
Interesting study of prostitution in Chicago

Posted on [January 18, 2008](#) by [Ampersand](#)

Economists Steven Levitt (of *Freakonomics* fame) and Sudhir Venkatesh have published a [study of the economics of street and brothel prostitution in Chicago](#). They used a variety of data sources, including paying prostitutes a fee to allow “embedded data trackers” (who were themselves mostly ex-prostitutes) to follow them through their working days^a and keep records of all transactions. As far as I can tell, only female prostitutes were studied.^b

Their conclusion:

This study provides a rare window into the lives of those who are most marginalized in society. Surprising to an outsider are the fluidity with which these women move in and out of prostitution and other work, their willingness to absorb enormous risk for a small pecuniary reward, and the blurred lines between good and evil, where police extort sex and pimps pay efficiency wages.

Also from the study (in context, it’s clear that when they write “prostitution” or “street prostitution” they mean to include both streetwalkers and brothel workers, but not more high-end prostitutes such as escorts):

The transaction-level data we collected suggests that street prostitution yields an average wage of \$27 per hour. Given the relatively limited hours that active prostitutes work, this generates less than \$20,000 annually for a women working year round in prostitution. While the wage of a prostitute is four times greater than the non-prostitution earnings these women report (approximately \$7 per hour), there are tremendous risks associated with life as a prostitute. According to our estimates, a woman working as a prostitute would expect an annual average of a dozen incidents of violence and 300 instances of unprotected sex.

Other findings — some expected, some surprising.

- About 1 in 33 tricks is a “freebie” with a cop. A street prostitute gets arrested about once every 450 tricks. “A prostitute is more likely to have sex with a police officer than to get officially arrested by one.”
- Between “freebies” to cops and freebies to gang members in exchange for “protection,” about 5% of all tricks are freebies. (Freebies to pimps don’t seem to have been counted, unless I missed it.) (*ETA*: As is pointed out in the comments, “freebies” are essentially rapes.)
- “On average the prostitutes work roughly thirteen hours per week, performing roughly 10 sex acts total. Average revenues generated

per week are about \$340. Most of this comes in cash, with some payments made in drugs.”

- Street prostitutes with pimps get paid more than those without pimps — even after the pimp takes off his 25%. Working with a pimp also means having to give fewer freebies to cops and gang members, and a lower chance of violent assaulted by a customer. However, the overall risk of violence is about equal, because of the chance of being violently assaulted by the pimp.
- A study of prostitution in Mexico found that customers pay significantly more to have condomless sex. However, in Chicago there’s barely any “no condom” extra charged. The authors theorize that this is because condoms are the “default” that must be negotiated away from in Mexico, but not in Chicago.
- Most prostitutes also hold other jobs. “We estimate that these women earn an average of \$7.24 per hour in their outside jobs, or about one-fourth what they earn as prostitutes.” During times of high demand for prostitution (the example studied is the 4th of July), a significant number of women enter the prostitution market on a short-term basis.
- The authors — after pointing out their study is a very rough estimate — estimate that there are “4,400 women active as prostitutes citywide in any given week.” That estimate only covers street prostitutes. They also estimate that there are, at a minimum, 175,000 johns using Chicago street prostitutes each year.

Hat tips: [Lawyers Guns & Money](#), [Hit & Run](#), [Hit & Run again](#), and [Foreign Policy blog](#). (Both Foreign Policy and Hit & Run misstate what the study found about condom use and pricing.)

Like 0

a. Or nights, I suppose. [[↩](#)]

b. You can read a draft of their paper [here, in pdf form](#). [[↩](#)]

Related posts:

1. [New prostitution strategy in the UK](#)
2. [Legalization of Prostitution in Austrailia](#)
3. [Meth-fueled prostitution in the Rockies](#)
4. [Major International Study on Sexual Behavior Challenges Myths](#)
5. [False story alert: Women in Germany probably not being forced](#)

[into prostitution by welfare state](#)

This entry posted in [Prostitution, Porn and Sex Work](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).

