regional Crown Counsel very much doubted that charges against Olson would have been dropped solely on the basis that the alleged victim was a prostitute; there must have been some kind of extenuating circumstance.

On 15 September a small article appeared saying that there was not enough evidence to proceed with sexual assault charges against Olson.<sup>57</sup> The Crown responsible for investigating the case said that inconsistencies in Werbecky's allegations led to the decision.

### ***Pimping and Violence: The Outlaw Culture of the Player-Pimp***

The player-pimp's game is providing "his ho" with a distinct set of values, the adherence to which makes her feel that she belongs to a particular in-group. This in-group sometimes constitutes a surrogate "family" made up of the pimp, his "main" or "bottom" lady (i.e., the top woman) and, if he is successful, his other "wifey's." The state of mind that is most susceptible to the pimp's game is likely to be one which is already disenchanted with "square" values. Because the in-group has an outlaw identity, the pimp-prostitute relationship is experienced and celebrated as an alternate reality; she is further alienated from straight society. The criminal law creates a niche which the career pimp exploits in the process of "catching" women and youth, and exploiting them as prostitutes. Violence plays an instrumental and expressive role in this value system, as it does in most outlaw cultures.

The broader moral censure of prostitution consolidates the feeling of otherness experienced by women who prostitute. Such women often have a difficult time relating to square men (see, for example, Jean's comments in Appendix 6a). If she wants an attachment, she may feel that only certain types of men would wish to associate with a woman who prostitutes. Because of the outlaw status of the "prostitute" there is a convergence of prostitution with other illicit economies, such as the illicit drug trade.

There are different ways of managing and exploiting prostitution. In this report we have used the term "career pimp" to describe the kind of person living on the avails and procuring laws have been interpreted as targeting -- i.e., a person who has a "parasitic" relationship with a prostitute. The result is that law enforcement concentrates on one particular type of management-exploitation, the men who run the street

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<sup>54</sup> One of the strategies prostitutes employ to try to detect undercover police officers is to ask prospective tricks either to expose themselves, or let the woman touch their genitals (see Lowman 1989, pp. 45-47).

<sup>55</sup> Suzanne Fournier "Guilt Not Mine: Olson Victim" *Province*, 10 June 1994, p. A5; Suzanne Fournier "Crown Wouldn't Listen" *Province*, 14 June 1994, p. A16.

<sup>56</sup> Ian Austin and Charlie Anderson Chilling Memories Follow Tale of Rape" *Province*, 12 June 1994, p. A5.

<sup>57</sup> "Olson case dropped" *Province*, 15 September 1994, p. A31.

trade. Other types of manager, such as escort service and body-rub operators, are sometimes prosecuted. But the tendency is for the police and Crown to ignore off-street prostitution for fear that closing it down would exacerbate the problems attributed to street prostitutes. Also, because the off-street trade is less likely to cause a nuisance, complaints about it are less likely. These various factors have the effect of consolidating the outlaw status of the "street prostitute."

### ***Management Styles and the Vulnerability of Sex Trade Workers to Violence***

Women who work for escort services often complain that the owners are more interested in profit than they are in the escorts' safety, and there is no doubt that escort service prostitution can be very exploitative. Nevertheless, women who work as escorts do not turn up in the ranks of murder victims at the same rate as street-involved women. The structure of the escort trade is such that the clients often have to identify themselves in the course of conducting business, because they contact the escort agency from a hotel at which they are staying, and may use a credit card to pay for the date. Leaving evidence of their identity makes their committing offences against prostitutes much less likely.

At several points in this report we have noted that far fewer Richards-Seymour women report bad tricks than do their Downtown Eastside counterparts, and they do not appear among the ranks of murder victims. This is not to say that Richards-Seymour women do not experience violence; they most certainly do (as evidenced by ASP/POWER Bad Trick Sheets). The question is, do they experience fewer bad dates than women in the Downtown Eastside, or do they report them less? Virtually all of our respondents indicate that women involved in heavy substance use are likely to be more vulnerable to bad dates than women who are not. Every indication is that drug use varies among Vancouver prostitution strolls, and that relatively few Richards-Seymour women are as "wired" as their Downtown Eastside counterparts. A woman "hurting" for a fix is not likely to be as careful about the men she dates as a woman who is not.

Also the Richards-Seymour stroll is controlled by pimps. It is not in the interest of player-pimps, even if they are also involved in drug distribution (usually cocaine and marijuana) to let their women use large amounts of drugs -- these men would rather spend the money on themselves. But one woman suggested that there are other aspects of pimp-values that may make the women they control more concerned about safety. She suggested that he does street-proof his women by schooling them in certain values and attitudes (see Appendix 6a). In this value system, the "trick" is an object of derision, a man who does not deserve the company of women, hence his having to pay for the experience. But she also noted that some of the values of pimp culture may make women more vulnerable to violence. A pimped woman might have a quota to meet, and take chances because of this. When she does have a bad date, a pimp might well blame her for her own misfortunes. It is attitudes like these that may make women working the Richards-Seymour stroll less likely to report their bad dates to police. Given that pimps are virtually never around when their women are turning tricks, it is difficult to see how they offer much protection -- other than from themselves and other men like them.

### ***Bawdy-House Prosecutions Increase Susceptibility of Street Prostitutes to Violence***

One of the most widely voiced criticisms of law enforcement initiatives in Vancouver is the prosecution for bawdy house offences of local hotel operators who rent rooms on a short stay basis to prostitutes for the purpose of turning tricks. The criminalization of such hotels forces more women to turn tricks in cars, the place in which they find themselves in the greatest danger. Because it is likely to increase the turning of tricks in cars, this law enforcement also has the effect of increasing public nuisance as prostitutes and their customers seek places to park undisturbed while they go about their business.

## *Vigilante Solutions to Land Use Conflicts*

Figure 1 indicates that after 1975, prostitution has received more and more news coverage in the *Vancouver Sun*. From 1975 to 1978, the large increase in the number of articles over the previous ten year period was related mainly to the closure of the Penthouse Cabaret after the owners and several employees were charged with living on the avails of prostitution (Lowman, 1986) and the growing "street prostitution problem" that seemed to develop in its wake. In the early 1980s, various interest groups in Vancouver -- one of which was the Vancouver Police Department -- started to become more vocal about the problems attributed to street prostitution. But rather than locating the problem in the contradictory and self-defeating nature of prostitution law (in the 1970s the closing down of off-street prostitution venues played a key role in the expansion of the street trade) at a time when there was probably a large increase in the numbers of people involved in prostitution, local neighborhood groups and police attributed the expansion of street prostitution to a series of court decisions that are said to have emasculated the street prostitution law. It is thus hardly surprising that the enactment of the communicating law did not have the desired effect. Apart from an initial six month period when there was a noticeable decrease, the street trade quickly re-established (Lowman, 1989, p. 94-96, A-529).

In 1981 the Concerned Residents of the West End (CROWE) was the first organization formed in the post-war period for the purpose of ridding a neighborhood of street prostitution. In 1984 the "Shame the Johns" group began to picket prostitutes, and become involved in open confrontations on the street. Since prostitution was displaced from the West End in the summer of 1984, lobby groups have emerged in other neighborhoods (Mount Pleasant, Strathcona, Kensington-Cedar Cottage, Grandview-Woodlands) as police initiatives have sequentially displaced prostitution from one area to another. Various groups have started street patrols, with the obvious potential for conflicts between street-involved women and protesters, and with some neighborhood spokespersons advocating vigilante action in situations where police seem to have "lost control of the streets." Until recently, most of these organizations have simply wanted to see prostitution removed from their neighborhood without seeming to care where it might go. But as the Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution (1985) pointed out ten years ago, if one of the goals of social policy is to remove prostitution from the street then, as long as it remains legal, we need to identify a place for it to go.

However, politicians fall short of determining where and under what circumstances prostitution can occur for fear, it seems, that they will be seen as condoning prostitution. While it is unlikely that street prostitution will disappear no matter what legislative regime is put in place, it is likely to be difficult to control if no attempt is made to address problems faced by street-involved women. In the absence of more effective policies, divisions in communities like Strathcona become more deeply felt, with high levels of fear on both sides. In 1991 a "Strathcona Neighborhood Action Patrol" was established to discourage street prostitution and drug dealing, one of several street patrols to have been organized in different Vancouver neighborhoods since 1984. By using several different tactics, law enforcement authorities have driven prostitution from neighborhood to neighborhood. Through a series of patrol police task forces using a variety of techniques to harass prostitutes out of Mount Pleasant, the street trade has been moved into surrounding areas, and more and more into the Downtown Eastside and Strathcona, the lowest income area in the city. But where does it go now? Instead of driving it out of the neighborhood, attempts have been made to keep women off residential streets on the Downtown Eastside, restricting them to commercial areas. As a result, local businesses have started to complain. One recent incident is worth describing in some detail, because it highlights the sorts of problems that are occurring. The description is taken from an internal VPD report prepared by Staff Sergeant Bob Taylor (1993) entitled "Street Prostitution and Community Reaction."

In July 1993 photocopies of a hand-written poster were stapled to telegraph poles in the area of the 800 and 900 blocks Pender, Hastings and Cordova. The poster read as follows:

Warning: Street Prostitutes  
From: 700, 800, 900 Block East  
Pender, Hastings & Cordova Residents

Move out or face the consequences  
by July 15/93 and thereafter

Subsequent information revealed that the flyers had been posted by employees of a local Cordova Street business, and that a second company had hired a local private security company to patrol the local lanes with an eye to doing something about the local street prostitution trade. Just after they began this assignment, one of the three security company employees flagged down a police car, and expressed his reservations about the private policing of a public place. After a short conversation with police, the supervisor decided to cease operations.

Police contacted the owner of the company that had made up the flyer, and asked him for an account of events leading up to its posting. It transpired that not only did this person own a local business, but also a local apartment building on Hastings Street, in which he claimed the units were becoming more and more difficult to rent. Police explained that the wording of the poster had caused considerable alarm, and the building owner said they would not be re-posted. A police examination of the building indicated that space for lease was being advertised, and that the top floor was not occupied. Behind the building they found garbage, including two used condoms, indicating that it was a place sometimes used to turn tricks.

When police contacted the owner of the business that hired the private security company, they again heard complaints about problems being caused by the local prostitution trade. The owner of the company was approached by the person who posted the flyers "wanting to get something going," but had not wanted to become involved in this incident.

When police interviewed the owner of the third company (the person who had angrily confronted a local politician when he took one of the flyers down), he said, "I've had lots of meetings with the police and nothing changes. I don't think there's any point in us talking." He added, if the prostitutes didn't leave, somebody "would end up shooting one of them" and suggested that the reason they remained was because they were "paying the police to allow them to stay."

This particular incident bespeaks the deeply felt divisions in different communities about the street sex trade. But rather than the "Not in my back yard" rhetoric of most Vancouver neighborhood groups, there has been more of an attempt in Strathcona to mediate the problems faced by street-connected women in the process of trying to deal with nuisance problems. One such example was in 1988 when maps were posted around the neighborhood requesting women, when they were prostituting, to stay away from certain residential streets (Lowman, 1989, p. 174-177). By all accounts, the strategy was fairly successful.

When the flyers threatening prostitutes appeared in 1993, concerns were raised by members of the local Police Community Liaison Committee. Two local politicians, including the one who had been verbally accosted when he took one of the posters down, also contacted police expressing concerns that the flyers might incite attacks on local women.

The Downtown Eastside Police Community Liaison Committee comprises roughly fifty people, including local service providers, residents (mostly from local care facilities), and business people. The Committee meets monthly in order to share information about community problems, and ensure that police initiatives are targeted appropriately. As the numbers of persons prostituting increased, in an ever larger area from the Downtown Eastside along and around Hastings to Victoria Drive and beyond, more and more of the Committee meetings focused on prostitution. In order to prevent prostitution monopolizing the meetings, a special sub-committee on prostitution was formed in 1992 with an eye to developing a policy position. In the process of doing this, two things have become clear. First, if prostitution is going to continue to be legal, policy makers have to decide where the business should be conducted:

... prostitution must be addressed through a coordinated approach involving a review of the criminal code, which at the current time forces the police to determine what types of prostitution will be permitted. It also places police in the difficult position of having to justify not taking any action when to do so would probably not be in the public interest.

Current examples in Vancouver are escort services, body rub parlours, and street soliciting which does not generate public complaints. (Taylor, 1993, p. 10)

The main reaction to problems associated with street prostitution, be it the flyer incident or any of the other now numerous campaigns to rid various Vancouver neighborhoods of street prostitution, is to move the street trade on. As Taylor notes, this is an "enforcement action which merely moves the problem to another location for another day. This action may be appropriate for the short term, but all too often that is the only action that is taken and so nothing changes" (p.10).

More and more in the discourse about prostitution in Vancouver, a zone of tolerance looks like an attractive short term solution to the immediate problems faced by persons in areas of street prostitution, and this might help address some of the problems faced by street-connected women.

Second, there is more and more acknowledgment that criminal law and police initiatives can only play a small part in the much broader issues that are raised by street prostitution, and other "problem" populations. As another recent VPD report suggests:

The root causes of prostitution and drug abuse are obviously beyond the ability of one city or neighborhood to resolve. However, what appears to be occurring in the DES and Strathcona is that the number of people with problems has reached the critical mass where the mainstream residents are unable to support, guide, or have a positive effect on their less able neighbours. Examples of the numbers are: over 500 seriously mentally ill people (survey by the Heatley Street Clinic); 480 prostitutes (VPD survey); between 350 and 500 latino refugees (DEYAS survey); and the uncounted numbers of alcoholics and dysfunctional people living in poverty...

The responses necessary to reasonably address these types of social issues require a major coordinated initiative involving the three levels of government. Decisions made in isolation tend to have unintended results: ghettos of ex-mental patients and refugees for example. Law enforcement actions can have only a limited amount of success under these circumstances." (Police Administrative Report to City Council on prostitution and drug abuse on the Downtown Eastside and Strathcona, 18 Feb. 1992, pp. 6-7)

These arguments mark an important shift of emphasis in discourse on prostitution in Vancouver from the early 1980s, when concern about nuisance and "taking back the streets" overwhelmed all other issues. That is not to say that "nuisance" and the general effect of street prostitution on residential and commercial areas is no longer an issue -- it is (most recently in Mount Pleasant -- again). Indeed, one school of thought says that the communicating law has not dealt with the "street prostitution problem" because the sentences handed out are too "lax," an argument expounded by many police organizations, some municipal politicians and some neighborhood groups. But other schools of thought have gained ground in some of these same circles. Although there is still a concern about the effect of street prostitution on neighborhoods, more and more concern is being expressed about the conditions that lead to prostitution, exploitation of youths, exploitation of prostitutes, and violence in the sex trade. With the experience of nine years of communicating law enforcement to go by, it now appears that criminalization of the street trade not only fails to have the desired effect on levels of street prostitution, it might actually make other aspects of prostitution worse. At least, that would seem to be the case when it comes to violence.

### ***Prostitution as a Social Problem: The "Nuisance" Rhetoric of the 1980s***

When residents see a young woman working the street, they do not see a child who is the victim of terrible conditions and abuse, only a person they fear and who will cause great damage to the neighborhood. (Vancouver Police Administrative Report to City Council on prostitution and drug abuse on the Downtown Eastside and Strathcona, 18 Feb. 1992, p 6.)

We have seen how the number of articles mentioning prostitution in the *Vancouver Sun* increased appreciably after 1975, again after 1980, and then again after 1984. Figure 2 shows that a large increase in the number of articles mentioning violence occurred in 1985, and the number has generally increased since that time. This large increase reflects what appears to be a real increase in violence, and in particular, a large increase since 1984 in the number of murders of women identified as prostitutes (Figure 4).

Because one of the questions posed by Justice Canada in commissioning this report concerned the effect of the December 1985 enactment of the communicating law on levels of violence, a further comment about discourse on prostitution through the 1980s is in order here. When we examine news coverage of prostitution, we find important shifts in the kinds of themes that dominate the discourse.

Table 1 shows our classification of prostitution news themes in the *Vancouver Sun* for the period 1975-1973. Analysis of the ebb and flow of these news themes reveals that from 1981 to about 1985 most of the talk was about the nuisance being created by street prostitution, and how the soliciting law, paralyzed by jurisprudence, needed to be replaced with an enforceable law so that prostitution could be swept from the streets (Gordon and Lowman, 1993). A range of arguments were presented, including the recommendation of the Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution that Canadian law be overhauled in such a way that it identifies where prostitutes can ply their trade. The legislature ignored this recommendation, favouring instead the arguments of various municipal politicians, police organizations and neighborhood interest groups that a reworded street prostitution law would clear the streets. As to where it might be displaced to, no consideration was given. In the meantime, the Attorney General of British Columbia cleared Vancouver's West End of prostitution using a civil nuisance injunction -- only to relocate the problem in other areas of the city, including Mount Pleasant, where the next vociferous campaigns against the street trade occurred.

The communicating law was enacted on 20 December 1985. Within a year, neighborhood groups in Mount Pleasant were already protesting the failure of the new law, which they attributed to lenient sentences. Various police authorities and neighborhood groups called for stronger penalties. In order to deal with street prostitution in Mount Pleasant, a series of police Task Forces were convened each summer, and prostitutes harassed out of the area, resulting in further displacement of prostitution strolls (Lowman, 1989, p. 88). Certain neighborhood group spokespersons characterized street-connected women and anyone associated with them as "scumbags" and "sleazeballs." In one instance, a Mount Pleasant activist wrote an open letter to movie star Clint Eastwood "on behalf of the community of Mount Pleasant which has been invaded by street prostitutes and other criminals." Eastwood is well known for his film roles depicting police officers with a no-nonsense attitude to crime fighting. The letter exhorted Eastwood, then Mayor of Carmel, California, to run for Mayor in Vancouver. "Talent such as yours" the letter continued, "is in great demand. Due to conditions here in Mount Pleasant, your election would be certain. Thank you for considering this offer." The letter concluded, "PS Bring your gun."<sup>58</sup>

We can only speculate about how the discourse on prostitution of the early 1980s, dominated as it was by demands to rid neighborhoods of the street trade by criminalizing its practitioners, created a social milieu in which violence against prostitutes could flourish. Perhaps men with certain attitudes to women found it easier to justify such violence to themselves.

Whatever the case, the pattern of violence is reasonably clear: After 1985, the year in which the communicating law was enacted there is a large increase in British Columbia of murders of women known to prostitute. Also, there is a large increase in the number of offences reported to police by prostitutes, although whether this represents an increase in the rate of victimization is unclear.

Regardless of whether violence is increasing or not, bad date sheets indicate that offences against prostitutes are a common occurrence. Most of the available evidence suggests that the system of quasi-

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<sup>58</sup> S.A. Agg "Run here Clint -- and make our day." Letter published in the *Vancouver Sun*, 25 April 1986.

criminalization currently in effect contributes to the vulnerability of sex trade workers to criminal victimization.

## 14. Summary

This study of violence against persons who prostitute in British Columbia involved interviews with various key players (police, women who prostitute, social service providers), and description of information from several databases, including:

- a) *Vancouver Sun* and *Province* articles on prostitution for various periods throughout the twentieth century, and focusing on the period 1964-1993;
- b) Vancouver Police Department data on assaults of women known to prostitute, on the cause of death of women known to have been involved in prostitution, and on prosecutions of persons for living on the avails of prostitution and/or procuring;
- c) RCMP data on murder and serial sexual assault of women and youth identified as prostitutes;
- d) Bad Trick Sheets for the period 1985-1993;
- e) a victim survey conducted with street-involved women on the Downtown Eastside in 1993; and
- f) A questionnaire with women working the Richards-Seymour stroll and the Downtown Eastside conducted in 1994.

The report deals with information available as of December 1994. We summarize the empirical findings below.

### *Newspaper Reports of Violence Against Prostitutes*

The analysis of newspapers consists of several components looking at reports of violence against prostitutes for various periods from 1900 to 1994. The main analysis focuses on the period 1964 to 1993, and examines the number of articles on violence each year. Also, we use the articles to construct scenarios of murders from 1982 to 1994 and other violent crimes (mostly sexual assaults) from 1975 to 1993.

An examination of articles mentioning prostitution in the *Vancouver Sun* from 1964 to 1993 indicates that the first mention of violence against prostitutes occurred in 1975. From 1976 to 1983 approximately seven articles each year mentioned violence against sex trade workers. In 1984 there were fifteen, just over thirty in 1985, roughly the same again in 1986 and just over forty in 1987. From 1988 to 1993, the annual average number of articles mentioning violence was 57.

An examination of the number of articles mentioning violence against prostitutes as a proportion of the overall number of articles mentioning prostitution revealed a substantial increase through time in the *overall proportion* of articles mentioning violence. From 1964 to 1974, the newspapers did not mention violence against prostitutes; indeed, this is a period when not much was said about prostitution at all. From 1975-1983 there was a substantial increase in the overall number of articles mentioning prostitution. During this period when the number of articles mentioning prostitution increased considerably, roughly 14.7% of them mentioned violence. From 1984 to 1988, when there was another large increase in the overall number of articles mentioning prostitution, the proportion mentioning violence rose to 29%. And from 1989 to 1993 it rose again, to the point where exactly half the articles mentioned violence against sex trade workers. All the available evidence suggests that this surge in the news coverage of violence against street prostitutes was, at least partly, incident driven -- almost certainly there was an increase in the number of murders -- not just a "paper crime wave." There is reason to believe that since the mid 1980s a larger number of sexual assaults have been reported by prostitutes to police, but it is difficult to determine if this is because more assaults are occurring, a larger proportion are being reported, or both.



### ***Murders in the News, 1900-1994***

Prior to 1982, there were only two murders in British Columbia of sex trade workers mentioned in the newspapers, one in 1910, the other in 1959. This does not mean that there were no such murders -- there may have been, but they were not reported as such. From 1982 to 30 November 1994 fifty murders of persons identified as sex trade workers were reported in the *Sun* and/or *Province*, including 43 prostitutes (26 of whom were specifically identified as "street" prostitutes), 5 exotic dancers, and 2 escorts. At least three of these murders were probably not directly related to prostitution, but to the illicit drug trade. The fifty victims ranged in age from 15 to 41, the average being 25.7 years. All but two of them were females (the other two were transsexuals). The accused ranged in age from 24 to 56, with an average age of 34.6 years. Of the 18 accused, 16 were men.

Nine (53%) of the 17 Vancouver victims for whom this information was reported were picked up on the Downtown Eastside, and 5 (29%) in Mount Pleasant. None of the victims was identified as having been picked up in the Richards-Seymour area.

### ***Other Violent Crimes Against Prostitutes***

In addition to murders, a variety of other violent crimes against prostitutes were reported in the *Sun* and *Province*. 72% of these cases involved customers, and 24% involved pimps (pimp cases only appear in this analysis if an element of violence was reported). 86% of the cases occurred in Vancouver (which is not surprising since the information is extracted from two Vancouver newspapers). Two thirds of the cases involved sexual assaults, the majority of which involved customers (or men posing as customers). Generally, the reporting of sexual assaults and other cases was stimulated by the arrest of a suspect, or after evidence was disclosed at a preliminary hearing or trial. Victim reports to police of sexual assaults and other serious crimes were rarely reported unless a suspect was arrested almost immediately.

As was the case with murders, there is a substantial increase after 1985 in the reporting of incidents involving both customers and pimps. It is difficult to tell if the increase in reporting of sexual assaults reflects an increase in the number of incidents, or whether they are becoming more newsworthy. The increase in stories on pimps after 1988 reflects the change in VPD prostitution law enforcement policy, and the emphasis placed on pimp investigations after this time.

As was the case with murders, reports of sexual assaults appear to come disproportionately from certain street prostitution areas. If we examine the customer cases only, we find that 43% of the cases involved women working on the Downtown Eastside, 31% involved Mount Pleasant, and 24% the West End (all the latter cases occurred prior to the summer of 1984, when the West End stroll was displaced to other areas). Only 7% of the incidents involved women working the Richards-Seymour area.

In the period examined, 40 customers or persons posing as customers were convicted, six were found not guilty, and charges against two were stayed. We were able to ascertain the sentences of seven pimps convicted of living on the avails of prostitution and/or procuring, and 29 persons convicted of sexual assault. All but four of the persons convicted of sexual assault received two years or more, with the average being five years and six months. The average sentence for living on the avails was two years and three months.

### ***RCMP Information on Murders and Sexual Assaults***

We were provided with an inventory of information contained in the RCMP MACROS database, from which we selected variables to yield descriptions about: the date and type of offence; the characteristics of the victim and the offender; the means by which an offender contacted a victim; and the release or body recovery scene. Using the variable "victim lifestyle" to identify persons thought to have been involved in prostitution, we obtained information about 29 murders and 47 sexual assaults in British Columbia recorded in this database. The murders cover the period 1975 to 1993. All but two of the sexual assaults were from 1991 to 1993.

In the case of sexual assaults, all the victims were female, all the offenders were male. One murder victim was a male, one offender a female. The murder victims ranged in age from 17 to 41 years, with an average of 23, and the sexual assault victims from 15 to 37 (19% were youths), with an average age of 22.5. Men committing sexual assaults ranged in age from 17 to 45 (with an average age of 27.3 years), and murderers from 23 to 46, with an average of 27.3 years. 25% of known murderers, and 38.5% of sexual assault offenders were recorded as being married, or living in a common-law relationship.

As with other indicators of victimization of different types of sex trade workers, most of the cases finding their way into this database involved women who met their assailant on the street (92% of the murder victims for which this information is available, and 80% of the sexual assault victims). Six of the twelve murders for which this information is available occurred outside (in a vehicle, parking lot, remote area, park, etc.) and six inside (two in hotels and four in residences). Only six of the 45 assaults for which this information is available occurred in a hotel or residence; the other 39 occurred outside (19 of these in a vehicle).

### ***VPD Information on Deaths of Persons Known to Have Prostituted***

In British Columbia over the past two years or so, there has been a large increase in the number of illicit drug overdose deaths. An unknown but probably substantial proportion of the persons who died were also involved in the sex trade. Although we did not have the resources to examine Coroners' files on overdose deaths, some information is available from the VPD Vice Unit files on the causes of death of women known to have been involved in prostitution. Whenever the Vice Unit record keeper receives information that a person on file has died (for example after police have attended a death scene, and determined that a murder or an overdose death has occurred), a record is put on file. There were 180 such records, with the cause of death being recorded in 124 of these. The most striking feature of this information is that the main cause of death (51.3% of cases) was "drug overdose" (with another 8.5% being recorded as "possible overdose"). The second most common cause was murder (27.4%). Some of the overdose deaths may have been murders, the consequence of a "hot cap" (a much stronger dose sold, or otherwise administered, to a person deliberately in order to cause their demise). Police investigate overdose deaths when there is a very high concentration of drug revealed by an autopsy.

### ***Composite Murder Data***

From a comparison of newspaper reports, Vice Unit files, and RCMP data it would appear that at least 67 persons who had been involved in prostitution in British Columbia at one time or another were murdered from 1978 to 1994, including sixty from 1982 to 1994. Of the sixty-seven murders, fifty-five occurred in British Columbia (in addition to the fifty mentioned in the *Sun* and/or *Province*, there are apparently five others -- two in VPD data and perhaps three in RCMP data). It is *not* possible to ascertain if all the murders were directly related to prostitution. 1978 is the first date of any murder of a prostitute in British

Columbia that we have been able to discover, other than the ones in 1910 and 1959 mentioned in footnote 10, and the three unidentified murders in the RCMP MACROS database discussed on p. 26 above.

Preliminary analysis suggests that women known to have been involved in street prostitution are murdered at a rate somewhere in the region of sixty to one hundred and twenty times the rate at which non-prostitute women are murdered.

### ***VPD Information About Assaults on Prostitutes***

The study of Vice Unit files on assaults of prostitutes for 1992 and 1993 yielded 61 cases (involving 27 assaults, 22 sexual assaults, 10 robberies and nine other offences). In 58 of these there was one victim, and in the other three there were two. Fifty-nine of the cases involved female victims, and two involved transsexuals.

Of 43 complainants only 3 (7%) were youths. At the time of writing, charges had been laid in nine of 43 cases (a clearance rate of 21%). 96.5% of offenders were tricks or men posing as tricks.

As with other indicators of violence against prostitutes, the complaints originate disproportionately from different areas of street prostitution. 63% of the assault reports originated from the Downtown Eastside/Hastings strolls, 26% from Mount Pleasant North (17% from First Avenue and 9% from Fraser/Broadway), and only 3% from the Richards-Seymour area.

### ***Bad Date Sheets***

We examine Bad Date Sheets from three organizations: ASP (Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes) for 1985; POWER (Prostitutes and Other Women for Equal Rights) for the period 1986-1988; and DEYAS (Downtown Eastside Youth Activities Society) for the period 1988-1993. The ASP and POWER Bad Trick Sheets reported information from all the strolls in use at that time. The DEYAS Bad Date Sheets report information mainly from the Downtown Eastside (76.8% of reports) and some from Mount Pleasant (19.1% of reports).

95% of the ASP-POWER reports and 99.2% of the DEYAS reports were by females. 39.7% of the incidents reported to ASP/POWER and 33.4% of the incidents reported to DEYAS involved an assault, and 28.4% of the ASP/POWER reports and 24.6% of the DEYAS reports involved a sexual assault. The corresponding proportions of incidents involving a weapon in the two sets of information were 27% and 25% respectively. 37% of ASP/POWER reports and 35.5% of DEYAS reports involved robbery or an attempt by the offender to get their money back.

It has been possible to compare the number of incidents reported to the VPD and the reports in DEYAS Bad Date Sheets for the period January 1990 to July 1993. During this time, 738 incidents were reported on DEYAS Bad Date sheets. Given that more than one charge could have arisen from many of these incidents, one can speculate that if an accused had been identified in every case, somewhere between 1000 and 1400 charges might have been laid had all these incidents come to the attention of the police. During the three and a half year period that 997 incidents were reported in DEYAS Bad Date Sheets (representing some 1000-1400 possible charges) a total of 573 alleged offences were reported to police from all the Vancouver strolls (including Richards-Seymour, which accounted for about 43% of the weekly head count population during this period, but is not represented in the DEYAS Bad Date Sheets) and 192 charges were laid.

### ***The 1993 Survey of Violence on the Downtown Eastside/Strathcona***

We were given permission to include a review of the main findings of the survey of violence against street-involved women that was carried out in the Downtown Eastside and Strathcona in 1993 (Currie et. al. 1995).

Individual interviews were conducted with 85 women. Their average age was 26 years, and they ranged in age from 16 to 55. Almost 70% of the respondents were aboriginal. 27% were Caucasian. 71% were mothers (averaging three child births per person); less than 50% of the mothers knew where their children were. 16% of participants currently lived with their children. 88% of the participants lived in the Downtown Eastside/Strathcona community. 18% of the participants were homeless, and 47% lived in a local hotel. 18% of the participants grew up in Vancouver. Of those who migrated to Vancouver, 64% came from outside British Columbia. 91% of the women did not have their high school diploma; 40% had completed less than grade ten. A third of the participants said that other family members had worked in the sex trade, either currently or when they were growing up. 73% of the participants entered the sex trade prior to their 18th birthday. All of the participants received financial assistance, or some other kind of governmental support. When asked about their lifetime experiences, 99% of respondents reported that they had been the victims of some form of "violence" with 97% reporting multiple victimization. 62% had been sexually assaulted, 52% had been beaten by a boyfriend, and 48% had been beaten by a customer. Only 14% had been beaten by a "pimp." 73% had been "sexually abused" (no definition is provided) as children. All of the respondents had used alcohol and/or drugs at some point in their lives, and 94% had used them in the past six months (78% had used alcohol, 75% had used heroin, and 68% had used cocaine).

Thirty-one women (37%) had used police services in the past six months (half of them to report bad dates). Only 11% of the respondents said police are "OK" and "do a good job." The remaining 89% expressed negative feelings, although the large majority of these women thought that police service is inconsistent -- it depends on the officer with whom they had to deal. Nevertheless, 74% of them said that, in general, they do not trust the police.

98% of the women said that they had at least one bad date while they were working, and 90% of the women said that they had at least one bad date in the six months prior to the interview. The main ways respondents suggested bad dates could be reduced were: a) implement a buddy system amongst working women (67%); b) provide more street-level and mobile outreach services (62%); and c) more intervention with and education for youth entering the sex trade (62%). The main ways that respondents suggested that violence against street involved women could be reduced were: a) safe/affordable housing, food, money and day care (100%); b) individualized detox and more specialized alcohol/drug services (85%); c) more training/transitional programs for street-involved women (66%); and d) increase community education regarding the sex trade (56%).

### ***1994 Survey of Victimization of Women Who Prostitute***

Because we wanted to get some idea of differences of experiences of women working in different strolls, and differences between street and off-street experiences, we supplemented the Downtown Eastside Survey with a questionnaire that was distributed in the Richards-Seymour area and in the Downtown Eastside. We asked respondents about their experiences working both on and off the street.

The 65 participants' ages ranged from 16 to 43 years, with an average age of 24.1. 67% were twenty-five or younger. The average at which they turned their first trick was 16. 90.8% of the respondents were female.

While all the subjects had worked the street -- 29 (45%) had worked only on the street -- 36 subjects (55%) had some experience of working in off-street locations (ads, bars, massage parlours, escort services)

currently (15 persons; 23.2%) or in the past. While working the street, a much larger proportion of respondents reported having been robbed, sexually assaulted, beaten, strangled, and kidnapped, and were more likely to have reported being involved in an incident where a weapon was used, or being the victim of an attempted murder. Generally, it appears that women working the street go to greater lengths to protect themselves than they do when they work in off-street locations -- almost 40% of the subjects carried a weapon when they are working the street as compared to only 15% of the subjects when they are working elsewhere.

The sample included 31 people (including 30 women) who worked the Richards-Seymour area and 24 (including 21 women) who worked the Downtown Eastside. When it comes to estimating the number of bad dates in every hundred, there was only a small difference between the two groups of women (the average for Richards-Seymour was 12.5 per hundred, the average for Hastings was 15). However, the Richards-Seymour group is inflated by what appear to be two statistical anomalies (the two participants who estimated that 75 in every hundred date were bad; in contrast, 21 of 26 respondents estimated the number of bad dates to be 10 or less per hundred). If we remove these two anomalies, the average is 7 per hundred, a rate about half the Downtown Eastside equivalent.

74.2% of Richards-Seymour respondents rarely or never told anyone about bad dates as compared to 41.1% of Downtown Eastside participants. And fully 33.3% of the latter group *always* told someone about their victimization, as compared to only one person (3.2%) in the former. Also, a higher proportion of Downtown Eastside respondents had reported an incident to the police than had their Richards-Seymour counterparts.

When asked how to make the street safer, the most frequent answer was safe "houses/trick pads" i.e., a safe place to turn tricks. Other categories chosen by a majority of respondents included "be allowed to work in well lit area" (63.5% of the respondents), "law change" (60%) and "self owned escort" (50.8%). Police and community education were also given a relatively high priority, as were 24-hour drop-ins and outreach vans. Less than one in ten respondents mentioned a need for "more vice" or "more patrols."

The majority of respondents think that some police officers are concerned about their safety, but the implication of this answer is that they think some are not -- indeed, about 90% of the respondents think that at least some police officers are not concerned about their safety.

### ***VPD Procuring and Living on the Avails Prosecutions***

We extracted information about prosecutions for living on the avails and procuring from Vancouver Police Department Vice Intelligence Unit files on "pimps" for the period 1989-1993. Between 1981 and 1987 in Vancouver, police charged only twelve people with the pimp-related offences of procuring and living on the avails of prostitution. In 1988 there was something of a change in the Vice Unit's philosophy of prostitution law enforcement, as can be seen in the relative attention paid to various prostitution offences, with a marked change occurring in 1988. The Uniform Crime Reports indicate that from 1989 to 1993 sixty-four persons were charged with procuring offences in Vancouver, as compared to only five from 1984 to 1988. In the past five years there has been a much greater effort devoted to enforcing the law against the exploiters of prostitutes than there had been in the previous five years.

There is also a distinct change in the pattern of communicating law (s.213) enforcement. From 1986 to 1992 between 883 and 1466 communicating charges were laid, with an average of 1209 a year. In 1993 the number fell abruptly to 212, marking another shift in the VPD's philosophy of prostitution law enforcement. In light of a general sense of disillusionment with the results of communicating law prosecutions -- particularly because of the perception that the sentences handed out did not merit the labour being expended on them -- emphasis shifted to enforcing the much more labour intensive laws against procuring and living on the avails.

The VPD Vice Unit information system contained a total of 159 files on "pimps." Seventy-five of these files contained information about men known or suspected to be pimping women in Vancouver, but no charge had been laid. The remaining 84 files contained a "Report to Crown Counsel" indicating what charges police recommended that Crown proceed with. Information from the reports to Crown Counsel is presented in two forms: a) a descriptive statistical profile of offenders, victims, incidents and cases; and b) scenarios of cases constructed from witness statements taken by investigating officers (Appendix 4). We also provide a portrait of pimping investigations based on the VPD's Vice Unit manual, *A Guide to Pimping Investigations*.

Transcripts of interviews with two women who talk about their experiences working in escort services and working for player-pimps are contained in Appendix 6.

Our review of Vice Unit files shows that five people identified as pimps and associates (usually another woman working for the man) were charged in 1989, 25 in 1990, 16 in 1991, 15 in 1992, and 54 in 1993, although not all of these cases involved living on the avails and procuring offences (some of the charges were for assaults, weapons offences, threats, forcible confinement, and so on). From 1989-1993 there was a total of 84 cases in which 115 people were charged (96 males and 19 females). Seventy-three cases involved procuring and/or living on the avails charges. 34% of persons charged were accused of living on the avails of a youth, and 51% of the accused for whom we have this information (n=104) were charged with an offence relating to a youth. The 115 accused were charged with a total of 205 prostitution offences and 99 other offences.

The accused ranged in age from 14 to 46 years. The average age of males charged with living on the avails was 25.4 years. Of the 77 persons accused of living on the avails, 74 were males, and four were under the age of eighteen (3 males and one female). Police referred eleven youths to Crown to be charged with procuring offences. 88% of accused were Canadian citizens, and 4% were landed immigrants. 83% of the accused had a criminal record.

### ***Criminal Code Section 212(4): Enforcement Issues***

In Vancouver from 1 January 1988, when s.212(4) came into effect, up to July 1994, apparently there were only six charges for offering to purchase the sexual services of a youth. Police sources say that s.212(4) is very difficult to enforce. The general consensus is that to achieve a conviction, the youth who had been propositioned would have to testify against the accused. Youths would be reluctant to do this.

Since 1986, sexually procured youths have been targeted by police using s.213 (a summary offence), because they feel that a conviction for communicating is the only way they can get a handle on a youth. The result is that the victims of sexual procurement are criminalized while the persons procuring their services are not. Service providers have expressed considerable reservations about the message sent out to street-involved youth in the process. Often homeless, in flight from home conditions they describe as intolerable, they are further alienated from "straight" society by the process of criminalization.

Apart from the activities of certain service providers on the Downtown Eastside and a Vancouver Police Department representation to the Federal Justice Minister in March 1994, prior to 1994 there had been very little lobby group activity to change s.212(4) so that it can more easily be enforced.

### ***Justice Canada's Research Questions:***

**a) Has there been an increase of violence against prostitutes since the enactment of the communicating law in December 1985? Who are the perpetrators of this violence?**

The data at our disposal suggest that there has been an increase of violence against persons who prostitute since the enactment of the communicating law. However, it is sometimes difficult to ascertain if apparent increases in violence are a reflection of a greater incidence of violence, more violence being reported, or both. In the few years for which we have information, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of assaults, sexual assaults and robberies being reported to Vancouver police by women who had been victimized during a transaction with a trick, although the proportion of the overall number of offences reported is very small. We do not know whether the increase in reporting is a result of an increase in offences, an increase in the severity of offences, an increase in prostitution (i.e. the rate of violence remains the same but the number of reports goes up because there are more transactions), an increase in the proportion of offences reported, or some combination thereof.

When it comes to the murders identified in police files and newspaper stories, the pattern is striking: there were very few murders prior to 1985, and only two from 1900 to 1978. From 1980 to 1984 there was an average of less than one murder a year. From 1985 to 1994 the average number of murders increased to 4.6 (Figure 3). The communicating law was enacted in December 1985. Because our data prior to 1975 are drawn primarily from newspapers, the further one goes back in time, the more difficult it is to ascertain whether we are dealing with offence rates or reporting rates. Women involved in prostitution may have been murdered, but not identified as such. Given that both prostitution and murder are newsworthy topics, murders of prostitutes usually make news. The question is, are prostitute murder victims identified as such during periods of relatively little prostitution law enforcement? One such period is between 1976 and 1986 in Vancouver, during which time the soliciting law fell into disuse. During other periods, on-going law enforcement presumably gave police reasonably good intelligence, so that they would have known if murder victims were involved in prostitution. We wonder if this information was available to police whether it was passed on to journalists.

Similarly the number of reported cases involving customer assaults of prostitutes begins to increase in 1985 (Figure 4). Between 1976 and 1984 there were eleven cases reported in the *Vancouver Sun*, an average of just over one per year. From 1985 to 1993 the average rose to seven per year. Obviously these are very small numbers, and only include a small proportion of the cases actually taken to court, which in turn constitute only a small proportion of the total number of incidents, since most offences do not get reported at all.

While information from bad dates sheets confirms that a large number of offences never get reported to police, it is still not possible to ascertain from this source if violence is increasing. For one thing, the bad date sheets come from three different organizations, so there are some differences in the way information was collected and recorded. Also, the information we have for the period 1988-1993 was collected almost entirely in the Downtown Eastside, while the records for the earlier period were collected from all the Vancouver strolls in use at the time. Nevertheless, these data may suggest an increase in the amount of violence: in the later period, as many bad dates were reported from the Downtown Eastside as were reported from all three areas in the earlier time period. This suggests that either there has been an increase in violence, an increase in bad date reports facilitated by a more systematic collection of information in the later period, or both.

Much of the other evidence we have at our disposal also suggests that there has been an increase in violence, although there is likely an increase in the rate at which offences are reported too. Does the apparent increase in violence have anything to do with the enactment of the communicating law? We suggest that it does, and that it has to be understood in the context of the anti-prostitution rhetoric that developed in the early 1980s. Here, an analysis of general prostitution news themes in the *Vancouver Sun* is helpful.

From the mid 1970s through the mid 1980s there was a large increase in the number of articles mentioning prostitution in the *Vancouver Sun* (Figure 1). The surge in articles from 1976 through 1978 was prompted

by the December 1975 closure of the Penthouse Cabaret, a well known venue for men to meet prostitutes. The surge in articles from 1980 through 1986 mostly reflects growing talk about the nuisances attributed to street prostitution, and about attempts by local activists to oust the street trade from certain neighborhoods. Much of this rhetoric was exclusionary, with the proposed solution to the nuisance problem being largely punitive in nature. Public propriety and property values overwhelmed all other issues.

In December 1985, the communicating law was enacted. Ignoring the Fraser Committee recommendation that the contradictions of Canadian prostitution law needed to be resolved by wholesale law reform, the government of the time opted instead for piecemeal reform of the street prostitution law, thereby galvanizing the effective illegality of prostitution. Criminal law reform was calculated primarily to control nuisance, but no direction was given about where prostitutes should meet their customers, or where to go to consummate what is, after all, a legal transaction. That is now left to municipal regulations in conjunction with selective (non-)enforcement of various prostitution laws.

In Vancouver, for a period of about six months after the communicating law was enacted, street prostitution did abate. But in the absence of another method for meeting customers, the street trade quickly returned to pre-1986 levels. Since then, it has generally increased in Vancouver, and spread to several of the surrounding municipalities, despite many thousands of charges under the communicating law. Newspaper coverage of violence against prostitutes began to increase in 1985, and since 1988 has figured in an increasing proportion of stories mentioning prostitution (Figures 2 through 5).

The indirect relationship between the communicating legislation and vulnerability to violence of women in prostitution would appear to look something like this: Discourse on prostitution in the early 1980s was dominated by portrayals of the street prostitute as a nuisance, a threat to neighborhood values, and a general indication that "nobody, including the police, cares". The soliciting law had been rendered ineffective by the decisions of an insensitive judiciary, and street prostitution was said to be out of control as a result. The obvious way to deal with the situation was to revamp the law. In this discourse, there was little concern about the "problem" from the prostitute's point of view. The talk was largely exclusionary, a message to legislators and police to dispose of the nuisance forthwith. Nobody seemed too concerned about asking where it might be disposed to.

This discourse and the rhetoric for action contained in it form an important part of the ideological context in which male violence against women is played out. A woman working the street is particularly vulnerable to predatory misogynist violence, and all the more so in a milieu in which she runs the risk of criminal prosecution. This same risk makes women who work the street much more susceptible to violence when a conflict with a trick occurs. In a situation where he may use violence because he knows she is unlikely to report him to the police, and with the nuisance rhetoric, among other things, at hand to justify doing so, conflicts may quickly elevate to the point of physical resolution. Alienated from the protective service potential of the police, the prostitute is also an obvious mark for robbery in the often predatory world of illicit street economies. In lieu of the development of viable alternatives to street prostitution, especially at the lower priced end of the trade, these conditions appear to have perpetuated and amplified violence against women involved in prostitution. Attitudes to prostitution in Vancouver have generally set the tone around the province.



**b) In what ways, if any, has the relationship between police and prostitutes changed since the enactment of the communicating law?**

The introduction of the communicating law has, no doubt, served to accentuate antagonism between police and women working the street. Symbolically, the law makes it clear that street prostitution is "criminal" activity. Women who work the street should be treated accordingly. Although uniformed patrol police are not involved in communicating law enforcement -- that is left to the Vice Unit -- they do nevertheless interact frequently with the women on the street. The enactment of the communicating law gave a clear mandate to police to try to clear the streets of prostitution, hence the development of strategies like the Mount Pleasant task force (Lowman, 1989, p.88) that ran each summer from 1986 through to 1992 with an eye to ridding residential Mount Pleasant of street prostitution. Task force activities consisted mainly of harassment tactics -- the creation of a police presence that made it impossible for prostitutes to meet tricks. The communicating law played only a minor role in this initiative.

Nevertheless, the Vice Unit laid roughly 1200 communicating charges a year in Vancouver up to 1992.

In other instances, police have negotiated the movement of women out of certain areas (see e.g. Lowman, 1989, pp. 172-177 for a description of this process in Strathcona), but these negotiations are quite one-sided since the police position is always backed up by the possibility of force. In general, the relationship between police and women working the street has become more adversarial since the enactment of the communicating law.

**c) Have prostitutes been forced to work in more remote areas since the enactment of the communicating law? Do prostitutes work in greater isolation? Are some strolls more dangerous than others? How willing are prostitutes to report their victimization to the police?**

In that the communicating law has given police power over women working the street, it helps police to negotiate with prostitutes to some extent to control the location of prostitution strolls. In some cases it has helped police move women out of residential areas. Sometimes, as a result, they end up in poorly lit commercial or industrial areas, or they become more spread out. In both cases they may become more vulnerable to robbery and assault when they find themselves getting into cars unmonitored by spotters or other women on the street.

Our surveys of street-connected women suggest that street prostitution on the Downtown Eastside is more dangerous than its uptown equivalent in the player-pimp controlled Richards-Seymour area. There is general agreement that player-pimps dissuade their women from becoming heavily substance addicted (the pimp would rather take the money from the woman than see her put it in her arm). In contrast, most of the women who work on the Downtown Eastside have partners (some of whom no doubt encourage prostitution) but they do not work for professional pimps. Native women comprise a large part of this population. A large proportion of the women are habitual heroin users, and although the drugs of choice have changed over time (in the 1980s when heroin was not so available, a mixture of Talwin and Ritalin was the main staple), in the post World War II period this area has been known as a "hypes" stroll. Much of the money made through prostitution is spent on illicit drugs and alcohol. When a woman and/or her partner are hurting (i.e. in need of a fix) she is likely to take more risks and be less selective of tricks than she might be otherwise, and is thus more vulnerable to the predator in search of a victim. A large proportion of Vancouver's murder victims were picked up in one of the Downtown Eastside strolls. Many of them were native women.

Vancouver Police Department data for the period 1987 through to 1993 indicate that more and more incidents are being reported to the police. Information from bad date sheets suggest that still only a very small percentage of offences committed in the course of prostitution transactions are reported to the police.

**d) Has the communicating law had an effect on the incidence of pimping and the modus operandi of pimps? Have there been more arrests of pimps in recent years?**

It is difficult to ascertain if the communicating law has had an effect on pimp activities because we have no base line data from which to compare the state of affairs before and after the law change. Both before and after the law change, there was a mix of pimp-controlled and independent strolls in Vancouver, but we are unable to say much about changes in the modus operandi of pimps.

We would note, however, that the communicating law, because it consolidates the criminal approach to prostitution, may reinforce the player-pimp's allure in the world of street prostitution. The more a woman involved in prostitution is alienated from straight society by the criminal law, the more she feels the need for the services that the pimp purportedly offers.

One of the most important changes in prostitution law enforcement since the enactment of the communicating law has occurred over the past five, and particularly the past two years. From 1988 on, more and more attention has been devoted to investigating and prosecuting pimps. In Vancouver between 1981 and 1987, only 12 people were charged with procuring and/or living on the avails of prostitution. In 1988, 12 people were charged, and from 1989 to 1993, another 115 people were charged, an average of 23 people a year.

This enforcement profile reflects a general change of philosophy in the VPD Vice Unit. From 1986 to 1992 there was an average of 1209 communicating charges a year. In 1993 the number fell to 212. The decreasing emphasis on enforcement of 212 reflects growing police disenchantment with that law. Given that police efforts do not appear to have much impact on the street trade, why bother to spend so much time on it when that time could be spent more experiencing the prostitute only as a source of problems, she is also seen as a victim of circumstances, hence the a shift in law enforcement emphasis, some of it to customers, but most of it to pimps. In the process, a shift is likely to occur in police-prostitute relationships, and this may affect pimp-prostitute-relationships as well, as pimps become more mindful of the pressure being exerted on prostitutes to "sign" on their men.

This change in VPD prostitution law enforcement policy bespeaks a more general change in the Vancouver discourse on prostitution. In 1994 neighborhood activists were once again making news as they campaigned for more effective street prostitution control. The problem remains the same: police efforts seem only to displace prostitution from neighborhood to neighborhood. This doesn't solve the problems being experienced either by residents or the women involved in the street trade. But the discourse of neighborhood groups concerned about the effects of street prostitution tends to have changed from the one-sided and largely exclusionary politics of their counterparts in the 1980s. Now, much more concern is expressed about what happens to women in the sex trade, more and more concern is expressed about providing programs and resources for youths caught up in prostitution, and there is a general reluctance to call for more punitive measures for women who prostitute. Now, these punitive sentiments are reserved for tricks and pimps instead.

**e) Is alcohol and illicit-drug use/abuse a factor in the violence prostitutes experience?**

See item (c) above.

**f) What are the difficulties in discovering, investigating and prosecuting offenses involving violence against prostitutes?**

In general, the one of the greatest impediments to more effectively preventing violence against women involved in street prostitution is their adversarial relationship with police. The findings of two surveys of street-involved women clearly show that most women involved in prostitution have negative attitudes to some or most police. From the police perspective, investigations involving prostitute witnesses are fraught with difficulties, not the least of which arise from the way the police and courts perceive the credibility and reliability of prostitute witnesses.

**g) What social and legal strategies would police, service workers and prostitutes like to see introduced to combat violence against prostitutes?**

Although our research did not include surveys of police and social service personnel around the province, we can provide some anecdotal commentary on preferred strategies mentioned by our key informants in Vancouver. We also summarize here the findings of two surveys with street-involved women.

From the point of view of street-connected women from the Richards-Seymour area and the Downtown Eastside who participated in our survey, the most frequently mentioned way to avoid trick violence would be to have safe places to meet and, more importantly, turn tricks (70% of participants). Other strategies mentioned were better lighting (63%), different laws (60%), and self-owned escort agencies (50%).

The participants in the 1993 Downtown Eastside survey (Currie et. al. 1995) suggested that the best way to minimize violence against street-connected women would be to provide safe/affordable housing, food, money and daycare. Also, 85% of these women mentioned the need for individualized detox units and more specialized drug and alcohol services. On the Downtown Eastside and in other areas, solutions to the many problems faced by women involved in prostitution will likely require programs to deal with their substance use. 66% of the Downtown Eastside survey participants mentioned the need for more training and transitional programs for street-involved women, and 33% mentioned the need for safe-houses and drop-ins.

Most social service personnel, depending on their more general attitude to prostitution, would probably share these perceptions about how violence could be minimized, since they generally take a service oriented stance to client groups. Obviously, one way to reduce violence is to get people out of prostitution, but there is a wide range of opinion about what sort of programs and services would achieve this. Social service providers also point to the need to take a different approach to youth prostitution than the one that has prevailed in Vancouver over the past ten years. This has involved police targeting youths by charging them under the communicating law so that it is possible to get some kind of hold on them -- something police say that the *BC Family and Child Services Act* does not make sufficient provision for. Many social service agency providers have suggested that this criminalization of youth highlights the contradictions in prostitution law. On the one hand, youths get criminalized for their involvement in prostitution while, on the other, the men who (ab)use their services do so without fear of prosecution, because they are so rarely charged under the provisions of s.212(4) which makes it an offence to buy or offer to buy sexual services from a youth (there were only six such charges from January 1988, the year that law was enacted, to the end of 1993).

More generally, social service providers have suggested that the only way to reduce violence against prostitutes is for legislators to identify a place where prostitution *can* occur, rather than restricting their actions to the negative language of the criminal code. Only when we work out where prostitution can occur will we create the conditions in which violence can be reduced. The problem is that many people are reluctant to take this step because they do not want to be seen to condone prostitution. This is generally the line taken by the Vancouver Police Administration which, in its discussion of enforcement priorities and decision-making, generally avoids talking about where prostitution should be located. Strategies suggested by police thus usually involve arguing for more easily enforceable laws and more penalties.

There is generally widespread support for the VPD's recent emphasis on living on the avails and pimping investigations. Vice officers have suggested that one way of improving their efforts in this regard would be to fast-track these cases through court by treating them in the same way that domestic disputes are treated in Vancouver. They also suggest that police should not be left with the sole responsibility to deal with victim-witnesses in pimp cases. Rather, a multi-agency approach should be taken to the problems experienced by a victim-witness, before, during and after the court case has been completed.

Indeed, perhaps in this recommendation we find one strategy that nearly all of our key respondents would agree upon: whatever strategy is taken to deal with the various problems associated with prostitution, it would do best if it involved private institutions, all three levels of government, and the women involved in the sex trade.

## **15. Conclusion: Male Violence Against Women, Commercial Sex, and the Law**

Our purpose in this report has been to describe the extent and nature of violence against prostitutes. The task of drawing out the theoretical and political implications of the information we have collected still remains, and will be taken up elsewhere. For the moment, we will conclude by suggesting that while the source of violence against persons who prostitute must be understood in terms of sex and gender relations more generally, the current approach to prostitution in British Columbia helps to create the conditions in which violence can flourish.

At present we have a system of quasi-criminalization of prostitution. The sale of sex is left to a combination of "market forces," selective enforcement of the criminal code sections relating to prostitution, and a system of municipal laws that restricts the off-street trade to what one might loosely call "middle class" venues, such as escort services and body rubs. For most of the women at the low price end of the street trade (a large proportion of whom are also involved in injection drug use) there are no viable off-street venues. Women do meet tricks in the bars of the Downtown Eastside but, given present legislation, this business could not, by itself, sustain the volume of trade that occurs on the streets of the Downtown Eastside. There is some regulation of escort services and body rubs, but the street trade is unregulated (in the formal sense, that is -- the informal order of the street trade is negotiated among the players and with the police). Manager-exploitation of the sellers occurs in a variety of ways. From the point of view of many of the women who work for them, escort services are exploitive. The agency usually takes a substantial cut, and may levy all sorts of ancillary charges for drivers, advertising, and so on, including "fines." The escort may be doubly exploited, first by the agency, and then by a player-pimp, for whom she may also work on the high track. The latter are career pimps in the sense that they try to make a living from women they put "down" on the track, and who, along with the women, identify with a particular value system of pimping ("the game"). Because the risk of criminal prosecution forms one of the conditions in which the street trade operates, and thus helps pitch women against police, brutal forms of manager-exploitation of women in the sex trade are able to take root. And because the street pickup tends to be most anonymous style of meeting tricks, the woman who conducts business this way is the most susceptible to trick violence.

We describe two very general types of trick violence -- situational and predatory -- and regard both as part of a continuum of male violence against women. Indeed, several men convicted of assaulting women who prostitute had assaulted other women too. For these predatory and generally misogynist offenders, it seems any woman would have done. The choice of a "prostitute" as a victim was primarily opportunistic. Also, some offenders might find it easier to rationalize crimes against women who prostitute because of their "outlaw" status: they probably view prostitutes as offenders who choose to do what they do; they know the risks, this line of reasoning goes, so they deserve what they get. The same set of values presumably also underlies situational violence, the trick's way of resolving a conflict that arises during the transaction. When turning their tricks in cars, prostitutes may find themselves in isolated locations vulnerable to spontaneous trick violence if some kind of dispute occurs.

A system of quasi-criminalization helps to expose women who prostitute to more violence. This sometimes happens in a relatively direct sense. For example, prosecutions of hotels for bawdy house violations, because they increase the likelihood that tricks will be turned in cars, would likely expose women who prostitute to a greater risk of violence. By forcing women to work in sometimes poorly lit industrial areas, the concentration of policing efforts to force the street trade out of residential areas may have a similar effect, and this may be accentuated by bail and probation order area restrictions designed to achieve the same end. Also, women who prostitute may be exposed to violence in a less direct though probably more important sense: criminalization alienates persons who prostitute from the protective service potential of the police. Why would women who prostitute turn to a potential adversary for help? For a woman to report an assault or robbery that occurred while she was prostituting might entail admitting that she was committing an offence (communicating), or in violation of a bail or probation area restriction. Criminal law sanctions encourage an adversarial relationship between prostitutes and police. This is not to

say that police are never helpful, or that prostitutes never turn to police for help; some do. And we have evidence that some police are very helpful (a growing number of men are being convicted for assaulting prostitutes, and given fairly lengthy prison terms). But we also have evidence that some police are perceived as not helpful.

Criminalization encourages the convergence of prostitution with other black markets, particularly the trade in illicit drugs. Once the price of a habit-forming mind-altering substance is driven up by criminal prohibition, and when drug use and prostitution become intertwined, a drug like heroin can become as demanding a “pimp” as any man. And although many of the women who work in the lower-priced end of the street prostitution trade are not run by career pimps, their relationships with their partners may end up being no less exploitive.

There appears to be little political will to *prevent* violence against women who prostitute by creating safer situations for them to turn tricks. The reluctance is rooted in the idea that any attempt to “help prostitutes” would be tantamount to condoning prostitution (an odd argument, given that prostitution is legal, and in that sense already condoned). Prevention of violence is conceptualized mainly in terms of eradicating prostitution. This reasoning, together with various kinds of moral disapproval of prostitution and the sentiment that prostitutes bring upon themselves the violence they experience, form powerful impediments to developing safer conditions for the women who do end up in the trade, and particularly that part of it which is conducted on the street.

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## **Victimization in Off-Street Sex Industry Work**

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# Victimization in Off-Street Sex Industry Work

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Tamara O'Doherty<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

The victimization experienced by street-based sex workers has led many observers to argue that prostitution is inherently dangerous. However, street-based workers form the minority of sex workers in Canada. Can their experiences validly be generalized to other types of prostitution? The research presented in this article examines whether female off-street sex workers face the same degree of victimization as female street-based sex workers in Vancouver, British Columbia. The results of a victimization survey examining interpersonal violence and other forms of victimization indicate that although violence and exploitation do occur in the off-street industry, some women sell sex without experiencing violence.

## Keywords

off-street, prostitution, sex work, victimization, violence

Research reveals that up to 98% of women who work on the streets of Vancouver's poorest region, the Downtown East side, experience violence from clients, pimps, and other sex workers (Cler-Cunningham & Christensen, 2001; Currie, Laliberte, Bird, Rosa, & Sprung, 1995; Lowman & Fraser, 1996). The high levels of violence reported by street workers are not unique to Canada; researchers from other countries, including the United States, England, The Netherlands, and Sweden, have similarly concluded that street-based sex workers are exposed to inordinately high levels of violence (e.g., Brewis & Linstead, 2000; Kinnell, 2001; Kuo, 2002; Sanders, 2005; Working Group on the Legal Regulation of the Purchase of Sexual Services, 2004).

Although the victimization experienced by street-based sex workers around the world has led some researchers to argue that prostitution is inherently dangerous (e.g., Dworkin, 1993; Farley, 2004; Raphael & Shapiro, 2004; Raymond, 2003), others assert that prostitution is not

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always violent and that criminalization produces working conditions that facilitate violence against sex workers (e.g., Betteridge, 2005; Bindman & Doezema, 1997; Kempadoo & Doezeman, 1998; Lewis, Maticka-Tyndale, Shaver, & Gillies, 2005; Lowman, 2005; Network of Sex Work Projects, n.d.; Pivot Legal Society, 2003; Rekart, 2005).

The criminal law and its enforcement encourage violence against sex workers, contribute to the continued low income of sex workers who have few options but to work on the street because of their poverty and other issues such as addictions, and increase those sex workers' risk of being exposed to HIV. (Betteridge, 2005, p. 44)

Many people and organizations around the world have called for the decriminalization of the sex industry to ameliorate working conditions and improve safety for all sex workers.<sup>1</sup> Two Canadian legal organizations have recently undertaken in-depth analyses of the effects of prostitution laws on the health and safety of sex workers (Betteridge, 2005; Pivot Legal Society, 2003, 2006). Both concluded that decriminalization is necessary to reduce the violence experienced by sex workers.

In opposition to decriminalization, some prohibitionist feminists argue that the act of prostitution itself constitutes violence against women and should be abolished. To this end, they seek to criminalize the sale of sex on the grounds that "prostituted women" are victims and they support criminally prohibiting both procuring and the purchase of sexual services (Dworkin, 1993; Farley, 2004; Raymond, 2003). The claim that prostitution is violence against women is partly political in that prohibitionist feminists deny that women ever "consent" to prostitute and partly empirical in that they assert that all prostitutes are victims of violence. It is this latter claim that my research set out to investigate.

Given that researchers consistently report high violence rates in street-based prostitution, the act of selling sex via Vancouver's streets is clearly dangerous. However, are rates of violence in other parts of the industry the same?

In order to assess the validity of the feminist argument that prostitution is dangerous, we must establish the extent to which these hazards exist and the extent to which they are linked to the commoditization of sex. Only then can we assess whether or not they can be used to justify the position that prostitution should be eliminated and prostitutes rehabilitated for their own good. (Shaver, 1988, p. 84)

We do not have a comprehensive understanding of sex work in the off-street sex industry. Approximately, 80% of the sex industry in British Columbia occurs *off-street* (Benoit & Millar, 2001; Lowman, 2005, Pivot Legal Society, 2006). In his thoroughgoing critique of prohibition feminist research, Weitzer (2000) cautions that "when it comes to prostitution, the most serious blunder is that of equating all prostitution with street prostitution, ignoring entirely the indoor side of the market" (p. 4). Data from research conducted with street-based sex workers may not be generalizable across the industry. We need to determine whether women who work off-street experience the same degree of victimization as

street-based workers and whether in-call and out-call off-street workers experience the same risk of victimization. Only then will we be able to ascertain whether the experience of prostitution is always an experience of violence. If women can sell sex without experiencing violence, we need to know how and under what conditions they are able to work safely.

## **Existing Knowledge About Off-Street Sex Work and Victimization**

Although there are numerous academic studies of the sex industry, the off-street sector has only recently been the specific target of research. Historically, in Canada and elsewhere, prostitution research has focused on the experiences of street-based sex workers.<sup>2</sup> In recent years, researchers have begun to explore off-street sex work.<sup>3</sup> In Canada, Lowman and Fraser (1996) conducted a project in which street-based workers were asked about their experiences working in off-street venues of prostitution in Vancouver, British Columbia. Lowman and Fraser found that their respondents faced lower levels of violence, and less serious violence, while working in the off-street sector compared with work on the streets of Vancouver.

Benoit and Millar (2001) conducted a study of 200 British Columbia sex workers, examining unsafe working conditions in a variety of venues in Victoria and surrounding municipalities. They found that off-street workers involved with a third party (typically an agency) reported financial exploitation in the form of systems of fines (for such things as lateness), the requirement to pay between 40% and 60% of earnings to the agency, and the need to "tip" management, phone operators, and drivers. The participants reported varying levels of control over whether they would accept a client and over what type of service they would provide. People who worked indoors for an agency reported lower rates of control over the number of clients seen in a shift than did those who worked independently, whether via the street or in any other venue. Benoit and Millar did not report specific rates of violence but noted that "almost all those interviewed for this study said that they had been exposed to dangerous working conditions on at least one occasion" (p. 50). The participants reported feeling much safer when working in off-street venues. Benoit and Millar found that clients were the most likely source of violence against sex workers and that sex workers were not likely to report violence to the police; "virtually all those interviewed expressed alienation from the protective services of the police and expressed a reluctance to report violent incidences or turn to the police for help" (p. 54).

In 2006, Pivot Legal Society released a report echoing the findings from the Benoit and Millar (2001) project. Pivot included the experiences of both street-based and off-street sex workers from Vancouver in the analysis and highlighted the specific concerns of workers in different venues. Violence was the greatest concern for street-based workers. Pivot found that the fear of violence was one of the biggest reasons that people turned to agencies for work; they felt better protected working for an agency than when working alone. However, escorts reported that attending a client at an unknown location, as they often do,

was a safety issue. For this reason, some individuals chose to work in massage parlors. Massage parlor workers, however, were shown to have a lower degree of control over their clients and the services performed.

Bruckert, Parent, and Robitaille (2003) conducted interviews with 14 women working in in-call (massage or brothel-type environments) venues in Toronto and Montreal. Their respondents indicated that they had chosen in-call work due to its relative safety compared with out-call (escort) work, the privacy and anonymity it granted, and, for some respondents, the ability to provide services that did not involve sexual intercourse with clients. Like most other researchers, Bruckert et al. reported that their participants were generally misinformed about the laws relating to prostitution and that this misinformation contributes to their reluctance to use the services of the local police. Physical safety was one of the participants' main concerns, and the women reported being hypervigilant about condom use to protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases (STD). The participants reported using several personal safety strategies, such as ensuring they do not take alcohol or drugs while working, using their intuition, and relying on the presence of others to protect them.

Lewis, Maticka-Tyndale, Shaver & Schramm (2005 Lewis, Maticka-Tyndale, Shaver & Schramm) used a purposive sampling method to create a diverse sample of male and female sex workers from a variety of venues within the Canadian sex industry. Based on interviews with 61 participants, they found that off-street work was less risky than street-based work, that in-call work for an agency was safer than out-call work, and that the degree of independence of the sex worker influences her ability to mitigate risk. Lewis et al. conclude that "independent off-street workers had the freedom to develop their own descriptions and parameters for their work and to establish their own ways of dealing with safety and risk" (p. 154).

Lowman, Atchison, and Fraser (1997) completed an Internet-based study of 130 clients. Their research is unique in Canada as it focused on the perspectives of clients rather than sex providers. Clients reported perpetrating low rates of violence against sex workers. The self-reported rates included 3% robbery, 6% assault, 3% sexual assault, and 8% forcible confinement of a sex worker. Less than 11% of respondents stated that they had verbally abused sex workers. In comparing the sex buyers with those who were not purchasers of sexual services, Lowman et al. found that those who bought sex had more positive views of sex workers. They concluded that the majority of sex buyers do not commit violence against sex workers and that a minority of clients commits most of the violence.

The conclusions reached by Canadian researchers are echoed in the research emerging from other jurisdictions. For example, Sanders and Campbell (2007) published data on the off-street working situation for women in England. Sanders interviewed 55 women who worked in a variety of off-street venues in Birmingham, and Campbell surveyed 90 indoor workers from Sefton and Liverpool. The two projects reported very similar levels of violence in off-street sex work: 76% (Sanders) and 79% (Campbell) of the participants reported that they had never experienced violence.

