



“OUR  
GREAT  
HOBBY”

**An Analysis of  
Online Networks  
for Buyers of Sex  
in Illinois**

Lead Researcher & Author  
**Lara Janson**

With an Introduction by  
**Rachel Durchslag**

Assistant Researchers  
**Heather Mann**  
**Rachel Marro**  
**Allyson Matvey**

In Partnership with **thorn** DIGITAL  
DEFENDERS OF  
CHILDREN

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# Abstract

When it comes to prostitution, the commercial sex industry, and sex trafficking, most discussions, reports, and research on the topics focus on “the prostitute,” ignoring the consumers of prostituted women, the “johns.” Focusing primarily on the women, who mostly constitute the supply side of the commercial sex industry, limits our understanding of the social relationships that characterize and fuel the commercial sex industry.

This study focuses on the exchange of information among men who post on the USA Sex Guide in Illinois regarding what they call their “great hobby,” buying sex. Studying these online forums where men trade information with one another on buying sex with women sheds light on the attitudes of a segment of men who buy sex in Illinois as well as a broader community of sex purchasers. It offers a unique glimpse into a world that remains hidden and often inaccessible to researchers. Researching the online johns’ boards also contributes to a better understanding of the increasingly important role of the Internet in the lives of men who buy sex.

This research is based on predominantly qualitative content analysis of posts made on the USA Sex Guide from June 1, 2010 to August 31, 2010 by men who buy sex in Illinois. We found that the USA Sex Guide serves as a community and an important resource for johns to inform themselves about buying sex throughout Illinois. The forums create a brotherhood among men who buy sex and reinforce men’s justifications for purchasing sex. The USA Sex Guide appears to be a source of strong bonding among the johns, who often use the forums to help buttress one another against perceived critics or threats.

2

Postings on the USA Sex Guide indicate that men travel throughout Illinois to buy sex in a variety of venues, particularly throughout the Chicago suburbs. The geographic mobility of men who buy sex suggests that responses to the demand for commercial sex must be coordinated in order to be effective. The entries also reflect an ethos of male entitlement to sex that many johns use to rationalize their behavior. Additionally, the data indicate a common vision of a fantasy shared by many men on the forum—an ideal experience in which prostituted women provide an illusion of intimacy and authenticity in their sexual encounters with johns.

This research confirms findings from other studies that indicate that the commercial sex industry in Illinois is harmful; some men who buy sex admit on the USA Sex Guide boards to being violent or aggressive toward women in prostitution, and many men on the forums reference the harm the commercial sex industry causes to women, communities, relationships, and themselves.

Comments made by men on the USA Sex Guide about law enforcement and policy efforts to combat prostitution reveal the ineffectiveness, in terms of deterring men from buying more sex, of policies that target prostituted women or only men of color who buy sex. Conversely, when johns post on the boards about law enforcement raids that only target men who buy sex, it creates energetic discussions about the risks of their “great hobby.” Some men on the forums state that they will no longer take the risk of buying sex due to the increased risk of legal punishment.

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## **Alert About Explicit Content**

We would like to warn readers that this report contains quotations with explicit language and descriptions of sexual violence.

# Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	5
Key Findings.....	5
Introduction from Executive Director.....	8
Introduction from Author .....	9
Background & Methods .....	13
Role of the USA Sex Guide .....	18
Findings .....	34
<b>Research Question 1: Johns' Postings and Their Justifications for Buying Sex</b>	
1. Male Entitlement .....	34
2. The Fantasy: Illusions of Intimacy & Authenticity .....	40
3. The Reality: Male Dominance & Control .....	45
4. Awareness of Harm to Women in the Commercial Sex Industry .....	52
<b>Research Question 2: Impacts of Law Enforcement on Men Who Buy Sex</b>	
1. Johns Educating Johns About New Laws .....	75
2. Racial Profiling, Set-Ups, and Posturing: How Law Enforcement Implement Laws .....	80
3. John Discussions of Law Enforcement Procedures.....	83
4. How Johns Avoid the Law .....	86
5. Law Enforcement Policies & Practices that Deter Men From Buying Sex .....	91
6. Law Enforcement Responses that Might End "Hobbying" .....	94
7. Law Enforcement Policies & Practices that Do Not Deter Men From Buying Sex... ..	95
Research in Context .....	98
Recommendations .....	99
References .....	102
Appendix .....	105

# Executive Summary

This study focuses on the exchange of information among men who post on the online forums of the USA Sex Guide in Illinois regarding what they call their “great hobby,” buying sex. We undertook the research to address two sets of research questions:

- 1) For what purpose do men who purchase sex in Illinois use the USA Sex Guide? How do the men who post on it frame their entries, and how do they justify their purchasing of sex?**
- 2) How do the men who post on the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide seem to be impacted by local and statewide law enforcement and policy efforts to address the demand side of prostitution? To what extent do such laws seem to impact the purported actions of many men buying sex in Illinois?**

Studying these online forums, where men trade information with one another about buying sex with women, sheds light on the attitudes of a segment of the broader Illinois community of men who buy sex. It offers a unique glimpse into a world that remains hidden and often inaccessible to researchers. Researching the online johns’ boards also contributes to a better understanding of the increasingly important role of the Internet in the lives of men who buy sex.

This research analyzes posts made on the USA Sex Guide from June 1, 2010 to August 31, 2010 by men who buy sex in Illinois. Forum members on the USA Sex Guide made 2,466 entries from June 1, 2010 to August 31, 2010, of which 1,684 posts (68.2%) were analyzed.

5

## Key Findings

### **1. Role of the USA Sex Guide: A Brotherhood/Training Ground for Johns**

- The USA Sex Guide serves as a community and a resource for johns to inform themselves about buying sex throughout Illinois. By creating a brotherhood of men who normalize buying sex, the forums seem to reinforce men’s justifications for purchasing sex. The USA Sex Guide appears to be a source of strong bonding among the johns, who often use the forums to help buttress one another against perceived critics or threats.
- The Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide are a training ground with sets of rules that are actively taught and reinforced. As one john puts it, the forum is an “old boys’ club.” This “club” inculcates men throughout Illinois in the etiquette and social organization of the commercial sex industry in their communities.
- As an information-sharing community, men on the Illinois boards of the USA Sex Guide communicate with one another about these topics by requesting advice, asking questions, discussing problems and complaints, responding to posts by other users, and giving recommendations.

- Men on the forums confirm their identities as “mongers,”<sup>1</sup> and their posts generally posit heterosexuality, linked closely to buying sex, as central to these men’s performance of masculinity. They do so in the context of power dynamics that operate between “novices” and experienced, or senior, mongers.
- Men on the USA Sex Guide articulate and enforce codes of masculine behavior among one another on the forums through a series of formal and informal rules and rituals.
- By using the USA Sex Guide, novices to buying sex, long-term mongers who have been inactive, and visitors from out of town can all bring themselves up-to-speed on the “best” places to buy commercial sex in communities throughout Illinois (and, indeed, throughout the country).
- Information available on these online forums helps give johns a sense of control. Whereas in the past men who bought sex learned about the perceived strategies and dangers of buying commercial sex primarily through their own personal trial and error, johns today can learn from the successes and failures of other men. To many men who buy sex, johns’ boards are a source of empowerment. Specifically, users on the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide use the website to inform one another about a variety of perceived threats to their “hobby,” particularly law enforcement and prostitution prevention efforts.
- The boards appear to be an information resource for people who are not necessarily contributing members to the forum (i.e., the boards do not benefit only those men who are listed and active as users on the forums). Data recorded from the website at the beginning of October 2011 show that guests (i.e., visitors) to the USA Sex Guide website far outnumbered the forum members at any given time. For the time period recorded, forum members composed an average of 34.4% of people on the USA Sex Guide, whereas guests to the website made up an average of 65.7% of the users.

6

## **2. Extent of Commercial Sex and Sexual Exploitation in Illinois**

- Postings by men on the USA Sex Guide confirm research that indicates that commercial sex and sexual exploitation occur in so-called “legitimate” sex industry establishments in Cook County and throughout Illinois (see Chicago Coalition 2004; Stroger 2007; and Durchslag & Goswami 2008)
- Postings on the USA Sex Guide indicate that men travel throughout Illinois to buy sex in a variety of venues, particularly throughout the Chicago suburbs.

<sup>1</sup> This word generally refers to a trader, dealer, or a promoter of something unpleasant, but on the USA Sex Guide it is the shortened version of “whoremonger,” or someone who consorts with “whores” (“Definitions” 2012).

### **3. Attitudes and Justifications for Buying Sex: Fantasy, Power, and Control**

- Overt and underlying assumptions about masculinity, femininity, sexuality, and prostituted women, in particular, inform men's participation in the commercial sex industry. While diverse attitudes are expressed by men who buy sex on the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide, for the most part they reflect the gender inequality and attitudes regarding gender relations that permeate and perpetuate prostitution.
- The entries reflect an ethos of male entitlement to sex that many johns use to rationalize their behavior.
- The data indicate a common vision of a fantasy shared by many men on the forum: an ideal experience in which prostituted women provide an illusion of intimacy and authenticity in their sexual encounters with johns. When elements of this fantasy are challenged, men on these forums often respond by asserting their right to dominate and control prostituted women.

### **4. Harm to Women in Prostitution**

- The commercial sex industry in Illinois is frequently harmful; some men who buy sex admit on the USA Sex Guide boards to being violent or aggressive toward women in prostitution, and many men on the forums reference the harm the commercial sex industry causes to women, communities, relationships, and themselves.
- Johns express often contradictory opinions on the forums regarding this harm, opting often to dismiss, rationalize, or ignore the harm; blame prostituted women; or buy sex in spite of the harm. Most men on the forums appear to deny their contribution to commercial sexual exploitation.

### **5. Law Enforcement & Men Who Buy Sex**

- Comments made by men on the USA Sex Guide about law enforcement and policy efforts to combat prostitution reveal the ineffectiveness of policies that target prostituted women or single out men of color who buy sex. Men on the johns' boards express that these policies do not stop them from purchasing sex.
- Conversely, johns' posts about demand deterrence efforts, including law enforcement raids that target all men who buy sex, create energetic discussions among johns about whether to continue buying sex. After the implementation of these efforts, some of the men on the forums stated that they will no longer take the risk of buying sex.

# Introduction from CAASE's Executive Director Rachel Durchslag

By the time you finish reading this report, thousands of johns will have logged on to the USA Sex Guide to talk about buying sex. While the general public has learned more about sex trafficking in recent years, thanks to media coverage and a growing anti-trafficking movement, many do not realize (or do not want to admit) that the commercial sex trade is a national problem. The posts created by the johns on this forum show that not only do prostitution and human trafficking exist in cities throughout the country, but they are thriving in many, if not most, of our own communities.

Men on the online forums of the USA Sex Guide acknowledge not only the pervasiveness of the commercial sex trade but also the harms frequently experienced by prostituted women, and some go on to describe their own perpetration of this violence. They talk about forcibly touching and sexually assaulting women who do not want to perform certain sex acts. They withhold money as a form of punishment. And they use aggressive sex as a means to harm women. This is a difficult report to read, as johns often describe this exploitation to each other in graphic detail and in a way that ignores or minimizes this harm.

8      Though a small percentage of media outlets and academic publications have begun to create space to share the stories and experiences of prostitution survivors, the voices of the purchasers have remained relatively unheard. And when these voices are unheard, then comprehensive and effective solutions to ending sexual exploitation are almost impossible to create. To adequately and effectively reduce the demand for paid sex, and thus reduce violence against prostituted individuals, we need to first understand what motivates men to purchase sex and the mechanisms by which they support their sex trade patronage. This knowledge will help determine what laws and consequences would serve as real deterrents to future purchasing.

This research is both an exposé of the USA Sex Guide and a call to action. It highlights, through johns' own words, how specific law enforcement responses to prostitution do deter men from purchasing sex. Johns notice when law enforcement is arresting and charging purchasers. They notice when new laws are passed that increase penalties against them. Conversely, they notice when johns are not arrested or held accountable, and this encourages them to continue their self-identified "great hobby."

We hope that this report will benefit activists, service providers, policy advocates, and law enforcement officials as they strive to eliminate commercial sexual exploitation in Illinois and beyond.



# Introduction from the Author

Every five minutes, people are accessing information from approximately 1,500 forum pages on the USA Sex Guide, a popular website for men who buy sex throughout the United States. At any given moment in time, somewhere between 800 and 1,700 men are on USA Sex Guide, perusing the posts and communicating with one another about the sex they have bought and/or the sex they hope to buy. This study focuses on the exchange of information among men who post on the USA Sex Guide in Illinois regarding what they call their “great hobby”: searching for sex to buy. Studying these online forums sheds light on the attitudes of a segment of the broader Illinois community of men who buy sex. It offers a unique glimpse into a world that remains hidden and often inaccessible to researchers. Researching these online johns’ boards also contributes to a better understanding of the increasingly important role of the Internet in the lives of men who buy sex.

When it comes to prostitution, the commercial sex industry, and sex trafficking, most discussions, reports, and research on the topics focus on the “prostitute,” ignoring the people who buy sex, often called “johns.” Focusing primarily on the women, who mostly constitute the supply side of the commercial sex industry, limits our understanding of the social relationships that characterize and reproduce the commercial sex industry. The global commercial sex industry exists because of the male demand for prostituted people, predominantly women and girls, yet little attention is paid to these johns, whose very moniker reinforces their anonymity and invisibility. They are “faceless and nameless” and have remained largely invisible in the collective consciousness (Hughes 2004, 6). One difficulty in doing research on johns is that the clandestine nature of the industry makes it impossible to get a representative sample of men who buy sex. Also, it is assumed that many men who buy sex are reluctant to admit that they pay for sex, due in part to the social stigma and illegality involved. Therefore, when prostitution is debated, the focus and analyses are typically on women’s participation in prostitution. Such a skewed focus reinforces many widespread stereotypes that hold women, but not men, accountable for their participation in prostitution. Men are, as Malarek puts it in *The Johns: Sex For Sale and the Men Who Buy It* (2009), the “missing link” to understanding and taking action on problems such as human trafficking.<sup>2</sup>

Other important factors contribute to sexual exploitation, including globalization, national and international policies, financial and political crises, the feminization of poverty, racial myths and stereotypes, women’s inequality, and cultures that tolerate or promote sexual exploitation (Jöe-Cannon 2006, 15; Hughes 2005). However, many scholars and activists argue that the male demand for commercial sex is “the most immediate cause of the expansion of the sex industry without which it would be highly unprofitable for pimps and traffickers to seek out a supply of women. It is indisputable that a prostitution market without male consumers would go broke” (Jöe-Cannon 2006, 15). And whereas the notion of “choice” is ambiguous, at best, in relationship to prostituted women and girls, men have the privilege of choosing to buy and sell women, youths, and other men for sexual use; this choice is real (MacKinnon 2011, 293).

2 Human trafficking in the context of commercial sex is understood in the widely applied Palermo Protocol as sexual exploitation through force, fraud, or coercion, including an abuse of power or a condition of vulnerability (see MacKinnon 2011, 299-300).

## | Purpose of Research |

The purpose of this research is to learn more about the under-researched demand side of the commercial sex industry: the men who buy sex, and the attitudes they express that contribute to the growth of the commercial sex industry. We hope this research will contribute to a more complex understanding of the commercial sex industry and the role it plays in all of our communities. We wanted to learn more about the cultural norms that perpetuate the commercial sex industry, and we did this by focusing on communication patterns in online communities of johns that are linked with communities throughout Illinois.

Our research examines posts made by johns in a three-month period in 2010 on the Illinois sections of the USA Sex Guide, one of the largest online forums for men who buy sex in the United States. As of November 2012, the website boasts 287,830 members, but many more people who are not registered as members visit the site as “guests.” Indeed, guests to the USA Sex Guide website tend to outnumber members by two to one on any given day. These online forums are known as “johns’ boards,” and they are created by and for men to discuss buying sex. With this project, we hope to explore the role that online forums such as the USA Sex Guide serve in the broader commercial sex industry, and thus how they impact our communities. The insight provided by examining johns’ boards could help policy makers design more effective laws and may help law enforcement improve their endeavors to arrest and prosecute pimps, johns, and traffickers.

10 This research indicates that these forums constitute a community and a brotherhood that articulates, reflects, reproduces, and reshapes cultural attitudes that pervade the commercial sex industry in Illinois. In this sense, these men should be of great interest to social scientists. They are not necessarily the social outliers they are often framed to be but rather a diverse group of generally mainstream people whose online posts often echo broadly articulated societal beliefs regarding masculinity, the objectification of women, and prostitution. The project combines qualitative and quantitative methods to carry out an in-depth content analysis of the posts.

## | Contributions of Research |

It is important to study these online forums because they reflect significant changes in the social relationships of and between men who buy sex, as well as social relationships in general. The Internet has taken on an important role in the lives of many men who buy sex, as it has in the lives of many (if not most) Americans. As of March 2011, the Internet was accessed by 245,000,000 Americans (“Usage and populations statistics” 2011). In Illinois alone, there were 10,243,294 Internet users as of June 2010, or put differently, 78.5% of the population in Illinois had access to the Internet (“Usage and populations statistics” 2011). Previous literature has shown that johns increasingly use online methods of communication to discuss and access the commercial sex industry (Holt & Blevins 2007). Interviews in 2008 with 113 men who bought sex in Chicago revealed that 34% of the respondents reported using the Internet to find women in prostitution (Durchslag & Goswami 2008, 10). The men’s comments on johns’ boards like the USA Sex Guide provide insight into the attitudes and methods of men who buy sex. Holt & Blevins (2007) noted the importance of online discussions for men who buy sex to identify and solicit prostituted people, as well as to manage external risks. As a distinct, social space created exclusively for men who buy sex, the forums seem to

offer a unique glimpse into the world of johns or “mongers,” as many self-identify themselves. The commercial sex industry and the Internet are continually evolving, and the ways in which men communicate with one another on the johns’ boards appear to reflect that mutability.

This research contributes to an exciting body of new social research about the impact of the Internet and virtual communities on the social world. The Internet is “dramatically changing the nature of social relationships,” including those relationships that define the commercial sex industry (Ebo 1998, Preface). The speed and impact of sexual activity on the Internet has opened a whole new field of sexual research (Carnes 2003, 309), and previous studies have found that internet sexual behavior (e.g., viewing pornography, purchasing sex online, communicating online with others who are active in the commercial sex industry) can accelerate existing compulsive offline behavior so that the compulsive purchasing of sex becomes even more of a problem when internet activity is added to the equation (Carnes 2003, 311-312).

### **| Impact of the Internet on Prostitution and the Sex Industry |**

The impact of the Internet on prostitution and the sex industry has been “nothing short of revolutionary,” and it has “reshaped, expanded, and repackaged the availability of all types of sexual services over the past decade” (Sanders 2008, 63). Sex-related sites have exploded on the Internet, and the Internet has become a “one-stop shop” for johns who use it as a Yellow Pages directory, a support group, and a travel advisory rolled into one (Malarek 2009, 9). As a result, patterns of exploitation have emerged “at a level not seen before” (Carnes 2003, 309). A 2007 international comparative study funded by the U.S. Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons on the demand for sex tourism and trafficking found that “[t]echnology is the engine behind the growth of the sex trade...[it] has become the single greatest facilitator of the commercial sex trade in all of the countries observed” (Shared Hope 2007, 6).

In addition to offering men who buy sex a new degree of control, anonymity, and freedom from law enforcement (Delmonico & Carnes 1999; Sanders 2008, 70), the Internet has created a remarkable shift in the lives of these men because it has enabled johns to realize that they are not alone. They can “reach out and touch one another—from all corners of the globe—and take comfort in the knowledge that there are millions like them” (Malarek 2009, 9). For that reason, johns’ boards like the USA Sex Guide appear to be a source of strong bonding among the men who use them. Malarek (2009) sees johns’ boards as communities or “brotherhoods” that men who buy sex use to buttress one another against perceived critics or enemies:

In the relative comfort of their homes and under the guise of a screen name, the johns share their reasons for wanting or needing paid sex, their fantasies, their escapades, their best and their worst. But they also rally around one another, offering comfort, validating each others’ feelings and fears, and valiantly defending their lifestyle against attack by outsiders or creeping feelings of guilt. In the process this community of johns has created a brotherhood like no other. To join is free and it is available around the clock, accessible worldwide, and always willing to assist. The only requirement is having the mindset of a john. Anyone suspected of being a Christian troublemaker or feminist ... need not apply. (9)

## | The Role of Johns' Boards |

Websites such as the USA Sex Guide become training grounds for purchasers of sex and offer a unique insight into how men use the Internet to learn about and negotiate the sex industry. The forums also reveal how these johns express their masculinity and construct narratives about their sexual exploits in ways that shape their sexual identities. Our analysis indicates that the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide constitute an important and relatively new resource for many men who buy sex throughout Illinois and beyond. Our findings show that the “brotherhood” on the USA Sex Guide is a configuration of practices and discourses that men who buy sex use to reinforce one another’s beliefs. Our research confirms previous studies that show that men who buy sex are not an entirely homogenous group (Chicago Coalition for the Homeless 2004; Durchslag & Goswami 2008; Hughes 2005; Hughes 2004; Jöe-Cannon 2006; Malarek 2009; Månsson 2004; Monto 2000; Sanders 2008; Shared Hope International 2007; Sawyer, et al. 2001-02; Sawyer, Rosser, & Schroeder 1998). The “monger” identity is one that different men on the board “embody in different ways and to different degrees” (Pascoe 2007, 5). Using a feminist methodology that builds on work on the sociology of masculinity, this research aims to contribute to conversations about how men internalize and express masculinity, as well as discussions about ways in which cultures of sexual inequality may influence men who buy sex. In this context, the men on USA Sex Guide actively work on their gender identities and perform their masculinity and sexuality online, rather than simply “having” those identities (see Butler 1990; Brekhus 2003, 21).

12 Despite differences among the men on the Illinois forums, what emerged from their posts was the active construction of a “monger persona,” in which men who buy sex are posited as needing to be continually “on guard” against continual attack by law enforcement and anti-prostitution feminists, and against being victimized by other actors in the commercial sex industry, namely prostituted women and pimps. In addition to articulating individual sexual experiences, a significant amount of energy is spent by forum users on articulating and reinforcing shared values, norms, and rules of the online community. We found that many users on the forum assert and reaffirm their “monger” identities by engaging in heterosexist, racialized, ageist, and homophobic discussions of women’s bodies, the monetary value of women’s sexual acts, and their own experiences buying sex.

## | Organization of Report |

The next section of the report discusses the data and methods used for this study, followed by a section titled, “Role of the USA Sex Guide,” which explores the role of the forum in the commercial sex industry and explains some of the rules and rituals that seem to shape how men write to one another on the forum. In the remainder of the report we discuss the findings of the research, in terms first of the attitudes that pervade the entries of the men who post and their justifications for purchasing sex, and second, how the men who post in the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide seem to be impacted by local, statewide, and national law enforcement and policy efforts to address the demand side of prostitution. We address the first category in the section, “Research Question 1: Johns’ Postings and Their Justifications for Buying Sex.” Our discussion of those attitudes and justifications are organized into four subsections that discuss male entitlement; fantasies that prostituted women are expected to perform for johns; attitudes expressing a desire for dominance and control on the part of many johns, particularly when prostituted women fail to perform men’s fantasies;

and johns' awareness of harm to women in the commercial sex industry. In the final section of the report, "Research Question 2: Impacts of Law Enforcement on Men Who Buy Sex," we consider these men's perception of efforts to curtail and punish their "hobby." The insights gathered on the Illinois forums of USA Sex Guide can help inform future law enforcement and policymaking efforts nationwide.

## Background & Methods

This research builds on the limited research that has been done on the demand for sex and online johns' boards in the United States and abroad. However, in contrast to some previous studies on johns that take prostituted women into account primarily as the "product" men buy, this research puts the treatment of prostituted women at its center. We believe it is ethically unsound to study the attitudes of men who buy sex without critically analyzing their attitudes toward the people they buy, as well as the ways in which they normalize their own behavior.

This project began in May 2010 with a broad inspection of several active johns' boards in Illinois. It quickly became apparent that the USA Sex Guide offered the most possibilities for research. Unlike other online forums that focus on one venue type in the commercial sex industry, such as strip clubs or brothels posing as massage businesses, USA Sex Guide is a comprehensive johns' board offering forum categories that mirror the full spectrum of places men go to buy sex throughout Illinois. A typical city board contains forums for the most or all of the following categories:

- Streetwalker Reports
- Strip Club Reports
- Massage Parlor Reports
- Escort Reviews/Reports
- Backpage Reviews/Backpage Advertiser Reports
- General Reports
- Craigslist Reviews
- News and Media Reports
- Rip-off Reports

USA Sex Guide also surpasses other johns' boards in accessibility and volume. The website is largely public—the posts made by users on the boards are public, but users can "PM," or Private Message, one another to trade information privately. Other johns' boards that may be comparable to USA Sex Guide in size could not be accessed, as they require paid memberships. Among publicly accessible johns' boards, the USA Sex Guide contains far more reports and daily activity than any of the other forums examined. Though preliminary assessment of 10 johns' boards in Illinois was conducted, it came as no surprise that the USA Sex Guide would offer the richest data; the USA Sex Guide seemed to be one of the "go-to" spots for men who go online to help themselves buy sex.