40 Responses to *Interesting study of prostitution in Chicago*

1

[jj](#) says:

January 18, 2008 at 11:17 pm

I wish instead of “freebies” they called it RAPE. Not the prostitutes, I totally understand how you would have to frame it that way in your head for sanity. But I wonder how many people read “freebies” and diminish it.



2

[Ampersand](#) says:

January 19, 2008 at 6:55 am

I think the authors were right not to term it “rape” — a study like this should reflect the views of the prostitutes, to a significant extent, rather than the views of the authors. (Not that it’s all one or the other, of course).

But you’re right that it is rape. And I should have said so in the post. Actually, I think I’ll edit the post now to say that.



3

[Robert](#) says:

January 19, 2008 at 9:10 am

Well, a freebie certainly CAN be rape. Most certainly, it is when the cop says “give me sex or I run you in”; extortion is a threat, same as any other threat.

But I’ve also known girls who proactively traded sex for protection — “I’ll blow you every once in a while if you’ll make sure that I find out about sweeps before they happen”. Or “I go with this cop so that my pimp knows I have a friend on the force and won’t treat me so bad.”

Don’t minimize the horror of what these women experience, but at the same time don’t deny their agency. It can get complicated out there.



4 **hf** says:

January 19, 2008 at 12:03 pm

Interesting. But the situations with the cop, particularly the sweeps one, involve a violent threat. And I don't mean an implied threat from a general power imbalance, but an explicit law threatening to put prostitutes in jail.



5 **Radfem** says:

January 19, 2008 at 11:15 pm

A "freebie" with a police officer is rape under the color or power of authority if it's done with threat of arrest, jail or other other forms of coercion.

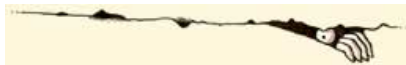
Laws exist pertaining to such in different states.

This is the one in California, for example.

[P.C. 271 \(7\)](#)

(7) Where the act is accomplished against the victim's will by threatening to use the authority of a public official to incarcerate, arrest, or deport the victim or another, and the victim has a reasonable belief that the perpetrator is a public official. As used in this paragraph, "public official" means a person employed by a governmental agency who has the authority, as part of that position, to incarcerate, arrest, or deport another. The perpetrator does not actually have to be a public official.

The stats in Chicago don't surprise me in this regard. That city has a pretty dirty police department. The latest round of cleaning it up and out involved hiring a fed as police chief.



6 **Silenced is Foo** says:

January 20, 2008 at 6:19 am

I would assume that pimps fall under the umbrella of "gang members in exchange for "protection"".



7 **hf** says:

January 20, 2008 at 7:57 pm

Cops apparently don't...



8

RonF says:

January 21, 2008 at 7:39 am

The latest round of cleaning it up and out involved hiring a fed as police chief.

Which happened just recently, BTW. There's been a few too many shootings and beatings of people by police officers. People are starting to get more upset than usual. The Chicago Police were not thrilled about an outsider being brought in to head the department, and the fact that he's white got a few of the aldermen to object – there's a perception that some of the positions in local government should be reserved for blacks. But the guy's resume is impeccable, and the need for reform is too obvious to ignore (and they're pretty good about ignoring the need for reform in Chicago).

He's going to need some time to work. He'll probably get it; Daley II seems to be mayor-for-life, just like his dad. Push will come to shove if/when he uncovers corruption that touches someone close to Daley's regime. While this has been going on, Daley has very quietly managed to get a local judge to approve his creation of an internal review board for all city hires. Up to this point they've been subject to external review so that he can't pack every single city job with relatives of his friends and campaign supporters. Now he can bring it inside, which I think is a real bad idea.



9

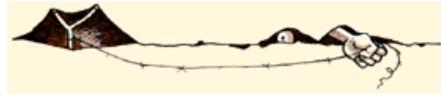
Radfem says:

January 21, 2008 at 3:39 pm

Yeah, they just hired him a month or so ago. From a federal position in Philadelphia.