Jeal and Salisbury (2007) compared the health needs of women working in massage parlors with those of street-based sex workers in Bristol, the United Kingdom. They found

strikingly different rates of drug use and violence between the two groups. Indoor workers were more likely to be educated, more likely to report stable social lives, and more likely to engage in preventive health care activities. Indeed, the researchers suggest that "it is not selling sex alone that is responsible for the very poor health seen in street sex workers but the combination of outcomes of risk-taking seen in all areas of their lives including sex work, drug dependency, health neglect and poor service use" (p. 880).

The aforementioned research indicates that sex workers face higher levels of violence in street-based sex work than in off-street sex work; however, where research is undertaken from a framework that views prostitution as violence against women, researchers report little difference between the sectors. For example, Farley (2004), after reviewing five research projects and her own work, concluded that "sexual violence and physical assault are the norm for women in all types of prostitution" (p. 1094). Similarly, Raphael and Shapiro (2004) explored the experiences of more than 200 sex workers in Chicago and concluded that "women indoors were frequent victims of violence, and in some instances, the type of violence was more serious and the levels higher than those experienced outdoors" (p. 136). Raphael and Shapiro, however, identify the bias of working within the "prostitution as violence" framework as a potential limitation that likely impacted both the construction of the survey instrument and the administration of the research (p. 132).

The emerging portrait of off-street sex industry work confirms that there is a diverse range of experiences for sex workers; this diversity of experience is one of the few generalizations that can be made. Off-street sex workers are not immune from exploitation or violence; however, the levels of victimization appear to vary greatly in different venues, by individual working conditions and by the political ideology of the researcher.<sup>4</sup>

## Surveying Victimization

This article reports the data produced from a victimization survey examining the experiences of women working in massage parlors, escort agencies, or independently out of their own homes in Vancouver, British Columbia. The project was concerned only with the exchange of sexual services for remuneration by consenting adults. I focus on *victimization* rather than the more restrictive term, *violence*, because *victimization* includes activities that are not traditionally brought into discussions of violence, such as theft, condom refusal, and disagreements over prices.

As with all of the aforementioned research projects related to victimization in sex industry work, the methodology does not feature random sampling techniques. Therefore, the data cannot be taken as representative of the off-street sex-worker population in Vancouver. The methodology was purposive to the extent that I selectively chose escort agencies, massage parlors, and independent escort directories that were known as "high-end" establishments or individuals. This represents an attempt to find women with very little, if any, experience working on the street and the fact that I wanted to focus on women who worked in the relatively more exclusive end of the sex industry. To create an appropriately worded, respectful, concise, and relevant instrument, I sought out four women who had worked in the sex industry in different venues to be members of a research design team.

Over the course of 7 months (December 2005-June 2006), I distributed paper copies of the survey and business cards with the website information to two establishments in Vancouver. Then, I emailed escorts who advertised their services on a few online escort directories and included the website address in the text of the email. All of the participants were invited to participate in interviews; 10 individuals ultimately shared their experiences this way. Three workers elected to participate solely by interview; the other seven interviewees participated in both components of the research. The interviews provided rich contextual information about sex industry work in Vancouver; however, this article focuses on the survey responses specifically addressing victimization.<sup>5</sup>

The data reflect only the particular experiences of the women involved in the project and the data set is small. Nevertheless, the 39 survey responses obtained are sufficient to provide insight into the world of this particular group of off-street sex workers. Their experiences do not match those of street-based sex workers.

## Ethical Considerations

In developing this project, I was keenly aware of the fact that I would be asking women to share information about ostensibly illegal activities.<sup>6</sup> Because of the potential harm to research participants that a violation of confidentiality could create, I did not place any limitations on the guarantee of confidentiality given to potential research participants. I did not ask participants to sign consent forms; instead, I read through a consent form with each interview participant and structured the online survey so that participants were required to navigate through the consent form before they could enter the survey. To help maintain confidentiality, I requested that each participant remain anonymous. In the case of those women with whom I had a prior relationship, I am the only person who knows their identities; I guaranteed them confidentiality as far as professional ethics allow, that is, strict confidentiality.<sup>7</sup> The anonymity built into the structure of the online survey proved to be key to the project's success.

## Off-street Sex Work in Vancouver, British Columbia

In the first section of the survey, respondents were asked to separate their experiences working in each of the three venues: massage parlors, escort agencies, and independent businesses. The venues were evenly represented with 64% ( $n = 25$ ) of respondents indicating that they had worked in a massage parlor, 67% ( $n = 26$ ) having worked as an escort, and 72% ( $n = 28$ ) having worked independently out of their own homes. Of the total 39 responses, 14 respondents (38%) had experience working in all three venues.

Respondents were asked to identify how concerned they were about safety while working in a specific venue. Massage parlors were perceived to be the safest environments. Whereas the majority of masseuses were *not at all* concerned about safety when working in a massage parlor, approximately half of both the escorts and independent workers responded that they were *very concerned* about safety. Every one of the escorts was at least *a little* concerned about safety. The results suggest that these perceptions accurately reflect

the women's experiences; escorts report experiencing more violence than individuals working in massage or independent venues.

### *Rates of Victimization*

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they experienced eight forms of victimization: uttering threats, threatening with a weapon, physical assault, sexual assault, kidnapping/confinement, theft, client refusal to pay for services, and client refusal to use condoms. In the case of the first six options, respondents were asked to classify the offender. The masseuses and the escorts were given five options: clients, police, significant others, bosses/managers, and coworkers. The independents were given three options: clients, police, and significant others.

Respondents were asked how many times they had experienced each of the types of victimization; the options were never, once, twice, 3 times, 4 times, or 5 times or more. In general, little victimization was reported. Indeed, the rates were so low that I collapsed the categories to report if respondents had *ever* experienced any form of victimization from each of the perpetrator groups, rather than its frequency.<sup>8</sup>

*Threats.* The definition given for "uttering threats" was "threatening to cause you physical harm if you don't do what is asked." Threatening was the most commonly experienced form of interpersonal violence against the sex workers who participated in this project: 13 of the 39 respondents had experienced this offense at least once (33%). For the masseuses, coworkers were the most frequent perpetrators of threats. Clients were the most frequent perpetrators for escorts. Independent sex workers were less likely to experience threatening, with only four respondents indicating that they had ever been threatened by a client.

*Threatening with a weapon.* I distinguished between "uttering threats" and "threatening with a weapon" to capture the more aggravated nature of the latter offense. Threatening with a weapon was less likely to occur than threatening: only 6 of the 39 respondents indicated that they had been threatened with a weapon (16%). Clients were the most likely source of weapons threats for escorts. However, significant others were the most likely perpetrators for masseuses. The two independent workers who reported that they had been threatened with a weapon had been victimized by both clients and police officers.

*Physical assault.* To define "physical assault," I provided the examples of being hit, kicked, or pushed down. Nine of the respondents reported that they had been physically assaulted at least once (24%). Clients were again the most likely perpetrators of such violence. Significant others and police officers were also identified as perpetrators of some of the violence. Escorts experienced twice as much physical assault than masseuses or independent workers, and they indicated that bosses can also be responsible for physical assault.

*Sexual assault.* Sexual assault (being physically forced to do something sexually that you were not prepared to do) was one of the least likely forms of violence that participants had experienced. Seven respondents (18%) indicated that they had been sexually assaulted. This was the one category for which the violence was evenly distributed across venues.

*Kidnapping.* I defined kidnapping as being physically restrained and not allowed to leave when you wanted to. Escorts were more than twice as likely to experience kidnapping than



either independents or masseuses; 21% of the escorts reported that a client had held them against their will at least once.

*Theft.* Theft, or having money, jewelry, or other items stolen from you, occurred at least once to 13 of the 39 respondents (33%). Masseuses were the most likely to experience theft, and their coworkers were the most likely perpetrators. Six of the 24 escorts reported that a client had stolen from them on at least one occasion (25%).

*Client refusal to wear a condom.* Respondents were asked whether they had ever had a client refuse to wear a condom. Thirteen respondents (33%) indicated that they had been in a situation where a client had refused to use a condom. However, the survey did not ask the participants about their action in response to a refusal. Many of the participants wrote in comments indicating that although they had faced the aforementioned situation, that did not necessarily mean that they had engaged in unsafe sexual acts with the client. Women indicated they would refuse to service clients who refused to wear condoms.

*Client refusal to pay predetermined amount.* Negotiating the specific monetary amount to be exchanged for the services proved to be one of the most frequent conflicts for all participants in this survey. Fourteen respondents indicated that they had experienced a conflict with a client over the price of the exchange. Again, the survey did not ask respondents to share their responses to clients in these situations. Some of the women indicated that they would offer different services if price was an issue for the client.

*Workers' grounds for refusing to provide services.* I posed an open-ended question asking respondents to identify their grounds for refusing to service a client. Nearly all of the participants provided detailed grounds including health concerns, such as visible STDs; drugs or alcohol use; insufficient funds; disrespectful behavior or attitude; no condom; safety or comfort concerns; aggression; hygiene concerns; or a discomfort with the act requested.

*Other forms of victimization.* There were two open-ended questions relating directly to experiences of victimization. First, respondents were asked if they had experienced any form of violence that was not included in my questions. Four women entered additional responses, such as "cattiness from other workers," the emotional impact of sex work, harassment by neighbors, and having clothing or items damaged by clients.

The second open-ended question relating to experiences of victimization asked women to describe briefly the most serious incident of violence that they experienced while working in the sex industry. One woman expressed her frustration with the assumption that the sex industry is rife with violence:

I have not experienced *any* incidences of violence, serious or otherwise, while working in the sex industry, and I believe that this question should be reworded to exclude the assumption that a sex-trade worker *must* have experienced violence at some point. (Participant No. 9)

Another woman explained that the only victimization to which she had ever been exposed was perpetrated by coworkers. Five women indicated that their most serious

incident was a verbal disagreement or a nonserious incident. Two of the five women reported that men had tried to have sex without condoms. The other three women dismissed their most serious incidents as "not serious" and explained that clients had given them a hickey, pushed them down, or "got a bit rough."

One client, who seemed particularly "excited," pushed me up into a corner. I'm not sure if he was being "violent" or just "enthusiastic." In any event, it made me a bit uncomfortable so I just pushed him away. End of story. (Participant No. 16)

Nine women (29%) described other incidents of violence, which ranged from being threatened to being held against their will, to being physically and sexually assaulted. Eleven respondents did not answer this question. One woman wrote, "I can't . . . I mostly try not to think about it" (Participant No. 1).

Clients were the main perpetrators of the victimization described in this question; they were mentioned in 12 of the 16 descriptions of victimization. Three women reported that their worst experiences were at the hands of coworkers, and one woman said that her pimp was the source of the most serious industry-related violence she had experienced. All of the altercations described between workers and clients in this question were related either to condom use or rates for services provided.

*Financial exploitation.* The respondents reported that women often face high levels of financial exploitation in certain segments of the off-street sex industry. They attribute much of the exploitation to the quasicriminal status of prostitution in Canada, which enables agencies, landlords, and advertisers to operate in a mostly unregulated way. Respondents allege that landlords and advertisers charge high rates for adult entertainment ads because escort agencies are reluctant to draw attention to themselves by complaining to the authorities. The cost of paying for ads is passed on to workers who are often required to pay the agency up to 60% of their hourly earnings.

*Perceptions of dangerousness.* To conclude this section of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate in which off-street venue they felt that women risked the most violence. Seventy-two percent of the respondents ( $n = 32$ ) indicated that they felt women who worked independently faced the most violence; 19% perceived escorting to be the most dangerous venue. Concern about women working alone was the most frequent reason given to explain why respondents felt that independents were the most likely to face violence. One woman offered the following insight:

Well, I think when you do out calls to private homes, as an independent or working for an escort agency, you are very vulnerable to any and all forms of violence. You don't know what is waiting for you there, and you cannot control the environment or situation as well as you can in your own place despite having someone [the Agency] knowing where you are going and a driver waiting outside. . . . I think it's not a case so much of whether you are independent or not, it's where you go to see a client. (Participant No. 8)

The self-reported victimization data from the survey do not support the perception of independent work as the most risky form of off-street sex work; among survey respondents, independent workers reported the least victimization.

### *Reporting Practices*

This section of the survey was designed to find out how often women reported incidents of violence to a third party, to whom they reported it, and whether they were satisfied with the response to their report. Only 18% of the participants reported incidents of violence to a third party. The respondents who indicated that they had not reported incidents of violence explained variously that they believed it was not serious enough, they did not believe anyone cared, they were afraid to lose their jobs, or that they were embarrassed.

Of the seven women who reported incidents of violence, four had reported one or two incidents, whereas the other three indicated that they had reported violence more than twice. Friends were the most likely people to whom respondents would turn. Three women, one from each type of venue, indicated that they had reported violence to the police.

The respondents who reported incidents to their managers were generally satisfied with the managers' responses. There was much less satisfaction with police responses. Two of the three women were very unsatisfied, whereas one of the respondents had mixed responses to her reports to police. On one occasion, she was completely unsatisfied with the response from police. However, the second time she reported violence, she received full support from the officers involved. She was much more satisfied with the response from police when she was working off-street as an escort than when she worked from the street.

Women who had never experienced violence said that they would turn to the police without hesitation. There appears to be a significant difference between hypothetically contacting police in the event of victimization and the consequences of self-identification as a sex provider if a woman does actually contact the police.

### *Violence Prevention*

Respondents were asked a combination of open and precoded questions in this section of the survey. First, I posed a broad, open-ended question asking participants what strategies they used to ensure their own safety while working; 74% of respondents reported using specific safety strategies. The most frequent safety strategies were (a) screening clients, (b) using intuition, and (c) planning ahead (ensuring that an emergency plan was in place with an agency or a friend). In addition to these, I identified several other strategies, including using public locations, employing specific security measures, direct communication, references, advertising and rates, control and professionalism, and interpersonal communication skills.

*Screening.* Screening is a conscious and proactive strategy employed prior to meeting clients. It is a strategy employed by some agencies and many independent workers.

I generally screen my clients quite well. I do not see anybody without having a verifiable name, address and phone number prior to meeting. The majority of my clients are business travelers staying in upscale hotels, which means they would be easy to track down if anything did happen [a big deterrent]. If I have any sort of odd feeling prior to an appointment, I contact a fellow escort and tell her exactly where I'm going and when I will "check in" with her for safety. (Participant No. 3)

Screening techniques include verifying names and addresses of clients. Participants reported using online directories to confirm the contact information for a potential client or verifying the client's employment. One woman reported asking for identification on meeting new clients. Several women mentioned that they did not accept calls from unlisted phone numbers.

*Intuition.* Use of intuition, the ability to be able to assess clients throughout the date, was identified by nine survey respondents as a key violence prevention strategy.

I am very careful to note the tone and attitude of anyone who emails or calls me. If something bothers me, even if I don't know exactly what it is, I will not book with them. (Participant No. 6)

Four of the interviewees spoke directly about intuition, or "trusting your gut." In two situations, women denied employing violence prevention strategies. However, they asserted that although they used their intuition to screen out unwanted dates, they did not think of this as a prevention of violence strategy until I identified it as such. Interview participants reported using intuition to continuously monitor the situation to avoid potentially dangerous encounters.

*Planning ahead.* Some women meet clients at upscale hotels because they can easily confirm the client's hotel reservation. Clients from upscale hotels would be "easy to track down" should a problem arise. Many of the women prefer public meetings with clients, meeting them in bars, coffee shops, or other public venues.

Participants often reported structuring their work to avoid isolation. For some, this includes working in a place, such as an apartment, where an usher or security guard is employed. Other women choose to work in brothels or massage parlors. Drivers are often employed by escorts to serve multiple functions, including transport and security.

My fiancé is my driver, and he waits outside for me at all my jobs. I do outcalls to either a client's home or hotel room, and my fiancé drives me there, waits outside, and has the client's information written down with him. I have a cell phone, and so does he. When I am done an appointment, the arrangement is for me to call him within 15 minutes of the time the appointment is supposed to be done. I'll then tell him I'm done and leaving the client. Usually I phone him within 5 minutes, but we agree on 15, and if he hasn't heard from me after 15 minutes, his instructions are to phone the police. Also, we have a code word that sounds perfectly normal, that

I could say in front of a client, and if I ever say that word on the cell phone to him, he will call the police, and attempt to come get me. We follow this procedure every single time, even with regulars. (Participant No. 4)

This system of “checking in” by phone is the standard practice of many escort agencies. Independent women reported using similar systems of ensuring that a friend knows how long they will be and whom to call in the event that they do not contact the friend in the prearranged time.

### *Demographics*<sup>9</sup>

This self-report victimization survey indicates that it is important to ensure that different groups of sex workers, not just street-based sex workers, are included in research prior to engaging in law reform as these results show a very different picture of victimization than the one usually associated with prostitution. The average age of the respondents in this project was 30 years. The youngest respondent was 20 and the oldest was 45. Only two respondents started working prior to the age of 18. The majority of the respondents (57%,  $n = 17$ ) started between the ages of 19 and 24, whereas 17% ( $n = 5$ ) started working in the industry at age 30 or older. In terms of the type of venue in which they first worked, 42% ( $n = 13$ ) of the respondents began in massage parlors; only five respondents indicated that they started on the street (21%).

This self-selected sample differs drastically from the reported self-selected samples in other Canadian studies—most of which focus on the street sex worker population—in terms of the respondents’ income, race, and education. Over half the respondents reported earning more than Can\$5,000 per month and more than Can\$60,000 annually. Those working as independents were most likely to earn more than Can\$10,000 monthly (21% of independent workers).

Of the 23 women who reported their “race,” the majority were White (79%). The majority of the respondents were Canadian (72%), most of whom were born in British Columbia. Ten percent of the sample identified as South East Asian. Aboriginal women were unrepresented in this study.

Regarding levels of education, this sample of sex workers had much higher levels of educational attainment than that reported by other study samples: 90% ( $n = 31$ ) indicated that they had some postsecondary training, whereas 36% had completed either a bachelor’s degree ( $n = 4$ ), master’s degree ( $n = 2$ ), or PhD ( $n = 5$ ).

In sum, my self-selected sample comprised mainly well-educated, financially comfortable, local, White women near the age of 30. They appear to be distinguishable from the general population of women only by their higher-than-average earnings. These are some of the women who work in the high-end, off-street sex work industry in Greater Vancouver.

### **Discussion**

In contrast to street-based sex workers (Cler-Cunningham & Christensen, 2001; Currie et al., 1995; Lowman & Fraser, 1996), the majority (63%) of the women who participated

**Table 1.** Comparison by Venue

Type of victimization Venue	O'Doherty (2007), N = 39			Cler-Cunningham and Christensen (2001), N = 183
	Massage	Escort	Independent	Street
Threats	20%	29%	15%	71%
Threats with weapons	13%	17%	8%	45%
Physical assault	17%	25%	15%	51%
Sexual assault	13%	12%	12%	46%
Kidnapping/confinement	8%	21%	8%	41%
Refuse condom	28%	37%	26%	83%

in this project had not experienced *any* victimization while working in the sex industry, a finding that contradicts the prohibitionist assertion that violence is inherent to prostitution. If they were victimized, my respondents were most likely to experience theft by coworkers or clients refusing to use condoms or pay for services. These findings do not suggest that no violence occurs in the off-street sector of the industry; however, the findings challenge the view that violence is a necessary part of sex work. Although certain sectors of street-based sex industry work are dangerous, other prostitution venues are very different.

Table 1 compares the victimization rates produced in this study with the Cler-Cunningham and Christensen (2001) study on street-based prostitution. The Cler-Cunningham and Christensen report used very similar language for the types of victimization, so it is easily comparable. The rates are reported in percentages to make the comparisons more directly. The table demonstrates that the participants in my study reported one half to a one third of the victimization than the participants in the Cler-Cunningham and Christensen sample reported.

Jeal and Salisbury's (2007) comparison between women working in massage parlors and street-based sex workers in the United Kingdom yielded similar results to my research. Specifically, they found that only 4/71 massage workers experienced violence, whereas 15/71 street-based sex workers had experienced violence.

Victimization occurs at different rates for off-street workers and street-based sex workers. Within off-street sex work, the type of venue, structure of work, a sex worker's degree of independence, and control over the services she provides all influence her susceptibility to violence. However, these data demonstrate that it is entirely possible for women to work in the sex industry without ever experiencing violence.

It is difficult to generalize about violence in the sex industry because of methodological differences between projects, such as different sampling methods, differing definitions or language used to describe forms of violence, and differences related to geographic regions. Furthermore, methodologies are often grounded in particular theoretical frameworks; the political ideology of the researcher will influence the language of the study, the access point for sampling, and the interpretation of data.<sup>10</sup> I have tried to mitigate bias by using empirically sound methods and by ensuring that I do not overgeneralize the results of this study. Nevertheless, I have identified two clear trends that are emerging in recent related

research. First, the overall rates of violence in studies involving off-street workers are remarkably consistent in certain respects. Specifically, 67% (O'Doherty), 60% (Lowman & Fraser), 76% (Sanders), 79% (Campbell), and 79% (Jeal & Salisbury) of the respective participants had *never* experienced *violence* while working in off-street sex work. The similarity in the statistics is striking considering the differences in sampling practices, geographic differences, and definitional differences. These five studies question the assertion that selling sex necessarily involves violence.

Second, my finding that independent sex workers may face the least amount of violence and escorts may face the most replicates the findings of Benoit and Millar (2001), Lewis et al. (2005b), and Kuo (2002). The assertion that women must work for an agency to stay safe in sex work is not supported by the relatively limited data at our disposal. Women may be safer when they are able to structure their working environments and deal directly with potential clients.

### *The Negative Impact of Canada's Prostitution Laws*

Researchers and sex workers have been publishing data on the impact of Canada's prostitution laws on the safety and health of sex workers for decades.<sup>11</sup> One conclusion of this work is that sex workers must contravene the Criminal Code to stay safe while working. For example, the provisions relating to "bawdy houses" criminalize one of the safest venues for sex workers (Lewis et al., 2005b; Lowman, 2005). Lewis et al. (2005b) argue that specific strategies that serve to increase safety for sex workers, such as the use of drivers or working with a partner, are prohibited by the "living on the avails" law. Furthermore, many reports have concluded that criminalizing "communication" per § 213 of the Criminal Code (Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General, 1990) has contributed to violence against street sex workers as the workers cannot openly negotiate the terms of an exchange with potential clients prior to entering vehicles (Betteridge, 2005; Lewis et al., 2005b; Lowman, 2005; Pivot Legal Society, 2003).

The criminalization of prostitution has contributed to exploitative working conditions in the off-street sex industry, too. Workers are unclear about which specific activities are illegal and which are allowed (Benoit & Millar, 2001; Pivot Legal Society, 2006). Many workers believe that they will face criminal consequences for their work in the sex industry, so they remain silent in the event violence does occur. Similarly, workers accept unsafe working conditions due to their lack of knowledge about their legal rights (Bruckert et al., 2003).

Disagreements between sex workers and clients arise due to miscommunication about prices and services. This finding is corroborated by Pivot Legal Society (2006), which found that prices and services to be performed (including the use of condoms) were the main sources of disagreements between sex workers and clients across venues (street based, escort, massage parlor, and independent). Respondents report that some agencies mislead clients about the activities that a sex worker is willing to provide. Similarly, clients may be led to believe that the initial agency fee includes sexual activities when it is only an "introduction" fee. In these situations, sex workers are left in the vulnerable position of having to correct the misinformation about the prices and services offered. Sex workers

may be forced to walk a precarious line urging the client to purchase additional services and agree to "tip" the sex worker in addition to paying the agency fee. If women and agencies could communicate the details of a transaction prior to the meeting, both the sex worker and the client would have a clear understanding of the services to be provided and the rate to be paid. In this regard, the safety of sex workers is directly compromised by criminal laws that prevent women from openly communicating their boundaries and expectations prior to an exchange of sex for money.

### **Limitations**

The purpose of this study was to examine victimization of women who work in the off-street sex industry. The sample is self-selected and purposive; it was specifically geared to high-end workers and included 39 survey respondents and 10 interview participants. There will undoubtedly be an element of volunteer bias as those who feel strongly about such things as decriminalization or dispelling myths would have been more likely to participate.

The survey was self-administered and the data are self-reported. Self-report data rely on individual memories and can be inaccurate. The primary limitation of this project is that I use a nonprobabilistic sampling method; we have no idea how representative the data are of the general population of sex workers in Canada. However, for the purpose of showing that sex work is not a homogenous experience, these limitations do not detract from the main findings of the survey.

### **Conclusions**

In this research, I sought to find out how much violence and other kinds of victimization occur in various kinds of off-street sex work. The findings indicate that although violence does occur in the off-street sector, it is possible for women to work safely in the sex industry. If women are able to sell sex off-street without experiencing violence, then we must look to conditions unique to the street to determine why street-based sex workers face such high levels of violence. Perhaps, as Lowman (2005b) suggests in his discussion of the "discourse of disposal," society's treatment of street-based sex workers as disposable nuisances has contributed to the high rates of violence.

The act of selling sex does not in itself cause sex workers to experience violence, in which case public policy should not be based on the assumption that prostitution is inherently violent. Generalizations about victimization in the industry misrepresent the diversity of the industry and only serve to mask the seriousness of individual experiences of violence. Violence against women, whether in the context of a commercial sex exchange or any other context, is a serious issue that warrants more careful attention than blanket assertions allow. This article has provided further evidence of the diversity of experiences for female sex workers; ultimately, much more research is required (particularly research that includes male and transgendered workers) to ensure that all workers have an opportunity to voice their experiences prior to public policy reform.



**Appendix. Victimization Rates by Venue**

	Masseuses (n = 23)	Escorts (n = 24)	Independents (n = 26)
<b>Threats</b>			
Clients	5 (20)	7 (29)	4 (15)
Police officers	4 (16)	1 (4)	3 (12)
Significant others	4 (17)	2 (8)	1 (4)
Bosses	2 (8)	4 (17)	NA
Coworkers	7 (28)	3 (12)	NA
<b>Threats with weapons</b>			
Clients	1 (4)	4 (17)	2 (8)
Police officers	0	1 (4)	2 (8)
Significant others	3 (13)	1 (4)	0
Bosses	0	2 (8)	NA
Coworkers	1 (4)	2 (8)	NA
<b>Physical assault</b>			
Clients	4 (17)	6 (25)	3 (12)
Police officers	1 (4)	2 (8)	4 (15)
Significant others	3 (13)	4 (16)	1 (4)
Bosses	0	(12)	NA
Coworkers	1 (4)	0	NA
<b>Sexual assault</b>			
Clients	2 (9)	3 (12)	3 (12)
Police officers	1 (4)	1 (4)	2 (8)
Significant others	3 (13)	1 (4)	0
Bosses	1 (4)	2 (8)	NA
Coworkers	0	1 (4)	NA
<b>Kidnapping</b>			
Clients	1 (4)	5 (21)	2 (8)
Police officers	2 (8)	2 (8)	2 (8)
Significant others	2 (8)	3 (12)	1 (4)
Bosses	0	3 (12)	NA
Coworkers	1 (4)	0	NA
<b>Theft</b>			
Clients	8 (35)	6 (25)	3 (12)
Police officers	3 (13)	1 (4)	3 (12)
Significant others	3 (13)	2 (8)	1 (4)
Bosses	1 (4)	1 (4)	NA
Coworkers	13 (54)	2 (8)	NA
<b>Refusal to wear condom</b>			
Client	7 (28)	9 (37)	7 (26)
<b>Refusal to pay predetermined amount</b>			
Client	6 (24)	8 (33)	6 (22)

Note: NA = not applicable for independent respondents. Percentages are reported in brackets. Some respondents experienced victimization while working in different venues, so the percentages do not add up to 100%.

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## Notes

1. International organizations that have indicated support for decriminalization include the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Labor Organization (ILO), Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Anti-Slavery International, and the Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW).
2. See Cler-Cunningham and Christensen (2001), Currie, Laliberte, Bird, Rosa, and Sprung (1995), and Lowman and Fraser (1996).
3. See Albert (2001), Boyle et al. (1997), Brock (1998), Chapkis (2000), Harcourt, Egger, and Donovan (2005), Jeffrey and MacDonald (2006), Kuo (2002), Lever and Dolnick (2000), Potter, Martin, and Romans (1999), Sanders (2005), Weitzer (2000), Whittaker and Hart (1996), Working Group on the Legal Regulation of the Purchase of Sexual Services (2004).
4. For more discussion on the impact of ideology on prostitution-related research, see Weitzer (2005).
5. The original thesis reports both the survey results and the interview results. See O'Doherty (2007) for more information.
6. The project received approval from Simon Fraser University's Research Ethics Board in July of 2005.
7. I am adhering to the ethics code of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences available at [http://www.acjs.org/pubs/167\\_671\\_2922.cfm](http://www.acjs.org/pubs/167_671_2922.cfm)
8. See the appendix for a detailed table of statistical data.
9. I have chosen to place the demographics section at the end of the findings because sex industry workers are too often discussed as a set of demographic characteristics. It is my intention to highlight their experiences in this article.
10. See the 2005 debate between Weitzer, Farley, and Raphael and Shapiro (Farley, 2005; Raphael & Shapiro, 2005; Weitzer, 2005).
11. Federal government-funded reports include *Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women* (Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, 1970); *Pornography and Prostitution in Canada* (Fraser Committee, 1985); *The Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General* (Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General, 1990); *Dealing with prostitution in Canada: A consultation paper*

(Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group on Prostitution, 1995); and *Report 6: The Challenge of Change: A Study of Canada's Criminal Prostitution Laws* (Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, 2006).

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## Bios

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the week of July 12, 1993, a number of posters advising street prostitutes not to work in the area of the 800 block East Hastings were posted on poles in the immediate vicinity.

The posters caused a reaction in the community which seemed out of all proportion to the facts - evidence of the fear for the safety of the sex trade workers on the part of the social agencies and societies. The Police Community Liaison Committee (PCLC) members were especially worried by the events, but were relieved when the police advised them that the matter would be taken seriously and investigated.

An Ad Hoc Committee on Sex Trade issues has recently been formed by three female politicians representing the three levels of government. The PCLC recommended that the writer prepare a letter from the Committee to the Ad Hoc Committee supporting constructive and progressive changes in the manner in which governments deal with prostitution.

The investigation revealed that a local business person had prepared a plan to reduce the level of street prostitution around the businesses in the 700 and 800 blocks East Hastings. The first phase of the plan was the posters, and the second phase was to be the patrolling of the lanes by a private security company - the intent was that the presence of the security personnel would interfere with street soliciting. There was a suggestion that a number of people carrying placards were intended to accompany the security personnel but this never materialized. The security company have withdrawn from this activity after talking to the police, as they were uncomfortable with their role in patrolling in a public place.

The person responsible for the posters agreed that they were worded inappropriately and that he will not be putting up any more, especially as the plan seemed to have fallen apart.

The investigation confirmed the considerable damage caused to local businesses by street prostitution - the soliciting and the debris - and high levels of frustration.

The numbers of sex trade workers appears to have increased considerably over the past two years, and the strolls have spread into other municipalities.

This report recommends: District 2 patrol personnel respond to this particular event in the normal manner; that the various interested parties will be advised by the writer as to the outcome; the writer should represent the Department on the Ad Hoc Committee on Sex Trade Issues; and the writer should prepare a letter of support from the PCLC to the Ad Hoc Committee.

We learn from history that men never  
learn anything from history.

George Bernard Shaw



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
The Poster Incident	2
The Police Community Liaison Committee (PCLC)	7
The Ad Hoc Committee on Sex Trade Issues	8
Writer's Comments	9
Recommendations	11
Appendices	12
A The Poster	
B Map of the immediate area	
C Minutes of the PCLC meeting of June 8, 1993	
D SFU statistics of levels of street prostitution	
E Report to Standing Committee on Planning and Environment - Neighbourhood issues	

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to focus not on the minor incident which caused the report to be written, but the much larger issue of street prostitution and the Justice System and community's response.

It is recommended that the reader should review the appendices prior to reading the other chapters. To do so will provide the historical background necessary to place events in their proper perspective.

## THE POSTER INCIDENT

### Background

On Tuesday, July 15, 1993, a police unit saw a number of hand written, photocopied posters stapled to poles in the area of the 700 and 800 blocks of Hastings and Cordova.

**Warning: Street Prostitutes  
From: 700, 800, 900 Block East  
Pender, Hastings & Cordova Residents  
Move out or face consequences  
by July 15/93 and thereafter.**

See appendix A for a copy of the poster.

On that day a meeting of the Police Community Liaison Committee (PCLC) was scheduled and the writer mentioned the posters during the meeting as a minor item. Some members of the Committee had also brought copies of the posters and the reaction of the group was quite dramatic: fears of some violent vigilante type of activity were voiced. (See the following chapter concerning the related activities of the Committee.)

On Thursday, July 15, at 1230, a police unit was flagged down in the north lane of the 700 block East Hastings by a private security person, a Michael Zivojinovich, Western Pacific Security Group, 10708 - 136A Street, Surrey, tel 584 6932. He explained to the police that his company had been hired by a Dean Toye, Acme Analytical Laboratories Ltd, 852 East Hastings, to patrol the north and south lanes of the 700 to 900 blocks of East Hastings regarding the street prostitution problem. There followed a short discussion during which Zivojinovich expressed some discomfort over the nature of the work his company had been hired to do, i.e. patrolling in a public place, and he decided to cease his operation at that time and he withdrew his two security guards from the area.

At 1445 hrs that day, the writer received a phone call from John Turvey (DEYAS) who advised the following: on the previous day, staff members of DEYAS had seen three employees, dressed in blue coveralls, come out of the rear of Wolff Marine, 780 East Cordova, carrying staplers. They watched the men staple a number of posters to poles in the area. Turvey stated that sex trade workers have reported to DEYAS staff that employees of the company have threatened and harassed them and have even had a dog with them to intimidate the sex trade workers.

### The Poster Incident

On Friday, July 16, 1010 hrs, Jim Green, 660 2049, was contacted by the writer by phone, and Green related the following incident: At about six thirty or six forty five the previous evening, Green was travelling along Cordova Street when he stopped in the parking lot close to Wolff Marine, and across the lane from Ted Harris Paints (757 East Hastings). He was examining one of the posters, about which he'd heard already, and was either removing it or had removed it when he was approached by two men who identified themselves as Ted Harris and son. They verbally abused him for removing the poster, to the degree that he described the incident as the most severe verbal attack he has suffered. He gave them his card and told them he understood their frustration but that the poster was not appropriate, that it could incite some type of attack on some girl, and that he would be willing to meet with them to discuss the issue when they had calmed down. He also added that he had heard that Alison Mitchell, manager of Princess Place, was also involved in the poster campaign. (Mitchell is a member of the PCLC. Princess Place, 321 Princess Street, SW corner of Princess and Cordova, is a newly constructed apartment building with numerous families and children)

Later the same morning, Councillor Libby Davies contacted Superintendent Brian McGuinness in relation to the poster issue. She was advised that the matter was being looked into by the writer and that she would be notified as to the result.

### The Investigation

At 1315 hrs, Friday, July 16, 1993, the writer visited the premises of Acme Analytical Laboratories Ltd, 852 East Hastings, and spoke to the President, Dean Toye. The writer asked Toye to tell him about the problems he was having in the area, and he related the following: He also owns the building across the street, 877 East Hastings. Due to the activities of street prostitution the building is becoming harder to rent. This situation has considerably worsened recently so that he made out the warning signs and caused them to be posted in the area. He has a contract with the security company Western Pacific Security Group to patrol his buildings, and he contracted with them to patrol the lanes effective July 15 (the "consequences" referred to in the warning poster). However the security company did not wish to conduct this type of activity following the meeting with the police in the lane on the first day, and so "the whole thing has fallen apart".

## The Poster Incident

The writer discussed how the poster had caused some alarm in the community and he agreed that it was inappropriately worded, but that part of his plan was over and there would be no more posters going up.

After leaving the premises, the writer went to 877 East Hastings, the other building owned and referred to by Toye. The building has three stories and access to the two upper stories is by outside staircases at the front and rear. Close to the rear of the building in the parking area there were two used condoms, several condom packages, one syringe, bloody tissue, and considerable litter of a type indicating loitering in the area - cigarettes, paper coffee cups, food wrapping. The top floor offices appeared to be empty and unoccupied and there was a sign on the front of the building advertising space to lease.

The writer then went to Wolff Marine Supply Co, 780 East Cordova. The manager Tom Wolff was not in, but the writer spoke to an employee for some time and asked about conditions in the area. The employee related the following: Prostitution is now occurring at all times (a female sex trade worker was walking past the front door at this moment) and the conduct of the prostitutes is often disturbing. It is not uncommon for them to expose themselves to traffic outside the store. He said that he would be reluctant to go to the store after closing time for a special order, a thing that often occurred in the past, due to the level of activity around the building. They hadn't had any damage caused to the premises recently, and that could possibly be due to the number of persons and continuous activity in the area. They didn't mind if prostitutes used the area and the parking lot when the business was closed as long as they didn't leave a mess. The staff have sometimes discreetly requested prostitutes to move out of their parking lot when the store was open, and deliberately try to avoid any confrontations due to the fear of damage being caused to the property in retaliation. He added that the guy (indicating to the south, presumably Toye) had come around with posters wanting to get something going, but they had not wished to be involved.

When the writer completed the interview he examined the parking lot on the east side of the building and the rear lane. The parking lot contained two syringes, several condom wrappings, and considerable other litter. At the rear of the premises, in the recessed area by the loading door, the entire area reeked of urine. Human feces and toilet paper were on the ground close to the door and the area was covered with other litter.

## The Poster Incident

The writer then went to Ted Harris Paint, 757 East Hastings, and spoke to Ted Harris Sr. After giving Harris a business card, Harris read out the particulars from the card and said, "I've had lots of meetings with the police and nothing changes. I don't think there's any point in us talking." Harris has very poor interpersonal skills and is often insulting and rude. The writer asked him whether things had changed recently and Harris complained bitterly and added that he had had an argument with Jim Green yesterday. He said that the prostitutes and dope dealers had been in his area for four years and it was time to send them somewhere else. He said that if they didn't leave someone will end up shooting one of them (the sex trade workers). He added that the reason why they weren't being moved was because they were paying the police to allow them to stay. The writer demanded an apology and when it was not forthcoming agreed with Harris that "there was no point in talking" and left.

When walking down the lane a few moments later, at about 1430 hrs, the writer saw a man photographing one of the posters. The man drove off in a '79 Chev station wagon, white, BC licence number XCT 659: registered to Carol June Cockwell, 405-324 West 10 Ave, Vancouver.

During the time the writer visited the area, a total of six sex trade workers were visible: three in the north lane of the 800 blk East Hastings, close to Hawks; one in the lane immediately behind Ted Harris Paint; one on the north sidewalk, 700 East Hastings; and one in the 700 Cordova.

The presence of the Astoria Hotel, across the lane from Wolff Marine, and one building from Ted Harris Paints, probably exacerbates the situation as the clientele may be part of the problem. The sex trade worker at the rear of Ted Harris Paints had just emerged from the rear door of the hotel.

Later that afternoon the writer phoned Michael Zivojinovich, of Western Pacific Security. He related that he had a contract with Dean Toye to patrol the premises at 877 East Hastings Street, and that starting on July 15 the contract had been extended to include patrolling the lanes in an attempt to discourage street prostitution and drug dealing.

### The Poster Incident

He said that it had apparently been Toye's plan to have a group of people (local merchants?) with placards to accompany the security patrol, but this had never materialized. He added that he had felt some reluctance about this venture and after his conversation with the police in the lane he had decided to withdraw his two guards. He described how recently one of his guards had confronted two people shooting up at the rear of 877 East Hastings and that a prostitute had been quite abrupt with the guard.

## THE POLICE COMMUNITY LIAISON COMMITTEE

The Committee comprises approximately fifty persons: service providers, persons representing residents (especially from the many residential care facilities), a small number of residents and business people, and workers from various agencies and societies. The Committee has been in existence for many years and the average attendance is about twenty five per monthly meeting, although at the June meeting over forty people attended. The topic of discussion in June was a presentation by Dr. John Lowman, School of Criminology, Simon Fraser University, covering the history of prostitution in Vancouver and examples of other initiatives from around the world. See appendix C for the minutes of this meeting.

Many of the meetings of the Committee are centred around the issues of street prostitution, and often the discussions go around in circles; so much so that in 1992 a sub committee was formed to deal only with prostitution issues in order to avoid monopolizing the Committee's agenda. The sub committee was short lived as again the inevitable collision with the Criminal Code effectively halts any initiatives to deal with prostitution in a constructive manner.

Earlier this year the Committee again started to become overwhelmed by the problems created by street prostitution and it was thought useful to have the presentation by John Lowman to provide everyone with the historical perspective. (Lowman worked with the writer in 1988 when he was researching the effects of the soliciting legislation for the Federal Solicitor General's Department.)

During the following meeting in July it was unanimously recommended that the Committee take some action to support any initiatives that would address prostitution problems in a constructive and coordinated manner. The Committee recommended that the writer prepare a draft letter to the Ad Hoc Committee on Sex Trade Issues (see the following chapter) supporting this type of initiative. Other members of the Committee also recommended that the PCLC members should write letters of support from their own agencies.



AD HOC COMMITTEE ON SEX TRADE ISSUES

This committee was formed earlier this year by three women politicians: Margaret Mitchell, MP; Joy McPhail, MLA; and Libby Davies, Councillor. The writer attended the first meeting at Kiwassa House, and there are two meetings planned for Monday, July 26, dealing with the needs of sex trade workers and the effects on businesses.

The objective of the Committee is to bring a coordinated approach through the three levels of government in examining sex trade issues.

## WRITER'S COMMENTS

That such a minor incident should generate the degree of concern and even fear that it has is a dramatic indication of the tension and division in the community.

The ability of the community to cope with the effects of street prostitution has long since been exhausted. The number of "people with problems" in the Downtown Eastside and Strathcona has passed the critical mass where the efforts of the community, social agencies, and the justice system are overwhelmed by numbers.

The displacement of street prostitution has always been a contentious issue, but the statistics clearly show that it is no longer displacement that is creating the difficulties, but an explosion in the numbers of sex trade workers over the past two to three years. VPD "level of visible street prostitution" statistics show an average of 7.1 sex trade workers were on the Downtown Eastside/Strathcona stroll at midnight during 1987. The figures increase as follows: 1988 - 8.5, 1989 - 7.4, 1990 - 9.6, 1991 - 11.9, 1992 - 15.5. The 1992 figures are not as accurate as the earlier years due to fewer counts being conducted. Dr. John Lowman, Simon Fraser University, School of Criminology, has conducted similar counts since 1986. SFU's figures are very close to the VPD's statistics in the earlier years, but they show an average of 23.1 for 1992 and 30.6 for 1993. (see appendix D)

District 2 Patrol personnel identified 488 sex trade workers in 1992, 44 of which were juveniles.

The increased numbers occur at a time when the area is developing and what were once quiet streets and parking lots, which provided an ideal place for the sex trade workers to ply their trade, are now residences for families and seniors. As a result of pressure from the residents the sex trade workers are pushed into the commercial areas with devastating effects on local businesses.

At the time when the numbers are increasing in Vancouver, strolls have become established in areas where street prostitution was not previously a problem: Burnaby, New Westminster, and Surrey. (the writer has been requested by the RCMP to attend a street prostitution meeting in Burnaby on July 22)

Appendix E contains a draft report to the Standing Committee on Planning and Environment concerning similar neighbourhood issues. The report describes the division in the community and the high levels of frustration and fear on both sides of the issue. In this case Ted Harris may not articulate his views in a constructive way, but he typifies many business people and

### Writer's Comments

residents, and is merely outspoken and incredibly frustrated over what he sees as the failure of the authorities to control what appears to him to be a straightforward issue.

What history tells us is that the police alone cannot cope with these numbers of "people with problems". The issue of prostitution must be addressed through a coordinated approach involving a review of the Criminal Code, which at the current time forces the police to determine what types of prostitution will be permitted. It also places the police in the difficult position of having to justify not taking any action when to do so would probably not be in the public interest. Current examples in Vancouver are: escort services, body rub parlours, and street soliciting which does not generate public complaints.

Historically, the typical reaction to incidents such as the one which caused this report is to take some type of enforcement action which merely moves the problem to another location for another day. This action may be appropriate for the short term, but all too often that is the only action that is taken and so nothing changes.

District 2 personnel, especially the Community Liaison Team, will address this particular problem in the usual manner and attempt to minimize the effects of street prostitution.

The Department has an opportunity to take a constructive and progressive position which may influence how the politicians approach the topic. It would be foolish to think that the causes and problems of prostitution can be easily dealt with, but we have to start somewhere and the Ad Hoc Committee on Sex Trade issues appears to be the logical point.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. District 2 personnel will address this particular issue in the normal manner.
2. The writer will ensure that the interested parties are advised of the outcome of the investigation.
3. The writer should represent the Department at the Ad Hoc Committee on Sex Trades Issues.
4. The writer should prepare a letter of support from the Police Community Liaison Committee to the Ad Hoc Committee on Sex Trade Issues.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Warning: Street Prostitutes

From: 700, 800, 900 Block East  
Pender, Hastings & Cordova Residents

Move Out or face consequences  
By July 15/93 and thereafter.

APPENDIX B



Map of the Immediate Area

north



Cordova Street

pkg lot

Wolff

pkg lot

Ted  
Harris

Astoria - pkg lot

877

East Hastings Street

852

Hawks

APPENDIX C

*A summary of the presentation made by Dr. John Lowman, School of Criminology, Simon Fraser University, to the Police Community Liaison Committee on June 8, 1993.*

*This summary was prepared from notes made during the session, and I apologize for any inaccuracies or omissions.*

*R. Taylor.*

### Prostitution and the Law

Dr. Lowman has been involved in research into prostitution and the law for more than fifteen years, and conducted a research project on behalf of the Solicitor General to determine the effectiveness of Section 213 (soliciting for the purpose of prostitution) after its introduction in December 1985.

The issue of street solicitation is of great concern in cities across the country.

The law regarding prostitution is ancient and was inherited from British Vagrancy Law, which was designed to control wanderers and to prevent public nuisances. It was incorporated into the laws of Upper Canada and into the Criminal Code of Canada when it was introduced in 1892.

During the early part of this century there was a "social purity crusade", which comprised a form of christianity/feminism/temperance.

The Vagrancy Law, known as Vag E, after the Criminal Code section, was repealed in 1972 and replaced by a soliciting law. This law was challenged in a Vancouver case (Hutt) where the court found that the soliciting had to be "pressing and persistent" in order to constitute an offence. This decision had the effect of nullifying the soliciting law, so that in reality there was no soliciting law.

In December 1985, Section 195 (since renumbered to 213) of the Criminal Code was proclaimed, making it an offence to "communicate in a public place for the purpose of prostitution". The effect of the new legislation was that initially there appeared to be a decline in the numbers of sex trade workers on the street, but after several months the numbers returned to their earlier levels, and may have actually increased.

In Vancouver, in the early 1900s, there was a tacit acceptance of prostitution, with regulated districts, especially in the Downtown Eastside and Strathcona, where until quite recently, and perhaps still, the names of the madams are set in the floor tiles of entrance halls of the houses which used to be brothels. The police position at the time was one of management and a reluctance to act.

In the 1920s there were attempts to close down the restricted areas. In the 1930s the position of the Mayor was "to close brothels and put the prostitutes on the street".

After the second world war there appeared not to be any brothels. In 1959 the newspapers of the time described the "call girl" trade and the process of customers being taken from the airport straight to a hotel where a prostitute would be arranged by the taxi driver.

In the mid 1970s the Penthouse Cabaret was prosecuted and many sex trade workers moved from inside the premises to the street.

The main question we should ask is "what is the overall goal of prostitution law?" What is it that we want the law to achieve? Eradication? Control?

There are three models to look at:

"Criminalization" where the buying and selling of sexual services are illegal. Canada would appear to have a "quasi" criminalization where some types of prostitution are not prosecuted. e.g. escort services.

"Legalization" where there is formal tolerance and regulation. The usual arguments for this system include health controls and safety for the workers. e.g. Nevada.

"Decriminalization" where prostitution is removed from the Criminal Code and is controlled by generic laws. i.e. the regulation of prostitution as any other business. e.g., cooperatives of prostitutes, escort services owned by prostitutes, etc. or various combinations.

Dr. Lowman then commented on several issues that had been identified by the Committee:

Deterrence - the customer is more deterrable, and so enforcement should more logically "get tough with customers".

The Dutch and German experience - although often viewed as a successful model, a recent film "Broken Mirrors" does not paint a pretty picture of life in the red light districts.

Violence against sex trade workers - there appears to be far more murders of sex trade workers in the period 1985 to the present than 1980 to 1985.

Criminalization tends to alienate the sex trade worker from the police.

Many sex trade workers go to jail, often for non-payment of fines.

Area restrictions - tend to make the strolls larger. In a twenty year period, 16 strolls have been identified in Vancouver. We are now seeing strolls in Surrey, Burnaby, and New Westminster.

### **What can the Committee do?**

- ask the Federal government what we are trying to achieve with prostitution related legislation? The current situation forces the police and Crown Counsel to make the law.
- a multi agency coordinated response is required if we are to be successful.

### **Comments and Questions from the Committee:**

- Chris Downing commented on the lack of choice due to poverty.
- Ian asked about section 212(4) of the Criminal Code, which makes it an offence for any person to obtain, or attempt to obtain, sexual services from a person under the age of eighteen years, for consideration. Bob Taylor described the police experience with this section: When it was introduced, the VPD Vice Intelligence Unit (VIU) planned a pro-active enforcement program, but immediately encountered difficulties. The first option explored was, when observing juveniles working the street, to place them under surveillance and arrest any customers who picked them up. Three problems were identified. Firstly, the moral/legal dilemma of allowing the young persons to remain on the street without immediately apprehending them; secondly, the danger of losing them when attempting to intervene; and thirdly, the fact that the police would require evidence from the juveniles in order to justify a charge. It is the police experience that under these circumstances the juveniles usually view the authorities as interfering with their ability to make money. VIU then approached Crown Counsel with the suggestion of using a female police undercover operator. Crown advised that these circumstances would not constitute an offence as the person was not in fact under 18. The difficulty of prosecuting customers under this section has resulted in very few charges being laid, and usually in these cases the circumstances were discovered by uniformed police interviewing juveniles found in hotels.
- the comment was made that it would have been appropriate for the police to have lobbied for changes to the legislation. Bob Taylor agreed and has drafted a letter from the Police Department to MSS commenting on the need to strengthen "protective" legislation (Family and Child Services Act) in order to avoid having to use the Criminal Code to remove juveniles from the street, and suggesting support for reviewing section 212(4) to determine whether it can be improved.
- Rusty asked about the advantages/disadvantages of "legalized" v. "Decriminalized" prostitution. Dr. Lowman commented that legalized prostitution usually results in big money/organized crime moving in and controlling the business.
- has Edmonton achieved anything, a tolerated "red light district" - there's nothing to recommend it.
- Dayle asked if there is a successful model anywhere? - Not that we're aware of.

- Page Latin commented on the need for: alternative sentencing (counselling, etc.), programs for pimps in jail, laws to regulate the abuses in the escort agencies, safe/transition houses, life skills, and reintegration.

- Bob Taylor closed the session by thanking John Lowman for his excellent presentation, and commented on the obvious antiquity of our current legislation when it refers to "bawdy" houses, a term not normally used in everyday conversation. Samuel Johnson's Dictionary (1755) defines the verb "to bawd" - as "to provide gallants with strumpets." (gallant is defined as a whoremaster, who caresses women to debauch them)

**\*\*\* The next Police-Community Liaison meeting will be on Tuesday, July 13, 1993 at 1330 hrs in the 4th floor Boardroom at Police Headquarters 312 Main St. \*\*\***

APPENDIX D

Figure 4: Counts of Vancouver Street Prostitutes, January-May 1993, Thursdays 10.00 to 12.00 p.m.

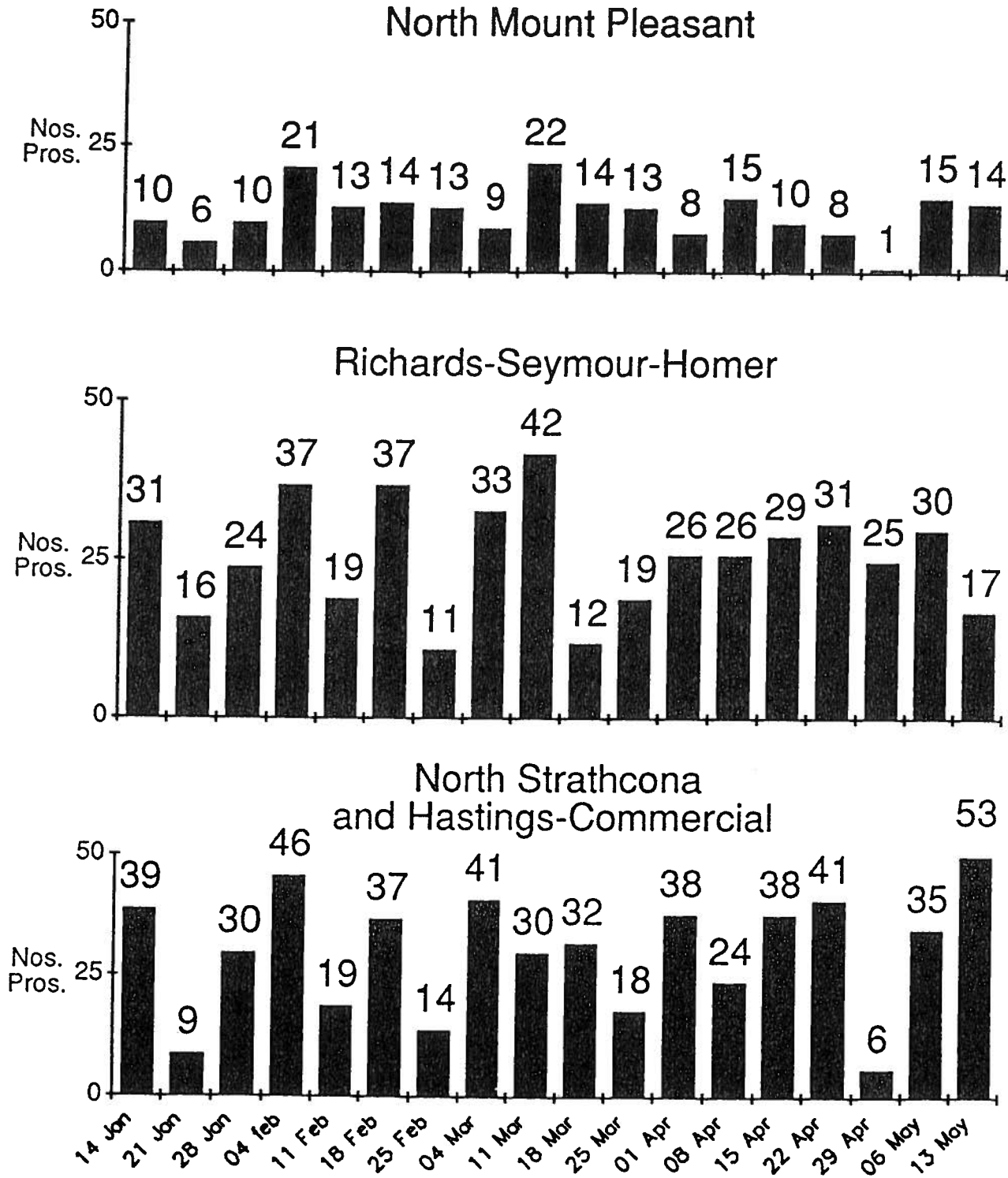
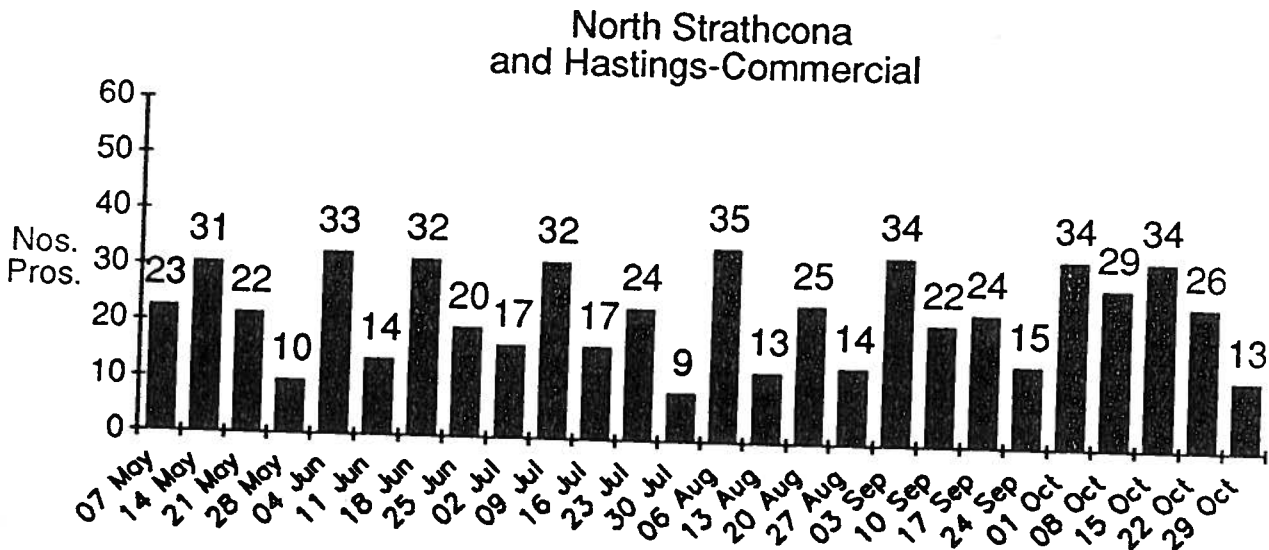
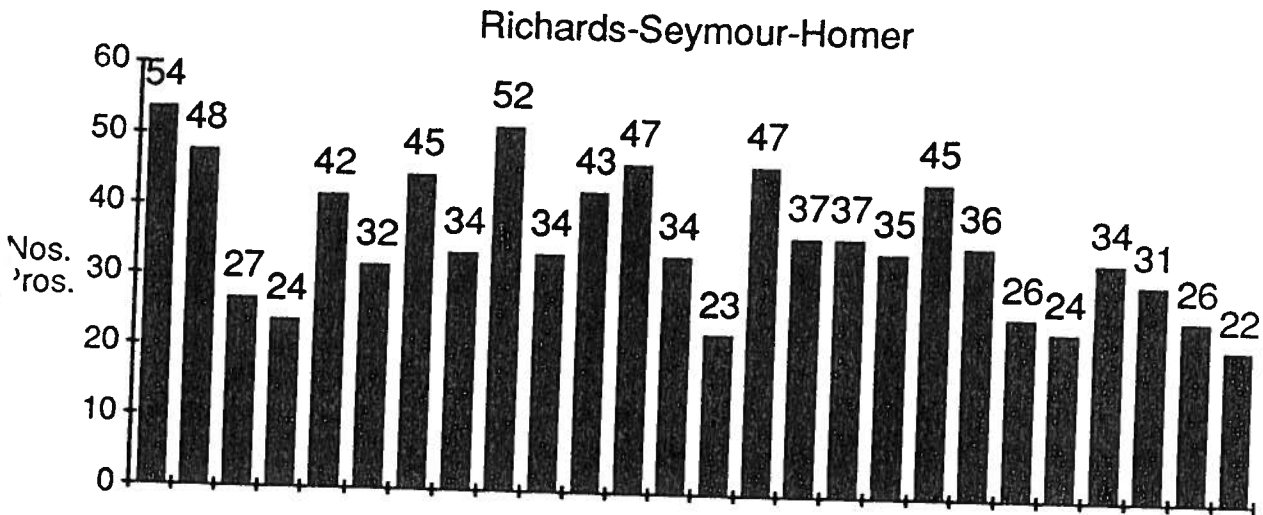
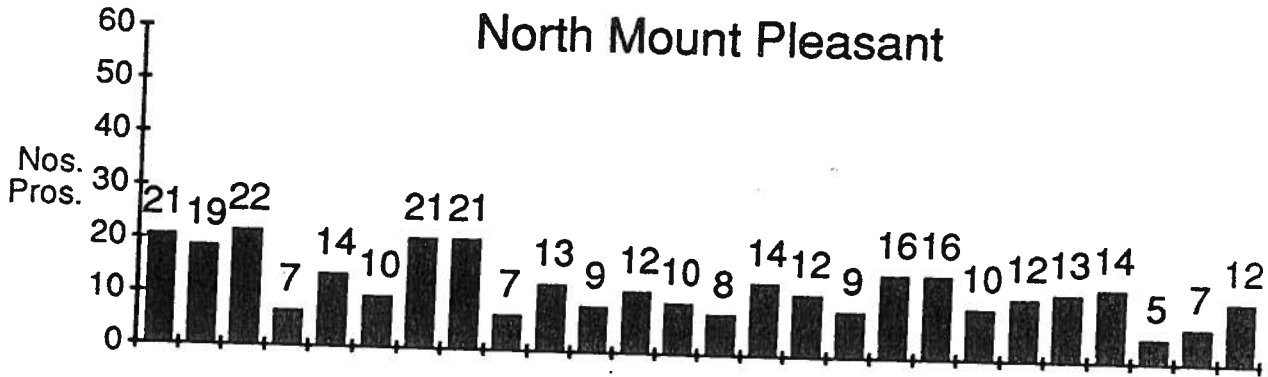




Figure 1: Counts of Vancouver Street Prostitutes, May-October 1992  
 Thursdays 10.00 to 12.00 p.m.



APPENDIX E

This report to the Standing Committee on Planning and Environment was prepared earlier this year by the writer in response to a letter of complaint from a resident regarding street prostitution and drug abuse.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Date: February 18, 1992  
File No.: 3504

TO: Standing Committee on Planning and Environment  
FROM: Chief Constable  
SUBJECT: Neighbourhood Issues  
Specifically Prostitution and Drug Abuse  
in the Strathcona and Downtown Eastside (DES) Areas

INFORMATION

The City Manager submits this report for information.

COUNCIL POLICY

There is no Council Policy applicable to this matter.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to respond to the request of the Standing Committee on Planning and Environment.

SUMMARY

The problem of drug abuse and street prostitution in the Downtown Eastside and Strathcona areas appears to have reached the point where the best efforts of the police, citizenry, and social agencies have a minimum effect.

This report traces the history, from the turn of the century and within the past few months and years, identifies the various responses and key factors, and describes recent events which show an alarming development in the community.

## DISCUSSION

The Downtown Eastside and Strathcona communities appear to have had some type of prostitution since Vancouver was established. "The red light district was now firmly established on Alexander Street where, in the 500, 600, and 700 blocks, virtually every house was a brothel." (Swan. J. A Century of Service. 1986. referring to earlier this century.)

Over the past several years the Vice Intelligence Unit has conducted a count of the numbers of men, women, and children working the streets of Strathcona and the Downtown Eastside at approximately 2300 hrs daily. The figures do not represent the total numbers of people working the streets that particular evening, only the ones visible at that moment. The statistics provide a useful indication of changes in the level of activity over periods of time.

The monthly figures for the area are as follows:

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Jan	na	8.8	7.6	9.5	8.5	9.2
Feb	6.0	8.3	4.4	8.0	10.6	12.7
Mar	5.2	6.5	6.8	8.0	10.3	12.1
Apr	6.6	9.9	11.6	9.5	11.0	20.1
May	5.6	8.3	5.0	10.4	10.4	13.7
Jun	6.3	12.7	8.3	8.5	15.0	17.3
Jul	11.9	na	na	9.1	10.1	20.3
Aug	9.2	9.7	7.0	10.1	12.1	19.5
Sep	8.3	8.6	8.0	11.7	14.6	16.8
Oct	8.0	8.8	8.0	11.3	13.3	15.2
Nov	9.7	8.0	6.6	9.8	10.5	15.2
Dec	8.1	4.6	8.2	9.5	16.4	13.5
ave:	7.1	8.5	7.4	9.6	11.9	15.5

During 1992, a total of over 480 men, women, and children were identified by the police working the streets in Strathcona and the Downtown Eastside. 44 of these people are juveniles accounting for a total of 102 apprehensions.

It appears that in this market supply exceeds demand, in that the price of sexual services has remained constant over several years; and it is believed that prostitutes in the lower priced market will sometimes barter as low as \$20 if they are desperate for money.

Since January, 1986, the Police Department has laid approximately 3500 charges against prostitutes and customers in the DES and Strathcona under section 213 of the Criminal Code, "Communicating for the Purpose of Prostitution", commonly referred to as "soliciting". This effort, other than in specific small areas, has had little, if any effect on the level of street prostitution.

The reason, presumably, is the characteristics of the typical person working the street. The following profile is based upon the circumstances of 393 prostitutes charged with soliciting in the DES and Strathcona between January, 1986, and June, 1988:

She is white (56%) or native (36%), in her early twenties. She probably uses drugs (80%) or is a drug addict (26%), and is on Welfare (80%). She lives in the immediate area (40%) or within Vancouver (45%). If she lived in Vancouver all her life, she has been a prostitute for four years; otherwise she moved to Vancouver three and a half years ago and has been a prostitute for the same period of time - suggesting that she moved to Vancouver in order to work the street, or found that she had to once she arrived. She has previous convictions for soliciting or is currently before the courts for soliciting.

This profile complements other literature that suggests that the typical prostitute started working the street as a child of 15 or 16 years of age.

Since the study was completed a number of changes have occurred: the presence of a "higher class" of women, controlled by pimps, working farther east on the Hastings corridor; a number of transvestites/transsexuals working around the Hastings Viaduct area, and the presence of street prostitution at all times of the day and night.

The critical factors are that a significant number of these people live in the immediate area and abuse drugs. Consequently their options are severely limited. The courts seem to view the pathetic accused prostitute with a good deal of sympathy - a very reasonable position in that prostitutes are probably society's ultimate victims. It is also unreasonable to expect that a simple enforcement solution will address a complicated, socio-economic, gender bias problem.

A similar profile of customers was prepared based upon the characteristics of 363 men charged with soliciting in the DES and Strathcona during the same period: he is an adult, usually between 20 and 40 years of age, is a blue collar worker or is unemployed, he does not have a previous record for soliciting except for a very small percentage, and lives in Vancouver or the Lower Mainland.

The courts also treat charges against customers as a "nuisance" offence, although nuisance is an unfortunate term to use to describe the desolation that street prostitution brings to a residential, and to a slightly lesser extent business, neighbourhood: noise, litter (dirty needles and condoms), traffic (leering potential customers and lookie-loos), violence (assaults on prostitutes by bad-tricks and pimps), drunkenness, and the general intimidation of the residents (walking past prostitutes, drug dealers and addicts, and customers outside one's home, business, and school).

If one accepts that street prostitution is the product of several factors - poverty, child abuse and neglect, lack of employment skills and realistic options, gender bias and the "fallen woman", exploitation of women and children, and a society that is not sufficiently sexually mature to live without prostitution - one should not be surprised that local attempts to resolve the issue have constantly failed.

The same factors are likely to produce drug abuse, and the drug-related problems in the area seem to have increased in numbers and magnitude. Police enforcement against drug dealing is constant. Usually, approximately 1000 arrests are made annually for trafficking in the DES and Strathcona areas. Again, other than in specific locations, the enforcement has little effect. Over the past two years the preventative activities of the police and community have moved the focus of the drug activity from Oppenheimer Park, to Mau Dan Gardens Housing Co-op, to the 700 block Hawks, to McLean Park, to Hastings Street.

Drug abuse activities probably result in more fear to the residents than prostitution. Some time ago a member of the Police/Community Liaison Committee said, "Even in the middle of the day we feel threatened. We keep our eyes straight ahead, we don't want to get in the middle of a drug transaction".

The question of discarded dirty needles haunts residents, especially if they have children, and various groups are constantly organizing "clean up" patrols that pick up needles. Although the numbers of complaints made to police management at the monthly Police/Community Liaison Committee Meetings concerning discarded needles has decreased over the past year, it takes only a few to be found each day to create a climate of anxiety. In November, 1992, a police officer was accidentally jabbed by a needle when checking a person in a washroom of a hotel.

The Police Department has responded to these issues in a number of ways:

The Police/Community Liaison Committee, made up of approximately fifty residents, social organizations, and service providers meets monthly in order to share information concerning neighbourhood problems, and to ensure that policing initiatives are appropriately targeted.

A series of Community Forums was held in the Fall of 1991 and the Spring of 1992 in order to enhance police/community communication. A Chinese Community Forum was held on November 28, 1992, at the Chinese Cultural Centre.

Police supervisors and managers attend meetings with various community groups to identify local policing needs.