Once the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide were chosen for analysis, we immersed ourselves in the forum posts for more than a year (reading, but not writing, posts), concentrating on two sets of research questions:

- 1) For what purpose do men who purchase sex in the Illinois commercial sex industry use the USA Sex Guide? How do the men who post on it frame their entries and how do they justify their purchasing of sex?**
- 2) How do the men who post on the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide seem to be impacted by local and statewide law enforcement and policy efforts to address the demand side of prostitution? To what extent do such laws seem to impact the purported actions of many men buying sex in Illinois?**

As primarily qualitative researchers, we collected information about the content of the website in coding categories that arose from the data and that became increasingly refined as we adjusted to accommodate incoming data.

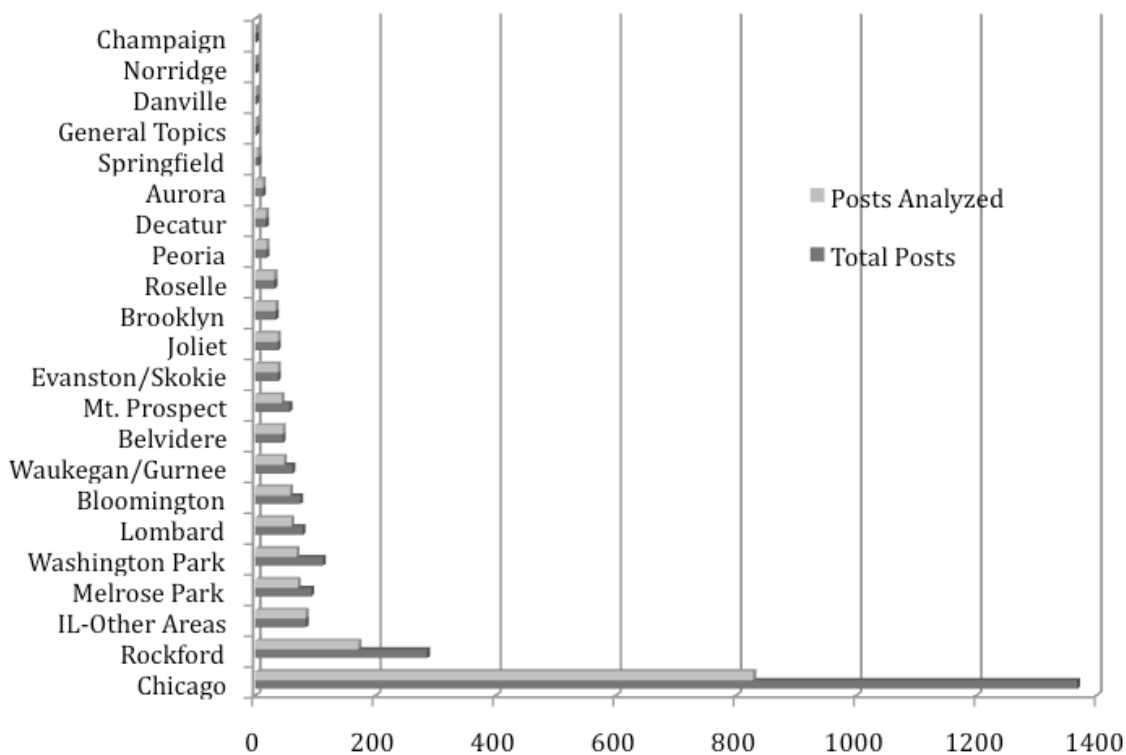
The body of data in this study is limited by particular parameters of 1) time, 2) place, and 3) type of subject. First, the forum reflects a social world that is active 24 hours a day; users can post and read at any time. This data is composed of the posts made on the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide during a three-month period in the summer of 2010: June 1-August 31, 2010. While the commercial sex industry is active at all times, we chose to analyze posts made during the summer because activity seems to be maximized in a broad range of sex venues during the summer season (e.g., reports on streetwalker activity diminish in the winter). An exception to this three-month period of data collection is the section addressing the second research question about law enforcement and policy. For this section, data was collected from the johns' posted entries from September of 2009 to July of 2011, in order to capture johns' responses to recent policy and law enforcement developments as they occurred. Below is an explanation of the distribution of data analysis for the posts falling in the three-month period of June 1 - August 31, 2010:

- Forum members on the USA Sex Guide made 2,466 entries from June 2010 to August 2010, of which **1,684 posts (68.2%) were analyzed**, using computer-generated random samples.
- For city forums containing fewer than 50 entries for the 3-month period, 100% of the posts were analyzed.
- For forums containing 50-100 posts, at least 75% of the posts were analyzed.
- For Rockford and Chicago, which contained 286 and 1,368 posts, respectively, at least 60% of the entries were analyzed.

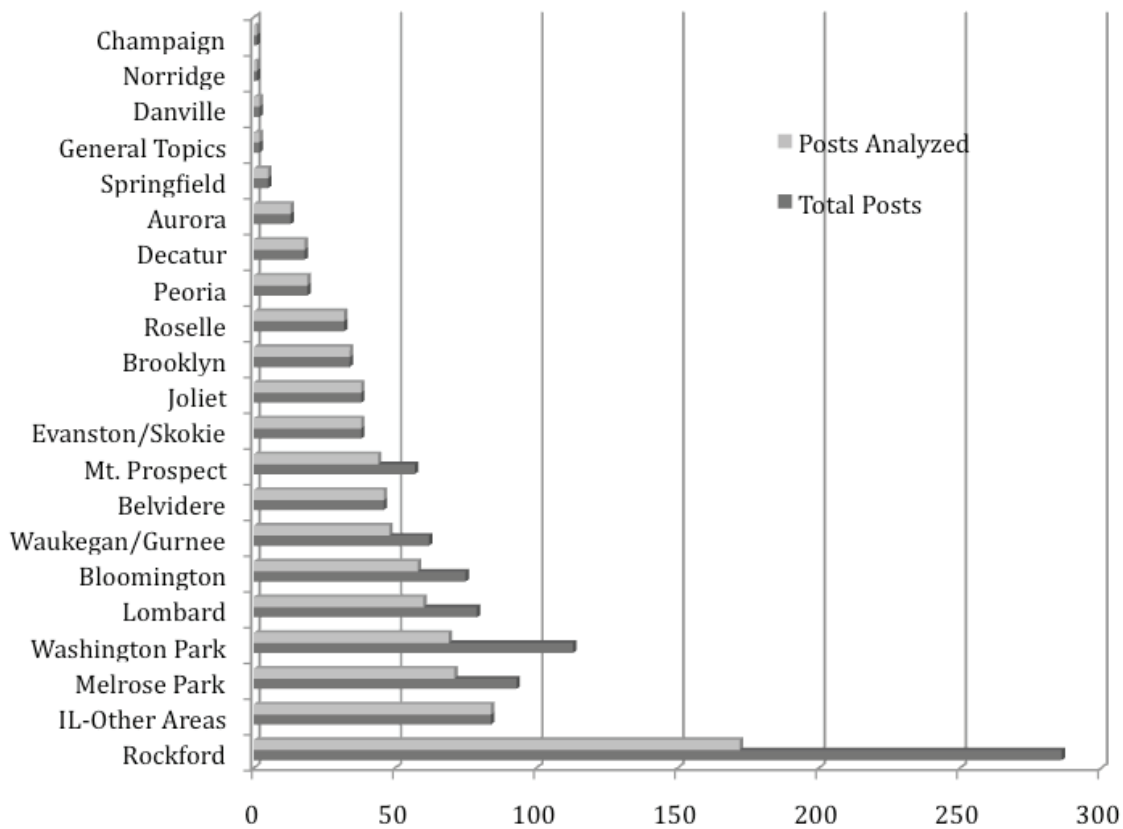
Figures 1 and 2 depict the distribution of forum posts for the three-month period analyzed.



**Figure 1 Total Posts, June - August 2010**



**Figure 2 Total Posts, June - August 2010 (Excluding Chicago)**



Second, the forum indicates that men buy sex throughout Illinois, not just in Chicago, and that these men exhibit a high degree of mobility between various local commercial sex industries. For that reason, we analyzed men's posts about commercial sex throughout Illinois, rather than focusing primarily on the commercial sex industry in Chicago/Cook County, as previous research has done (see Chicago Coalition for the Homeless 2004; Chicago Coalition for the Homeless 2002; Cook County Commission on Women's Issues 2007; Durchslag & Goswami 2008; O'Leary & Howard 2001; Raphael & Ashley 2008; Raphael & Powell 2010; Raphael & Shapiro 2002; Rosen & Venkatesh 2008; Stroger 2007). On a related note, because men buy sex in a variety of places, we analyzed posts made in all forum categories for communities in Illinois, rather than focusing on one category, such as Streetwalker Reports.

Third, reading the boards confirmed that we would not achieve a representative sample of men who buy sex in Illinois. It is unclear what percentage of men in Illinois who buy sex access johns' boards like the USA Sex Guide, and the number of men who actively post comments on the forum is distinct from the number of men who access the site in order to read posts made by others. Little data is available on the men who do use the website, other than what users themselves post. Therefore, the aim of this project was to draw a picture of how this subset of literate johns who have Internet access interact within the particular context of the johns' boards.

Because limited research exists about how the proliferation of the Internet has impacted social relationships, no one has articulated a single, clear methodology for studying this "important and growing phenomenon" (Cooper, Sherer, & Mathy 2001, see also Babbie 2008, 478). To the contrary, researchers have pointed out that the Internet is a "new, exciting, and challenging medium for conducting research" (Cooper, Sherer, & Mathy 2001, 444, see also Babbie 2007). Such scholars embrace the fact that traditional research methodologies were not designed for the Internet and explain that the "uncharted waters" of the Internet open up several possibilities and limitations for using it as an object of social study (Cooper, Sherer, & Mathy 2001, 437; see also Atkinson, Saperstein, & Pleis 2009; Babbie 2008; Eysenbach & Wyatt 2002; and Eysenbach 2003).

We conducted no questionnaires, surveys, or interviews with any of the users of this forum; rather than make direct contact with the users, CAASE researchers accessed information through reading the users' posts. No contributions were made to the forums in order to focus entirely on the observation/analysis of the postings on these websites from June to August, 2010. Thus, the data analyzed reveals how men on these johns' boards present themselves to their virtual community, not how they represent themselves to researchers. The drawback to this approach is the inability to collect demographic data from the users or to ask them specific questions. However, we believe the posts can provide rich insight into how johns see each other, the commercial sex industry, their communities, their significant others (if they have them), and anyone who threatens their "hobby."

This research relies predominantly on qualitative content analysis in order to describe and understand the network of relations on the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide, as well as the role the forum seems to play in the lives of many men who buy sex in Illinois. Users on the forum establish their presence in these forums through their regular participation in the conversational topics on the sub-forums (e.g., "Streetwalker Reports," "Massage Parlor Reports," etc.), including greetings, questions and answers, complaints and apologies, responses and



replies, and justifications to one another. When possible, we conducted a statistical, quantitative analysis of factors such as categories mentioned by men in their posts (e.g., race, age, body/appearance, price, location, law enforcement). However, the project relies primarily on a qualitative analysis of the content of the posts, because the argot and attitudes expressed on the forum require a nuanced understanding of the commercial sex industry that cannot be fully articulated through purely quantitative analysis.

We chose content analysis because it allows us to understand how the forum operates (its rules, rites, and rituals), to trace prominent patterns on the forum and the flow of information on it, to focus on the diverse relationships and exchanges involving the men on this forum, and most importantly to examine the purpose of these types of websites in the lives of men who buy sex. The posts reflect cultural practices, cultural performances, shifting or conflicting cultural meanings, and qualitative content analysis allows the examination of these aspects of the posts in-depth.

To follow an inductive approach, we generated open questions that “guide the research and influence the data that are gathered” (White & Marsh 2006). To code the data, we relied on inductive category development. Immersing ourselves in the data for a year allowed new insights to emerge about how to categorize the data (Hsieh & Shannon 2005, 1279). In the early months of the project, a sampling of the data was coded in an exploratory analysis. In this way, categories were established and codes were organized and grouped into meaningful clusters after a preliminary examination of the data, using what Stemler (2001) calls “emergent coding.” At the same time, the approach was somewhat directed, in that we drew on common attitudes expressed in CAASE’s 2008 publication of in-depth interviews with men who buy sex in Illinois to inform the categories developed.

17

The early stages of the research project involved a six-month period of weekly inter-rater reliability checks with the lead researcher and one research assistant (we had a consistent agreement rate for quantitative categories of 90-96% and 72-88% for qualitative categories). Credibility for the project was increased through prolonged engagement with the material, persistent observation, and frequent peer debriefing about how data was interpreted, particularly when we found certain responses difficult to code (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, 1280). The forthcoming comments are trends we identified through our content analysis of the posts on the USA Sex Guide.

# Role of the USA Sex Guide

## | The Internet and Sexual Exploitation |

As a “one-stop shop” for men who buy sex, the USA Sex Guide forums act as directories, support groups, and travel advisories are characterized by: a code language used by many in the commercial sex industry; their often public accessibility; and their high volumes of activity (Polaris Project 2011 and Malarek 2009, 9). According to Polaris Project, a leading organization combating all forms of human trafficking in the United States, the Internet has been identified as “the number one platform that pimps, traffickers and johns currently use for buying and selling women and children for sex in the United States” (2011). Individuals trafficked through pimp-controlled prostitution, escort services, in-call and out-call services, strip clubs, and brothels disguised as massage establishments are often marketed on websites like Backpage.com, Eros.com, and on Craigslist.org. Polaris Project calculates that when the U.S. Craigslist Adult Services section was available, it hosted 10,000-16,000 adult services postings per day, which comprised approximately 40% of the total online sex ads in the United States (2011). Since Craigslist removed its Adult Services section in September 2010, it appears that many online sex ads have moved to other websites such as Backpage.com.

18 According to law enforcement throughout the United States, online sex ads and forums constitute the number one platform for buying and selling sex with minors and young women, but individuals advertised online for commercial sex “are often made to appear that they are working independently, when in fact they are victims of sex trafficking more often than is recognized or understood” (Polaris Project 2011). An FBI investigation of Craigslist found that more than 2,800 ads of prostituted children were posted in 2008 alone (Polaris Project 2011). In an open letter to Craigslist, trafficking survivor “MC” describes her experience being pimped on Craigslist:

*I was first forced into prostitution when I was 11 years old by a 28-year-old man. I am not an exception. The man who trafficked me sold so many girls my age, his house was called “Daddy Day Care.” All day, other girls and I sat with our laptops, posting pictures and answering ads on Craigslist. He made \$1,500 a night selling my body, dragging me to Los Angeles, Houston, Little Rock — and one trip to Las Vegas in the trunk of a car. I am 17 now, and my childhood memories aren’t of my family, going to middle school, or dancing at the prom. They are of making my own arrangements on Craigslist to be sold for sex, and answering as many ads as possible for fear of beatings and ice water baths. (Cited in Polaris Project 2011)*

## | Purpose of the USA Sex Guide |

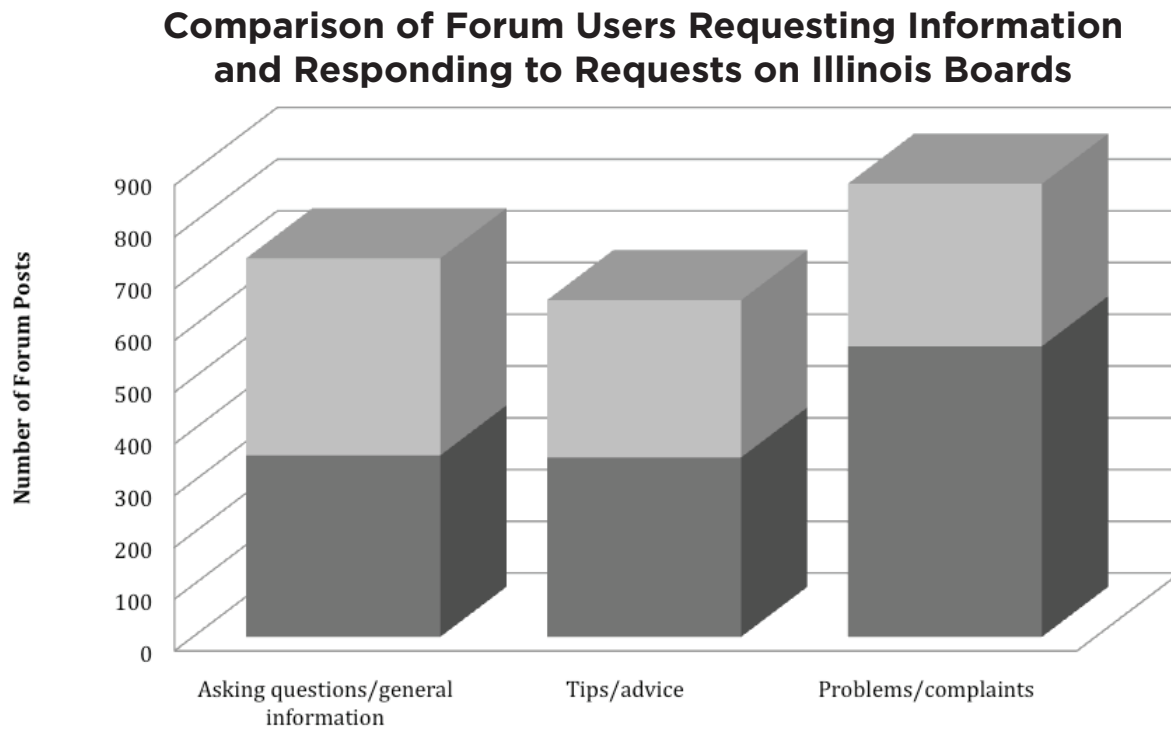
Johns' boards operate within this milieu, helping men to navigate the vast array of sex ads and sex services available online and offline. In its FAQ section, the *raison d'être* of the USA Sex Guide is described thus: "The purpose of this Forum is to facilitate the exchange of information between men who are looking for sex with women." The founder of the USA Sex Guide writes that "this website is all about assisting people in obtaining commercial sex services," and other users describe the forum using terms such as "this here hooker board." Only heterosexual content is allowed in the posting. One user who posts on a Lombard, Illinois forum explains that he is on the forum "trying to share experiences and have fun while doing it."

As a brotherhood of men who buy sex, the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide evoke images of a camp, a training ground with sets of rules that are actively taught and reinforced, and an "old boys' club," as one john puts it. This "club" inculcates men throughout Illinois in the etiquette and social organization of the commercial sex industry in their communities (Sanders 2008, 73). The website helps men share various types of information with one another, including:

- Identifying, describing, and rating sexual services & locations
- Identifying, describing, and rating women in prostitution (by race, age, appearance, attitude, etc.)
- Describing and rating costs of commercial sex services
- Managing detection (by law enforcement, significant others, and/or the wider community)

In this information-sharing community, men on the Illinois boards of the USA Sex Guide communicate with one another about these topics by requesting advice, asking questions, discussing problems and complaints, and responding to posts by other users and giving recommendations. Figure 3 indicates the number of posts in the analyzed three-month period that request/give information and advice, as well as address problems and complaints of johns.

**Figure 3** Information Exchange on Illinois Forums of USA Sex Guide



20

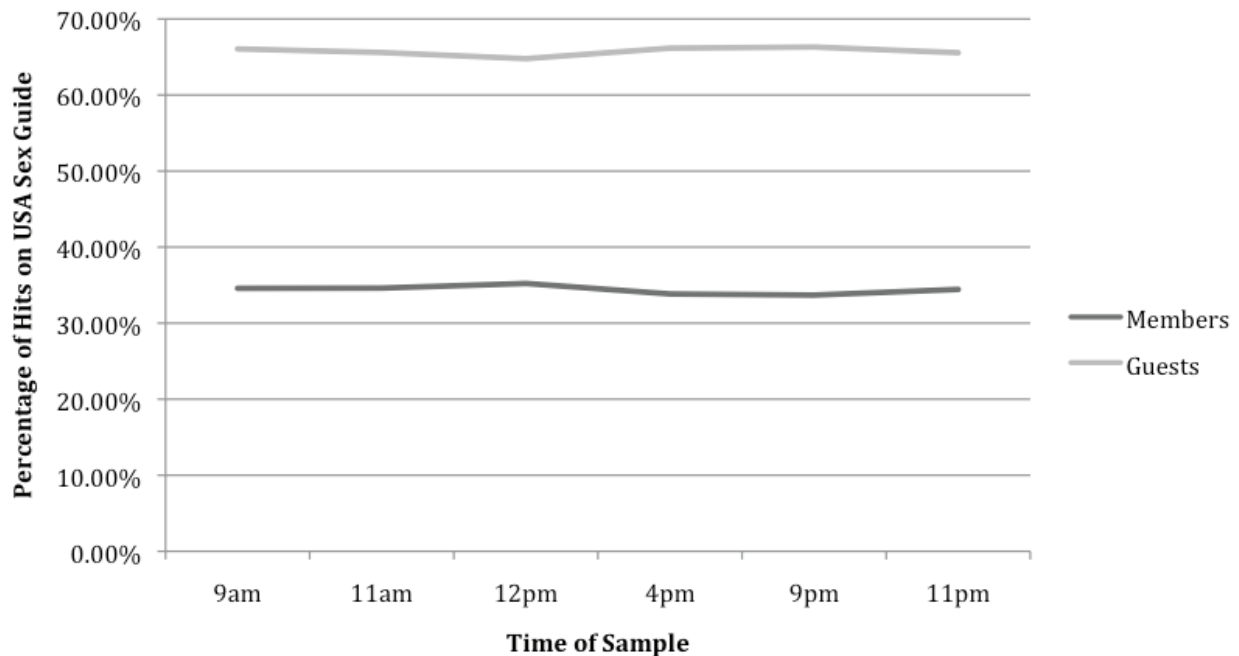
- Responding to others by asking questions/giving general information, giving tips and advice, addressing problems (including regarding other forum members)
  
- Requesting advice/asking questions, requesting tips/advice, and problems/complaints

## | Expansiveness & Popularity of the USA Sex Guide |

The information on the Illinois boards of the USA Sex Guide appears far-reaching, due in part to it being a free site. One must become a member in order to actively post on the USA Sex Guide, but anyone can enter the website and read the posts. At any given moment, non-members of the forum outnumber members in terms of who is viewing the content. From October 3-15, 2011, our research team recorded the total number of people on the USA Sex Guide, as well as the division between forum members online compared with guests online (people who have not created a username/account on the USA Sex Guide) at regular intervals three times a day. In all 32 instances in which we recorded the ratio of forum members online to guests online<sup>3</sup> on the USA Sex Guide, the guests far outnumbered the forum members (see Figure 4). In our sample, forum members composed an average of 34.4% of people on the USA Sex Guide, whereas guests made up an average of 65.7% of the users.

Figure 4

### Forum Members vs. Guests Online at USA Sex Guide



21

<sup>3</sup> As reported on the home page of the USA Sex Guide. At any given moment, one can check how many forum members and guests are also on the website.

As an indication of its popularity, the USA Sex Guide boasts to potential advertisers the following statistics:

- 200,000+ Registered Forum Members.
- 60,0003 Unique Visitors<sup>4</sup> per day.
- 230,0003 daily page loads.
- Average time on site is an impressive 19 minutes (“Banner advertising FAQ” 2011, citing statistics from [www.statcounter.com](http://www.statcounter.com))

The statistics boasted by USA Sex Guide may or may not be accurate. Other website trackers state that on any given day, the USA Sex Guide has an average of anywhere from 2,276 to 4,410 unique visitors (“About [usasexguide.info](http://usasexguide.info)” 2011 and “[Usasexguide.Info](http://Usasexguide.Info)” 2011). Since registering its current domain in 2003, the USA Sex Guide has grown to an estimated worth of up to \$71,497, through advertisements (“About [usasexguide.info](http://usasexguide.info)” 2011). According to one website traffic engine, Alexa, the USA Sex Guide is ranked 26,549 of all websites on the Internet and 4,803 within the United States (“Statistics summary” 2011). Ninety-one percent of unique visits to the USA Sex Guide are from within the United States.<sup>5</sup> The Chicago forums of the USA Sex Guide receive approximately 7,100 unique visitors per month, and the website is the 1,951<sup>st</sup> most popular website among Chicagoans. In Rockford, the USA Sex Guide forums are popular; the USA Sex Guide is more popular in Rockford, Illinois than in any other city in the U. S., including Los Angeles, Chicago, Honolulu, Detroit, and other major cities; the USA Sex Guide ranks #217 in the popularity of all websites among residents of Rockford (“[Usasexguide.Info](http://Usasexguide.Info)” 2011).

22

Often, johns on the Illinois forums are geographically mobile; the Internet provides men with information about how and where to buy sex not just in their own communities, but throughout the country and, indeed, throughout the world. Men who buy sex build information-sharing networks across state borders on the USA Sex Guide. For example, a user visiting Chicago from Tennessee writes:

*I'm vising this fine part of Chicago soon and wanted to say thanks for the useful info on here. Some of the locations are a little hard to figure out, but I already have at least 3 places I plan on trying out. I may have to PM [Private Message] to figure out where your 2nd visit was. Sounds like heaven. Thanks and be safe all!*

4 “Unique visitor” is a term used to denote how visitors to a website are only counted once, even if they return multiple times to a website, because they are identified and counted according to their unique IP address.