No department likes outsiders coming in let alone ex-feds to run it, but there's no chance of getting anywhere with Chicago without an outsider and I'm not sure he'll be able to do that much. Often, the people closest to the chief position are part of the problem because corruption always goes back to management whether it's directly involved or not. And when an agency is really in trouble, there's always hiring outside to bring in that untainted perspective. My city is no exception. Sometimes, they promise that the guy after the outsider will come from the inside to placate.

And having mayors involving themselves in the mix beyond the boundaries of their jobs even and particularly those with LE backgrounds themselves but not exclusively, i.e. Frank Rizzo, Rudy Guillani (whose clashes with Commissioner William Bratton for example are legendary) or Daley only adds to it.

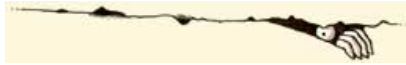


10 **mythago** says:

January 21, 2008 at 8:15 pm

But I've also known girls who proactively traded sex for protection

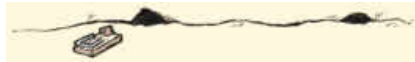
In other words, we have police officers taking bribes?



11 **Robert** says:

January 21, 2008 at 10:28 pm

Shocking, I know.



12 **Daran** says:

January 22, 2008 at 6:58 am

Yeah, they just hired him a month or so ago. From a federal position in Philadelphia.

I misread that as "they just hired him a month or so ago. From a federal prison in Philadelphia".



13 **RonF** says:

January 22, 2008 at 8:21 am

there's no chance of getting anywhere with Chicago without an outsider and I'm not sure he'll be able to do that much.

The Chicago Police Department has a large number of honest people who are dedicated to putting their lives on the line for a lot less money than I'd take to do the job to do their best to see that decent people can work, play and sleep at night peacefully. They've got a small number of people who abuse the power entrusted to them in various ways, at all levels. And because of the nature of their jobs, it's a natural human reaction for the people involved to "circle the wagons" when one of their own is threatened, even if that threat is entirely justifiable due to that person's own actions.

But also because of the nature of their jobs, such actions threaten the very fabric of our society. For that reason it's got to get cleaned up. For the other reasons, it's going to take

time. The job this guy has got is to overcome the resistance not only by the bad actors themselves, but from the good actors who have a hard time throwing a bad guy to the wolves who also may have saved their life once upon a time when they were both in an alley together. It's a tough job. We'll see whether the political powers give him the power and authority to match his responsibility.



14 **mythago** says:
January 22, 2008 at 9:46 am

And because of the nature of their jobs, it's a natural human reaction for the people involved to "circle the wagons" when one of their own is threatened

Seems a little disingenuous to 'circle the wagons' and then act shocked, shocked at absorbing some of the moral taint from the people one is protecting.

Robert, my point was that it's silly to focus on the prostitutes' alleged agency; we have corrupt police officials who don't see what they're doing as taking bribes, and when "freebies" are something cops feel entitled to, how much difference is there in offering sex vs. waiting for it to be demanded? You get better treatment if you offer than if you have to wait for the cop to tell you to put out? Yes, that's some agency.



15 **Sailorman** says:
January 22, 2008 at 11:30 am

OK, um, I'm not defending Chicago's cops.

But as an interesting technical question: If what you are "asking" from the cops is something that you are *entitled to demand* (don't beat me up; don't stand and watch while I am beaten up; don't ignore my pleas for help) then you are not exercising agency if you "pay" the cops to get it. That's what bribery is.

However, cops have a wide range of services that they provide. Given that there aren't enough cops (a separate problem) then it's quite likely that the level of policing is lower that people want.

Such a system means that more policing for Person A results in less policing for Person B. In that case, you (global 'you') may not be entitled to demand the level of policing that you want to have, to the exclusion of other people's need for police work. In that case, if you offer to pay for services that are greater than your entitlement, you *might possibly be* exercising agency.