The Community Liaison Unit (CLU) was created in 1992. Comprised of two officers, male and female, with Cantonese language skills, the unit's mandate is to work closely with the community in identifying specific issues and problems and address the root causes, rather than taking enforcement action against symptoms. Typical examples are rented accommodations that are managed in such a poor manner that they condone or even encourage anti-social behaviour.

Two officers, male and female, were assigned the mandate to address and coordinate the police response to the problems of street prostitution, especially in relation to sensitive areas (residences, schools, parks, community centres, etc), the safety of the people working the street (especially juveniles), and enforcement action against customers. Approximately 200 potential customers have been arrested by this unit since January, 1992.

The Latino Liaison Unit (LLU) was created in 1992. Comprised of two officers, male and female, with Spanish language skills (one of the officers was born in Central America and speaks without an accent), the mandate of the unit is to provide effective policing services to the Latino community - estimated at between 350 and 500 people living in poor accommodation in the immediate area - and work closely with the agencies and groups providing services to these people.

Weekly "community initiatives" are conducted, where a group of police officers undertake a project, or series of smaller projects, targeted at specific problems requiring focused and detailed investigation or enforcement. Examples are: undercover "buy and bust" drug enforcement; concentrated foot patrols in vulnerable areas (schools, Gastown, Hastings Street, Chinatown, Commercial Drive); undercover stake-outs against theft from autos suspects; and licensed premises visitations and monitoring.

The coordination of the various police components - Patrol, specialty liaison units, Drug Squad, Vice Squad, Bicycle Patrol Unit, Traffic Enforcement - is a key factor in preventing mere displacement of problems as opposed to addressing them.

Numerous letters and petitions have been sent to the City Council and Police Department over the past two years. On October 7, 1992, Mr. Bill Horne wrote to the Standing Committee on Planning and Environment suggesting that the residents, police, the City, and other agencies move street prostitution and the drug trade to a "zone of tolerance" in the industrial and waterfront non-residential areas.

There is an instinctive realization amongst people who live or work in areas affected by street prostitution and/or drug abuse, that, for the immediate future at least, the problems will continue, despite the efforts of government to outlaw activities, and social and police agencies to address the problems, hence the concept of moving the problem to a zone of tolerance is

attractive. Certainly most residents feel that if the activity is to continue, it would be logical to have the activity in the area that causes the least problems.

What has occurred over the past few years is the replacement of quiet, vacant, or business areas with new housing developments. Consequently the opportunities to put such an idea into practice are rapidly diminishing. Another problem with the concept is that although few complaints will be made regarding the activities at the time they are occurring - presumably because there are few people around to observe them - after a short period of time the businesses in the area discover the evidence of last night's activities on their doorsteps: condoms, needles, excrement, litter. The people who work the street may also be reluctant to move to an area that is dark and unpopulated, does not have access to restaurants, and, perhaps most importantly, is some distance from their residence or place of support.

The root causes of street prostitution and drug abuse are obviously beyond the ability of one city or neighbourhood to resolve. However, what appears to be occurring in the DES and Strathcona is that the number of people with problems has reached the critical mass where the main-stream residents are unable to support, guide, or have a positive effect on their less able neighbours. Examples of the numbers are: over 500 seriously mentally ill people (survey of the Heatley Street Clinic); 480 prostitutes (VPD survey); between 350 and 500 Latino refugees (DEYAS survey); and the uncounted numbers of alcoholics and dysfunctional people living in poverty.

The alarming signs of a deep division in the community are evident. The hostility of main-stream residents towards the marginalized residents is apparent. A "Strathcona Neighbourhood Action Patrol" was established several months ago; the patrol walks the streets in groups of five or six with the intention of discouraging street prostitution and drug dealing. When residents see a young woman working the street, they do not see a child who is the victim of terrible conditions and abuse, only a person they fear and who will cause great damage to the neighbourhood. It is a theme described over fifty years ago in Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath".

A vivid example of this division occurred in October, 1992, when an undercover officer was attacked, apparently by a frustrated resident. The Province newspaper, under the headline "Vancouver vigilante vengeance misfires", described the situation. "...was in a surveillance operation against a known drug dealer on Hastings Street near Hawks, a few blocks east of Main Street, when he was attacked. The vigilante, who is in his 60s, asked the police officer what he was doing. The officer replied that he was just out for a walk. 'Then this old guy just up and clubbed him from behind with an iron pipe wrapped with tape .... it was lucky it was a cop he hit. A real drug dealer would have killed him.'"



The responses necessary to reasonably address these type of social issues require a major coordinated initiative involving the three levels of government. Decisions made in isolation tend to have unintended results: ghettos of ex-mental patients and refugees for example. Law enforcement actions can have only a limited amount of success under these conditions.

\* \* \* \* \*

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City Manager to complete:

Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Officials to be present

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Report Reference

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Report Dated \_\_\_\_\_

Chief Constable \_\_\_\_\_

Author's initials \_\_\_\_\_ RT \_\_\_\_\_

Concurrence of other

involved Departments:

Social Planning \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Officials recommended to be present \_\_\_\_\_



# **PROSTITUTION IN THE VANCOUVER METROPOLITAN AREA** **1989 to 1995**

**John Lowman and Laura Fraser<sup>1</sup>**  
**10 October 1995**

This report provides an update of selected components of previous research funded by Justice Canada on prostitution in Vancouver (Lowman, 1984; 1989a; 1989b; 1990; 1992); in particular, it examines relative levels of street prostitution and its geography in the lower mainland of British Columbia from 1989 to 1995.

## **Methodological Considerations**

The overall task is to update streetcounts of prostitutes as was done previously in the five field evaluations of Bill C-49. In order to complete this task contractors will conduct "streetcounts" during peak hours 11:00 p.m. to 02:00 a.m. over several weekends to ascertain whether the number of street prostitutes has changed. The contractor will note whether the stroll (sic) have relocated. The method of counting should approximate as much as possible methods used earlier in similar work. Contractors will interview one to three key police personnel to further ascertain whether the number of street prostitutes has changed, what these changes mean and whether enforcement has had a role in these changes. Contractors may wish to talk to other key informants social service agencies, lawyers, citizens groups etc. to corroborate findings.

### *Statement of Work*

This *Statement of Work* asks contractors to "approximate as much as possible methods used earlier in similar work," but then proceeds to request that counts be conducted "over several weekends" during the "peak hours" of 11.00 to 2.00. In Vancouver, counts of street prostitutes<sup>2</sup> and their customers have been conducted during various periods from November 1982 to April 1994. The once-weekly counts reported in Lowman (1984, 1989a, 1989b, 1990, 1992) were conducted on Thursday nights from 10.00 p.m. to midnight, not on weekends. This particular time was chosen, because counts conducted every two hours over various 24 hour periods in 1984 (Lowman 1984:351-359) and 1987-88 (Lowman, 1989:A-534) reveal that the peak hours for street prostitution in Vancouver are between 10.00 p.m. and Midnight. A weekday was chosen, because Friday/Saturday evening counts are generally lower than those on weekday evenings (Lowman, 1989:536). Thursday was chosen because it represents an "average" weekday. Consequently, to make this study consistent with previous research, counts were conducted on each Thursday evening in September 1995 from 10.00 p.m. to midnight.

### *Establishing a Baseline for Comparative Purposes*

The *Statement of Work* requests that a few weekend counts be conducted. In previous reports (Lowman 1990, 1992) care was taken to point out that "Vancouver data indicate that weekly, and even monthly fluctuations in levels of street prostitution can be so great that a small number of counts does not constitute an adequate enough base from which to compare levels of street prostitution in different periods." Consequently, we conducted ten counts between 10.00 p.m. and midnight, one on each Thursday of the

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<sup>1</sup> For their assistance with this project, we would like to thank: The Vancouver Police Department Crime Analysis Unit; Dave and Rob Adamoski, Chris Atchison, Rob Chance, Len Cler-Cunningham, Paige Latin, Robbie Robidoux, and Inspector Bob Taylor. For map preparation (Figure 1), thanks to Bill Schuss and Jaelyne Campbell of the SFU Instructional Media Center.

<sup>2</sup> Because we have no way of ascertaining their age, sexually procured youths are also included in these numbers.

month (in keeping with our previous methodology), and six from Tuesday 8th to Wednesday 13th of September. Together with the Thursday counts on 7 and 14 September, this yielded an eight day series, allowing us to examine fluctuations in the number of people on the street through this one week. Also, in order to provide an impression of fluctuations in the numbers of persons on the street throughout the day, we conducted counts every two hours from 6.00 a.m. on Thursday 21 September to 4.00 a.m. on 22 September 1995. These various time series together with the four Thursday surveys yielded a total of 21 counts. We compare these with counts from various other periods since 1989.

### *Ascertaining "Whether the Number of Street Prostitutes Has Changed"*

Each time data have been presented from the Vancouver street prostitution counts, care has been taken to ensure that the limitations of this simple enumeration technique are recognized. Counts can only be used to indicate the relative numbers of people working the street at different times, the areas they work, and changes in that geography. Counts cannot be used to ascertain the total population of persons working the street, or the effect of law enforcement on this number. Consequently, we limit our discussion of law enforcement to its effect on *where* street prostitution is located, and its relative visibility. Counts of customers<sup>3</sup> do not yield sufficiently large enough figures to be able to ascertain relative changes in the number of men seeking to purchase sexual services from women working the street, or sexually procure youths.

### **The Geography of Vancouver Street Prostitution Strolls in September 1995**

In Vancouver at present there are six main prostitution strolls (Figure 1), the first three of which form a large contiguous area: a) Hastings-Cordova (the Downtown Eastside) (Figure 1, area 4); b) Franklin and Cordova west of Clarke (area 3); c) Franklin and Pandora from Clarke to Victoria (area 2); d) Richards-Seymour (area 5); e) "Boystown" (area 6); and f) 1st Avenue (area 7). There are at least two subsidiary strolls including: g) Broadway and several surrounding streets in Mount Pleasant (area 9), an area that was not being used in September; and h) Kingsway from the 2400 to the 3400 block (area 10 running southeast off Figure 1), where a few women apparently "hitch-hook" during the day. There was a concerted police effort through the summer months of 1995 to oust prostitution from both these areas (in Mount Pleasant, a prostitution task force was set up for this purpose).

No doubt the social organization of the three Eastside strolls is more complex than the distinction we have made.<sup>4</sup> Some street corners are controlled by professional pimps (this appears to be the case on Franklin from Commercial to Clarke), others are worked by "renegades" and other free-lance women with boy friends, some of whom are in more or less exploitative relationships with their female partners. The Richards-Seymour stroll is controlled by professional pimps, apart from the south end which is worked by transsexuals and transvestites and some renegade women. The 1st Avenue stroll, also controlled by professional pimps, has declined in importance over the past year. In 1994 as many as 15 or so women could be counted at peak times, but in September this year the average number was five. "Boystown" is located on Homer around Drake and Davie, an area worked by young males-dressing-as-males.

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<sup>3</sup> A male is counted as a customer if he are seen talking to a woman thought to be working. If such a person is known to be a police officer or outreach worker, he is not counted. Obviously, there is some room for error.

<sup>4</sup> The distinction is based on physical boundaries (Franklin cannot be crossed at Clarke Drive so this identifies the boundaries between areas; Campbell, which marks the beginning of the Downtown Eastside Hastings strip, distinguishes areas 3 and 4) and on the sequential movement of the street trade into each of these areas at different times.

### Current Activity levels

Table 1 shows the counts for each of the strolls, each Thursday in September 1995, and for each day of the second week of that month. Figure 2 shows the total counts for these same days. Four of the strolls -- the three east-side strolls, and the Richards-Seymour area -- are currently the most populous, and account for most of the visible street prostitution (Table 1). The three Eastside strolls now house roughly two thirds of the street prostitution trade.

**Table 1**  
September 1995 Counts of Street Prostitutes, 10.00 p.m. to Midnight

<i>Date</i>	07	08	09*	10*	11	12	13	14	22	28*	Average
<i>Area</i>											
Franklin-Pandora	26	18	28	15	19	36	22	17	20	12	21
Franklin-Cordova	7	15	5	3	13	18	9	4	8	7	12
Hastings-Cordova	24	30	6	23	14	21	21	32	14	16	20
Richards-Seymour	18	9	14	13	17	22	15	24	23	19	17
Homer	7	7	1	2	12	11	9	11	3	2	6
1st Avenue	4	5	8	6	3	1	5	5	7	6	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>81</b>
New Westminster	0							0	8		3
Surrey	2							1	0		1
BurnabyKingsway	0							0	2		1

\* 9 and 10 September = Saturday and Sunday

\* 28 September = day after welfare payday

As in previous studies, the evening counts done on eight consecutive days indicate that, if this period is typical, we find that numbers tend to be down on the weekends. The average total count for the four Thursdays in September was 79, and the average for all ten evening counts was 81 (again suggesting that Thursday is a fairly "typical" day in terms of the number of people visibly working the street).

Table 2 and Figure 3 show the 24 hour activity profile. Like the weekly profile, these daily profiles look

**Table 2**  
Street Prostitute Counts  
24 Hour Activity Profile 21-22 September 1995

<i>Time</i>	6am	8a	10a	12a	2pm	4p	6p	8p	10p	12p	2am	4a
<i>Area</i>												
Franklin-Pandora	1	3	2	2	4	6	8	20	20	8	20	2
Franklin-Cordova	0	0	1	5	2	6	2	4	8	10	7	1
Hastings-Cordova	1	5	2	5	8	10	9	14	14	8	11	3
Richards-Seymour	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	5	23	18	9	1
Homer	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	7	3	7	8	0
1st Avenue	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	7	6	2	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>7</b>

very much like daily profiles at other times we have conducted counts (Lowman 1984:351-359, 1989:A-534). The aggregate peak activity time is 8.00 p.m. to 2.00 a.m., with the highest count from 10.00-11.00 p.m.. But the strolls vary in terms of when they are populated by sex traders. In the east side strolls, somebody can be found working at almost any time of day, with peak hours during the late evening. The other strolls are populated by sex traders only during the evening and early morning hours, but not during the day (with the exception of Kingsway -- Figure 1, area 10 -- which is worked by only a few women, and currently only during the day).

## Time trends

Figure 4 shows count numbers now as compared to various times since 1989. Table 3 shows the counts in different strolls from May 1992 to September 1995. One can see through this period the demise of the Quebec-Ontario (Figure 1, area 8) and Lakewood-Semlin strolls, the appearance of the 1st Avenue stroll, and the intensification of use of the Franklin-Pandora area, now reputedly the "hot" stroll in Vancouver. There has also been intensification of the use of the Hastings-Cordova stroll. Most of these changes in numbers reflect the displacement of women and youths from area to area. Geographically, three of the strolls (Richards-Seymour, Boystown, and the Downtown Eastside) have remained relatively stable throughout this period, although the visible number of sex traders varies, as women move in and out from other areas, and in and out of the trade.

**Table 3**  
Average Thursday Counts During Selected Months From  
May 1992 to September 1995, 10.00 p.m. to Midnight

<i>Month/Year</i>	5/92	9/92	1/93	5/93	9/93	1/94	4/94	9/95
<i>Area</i>								
Lakewood-Semlin	2	1	1	5	4	4	5	
Franklin-Pandora					2	1	1	21
Franklin-Cordova	7	11	16	19	19	26	25	12
Hastings-Cordova	10	12	10	15	9	8	9	20
Richards-Seymour	31	28	19	15	23	28	32	17
Homer	6	7	8	8	4	7	9	6
1st Avenue						8	10	5
Quebec-Ontario	22	13	12	12	4			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>81</b>

Care should be taken in reading Figure 4: the 1989-1994 data relate to monthly averages (i.e. the average of the four Thursday counts) while the September 1995 figures are weekly counts (the Thursday average is 79). An upward trend in the monthly average counts is evident from 1990 through April 1994. The average number in September this year (79) is a little above the May 1992-April 1994 average of 72.

## The Changing Geography of Lower Mainland Street Prostitution, 1990-1995

### Surrey, New Westminster, and Burnaby.

Since 1989, in addition to the strolls in Vancouver, street prostitution has moved into Surrey, New Westminster, and Burnaby. Prostitution appeared on the street in Whalley (Surrey) apparently in 1988 or 1989. The development of a stroll on King George Highway between 104 and 108 Streets, particularly after 1990, has generally been attributed to displacement of women from Vancouver by law enforcement efforts and the effects of area restrictions imposed as part of bail and probation orders. The first mention we find of the Whalley stroll in the Vancouver newspapers is in 1991<sup>5</sup>, and it became more of a concern in 1992. Police and social service providers told us that sometimes 20 to 30 women could be seen working this strip. According to these sources, the street trade disappeared after the implementation of a law enforcement task force by Surrey RCMP in 1992 and 1993. An on-going “zero-tolerance” policy has, for the time being, displaced the street prostitution trade out of Surrey altogether. More recently, Surrey police have turned their attention to the off-street trade in hotels, bars and other venues.

In 1992, the Vancouver newspapers also started reporting the development of prostitution in Burnaby along Kingsway several blocks east of Edmonds (from 18th to 11th Avenues), and in an adjacent part of New Westminster, on 12th Street between 3rd and 10th Avenues. In one newspaper article, New Westminster police were quoted as saying that the increase of prostitution in the summer of 1992 was a direct result of the crackdown in Surrey.<sup>6</sup> In 1991 New Westminster police were reported as having laid only one charge, but in 1992 had laid 36. In April 1993, residents in Burnaby in the Kingsway, 11th to 18th Avenue area sent a petition to the city council urging action to rid that area of street prostitution.

Table 1 shows three counts we conducted in outlying municipalities. Our observations confirmed information that there is very little visible street prostitution in Burnaby and Surrey at this time. On two nights (7th and 14th September) of the three we visited the 12th Street stroll in New Westminster (and several other New Westminster locations where street prostitution has been known to occur), no one was around. Apparently, police activity in August and the first week of September resulted in women and youth moving to Vancouver strolls, at least for the time being. But on the third night (21st September), there were eight females working. A local service worker told us that up to ten to fifteen women and youths can be seen at peak times in this area. Police activity in New Westminster sometimes results in women moving across the municipal boundary to the Burnaby section of Kingsway east of Edmonds, and vice versa.

### Vancouver

#### *Grandview Woodlands*

In 1991 and 1992 most activity in this area was around Lakewood, Semlin and Victoria (Figure 1, area 1), a mainly residential area to the eastern side of the Franklin stroll. Police activity is now designed to keep the stroll located on the industrial section of Franklin west of Victoria, and preferably west of Commercial Drive (area 2).

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<sup>5</sup> E.g. H. Munro, “Vancouver hookers commute to Surrey” *Vancouver Sun*, 4 April 1991, p. B1.

<sup>6</sup> “Police crackdowns keep prostitutes on the move” *Vancouver Sun*, 28 April 1993, p. B1.

### *Strathcona*

Strathcona has long established street prostitution. For much of the post war period up to 1985, the stroll was located on a few streets adjacent to Chinatown (Keefer, Gore, Georgia, Union). In the mid-eighties, the street trade expanded into the residential streets to the east of the traditional stroll. Resident group resistance to this development took shape in 1986 and 1987. In response, a combined effort of local service providers and police facilitated relocation of the stroll to a mixed land use area to the north of Hastings Street (Figure 1, area 4). From 1988 through the 1990s there were various problems in this area too. Consequently, the stroll was relocated again, this time to the west end of Franklin and the east end of Cordova, a small industrial enclave on the east side of Strathcona (area 3). Subsequently, with the overall growth of the number of people working in the east side areas, the street trade has moved back into the Hastings-Cordova section of the Downtown Eastside (which is also a home to many of the women who work there). Problems involving the public sex trade are still a familiar story in the local papers as different groups try to come to terms with the issues raised by it.

### *Mount Pleasant*

Our first records of street prostitution in Mount Pleasant in the post-war era are from 1981, when newspapers reports talked about hitch-hooking on Broadway. However, it was not until 1984 that street prostitution in the area became a public issue, when the trade was forced out of Vancouver's West End by a civil nuisance injunction. Prostitution continued to make news in this area as lobby groups pressured police and politicians alike to clear the area of the street trade. After the communicating law failed to do anything to help the situation, police mounted a series of summer task forces from 1986 through 1991 to move women to various designated areas within Mount Pleasant, or out of it altogether. The experience of each task force was that while it was possible to displace street prostitution by using a combination of tactics, including selective enforcement of s.213, it gradually re-established along Broadway (Figure 1, area 9) as soon as task force activities were suspended. Something of an equilibrium was attained when police persuaded women to work on Ontario and Quebec Streets between 2nd and 5th Avenue (Figure 1, area 8). But residents and businesses in this area still complained of the difficulties caused by the trade. The solution to these problems was achieved when police managed to relocate the stroll outside Mount Pleasant a few blocks north on the entirely industrial 1st Avenue in the last quarter of 1993 (Figure 1, area 7). There was a resurgence of street prostitution along Broadway and the surrounding streets through 1994 and 1995, and a resurgence of local lobby group activity to encourage police and politicians to do something about it.

## **Vancouver Law Enforcement Patterns: A Containment Strategy**

The law enforcement response to prostitution has changed significantly over the past seven years. For one thing, there has been a change of prostitution law enforcement emphasis to focus on living on the avails and procuring offences (Lowman and Fraser, 1989). Sometimes this has meant relaxation of the attention paid to the street trade, at least in times where street prostitution is contained in certain areas (Richards-Seymour, Homer, 1st Avenue, and the two Franklin strolls). Thus the number of communicating charges dropped from an average of 1166 a year in 1990, 1991 and 1992, to 211 in 1993, and perhaps not much more in 1994 (see footnote 7). But in 1995 the situation changed again. As problems with the street trade became more pressing in Mount Pleasant and other residential areas, s.213 was re-mobilized, and 822 charges had been laid by the end of August this year. The response to the re-emergence of street prostitution in residential areas has been the crystallization of a policy of containment through selective use of the communicating law and other measures. In the short term, if the street trade is confined to certain areas (Figure 1, areas 2,3,5,6, 7) the police are prepared to leave it alone. Scrutiny of patterns of monthly Vancouver Police Department Crime Analysis incident reports (Figures 5 through 7) confirms this pattern. Table 4 shows the number of charges per month from January through August; Table 5 shows the number of charges per month.



**Table 4: s.213 Charges**

1990 =	984
1991 =	1284
1992 =	1231 (to November 1)
1993 =	211
1994 =	99 <sup>7</sup>
1995 =	822 to date (559 sex trade workers; 263 customers)

Figures 5 through 7 confirm that most of the s.213 charges are laid in the “flashpoint” zones, i.e. those areas generating the most complaints about the street trade. The Mount Pleasant prostitution task force, reconvened in the summer of 1995 after a two year hiatus (there were prostitution task forces in Mount Pleasant each summer from 1986 to 1992) is responsible for the enforcement activity along and around Broadway (Figure 1, area 9) and Ontario and Quebec (area 8). A concerted effort is also made to discourage people from working east of Victoria on Franklin, Semlin and Lakewood (area 1), and residential streets on the west side of the Hastings-Cordova stroll (area 4).

**Table 5  
s.213 Charges in 1995**

January	17
February	22
March	67
April	14
May	64
June	187
July	259
August	177
Total	807

As a general deterrent to Johns, the police are also handing out “Dear John” letters to men observed proposition prostitutes, be they inside or outside the informally tolerated strolls.

According to our counts, the containment strategy is working -- for the time being anyway. A variety of forces can upset the balance. One key difference in the 1990s situation is that displacement is occurring interjurisdictionally, not just within Vancouver. Also, there is no actual assurance that the next police administration will adopt the same approach, and no guarantee that some politician will not rise from the ranks to attack the tacit policy of “tolerating” the street trade in certain areas. Without a fundamental change to the law and other prostitution policy, from the police perspective the containment strategy is perhaps the “best” practical enforcement solution they can offer to deal with the nuisances attributed to street prostitution. It keeps the lid on problems. But should police be put in the position of having to “make” the law in this way? Also, because this strategy is geared mostly to solving nuisance problems, it does not address wider issues raised by the prostitution trade. At the ground level, it means that persons who prostitute are gradually pushed into darker commercial areas where women may be more prone to victimization. By accommodating them, the containment strategy does nothing to resolve the fundamental contradictions of the law which necessitate such compromises. And it is not designed to address the conditions which produce prostitution in the first place.

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<sup>7</sup> This figure is not accurate. Because of a lengthy strike in 1994, a lot of information has yet to be computerized.

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COPY

**MEDIA RELEASE**

97.02.25

**STREET PROSTITUTION ENFORCEMENT**

Since August of 1996, our focus on the street sex trade has been on:

- ◆ Sexual exploitation of youth through prostitution and pornography;
- ◆ Violence in prostitution;
- ◆ Community safety and nuisance issues resulting from prostitution related activities;
- ◆ Targeting Pimps and Johns.


The root cause of Vancouver's street prostitution is the men who purchase or who recruit and control (pimp) juvenile or adult sex trade workers. Our limited resources are focused on pimps and "johns" and other abusers who sexually exploit youth through pornography. If we can reduce the demand, the supply will decrease.

Recent media reports on this matter have brought a number of telephone calls to the Department with respect to when we would arrest and charge female sex trade workers. The unusual circumstances necessary to arrest would be: to protect young persons who are being sexually exploited; or female sex trade workers who are pressing and persistent in residential, school, playground, parks or community centre areas (community safety and a demonstrated nuisance problem). If these circumstances are present and police/community outreach initiatives fail, then we will charge under Section 213 C.C. A police and community Impact Statement will accompany each of these exceptional arrest cases that will assist the Court to develop creative sentencing options.

Street prostitution is a controversial issue, with legal, social, health, and economic implications. The life of a street sex trade worker is frequently characterised by exploitation, violence, substance abuse and disease.

The Vancouver Police are developing and implementing innovative strategies at prevention as well as enforcement tactics to deal with the problems associated with street prostitution.

-30-

  
Rich Rollins, Deputy Chief Constable,  
Commanding Investigation Division.

  
Terry Blythe, Deputy Chief Constable,  
Commanding Patrol Division.





## VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT VICE/DRUGS SECTION

**DATE:** 97.02.26

**TO:** The Chair and Members of the Vancouver Police Board  
Members of the Executive

**FROM:** Inspector Ken Doern,  
i/c Vice/Drugs Section

**SUBJECT:** *STREET PROSTITUTION IN CANADA*

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Over the past week there has been a great deal of discussion regarding this topic in the Lower Mainland.

Street prostitution is a controversial issue, with legal, social, health and economic implications. It is also closely linked to other criminal activities. Since the act of prostitution has traditionally been considered voluntary, it has been perceived as a victimless crime. Yet the life of a street prostitute is frequently characterised by exploitation, violence, substance abuse and disease.

On 97.02.18, the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, released their report: STREET PROSTITUTION IN CANADA, by Doreen Duchesne (catalogue number 85-002-XPE, Volume 17, Number 2).


The Highlights, extracted directly from this report, are as follows:

- ◆ *In 1995, almost all of the 7,165 prostitution incidents reported by police nationally involved communicating to buy or sell the services of a prostitute (92%). The remaining incidents concerned procuring (5%) or bawdy-house (3%) offences.*
- ◆ *Between 1994 and 1995, the total number of prostitution incidents in Canada rose 29%, largely due to a substantial rise in communicating offences in Vancouver. But this increase followed two years of steep declines, mainly traced to Toronto, Edmonton and Calgary (in 1994), and Vancouver (in 1993).*
- ◆ *The vast majority of persons accused of a prostitution-related offence in 1995 were adults aged 18 or older (97%). The relatively small proportion of youths (12 to 17 year olds) charged may reflect their frequent diversion to social service agencies by police.*



- ◆ *Since December 1985, when the communicating law replaced the soliciting law, there has been a shift towards more males being charged. Between 1986 and 1995, almost half (47%) of all persons charged with communicating were male, compared with just over one-third (36%) of those charged with soliciting in the 1977 to 1985 period. This increase may reflect changes in enforcement practices, in that some police agencies are charging more men in an effort to hold customers more accountable for their participation in the sex trade; also, since 1985, the law in force has clearly applied to clients as well as prostitutes.*
- ◆ *Between 1991 and 1995, 63 known prostitutes were murdered. Almost all were female (60); seven of them were juveniles aged 15 to 17. Most deaths were related to the trade; 50 prostitutes were thought to have been killed by clients, and 8 by pimps or in a drug-related incident.*
- ◆ *In adult courts, women convicted of communicating tend to be sentenced more severely than men, perhaps because they are more likely to have had previous convictions, or cases involving multiple charges. For example, 39% of women convicted in 1993 or 1994 were imprisoned, compared with only 3% of men. Among the latter, the most severe penalty was usually a fine (in 56% of cases); in contrast, 32% of women received fines. (These proportions are based on a non-representative sample of court cases).*
- ◆ *When prison sentences were imposed in adult courts for communicating, the median duration was the same for both sexes (30 days). However, when probation was the most severe penalty incurred, the median length of time was twice as long for women as for men (one year versus six months). In cases where a fine was administered, the median amount was \$200 for both sexes.*

The Vancouver Police are developing and implementing innovative strategies at prevention as well as enforcement tactics to deal with the problems associated with street prostitution. The attached media release re-affirms our commitment with respect to this complex issue.

  
Ken Doern, Inspector 333,  
i/c Vice/Drugs Section.





**AN EXAMPLE OF THE MUNICIPAL REGULATION OF OFF-STREET  
COMMERCIAL SEX:  
VANCOUVER'S PROSTITUTION LICENSING BY-LAWS**

John Lowman  
School of Criminology, Simon Fraser University  
December 2005

Canadian political rhetoric about prostitution has been mainly abolitionist or prohibitionist. On the grounds that they do not want to be seen to condone prostitution, most politicians staunchly refuse to talk about where street prostitution might be relocated. And yet, prostitution is legal, and a widespread municipally licensed prostitution business is flourishing across Canada. By way of example, consider the prostitution licensing system now operating in Vancouver.

The City of Vancouver License By Law No. 4450 provides a schedule of annual licensing fees for various businesses, and provides a series of definitions to distinguish them. I examined the following five license categories, and discovered that a "body rub" could mean only one thing:

*Dating Services;*  
*Escort Services*  
*Massage Parlours;*  
*Health Enhancement Centres;*  
*Body Rub Parlours/Body-Painting Studios/Model Studios.*

The By-laws read as follows:

**OUTCALL-TYPE VENUES**

**Dating Service** (By-laws 5283-1979; 6038-1986; 6646-1990)

"Every person operating a dating service shall:

- a) supply the license Inspector with the name, age, address and description of every person proposed to be employed or engaged in the business;
- b) notify within 72 hours of any change of personnel; and
- c) maintain a written record of all persons registered with the dating service showing their name and address and the name and address of the person to whom they have been referred for a social engagement."

**Social Escort Service** (By-laws 6373-1988; 6466-1989, 6646-1990)

- (1) Every applicant for a license to operate as a Social Escort Service shall include in the application the trade name or names under which such business will operate and advertise.
- (2) Every person who intends to operate or advertise a Social Escort Service under a trade name other than that specified in the application for a license shall notify the Inspector in writing of the intended trade name at least 14 days prior to its use.
- (3) No person carrying on the business of a Social Escort Service shall offer the services or name of any Social Escort, or introduce customers or potential customers to any Social Escort, unless that escort is at least nineteen years old.
- (4) No person carrying on the business of a Social Escort shall offer the services or name of any person required to be licensed pursuant to this By-law unless that person is so licensed.

- (5) At all times during which the premises specified in the license application as the place of business of the Social Escort Service are open for business the operator or a licensee or employee shall be present on the premises.
- (6) Every person carrying on the business of a Social Escort Service shall:
  - (a) maintain on the premises a list of all current employees and all persons being handled on an agency basis; and
  - (b) upon request make such a list available for inspection by the Inspector or Chief Constable.”

## **FIXED-LOCATION VENUES**

### **Steam Bath and Massage Parlour (By-laws 4782-1974; 6038-1986; 6646-1990)**

- “(1) No person owning, keeping, maintaining or operating any bath, steam bath, or massage parlour shall allow or permit any person of the male sex to act therein as an attendant or employee in respect of any person, customer or patron of the female sex; or allow or permit any person of the female sex to act as an attendant or employee in respect of any person, customer or patron of the male sex; nor shall any person so owning, keeping, maintaining or operating any bath, steam bath or massage parlour attend, treat or serve any person, customer or patron thereof of the opposite sex.
- (2) Every person owning, keeping, maintaining or operating any bath, steam bath, or massage parlour shall provide and keep therein a written and legible record in journal form of all persons using the facilities of the said bath, steam bath, or massage parlour to record his or her name and home address together with the date and time of such registration in such register.
- (3) No person owning, keeping, maintaining or operating any steam bath shall allow persons of the opposite sex to occupy the same room or adjoining rooms with an inter-communicating door or which have doors opening into a common steam room. PROVIDED, however, that a person may maintain a steam bath having a family room intended to be occupied and occupied by members of the same family, if such a room is closed off from the rest of the steam bath by a door.
- (4) Every person owning, keeping, maintaining or operating any bath, steam bath, or massage parlour shall ensure that the interior of the premises is at all times during business hours illuminated to a minimum of ten foot candles in every part thereof.”

### **Health Enhancement Centre (By-laws 6830-1991; 7052-1992)**

- “(1) The Inspector shall not issue a license for a health enhancement centre unless satisfied that either the applicant for the license or an officer of the applicant demonstrates a knowledge and understanding of the art and practice of reflexology, shiatsu, biokinesiology, hellework, polarity, reiki, rolfing or the trager approach, or any other therapeutic touch technique, and the Inspector may, in that regard, require the applicant or officer to take and pass an examination.
- (2) Every person carrying on the business of a health enhancement centre shall ensure that all persons hired to administer a therapeutic touch technique are qualified in that respect and have not been convicted of an offence under sections 212 or 213 of the Criminal Code.
- (3) No person carrying on the business of a health enhancement centre shall employ any person to administer a therapeutic touch technique unless that person is at least 19 years of age.
- (4) No person carrying on the business of a health enhancement centre shall remain open for business or administer a therapeutic touch technique between the hours of 12.00 midnight and 8.00 a.m.
- (5) No person carrying on the business of a health enhancement centre shall allow any employee or other person on the premises to engage in or offer to engage in an act of prostitution.”

**Body Rub Parlour/Body-Painting Studio/Model Studio (By-laws 4957-1976; 4969-1976; 5283--1979; 6596-1989; 6646-1990; 6830-1991; 7052-1992)**

- “(1) Every applicant for a license to operate a body-rub parlour, body painting studio or model studio shall supply the Chief Constable and the Inspector with the name, age, address and sex of all persons employed by the applicant.
- (2) Repealed.
- (3) No person carrying on the business of operating a body-rub parlour, body painting studio or model studio shall
- (a) employ any person on the licensed premises unless such a person is 19 years of age or over;
  - (b) permit any person to be on the licensed premises at any time unless such a person is 19 years of age or over
- (4) Every applicant for a license for a body-rub parlour, body painting studio or model studio shall be accompanied by a floor plan of the entire premises in such scale and detail as may be prescribed by the Inspector, and when any alterations are made to the licensed premises, plans thereof shall be filed with the Inspector forthwith.
- (5) All rooms used for a body-rub parlour, body painting studio or nude photography shall comply with the following condition:
- (a) shall not be less than 2.4 metres by 2.4 metres;
  - (b) shall not be equipped with any locking device;
  - (c) other than a door providing entrance thereto, shall not have any means by which any person may view the interior thereof;
  - (d) shall be equipped with lighting of at least 50 candle power which shall remain “on” when the door is closed.
- (6) No person who carries on the business of operating a body-rub parlour, body painting studio or model studio shall permit any person to enter or remain thereon between the hours of 12 midnight and 8.00 a.m.
- (7) No person carrying on the business of a body-rub shall permit any person engaged in providing a body rub in the licensed premises to perform the same unless the person is wearing clean, washable, non-transparent outer garments covering his or her body between the neck and the top of the knee, the sleeves of which do not reach below the elbows.
- (8) No body-rub parlour proprietor shall exhibit himself or herself nor permit other persons to exhibit themselves, in any window on or about the licensed premises, or exhibit or permit to be exhibited any sign outside of the premises showing any nude male or female body, or any part thereof, nor any printed words that might indicate that the licensed premises is a place that offers any form of sexual or nude entertainment.
- (9) No person carrying on the business of a body-rub parlour shall practice or provide or permit the practice or provision therein of a therapeutic touch technique or advertise in any way that a therapeutic touch technique is available or being practiced on the premises.
- (10) Any club subject to regulation under By-law No. 2647 providing any services similar to a body-rub parlour, body painting studio or model studio shall, in addition to any other licensing requirement, obtain a body-rub parlour, body painting studio or model studio license pursuant to Schedule “A” and shall comply with the regulations set forth in this section.”

### **Commentary**

A reading of these by-laws suggests that the City is attempting to limit prostitution to two venues: body-rub parlours and escort services. These are the only two types of venues in which the owner is required to report the names and addresses of employees to the police. Why is this?

Note that, unlike the by-law for a health enhancement centre, the body rub by-law does not expressly prohibit acts of prostitution on the premise. In body-rubs, women are allowed to provide services to men (body rubs employ mostly women), but only persons of the same sex are allowed to provide services in massage parlours and steam baths (some of which also serve as venues for prostitution). While the body-rub by-law prohibits both the advertising of and the provision of a therapeutic touch technique, it prohibits only the advertising of “sexual entertainment,” not sexual entertainment as such. In contrast, the health enhancement centre by-law expressly prohibits acts of prostitution from occurring on the premises.

The implication is that “sexual entertainment” can occur in a body-rub parlour. The regulatory definition of a “body-rub” confirms this:

“Body rub” includes the manipulating, touching or stimulating by any means, of a person’s body or part thereof, but does not include medical, therapeutic or cosmetic massage treatment given by a person duly licensed (Vancouver License By-law, p.2).

Since a body-rub parlour is a “business” providing a service for which the patron pays, surely this leaves only one thing: acts of prostitution.

The distinction between dating services and social escort services is less clear. The distinction seems to have been wrought in the early 1990s. Prior to this, escort agencies advertised under both “dating” and “escort” headings in the Telephone Yellow Pages. More recently, however, they have advertised only under the title “escort.” If escort services are simply providing introductions - i.e. “dates” - why is the regulatory distinction of “dating” and “social escorts” necessary? Apparently its purpose is to clarify which business is involved in commercial sex. In the case of dating services, the names of both parties have to be recorded. In the case of escort services, only the service provider’s name has to be recorded. This way the client’s anonymity can be preserved -- in which case if he wants to purchase sex, he has an incentive to go to the “correct” city-licensed venue.

*If any doubt remains that the City Council overseeing these by-laws knows that it is licensing prostitution, consider the 1997 fees the City charged for different categories of business:* As of 1997 there were roughly 150 license fee categories in Vancouver. 115 categories of business involve an annual fee of less than \$200.00. Another 24 are between \$201.00 and \$500.00. Only a few are more than \$500.00 (e.g. pubs and cabarets are \$556.00; a public market is \$886.00; concert halls vary from \$1839.00 to \$2644.00 depending on seating capacity; an amusement park is \$3156; the horse race track is \$7473, and the Pacific National Exhibition is \$10,463).

**Annual License Fees as of 2005:**

Dating Services	\$125.00
Massage Parlours	\$208.00
Health Enhancement Centres	\$193.00
Body Rub Parlours/etc.	\$7891.00
Escort Services	\$932.00

At just over \$7891.00, a ~~brothel~~ body-rub parlour license is the 3rd most expensive in Vancouver after the Pacific National Exhibition and the horse race track.

**Does the Regulation Work?**

In 1998, although more than 80 escort services advertised in the Vancouver Yellow Pages, only 31 were licensed, yielding a paltry \$24,862 for the city coffers. And the city issued only 98 individual escort licenses, an average of three per agency, which yielded another \$10,584. There was just one licensed body rub. If we add to these revenues the three steam baths where male prostitution sometimes occurs (\$179 each) the city received just over \$42,500 from prostitution in 1997. It is not known how many massage parlours offer prostitution services, or how many licenses are involved.

Does this mean that the off-street prostitution trade is relatively small, or that most of it is not licensed? We suspect that it is the latter, and that more people work in the off-street prostitution trade than work on the

street. We know from sex sellers and buyers interviewed in Vancouver that some massage parlours and health enhancement centres are fronts for prostitution. Why pay many thousands of dollars for a body rub license when a massage parlour license is one fortieth of the cost? As to men and women working as escorts, why would they want to create an indelible record of their sex work with the city authorities?

### **Law Enforcement**

If we examine law enforcement patterns, it is clear that off-street prostitution is not a priority. 95% of all charges are for "communicating." Since the early 1970s Canadian police have paid progressively less and less attention to bawdy-house violations and off-street prostitution in general. In the early 1970s there were from 800 to 1200 bawdy-house charges a year in Canada compared to less than 200 a year now. Perhaps it is the memory of what happened on the streets of Toronto (Brock, 1998) and Vancouver (Lowman, 1986) in the 1970s when police closed down the off-street venues that makes the players in today's off-street prostitution trade (including city councils, which arguably live on the avails) almost immune from prosecution.

Brock, D. R. *Making Work, Making Trouble: Prostitution as a Social Problem*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.

Lowman, J. "Street Prostitution in Vancouver: Notes on the Genesis of a Social Problem." *Canadian Journal of Criminology*, 28:1:1-16, 1986.



# **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN VANCOUVER'S STREET LEVEL SEX TRADE AND THE POLICE RESPONSE**

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**Funded by:  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I</b>	Foreword.. .....	i
<b>II</b>	Executive Summary .....	iii
<b>III</b>	Introduction .....	1
<b>IV</b>	Background.. .....	2
<b>V</b>	Vancouver: Sins of the City,.. .....	4
<b>VI</b>	Simon Fraser University and the Research Chill .....	8
<b>VIII</b>	Community Advocacy Action Plan.....	10
	i) A focus group for youth in the survival sex trade .....	11
	ii) Towards a Common Ground .....	13
<b>IX</b>	Violence and The Outlaw Status of <del>Street</del> Prostitution.,.....	15
<b>XI</b>	Vancouver: Third World Conditions in a First World City.....	18
<b>XII</b>	Vancouver: A Plight Ignored. ....	21
<b>XIII</b>	Violence Against Women In Vancouver's Street Level <del>Sex</del> Trade	23
	1) Method.....	24
	2) The <b>response</b> .....	26
	3) Demographics.....	28
	4) Time, locations, live guys.....	32
	5) <b>Harassment</b> .....	38
	6) <b>Robbery</b> .....	42
	7) Physically threatened.....	45
	8) Threatened with a <del>weapon</del> .....	48
	9) Physically assaulted without a weapon being involved.....	51
	10) Assaulted with a weapon.....	54
	11) Refusal to wear a condom.....	57
	12) Raped without a weapon involved.....	59
	13) Raped with a weapon involved.....	62
	14) Kidnapped/ confined .....	65
	15) Attempted murder.....	67
	16) Is anybody out there .....	71
	17) How the women feel about the VPD.....	73
	18) In their words .....	79
<b>XIV</b>	Somebody's Got it Wrong .....	85
<b>XV</b>	A <i>Sex</i> Trade Liaison Officer. ....	90
<b>XVI</b>	Vancouver Police Board Response.....	93
<b>XVII</b>	Feminism & the <del>sex</del> trade – Problematic or just a problem?	95



**FOREWORD**

PACE Society, since its inception, has driven the movement toward systemic change in social attitudes, treatment, and the condition with which women and children who are trapped in cycles of sexual exchange are forced to live. The ability to involve our client-base has lead to success in governance, service provision, research and social empowerment.

The former sex workers that founded PACE Society were committing to eliminating the conditions of rape, mutilation, assault, and death. All those who have taken up this challenge are also faced with political unpopularity, frustration, ridicule, and the realities that the general lack of resources and community support afford them.

We hope that abolitionists will draw from the findings in this report and realize that the war on sex buyers has only added to the disempowerment of sex workers through victimization. Enforcement methodology is extinct, and has not solved the problem. In actuality, 'shame the johns' campaigns have been harmful to our population by shifting the focus away from violence and issues of economic security for women.

We hope that this research will give a clearer picture of the rates of violence faced by the sellers of sex, and highlight the lack of coordinated efforts to reduce these numbers.

We hope that the voices of sex workers will not be silenced but included in the agendas of women's equality groups that are directed towards egalitarianism.

We hope for the inclusion of all genders in this plight; we do not believe we must exclude men to include women and the transgendered.

On behalf of PACE Society we would like to honor the over 200 sex workers that were able to give input into this research. Additionally we would like to thank Paige Latin, our founder, for her vision and personal sacrifice, Leonard Cler-Cunningham for his efforts in bringing this project to fruition, and the staff, Board of Directors and volunteers at PACE Society who dedicate their time to the fulfillment of our mandate that calls for "harm reduction and the abolition of conditions that lead to prostitution". We would also like to thank Status of Women for their contribution and support of this project.

Raven R. Bowen  
Projects Coordinator

A child with her innocence stolen arrives on the streets of Vancouver alone, frightened and feeling worthless. Having very few options open for survival, she begins selling her body.

Her body is something desired by perverted older men and brought in enough money to have a warm, semi-clean motel room. She earns enough money to eat and clothe herself. Within days, the pain and humiliation of selling her flesh is too much to bear. Getting high helps mask some of the feelings of despair.

So much pain from past association with adults; that the idea of adults helping is a joke to be laughed at. Adults were the ones that had created the gaping holes in her esteem and heart. Having died many times already, there are feelings that physical death will be the only way to stop the hurt, the hurt that is part of every waking moment of life.

A deviant and criminal in the eyes of society because you are a female, teenaged runaway, Authorities take this to mean that you cannot be trusted or be reliable. Many members of society were the criminals in early life, crimes committed for which no one was ever charged, the damage done to these women by sick adults perpetuates the damage they continue to do to themselves. A sick individual takes a life and causes so many people to be devastated with the loss of another beautiful young woman.

A woman stated that the physical pain that she endured at the hand of men was not so bad: "that pain heals". I was not able to help this woman but maybe in some way, I will be able to help save another young woman.

These women deserve the same worth afforded to all other people. No woman should be defined as worthy or worthless because of substance use and/or prostitution. Women do not wake up one morning and decide to be a drug-addicted prostitute. They do wake up mornings wanting to have people look at them with empathy, compassion and respect. The same way they look at others.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The reality for a woman offering sex for sale on the streets of Vancouver is that she can be murdered and there's little chance that anyone will be prosecuted. She can be raped knowing that the police will likely not protect her. She can be chased from neighborhood to neighborhood as the purveyor of disease, destroyer of families, or a brainwashed victim to be rescued from the ravages of patriarchy. Endless reports have found that the non-profit agencies that should be helping her are often too busy squabbling amongst themselves rather than coordinating their efforts.

Residents feeling under siege, a rate of rape and assault that would shame third world nations, an expanding list of murdered and missing women, and an international embarrassment of infectious disease transmission rates are the consequences of misguided laws and ill thought out social policies.

Four years ago the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver was declared a medical health disaster with the highest reported HIV/HEPC infection rates in the Western world and the subsequent \$3 million spent on HIV prevention services is accepted as having had little or no impact.

Over 4700 injection drug users (IDUs) are estimated to live in the area and, until a recent drop, overdose deaths outstripped all other North American cities. Research in Vancouver indicates that 80% of female IDUs report being active in the sex trade, and this population accounts for one the highest percentage increases of new HIV infections in Canada.

A report released last month by British Columbia Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDs established that Vancouver is the only city in the developed world where the HIV infection rate among female injection drug users far outstrips that of men - a consequence ascribed to our street level sex trade conditions.

The law in Canada was created in 1984, and it's important to remember that while prostitution is legal in Canada, the bawdy house portion makes it against the law to buy or sell sex in off-street settings and the communicating section does the same for the buying or selling of sex in public.

It is our opinion that this system of quasi-criminalization bears a direct responsibility for the violent conditions suffered by women in Vancouver's street level sex trade.

A Vancouver newspaper has identified that since 1989 at least 35 sex workers have been slain. If one included information from Vice Unit files and RCMP (Canadian police agencies) data the number increases to 60 murdered sex workers since January 1982 - the majority of their murders remain unsolved (Lowman and Fraser).

In 1994 Paige Latin brought together former sex workers and their allies committed to doing something about the lack of relevant services and founded Prostitution Alternatives Counselling and Education (PACE) Society. With a mandatory minimum representation of 1/3 former or current sex workers on their board of directors, PACE presciently recognized the limitations of agencies relying on top-down programs developed by 'experts' opting to embrace innovative bottom-up peer-based programs.

Within 7 years, and no support from the City, PACE began to garner recognition. **An** independent evaluation of the Ministry of Children and Families' Vancouver Action Plan on Sexually Exploited Youth called for immediate expansion of their outreach and advocacy program targeting youth in the survival sex trade.

In a national report on the sex trade their innovative method for working with resident groups and neighborhood police was recognized as model for dealing with the impact of sex workers on residential neighborhoods. The Mount Pleasant community, a residential neighborhood in which they are based, appreciated their contribution enough to give them the service agency of the year award (1998).

In Vancouver violence against street-level sex trade workers has long been accepted as pervasive. We wanted to gain a better understanding of the conditions under which this violence occurs. Who is it committing these violent acts? What is being done about the violence? Why is this level of violence allowed to continue? How was this allowed to happen?

We were looking for a new model of doing research that could respond to the issue of violence – one that was propelled by the needs of the women and not the researchers desire to collect data.

We chose to investigate rates of eight different violent acts, based upon Canadian Criminal Code definitions, and three (for the purposes of this paper) non-violent categories – harassment, robbery, and refusal to wear a condom. In an attempt to gauge the gulf between acts of violence suffered and acts of violence reported we also explored police response from the point of view of the women.

Our sample size was **183** and data collection took place over two years making the information collected fairly reflective of conditions.

Our youngest contributor was **15** and the oldest was **51**. In an industry where youth is a commodity it's not surprising that over half were **24** and under. The average age was **25.9** years old.

Almost a third of our sample has been working in the sex trade for less than **2** years. **13.8%** started in the sex trade before they were even teenagers and a full **70%** of our sample began before they were old enough to drink legally. The average age of entry into the sex trade was **16.98**. There is an immense overrepresentation of Aboriginal women in the street level sex trade (**31.1%**). According to the **1996** Census data from Statistics Canada, Aboriginals (North American Indian, Metis, Inuit) constitute only **1.7%** of Greater Vancouver's population.

Almost three quarters of the women had left their parent's or guardian's home permanently at age **16** or younger. **62.4%** don't have a high school diploma and **10.2%** had only a public school education. We found that **58.1%** identified themselves as working to supply a drug habit. When asked if they had to give money to somebody to be able to work either on or off-street, the majority of women, over **80%** of women on the street and over **70%** of the women off-street, replied 'no'. **89%** reported that someone has refused to wear a condom within the past year.

The following table shows a small sample of the data on violence that we collected.

All percentages are expressed as a valid pct (missing responses removed)	Pct responding that this happened to them while working on the street	Pct responding that it has happened more than once in the past year	Pct responding that this has happened to them within the past six months	Pct of Dates/tricks reported as being responsible for these acts	Pct that did not report any of the instances to the bad date sheet	Pct that did not report any of the incidents to the police	Pct reporting that no charges were ever laid in any of the instances	Pct reporting that nobody was ever convicted in any of the instances
Been harassed	83.1%	85.1%	73.2%	96.4%	54.7%	68.3%	83.8%	93.8%
Been robbed	53.7%	53.2%	69.2%	49.25%	56.8%	74.7%	89.8%	93.1%
Been physically threatened	70.5%	73.2%	68.4%	48.1%	63.4%	77.9%	90.1%	93.5%
Been threatened with a weapon	44.5%	60.3%	66.1%	35.4%	59.5%	72.2%	85.9%	88.4%
Been physically assaulted	51.2%	47.3%	72.7%	57.5%	58.0%	75.6%	91.6%	92.9%
Been assaulted with a weapon	30.3%	47.6%	74.4%	49.3%	68.4%	77.6%	89.8%	91.3%
Been forced to have sex against their will	45.8%	56.7%	68.2%		60.5%	77.8%	88.6%	94.3%
Been forced to have sex against their will w/ a weapon involved	40.7%	38.8%	68.1%	72.4%	63.8%	72.1%	85.9%	86.2%
Been kidnapped/confined	41.9%	30.9%	72.0%	67.8%	65.7%	64.8%	82.8%	87.1%
Been a victim of someone trying to kill them	33.1%	35.9%	59.5%	63.8%	56.9%	59.6%	78.9%	88.9%

Ultimately the goal was not to simply study the violence, but to use the information to hasten its end. Throughout this project former and current sex workers used the information to identify, develop and implement a variety of pro-active initiatives:

- On Monday April 26<sup>th</sup> 1999, over 35 youth from Vancouver who were, or had been, involved in the survival sex trade came together at the Mount Pleasant Neighborhood House. The focus group identified missing necessary services and called for immediate and easy to implement changes in the policy and practices of welfare, the police, and the Ministry of Children and Families' Adolescent Services Unit.
- ◆ *Towards A Common Ground*, is an opinion survey that was completed by over 500 Vancouver residents and business owners that attempted to discover what they agreed should be done in response to the sex trade: who should be allowed, where can it happen, what is acceptable, and what cannot be allowed to happen.
- ◆ The PACE Health Network (PHN) is a two year peer driven demonstration project for women whose involvement in the sex trade is primarily to finance their injection drug habit (SWIDU). The PHN is an attempt to:
  1. Identify and develop messages and strategies for HIV/AIDS/HEPC/STD prevention,
  2. Staff and operate a SWIDU based needle distribution,
  3. Develop and deliver prevention education/resource materials,
  4. Have weekly board meetings & monthly general membership meetings,
  5. Increase condom usage by SWIDUs, their partners and clients and
  6. Assist with the development and implementation of improved reporting/tracking of HIV/AIDS/STDs in order to improve the potential effectiveness of treatments.
- ◆ A Sex Trade Liaison Officer policy proposal presented to the Mayor and the Vancouver Police Board that might help lower the rape and assault rate of street level sex workers by having an officer dedicated to this job.

This research looks at the saddeningly tragic complicity in creating an environment that has unwittingly encouraged this situation. A city that has continually demonstrated its refusal to discuss any substantive response to this issue, the pernicious influence of a small but vocal feminist minority that has suffused the entire debate on the sex trade and a law that even the Department of Justice has deemed "ineffective in terms of the reduction of street prostitution and the aggravation experienced by members of the community".



Leonard Cler-Cunningham, April 30/2001

## INTRODUCTION

The reality for a woman offering sex for sale on the streets of Vancouver is that she can be murdered and there's little chance that anyone will be prosecuted. She can be raped knowing that the police will likely not protect her. She can be chased from neighborhood to neighborhood as the purveyor of disease, destroyer of families, or a brainwashed victim to be rescued from the ravages of patriarchy. Endless reports have found that the non-profit agencies that should be helping her are often too busy squabbling amongst themselves rather than coordinating their efforts.

Ultimately you begin to suspect that the law and its practice weren't created to protect you. "An evaluation (of the federal communicating law) by the Department of Justice (1989) deemed the law ineffective in terms of the reduction of street prostitution and the aggravation experienced by members of the community." – (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics)

University researchers, social workers, Ministry staff, consultants, the charity, health and criminal justice industries continue to profit with little or no measurable impact on the lives of those they are supposed to serve.

In Vancouver for the women in the sex trade and their families it is past time to admit the obvious – how we have been doing what we are doing is not working.

There are at least 31 missing women from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES). Since 1989 The Vancouver Sun has identified at least 35 prostitutes who have been slain. If one includes information from Vice Unit files and RCMP data the number increases to 60 murdered prostitutes since January 1982 - the majority of their murders remain unsolved. Women in the sex trade are murdered at a rate of 60 to 120 times the rate of the general female population (Lowman and Fraser 1996).

Residents feeling under siege, a rate of rape and assault that would shame third world nations, an expanding list of murdered and missing women, and an international embarrassment of infectious disease transmission rates are the consequences of misguided laws and ill thought out social policies.

One day the history of prostitution in Vancouver will be written. When the author arrives at the 1990s they will have no choice but to write a tragedy of individuals, governments and organizations making bad or willfully ignorant but ultimately self-serving decisions. We might not know why until a future cottage industry in Royal Commissions examines how we could have sustained such painful incompetence, with such horrific consequences, for *so* long.

This research looks at the saddeningly tragic complicity in creating an environment that has unwittingly encouraged this situation. A city that has continually demonstrated that this issue is "not a high enough priority at this time" for them, the pernicious influence of a small but vocal feminist minority that has suffused the entire debate on the sex trade and a law that the Supreme Court of Canada recognizes as violating the *Canadian Charter of Rights*'.

## BACKGROUND

The impetus for this project came from the Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW) Conference held in Victoria BC on May 1, 1997. GAATW's mandate:

*"is not to stop the migration of women but to ensure the protection of the human rights of those involved. Our strategy is to promote the involvement of grassroots women in all work against trafficking in women to ensure that any work done addresses the real problems. We work to empower women rather than treat them as victims."*

In PACE Society's first year their founding members made a critical decision to emphasize direct service delivery over political advocacy. They chose as their mandate: *The reduction of harm and the abolition of conditions leading to prostitution, as we know it.* Over the past seven years this choice has continued to inform the development of PACE and guided this study.

Originally the project was to have four sections:

### *Off-street sex trade outreach program*

The off-street sex trade is often estimated to be six to ten times the **size** of that found on the street. Much of it occurring in places where there is little, or no, monitoring or opportunity for individuals to access services. With funding from the City of Vancouver we had hoped to initiate an outreach program for this population. This was to be complemented by:



### ***Offbeat sex work research***

In 1998 there had been little research published on the off-street sex trade. We hoped to fill this gap by working with a professor from SFU. The information could have been used by the outreach program and all three levels of government to ensure that equitable regulatory measures were in place to identify and reduce abusive situations.

### ***Community advocacy action plan***

Federal, Provincial, and Municipal governments had recognized the difficulty of responding to the sex trade to almost anyone's satisfaction. Greater onus was placed on local communities and individuals affected by this issue to find their own responses. PACE hoped to identify issues of common concern among youth in the survival sex trade, residents, parents, resident groups, business owners, police, Crime Prevention Offices, Municipalities, sex workers and non-governmental organizations.

### ***Research on Violence Against Vancouver Street Level Sex Workers***

The bulk of this report is an examination of violence suffered by street level sex workers - how it came about and why it seems to continue unabated.

As you will see, a controversy over research ethics at Simon Fraser University, the Vancouver municipal government's bureaucratic brick wall, and an increasing recognition by PACE's front line staff that conditions in the city served to encourage violence against this population made it difficult to adequately address the off-street issue and led us to focus the majority of our efforts on the *Community advocacy action plan* and *Research on Violence Against Vancouver Street Level Sex Workers*.

We were looking for a new model of doing research – one that was propelled by the needs of the women and not the researchers desire to collect data. Throughout this project former and current sex workers used the information to identify, develop and implement a variety of pro-active initiatives:

- ◆ A focus group for youth in Vancouver's survival sex trade that identified missing necessary services and called for immediate and easy to implement changes in the policy and practices of welfare, the police, and the Ministry of Children and Families Adolescent Services Unit.
- ◆ *Towards A Common Ground*, an attempt to identify principles commonly held by Vancouver residents and business owners about where and under what conditions the sex trade can happen.
- ◆ The PACE Health Network (PHN), a two year peer driven demonstration project to combat HIV/HEPC for SWIDUs (SWIDU is used in place of the clunky 'sex workers that are injection drug users whose involvement in the sex trade is primarily to finance their habit').

- ◆ A Sex Trade Liaison Officer policy proposal presented to the Mayor and the Vancouver Police Services Board that could lower the rape and assault rate of street level sex workers.

Ultimately the goal was not to simply study the violence, but to use the information to hasten its end.

#### VANCOUVER: SINS OF THE CITY

Given the pivotal role Vancouver played in bringing about the laws of today, their continued refusal to grapple with the issue in any substantive manner is doubly frustrating.

Like most frontier towns Vancouver's history is intertwined with prostitution. One of the earliest residents was Birdie Stewart who opened a brothel at the corner of Water and Cambie around 1880. A veritable head tax on prostitutes, through a system of fines, became a reliable source of revenue for a young town. The first police scandal, and almost every one to follow, has been tied to the sex trade. (On The Shady Side)

A century later, the politically adroit - almost paramilitary exuberant - Concerned Residents of the West End's (CROWE) efforts to rid their neighborhood of sex workers developed into a national political force that was hard to ignore. The Association of Canadian Chiefs of Police and mayors of large Canadian cities were of shared opinion that recent court decisions" on prostitution laws had rendered it impossible to enforce. Added to this mix, in the mid '80s, was an explosion of emphasis on pornography by North American feminists. The combination of these factors nudged the Federal Government to establish that savior of seemingly intractable social problems - a Royal Commission. (McLaren)

On June 23, 1983 the Federal Minister of Justice mandated the Fraser Committee to examine issues related to pornography and prostitution.

The conservative government at that time balked at any of the recommendations that might have been a step towards clearing up the contradictory nature of Canadian prostitution law.

It's legal to sell sex in Canada but if you sell it on the street you can be arrested. If you sell it in your home you can be arrested. If you open a business to sell it, you can be arrested. If you help somebody sell it you can be arrested.

However, this wholly inadequate law can be seen as an unintended consequence of the fact that the welfare of sex workers, mostly women, wasn't the foremost consideration in the development and implementation of Canadian legislative measures responding to the sex trade.

No one can deny that the individuals involved with the Fraser Committee were possessed of anything but the best of intentions and that criticizing their efforts with the benefit of almost 20 years of hindsight is unfair.

But just a few years after the law was enacted former committee member John McLaren reflected on how individual vs. equality rights, time and research constraints inhibited the full potential of their work.

Of their own volition the committee members had already "concluded that it is legitimate in the Canadian context to seek to balance individual and equality rights and, where they conflict, to consider limiting the former in order to protect and sustain the latter." (McLaren)

McLaren states that, "we (the Fraser Committee) had too little input from important players in the world of commercialized sex, *such as prostitutes* (emphasis added)". Thus they relied on researchers. Research into sex work was still in its infancy and working under a six-month timeline they were only able to collect information on the street level sex trade.

He admits that, "This left large gaps in our knowledge about off-street prostitution, whether in the context of residential service, escort agencies, hotels, bars or massage parlors."

Time wasn't the only constraint placed upon the research. They were denied the opportunity of traveling to other countries gaining first hand knowledge of how "operational policies, attitudes and realities" actually worked.

**An** emphasis on equality over individual rights, little input from sex workers, no information on the off-street sex trade and no direct observation of how legal measures and social policy in other

countries impacted the lives of women in the sex trade. It would be like holding the Walkerton inquiry without talking to anyone who had drunk the water.

McLaren's caveat that "despite the impulse of the reformers to see the criminal law used as a weapon against exploiters, the reality has typically been that it is the victims rather than the exploiters who find themselves at the receiving end of the criminal law" has largely rung true for sex workers and youth in the survival sex trade.

In Vancouver, the 'child as victim' rhetoric notwithstanding, an increasing number of young women have recently been charged with pimping. From 1988 through 1994 "there were just six charges for offering to purchase the sexual services of a youth, and only two convictions (Clark, 1996). Compare this to the enforcement of the communicating law. During its first six years, 7409 charges were laid in Vancouver." (Lowman and Fraser 1996)

In 1994 Paige Latin had brought together a group of former sex workers and their allies, committed to doing something about the lack of relevant services in Vancouver, and founded Prostitution Alternatives Counselling and Education (PACE) Society. With a minimum of 1/3 representation of former or current sex workers on their board of directors, PACE presciently recognized the limitations of agencies relying on top-down programs developed by 'experts', opting to embrace innovative bottom-up peer based programs.

Within 7 years, and no support from the City, PACE began to garner recognition. An independent evaluation of the Ministry of Children and Families' Vancouver Action Plan (VAP) on Sexually Exploited Youth, called for immediate expansion of their outreach and advocacy program that targeted youth in the survival sex trade.

*"...PACE, is notable within the continuum of VAP component services for its complete focus on youth who are clearly and currently involved in street prostitution. As such it is the only project that has this as its central mandate and sole service mode.. .It appears to the evaluators to be quite effective in identifying, contacting, and supporting young people (mostly women, of course) who are engaged in prostitution.*

*... we believe that the PACE model seem to be a good one for direct services to this highly specialized and very vulnerable target group. As such we believe that expansion of this type of precisely targeted, multi-faceted service ... could be of real benefit to youth whose primary source of economic survival at this point is prostitution."*

**(REPORT OF THE FINDING FROM THE EVALUATION OF THE VANCOUVER ACTION PLAN ON SEXUALLY EXPLOITED YOUTH (VAP), 1996)<sup>iii</sup>**

In a national report on the sex trade their innovative method for working with resident groups and neighborhood police was recognized as a model for responding to the impact of prostitution on residential neighborhoods. (FEDERAL/PROVINCIAL TERRITORIAL WORKING GROUP ON PROSTITUTION)

In 1998, the Mount Pleasant community appreciated their contribution enough to give them the service agency of the year award.

While the need for supplying housing for this vulnerable population was a consistent chorus in city reports, PACE and a group of dedicated volunteers were busy building it themselves (see attachment # 1 ***A Place to Sleep, Something to Eat and Somebody Who Cares***).

In 1998 PACE applied to the City of Vancouver for funding to support an advocacy/outreach worker that would target off-street sex workers – estimated to be 6 to 10 times the number of street level. The belief was that the City would recognize a link between collecting revenue from selling licenses to individual escorts and body rub parlors and the responsibility to fund social programs.

Despite the awards, independent evaluations, and recommendations calling for services to this population Vancouver's Social Planning department's decision was:

***"No grant recommended. Objectives and outcome of proposed work are unclear and MCF funding for core services is currently unstable."***

PACE appealed and on April 23, 1998, The Standing Committee on City Services and Budgets agreed with social planning's recommendation and decided not to approve the grant.

However they asked:

***"That a strongly worded letter be sent to the Provincial Government regarding the funding of services for sex trade workers."***

Almost four years has gone by and no letter has ever been sent.

The lack of support from the City of Vancouver didn't mean that PACE would have to abandon doing research on the off-street sex trade. Simon Fraser University helped with that.

#### SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY AND THE RESEARCH CHILL

Considering the perilous legal nature of much of the off-street sex trade, the conditions of SFU's ethics policy would have made it impossible for researchers to engage in work of any value or quality on a topic like this.

Regardless of a vigorous debate on the seeming failure of social science research to have much of an impact on the lives of their subjects, community groups and individuals attempting to work outside of academic institutions cannot access peer and ethical review boards for research involving human subjects. This denies them access to the bulwark of funding available and limits their ability to have their work viewed as 'rigorous and valid'.

To overcome these barriers community groups are forced to 'partner' with academic institutions. Status Of Women Canada had committed funding for this project and PACE was fortunate in having established a relationship with Professor John Lowman from Simon Fraser University's Criminology department.

PACE was to assist with supplying access to a hitherto relatively unexplored population (individuals involved in the off-street sex trade) and Dr. Lowman would be able to give the project credibility, not only through his involvement but also, by access to peer and ethical review.

Meanwhile, a seemingly unrelated event was unfolding in the British Columbia courts.

SFU Criminology student Russel Ogden had recently published his masters thesis on assisted HIV suicide when he was called in front of the coroner and directed to reveal his sources. He refused and eventually the courts backed down.

Like all graduate students doing research involving human subjects Russel had received an ethics certificate from the university. Even though he could have faced imprisonment the university abandoned him while he was in front of the courts. He sued SFU for breach of contract in an

attempt to recoup some of his out of pocket expenses for legal fees. To the judge's regret he had no choice but to rule against Ogden but the verdict contained a scathing denunciation of SFU calling their defense of academic freedom "hollow and timid".

Professor Lowman was one of Russel's staunchest defenders and a vehement critic of the administration's behavior during the inquest and trial. That they would acquiesce to any demand by the police and courts for access to a researcher's notes and data without having to demonstrate the need in court was anathema to **him**.

In an interesting parallel this places research in the same legal status as pornography. Courts, customs or police can basically apprehend material and the onus is on the researcher/bookstore/artist to prove that it **is** not necessary/obscene.

With the city refusing to fund **an** off-street outreach worker and SFU's ethics policy potentially placing research subjects at risk of arrest, we were forced **to** abandon the off-street sections.

**As** a result, efforts were focused on how best **to** work with the youth and communities and finding solutions to the violence.