5 Alexa rankings are calculated using a combination of average daily visitors to [usasexguide.info](http://usasexguide.info) and page views on [usasexguide.info](http://usasexguide.info) over the past three months. The site with the highest combination of visitors and page views is ranked #1. The rankings for the United States uses the same ranking system, but with respect to users from the United States over the past three months (“Statistics summary” 2011).

In a later post titled, “Thanks!” the same visiting john explains that he would be willing to reciprocate information about the sex industry in Tennessee for johns visiting from Illinois:

*You guys have been very hospitable about letting me know where a few key AMPs [Asian Massage Parlors] are located. It will make my first visit to the suburbs of the windy city a memorable one!! If I can return the favor for anyone traveling to Tennessee just PM me.*

Men who buy sex report using the information on the Illinois boards of the USA Sex Guide to purchase sex in a variety of communities and venues. On one day, a user posting on the Washington Park forums reports going to an AMP [Asian Massage Parlor], street strolls [“tracks” where johns look for “streetwalkers”], and a strip club in Washington Park, buying unprotected sex with two women—one at the AMP and one at a strip club. Other men on the Illinois forums report that they do not mind crossing state borders or leaving their communities to buy sex. One user writes, “I have ran across the boarder [sic] and found a nice place to visit. It is only about 15-20 minutes from Waukegan! I have been there twice and planning on a return trip.” A fellow monger responds, “Planning on sharing your ‘gem’ across the line?”

On the USA Sex Guide Illinois forums, men share information with one another not only about sex available in Illinois and across state borders, but also about sex they buy in other countries. After one john complains on the Chicago Escort Reports forum that he “can’t find” a woman from India to buy sex with, another user advises him to “take a flight to Canada,” where “[t]hey have both Indian Escorts and IMPs [Indian Massage Parlors]. Once you’re there, I’ve heard that prices are lower and quality is higher than here.” Other users in Illinois occasionally report back on their experiences buying sex while traveling abroad on business or as tourists. A user describes his reported experiences buying sex in China to other men on the Chicago Massage Parlor Reports forum:

*I was once in western China, a small city with a lot of tourists, both Chinese and foreign. I picked a random direction and just started walking, past apartments, stores, restaurants, and row after row of nail salons. As I walked past one, I looked over and saw the most adorable spinner sitting on a stool right out front....She beckoned me over, and as I approached her magnificent visage, she looked up at me, made an okay sign with one hand and slid the index finger of her other in and out. Then she held up two fingers, indicating 200 Yuan, which is about \$30. I had a good night.*

The user’s post sparks a discussion about the availability of commercial sex between different countries, and another user responds, “I traveled to Beijing and Shanghai last year. Buying pu\$\$y is illegal but it is just as easy to buy as a loaf of bread. No need to look for some...it will find you.”

## | Forum Rules & Rituals |

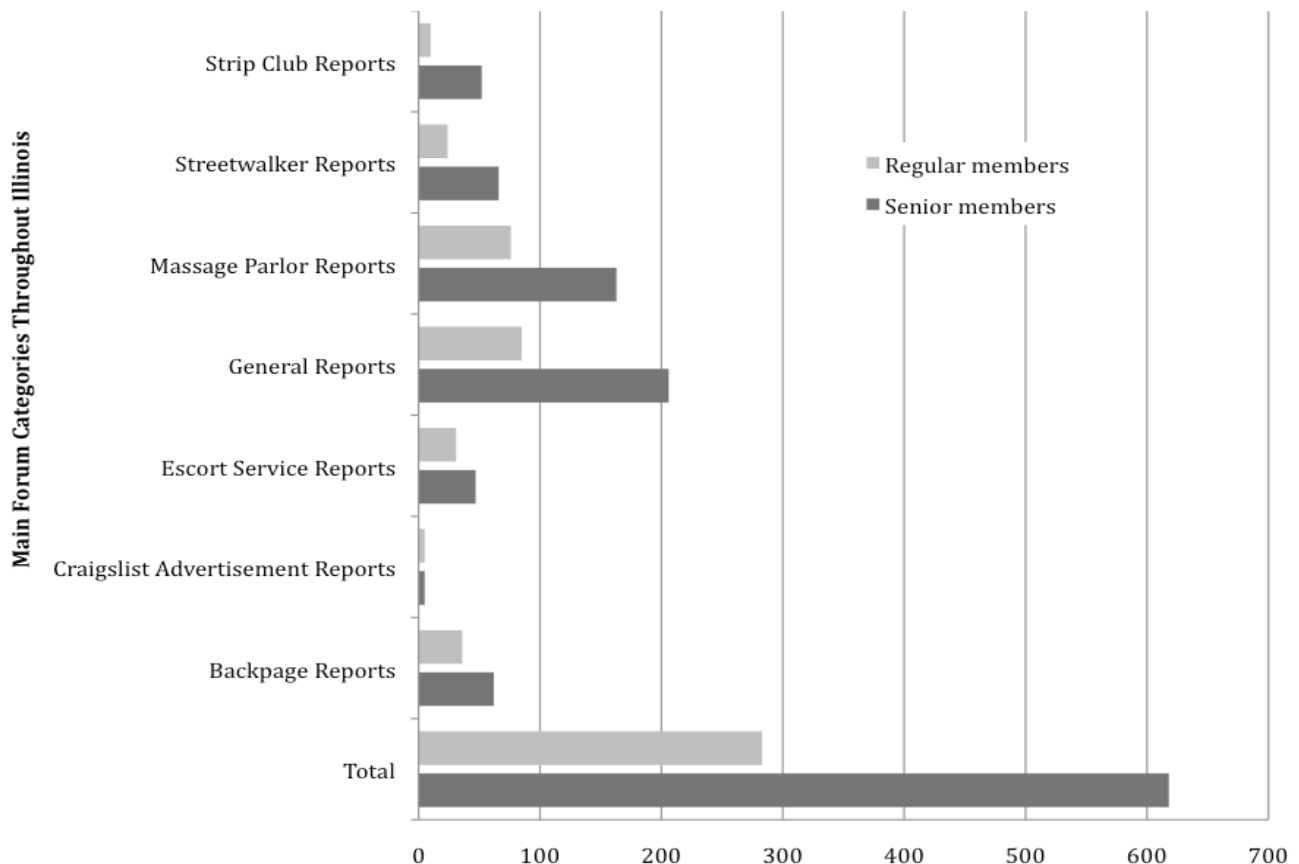
Whether johns on these forums are writing about buying sex in Waukegan, Illinois, or sex in China, their posts generally adhere to a set of what we will term “forum rules and rituals.” These rules and rituals reinforce that the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide are a community in which the members share common values and communicate with one another using a shared language.

## | Seniors versus Regular Members |

The members of the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide are divided generally by their “senior” or “regular” member status. According to the “Senior Membership Criteria” page of the USA Sex Guide, members are upgraded to senior status when they have been members for at least six months and have contributed at least 25 posts to the forums. These men confirm their identities as “mongers,” and the posts on the forums posit heterosexuality and buying sex as central to these men’s performance of masculinity. They do so in the context of power dynamics that operate between “novices” and experienced, or senior, mongers. Figure 5 compares the number of posts made by regular vs. senior forum members on the various forums of the USA Sex Guide in Illinois.

Figure 5

### Posts by Senior vs. Regular Forum Members





In addition to their posts about buying sex in Illinois, men on the USA Sex Guide articulate and enforce codes of masculine behavior among one another on the forums by encouraging and applauding certain types of behavior on the forum while discouraging and disparaging other behaviors. As Pascoe (2007) points out, “There are a variety of masculinities, which makes sense only in hierarchical and contested relations with one another...[M]en enact and embody different configurations of masculinity depending on their positions within a social hierarchy of power” (7). Masculinity, in this sense, is both a process and a field through which power is articulated on the Illinois johns’ boards (Pascoe 2007, 13).

By using the USA Sex Guide, novices to buying sex, long-term mongers who have been inactive, and visitors from out of town can instantly uncover the “best” places to buy commercial sex in communities throughout Illinois. One john who says he has been inactive for six years proclaims that he is “free to monger again” and is “curious about what changes have taken place.” He asks fellow forum members for information on the best escort and Asian in-call services in Mt. Prospect, Illinois, as well as for the best online sites for finding sex ads. Another user responds two days later with recommendations of locations, websites, prices, and details on sexual services, and adds, “Good luck out there!” A visitor to Waukegan and Gurnee, Illinois asks men on the local forum, “Would anyone be kind enough to let me know the ‘usual places’ I need to look for WSW [white streetwalkers] in Libertyville/Gurnee or Waukegan?” In a response titled, “Libertyville action,” an experienced local monger advises the visitor, “If you like older women, you can try [local sex venue] on Friday and Saturday nights.”

This and other types of information available on the online forums help allay fears that johns will get “the short end of the stick,” as one self-proclaimed newbie in Mt. Prospect, Illinois puts it, and this gives johns a sense of control over others in the commercial sex industry. Getting “the short end of the stick” sometimes refers to feeling taken advantage of by prostituted women or by pimps, paying for a sexually unsatisfactory experience, or unknowingly walking into a police trap. Whereas in the past men who bought sex learned about the perceived strategies for and dangers of buying commercial sex through trial and error, johns today can learn from the successes and failures of other men.

Three lists of rules and recommendations written by johns about sex sold on the street were so popular and widely shared amongst forum members that the founder of USA Sex Guide posted links to them on the home page of the USA Sex Guide (see complete rules in Appendix). These habitually referenced lists, titled, “22 Rules for Street Mongering,” “19 Rules for Street Walkers,” and “Streetwalker Rules,” provide men with tips on “avoiding scams,” “hunting hours,” and “avoiding LE [Law Enforcement] stings.” The list of rules for street walkers warns women that “[i]f u rip me off, I will make it my life’s work to find you and run you over. Lest you forget, you are a street WALKER, I am a street DRIVER.” It also advises women that they should “at the very least act interested,” because the men are paying them, and that if the women provide “lack luster service, [they] will be compensated accordingly.” According to many men who post on the forum about buying sex, access to this type of information on johns’ boards makes the boards a critical resource in helping them feel empowered.

Senior members, or “pros,” on the forum often take on a mentoring role to regular members, or “apprentices,” training them in the rules of the forum and in how to succeed in their “hobby,” or “sport.” One self-proclaimed novice posting on the Rockford forum thanks the “regulars” in the forum for their assistance and states, “[T]his site is a fantastic resource for

those new to the hobby.” Another user posting on a Lombard, Illinois forum acknowledges the importance of the USA Sex Guide forums in his efforts to buy sex. He explains:

*What I've learned, not even asking any questions, has saved me years of trial and error. Newbies, read read read and then go someplace and put what you've learned to use. If someone asks about that place, chime in. If you want to try a place that nobody's talked about, ask but respect the level of info provided and read between the lines. If that's not good enough, stick to the sure things. If you don't know where the sure things are by now, go back and read some more.*

This user's comment echoes a catch-phrase used frequently on the forum to reprimand users who are viewed as asking obvious questions: “RTFF,” or “Read the Fucking Forum.” Similar comments are used to enforce the expectation that in order to get information from other users on the forum, one must be active on the forum and share information with the other members. In an explanation for “newbies” on how to get their “feet (and something else) wet” in the sex industry, one senior member writes:

*I've been in this hobby since 1992, and it's been a great ride. Some of the most rewarding moments were completely unguided by other members of this forum. So go to [the fake massage establishment I recommended in Lombard], send me a PM [Private Message] to tell me (in detail) about your experience, thank me for the recommendation, and see what happens. This is how our community works.*

The concept of “TOFTT,” or “Take One For the Team,” is central to the ethos that permeates the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide. Buying sex is viewed often as a collective effort or a group hunt. Members are expected to “earn [their] wings” on the forum by sharing information with other members. One member posting on the Massage Parlor Reports forum for Chicago goes as far as to state that “Taking One For the Fucking Team” (toftft) is a “rite of passage” for johns on the USA Sex Guide:

*If a person wants to know about which girl you see...then as a rite of passage they need to toftft! Then the seniors can validate their experience and give them a pass! ...I got like no info from this place when I first started. But I remained resilient [sic]. And earned the respect of several people. I toftft often Now I know the spots. If you don't have the time or resources to be mongering, then this aint [sic] the hobby for you! Try picking up bitches on dating sites.*

Another user criticizes a novice who has only one report and has requested “digits” (phone numbers) for prostituted women in Rockford. He admonishes the user, “You need to make some posts and give regulars some digits. You will then get some numbers.” The power dynamics between regular and senior members on the forums sometimes create tensions between users. Novice members on the Illinois forums sometimes complain that “if you are ‘new noone [sic] wants to give you any information,” as one user posting in Waukegan/Gurnee stated. He states that if ‘new’ and ‘old’ members don’t work together then nothing will ever change.” Regarding arguments on the Chicago boards between “pros” and “apprentices,” one user attempts to restore peace among users by emphasizing their shared values as aficionados of the “sport” of buying sex:

*For everyone—PLEASE use your head here. These boards are intended for us to share information. This isn't a contest, just a place where we can share our experience for some good, clean, safe, dirty fun. I have had shared messages with both pros and apprentices, and most of you are really great people. Let's agree to be respectful of each other as we enjoy this incredibly expensive and risky sport together.*

### **| Establishing Credibility |**

Members are rewarded for their activity on the forum with credibility; in other words, the more posts a member has, the more other users on the forum tend to value his opinions. Because people can theoretically write almost anything they want on the forum, most users are continually on guard for “BS” (i.e., false information), and so earning credibility is an important aspect of participating in the USA Sex Guide community. Sometimes users get into “pissing matches” with one another, as one member puts it, over the degrees to which users’ differing post counts grant them varying degrees of believability among other users. Trust and respect are sometimes mentioned in correlation with the credibility various members build on the forum. On a Chicago board, one user proclaims, “I am officially calling BS on [a fellow user’s] review of this place [a fake massage business]. I don’t know what he got in exchange for pumping the place up, but I do know what he’s lost. My trust and respect.” Another user, however, dismisses the importance of respect, telling the first user, “You should never trust or respect anyone here! Seriously, don’t trust or respect anyone here [on USA Sex Guide].”

The number of posts made by individual members of the USA Sex Guide forums in Illinois is important to their credibility on the forums, but so is how the men present the information to other users in their posts. Many users expect detailed descriptions of women, prices, services, and events, and men on the website appear to continually negotiate the question of how much information should be revealed in the public posts, versus private messages, on the forums.

Men who do not follow the established format of objectifying and rating women’s bodies and appearance and providing other details are often met with criticism by fellow users. A user who gives a perfunctory report of his experiences seeking or buying sex might be met with comments such as:

*WTF kind of report is that?! How are we supposed to figure out who you're talking about? Was she white? Black? Latina? What color was her hair? How tall was she? What was she wearing?...If you want answers, you must provide more info than that. I expect better from a senior.*

In this case, the offending user responded promptly with an apology that included many details, including, “She was a BSW [black streetwalker] on [an El stop]. She had long straight typical black hair and had the humongous boobs....” Another user nudged a fellow monger to provide more details, saying, “You didn’t say where you headed East from, nor what time of day your dream happened! Would you like to share?” Posts that typically go uncriticized or are deemed “helpful” on the forums often include details that describe and evaluate prostituted women, sex acts, and sex venues. Here is an example of such a post:

*Had my first weekend off from work in a while and decided to go to [local fake massage business] again. Was intending to see C\*\*\* after reading so much about her, but E\*\* ended up answering the door after I rang so I stuck with her. Unlike last time which felt somewhat rushed it was very relaxed and E\*\* took her time with everything, especially with the BBBJ [Bareback Blowjob; unprotected oral sex] in 69 which was great. After a couple positions ended up in missionary and couldn't hold it in any longer. Afterwards E\*\* tried giving me a HJ [Hand Job] but I was too spent at that point. Next time I'm in the area and she's still there, I'm going with E\*\* again.*

Though johns generally encourage one another to share details about their experiences buying sex, many are wary of posting information that might compromise themselves or others in the commercial sex industry, with respect to law enforcement. One user posting on a Lombard, Illinois forum advises fellow mongers on how to strike a balance between public posts and private messages on the USA Sex Guide:

*You will find that besides the good reports written here, that a lot goes on through PM. This will happen if you start writing good reports and become a respected member of the board. Someone will follow one of your tips, have a good experience and PM you a tip from their experiences. From there you will build a good and trusted relationship with several fellow members. Because of the nature of our hobby and the legality of it, members are leery of giving away too much info sometimes. Learn from what is on the board, write your experiences and become a trusted member. ....Follow the recommendation and let us know how it went.*

28

Some users become angry by the naiveté they perceive in other users who publicly post information that many think should be kept private. On the Massage Parlor Reports board for Waukegan/Gurnee, Illinois, one user vents, “Non seniors like [fellow user] need to STFU [Shut the Fuck Up] and not ruin a good thing. Some things are best left unspoken about.” Users who are criticized for sharing too much information sometimes attempt to justify how they decided which information to share publicly. One user expresses frustration with the simultaneous expectation that users should post new information to fellow users to avoid criticism, but they must not post too much information:

*You just can't win on this site sometimes. I get your point about keeping some things quiet. I appreciate that, which is why my post was very vague. That being said, if I only post comments about the places we all know when you get blasted for not posting anything we don't already know. I tried to express my thoughts with out giving names or locations.*

In addition to being generally wary of posting information that may be useful to law enforcement, users on the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide use the website to inform one another about a variety of issues related to law enforcement and prostitution prevention efforts, which will be discussed in more detail later in this report.

## | Anonymity & Reviews |

The founder of USA Sex Guide has made it clear that, while posting information about law enforcement stings was acceptable, reprinting the names of men arrested in prostitution stings was unacceptable, as it violated the principle of protecting fellow men who buy sex. To a user who copied an article in his post about five men arrested in a prostitution sting in Downers Grove, Illinois, the founder edited the report to remove the names of those arrested and made a note explaining, "I want to say this carefully so no one gets the wrong idea here, but if you think about it, posting the names of people who have been arrested is...just helping the police in their efforts to embarrass these people...we don't want to add to the problems of the unfortunate people who have been arrested by publishing their names and/or photographs." The user who had copied the news report immediately apologized and said, "you are absolutely correct. I will be more careful in the future."

As a brotherhood of men who help each other buy sex, johns on the USA Sex Guide protect one another's identities. When it comes to prostituted women, however, users share information about them relatively freely, despite some johns' reports of prostituted women asking johns not to post about them online. A senior member posting on the Chicago Massage Parlor Reports forum in June 2010 writes:

*There is significant resentment in the provider community regarding our little coffee [sic] clutch [i.e., USA Sex Guide]. They are not happy that what they believe is their business [is] being discussed so openly online. I have noticed an uptick in complaints from providers on this subject over the last three months.*

29

Another user counters, "Sure they complain. This forum puts them on the spot. It's not just their business being discussed so openly online. It's our business too." Another john describes being with an AMP (Asian Massage Parlor) girl whom he had never met before. Her screening questions for him, he states, were: "Have you been here before? Who did you see? Do you go on the internet? Do you write reports?" According to this john, the "girl" went on to tell him that "reviews are very bad because the police read them." He goes on to say, "If she's right or wrong it doesn't matter. It's the perception that her and other providers [women in prostitution] share." Another user counters that johns should just never discuss the USA Sex Guide with "ANY provider," and a different user believes that it "depends on the provider," because some "providers" have asked him to post reviews, especially if he "enjoyed their service." Men on the Illinois boards of the USA Sex Guide appear generally to respect the wishes of fellow users, but they do not necessarily respect the reported wishes of women with whom they pay to have sex. In fact, one user actively goes against the explicit "pleading" for anonymity made by prostituted women in his report. He writes:

*My first report. It all happened in a dream last night and man it was a good one! I should preface it by saying that in my dream both providers asked me not to post anything online. I never mentioned that I checked providers online, so they must be hearing it more and more. Anyway, against their pleading here are my reports... [the location in Lombard is obvious in the post, and user identifies the two women by age and physical description].*

## | Semantics & Coding |

As is evident in the quotation above, users on the forum sometimes couch their descriptions of buying sex in the language of “dreams,” which constitutes part of the unique jargon shared by users on the USA Sex Guide. Another user writes about “dreaming about a trip” in which he bought FS [Full Sex] with a Latina for “.5” (\$50). He then reports seeing an “attractive BSW [Black Streetwalker] sitting on park bench” but “was spent so didn’t follow up.” In a post titled, “Waukegan Dream,” a different user writes:

*So I'm heading west on Grand when my mind starts dreaming. I dreamt I saw a young latina at Jackson ... I dreamt she offered a BBBJ [Bareback Blowjob; unprotected oral sex] when all of a sudden my dream went south. It was the worst BJ I have ever had. I tried to wake up, but my dream held me captice [sic]. ...I nudded on her face which wasn't much consolation. I dropped her off and woke up. Damn when am I going to have a good dream again?*

30 Framing men’s stories of buying sex in the language of dreams is sometimes explained as a “style” choice, or an attempt to somehow protect johns from law enforcement officers who may read the website, but some johns are not convinced of the utility of using dreaming language on the forum. To the contrary, some seem to find it distracting and annoying. In a post titled, “Wake up,” a senior member asks another user, “Whats [sic] with all the fucking dreaming? Sounds like that 3rd party shit from the 80’s with ‘Bo knows’.” Other users agree with the criticism, adding comments such as, “Couldn’t agree more” and “[the senior member] hits a home run.”

Information sharing on the Illinois boards of the USA Sex Guide is done through this sort of special coding, which reinforces the feeling that the USA Sex Guide is a brotherhood of men who share a common language, common values, and a common understanding of both the etiquette for buying sex and the etiquette for communicating with other men about buying sex.

Prices are rarely reported overtly on the USA Sex Guide in Illinois, but rather are coded using dollar signs, decimal points, or even terms like “50 rainbow and 100 flowers” and “20 rocks.” Generally, one dollar sign denotes \$100, and decimal points are decoded by moving the decimal to the right two places. Thus, “.5” = \$50, “\$\$” = \$200, and “\$.2” = \$120. However, this language is not always universally understood by users on the Illinois forums, and frequently discussions occur to clarify the price coding system used amongst men who buy sex.



Johns describe women, sex acts, and prices to one another in a kind of shorthand comprised mainly of broadly understood acronyms. The main page of the USA Sex Guide offers users a link to a glossary of terms used on the website. Below are some of the terms used most commonly on the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide:

- **AMP** – Asian Massage Parlor (Johns frequently use the term “massage parlor” to describe fake massage establishments, i.e., brothels and trafficking operations posing as massage businesses.)
- **AR** – Anal Rimming
- **Bareback** – Without condom
- **BBBJ** – Bare Back Blow Job (oral sex without condom)
- **BBBJTC** – Bare Back Blow Job to Completion (unprotected oral sex to orgasm)
- **BBBJCIM** – Bare Back Blow Job Come in Mouth (unprotected oral sex with swallowing)
- **BJ** – Blow Job (oral sex on a man)
- **BSW** – Black Street Walker
- **CBJ** – Covered Blow Job (oral sex with a condom)
- **Clockwatcher** – A term for a provider [woman in prostitution] who counts the minutes until the session is over
- **COF** – Cum on Face
- **Cruising** – Looking for prostitutes while driving
- **DATY** – Dining at the Y (performing oral sex on a woman)
- **DFK** – Deep French Kissing
- **EMP** – European Massage Parlor
- **FS** – Full Service (complete sex)
- **GFE** – Girl Friend Experience
- **Half and Half, 1/2 and 1/2** - Oral sex followed by intercourse
- **HE** – Happy Ending (Hand Job)
- **Hobbyist** – A man who patronizes prostitutes
- **HR** – Hand Release (a hand job)
- **HSW** – Hispanic Street Walker
- **Incall** – A man meets a woman/girl at her location
- **John** – A man who patronizes prostitutes
- **L/A/S - Looks/Attitude/Service** - A subjective ranking system. Each criteria separately ranked, from lowest (1) to highest (10). Examples: 2/9/8 = Unattractive, but very friendly and good sex. 10/5/4 = Model material, but a poor attitude, and mediocre sex.
- **LE** – Law Enforcement
- **LEO** – Law Enforcement Officer
- **Mamasan** – Female manager of a brothel using massage therapy as a front [can be a trafficker]
- **Monger** – Short for “whore monger” – one who buys sex

- **MP** – Massage Parlor
- **Newbie** – A novice hobbyist or novice provider
- **Outcall** – The woman/girl comes to the man’s place
- **Papasan** – Male manager of a brothel using massage therapy as a front [can be a trafficker]
- **PM** – Private Message sent via the Forum’s Private Message service
- **Provider** – Prostituted woman
- **R & T** – Rub and Tug (a massage followed by a hand job)
- **ROB** – Rip-Off Bitch
- **RTFF** – Read the Fucking Forum
- **Sex Worker** – Catch-all phrase for women working in the commercial sex industry
- **SO** – Significant Other
- **Spinner** – Very petite, thin girl
- **Sting** – A female police officer poses as a prostitute to apprehend unsuspecting johns, or a male police officer poses as a john to apprehend unsuspecting prostituted women.
- **Stroll** – Path frequented by “street walkers”
- **SW** – Street Walker, or Sex Worker
- **TGTBT** – Too Good To Be True
- **TOFTT** – Take One For the Team – in reference to a new, non-reviewed woman
- **WSW** – White Street Walker
- **WTF** – What the Fuck?
- **YMMV** – Your Mileage May Vary (you could get different results)



Finally, many of the user names constructed by men on the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide reinforce their construction of a “monger” identity. Names selected by users are wide-ranging, but many denote the sexual objectification and penetration of women, men’s attachment/dedication to buying sex as an adventurous “hobby” or animalistic “hunt,” and a possible desire to describe oneself as sexually powerful. For legal reasons their exact user names will not be printed here, but below is a list of user names similar to many of those used by men on the Illinois USA Sex Guide boards or are original names that have been altered slightly:

- Monger4Ever
- MongerAbc
- ChitownMonger
- Lurker24
- HobbyHoes
- Find the Ho
- Pussy Stuffer
- Punani Prowler
- PussyProdder
- Pussy Sniffer
- Pussy Hunter435
- Insatiable
- Travelnbang
- FucknRoll
- Pounder 47
- High Rize
- Cumsquirter
- Dr Black Dick
- DaddyWantsIt
- Eliteplaya
- Southside Pounder
- Redhawk77
- ChiNightOwl
- Panther54
- Loadedman4
- Richguy6
- TheBoss
- Chicago Perv
- CapnPerv
- Sinner
- NotURbiz
- Average Joe
- Johndoe47
- Needtoknow92
- XXXrules
- Bondman007
- BillClinton
- SylStallone
- StevieMcQueen

# Findings

## RESEARCH QUESTION 1: Johns' Postings & Their Justifications for Buying Sex

Overt and underlying assumptions often inform men's participation in the commercial sex industry. While men express diverse attitudes on the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide, for the most part they reflect the gender inequality that permeates and perpetuates prostitution. In this section, we explore four dimensions of the attitudes reflected in men's entries on the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide. First, we discuss ways in which the entries reflect an ethos of male entitlement that many men who buy sex use to rationalize their behavior. Second, a pattern emerged that many men share a common fantasy of an ideal experience in which prostituted women provide an illusion of intimacy and authenticity in their sexual encounters. Third, it became apparent that when cracks surface in this fantasy, men on these forums often respond by asserting their right to dominate and control prostituted women. Finally, we look at men's awareness of harm to women in the commercial sex industry.