Not that this solves the problem of too few cops and/or too little protection. And in my own

experience, I find corruption runs deep. Once you're at the point of demanding or feeling entitled to freebies from people (be it coffee, drugs, "gas money", or free lunches) it is hard to put a limit on things.



16

Radfem says:

January 22, 2008 at 12:50 pm

There's debate about whether low salaries factor at all into the prevalence of corruption in a police agency. I've heard it both blamed on higher pay (attracting people who are more interested in money than public service) and lower pay (which tempts them to subsidize their low salaries if they live in an area with a high cost of living on the side, sometimes through illegal means). And that's within the same agency sometimes, the difference of opinion.

Of course, Chicago has good police officers, even in its majority. Most often, they all do, except in smaller agencies where the majority or entire force is engaging in serious misconduct and/or illegal behavior. But this isn't about "bad apples" either, or else the new chief would still be in Philadelphia or at another job elsewhere. Chicago's problems are systemic and very long in duration. Both within its agency particularly its management and in its government as well. That's what makes me pessimistic, especially considering it has an ongoing history of serious problems. Not the least of which is officers putting out hits on other officers to cover up deeper criminal activities. That's similar to a situation in the New Orleans Police Department some years back.

You're right about there needing to be a lot of time to change the department, in my opinion. Overcoming the resistance of the labor unions. Power plays by lower management, community perceptions, governmental political games, etc. But then it's still plagued by problems with policing agencies in general.

The NYPD, another large agency with a history of corruption including graft, has struggled with similar issues. Very low beginning pay and max. pay that was actually reduced through some sort of arbitral proceeding and being next to agencies (i.e. Nassau and Suffolk Counties) which are among the highest paying and most competitive in the country. I've had some interesting conversations with former NYPD officers about the pay scale issues.

And because of the nature of their jobs, it's a natural human reaction for the people involved to "circle the wagons" when one of their own is threatened, even if that threat is entirely justifiable due to that person's own actions.

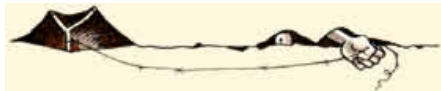
It's more cultural than natural, feeding into the "you're with us or against us" or "you're us or you're them". It's also very destructive over the long run for just about everybody involved.

Not that this solves the problem of too few cops and/or too little protection. And in my own experience, I find corruption runs deep. Once you're at the point of demanding or feeling entitled to freebies from people (be it coffee, drugs, "gas money", or free lunches) it is hard to put a limit on things.

This is an interesting topic. Gratuities as they are called, are against departmental policy in many agencies yet local businesses still provide free beverages, coffee, etc. to encourage

police officers to spend more time or become more of a visible presence at their businesses to discourage robberies. And the slippery slope factor towards entitlement and what those officers believe they are entitled to receive.

There were actually a group of officers threatening to do the opposite, boycott a local business where they hung out. Why? Because some of the employees were friendly to me. It was in that case, an “us vs her” decision. But in a way, it could be seen as intimidating for them because they had felt more protected against armed robbery when the police officers were there (though they had to smile at some really graphic sexual banter in return) and the officers knowing that were attaching conditions to it.



17

RonF says:

January 22, 2008 at 3:19 pm

Chicago's problems are systemic and very long in duration.

Yup. In fact, it's not just a few individual bad apples; there have been bad units as well, operating burglary rings, drug rings, etc. But the thing that really seems to have crossed the line for everyone was a male cop who beat up a female bartender in her bar in the presence of other cops who did nothing to stop him. It was all caught on security videos and played on every TV station in Chicago. The Police Commander

Both within its agency particularly its management and in its government as well.

Discoursing on Chicago government and it's many, many flaws would take about 12 entire blogs. Suffice it to say that it's well beyond the scope of the Chicago Police Department to fix. The U.S. Attorney for the District of Northern Illinois is working on that, but it'll take quite a while.