COMMUNITY ADVOCACY ACTION PLAN:

A FOCUS GROUP FOR YOUTH IN THE SURVIVAL SEX TRADE

The need for doing something different was made clear in *Mean Streets Youth Crime and Homelessness* (1998) by John Hagan and Bill McCarthy. The work clearly identified that Vancouver's reliance on apprehension and/or arrest had the unintended effect of increasing the number of youth in the survival sex trade. Surprisingly, there was little or no attention paid to this important work by either Vancouver's local media<sup>1</sup> or service providers despite it being the largest and most analytically rigorous research ever done on high-risk youth in Vancouver and Toronto.

*"When Vancouver street youth are picked up by the police, they cannot be taken to a youth hostel. Rather, they are more likely to face one of several less desirable consequences: They may be returned to their families, who are liable to criminal prosecution if they refuse to accept and promise support for their children; they may be placed in government care and sent to a foster or group home; or they may be jailed. As expected few of these environments offer successful solutions to problems that cause youth to leave home in the first place."*

An impressive group of young women who had left the survival sex trade, with help from PACE, gave up a Saturday each week for a year to meet at the PACE office. Not only did they work together on identifying common themes that served to maintain youth involvement in the survival sex trade - they also served as the advisory board for the violence research.

They wanted to find out what other youth believed could be changed tomorrow rather than coming up with a litany of complaints or unobtainable goals. Four areas of immediate concern that they identified were the practices and policies of:

1. Welfare/assistance
2. Police/enforcement
3. The Adolescent Services Unit (ASU)
4. And a lack of necessary services.

<sup>1</sup> Hagan John, and McCarthy Bill, *Mean Streets* pg. 109



## VANCOUVER YOUTH IN THE SURVIVAL SEX TRADE FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

On Monday April 26<sup>th</sup> 1999, over 35 youth from Vancouver who were, or had been, involved in the survival sex trade came together at the Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House.<sup>v</sup> Together they developed simple and easy to implement recommendations necessary for responding to the needs of Vancouver youth in the survival sex trade.

### **Welfare/Assistance:**

The youth identified that the very people who were supposed to help them leave the survival sex-trade were often factors that pushed them further, farther and deeper into sexual exploitation.

Financial Aid Workers, Social Workers and Training Consultants were identified as inconsistent at best or at worst, direct factors in a youth's involvement. The lack of confidentiality, respect and an overwhelming fear of being judged if a youth disclosed their involvement in the survival sex trade were consistently identified as factors keeping children out there on the streets.

### Recommendation:

*That all professionals, particularly Financial Aid and Social Workers, receive training specific to working with sexually exploited youth.*

### **Police/Enforcement:**

The youth felt that police and enforcement services often neither believed, respected nor followed-up on complaints of rape or assault. They also felt that arresting or apprehending youth was not effective in helping them leave the streets.

### Recommendation:

*That the police receive training on working with sexually exploited youth and that the police emphasize protecting them from rape and assault over arresting/apprehending youth.*

### **Adolescent Services Unit (ASU)**

The youth recognized that ASU is a relevant resource for street-kids but felt that it offered little for youth in the survival sex trade. They also felt that being brought in by the police was not only ineffective but created an atmosphere of mistrust. Constant questions about "who is your pimp" and "how long have you been working" made ASU an unsafe place.

### Recommendation:

*Access to services must be voluntary and focus on helping the youth rather than arresting the pimp. The youth felt that ASU could achieve this through greater co-operation with existing agencies rather than the police. The Downtown Eastside Youth Activities Service., Street Youth Services., PACE, and the Street Nurses were identified as relevant resources that ASU should work closer with.*

*Necessary Services*

*Finally, they wanted it known that youth in the survival sex-trade were not necessarily street kids. Therefore services for street kids were not necessarily relevant for them. Counseling, safe houses, training, and more outreach specific to them must be established. All of these things should be integrated in order to ensure a relevant and effective continuum of services.*

The input of the young women and results from the forum clearly influenced not only the method and goal of the violence research but impacted the direction of PACE programs.

Fortunately, the Canadian Department of Justice provided detailed comments and suggestions to assist PACE in developing each section of the project. They also encouraged the organization in making an application to the National Crime Prevention Centre program, which is currently funding the Community Based Prevention Program for Young Women at Risk.

This prevention program is developing a 'best practices model' program for young women (12 to 24) that are involved in, or are at risk of entering, the survival sex trade. A peer counselor and volunteers work with incarcerated young women discussing the realities of the sex trade. The peer volunteers and worker assist the young women and their families in making a transition back to the community.

## TOWARDS A COMMON GROUND

PACE was not prepared to abandon working with local communities and individuals affected by the sex trade on the identification of shared goals and equitable responses. Their experience with members of the Mount Pleasant community and police<sup>v</sup>were, and continues to be, a positive one. They had learned that supposedly conflicting interests could be overcome if there were clearly articulated common purposes.

The biggest obstacle to identifying what opinions these divergent groups shared was to select a method that would give them fairly reliable data. It was decided that an opinion survey was the simplest and most cost effective tool available.

The purpose of *Towards A Common Ground* (see attachment #2) is an attempt to identify what people in Vancouver agree should be done to respond to the sex trade: who should be allowed, where can it happen, what is acceptable, and what cannot be allowed to happen.

The development of *Towards a Common Ground* is indebted to Valerie Spicer and Eileen Mosca's *The Commercial Drive Community Survey* (1997).

Barbara Waldren, a student from SFU with a demonstrated commitment to the idea of community research, volunteered to help distribute the surveys throughout Vancouver.

Barbara collected 50 surveys from each of the 15 neighborhoods with a Crime Prevention Office (CPO). This would allow us to compare the attitudes of different neighborhoods. In order to get fairly representative data, 10 surveys were left with each of the 15 CPOs, and an additional ten, in each neighborhood, were collected on the spot from randomly selected people. The remaining 30 were left with residents and business owners in each community and, at an agreed upon time in the future, Barbara returned to collect them.

This method was chosen over simply dumping them at community agencies and CPOs for anyone to fill out and return. We wanted to collect input from people that would be more representative of the general population.

We hope to release the results in the near future. Unfortunately, without funding it's difficult to input over 700 surveys and write up the results.

### Violence and the Outlaw Status of Street

In a forthcoming article, *Violence And The Outlaw Status of Street Prostitution*, Dr. Lowman discusses the history of the missing and murdered sex workers in British Columbia.

In 1991 local activists and relatives began a Valentine's Day vigil in memory of the murdered women in Vancouver's notorious DTES. Seven years later 16 mostly aboriginal women had disappeared, and the idea that a serial killer was active became common currency among the women on that stroll.

Vancouver Police Department spokespersons effectively dismissed the existence of serial killers preying upon this vulnerable population, suggesting instead that many of the women had probably just chosen to go missing. Family, friends and activists heatedly disputed this idea pointing out that the women had close social ties in the community. In many cases money had either been left in their bank accounts or they hadn't picked up their welfare checks, behavior completely at odds with anyone that has a long history of addiction – as many of these women did.

While the community was demanding that something be done and this issue taken seriously, the Vancouver Police Board had authorized a \$100,000 reward for information related to suburban home invasions. Another \$100,000 was offered for information relating to the identification of the garage robber – a group ambushing people as they pulled into their garages.

This was taken as a sign that the Vancouver Police department considered the safety of residents from affluent neighborhoods a higher priority than the increasing numbers of women missing from one of the poorest postal code districts in all of Canada.

In April 1999, the Mayor finally recommended to the Police Board that they support the posting of an equivalent reward.

Professor Lowman wonders, in this paper, how the police could have *so* quickly dismissed that a serial killer was responsible for any of the murdered sex workers from British Columbia with an active investigation into the Green River Killer just across the border?

The 31 missing women aren't included in the more than 60 murdered sex workers in British Columbia between 1982 and 1998. Where the stroll on which the victim met the assailant is known, nearly all came from the Mount Pleasant and DTES areas.

In April 1999 local media devoted attention to a Vancouver psychiatrist's battle in BC Supreme Court to reveal information about one of his patients -Michael Leopold.

Leopold had recently plead guilty to assaulting a sex worker and revealed to the psychiatrist that he'd actively planned to kill her and others, going *so* far as to turn ~~his~~ basement into a torture dungeon. He intended to render identification impossible by mutilating their bodies and dumping them in the bush near Hope BC. A site where the bodies of other sex workers have been found in the past.

From September 1996 to Dec 1997 five women went missing. Micheal Leopold was free on bail during that time.

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Some of the women have been found, but at the time of this writing 31 women from Vancouver's DTES are still missing and unaccounted for. Meanwhile, a new task force is being assembled but **unless** the police are willing to address their contribution of negligence the conditions will remain unchanged and the numbers will continue to rise. The belated and begrudged recognition of an active serial killer or killers is a farcical victory for families and activists.

Investigators that recognized and demonstrated that it would not be enough to simply investigate the murders, but that conditions contributing to the murders must be changed, were transferred out of the unit.

At the beginning of this year the VPD made an official announcement— they were reducing the staffing commitment of the task force.

Maggie deVries, whose sister is among the 31 missing women, has observed that, "If 20 UBC students went missing over the same period of time there would be mayhem. There would be searches and media interest and rewards."

A small number of offenders are responsible for a large amount of violent sex crimes and murders.

In 1994 Kim Werbecky announced to the media that in April 1981 she had been the victim of a sexual assault while hitchhiking and that the crown decided not to charge the man only after learning that she had been a child prostitute. The individual that she had made the charges against was Clifford Olson. In the following four months - he murdered ten children. (Lowman and Fraser 1996).

In July 1986 11-year-old Alison Parrott's naked body was found in Toronto's Kingsmill Park. She had left her home a day earlier to meet with a 'photographer' who was to take photos of her for an upcoming track meet in New Jersey. Originally a suspect in the slaying, Francis Carl Roy was questioned and released, moving to Vancouver's Mount Pleasant neighborhood two years after the murder.

A decade later two Vancouver police officers caught him in some bushes near where a sex worker had been killed. He had a rape kit - tape, rope and gloves - and although questioned and released he became an immediate suspect in the slaying of two sex workers from the Mount Pleasant area. During their investigation the officers discovered that he had been a suspect in the slaying of Alison Parrott and contacted Toronto's homicide division.

With this new information Roy again became a primary suspect and was eventually convicted for the murder of Alison Parrot.

While Vancouver Police might deny the existence of a serial killer(s) targeting sex workers, their Toronto counterparts contradict them: 'Francis Carl Roy is still being investigated by the RCMP and the Vancouver City Police in regards to the murder of **seven** (emphasis added) women, **three** who are confirmed to be prostitutes between August 1988 and August 1990. All of these women had been strangled.'

Senior Vancouver Police officials"" familiar with the original investigation against Roy for the murder of two sex workers from Mount Pleasant are adamant that the lack of investigation into the homicides was due to the fact that the two victims were sex workers and, not miscommunication between departments as reported in the newspapers.

Violence by serial predators is not the **only** ill that Vancouver street level sex workers can fall victim to:

#### VANCOUVER: THIRD WORLD CONDITIONS IN A FIRST WORLD CITY

Anyone either working or residing in the DTES feels like the butt of a mirthless prank each time Vancouver is selected as a number one destination or place to live. It's difficult to accept that they could continue receiving this kind of consideration if competing international tourism and business communities were aware of the other areas where Vancouver holds the #1 title.

It was only four years ago that the Downtown Eastside was declared a medical health disaster with the highest reported HIV/HEPC infection rates in the Western world and the subsequent \$3 million spent on HIV prevention services is accepted as having had little or no impact.

Over 4700 injection drug users (IDUs) are estimated to live in the area and, until a recent drop, overdose deaths outstripped all other North American cities. Research in Vancouver indicates that 80% of female IDUs report being active in the sex trade, and this population accounts for one of the highest per-centage increases of new HIV infections in Canada.

A report released earlier this month by BC's Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS established that Vancouver is the only city in the developed world where the HIV infection rate among a group of women far outstrips that of men - a consequence they ascribed to our street level sex trade conditions.

Why this should be a major concern for public health officials is illustrated by a young woman who left the hospital in Vancouver where she had been receiving treatment for MV, Hepatitis C and tuberculosis. Well aware that the inevitable consequence of her decision is that she would



die - health care professionals were concerned that on her way out that she would be taking some others with her and debated issuing a medical warrant.

Tuberculosis had left this woman with fashionably chiseled cheekbones. She didn't have to work as hard to turn tricks with suburbanjohns who would pay extra not to use a condom.

A recent syphilis outbreak led Vancouver Health authorities to target street level sex workers. They imported a method more common to the Third World than First. Syndromic management is where you treat everyone considered at risk of having the disease regardless if they are symptomatic or not.

In another Third world parallel, the researchers received permission to use a drug not yet approved for release in Canada.

The conditions encouraging the disease transmission rates have not gone unnoticed by the City. On November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2000 the Mayor Phillip Owen of Vancouver released *A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION -A Four-Pillar Approach to Drug Problems in Vancouver*. To his credit it ranks among the first time a mayor from a major North American City has essentially recognized that the American style war on drugs is not winnable and that we should explore innovative harm reduction initiatives that have demonstrated their success in containing the spread of disease and lowering crime rates in some European Cities. This, for North America, revolutionary approach - safe injection sites, medically prescribed heroin, and low threshold methadone programs - to the issue of drug use, disease and crime went virtually unnoticed in major Canadian media.

A discomfoting gap in the report is the lack of any emphasis on the issue of gender. Women in the sex trade represent a unique population with their own needs requiring specifically tailored and targeted programs.

A sentiment echoed in a recent report by the Vancouver Injection Drug Users Study (VIDUS):

*"It is clear that female injection drug users who also sell sex represent a population that should receive intensive STD prevention interventions. The challenges of dealing with this population however will require innovative approaches. Simply having condoms and providing free diagnostic testing and antimicrobial therapy is not sufficient."*

This same report was concerned that without these 'innovative approaches' SWIDUs could be potential *bridges* to populations outside the DTES through men who visit the area to purchase sex and foreign visitors to the area - tourists or ship workers stopping at Vancouver port. (Doctor Mark Tyndall, September 2000)

International organizations such as UNAIDS, WHO, UNICEF, UNDP, and the World Bank have all stated that peer education for sex workers is the best policy and have subsequently recognized it as a 'high priority' in international development.

Health research and service initiatives often perpetuate the isolation of **sex** workers by viewing them solely as vectors of disease transmission. PACE initially chose not to emphasize HIV/AIDS in their mandate and programs although it was a dominant concern and service priority for the organization. PACE believes that it is the unsafe conditions and the marginalization of this population, rather than sex work itself, which facilitates the risk of HIV/AIDS/HEPC/STDs.

The women from the DTES that worked on the Sex Trade Liaison Officer Proposal and marched to the police station demanding their right to protection by the police from rape and assault **all** had long histories of addiction and were primarily involved in the sex trade to finance their drug habits.

They were the victims of the failure of agencies in the DTES to adequately respond to the issue of HIV/AIDS and wanted to see PACE's peer-driven model applied to their situation. They developed the PACE Health Network (PHN) which is a two-year demonstration model project.

The PHN is effectively a synthesis of PACE and the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU). It is a community empowerment initiative that mobilizes the SWIDU community to identify, develop, implement and evaluate peer driven programs.

The objective of the PHN is the empowerment of the **SWIDU** community through:

- **Personal Empowerment:** making members aware of their skills, possibilities and choices and giving them knowledge of and control over ways to change the conditions that cause them problems,
- **Community Empowerment:** strengthening this population as a whole to demand changes in their communities and to call for a supportive environment, and
- **Social Empowerment:** empowering SWIDUs to fight for their rights and for acceptance by the larger society.

This will be achieved through the creation of a semi-autonomous membership driven project that utilizes the PHN membership to:

1. Identify and develop messages and strategies for HIV/AIDS/HEPC/STD prevention,
2. Staff and operate a SWIDU based needle distribution,
3. Develop and deliver prevention education resource materials,
4. Have weekly board meetings & monthly general membership meetings,
5. Increase condom usage by SWIDUs, their partners and clients and
6. Assist with the development and implementation of improved reporting/tracking of HIV/AIDS/STDs in order to improve the potential effectiveness of treatments.

Unfortunately any program or debate on the conditions of the sex trade in Vancouver will arrive far too late for the woman who left the hospital. Five months ago she suffered a seizure in one of the local parks in Vancouver's east side - admitted to a local hospital she slipped into a coma and died.

## VANCOUVER: A PLIGHT IGNORED

Earlier this year PACE again approached the City of Vancouver requesting support for an outreach program to complement the PHN by targeting adult street level sex workers. Representatives from the Social Planning department, once again, rejected the request deeming the issue as being *“not a high enough priority, at this time”*.

Social Planning's Rick Gates defended the decision, assuring the public that they're working with a collection of veteran service agencies in response to the issue.

It's not the lack of support but the seeming lack of interest from the City that is bewildering. Without the application-rejection-appeal process it appears that PACE wouldn't have any dialogue with social planning.

Granted, it isn't fair to hold City politicians and bureaucrats responsible for conditions that began almost twenty, or even five, years ago, but surely they cannot continue to escape some semblance of responsibility for continuing to refuse to address the issue of Vancouver's sex trade.

Given the absence of this issue on the city's agenda over so many years, the question becomes: how many bodies have to be found, how many women have to disappear, how many people have to die of preventable illnesses before this becomes 'a high enough priority' for the City of Vancouver?

## VIOLENCE AGAINST STREET LEVEL SEX WORKERS IN VANCOUVER

The goal of social science research shouldn't be to just study an issue but to hopefully reveal or discover an aspect that hasn't hitherto been explored - to add value to the debate. Ultimately good research can alter the very way we look at something by challenging our assumptions.

The same goal applies to good agencies – they must continually challenge their own assumptions in order to avoid becoming part of the geography they are trying to change.

Many sex trade advocates feel that researchers and agencies use sex workers as guinea pigs without any benefit accruing to them as a result of the research. Some of the research findings have even provided ammunition to those who want to suppress the sex industry. (*The Journal for Sex WorkResearch*)

Long time sex work advocate and writer Priscilla Alexander argues that sex workers must be involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of programs. Ultimately, in order for research and services for sex workers to be successful they have to move past focusing solely on the women themselves to an exploration of the social conditions under which the sex trade occurs.

Violence against street-level sex trade workers has long been accepted as pervasive. We wanted to gain a better understanding of the conditions under which this violence occurs. Who is it committing these violent acts? What is being done about the violence? Why is this level of violence allowed to continue? How was this allowed to happen?

Thus, we chose to investigate rates of eight different violent acts, based upon Canadian Criminal Code definitions, and three (for the purposes of this paper) non-violent categories – harassment, robbery, and refusal to wear a condom. In an attempt to gauge the gulf between acts of violence suffered and acts of violence reported we also explored police response from the point of view of the women.

## METHOD

Two advisory boards composed of women were established to identify issues, develop the survey tool and figure out how best to collect the data.

One was a community agency board with representation from PACE, AIDS Vancouver, Sheway, High Risk, Street Youth Job Action, and a Doctoral candidate from SFU.

The second was the group of young women from the survival sex trade that had developed the youth forum.

We were helped in this research by the fact that in 1994 staff from PACE Society assisted Simon Fraser University Professor John Lowman and Laura Fraser in collecting data on violence against sex workers in the Downtown Eastside (DTES) and Richards/Seymour areas of Vancouver.

Lowman and Fraser's *Violence Against Persons Who Prostitute: The Experience in British Columbia* gave us an excellent template to use not only for examining violence but to measure what impact initiatives such as the Vancouver Action Plan on Sexually Exploited Youth and the Provincial Prostitution Unit have had.

In 1994 we became aware that some of the women didn't share the understanding of rape/sexual assault as the researchers had intended. Several respondents answered that they had not been victims of rape/sexual assault when the individuals administering the survey knew otherwise. When asked, after, if "they had ever been forced to have sex against their will", they answered yes.

In order to overcome any potential confusion by sex workers and to avoid possible criticisms that the information we collected is neither relevant nor valid in a legal sense the terms used in this survey were taken from the Canadian Criminal Code where it made sense.

A small sample of other changes to the survey were:

- **An** examination of rates of violent acts suffered by this population (within the past week, month, six months or year),

- Whether to the best of their knowledge anyone had been charged,
- Whether, again as much as they could possibly know, had anyone been convicted,
- Were the violent acts reported to the DEYAS bad date sheet,<sup>ix</sup>
- How sex workers feel the police viewed them,
- How sex workers view the police and,
- Slightly expanded demographics.

We used PACE's outreach workers to distribute and collect the questionnaires. They had established a high level of trust and comfort with the population so we felt that there was a greater likelihood of unvarnished responses<sup>x</sup>. Because of the sensitive nature of the information being collected they could also assist with any issues or requests that might arise once the survey was completed. The survey was also an excellent tool for introducing the agency to women not familiar with us.

The questionnaire went through 15 drafts. It was then field-tested on the stroll and accordingly revised seven more times. Emphasis was placed on getting as reflective a cross-section of women in the street level sex trade as possible. Thus, they varied the times, days and places that the information was collected.

The average time spent responding to a survey was 20 to 40 minutes, and all participants received a small honourarium. When it was explained that sex workers founded PACE almost no one declined an opportunity to participate.

Data collection took place over a longer period of time than previous research on this topic -two years. This was an unintended benefit that allowed us to get a fairly representative snap-shot of Vancouver street level sex workers. The sex trade in Vancouver fluctuates seasonally with a larger number of individuals on the stroll during the summer months, many of them traveling a loosely defined 'circuit' from town to town. The demographics also vary with a higher percentage of youth in the summer months as opposed to the winter.

The PHD criminologist Kim Rossmo, best known for his groundbreaking work on geographic profiling, wrote a paper estimating the size of Vancouver's street level sex trade as between 1300 and 2600. With 183 responses we are somewhat confident that the information collected is fairly representative of violence against street level sex workers in Vancouver.

## THE RESPONSE

The report is broken down into sections. Tables 1 to 9 look at the demographics of the women who participated while Tables 10 to 21 examine issues of payment and movement both within the Lower Mainland, on street and off-street, and between cities.

Tables 22 to 106 show responses to the acts of violence explored:

- Harassment  
Tables 22 to 34
- Robbery  
Tables 35 to 37
- Being physically threatened  
Tables 38 to 45
- Being threatened with a weapon  
Tables 46 to 54
- Being physically assaulted *without* a weapon being involved  
Tables 55 to 62
- Being physically assaulted with a weapon *without* being forced to have sex against their will  
Tables 63 to 69
- Refusal to wear a condom  
Tables 70 to 75
- Forced to have sex against their will *without* a weapon being involved  
Tables 76 to 82
- A weapon was used to force them to have sex against their will  
Tables 83 to 90
- Kidnapped/confined  
Tables 91 to 98
- If any one has tried to kill them  
Tables 99 to 106

We asked if any of these things had ever happened to them when they were working on the street. We then asked how many times and when in the past year that it occurred. It was important that we found out who it was committing these acts of violence and whether the women were reporting any of the instances to either the Bad Date Sheet or the police. Finally, we asked if any charges had been laid, or if anyone had been convicted in any of the instances.

Tables 107 to 110 ask whom the women talked to about the violence and if anyone did anything about it. Tables 111 to 119 show what the women think about the police and Vice units. Finally, *Section 6 "In Their Words"* (Tables 120 to 122) asked for comments about what they believed



would make things safer for them and what they would tell a 16 year old thinking about getting into the sex trade.

**Section 1: DEMOGRAPHICS**

Table 1 shows the ages of the women that participated in the research. The youngest contributor was 15 and the oldest was 51. In an industry where youth is a commodity it's not surprising that over half are 24 and under. The average age was 25.9 years old.

**Table 1: How old are you?**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Pct of respondents</b>	<b>Valid Pct</b>	<b>Cumulative Pct</b>
15 - 16	4	2.2	2.2	2.3
17 - 18	20	10.9	11.5	13.8
19 - 20	22	12.1	12.6	26.4
21 -22	23	12.6	12.9	39.7
23 - 24	20	10.9	11.5	51.1
25- 26	20	10.9	11.5	62.6
27 - 28	11	6.0	6.3	69.0
29 - 30	15	8.2	8.6	77.6
31 - 32	8	4.3	4.6	82.2
33 -35	8	4.4	4.5	86.8
36 - 38	10	5.4	5.7	92.5
39 - 43	9	4.9	5.1	97.7
44 and over	4	2.0	2.4	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>95.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
<b>Missing</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4.9</b>		
	<b>183</b>	<b>100.0</b>		

The second table shows the length of time the women have been working in the sex trade. Almost a third of our sample has been working for less than 2 years. The average amount of time is 5.45 years. Six of the respondents had been working in the sex trade for 20 or more years.

**Table 2:  
How long have you been working in the sex trade?**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Pct of respondents</b>
Less than a year	22	12
1-2 years	33	18.0
3-4 years	31	16.9
5-6 years	29	15.8
7-8 years	16	8.7
9-10 years	14	7.6
More than 10	38	20.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>100.0</b>

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct	Cumulative Pct
Never	34	18.6	18.9	18.9
Once	27	14.8	15.0	33.9
Twice	37	20.2	20.6	54.4
3 times	23	12.6	12.8	67.2
4 times	26	14.2	14.4	81.7
5 times	11	6.0	6.1	87.8
More than 5	22	12.0	12.2	100.0
Total	180	98.4	100.0	
Missing	3	1.6		
Total	183	100.0		

Table 4 shows that 40% had quit for a year or more the last time they left the sex trade.

**Table 4:**  
**The last time you stopped working in the sex trade, how long did you stay out?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
A day	14	7.7	7.7
A week	16	8.7	10.3
A month	33	18.0	21.3
Six months	31	17.0	20.0
A year	29	15.9	18.7
More than a year	34	18.6	21.9
Missing	28	15.3	
Total	155	100	

National media attention was recently drawn to Vancouver with the discovery of an 11 year old forced out on the stroll. While various spokespeople have been quoted in the media stating that the average age of entry is around 14 years old it's difficult to find any study that **supports** this. The only research that we are aware of that makes this claim relied on collecting their information **from** front line staff that might understandably be motivated by a desire to draw attention to the issue of youth in the survival sex trade.

Table 5 shows that 13.8% started in the sex trade before they were even teenagers. A full 70% of our sample began before they were old enough to drink legally. The average age was 16.98.

**Table 5: How old were you when you did your first date?**

Age	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct	Cumulative Pct
8 -12	24	13.1	13.8	13.8
13-16	66	36.1	37.9	51.7
17-18	32	17.5	18.4	70.1
19-24	40	21.9	23.0	93.1
25 and over	12	6.6	6.9	100.0
Missing	9	4.9		
Total	183	100.0	100.0	

Table 6 shows an immense overrepresentation of Aboriginal women in the street level sex trade (31.1%). According to the 1996 Census data from Statistics Canada, Aboriginals (North American Indian, Metis, Inuit) constitute only 1.7% of Greater Vancouver's population.

**Table 6: Are you:**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Cumulative Pct
White	88	48.1	52.1
Aboriginal	57	31.1	85.8
Asian	3	1.6	87.6
East Indian	2	1.1	88.8
Black	9	4.9	94.1
Other	10	5.5	100.0
Total	169	92.3	
Missing	14	7.7	
	183	100.0	

Table 7 shows that almost three quarters of the women had left their parent's or guardian's home for good at age 16 or younger. It is a compelling argument for the need to concentrate on prevention programs, such as Parents Together, that target the family of origin.

**Table 7: At what age did you leave your parents' or guardian's home permanently?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
12 or younger	31	15.8	18.7
13-14	48	26.2	31.0
15-16	37	20.2	23.9
17-18	27	14.8	17.4
19-21	11	6.0	7.1
Still live at home	1	.5	.6
Total	155	84.7	100.0
Missing	28	15.3	
	183	100.0	

Table 8 shows the present level of education, 62.4% don't have a high school diploma and 10.2% had only a public school education.

**Table 8: What is your present level of education?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct	Cumulative Pct
Public school	16	8.7	10.2	10.2
Grade 9	21	11.5	13.4	23.6
Grade 10	29	15.8	18.5	42.0
Grade 11	32	17.5	20.4	62.4
Grade 12	43	23.5	27.4	89.8
Univ. BA	5	2.7	3.2	93.0
Some college	11	6.0	7.0	100.0
Total	157	85.8	100.0	
Missing	26	14.2		
	183	100.0		

In table 9 we looked at 3 possible places where involvement could have started. Spotting is the practice of keeping your eye on someone who is working. The spotter is expected to jot down license plate numbers of the cars the women leave in and/or intervene in dangerous situations.

**Table 9: Did your involvement in the sex trade begin with working:**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct	Cumulative Pct
On the street	116	63.4	64.1	64.1
Off-street	33	18.0	18.2	82.3
Spotting	32	17.5	17.7	100.0

## Section 2: TIMES, LOCATIONS, & LIVE GUYS

In table 10 we looked at how many days a week the women worked, 37.5% of the women reported 7 days a week with only 23.8% working 1 to 3 days a week. On average they worked 5 days a week.

**Table 10: Days**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
1 day	7	3.8	4.2
Two days	11	6.0	6.5
Three days	22	12.0	13.1
Four days	22	12.0	13.1
Five days	21	11.5	12.5
Six days	22	12.0	13.1
Seven days	63	34.4	37.5
Total	168	91.8	100.0
Missing	15	8.2	
Total:	183	100.0	

Table 11 shows that on average the women worked 4.3 hours a day but 31.8% reported working 9 or more hours.

**Table 11: On an average day how many hours do you work on the street?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Less than an hour	4	2.2	2.4
1-2 hours	15	8.2	8.8
3-4 hours	38	20.8	22.4
5-6 hours	40	21.9	23.5
7-8 hours	19	10.4	11.2
9 or more hours	54	29.5	31.8
Total	170	92.9	100.0
Missing	13	7.1	
	183	100.0	

Table 12 shows that 58.1% identified themselves as working to supply a drug habit.

**Table 12: Working to supply a drug habit**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Pct of respondents</b>	<b>Valid Pct</b>
<b>Yes</b>	100	54.6	58.1
<b>No</b>	72	39.3	41.9
<b>Total</b>	172	94.0	100.0
<b>Missing</b>	11	6.0	
	183	100.0	

Of the women that identified themselves as working to supply a habit, table 13 shows that 79.2% have to make over \$100 a day. The increase in crack cocaine use has driven down what women charge for sex on the Downtown Eastside. A hundred dollar a day habit doesn't mean just one or two dates - it could be as many as 10.

*An* ethnographer sympathetic to this kind of research method would be a valuable addition to the development and evaluation of peer-based interventions. The BC Centre of Excellence and BC Centre of Disease Control should consider working with community driven initiatives like the PACE Health Network.

**Table 13: How much?**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Pct of respondents</b>	<b>Valid Pct</b>
<b>Less than \$50</b>	4	2.2	4.0
<b>\$50 to \$100</b>	17	9.3	16.8
<b>\$101 to \$200</b>	44	24.0	43.6
<b>More than \$201</b>	36	19.7	35.6
<b>Sum</b>	101	55.2	100.0
<b>Missing</b>	82	44.8	
<b>Total</b>	183	100.0	

We also felt it was important to look at the issue of the 'pimp' Table 14 shows that when asked if they had to give money to somebody to be able to work either on or off-street the majority of women, over 80% of women on the street and over 70% of the women off-street, replied no.

The pimp is neither as wide spread a phenomenon as most people think nor is it very well understood. It is, however, an area that needs serious and considered investigation. The consequences of designing laws and policy based upon a moral panic is well documented elsewhere. In Vancouver, an increasing number of young women have been caught up in 'pimp' hysteria; charged and convicted with living off the avails (pimping), some appearing in youth court. Two of these young women, upon their release, joined PACE to design programs to help other children exit the survival sex trade and assisted with the research.

**Table 14: The pimp?**

	Frequency		Pct of respondents		Valid Pct	
	Street level	Off-Street	Street level	Off-Street	Street level	Off-Street
Yes	30	27	16.4	14.8	17.3	27.6
No	143	71	78.1	38.8	82.7	72.4
Sum	173	98	94.5	53.6	100.0	100.0
Missing	10	85	5.5	46.4		
Total						

Table 15 shows that exploitation is more widespread on street than off-street. This could be reflective of the city's acceptance of the off-street sex trade.



Table 15: If you made \$100 how much do you keep?

	Frequency		Pct of respondents	
	Street level	Off-Street	Street level	Off-Street
Less than \$10	12	1	6.6	.5
\$11-20	3	4	1.6	2.2
\$21-30	2	1	1.6	.5
\$31-40	3	3	2.1	1.6
\$41-50	2	2	1.1	1.1
\$51-60	3	7	1.1	3.8
\$61-70	0	3	1.6	1.6
\$71-80	1	4	0.0	2.2
More than \$80	8	4	.5	2.2
Total	34	29	19.2	15.8
Missing	149	154	79.8	84.2
Total	183		100.0	

Table 16 shows the Lower Mainland street level strolls the women have worked on in the past year. As occurs in other tables where people were allowed to tick off more than one answer the percentage adds up to more than 100.

Table 16: Strolls

	Frequency	Valid Pct
Hastings/DTES	97	51.9
Franklin	89	48.6
Broadway	59	32.2
Regulars	59	32.2
Richards/Seymour	44	24.0
Surry/NewW/Brnby	41	22.4
Quebec/First	17	8.7
Transgendered stroll	7	3.8
Bovstown	4	2.2
Other	3	.5
	183	226.5

Table 17 examines where else they have worked outside of the Lower Mainland. We were interested in the prevalence of involvement in the 'circuit/pipeline'. Our research seems to indicate that in cases of missing women, contact between police and agencies in Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton should be increased.

Table 17: the 'pipeline'

Outside of Lower Mainland	Frequency		Pct of responses	
	Off-street	Street level	Off-street	Street level
Calgary	18	27	21.4	13.6
Edmonton	10	28	11.9	14.1
Toronto	9	17	10.7	8.5
Kelowna	6	17	7.1	8.5
Victoria	6	15	7.1	7.6
Los Angeles	5	10	5.9	5.0
Montreal	5	9	5.9	4.5
Seattle	5	8	5.9	4.0
Winnipeg	5	11	5.9	5.5
Las Vegas	4	12	4.8	6.0
Hawaii	2	8	2.4	4.0
Kamloops	2	5	2.4	2.5
New York	2	4	2.4	2.0
Miami	1	8	1.2	4.0
Portland	1	6	1.2	3.0
Prince George	1	5	1.2	2.5
Halifax	nil	3	nil	1.5
Other	2	6	2	3
	84	199	100.0	100.0

Table 18 shows the types of locations where our respondents have worked in the off-street sex trade in the past year.

Table 18: Off-street sex trade

	Frequency	Pct of responses*
Regulars	43	28.0
Escort Agency	32	21.0
Ad in Buy & Sell	25	16.0
Bars/Clubs	21	18.0
Ad in West Ender	14	9.0
Body Rub Parlour	12	8.0
Ad in other papers	5	3.0
Health Enhancement	3	2.0
Other	1	Nil
<b>Total:</b>	156	100.0

\*Adds up to more than 100 since they could tick off more than one answer

As table 19 shows, 44.3% of the respondents reported involvement with the off-street sex trade.

**Table 19: How many days a week do you work off-street on average?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents
One day	18	9.8
Two days	16	8.7
Three days	11	6.0
Four days	11	6.0
Five days	14	7.7
Six days	4	2.2
Seven days	7	3.8
Total	81	44.3
Missing	102	55.7
Total	183	100.0

Table 20 looks at the number of hours per day the women worked off-street.

**Table 20: off-street hours**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents
Less than an hour	8	4.4
1-2 hours	9	4.9
3-4 hours	18	9.8
5-6 hours	18	9.8
7-8 hours	10	5.5
9 or more hours	17	9.2
Total	80	43.8
Missing	103	56.2
Total	183	100.0

Table 21 looks at just about all the possible locations or places in the Lower Mainland where the women might have worked prior to this year.

Table 21: places &amp; locations

	Frequency	Valid Pct
Hastings/DTES	46	13.1
Regulars	43	12.3
Franklin	39	11.1
Surrey/New West/Brnby	29	8.3
Richards/Seymour	26	7.4
Bars & Clubs	25	7.1
Mount Pleasant	22	6.3
Quebec & 1 <sup>st</sup>	22	6.3
Escort Agency	21	6
No where else	18	5.1
Massage Parlour	15	4.3
Ads in Buy & Sell	14	4
Body Rub Parlour	12	3.4
Ads in West Ender	7	2
Other Place	5	1.4
Ads in other papers	4	1.1
Transgendered Stroll	3	.85
Total	351	

## HARASSMENT

Table 22 shows that 83.1% report having been harassed since they've worked in the street level sex trade.

Table 22: harassment

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	147	80.3	83.1
No	30	16.4	16.9
Total	177	96.7	100.0
Missing	6	3.3	
Total	183	100.0	

Table 23 shows how many times within the past year that the respondents were subjects to harassment. Where the individual indicated that there had been more than 10 incidents, but did not put in a number, we created an average based on the number of incidents reported by those who had written one in. We have also done this for all the categories.

**Table 23: rates of harassment**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
	21	11.5	14.9
2 times	16	8.7	11.3
3 times	17	9.3	12.1
4 times	13	7.1	9.2
5 times	8	4.4	5.7
6 times	7	3.8	5.0
7 times	3	1.6	2.1
8 times	3	1.6	2.1
9 times	2	1.1	1.4
10 times	5	2.7	3.5
More than 10	46	32.6	32.6
Total	141	77.0	100.0
Missing	42	23.0	
	183	100.0	

Table 24 shows that within the past year over half of the respondents report having been harassed within the last month.

**Table 24: Within the last year approximately when did these incidents occur?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
betweenthe past 0-7 days	44	24.0	32.6
Between 8-30 days ago	28	15.3	20.7
31-182 days	27	14.8	20.0
183-365 days	36	19.7	26.7
Total	135	73.8	100.0
Missing	48	26.2	
	183	100.0	

Table 25 shows that the women report dates as 'others' committing much of the harassment. 'Other' is primarily young men and women who get kicks from driving around the stroll throwing objects or yelling at the women while they work.

**Table 25: Who did this to you while you were working on the street**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Date	107	58.5	96.4
Other	3	1.6	2.7
Everyone	1	.5	.9
Total	111	60.7	100.0
Missing	72	39.3	
	183	100.0	

PACE workers have also been subject to harassment by belligerents driving the stroll. Vicious comments are the least of their concern. The outreach workers report having urine, bleach, pennies and beer bottles thrown at them by passing cars.

On two separate occasions, it has crossed the line into situations where the workers have been at risk of their lives. While collecting the property of a young woman, leaving the sex trade, from her home the author and PACE's first outreach worker were attacked by 'two pimps. Patrick Healey the outreach worker, was forced to his knees with a gun behind his ear.

On another occasion an outreach worker stepped in to stop the assault of a sex worker and was beaten by three men. When VPD patrol officers came upon the scene they questioned and released the three men telling the outreach worker that he should expect these kinds of things to happen considering the population (sex workers) that he's working with.

The Vancouver Police Department is currently reconsidering their use of female operatives posing as sex workers due to the high potential for them to be victims of

violence. A female officer posing as a sex worker was off work for a year after a date brutally assaulted her in the ten seconds it took her back-up to arrive on the scene.

Table 26 shows whether they reported any of the incidents to the bad date sheet. This is run by DEYAS and takes anonymous information from the women on violent predators and puts it on a monthly handout. (see sample attachment). Over 50% didn't report any of the incidents to the bad date sheet.

**Table 26: Did you report any of these incidents to the bad date sheet?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	67	36.6	45.3
No	81	44.3	54.7
Total	148	80.9	100.0
Missing	35	19.1	
	183	100.0	

Table 27 shows that over 68% have never reported any instances of harassment to the police.

**Table 27: Did you report any of these incidents to the police?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	46	25.1	31.7
No	99	54.1	68.3
Total	145	79.2	100.0
Missing	38	20.8	
	183	100.0	

Table 28 shows that over 80% answered that charges had never been laid.

**Table 28: Were charges ever laid in any of these cases?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	21	11.5	16.2
No	109	59.6	83.8
Total	130	71.0	100.0
Missing	53	29.0	
	183	100.0	

Table 29 shows that in over 90% of the instances the women were not aware of any convictions.

**Table 29: Was anyone convicted?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	8	4.4	6.2
No	122	66.7	93.8
Total	130	71.0	100.0
Missing		29.0	
	183	100.0	

## ROBBED

Table 30 shows that over half of the women report having been robbed since entering the sex trade.

**Table30: Since entering the sex trade has anyone robbed you when you were working on the street?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	95	51.9	53.7
No	82	44.8	46.3
Total	177	96.7	100.0
Missing	6	3.3	
	183	100.0	

Table 31 shows that 43.2% of the women report having been robbed in the last year. 79 people reported 188 instances for an average of 2.38 per person within the last year.

**Table 31 Within in the past year how many times has someone tried to rob you?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Once	37	20.2	46.8
2 times	19	10.4	24.1
3 times	9	4.9	11.4
4 times	7	3.8	8.9
5 times	1	.5	1.3
More than 5	6	7.6	7.7
Total	79	43.1	100.0
Missing	104	56.8	
	183	100.0	



Table 32 shows that 35.9% report having been robbed within the past month.

**Table 32: Within the past year when did these incidents occur?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
past 0-7 days	16	8.7	20.5
Between 8-30 days ago	12	6.6	15.4
31-182 days	26	14.2	33.3
183-365 days	24	13.1	30.8
Total	78	42.6	100.0
Missing	105	57.4	
	183	100.0	

Table 33 asks who robbed them.

**Table 33: Who robbed you?**

	Frequency	ValidPct
Date	66	49.25
Prostitute	23	17.2
Your man/pimp	12	9.0
Other	10	7.5
Boyfhend	9	6.7
Uniform police	8	6.0
Vice	3	2.2
Spouse	2	1.5
Girlfriend	1	0.7
Total	134	100.0
Missing	49	

Table 34 shows that 57% did not reported any of the incidents to the bad date sheet.

**Table 34: Did you report any of these incidents to the bad date sheet?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	41	22.4	43.2
<b>NO</b>	54	29.5	<b>56.9</b>
Total	94	51.9	100.0
Missing	89	48.1	
	183	100.0	

Table 35 shows that almost 75% have never reported at least one robbery to the police.

**Table 35: Have you reported any of these incidents to the police?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	24	13.1	25.3
No	71	38.8	74.7
Total	95	51.9	100.0
Missing	88	48.1	
	183	100.0	

Table 36 shows that almost 90% report that no charges were ever laid in any instance.

**Table 36: Were charges ever laid in any of these cases?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	9	4.9	10.2
No	79	43.2	89.8
Total	88	48.1	100.0
Missing	95	51.9	
	183	100.0	

Table 37 shows that 93% weren't aware of any convictions.

**Table 37: Was anyone convicted?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	6	3.3	6.9
No	81	44.3	93.1
Total	87	47.5	100.0
Missing	96	52.5	
	183	100.0	

## PHYSICALLY THREATENED

In this category we examined the women being subject to threats of physical harm. Table 38 shows that 70.5% report having been physically threatened while working on the street.

**Table 38: Since entering the sex trade has anyone physically threatened you?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	122	66.7	70.5
No	51	27.9	29.5
Total	173	94.5	100.0
Missig	10	5.5	
	183	100.0	

Table 39 shows that 73.2% say that they were physically threatened more than once within the past year. 111 individuals reported 760 incidents for an average of 6.85 per person per year.

**Table 39: How many times in the last year were you threatened?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Once	30	16.4	26.8
Twice	29	15.8	25.9
3 times	7	3.8	6.3
4 times	9	4.9	8.0
5 times	7	3.8	6.3
6 times	5	2.7	4.5
8 times	1	.5	.9
10 times	4	2.2	3.6
More than 10	19	10.4	17.3
Total	110	61.2	100.0
Missing	73	38.8	
	183	100.0	

Table 40 shows 39.6% report being subjected to a threat of physical harm within the past month.

**Table 40: Within the last year when did these incidents occur?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Between the past 0-7 days	22	12.0	19.8
Between 8-30 days ago	22	12.0	19.8
31-182 days	32	17.5	28.8
183-365 days	35	19.1	31.6
Total	111	60.7	100.0
Missing	72	39.3	
	183	100.0	

Table 41 shows who committed these acts within the last year.

**Table 41: Who did these things to you while you were working on the street?**

	Frequency	Pct of frequency
Date	88	48.1
Sex Worker	32	17.5
Your man/pimp	31	16.9
Other person	15	8.2
Boyfriend	14	7.7
Vice	11	6.0
Spouse	2	1.1
Total	193	

Table 42 shows that 63% have not reported any incidents to the bad date sheet

**Table 42: Did you report any of these incidents to the bad date sheet?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	45	24.6	36.3
No	78	42.6	<b>62.9</b>
Total	123	67.8	100.0
Missing	59	32.2	
	183	100.0	

Table 43 shows that over 75% never reported at least one instance of being physically threatened to the police.

**Table 43: Did you report any of these incidents to the police?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	27	14.8	22.1
No	95	51.9	<b>77.9</b>
Total	122	66.7	100.0
Missing	61	33.3	
	183	100.0	

Table 44 shows that almost 90% report that no charges were ever laid.

**Table 44: Were charges ever laid in these incidents?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	11	6.0	9.9
No	99	54.1	<b>89.2</b>
Total	110	60.7	100.0
Missing	72	39.3	
	183	100.0	

Table 45 shows that over 90% report that no one was ever convicted.

Table 45: Was anyone convicted?

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	7	3.8	6.5
No	101	55.2	93.5
Total	108	59.0	100.0
Missing	75	41.0	
	183	100.0	

### THREATENED WITH A WEAPON

Table 46 shows that 44.5% report having been threatened with a weapon since working on the street.

Table 46: Since entering the sex trade has anyone threatened you with a weapon when you were working on the street?

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	77	42.1	44.5
No	96	52.5	55.5
Total	173	94.5	100.0
Missing	10	5.5	
	183	100.0	

Of these, Table 47 shows that 60.3% report having been threatened with a weapon more than once in the past year, 63 individuals indicated 159 instances for an average of 2.52 per person per year.

Table 47: Within the past year how many times has someone threatened you with a weapon?

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Once	25	13.7	39.7
Twice	16	8.7	25.4
3 times	9	4.9	14.3
4 times	6	3.3	9.5
5 times	2	1.1	3.2
6 times	1	.5	1.6
7 times	2	1.1	3.2
10 times	1	.5	1.6
More than 10	1	.5	1.6
Total	63	34.4	100.0
Missing	120	65.6	
	183	100.0	

Table 48 shows that 41.9% report having been threatened with a weapon within the past month.

**Table 48: Within the last year when did these incidents occur?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Between the past 0-7 days	14	7.7	22.6
Between 8-30 days	12	6.6	19.4
31-182 days	15	8.2	24.2
183-365 days	21	11.5	33.9
Total	62	33.9	100.0
Missing	121	66.1	
	183	100.0	

Table 49 shows that dates are responsible for the most threats with a weapon followed by other sex workers and pimps.

**Table 49: Who did these things to you while working on the street?**

	Frequency	Valid Pct
date	56	35.4
Your man/pimp	19	12.3
Prostitute	16	10.3
Boyfriend	7	4.5
Other person	7	4.5
Uniform police	7	4.5
Vice	3	1.9
Total	115	

Table 50 shows that 60% have never reported at least one instance of being threatened with a weapon to the bad date sheet.

**Table 50: Did you report these incidents to the bad date sheet?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	32	17.5	40.5
No	47	25.7	59.5
Total	79	43.2	100.0
Missing	104	56.8	
	183	100.0	

Table 51 shows that over 70% have not reported at least one instance of being physically threatened to police.

**Table 51: Did you report any of these incidents to the police?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	22	12.0	27.8
No	57	31.1	72.2
Total	79	43.2	100.0
Missing	104	56.8	
	183	100.0	

Table 52 shows that 86% have reported that no charges were ever laid in any of these instances.

**Table 52: Were charges laid?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	10	5.5	14.1
No	61	33.3	85.9
Total	71	38.8	100.0
Missing	112	61.2	
	183	100.0	

Table 53 shows that 10.1% reported being aware of a conviction.

**Table 53: Was anyone convicted?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	7	3.8	10.1
No	61	33.3	88.4
Total	70	37.7	100.0
Missing	113	62.3	
	183	100.0	



### PHYSICALLY ASSAULTED WITHOUT A WEAPON BEING INVOLVED

Table 54 shows that 51.2% respondents report having been physically assaulted without a weapon having been involved since they have been working on the street.

**Table 54: Physically assaulted you without a weapon being involved?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	87	47.5	51.2
No	83	45.4	48.8
Total	170	92.9	100.0
Missing	13	7.1	
	183	100.0	

Table 55 shows that 47.3% report that they have been physically assaulted within the past year more than once. 74 people reported 181 acts of physical assault for an average of 2.45 per year.

**Table 55: How many times in the past year?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Once	39	21.3	52.7
Twice	15	8.2	20.3
3 times	5	2.7	6.8
4 times	7	3.8	9.5
5 times	2	1.1	2.7
8 times	1	.5	1.4
9 times	1	.5	1.4
10 times	2	1.1	2.7
More than 10	2	1.1	2.7
Total	74	40.4	100.0
Missing	109	59.6	
	183	100.0	

Table 56 again shows that dates commit the majority of assaults followed by other sex workers.

**Table 56: Who did this do you?**

	Frequency	Valid Pct
Date	69	57.5
Prostitute	15	12.5
Your man/pimp	13	10.8
Uniform police	7	5.8
Boyfriend	6	5.0
Other person		3.3
Souse		2.5
Missing		2.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 57 shows that 41.6% of these assaults have occurred within the past month.

**Table 57: When did each of these incidents occur?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Between the past 0-7 days	16	8.7	20.8
Between 8-30 days	16	8.7	20.8
1-182 days			2
183-365 days	21	11.5	27.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>42.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Missing</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>57.9</b>	
	<b>183</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 58 shows that 58% have not reported any incidents of assault to the bad date sheet

**Table 58: Did you report any of these incidents to the bad date sheet?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	37	20.2	42.0
No	51	27.9	58.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>48.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Missing</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>51.9</b>	
	<b>183</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 59 indicates that three quarters of these women have never reported at least one incident to the police within the last year.

**Table 59: Did you report any of these incidents to the police?**

Yes	22	12.0	24.4
No	68	37.2	75.6
Total	90	49.2	100.0
Missing	93	50.8	
	183	100.0	

Table 60 shows that over 90% report that no one was charged in any of the incidents.

**Table 60: Where charges laid?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	7	3.8	8.4
No	76	41.5	91.6
Total	83	45.4	100.0
Missing	100	54.6	
	183	100.0	

Table 61 shows that over 90% believe that no one was ever convicted.

**Table 61: Was anyone convicted?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	5	2.7	6.0
No	78	42.6	92.9
Total	83	45.9	100.0
Missing	100	54.1	
	183	100.0	

**PHYSICALLY ASSAULTED WITH A WEAPON WITHOUT BEING FORCED TO HAVE SEX AGAINST THEIR WILL**

We used this unwieldy term to differentiate it from rape. Table 62 shows that 30.3% of the respondents report having been assaulted with a weapon since working on the street.

**Table 62: Assaulted with a weapon?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	50	27.3	30.3
No	115	62.3	69.7
Total	165	90.2	100.0
Missig	18	9.8	
	183	100.0	

Of these, Table 63 shows that 47.6% report having been physically assaulted with a weapon without anyone forcing them to have sex against their will more than **once** in the last year. 41 individuals reported 86 acts of physical assault with a weapon involved for an average of 2.1 times per person per year.

**Table 63: How many times in the last year?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Once	22	12.0	52.4
Twice	10	5.5	23.8
3 times	1	.5	2.4
4 times	5	2.7	11.9
5 times	2	1.1	4.8
More than 10 times	1	.5	2.4
Total	41	23.0	100.0
Missing	142	77.0	
	183	100.0	

Table 64 shows that of those that reported having been assaulted with a weapon 53.8% were within the past months.

**Table 64: When did these incidents occur?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Between the past 0-7 days	10	5.5	25.6
Between 8-30 days	11	6.0	28.2
31-182 days	8	4.4	20.5
183-365 days	10	5.5	25.6
Total	39	21.3	100.0
Missing	144	78.7	
	183	100.0	

Table 65 shows that dates were again the most violent. Police and Vice combined are reported as committing as many acts as pimps.

**Table 66: Who did these things to you?**

	Frequency	Valid Pct
Date	33	49.3
Your man/pimp	8	11.9
Prostitute	7	10.4
Other person	7	10.5
Boyfriend	5	7.4
Uniform police	4	6.0
Vice	2	3.0
Spouse	1	1.5
	67	100.0

Table 66 shows that over two-thirds did not report at least one instance to the bad date sheet.

**Table 66: Did you report to the bad date sheet?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	15	8.2	29.4
No	35	19.7	68.6
Total	50	27.9	100.0
Missing	133	72.1	
	183	100.0	

Table 67 shows that over three-quarters had not reported any of these acts to the police.

**Table 67: Did you report any of these incidents to the police?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	11	6.0	22.4
No	38	20.8	77.6
Total	49	26.8	100.0
Missing	134	73.2	
	183	100.0	

Table 68 shows that only almost 9 out of ten of the women report that no charges were laid.

**Table 68: Were charges ever laid?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	5	2.7	10.2
No	44	24.0	89.8
Total	49	26.8	100.0
Missing	134	73.2	
	183	100.0	

Table 69 shows that over 90% state that no one was ever convicted

**Table 69: Was anyone convicted of these charges?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	4	2.2	8.7
No	42	23.0	91.3
Total	46	25.1	100.0
Missing	137	74.9	
	183	100.0	

## REFUSAL TO WEAR A CONDOM

Table 70 shows that 82.9% report that people have refused to wear a condom.

**Table 70:**  
**Has anyone refused to wear a condom when you were working on the street?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	145	79.2	82.9
No	30	16.4	17.1
Total	175	95.6	100.0
Missing	8	4.4	
	183	100.0	

Table 71 shows that 89% report that it has happened more than once within the past year. 136 of the women report 1,892 instances of refusal to wear a condom within the past year for an average of 13.91 per person per year. Considering the HIV and HEPC infection rate in Vancouver this statistic raises concern about the impact of safe sex campaigns for men purchasing sex.

**Table 71:**  
**Within the past year, how many times has someone refused to wear a condom?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Once	15	8.2	11.0
Twice	17	9.3	12.5
3 times	13	7.1	9.6
4 times	8	4.4	5.9
5 times	10	5.5	7.4
6 times	5	2.7	3.7
7 times	5	2.7	3.7
8 times	7	3.8	5.1
10 times	7	3.8	5.1
More than 10	49	26.9	36.0
Total	136	74.3	100.0
Missing	47	25.7	
	183	100.0	

Table 72 shows that within the past month 58.6% of 128 women report someone refused to wear a condom.

**Table 72: Within the past year, when did these incidents occur?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
past			
0-7 days			
Between 8-30 days	29	15.8	22.7
31-182 days	33	17.6	25.0
183-365 days	20	10.9	15.6
Total	128	69.9	100.0
Missing	55	30.1	
	183	100.0	

Understandably, Table 73 shows that dates are the most likely to refuse to wear a condom.

**Table 73: Who refused to wear a condom while your were working on the street?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents
Date	134	85.9
Your man/pimp	7	4.5
Vice	2	1.3
Uniform police	5	3.2
Prostitute	2	1.3
Boyfriend	3	1.9
Spouse	1	.6
Other person	2	1.3
	156	100.0

Table 74 shows that a third of the women report having done a date without a condom. Questions regarding high-risk practices are often under reported in quantitative research.

**Table 74: Have you ever done a date without a condom?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	49	26.8	33.8
No	96	52.5	66.2
Total	145	79.2	100.0
Missing	38	20.8	
	183	100.0	



Table 75 shows that money and being drunk or high were the two biggest factors for doing a date without a condom.

**Table 75:**  
What factors most influenced your decision not to use a condom?

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Money	19	10.4	38.0
I was drunk/high	14	7.7	28.0
In order to survive/threat of violence	7	3.8	14.0
He was a regular	10	5.5	20.0
Total	50	27.3	100.0
Missing	133	72.7	
	183	100.0	

**FORCED TO HAVE SEX AGAINST THEIR WILL WITHOUT A WEAPON BEING INVOLVED**

Table 76 shows that 45.8% report having been forced to have sex against their will without a weapon being involved since working on the street.

**Table 76:**  
Has anyone forced you to have sex against your will without a weapon being used?

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	81	44.3	45.8
NO	96	52.5	54.2
Total	177	96.7	100.0
Missing	6	3.3	
	183	100.0	

Table 77 shows that **56.7%** report that it has happened more than once within the past year.

**Table 77:**  
 Within the past year how many times has someone tried to force you to have sex against your will without a weapon being involved?

		Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Once	29	15.8	43.3
Twice	20	10.9	29.9
3 times	2	1.1	3.0
4 times	5	3.3	9.0
5 times	2	1.1	3.0
6 times	3	1.6	4.5
10 times	3	1.6	4.5
More than 10	2	1.0	3.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>36.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Missing	116	63.4	
	183	100.0	

Table 78 shows that 37.9% reported being raped within the last month.

**Table 78:** Within the last year approximately when did these incidents occur?

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Between the past 0-7 days	6	3.3	9.1
Between 8-30 days	19	10.4	28.8
31-182 days	20	10.9	30.3
183-365 days	21	11.5	31.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>36.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Missing	117	63.9	
	183	100.0	

Unfortunately, in all of the drafts and changes, we missed including the critical question of whom it was doing this. The incident rates are similar to that of sexual assault with a weapon and we are comfortable assuming that it is the same perpetrators.

Table 79 shows that 60 % never reported even one of the incidents to the bad date sheet.

**Table 79: Did you report any of these incidents to the bad date sheet?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	32	17.5	39.5
No	49	26.8	60.5
Total	81	44.3	100.0
Missing	102	55.7	
	183	100.0	

Table 80 shows that over three-quarter have not reported at least one incident to the police

**Table 80: Did you report any of these incidents to the police?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	18	9.8	22.2
No	63	34.4	77.8
Total	81	44.3	100.0
Missing	102	55.7	
	183	100.0	

Table 81 shows that 88.6% reported that no charges had been laid.

**Table 81: Were charges ever laid in any of the cases?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	8	4.4	11.4
No	62	33.9	88.6
Total	70	38.3	100.0
Missing;	113	61.7	
	183	100.0	

Of these, Table 82 shows that 94.3% said that no one was convicted

**Table 82: Was anyone convicted?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	4	2.2	5.7
No	66	36.1	94.3
Total	70	38.3	100.0
Missing	113	61.7	
	183	100.0	

**A WEAPON WAS USED TO FORCE THEM TO HAVE SEX AGAINST THEIR WILL.**

Table 83 shows that 40.7% of the women reported that a weapon had been used to force them to have sex against their will since working on the street.

Table 83:

Since entering the sex trade has anyone used a weapon to try to force you to have sex against your will when you were working on the street?

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	66	36.1	40.7
No	96	52.5	59.3
Total	162	88.5	100.0
Missing	21	11.5	
	183	100.0	

Of these, Table 84 shows that 38.8% report it happening more than once within the past year.

Table 84:

Within the past year how many times has someone used a weapon to try to force you to have sex against your will?

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Once	30	16.4	61.2
Twice	6	3.3	12.2
3 times	7	3.8	14.3
4 times	2	1.1	4.1
5 times	2	1.1	4.1
6 times	1	.5	2.0
7 times	1	.5	2.0
Total	49	26.8	100.0
Missing	134	73.2	
	183	100.0	

Table 85 shows that 63.8% report having been raped within the past six months.

**Table 85: Within the last year when did these incidents occur?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Between the past 0-7 days	3	1.6	6.4
Between 8-30 days	6	3.3	12.8
131-182 days	21	11.5	44.7
183-365 days	15	8.2	31.9
Total	45	24.6	100.0
Missing	138	75.4	
	183	100.0	

Dates are again the highest perpetrators but Table 86 shows that if uniform police and Vice were combined they would have the same reported rate of attempted rape using a weapon as pimps. That some officers are capable of violence against sex workers is documented in *Violence Against Persons Who Prostitute: The Experience in British Columbia (1996)*

“Our records indicate that men are prosecuted for crimes against prostitutes, ...including four police officers in British Columbia over the past six years (one **RCMP**, two **VED** officers, and a reserve). In 1988 one **VPD** officer was found guilty of extorting sexual favors from a seventeen-year-old prostitute while he was on duty, and was sentenced to six months. In 1991 another Vancouver officer was sentenced to five years for charges of extortion, sexual assault (two counts) unlawful confinement (two counts), theft, and robbery.”

**Table 86: Who did this to you?**

	Frequency	Valid Pct
Police	55	72.4
Other person	1	1.3
Your madpimp	6	7.9
Vice	2	2.6
Uniform police	4	5.3
Prostitute	3	4.0
Boyfriend	4	5.3
Spouse	1	1.3
	183	100.0

Table 87 shows that 63.8% never reported any of these incidents to the bad date sheet.

**Table 87: Did you report any of these incidents to bad date sheet?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	25	13.7	36.2
No	44	24.0	63.8
Total	69	37.7	100.0
Missing	114	62.3	
	183	100.0	

Table 88 shows that 72% have never reported least one of these incidents to the police.

**Table 88: Did you report any of these incidents to the police?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	18	9.8	26.5
No	49	26.8	72.1
Total	67	36.6	100.0
Missing	116	63.4	
	183	100.0	

Table 89 shows that 85.9% were not aware of any charges having been laid.

**Table 89: Were charges laid in any of these cases?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	9	4.9	14.1
No	55	30.1	85.9
Total	64	35.0	100.0
Missing	119	65.0	
	183	100.0	

Table 90 shows that 86.2% weren't aware of any convictions.

**Table 90: Was anyone convicted?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	6	3.3	9.2
No	56	30.6	86.2
Total	62	33.9	100.0
Missing	121	66.1	
	183	100.0	

## KIDNAPPED/CONFINED

Table 91 shows that 41.9% of the respondents report having been kidnapped/confined since working on the streets.

**Table 91:**  
**Since entering the sex trade has anyone kidnapped/confined you when you were working the street?**

			Pct
Yes	72	39.3	41.9
No	100	54.6	58.1
Total	172	94.0	100.0
Missing	11	6.0	
	183	100.0	

Of these, table 92 shows 30.9% report having been kidnapped/confined more than once. Of the 55 respondents they report 98 incidents for an average of 1.78 per person per year.

**Table 92: Within the past year how many times has someone tried to kidnap you?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Once	38	20.8	69.1
Twice	9	4.9	16.4
3 times	4	2.2	7.3
4 times	2	1.1	3.6
More than 10	2	1.1	3.6
Total	55	30.1	100.0
Missing	128	69.9	
	183	100.0	

Table 93 shows that 72% report having been kidnapped/confined within past six months.

**Table 93 Within the past year when did these incidents occur?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Between past 0-7 days	5	2.7	10.0
Between 8-30 days	7	3.8	14.0
31-182 days	24	13.1	48.0
183-365 days	14	7.7	28.0
Total	50	27.3	100.0
Missing	133	72.7	
	183	100.0	

Table 94 shows that dates commit the majority of kidnappings.

**Table 94: Who did these things to you?**

	Frequency	Valid Pct
Date	59	67.8
Your man/pimp	11	12.6
Vice	2	2.3
Uniform police	3	3.4
Prostitute	4	4.6
Boyfriend	5	5.8
Spouse	1	1.2
Other person	2	2.3
Total	87	

Table 95 shows that 65.7% have not reported any of these incidents to the bad date sheet.

**Table 95:  
Did you report any of these incidents to the bad date sheet?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	24	13.1	34.3
No	46	25.1	65.7
Total	70	38.3	100.0
Missing	113	61.7	
	183	100.0	

Table 96 shows that 64.8% have not reported at least one of these incidents to the police within the past year.

**Table 96: Did you report any of these incidents to the police?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	25	13.7	35.2
No	46	25.1	64.8
Total	71	38.8	100.0
Missing	112	61.2	
	183	100.0	

Table 97 shows that 82.8% report that to their knowledge no charges were ever laid.



**Table 98: Were charges laid in any of the cases?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	11	6.0	17.2
No	53	29.0	82.8
Total	64	35.0	100.0
Missing	119	65.0	
	183	100.0	

Table 98 shows that 87.1% report that there were no convictions.

**Table 98: Was anyone convicted?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	8	4.4	12.9
No	54	29.5	87.1
Total	62	33.9	100.0
Missing	121	66.1	
	183	100.0	

### ATTEMPTED MURDER

Table 99 shows that 33.1% report that someone has tried to kill them since they worked on the street

**Table 99: Has anyone tried to kill you since working on the street?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	58	31.7	33.1
No	117	63.9	66.9
Total	175	95.6	100.0
Missing	8	4.4	
	183	100.0	

Of these, table 100 shows that 35.9% report more than one attempt to kill them in the past year. 39 women report 85 attempts for an average of 2.18 per person per year.

**Table 100:**  
**Within the past year how many times has someone tried to kill you?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Once	25	13.7	64.1
Twice	5	2.7	12.8
3 times	3	1.6	7.7
4 times	2	1.1	5.1
6 times	2	1.1	5.1
10 times	1	.5	2.6
More than 10	1	.5	2.6
Total	39	21.3	100.0
Missing	144	78.7	
	183	100.0	

Table 101 shows that **59.5%** reported that someone has attempted to kill them within the past 6 months.

**Table 101: Within the past year when did these incidents occur?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Between the past 0-7 days	5	2.7	13.5
Between 8-30 days	8	4.4	21.6
31-182 days	9	4.9	24.3
183-365 days	15	8.2	40.5
Total	37	20.2	100.0
Missing	146	79.8	
	183	100.0	

Table 102 shows that dates are responsible for the majority of attempted murders.

**Table 102:**  
**Who did these things to you while you were working on the street?**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Pct</b>
Date	44	63.8
Your man/pimp	11	15.9
Boyfriend	6	8.7
Uniform police	2	2.9
Prostitute	2	2.9
Vice		2.9
Other person	2	2.9
	69	100.0

Table 103 shows that 43.1% reported at least one of these instances to the bad date sheet.

**Table 103: Did you report any of these incidents to the bad date sheet?**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Pct of respondents</b>	<b>Valid Pct</b>
Yes	25	13.7	43.1
No	33	18.0	56.9
Total	58	31.7	100.0
Missing	125	68.3	
	183	100.0	

Table 104 shows that almost 60% never reported even one instance of attempted murder to the police.

**Table 104: Did you report these to the police?**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Pct of respondents</b>	<b>Valid Pct</b>
Yes	23	12.6	40.4
No	34	18.6	<b>59.6</b>
Total	57	31.1	100.0
Missing	126	68.9	
	183	100.0	

Table 105 shows that almost 80% of the women report that no charges were ever laid in any of the murder attempts.

**Table 105: Were charges laid in any of these cases?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	11	6.0	19.3
No	45	24.6	78.9
Total	56	30.6	100.0
Missing	126	69.4	
	183	100.0	

Table 106 shows that 88.9% report that there was no convictions in cases of attempted murder.

**Table 106: Was anyone convicted?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Yes	6	3.3	11.1
No	48	26.2	88.9
Total	54	29.5	100.0
Missing	129	70.5	

## IS ANYBODY OUT THERE?

Table 107 shows that the women rely on their social circle for assistance in almost half of the instances.

**Table 107:**  
**While working on the street, when you been assaulted, raped, threatened, robbed, harassed. ...who have you reported incidents to?**

	Frequency	Pct of frequency
Friend	83	18.7
Sex trade worker	64	14.5
Your man/pimp	43	9.7
Uniform police	42	9.5
Outreach worker	34	7.7
Street Nurse	30	6.8
Nobody	26	5.9
Doctor	23	5.2
Date/regular	22	5.0
Parent	17	3.8
Vice	16	3.6
Counselor	12	2.7
Other person	10	2.3
Rape relief/battered shelter	10	2.3
Social Worker	7	1.6
Agency Owner	4	.9
Total	443	

Table 108 shows who actually helped them. It's frightening to see that 'nobody' is the most frequent response; pimps and street nurses are tied while social workers were of less assistance than the dates.