### 1. Male Entitlement

Many men who post on the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide use the idea of a supposedly insatiable male sex drive as a justification for their entitlement to buy sex. They celebrate sexual encounters with prostituted women who “kno[w] how to make a man feel like a man” and often attribute poor decision-making while buying sex to having let their “little head” (i.e., their penis) do the thinking. Examples of such attitudes include:

34

*“In retrospect I should have waited but I was pressed for time and thinking with the little brain.”*

-User on Lombard General Reports forum

*“I started to let my little head do the thinking for me because this girl was very hot...”*

-User on Rockford General Reports forum

*“Remember to use the big head, gentlemen, or you may be repurchasing your vehicle”*

-User on Rockford General Reports

*[About a “girl” advertised on backpage.com] “Looks too good to be true, but damn the little head likes her.”*

-User on Chicago BackPage Review forum

Malarek (2009) points out that these types of attitudes, endorsed by mainstream society, contain a basic underlying assumption that “men who buy sex are just doing what men do” (13). Whereas the dominant image of women in prostitution is that of a “vile temptress” or drug-addicted woman upon whom societies heap blame, men are often dismissed and invisible: “a one-dimensional, usually anonymous, somewhat comical character ruled by the direction of his erection...in lighter contexts, a sort of mindless buffoon who thinks with his other head when his loins begin to stir” (Malarek 2009, 13).

Many men on the USA Sex Guide in Illinois express their entitlement to objectify all women as they objectify women in prostitution; such attitudes seem to indicate that the way men treat prostituted women may bleed into men’s daily treatment of women outside of prostitution. Men on the streetwalker forums in Illinois often assume that women walking on the street (and dressed a certain way) must be involved in the commercial sex industry, and many express confusion or frustration when they discover that a woman they had assumed was “working” actually was not. In daily reports about activity on various strolls (areas where street prostitution occurs), men on these forums often describe slowing down to “check out” women they see on the street, to ascertain whether they might be able to buy sex from them. A typical such report looks somewhat like the following post:

*About a month ago 6/10(ish)/2010 while on the way home I was traveling north on Jackson Street near 14 th Street at about 4:45p. As I like to do when seeing a cutie walking, I slowed down and looked. This young lady stopped walking south and turned to wave at me. It was a shame I had to be someplace else for she sure peaked [sic] my interest.*

*I'd say she was 18 to 20 yrs old  
5'5" to 5'8"  
110lbs  
black  
Nice tight fitting top with a short skirt.*

35

Another user who claims to frequent Asian brothels using massage as fronts describes being thrown out of a Chinese restaurant in Rockford after talking to the Chinese hostess the way he speaks to women in the brothels. He writes:

*This weekend I went to the China Buffet for dinner. A really hot chinese [sic] girl greeted me and showed me to my seat. I lost control when she asked what I wanted. I told her an hour massage with table shower. They threw me out.*

On a related note, several johns on the Illinois johns’ boards express opinions that equate all women with prostituted women, in terms of what men must do to get sex from all women. Some men on the forums express frustrations with conventional dating relationships and explain that they would rather spend \$150 to have sex with an escort than spend a similar amount of money on a date that would not necessarily end in sex. As one john puts it, he would rather “rent pussy” when needed than take “a long term lease”:

*Personally its not just [location for swinger events and gang bangs] that has ruined regular dating for me but also massage parlors and the occasional escort in addition to one or two girls every now and then off personals sites. For around the same cash outlay you are guaranteed a little happy time and you don't have*

*to put up with the normal female BS once its over. It's kinda hard not to get spoiled that way. In my opinion renting pussy when needed is much smarter than taking a long term lease.*

Other men on the forums echo similar sentiments. One user asks other men on a Melrose Park forum if they have noticed that that being able to buy sex “at a moment’s notice” has affected their “vanilla” life. He explains further:

*After having been with [prostituted women] my inclination to try match.com is way down. The traditional part of my upbringing [sic] says to date and meet a nice girl etc., but after some great times at 15th I’m much less inclined to drop \$100+ on a first date where you just get the good night kiss. I sort of feel sorry for ‘regular’ women who want a traditional courtship.*

These types of comments, made by men on USA Sex Guide boards in Illinois, match up with those of men on other johns’ boards. In his research on johns, Victor Malarek (2009) explains that the modern costs of courtship are high, whereas the payoff (sex) is “uncertain, leaving many [men] pining for more cost-effective erections” (51). Their answer, according to Malarek, is to stay single by choice and to “pay for play rather than pay for a date” (52). He found that many men who buy sex spoke of wanting to eliminate the “drama” and “emotional baggage” of relationships, and paying for sex was viewed as “faster, more certain, and more efficient than dating” (53).

36

While some johns on the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide appear to prefer paying for sex to dating, others have girlfriends, wives, and families, but choose also to buy sex. Such men sometimes indicate a desire to “keep [their] hobby and family life separate.” Many men who post on the forum appear to go in and out of buying sex, depending on their relationship situation. Some describe being free to purchase more sex when the “wifey...[goes] out of town often.” One user posts that he is excited to visit sex venues that he hasn’t been out at “for years,” because “[t]he warden [his significant other] is going out of town for a week.” Another user writes on the Chicago Massage Parlor Reports forum that he is “looking forward to hitting” his first fake massage business in “nearly a year,” because he has just broken up with his girlfriend. He adds that he wants to “try something different,” such as “European or Polish chicks.” A man who reports staying in a hotel in Lombard while he separates from his wife boasts that he has “a lot of freedom [to buy sex] right about now.”

### **| Women’s Objectification as Market Commodities, Merchandise, and Goods |**

Most posts on the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide objectify and commodify women to some degree, and most men on the forum express attitudes that justify prostitution as a legitimate market of women available for men. The vocabulary men choose to describe buying sex helps rationalize prostitution as a legitimate business, like any other. They avoid value laden terms like “prostitutes” and “prostitute users,” and opt more often for neutral terms like “provider” or “therapist” for prostituted women, “client” for themselves, and “service” for sex (Malarek 2009, 94). Buying sex is framed by men on the USA Sex Guide forums for Illinois as a fun conquest, adventure, hunt, sport, or hobby, and many men call themselves “hobbyists” and “mongers.”

## Buying Sex as a Hunt:

*“Good luck to you and happy hunting”*

-User on Lombard General Reports forum

[Talking about a woman he posted about having sex with] *“[G]uys don’t over fish this spot or abuse this one and send her into hiding she is a keeper”*

-User on Chicago BackPage Advertiser Reviews forum

[About being stopped by LE and then moving to a different part of town to keep looking for sex] *“They [law enforcement] can pretty much do whatever they want to make our hunt difficult”*

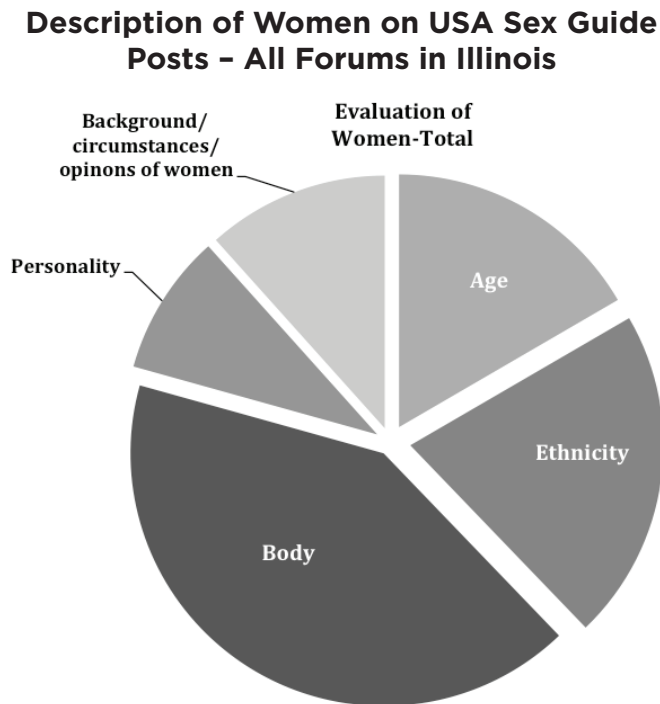
-User on Chicago Streetwalker Reports forum

Men who post on the USA Sex Guide forums throughout Illinois often objectify and commodify prostituted women by referring to them as “merchandise,” “goods,” “talent,” and “objects” to be bought, traded, and rated. Women are judged and compared to one another on these forums, rated according to the women’s weight, face, body, breasts, age, ethnicity, etc. Men talk about their “stock collections” of go-to prostituted women, and sometimes users will only trade information about women from their “stock” if other users trade information about other prostituted women. Men’s stated preferences for which “merchandise” they wish to “sample” usually relates to physical characteristics of women—their race/ethnicity, age, hair color, body type, etc.

In the three-month period of posts analyzed from the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide, we found the following trends (see also Figure 6):

- 10.69% of posts discussed the **age** of a woman or women in the sex industry
- 13.66% of posts discussed the **ethnicity** of a woman or women in the sex industry
- 27.72% of posts described the **body** of a woman or women in the sex industry
- 31.53% of posts **evaluated/rated a woman or women** in the sex industry (in comparison, 12.65% of posts evaluated a sex venue/location and 18.35% rated an experience in the sex industry)
- 5.82% of posts discussed the personality of a woman/women in the sex industry
- 7.48% of posts discussed the background, circumstances, and/or opinions of a woman or women in the sex industry

Figure 6



38

Though the degree to which women were described according to their bodies, ethnicity, age, personality, or background/circumstances/opinions varied between sex venue types (e.g., women’s bodies were described and rated more frequently on the Backpage and Craigslist Reports forums than on others, and women’s ethnicity was mentioned more often in Streetwalker Reports forums than on others), in all circumstances, men placed more importance on describing characteristics of women related to their appearance — their bodies, their ethnicity, and their age — than on their personality, background, circumstances, or the women’s opinions. In this way, men on the forums tended to reference women as market commodities, to be described, rated, and compared with one another. On these forums, prostituted women essentially become market goods organized for varying “consumer” tastes by ethnicity, size, age, and appearance.

Some examples of women’s objectification in the posts as market commodities, merchandise, and goods include the following:

*“If you want websites where you can view the merchandise, try [Asian Massage Parlor A]. [Asian Massage Parlor B] is just a little joint, and if they put their goods up they probably wouldn’t last long. I wouldn’t worry about getting arrested.”*

-User on a Joliet Massage Parlor forum

*“As far as what I might like from a private stock selection: red-heads will always get my attention first; I like aggressive girls too.”*

-A “St. Louis senior member” who was attempting to make plans to buy sex in Schaumburg on a visit there, on Chicago General Reports forum

*“The W\*\*\*\*\* has all types of ladies, young, old and in between. Fat, skinny and in between. White, dark and asian [sic].”*

-User on Mt. Prospect General Reports forum

*“I would love to try a lady of Pakistani/Indian descent. Anyone know of anyone out there who is reliable?”*

-User on Chicago BackPage Advertiser Reviews forum

*“...like I said, real pics, decent price, decent looking, for a quick release she can fit the bill...Partly native American too if that gets you off.”*

-User on Chicago BackPage Advertiser Reviews forum

*“Never done anything but amp’s [Asian massage parlors] but next I want some latina but sounds like they can be a pain with haggling and charging too much. If anyone could tip me off to the best latina places where fs [full sex] could be had that would be great. Especially I like them straight off the boat and not too Americanized.”*

-User on Chicago Massage Parlor Reports forum

*“Anyone know where I can find a pregnant provider, its [sic] been a fantasy of mine for some time.”*

-User on Chicago Escort Reports forum

Men objectify, and one could argue dehumanize, prostituted women on the USA Sex Guide forums in Illinois by comparing them directly to “food” that men are hungry to “sample.” When these food analogies are made, women are sometimes described as “meat.”

39

### **Women Portrayed as “Meat”:**

*“Paid \$65 for the hour and got a Korean in her 40’s....I give her am [sic] light smack in her ass which she replied positively. I’m looking for a full entre [sic] and she wants \$2. 0 which I replied with \$60 since she was more like ground beef than a fine filet. I was hungry so we settled for \$1. 0 for the entre [sic] and I began my meal. As I thought it was not as filling as I expected. Overall, paid \$1.65. For an unappetizing meal. I am having buyers [sic] remorse. I could have had a finer filet at the other apts but settled for an overpriced overdone burger. I don’t plan on eating here again. Should have had Mexican like you did.”*

-User on Chicago Massage Parlor Reports forum

A user on the Rockford forum attaches a photo of a prostituted woman and complains, “Where’s the prime meat? Why does it seem that this is all there is left on the streets of Rockford?”

*“At [strip club] all I found were large slabs of beef. Smallest girl must have been at least 35 lbs over weight.”*

-User on Washington Park Strip Club Reports forum



*“It has been awhile for me but when I entered [fake massage business] I saw a few of my favs D\*\*\*\* and a few others but then my eyes feel [sic] upon fresh meat. A\*\*\*\* now boys treat this one well and she may surprise you. Thin nice tits great ass nice ending.”*

-User on Belvidere General Reports forum

The language of objectification (market commodities, hunting, food, etc.) men use on the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide helps to reinforce an ethos of male entitlement to purchase sex, articulated throughout the forums.

## 2. The Fantasy: Illusions of Intimacy & Authenticity

Many men on the forums share a common vision of a fantasy commercial sex experience, in which prostituted women serve men and provide an illusion of intimacy and authenticity in their sexual encounters. To varying degrees, the fantasy entails that men should control the sexual encounter entirely and that prostituted women should appear happy, enthusiastic, and insatiable while serving johns’ sexual needs; the women should make men believe they find johns attractive; the women should appear to care about the men; and the women should appreciate and value johns’ economic “help.” These expectations directly reflect some of the most commonly held myths about prostituted women.

Academic research appears to confirm that men deceive themselves to some extent when buying sex, and that they are often interested in paying for sex so they are in control of the sexual encounter. As Malarek (2009) explains, “in the world of johns, they call the tune, and the rented woman has to play it” (81-82). Paid sex, he says, is “all about entitlement, power, and control,” and johns look for brief encounters where they can let go and freely express their most selfish desires without having to worry about anyone else’s or about being “nice” (2009, 10, and Hughes 2004). In her discussion of what is bought and sold in prostitution, MacKinnon (2011) argues that some men pay for “you do what I say” sex. MacKinnon says these men

are buying the sex of no back talk, of not relating to her as a person, of being served and serviced, of being in the privacy of anonymity with a switched-off dissociated person who is not there, counting the cracks in the ceiling while watching the clock...of not having to do anything real for her sexually while kidding yourself that all she wants is to be there doing exactly this for big sexy irresistible you. (294)

On the Illinois forums, many men indeed want to pay for the “sex of no back talk.” One user, for example, claims that a woman in a Washington Park strip club “[w]ill upsell everything” and that “she does talk alot [sic] throughout.” He exclaims, “My god shut the f\$%k up! I pay to not have to listen to garbage.” To MacKinnon’s statement we would add that many men on the forums expect prostituted women to perform a fantasy in which they do not seem “switched-off,” “dissociated,” or like they are “watching the clock.” This seeming is all part of the “acting” that is often expected of prostituted women by men who buy sex, as Malarek (2009) argues. He likens the relationship between johns and prostituted women to that of a porn director and a supporting actress, saying that in the fantasies johns create, women’s roles are clear: they are to perform the illusions johns want to see. He writes:



It's as if the john is producing a private porn flick: he writes the screenplay, directs, and stars. He can be mean, aggressive, demeaning, or vulgar...or he can be pleasant and caring, perhaps playing the part of the tender boyfriend. But his role is not to please her or worry about her feelings. It's all about making him feel good. Perhaps the best part for the john in this erotic encounter is that he is also the casting agent. He gets to audition countless hopefuls and choose his own supporting actress...For the duration of the liaison, the roles are clear...For the entire encounter she has to make him feel as though he is the center of her universe; after all, he is paying. Yet all that transpires is just that—acting. The man is buying an illusion, if only for a moment. Sadly, a lot of johns buy into that illusion and begin to believe it's real. (2009, 11)

In-depth interviews by Swedish researcher Månsson (2004) with men who buy sex found that the narratives men constructed to explain why they purchase sex related more to emotional, not physical, needs, and that “[t]he actual content of the visit to the prostitute is of less importance than the meaning it has in the man’s fantasy.” In an article about the psychological appeal of prostitutes, psychotherapist Bader (2008) states that the appeal of purchasing sex, for most johns, lies in the fact that once men purchase the sex,

the woman is experienced as completely devoted to the man—to his pleasure, his satisfaction, his care, his happiness. The man doesn't have to please a prostitute, doesn't have to make her happy, doesn't have to worry about her emotional needs or demands. He can give or take without the burden of reciprocity... Now, of course, these interactions are scripted. The prostitute is acting. But it doesn't matter. For men who like to go to prostitutes, the illusion of authenticity is enough.” (Malarek 2009, 10, citing Bader 2008)

41

Users on the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide appear aware that the authenticity of their interactions with prostituted women is fabricated, and they sometimes directly mention the “fantasy” that they say “comes with the territory” in their hobby. They occasionally remind one another to “make sure that you’re not confusing fantasy and reality.” After a john tells other members of a Lombard forum that he made up several lies in an encounter with a prostituted woman at an Asian fake massage business, another user tells him, “You mentioned in your original posting of BS’ing your way through the session. It appears here that the BS’ing didn’t end with your session. Maybe that’s OK, fantasy is part of the game. You just don’t want to get so deep into the fantasy that you lose touch with reality.” The user apparently gives this advice not out of concern for the other john’s well-being, but because he is worried that the john will “offer up wild descriptions” on the USA Sex Guide that will prompt fellow mongers to waste their money. He ends his post by warning the other user not to be surprised “if some people end up questioning your credibility.” Other johns on the Illinois forums of USA Sex Guide warn one another not to get so caught up in the fantasy and illusion of authenticity that they forget that prostituted women are “faking it” and are actually trying to look for “suckers” who will overpay. One john tells another that he is “seeing the situation through rose-colored glasses” and that he “got carried away in the moment.” He adds the following advice:

*It happens to most of us. For guys like me, the first time is always the greatest because it's a new feeling. It usually goes downhill from there. Try not to get caught up in expectations and keep a realistic perspective. It'll be better all the way around. You will be far less likely to be disappointed in the future...*

For the most part, however, men's posts on the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide reinforce elements of this shared fantasy; men state that they pay for women to act happy, enthusiastic, and "into" them, and they expect this of the women. Most of men's ratings of women, locations, and sexual experiences relate to the degree to which the prostituted women successfully performed this fantasy.

### **Fantasy that Prostituted Women Enjoy Having Sex with Johns**

Many johns on the Illinois forums of USA Sex Guide expect prostituted women to confirm the myth that they are happy with working in the commercial sex industry, that they enjoy having sex with johns and that they have insatiable sex drives.

Comments made by johns on these forums often reveal both an assumption that the prostituted woman enjoyed the experience as much as the man did, as well as an underlying awareness that she might be "acting." Even when men on these forums appear aware that women are acting and do not genuinely enjoy having sex with them, the illusion of authenticity appears to be enough for the johns. Consider some of the following excerpts from posts:

*"Had C\*\*\* who was very cute, very sweet, and just an amazingly tight body. It's pretty obvious that she likes to fuck. Kept telling me how much she likes my dick but I'm sure she says that to everyone..."*

-User on Chicago Massage Parlor Reports forum

*"...it becomes quickly apparent that Joy receives great joy from sex....Her enthusiasm was absolutely outstanding."*

-User on a General Reports forum<sup>6</sup>

*"Chauffeur-ing her home (just after 4am) I learn she grew up on a farm, she's married...really likes sex (OK, I gleaned this earlier in the night)...This after a full, complete, and totally satisfying release for me (and three big O's for her). Her organism [sic], hell I was keeping track and she stated as much and yes I'm bragging a little"*

-User on Rockford General Reports forum

[About a young Asian girl who seemed to have a pimp who made the user feel "scared as hell"]: *"Decent massage and very brief bbbj [Bareback Blowjob] to cbj [Covered Blowjob] and then she rode my face. She seemed to be really into it or shes [sic] a very good actress."*

-User on Chicago BackPage Advertiser Reviews forum

*"A\*\*\*\*\* gives you value-for-money on that extra small investment. Specifically, I had the pleasure of enjoying something I'd never had in a similar situation: the chance to engage in some long and fairly passionate DFK [Deep French Kissing]. Nothing is quite so enjoyable as being able to engage in a long and serious kiss while in the middle of activities. Even better, A\*\*\*\*\* seems to enjoy this as much as the person she's with. She also seems to enjoy everything else involved too, which is nice."*

-User on Rockford General Reports forum

6 Forum location has been omitted here because the woman's name was kept in the post (since removing it would have compromised the coherence of the comment).

*"Few different positions, she acted pretty into it, even if it was quick & probably fake, it was enough for me for sure."*

-User on Chicago BackPage Advertiser Reviews forum

*"We went through a couple of positions and she told me after the first that she'd already enjoyed herself, so I figured to go into the second concentrating on my own needs. She satisfied those quite well and seemed to be enjoying herself in this round too, though that is one of the things that is almost considered standard to say and/or imply."*

-User on Rockford General Reports forum

Men on the Illinois forums of USA Sex Guide demonstrate an overwhelming preference for women who are "enthusiastic" and not "rush-rush," as one John put it. They warn each other of prostituted women whom they label "clock-watchers" and complain if women seem "disengaged" or "mechanical." One user posting on a Roselle, Illinois, forum complained that a new girl at a sex venue had "the personality of a bag of rocks" and that "if she is just going to mechanically 'go through the motions' and charge as much as the other 'go-getters,' she is absolutely not worth it."

Other comments made by Johns on the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide indicate conflicting attitudes about whether prostituted women find men who buy sex attractive. One user says he dislikes "fake compliments" that remind him that he's paying for sex. In a post titled, "Massage Turn Off," the user writes:

Does anyone else find it a little bit of turn off when your Asian massage girl (who weighs less than you and is half your age) starts going on and on about what a great body you have and how strong you are etc. I'm sorry but it does nothing for me except remind me that I'm paying this person to be with me. Am I alone in wishing that they keep their fake compliments to themselves and not patronize me. I drink. I smoke. I have a crappy diet. I'm not healthy and don't want someone pretending that I'm someone with a killer body.