18

Radfem says:

January 22, 2008 at 4:42 pm

[Corruption scandal of the day](#) from the NYPD.

(excerpt, *New York Daily News*)

Sources said probers are checking to see if:

Any of the cops gave confiscated cocaine and heroin to informers for information on other drug dealers.
Officers traded drugs for sexual favors with informants and prostitutes.
The corrupt tactics permeated the unit.
Supervisors knew of the alleged corruption.
“You have a handful of guys basically shaking down drug dealers,” one source said. “Given that these officers were not the smartest bulbs in the

box, how secret could it have been? Where were the bosses? Asleep? Complicit? Intimidated?"

At the least, it was clear that supervision of the unit was "incredibly sloppy and lax," two high-ranking law enforcement sources said.

One source said Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget Brennan was "fed up" with the work of the unit and was "wary of the cases they develop." Brennan could not be reached.

Dozens of prosecutions – including convictions where dealers are currently serving long sentences – could be compromised or overturned, another source said.

In other news, [MTA officers' salaries may surpass those in the NYPD](#).



19 **hs** says:

January 23, 2008 at 10:00 am

I am not American, so there is something I don't understand. Maybe you could explain this to me. If you read the US Government's statements on prostitution, they say right in your face that they want these women jailed for being slaves and rape victims. And they are about to pass the Trafficking Victims Protection Act 2007/11, which will conflate all prostitution with human trafficking and "protect" the alleged victims by jailing them for up to ten years. If you choose to perceive all prostitutes as victims of abuse, well – certainly many are. But – wouldn't the logical thing be to help them, instead of punishing them?



20 **Radfem** says:

January 23, 2008 at 1:19 pm

So are they looking at a federal consent decree?

Yeah, special units attract a lot of scandals. Not a lot of supervision. Officers playing the role of criminals and the line gets blurred. They should take great care on who they assign to these units yet in many agencies, it's often the officers who they can't put out on patrol because of complaints.

An officer in the Chicago Police Department who plead guilty to battery in connection with beating a handcuffed man in a wheel chair is scheduled to come back to work. He got a whopping 18 months probation and also received an administrative suspension lasting about two years. I guess the new superintendent is appealing the suspension and trying to get him terminated.



21 **Bjartmarr** says:

January 23, 2008 at 1:48 pm

Yes, hs, that would be the logical thing to do if you were trying to alleviate suffering or end prostitution.

What you don't understand is that there is a large minority of Americans who hate sex. Sex within marriage for the purposes of procreation is necessary, of course, and can be unfortunately pleasureable, but sex for any other purpose is Just Plain Bad.

This all-consuming blind hatred of sex overrides their feelings of justice, compassion, and self-interest to the point where it becomes absolutely necessary to punish sex. They feel compassion for the girls who are caught, and they truly feel bad that these girls must be punished, but they see it as a can't-make-an-omelet-without-breaking-eggs scenario — the suffering is a necessary evil. Their hatred of sex blinds them to the fact that their policies of punishment actually help increase prostitution; to acknowledge such would introduce a contradiction in their world-view, and so in order to protect their sanity their subconscious keeps them blind to the contradiction.

We've got a similar process going on for issues of drugs, abortion, and poverty, which is why we have so much of them.



22 **RonF** says:

January 23, 2008 at 2:24 pm

hs said:

If you read the US Government's statements on prostitution, they say right in your face that they want these women jailed for being slaves and rape victims. And they are about to pass the Trafficking Victims Protection Act 2007/11, which will conflate all prostitution with human trafficking and "protect" the alleged victims by jailing them for up to ten years.

That does seem rather odd. In fact, it seems incredible. Perhaps you could quote the relevant sections of the U.S. Code (i.e., Federal law) that says this. Because I've been searching on the web and reading [the Act](#) and [most recent amendments to the act](#) and I don't see any language that seems to support your statements. Of course, I may have missed it or misread it. So if you could provide some support for your statements I'd appreciate it.