**Table 108: Which of these people you reported these incidents to actually helped you?**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Pct of total frequency</b>
Nobody	48	17.6
Friend	44	16.1
Prostitute	34	12.5
Your man/pimp	24	8.8
Street Nurse	24	8.8
Outreach worker	19	7.0
Uniform police	15	5.5
Parent	11	4.0
Rape relief/battered shelter	11	4.0
Doctor	10	3.7
Some other person	9	3.3
Vice	9	3.3
ate/regular		1.8
Counselor		1.8
Social worker		1.8
gency Owner		.4
otal	273	

Table 109 shows that the most common acts of violence by sex workers are threats and robbery.

**Table 109: While working on the street, have you ever.. .**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Pct</b>
physically threatened anyone	71	22.3
Robbed someone	70	21.9
Physically assaulted someone without a weapon	67	21.0
Physically assaulted someone with a weapon	42	13.2
Threatened someone with a weapon	40	12.5
Tried to kill someone	13	4.1
Kidnapped/confined someone	12	3.8
Forced someone to have sex against their will	4	1.8
Total	319	

Table 110 shows that the most common victim of violence by sex workers were dates. Considered in the context of the major perpetrators of violent acts against them - much of these acts could be seen as self-defense.

**Table 110: Who have you done these things to?**

	Frequency	Valid Pct
date	78	42.4
Prostitute/Sex Worker	53	28.8
Your man/pimp	21	11.4
Other person	13	7.1
Boyfriend	11	6.0
Spouse	3	1.6
Girlfriend	2	1.1
Uniform police	2	1.1
Vice	1	.5
Total	184	

#### HOW THE WOMEN FEEL ABOUT THE VPD

We wanted to look at how the women thought uniform police and the vice department viewed them.

Table 111 shows how the women perceive Vancouver's Vice department. Of the 177 women that answered the question over a quarter don't believe that any are concerned.

**Table 111: Do you think vice care about your safety?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Most/all of them concerned	29	15.8	16.4
Some of them are concerned	103	56.3	58.2
None of them are concerned	45	24.6	25.4
Total	177	96.7	100.0
Missing	6	3.3	
	183	100.0	

We also wanted to look at how they felt Vice treated them, Table 113 shows that inconsistency and a lack of trust were the most common responses.

**Table 112: How do vice treat you?**

	Frequency	ValidPct
It varies/it's not consistent	60	16.3
I don't trust most of them	50	13.6
I trust most of them	45	12.2
Most of them are respectful	41	11.1
Most of them take me seriously	33	8.9
Most of them do a good job	30	8.1
Most of them harass me	30	8.1
Most of them are helpful	28	7.6
Most of them are uncooperative	25	6.8
Other	9	3.8
Most of them don't take me seriously	13	3.5
Total		

The need for understanding, education and respect are consistent themes that have been articulated throughout **this** project by the women and the youth in the survival sex trade.

**Table 113: How could vice improve their relationship with you?**

	Frequency	Valid Pct
Vice should be more Understanding	98	28.9
Vice need to be educated	80	23.6
Vice should be more respectful	73	21.5
More female vice officers	45	13.3
Don't need to improve	17	5.0
Should have more vice	14	4.1
Other	12	3.5
Total	339	

Contrary to Vancouver Police Department spokesperson Anne Drennan's public statement that the VPD investigates all crimes equally, regardless of who the victim is, table 114 is a graphic depiction of the women's belief that the laws are not equally



applied. At the bottom end of the scale almost one out of five of the women believe that not a single police officer out of ten would do anything if a sex trade worker were raped. When asked "Out of ten police officers, how many would do anything if a square woman was raped?" not a single respondent believed that there wasn't an officer who would turn his back.

The disparity is just as strong at the opposite end of the scale. Less than 5% of the women thought all ten offices would do something if a woman in the sex trade was raped, while an overwhelming majority of the respondents (70%) thought all ten officers would do something if it wasn't a woman in the sex trade.

**Table 114: Sex workers and square women**

	Frequency		Valid Pct	
	Sex Worker	Square Woman	Sex Worker	Square Woman
None	30	Nil	18.0	0
One	18	4	10.8	2.4
Two	29	4	17.4	2.4
Three	14	2	8.4	1.2
Four	15	4	9.0	2.4
Five	32	6	19.2	3.6
Six	11	1	6.6	.6
Seven	7	4	4.2	2.4
Eight	0	10	0	6.0
Nine	3	13	9.8	7.7
Ten	8	120	4.8	71.4
Total	167	168	100.0	100.0
Missing	16	15		
	183	183		

Table 115 shows that 39.2% of the women were convicted for communicating for the purposes of prostitution. Vancouver Police Department reports that procuring charges are down by 50% while communicating charges are up by 130% in 2000 compared to 1999.

**Table 115:**  
**How many times have you been convicted for communicating?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Never	101	55.2	60.8
Once	19	10.4	11.4
Twice	19	10.4	11.4
3 times	10	5.5	6.0
4 times	1	.5	.6
5 times	4	2.2	2.4
6 times	1	.5	.6
7 times	3	1.6	1.8
8 times	1	.5	.6
10 times	3	1.6	1.8
11 or more	4	2.1	2.4
Total	166	90.7	100.0
Missing	17	9.3	
	183	100.0	

Table 116 shows that over a quarter of the women believe that none of the uniform police actually care about their safety.

**Table 116: Do you think the uniform police care about your safety?**

	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Most/all of them are concerned	28	15.3	6
Some of them are concerned	97	53.0	56.7
None of them are concerned	46	25.1	26.9
Total	171	93.4	100.0
Missing	12	6.6	
	183	100.0	

Table 117 shows that the women simply want understanding and respect and feel that this can be achieved through education.

**Table 117: In what ways do you think the uniform police could improve their relationship with you?**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Pct</b>
Police should be more understanding	97	25.2
Police need to be educated	90	23.4
Police should be more respectful	87	22.6
Police do not care enough to improve	52	13.5
More female police officers	30	37.8
Should have more police patrols	15	3.9
Don't need to improve	14	3.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>385</b>	

We asked the women to write in the name of an officer that they believe truly cares about their welfare. We included this question hoping that the Vancouver Police Department would go to these officers and inquire how they've gained the women's trust. Out of 155 respondents 29.7% put in the name of Dave Dixon, a police officer in the DTES. 14.2% said that there was an officer but they didn't know their name.

We were interested in what the police have ever done for and to the women. Table 118 shows that the women report more officers paying for sex than taking them to shelters or clinics. That some officers are concerned about the women is reflected in their warning and lectures about the dangers. Hopefully in the future this will be balanced by the women reporting that officers have been as diligent in enforcing laws against rape and assault as they are in lecturing them about the dangers of the sex trade.

Table 118: Have the police ever:

	Frequency	ValidPct
Warned you about dangers	105	16.3
Lectured you about danger	97	15.0
Said they were concerned for your safety	86	13.3
Ridiculed you	78	12.1
Taken your picture against your will	56	8.8
Made sexual comments to you	46	7.1
Taken you home	44	6.8
Told your parents/social worker that you were a prostitute	42	6.5
Paid for sex	35	5.4
Wanted free sex	26	4.0
Taken you to a shelter	22	3.4
Taken you to a clinic	9	1.4
Total	646	

Table 119 shows that the women essentially use the same strategies to protect themselves whether working on or off-street – relying upon themselves.

Table 119: What do you do to protect yourself when you are working on/off-street?

	Frequency		Valid Pct	
	Street level	Off-street	Street level	Off-street
Don't work off/on street	50	21	22.0	4.0
Trust my senses	48	131	20.9	24.7
Avoid drunk or stoned tricks	31	93	13.8	17.6
Don't use drugs or drink when working	23	69	10.2	13.0
Carry a weapon	22	61	9.8	11.5
Work with a friend	19	69	8.4	13.0
Spotter	14	45	6.2	8.5
Trick pad	10	24	4.4	4.5
Other protection	7	15	3.1	2.8
Nothing	1	2	Nil	.4
Total	225			

Table 120 asked what services they believe there should be for sex workers. The women overwhelmingly wanted safer working conditions and the laws changed. Respect and education by the community and enforcement agencies far outweighed the least popular option of more police and vice.

**Table 120:How could working on the street be safer?**

	Frequency	Valid Pct
Safe houses/safe trick pads	107	11.4
Being allowed to work in well lit locations	100	8.5
Change the laws	98	8.4
24hr drop in centers	88	7.5
More outreach services	76	6.4
Better lighting	68	5.8
More mobile outreach vans	65	5.6
Self owned escort services	62	5.3
Better community education	61	5.2
24hr crisis lines	61	5.2
Patrols of ex-prostitutes	60	5.1
Transition houses	59	4.9
More drop in Centres	53	5.5
Better police education	53	4.5
Better education of vice	53	4.5
Don't work on the street	33	2.8
City-run security	31	2.6
Increased police patrols	22	1.9
Increased number of vice	16	1.4
Total	1170	

## IN THEIR WORDS

We basically asked the same question ~~twice~~ but this time we asked the women to write in comments. The women again overwhelmingly wanted safer working conditions. Among comments were:

*"I see plenty of services for those who are on welfare. For those who are not – few of them. No medical insurance or access to legal aid – the money for paying lawyers comes off the street "*

*"Someone or somewhere to raise the level of self esteem in working girls. Some understanding on behalf of regular people because we are just living our lives. So I'm different doesn't mean a non-prostitute is any better."*

*"Officer in charge of following up rape, assaults and murders of sex workers specifically."*

*"Better health and counseling services for rape victims."*

*"Places like PACE and better advertising for them so that people know about them. More outreach and resources."*

*"Counseling/Safe houses/Police (on our side)"*

*"Lots of outreach programs...some girls need support they lack from family and friends."*

*"The strength to square us."*

*"Safe trick pads/life skills training! Options stressed ie how to get out."*

*"Safe place to do dates – monitored. More lighting and police patrols (concerned for the girls safety not busting or moving girls along.)"*

*"The same as any other workers."*

*"24 hour drop-in, less charging of girls, house for prostitutes, counseling for recovery from sex trade, groups in house, resources to leave it, support – Celebrate surviving, no shame."*

*"Just people who don't judge you – talk down to you or make you feel guilty or dirty. More Vice who have been street workers/prostitutes etc."*

*"Outreach workers/Red light district."*

This is another section where we let the women write in their answers and comments, and then we created categories that reflected what they said. People have pride and no matter how bad the choices they've made or the conditions they find themselves in you can't expect them to admit to a stranger that they wish they were anywhere else but where they are in exchange for a few dollars. Not only ours but prior research has shown that the average age that women begin their involvement in Vancouver's street level sex trade is around 16, so rather than ask how they felt about their life we asked, 'What would you tell a 16 year old getting into the sex trade?' Over three-quarters basically said do not do

it. Around 10% made any comment that could be seen as encouraging this as a career choice.

**Table 121: What would you tell a 16 year old girl thinking about entering the sex trade.**

	Frequency	of respondents	Valid Per
Don't do it/Don't start	45	24.6	26.7
Try to talk her out of it.	30	16.4	17.8
Think again, this isn't easy	15	8.2	8.9
It's not worth it	13	7.1	7.7
Big mistake	12	6.6	7.1
Go home	12	6.6	7.1
Scare her straight	11	6.0	6.5
Use your brain	10	5.5	5.9
Go home or I'll beat you.	9	4.9	5.3
Be careful	6	3.3	3.6
Don't have a pimp	2	1.1	1.2
None of my business	1	.5	.6
Send her for help	1	.5	.6
Please don't it's dangerous	1	.5	.6
Bump her	1	.5	.6
Total	169	92.3	100.0
Missing	14	7.7	
	183	100.0	

The range of comments ran the gamut from the simple, "Go home" and "If you really want to die why don't you just shoot yourself?" to longer paragraphs:

*"You won't make fifty grand and get out, that's what everybody who gets in thinks. - I'm just going to buy a car and pay off my bills - it never happens. In 8 years on the street I've only ever met one sex trade worker who made anything in a financial sense. The drugs, the violence, the absence of a sense of direction drags almost everybody down. Nobody ever decides to become a drug addict - same thing for career sex trade workers - nobody hopes for that and it happens anyway."*

Other comments:

*"You are beautiful, you have your whole life ahead of you; nothing is worth selling a little pride every date unless it's all gone already. I would also take her on a tour of her future downtown skid row to scare her away."*

*"I tell them, I have lost 14 friends to the sex trade industry, I have been stabbed, robbed and shot at, raped and beaten and just when you think you're over the worst & someone like me will come along and make your life worse because the girls can be worse than the pimps."*

*"It's like drugs, once you start, reality becomes very distorted and you become hooked. It's not a very glamorous life. I wish I had stayed in school and received my schooling and have a better way & living than laying down with a man for \$60 - \$150, the money really isn't worth it."*

*"Please don't. It's dangerous. Street = Drugs + Death."*

*"You're probably cutting back your life expectancy, you'll lose your self respect and esteem. You'll end up probably hating yourself and walking around feeling guilt and shame all the time."*

*"I would not consider it my problem cause it's none & my business, only if she were a close friend or family."*

*"Get the fuck home."*

We also gave the women an opportunity to write in answers to the question, "What got you into the sex trade?". Table 122 shows their responses broken into reflective categories.

Table 122	Frequency	Pct of respondents	Valid Pct
Needed the money	65	35.5	40.4
Drugs	30	16.4	18.6
Met the wrong man	20	10.9	12.4
Friends	13	7.1	8.0
Boyfriend after hooking me on drugs	9	4.9	5.6
Forced to	5	2.7	3.1
Mother	5	2.7	3.1
Family problems	4	2.2	2.5
Made bad choices	4	2.2	2.5
Sister	2	1.1	1.2
Father	1	.5	.6
Uncle	1	.5	.6
Cousin	1	.5	.6
Sex	1	.5	.6
Total	161	88.0	100.0
Missing	22	12.0	
	183	100.0	



This doesn't reflect the breadth or timbre of their answers. All of the questions were optional and they wrote these comments at the end of filling out a survey that took almost half an hour to complete. It is important that their voice be directly heard. Don't skim through; the women took the extra time out because they wanted their words to be heard.

*"Needed money, had no place to live at twelve."*

*"A guy got me wired to heroin without me realizing it until I was junk sick."*

*"Money for housing-money for drug addiction-to be complimented valued-to be loved!"*

*"Ex-boyfriend, beat me up if I didn't work on the street."*

*"No where to go with no money and responsible to take care of a 16 year old younger sister."*

*"Movie: Pretty Woman, glorified and glamorized. Peer pressure by so called friends."*

*"I met a very smooth fast taking pimp, and was lured by the huge money. I was a teacher/administrator at a small private language school at the time. The idea would not have occurred to me on my own."*

*"I thought it would be lots of money & cool & get me out of the house. Worst mistake of my life. I thought I would be a star."*

*"I lost my daughter when I was 16 years old & decided that I was going to get even with the government"*

*"Mother was alcoholic was involved with abusive man, he had put me in hospital at 11 yrs with a 2x4. Mother made blind, so I ran away from home. Been on my own since 13 yrs never went back."*

*"Easy money and drugs. Now it's because I got a kid to take care of:"*

*"I have a 13 month old daughter so it was this or welfare."*

*"I had a sugar daddy who got me hooked on cocaine and the only option for more was the inevitable"*

*"Mom got me working on street."*

*"I was forcefully hooked on drugs by being held against my will and drugged Then I was turned out."*

*"I wanted tickets to go to a Guns n' Roses concert."*

*"My father used to bring prostitutes home. I wanted to see if it was for me, my mom kicked me out, it was my final choice."*

*"Looking for love in all the wrong places; became the money; cause my man wanted me to."*

*"A boyfriend who loved me so much he fed me heroin until he made me work the streets."*

*"Survival, wanted to eat; safer than home."*

*"The money, nice clothes thought I'd be a glamour girl with all the most expensive clothes, jewelry, etc. Then 4 years later - I'm an alcoholic Ho! Then 3 years later - I'm a junkie ho!"*

*"For money and understanding and compassion."*

*"I was a WOL from group home. Hadn't eaten for long time so I asked one of the girls to show me how"*

*"My mom sold me to her pimp."*

*"I ran away and this girl said I could stay at her house then these guys intimidated me to work."*

*"Dancing and when guys came and offer money. It looked and sounded to good at the time and it paid for college."*

*"By force boyfriend, held child while I made his drug money."*

*"Bad things when growing up."*

*"Very vulnerable, never felt loved, met a man, was my first love, turned out to be a fairy tale, then everything turned sour."*

*"I got kicked out of my mom's and a friend of mine knew a date who paid to take polaroids of us half dressed and then after that I went directly to standing on the corner"*

## SOMEBODIES GOT IT WRONG

The question now becomes how ‘reliable or valid’ our data is. One method is to compare it to similar works on the issue. Making a definitive statement based on comparing data from studies done at different times is dangerous. Meshing diverse methods, conflicting term definitions and a tendency to select the bits and pieces that supports your argument are only a few of the pitfalls.

Fortunately, “representatives from PACE helped to design, pretest and circulate” the 1996 Survey of Victimization of Women Who Prostitute, in *Violence Against Persons Who Prostitute: The Experience In British Columbia* (Lowman and Fraser 1996 - herein referred to as *Violence 1994* – the year in which the data was collected). Since we used that survey as a template we’re fairly comfortable in comparing some of the results. The sample size in 1994 was 65; this sample is considerably larger – 183 (there are an additional 21 surveys to be inputted (final total: 204) – those results will be published in an academic journal).

Table 123 shows fairly similar results with the 2000 population being slightly older; while Table 124 shows a higher rate of violence in all shared categories – the percentage differences have been highlighted. Where there is not a generally accepted term employed we have shown the results of the individual research. The greatest differences are in the categories of refusal to wear a condom and attempted murder – up 41% and 23.4% respectively.

Table 123: Demographics	Violence (1994)	Violence (1999-2000)
	Average age of respondents	24.1
Average years in sex trade	5-6	5.45
Age of first date	16.5	16.98
White	62.5%	48.1%
Aboriginal	10.9%	31.3%

Table 124: Changes in Violence	Frequency		% (Missing values removed)	
	Violence 1994	Violence 1999-2000	Violence 1994	Violence 1999-2000 (Percentage change in brackets)
General harassment	43	147	69.4	83.1 (+ 13.7%)
Threat/intimidation	41	122	66.1	70.5 (+ 4.4 %)
Had use knife	32		51.6	
Dumped	27		43.5	
Refused condom	26	145	41.9	82.9(+ 41%)
Beating*	24	87	38.7	51.2 (+ 12.5%)
Robbery	23	95	37.1	53.7 (+ 16.6%)
Sexual Assault**	23	81*	37.1	45.8*(+ 8.7%)
Had used gun	22		35.5	
Unwanted acts	21		33.9	
Kidnap/Confine	20	72	32.3	41.9 (+ 9.6%)
Strangling	19		30.6	
Other weapon	17		27.4	
Attempted Murder	6	58	9.7	33.1 (+ 23.4 %)
Other	2		3.2	
Threatened with a weapon		77		44.5
Assault with a weapon w/o rape		50		30.3
A weapon was used during rape		66		40.7

\* The 2000 survey asked: "Since entering the sex trade has anyone physically assaulted you without a weapon being involved when you were working on the street."

\*\*The 2000 survey asked: "Since entering the sex trade has anyone tried to force you to have sex against your will without a weapon being involved when you were working on the street?"

There are five key factors that could explain the higher rates of violence in our research.

First, our data was collected from women on **all** of the strolls throughout Greater Vancouver whereas *Violence* chose to concentrate on Richards/Seymour and the DTES in order to compare the experiences of the women on those strolls. Therefore, we probably collected information from a higher percentage of women who use **drugs**.

Second, drug use patterns aren't static. There was an observed dramatic increase in crack cocaine in the intervening years by both the women and dates. The prices charged for sex have fallen accordingly, often pitting the women against each other.

Third, the conditions that gave rise to the remarkable explosion of HIV/HEPC/STD infection rates amongst the SWIDU population have largely gone unchanged; obviously there are now even more women that are far more sick than they were then. Surviving in conditions of unremitting disease, addiction and violence functions like a self-fulfilling prophecy – driving the desperate to engage in even riskier behaviours.

Fourth, almost a third of our sample identified themselves as aboriginal. We are talking with several organizations about isolating the data on aboriginal women in order to compare it to the non-aboriginal population and using the information to identify, develop and implement pro-active strategies.

Finally, it simply could be worse out there now than it was 7 years ago and without fundamental change we may very well find that it is worse still in another seven years.

Our research, and efforts by others – notably the BC Centre of Excellence in HIV/AIDS – seems to indicate that conditions for Vancouver women in the survival sex trade are worsening. In contrast statistics from the Vancouver Police Department indicate the city is becoming an even safer place to live. Table 125 shows a decline in almost **all** categories of violence in the similar time period (1994 to 2000).

<b>Table 125: Vancouver Police Department Statistics</b>	<b>Vancouver Police Department Statistics 1994</b>	<b>Vancouver Police Department Statistics 2000 (Percentage change in brackets)</b>
<b>Violent Crimes</b>		
<b>Homicide</b>	25	17 (- 32%)
Attempted Murder	25	26 (+ 4%)
Sexual Offences''	681	488 (- 28.3%)
Assaults - Total'''	4907	3923 (-20%)

Perhaps the chasm is one of selected emphasis. Table 126 shows that during the same period there was an increase in two categories – drug offences and prostitution.

<b>Table.126: Vancouver Police Department Statistics</b>	<b>Vancouver Police Department Statistics 1994</b>	<b>Vancouver Police Department Statistics 2000 (Percentage change in brackets)</b>
Prostitution	125	200 (+60%)
Drugs	2141	3080 (+43.8%)

Obviously the Vancouver Police Department has not been inactive, however they have been selective in what they choose to enforce. In 1997 Vancouver established the Coalition on Drug Treatment and Crime Prevention. Three years later drug related arrests in the Downtown Eastside were up a staggering 80% over the previous year.

This pattern is repeated in the latest statistical report. Drug offenses are up 57.9% from 1999 to 2000, and prostitution charges (Bawdy House, Procuring and Communicating) have increased 122.2%.<sup>xiii</sup>

It should be noted that successful conclusions to violent crime investigations are hindered anytime where the victim and perpetrator are strangers to each other. This is overwhelmingly the case in acts of violence against women in Vancouver's street level sex trade - where dates are the people responsible for the majority of incidents. Due to the contradictory nature of laws on the sex trade (prostitution is legal but everything and everywhere associated with it is not) the women are engaged in an illegal activity - increasing their reluctance to report incidents.

This in no way dismisses the responsibility of the police to pursue investigations into rape and assault, nor does it justify their demonstrated pick and choose approach to law enforcement.

In the past, domestic assault, rape within marriages, and child sexual abuse did not exist if one relied on police statistics as a reflection of reality. It wasn't until groups worked to

have these things recognized as existing and moved society to express its repugnance that enforcement bodies began to pursue and punish the perpetrators.

Fifty years ago the conditions of marriage were blatantly unfair to women - groups, mostly women, organized and advocated for changes to the institution of marriage, not its abolishment. Today the conditions of prostitution are blatantly unfair and unsafe for a group of women - sex workers - but the efforts of some of the most vocal feminist groups appears to be dedicated to the abolition of the institution and not to changing the conditions.

Violence against women in Vancouver's street level sex trade must receive the same consideration and concerted effort. These women must be brought within the umbrella of fundamental human rights - the right to equal protection by the law.

**Is there something *so* heinous about the sight of a woman selling her body that it could outweigh protecting her from rape, assault and murder?**

## A SEX TRADE LIAISON OFFICER

Recommendations of admirable research is sometimes bogged down by a wish list of special interest groups or make the resolution of an issue dependent upon the abolition of such things as poverty and patriarchy. Although both admirable long-term goals, we were concerned about what could be done to immediately change things. It was incumbent upon us not to simply point fingers at what we perceived to be the failure of others, but to supply or initiate solutions.

A way out of this situation had to be found and the women couldn't wait for the conclusion of the research. With input and direction from the young women on the advisory board and a group of DTES sex workers from the PACE Health Network we developed a policy paper that we felt would contribute to preventing violence.

The provincial government in British Columbia had recently initiated a new policy on domestic assault that gave us a tenable template to mimic.

Dan Moon, the original Crown Counsel with the Provincial Prostitution Unit, took time **out of** his personal life to help in developing a draft outline for the ***Sex Trade Liaison Officer Policy*** that was presented to the Vancouver Police Department Services Board in December of last year.

Sex workers from the **DTES** and staff from women's groups further developed the Sex Trade Liaison Officer policy. Among the women's groups were Justice for Girls, Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW), the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, individuals from the B.C. Sexual Assault Center, and a Youth Worker from the Women's Rehabilitation Centre in Katmandu that works with Nepalese **girls** trafficked into the brothels of India.

We had a private meeting with Mayor Philip Owen and gave him the Liaison Officer Policy first draft. We also made him aware that it appeared that the report would have no choice but to be highly critical of the city of Vancouver.

The Mayor invited us to present the policy at the next meeting of the Vancouver Police Services Board in December, 2000.



Contrary to an earlier stated promise from the Mayor that the Police Services Board meetings were to be open to the general public, this meeting was held on the seventh floor of the Cambie police station. We arrived with a group of what the media reported as 'up to 60 placard waving sex workers' and their allies immediately encountering difficulties.

Officers stipulated that the placards must remain outside and that only 10 of the women would be allowed upstairs, only after presenting photo ID at the front desk.

This demand effectively barred the street level sex workers from the **DTES** who had helped develop the proposal from attending the board meeting. Only through the timely intercession of Vancouver City Councilor Fred Bass was the embargo lifted and ten women were allowed upstairs. Below is the proposal that was submitted for consideration.

### THE SEX TRADE LIAISON OFFICER PROPOSAL

The creation of a Sex Trade Liaison Officer position within the VPD would:

- Reduce the murder, rape and assault rates;
- Prevent the recruitment and involvement of children in the **sex** trade;
- Ensure a higher rate of successful pimping investigation and convictions;
- Contribute to a higher homicide clearance rate;
- Assist communities in developing strategies to deal with the impact of prostitution in their neighborhood.

By facilitating investigations related to the physical/sexual assault and homicide of individuals in prostitution a Liaison Officer would **be** able to gain the trust of women and children in the street level **sex** trade. This can be achieved through two-parts:

- Reporting structure
- Responsibilities

## SECTION ONE: REPORTING STRUCTURE

### C. INTRODUCTION

- Prostitution and prostitution related issues are a concern throughout Vancouver and not simply limited to a single area, although at any given time certain neighborhoods are affected to a greater degree than others. Due to the transitory nature of prostitution, the effect of localized enforcement efforts (displacement), and the fact that prostitution occurs on and off-street, the Liaison Officer's mandate should **be** citywide.
- The effectiveness of the Liaison Officer will be directly related to their ability to gain: the trust of youth in the survival **sex** trade and women in prostitution, the input and support of residents and business owners, and the co-operation of service agencies will **be** required.

## B. DIRECT AUTHORITY

- Due to the expertise of the sexual assault unit, it is recommended that the officer be based.
- There must be strong accountability to, and support from, the broader community that works with women in the sex trade. This can be achieved by having regularly scheduled with the advisory panel.

## C. ADVISORY PANEL

- Regular input should be solicited from a variety of partners through the creation of an advisory panel. Suggested members are: patrol division representatives, First Nations Women's Health organization, Crime Prevention coordinators, service agencies, BC Womens, Sexual Assault Centre, First Nation and other health care advocates

## SECTION TWO: RESPONSIBILITIES

### D. POLICE

The Liaison Officer will:

- Encourage patrol division officers to actively pursue reported cases of physical and sexual assault where the victim is an individual known to be involved in prostitution;
- Ensure that victims of sexual assault receive appropriate services (ie placement in safe houses & access to agency support)
- Assist in physical/sexual assault and homicide investigations when the victim is a known prostitute. They will provide the victim with the attending officer's name or number, the case number, contact phone number and see that the victim is referred to an appropriate agency or ministry service;
- Be responsible for rapid identification of prostitution-related nuisance areas;
- Develop multi-service responses to concerns from business owners and residents regarding identified prostitution-related nuisance areas;
- Serve as a city-wide resource to CPOs and patrol divisions in order to develop comprehensive strategies to respond to the issue of prostitution. The goal of these strategies would be to avoid simply displacing the problem from one residential area to another;
- Help support and develop enforcement investigation regarding men who purchase sex from children and pimping investigations.
- Assist in the development of appropriate medical care for First Nations women in the survival sex trade.

### B. COURTS

The Liaison Officer will:

- Help ensure witness testimony in sexual/physical assault and homicide cases involving individuals engaged in prostitution;
- Aid in developing and ensuring adequate and sensitive support strategies for youth in the survival sex trade;
- Work to ensure witness testimony in 2124 and pimping cases;
- Make them available to give opinion/evidence in court regarding the dynamics of prostitution and the effects on youth in the survival sex trade. This would free other officers, such as Vice Unit investigators from unnecessary court appearances;

- Assist victims in obtaining criminal compensation.

### C. COMMUNITY

The Liaison Officer will:

- Directly work with individuals involved in prostitution in order to establish protocols of behavior which are sensitive to the needs of the communities affected by the issue;
- Help develop more efficient coordination of community based initiatives in order to respond to prostitution related issues;
- Aid CPOs in developing responses to the issue of prostitution in their neighborhoods;
- Work directly with service agency front-line workers in order to gain the trust of individuals engaged in prostitution;
- Respond to individual complaints regarding police/courts.

### CONCLUSION

Although the Federal Government is responsible for a law recognized as "ineffective in terms of the reduction of street prostitution and aggravation experienced by members of the community" (Canadian Centre For Justice Statistics), it is local law enforcement agencies that bear the brunt of community dissatisfaction.

Short of losing a charter challenge there is little likelihood that the Federal Government will make any substantive changes to the law. Thus, local law enforcement agencies must explore new and innovative techniques to respond to the issue of prostitution and its effect on residential areas.

The goal of the Liaison Officer is the reduction of harm. Residents and business owners will have an identifiable individual to respond to their concerns. Crime Prevention Offices will have a much-needed resource in order to develop strategies. The Vice Unit and Patrol Divisions will be able to free up much needed resources to pursue priority calls and the Sexual Assault Unit will gain additional manpower to pursue investigations.

More importantly, this would significantly reduce the rape, assault and homicide rates suffered by women in the street level sex trade in Vancouver.

### VPD BOARD RESPONSE

Our goal was not the wholesale adoption of the Liaison Officer Position within the VPD but to articulate a simple idea, whose time has come - that these women, regardless of what they are engaged in, deserve to be protected from rape and assault.

Social change doesn't happen overnight.

In March of this year the Vancouver Police Board agreed with the VED that a Sex Trade Liaison Officer position **not** be created. However, they called upon the police department to utilize:

*“the existing mechanisms within the VPD, while advancing positive and progressive change, and that a follow-up report be submitted after the three month trial; AND THAT the VPD explore the inclusion of PACE in education opportunities at the Police Academy.”*

The liaison officer policy was developed as a concrete point from which to begin to change things. The responsibility to report on changes within 3 months and the opportunity to help form the attitudes of the next generation of officers represents a small but fundamental ~~shift~~ and groups like PACE must be as vocal in their recognition of efforts as they are in their criticisms.

Unfortunately, it is ‘the existing mechanisms within the VPD’ that have helped create a geography of degeneracy where **some** people are more worthy of protection than others. They were joined by the most unlikely and unwitting of allies in the making of this landscape – a perplexing silence by liberal feminism in the face of such unnecessary tragedy and their seeming abandonment of the political and legal articulation of this issue to the radical/abolitionist wing who equate any legal recognition of the sex trade to countenancing slavery.

Feminism & the sex trade – Problematic or just a problem?

*“Now, I say the time has arrived when serious men should give to prostitution serious thought...The field of inquiry may be repulsive, the problems that meet us difficult of solution, and my fellow labourers must expect for a season at least to have only their labour for their pains, and for their only reward an approving conscience. But we ~~may~~ trust that the time is approaching when the justice of our cause will be acknowledged. It cannot be that the people of this country will for ever ignore the misery to be found in their midst. Nor even to human ears can The crying of the poor and the sighing of the needy, for ever appeal in vain.”*

**William Acton** *Prostitution (1857)*

No law, neither by volition nor omission can be seen as contributing to rape, assault and murder, but this is what has happened. The contradictory laws governing the sex trade have played a direct role in contributing to the rape, assault and murder of women in the street level sex trade.

Here is an issue where the law has helped to place a vulnerable population in the position of crippling disadvantage - defined by their gender and reduced to a commodity to be bought and sold for the pleasure of men – you’d think that this would be one of the premier rallying points for the feminist community, but it has not been *so*.

That said, neither feminism nor the sex trade is monolithic. **You** can no more credibly point to the street level trade in the DTES and say that is representative of the conditions for the entire sex industry than you could take a single argument from one theorist or camp and declare it *the* feminist position.

But, our interest is not to explore the myriad theoretical perspectives of either, rather it is to speculate on how they have been politically articulated and what the consequences are for women selling sex on the streets of Vancouver.

In 1990 there was an opportunity to force the government to bring these conditions to an end. It was met with a deafening silence from liberal feminist groups, who have appeared willing to leave the political articulation **of** this issue to the radical/abolitionist wing of feminism.

In the compelling and erudite article *Whores and Worthies: Feminism and Prostitution* Janice Dickin McGinnis explores how the abandonment of this issue by Canadian mainstream feminism to anti-pornography forces was used to maintain laws that have made the street level sex trade more dangerous.

“As much as feminists may protest that they are only taking on these types of questions for the good of all women, and particularly the good the women they see as caught in the tentacles of the sex trade, they must confront the fact that their stance and their words are being used to disadvantage other women, no matter what their intent.”  
(*McGinnis*)

In May of 1990 two sections of the laws governing the sex trade were brought before the Supreme Court of Canada. While prostitution is legal, the bawdy house portion makes it against the law to buy or sell sex in off-street settings and the communicating section does the same for the buying or selling of sex in public (both sections are reproduced underneath in their entirety).

193(1) Every one who keeps a common bawdy-house is guilty of an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for two years.

193(2) Every one who  
 (a) is an inmate of a common bawdy-house,  
 (b) is found, without lawful excuse, in a common bawdy-house, or  
 (c) as owner, landlord, lessor, tenant, occupier, agent or otherwise having charge or control of any place, knowingly permits the place or any part thereof to be let or used for the purposes of a common bawdy-house,  
 is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction  
*(now known as section 210)*

195.1(1) Every person who in a public place or in any place open to public view  
 (a) stops or attempts to stop any motor vehicle.  
 (b) impedes the free flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic or ingress to or egress from premises adjacent to that place, or  
 (c) Stops or attempts to stop any person or in any manner communicates or attempts to communicate with any person for the purpose of engaging in prostitution or of obtaining the sexual services of a prostitute  
 is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.

195.1(2) In this section, “public place” includes any place to which the public have access as of right or by invitation express or implied, and any motor vehicle located in a public place or in any place open to public view.  
*(now known as section 213)*

Lawyers argued that each of the sections infringed the guarantee to freedom of expression found in section 2(b) of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom*:

- 2        Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:  
           (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication;

The court was unanimous in their agreement that the laws on communicating were in violation of the *Charter*. This is not some theoretical or abstract legal argument; to deny someone full participation in a free and democratic society, no matter how offensive their activity, by infringing on his or her fundamental freedom is a serious issue.

In order to violate a fundamental freedom the court must be confident that the response is reasonable and justified.

It is interesting to note that the decision split down gender lines with the two female justices arguing against the all male decision that while the communicating section does violate the charter it is warranted in this case. The majority decision was supported and informed by the rhetoric of the abolitionist/radical feminist wing - that the very existence of prostitution is harmful and degrading to all women.

As McGinnis has pointed out, the male justices were able to justify their decision with impeccable feminist credentials quoting from a brief prepared for the Fraser Committee in 1984 by the Ontario Advisory Council on the Status of Women:

*“There is a real victim in prostitution – the prostitute herself: All women, children and adolescents are harmed for prostitution...Prostitution functions as a form of violence against women and young persons. It is certainly a blatant form of exploitation and abuse of power... Prostitution is related to the traditional dominance of men over women. The various expressions of this dominance include a concept of women as property and the belief that the sexual needs of men are the only sexual desires to be given serious consideration. Prostitution is a symptom of the victimization and subordination of women and of their economic disadvantage.”*

The same analysis was used in the creation of the laws on pornography.

The most well known theorists from the abolitionist camp are Catharine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin familiar to Canadians for their influence on the 1992 Canadian Supreme Court decision on obscenity in *R v. Butler*. The court basically agreed with their view equating pornography to hate literature and that its very existence is harmful to all women. The law allows customs to prohibit something before the courts have even ruled on it – turning the principle of innocent until proven **guilty** on its head. Their intentions might have been to save and protect all women but the law has primarily targeted gay and lesbian bookstores leading to lengthy and costly court battles.

Vancouver's Gay and Lesbian bookstore Little Sisters has been in court for 13 years trying to stop the continued detainment and confiscation of books and magazines by Canadian Customs.

This year the Supreme Court attempted to right the abusive procedure. Artists and bookstores like Little Sisters will no longer have to prove the material is not obscene but the premise that lead to the outcome remains. (Crean)

The outcome of the laws on pornography, costly and lengthy court battles for artists and bookstores, pale in comparison to the consequences borne by women in the street level sex trade.

It seems to have finally dawned on some of the prohibitionist groups that their refusal to allow for any legal recognition of the right to **sell** and buy sex **is** not only silly but actually harmful. The new stance argues that any potential legal reforms should criminalize the buying of sex but not the selling.

This emphasis on punishing men rather than freeing women holds little potential for changing the conditions of violence and in no way reflects the position **of** sex workers. Any maintenance of the system of quasi-criminalization will help only to perpetuate violence against sex workers. Given a **choice**, the women selling sex on the streets **of**

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Vancouver would prefer the prosecution of the men who rape her rather than the prosecution of the men who pay her.

The argument that any reformation of prostitution law should pursue the punishment of pimps and johns but not the sellers of sex is put forward in a laborious and dense feminist legal theory paper entitled *A Matter of Prostitution Becoming Respectable*. The law professors who wrote the article have helped fashion laws of this nature in the United States and we mention it here because it is one of the few places that addresses that a system of quasi-criminalization will maintain the exclusion of sex workers from being viewed as a regular member of society. They are clear that this is precisely the goal of the abolitionist point of view:

***“...women who have not been prostituted, as well as society as a whole, have a stake in perpetuating the taint of degeneracy that is attached to women in prostitution.”***

As a society we are not motivated to protect the rights of degenerates nor are the police as quick to respond to their requests for protection. It appears that the abolitionist wing of feminism is prepared to abandon a few women for the good of all women.

Like Janice Dickin McGinnis in *whores and Worthies: Feminism and Prostitution* I attempted to contact LEAF (Legal Education Access Fund). LEAF is a publicly funded body that is mandated to apply for intervenor status in courts cases involving the rights of women and is generally seen as representative of liberal feminism. For over a year and a half I tried to get an answer from West Coast LEAF to the simple question of whether they have ever applied for intervenor status in any case involving the sex trade and/or developed any policy papers on this topic.

After countless phone inquiries the receptionist informed me that she had been instructed not to speak to me. I explained that I was offering them an opportunity to explain their position and would be happy to do this over email.

Below is their reply to my emailed request:

***“April 12th, 2000***

*Dear Mr. Cunningham:  
Re: Enquiry of February 3rd, 2000*

*I am in receipt of your enquiry regarding LEAF's involvement in prostitution issues. Before responding to your enquiry, we would appreciate it if you could provide some background information regarding your research work i.e. who are you doing research for, your qualifications and expertise, and your interest in this particular area of the law.*

*I look forward to hearing from you."*

I sent them the information they requested and as a reward for my efforts spanning a year and a half received an email response essentially directing me to call the head office.

In 1990 the Supreme Court did not have access to a body of research that raises the question of whether this law is killing women and we must ask what their decision would have been if this information had been available to them at the time. The laws governing the sex trade will again be challenged in the Supreme Court - the question now becomes whether anyone will help these women.

## Conclusion

*"Instead of the scorn so freely lavished on the poor lost daughters of shame and misery, I plead for a little pity - nay, far more than pity, I plead for justice...I charge those laws with cruelty, and I say further that her blood is on the head of those who know the injustice of such laws yet will not help to alter them..."*

- These words were written by William Acton (1857) in one of the first serious works exploring the issue of prostitution and are as relevant today as they were then.

We have neither succeeded in discovering **anything** new nor uncovered anything shocking. Anyone familiar with the street level sex trade knows that the rates of violence are the highest suffered by any group of women in Canada and that recourse to the

protective potential of the police and courts is practically non-existent. We feel that this indicates an unintended support for violence against street-level sex trade workers.

A flawed law and its practice, the, city of Vancouver's demonstrated resistance to addressing a situation they helped to create, and the saddeningly tragic complicity of a wing of feminism that has essentially denied a group of individuals, regardless of what they are doing, inclusion in the protective capacity of the police and courts is a fundamental violation of basic human rights that should not shock but rather sicken.

It is our opinion that the Government of Canada has been complicit in violating the most basic fundamental human rights for a segment of its population.

Our inclination to respond to the social nuisance aspects of the sex trade using repressive mechanisms is a leitmotiv throughout its history resulting in situations where moral or social values have taken precedence over the protection of individual freedoms with unameliorated consequences.

At best, the laws on the sex trade are in violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights - a point that the Supreme Court of Canada agrees with; at worst the laws are culpable for the missing women and the rape and assault and murder rates in Vancouver.

Human rights are an abstract idea for most of us. We are comfortable in the knowledge that Canada is known internationally as a sponsor and signatory of international covenants and treaties but this has little or no impact on our day-to-day lives. Aside of assuring Canada's reputation as one of the good guys few, if any, of us truly understand what fundamental human rights are and how they work.

International human rights law can be viewed as entirely ineffectual but at the same time utterly persuasive. It is best understood as that pain in the pit of your stomach you feel when you know that something is just simply wrong. It is the articulation of our best principles and standards to which we should aspire.

No amount of rhetoric can disguise the fact that the lack of any substantive response by all three levels of government can be traced to the simple fact that since it is only street level sex workers that are being raped and murdered it does not, and most likely will not, matter.

It is with some sadness and regret that this research project is completed. Any feeling of success is undermined by a sickening conviction that all our efforts were in vain and the situation will essentially remain unchanged. Perhaps this research will spark debate but it is doubtful that it will affect any real change, as we seem to live in a time where process and inclusion appears to hold greater value than effectiveness and outcome. As one of the authors of this study I find it confusing that I'll receive greater attention and reward for talking about the issue than I did for helping fashion responses to it.

The last words are those of Sarah DeVries - one of the 31 women who is still missing. The first piece is a terrifyingly prescient poem, she wrote about the discovery of women's body in a dumpster behind one of the DTES hotels, that predicts not only her impending death, but also our indifference to it. The second recounts a bad date and what happened when she reported it to the police.

Leonard Cler-Cunningham  
Vancouver, 2001

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Women body found beaten beyond  
Recognition you sip your coffee  
Taking a drag of your smoke  
Turning the page  
taking a bite of your toast  
Just another day  
Just another death  
Just one more thing you *so* forget  
you and your soft, sheltered life  
Just go on and on  
For Nobody special from your world is gone  
Just another day  
Just another death  
Just another Hastings street whore  
Sentenced to death  
NO judge  
NO jury  
NO trial  
NO mercy  
The Judges gavel,  
already fallen  
Sentence already passed  
But you  
**You** just sip your coffee  
Washing down your toast  
For you it's just another day  
For you it's just another death  
For you you've already forgot  
It's not just another day  
It's not just another death  
She was a broken down angel  
Just a child lost with no place  
a human being in disguise  
**She** touched my life  
She was **no** whore  
She was somebody special  
Who just lost her way  
She was somebody fighting for her life  
trying to survive  
a lonely lost child who died

in the night all alone, scared  
 gasping for air.  
 -Sarah.

①  
 Women barely found beaten beyond  
 recognition  
 you sip your coffee  
 Taking a drag of your smoke  
 turning the page  
 taking a bite of your toast  
 just another day  
 just another death  
 just one more thing you so forget  
 you and your soft, sheltered life  
 just go on and on  
 for nobody special from your world is gone  
 just another day  
 just another death  
 just another Hastings whose  
 sentenced to death.  
 No judge  
 No jury  
 No trial  
 No mercy  
 The judges gavel,  
 already fallen  
 Sentence already passed.  
 But you  
 you just sip your coffee  
 washing down your toast  
 for you it's just another day  
 for you it's just another death  
 for you you've already forgot  
 it's not just another day  
 it's not just another death

She was a broken down Angel  
Just a child lost with no place  
a human being in disguise  
She touched my life  
She was somebody  
She was no whole.  
She was somebody special.  
Who just lost her way  
She was somebody fighting for who  
trying to survive  
a lonely lost child who died  
in the night all alone, scared  
gasping for air.

Sarah.

Beaten After Robbing A John  
-Sarah DeVries

3.

it was just after supper and the traffic was just starting to pick up. I was sick and needed money. I was standing at Hawks and Hastings Kiddy corner from the Astoria Hotel and this blue 529 pulled up. I got in, pulled the door shut and agreed on 20 for a B.V. his name I don't remember or maybe I just don't want to. anyway I told him my name Sarah and it all started at that moment after everything he said he said my name.

Sarah are you from Vancouver?

Sarah how old are you?

Sarah this Sarah that it sort started to scare the hell out of me. it was like he was going to sic himself up to do something I couldn't have been any more wrong right. the fact that I was giving head while he was driving was the reason I didn't see how fast we had gone. He had played and acted like he was one of the nicest people on earth. He had bobby trapped his car so that I couldn't get out. Some where on a road in port Moody out in the middle of nowhere with no one around for miles. He stopped getting out of the car. I had noticed his wallet in between the seats so I took the money out and put it back. I asked where's your place he said right around the corner and stopped he had trouble getting his seat belt undone. I took that chance and to try and slide over the seat and out his door. I tried to run and both my legs felt like they were a thousand pounds each and I was running and going nowhere. I felt his



44

4

Hand on my shoulder pull me back and ~~and~~  
 then I felt a blow to the side of my head,  
 I saw black dots flashing in front of my eyes.  
 as he grabbed a hold of my ponytail lifting  
 me off the ground, I felt his triple ~~scissors~~  
 daggers hit my face over and over again.  
 I curled into a fetal position trying to protect  
 my chest and face. it didnt help much. I  
 heard the ripping of my spandex pants and he  
 tore them off. I heard the rip of my shirt he  
 tore off. He stopped for a moment and threw  
 the shoes I had borrowed from Mary.  
 Her words echoed in my head. dont wreck then  
 she made me promise, "only if something  
 happens some" like I get murdered or something.  
 we both laughed. I was yanked by pain back to  
 reality as he was trying sodomus me. I guess  
 I put up to much of a fight for him, he looked  
 tired giving me a couple more boots to the face  
 he turned and ~~picked up mary~~ told me to  
 climb up this little cliff hill sort of large rock  
 covered in black berry bushes, all I had on were  
 my socks and a little blue sailor jacket. I started  
 to climb my whole body ached from head to toe  
 I could barely see out of my eyes and my  
 nose was plugged with blood. my lips felt like  
 two hot balls, and the tear that rolled down  
 my bruised and swollen cheeks burned  
 and I was cold so cold numb to the  
 prickly bushes that sliced at my legs arms  
 and face, or the thorns that were being  
 buried in the soles of my feet.

5.

I reached the top, fell to my knees and wrapped my arms around myself to try and calm my terrified little soul that his yell yanked me right back to cruel reality. Sarah wears my money. I sat up like a bolt of lightning. I had forgot that I had stole all his money plus what he had payed me to begin with. Sarah wears my fucking money he yelled again. I played the duck. I dont know where it is I thought you took back the 40 bucks, you little phore he yelled. I want my \$400 you took from my wallet. I could see his head starting to come towards me up the cliff. I wanted to sit there and cry hoping he would tell sorry for me, yet the fear in my throat just kept rising, my heart starting beating in my throat and with out thinking I just started running and blindly through the bushes. My legs were going, only the earth was gone under them and I was falling and there was nothing, only achy numbness that ran through my veins. I had forgotten I was sick and the pain flashed in, money he took my money I thought as I tried to stand I remembered the job a new found energy zapped through my body and where there's a will there's a way. I realized that I was in a mud pond and I was covered I started tugging the highway and I heard a car. my heart stopped. I dove into the tall grass and it kept going. I got up and it was him fear struck and I felt tears flowing down my cheeks, I started to walk again I didnt even know if I was going the right way, sickness

6.

engulfed me, and I wished I was home. I heard the car again, once more. I was in the ditch and fell grass on my stomach, again. It passed. again I was right it was him, for at least 2 hours I walked and while I walked he drove up and down. I guess he gave up, I almost did. and I cried. Crying. Sorry for myself, then I saw the main road, and I got that extra lift from hope the first car to see me stopped and he gave me a hand. he was in shock I think maybe more than I was. He drove me to the police station against my will but I had no fight left, I had one thing on my mind a fix the pain and the sickness were killing me my eye were almost swollen shut. I didnt want to go to see any pigs, their response was what I expected. I felt like a total cheap junkie whore. Standing there sick. Naked, beaten to a pulp. and thats what they told me they said I got what I deserved and they gave me nothing no clothes no bus fare no help no sympathy, not that I expected it but still it hurt me and deeply the truth hurts. and part of what they said was true. I could feel my face redden and tears started to flow. <sup>But</sup> my tear ducts. My throat grew a lump and it burned. and I still remember that tone of voice and that look he had on his face. as clear as if it were right now. I walked out trying to keep my head up high. But it was hard the fresh air would me a bit I felt sick heavy queasy were crawling on my stomach and my

7.  
 Joints were aching and itchy, kind of  
 tickling at the same time. I had hot and  
 cold sweats, and a tingle started in my  
 throat. ~~the~~ I knew that the dry heaving  
 was soon to start. I turned and stuck  
 out my thumb. The first couple cars  
 past, I looked away but I still could feel  
 their eyes upon my body like darts hitting a  
 bar board, the wind cut to the bone, the  
 sick feel got stronger, so I add colder  
 sweating bullets, and I was just going to  
 sit down and cry when I remembered, there  
 just then a ~~taxi~~ stopped. I got in trying to  
 hide my face. He put his hand on my knee  
 and asked if I was ok. The kindness in his  
 voice made me relax a little. The warmth the  
 chance to sit down and just rest. I felt his  
 hand on my breast. I started screaming and  
 he kicked me out and thank God there was a  
 taxi then I just couldn't go on any more  
 the cabbie gave me a free ride to my front  
 door. he ~~well~~ kept me in and gave me some  
 smokes. That fix felt so good. But I've yet  
 to ever be the same. Sometime I dream and  
 I could swear that I'm there I actually feel  
 the blow and kicks to the head. I wake in a  
 panic and in tears.

...it was just after supper and the traffic was just starting to pick up. I was sick and needed money. I was standing at Hawks and Hastings kiddy corner from the Astoria Hotel and this blue Z28 pulled up. I got in pulled the door shut and agreed on \$40 for a BJ, his name I don't remember or may I just don't want to anyway I told him my name Sarah and it all started at that moment everything he said he said my name.

Sarah are you from Vancouver?  
 Sarah how old are you?

Sarah this Sarah that it started to scare the hell out of me it was like he was trying to psych himself up to do something I couldn't have been anymore right the fact that I was giving head while he was driving was the reason I didn't see how far we had gone. He had payed and acted like he was one of nicest people on Earth. He had boobytrapped his car *so* that I couldn't get out. Somewhere on a road in Port Moody out in the middle of nowhere with no one around for miles. He stopped, getting out of the car. I had noticed his wallet in between the seats *so* I took the money out and put it back. I asked "Where's your place" he said right around the corner and stopped he had trouble getting his sat belt undone, I took that chance and to try and slide over the seat and out his door. I tried to run and both my legs felt like they were a thousand pounds each and I was running and going nowhere, I felt his hand on my shoulder pull me back and then I felt a blow to the side of my head, I saw black dots flashing in front of my eyes as he grabbed a hold of my ponytail lifting me of the ground, I felt his triple soled daytons hit my face over and over again. I curled into a fetus position trying to protect my chest and face, it didn't help much. I heard the ripping of my spandex pants and he tore them off. I heard the rip of my shirt he tore off He stopped for a moment and throws the shoes I had borrowed from Mary.

Her words echoed in my head "don't wreck them she made me promise, "only if something happens to me" like I get murdered or something. We both laughed, I was yanked by pain back to reality as he was trying to sodomize me. I guess I put up to much of a fight for him, he looked tired giving me a couple more boots to the face he turned and told me to climb up this cliff hill sort of large rock covered in black berry bushes, all I had on were my socks and a little blue sailor jacket. I started to climb, my whole body ached from head to toe. I could barely see out of my eyes and my nose was plugged with blood my lips felt like two foot balls and

#### DEFINITIONS/EXPLANATIONS

For this study we used Day's (1988) definition of **sex work**: 'the exchange of sexual services for money or goods between two or more people'.

Funding restrictions and other constraints had us focus on women in the street level sex trade. Accordingly, when the terms **sex worker** or **sex trade** appear they should be understood as referring to the respondents— women in Vancouver's street level **trade**.<sup>xiv</sup>

The term **survival sex trade** appears in this paper often in reference to the issue of children or youth. It was chosen over the politically popular 'sexually exploited youth' as the latter is linked to governments and agencies justification for enforcement measures such as 'John Schools' and 'Secure Care'.

The acronym **SWIDU** is used in place of the clunky 'sex workers that are injection drug users whose involvement in the sex trade is primarily to finance their habit'.

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A loving thank you to William & Nicco for all the sacrifices they've made for this project. I love you. A huge thanks to MA! We've done it mom. There are also numerous close friends who have supported this project in *so* many ways. We've been given everything from food, supplies, technical **skills** and a listening ear. I give my sincere appreciation.

To the women who participated in this: Thank you. The courage you've shown in your open, honest involvement was fabulous. Without you this project would just be theory.

-Christine Christenson 2001

The development of *Violence Against Women in Vancouver's Street Level Sex Trade* would not have been possible without earlier assistance from the Law Foundation of British Columbia, financial support from Meghan Worsnop and the patience of Status of Women Canada.

Without the continued input from the young women on the advisory panel this project would not have been worth attempting. Jocie, Joelle, Misha, Crystal, Chris, and Jennifer gave up a Saturday each week for over a year to make this a reality. They deserve every bit of success that comes their way. The greatest debt is owed to all of the women who were involved in this project if they hadn't supported it to the level they did we would have walked away.

Raven, Char and Alex are not only great people but definitely the best staff any agency could ever hope to have - PACE board, staff, volunteers and supporters are too many to name here but there are some that should: Ellen Wiebe, Janet Freeman, Deena, Char LaFontaine, Alex, Raven Bowen, Michael Cooke, Valencia, Nora, Paige, Keith Larkin, Cassandra, Michael Wright, Pat, **John** Lowman, the **girls** at freestyle, Barbara Waldren, Kim K, Annebelle, Christine Christenson, Carmen, **John** Turvey, Gordon Roe, Randy Lee, Suzi Milen at MWE, Vancouver Foundation, David Driscoll, Gerry Adams, Sandy Cooke, Ken, Jamie Lee Hamilton, Fred Bass, Anna Terrana.....anything of value came from them and the mistakes are solely my own.

Lianne Payne deserves a special mention for her work at PACE and many other worthwhile ventures. She is one of those amazing people who never claim the recognition they deserve. A deep thank you to Marie Bohm for her support at a critical time.

To my mother Connie Cunningham who passed away last year and always told me that I wasn't doing a good job unless someone was pissed off at me. Finally, to Hailey Lewis - I never thought a child's pride would be so important to me in the work that I do.

-Leonard Cler-Cunningham, 2001

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> We're not saying that responsibility is limited to these players, simply that an odd historical synchronicity of factors combined to give them prominence. The sex trade is *an inherently* complex issue for activists and theorists. As an idea, concept or category all the *great* issues of



modern thought have come to play: race, gender, class, sexuality, the nature of free will, fundamental justice, deviancy, autonomy, and consciousness. Very few issues lend themselves to abstraction or metaphor such as this one and it is only recently that marginalized populations like this have come to be considered worthy of study. With the wall breached we can expect a flood of books and articles on this topic in the future.

<sup>2</sup> Amongst others was the infamous 'Hutt Decision' that decided that for soliciting to be proven to have taken place that it must be 'pressing and persistent'.

<sup>3</sup> It's interesting to note that not only did PACE never receive any additional funding from the Ministry of Children and Families; their funding for a single position came under threat.

<sup>4</sup> John Hagan and Bill McCarthy's work was however reviewed in the Globe and Mail. Vancouver media's perceived lack of attention to social issues is a source of frustration for front line service providers in Vancouver. In December of 1998 B.C.'s Children's Commissioner Cynthia Morton reported on the deaths of 24 children in 1997 who were involved with the Ministry of Children and Families. Although her harsh criticisms of the provincial ministry were reported in the Globe and Mail no local paper reported on these serious allegations. The *FEDERAL/PROVINCIAL TERRITORIAL WORKING GROUP ON PROSTITUTION: Report and Recommendations in respect of Legislation, Policy and Practices Concerning Prostitution-Related Activities* released on December 16 1998 also received scant attention in both the local and national media.

<sup>5</sup> Kim Symons a marketing and communications professional volunteered his time to ensure that we adhered to relevant methods in doing the focus group. Too often social science researchers rely solely on this lazy method – either biasing the conclusion through focus group selection or using a biased and biasing methodology. Members of British Columbia's aboriginal community have leveled this accusation against Save The Children's Canada recent report on aboriginal youth in the survival sex trade.

<sup>6</sup> We were aided in this by the support and contribution of an amazing representative and example of what policing can achieve – Paul Battershill. In the first year of PACE we worked closely with the police department in Mount Pleasant on a variety of unique initiatives (see endnote below) that should be revisited. The police were as frustrated with the inability of services to adequately respond to the needs of young women in the survival sex trade as we were. So it was decided that rather than having the police drop the young women off at the revolving door of the Ministry of Children and Families they could call the PACE outreach worker to come and intervene. This initiative was a victim of its own success. Officers from other districts began calling PACE's sole outreach worker at all hours of the day. When PACE approached other agencies about initiating a similar program in their district – they declined. We had no choice but to end this seemingly successful initiative for the reason that it seemed to work so well. I am happy to say that although I have not seen Paul in a long time I still count him among my friends.

<sup>7</sup> The officers requested that they remain anonymous, as they were nervous about political retribution for speaking out of turn.

<sup>8</sup> Any mistakes, glaring errors or oversights are completely the responsibility of the author – anything of value or utility can be traced back to the advisory boards and authors of the original instrument.

<sup>9</sup> We hope that someone with a background in statistical analysis will take the opportunity to investigate the number of bad dates reported in our survey and compare it to bad dates reported to DEYAS in order to come up with a more comprehensive picture of the extent of violence.

“This is an issue that should receive greater attention than it does. Research on marginalized populations often relies on focus groups or a single instrument rather than a blended methodology (quantitative, qualitative and focus groups). By using the outreach workers we incorporated what I call an ‘accidental ethnography’.

<sup>11</sup>Sexual Offences include: Aggravated Sexual Assault, Sexual Assault with a Weapon, Sexual Assault, & other Sex Offences

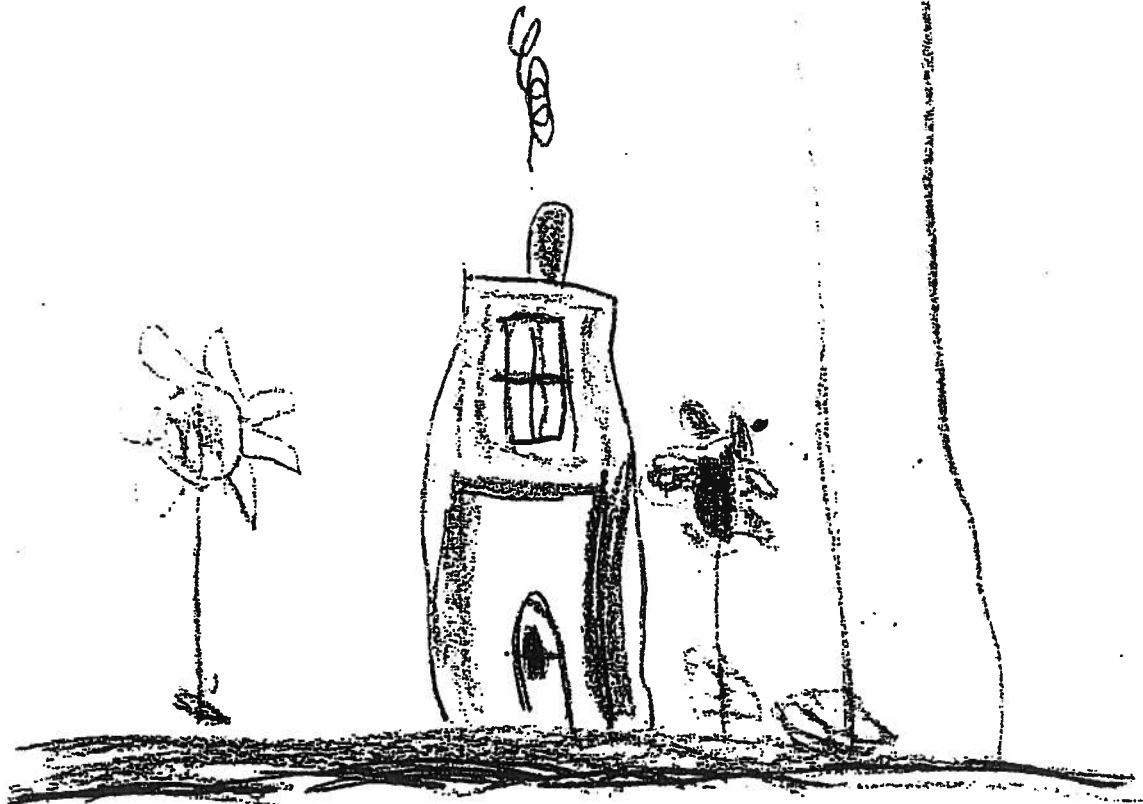
<sup>12</sup>Includes Assault Level 1, Assault **with** Weapon Lvl 2, Aggravated **Aslt** Lvl 3, Unlawfully C/B/H, Discharge Firearm, Assault PC, Other Public Officer, Other Assault

<sup>13</sup> Procuring is down 50% while the category of ‘Other Prostitution’ is up **130.6%**. We are assuming that ‘Other Prostitution’ refers to soliciting since ‘Bawdy House’ has its own heading.

<sup>14</sup>**Male** and transgendered sex workers appear to be underrepresented in research literature except in terms of their engagement in high-risk practices. We had hoped to include male sex workers **from** the Boystown stroll but encountered difficulty in securing the cooperation of other agencies - primarily **from** researchers that had assumed what could be best termed a ‘proprietary relationship’ to their research subjects.

HARLEY

**A Place to Sleep,  
Something to eat,  
and  
Somebody Who Cares**



## Table of Contents

<b>I</b>	In Memoriam	1
<b>II</b>	Executive Summary	2
<b>III</b>	Background	3
<b>IV</b>	Project Goals	4
<b>V</b>	Objectives	4
<b>VI</b>	Sponsoring Organization	5
<b>VII</b>	Volunteers, Partnerships & <b>Community</b> Involvement	8
<b>VIII</b>	Work Plan/ Outcome Measurements	15
<b>IX</b>	Communications Strategy	18
<b>X</b>	Evaluation Plan	18

### Supported By:



### In Memoriam

**A Place To Sleep, Something to Eat and Someone Who Cares** is dedicated to Sherry Upright.

On a highway East of Fort Saskatchewan Alberta, around 8:30 a.m. on January 3<sup>rd</sup> 1999, fumes from a leaking gasoline container on the passenger seat of a 1990 white Ronda Accord were ignited by a cigarette. The resulting explosion caused the driver to lose control of the car and it rolled into the ditch tossing both Richard Benjamin Spencer, 26, and Sherry Upright, 25, from the wreckage.

When the police came across Sherry's body they marked it up to a traffic fatality. Further investigation showed that this was anything but a simple accident. Sherry had been strangled hours before the impact jettisoned her lifeless body from its hiding place in the trunk of Richard Benjamin Spencer's car.

Sherry worked on the Quebec Street track to support herself and her daughter and played an important role in the growth of ~~Prostitution~~ Alternatives Counselling and Education.

Sherry's death had an immense impact on the original PACE Staff group and strengthened our commitment to working towards ensuring that no young women would have to remain on the streets due to a lack of choice.

Her name will not be added to the list of murdered and missing women in Vancouver. As of this date no one actually knows how many of the women and children from Vancouver's sex trade are missing or have been murdered. If the number of women who will die from preventable diseases, such as HIV or Hepatitis C, were added to the list it could easily number in the thousands.

This project is dedicated to their memory and to Sherry.

## Executive Summary

The purpose of **A Place To Sleep, Something to Eat and Someone Who Cares** is to:

1. Establish 20 units of safe affordable housing for young women in the survival sex trade
2. Develop a self-sustaining model for creating affordable housing which can be replicated across Canada
3. Develop and demonstrate innovative partnerships between volunteers, non profit agencies, the private sector and government which will provide permanent, supportive and affordable housing for this population.

In order to achieve these goals, Prostitution Alternatives Counselling and Education Society (PACE) will:

- Recruit and train volunteers
- Develop parameters for residents to contribute to their housing through "sweat-equity", secure partnerships with other agencies, private sector funders and governments, and
- Document the activities leading to the establishment of safe affordable housing.

PACE has already established partnerships with several other agencies, including the **Urban** Native Youth Alliance (UNYA) and Save the Children Canada. Community agencies **with** experience **m** working with disadvantaged populations in the establishment **of** affordable housing, such as Habitat for **Humanity**, have offered their assistance. It is intended to obtain seed money from foundations, individuals, the private sector, and the Provincial and Federal Governments. Funding **will** be obtained from programs to provide housing for the homeless. The lack of supportive shelter options is consistently identified as one of the greatest barriers to permanently leaving the streets.

**A Place To Sleep, Something to Eat, and Someone Who Cares** will find sub-standard housing units, renovate them with volunteer labour and donations and make them available to young women in the survival sex trade. In the first year we will develop and implement an intensive capital fundraising campaign for the purchase of properties. These housing units can be sustained by applying the shelter allowance for those under **youth** agreements and young people **24** and under who are eligible for income assistance. PACE will be responsible for ensuring that income from shelter allowance is adequate to cover the rental/mortgage costs **of** the units. It is anticipated that lower than market rents can be obtained from landlords who have sub-standard housing units. In return for below market rents, they **will** obtain renovations at **no** cost, and **a** guaranteed source of rents from the tenants, who **will** themselves be supported by PACE and its partners. In addition, renovations can be undertaken to other types of buildings that are currently not used for housing.

Residents will receive \$50.00 to \$100.0 a month for their continued active involvement in the management, maintenance and development of additional housing units for other young women in the survival sex trade. Priority will be given to aboriginal young women in the survival sex trade.

The existing PACE office already has the potential for **6** housing units. By building on existing and potential partnerships and developing a process for "sweat equity", **6** units could be operational within **6 months**.

## BACKGROUND

The past few years has witnessed a rising commitment that long-term solutions to the issue of young women in the survival sex trade must be found. All three levels of government, agencies, forums, university researchers, non-governmental organizations, studies, the private, and most importantly the youth themselves, are in agreement that the establishment of housing for this vulnerable population is a priority.

The commitment to finding new methods of intervention has recently translated into fundamental changes in the direction of service delivery systems in Vancouver. The importation and establishment of Covenant House and Habitat for Humanity's innovative shelter and housing programs demonstrates the sustainability of new models. Save the Children Canada has committed itself to establishing a national profile for the issue of youth in the survival sex trade while simultaneously supporting the efforts of local front line agencies.

The growing support for innovative grass roots agencies such as PACE Society is part of this natural evolution. We invite you to join PACE, Urban Native Youth Association,

Since 1989, the Vancouver Sun has identified at least 50 prostitutes who have been slain. It has provided information from the police and RCMP that the number increased to 106 murdered prostitutes since January 1989. The majority of the murders remain unsolved.

In Vancouver the average age of entry is 16-17 years. 70% of adult sex trade workers begin before their 18th birthday and 25% start before 14 years of age.

John Cowman, SHU Criminologist

Internationally, the average age of entry is 16 years. Vera Silver and Amy Price, Criminologists, in the International Journal

No part of the Canadian population suffers as high a rate of murder as women trapped in street prostitution. Women known to have been involved in street prostitution are murdered at a rate anywhere in the region of 10% to one hundred and twenty times the rate at which non-prostitute women are murdered.