43

To that post, a fellow monger responds, "No. I love being lied to. I will let you in on a secret. I lie to them too. I always say I am single. I always say the [sic] are pretty & I always say they are the best girl at any particular establishment." A different user encourages the "Massage Turn Off" poster to believe the compliment, stating that in Asian culture, being "heavy" is a sign of being a "boss man." Other users don't seem to care whether or not prostituted women find them attractive; they appear to feel empowered by the fact that no matter how they look, their money can enable them to have sex with a woman. In a post titled, "Yeah, I'm Fat" on the Chicago Massage Parlor Reports forum, a user writes:

*...who cares? Do you really care one way or another what she thinks of you? If so, you're in the wrong hobby, man. I once had a girl slap my belly and say, "You so fat!" She laughed. I laughed. Who cares? In the end, I still f\*cked her.*

As another John says, paying for sex enables women to have sex with men who are "out of their league," so "of course" they should compliment Johns, since Johns "have the money" and are the "customer." A user who describes his plan to visit a woman at a local fake massage business and offer her "an obscene amount of cash" for full sex "to see if she bites," writes, "Old guy + cash (usually) = success. How I love this hobby!"

## Fantasy of Emotional Connection and “Helping” Women in Prostitution

Statements such as these reflect an attitude that women and girls in prostitution are willing to do almost anything for the right amount of money. Many men on the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide appear to exploit that notion and seem to believe that men who buy sex from desperate women are in some way “helping” those women. In return for their economic “contributions,” some johns on the forum appear to believe that prostituted women care for them and treat them in a “special” way. A senior member agrees with the previous john’s “mathematical assessment” about older men with money and responds, “It’s cool how a reasonable amount of disposable cash to me equals a large amount of persuasion to a younger chick who needs the cash.” Another man posting on a Rockford forum reports that a prostituted woman he visits regularly tells him she is giving him “a deal,” and he explains what he believes he gives her in return:

*What I would like to think I give her, well...a good fuck, a decent sized donation (less then [sic] she’s use [sic] to but more then [sic] I give others), an hour or so of being treated like a person (a funny, smart, sexy, interesting person), and unorthodox help from time to time.*

A user posting on the Chicago Escort Reports forum states that he will share the phone number of a young college girl in Wrigleyville who “will dfk [Deep French Kiss] and do BBBJ [Bareback Blowjob]” because he is “trying to help her out since she’s using the money for her tuition and is a really cool chick.” In a case of clear survival sex, a user on the Chicago Streetwalker Reports forum reports that he picked up a woman holding a sign on the street asking for help and paid her \$60 for full sex. He frames the entire encounter as “just civilians helping another”:

*I’ve had luck once picking up a girl, don’t know if she was a pro or not but she was dressed in civilian cloths [sic] (mid 20’s) standing in the middle of the street on touchy [sic] and McCormick on the north side. She was holding a sign that said she was recently a laid off seeking help. Offered to get her food at the mc-donalds on touchy [sic] and it led to some great sex for 60....the scene was not of a John picking up a pro but rather just civilians helping another. Isn’t that what we all do on this board?*

The special treatment that some johns on these forums seem to believe they receive from prostituted women is often recognized as potentially false, but it appears to be something that the men would rather not think about. For example, one man writes on a Rockford forum, “She and I FS or FS’d or FSed or however you abbreviate full service but that isn’t something she makes available to others (ok, there may be others but I choice [sic] not to think about that, thank you).”

Other researchers who have focused on men’s attitudes about buying sex indicate that the fantasies shared by many johns stem from fundamental “false beliefs” and myths that the men hold about prostituted people and prostitution; they suggest that men “may cling to these beliefs as a way to justify their behavior” (Hughes 2004, 17; Sawyer et al. 2001-02; Sawyer, Rosser, & Schroeder 1998). The posts on the Illinois boards of the USA Sex Guide seem to indicate that the fantasies described by many forum users are based on illusions of authenticity and intimacy. In her book on strip club regulars and male desire, *G-Strings and Sympathy*, Frank (2002) refers to these fantasies as “staged authenticity” (176). Our research

sidesteps the issue of whether the experiences men describe on the forums are actually “real” or “fake” and instead focuses on the men’s perceptions of the interactions and how they frame their experiences as fantasies, desired fantasies, broken fantasies, etc. We find that when prostituted women fail to “play along” with these illusions or otherwise fail to meet johns’ expectations, many men on the forum describe various ways of asserting control and dominance over the women.

### 3. The Reality: Male Dominance & Control

On the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide, men often respond to perceived cracks in the fantasies they construct about commercial sex by asserting their right to dominate and control women in prostitution. To begin with, the attitude that men are entitled to buy sex with women is sometimes linked on the forums to a sense of entitlement to have unlimited access to women’s—in particular prostituted women’s—bodies. In several forums, especially for Massage Parlor Reports, men in Illinois describe grabbing the private parts of prostituted people without asking beforehand, or in spite of prostituted women’s protests, and they often encourage other johns to do the same, all within the rhetoric of sharing “sexual etiquette” with one another for buying sex in different commercial sex venues throughout Illinois. In a post titled “Roamin [sic] Hands and Russian Fingers,” for example, one user responds to another’s request for “enlightenment” on sexual etiquette by writing, “As you are getting the massage start feeling the massueses [sic] legs and rear. On the flip keep roaming up to the chest area and she usually just drops the top.”

#### Dominance Over Women’s Physical Boundaries

Men on these forums often describe how they set the terms of their paid sexual encounters, and they complain about women in prostitution who attempt to resist their physical groping. Men often report responding to such women by withholding tips or otherwise punishing them. Below are a few examples of how men frame their perceived right to access prostituted women’s bodies:

[During a massage at a new Asian fake massage business in Lombard]: *“I grab her ass to establish my bona-fides, and she grabs Mr. Happy and starts HR [Hand Release; Hand Job]. I stop her and tell her I want a BJ [Blowjob]. Nope, don’t do that here, she says. I ask if anything else is available, patting her butt. Nope, she says. I say, OK, how about one of the other girls. Nope she says, we don’t do BJs or sex here. So I tell her, I can do this (making HJ motion) myself, no thanks. So NOW she starts actually giving me a real massage. Not a great one, but went from a 4 up to a 6. Hot towel at the end of my full hour and I’m outta there, no tip.”*

[In response to another user who wrote, “Nothing kills a HR like ‘don’t touch my ass’ or whatever,” this user writes]: *“Amen to that. I’ve had a couple of therapists pull that after multiple visits. The hands were allowed to roam and then bam; ‘you want more you pay more’. F that. You want a weekly customer, we play by the old rules. Otherwise I take my business elsewhere. Hell, all I was doing was lightly grazing the T or A [“Tits” or “Ass”]. Now they want to charge a’lacarte [sic]? Forget about it.”*

-User on Chicago BackPage Advertiser Reviews forum



*“You guys need to [be] aggressive. When I go to a place like this [a massage “spa”] I take their hand and move it to my cock within 5 minutes. There is no flip because I ask to be face up at the start. If there is no HE [Happy Ending; Hand Job], then I want to know right away and not wait until time is up.”*

-User on Evanston/Skokie General Reports forum

*“What the [massage] therapist is willing to do beyond just the basic tug session [a session that includes a hand job] varies from individual to individual and from what I have seen has little to do with how much you tip. They will accept every cent you offer, but the sad fact is the service is usually pretty much the same regardless. Some drop the clothes automatically, some will if you ask, and others just pull up the shirt or let you reach under. Like was mentioned before, don't be afraid to show them what you are there for by touching them.”*

-User on Waukegan/Gurnee Massage Parlor Reports forum

### **Monetary Control & “Rip-Off Bitches”**

46 Many men on the USA Sex Guide forums for Illinois seem to believe that they have purchased women's consent with their money and that they are thereby entitled to control the interaction entirely. MacKinnon notes that, behind the fantasy shared by many men who buy sex, most johns realize prostituted women do not enjoy the sex and are there out of “economic necessity,” but it is crucial to understand that most johns still consider this consent (2011: 294-295). Several men on the Illinois boards appear to subscribe to the belief articulated by one user posting on a Chicago forum, that men should be in control of the “relationship” between johns and prostituted women. “Good providers,” he writes, “understand this relationship is one way. I call them then I need them...they should NEVER contact me.” Some men on these forums encourage one another to compel women in prostitution to accept men's prices, not the other way around, and to take advantage of women's economic vulnerability.

For example, users on the Joliet Massage Parlor Reports forum discuss the fact that women in brothels disguised as massage establishments feel compelled to provide sexual “extras” in order to stay in business in the difficult economic climate, and one user seems to believe that women working at those fake massage will take what johns offer them: “When you just opt for the half hour rate and say 100 is all you have I am sure these girls will go for it.” One john on the Chicago Massage Parlor Reports forum criticizes what he sees as excessive control over women providing sex. In one post, he tells other users, “I don't think it is cool to pay for a massage and think you can get what every [sic] you want...It is a MASSAGE shop, Not a F\_CK shop.” In another post, he advises other men to “[c]ut the ladies some slack. Legit or not, like you or not, they are working to making a living just like all of us. Times are hard and everyone is doing what they can to make it by.” The same user advocated better tips for women working at fake massage businesses, and in nearly all instances, other men on the forum criticized or dismissed his opinions on the forum.

Men on the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide tend to criticize, rather than sympathize with, prostituted women. These men's expressed attitudes about needing to control their encounters with prostituted women are justified in part by the widely articulated assumption that prostituted women are sneaky, suspicious, not to be trusted, and are generally trying to take advantage of men who buy sex. Johns warn each other on the forums to be on guard against "rip-off bitches" who try to "scam" men. In a post titled "scammed," one user warns "fellow mongers":

*Beware fellow mongers! WSW [White Street Walker], late twenties or early thirties with medium length dark blonde hair did NOT deliver on her end. Picked up this WSW mentioned above in North Chicago last night on [street intersection]. She got in and we negotiated a deal, but she didn't deliver. Like a fool I let the little guy do my thinking and I ended up going to her place after a stop at an ATM. She had some friends there and I feel lucky to get out with only the loss of some mongering funds. Be careful!*

Though the "scam" described by this user could have been an indication that the woman described was under pimp control, the john does not appear concerned for her safety. To the contrary, he seems to blame her for the events that occurred. Another user on a Chicago forum describes how he always attempts to "be in control" when he buys sex:

*If I'm forced to negotiate, then I'm going to haggle. First, because the initial offer is almost always sky high. They're trying to gauge if you're a sucker they can bleed dry. Second, I'm not willing to pay premium prices for service that is likely to be substandard. Third, if you let them take advantage of you even a little bit, they'll eventually give you a hard time over every little thing. You must always be in control of the situation. Once you cede control, you're in trouble. You have learned nothing from these boards.*

Another user agrees with the idea that losing control makes johns vulnerable, stating, "I am totally with you man, I have some bad experience just like what you were saying ...I lose control and just got eat up, and later I just ask myself, why the hack [sic] I come here and pay all this extra money..."

Men frequently end their posts on the Illinois boards of the USA Sex Guide with catch phrases that indicate men's sense of being vulnerable to victimization by prostituted women, pimps, and law enforcement. Typical catch phrases include, "Play it safe guys," "Be safe," "Be safe on the hobby," and "Be very careful everyone." One john whose very username includes the word "monger" proclaims on the Chicago Streetwalker Reports forum that men who buy sex should stop using the term, as it makes prostituted women, not men who buy sex, look like "the victim." He writes, "Fourth and last, we must stop calling ourselves mongers, because the word makes us look like predators and the SW [Sex Worker] look like the victim! I like this site and I want everyone to be safe out there!" Another user who recognizes the irony of that user's statement responds, "Dude, look at your screen name!"



## Punishing Women by Withholding Tips

Men on the Illinois forums of USA Sex Guide who may feel victimized or otherwise vulnerable because of the perceived threat of “rip-off bitches” and other women who do not perform their fantasy sometimes report regaining control of the sexual encounter by withholding tips, refusing to pay, or punishing the women in other ways.

The topic of tipping women in prostitution is often a subject of great debate on the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide, and opinions vary between users. For many users, however, women in the sex industry must provide sex of some sort in order to “earn” a tip from the men. For example, one user posting about an experience in Chicago writes that the only “extra” available was a hand job, which he turned down, and he complains that the woman had “the temerity to ask for a TIP!” He says he “looked at her with shock and said, ‘For what? You have to do something to get a tip. No extras, no tip.’” He labels the fake massage business a “rip-off joint” and says he left the establishment without providing a tip for the massage and shave<sup>7</sup> the woman reportedly provided him. A user posting on the Chicago Escort Reports forum warns other users that rewarding women for “bad service” by tipping them and putting them “on a pedestal” creates a “golden pussy syndrome” that will lead prostituted women to think they do not have to obey the desires of johns:

*I have rarely tipped someone. I have been hobbying for over 8 years and in that time I have learned that tipping is only to be considered when someone goes above and beyond. Besides if a lady was rude and uninterested during an apt and then had the audacity to ask for a tip, I would definitely tell her off. It is ‘complete’ bending over backwards and kissing ass and tipping...that creates the sense that ‘I can do what I want and still get paid for it’ attitude. AKA (golden pussy syndrome). Think about it clearly. In any other service industry. Would you actually reward bad service? Why is this any different? Unfortunately men are to blame. We put most of these SP’s [Service Providers] on a pedestal. And then wonder what went wrong.*

One user says the issue of tipping or not tipping is not the main point; he advises other users not to visit establishments that do not provide “extras” in the first place. In a post titled, “To tip or not to tip? WTF?” he writes:

*You guys are debating about whether to tip or not? If the masseuse says at the start that there are no extras or that the massage is covered. Here’s what you should do. Get up, request your money back, and walk out (or ask for a different masseuse)! The question is NOT whether to tip, but whether to patronize that masseuse at all. If you patronize them, you are encouraging this foolishness...if [the women] are uncomfortable giving massages then they should find a different line of work.*

In rare instances, men on the forum describe purposely cheating women in prostitution by failing to pay for sexual services. In a post titled, “How to avoid paying?” one user asks fellow mongers for tips on cheating women:

7 Some men reportedly pay for women to shave facial or pubic hair for them, in addition to sexual services.

*Any members have tips on ways not pay [sic]? I got one girl who charged \$200/hour but I put down 40 instead and she didn't count until I had left. I tried leaving an empty envelope but she checked. Now, I am thinking its [sic] best to leave the money, have the service, then just reach into her purse and take the money back...I'm not worried about getting attacked by security, I am a bouncer at a nightclub and can handle myself. I can't pay as my income is low and I need to pay my parents [sic] medical bills...I can't get a girlfriend because I have Asperger's syndrome which makes meeting women and making friends extremely difficult. I am thinking of going to Thailand to get a bride, but as I mentioned, my parents need my help now so I can't go until next year at the latest."*

Some users criticize this man for potentially “giving mongers a bad name” and for “ripping off” women. One user comments, “[T]hat’s fucking pathetic! Damn, dude, you suck! I also take back what I said in the title, ripping off a woman like that is beyond pathetic.” Another tells the user:

*Some helpful advice. 1. Grow up. 2. Forget Thailand, you'll be a loser there too. 3. Lose the rip-off scheme. It's a recipe for getting your ass kicked royally, or worse, in the near future. Besides, you're giving mongers a bad name, and that's not an easy thing to do.*

However, it is not always apparent that johns on the Illinois forums of USA Sex Guide think that “ripping off” a woman is “pathetic.” In some cases, “stiffing” a woman is seen as admirable, or even heroic. On the Chicago Massage Parlor Reports forum, one user, whom we will call “User A,” writes that “if it’s HR [Hand Release, Hand Job] only I stiff them and walk.” To this post, another user writes simply, “You are my new hero.” Another user adds, “After reading [User A’s] posts, you can count [me] in as a hero worshipper, too!” Yet another user titles his post “[User A] is The Man.”

49

## **Punishing Women Through Prolonged Ejaculation or Aggressive Sex**

In addition to advocating punishing women in prostitution by withholding tips, some men on the USA Sex Guide forums in Illinois describe punishing women whom they think are trying to “rush” the sexual encounter, or who otherwise fail to meet johns’ expectations, by prolonging ejaculation. One user writes:

*I went to [local brothel disguised as a massage establishment] a few weeks ago and had J\*\*\*. I stupidly put down \$20 and was given the worst HR ever. Since I can control myself pretty well and she was just rude, unattractive and awful, I held out for a long, long time. She was trying to rush me but I would not let it happen (perhaps it was her hairy body that partially turned me off). The funny thing was that she was all sweaty and I was totally cool. It would have been much easier to get on top of me. She then complained about my making her get all sweaty and how long it took. I told her you win some and lose some. ... She's nothing more than an older also-ran masseuse who needs a razor or two. I should have walked out when I encountered a woman with more hair on her body than me.*

In some cases, the punishment of prostituted women reported by men in these forums becomes violent or aggressive, and such men justify their violence by stating that they are getting their “money’s worth.” Some men appear to believe that the fact that they have paid for sex with a woman justifies any and all harm they might do to her. Some even frame their aggression in terms of trying to help “teach” prostituted women how to provide them with “better service.” In a post titled, “Waukegan Dream,” a john describes his attempts to instruct a young prostituted woman he finds on the street:

*So I'm heading west on Grand when my mind starts dreaming. I dreamt I saw a young latina at Jackson talking to some guy. ...I dreamt she offered a BBBJ [Bareback Blowjob] when all of a sudden my dream went south. It was the worst BJ I have ever had. I tried to wake up, but my dream held me captive [sic]. So being the nice guy I am, I tried to teach the poor thing how to provide me better service. That didn't help much as she just wouldn't open her mouth much. WTF! She then offer more on the menu for no extra coin, but I just wasn't in the mood anymore. I nudded on her face which wasn't much consolation. I dropped her off and woke up. Damn when am I going to have a good dream again?*

Another user posting about an Asian apartment (brothel) in Roselle describes how the woman he paid to have sex with complained that the sex “hurt,” but he continued to “pound” her anyway. After rating the girl as a “5 or so, maybe a 6 if [he] was being nice,” he states that she skipped the CBJ [Covered Blowjob] and the two began to have intercourse. He continues:

50

*Switched positions quite a few times, but was very hesitant to do doggie, the first time we tried I got maybe ten strokes in and she said it hurt. Unlike most of the girls I have seen here she felt very loose, so I find it hard to believe that it hurt... I, as I always do at this place made sure I got my moneys worth, she kept telling me to cum but I just kept pounding her, and eventually insisted that we finish doggie.*

A man posting on the Chicago Streetwalker Reports forum describes an experience in which he reportedly “skull fucked” a prostituted woman in his car whom he says rushed him to ejaculate because she feared being caught by law enforcement. In his account, he appears to view the woman as worthless:

*Last night went out around 3am was bored out of my mind...by Howard saw a BSW [black streetwalker] blowing me a kiss. She hops in...said \$30 for head had 2 bucks on me had to go to aTM [sic]. Told her can do \$22 at most she agreed but wasnt [sic] too happy \*\* off the subject you know how sometimes just by experience you know if its going to be good or not well I didn't have a good vibe on this 1 \*\* CBJ [Covered Blowjob] 3-4 mins into it said I have to hurry becuz she doesn't want to get locked up. Long story short I told her that by her saying that aint going to make me finish so I forcefully skull fucked her and let it out asap. Name was L\*\*\*\*\* or some shit like that got digits but I doubt anybody would want them.*

## Violent Sex & Rape

A john, whom we will call “User C,” posts several accounts of his reported violence toward prostituted women he visits at Chinese fake massage businesses in Chicagoland. Here are a few of his accounts, in which he describes aggressive sexual acts that reportedly prompt women to protest, have stomach aches, or even throw up:

*“...finally she puts the rubber on and starts the sucky. At one point I grab her by the head a [sic] jam it down her throat, she gags and complained so I told her I wouldn’t do it again. She tells me to be nice...I stand and lay her on the table and go to town with her legs in the air...She was moaning but telling me my dick was ‘too long’. So then I turn her doggy and basically crushed her guts until I came. She was so cute afterward holding her stomach and telling me she had a stomach ache from the pounding I gave her...”*

*“Once with a petite little spinner abt 40 who told be [sic] no bj [blowjob], but then I simply insisted firmly ‘yes. You suck.’ and I grabbed her head and she didn’t resist. That was one of the wildest mp [massage parlor] experiences I’ve had because I completely face fucked her to where she puked on the floor twice and would clean it up then come back to me where I would fuck her face silly again. I even had her licking my asshole that time...I think I gave her .80.”*

*“Seems she has some rules, like I gagged her on my cock once and she got kind of upset pointing to where she says it went in her throat. Kind of funny actually.”*

51

User C appears to find it “funny” or “cute” when women protest his aggressive violence or seem hurt by it. While it is clear from reading the USA Sex Guide forums in Illinois that not all men on the forum engage in overtly aggressive or violent sex with women, many men on the forum seem to view such violence as justified in the case of prostituted women.

Indeed, research on johns appears to confirm that many men who buy sex also buy into common “rape myths” that justify violence against women, blame women for rape, and negate rape as harmful to women (Hughes 2004, 16, citing Monto 2000). A 2008 study with 110 Scottish johns found that 10% of the men believed that rape of prostituted women is “not possible”; 12% believed that the concept of rape “simply doesn’t apply” in the context of prostitution; 22% stated that, once they pay, johns are entitled to whatever they want from prostituted women; and 10% admitted “they would rape a woman—any woman—if they thought they wouldn’t get caught” (cited in Malarek 2009, 87). Similarly, Durchslag & Goswami’s study on men who purchase sex in Chicago found that 21% of the men they interviewed did not think it was possible for women in prostitution to be raped (2008, 21). The study also found that the johns they interviewed in Chicago endorsed many of the following general rape myths:

- 47% of interviewees believed that if a woman participates in any sexual activity then the man has the right to rape her;
- 32% thought that rape occurs because men have strong sex drives, and 47% believed that men rape women when their sex drive gets out of control;

- 28% stated that women ask for rape if they dress provocatively;
- 27% thought that if women were drunk or high and got raped, it was the woman's fault;
- 27% acknowledged that they had committed sexually coercive acts against women;
- 13% stated they would rape a woman if they knew they could get away with it; and
- 19% admitted to having raped a woman (Durchslag & Goswami 2008, 22).

Some researchers conclude that a commodified view of sexuality, combined with attitudes of male entitlement, could be linked to a lack of respect for and violence against women in prostitution (Hughes 2004 and Monto 2000).

#### **4. Johns' Awareness of Harm to Women & Girls in the Commercial Sex Industry**

The concrete violence suffered by many women in the commercial sex industry stands in stark contrast to the fantasies about prostituted women articulated by many johns who post on the Illinois boards of the USA Sex Guide. This section looks at men's awareness of several related types of harm experienced by women in the commercial sex industry, including the presence of young, underage, and/or vulnerable women and girls in prostitution; the involvement of pimps and traffickers; violence to women and girls in prostitution; indications that women and girls are not happy when "performing" for the johns and that they want out of the commercial sex industry; and serious health issues experienced by women and girls in prostitution, including STDs/HIV, drug and alcohol abuse, and mental health issues.

52

Because comments on the Illinois Sex Guide about harm to women and girls relate more to these johns' general perceptions than to tangible statistics, this analysis is grounded first in some local statistics. These statistics indicate widespread and persistent harm to women and girls in the commercial sex industry. Therefore, before discussing men's perceptions of these types of harm to women and girls, the report will look at the perspectives of prostituted women and girls in Chicago, as recorded in several studies about the Chicago commercial sex industry.

To begin with, in 2001 the Center for Impact Research (CIR) estimated that 16,000 to 25,000 women and girls are involved in prostitution on any given day in metropolitan Chicago, a third of whom first get involved in prostitution by the age of 15, and 62% of whom began by age 18 (Raphael & Shapiro 2002, 4).

In their 2002 study, *Sisters Speak Out: The Lives and Needs of Prostituted Women in Chicago*, the Center for Impact Research conducted interviews with 222 women in all sectors of the commercial sex industry, and they found that most of the women and girls enter the industry at a young age and experience high levels of homelessness and violence, including sexual and physical abuse, domestic violence, and child abuse (Raphael & Shapiro 2002). Notably,

in this study, “[c]ustomers were most frequently identified as the perpetrators of violence, across all venues” (Raphel & Shapiro 2002, 5). Twenty-one percent of the women interviewed in escort services reported being raped more than 10 times (5). Half of those women in escort services gave a “cut” of their money to someone else, and 75% of these women believed they would be harmed if they stopped (5).

Other studies have shown similar results. In 2002, the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless interviewed women in Cook County Jail and found that the prostituted women in their sample were more than twice as likely as women not involved in prostitution to be victims of sexual assault or assault with a weapon by someone other than a partner; 86% of prostituted women in the study had survived domestic violence, 74% had been sexually assaulted, and 53% experienced sexual abuse in childhood (Chicago Coalition 2002, 15).

The remainder of this section focuses on how men on the forums express their awareness of the existence of these types of harm for prostituted women and girls in Illinois.