23 **hs** says:

January 24, 2008 at 10:21 am

I think this passage from "The Link Between Prostitution and Sex Trafficking" (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/rls/38790.htm>) is pretty clear: "The U.S. Government

adopted a strong position against legalized prostitution in a December 2002 National Security Presidential Directive based on evidence that prostitution is inherently harmful and dehumanizing, and fuels trafficking in persons, a form of modern-day slavery.“ The abuse of prostitutes is used to defend a policy that punishes prostitutes. Of course, it’s just a single quote, so it doesn’t prove much. I admit to reading between the lines: It’s the combination of what is said and done that surprised me: In most statements, they rarely mention prostitution, and if, then only in one breath with human trafficking. They talk about “help” for the victims. It sounds perfectly sensible, perfectly compassionate. Except if you see not only what they say but also what they do: They use the suffering of prostitutes as an excuse to crack down on prostitutes. To me, it’s as blatant as saying it right in your face. Maybe you don’t see it that way.

For the changes to the Act, read the Washington Post article of November 29, 2007: “Anti-Human Trafficking Bill Would Send FBI Agents on Trail of Pimps.”

(<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/11/28/AR2007112802282.html>) and the San Francisco Chronicle article of January 13, 2008 by Joel Brinkley (<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/01/13/EDUPUDB4L.DTL&hw=prostitution&sn=002&sc=504>). I got the information first from the “Bound, Not Gagged” website (<http://deepthroated.wordpress.com/>), where prostitutes are campaigning for their rights. Read especially the “Help! Contact your Senator” passage and the comments.

Personally, I have very mixed feelings about prostitution. On the one hand, there is the abuse. Is it moral to eat innocent pigs while there are perfectly guilty pimps available? On the other hand, I believe that a person is the only owner of his or her body, and neither a pimp nor a government has the right to deny him or her that ownership. So no matter what my opinion on prostitution may be, I don’t have the right to prohibit it, but I still have the obligation to fight abuse. Prostitution has so many faces that if you only have a single opinion about it, a single approach to understand it, a single solution to its problems, then you probably got it all wrong. But I think that the best way to fight its problems is to work with prostitutes, not against them.



24

RonF says:

January 24, 2008 at 2:44 pm

hs, you said:

And they are about to pass the Trafficking Victims Protection Act 2007/11, which will conflate all prostitution with human trafficking and “protect” the alleged victims by jailing them for up to ten years.

I asked you to prove this, and you provided links. I’ve read the links you provided. The actual text of the proposed amendments are nowhere to be found on any of those links. They do claim that the amendments will conflate all prostitution with slavery. They also claim that the FBI will be forced to investigate pimps. But the second allegation is disputed, and in any case no quotes from the amendments are offered to support the allegations.

And nowhere does anyone say anything about jailing prostitutes for 10 years.

Once again; please provide something that supports your statement that the reauthorization proposed for the Anti-Human Trafficking bill will lead to jailing prostitutes for 10 years.

That's a very specific allegation and you have yet to offer any proof of it.



25

hs says:

January 25, 2008 at 8:18 am

The 10 years' prison time for prostitutes is mentioned on the "Bound, Not Gagged" blog entry I provided: "Help! Contact your Senator!". Please read this, by Lisa Roellig: "...The most troubling aspect of this legislation is that not only does it conflate all sex work with sex trafficking but also that for the way our industry operates, where workers are frequently crossing borders to work, be it national or international, the potential for massive arrests and long periods of prison time are very distressing. Note, up to 10 years for the worker and up to 30 years for the support staff." The actual passage from the law is quoted under "Comments". They also provide a link for the whole thing: http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110_cong_bills&docid=f:h3887rh.txt.pdf

Quote:

"§ 2423A. Sex tourism

9 "(a) TRAVEL WITH INTENT TO ENGAGE IN ILLICIT

10 SEXUAL CONDUCT.—A person who travels in interstate

11 commerce or travels into the United States, or a United

12 States citizen or an alien admitted for permanent residence

13 in the United States who travels in foreign commerce, for

14 the purpose of engaging in any illicit sexual conduct with

15 another person shall be fined under this title or imprisoned

16 not more than 10 years, or both.