John Cowman and Amy Price, Criminologists, in the International Journal

Save The Children Canada and a growing list of others in the development and establishment of an innovative pilot project that will provide much needed housing for young women in the survival sex trade.

**PROJECT GOALS:**

1. To establish up to **20** units of cost-effective, long-term, safe, and affordable housing for young women in the survival sex trade over the next three years.
2. To create a new and innovative 'made in Vancouver' solution for opening self-sustaining long-term affordable housing for this population that can serve as a model for communities throughout Canada.
3. To establish and demonstrate the effectiveness of this model for community partnerships between the volunteer sector, non-profit service agencies, foundations, the private sector, Federal, Provincial, and Municipal representatives that are committed to finding long term, cost-effective, solutions to the issue of young women in the survival sex trade.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Over the next three years PACE will recruit and train volunteers (with an emphasis on the involvement of **skilled** tradeswomen) to work with young women in the survival sex trade to establish up to **20** units of safe affordable housing. The young women (under **24** years of age) **will** invest 'sweat-equity' by renovating their **own** apartments in exchange for a 3-year lease. In exchange for continued involvement in the renovation of **units** for other young women they **will** also receive from **\$50** to **\$100** a month. **The** benefits of involvement **in** a peer culture in tandem with **a** below shelter allowance rental rate **will** extend far beyond the creation of affordable housing stock.



Out From the Shadows: The  
International Summit on  
Sexually Exploited Youth

DECLARATION

We, the sexually exploited child and youth delegates gathered in London, Canada for Out From the Shadows: The International Summit on Sexually Exploited Youth declare the following:

We declare that the term child or youth prostitute can no longer be used. These children and youth are sexually exploited and any language of reference to them must reflect this fact.

We declare that the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth is a form of child abuse and slavery.

We declare that all children and youth have the right to be protected from all forms of abuse, exploitation and the threat of abuse, harm or exploitation.

We declare that the commercial exploitation of children and youth must no longer be financially profitable.

We declare that all children and youth have the right to know their rights.

We declare that the issue of child and youth sexual exploitation must be a global priority and nations must not only honor their obligations as signatories but also themselves.

2. An intensive capital fundraising campaign **will** be initiated in order to purchase the properties. Banks, foundations, and private individuals **will** offer extended mortgages to PACE Society that equal the amount of revenue received from the young women that **will** reside in the housing project thereby creating a revenue neutral project. Over a period of time the invested equity **will** be devoted to establishing additional housing project for other groups in the survival sex trade (boys, transgendered, adult women, women with children,..).
3. To comprehensively document the results and place them on the PACE web site (opening October 1st). There **will** be an emphasis placed **on** gaining input from all partners. Historically the funding recipient reports **on** the outcomes of the project to the funder. We **will** encourage the funders to not only actively involve themselves (**in** the belief that they have more to offer than just money) in establishing the project but to identify what works and to immediately implement it.

**SPONSORING ORGANIZATION**

PACE Society was founded on March **10,1994** by a group of former prostitutes, led by Paige Latin, who recognized the lack of specific services available to individuals engaged in prostitution. PACE is dedicated to creating a **caring** and judgement free environment where individuals can make a free choice regarding their lifestyle. Programs, services, and support respect the individuals needs and decisions. PACE is dedicated to reducing harm and abolishing conditions that lead to prostitution.

In **5 years** PACE has grown from a small volunteer-run organization, operating out of Paige Latin's one bedroom apartment, to an award winning and nationally recognized service for individuals in the survival sex-trade.

We declare that governments are obligated to create laws which reflect the principle of zero tolerance of all forms of abuse and exploitation of children and youth.

**Convention on the Rights of the Child**

Canada formally ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child on December 13, 1991. The 30 specific articles from the Convention directly address the sexual exploitation of youth.

**Article 1**  
State Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. For these purposes, State Parties shall in particular take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent:

The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity;

The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices;

The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.

**Article 34**  
State Parties shall take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent the abduction of, the sale of or traffic in children for any purpose or form of exploitation.

**Article 36**  
State Parties shall protect the child against all other forms of exploitation, in particular, in any aspect of the child's welfare.

**Introduction to the Committee on the Rights of the Child**

**Outreach/Crisis Intervention**

PACE operates a comprehensive outreach program designed by a group of youth involved in the survival sex-trade. The goal of the outreach program is to make non-judgmental and significant contact with youth in the survival sex-trade in order to assist them to leave the streets.

**Community and client support**

- Individual counseling, referrals, and advocacy
- Individual support with **setting** and attaining goals
- Referrals to support groups
- **One-on-one** assistance with education, employment and **skills** training programs
- Emergency **moves** with a police escort when youth are escaping pimps
- **Working** with neighbourhoods to identify and implement long-term sustainable strategies to address the impact of the sex-trade on their community

**Advocacy**

- Referrals and support service regarding legal, medical, education and housing
- Assistance with welfare, daycare, family issues
- The paid and volunteer Advocates at PACE are frequently former clients and peers.

**Education**

- Information seminars and presentations given to service groups, organizations, community groups, students and professionals

**Prevention**

PACE has established a broad based community partnership and is establishing a **best-practices** program to prevent the recruitment of high-risk young women who are currently incarcerated,

**Research**

- Quantitative research that examines violence against young women at risk and women in prostitution and the police response to this violence.
- Qualitative research on young women trapped in the survival sex-trade.

In British Columbia, from 1997/98 to 1998/99 there was a 20% increase in youth appearing before the courts. Nationally, trends show that the proportion of female youth appearing before the court has risen slightly from 48% of cases in 1997/98 to 21% in 1997/98. Youth Court Statistics, Statistics Canada, 1999.

The reliance of criminal justice and social service agencies in Vancouver on apprehension and/or arrest to respond to youth in the survival sex trade and addiction encourages the involvement of youth in the survival sex trade. Vancouver's reliance on a crime control model and the available youth shelters and drop-in centres often forces street youth to spend more time on the street which in turn leads to more exposure to peer violence, crime and to encounters with police.

Young women begin exposed to stress who work in prostitution increases. The likelihood of their involvement. Eighty six per cent of youth who received frequent state of assistance do work in the sex trade, compared to 26% of youth who rarely received ones.

McElderry, Megan. *Mean Streets: Youth, Crime and Homelessness*, 1997.

- A community standards questionnaire on prostitution; over 300 responses have been collected to date.
- With support from the B.C. Attorney General, PACE held The Vancouver Sexually Exploited Youth **Forum**: a focus group of over **35** sexually exploited youth that collected their input on solutions to problems they identified.

### Awards/Evaluations

PACE Society received the Mount Pleasant Agency of the Year Award in **1998**. In **1996**, the Ministry of Social Services' (now **Ministry** of Children and Family) independent evaluation of the Vancouver Action Plan (VAP) for sexually exploited youth recommended that:

*"...PACE, is notable within the continuum of VAP component services for its complete focus on youth who are clearly and currently involved in street prostitution. As such it is the only project that has this as its central mandate and sole service mode. The project has not been evaluated, though it has consistently evaluated itself through systematic written feedback from its clients. It appears to the evaluators to be quite effective in identifying, contacting, and supporting young people (mostly women, of course) who are engaged in prostitution.*

*...we believe that the PACE model seem to be a good one for direct services to this highly specialized and very vulnerable target group. As such we believe that expansion of this type of precisely targeted multi-faceted service (regardless of who is delivering it) could be of real benefit to youth whose primary source of economic survival at this point is prostitution."*

#### **(REPORT OF THE FINDING FROM THE EVALUATION OF THE VANCOUVER ACTION PLAN ON SEXUALLY EXPLOITED YOUTH (VAP), 1996)**

PACE was also twice highlighted in the recent **FEDERAL/PROVINCIAL TERRITORIAL WORKING GROUP ON PROSTITUTION** report. However, the most important recognition that we receive is found in the letters and calls from former clients and parents whom we have helped.

RESULTS OF THE MANICOVER  
SEXUAL ABUSE EXPLORED YOUTH  
FORUM

Policy Enforcement

It was felt that police and enforcement  
services should be better equipped to  
follow up on complaints of rape or  
sexual assault, especially if the victim  
and other members of the community  
youth are not cooperative in  
keeping/holding them in the street.

Recommendation

That the police be better trained on  
working with and the exploited youth  
and that they are more prepared to  
youth and/or make them more  
friendly staff.

Anti-Sex Trafficking

With the recognition that ASU  
is a form of sex trafficking, it is  
felt that more individuals would more  
likely be able to find employment  
through their own resources in  
employment or business. Constant  
discussion about what is going on  
and how to help the exploited youth  
make ASU unappealing.

Recommendation

ASU is a form of sex trafficking  
and should be treated as such. The  
dangerous and harmful ASU could  
be eliminated through greater  
education and awareness of the  
issue. ASU is a form of sex trafficking  
and should be treated as such. The  
dangerous and harmful ASU could  
be eliminated through greater  
education and awareness of the  
issue.

Needs for Services

Youth in the survival sex trade are  
in a very hard and stressful  
situation and need services to  
help them. They need financial  
counseling, legal services, and  
more support services to help  
them in the community. They need  
more support services and a  
community support group.

**VOLUNTEERS, PARTNERSHIPS, &  
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Broad based involvement by volunteers, partnerships with organizations that have expertise or **skills** that PACE does not possess, and the inclusion of the broader community (the private sector, foundations, governments and committed individuals) is the most critical element to ensure the success of this initiative. Supplying housing, no matter how affordable, is not a golden bullet that will magically transform the lives *of* young women in the survival sex trade. Even if we were able to supply safe and affordable housing to all of the young women in the survival sex trade the wide variety of issues would overwhelm the capacity of any single agency. Above and beyond a lack of safe and affordable housing young women **in** the survival sex trade face a wide variety of other issues:

- Substance management issues
- Lack of education
- Little or no employable **skills** that can be listed on a resume
- Health **issues** ranging from HIV, HEP C, endocarditis, to pelvic **inflammatory disease**
- Mental health **issues** such as depression and suicide
- Family reunification
- Overcoming barriers to establishing healthy social relationships

In 1994-95, 41% of youth cases with a conviction involved repeat offenders. About one-quarter of the repeat offenders were persistent re-offenders with three or more prior convictions. (Statistics Canada, 1996)

In Vancouver six years prior to 1996 only 8 men were charged under Section 424 with procuring children for sexual purposes. In the same period 364 youth were charged with soliciting. In between 1991 and 1995 60 known female prostitutes were murdered in Canada. (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1997)

In 1994-95, 41% of youth cases with a conviction involved repeat offenders. About one-quarter of the repeat offenders were persistent re-offenders with three or more prior convictions. (Statistics Canada, 1996)

In Vancouver six years prior to 1996 only 8 men were charged under Section 424 with procuring children for sexual purposes. In the same period 354 youth were charged with soliciting. In between 1991 and 1995 60 known female prostitutes were murdered in Canada. (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1997)

In the first three months we **will** actively solicit the involvement of established agencies with experience in the development and implementation of housing for marginalized populations. We will also work to ensure the continued involvement of groups with experience working on the issues listed above.

**VOLUNTEERS**

The existence of PACE Society is testament to what a group of volunteers **can** achieve when offered the opportunity to participate in something where they **can** have a **meaningful** impact on an individual's life.

We are confident that ***A Place to Sleep, Something to Eat, and Somebody to Care*** can serve as a model for recruiting, training and **recognizing** volunteers **in working** with the most highly marginalized populations. We will be actively recruiting volunteers, with an emphasis on **enlisting skilled** tradeswomen, to work with young women in the survival sex trade on the creation of affordable housing.

PACE has recently joined Volunteer Vancouver and is soliciting support to establish a:

- Volunteer training program
- Database of available volunteers and
- Strategy to attract and maintain an active volunteer base.

### PARTNERS

#### **URBAN NATIVE YOUTH ALLIANCE (UNYA)**

For the increasing numbers of young aboriginal women on the streets of Vancouver the effects of cultural dislocation, intergenerational welfare dependency, substance abuse and involvement in the sex trade make the implementation of effective and relevant interventions that much more difficult,

It is evident among the incarcerated group of young women (1) that there are 12 year olds on the streets selling their bodies to support heroin and crack cocaine addictions, (2) that the analogy of young women receiving a judicial sentence are serving time for minor violations, (3) a substantial number of young women are returned to custody within three months of their release (43%) and (4) that there are very few effective non-custodial policy initiatives that are available to this group of young women. It appears that there is a consensus among researchers and policy makers that incarceration is morally wrong and not a very effective use of already underfunded resources for young women.

Raymond R. Conrado et al. *The Incarceration of Female Young Offenders: Protection For Whom?* 2000

**UNYA** is a society that has served the Greater Vancouver Area for the past **7 years** and has developed an excellent standing within the community. The majority of the services proved are focused on youth between the ages of **11 to 24** years. UNYA began as a means of dealing with issues around the need for preemployment training and has expanded to meet other needs and concerns within the Aboriginal **Community**. Among the programs that UNYA offers are:

#### ***Aries Alternate School***

The Aries Alternate School is a program for Aboriginal street youth that are not attending regular public school. The youth involved in the Aries project must have

made a conscious decision to **turn** their lives around. Aries **is** open to youth between the ages of 13 to **19** years that have been involved in a street lifestyle.

#### **Youth *Outreach***

The Outreach is prevention and intervention program aimed at helping youth between the ages of **11** to **15** years stay away from, or move away from a street lifestyle. One of the goals of this program is to **help** youth become aware of the **risks** and dangers of street life before they become entrenched.

#### ***Safe Houses for Street Youth***

Two projects provide a safe and stable environment for youth **16 – 24**. It is a place of comfort to help them make the first move from the street. Youth are directed to the appropriate agencies to receive the best of the services available to them, The Safe Houses provide a place for re-unification of Native youth with their community and tradition where appropriate.

#### ***What they bring:***

The PACE housing project **will** supply long-term safe and affordable housing for young aboriginal women who have made the first move from the street by accessing UNYA safe houses. Staff at UNYA would also continue to supply key support and resources for these young women once they have moved into the PACE project.

No matter how good any project is, if no one knows about its existence, it is as if it never happened.

SAVE **THE** CHILDREN CANADA will not only support the development and implementation of this project but upon its completion will support organizations throughout Canada in **adapting** this model in their own communities. They are an international organization dedicated to improving the lives of the most needy children

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in Canada and overseas, regardless of race, sex, colour or religious affiliation. It is committed to achieving the objectives of the United Nations' Declaration of the Rights of the Child and implementing those rights.

***What they bring:***

With over 80 years of service and an international reputation Save the Children Canada recognizes the need to support implementable strategies to respond to the issue of youth in the survival **sex** trade.

**THE PRIVATE SECTOR**

Partnerships with the private sector is not so much a question of establishing new models as it is the need for reestablishing or reinvigorating a sense of community.

Twenty to thirty years ago unions or service agencies like the Rotary or Kiwanis built the buildings, bought the dialysis machines and donated their personal time and abilities to worthwhile causes. The owner of a hardware store donated materials. A lawyer helped an agency or community group incorporate. The real estate agent helped to buy the property. The salesman helped develop materials for raising funds.

The concept of private and public sectors was neither as well developed nor the lines between the two as sharply drawn as **now**. The 1960's and 70's saw the specialization of social service systems and the rise of a professional class of 'community leaders'; while the '80s and '90s saw an explosive growth in the role and power of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Service agencies and other 'community leaders' all compete for money and the role of the individual has been diminished, if not extinguished. This project is an answer to the frustration of people who want to help, but don't want their contribution to their community to be reduced to simply **signing a** cheque without directly seeing what



impact their money **will** have. Not only will people be able to donate funding but we **will** also actively encourage them to share their expertise and abilities by volunteering their time in *building/renovating* the housing.

Given the opportunity the private sector and individuals would be excited to be involved with a project that is:

- ◆ A unique program with a demonstrated capacity for flexibility.
- ◆ Willing to make use of the **skills** and abilities of individuals and organizations – not just their dollars.
- ◆ Committed to *developing a sustainable project that won't solely rely on ongoing funding.*
- ◆ Proactive rather than simply reactive – changes conditions and not simply reacts to them (to solve rather than help).

## 1 CITY YEMENI

### **HABITAT FOR HUMANITY CANADA (VANCOUVER)**

Habitat for Humanity Canada (Vancouver) has agreed to assist this project through allowing us **access** to any of their excess donated building materials and **will** encourage volunteers that they do not have room for. Their model of using volunteers, donated labour and materials and striving to ensure that the projects are as fiscally self-sustaining **as** possible is an overlooked and underutilized model that could be easily adapted to meet the needs of young women in the survival **sex** trade.

Habitat for Humanity Canada works With those in need of adequate shelter. **The** shelter recipients work side-by-side with volunteers from all walks of life to build simple, decent houses. The houses are built with no profit added and no interest charged, with the money **coming** from the **new** homeowners' house payments, donations and no interest loans provided by supporters, Even with the involvement of volunteers, partners, the private sector and community agencies there is still a **need** for the

involvement of the:

### GOVERNMENT

Partnerships are where each side receives benefit through cooperating on an initiative. All three levels of government would reduce or waive taxes, fees, and charges to permit the creation of this project. Indirect savings will accrue to all three levels through reduced hostel use, lower welfare caseloads, lower rates of young women in care, and a reduced demand on the health care system, especially emergency care.

### **MUNICIPAL : CITY OF VANCOUVER**

The City of Vancouver is one of the few municipalities that has consistently supported the development of non-profit housing. In the first year there will be no request for capital assistance although their demonstrated expertise and input will be invaluable to the success of this project.

### **PROVINCIAL: MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES: YOUTH AGREEMENTS**

Youth agreements are legal contracts between the **ministry** and high-risk youth between the ages of **16** and **19** who can't live at home or have no parent or other person willing to help them. **This program is only open to youth With:**

- ◆ Serious behavioural or mental health problems.
- ◆ Severe substance misuse or addictions.
- ◆ Homeless AND not attending school, not working or not participating in a rehab program.
- ◆ *Involvement in the sex trade.*

The youth **only** receive around \$500.00 a month. Regardless of how much support is available the ability **to not only survive** but to overcome any one of the above issues **is** severely hindered by the lack of affordable housing. **A Place To Sleep, Something to Eat, and Somebody Who Cares** could meet the needs of youth agreement

participants throughout the lower mainland who are involved in the survival sex trade.

Attached to the youth agreement program is new staff to deliver services including drug and alcohol counsellors, outreach workers and youth support workers. These support services will co-ordinate a continuum of services to assist young women in making the transition from the sex trade and off the streets.

### **WORK PLAN/OUTCOME MEASUREMENTS/YEAR ONE**

Year one is dedicated to both finalizing a model for recruiting, training and recognizing volunteers, establishing housing for young women leaving the survival sex trade and opening the first site. The PACE office is already located at a site with up to six potential units. Every **two** months a report including the outcome measurements will be submitted to funders, Housing Projects Development Committee members, partners and other interested individuals,

#### **FIRST THREE MONTHS:**

##### **PROJECT DEVELOPMENT**

Further develop the vision  
 Name the coordinating committee  
 Identify and recruit additional **skills** needed  
 Solicit community support  
 Develop capital and program needs  
 Project capital and operational costs  
 Formally recruit development team  
 Recruit volunteers (an emphasis will be placed on recruiting skilled tradeswomen) and develop a training program  
 Enlist the involvement of other established agencies with **skills** not already represented

##### **DEVELOPMENT TEAM\***

Coordinating committee  
 Housing consultant  
 Lawyer  
 Architect/designer

Construction trades coordinator

Client reps

Volunteers

Partners\*\*

\*not all positions represented are necessary

\*\*An emphasis will be placed on development team member partners being represented by both a staff member and a young women with relevant experience in the survival sex trade. The young women with receive an honorarium for involvement.

### **MONTHS FOUR TO FIVE:**

#### Work Plan:

1. Begin negotiations for purchase of first site
2. Identify and contact potential partners, funders, additional resources, volunteers and ministries that should be involved in this project
3. Identify sources of funding including equity, bank loans, municipal and provincial housing
4. Development of budget including: land costs, construction, legal, architectural, engineering permits, inspections, construction insurance, financing costs, taxes
5. Develop the internal evaluation tools of base line questionnaire, and interview format
6. Look at other models for developing shelter options
7. Advertise for first applicants
8. Initiate programming and standards expected of residents
9. Develop a 'Good-Neighbour' policy

#### Outcome Measurements:

1. Report on negotiations
2. Report on potential partners, funders, additional resources, volunteers and ministries that should be involved in this project
3. Report on identified sources of funding including equity, bank loans, municipal and provincial housing
4. Release budget for input
5. Field test internal evaluation tools of base line questionnaire, and interview format
6. Report on relevance of other models for developing shelter options
7. Select first applicants
8. Release for discussion: programming and standards expected of residents
9. Distribute 'Good Neighbour' policy to community agencies and residents

**MONTHS SIX TO EIGHT****WORK PLAN**

1. Initiate purchase of first site
2. Select and move in first tenants
3. Identify costs not recognized in initial budget
4. Collect evaluation information from young women
5. Identify costs not recognized in initial budget
6. Collect evaluation information from young women
7. Release draft document "A PLACE TO SLEEP, SOMETHING TO EAT AND SOMEBODY WHO CARES" to committee members and on web site

**OUTCOME MEASUREMENTS**

1. Report on purchase of first site
2. Report on progress of first tenants
3. Integrate costs into year two and three budgets
4. Collate data for incorporation in final report
5. Develop budgets for years two and three
6. Collate data from evaluations and release information, integrate relevant points
7. Collect input from committee and individuals on draft and revise

**MONTHS NINE TO ELEVEN:****WORK PLAN**

1. Identify properties for years two and three
2. Select and move in next tenants in year one site
3. Release draft budget for years two and three
4. Continue collecting information from first tenants and initiate data collection from second tenants
5. Release second draft of 'A PLACE TO SLEEP, SOMETHING TO EAT AND SOMEBODY WHO CARES' to committee members and on the web site

**OUTCOME MEASUREMENTS**

1. Begin negotiations for purchasing properties
2. Continue reporting on progress of first and second tenants
3. Finalize budget for years two and three with identified capital and programming costs With attendant identified funders
4. Refmedata
5. Incorporate input

**YEAR ONE PROJECT COMPLETION:**

A press conference will be held to announce the official opening of the first site and 'A

**PLACE TO SLEEP, SOMETHING TO EAT AND SOMEBODY WHO CARES'**

will be released. The work plan/outcome measurements for years two and three will also be released.

## COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The model for developing housing for this vulnerable population will be published at the completion of the project, for incorporation in programs throughout Canada. The PACE web-site will make the **results** available to international researchers, agencies and policy makers. Save the Children Canada is a national organization that has agreed to make information on this model available to organizations, foundations, business sector participants and governments throughout Canada.

## EVALUATION:

The project will identify a 'best practices model' by utilizing evaluative research methods including base line questionnaires, quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments and focus group methodology. The Community Services Fund has supplied us with a format that will be used throughout the developmental phase (see attachment). PACE will either be applying for funding in order to determine the long-term impact of this project on the participants or will solicit the involvement of qualified research professionals within the University community.

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**VIOLENCE AGAINST PERSONS IN THE SEX-TRADE**

This research was developed with the support of the Law Foundation of British Columbia and is funded by Status of Women Canada. It is being carried out by PACE (Prostitution Alternatives Counseling and Education). No names will be taken and your involvement is absolutely confidential. The final research paper will be made available to Municipal, Provincial, and Federal politicians in the hope that they will develop policy, laws, and regulations designed to place the interests of **YOU** first.

It may take half of an hour of your time to complete this questionnaire. You may take a break or stop at any time. Time will also be made available for you at the completion of the questionnaire if there is anything you want to discuss.

Please be honest, be careful, and take care of yourself. If you would like to talk to anybody regarding this questionnaire, or about anything else ---call PACE---872-765 1.

*If you have any problems with any questions, please ask the interviewer to explain.*

<b>BACKGROUND INFORMATION</b>	
1(a). How long have you been working in the sex trade?  TICK ANSWER	01 <input type="checkbox"/> Less than a year, write in # of months that you have been working: ____ 02 0 1 to 2 years 03 0 3 to 4 years 04 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 to 6 years 05 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 to 8 years 06 0 9 to 10 Years 1 2 0 More than 10 years, write in # of years that you have been working:
1 (b) How many times have you stopped working in the sex trade and then came back to it.	01 0 never 02 0 once 03 <input type="checkbox"/> twice 04 0 three times 05 0 four times 06 0 five times 07 0 More than five times, write in # of times:
The last time you stopped working in the sex trade how long did you stay out:	01 0 one day 02 0 a week 03 0 a month 04 0 six months 05 0 a year 06 0 more than a year, write in length of time:
2. Did your involvement in the sex trade begin with working:	<input type="checkbox"/> on the street <input type="checkbox"/> off-street <input type="checkbox"/> spotting

<p>4. Where else have you worked on the street this year? TICK AS <i>MANY</i> ANSWERS AS YOU NEED</p>	<p>B.C.:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Have not worked anywhere else</p> <p>01 <input type="checkbox"/> Kelowna</p> <p>02 <input type="checkbox"/> Kamloops</p> <p>03 <input type="checkbox"/> Prince George</p> <p>04 <input type="checkbox"/> Victoria</p> <p>Other (Write in): _____</p> <p>Canada:</p> <p>05 <input type="checkbox"/> Calgary</p> <p>06 <input type="checkbox"/> Edmonton</p> <p>07 <input type="checkbox"/> Ottawa</p> <p>08 <input type="checkbox"/> Winnipeg</p> <p>09 <input type="checkbox"/> Toronto</p> <p>10 <input type="checkbox"/> Montreal</p> <p>11 <input type="checkbox"/> Halifax</p> <p>Other (Write in): _____</p> <p>United States:</p> <p>120 New York</p> <p>13 <input type="checkbox"/> Miami</p> <p>14 <input type="checkbox"/> Los Angeles</p> <p>15 <input type="checkbox"/> Las Vegas</p> <p>160 Portland</p> <p>170 Seattle</p> <p>18 <input type="checkbox"/> San Jose</p> <p>19 <input type="checkbox"/> Hawaii</p> <p>Other (Write in): _____</p> <p>99 <input type="checkbox"/> International (List as many as possible): _____</p>
<p>5. Do you give someone money to be able to work on the street?</p>	<p>01 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p>02 0 No (If you answered No go to question</p>
<p>6. If you answered yes. if you made \$100 how much do you keep?</p>	<p>01 <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 10\$</p> <p>02 0 11 to 20\$</p> <p>03 <input type="checkbox"/> 21 to 30\$</p> <p>04 <input type="checkbox"/> 31 to 40\$</p> <p>05 <input type="checkbox"/> 41 to 50\$</p> <p>06 0 51 to 60\$</p> <p>07 0 61 to 70\$</p> <p>08 <input type="checkbox"/> 71 to 80\$</p> <p>09 0 More than 80\$</p>
<p>7. Do you have a quota or fee. and if you do. how much money do you have to make when you work:</p>	<p>Fill in average amount you have to make when you work in dollars: \$</p>
<p>Do you work to supply a drug habit?</p>	<p>01 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p>02 <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p>If you answered yes, how much do you have to make each day to supply your habit</p>	<p>01 <input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$50</p> <p>02 0 \$50 to \$100</p> <p>03 <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 to \$200</p> <p>04 <input type="checkbox"/> More than \$200</p>



<p>9. Where else have you worked off-street this year?  <b>TICK AS MANY ANSWERS AS YOU NEED</b></p>	<p><b>B.C. :</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Have not worked anywhere else  01 <input type="checkbox"/> Kelowna  02 <input type="checkbox"/> Kamloops  03 <input type="checkbox"/> Prince George  04 <input type="checkbox"/> Victoria  Other (Write in): _____  Canada:  05 <input type="checkbox"/> Calgary  06 <input type="checkbox"/> Edmonton  07 <input type="checkbox"/> Ottawa  08 <input type="checkbox"/> Winnipeg  09 <input type="checkbox"/> Toronto  10 <input type="checkbox"/> Montreal  11 <input type="checkbox"/> Halifax  Other (Write in): _____  United States:  120 New York  13 <input type="checkbox"/> Miami  140 Los Angeles  15 <input type="checkbox"/> Las Vegas  16R Portland  170 Seattle  18 <input type="checkbox"/> San Jose  19 <input type="checkbox"/> Hawaii  Other (Write in): _____  99 <input type="checkbox"/> International (List as many as possible): _____</p>
<p>10. Do you pay someone to be able to work off-street?</p>	<p>01 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes  02 <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p>11. If you answered yes, if you made \$100 how much do you get to keep?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND/OR</p>	<p>01 0 less than \$10  02 <input type="checkbox"/> 11 to 20\$  03 <input type="checkbox"/> 21 to 30\$  04 <input type="checkbox"/> 31 to 40\$  05 <input type="checkbox"/> 41 to 50\$  06 <input type="checkbox"/> 51 to 60\$  07 0 61 to 70\$  08 <input type="checkbox"/> 71 to 80\$  09 0 More than 80\$</p>
<p>12. Do you have a quota or fee, and if you do, how much money do you have to make when you work:</p>	<p>Fill in average amount you have to make when you work in dollars: \$</p>
<p>13. Are you paying a fee or percentage to anyone to work inside?</p>	<p>01 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes  02 0 No</p>
<p>14. Do you have a social escort license?</p>	<p>01 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes  02 0 No</p>
<p>15. Have you ever applied to the City of Vancouver in order to work off-street?</p>	<p>01 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes  02 0 No</p>

<p>20. Who did these things to you while you were working on the street?</p> <p>TICK AS MANY ANSWERS AS YOU NEED</p>	<p>3 1 0 Date  3 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Your man      O A pimp  3 3 0 Vice  3 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Uniform police  3 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Sex-trade worker  3 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Boyfriend/Girlfriend (Circle One)  3 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Husband/Wife (Circle One)  9 9 <input type="checkbox"/> Other Person.  Who?</p>
<p>21. Did you report any of these incidents to the bad date sheet?</p>	<p>3 1 0 Yes  3 2 0 No</p>
<p>22. Did you report any of these incidents to the police?</p>	<p>0 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes  3 2 0 No</p>
<p>23. Were charges ever laid in any of these cases?</p>	<p>3 1 0 Yes  0 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p>21. Was anyone convicted?</p>	<p>3 1 0 Yes  0 2 0 No</p>
<p>25. Since entering the sex trade has anyone <b>robbed you</b> when you were working on the street?</p>	<p>3 1 0 Yes  0 2 0 No (if you answered no go to question 32 )</p>
<p>26. Within the past year how many times has someone tried to rob you:</p>	<p>0 1 0 once  0 2 0 2 times  0 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 times  0 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 times  0 5 0 5 times  0 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 times  0 7 0 7 times  0 8 0 8 times  0 9 0 9 times  1 0 0 10 times  1 1 0 More than 10 - Write in number of times:</p>
<p>26. Within the last year approximately when did <u>each</u> of these incidents occur?</p> <p>(If there was more than one incident within a time period write in the appropriate number)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Between the past 0 to 7 days  <input type="checkbox"/> Between the past 8 to 30 days  <input type="checkbox"/> Between the past 31 to 182 days  <input type="checkbox"/> Between the past 183 to 365 days</p>
<p>27. Who did these things to you while you were working on the street?</p> <p>TICK AS MANY ANSWERS AS YOU NEED</p>	<p>0 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Date  0 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Your man      O A pimp  0 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Vice  0 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Uniform police  0 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Prostitute  0 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Boyfriend/Girlfriend (Circle One)  0 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Husband/Wife (Circle One)  9 9 <input type="checkbox"/> Other Person.  Who?</p>
<p>28. Did you report any of these incidents to the bad date sheet?</p>	<p>0 1 0 Yes  0 2 0 No</p>

<p>41. Within the past year how many times has someone threatened you with a weapon:</p>	<p>01 <input type="checkbox"/> once  02 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 times  03 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 times  04 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 times  05 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 times  06 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 times  07 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 times  08 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 times  09 <input type="checkbox"/> 9 times  10 <input type="checkbox"/> 10 times  11 <input type="checkbox"/> More than 10 - Write in number of times:</p>
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<p>42. Within the last year approximately when did <u>each</u> of these incidents occur?   (If there was more than one incident within a time period write in the appropriate number)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Between the past 0 to 7 days  <input type="checkbox"/> Between the past 8 to 30 days  <input type="checkbox"/> Between the past 31 to 182 days  <input type="checkbox"/> Between the past 183 to 365 days</p>
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<p>43. Who did these things to you while you were working on the street?   TICK AS MANY ANSWERS AS YOU NEED</p>	<p>01 <input type="checkbox"/> Date  02 <input type="checkbox"/> Your man  03 <input type="checkbox"/> A pimp  04 <input type="checkbox"/> Vice  05 <input type="checkbox"/> Uniform police  06 <input type="checkbox"/> Prostitute  07 <input type="checkbox"/> Boyfriend/Girlfriend (Circle One)  08 <input type="checkbox"/> Husband/Wife (Circle One)  09 <input type="checkbox"/> Other Person.  Who?</p>
---	--

<p>44. Did you report any of these incidents to the bad date sheet?</p>	<p>01 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes  02 <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
---	--

<p>45. Did you report any of these incidents to the police?</p>	<p>01 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes  02 <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
---	--

<p>46. Were charges laid?</p>	<p>01 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes  02 <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
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<p>47. Was anyone convicted?</p>	<p>01 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes  02 <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
----------------------------------	--

<p>48. Since entering the sex trade has anyone physically assaulted you without a weapon being involved when you were working on the street?</p>	<p>01 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes  02 <input type="checkbox"/> No (if you answered no go to question 56 )</p>
--	--

<p>56. Within the past year how many times have you been physically assaulted with a weapon without anyone attempting to force you to have sex against your will:</p>	<p>01 0 once  02 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 times  03 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 times  04 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 times  05 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 times  06 0 6 times  07 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 times  08 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 times  09 0 9 times  10 <input type="checkbox"/> 10 times  11 <input type="checkbox"/> More than 10 - Write in number of times:</p>
<p>57. Within the last year approximately when did <u>each</u> of these incidents occur?   (If there was more than one incident within a time period write in the appropriate number)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Between the past 0 to 7 days  <input type="checkbox"/> Between the past 8 to 30 days  <input type="checkbox"/> Between the past 31 to 182 days  <input type="checkbox"/> Between the past 183 to 365 days</p>
<p>58. Who did these things to you while you were working on the street?   <b>TICK AS MANY ANSWERS AS YOU NEED</b></p>	<p>01 0 Date  02 <input type="checkbox"/> Your man  <input type="checkbox"/> A pimp  03 <input type="checkbox"/> Vice  04 <input type="checkbox"/> Uniform police  05 <input type="checkbox"/> Prostitute  06 <input type="checkbox"/> Boyfriend/Girlfriend (Circle One)  07 <input type="checkbox"/> Husband/Wife (Circle One)  99 <input type="checkbox"/> Other Person.  <b>Who?</b></p>
<p>59. Did you report any of these incidents to the bad date sheet?</p>	<p>01 0 Yes  02 0 No</p>
<p>60. Did you report any of these incidents to the police?</p>	<p>01 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes  02 0 No</p>
<p>61. Were charges ever laid ?</p>	<p>01 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes  02 <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p>62. Was anyone convicted?</p>	<p>01 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes  02 0 No</p>
<p>63. Since entering the sex trade has anyone refused to wear a condom when you were working on the street?</p>	<p>01 0 Yes  02 <input type="checkbox"/> No (if you answered no go to question 69 )</p>

<p>70. Within the past year how many times has someone tried to force you to have sex against your will without a weapon being involved:</p>	<p>3 1 0 once  3 2 0 2 times  3 3 0 3 times  0 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 times  3 5 0 5 times  3 6 0 6 times  3 7 0 7 times  0 8 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 times  3 9 0 9 times  1 0 0 10 times  1 1 0 More than 10 - Write in number of times:</p>
<p>71. Within the last year approximately when did <u>each</u> of these incidents occur?   (If there was more than one incident within a time period write in the appropriate number)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Between the past 0 to 7 days  <input type="checkbox"/> Between the past 8 to 30 days  <input type="checkbox"/> Between the past 31 to 182 days  <input type="checkbox"/> Between the past 183 to 365 days</p>
<p>72. Did you report any of these incidents to the bad date sheet?</p>	<p>3 1 0 Yes  3 2 0 No</p>
<p>73. Did you report any of these incidents to the police'?</p>	<p>3 1 0 Yes  3 2 0 No</p>
<p>74. Were charges ever laid in any of the cases?</p>	<p>3 1 0 Yes  3 2 0 No</p>
<p>75. Was anyone convicted?</p>	<p>3 1 0 Yes  3 2 0 No</p>
<p>76. Since entering the sex trade has anyone used a weapon to try to force you to have sex against you will when you were working on the street?</p>	<p>3 1 0 Yes  3 2 0 No (if you answered no go to question 84 )</p>
<p>77. Within the past year how many times has someone used a weapon to try to force you to have sex against you will:</p>	<p>0 1 0 once  0 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 times  0 3 0 3 times  0 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 times  0 5 0 5 times  0 6 0 6 times  0 7 0 7 times  0 8 0 8 times  0 9 0 9 times  1 0 0 10 times  1 1 0 More than 10 - Write in number of times:</p>

<p>87. Who did these things to you while you were working on the street?</p> <p>TICK AS MANY ANSWERS AS YOU NEED</p>	<p>310 Date  32 <input type="checkbox"/> Your man  <input type="checkbox"/> A pimp  33 <input type="checkbox"/> Vice  34 <input type="checkbox"/> Uniform police  35 <input type="checkbox"/> Prostitute  36 <input type="checkbox"/> Boyfriend/Girlfriend (Circle One)  37 <input type="checkbox"/> Husband/Wife (Circle One)  99 <input type="checkbox"/> Other Person.  Who?</p>
<p>88. Did you report any of these incidents to the bad date sheet?</p>	<p>310 Yes  32 <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p>89. Did you report any of these incidents to the police?</p>	<p>310 Yes  320 No</p>
<p>90. Were charges laid in any of these cases?</p>	<p>310 Yes  320 No</p>
<p>91. Was anyone convicted?</p>	<p>31 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes  320 No</p>
<p>92. Since entering the sex trade has anyone <b>tried to kill</b> you when you were working on the street?</p>	<p>310 Yes  320 No (if you answered no go to question 100)</p>
<p>93. Within the past year how many times has someone tried to kill you:</p>	<p>01 <input type="radio"/> once  320 2 times  03 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 times  04 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 times  05 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 times  06 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 times  07 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 times  08 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 times  09 <input type="checkbox"/> 9 times  10 <input type="checkbox"/> 10 times  11 <input type="checkbox"/> More than 10 - Write in number of times:</p>
<p>94. Within the last year approximately when did <u>each</u> of these incidents occur?</p> <p>(If there is more than one incident within a time period write in a number)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Between the past 0 to 7 days  <input type="checkbox"/> Between the past 8 to 30 days  <input type="checkbox"/> Between the past 31 to 182 days  <input type="checkbox"/> Between the past 183 to 365 days</p>
<p>95. Who did these things to you while you while you were working on the street?</p> <p>TICK <b>AS MANY</b> ANSWERS AS YOU NEED</p>	<p>010 Date  02 <input type="checkbox"/> Your man  03 <input type="checkbox"/> Vice  04 <input type="checkbox"/> Uniform police  05 <input type="checkbox"/> Sex trade worker  06 <input type="checkbox"/> Boyfriend/Girlfriend (Circle One)  07 <input type="checkbox"/> Husband/Wife (Circle One)  99 <input type="checkbox"/> Other Person.  Who?</p>
<p>96. Did you report any of these incidents to the bad date sheet?</p>	<p>01 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes  020 No</p>
<p>97. Did you report any of these incidents to the police?</p>	<p>010 Yes  020 No</p>

103. Who have you done these things to:

**TICK AS MANY ANSWERS AS YOU NEED**

01 Date

02  Your man

03 Vice

04  Uniform police

05  Sex-trade worker

06  Boyfriend/Girlfriend (Circle One)

07  Husband/Wife (Circle One)

99  Other Person.

Who?

<p>7. Do you think the <b>uniform police</b> care about your safety?</p> <p>TICK <b>ONE</b> ANSWER ONLY</p>	<p>01 0 Most/all of them are concerned  02 0 Some of them are concerned  03 0 None of them are concerned</p>
<p>8. In what ways do you think the <b>uniform police</b> could improve their relationship with you?</p> <p>TICK AS <i>MANY</i> ANSWERS AS YOU NEED</p>	<p>01 0 Don't need to improve  02 <input type="checkbox"/> More female police officers  03 0 Police need to be educated  04 0 Police should be more respectful  05 <input type="checkbox"/> Should have more police patrols  06 0 Police should be more understanding  07 0 Police do not care enough to improve  09 0 Other. Write in:  _____  _____</p>
<p>9. Have the police ever?</p> <p>TICK AS MANY ANSWERS AS YOU NEED</p>	<p>01 <input type="checkbox"/> Taken you to a clinic  02 <input type="checkbox"/> Taken you to a shelter  03 <input type="checkbox"/> Taken you home  04 <input type="checkbox"/> Warned you about dangers  05 <input type="checkbox"/> Lectured you about danger  06 <input type="checkbox"/> Said they were concerned for your safety  07 <input type="checkbox"/> Advised you to contact an agency/social senice  08 <input type="checkbox"/> Made sexual comments to you  09 <input type="checkbox"/> Ridiculed you  10 <input type="checkbox"/> Told your parents/social worker that you were in prostitution  11 0 Wanted free sex  12 <input type="checkbox"/> Paid for sex  13 <input type="checkbox"/> Taken your picture against your will</p>
<p>9. Name an officer that you believe truly cares about your welfare?</p>	<p>01 0 There is not any  02 <input type="checkbox"/> Name: _____</p>
<p>10. <b>Right now</b>, what do you do to protect yourself when you are working <b>on the street</b>?</p> <p>TICK AS <i>MANY</i> ANSWERS AS YOU NEED</p>	<p>01 0 Don't work on the street  02 0 Trust my senses  03 0 Carry a weapon  04 0 Work with a friend  05 0 Spotter  06 0 Trick pad  07 0 Don't drink/use drugs when working  08 0 Avoid drunk or stoned tricks  09 0 Some other protection. What?  _____  _____</p>



15. Are you?	01 0 White 02 <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal 03 0 Asian 04 <input type="checkbox"/> East Indian 05 <input type="checkbox"/> Black 06 0 Other: _____
16. At what age did you leave your parents' or gaurdian's home permanently?	01 <input type="checkbox"/> 12 or younger 02 <input type="checkbox"/> 13-14 03 0 15-16 04 <input type="checkbox"/> 17-18 05 <input type="checkbox"/> 19-21 06 0 Still live at home
17. What is your present level of education?	01 0 public school 02 0 grade 9 03 <input type="checkbox"/> grade 10 04 <input type="checkbox"/> grade 11 05 <input type="checkbox"/> grade 12 06 0 Other: _____
18. Are you?	01 0 Female 02 0 Male 03 <input type="checkbox"/> Transsexual 04 <input type="checkbox"/> Cross dresser
19. What got you into the sex trade?          	
20. What services do you <b>think</b> there should be for sex trade workers?          	



**Prostitution in Vancouver: Violence and the  
Colonization of First Nations Women**

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**Abstract** We interviewed 100 women prostituting in Vancouver, Canada. We found an extremely high prevalence of lifetime violence and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Fifty-two percent of our interviewees were women from Canada's First Nations, a significant overrepresentation in prostitution compared with their representation in Vancouver generally (1.7–7%). Eighty-two percent reported a history of childhood sexual abuse, by an average of four perpetrators. Seventy-two percent reported childhood physical abuse, 90% had been physically assaulted in prostitution, 78% had been raped in prostitution. Seventy-two percent met DSM-IV criteria for PTSD. Ninety-five percent said that they wanted to leave prostitution. Eighty-six percent reported current or past homelessness with housing as one of their most urgent needs. Eighty-two percent expressed a need for treatment for drug or alcohol addictions. Findings are discussed in terms of the legacy of colonialism, the intrinsically traumatizing nature of prostitution and prostitution's violations of basic human rights.

**Key words** colonization • First Nations • post-traumatic stress disorder • prostitution • sexual assault

Prostitution is a gendered survival strategy that involves the assumption of unreasonable risks by the person in it. A number of authors have documented and analyzed the sexual and physical violence that is the normative experience for women in prostitution (Baldwin, 1993, 1999; Barry, 1979, 1995; Boyer, Chapman, & Marshall, 1993; Dworkin, 1981, 1997; Farley, Baral, Kiremire, & Sezgin, 1998; Giobbe, 1991, 1993; Hoigard & Finstad, 1986; Leidholdt, 1993; MacKinnon, 1993, 2001; McKeganey & Barnard, 1996; Miller, 1995; Silbert & Pines, 1982; Silbert, Pines & Lynch, 1982; Vanwesenbeeck, 1994; Weisberg, 1985). For example, Silbert and Pines (1981, 1982) reported that 70% of women suffered rape in prostitution, with 65% having been physically assaulted by customers, and 66% assaulted by pimps. The foregoing authors include data from Burma, Germany, Mexico, Philippines, the Netherlands, Norway, Scotland, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, USA and Zambia.

Most of those in prostitution began prostituting as adolescents. Nadon, Koverola, and Schludermann (1998) found that 89% had begun prostitution before the age of 16. Of 60 women prostituting in escort, street, strip club, phone sex,<sup>1</sup> and massage parlors in Seattle, all began prostituting between the ages of 12 and 14 (Boyer et al., 1993). In Canada, as elsewhere, most women and men enter prostitution as adolescents (Lowman, 1993).<sup>2</sup> Fifty-two percent of 183 Vancouver women were first prostituted when they were younger than 16 years, and 70% first prostituted before age 18 (Cunningham & Christensen, 2001). Children typically enter prostitution subsequent to abusive treatment by caregivers (Lowman, 1993) and subsequent to running away from dangerous home environments (Federal/Provincial Territorial Working Group on Prostitution, 1998).

Most people in prostitution were sexually abused as children, usually by several perpetrators. Farley and colleagues (2003) found an average of four perpetrators of childhood sexual abuse against those in prostitution in nine countries. Those in prostitution are often still children (Youth Delegates of Out of the Shadows, 1998). Across nine countries on five continents, 47% of the people in prostitution entered it when they were less than 18 years of age (Farley et al., 2003). One girl prostituting in Seattle said:

We've all been molested. Over and over, and raped. We were all molested and sexually abused as children, don't you know that? We ran to get away. They didn't want us in the house anymore. We were thrown out, thrown away. We've been on the street since we were 12, 13, 14. (Boyer et al., 1993, p. 16)

The most relevant paradigm currently available for understanding the harm of prostitution is that of domestic violence. Physical coercion, rape and violence by husband/partner/pimp and john are perpetrated against women in prostitution (Currie, 1994; Lowman, 1993; Lowman & Fraser, 1995; Miller, 1995). Of 854 people in prostitution, 73% reported that they had been physically assaulted in prostitution (Farley et al., 2003). In most instances, women in prostitution are battered women. Giobbe (1993) compared pimps and batterers and found similarities in their use of enforced social isolation, minimization and denial, threats, intimidation, verbal and sexual abuse, attitude of ownership, and extreme physical violence to control women.

One survivor described prostitution as a 'harrowing metamorphosis' that included frequent physical assaults and which ultimately resulted in a 'neutralization of the body' (Jaget, 1980, p. 188) or somatic dissociation. The physical and emotional violence of prostitution leads to somatic dissociation which itself has been regularly associated with chronic health problems (Kirkingen, 2001). In 1858, Sanger asked 2000 prostitutes in New York about their health and concluded that 'premature old age' was the invariable result of prostitution (cited in Benjamin & Masters, 1964). Today we view the chronic ill health of those in prostitution as resulting from physical abuse and neglect in childhood (Radomsky, 1995), sexual assault (Golding, 1994), battering (Crowell & Burgess, 1996), untreated health problems, and overwhelming stress and violence (Friedman & Yehuda, 1995; Koss & Heslet, 1992; Southwick, Yehuda, & Morgan, 1995).

Sanger described conditions of despair, degradation, decline, and early death among women in prostitution who survived, on average only 4 years from entry into prostitution (Benjamin & Masters, 1964). Making the same observation in the parlance of today's global marketplace, an anonymous pimp commented on the 'brief shelf life' of a girl in prostitution. Pheterson (1996) summarized the health problems of women in prostitution: exhaustion, frequent viral illness, sexually transmitted diseases, vaginal infections, backaches, sleeplessness, depression, headaches, stomachaches, and eating disorders. The longer women were in prostitution, the more sexually transmitted diseases they reported (Parriott, 1994). Women who were used by more customers in prostitution reported a range of more severe physical symptoms (Vanwesenbeeck, 1994).

Prostitution can be lethal (Potterat et al., 2004). A Canadian commission found that the death rate of women in prostitution was 40 times higher than that of the general population (Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution, 1985). A study of Vancouver prostitution reported a 36% incidence of attempted murder (Cler-Cunningham & Christenson, 2001).

Vancouver agencies serving women in prostitution have observed many

First Nations women in prostitution. We use the words First Nations as a term of respect for people whose ancestors were the first nations of people in North America. We use the term Aboriginal interchangeably with First Nations.<sup>3</sup> In a number of communities across Canada, Aboriginal youth comprise '90% of the visible sex trade' (Save the Children Canada, 2000, p. 7), suggesting the importance of placing prostitution in historical context. Acknowledging the adverse effects of colonialism, Cler-Cunningham and Christenson (2001) observed the 'immense overrepresentation' of Aboriginal women in Vancouver's street-level sex trade.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) documented the perilous state of Aboriginal housing: 84% of Aboriginal households on reserves did not have sufficient income to cover housing (RCAP, 1996). Housing instability results in reserve-to-urban migration, leaving young women vulnerable to prostitution, in that homelessness has been established as a primary risk factor for prostitution (Boyer et al., 1993; Louie, Luu, & Tong, 1991; Silbert & Pines, 1983). When women in prostitution are asked what they need, first on their list is housing (Farley et al, 1998).

Colonization and racism result in extensive and insidious trauma that wears away its victims' mental and physical health (Kelm, 1998; Root, 1996). Colonization of First Nations in Canada by the British and the French resulted in well-documented health problems (Waldram, Herring & Young, 2000). The combined effects of poverty, race discrimination and cultural losses profoundly affect First Nations and are likely contributing factors to high rates of interpersonal violence, depression, suicide and substance abuse (Kirmayer, 1994).<sup>4</sup> Canada's Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples referred to premature death as one of the consequences of colonization:

Aboriginal people are more likely [than non-Aboriginal people] to face inadequate nutrition, substandard housing and sanitation, unemployment and poverty, discrimination and racism, violence, inappropriate or absent services, and subsequent high rates of physical, social and emotional illness, injury, disability and premature death. (RCAP, 1996, p. 107)

The suicide rate among First Nations people across Canada was three times that of other Canadians and six times higher for those aged 15–24 years (Bobet, 1990).

The prevalence of violence against Aboriginal women is extremely high. The death rate of First Nations women from homicide is more than four times greater than that of all Canadian women (Health Canada, Medical Services Branch, unpublished tables, 1995, cited in RCAP, 1996, p 153). Nahanee (1993) wrote of 'the almost total victimization of [Aboriginal] women and children' and concluded 'violence against Aboriginal women

has reached epidemic proportions according to most studies conducted over the past few years. This violence includes the victimization of women and their children, both of whom are seen as property of their men (husbands, lovers, fathers), or of the community in which they live' (Nahanee, 1993, pp. 360–361). Similarly in the United States, 80% of indigenous women seeking health care at one clinic reported having been raped (Old Dog Cross, 1982).

First Nations gay men like First Nations women, are in double jeopardy. Comparing Canadian Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal gay men, researchers found that Aboriginal gay men were significantly more likely to be poor, unstably housed, more depressed, to have been sexually abused as children, to have been raped, and to have been prostituted (Heath et al., 1999).

The diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) describes psychological symptoms resulting from overwhelmingly traumatic events such as rape, war, and prostitution. PTSD can result when people have experienced 'extreme traumatic stressors involving direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury; or other threat to one's personal integrity; or witnessing an event that involves death, injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of another person; or learning about unexpected or violent death, serious harm, or threat of death or injury experienced by a family member or other close associate' (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). PTSD is characterized by anxiety, depression, insomnia, irritability, flashbacks, emotional numbing, and hyperalertness. Symptoms are more severe and long lasting when the stressor is of human design. PTSD is common among prostituted women. Farley and colleagues (1998) found a PTSD prevalence rate of 67% among those in prostitution in five countries.

Cultural and social factors are known to have a causal role in PTSD symptoms (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). Trauma history and PTSD vary by race/ethnicity and national origin with, for example, refugees from South Asian countries experiencing high rates of war-related traumatic events (Mollica et al., 1990) and indigenous peoples in the United States suffering multiple and cumulative trauma when compared with other groups (Robin, Chester, & Goldman, 1996). In a study that included a majority of Alaska Native women, 70% of a sample of pregnant women in substance abuse treatment had experienced childhood physical and sexual abuse (Brems & Namyniuk, 2002).

There are many anecdotal accounts and case studies of prostitution (Farley & Kelly, 2000). We noted the need for quantitative data. This work was an attempt to expand a quantitative database on prostitution, history of violence and PTSD that now includes nine countries (Farley et al., 2003). An analysis of the intersections of race, class and gender is crucial

to an understanding of prostitution. In reviewing the literature regarding colonialism, cultural alienation, and violence against First Nations, we predicted that First Nations women, compared with non-First Nations women in prostitution, would report increased rates of violence both during prostitution and in their lives prior to prostitution. Given the previous findings of extremely high rates of PTSD among those prostituted, we did not anticipate finding differences in PTSD between First Nations women and white European-Canadian women in prostitution.

### METHOD

Brief structured interviews of 100 prostituting women and children were conducted in Vancouver, Canada. We contacted agencies working with prostitutes and set up collaborative efforts where possible. The second author was a board member of a Vancouver agency that provided services to prostitutes and was familiar with locations where prostitution commonly occurred in Vancouver. She was known to some of our interviewees in her capacity as a social worker. Interviewers were screened for the ability to establish an easygoing rapport on the street and in occasionally dangerous locations.

The women we interviewed were from the Downtown Eastside, Franklin, and Broadway/Fraser prostitution strolls in Vancouver, BC. We attempted to contact any woman known to be prostituting, whether indoor or outdoors. Using a snowball recruitment technique, we asked women to let their friends who were prostituting elsewhere (e.g. in other areas or indoors) know that we would return to a specific location at a specific time the next day. Usually we had access only to people prostituting on the street. Only four women refused to participate; several appeared to be in the process of approaching customers.

Informed consent included a summary of research goals and participants' rights. Respondents' copies of the consent form included names and phone numbers of local agencies that could be contacted for support and assistance and included the authors' phone numbers and email addresses. In all cases we offered to read the items to respondents. Most were able to complete the questionnaire without assistance; however, a few were illiterate.

If respondents indicated that they were prostituting we asked them to fill out three questionnaires. We paid a small stipend (\$10 Canadian) to those who responded to the three questionnaires. The Prostitution Questionnaire (PQ), used in similar research in South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, the USA and Zambia, consists of 32 items asking about physical and sexual assault in prostitution, lifetime history of physical and sexual violence, and the use of or making of pornography during prostitution (Farley et al.,



1998). The questionnaire asked whether respondents wished to leave prostitution and what they needed in order to leave. We asked if they had been homeless, if they had physical health problems, and if they used drugs or alcohol or both. Because of item heterogeneity, psychometrics on the PQ are not available. Sample items include:

2. Since you've been in prostitution, have you been physically assaulted?
- 14a. When you were a child, were you ever hit or beaten by a parent or caregiver until you had bruises on your body or were injured in some other way by them?
16. Did you ever have pictures taken of you while you were working in prostitution?
19. Have you ever been homeless?

Respondents also completed the PTSD Checklist (PCL), a 17-item scale that assesses DSM-IV symptoms of PTSD (Weathers, Litz, Herman, Huska, & Keane, 1993). Respondents were asked to rate the 17 symptoms of PTSD (see Table 1) on a 5-point scale with 1 = *not at all*; 2 = *a little bit*; 3 = *moderately*; 4 = *quite a bit*; and 5 = *extremely*. Weathers and colleagues (1993) report PCL test-retest reliability of .96. Internal consistency as measured by Cronbach's alpha was .97 for all 17 items. Validity of the scale is reflected in its strong correlations with the Mississippi PTSD Scale (.93), the PK scale of the MMPI-2 (.77) and the Impact of Event Scale (.90). The PCL has functioned comparably across ethnic subcultures in the USA (Keane, Kaloupek, & Weathers, 1996).

Based on previous responses to open-ended questions about health problems among prostituted women, we constructed a Chronic Health Problems Questionnaire (CHPQ; Farley et al., 1998). The CHPQ is a symptom checklist with dichotomous items. Interviewees were asked whether or not they had symptoms or experienced events commonly reported by women in prostitution. Sample items included joint pain, jaw pain, loss of feeling on skin, pain in breasts and head injury. Scale mean was 17.6, with  $SD = 8.6$ . Internal consistency as measured by Cronbach's alpha was .92 for 36 items.

Once it was apparent that we were interested in hearing about women's experiences during prostitution, many volunteered information regarding what prostitution was like for them. Some of their observations are included here. Whenever an interviewee wanted to talk with us, we welcomed that and took notes. During this process, referrals were made to substance abuse treatment centers, First Nations community centers and medical clinics.

*PARTICIPANTS*

We describe all of the 100 interviewees in this study as women, although one respondent identified as transgendered. This person was included as a woman with the rest of our respondents. Ages ranged from 13 to 49 years, with a mean age of 28 years ( $SD = 7.8$  years).

The youngest age at recruitment into prostitution was 10 years. Respondents spent an average of 10 years in escort, massage, and street prostitution ( $SD = 7$  years). A few respondents had been in prostitution less than a year, with 4 months being the least amount of time any of our interviewees spent in prostitution. One woman had been prostituted for 31 years.

With respect to race/ethnicity, 52% were First Nations, 38% were white European-Canadian, 5% were African-Canadian, and 5% left the question unanswered. Ethnicity was self-reported. The majority of the 52 First Nations women described themselves as Native ( $n = 24$ ), First Nations ( $n = 2$ ) or Native Indian ( $n = 2$ ). Next most often, they described themselves as Metis ( $n = 10$ ), a French word that translates to English as 'mixed blood' and is used to describe people who are of both First Nations and European ancestries. Historically, the two major colonizers of First Nations of Canada were the British and the French; therefore most of those called Metis were First Nations/French or First Nations/British. In current use in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, the word Metis refers to anyone who is biracial or multiracial. We use the term Metis in its broadest sense and not as a term that refers to legal status. The First Nations women also categorized themselves as Cree or Cree Native ( $n = 3$ ), Cree/French ( $n = 2$ ), Ojibwa ( $n = 2$ ), Aboriginal ( $n = 2$ ), Native/El Salvador ( $n = 2$ ), Blackfoot/Cree ( $n = 1$ ), Cree/Metis/Mexican ( $n = 1$ ), and Interior Salish ( $n = 1$ ). In order to make statistical comparisons, we collapsed all the foregoing groups into the category 'First Nations.' Fewer than 10 women identified themselves by nation, so we were unable to compare nations in our analyses.

**RESULTS**

*CHILDHOOD VIOLENCE*

Eighty-two percent of our respondents reported a history of childhood sexual abuse, by an average of four perpetrators. This statistic (those assaulted by an average of four perpetrators) did not include those who responded to the question 'If there was unwanted sexual touching or sexual contact between you and an adult, how many people in all?' with 'tons' or 'I can't count that high' or 'I was too young to remember.' Seventy-two percent reported that as children, they had been hit or beaten by a caregiver until they had bruises or were injured.

Eighty-six percent of these women in Vancouver prostitution reported current or past homelessness.

#### *PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN PROSTITUTION*

Ninety percent of these women had been physically assaulted in prostitution. Of those who reported physical assault, 82% of the perpetrators were their customers. Eighty-nine percent had been physically threatened while in prostitution and 67% had been physically threatened with a weapon. Seventy-eight percent had been raped in prostitution, with 67% of those raped having been raped more than five times. Seventy-six percent of those who had been raped had been raped by customers.

Sixty-seven percent of our interviewees reported that pornography was made of them in prostitution; and 64% had been upset by an attempt to force them to perform an act that customers had seen in pornography.

#### *VERBAL AND EMOTIONAL ABUSE IN PROSTITUTION*

Eighty-eight percent of the women responding to our questionnaires reported that they had been verbally abused. One woman commented, 'lots of [customers] are super-nice at first. Then when the sex act starts, they get real verbally abusive.' Another told us that while legal prostitution might make her feel safer from physical assaults, it would not change the verbal abuse and harassment that she knew was intrinsic to prostitution.

#### *PHYSICAL HEALTH PROBLEMS*

Sixty-three percent of these women in prostitution reported health problems. Common symptoms were memory problems (66%), trouble concentrating (66%), headaches (56%), dizziness (44%), vision problems (45%), hearing problems (40%), balance problems (41%), aching muscles (78%), joint pain (60%), jaw pain (38%), and swelling of limbs (33%). Cardiovascular symptoms included chest pain (43%), pain/numbness in hands/feet (49%), irregular heartbeat (33%) and shortness of breath (60%). Sixty-one percent of these respondents had cold/flu symptoms. In addition, 35% reported allergies and 32% reported asthma. Twenty four percent reported both painful menstruation and vaginal pain. Twenty three percent had breast pain. In response to a general query about health, 30% of the women we interviewed reported hepatitis C. Some of the cardiovascular, neurological and joint complaints may have been symptoms of drug withdrawal.

Seventy-five percent of the women reported physical injuries from violence in prostitution. Many reported stabbings and beatings,

concussions and broken bones (broken jaws, ribs, collar bones, fingers, spinal injuries, and a fractured skull), as well as cuts, black eyes, and 'fat lips.'<sup>5</sup> Fifty percent of these women had head injuries resulting from violent assaults with, for example, baseball bats and crowbars. Many had their heads slammed against walls and against car dashboards. Customers and pimps regularly subjected them to extreme violence when they refused to perform a specific sex act.

#### *POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER*

PTSD consists of three types of symptoms: (1) persistent, intrusive re-experiencing of trauma; (2) numbing of responsiveness and persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with trauma; and (3) persistent autonomic hyperarousal. A diagnosis of PTSD requires at least one intrusive symptom, three numbing/avoidance symptoms, and two hyperarousal symptoms, as well as having experienced a traumatic stressor (criterion A). Criterion A requires having experienced or witnessed an event or events involving actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others, and reacting with intense fear, helplessness, or horror to these events (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). Attempted rape is commonly accepted as meeting criterion A for diagnosis of PTSD (Avina & O'Donohue, 2002). Ninety percent of our respondents had themselves been physically assaulted in prostitution. Based on previous findings we concluded that all of our respondents met criterion A by having experienced or witnessed serious injury.

We summed respondents' ratings across the 17 items of the PCL, generating an overall measure of PTSD symptom severity that was previously used by the scale's authors. Mean PCL score for our respondents was 55.7 ( $SD = 15.6$ ).

Using Weathers et al.'s (1993) formulation we considered a score of 3 (*moderately*), 4 (*quite a bit*) or 5 (*extremely*) on a PCL item to be a symptom of PTSD. Eighty-nine percent of our respondents endorsed at least one intrusive symptom of PTSD, 81% endorsed at least three numbing and avoidance symptoms of PTSD, and 85% endorsed at least two of the physiologic hyperarousal symptoms of PTSD. The mean scores for these 100 women in prostitution were within the clinically symptomatic range (3 or greater) on two of the five intrusive symptoms, for all seven of the numbing/avoidance symptoms, and all five of the hyperarousal symptoms of PTSD. See Table 1 for mean scores of each of the 17 PCL items. Seventy-two percent of our respondents met criteria for a PTSD diagnosis.

**TABLE 1**  
PTSD symptoms of 100 Vancouver women in prostitution

<i>PTSD symptom</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Percent responding at PTSD symptom level (%)</i>
<i>Intrusive re-experiencing (B symptoms)</i>			
Memories of trauma from the past	3.1	1.3	64
Dreams of trauma from the past	2.8	1.4	54
Act/feel as if traumatic event were happening again	2.8	1.3	53
Very upset when reminded of trauma from past	3.5	1.2	76
Physical reactions to memories of past trauma	2.6	1.4	52
<i>Numbing and avoidance (C symptoms)</i>			
Avoid thinking or feeling about past trauma	3.5	1.4	76
Avoid activities which remind you of past trauma	3.4	1.4	68
Trouble remembering parts of trauma from past	3.1	1.5	65
Loss of interest in activities you used to enjoy	3.8	1.3	78
Feeling distant or cut off from people	3.7	1.4	72
Emotionally numb; unable to have loving feelings	3.4	1.5	70
Feel as if future will be cut short	3.4	1.5	68
<i>Hyperarousal (D symptoms)</i>			
Trouble falling or staying asleep	3.1	1.4	67
Feeling irritable or having angry outbursts	3.3	1.5	64
Difficulty concentrating	3.3	1.3	72
'Superalert' or watchful or on guard	3.6	1.3	81
Feeling jumpy or easily startled	3.3	1.5	66

### *HISTORY OF VIOLENCE AND PTSD*

We investigated four types of lifetime violence experienced by these interviewees: childhood sexual assault, childhood physical assault, rape in adult prostitution, and physical assault in adult prostitution. Eighty-nine percent reported childhood sexual assault, 72% reported childhood physical assault, 92% reported rape in adult prostitution, and 90% reported physical assault in adult prostitution. Four percent of the sample had experienced only one type of lifetime violence, 11% reported two types, 23% reported three types, and 62% reported experiencing all four types of lifetime violence.

PTSD diagnosis and severity were not related to number of types of lifetime violence as would normally be expected. These respondents' extremely high incidence of lifetime violence created a ceiling effect. Because 85% of the sample experienced three or four types of lifetime violence, there were not enough people in the group who experienced only

one or two forms of lifetime violence (15%) to determine whether there was a relationship between PTSD severity and number of different types of lifetime violence.

*CURRENT NEEDS OF INTERVIEWEES*

Ninety-five percent of these respondents stated that they wanted to leave prostitution. Eighty-two percent expressed a need for drug or alcohol addiction treatment. They voiced a need for job training (67%), a home or safe place (66%), individual counseling (58%), self-defense training (49%), health care (41%) and peer support (41%). Thirty-three percent needed legal assistance, 32% wanted legalized prostitution, 12% needed childcare, and 4% wanted physical protection from pimps.

*DIFFERENCES WITH RESPECT TO RACE/ETHNICITY*

We compared First Nations women with European-Canadian women in a number of analyses. Table 2 summarizes these comparisons. Childhood sexual abuse was reported significantly more often by interviewees identifying as First Nations than by those describing themselves as European Canadian ( $\chi^2 (1) = 5.2, p = .02$ ). Of those First Nations women reporting sexual abuse, relatives were specified as perpetrators 41% of the time, adult friends or community members were specified as perpetrators 34% of the time, and an older child was specified as perpetrator 25% of the time. Significantly more First Nations women than European-Canadian women reported childhood physical abuse ( $\chi^2 (1) = 5.6, p = .02$ ).

**TABLE 2**  
Comparison of First Nations and European-Canadian women: Childhood physical and sexual abuse, homelessness, and violence in prostitution

	<i>First Nations</i>		<i>European-Canadian</i>		$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>
	%	( <i>n</i> = 52)	%	( <i>n</i> = 38)		
Childhood physical abuse*	81	(42)	58	(22)	5.6	.02
Childhood sexual abuse*	96	(50)	82	(31)	5.2	.02
Verbal abuse in prostitution	88	(45)	92	(35)	1.0	.30
Physical abuse in prostitution	88	(46)	89	(34)	.02	.88
Raped in prostitution	92	(48)	92	(35)	.00	.97
Threatened with a weapon	63	(33)	66	(25)	.16	.69
Homelessness	83	(43)	87	(33)	.43	.51
Upset by being forced to imitate pornography	69	(36)	58	(22)	1.2	.28
Had pornography made of them	65	(34)	60	(23)	.49	.48

\**p* < .05.