### “Too Young”

It is difficult to say, from reading men’s posts on the USA Sex Guide in Illinois, to what degree johns are aware of the young age that most women and girls are recruited into the sex industry, or the often coercive or desperate circumstances that lead to women’s involvement in prostitution. However there is evidence that, while the overwhelming majority of men who post on USA Sex Guide state a preference for “young” women, some men who buy sex in Illinois do take note when the prostituted women and girls they meet seem “too young.” For example, one john writes on the Chicago Backpage Advertiser Reviews board about an advertisement for a girl that causes him to think twice about purchasing sex with her. He tells fellow mongers, “She looks way young and innocent...a little too young for me for sure. Hope you guys check her ID before taking the plunge...just looks a little too jailbait-ish.”

53

Other men who post on USA Sex Guide may note that a girl looks “very young” and may describe indicators that would normally raise red flags about coercion, pimping, and trafficking, but instead the johns concentrate on the girl’s youthfulness as a turn-on. One man writing on the Chicago Backpage Advertiser Reviews forum describes a “tiny,” “very young looking” girl he claims to have bought sex with. He says that her “scars” and the “bandaid” on her arm [possible indications of violence/abuse] were initially turn-offs for him, but that in the end he couldn’t resist having her “little body” pressed against his:

*Just saw S\*\*\*\* outcall from backpage...amazingly cute, great tiny little body with nice tats...She has some old scars and was wearing a bandaid on arm, initially a minor turn off, but I quickly got over that. Very young looking, 22 but almost looks younger...Felt so good to have her little body pressed against mine. I couldn't recommend more highly for the price.*



Another man posting on a Rockford forum states that the girl he buys sex with is young and not very enthusiastic, but rather than wonder if she does not enjoy working in prostitution, he attributes her attitude to youthful inexperience:

*B\*\*\*\* saddles in...She's in her early 20s, petite...Donations are higher than for most girls and her general enthusiasm is less than stellar (I attribute that to her young age more than anything else, not a general dislike of sex or me for that matter). But good god she is pretty and young.*

A john posting on a Waukegan/Gurnee forum warns other johns of an “awful young” Latina girl whom he saw in street prostitution, apparently to support a drug habit. It is interesting that he frames his post in terms of concern for fellow mongers that the young woman may be a potential threat, rather than out of concern for the very young woman, who reportedly has a drug problem. He writes:

*BTW saw my Latino friend out on 120 again last week. I'd be careful with this one. I think she only comes out for a short time to get some quick cash for her high. She's awful young. Be safe!*

On the Rockford General Reports forum, a user who describes himself as old, overweight, and unattractive posts about purchasing sex with a “sweet girl” who has braces and is “just 18” and “just a couple months into legalness.” He describes her as “an unspoiled treasure” and notes how quiet she was, that she did not want to kiss him on the mouth, and that she had some difficulty having vaginal intercourse with him because she is “kinda tight.” The description given could fit that of a young trafficked girl who is trained to convince johns that she is “just/barely 18” if her youthful appearance raises any questions, but this user seems unconcerned by any potential “red flags” he has raised in his description. Instead, he says he will return to buy more sex with her, and recommends that others do the same. In his primary post about the girl, he writes:

*Just saw M\*\*, what a sweet girl, just 18...She didn't like to kiss on the mouth... Open for most anything but greek [anal sex]...She is very quiet, and very cute. Her oral skills (covered) were very good, and the thought of her doing it with her braces made it better. She mounted me, had to work a bit for that, she is kinda tight...This is an unspoiled treasure, treat her good. Had an incall at a friends, very clean and nice, all around good time, will return.*

Just a day after this report was posted, the poster writes that the girl's ads disappeared on Backpage for both Rockford and Janesville and that the contact number for her “quit working right after the weekend.” The johns who post about this girl do not connect these reported events with the girl's potential trafficking to other cities/states, as is frequently the case with underage girls who are advertised by pimps online, but instead attribute her disappearance to being exhausted from having sex with so many mongers from the USA Sex Guide forums. As one user states on a Rockford board, “You guys must of tired her out.”



## Desperation & Survival Sex

Some men who post on the Illinois boards of the USA Sex Guide demonstrate awareness that many women are involved in prostitution because of various types of desperate circumstances, including poverty, drug addiction, inability to support children, and homelessness. Descriptions of women's desperation and engagement in "survival sex" confirms research in Chicago that found that "the most significant predictor of entry into prostitution is running away or being homeless as a youth, particularly if that homeless experience occurs prior to the age of sixteen years" (Stroger 2007, 5). In the report, Kathleen Muldoon, the Assistant State's Attorney with Cook County's Sex Crimes Division at the time, describes meeting a 14-year-old ward of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services who said she was going back to her pimp even though she wanted out of prostitution, and her stated reason was that "he gets me a Subway sandwich whenever I want it" (Stroger 2007, 5). Muldoon was stunned that "[t]hat was it. That was the hold, a sandwich, a meal" (Stroger 2007, 5). Circumstances such as these make it difficult to talk about prostitution as a "choice," and it is interesting to see how johns on the Illinois boards identify circumstances in which women appear desperate or otherwise vulnerable.

One man on a Rockford forum describes talking with a "friend" who reportedly asks him insistently to recommend other men who might pay her for sex, because she is having difficulty "pay[ing] her bills" and has had "some tough breaks." The user says he will give the girl's contact information to other men on the USA Sex Guide. In a post titled "Presious [sic], like the movie," the user writes:

*I talked to a friend who asked me if I knew any guys that she should meet. I told her I might know someone who was interested in a little personal time, but c'mon kid—I'm not a pimp. She asked several times, and told me how difficult it was for a girl to pay her bills, etc. I finally told her I would pass her number along to a friend that I knew...She is a 19 y/o black little sweet thing. She is 4'11" and maybe 114#. She has had some tough breaks and had her second kid in Feb. Both her babydaddy and her BF (two different guys!) are in jail. It has been a while since I have sampled the goods, but I remember her as being skilled and willing. Contact info available for Seniors or mongers I know.*

Other men on the Illinois boards may not directly note the desperation of the women from whom they purchase sex, but the prices and unsafe sex they describe tell a story of their own about the conditions under which many prostituted women and girls in Illinois "work." For example, a man posting on the Chicago Streetwalker Reports board states that he paid \$30 for a bareback blowjob (oral sex without a condom) and unprotected full sex with an African American "streetwalker" he found in Maywood on a Saturday afternoon. Another user on the same forum writes that he got a covered blowjob (using a condom) for \$10 from a woman off Kenton who "like most sw [streetwalkers, or sex workers] are supporting a habit."

Another user on the Chicago Streetwalker Reports forum describes picking up a woman and paying her \$20 for a covered blowjob and then paying \$8 more to have full sex with her (it is unclear whether that was protected or unprotected). He writes:

*Got too [sic] Rossevelt [sic] and saw D\*\*\* BSW [Black Streetwalker] short hair and a real big ass. \$20 CBJ wasn't too great so I coughed up \$8 more bux [sic] too [sic] hit it she agreed. Wanted too [sic] do doggie out the car but she refused due too [sic] the area soo [sic] pounded it in my car for about 10 mins.*

Though it is common for johns to report low prices for sexual services, particularly off-the-street, it is unusual even in street prostitution for a john to pay just \$8 more to a woman to have vaginal sex with her, and instances in which this occurs underscore the desperation, lack of control, and potential lack of liberty experienced by some women in prostitution.

### **Pimps and Possible Trafficking**

As discussed earlier, current research on prostitution, as well as accounts by prostituted people, reveal that pimps rarely protect women and girls from the harms of prostitution but instead often inflict harm through direct exploitation, abuse, and/or violence. Johns posting on the Illinois boards of the USA Sex Guide discuss pimp presence in a variety of sex trade venues, including street prostitution, brothels disguised as massage businesses, online ads from escort agencies, and strip clubs. For the most part, men who mention pimps do so to complain about them, warn other johns about them, or ask fellow johns for information about them. Some johns on the Illinois boards may describe potential trafficking operations, either individual or organized, but rarely do so using the language of “trafficking.” Instead, they occasionally note when prostituted women give money to someone else, or when women are being abused in some way. Some casually mention pimps, “managers,” mamasans and papasans (the managers and sometimes traffickers at brothels with massage as fronts), and “boyfriends” (often pimps) without making further commentary about them.

56

#### | STREET PROSTITUTION |

On the Streetwalker Reports forums, men occasionally post about pimps, either casually noting their presence, viewing them as a potential danger, or wanting to know more information. An example of the first variety is a poster who writes about a pimp on the Bloomington Streetwalker Reports forum. He says:

*I ventured down the stroll [area where street prostitution occurs] today. Saw pretty nice BSW [Black Streetwalker]. About 34 years old, 5 foot 6 or shorter, nice bod, nice legs, with a tattoo around her left arm upper...A black dude on a mountain bike was pimping her.*

Another man casually notes that a woman he picked up off the street who seems “a bit mercenary and strung-out” has sex with men in a “notell” connected to her pimp/dealer’s home:

*[S]he's legit, if a bit mercenary and strung-out. Otherwise very businesslike. Went to her notell about 6 blocks from North and Pulaski that shares a bathroom with her pimp/dealer. Definitely had a nice ass!*

Sometimes men on the Streetwalker Reports forums may report the presence of another man as a potential threat, but it is unclear whether the man is a pimp. For example, one man on the Chicago Streetwalker Reports forum reports, “I noticed that whe [sic] she gets closer to the car there is some guy in the background. There is no way I could take any chance.” Another john posting on the same board notes a potential pimp in relationship to a concern for his own safety. In requesting information from other johns who may have seen something similar, he perpetuates the common myth that pimps “protect” women in prostitution:

*There's another skinny WSW [White Streetwalker]...but check this out: I drove around / followed her as she walked down the street...there was a shady looking dude walking the same direction [as her], also on the cell. When I spotted her again much further down by Archer and 47th, dude was still walking along on his cell, down the alleys. Is he waiting to jump customers, or just keeping her protected? Watch out guys and if you've seen this move let me know what you think.*

#### | BROTHELS DISGUISED AS MASSAGE BUSINESSES |

On the USA Sex Guide boards for “massage parlors and spas in Illinois, several men seem aware of the influence and control exerted in the parlors by mamasans and papasans and “[g]uys in back rooms with funny names.” Many of their comments reference dynamics that have been found in fake massage businesses where women are commercially sexually exploited, including the use of control (economic and otherwise) and “fear” by mamasans and papasans on women in the spas; putting pressure on these women to provide sexual “extras,” including unsafe sex; and periodic turnover of women staffing the brothels (reports of “new girls” and other girls frequently “going on vacation” or “disappearing”).

57

A monger posting on the Chicago Massage Parlor Reports board describes a papasan who may be “possibly mistreating the girls”:

*The regular papasan has been gone for a while now and there's a younger guy in his place. I sensed that the new boss is not very well liked...possibly mistreating the girls. Appears to be a complete change of personnel. The replacements are substandard imo [in my opinion].*

On a forum for Ottawa, Illinois a john posts that “uncooperative girl[s]” at a fake massage business in Ottawa disappear quickly, and that girls at the spa have told him that their mamasan “puts all sorts of fear into them” until they acquiesce to providing sexual extras to the men who come to the spa:

*As I said, it's been a while, but most there [at a particular MP in Ottawa] know me and treat me well, although on VERY rare occasion (two girls in about 20 years) there's a girl who doesn't get it. The last time (about six or seven years ago), I asked the next girl I saw I saw about it, and she scoffed at her lack of common sense. The uncooperative girl was not there long. According to the girls, their 'mamasan' (she's not Asian) puts all sorts of fear into them when they start, but they figure out quickly that there's no harm in providing a helping hand [i.e., a hand release].*

Another john posting on a Lombard, Illinois forum writes that all of the women eat together with the mamasan (in trafficking situations, this is often mandatory) and that after breakfast, the women “disappear” and it is the mamasan who controls who serves which men:

*I won't rate [a Lombard spa], but I tell you this much. Besides mamasan, there are three therapists. If you want to sample them all, go there early in the morning when they all sit on the floor and eat breakfast. After breakfast, they disappear and you will be met by the therapist chosen by mamasan, unless you mentioned a name.*

On the Chicago Massage Parlor Reports board, a john reports that he feels “weird” about going back to the fake massage businesses where he has seen the same man working, as he suspects he is a papasan. He asks other forum members for advice on the situation:

*I seem to see the same dude working at all these places, though, I'm not sure if he's one of the mentioned papasans on the forum. I've seen him on Ashland, Milwaukee, Western (I think he was filling in at [Chicago fake massage business] for a while), and [a different Chicago brothel]. He knows me now, makes me feel kindof [sic] weird about going back to any of those spots. Thoughts on that anyone?*

On the same board, another john reports that a woman at an Asian fake massage business asked him to tip her more because the papasan at the spa only gave her \$10 of the money the john paid for the massage (usually ranging from \$60-75). The john states that he reacted to her request by saying “WTF [What the Fuck]” and leaving, without giving her an extra tip. Instead of expressing concern for the economic exploitation the woman at the parlor appears to be experiencing, the john seems disgusted that he is not “tak[en] care of” and was treated “like a wife.” In a post titled, “Taken for Granted,” this user writes:

58

*So Papason suggested A\*\*\*\* who almost as good a [sic] C\*\*\*\* and I made regular visits to her until a couple weeks ago. She was telling me during the massage how things were slow. Then after I tipped her the regular. 5 [dollars] she complained that I should give her more because Papson [sic] only gave. 10. I said WTF and left and never to [sic] see her again. Instead of really taking care of regulars they start treating you like a wife.*

Sometimes men on the Massage Parlor Reports forums note the frequent turnover of women working at the spas, complain about a lack of massage training on the part of “new girls,” and reference their English skills, which are usually seen as a communication barrier. While the women described on the forums may not be trafficking victims, it is important to note that in trafficking situations at fake massage businesses, frequent turnover and the movement of workers from one geographic area to another, as well as limited English skills, assist traffickers in isolating their victims and preventing them from potentially reaching out for help.

A user posting on a Mt. Prospect, Illinois forum describes receiving a massage and a hand job from a woman who reportedly told him she is at the spa for just one week. He notes a communication barrier, complains that her massage was “uninspiring,” and calls her a “but-ter-face type,” a derogatory term used to describe a woman who has an attractive body but an ugly face (i.e., everything is beautiful “but her” face):

*Called the place in [location]. Got sent to a different location this time...I was met by L\*\*\*\*. Kind of a butter-face type. Massage was uninspiring...I just go for handshakes [hand jobs], and on this she didn't disappoint...The only problem was communicating that I wanted her clothes off. She finally got the message and...Hands were free to roam everywhere...She said she's there for one week.*

One john posting on the Bloomington, Illinois AMP (Asian Massage Parlor) Reports forum complains about the high turnover of women in AMPs. He seems primarily concerned about the women's disappearance in relationship to his own pleasure, noting that he hopes the woman who replaces the one who has disappeared is "of equal quality":

*Why is it that the good ones never stay very long? ...I was disappointed she had left. Now she is back but is leaving in 2 weeks? Just before I can get back to visit again. Hope her replacement is of equal quality!*

Regarding the disappearance of the same woman from a Bloomington AMP, which is phrased in the common euphemism "gone on vacation," another user writes that he assumes the Chinese woman "went home." He is also primarily concerned with focusing on the "new talent" that will arrive, a comment that confirms many traffickers' assumption that men who buy commercial sex desire a frequent turnover of "new talent" and "new girls" to sample:

*From my last Hong Kong visit I learned that L\*\*\* has 'gone on vacation.' I didn't ask if it was a day break, or if she went home. I assumed the later...The wait for new talent begins again.*

Another post on the Bloomington AMPs forum seems to support evidence that women in Asian Massage Parlors are often trafficked all over the country. He writes:

*Stopped by [Asian fake massage business] today and saw the new girl C\*\*\*\*...I was pleasantly surprised at the extras I received...She said that this was her 4th day here, and she was previously working in Dallas TX.*

A man posting on a Rockford forum notes that a woman at a fake massage business stopped showing up for work, and her coworkers did not know what had happened to her. The john expresses some "disappointment," but he seems content to move on, having found "a more than satisfactory alternative" to the woman who had left:

*[S]he...told me that L\*\*\* M\*\*\*\* had quit. According to A\*\*\*\*, [L\*\*\* M\*\*\*\*] simply didn't showing [sic] up for work one day and none of the women who worked with her have heard from her since. This was something of a disappointment, but I hope she's found something else to do if that's her choice. I was to quickly learn that A\*\*\*\* was a more than satisfactory alternative.*

In general, men who post on the USA Sex Guide about buying sex at fake massage businesses in Illinois seem accustomed to the frequent turnover of women and girls at the parlors, and to being told that women have "gone on vacation" periodically or permanently. Rather than expressing concern about the women's well-being, the majority of johns who mention this turnover seem excited about the chance to "sample" the "new talent" that will replace the women who have disappeared.

As with johns' comments about power dynamics at fake massage businesses, johns' comments about women/escorts from online ads and escort agencies often mention dynamics that could indicate trafficking and sexual exploitation. In addition to noting overtly the presence of pimps/traffickers who take the women's money, some men on the forums note that women must be "booked" through a third party, complain that a woman is different from the girl pictured on the website (a common practice in online prostitution rings that sell multiple women and assume that men will accept whichever woman they send to johns), talk about how women change location "three times a day" and are posted "all over" sex websites, and note potential physical abuse experienced by women.

One john writing on a Mt. Prospect forum observes that a man's shoes can be seen in the ads for a woman described by other forum users as possibly being on "speed." He thinks the presence of a man in the photos and the potential addiction may be "red flags," but another user assures him that the woman "has a boyfriend" who "[w]aited outside till we were finished." He advises the concerned john not to "worry about him [the boyfriend/pimp]. He is not around anywhere during the session." The men in this exchange seem concerned about a boyfriend/pimp only insofar as he might inconvenience/threaten men who buy sex, not because of the harm he may do to a woman in prostitution.

Another user posting on a Rockford forum describes arranging a sex encounter with a "BSW," or black streetwalker, through a "BP," or black pimp. The reference to the pimp appears to be made mainly in order to make a racial joke. According to his report, this monger's interaction with the pimp does not deter him from buying sex with the woman:

*I got a number from her [a prostituted woman]. An hour or so later I try the number, get another BSW (I presume SW, the race I was more sure) and asked for T\*\*\*. I hear a well spoken BP (new abbreviation Black Pimp, and once again I was being presumptive about his chosen occupation and less presumptive about his race and I was definitely being sarcastic about pimp-daddy being well spoken). In short order we make our plans.*

A user on the Chicago Backpage Advertiser Reviews forum also references a third-party booking network in his post. He tells fellow mongers, "Just s [sic] bit of a warnign [sic] about this one her and her fellow workers all book through another girl so your wait times may vary depending on if she can get them right away." Another man on the same forum reports that a woman on Backpage had ads all over the Chicago area, and he seems spooked when a man—potentially the woman's pimp—apparently answered the phone number the john had been using to call the woman from the ad:

*Later that nite [sic] I called b\*\*\*\*\* k\*\*\*\*\*. She too had ads with different locations all over backpage. Almost as if she was changing her location three times a day. Once in hyde park, once in Evanston, another time downtown. When I called her she said she was downtown and then I discovered she was with '[another woman's name].' Then a guy answered the phone and said are you coming or not and I said no thanks.*



The same man writes about arranging to have sex with another woman from Backpage.com and reports being “pissed” when the girl he saw “wasn’t the girl in the pics.” He reports purchasing sex with her anyway after having her coming out to his car to evaluate her body. He pays \$60 for full sex with her and then ends the report by stating that he saw that the woman had been hiding “two black eyes.”

*On another note I went to see t\*\*\*\* d\*\*\* last nite [sic] in Skokie and when I arrived I realized it wasn't the girl in the pics. I was pissed....So I left when I got there and then her friend calls and says I'm tan and skinny do you want to see me instead. I tell her to come outside to my car so I can get a look at her. She has a nice bod so I go for it and tell her I'm ony [sic] doing \$60 and she was cool w it. CBJ cowgirl mish doggie then I was out. She had glasses on when I askd [sic] her to take them off she had two black eyes. Ridiculous.*

Clearly the woman he bought sex with experienced abuse, according to the user’s account, though he seems perhaps annoyed, not concerned, by her black eyes.

Another user on the Chicago Backpage Advertiser Reviews forum describes being “scared as hell” after speaking with a man who was pimping out a girl who “just arrived” in Chicago and will only be available there for commercial sex for two weeks:

*Saw V\*\*\*\* here [link to BP ad]. Was scared as hell and almost turned around because the guy sounds so like LE [Law Enforcement]. Sounds like a white dude born in America and likes to use the word 'book' and 'property'...Shell [sic] be here for about 2 weeks as she just got here.*

On a Rockford forum, a user describes an experience in which a woman reportedly asked for permission to give the money he had given her for sex to another man who had been waiting nearby in “the shadows.” The john reportedly agrees and proceeds to have sex with her afterwards:

*I'm off to her apartment. She jumps in but leaves the door open. 'I have a favor to ask.' 'Can I give the 'contribution' (my term not hers) to X\*#\*x&& (her significant other, whom I wouldn't name here)?' She'll wait in the car and he'll come and get it. What the fuck can I say? I'm literally in the driver's seat if not figuratively. I've seen her 'other' before and he don't scare me no how (intentional poor English). He's a little wigger wanna-be [a male Caucasian, often suburban, who emulates African American hip-hop culture and style]. Ok I sezz. He steps out of the shadows of her door way and does that little hunched shoulders grab his pee-pee walk that all good wiggers work so hard to perfect. She hands him the dead presidents and shuts the door. Off we go...*



Comments on the Illinois johns' boards about pimps at strip clubs were less common than for other types of sex venues, but some johns did note the presence of pimps at strip club locations. A poster on the Rockford Strip Club Reports forums bemoans the presence of "parasite pimp boyfriends" who sit at bar stools in clubs, "sucking money" out of the girls there. He complains:

*One of the dancers was a 8-10 in looks and attitude, unfortunately I noticed her giving cigarette money to some parasite guy sitting at the bar. I hate pimp types. The bar owner should really not allow the pimp types to sit in the bar or the parking lot, what a turn off...I would like..no parasite pimp boyfriends sitting in the bar stools sucking money out of these girls.*

Another user responds to this post by stating simply, "Welcome to Rockford," indicating that "parasite pimps" may be a common sight at strip clubs in Rockford.

A john posting on the Washington Park Strip Club Reports forum talks about a woman who quit working at one strip club because they had been "forcing" girls to work at another strip club. He also states that the woman was arrested in a raid and subsequently "struggled" at a different strip club because she did not want to provide the sexual "extras" that other women were providing there. According to him:

*M\*\*\*\*\* was an absolute prize. She quit [strip club A] because at the time they were forcing girls at least in days to go to [strip club B]. She avoided it for quite some time but finally her number was up and it just happened to be one of the days ESL raided the place and put everyone in jail. So she quit. Several months later someone told me she was at [strip club C] so I stopped by a couple of times...She struggled a bit there because she wouldn't provide all of what is pretty much widely available there so she quit. I think it was too dirty for her as well.*

62

In a rare post by a woman on the Illinois boards of the USA Sex Guide, a poster who self-identifies as a woman, M\*\*\*\*\*, who posts ads for sex online and who has reportedly danced at strip clubs in Rockford posts on the Rockford General Reports forum in order to inform johns, apparently, about another woman, L\*\*\*\*, who dances at a strip club in Rockford. Her account is laced with references to the extreme violence, pimp-control, unprotected sex, and desperation reportedly experienced by L\*\*\*\*, though it is important to note that these descriptions are couched in a discourse of blaming the woman for the violence she is experiencing. Her post could be seen as an indication of both the pervasiveness of the culture of "victim blaming," as well as the difficulty for women in prostitution to create solidarity amongst each other, given the competitiveness that is often bred amongst women in the sex industry.

M\*\*\*\*\* goes so far as to state that L\*\*\*\* "likes" that her boyfriend/pimp "beats her ass." According to M\*\*\*\*\*, the people around L\*\*\*\* know about the extreme violence she suffers but do not feel sorry for her because she doesn't "stop the beatings," even though she also mentions that L\*\*\*\* does stay in a hotel away from her pimp to "fee[l] safer." M\*\*\*\*\* writes:

*This is M\*\*\*\*\* and I just wanted to say that [L\*\*\*\*'s] boyfriend beats her ass and she likes it. Hes [sic] stabbed her head with a butcher knife and has thrown her daughter down a flight of stairs. Nobody feels sorry for her whatsoever. Cause the guy is a threat to her children and the poor kids see their mom get beat everyday and she does nothing to get away from him. She will feed you with her sad stories and try to make you feel sorry for her but she likes it. She loves staying in a hotel room to [sic], I think she feels safer in one but that still don't stop the beatings. She pays a lot for a hotel room plus her 4 kids and her man. So she has to make a lotta bucks to make it. So to ensure she pulls alotta sessions she offers no condom with everyone so she can get most of the business. In fact she's 4 or 5 months pregnant by a customer right now and her boyfriend Theo knows that its not his and now hes [sic] beating her even more and she's been coming to work with black eyes. You would think DCFS would get involved but her mom used to work with them and protects her from getting in trouble.*

In another report, M\*\*\*\*\* mentions that the boss of the strip club in question has apparently paid for L\*\*\*\* to get abortions from pregnancies that resulted from sex (most likely unprotected) with customers. She says, "I like L\*\*\*\* all I have to say is the boss has already payed [sic] for one and 2 abortions already to help her and probably wouldn't help her this time. So for everyone that cumed [sic] in her it might have been your baby she killed." M\*\*\*\*\* ends another report by continuing to blame L\*\*\*\* for the abuse she is reportedly experiencing:

*I'm just telling the truth and I hope the best for [L\*\*\*\*]. I tried to help her and offered her to live with me but she don't want the help. I just hope she realizes what she's putting her kids through and what they will become as a result of all this violence....*

63

The posts by M\*\*\*\*\* not only offer a glimpse into the perspectives of a woman in the commercial sex industry in Illinois, but they also indicate the types of violence and extreme abuse that can be suffered by prostituted women.