17 "(b) ENGAGING IN ILLICIT SEXUAL CONDUCT IN FOR

18 EIGN PLACES.—Any United States citizen or alien admit

19 ted for permanent residence who travels in foreign com

20 merce, and engages in any illicit sexual conduct with an

21 other person shall be fined under this title or imprisoned

22 not more than 10 years, or both.

23 "(c) ARRANGING TRAVEL AND RELATED CONDUCT.—

24 Whoever, for the purpose of commercial advantage or pri

25 vate financial gain, arranges, induces, procures, or facili-

VerDate Aug 31 2005 23:14 Nov 20, 2007 Jkt 059200 PO 00000 Frm 00069 Fmt 6652 Sfmt

6203 E:\BILLS\H3887.RH H3887 bajohnson on PROD1PC71 with BILLS

70

•HR 3887 RH

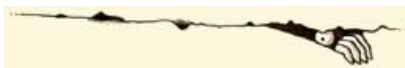
1 tates the travel of a person knowing that such a person is

2 traveling in interstate commerce or foreign commerce for

3 the purpose of engaging in illicit sexual conduct shall be

4 fined under this title, imprisoned not more than 10 years,

5 or both”

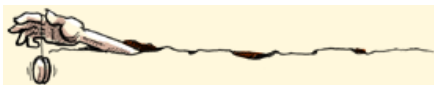


26

Silenced is Foo says:

January 25, 2008 at 9:57 am

@hs – maybe I’m reading that wrong, but it sounds more like it was intended to be something to slap on the customers who go to countries where prostitution is legal (or at least easier). Not that it wouldn’t be levelled at prostitutes as well.



27

BananaDanna says:

January 25, 2008 at 10:12 am

“not more than 10 years, or both.”

So this is the maximum possible sentence... do you honestly think that it will become the standard sentence, unmitigated by the circumstances of the prostitute in question? And I see 30 years max for people who have illicit sexual conduct with children, but only 10 years max for “support staff” (meaning, I presume, pimps/madams or other parties that procure “dates” for prostitutes/facilitate prostitution).

23 “(c) ARRANGING TRAVEL AND RELATED CONDUCT.—

24 Whoever, for the purpose of commercial advantage or pri25
vate financial gain, arranges, induces, procures, or facili-

VerDate Aug 31 2005 23:14 Nov 20, 2007 Jkt 059200 PO 00000 Frm 00069 Fmt 6652 Sfmt
6203 E:\BILLS\H3887.RH H3887 bajohnson on PROD1PC71 with BILLS

70

•HR 3887 RH

1 tates the travel of a person knowing that such a person is

2 traveling in interstate commerce or foreign commerce for

3 the purpose of engaging in illicit sexual conduct shall be

4 fined under this title, imprisoned not more than 10 years,

5 or both.



28

Sailorman says:

January 25, 2008 at 11:14 am

That analysis is wrong.

If you look at the linked PDF (I have no idea if it's current), on the page titled 69 you will find the quoted text. You'll see that it is to be *inserted into the existing U.S. Code* after section 2423.

So.... then you have to go find (or as your friendly Internet-savvy lawyer to find) section 2423 so you can look at **the definitions of terms within that section**

And you'll see:

(f) Definition. – As used in this section, the term “illicit sexual conduct” means (1) a sexual act (as defined in section 2246) with a person under 18 years of age that would be in violation of chapter 109A if the sexual act occurred in the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States; or (2) any commercial sex act (as defined in section 1591) with a person under 18 years of age.



29 **hs** says:

January 25, 2008 at 11:20 am

Unfortunately, I don't know how such laws are applied in legal practice in America. I guess, even if it's supposed to target mainly customers – if it allows the imprisonment of prostitutes for up to ten years, there will be lawyers, judges and politicians pushing for such sentences. The least thing it does is rendering prostitutes vulnerable to the whims of such people.