**TABLE 3**  
Responses to 'What do you need?' asked of women in prostitution

Need	First Nations		European-Canadian		$\chi^2$	p
	%	(n = 49)	%	(n = 36)		
Drug or alcohol treatment	88	(43)	75	(27)	2.3	.13
Job training*	78	(38)	56	(20)	4.6	.03
Individual counseling*	67	(33)	44	(16)	3.9	.05
Self-defense training**	63	(31)	33	(12)	7.4	.006
Home or safe place	61	(30)	75	(27)	1.3	.25
Peer support*	53	(26)	25	(9)	6.3	.01
Medical or health care	41	(20)	36	(13)	.2	.66
Legal assistance	33	(16)	28	(10)	.2	.63
Legalized prostitution	24	(12)	36	(13)	1.3	.24
Childcare	16	(8)	8	(3)	1.2	.28
Physical protection from pimp	4	(2)	3	(1)	.1	.75

Note. Five participants did not respond to these questions.

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ .

There were ethnic differences in response to a needs assessment. See Table 3. First Nations women indicated a significantly greater need for self-defense training ( $\chi^2(1) = 7.4, p = .006$ ), a greater need for peer support ( $\chi^2(1) = 6.3, p = .01$ ), a greater need for job training ( $\chi^2(1) = 4.6, p = .03$ ), and for individual counseling ( $\chi^2(1) = 3.9, p = .05$ ).

We found no race/ethnic differences in the frequency of health problems endorsed on the Chronic Health Problems Questionnaire ( $F(1,82) = .06, p = .81$ ).

First Nations women in the sample were not more likely than European Canadians to qualify for a diagnosis of PTSD ( $\chi^2(1) = .01, p = .92$ ) nor was there a significant statistical relationship between PTSD severity, as measured by the mean PCL sum score and First Nations heritage (Pearson  $r = -.02, p = .86$ ).

## DISCUSSION

The clinical expression 'hypervigilance' does not adequately describe the physical terror and despair we witnessed in many of these women. Violence seemed to be in the very air they breathed. Our findings document this extreme level of sexual violence. One woman told us that she was continually raped in prostitution, explaining 'what rape is to others, is normal to us.' Another woman, aged 36, described a rape as the 'defining experience' of her life. At age 16 she was raped at knifepoint after which the rapist gave her a gold chain in effect paying her for the rape and defining her as a prostitute.

Most of our respondents had been physically assaulted (90%) or raped (78%) in prostitution. A fear of men was pervasive. One woman told us that being hit and bruised were 'just your common aggressiveness from men.' In a separate study of Vancouver prostitution, 68% of women had been recently raped, 72% had been kidnapped, and 89% had had customers refuse condoms in the previous year (Cunningham & Christenson, 2001).

For many of our interviewees, accommodation to violence began in childhood. Most women in this study (82%) reported sexual abuse as children, usually with multiple perpetrators. Currie (1994) found a comparable prevalence of childhood sexual abuse (73%) among 600 women prostituting in Vancouver. Benoit and Millar (2001) noted a 55% incidence of childhood sexual abuse among 201 women prostituting in Victoria, BC. A Toronto study noted that many women who were prostituting cited 'persistent abuse' as precipitating their drug use (Butters & Erickson, 2003).

Cler-Cunningham and Christenson (2001) reported that 85% of 183 women in Vancouver prostitution had been verbally or physically harassed more than once in the past year. The verbal abuse in prostitution is socially invisible just as other sexual harassment in prostitution is normalized and invisible. Yet it is pervasive: 88% of our respondents described verbal abuse as intrinsic to prostitution. Customers' verbal assaults in all types of prostitution are likely to cause acute and long-term psychological symptoms. A woman in another study explained this: 'It is internally damaging. You become in your own mind what these people do and say with you. You wonder how could you let yourself do this and why do these people want to do this to you?' (Farley, 2003b). The verbal abuse against prostituted women is reflected in the names that all women are called by violent men during sexual assaults. The epithets seem intended 'to humiliate, to eroticize, and to satisfy an urge for self-justification.' (Baldwin, 1992, p. 60).

The 72% incidence of current PTSD in these women in prostitution is among the highest reported in populations where PTSD has been studied, including battered women, combat veterans, childhood trauma survivors, rape survivors, and torture survivors (Bownes, O'Gorman, & Sayers, 1991; Farley et al., 1998; Feeney, Zoellner, & Foa, 2000; Houskamp & Foy, 1991; Kemp, Rawlings, & Green, 1991; Ramsay, Gorst-Unsworth, & Turner, 1993; Weathers et al., 1993). Rates of PTSD among these prostituted women from Canada did not differ significantly from prostituted women in other countries including South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, the USA and Zambia ( $F(5,575) = .95, p = .45$ ). The mean PCL score (56) of these prostituted women was in the same range (51–56) as that of people in prostitution in South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, the USA and Zambia (Farley et al., 1998) and similar to the mean PTSD score (51) of treatment-seeking Vietnam



veterans (Weathers et al., 1993) and much higher than means in studies of Persian Gulf War veterans (35, Weathers et al., 1993), and women HMO members with and without childhood physical and sexual abuse (24–37, Farley & Patsalides, 2001).

When we compared European-Canadian women with First Nations women we did not find differences in PTSD. The pervasiveness and severity of trauma exposure experienced by these women in prostitution may have obscured differences in PTSD that would otherwise be expected on the basis of race/ethnicity. Our findings are consistent with two studies that failed to find race differences in PTSD symptoms among combat veterans (Beals et al., 2002; Monnier, Elhai, Frueh, Sauvageot, & Magruder, 2002). In these studies, combat (like prostitution) was the overwhelmingly traumatic event that mitigated differences in PTSD based on race.

Our respondents appeared to be in a state of almost constant revictimization. The assaults against these women in prostitution were part of a lifetime surround of exploitation and abuse. Because of this pervasive violence we cannot separate the effects of childhood and adult violence on current PTSD symptoms. It is likely that experiences of violence over the course of one's lifetime have a cumulative effect on PTSD symptoms (Follette, Polusny, Bechtle, & Naugle, 1996). Other research found that a history of sexual assaults is a common precursor to prostitution. West, Williams, and Siegel (2000) found that women were most likely to prostitute if they had experienced *both* sexual abuse as children and were later revictimized by rape as adults. One young woman told Silbert and Pines (1982, p. 488), 'I started turning tricks to show my father what he made me.' Dworkin (1997, p. 143) described incest as 'boot camp' for prostitution.

Fifty-two percent of our respondents were First Nations women, a lower percentage than the 70% of First Nations women in street prostitution in another Vancouver study (Currie, 1994, reported in Federal/Provincial Territorial Working Group, 1998). In population census estimates, 7% of Vancouver's people are First Nations (Vancouver/Richmond Health Board, 1999). The overrepresentation of First Nations women in prostitution, and prostitution's prevalence in an area of Vancouver with a high proportion of First Nations residents reflects not only their poverty, but also their marginalized and devalued status as Canadians. Others report similar findings. For example 15% of women in escort prostitution in Victoria, BC were First Nations although the First Nations population of Victoria has been estimated at 2% (Benoit & Millar, 2001 p. 18).

In New Zealand, Plumridge and Abel (2001) observed that 7% of the Christchurch population were Maori women but 19% of those in Christchurch prostitution were Maori women. Maori in prostitution were significantly more likely than European-ancestry New Zealanders to have

experienced homelessness and to have entered prostitution as children (Farley, 2003a). As we did in Vancouver, New Zealand researchers sampled from the poorest community in Auckland and reported that twice as many Maori there were in prostitution (40%) compared with their representation in northern New Zealand generally (21%) (Saphira & Herbert, 2003). In the early 1990s, Atayal and other Aboriginal girls comprised 70% of those in Taiwanese debt-bondage prostitution although they were only 1.8% of the total population (Hwang & Bedford, 2003). The researchers noted that pathways into prostitution for Aboriginal Taiwanese adolescents were similar to those pathways elsewhere: globalization of the economy, social and cultural disruption, race/ethnic discrimination, and extremely high levels of family violence.

For women, prostitution is intimately associated with poverty. Its First Nations residents refer to Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, one of the poorest areas in North America, as the 'urban reserve.' Colonization left many First Nations people in extreme poverty that has endured for generations (LaFramboise, Choney, James, & Running Wolf, 1995). Eighty-six percent of our respondents were currently or previously homeless. First Nations youth who leave their home communities for urban areas are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation in that they are both homeless and in an unfamiliar cultural environment (Federal/Provincial Working Group, 1998). Although we do not yet have data to confirm this, we suspect that First Nations women are more likely to be overrepresented in the poorest types of prostitution – street and massage – than in strip club, phone sex, and Internet prostitution. The first author observed that in Mexico City, Mayan women were often sold in prostitution for the lowest price and were made available for more violent sex acts, such as anal rapes, that other women refused to perform.

Analyzing the effects of racism is central to an understanding of prostitution. Racism has a profound effect on health (Williams, Lavizzo-Mourey, & Warren, 1994; Turner & Kramer, 1995). For example a U.S. report located more than 175 studies documenting race/ethnic disparities in diagnosis and treatment of medical conditions (Institute of Medicine, 2002). Reflecting poverty, malnutrition, chronic stress and inadequate health care, premature aging is commonplace in the Downtown Eastside where one neighborhood center categorizes anyone over age 40 as a senior. The vulnerabilities of race, class and gender have been recognized as multiplicative risk factors for HIV (Osmond et al., 1993), and we think that they are also multiplicative risk factors for prostitution. In Canada, the triple force of race, class and sex discrimination disparately impacts First Nations women. Prostitution of Aboriginal women occurs globally in epidemic numbers with indigenous women at the bottom of a racialized sexual hierarchy in prostitution itself. This phenomenon has been observed by others

(Grant, Grabosky, & David, 1999; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2001; UNICEF, 2004).

For many, the experience of prostitution stems from the historical trauma of colonization. Imposing a sexist and racist regime on First Nations women, colonization simultaneously elevated male power within the colonized community (Fiske, 1995). Today, many First Nations women are dominated by a 'newly evolved state of traditional governance' that replaced more egalitarian systems (Brunen, 2000). The cultural destruction of positive roles for First Nations men and their subsequent identification with supremacist attitudes have had disastrous consequences for First Nations women, with astronomical rates of incest, rape and husband violence.

Freire (1994) described the colonial destruction of positive roles for men as resulting in 'adhesion to the oppressor' (p. 27). Dworkin also discussed the harm inflicted on women by colonized men:

The stigma of the prostitute allows the violent, the angry, the socially and politically impoverished male to nurse a grudge against all women, including prostituted women; this is aggressive bias, made rawer and more dangerous by the need to counter one's own presumed inferiority. (Dworkin, 2000, p. 325)

Sexual violence and other family violence are major social problems in First Nations communities. A Dene woman described communities in which the entire female population had been sexually assaulted by men. She had been threatened with further violence if she spoke out against this (Lynne, 1998, p. 43). Consistent with others' reports, First Nations women in our study were significantly more likely than non-First Nations to report childhood physical and sexual abuse.

There is an urgent need for further exploration of these connections between gender, race/ethnicity, and class in prostitution not only in Canada but elsewhere (Bourgeault, 1989). Prostitution is one specific legacy of colonization although it is infrequently analyzed as such (Lynne, 1998; Scully, 2001). A perspective that understands prostitution to be colonization of First Nations women by both First Nations and non-First Nations men may be helpful in addressing the problem.

The RCAP report suggested that a general health strategy for First Nations should involve equitable access to health services, holistic approaches to treatment, Aboriginal control of services, and diverse approaches that respond to cultural priorities and community needs (RCAP, 1996). These four strategies are applicable to the healing of women escaping prostitution. Models for healing of First Nations women in prostitution would include a decolonizing perspective that analyzes historical trauma, violent crimes, family violence, child abuse and neglect,

discrimination, unresolved grief and mourning. Cultural moderators of these traumatic experiences that would promote healing include family/community support, traditional spiritual practices and medicine, and a positive indigenous identity (Walters, Simoni, & Evans-Campbell, 2002). A study of the needs of Vancouver prostituted women underscores these recommendations (Benoit, Carroll, & Chaudhry, 2002). A Toronto study of 30 prostituting women emphasized their need for mental health services, including drop-in crisis centers open at night as well as hotlines staffed by peers (Butters & Erickson, 2003). Access to alternative employment that would generate sustainable income is necessary in order to remove the economic motivation for prostitution.

In our opinion, western medical treatment of PTSD is best combined with traditional healing for First Nations women who want to escape prostitution. The Peguis First Nation community in Manitoba found that a combination of traditional and western healing approaches was especially effective for those who suffer from emotional problems, including those related to alcohol and drug abuse, violence and suicide (Cohen, cited in RCAP, 1996).

Women in prostitution self-medicate for depression and PTSD with drugs and alcohol.<sup>6</sup> An urgent need for treatment of drug and alcohol addiction was voiced by 82% of those we interviewed. An approach that simultaneously treats substance abuse and PTSD has proven more effective than treatment that only treats substance abuse and fails to address PTSD (Epstein, Saunders, Kilpatrick, & Resnick, 1998; Najavits, Weiss, Shaw, & Muenz, 1998; Ouimette, Kimerling, Shaw, & Moos, 2000). Women in prostitution who are dealing with addictions are not likely to benefit from treatment in mixed-gender groups. It is unsafe for them to discuss prostitution in the traditional 12-step setting, because men regularly proposition them as soon as the women are known to have prostituted. Furthermore, confidentiality is a concern in communities where everyone is either related or knows one another (Rees, 2001).

Any intervention for those in prostitution must first acknowledge prostitution as a form of violence. As with battered women, physical safety is a critical concern. In order to address the harm of prostitution it is necessary to use education, prevention and intervention strategies similar to those dedicated to other forms of gender-based abuse such as rape and intimate partner violence. This understanding of prostitution as violence against women must then become a part of public policy and it must be structurally implemented in public health care, mental health services, homeless shelters, rape crisis centers and battered women's shelters (Stark & Hodgson, 2003). The healthcare provider must become not only culturally competent regarding differences between nations in culture and language but also acquainted with community services and anti-violence resources

(Polacca, 2003). In the United States there is the additional complexity of jurisdictional confusion. Tribal courts may lack the means and the will for strong prosecution of perpetrators of violence. Tribal jurisdiction sometimes conflicts with federal law enforcement, and perpetrators may be aware that there are minimal consequences for violence against women (National Sexual Violence Resource Center, 2000; Polacca, 2003).

Caution is warranted in interpreting these results because we ran multiple post-hoc analyses on this data, which has not been statistically corrected for the increased probability of finding significant results when multiple analyses are performed. Nonetheless, we are confident that the trends we have described are accurate and that they warrant further investigation.

Because of the ongoing trauma of prostitution and homelessness it is likely that some of these women minimized childhood violence. To review a history of trauma while in the midst of ongoing abuse was likely to have been too painful for some. Some of these women did not categorize juvenile prostitution as childhood sexual abuse.<sup>7</sup> Others minimized violence they had experienced by comparing it with that suffered by friends. One woman told us that since she had no broken bones and had not been assaulted with a weapon, therefore her rape and strangulation by a john did not count as much. Thus we assume that the reporting of trauma history among our respondents is conservative and that the actual prevalence of traumatic events, health symptoms, and PTSD symptoms is likely to be higher than reported here. Some women we interviewed were obviously intoxicated. This does not decrease our confidence in the accuracy of these results. Along with others we have noted that addicts report life events with as much accuracy as non-addicts do (Bonito, Nurco, & Shaffer, 1976).

No study of prostitution can claim a representative or random sample, given the illegality of prostitution in most locations. 'There is quite simply no such thing as a representative sample of women selling sex' (McKeganey & Barnard, 1996). We interviewed those people to whom we had access. In most cases we and other researchers have access only to people prostituting on the street. That said, we made every attempt to contact any woman known to be prostituting, indoors or outdoors. We did this by asking women to tell friends who were prostituting elsewhere (e.g. in other areas or from their homes or clubs) that we would return to a certain location at a specific time the next day. Interviewees often reported involvement in prostitution across multiple locations, for example, strip club, escort and massage parlors as well as street prostitution.<sup>8</sup>

As shown in these findings, prostitution is a sexually exploitive often-violent economic option most often entered into by those with a lengthy history of sexual, racial and economic victimization. Prostitution is only

now beginning to be understood as violence against women and children. It has rarely been included in discussions of sexual violence against First Nations.<sup>9</sup> It is crucial to understand the sexual exploitation of First Nations women in prostitution today in a historical context of colonial violence against nations (Frideres, 1993; Ryser, 1995; Waldram, 1997). Today, the continued displacement of women who are poor, rural and indigenous may be understood as *trafficking* in which women are moved from the reserve to the city for the purpose of prostitution (Lynne, 1998).

Just as wife beating was historically viewed as having been provoked by the victim, prostitution is still viewed by some as a job choice to which the victim 'consents.' Ninety-five percent of our interviewees said that they wanted to escape prostitution, while also telling us that they did not feel that they had other options for survival. Another report found that 90% of women in prostitution wanted to leave prostitution but could not (Elizabeth Fry Society of Toronto, 1987). Social scientists have begun to address the harms of incest, rape and family violence. We hope to see more research that examines prostitution as part of the surround of violence against women, specifically including First Nations women. We also hope to see investigations of interventions that promote healing from prostitution.

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#### NOTES

1. In phone sex, a person verbally provides explicit sex talk for pay for a customer who typically masturbates during the call. It can include what in other settings would be verbal sexual harassment, as well as sexist and racist epithets and other verbal abuse. Commonly, women who engage in phone sex, like women in strip clubs, also prostitute in other ways.
2. British Columbia surveys found the average age of entry into prostitution to be 14–15.5 years, and a Vancouver survey found average age of entry into prostitution to be 16.3 for girls and 15.6 for boys (Lowman & Fraser, 1989).
3. Aboriginal and First Nations, are words used to refer to indigenous peoples of Canada. No doubt some will disagree with our choice of terms. We are not using terminology that refers to a person's legal status. Instead, we are attempting to use respectful words as spoken by both insiders and outsiders in the Downtown Eastside community of Vancouver. When an author in a cited work uses the term Aboriginal, we use the word Aboriginal in connection with their work. However, we prefer not to use the term Aboriginal because the Oxford Dictionary currently lists a second descriptor for the word

Aboriginal as 'primitive.' We use the term First Nations interchangeably with Aboriginal throughout the article, as Brunen does in her 2000 article on the marginalization of Aboriginal women with addictions in the Canadian healthcare system.

4. Similar health consequences of colonialism on indigenous people are seen in health data from the United States. American Indians and Alaska Natives have the second highest infant mortality rate in USA, and the suicide rate of American Indians is 50% higher than the national rate (U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services, 2001, p. 82; U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services, 2001a, p. 17).

5. Other descriptions of violence included:

[I have a] long history of physical abuse. I was beaten by my mother's boyfriend, ran away from home to a pimp who beat me, I left him for a man who beat me up, and so on. . . .

A 13-year-old told us she had: 'disalignment in my neck, cuts, and scratches, bruises caused by bad dates. Also deafness.'

A stalker hit me with his car on purpose.

Date tried to assault me with steel-toed boots because I wouldn't do something he wanted.

A bad date hit my head on a wall.

I was beaten with stones by a couple of women.

[A pimp] locked me in a room and beat me 30 times with baseball bat.

My boyfriend pushed me downstairs and broke my arm, [I've had] multiple beatings by various boyfriends, broken kneecaps, broken limbs. I'm scared of men.

Two years ago, I was beat and raped for 45 minutes.

6. Wayne Christian, Director of the First Nations Round Lake Treatment Centre in Armstrong noted that most of his clients have used drugs and alcohol to 'deaden' the pain of emotional and physical trauma. 'Up to 95% of clients at Round Lake reported a history of some kind of trauma, personal trauma, whether it was residential school, sexual abuse, physical violence, abandonment – those types of issues . . .' (Rees, 2001).
7. One woman at first answered 'no' to the question, 'before you were 18 years old, did you experience any unwanted sexual touching or any sexual contact between you and a grown up?' Then she thought about it briefly and asked (without interviewer prompt): 'does this question mean for when I was prostituting underage?' After the interviewer said yes, the young woman said 'every time a john touches me, it's unwanted.' She started prostituting at age 12.
8. Although there is a common misconception that street prostitution is the most harmful type of prostitution, there is no research evidence for this. In

fact, women have told us that they felt safer in street prostitution compared with legal brothels or massage parlors where they were not permitted to reject customers for any reason. Others commented that on the street they could refuse dangerous-appearing or intoxicated customers. Some told us that they considered it a deterrent to violence when a friend made a show of writing down the john's car license plate number. Raphael and Shapiro (2002) noted that women in Chicago reported the same frequency of rape in escort and in street prostitution. Although more physical violence was reported in street compared with brothel prostitution in South Africa – there was no difference in the incidence of PTSD in these two types of prostitution, suggesting that the experience of prostitution is intrinsically traumatizing (Farley et al., 1998). A Canadian study comparing strip club and street prostitution found that women prostituting in strip clubs had significantly *higher* rates of dissociative and other psychiatric symptoms than those in street prostitution (Ross, Anderson, Heber, & Norton, 1990). Strip club/massage, brothel and street prostitution were compared in Mexico. There were no differences in the incidence of physical assault and rape in prostitution, childhood sexual abuse or symptoms of PTSD, and no differences in the percentages of women in brothel, street, or strip club/massage prostitution who wanted to escape prostitution (Farley et al., 2003).

We have begun inquiry about different locations where prostitution occurs. A checklist rather than open-ended questions about location of prostitution is recommended. In a 2003 study, Farley used the following list of categories of prostitution, asking each participant regardless of the location of the current interview, to check off each kind of prostitution she had previously been in. Types of prostitution included: escort, massage, phone sex, street, Internet, brothel, prostitution as a child under age 18, strip club, bar, table dance club, peep show, prostitution associated with a military base, trafficked (moved) from another country to New Zealand for prostitution, trafficked (moved) from one part of New Zealand to another for prostitution, and other. Kramer (2003) found a range of street, escort and strip club prostitution experiences among interviewees in southwestern USA. Across these three types of prostitution, 90% of Kramer's respondents described the experience of prostitution as negative or traumatic. We suggest that any study of prostitution report the length of time in prostitution and the number of customers seen by respondents. These factors, more than the physical location of the prostitution, are correlated with harm (Parriott, 1994; Vanwesenbeeck, 1994).

9. Not only has there been a lack of attention to prostitution as a form of violence against First Nations women, but the RCAP report has been generally criticized for its failure to take into account the viewpoint of Aboriginal women (Frideres, 1996). Frideres in the same article also comments that two-thirds of the presenters at the RCAP hearings were male (Note 18, p. 264).



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**Crown Expert-Witness Testimony in *Bedford v. Canada*:  
Evidence-based Argument or Victim-Paradigm Hyperbole?**

**John Lowman**

(Paper prepared for Durisin, E., Love, V. and van der Meulen, E. (eds.) *Selling Sex*)

In 1999 Sweden was the first country to adopt demand-side prohibition of prostitution,<sup>1</sup> with Norway and Iceland following suit in 2009. Intent on abolishing prostitution, the “Nordic ” (Raymond, 2010) or “Swedish Model” prohibits sex buying and procuring, but does not prohibit sex selling on the grounds that prostitutes are victims of male sexual violence and exploitation, and thus should not be criminally culpable. From this perspective, prostitution *is* violence against women: “the man who commits the prostitution act on the prostituted woman ... is no different than a rapist” (Ekberg 2008, 2).

Since its adoption in Sweden there has been an intensifying campaign to globalize demand-side prohibition. Its most vociferous advocates have traveled the globe presenting their arguments to national legislatures and other bodies whenever the opportunity arises. In 2010 their arguments wound up in a Canadian Court.

When three Ontario sex workers<sup>2</sup> brought an action against the Government of Canada seeking a declaration that several of its prostitution laws violate their guaranteed rights under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (*Bedford v. Canada*), the Crown attempted to defend the impugned legislation by adopting the prohibitionist discourse and arguing that prostitution is “inherently harmful” (Factum of the Attorney General of Canada, para. 1). Among its expert witnesses were Melissa Farley and Janice Raymond from the United States, Mary Sullivan from Australia, and Richard Poulin from Canada, all of whom purport to offer an evidence-based rationale for demand-side prohibition. Although the Ontario Superior Court clarified that its task in *Bedford v. Canada* was to consider the Constitutional arguments at issue, and *not* which model of prostitution law is best (para. 25), various prohibitionist truth claims were put to the test. The ensuing paper examines several of the core claims advanced.

Given that *Bedford v. Canada* generated more than 25,000 pages of evidence – including the transcripts of fifty-five witness cross examinations, numerous government and academic research reports, newspaper articles, Hansard extracts and more<sup>3</sup> – it would not be possible for this short chapter to do justice to the entire range of prohibitionist evidence-claims advanced.<sup>4</sup> Instead, it focuses on the claims of Crown expert witnesses Melissa Farley and Richard Poulin that:

- 1) The average age of entry into prostitution in Canada is fourteen years;
- 2) The “vast majority” of Canadian prostitutes were sexually abused as children; and

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<sup>1</sup> As the subject of this chapter is prostitution as such, I use the term “prostitution” and “prostitute” to distinguish exchange of physical sexual services for reward from other kinds of sex work and sex worker.

<sup>2</sup> One was an active sex worker; the other two were formerly sex workers.

<sup>3</sup> The complete record is posted at <http://mypage.uniserve.ca/~lowman/>

<sup>4</sup> For a general critique of the Crown’s expert witnesses, see the Applicant’s factum, paras. 275-423

3) Prostitution is inherently “violent” because of the psychological and physical harm it inflicts on “prostituted women” and the “power imbalance” it involves.

The paper concludes with a discussion of the prohibitionist “harm elimination” philosophy in light of the Ontario Superior Court’s conclusion that, by striking down the impugned provisions, violence can be reduced but not necessarily eliminated from prostitution in Canada.

### **1) Is fourteen the average age of entry into prostitution in Canada?**

In his affidavit for *Bedford v. Canada*, University of Ottawa sociologist Richard Poulin<sup>5</sup> repeated the oft-made prohibitionist claim that “the average age of recruitment ... in Canada is 14 years old” (Joint Application Record Vol. 40, Tab 102, paras 24, 28). Poulin’s testimony deserves scrutiny in light of the way the majority report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women (2007) – the only federal review of Canadian prostitution law to have recommended that Parliament adopt the Nordic model of demand-side prohibition – treated every claim he made at its hearings as established fact.<sup>6</sup>

Poulin’s claim about the age of entry into prostitution is a cornerstone of prohibitionist rhetoric, as it “raises the issue of free and informed consent and the ‘choice’ of prostitution as a profession” (Affidavit para 24). If a person begins to prostitute at age 14 and then becomes entrenched, there are questions about the degree of choice they exercise after they turn eighteen: “The 14-year-old in prostitution eventually turns 18 but she has not suddenly made a new ‘vocational choice’.... Women who began prostituting as adolescents may have parts of themselves that are dissociatively compartmentalized into a much younger child’s time and place” (Farley et al. 2003, 36). By treating them as if they are children it is much easier for prohibitionists to argue that prostitutes should be saved from themselves.

As evidence to substantiate his claim about the average age of entry Poulin’s affidavit provided several sources (para 28). However, under cross examination it became clear that only one of them, McIntyre’s (1999) study of sexually exploited youth, reported the average age of entry of its research participants as being fourteen. Because her sampling procedure excluded anyone who became involved in prostitution as an adult, it is not possible to derive the Canadian average age of entry into prostitution from it. Indeed, it is not possible to estimate that age from any stand-alone non-probabilistic sample.

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<sup>5</sup> Although Poulin claimed to have interviewed numerous women involved in prostitution in Montreal, cross examination revealed that has not published any articles describing the results of these interviews. Indeed, he could not produce any transcripts or quantitative data pertaining to them.

<sup>6</sup> One important difference between a courtroom and a parliamentary committee room is that in court expert testimony is subject to the detailed scrutiny of the adversarial process. Both sides have the right to introduce expert opinion and cross-examine each other’s experts. In sharp contrast, the Standing Committee invited only known prohibitionists to give expert evidence, thereby exhibiting a clear witness-selection bias (for further discussion, see Lowman, 2011).

Why did Poulin not acknowledge that in other Canadian studies entered into evidence, the average age of entry was much higher? For example, in O’Doherty’s (2007) sample of off-street prostitutes it was 22 and in Benoit and Millar’s (2001) it was 19.<sup>7</sup> Even for Farley et al’s (2003, 2005) sample of Vancouver prostitutes it was 18. As Poulin subsequently acknowledged under cross-examination, “There’s no national inquiry in Canada, so nobody can have the pretence of knowing when people enter the sex trade, at what age” (Joint Application Record Vol. 43, Tab 105, q. 158).

In view of the evidence before the court, it is difficult to understand why the Attorney General of Canada nevertheless claimed that the average of entry into prostitution in Canada is between 14 and 16 (2009, Factum para. 49).

## **2) Were the “vast majority” of Canadian prostitutes sexually abused as children?**

Farley et al. (2005) claim that 55% to 90% of prostitutes report a history of child sexual abuse (p. 35). Poulin claimed that “The vast majority of people in prostitution have been victims of sexual assault during childhood” (Joint Application Record Vol. 40, Tab 102, para. 37). When it comes to Western nations, again these claims are based non-probabilistic samples of persons involved mainly in street prostitution<sup>8</sup> contacted through social service agencies or on the street. In the case of Canada, these commentators ignore the debate over the extent of sexual abuse among even these samples.

For example, although Poulin's affidavit cited the conclusion of the Committee on Sexual Offences Against Children and Youth (CSOACY 1984) that running away from home is a pathway into youth prostitution, he neglected to apprise the court of the Committee's conclusion that juvenile prostitutes are no more likely than members of the general population to have been victims of childhood sexual abuse (CSOACY 1984, 1046). Although a re-examination of the Committee's data showed nothing of the sort – the respondents to their "Juvenile Prostitution Survey" appear to have been at least twice as likely as respondents to their "National Population Survey" to have been victims of "unwanted sexual acts" during their childhood (Lowman 1987, 103)<sup>9</sup> – the victims were still in the minority: 60% of the female respondents to the "Juvenile Prostitution Survey" and 78% of the males did *not* report having experienced "unwanted sexual acts" while they were under the age of eighteen.

Other Canadian surveys providing data on incidence of childhood sexual abuse among prostitutes report a large range, varying from 10% to 90% (Brannigan and Fleischman 1989; Lowman 1991) – hence the disagreement over the relevance of childhood sexual abuse for identifying pathways into prostitution. Nevertheless, childhood sexual and physical abuse do appear to be important factors leading to premature home leaving, with prostitution being one of

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<sup>7</sup> In van der Meulen’s (2010) small study in Toronto Ontario it was 20, and in Bruckert and Hannem’s (this volume) research in Ottawa Ontario it was 22.

<sup>8</sup> “Street prostitution” refers to commercial sexual transactions that are initially arranged in street locations that are known locally as prostitution “strolls.” In such areas sex sellers wait on the side of the street for clients to approach on foot or in a vehicle.

<sup>9</sup> The Committee reached this conclusion by comparing questions that were not commensurate from the two surveys.

the few ways that “lumpen youth” can support themselves (Lowman 1987). Once on the street, selling sex becomes a solution to their situational poverty: “survival sex” *par excellence*. However it is equally clear that this is but one pathway into commercial sex, and one experience of prostitution. The incidence of childhood sexual abuse among persons who begin prostituting when they are adults – which may be the majority of Canadian prostitutes – is unknown.

### **3) Is prostitution inherently “violent?”**

To understand the prohibitionist argument that prostitution is inherently violent (see also Goodyear and Auger’s chapter in this volume), we need to consider Crown witness definitions of “violence” and the meaning of “inherent.” To be “inherent” an attribute must be “permanent or essential,”<sup>10</sup> “inseparable,”<sup>11</sup> and “intrinsic.”<sup>12</sup> To be “intrinsic” the attribute must constitute “the essential nature of a thing,”<sup>13</sup> and “not [be] dependent on external circumstances.”<sup>14</sup>

The Crown’s expert witnesses in *Bedford v. Canada* offered three concepts of “violence,” which they claim are ubiquitous in prostitution: i) the “power imbalance” inherent in prostitution constitutes violence; ii) “psychological harm” constitutes violence; and iii) *Criminal Code* prohibitions define “physical violence,” the main evidentiary focus of the case.

#### **a) Power imbalance as violence**

Poulin defined “violence” as, “The systematic relationship of power involving [one person’s] domination over the other” (Joint Application Record Vol. 43, Tab 105, q. 387). Under cross-examination Poulin asserted that any systematic power imbalance between adults constitutes “violence.”<sup>15</sup> From this perspective, prostitution is an act of “domination” because the sex buyer exercises his “power” to pay for sex, in contrast to the sex seller, who is subordinate because she has to provide sex to receive that payment (Joint Application Record Vol. 43, Tab 105, q. 300). By means of this trope, prostitution becomes inherently “violent” by definition. However, while many commentators argue that the power relationship in prostitution is much more complicated than this (Chapkis 2001; O’Connell Davidson 1998), if Parliament were to agree with Poulin’s eccentric definition of violence, then presumably all wage labour would be criminalized, not just prostitution, and heterosexual marriage too.

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<sup>10</sup> WordReference.com (<http://www.wordreference.com/definition/inherent>)

<sup>11</sup> <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/inherent>

<sup>12</sup> The Free Dictionary (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/inherent>)

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/intrinsic>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.yourdictionary.com/intrinsic>

<sup>15</sup> See affidavit paragraphs 25, 26 and 41, and transcript of cross-examination questions 301, 310, 311, 387, 548 and 575.

## b) Psychological harm as violence

In defending the impugned prostitution laws, the Attorney General of Canada claimed that “Social science evidence from around the world demonstrates that the risks and harms flowing from prostitution are inherent to the nature of the activity itself” (Attorney General of Canada Factum para. 1). A central pillar of this argument is that prostitution is inherently psychologically harmful (Attorney General of Canada Factum para. 44). Two indicators of this alleged psychological harm are the high levels of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among “prostituted women” and their desire to “escape” prostitution (Farley and Barkan 1998; Farley et al. 1998; Farley et al. 2003).

An oft-quoted source of evidence for the psychological harm caused by prostitution is that 68% of Farley et al.'s (2003) respondents in nine countries met her criteria for a diagnosis of PTSD, with the severity of their symptoms being in the same range “as treatment-seeking combat veterans, battered women seeking shelter, rape survivors, and refugees from state-organized torture” (Farley et al. 2003, 56).

It is one thing to argue that some women are traumatized by their experience of prostitution, but quite another to suggest that these findings demonstrate that prostitution psychologically harms everyone involved. Do Farley et al.'s sampling technique and method for measuring PTSD warrant such a generalization? To answer this question, first consider the methodological problems with Farley et al.'s diagnosis of PTSD; I return to problems with her sampling methods later when discussing the incidence of criminally prohibited physical violence in different prostitution venues.

Farley et al.'s method for diagnosing PTSD has been evaluated as incapable of generating the conclusions she draws from it.<sup>16</sup> Consider the comments of Dr. Paul Henry De Wet, the head of Forensic Psychiatry at Weskoppies Hospital, when he was asked to assess Farley's measurement of PTSD after it had been entered into evidence in a Constitutional challenge of South African prostitution law (*S. v. Jordan and Others*, 2002).

When he learned that the diagnosis was based on a “PTSD checklist” and a 23-item questionnaire that took about ten minutes to complete, De Wet commented “PTSD simply cannot be diagnosed in this manner” (cited in *Bedford v. Canada Applicants'* factum, para. 303). He explained that there is no internationally accepted measuring instrument and that a psychiatric examination would require approximately three hours with a patient, plus collateral corroboration that might involve interviews with family members, friends and work colleagues. He argued that diagnosis requires use of accepted international classification systems (for example, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th Edition or the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems 10<sup>th</sup> Revision) rather than a checklist of symptoms, as most of the symptoms are also associated with other disorders. Given that a variety of factors might produce the occurrence of those symptoms, he found the claim that “the trauma relates to prostitution as such difficult to accept” (2002, para.

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<sup>16</sup> For a review, see the Applicants' *Bedford v. Canada* factum (paras. 303-305).

9). Any number of factors other than prostitution could have caused the trauma that Farley claims to have measured. De Wet concluded, “In the absence of proper control groups for the research and in the absence of proper diagnostic methodology I find the diagnosis of PTSD as well as the allegations in respect of its alleged causes to be wholly inappropriate” (2002 para. 24).<sup>17</sup> Little wonder, then, that the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies does not recommend that Farley's method be used for clinical diagnosis.

Of as much concern as De Wet's criticism of Farley's PTSD diagnosis is her refusal to disclose her research instruments on the grounds that their dissemination would compromise their validity.<sup>18</sup> Because it is not clear how it would compromise their validity, this strategy runs contrary to customary academic practice<sup>19</sup> because it means that other researchers cannot subject her research instruments to critical scrutiny or attempt to replicate Farley et al.'s findings using them. Consider this problem in relation to another indicator of the psychological harm attributed to prostitution, i.e. the finding that many women wish to “leave” it, as was the case with Farley et al.'s (2003, 2005) sample drawn mostly from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, which is one of the poorest city neighbourhoods in Canada, and home to a large number of mentally ill persons, refugees and street-connected Aboriginal women.

Two problems characterize the generalization of this sample into the claim that the large majority of women wish to “escape” prostitution. The first concerns the generalization of findings about the experiences of some of the most marginalized street prostitutes in Canada to prostitution as a whole, a problem taken up below in the discussion of physical violence. The second concerns the translation of a respondent's desire to “leave” prostitution – the relatively neutral term that appears to have been used on the questionnaire – into a desire to “escape” it, a term that better fits prohibitionist rhetoric, which treats all prostitution as “sexual slavery.”

Because Farley refuses to release her research instruments, it is difficult to ascertain exactly how the question about “leaving” was asked. The reporting of de-contextualized self-administered survey questions may say as much or more about the researchers than their subjects. For example, while some people may wish to leave prostitution, they may nevertheless prefer prostitution to the low paid “shit work” that may be their only alternative, from which prostitution represents “escape,” the least-bad alternative. Women choose to prostitute in social-structural conditions they do not choose. When the same structural circumstances limit their work options to minimum-wage manual or service work, prostitution may be their preferred option because of the relative autonomy and better pay it affords (Jeffrey and MacDonald 2006).

The window of opportunity for a person to engage in sex work may also have something to do with their desire to move on (see Law's chapter in this volume). Like some other forms of work, the earning potential of adults who sell sex declines with age. Survey samples and communicating charge statistics indicate that the majority of street sex workers are between 16

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<sup>17</sup> For Farley's defence of her methodology, see her cross examination questions 409-451.

<sup>18</sup> Farley refused to produce them during her cross-examination in *Bedford v. Canada* until an agreement was reached that they be distributed only to the participating attorneys and the presiding judge.

<sup>19</sup> Her failure to submit her research protocols for independent research ethics review also is contrary to accepted academic practice.

and 26 years of age (Lowman 1989, 267), in which case decreasing earning power may partly explain a person's desire to "leave" prostitution at some point. The same may be true of men and women working in low-paid agricultural work, manufacturing, and other low-paid service jobs where work experience – time on the job – does not usually increase the rate at which they are paid. To say that people make a "choice" to do any of these jobs does not necessarily mean they are "happy hookers"<sup>20</sup> or happy labourers, although some of them may be.

Given their experience of prostitution and the other problems they face – including substance addiction, grinding poverty and the devastating effects of colonization on Aboriginal peoples – many street-involved women in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside would, no doubt, like to "escape" prostitution. They would probably like to escape poverty and colonialism too. In this regard, it would be hard to find anyone involved in the debate over prostitution law reform who would disagree with the idea that we should develop policies to help provide alternative ways for these women to make a living – but it would be just as hard to find anyone who believes that the current Federal or British Columbia governments would be willing to fund the policy changes and programs necessary to create these opportunities, let alone understand what programs are needed.

Then there is the problem of making generalizations about prostitution on the basis of a sample of the most marginalized group of "survival sex" workers.

#### **b) Criminally prohibited physical violence**

Given that one of the primary Constitutional issues that *Bedford v. Canada* raised is whether the impugned provisions compromise a prostitute's Constitutional right to security of the person, the case hinged on evidentiary claims about relative rates of *Criminal Code* definitions of violence in different prostitution venues. The Crown argued that violence is a permanent or essential attribute of prostitution that is not dependent on external circumstances, such as the location in which sexual liaisons are arranged or occur. If the risk of violence is "inherent" in this actuarial sense, it would be "impossible to manage or transfer away."<sup>21</sup>

The Crown's expert witnesses argued that prostitution involves physical victimization of prostitutes no matter where it occurs. The Applicants presented evidence indicating that there are substantial differences of levels of violence in different sex-work settings (Bretns and Hausbeck 2005; Church 2001; Plumridge and Abel 2001; Sanders and Campbell 2007)<sup>22</sup> in which case it is possible to mitigate the risk of violence. If the court accepted the evidence that risk varies considerably, the question then became the degree to which the impugned prostitution laws materially contribute to the victimization that occurs by preventing risk mitigation. As exemplars

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<sup>20</sup> The term that demand-side prohibitionist Victor Malarek (2009) borrowed from Xaviera Hollander to misrepresent and trivialize arguments for decriminalization.

<sup>21</sup> [http://www.riskythinking.com/glossary/inherent\\_risk.php](http://www.riskythinking.com/glossary/inherent_risk.php)

<sup>22</sup> Also see Raphael and Shapiro (2004), which prohibitionists assert establishes that off-street prostitution may be even more violent than street prostitution. However, this study does not include massage parlours and other key in-call locations. For further commentary about methodological problems with this study, see Applicant's Factum, para. 213.5)

of the issues at stake the discussion focuses on victimization surveys of Vancouver sex workers in different venues and murder rates of sex workers in street versus off-street sex-work venues in British Columbia.

i) Victimization surveys as an index of risk of physical violence

Given the Attorney General of Canada argued that “Social science research conducted regarding prostitution should avoid making sweeping generalizations about prostitution at large,” one wonders why Canada’s defence of the impugned laws was based on a series of sweeping generalizations about prostitution. To illustrate the folly of generalizing from unrepresentative samples, consider Farley et al.’s (2003, 2005) analysis of prostitution in Vancouver.

Farley et al. (2005, 260) acknowledge that “No study of prostitution can claim a representative or random sample, given the illegality of prostitution in most locations.” However, they appear to believe that the mere acknowledgement of this sampling problem solves it, as they proceed to make sweeping generalizations on the basis of a purposive sample of what are probably the most marginalized sex workers in Vancouver. Are these generalizations warranted?

It is not possible to determine the overall population of sex workers in Vancouver from which to generate a random sample. Because street workers may also work off street at some point, the street and off-street populations are not mutually exclusive. However, given that it is estimated that only 5-20% of Canada's prostitution trade occurs on the street<sup>23</sup> it is likely that the majority of persons working off-street never work the street, or rarely do. One criterion a sample would have to meet to be representative would be that it comprise at least 80% workers who never or have rarely worked the street. Although such a sample would still be self-selected and thus not necessarily representative of each population, it would at least enable a comparison of pathways into prostitution and the working experiences of sex workers in different venues, albeit with self-selected samples. How does Farley et al.’s sample fare in light of this criterion?

Prostitution in Vancouver takes many forms with the street trade comprising a relatively minor component. The largest part of the trade occurs in massage parlours, health enhancement centers, escort services, micro-brothels and outcall or in-call services advertised by independent workers in print media and via the Internet. Did Farley et al.’s sample include a cross-section of workers from these various sectors of Vancouver’s commercial sex industry? No. Their study involved “brief interviews” with “100 women prostituting in or near Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside” which they acknowledge is “one of the most economically destitute areas in North America” (Farley et al., 2003, 37).<sup>24</sup>

Not only did this sample exclude most off-street venues but also it excluded important components of the street trade, including the so-called “high track,” which at that time was the Richards-Seymour stroll in downtown Vancouver. High track women command much higher

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<sup>23</sup> This figure was not contested by any witness appearing in *Bedford v. Canada*.

<sup>24</sup> According to the Applicants’ factum in *Bedford v Canada* (para. 298) this same bias characterizes all of Farley et al.’s (2003) samples: “It is clear from [Farley’s] cross-examination that she recruited virtually all participants in the nine country study from populations of vulnerable, impoverished and disadvantaged persons.”



prices for sexual services than their counterparts in the Downtown Eastside, and often supply the service in hotel rooms near the stroll rather than in parked cars in remote locations. High track is controlled by “professional pimps” who frown on intravenous drug use (Lowman and Fraser 1995), whereas the majority of women in the Downtown Eastside are intravenous drug users (Currie et al. 1994; Shannon et al. 2008). Women on high track refer to the Downtown Eastside as “low track” and there is little intermingling of the women from the two areas. Few Aboriginal women work high track, in contrast to Farley et al.’s mostly Downtown Eastside sample, 52% of whom were Aboriginal (Farley Affidavit, Joint Application Record Vol. 49, Tab 113, para.49).

Farley et al. claim to have made “every attempt to contact any woman known to be prostituting, indoors or outdoors” (2005, 260). They assert, “We did this by asking women to tell friends who were prostituting elsewhere (e.g. in other areas or from their homes or clubs) that we would return to a certain location at a specific time the next day” (2005, 260). It is difficult to see how this method constitutes “every attempt” when they did not use the much more successful strategies that other Vancouver researchers have employed to contact women in massage parlours and escort services or who work independently from apartments – most notably by developing contacts in those other venues (Orchid Project 2007; O’Doherty 2007, 2011) or by advertising for research participants on-line (O’Doherty 2007, 2011).

Farley et al. argue that their failure to contact women working indoors was not a problem as some of the respondents had off-street experience. However, they do not disclose what proportion had off-street experience or what it consisted of. My experience researching prostitution in Vancouver indicates that most Downtown Eastside women would know few, if any, people working in Vancouver’s mid to high-end escort services and massage parlours, which would appear to employ very few Aboriginal women (O’Doherty 2007).<sup>25</sup> To collect information about the experiences of these populations, they need to be purposively sampled in a concerted way.

While there clearly is some cross-over between street and off-street prostitution, many off-street sex workers have little or no street prostitution experience. For example, when O’Doherty (2007) purposively sampled mid to high-end indoor sex workers, of the 39 who responded to her survey, only five began their involvement in prostitution on the street, which is roughly what one would expect if street prostitution comprises 5-20% of the trade. To examine relative degrees of risk, the most helpful comparison of prostitution experiences would thus be between women (and men) who have mostly or all street prostitution experience with those who have none.

O’Doherty’s sample (n=39) provides a portrait of very different prostitution experiences and risks than those associated with street prostitution in the Downtown Eastside. Seventeen of her respondents had worked in massage parlours, 15 had worked for escort services and 16 had

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<sup>25</sup> Farley, Lynne and Cotton (2005) claim that Benoit and Millar’s (2001 p. 18) research indicates that “15% of women in escort prostitution in Victoria, BC were First Nations although the First Nations population of Victoria has been estimated at 2%” (p. 256). However, they misrepresent Benoit and Millar’s report – this is the percentage of aboriginals in their sample as a whole, not those who had escort service experience.

worked independently meeting clients by advertising on-line or in print media.<sup>26</sup> The characteristics of this sample differ markedly from samples of street-based sex workers. Only two of O'Doherty's respondents were under the age of 18 when they started working. There were no Aboriginal women. The sample had much higher levels of educational attainment than other samples of Canadian sex workers: 90% had some post-secondary education, including seven women with postgraduate degrees. Overall, 63% had not experienced any kind of victimization while working. If we remove from the sample the five women who began working as prostitutes on the street, we find a much lower rate of victimization than in any street sample (e.g. Lowman and Fraser 1996; Cler-Cunningham and Christensen 2001). Indeed, in the roughly 270 years<sup>27</sup> that the 34 remaining women had practiced prostitution, there was just one assault by a client and five incidents where clients had made threats of some kind. Is this degree of risk "unacceptable?" Compare it to the proportion of women in Currie et al.'s (1995) sample of street connected women in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, 48% of whom<sup>28</sup> had been "beaten by a customer" in the six month period prior to the survey.

Although Farley et al.'s study did not access the off-street sector of commercial sex in Vancouver, the skewed nature of their sample did not lead them to qualify their generalization that prostitution is an "often violent economic option most often entered into by those with a lengthy history of sexual, racial and economic victimization" (2005, 260).<sup>29</sup> While this may be an apt description of prostitution in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and some other areas, it would be premature to generalize it to the sex trade in the city as a whole without a sample designed to capture a cross section of the whole population.

These methodological issues also suggest that sweeping generalizations about the incidence of PTSD on the basis of a highly-skewed sample of street-involved sex workers are incautious. We need a much more inclusive sample to understand the psychological effects of sex work (Vanwesenbeeck 2005, 636). In this regard Chudakov et al.'s (2002) findings provide an important qualification to other studies. Their interviews with 55 women working in organized brothels included screening items for posttraumatic stress disorder. They found that 17% met the criteria for PTSD, a much smaller proportion than Farley and Barkan (1998). Chudakov et al. concluded, "It is important for hypothesis formation for researchers to realize the tremendous potential heterogeneity of commercial sex workers, as evidenced in the case histories presented here" (2002, 315).

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<sup>26</sup> O'Doherty asked respondents who had worked in more than one venue to recall their experiences in each venue.

<sup>27</sup> If their average age was 30 years and their average age of entry in prostitution was 22, then on average each respondent had worked for eight years.

<sup>28</sup> Sixty-five respondents answered the question about types of violence experienced over the past six months.

<sup>29</sup> They are similarly less than careful when citing other Vancouver research, as they fail to mention that Currie et al (1994), Lowman and Fraser (1995) and Cler-Cunningham and Christensen (2001), were all samples of women who were primarily involved in *street* prostitution.

ii) Murder<sup>30</sup> rates as an index of risk of physical violence

There can be little doubt that sex workers are primary targets of serial killers (Quinet 2011). However, serial killers do not target sex workers in general; they focus on street prostitutes. For example, the Green River killer (Gary Ridgeway, 49 convictions), the Yorkshire Ripper (Peter Sutcliffe, 13 convictions), the Spokane killer (Robert Lee Yates, 13 convictions), the Genessee River killer (Arthur Shawcross, 12 convictions), the New York State killer (Joel Rifkin, 9 convictions) and Robert Pickton (6 convictions, 20 murder charges stayed, may have murdered as many as 49 women) focused overwhelmingly on street-involved women. They did not go to body rub parlours to find victims, or even escort services.

Despite the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, Poulin took issue with murder expert Elliott Layton's evidence (Affidavit, Joint Application Record Vol. 40, Tab 102) that serial killers of sex workers mainly target street prostitutes. Arguing that the Pickton experience in Vancouver has warped perceptions of sex-worker victimization, Poulin offered four examples of killers targeting indoor sex workers.

The first two examples concerned Patrice Alegre, who Poulin claimed killed four sex workers indoors in France, and Austrian Jack Unterweger who killed women in three different jurisdictions. However, on cross examination, Poulin was unable to provide any sources showing where these two truck drivers met or killed their victims.<sup>31</sup>

The third example consisted of Poulin's claim that, "In Quebec, at least 5 of the 14 women prostitutes killed in the last ten years did not work on the streets. They were incall and outcall prostitutes, meaning that they received clients in a private place, or travelled to meet clients at their homes or hotel rooms" (Joint Application Record Vol. 40, Tab 102 para. 47). When pressed to provide evidence to substantiate this claim, Poulin's list of homicides revealed that, while the bodies of five victims had been found indoors (three in their own homes, one in a motel room and one in a drug dealer's apartment), it did not establish where any of them initially met their assailant (Supplementary Joint Application Record Volume 2, Tab 175H).<sup>32</sup>

His fourth example concerned murders of sex workers in the Netherlands. Poulin claimed that, "since 1992, there were 50 female prostituted persons killed, they were working in brothels and windows" (Joint Application Record Volume 43, Tab 105, p. 91). However, the source he gave did not substantiate this claim: Dutch historian Lotte Van de Pol wrote: "Many victims

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<sup>30</sup> In this section "murder" includes some homicides that may subsequently be classified as "manslaughter."

<sup>31</sup> The same held for Poulin's claims about other kinds of violence. He asserted that a serial rapist in the U.S. assaulted women in massage parlours (Joint Application Record Vol. 40, Tab 102, para 47) but examination of the newspaper article from which he derived this claim showed that it did not indicate where the assaults occurred.

<sup>32</sup> Under cross examination Poulin claimed that, "In Quebec, since 1989, there were 38 murders of prostituted persons and lap dancers. Sixty-six percent that were killed were not working on the stroll, they were escorts, getting clients ... at their homes. They were killed by johns, by procurers, people from organized crime and by their sex partners" (*Bedford v. Canada*, Joint Application Record Volume 43, Tab 105, p. 91). He did not provide a source for these assertions.

were working in the streets, the majority of which (sic) were drug addicts; but there were also several women murdered in a brothel or 'window', and a few of them were murdered at home by their pimp" (Affidavit, Joint Application Record Volume 47, Tab 110). From this description it appears that the majority of victims were street workers. As it is estimated that just 1% of Dutch prostitution occurs on the street (Siegel 2009 cited in Weitzer 2011), these figures provide further evidence that street-involved women are exposed to by far the greater risk of violence by clients or men posing as clients compared to in-call workers.

The foregoing commentary is not meant to suggest that women in off-street prostitution work risk free. There are records of women involved in outcall work being murdered. For example, when we created profiles of the fifty known murders of sex workers occurring in British Columbia during the period 1960 to 1993 we found a case where a man was charged in 1988 with the murder of an escort in Victoria. When the escort visited the accused man's apartment he murdered her. He attempted to strangle a second escort three hours later, but she escaped and led police to him. After a psychiatric examination he was found fit to stand trial, convicted and given a life sentence (Lowman and Fraser 1996, 137).

One of the few murders we have found involving a person working indoors in Vancouver since 1960 occurred in 2007, when Andrew Evans killed Nicole Parisien, a thirty-three year old Aboriginal woman he met via an erotic services advertisement on Craigslist. Newspaper coverage indicated that Parisien was working alone in a fifth floor apartment where she serviced clients (Vancouver Sun 2007). It appears that a conflict developed during the sexual encounter that ended with the intoxicated Evans striking and strangling Parisien, whose body he dumped outside the apartment building where the alleged bawdy house was said to have operated.

Parisien's demise is significant not only for being one of the very few cases of the murder of an in-call sex worker – albeit one who appears to have been working alone – but also for the interpretation of its significance by demand-side prohibitionist Janine Benedet, a professor in the University of British Columbia law school.

In a *Globe and Mail* opinion editorial Benedet (2009) claimed that "Supporters of the prostitution industry want us to believe that women would be safe if men's purchase of women for sex is legalized."<sup>33</sup> She used Evans's conviction for second-degree murder as evidence that no form of prostitution is safe, in which case Canada should follow Sweden and criminalize sex buying and pimping while decriminalizing the act of selling sex.

Benedet's analysis sidestepped the *Charter* arguments before the Ontario Superior Court. The main issue is whether laws that criminalize the activities surrounding prostitution make a "material contribution" to violence against prostitutes by putting their lives at greater risk than would be the case if they could work legally in a controlled indoor environment. To understand the variation in the degree of risk that workers in different commercial sex venues experience, the murder of an indoor sex worker, tragic though it is, needs putting into perspective.

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<sup>33</sup> Benedet conflates supporting "the prostitution industry" and supporting a prostitute's right to life, liberty and security of the person. For the reasons that O'Connell Davidson (2002) describes, it is possible to support the latter without necessarily supporting the former.

Since 1980 in British Columbia, approaching 150 street prostitutes have gone missing or are confirmed homicide victims. The street trade is estimated to account for between 5-20% of prostitution in the province. If the risk of murder is as great in off-street locations as it is on the street, we would now be reading about the murder or disappearance of between 600 and 2850 escort service and massage parlour workers during that period. However, we have found no murders of massage parlour workers, two murders of escorts and one of a woman working alone in an apartment, in which case street prostitutes are somewhere between 200-950 times more likely to be victims of homicide than their off-street counterparts.

These murder patterns also suggest that instead of having an opportunity to become serial killers, the men who murder indoor sex workers are usually apprehended relatively quickly, unlike the men who target street workers, who rarely leave tracks.

### **The Ontario Superior Court Decision**

After considering 25,000 pages of evidence the Ontario Superior Court concluded that, on a balance of probabilities, the risk of violence towards prostitutes “can be reduced, although not necessarily eliminated” (*Bedford v. Canada*, para. 300). From this perspective, the degree of risk of physical violence to which sex workers are exposed is dependent on external circumstances and is thus not “inherent” – i.e. risk does not constitute “the essential nature” of prostitution even though it is substantial, and it may not be possible to eliminate it completely. From this perspective, given that the Charter challenge focused on the effect of the impugned laws on the prostitute’s right to security of the person, the question for the court became one of ascertaining whether the impugned laws *materially contribute* to the physical risk that sex workers face.

After weighing the evidence the Court concluded that: working indoor is generally safer than working on the street; the bawdy-house provisions can place prostitutes in danger by preventing them from working in a regular indoor location and gaining the safety benefits of proximity to others, security staff, closed-circuit television and other monitoring; the living on the avails of prostitution provision can make prostitutes more susceptible to violence by preventing them from legally hiring bodyguards or drivers while working; and the communicating provision can increase the vulnerability of street prostitutes by forcing them to forego screening customers at an early and crucial stage of the transaction (paragraph 421). In sum, the court found that:

[T]hese laws, individually and together, force prostitutes to choose between their liberty interest and their right to security of the persons protected under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. ... [T]hese laws infringe the core values protected by section 7 and that this infringement is not saved by section 1 as a reasonable limit demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society (paragraph 3)

While the decision may be overturned on appeal, it highlights some of the issues at stake when it comes to the relative merits of the prohibitionist goal of eliminating harm by abolishing prostitution versus the goal of harm reduction that is based on a prostitute's right to life, liberty and security of the person.

### **Conclusion: Prohibitionist Symbolism at What Price?**

The testimony of key prohibitionists, Poulin and Farley in *Bedford v. Canada* reveals their tendency to shape their findings to fit their abolitionist agenda. They present argument-based evidence rather than evidence-based argument in their quest to bring the "Nordic Model" to Canada.

Its disputed practical effects aside, the most important aspect of demand-side prohibition in Sweden is its perceived symbolic virtue, a testament to the nation's commitment to gender equality<sup>34</sup> and refusal to countenance violence against women. What would be the likely consequence for the prostitute's right to life, liberty and security of the person if Canada follows suit?

Just as we will never rid marriage or dating relationships of violence we will never make prostitution absolutely safe either, but is that a reason to criminalize sex purchasing – or marriage, or dating? Because condoms do not absolutely guarantee safe sex, does that mean people should stop using them for safer sex?

The great irony of demand-side prohibition is that its goal of eliminating harm would expose prostitutes to a greater risk than they would experience if they could work in a controlled and monitored indoor environment. Their safety would be sacrificed to a political manifesto, which claims that prostitution harms all women and prevents them from gaining equality with men. Women who continue to work in the sex industry would be absolved of any criminal responsibility on the grounds that they are victims of male violence against women, but the retention of the impugned provisions would mean that they could not work legally in a controlled and monitored environment. Who would pay the greatest price in this symbolic universe? In all likelihood it would continue to be those who already disproportionately pay the price: women in the "survival sex" trade.

By way of example, take the experience of *Grandma's House* during the period Robert Pickton is thought to have murdered as many as 49 street-involved Downtown Eastside<sup>35</sup> women (see also Arthur, Davis, and Shannon's chapter in this volume). *Grandma's House* was the headquarters of a charitable society established in 1998 by Jamie Lee Hamilton<sup>36</sup> to provide services for sex workers in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

At about the same time *Grandma's House* opened fear that a serial killer was preying on the area's sex workers was widespread on the street and the Vancouver media were beginning to

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<sup>34</sup> For a discussion of the deep divide in feminism over the role prostitution plays in women's inequality, see Jolin (1994).

<sup>35</sup> He may have met some of his victims in other strolls.

<sup>36</sup> This account is based on my personal communications with Ms. Hamilton.

report the disappearance of numerous women. We now know that 10 women disappeared from this area in 1997, nine in 1998, and 6 in 1999.<sup>37</sup> Fearing for their lives, some of the local women asked Hamilton if they could bring dates to *Grandma's House* so that they could conduct their business safely: with other people around, they would be able to get help if a date turned bad. Hamilton agreed. In 1999 the Vancouver Police Department laid charges against Hamilton for keeping a common bawdy-house, at which point *Grandma's House* closed. Hamilton believes that the charges were retribution for her outspoken criticism of the local police and municipal authorities for failing to investigate the growing number of missing women.

The closure of *Grandma's House* forced the women who frequented it to perform sexual services elsewhere – the most likely place being in cars, one of the locations they find themselves most vulnerable. A large proportion of Downtown Eastside street-involved women are drug and/or alcohol dependent and are homeless or live in rooming houses (Currie et al. 1995). The message appears to be the only way they can get help to prevent victimization is if they stop the legal act of selling sexual services.

Ironically, then, if demand-side prohibition were to be implemented in Canada – especially if the pattern of law enforcement since 1985 persists, whereby 93% of all prostitution charges are for the street offence of “communicating” – race, class and gender would intersect in a way that would continue to marginalize and victimize the most vulnerable women in the survival sex trade, many of whom are Aboriginal. Meanwhile, because of the difficulty of enforcing laws against the off-street trade, the indoor trade would remain *de facto* legal, with most violators of bawdy-house and procuring laws facing only a small risk prosecution.

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<sup>37</sup> These figures were compiled by then Detective Inspector Kim Rossmo of the Vancouver Police Department.

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## Men Who Buy Sex: A Survey in the Greater Vancouver Regional District\*

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Les auteurs de cet article passent en revue la documentation canadienne sur les hommes qui achètent des services sexuels et présentent les résultats d'une enquête autoadministrée auprès de 80 de ces hommes, enquête qui a été réalisée dans le Grand Vancouver. L'article décrit les caractéristiques démographiques générales de l'échantillon et certains aspects de leur comportement d'achat sexuel. En raison de l'inquiétude accrue concernant le grand nombre de travailleurs du sexe sur la rue qui ont disparu ou qui ont été tués, et de façon à apporter quelques réflexions au débat sur le prohibitionnisme qui allègue que la violence est omniprésente dans la prostitution, les auteurs examinent les actes de violence commis sur les travailleurs du sexe et autres personnes, et déclarés par eux. Ils se penchent également sur les expériences des hommes qui ont été victimes de violence de la part de travailleurs du sexe.

This paper reviews the Canadian literature on men who purchase sexual services and presents the results of a self-administered survey conducted in Greater Vancouver of 80 such men. The paper describes the general demographic characteristics of the sample and selected aspects of their sex-buying behaviour. Because of heightened concern about the large number of street-level sex workers who have gone missing or been murdered, and in order to offer some reflections on the prohibitionist argument that violence in prostitution is ubiquitous, the paper examines the self-reported commission of violence against sex workers and other people. We also examine their experiences of being victimized by sex workers.

**IN ALMOST EVERY ENGLISH-LANGUAGE RESEARCH ARTICLE** on the clients of prostitutes published over the past 20 years, one of the first things the reader encounters is a lament about how little published research there is. But it would not be appropriate to start the current article

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in this way, because there is now a substantial literature on clients. In Europe and the U.K., as more funding became available for research on populations at high risk of contracting HIV/AIDS, more attention was given to clients (e.g., Thomas, Plant and Plant, 1990; Barnard, McKeganey and Leyland, 1993; and McKeganey, 1994 in the U.K.; de Graaf, 1995; and Vanwesenbeeck, de Graaf, van Zessen, Straver and Visser, 1993 in the Netherlands). In the U.S. there is some relatively early research literature (e.g., Winick, 1962; Holzman and Pines, 1982) and a kindred interest in the role of the client in disease transmission (e.g., Leonard, 1990). More recently, client research across North America has received a new impetus, the availability of customer research subjects in "john schools" (e.g., in the U.S., Busch, Bell, Hotaling and Monto, 2002; Monto, 1998; Monto and Hotaling, 2001; and Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, 2004; in Canada, Fischer, Wortley, Webster and Kirst, 2002; Wortley, Fischer and Webster, 2002; and Kennedy, Klein, Gorzalka and Yuille, 2004), programs that are designed to "educate" men charged with attempting to purchase sex from a female police decoy posing as a street prostitute.

In what follows, we review Canadian research on clients, and present selected findings from a mail-back questionnaire survey of 80 such men. The paper describes the general demographic characteristics of the sample and their sex-buying behaviour. Because of heightened concern about the large number of street-level sex workers who have gone missing or been murdered over the past twenty years in Canada, and in order to reflect on the prohibitionist argument that violence in prostitution is ubiquitous, the final section of the paper focusses on our respondents' self-reported commission of violence against sex workers and other people, and their experiences being victimized by sex workers.

### **Canadian Research on Clients**

The first substantial federal funding of research on prostitution in Canada occurred in the 1980s, when the federal government established the *Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution* (Fraser Committee, 1985) and asked it to "consider alternatives, report findings and recommend solutions to the problems associated with pornography and prostitution in Canada" (6).

To facilitate the work of the Committee, the Department of Justice funded five exploratory regional prostitution surveys (Crook, 1984; Fleischman, 1984; Gemme, Murphy, Bourque, Nemeh and Payment, 1984; Lutt, 1984; Lowman, 1984). Each survey attempted to provide as broad an empirical picture of prostitution as practicable in the six-month period the researchers were given to execute it. Interviews were conducted with anyone involved in, affected by, or trying to control the sex trade. While the research teams had little trouble contacting sex sellers, producing a total of 278 interviews between them, only two teams managed to interview clients: Crook (1984) obtained 18 interviews, and Gemme, Murphy,

Bourque, Nemeh and Payment (1984) obtained 33.<sup>1</sup> All the clients were men.

Gemme, Murphy, Bourque, Nemeh and Payment's interviews must have been relatively short, as the published findings are limited to the participants' age (predominantly 35–45 years old), income ("higher than average"), marital status ("generally married"), education (roughly 50% had at least some university education), the frequency of their sex purchases (13 purchased once a week, 13 once a month—the others purchased less frequently), and a choice of six pre-coded reasons for buying sex—the most frequently chosen (73% of respondents) being the desire for "a brief, uncomplicated sexual encounter."

Crook's (1984) 18 clients' average age was 29.6 years, all were Caucasian, and 89% were born in Canada. When it came to their reasons for buying sex, 33% stated that they first sought out a prostitute because they could not find sexual fulfilment elsewhere, 28% said they were lonely and seeking companionship, and 33% said they were "curious."

In 1987 the Department of Justice Canada sponsored five more regional prostitution studies as part of its evaluation of the "communicating law," the section of the *Criminal Code* governing street prostitution as of December 20, 1985. Again, the result of attempts to interview clients was disappointing. In Vancouver, Lowman (1989) obtained 17, and Gemme, Payment and Malenfant (1989) obtained six in Montreal. However, because police were now charging clients under the communicating law, a new source of information emerged.

On the basis of information culled from police reports, Gemme, Payment and Malenfant (1989), Lowman (1989) and Moyer and Carrington (1989) were able to describe the general characteristics of men charged under the communicating law, including their age, place of birth, occupation, "race," marital status, and area of residence.

While these descriptions reveal noticeable regional variations—such as the proportions of immigrant men, married men, White men, and men with previous criminal records—they suggest that communicating law enforcement captures men mostly from the lower socio-economic segment of the prostitution trade. Because men who can afford to frequent off-street venues are able to buy sex without being charged, any sample of clients based on the enforcement of the communicating law is highly skewed.

Opportunities for research on street-level clients opened up further with the creation of the first Canadian john school in Toronto in 1996. There are perhaps a dozen similar programs across Canada at the time of writing. The "school" is a diversion program for men charged under the communicating law.

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1. There is some doubt about this number, which is given as 28 in a reanalysis of the same data some five years later (Gemme, Payment and Malenfant, 1989).

**Table 1**  
**Characteristics of Men**  
**Charged under the Communicating Law**

Study	Profile
Gemme et al., 1989 Montreal 95 cases	Average age 36, married 65%, "country of origin": 85% Canadian, White 94%, residence in Montreal 83%, no criminal record 99%.
Lowman, 1989 Vancouver 230 cases	Average age 35, married 52%, White 63%, lower mainland B.C. addresses 93%, no criminal record 79%, mostly lower socio-economic status men, as measured on the Blishen Index.
Moyer and Carrington, 1989 Toronto 401 cases	Age ranged from 16-68, with 46% in the 25-29 range, born outside Canada 60%, White 77%, married 43%, no criminal record 84%, mostly lower socio-economic men, as measured on the Blishen Index.