## Human Trafficking & Ending Prostitution

In the rare instances in which the men who post on the Illinois boards of the USA Sex Guide directly discuss issues of the demand for commercial sex and ending prostitution, they express diverse opinions that are difficult to categorize. However, a majority of the men posting appear to take prostitution for granted as a societal institution that will never disappear and believe that exploitation is inherent (and therefore somehow excusable) in prostitution. Many argue that legalization is the way to solve “that sex slavery stuff.”

A john posting on the Chicago Massage Parlor Reports forum in late June 2011 seems outraged at the legislation passed in Illinois to protect children in Illinois from being forced into the sex trade and to provide police and prosecutors new tools to go after pimps, traffickers, and people who buy sex (the Illinois Safe Children Act, or HB 6462). He argues that it is “impossible” for prostitution to ever disappear and reinforces the platitude that it is “the oldest profession”:

*How can stupidity and hypocrisy be so universal in politics that such a law could have passed! In a ‘free’ country where people are on the news everyday talking about civil liberty, in a city that votes blue in every election, there exists a law that criminalizes interaction between two consenting adults. What is the end goal? That one day prostitution will not exist? First, it is impossible. There is a reason that prostitution is the oldest profession. Because it has been around forever and will continue to be around forever.*

64

One john who says he watched a special on MSNBC about human trafficking in February 2011 wonders if other mongers have seen it and says it “talks about how all the SW are abused an [sic] mistreated very young girls who are tricked by their boyfriends (pimps) to make money and basically become an indentured servant. And well they talk about BP’s [Backpage.com] a lot so just kinda hoping that that doesn’t got [sic] of [sic] the way of Craig[slist].” Another john responds, “Yeah I saw it. A lot of that sex slavery stuff would end if they just legalized prostitution.” A third poster says that idea is “[w]rong” and posts a link to a British news story titled, “My Life of Misery as an Amsterdam Sex Slave.” Yet another john tells the forum member who promoted legalization that he “might wish it were so,” but that the “[s]ad truth of the matter is that there are always going to be those who will take advantage of others, rather than work themselves. Prostitution is no different than any other industry in that matter.”

A john posting on the Chicago Streetwalker Reports forum in September 2009 references an interview with a “former prostitute” who says that when she was arrested with a john, she went to jail, while the john did not. The woman is quoted as saying, “I never really understood that because we’re both committing the crime. If he wasn’t buying, I wouldn’t be selling. I never thought that was fair. ... They get to go home to their families, their wives, and no one knows what they did.” The john citing this interview reacts strongly to the woman’s statements. He argues that her emphasis on the demand for commercial sex is “backwards,” and he instead blames women for enticing him to buy sex with a “look.” He goes on to restate the cliché that prostitution cannot be eradicated because it is “the world’s oldest profession.” He writes:

*This woman is delusional. She’s got it backwards. If she wasn’t selling, we wouldn’t be buying. I can’t tell you how many times I was just driving around (not looking for SW) when someone would give me the look. They come down harder on the*

*prostitutes so they can drive them out of a certain area. Let's be realistic. They're not going to get rid of prostitution. It's not called the world's oldest profession for nothing.*

A different john conceives of demand in much the same way as some anti-trafficking activists, by emphasizing the need for viable alternatives for women in prostitution. He contends that “the only way to stop the demand is to stop the prostitutes by giving them some type of work they can do.” He adds that another poster is dead on in pointing out that “if there was no place for a monger to go, where would they go[?] home.” He also makes the argument that efforts to curb demand in Illinois will spike and the “street scene” will “die down” as Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart tries to “make a name for himself,” but that after a while, the commercial sex industry will go “back to business as usual.”

Regarding the problem of human trafficking, several johns seem aware of the trafficking of international victims to the United States for sexual exploitation, but they describe cases of domestic trafficking much less frequently. When they do describe trafficking or “sexual slavery,” many men seem to view it as something that is separate from the broader commercial sex industry. Examples of how men describe sex trafficking on the Illinois boards of the USA Sex Guide include:

*“Most euro babes who are here, work for a pimp from E. Europe. They have a tax to pay back and that forces them into a [sic] escort/ massage service here. They are not on drugs when they get here, and are under a brutal watchdog system by these guys. If they fuck up, they go back or are sent elsewhere [sic] in the U.S. or the world. They are looked down on very bady [sic] if they walk the streets.”*

-User on Chicago General Reports forum, 12/31/06

*“As I type this, he [a pimp called “The Soup Nazi” on the boards] is probably in Korea convincing gullible young girls about all the money they can make as nannies and waitresses in the US.”*

-User on Chicago BackPage Advertiser Reviews forum, 3/4/11

*“Of all the providers, the Asian (usually Chinese) providers who are distributed in apartments throughout the [Chicago] suburbs area [sic] very consistent. I cannot help thinking, however, that there is some kind of human trafficking [sic] going on. They speak Mandarin and no English etc. . . They must be trapped here.”*

-User on Chicago BackPage Advertiser Reviews forum, 1/31/11

*“No Asian apartments for me - This news made me feel sick. I feel like a creep, really, if you are going to these apartments you are contributing to sexual slavery. No question, no excuse, own it. It bothers me. If you are an escort by choice, right on, free will, free choice. You can do what you want with your body and I strongly believe legalized prostitution would end, certainly curtail, sexual slavery. Forced sexual slavery is sick and I will not go to an Asian apartment ever again. Hookers are illegal, but contributing to human bondage is disgusting. I have in the past. I was dumb and weak. No more. I can get my rocks off with someone who has chosen this line of work and is not forced to fuck for freedom. Gross.*

-User on Chicago Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart's suit against Craigslist forum, 10/19/09

*"If you grow up in an environment that encourages such a choice (poverty, drug abuse, poor family) a young woman may sell her body. The vast majority of women in this environment do not. They [sic] have that choice. However, if you get abducted and are forced to fuck men for your freedom there is no choice. You can color it anyway you want it, but fucking a drug addict or buying a woman dinner are related no way [sic] to having sex with women forced to have sex for their freedom. You are a slave, in servitude to another person. You may be a slave to your drug habit, but it's a choice. A hard habit to break, sometimes unbreakable, terrible, [sic] but crack, etc, is treatable. There is no treatment for a slave. There is a difference in the choice you make. If you are seeing these women you are contributing to human slavery."*

-The same user on Chicago Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart's suit against Craigslist forum, 10/23/09

In response to posts such as those quoted above, one user criticizes johns for getting on a "high horse" and pretending they are "good" johns who only pick up American girls who "choose" to work in the sex industry. He argues that the majority of women in the commercial sex industry are slaves, and therefore, men who buy sex should face up to/accept their participation in the continual abuse of women in prostitution. He says that personally he is "okay with this" and "can walk away." He writes:

*One can also make the claim that the majority of sex workers are slaves. They were "forced" into it by their circumstances. Parents abused them, kicked them out of house, met up with abusive boyfriend, need money to support themselves, no education due to abusive childhood..... Lets [sic] not get on our high horse and pretend we are a 'good' john by only picking up American girls that 'choose' to be prostitutes. Not those 'poor foreign' girls that were forced into it. I bet only a very small minority get into because of free choice. Girls sell sex. Guys buy sex. Period. Sometimes it's illegal (money for sex) sometimes it's not (expensive or cheap dinner and drinks for sex) [sic] I know I have probably fed some woman's drug habit. I know she is probably out walking the streets instead of being home with her kids, thereby continuing the abuse pattern. I'm okay with this. Ultimately, we all can walk away. (I can just be happy with my SO [Significant Other] and she can always find a halfway house, church, whatever) But I don't and she doesn't either. All I'm saying lets [sic] not kid ourselves what the consequences are for what happens after the deed is done. (Broken marriages, disease, drug habits continues.....)*

## Violence to women in prostitution

The cognizance displayed by men on the Illinois forums of USA Sex Guide of violence to women in prostitution has come through in many of the posts already discussed in this report. Sometimes violence is mentioned casually, as when a poster mentions that he passed by an old “rip off” fake massage business in Mt. Prospect where “the owner was publicized as abusing some of the help” and notes that they have since “moved out.” Other johns reference violence obliquely in their physical descriptions and evaluations of women in prostitution. Usually, if the johns on the forums mention potential violence experienced by women in prostitution, they do not dwell on it or bring it up as a topic for special discussion, perhaps as a coping mechanism for justifying their involvement in an industry that harms large numbers of women and girls.

However, occasionally johns will go into more detail on the forums about reported rapes, beatings, and other violence experienced by the women with whom they purchase sex. It is important to note that while such individuals may appear concerned, or at least preoccupied in some way, by the violence, it almost never deters them from buying sex, according to their accounts.

For example, when one john complains on the Chicago Massage Parlor Reports forum that he did not get the sexual “extras” that another user claims he got from a woman at a fake massage business, another user responds by describing an experience he says he had, in which he walked in on another john “yelling and pointing” at a woman, and he wonders about what might have happened if he hadn’t walked in. He further writes that he thinks “something or someone got to her,” and he clarifies that he means that she might have been raped or beaten, because in recent encounters with her she did not talk much and he saw evidence of violence on her body. He writes:

*It may be that time of month, bad day with her honey. I walk in one time with a customer yelling and pointing at her. If I didn't walk in when I did, what might of happen [sic]. I also think something or someone got to her. (Rape or beaten ) Last couple of visit [sic] she did not talked [sic] much and I saw some black and blue marks on her legs and arms.*

A user posting on the Rockford General Reports forum states that he picked up a woman on the street and after “inquir[ing] about her current state of affairs,” he says she told him a sad story that included being robbed, losing her significant other, suffering from insomnia, and significant weight-loss:

*The story (answer) was long, the story was sad, and I'm a sucker. The fiver was a help but could I do more. So I let her in and we head to my place. The tale of woe included (but certainly wasn't limited to) having all of her clothes stolen, a recently murdered boyfriend, and a current and on-going predilection to not sleeping. On the way there she mentions (when she wasn't dozing) that she had recently lost a lot of weight (60 plus pounds)...she is just over five feet tall, WSW [White Streetwalker], and currently 120 to 130 lbs.*



In another post on the Rockford forum, a user describes picking up a woman who is visibly injured, apparently because of another john who kicked her out of a moving vehicle. He describes her as hungry and “sad, scared, and none too eager to trust anyone,” but he still convinces her to have sex with him at his place. He narrates:

*A week ago this past Friday night we got the chance to get to know each other a little better. She was walking north on 10th street just past Broadway. I pulled over, she slowly walked over, she slowly gets in, and we quickly leave the area. She has a black eye and a fucked up ankle and leg. I ask what happened. In bits and drabs I learn that some monger (a middle aged Asian guy driving a dark colored SUV) wasn't happy with [her] and kicked her out of his vehicle while he was still driving. Sad, scared, and none too eager to trust anyone we talk. [She] is a WSW, late 20s to early 30's, and a former dancer. ...After some doing I talk her into going to my place...Taking her home she tells me she's hungry...and we stop and get her a fifth meal.*

In all these examples, the men who describe violence against women in prostitution still paid to have sex with the very women who reportedly experienced violence.

### **Unhappiness & Reluctance of Women in Prostitution**

68 As discussed earlier, many men on the Illinois boards of the USA Sex Guide describe a common vision of a fantasy or ideal experience in which prostituted women provide the illusion of intimacy and authenticity during sexual encounters with johns. But men on these forums also seem aware of just how illusory that fantasy often is. In instances when women reportedly do not perform the script that johns think they have purchased, cracks begin to show in the fantasy, and the reality of a woman's unhappiness and reluctance while working in prostitution shows through.

It should be noted that, while men on the Illinois boards often express disappointment or anger that women are not “enthusiastic” or “dedicated” enough during the purchased sexual encounter, they do not necessarily display awareness that their disappointment could stem from a fundamental discontent, averseness, or unwillingness on the part of the women. That is to say, many of the examples to follow show indications that women might be unhappy or reluctant, but the men themselves might not frame their descriptions in those terms. For example, a john who expresses disappointment that one of his “favorites” at a spa in Joliet is “rushed” and “lacking her typical enthusiasm” does not express any further insight that such shifts could have occurred because she is unhappy with the conditions in which she is working, or with the work itself. Rather than displaying sensitivity to what prostituted women might be experiencing, many men on the forums seem to be the ones causing the unhappiness, reluctance, or resistance, much of the time.



On a Lombard forum, a john complains that he “got a better massage from S\*\*\*\*, but had to fight to get to play with the bolt-ons [breast implants].” Another john on the same forum describes similar reluctance:

*...the massage was also pretty good...better than average. On to the soft touch, the flip, and the usual finish. She was very reluctant to allow any access to anything, which was disappointing.*

One john says that a woman at an Asian fake massage business gave an “excellent” massage and that he “[g]ot her topless,” but that she “actually looked unhappy” when giving him a hand job that he described as “mechanical and uninspired.” He recommends that other johns visit a different woman who “smiles more during the finish,” which he says, “goes a long way.” A john posting on the Mt. Prospect General Reports forum appears implicitly aware that women at Asian apartments (brothels) may be unhappy with providing johns with full sex in his description of their apparent “relief” when he communicates to them that he “just” wants a hand job:

*I'm just there for a handshake...when I get to the apartment, I do one of two things: I hand her \$60 and say, 'For the massage only, then I'll tip you,' or I hand her \$100, get a confused look, and I say, 'For the massage, plus tip.' There's a little sign language that goes on, and I usually get a big smile. I chalk that up to relief that she won't have to spread her legs this time.*

Similarly, another john visiting an Asian apartment (brothel) in Mt. Prospect complains that it was clear that a “new lady” there “did not want to be there doing this at all”:

*There is a new lady there. I could not understand her name. She is older, looks ok, but everything else was bad. She did not want to be there doing this at all. That was evident. The massage was bad, extras were bad, nothing good about it. I am going to stay away for a while. Looks 7, Body 6, English 2, Massage 3, Extras 2, Atitude [sic] 2.*

A user posting on a Washington Park forum reports that he had sex with a petite woman at an Asian fake massage business who appeared to be uncomfortable or in pain while having sex. He says:

*A short, petite Korean from Texas with average looks and short hair, big mistake, no massage and while she has a tight box [vagina] the whole time she's saying you too big, you come now, will not repeat.*

## Health Issues

| STDS & STIS |

In the posts analyzed on the USA Sex Guide (from June-August 2011), an overall 7.95% of posts mention health issues, including STDs and drug/alcohol addictions, approximately 5.4% of which specifically mention issues related to unprotected sex and STDs. Of the men who do mention unprotected sex/STDs on the forum, many do so as part of their routine report of buying sex, not because they view unprotected sex as a concern. Other men who mention unprotected sex and STDs do so in order to warn other mongers to “stay away” from certain “diseased” women, whom they often describe in disdainful terms.

The posts analyzed from the Illinois boards of the USA Sex Guide indicate that women and girls in prostitution face numerous health risks, many of which are serious, but, just as importantly, the posts also reveal that many men who buy sex perpetuate the description of prostituted people as “vectors of disease,” a notion that dates back at least as far as the Victorian era (Bell 1994). Since that period, women in prostitution have been defined often through two inverted “master images”: one is “a ruined, destroyed, victimized body; the other a destroying body, a disease that spreads and rots the body politic” (Bell 1994, 45 and Pullen 2005, 1). Charles Baudelaire, a renowned theorist of modernity, described the prostitute body as “the allegory of modernity.” Building on that notion, Bell argues in *Reading, Writing, and Rewriting the Prostitute Body* (1994) that the prostitute body “was mapped—marked out and defined—as a distinct body, and ‘the prostitute’ was actively produced as a marginalized social-sexual identity, particularly during the latter half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century” (40, 44).

70

Framing women in prostitution as diseased or “destroying” bodies has a concrete impact on the treatment of prostituted people. During the 1980s, as awareness of the sexual transmission of AIDS spread, various governments enacted laws that blamed prostituted women as “vectors” of the HIV virus and that protected johns from prostituted people through the enforcement of mandatory HIV tests for anyone convicted, or simply arrested, on prostitution charges (Alexander 1997, 88 and Marten 2005, cited by Menon 2003, 262). Law enforcement and legal approaches to health issues associated with prostitution often denigrate women in prostitution and unfairly put the blame and responsibility for such issues on the women, not on the men who pay for sex with them and are responsible for the demand for unprotected sex.

Before discussing how men on the Illinois boards talk about sexually transmitted diseases and infections, including HIV/AIDS, in the commercial sex industry, it is worth noting that this report cites posts not to perpetuate images created by the johns of infected women, but to discuss the active creation of those images by johns, as an indication of how some of them frame the issues of unprotected sex and STDs.

In cases where men note the possible presence of sexually transmitted diseases, their reactions vary. Some report having sex with the woman but say they will “stay away” and advise others to do the same, some say they are “picky” about when they pay for full sex, because of a general concern about STDs, some decide not to buy sex with the women

they describe as potentially infected, and others seem to view sexual infections somewhat casually. The posts below illustrate some of the ways in which johns on the forums react to reported hygiene/health issues:

*"She was enthusiastic but I will not be repeating. Came up with a little yeast infection odor on the dipstick test."*

-User on Chicago Escort Reports forum

*"She is a complete waste. Very very bad hygiene. Her pussy stank to high heavens and when we were done she stole 2 or 3 things (minor things) from my restroom."*

-User on Chicago BackPage Advertiser Reviews forum

*"I could see FS [Full Sex] easily being had there [at an Asian fake massage business] Still don't know if that's what I'd be into, wise chinaman once tell me 'Man who fishes in other man's well often catches crabs.' So I've been picky about where I fish."*

-Chicago Massage Parlor Reports forum

*"...see a bsw [black streetwalker] sitting on a hydrant...there were blisters on her blisters around her mouth which made me feel like I'd go home with more than a bj [blowjob] so I did not partake."*

-User on Chicago Streetwalker Reports forum

Some johns on the Illinois boards specifically mention HIV/AIDS as a health concern. For example, a john who reports seeing a black streetwalker in a Chicago neighborhood writes that the "area is a little scary, and am uncomfortable with 2 [SW] walking together. This is also a high HIV area." He advises fellow mongers to "Stay Safe." In the same post, one john posting on the Joliet News and Media Reports forum describes purchasing unprotected sex and talking with a friend who told him there has been a recent rise in positive HIV tests at the local hospital. He advises other johns to "wrap it up" when they have sex (i.e., use a condom), but he does not appear to have taken his own advice when it came to unprotected oral sex with a woman in the sex industry. Additionally, he might allude to having unprotected anal sex with the same woman when he says she was "reluctant to give the cola [literally "tail," another word for a person's butt, in Spanish]" but later agreed. He writes:

*Spent a very pleasant 90 mins with A\*\*\*\*\*....Locvely [sic] deep BBBJ [Bareback Blowjob; unprotected oral sex]. A friend of mine works at a Hospital in Joliet. Last night talking to her she was saying how they have had a bunch of HIV test coming back positive. Basically damn near 100% percent she said it won't be declared an out break [sic] and you probably won't hear anything but she never seen it like that before. I know this is all second hand knowledge and a grapevine situation. Just giving a heads up and if you are in the area make sure you wrap it up. Was reluctant to give the cola but agreed and was so sweet about it. Its [sic] not something she says she usually does (who knows! But she was tight and sweet!)*

Other johns may consider the risks of unprotected sex, but decide not to use protection anyway, or may engage in reportedly unprotected paid sex and only consider the risk afterwards. In a report in which a user details his experiences at seven fake massage business/incall situations in Chicagoland, the user describes getting a bareback blowjob (oral sex without a condom) and says, “BBBJ makes me paranoid though, and spent the next few days thinking something was wrong, but as usual it was all in my head.” In a post that a john claims is his first ever on USA Sex Guide, he describes giving unprotected oral sex to a woman he purchased sex with in Lombard:

*Ended up doing DATY [“Dining at the Y,” or cunnilingus on a woman] on her, but then regretted it afterwards thinking of the possible contagions...I used a lot of soap and even put soap in my mouth and swished it around LOL. After she dried me off and we hugged I went to the car, drove away and then and [sic] sued mouthwash for about 2 minutes. I’m a freak I know.*

72 Still other johns on the Illinois boards do not seem to think twice about purchasing unprotected sex, and many describe having unprotected sex with multiple prostituted women, sometimes in the same night. A user who reports going to an Asian fake massage business, a strip club, and a street stroll in the same day in Washington Park, and who reports purchasing full sex with two women (one at AMP, one at strip club, including unprotected sex), adds a degrading comment on the health issues that a woman at the strip club may be experiencing, perhaps because of “customers” like himself; he says that “her Snapper [vagina] smelled like all 6 [of her] kids took a shit in there before they came out, that didnt [sic] help things either.” Another john posting on the Chicago Streetwalker Reports forum reports paying \$50 for a “half and half” (half oral sex, half intercourse) that was half unprotected and half protected with one woman, then picking up some food and going back out to look for more sex to buy, hopefully with a “younger” woman:

*Paid .5 for half and half. Bbbj [bareback blowjob] and nailed her covered from behind. Afterwards took her back to her corner, grabbed some food and taking a rest beforeni [sic] cruise again. Looking for something a little younger this time, hopefully mid 20’s...*

The user who posted the comments above did not reveal an awareness of the potential risks of purchasing unprotected sex with one woman and then going out to have more (potentially unprotected) sex with another prostituted woman.

In contrast to many of the men referenced above, some men who post on the Illinois boards of the USA Sex Guide talk openly about the importance of safe sex and say that they insist on using condoms. Such discussions sometimes reinforce the notion that prostituted women are vectors of disease. One john writes, “Bareback should never be an option,” and another declares, “I avoid girls who will have FS [Full Sex] without a cover [condom]...In [sic] don’t know what’s worst with this hobby, getting to meet uncle Leo [Law Enforcement] or leaving with an STD.” In response to those concerns about unprotected sex, another user responds, “Its [sic] a risky hobby but I dunno why I keep doing it.”

One user makes fun of another who says he is considering quitting the hobby because of getting athlete's foot and sinusitis at fake massage businesses, and this user responds:

*Wow! If you think that's funny, you'll absolutely be in stitches if you read the Mayo Clinic's article about Athlete's foot and it's [sic] cousins Ringworm and Jock itch. Imagine. Being concerned of possible cleanliness issues at a cat house.*

The poster's sarcasm seems to indicate a belief on his part that it should be taken for granted that "cat houses" (brothels and other locations where commercial sex is sold) can cause health concerns. A john posting on a Belvidere forum says that in a "session" with a new girl who was not his "standard choice," the woman "went right in for it BB [Bareback Blowjob] and [he] had to ask her to put the cover on." To a fellow monger who claims that a woman at an Asian fake massage business in Joliet offered him unprotected full sex and "BBBJs," another john responds, "What no way" and adds that "something must be wrong!" if a "provider says don't worry about the condom." A third user on the forum conjectures that the woman might be "offering" unprotected sex because she "just doesn't care and wants out of the industry."

Despite the existence of some discussions about the implications of unprotected sex and sexually transmitted infections and diseases, some johns on the Illinois forums of USA Sex Guide seem to believe that any such health concerns do not change their preference for buying unprotected sex. As a john posting on the Chicago South Suburb Reports forum says, "I would prefer a BBBJ [Bareback Blowjob] over a CBJ [Covered Blowjob] any day."

#### | DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE |

73

Many johns posting on the Illinois boards mention drug and alcohol abuse on the part of women they pay to have sex with. Their comments seem to support research that has found that women's inability to escape prostitution can lead many of them to self-destructive behaviors, including using drugs and alcohol to "cope" with the difficulty of being in the sex industry (Hughes, 2004: 5). Men on the USA Sex Guide forums in Illinois most frequently frame women in street prostitution as suffering from addiction issues, and they do so in often disparaging terms. The low prices some men report paying for sex (often unprotected) with apparently addicted women are a testament to the potential severity of the women's addictions. The johns report that some of the addicted women are young, and they sometimes mention that the women have been arrested or jailed on prostitution or drug-related charges.