30 **Sailorman** says:

January 25, 2008 at 11:22 am

This is a perfectly normal misinterpretation of the law, BTW. The stuff is hideously complex. It's made even more so by the use of “legal” terminology *for normal words*. (i.e. ‘illicit’ in THIS context means “illicit, and involving a minor” and you **cannot** know that from looking at the quoted text)

But it can be a wake up call. Basically, you should never trust a layperson's reading of a complex law, ESPECIALLY a small segment of a complex law. This is hard stuff even for people who do it all the time.



31 **hf** says:

January 25, 2008 at 12:50 pm

Don't we have other laws allowing people to jail prostitutes? I don't know if I understand [this](#)

[bit of Title 22](#). It says you can't keep victims of trafficking in "facilities inappropriate to their status as crime victims", and it also says, "Victims of severe forms of trafficking shall have access to information about their rights and translation services." Sounds good. Except it also seems to say that in order to qualify as a victim with these rights, someone past the age of 18 must not only cooperate with investigations of pimps etc, but also make "a bona fide application for a visa...that has not been denied". And the part that seems on the surface to protect their right to information also says, "Nothing in [that part] shall be construed as creating any private cause of action against the United States or its officers or employees." This would appear to mean they have no rights. Officers can claim to be following other laws and cite the lack of visa application as an excuse for not telling them how to apply. They can't sue later, and have these hypothetical officers broken the law?



32 [Sailorman](#) says:
January 25, 2008 at 1:48 pm

hf, I could answer those questions in theory, but i simply don't have the time to research it all. This isn't my practice area.

The 'no rights' language is probably a way to head off private claims for civil damages, which the U.S. Government generally tries to avoid. It's not necessarily anti-victim specifically though it may be in application.

But yes: in many cases, you can't sue government for doing a *bad job*, even if said bad job causes you harm. You can sue them for intentionally malicious conduct under the FTCA sometimes. This makes more sense than it may seem at first glance; you'll have to research it to find out why though, sorry.



33 [hs](#) says:
January 26, 2008 at 4:25 am

Thank you for the clarification, Sailorman. I hope it turns out to be much ado about nothing. And thank you, Bjartmarr, for your honest response to my question.

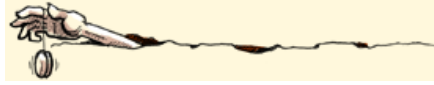


34 [Lisa Roellig](#) says:
January 26, 2008 at 4:47 pm

For any legal questions regarding the TVPRA 2007/11 you may have and it sounds like there are a few floating around here, may I suggest the Urban Justice Center website. Thank you for taking the time to discuss this very important issue.

<http://www.urbanjustice.org/>

In Solidarity,
Lisa Roellig
Erotic Service Providers Union
<http://www.espu-ca.org>



35

RonF says:

January 27, 2008 at 10:00 pm

Damn. Go on a campout for a weekend and all hell breaks loose while I'm gone. Thanks for the info, folks.



Pingback: [*International Sex Workers Rights Day : The Curvature*](#)

Pingback: [*Jenny's Pennies » Better later than never: International Sex Workers Rights Day*](#)

36

amber says:

March 28, 2008 at 7:47 pm

<http://beinganescort.blogspot.com/>

My blog about being an escort,,, it sucks



37

[A Southwest Gal](#) says:

June 6, 2009 at 12:28 am

Thanks for this interesting conversation. My experience as an ex was that cops who wanted to sleep with me were not vice cops but beat cops who seemed to find some "value" in me and tried to help me. I never had problems with vice cops raping me, but smacking me around and humiliating me,



38

[A Southwest Gal](#) says:

June 6, 2009 at 12:33 am

Oh yes, 13 hours a week? How about 13 hours a day minimum? Will have to read the entire