Studies of john school students undoubtedly do provide useful data on the demographic characteristics of street-level buyers. In Vancouver, ages of john school students ( $n = 365$ ) ranged from 18 to 89 years with a mean of 37.5, 54.3% were married or in a common-law relationship, 64% had some post-secondary education, 81% were employed full time, and 64% were White (Kennedy, Klein, Gorzalka and Yuille, 2004). A sample of Toronto john school students ( $n = 366$ ) ranged in age from 19 to 76, with a mean age of 37 years (the average age of men in Toronto is 41 years); 52% had not gone beyond high school, 81% were employed full time, and 66% were foreign born (Wortley and Fischer, 2002; Wortley, Fischer and Webster, 2002; Fischer, Wortley, Webster and Kirst, 2002). Like Moyer and Carrington before them, in their study of communicating law offenders in Toronto Wortley and Fischer (2002: 378) concluded that, "relatively few John School participants come from an affluent social background or are employed in professional/managerial occupations," in which case, "the types of men who ultimately attend the John School program may reflect the demographics of the neighbourhoods and individuals that are most targeted by police 'sting' operations and other anti-prostitution initiatives."

How much we can learn from john school research about the attitudes and perspectives of clients is another matter. John school "education" goes beyond "nuisance," the problem the communicating law is designed to address, to the alleged effects of prostitution on prostitutes and society more generally. The "education" has a distinctly prohibitionist/abolitionist



moral spin—Wortley, Fischer and Webster (2002) describe the Toronto program as a “confrontational shaming ritual,” Statham (2004) characterizes the Vancouver program as “selective and inherently political.”

Because of its morally charged nature, john school is hardly the ideal environment to conduct research on the subjectivity of sex buying. Given that the school aims to change the attitude of its students, one wonders how much baseline data collected the day that sex buyers attend john school can be taken as representing their state of mind prior to being charged—their responses may well attempt to anticipate what they think the school’s organizers want to hear. Also, one wonders if these men really do feel free to participate in the research when it is conducted as part of a criminal justice program, especially given that attempts to conduct follow-up interviews six months later produce very low response rates. In addition to these problems, studies of john school students suffer from the same sampling bias as any study of communicating law offenders: they capture only the men buying sex on the street. Currently, street prostitution probably accounts for less than 20% of the sex trade in most large Canadian cities.

### **Initiating Research on Undetected Sex Buyers**

In order to develop a research program that includes both street and off-street sex purchasers, the British Columbia Ministry of Attorney General funded a five-part study of men who buy sex, which we conducted from 1995 to 1998 through: a) a survey of clients over the Internet; b) a self-administered, mail-in questionnaire for men who buy sex in the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD); c) semi-structured telephone interviews with men who buy sex; d) a descriptive analysis of “bad date sheets” distributed in Vancouver; and e) a study of the court files of men charged in Vancouver under the communicating law.

Descriptions of the bad date sheet analysis and the court file study have already been published (Lowman, Atchison and Fraser, 1996; Atchison, Fraser and Lowman, 1998), as have some of the preliminary analyses of the Internet and GVRD survey data (Lowman, Atchison and Fraser, 1997). In this paper, we focus on the 80 responses we received to the mail-back questionnaire distributed in the GVRD. As a detailed description of the survey is available on-line (Lowman, Atchison and Fraser, 1997), we will not repeat it here.

The sample is non-probabilistic. It cannot be known to what extent any convenience sample represents the general sex-buyer population. Nevertheless, these samples include a much broader cross-section of the sex-buying population than that accessed by john school research. And unlike john school students, who may feel an incentive to participate in research to demonstrate their willingness to be reformed, the participation of our respondents was entirely voluntary.

To provide a discrete way for participants to pick up a questionnaire, we rented shelf space in a downtown book store that was open 24 hours a day, where we left information sheets and a stack of questionnaires and prepaid return envelopes for respondents to pick up. We used several contact methods described in the extant literature, and devised several more: a) advertisements in newspapers and other print media asking prospective respondents to telephone us and tape an interview, or visit the bookstore and pick up a questionnaire; b) sex workers in various venues gave clients a business card with the same invitation, as did two service organizations that ran street outreach programs; c) we glued business cards to 200 flat magnets designed for that purpose and attached them to cubicles in men's washrooms across Downtown Vancouver; d) we distributed questionnaires in Downtown Vancouver bars and pubs, selecting sites with an eye to covering as broad a cross-section of socio-economic groups as possible; and e) we left an advertisement and a pile of questionnaires and prepaid return envelopes in the STD clinic at Vancouver General Hospital.

### **General Characteristics of the GVRD Sample<sup>2</sup>**

Of the 80 respondents, 77 purchased sex exclusively from females. The respondents' average age was 38.4 years. Eighty percent of the respondents were born in Canada, 34% of them in B.C. and 21% in Ontario. Of the men born outside Canada, 25% were born in the United States, 25% in Western Europe, 25% in the United Kingdom, 6% in Australia or New Zealand, 6% in Asia, and 5% elsewhere. Eighty percent of the respondents identified themselves as "Caucasian" in our pre-coded question concerning "race." Thirty-three percent of the men reported having no religion, 8% defined themselves as "atheist," 23% as "Protestant," 21% as "Catholic," and 5% as belonging to some other kind of Christian denomination. Only 8% of the respondents reported having a non-Christian faith. In large part, then, this is a survey of "White guys."

As the respondents were contacted mainly in Vancouver locations or through local newspapers and other publications, nearly all the respondents lived in the GVRD—58% resided in Vancouver itself, with another 33% living in other GVRD municipalities. Only 2% of the respondents resided outside British Columbia.

When it came to their educational attainment, 78.5% had graduated from high school, 26% had a post-secondary school diploma of some kind, and 21% had a bachelor's degree. At the time of the interview, 55% of the respondents were employed full time, 23% were employed part time, 7% were self-employed, 7% collected welfare, and 8% reported "other" sources of income.

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2. Where missing values constitute less than 10% of responses, we report only "valid percentages," i.e., the missing values are excluded from the calculation of the percentages.

In terms of their marital status, 54% were single, 24% were married or lived in a common-law relationship, 19% were separated or divorced, and 3% were widowed. Because this question did not tell us all we wanted to know about the proportion of men who had a regular non-commercial sexual relationship, we also asked them if they had a regular sex partner. Forty-nine percent of respondents reported having a regular sexual partner or spouse. Of these men, 67% said that they were "satisfied" or "very happy" with the relationship, 18% had "mixed feelings," and 15% reported that they were "unhappy" or "dissatisfied" with it. These findings would appear to indicate that, for most of the men with regular sexual partners, the quality of the relationship was not an important factor when it came to their motivation for purchasing sex. Sixty-one percent of the men had at least one child. When we asked if their parents still live together, 52% said "yes," 45% said "no," and 3% did not know, as they had not had any contact with their parents for many years.

Eighty percent of the clients described their sexual orientation as "heterosexual," 2.5% were "gay," and 17.5% considered themselves to be "bisexual." Given that researchers studying sex workers have often asked sex workers questions about the incidence of sexual abuse during their childhood years, we asked clients the same questions. In the questionnaire, we defined "sexual abuse" according to the *Criminal Code*:

*In the case of 14 to 17 year olds, sexual abuse includes: interference; exploitation; incest; anal intercourse; corrupting a youth; procuring; pimping; sexual assault; and sexual touching by a person in a position of authority or trust, or with whom a young person is in a relationship of dependency.*

*Sexual abuse of persons under 14 years of age includes: interference; sexual touching; exploitation; incest; anal intercourse; bestiality in the presence of a child; corrupting a child; indecent acts; procuring; pimping; and sexual assault. In the case of persons aged 12 and 13, sexual touching is not an offence if it is consented to and the difference in the ages of the partners is no more than two years.*

*A child is anyone under 14 years of age. A youth is a person between 14 and 17 years of age.*

Twenty-three percent of our respondents reported having been victims of sexual abuse prior to the age of 18 years (there were only two missing values for this question). The average age of the onset of the abuse was 12 years, and 12 of the 18 men disclosing the abuse reported more than one incident. Table 2 shows the number of lifetime sex purchases of our respondents.

**Table 2**  
**Respondent's Lifetime Sex Service Purchases**

% of Respondents	Number of Sex Service Purchases
5.0%	Once
12.5%	2-5 times
17.5%	6-10 times
32.5%	11-50 times
10.0%	51-100 times

The average age at which they first purchased sex was 24 years. When we asked them what prompted their first visit to a sex seller, 5% said pornography, 12% said "friends," 27% reported that it was a spontaneous decision, and 41% said that it was the availability and/or visibility of sex workers. This finding concerning the opportunity to buy sex is of particular interest in the context of abolitionist proposals to shift the emphasis of prostitution law enforcement to the buyer of sexual services, due to the belief that prostitution is demand driven—without the buyers, there would be no prostitution. Our results suggest that, like most other goods and services bought and sold in a consumer society, demand and supply interact: for a certain segment of the sex buyer population, their initial demand was, at least partly, supply driven. From this empirical vantage point, the proposal to criminalize the purchase of sexual services and decriminalize their sale—the law adopted in Sweden<sup>3</sup>—becomes a form of institutionalized entrapment.

### **Violence and the Commercial Sex Contract**

Although we did not set out to test specific hypotheses, our research questions were shaped by speculation in the literature about what motivates men to buy sex. For example, opponents of commercial sex have argued that, from the buyer's point of view, prostitution is like rape (Dworkin, 1992)—it is more about power than it is about sex. Many feminists maintain that violence against women is a product of the power and control dimensions of traditional gender roles—men assert their control through violence as a way of maintaining their hegemonic power over women (e.g., Busch, Bell, Hotaling and Monto, 2002). We tried to get a sense of whether this characterization of the commercial sex interaction adequately captures the behaviour of the clients we surveyed.

3. For a description of the Swedish law, see Ministry of Justice and the Police, 2004.

Much of the available empirical research on commercial sex indicates that at least some sex workers experience high levels of violence, including, but not limited to, physical assaults, sexual assaults, verbal threats or abuse, psychological abuse, robbery, and kidnapping (Church, Henderson, Barnard and Hart, 2001; Felson and Messner, 2000; Lowman, 2000; Raymond, 2004). However, while some commentators assert that violence is ubiquitous in all forms of prostitution (Barry, 1995; Dworkin, 1992; Jeffreys, 1997; MacKinnon, 1987; 1989), others believe that the incidence of violence varies enormously in different prostitution venues. Also, it may vary enormously among clients.

While this new emphasis on the masculine role in prostitution is long overdue, our findings suggest that we need to proceed cautiously when assessing claims about the frequency and nature of the violence perpetrated by men who buy sex. Much of the evidence surrounding specific instances of violence in prostitution is based on the testimony of street-level sex workers. While these accounts are invaluable for understanding the frequency and nature of individual experiences of violent victimization, they provide a one-sided picture of the sources and nature of client violence. Further, as Weitzer (2005a; 2005b) points out, the operational definitions of violence used as the basis of much of the research are either empirically underspecified, or constructed around the rather tenuous assumption that culturally proscribed gendered attitudes that appear to favour violence are equivalent to, or the cause of, actual violent behaviour.

#### **Indices of Violence and Victimization: Understanding the Frequency and Nature of Male Sex Buyer Violence and Victimization**

Our analysis examines the self-reported violent behaviours of the 77 heterosexual sex buyers who responded to our survey, as well as their reported experience of victimization by sex workers, in order to better understand the extent and nature of violence in commercial sex interactions.

To examine the nature and frequency of violent behaviour and victimization among our sample of male sex buyers we selected 28 questions pertaining to the men's self-reported commission of violence and experiences of victimization at various stages in their lives, in both commercial and non-commercial settings.

Referring to non-commercial encounters, we asked our respondents how frequently, if at all, they had: a) deliberately physically hurt a parent, a non-commercial sex partner, a friend, or an animal over the past year; b) deliberately physically hurt a parent, a non-commercial sexual partner, a friend or an animal during their teenage years; and c) robbed, assaulted, raped, forcibly confined, or murdered a non-commercial sex partner at any time. In terms of their experience of victimization, we asked our respondents how many times, if at all, they had been robbed, assaulted or raped by a non-commercial sex partner.

Referring to commercial sex encounters, we asked the men to tell us how frequently, if at all, they had: a) refused to pay a sex seller; and b) assaulted, robbed, raped, forcibly confined, or murdered a sex seller.

Needless to say, we have no way of knowing if or how much our respondents underreported their own violent behaviour.

Turning to the men's victimization, we asked them to tell us how frequently, if at all, they had been: a) robbed, assaulted, sexually assaulted, or had any money or property stolen by a sex seller; b) paid for sex with a sex seller and not received services; or c) been drugged and robbed by a sex seller or a pimp.

In part of the analysis we combined the responses to each set of questions into a single index measure, resulting in four separate indices of violence and two indices of victimization.<sup>4</sup> These composite indices provide a single measure of the frequency with which the respondents reported having: 1) perpetrated acts of physical harm as children (past physical harm); 2) committed acts of physical harm against others (recent physical harm); 3) violently offended against a non-commercial sex partner; 4) violently offended against a commercial sex partner; 5) experienced violent victimization at the hands of a non-commercial sex partner; and 6) experienced violent victimization at the hands of a commercial sex partner.

The relative distribution of responses across the categories of these violence indices creates a clearer picture of the frequency and nature of reported violence among our sample of male sex buyers. Our composite measure of past physical harm indicates that physical violence was not a prominent feature of many clients' lives when they were children.

The majority of men (63.6%,  $n = 42$ ) reported that they did not engage in violence as a teen, 25.7% ( $n = 17$ ) indicated that they acted violently on very few occasions, while the remaining 10.6% ( $n = 7$ ) indicated that they were more than occasionally violent when they were teens. When we look at the nature of childhood violence, 28% ( $n = 21$ ) of men recall deliberately hurting a friend, 25% ( $n = 28$ ) recall deliberately hurting an animal, 16.9% ( $n = 12$ ) recall deliberately hurting their parents, and 12.7% ( $n = 9$ ) recall deliberately hurting a non-commercial sex partner.<sup>5</sup>

When we asked the men how often they had deliberately physically hurt a parent, a non-commercial sex partner, a friend, or an animal over the year prior to the survey, an overwhelming majority of men (82.8% or  $n = 53$ ) reported that they had not. A small percentage of men (12.5% or  $n = 8$ ) indicated that they act violently on very rare occasions, while the remaining 4.7% ( $n = 3$ ) admitted to acting violently more than occasionally. It thus

4. Prior to combining the individual measures into the various index measures, a reliability analysis was conducted to determine the overall internal consistency of items used. Cronbach's alpha measures how well a set of items measures a one-dimensional latent construct. The alpha level of a set should be greater than 0.7 for them to be grouped into a single measure.
5. The percentages reported for the specific acts of violence and victimization in this section are derived from separate questions. Each percentage value reported reflects the total portion of the sample that reported committing or experiencing each particular act of violence.

appears that, while some of the men in our sample were violent teenagers, most of them "grew out of it." A closer inspection of the nature of their recent violence reveals that it was directed at animals (11.1% or  $n = 8$ ), friends (12.3% or  $n = 8$ ), a sex partner (6.9% or  $n = 5$ ) or a parent (5.9% or  $n = 4$ ).

In reference to non-commercial encounters, when asked how frequently they had robbed a sex partner, assaulted a sex partner, raped anyone, forcibly confined a sex partner, or murdered a sex partner, 57 men in our sample (77%) indicated that they had never committed any of these types of violent offences. Of the 23% ( $n = 17$ ) of men who indicated that they had done so on one or more occasions, 8.1% ( $n = 6$ ) indicated this happened once, 8.1% ( $n = 6$ ) reported that it occurred on two or three occasions, while the remaining 6.8% ( $n = 5$ ) had committed four or more violent acts against a sex partner. It is apparent that, for a minority of men in our sample, relations with their non-commercial sexual partner have sometimes included violence. According to these self-reports, the most common forms of violence are robbery (13.2% or  $n = 10$ ) and assault (12% or  $n = 9$ ). The offences that men in our sample are least likely to report having committed against a non-commercial sex partner are forcible confinement (6.6% or  $n = 5$ ), rape (3.9% or  $n = 3$ ) and murder (1.3% or  $n = 1$ ).

In order to gauge the frequency of violent offences that men in our sample committed against sex workers, we asked them how many times they had refused to pay a sex seller, assaulted a sex seller, robbed a sex seller, raped a sex seller, forcibly confined a sex seller, or murdered a sex seller. Again, the majority of our respondents (80.3% or  $n = 61$ ) reported that they had not committed any of the aforementioned offences; 10.5% ( $n = 8$ ) reported committing one offence, 6.6% ( $n = 5$ ) reported two or three offences, while the remaining 2.6% ( $n = 2$ ) reported four or more offences. When we look at the specific forms of offences reported, the most common were refusal to pay for services (13.2% or  $n = 10$ ) and robbery (9.8% or  $n = 6$ ). The offences that men least reported having committed against a commercial sex partner were forcible confinement (2.6% or  $n = 2$ ), assault (2.6% or  $n = 2$ ), rape (1.3% or  $n = 1$ ) and murder (1.3% or  $n = 1$ ).

Since much of the extant literature on violence indicates that a man's propensity to violent behaviour may be linked to his own experience of victimization at the hands of others, we felt that it would be prudent to investigate the frequency and nature of men's experiences of victimization by both commercial and non-commercial sex partners. We began by asking the men how frequently they had been robbed, assaulted, or raped. The majority of respondents (56% or  $n = 42$ ) indicated that they had experienced at least one form of violent victimization by a non-commercial sex partner on one or more occasions during their lives. Of these men, 28% ( $n = 21$ ) indicated that they had experienced only one instance of violent victimization by a sex partner, 14.7% ( $n = 11$ ) experienced two or three instances, and the remaining 13.3% ( $n = 10$ ) experienced four or more instances. When we look closely at the specific type of victimization by a

non-commercial sex partner, we see that 50% (n = 38) involved robbery, and 17.1% (n = 13) involved assault. The least common form of victimization reported by men in our sample is rape, with 4.3% (n = 4) of men reporting that they had experienced this between one and three times in their lives.

In order to assess the frequency of experiences of violent and other kinds of victimization within commercial sexual relations, we asked men in our sample how many times they had been robbed by a sex seller, been physically or sexually assaulted by a sex seller, had any money or property stolen during a visit to a sex seller, paid for sex and not received the services, or been drugged and robbed by a sex seller or a pimp. The cumulative results of responses to these questions indicate that men in our sample appear to have experienced a roughly equal amount of violent victimization at the hands of their commercial partners as they had at the hands of their non-commercial ones. A large majority of men in our sample (68.4% or n = 52) indicated that a commercial sex partner had victimized them on at least one occasion; 9.2% (n = 7) of the men maintained that this only happened once, 14.5% (n = 11) experienced two to three instances, and 44.7% (n = 34) experienced four or more instances. The most common type of victimization was not receiving the services that they had paid for (58.4% or n = 45). Additionally, a large proportion of men reported that they had property stolen (48.7% or n = 37) or were robbed (45.5% or n = 37). A small number of men reported that they had been drugged and robbed (5.2% or n = 4) or assaulted (3.9% or n = 3) by a commercial sex partner on one or more occasions during their lives.

### **Is Sex Buying Inherently "Violent"?**

For the purposes of this paper we have employed *Criminal Code* definitions of violence to examine the incidence of self-reported offences in our sample of 77 men who buy sex from females. The extant research on victimization of sex workers tends to be interpreted as evidence that prostitution is a "risky" activity, and that the primary source of this risk is the male sex buyer. While it is certainly true that men commit most of the violence experienced by sex workers, it appears that a relatively small proportion of sex buyers account for most of the violence; many sex buyers do not assault, rob, rape or murder sex workers, and the majority claim not to verbally abuse them. Although we do not know if our respondents underreported their violent behaviour, one would have to argue that they concealed most of it in order to reach a different conclusion.

Much of the literature on the frequency and nature of sex-buyer violence appears to be empirically overestimated and theoretically underspecified. Almost one quarter of our respondents reported that they have been or are physically violent with a non-commercial sex partner. When we look at the frequency of self-reported violent acts, we see that, in most instances, the violent behaviour is infrequent (occasionally or less than four times) as



opposed to habitual (frequent or on more than four occasions). If we include verbal abuse as a form of violence, when the violence is directed toward either a non-commercial or commercial sex partner, it appears that it most often takes the form of verbal as opposed to physical abuse. In the case of commercial sex partners, when the violence was physical, much of it concerned cash, i.e., it involved robbery and refusal to pay for sexual services. Only a few men in our sample (6.49% or  $n = 5$ ) reported having ever committed physically violent acts against either a non-commercial or commercial partner that would appear to be motivated by apparent misogyny or the wish to exert overt power (i.e., assault, rape, forcible confinement, or murder).

On the basis of the responses to a small convenience sample of self-reported survey data, it is hard to establish the specific motivation or determinants for the violent acts that the men in our sample reported having committed. Our data appear to indicate that much of the self-reported violence is situational and materialistic. If these men indicate a sense of entitlement, it would appear to be related to a desire for money, or to secure the specific services they made a contract to buy but did not receive. A select few of our respondents clearly represent a disturbing subset of the male sex-buying population that appears to be motivated by the desire to exert physical power and control over women. Obviously, men like these roam Canada's prostitution strolls—how else could one explain the carnage inflicted upon sex workers over the past twenty years (Lowman, 2000)? However, they are not representative of the sex buyers in our sample, and may not be representative of sex buyers as a whole.

It would appear that our findings are consistent with many contemporary accounts suggesting that the problem of violence against sex workers is perpetrated by a relatively small proportion of very violent men who prey on the marginalized social and situational position of street sex workers (Lowman, 2000; Monto, 2004). No doubt there are some deplorable conditions in the off-street sex trade and violence does occur, but it appears to pale in comparison to the situation on the street.

While the culture of violence that surrounds hegemonic masculinity is impossible to ignore when studying violence against sex workers, focussing only on the gendered cultural aspects of violence has prevented us from paying closer attention to the enormous variation in the propensity to violence among men who buy sex. A growing body of evidence suggests that the experience of being a victim of violence leads to the perpetration of violence against others (Benoit and Kennedy, 1992; Stein and Lewis, 1992; Widom and Ames, 1994; Widom, 1989). Our data on experiences of victimization shows that 56% ( $n = 42$ ) of the clients in our sample had experienced at least one form of violent victimization by a non-commercial sex partner on one or more occasions during their lives. Further, a large majority of our sample (68.45%) indicated that a commercial sex partner had victimized them on at least one occasion during their lifetimes. The most frequent types of problem did not involve violence as such, but involved a sex buyer

not receiving the services he paid for, or having something stolen from him. While we are *not* proposing a victim-precipitation theory to explain violence against sex workers, these findings suggest that some client violence may be reactive, not proactive. The same can be said for acts of violence that sex workers perpetrate against clients.

These insights suggest that while the recent empirical attention paid to male sex buyers is a positive step toward understanding both the mundane and problematic dimensions of these men's behaviour, more research needs to be conducted on the immediate context in which violence occurs. We need to investigate further the connection between individual acts of violence and the specific nature of the commercial setting in which it occurs, so as to understand how much violence is a quality of prostitution per se, and how much it is enabled or encouraged by the circumstances in which the transaction occurs. In order to better understand violence in commercial sex transactions, we need more systematic investigations of actual reported violent behaviour, rather than gross generalizations. While recent investigations of "male entitlement" (Busch, Bell, Hotaling and Monto, 2002; Monto, 2004), "male sex right" and "demand" (Raymond, 2004), and client acceptance or rejection of "rape myths" (Monto and Hotaling, 2001) help to throw light on the cultural underpinnings and patriarchal-beliefs system that may serve to justify or legitimate certain kinds of male violence against women, they do little to help us understand why some male buyers use violence to exert their masculine "rights"—if that is what they are doing—while others do not.

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## *Violence and the Outlaw Status of (Street) Prostitution in Canada*

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*This article constructs a profile of murders of sex workers in British Columbia from 1964 to 1998. The analysis reveals the relationships among media, law, political hypocrisy, and violence against street prostitutes. In particular, the article examines how the "discourse of disposal"—that is, media descriptions of the ongoing attempts of politicians, police, and residents' groups to get rid of street prostitution from residential areas—contributed to a sharp increase in murders of street prostitutes in British Columbia after 1980.*

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The 1996 Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics report on Homicide in Canada noted that, "Some occupations involve more personal risk to personal safety than others" (Fedorowycz, 1996). Two police officers were victims of homicide in 1995, compared with one in 1994, two in 1993 and one in 1992, and, "For the eleventh consecutive year, no federal or provincial correctional worker was a victim of homicide in the line of duty." The report then singles out two other categories of "high risk" work: taxi driving and prostitution. From 1992 through 1995, 18 taxi drivers were murdered during the course of their work, as compared to 39 prostitutes (9 in 1995, 16 in 1994, 9 in 1993, and 5 in 1992). An earlier Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics publication reported that 22 prostitutes were murdered during the course of their work in 1991 and 1992 (Wolff & Geissel, 1993), thereby bringing the total to 56 from 1991 to 1995.

Fedorowycz's figure differs from another Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics publication on prostitution. Duchesne (1997)

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**AUTHOR'S NOTE:** Thanks to Laura Fraser and Jody Gordon, RCMP Corporal Davidson, the Vancouver Police Department, Orest Fedorowycz and Rick Labovitch for providing provincial breakdowns of relevant homicide statistics, numerous students over the years who spent thousands of hours collecting newspaper articles, and two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments.

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987

reports that from 1993 to 1995 there were 41 murders. The difference occurs because Duchesne includes all murders of prostitutes, whereas Fedorowycz includes only the murders that occurred while the victim was working (see Table 1; Fedorowycz's reference to "prostitutes killed while applying their trade" excludes "drug-related" murders and "others," such as "lover's quarrels").

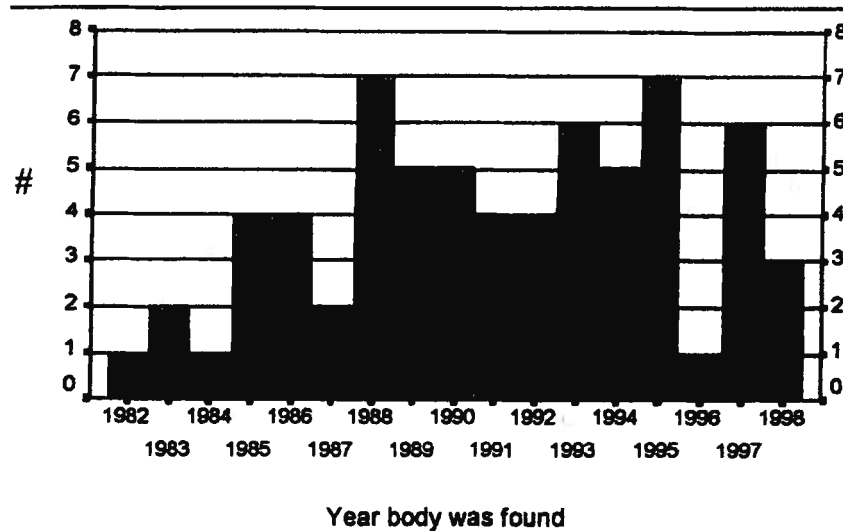
The most recent *Homicide in Canada* (Fedorowycz, 1998) reports that in 1996 10 more prostitutes were murdered while applying their trade, and 6 were murdered in 1997. Fedorowycz (1996, p.10) notes that, "the number of prostitutes reported killed most likely underrepresents the actual figure: Only those incidents where the police are certain that the victim was killed in the course of engaging in prostitution-related activities are counted." If all the situations listed in Table 1 are included, 86 prostitutes were murdered in Canada from 1992 through 1998. During this same period, prostitutes killed 16 clients, 1 pimp and 9 other people.

When Fedorowycz prepared the three Juristat Service Bulletins on homicide (1994, 1996, 1998), he had no way of estimating how much the Homicide Survey underestimates the number of prostitutes murdered. Also, because statistics on the occupation of murder victims were not available prior to 1991, the year the Homicide Survey was revised to include this information, he could not describe longer-term trends in the murder rate of prostitutes. The following discussion sheds some light on these issues by constructing a profile of murders of sex workers<sup>1</sup> in British Columbia from 1964 to 1998. The analysis reveals the relationships among media, law, political hypocrisy, and violence against street prostitutes. In particular, the article examines how the "discourse of disposal"—that is, media descriptions of the ongoing attempts of politicians, police, and residents' groups to "get rid" of street prostitution from residential areas (e.g., Gayle, 1999)—contributed to a sharp increase in murders of street prostitutes after 1980. The presentation updates information provided by Lowman and Fraser's (1996) study of violence against prostitutes in British Columbia, one of four such studies funded by the Department of Justice Canada in 1994 (also see Brannigan, 1996; Fleischman, 1996; La boîte à qu'on-se-voir, 1996<sup>2</sup>).

**TABLE 1**  
**Murders of Prostitutes in Canada, 1992 to 1998**

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
<b>British Columbia</b>							
Killed by clients	1	4	5	5	1		3
Killed by pimps							
Drug-related		1					
Other					1	1	
Unknown							
Subtotal	1	5	5	5	2	1	3
<b>Alberta</b>							
Killed by clients		2			2	2	
Killed by pimps	2						
Drug-related	1			1			
Other		1		1	1		
Unknown							
<b>Saskatchewan</b>							
Killed by clients	1		2	1			
Killed by pimps							
Drug-related							
Other				1			1
Unknown							
<b>Manitoba</b>							
Killed by clients					1		2
Killed by pimps							
Drug-related							
Other					1	1	
Unknown			1				
<b>Ontario</b>							
Killed by clients		2	4	2	3	2	1
Killed by pimps							
Drug-related		1				2	
Other	1					1	
Unknown							
<b>Quebec</b>							
Killed by clients	1		3		3		
Killed by pimps							
Drug-related		1					
Other					1	1	1
Unknown							
<b>Atlantic Provinces</b>							
Killed by clients			1				1
Killed by pimps		1					
Drug-related							1
Other	1					1	2
Unknown				1			
<b>Total (including British Columbia)</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>

SOURCE: Homicide Survey, Policing Services, and Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.



\*There were no murders reported from 1964 through 1981

Figure 1: Number of Murders of Sex Workers in British Columbia Reported in the *Vancouver Sun* and *Province*, 1964 to 1998

### MURDERS OF SEX WORKERS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA: LONG-TERM TRENDS

Figure 1 shows the number of sex workers murdered from 1964 through 1998 reported in Vancouver's two daily newspapers, the *Vancouver Sun* and the *Province*. These statistics include 43 prostitutes, 5 exotic dancers, and 2 escort service workers. When my collaborators and I first constructed this murder profile in 1994, we also examined the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's (RCMP) Macros database<sup>3</sup> and information from the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) to see if we could identify murders not mentioned in the *Sun* and *Province*.<sup>4</sup> We identified seven additional murders: one each in the years 1975, 1978, 1979, 1980, and 1981, and two in 1982.

When all four sources of information are integrated, we find that the first murder in the period 1964 to 1998 was in 1975 (in fact, no murders were reported in the 1940 to 1963 period in the two newspapers either). From 1975 to 1979, there were 3 murders, from 1980 through 1984 there were 8, from 1985 through 1989



there were 22, and from 1990 to 1994 there were 24. This profile reveals 32 murders of sex workers (31 prostitutes and 1 exotic dancer) in British Columbia from 1992 through 1998 as compared to 22 reported in the Homicide Survey (see Table 1).

Street prostitutes were the majority of victims in the more than 60 murders reported in the *Sun* and *Province* from 1982 through 1998. Although several of the murders of street-involved women were drug related,<sup>5</sup> it appears that the majority related to the victim's involvement in sex work.

The British Columbia study conducted for Justice Canada (Lowman & Fraser, 1996) included a description of 50 murders reported in the *Sun* and *Province* from January 1982 through December 1994, which are reviewed below.

Of the victims, 48 were female and 2 were transgendered. The ages of the 50 victims ranged from 15 to 41 years, with an average age of 25.7. There were 4 youths (1 was 15 years old and 3 were 17 years old). As journalists during this period generally used the term *prostitute* to refer to women who meet their clients on the street, and given that a person is usually identified as a prostitute because she or he has a criminal record for communicating (Criminal Code s.213), it is highly likely that the remaining 17 victims (other than the 5 dancers and 2 escorts) also worked the street. It is not known if the 5 dancers were involved in prostitution (some dancers are), or if their murders were directly related to their work. One of the escorts died of an overdose administered by a man who was eventually convicted of manslaughter. The other was murdered by a would-be serial killer, but the second woman he attacked survived and identified him. Although there was an attempt to have him declared unfit to stand trial, he was eventually given a life sentence. In 1991, he committed suicide while serving his sentence.

In 35 of the 50 murder cases, information was available about the cause of the victim's death. Thirty-one of the women were strangled, beaten, or stabbed. In 7 of the 14 stabbing cases (all prostitutes), police used the term "overkill" to characterize the attack.<sup>6</sup> In other words, the force used was far greater than necessary to bring about the victim's death (several victims were stabbed 30 to 40 times; 1 was stabbed 99 times). Three victims were mutilated and dismembered. In many of these cases, one is

left with the impression of an offender in an uncontrollable rage that is difficult to comprehend.

As of December 1, 1994, convictions were obtained in 17 of the 50 cases,<sup>7</sup> a clearance rate of 34%. In the 26 cases involving persons identified as street prostitutes, there were seven convictions, a clearance rate of 27%. By contrast, from 1986 through 1997, the Canadian clearance rate for murder fluctuated between 77% and 85% (Fedorowycz, 1994, 1998).

#### **VICTIMIZATION RATES IN DIFFERENT PROSTITUTION STROLLS**

The bodies of 18 of the 50 victims were found in Vancouver, and another 16 were found in surrounding municipalities in the lower mainland. Six were found in Victoria and 4 more in other Vancouver Island locations. The remaining 4 were found in mainland British Columbia.

As street prostitution strolls did not develop in any of the municipalities surrounding Vancouver until the early 1990s, and initially only in Surrey, it appears likely that most, if not all, of the street prostitution victims found in the lower mainland worked in Vancouver.

From 1982 to 1994, there were 17 different strolls in Vancouver, with 4 or 5 at any one time. From 1982 through 1995, we conducted head counts in the various strolls to monitor levels of street activity and record displacement of street prostitution in response to various law enforcement initiatives. From 1984 through 1994, the most populous stroll was "high track," a six-block commercial area on Richards and Seymour Streets in downtown Vancouver.

On a single traverse of the streets and lanes in the recognized Vancouver stroll areas on any given night, there were from 50 to 100 persons working the street. From 1985 to 1993, high track accounted for 46% of the street prostitute head count. In 26 of the 50 murder cases examined, the stroll where the victim met the assailant was identified. None of them worked the Richard-Seymour stroll.

Throughout this same period, there was a stroll in Vancouver's downtown Eastside/Strathcona (referred to hereafter as the *Downtown Eastside*). From 1985 to 1988, the Downtown Eastside

stroll accounted for about 14% of the total head count on any given night. From 1989 to 1993, the proportion increased to 28% as a series of police task forces moved prostitution out of residential Mount Pleasant. The corresponding head count proportions in Mount Pleasant for these same two periods decreased from 26% to 11%.

Although Mount Pleasant and the Downtown Eastside accounted for about 40% of the nightly prostitute population from 1985 through 1993, nearly all the murder victims during this period came from these two areas. An examination of the 89 assaults of prostitutes reported in the *Vancouver Sun* and *Province* for the period from 1985 to 1993 revealed much the same pattern (Lowman & Fraser, 1996, pp. 21-29). And the VPD files on "assault prostitute" for the period from 1992 to 1993 showed the same pattern again. Of the 61 assaults recorded, information about the location of the offense was available for 35 cases. Of these, 63% came from the Downtown Eastside, 34% from other areas, and only 3% from the Richards-Seymour area.

#### ACCOUNTING FOR DIFFERENT VICTIMIZATION RATES

The Richards-Seymour stroll and the Downtown Eastside are two very different social worlds. Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, a neighborhood of 16,000 residents, has one of the lowest average household incomes in Canada and one of the highest HIV and hepatitis infection rates in the western world. The neighborhood also has the highest number of bar seats per capita in Vancouver, with 28% of the city's total, and nearly 80% of the city's single-room occupancy units. Through a process of urban triage, the Downtown Eastside has long been a residuum for the homeless, the mentally ill, and the drug addicted. From 1994 through 1998, there was an average of at least one illicit-drug overdose death per day.

From the 1950s up to the mid-1980s, there was a well-established stroll adjacent to Vancouver's Chinatown in the Downtown Eastside. This has always been known as a "hypes" stroll, that is, most of the women working the area are intravenous drug users. In 1992, police identified a total of 480 people (44 of them youths) working as prostitutes in this area. In 1986, the stroll

moved east from its traditional location into a gentrified residential neighborhood. This relocation occasioned the first organized resistance to the street prostitution trade in the Downtown Eastside. In 1988, through a process of negotiation with the women, the stroll was relocated in a commercial area north of Hastings Street.<sup>9</sup> After the move, the women were spread out over a five-block area, standing in poorly lit back alleys and usually working alone. Women on the Downtown Eastside often have boyfriends with whom they share money and drugs, but they are not "pimped" in the traditional sense. Prices for sexual services on the Downtown Eastside are the lowest in the street hierarchy and range from \$80 down to \$20 or even less, depending on the service, the woman, and her need for drugs.

The Richards-Seymour stroll is located in a commercial area close to Vancouver's central business district and was, until recently, the main African American "pimps" stroll. Contrary to media stereotypes, these particular "mac" pimps and "players"<sup>10</sup> do not allow the women working for them to use drugs intravenously. For one thing, pimps would rather spend the money on themselves. Also, they regard women with needle marks as "spoiled goods" because they cannot command the prices typical of "high track," which generally range from \$100 to \$200, depending on the service and time spent with the woman. There are aspects of pimp subculture that may make the women they control less vulnerable to victimization. The pimp "street proofs" his women by schooling them in certain values and attitudes. The women often work together and take car license plates for each other. Because the stroll area is fairly small, when a client picks up a woman, it is usually in full view of other women, and many of the dates occur in local hotels rather than cars.

Of course, violence still plays an important role in this subculture. Pimps sometimes brutalize the women working for them, and if a woman has an earnings quota to meet, she may take chances with clients rather than risk a beating by her man. When she does have a bad date, a pimp might blame her for her own misfortune. Attitudes like these probably make women working the Richards-Seymour stroll less likely to report their bad dates to police than independent women. Because of their addiction, women on the Downtown Eastside are generally not as discriminating about clients as their counterparts in the Richards-Seymour stroll.

### **OFF-STREET PROSTITUTION**

Women who work for escort services sometimes complain that the owners are more interested in profit than they are in the escorts' safety. Nevertheless, women who work as escorts do not turn up in the ranks of murder victims at the same rate as street-involved women. The structure of the escort trade is such that the clients often have to identify themselves in the course of conducting business because they contact the escort agency from a hotel at which they are staying and may use a credit card to pay for the date. Leaving evidence of their identity makes their committing offenses against escorts much less likely. Similarly, our ongoing research indicates that women who work in body rubs and massage parlors do not encounter anything like the same kind of victimization from clients as street prostitutes, primarily because a manager is almost always present.

### **THE SOCIAL REACTION TO THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE MURDERS AND MISSING WOMEN**

In 1991, local activists and relatives started a Valentine's Day vigil in memory of the murdered women on the Downtown Eastside. Very few of these murders have been solved. The VPD has consistently maintained that its homicide squad vigorously investigates all murders of sex workers. Police attribute the low murder clearance rate to the difficulty of identifying suspects when they are strangers to the victims.<sup>11</sup> However, local activists insist the murders of sex workers are not treated the same way as other killings because the victims are "throwaway people" (Skelton, 1999; also see Gordon, 1996).

In September 1998, complaints that police and politicians were ignoring the victimization of street-involved women took a new turn. By this time, 16 women, most of whom were Aboriginal, had disappeared from the Downtown Eastside since 1995. Because they were involved in prostitution, fears that a serial killer accounted for their disappearance rapidly gained currency. In September 1998, the VPD announced it was setting up a team to review 40 Vancouver missing women cases dating back to 1971 (Kines, 1998).

Over the next 8 months, the story gained momentum in the Vancouver press as more disappearances came to light. Claims that the local authorities treated inner-city and suburban crime differently gained credibility when a \$100,000 reward was posted for information relating to a string of 31 suburban home invasions. Then, another \$100,000 reward was offered for the identity of the "garage robber," an armed man who ambushed a series of residents as they drove into their remote-controlled garages after returning home from work. In the spring of 1999, family members and local prostitutes' rights advocates began pressing for a similar reward for information leading to the capture of the person or persons they believed to be responsible for the disappearances of the Downtown Eastside women.

Initially, VPD spokespersons responded that they thought it unlikely that a serial killer was at work because no suspect or vehicle description was associated with more than any one of the cases (Skelton, 1999). Also, they asserted that many street-involved women do not have close family ties and may deliberately go "missing" for any number of reasons, including their desire to evade police. Vancouver's Mayor Owen was more blunt. He said that because there was no evidence of a serial killer being involved, the municipal authorities were not prepared to fund a location service for prostitutes (Stall, 1999).

Opponents countered that if the reward were to be offered for information leading to the conviction of a killer, it could be claimed only if there was a killer. Then, as journalists dug for information on the missing women, it became clear that many of them did have close family ties and well-established social networks and had suddenly disappeared nonetheless. One of the women left money in a local bank. Others failed to pick up welfare checks. These are not the actions of poverty-stricken women. In April 1999, the Mayor relented and recommended to the Police Board that it support the posting of a reward (Stall, 1999).

By the summer of 1999, the tally of missing women reached 22: 3 in 1995, 2 in 1996, 3 in 1997, 10 in 1998, and 4 more by July 1999 (Kines, 1999). On July 31, 1999, the story made international headlines when Fox Television's *America's Most Wanted* ran an 8-minute segment requesting information about the 22 missing women and eight others who had disappeared prior to 1995. Although the show produced "no solid leads," it did produce 20

tips "worthy of following up" (Sieberg, 1999). As of February 2000, information had come to light about three of the women mentioned in the show: one died of hepatitis in an Alberta hospital, one of an overdose, and one was found alive. None of the 22 women disappearing between 1995 and 1999 have been located.

### **SERIAL KILLER OR KILLERS?**

In some respects it is extraordinary that police so quickly dismissed fears that a serial killer was responsible for the disappearances, for it seems likely that several serial killers were responsible for some of the 60 murders that occurred in British Columbia over the past 15 years. In the early 1980s, there was speculation that the Green River killer, who is thought to have killed 49 prostitutes in Washington, also killed women in Vancouver. Of the 50 murders reported in the newspapers between 1982 and 1994, there was speculation that several of the cases were linked. Several men convicted of a single murder during that period are suspects in other cases.

Most recently, forensic evidence has linked four 1995 murders to a suspect now in custody who has been declared a dangerous offender. He was imprisoned for 17 years in 1982 for assaulting a prostitute and was released on mandatory supervision in 1994. He was imprisoned again in 1996.

In April 1999, the chilling details of another man's plans to kidnap and kill Downtown Eastside prostitutes were revealed when a psychiatrist petitioned the Supreme Court of Canada for permission to testify against the defendant, Michael Leopold, whom he examined at the behest of Leopold's lawyer<sup>12</sup> (*Smith v. Jones*, 1999). Leopold had pled guilty to assaulting a prostitute but revealed to the psychiatrist that he had intended to kill her and that the escapade was actually a trial run for a planned sequence of murders. Leopold had turned the basement of his home into a dungeon where he planned to take the women, torture, sexually assault, and then kill them. He planned to make the identification of his victims more difficult by "blowing their faces off," and then dumping them in the bush in the mountains near Hope, a small town 90 miles east of Vancouver. Leopold was released on bail from September 1996 to December 1997, during which time five women went missing. Needless to say, Leopold was moved into

the category "of interest" by police investigating prostitute disappearances and murders.

It is easy to imagine a scenario where a man like Leopold accounts for many of the missing women but has not come to the attention of police because, like several well-known serial killers, he disposes of his victims in a single location. However, when we reflect back on the 60 or so murders in British Columbia over the past 15 years, it is obvious that we are not dealing with one or even several serial killers. Each of the 17 convictions in the 50 murders of sex workers reported in Vancouver newspapers between 1982 and 1994 involved different offenders (16 men and two women<sup>13</sup>).

Rather than dealing with a single aberrant serial killer or even several of them, we are dealing with a systematic pattern of violence against prostitutes perpetrated by many men, some of whom are serial killers. These murders are merely the extreme end of a continuum of violence. The question is: Why did the murders start to increase dramatically in the mid-1980s? I suggest the answer can be found, at least in part, in public discourse on prostitution. To get a sense of the discursive framework in which the social relations of prostitution unfold, let us examine local news coverage of prostitution.

### DISCOURSE ON PROSTITUTION AND VIOLENCE AGAINST PROSTITUTES

The news data are drawn from an ongoing study of 100 years of prostitution reporting in the *Globe and Mail* and two Vancouver daily newspapers, the *Province* and the *Vancouver Sun*. The analysis presented here is restricted to the *Sun*. From 1983 to 1998, the articles accumulated in a clippings file as we read the paper each day. The articles prior to 1983 are drawn from a page-by-page search of past editions of the *Sun* stored on microfiche. Any article mentioning prostitution was included.

From 1964 to 1973, there was an average of only seven *Sun* articles per year mentioning prostitution (see Figure 2). The number increased substantially in 1975, when there were 37 articles, and again in 1976, when there were 98. The flurry of interest in 1976 related mostly to the closing of Vancouver's renowned Penthouse Cabaret, after police charged the owners and several employees



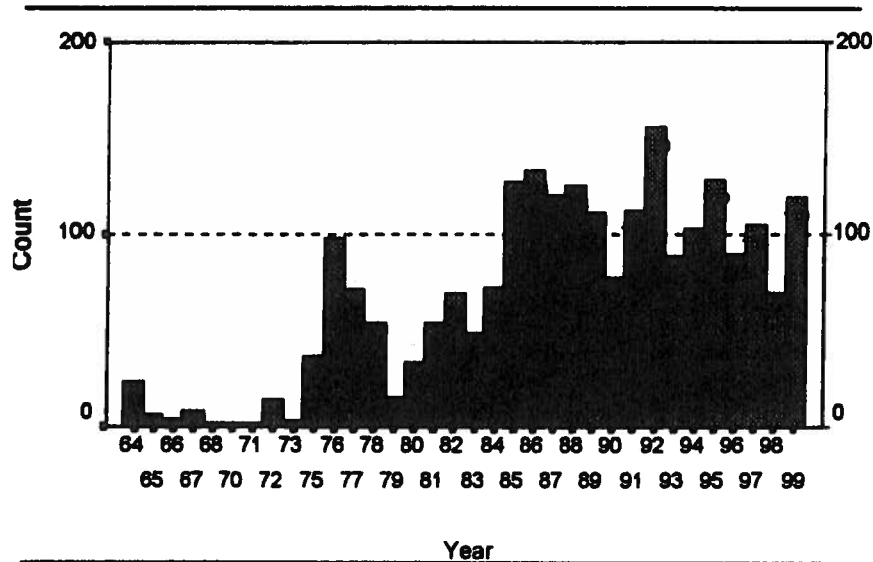


Figure 2: Number of Articles Mentioning Prostitution in the *Vancouver Sun*, 1964 to 1999

with procuring and living on the avails of prostitution (Lowman, 1986). The closure of this and other off-street prostitution venues played a decisive role in the spread of street prostitution that became the focus of considerable media attention in the early 1980s. A similar process occurred in Toronto in 1977 following the crackdown on the Yonge Street body rubs (Brock, 1998).

In the 2 years following the closure of the Penthouse, the number of articles mentioning prostitution declined. From November 1978 to July 1979 there was a strike, and in 1979 only 15 articles mentioning prostitution appeared in the *Sun*. From 1980 to 1984, the average number of prostitution articles each year was 56. From 1985 (the year of the enactment of the communicating law) until 1990, the annual average more than doubled to 124. The annual average from 1990 to 1993 (108) was similar. However, this average is inflated by the effect of the 156 articles appearing in 1992, the largest number in any year during the 36-year period under scrutiny. From these totals it is evident that there has been more talk about prostitution since 1985, the year in which the communicating law was enacted, than there was in any of the 20 years preceding it.

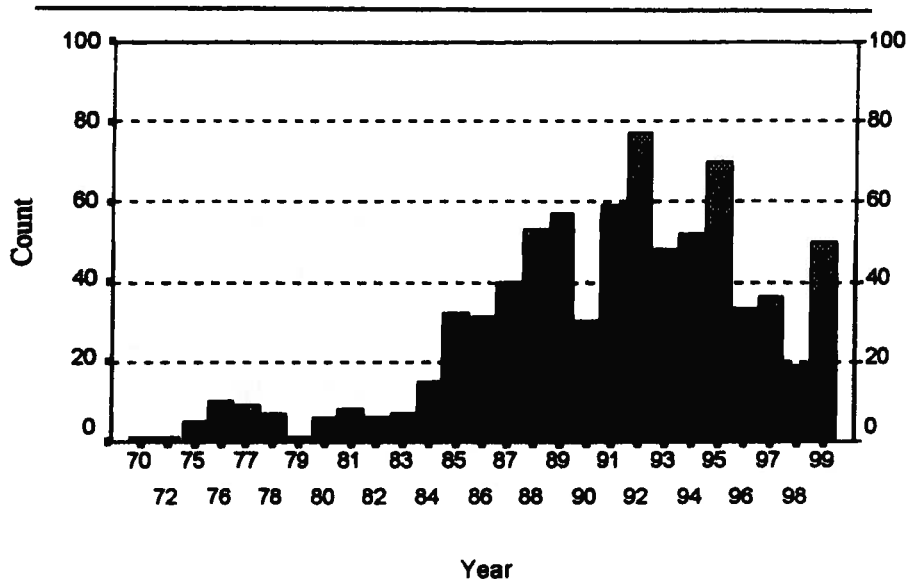


Figure 3: Number of Articles Mentioning Violence Against Prostitutes in the *Vancouver Sun*, 1964 to 1999

NOTE: From 1964-1969, no articles mentioned violence.

Figure 3 shows the number of articles from 1964 to 1993 mentioning violence<sup>14</sup> against prostitutes.<sup>15</sup> The first article mentioning violence appeared in 1975. From 1975 through 1983, an average of 7 articles per year mentioned violence. In 1984, 15 articles mentioned violence. Then there were 32 articles in 1985, 31 in 1986, and 41 in 1987. From 1988 to 1993, the annual average number of articles mentioning violence rose to 55.

Figure 4 shows the number of articles mentioning violence against prostitutes as a proportion of the overall number of articles mentioning prostitution. A similar trend emerges here, but expressed this way we can see more clearly how the overall proportion of articles mentioning violence also increased. From 1964 to 1975, violence against prostitutes was not mentioned at all. From 1975 to 1983, 14.7% of the articles mentioned violence. From 1984 to 1987, the proportion rose to 29%, and from 1989 to 1993, it increased again to the point where half the articles mentioned violence against prostitutes. Far from representing a "paper crime wave," these news stories are incident driven and represent the reverse of the situation usually discussed in the criminological

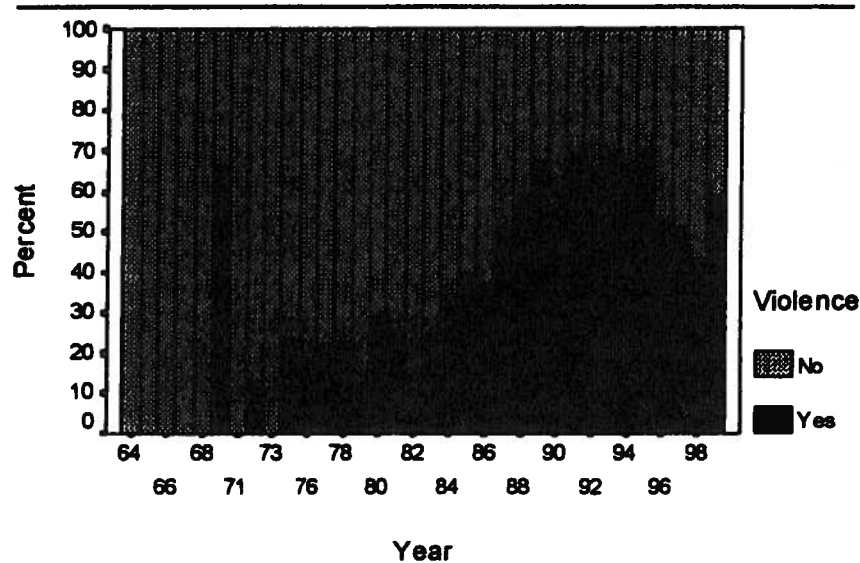


Figure 4: Percent of Articles Mentioning Violence in the *Vancouver Sun*, 1964 to 1999

literature: a "real" crime wave—and in this case, one without an accompanying moral panic.

The primary reason for the increased attention paid to violence against sex workers is the growing number of assaults and murders in British Columbia from 1982 on, and especially from 1988 to 1994 when 38 murders were reported in the newspapers. It appears that the increased murder rate since 1964 is a reflection of an increase in the actual number of murders of women involved in prostitution rather than a change brought about solely by news reporting, although the increase may reflect both influences.

#### "GETTING RID" OF PROSTITUTES: STATE AND VIGILANTE SOLUTIONS TO LAND USE CONFLICTS

Analysis of the ebb and flow of news themes reveals that from 1981 to about 1985, most of the talk was about the nuisance attributed to street prostitution. In 1981, the Concerned Residents of the West End (CROWE) was the first Vancouver organization formed in the post-war period specifically for the purpose of ridding a neighborhood of street prostitution. In 1984, the Shame the Johns group began to picket prostitutes. After prostitution was

displaced out of Vancouver's West End in the summer of 1984 by a nuisance injunction (Lowman, 1989), lobby groups have emerged in four other neighborhoods (i.e., Mount Pleasant, Strathcona, Kensington-Cedar Cottage, Grandview-Woodlands) to combat prostitution displaced from other areas. Most of these organizations have simply wanted to see prostitution removed from their neighborhood without seeming to care where it might go.

From 1981 to 1985, municipal politicians, police organizations, and neighborhood interest groups all pressed for a new law so that police could sweep prostitution from the streets. Prohibition was the order of the day. In 1985, the Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution recommended a different approach: If one of the goals of social policy is to remove prostitution from the street, then as long as it remains legal, we need to identify a place for it to go. The legislature rejected this plea for holistic reform of prostitution law and, on December 20, 1985, enacted the communicating law instead.

Within a year, neighborhood groups were already protesting that the new law had failed because, they said, sentences were "too lenient." Various police authorities and neighborhood lobby groups called for stronger penalties. Neighborhood activists referred to street-connected women and anyone associated with them as *scumbags* and *sleazeballs*. In one instance, one of the most vocal activists wrote an open letter to movie star Clint Eastwood "on behalf of the community of Mount Pleasant which has been invaded by street prostitutes and other criminals." The letter exhorted Eastwood, then mayor of Carmel, CA, to run for mayor in Vancouver. "Talent such as yours" the letter continued, "is in great demand. Due to conditions here in Mount Pleasant, your election would be certain. Thank you for considering this offer." The letter concluded, "PS Bring your gun" (Agg, 1986, p. A21).

Sometimes these exclusionary tactics extended to vigilante action on the street. In July 1993, photocopies of a hand-written poster were stapled to telegraph poles in the Downtown Eastside. The poster read as follows: "Warning: Street Prostitutes. From: 700, 800, 900 Block East Pender, Hastings & Cordova Residents. Move out or face the consequences by July 15/93 and thereafter."

The main result of the numerous campaigns to rid various Vancouver neighborhoods of street prostitution is to displace it. As one VPD report put it, this is an "enforcement action which

merely moves the problem to another location for another day. This action may be appropriate for the short term, but all too often that is the only action that is taken and so nothing changes" (Vancouver Police Department, 1993).

There is growing acknowledgment that criminal law and police initiatives can only play a small part in the much broader issues that are raised by street prostitution and other "problem" populations. As another report suggests,

The root causes of prostitution and drug abuse are obviously beyond the ability of one city or neighborhood to resolve. However, what appears to be occurring in the DES [Downtown Eastside] and Strathcona is that the number of people with problems has reached the critical mass where the mainstream residents are unable to support, guide, or have a positive effect on their less able neighbours. Examples of the numbers are over 500 seriously mentally ill people . . . 480 prostitutes . . . between 350 and 500 Latino refugees . . . and the uncounted numbers of alcoholics and dysfunctional people living in poverty. . . . The responses necessary to reasonably address these types of social issues require a major coordinated initiative involving the three levels of government. Decisions made in isolation tend to have unintended results: ghettos of ex-mental patients and refugees for example. Law enforcement actions can have only a limited amount of success under these circumstances." (Vancouver Police Department, 1992)

#### THE DISCOURSE OF DISPOSAL

It appears that the discourse on prostitution of the early 1980s was dominated by demands to get rid of prostitutes, creating a social milieu in which violence against prostitutes could flourish. The same exclusionary discourse continues to be broadcast today, amidst stories of the disappearing women (e.g., Gayle, 1999). The association of this discourse of disposal to violence against prostitutes is clear enough. After 1985, the year in which the communicating law was enacted, there was a large increase in British Columbia of murders of women known to prostitute.

Similarly, the number of reported cases involving customer assaults of prostitutes began to increase in 1985 (Lowman & Fraser, 1996). Between 1976 and 1984, there were 11 cases reported in the *Vancouver Sun*, an average of just over one per year. From 1985 to 1993, the average rose to 7 per year. Obviously, these are very

small numbers and only include a small proportion of the total number of incidents, but the trend is the same.

This discourse of disposal has formed an important part of the ideological context in which male violence against women is played out. A woman working the street is particularly vulnerable to predatory misogynist violence, and all the more so in a milieu in which she runs the risk of criminal prosecution. This same risk makes women who work the street much more susceptible to violence when a conflict with a client occurs. In a situation where he may use violence because he knows she is unlikely to report him to the police, and with the nuisance rhetoric, among other things, at hand to justify doing so, conflicts may quickly escalate to the point of physical resolution. Alienated from the protective service potential of the police, the prostitute is also an obvious mark for robbery. In lieu of the development of viable alternatives to street prostitution, especially at the lower-priced end of the trade, these conditions appear to have perpetuated and amplified violence against women involved in prostitution.

### A CONTINUUM OF VIOLENCE

It should go without saying that the murders described here are just the extreme end of a continuum of violence against prostitutes. Many street prostitutes experience numerous "bad dates" involving assaults, sexual assaults, and robberies (Currie, Laliberte, Bird, Rosa, & Sprung, 1995; Lowman & Fraser, 1996). By all accounts, the women on the Downtown Eastside are the most victimized.

In very general terms, the violence against street prostitutes perpetrated by clients or men posing as clients can be classified into two main types: *situational* and *predatory*.

Situational violence occurs when a dispute arises during the course of a transaction and the client resorts to violence to resolve it. The dispute might take the form of a disagreement about services performed, price paid, an alleged rip-off, and so forth. It is situational in the sense that it is not premeditated. Sexual assaults, assaults, and robberies may all arise from such disputes. Although these offenses are not premeditated, they are not

entirely situational either. Such incidents are predisposed by the perpetrator's attitude toward women and sexuality.

Predatory violence is premeditated. It may be financially motivated—a planned robbery—and it may be misogynist, sexual, and serial. The offender is not a client as such, because he sets out with a different agenda. He knows what he is going to do before he does it, and he knows where to find victims: the unregulated and mostly unmonitored prostitution strolls of a city like Vancouver. The choice of a prostitute as a target is, at least partly, a matter of opportunity: Because street prostitutes will get into a car with a stranger, they are targets.

Predatory sexual violence against prostitutes is termed *misogynist* because, as one 31-year veteran of the VPD put it, the maliciousness and viciousness of some of the sexual assaults and murders is "beyond belief." He described the behavior of many of the men who assault prostitutes as "very physical . . . very intimate . . . and designed to hurt."

Both situational and predatory violence can lead to death. An example of situational violence is given by a Victoria taxi driver ("M.") who was sentenced to a life term for the second-degree murder of a prostitute ("P."):

Court was told M. fantasized about a pure, eternal heterosexual romance. He idealized women but despised them when he felt rejected.

On Dec. 8, 1993 he picked up P. and paid her \$50 for sex. When P. tried to leave before M. had finished the sex act, he exploded into anger, and the pent-up hatred he had of women poured out. (Canadian Press, 1994)

He stabbed his victim 32 times and then slit her throat.

In another recent case, "D." was convicted of three counts of sexual assault with a weapon (two involving prostitutes), three counts of confinement, and 1 count of robbery. The accused "pointed a gun at one victim when he ordered her to get into his vehicle. He then pressed the gun against her head as he forced her to perform an oral sex act." In the other assaults, D. "pressed a sharp knife against the victim's head as he forced her to perform . . . sex acts" (Still, 1994). In passing a sentence of 14 years, the judge described the premeditated assaults as "extremely serious"

in nature, with each victim "subjected to prolonged terror" (Ogilvie, 1995).

As to the extent to which violence against prostitutes is a matter of violence against women in general rather than prostitutes in particular, too much of an analytic separation should be resisted. Several of the men convicted of sexually assaulting prostitutes in British Columbia have convictions for assaulting or murdering other women too. For example, a man convicted in 1989 of killing a female jogger in Saanich was charged in 1986 with two different assaults on prostitutes for which he was out on bail awaiting trial at the time he committed the murder. He was convicted of both assaults and was serving a lengthy sentence at the time police realized he was responsible for the murder. Seen in this light, although the victim was a prostitute, from this man's point of view, any woman could have been a victim. In 1995, a woman working in a Surrey tanning salon was abducted, sexually assaulted, and murdered. Fernand Auger, the man who is thought to have murdered her (he committed suicide), had a record for assaulting prostitutes (Bell & Munro, 1995).

In light of these cases, violence against prostitutes ought to be understood as part of a continuum of violence against women more generally. Nevertheless, it is likely that some men are more easily able to rationalize violence against a prostitute than against other women because of prostitutes' moral-political marginalization. The de facto criminal prohibition of prostitution plays a major part in this marginalization.

The current Canadian Criminal Code effectively outlaws prostitution; technically, prostitution is legal, but it is almost impossible to prostitute on an ongoing basis without breaking the law. This system of quasicriminalization makes this marginalization more complete in several ways:

1. It contributes to legal structures that tend to make the prostitute responsible for her own victimization and thus reinforces the line of argument that says that if people choose to prostitute, they deserve what they get—they are offenders not victims.
2. It makes prostitution part of an illicit market. As such, it is left to primitive market forces and creates an environment in which brutal forms of manager-exploitation can take root.
3. It encourages the convergence of prostitution with other illicit markets, particularly the drug trade. Once the price of a habit-



forming, mind-altering substance is driven up by criminal prohibition, a drug like heroin can be as demanding a "pimp" as any man.

4. It alienates persons who prostitute from the protective service potential of the police. Why would prostitutes turn to the police for help when the police are responsible for enforcing laws against prostitutes? For a prostitute, to report an assault or robbery might entail admitting that she was committing an offense (communicating) or violating a bail or probation area restriction. Criminal law sanctions institutionalize an adversarial relationship between prostitutes and police. This antagonism finds its roots in the contradictory structure of criminal law and the refusal of legislators to identify the circumstances in which the legal act of prostitution can take place.

#### **VIOLENCE, COMMERCIAL SEX, AND THE POLITICS OF DECEPTION**

The main conclusion of the analysis presented here is that the prohibition and stigmatization of prostitution are the main obstacles to creating safer working conditions for prostitutes. At present in Canada, we have a system of quasicriminalization of prostitution. The sale of sex is left to a combination of market forces, selective enforcement of the criminal code prostitution statutes, and a crude system of municipal regulation of escort services, body rubs, and massage parlors. One of the main features of this schizoid system of regulation is that it denies what it is really all about. For example, although many police departments tell women who apply for escort service licenses that they are getting involved in prostitution, they refuse to issue a license if the applicant has a communicating conviction. Because of this systematic political deception, women at the lower-priced end of the street trade, especially intravenous drug users, are left with few or no viable off-street alternatives. Neither the women nor many of their clients have the resources needed to control private spaces to conduct their business.

The system of quasicriminalization helps to perpetuate violence against prostitutes. This sometimes happens in a relatively direct way. For example, when hotel owners are prosecuted for bawdy-house offenses, prostitutes are more likely to service their clients in cars, thus making prostitutes more vulnerable to assault, robbery, and murder. Police efforts to displace the street trade out

of residential streets into poorly lit industrial areas have a similar effect. Street prostitutes may be exposed to violence in a less direct, though probably more important sense: Criminal law sanctions encourage an adversarial relationship between prostitutes and police. Why would a prostitute turn to a potential adversary for help? This is not to say that police are never helpful or that prostitutes never turn to police for help—some do, which is why a growing number of men are being convicted for assaulting prostitutes and given fairly lengthy prison terms as a result. Nevertheless, the statistics on violence against street prostitutes suggest that it is probably the most dangerous form of work in Canada.

There appears to be little political will to prevent male violence against prostitutes by creating safer conditions for prostitutes' work. The reluctance is rooted in the idea that any attempt to help prostitutes would be tantamount to condoning prostitution. This is odd, given that prostitution is already legal in Canada. As things stand, prevention of violence is conceptualized mainly in terms of eradicating prostitution. This reasoning, together with various kinds of moral disapproval of prostitution and the sentiment that prostitutes bring upon themselves the violence they experience, forms a powerful impediment to developing safer conditions for sex workers. It is time for politicians to admit the obvious and engage in a dialogue with prostitutes about how to meet their clients and where to conduct their business. Without this dialogue and a wholesale rationalization of Canadian prostitution law, many more women will die.

Of course, resources must also be devoted to helping women leave prostitution if they want to and preventing youths from making choices they later regret. Most important, politicians and the rest of us must address the fundamental issues that lead to pernicious forms of prostitution in the first place, including the effects of several hundred years of colonialism on First Nations peoples, the feminization of poverty, addiction, sexual exploitation of children and youth, and certain kinds of male sexual expression.

## NOTES

1. In this category, we include exotic dancers and escorts; the data include the murders of five dancers and two escorts.
2. For information on violence against prostitutes in Australia see Hatty (1989); in England and the United States, see the International Collective of Prostitutes (2000); and in the United States, see Miller (1993) and Miller and Schwartz (1995). For other research on violence against prostitutes in Vancouver, see Currie, Laliberte, Bird, Rosa, & Sprung (1995).
3. This was the forerunner of the Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System (VICLAS).
4. The murders for the period 1994-1998 are taken from the newspapers only.
5. A Vancouver Police Department report written in 1992 suggests that at least three of the Vancouver murders from 1984 through 1992 were related to the drug trade, not to prostitution as such. This may also be the case with some of the murders outside the lower mainland of British Columbia.
6. Also, in 10 of the 29 prostitute murder cases recorded in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Macros database, the term *overkill* was used.
7. Six for first-degree murder, four for second-degree murder, and one for manslaughter. In the remaining six cases, the category of conviction was not mentioned.
8. For a description, see Lowman 1989, pp. 174-177.
9. The term *pimp* does not appear anywhere in the criminal code. Technically, anyone who lives on the avails of prostitution is a pimp. However, the term is usually reserved for men who manage street prostitutes, particularly African American men.
10. These terms are taken from the argot of a long-established African American pimp subculture (e.g., Hodgson, 1997; Layton, 1975) but may not be in contemporary use in some parts of Canada.
11. Only 13% of Canadian murders are committed by persons not known to the victim (Fedorowycz, 1998).
12. Because the defendant's lawyer instigated the examination, it was protected by lawyer-client privilege. The Supreme Court invoked the public safety exception and allowed the psychiatrist to reveal the contents of his conversation with the accused to the Crown. The Crown is now instituting proceedings to have Leopold declared a dangerous offender.
13. In the 17th case, two women were convicted for the murder of a woman who had witnessed two men kill another woman at a party the previous year.
14. Violence includes first and second degree murder (s.231), manslaughter (s.232), attempted murder (s.239), uttering threats (s.264.1), assault (s.265), assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (s.267), aggravated assault (s.268), sexual assault (s.271), sexual assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (s.272), aggravated sexual assault (s.273), forcible confinement (s.279), robbery (s.343), and extortion (s.346).
15. These figures also include about 15 articles that mention the murders of five exotic dancers; the remainder refer to prostitution.

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