A john who buys sex in fake massage businesses criticizes "cheap SOB's" who buy ".2 bj's [\$20 blowjobs] from needle infested skanks on the corner." Another reports buying a covered blowjob for \$10 from a woman on the street in Chicago but says he "[w]ill not repeat though as she like most sw [streetwalkers, or sex workers] are supporting a habit." Another john reports that a woman who worked in Niles "was twitching as much as a crackhead SW, and her paranoia level was at 110%." A different john complains that a girl he found online "does not look like her photos. She looks cracked/methed out." A john posting on the Rockford General Reports forum reports buying sex from a young woman who had been in jail on prostitution charges and who appears to use drugs:

*She was in her early 20s and she told me she was in jail but got out and had to go to court and was arrested for what I was picking her up for and I had fun with her and she had money for drugs.*

In the following post, a john posting on a Rockford forum describes a situation in which he pays for sex with a woman he assumes will use the money for drugs, and he seems convinced that the only reason she is working in prostitution is to support a drug habit:

*I put the \$100 on the table and she told me to make myself comfortable. I assumed at that time that \$100 would be in a drug dealer's pocket 10 minutes after I walked out the door...Call me a pussy but I have rarely (2 or 3 times in my life) done a street worker as I think it is too risky for my scenerio [sic]. So to be fair, I don't see a lot of the busted out crack hoes you street mongers do. C\*\*\*\*\* was nice and did put me at ease. But to be candid, she looked like she was addicted to crack or meth. Hey, she wouldn't be fucking me if she wasn't. She had they [sic] look like she had prematurely aged. I almost was too worried about crabs to stick it in C\*\*\*\*\*, but she started with CBJ [Covered Blowjob] and then figured, yeah..I can always get the medicine if I get crabs...There was never any discussion of BB [Bareback, or unprotected sex] as I was scared of FS [Full Sex] with a condom with this girl.*

In addition to noting alcohol and drug abuse among women in street and online prostitution, some johns on the Illinois boards report substance abuse among women working in strip clubs. A john posting on the Washington Park Strip Club Reports forum says that one dancer “had a smoking hot body but looked high or stoned or whatever so [he] declined.” Another user posting on the same forum describes a woman who was “certainly [his] type” but was “out of it” in the back room. He adds, “She also had a smell to her if you know what I mean.” A user posting on the Chicago Strip Club Reports forum encourages other johns to take advantage of a “small and dirty girl” at one club by getting her drunk:

74

*Try L\*\*\*\* at [strip club]. Hot small and dirty girl...Used to fuck her when she was 'retired' (temporarily). Get her drunk and she will do almost anything, in of [sic] out of the club.*

This last comment points to a vulnerability that many women and girls appear to experience (in this case purportedly due to intoxication), and it and similar comments on the Illinois forums also indicate a desire on the part of some johns to take advantage of that vulnerability for their own benefit and/or pleasure.

Many men who buy sex appear to rationalize their participation in the commercial sex industry through the illusion that they do not contribute to the harm experienced by women and girls in it, and the USA Sex Guide boards in Illinois seem to allow mongers to believe they are the ones facing real harm, from law enforcement, from “rip-off bitches,” and from others who are perceived as threats to their “hobby.” In the next section of the report, we explore johns’ perceptions of law enforcement as a common enemy against whom the brotherhood of mongers on the Illinois forums of USA Sex Guide bond. In the forum posts, johns set examples for one another on how to respond to the perceived threat from law enforcement. The next section also explores how johns on the USA Sex Guide often use the illegality of prostitution as a scapegoat for any harm women might be acknowledged to experience in the sex industry.



## RESEARCH QUESTION 2: Impacts of Law Enforcement on Men Who Buy Sex

This final section examines how johns who post on the Illinois forums of USA Sex Guide educate one another on efforts to curtail and punish their “hobby.” During the course of analyzing posts on the USA Sex Guide, it was surprising to see the extent to which forum members talk to one another about law enforcement efforts and legislation in relationship to their purchasing of sex. They share information and advice with one another on a variety of topics. In the first two sections, the report looks at instances in which johns share information about actual laws that may impact their mongering and discuss how those laws are implemented. The next sub-section, “John Discussions of Law Enforcement Procedures,” deals with johns’ forum discussions of the habits and practices of law enforcement officers. “How Johns Avoid the Law” looks at how users on the USA Sex Guide forums in Illinois give one another tips for evading or dealing with law enforcement while out purchasing sex. The report then moves to a discussion of instances in which policy appears effective in deterring men from purchasing sex, according to johns’ own accounts, as well as instances in which policy appears ineffective in addressing the demand for commercial sex. This firsthand insight may help policy makers design more effective laws and may help law enforcement improve their efforts to arrest and prosecute johns.

### 1. Johns Educating Johns About New Laws

This research comes at a time when Illinois has passed several laws that affect johns, and they are taking notice. The Illinois Safe Children Act was passed in the General Assembly on May 26, 2010 and was signed into law by Governor Pat Quinn on August 20, 2010. The Illinois Safe Children Act (HB 6462) was the first state law to remove all criminal penalties for minors in the sex trade, and it includes increased penalties for johns and pimps. End Demand Illinois is a statewide advocacy campaign, led by the Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation. The campaign works to hold traffickers, pimps, and the people who buy commercial sex accountable, while proposing a network of supportive services for survivors of the sex trade.

Comments on the Illinois forums of USA Sex Guide reflect and respond to these changes in legislation and the subsequent law enforcement response. The responses from johns regarding the new legislation described above—in particular the Illinois Safe Children Act, since it more directly impacts johns—provide insight into their perception of efforts to curtail and punish their “hobby.” The posts reveal that many men who buy sex in Illinois are well-informed about how new legislation may impact them, and johns assist one another in understanding the practical implications of the laws.

Some johns on the Illinois boards refer to how new legislation has negatively impacted their mongering activities, in some cases almost immediately following the signing of new laws. For example, a john who posted on a Roselle forum four days after the Illinois Safe Children Act (HB 6462) was signed by Governor Quinn complained that, according to “new rules” at a local fake massage business, his “favorite Ukrainian” there informed him that now she “could not take anything off,” though “[g]roping was allowed.” He ends the post by saying, “Welcome to the new laws.”

Another man posting on the Chicago Streetwalker Reports forum in late September 2009, when the End Demand Illinois campaign was in its early stages, tells other mongers about the End Demand Illinois campaign and warns them to “[w]atch out” as they “are out to get the monger and let the SW [Sex Workers] go”:



*Tom Dart is trying again to make a name for himself by pioneering a get rid of demand campaign. They believe instead of taking in the SWers and trying to get them off the street and get them a different line of work if they get rid of the demand the SWers will go away. Can anyone say Delusional? They have the backing of some Woman's group and they gave them \$500k in funding. It is some program that the whole nation is looking at the viability of it working in other areas. Watch out they are out to get the monger and let the SW go.*

Another john posting 11 days after the Illinois Safe Children Act (HB 6462) was signed by the governor wonders if the new law will only impact men who buy sex in the Chicago area, or if other cities in Illinois are as “enthusiastic” about implementing the law:

*The concern for this new law seems to be only in the Chicago area sections on this site, even though it is for the whole state. Has anyone heard how other cities in the state might be reacting? There was a post that said it was basically sponsored by Cook County and their officials seem to be the most enthusiastic about it.*

A john who posts on the Chicago Escort Reports forum about a week before HB 6462 was signed into law asks other forum members if an escort agency that closed did so because of the new law, and he discusses how the law might impact people in the commercial sex industry. He writes:

*Does anyone knows [sic] why This [sic] agency got suddenly closed. She was running a good show with great girls for many years. I heard that the New Law HB 6462 is scaring off some of these agencies. The New [sic] bill could be a Law [sic] from August 24 if signed by Governor. Basically misdemeanor will be a Class 4 Felony and includes johns, providers, pimps, appointment makers and place of Action [sic] like Massage [sic] parlor or a brothel or an apartment.*

In a post titled, “Hb 6462,” another member posting on the same forum responds to the above user, “Good Lord. That may explain it. Looks like all they can do is focus on punishment instead of legalizing this great hobby of ours. Sheesh.”

Some johns post on the Illinois Sex Guide boards about End Demand and the Illinois Safe Children Act in order to clarify details of the bill, i.e., the legal consequences for various mongering activities. In mid-August 2010, just before HB 6462 was signed, a conversation arises between users on the Chicago Escort Reports forum about whether the bill “deals exclusively with minors” or not. The user who begins the conversation seems to applaud the bill, if it criminalizes men who have sex with minors, whom he describes as “disease[d]” and in need of “help”:

*From what I read the bill-law deals exclusively with minors. Frankly, if your [sic] bopping a minor, you should go to jail. I am an avid hobbyist and have left on 2 occasions because the girl looked way to [sic] young. Stick with the adults and if you get the impression the girl is trafficked' [sic] then you should stay away. I am cool with consenting adults doing whatever they want for whatever price they agree, but once you start bopping kids you have a disease and should get help.*

Another user responds that the first post is “Not True,” as the “Bill deals with Adults too.” He explains:

*The original bill was for minor [sic] but they added more language to it for Adults [sic] too. Basically making it Class4 [sic] Felony from a misdemeanor for Adults [sic].*

*Thats [sic] how the Bill got passed. This is a [sic] very serious stuff if become [sic] the Law [sic] on August 24. I think we all need to say good by [sic] to this Hobby [sic] or get ready for Felony [sic] charges which also means loss of Job [sic] for professionals. LE will pursue it hard due to the Felony Charges [sic]. See this link from End Demand organization who are behind this Bill [sic]. This explains the penalties and its [sic] just not for Minors [sic].*

The user then provides a link to a summary of the Illinois Safe Children Act posted on the End Demand Illinois website. The first user responds:

*You obviously didn't read the entire bill. There is a section specifically for minors (to protect them), but it also elevates all of the other charges from Misdemeanor to Class 4. Looks like things might be drying up in Chicago.*

Many other posts on the Illinois forums of USA Sex Guide express concern and confusion regarding the new law. Other posts about the confusion between felony vs. misdemeanor charges for men buying sex include:

*“I've not been around this forum for some weeks, but I'm wondering if anybody knows if LEO [Law Enforcement Officer] is charging people under the new John felony law?”*

-User on Chicago Streetwalker Reports forum, 11/11/10

*“A felony? Was he going to see an underage girl? I thought the new laws only gave felonies to repeat offenders, pimps, and those who own / rent a house of prostitution.”*

-User on Chicago Backpage Advertiser Reviews forum, 2/11/11

Below is an exchange that took place the day the Illinois Safe Children Act was signed and the two days following the signing, between several posts on the Chicago Escort Reports. In the comments, the forum members ask for and give one another information about the new law:

*“I heard on the radio today that some bill regarding not charging someone under the age of 18 with prostitution was signed by Gov. Quinn. Could it be this Bill in question?”*

-User A, 8/20/10

*“Yes, but they add Adults too by increasing to Class 4 Felony.”*

-User B, 8/20/10

*“So, this is it? We're screwed now or are the AMP [Asian Massage Parlor]/Escort providers screwed now? Both of us? What is the best way to go about mongering now that this new bill is in the fold?”*

-User C, 8/21/10

Other men on the Illinois boards of the USA Sex Guide discuss the charges associated with purchasing sex near a school. One john posting on the Chicago Streetwalker Reports forum in late September 2010 reports that he looked at the arrests of men on the Chicago Police Department's Clearpath website in order to understand the types of charges johns may receive. He finds that there are "three distinct offenses for each of the statutes," including "regular (misdemeanor), within 1000 ft of a school (felony), and 2nd offense (felony)." The john says he thinks the new HB 6462 law makes the first offense a felony, and he advises johns that "anyone even thinking about this should stay far from schools, never admit to completing any act, don't get caught a second time, and ride a bicycle if you like your car and your bank account." He ends his post by asking other forum members, "Does anyone here want to post a google map with 1000 ft circles drawn around all the schools?" A different john, posting on the Chicago News and Media Reports forum in July 2011, calls the "1,000 foot rule" a "joke," because "[m]ost of the mongers on this site have probably violated that law without even realizing it." He claims the law is "too vague" because it makes purchasing sex acts of any kind near a school a felony. He explains:

*No one wants prostitution taking place by school grounds, but this law is too vague. An act that takes place inside a home or motel room that's a block and a half away from a school in the middle of the evening is a lot different than a street pickup on a school corner during school hours, yet both are classified as felonies.*

78 A senior member on the USA Sex Guide displays an extremely nuanced understanding of the laws that impact johns in a long post from May 2010 in which he describes the purpose of different laws, their status in the legislature, concrete ways in which they might impact johns, and how fellow mongers may go about better informing themselves or lobbying against the laws. Regarding fellow members' questions about misdemeanor vs. felony charges, this member writes:

*I suspect you are referring to HB6195 that makes various prostitution offenses that are now misdemeanors into felonies. There is another bill that is currently before the legislature, HB6462, which also concerns sex crimes but it is concerned with closing loopholes that exist in the current law (for example, pimping involves taking money from a prostitute, but under current law you can avoid the pimping statute by having the customer give the money to the pimp directly). HB6462 does not change [sic] generally change the criminal level of prostitution offenses (i.e from misdemeanor to felony). Neither of these bills has been passed as a law as of yet but are under consideration in the legislature. If you want to lobby your legislature to oppose a law, then I suppose that HB6195 is the one of greater concern since HB6462 is primarily directed at various service providers. At any rate, you should be aware that under current law, prostitution offenses that occur within 1000 feet of a school ground are felonies. That means if you get busted at an MP [Massage Parlor] that is operating within 1000 feet of a school ground, you could get hit with a felony charge. One other point that I might add is that you can get hit with a felony charge for prostitution offenses as a customer under current law even if you are not in the vicinity [sic] of a school ground. What HB6462 does is make it easier for you to get hit with*

*a felony charge. For example, under current law, you can think of a prostitution transaction as having two parts: a sollicitation [sic] part (where you solicit the service) and a patronizing part (where you get the service). Under current law, you can get hit with two separate counts: one for sollicitation and one for patronizing. This would allow a prosecutor to pursue a felony charge for a first time prostitution offense (I might add that repeat offenders can get hit with a felony charge for a second single charge). ...For more details about your actual legal rights you would be better served by consulting an attorney who practices this kind of stuff.*

Regarding taking action against the creation of new laws in Illinois that punish men who buy sex, another forum member posting on the Chicago Escort Reports forum four days before HB 6462 was signed by Governor Quinn lists the names of sponsors of the law in the House and the Senate and advises fellow mongers to “[t]ake a look at the names of the sponsors and remember them when election time comes around.” He posted the list of names, five of which belong to women, in part to correct another john who had remarked, “Stupid politicians. Half of them are mongers anyway, this is just another way to soak [sic] people for money to prop up the bankrupt state.”

Three days after HB 6462 was signed into law, a john posting on the Chicago Escort Reports forum laments that efforts to stop the bill are “[t]oo late now.” He writes that efforts to dissuade Governor Quinn from signing the Illinois Safe Children Act were unsuccessful, and he attributes this in part to the strength and effectiveness of the End Demand Illinois campaign:

*Lots of people try by sending emails, calls, letters and even met Governor staff on this but they were unable to convince him to veto at least part of the bill dealing with Adults [sic] penalties. The bill was sponsored by Cook county the [sic] so its [sic] hard for him to object [sic] it. Plus End Demand organization was behind it and they are very strong in getting things done. Currently they [sic] pushing Cook County sheriff office [sic] to start the crack down and no plea bargains for Felony [sic] charges for first few cases to send the message loud and clear. Look for some high profile stings in coming weeks and months.*

79

Some men posting on the Illinois forums of USA Sex Guide focus on new impoundment and towing fees for various crimes, including prostitution or sollicitation of a prostitute. Some examples of sharing information about car towing on the forums include:

*“New impoundment and towing fees go into effect Thursday in Champaign. A \$250 impoundment fee for vehicles involved in certain crimes and traffic offenses will also be assessed. The cars will not be released until the towing administration fee is paid. Crimes where the fee applies include fleeing or attempting to elude police, leaving the scene of accidents involving death or injury or leaving the scene without reporting an accident, driving under the influence, driving with a suspended or revoked license, reckless driving, driving an uninsured vehicle and crimes involving drugs, deadly weapons, prostitution or sollicitation of a prostitute.”*

-User on Champaign General Reports forum, 10/1/09

*“Safety first and remember if you get caught they can take you car [sic] too.”*

-User on Chicago Streetwalker Reports, 5/18/10

Some johns use the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide to clarify what, exactly, will get them “caught” and charged for purchasing sex. They discuss the roles that offers, agreements, acts, and intent play in deciding whether a man can be charged for soliciting sex. After one john claims that police “still have to prove she went through with the acts at the times and places specified,” another john on the Chicago News and Media Reports forum responds:

*Nope. In Illinois the crime of prostitution is made out by 1) an offer. 2) an agreement, or 3) an act. Proving an act of prostitution is almost a rarity. The case is nearly always made out by an offer or agreement, whether it's the arrest of an alleged prostitute or an alleged john.*

Another john similarly responds, “Not true! You do not have to actually commit a sex act to be charged with a prostitution offense.” He offers advice to fellow mongers on how to buy sex without getting “nailed”:

*The way that you make an appointment that avoids getting yourself nailed is to avoid being explicit about the purpose of the appointment. Since you were apparently suspicious when you discussed the appointments, it would seem unlikely that you would have said anything that have given [sic] LE valid cause to arrest you.*

In all of the posts described, men on the Illinois boards of the USA Sex Guide display concern about how legislation may impact their efforts to purchase sex. Though misinformation circulates on the forums, usually it is corrected by fellow forum members, which shows the usefulness of the johns’ boards to men who buy sex. Johns explain complicated laws and statutes to one another and give each other concrete examples of what the laws “mean” for mongers. The next section looks at how those laws are implemented, according to johns.

80

## **2. Racial Profiling, Set-Ups, and Posturing: How Law Enforcement Implement Laws**

When johns on the Illinois forums of USA Sex Guide discuss how laws about prostitution are implemented, three major themes emerge: 1) the existence of racial profiling, 2) prostituted women being “set up” and otherwise abused by police officers, and 3) the opinion that laws are used by politicians to bolster their own public image. Throughout most of the posts, law enforcement (LE) and law enforcement officers (LEO) are referred to as “Uncle LEO,” or “Leo.” “Uncle Leo” becomes personified on the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide as the common enemy against whom johns bond and strategize.

Several johns have commented on the Illinois forums that when law enforcement officers do arrest men who buy sex, they disproportionately arrest men of color. A forum member posting on the Chicago General Reports board notes:

*I just was on the Chicago Police department website [Clearpath] which shows the pictures of all the johns arrested in Chicago...I set it for the last 30 days... there is ONE white guy..... what are the odds?”*



Indeed, frequent checks of the Clearpath website during the past year appear to affirm that arrested men of color far outnumber Euro-American men, though such a claim would benefit from a concrete study. A john who self-identifies as white says that he believes police in Chicago engage in racial profiling when arresting johns, and he describes an incident in which he claims that the police seemed “reluctant” to arrest him because he was white:

*I think they do racial profiling when busting us johns. When I got popped 2 years ago at Cicero and 50th St, I was the only white guy out of about 15 arrested. The sting decoy seemed reluctant to come over to my car [...] She finally approached me on my third attempt. [...] I do think she was trying to let me pass by not coming to my car the first 2 times.*

A john posting on the Chicago Streetwalker Reports forum in May 2010 writes about an area where police stings of men who buy sex are frequent, but he says most of the men arrested are black or Hispanic:

*As far as the busts go, LE does stings there ALL THE TIME. The vast majority of those busted are black or Hispanic. Sorry, but it's true. The reason a lot of Hispanic guys get busted is because they don't take the time to make sure it's a decoy. They just pull right up and make the offer.*

There may be many reasons why more men of color are arrested for buying sex in Chicago than Euro-American men, but it is important to note that the perception of many of the johns themselves is that the police engage in racial profiling when arresting johns.

Another theme that emerges when johns on the Illinois forums of USA Sex Guide discuss how laws are implemented is the idea that women in the sex industry are “set up” or otherwise abused by police officers and arrested on prostitution charges. One john writing about a woman’s reported experience while working at a fake massage business in Chicago says, “I was told that the cop forced her hand on his junk and called his buddies in to arrest her.” Another forum member responds:

*If I had a dollar for every time I have spoken to ladys [sic] who were setup by the LE [Law Enforcement] using this tactic just to bust the ladys [sic], F\*ck this just pisses me off just thinking about it.*

Other johns seem similarly incensed or bothered by the criminalization and police abuse of women in prostitution. On the same forum as the two previous comments, another john adds that police should

*[j]ust try to concentrate on the real crimes in the city. Working girls have been doing there [sic] thing since the days of david [sic] and goliath [sic] and you still won't be able to chage [sic] it still to this day.*

A forum member posting on the Chicago General Reports forum in October 2010 makes a more serious claim about police corruption. He states that he has it “on good authority” that police officers in Lake County “will have sex with prostitutes and then arrest them afterward.” Other johns posting on Chicago forums of the USA Sex Guide also discuss police officers who allegedly have sex with women in the sex industry and take “freebies” from them. Such comments include:



*"I have been with lot [sic] of SW [sex workers] and they all say that Leo [Law Enforcement Officers] always pick them up and have everything for free. One told me that she always have [sic] a regular Leo that call her all of the time but he give [sic] her something. One once told me that the same Leo who was with her them [sic] turn and arrested on a miner [sic] thing."*

-User on Chicago News and Media Reports forum, 5/12/11

*"There is one more thing that I have learned via insider information. When a certain girl gets high marks on this board, there are certain LEO [Law Enforcement Officers] who will make it a personal crusade to bag or bed (usually bed) same MT [Massage Therapist]. Don't hang a target on your ATF [All-Time Favorite]!"*

-User on Chicago Massage Parlor Reports forum, 9/30/10

*"Those Leos [Law Enforcement Officers] are just mad because they are not getting any freebees. Trust me, I know many of them who LOVE to run across the ladies. Either for fun or money."*

-User on Chicago BackPage Advertiser Reviews forum, 7/6/11

Finally, some johns appear to believe that laws are implemented in part to bolster the public image of politicians, or in order for police officers to be able to justify their salaries and benefits. Examples of comments expressing these types of opinions include:

*"God forbid prostitution should end. What would Dart have to build his political career on?"*

-User on Chicago Streetwalker Reports forum, 9/18/09

*"Another one [Massage Parlor] gone. What's going on? Leo seems to be going after them all like crazy. Is it because it's an election year? Because Daley's stepping down?"*

-User on Chicago Massage Parlor Reports forum, 10/8/10

*"Being a cop in a suburban town is the most overrated job in the world. 99% of these guys are never in a remotely dangerous situation. The main focus of their job is to write tickets and direct traffic when necessary. They run prostitution stings so they can justify their salaries and exorbitant benefits."*

-User on Chicago News and Media Reports forum, 6/10/11

### 3. John Discussions of Law Enforcement Procedures

| STINGS: DECOYS, LIES, LENIENCY, & PAYOFFS |

When johns on the Illinois forums of USA Sex Guide mention law enforcement (which they do in 13.12% of all posts analyzed), it is often to ask or respond to questions about the practices of police officers, particularly when it comes to conducting arrests, stings, and other undercover operations designed to target men who buy sex. Many johns report that the law enforcement practices they see “on the ground” change their behavior.

Regarding stings for online sex ads, one forum member asks other mongers for tips on identifying potential undercover female police officers in online ads. He writes:

*Of course an undercover cop is not going to post naked photos of herself, but do they ever post using fake pics off of the Internet? When we learn that a post was connected to LE [Law Enforcement], it would be good to post it in the forum to see there [sic] MO. [...] I would suspect that cops try to get you to ask questions so there is no claim of entrapment, but this is just a somewhat educated guess.*

Another john posting on the Chicago Streetwalker Reports forum informs fellow mongers that undercover officers (“decoys”) on the street can arrest a man for pulling over and talking to the “decoy,” even if the man does not discuss sex acts and money:

*The way it works now, if you pull over and talk to the decoy in code and then decide you fucked up and try and pull away, they are busting you anyway. They know what you're there for and they don't give a shit if you didn't actually say the magic words that form the crime (ie: BJ [Blowjob] and \$ amt).*

In May 2011, a john on the Chicago Streetwalker Reports forum posted a “heads up” to fellow mongers advising them to watch a YouTube video created by a Chicago police officer, in which the officer explains how he conducted a prostitution sting. The user says the video contains “[I]ots of good information” for mongers and reminds other johns to be careful because “Uncle LEO” (law enforcement) is “watching”:

*Just a heads up guys. Was on you tube last night and if you search under Chicago prostitution you will see a video made by Chicago PD. It showed a sting operation, the decoy, and while interviewing a detective he had the USG [possibly USA Sex Guide] up on his computer monitor. The sting was filmed at 47th and Cicero. Can't post a link so you will have to look it up. Lots of good information. So be careful out there Uncle LEO is watching.*

Johns posting on the Illinois boards sometimes want to know if law enforcement officers can lie to johns in stings. Johns respond to such questions by informing one another of law enforcement strategies for eliciting confessions from johns. This information better equips fellow mongers to resist such tactics. Below are two examples of information provided on the forums about whether “Leo” can lie:

*“It’s ok for LEO to LIE! I searched that it’s legal for leo to lie. It’s one of the main strategies they use to make an individual confess something. In fact, many innocent people have confessed things they never did by being intimidated by this tactic. On the other hand, if a person lies to leo, there might be some adverse consequences. Pledging the fifth, a. K. A keeping your mouth shut! May be your best move.”*

-User on Chicago Streetwalker Reports forum, 9/20/10

*“When LE has the purpose of conducting police business they do not have to tell you whether or not they are LE. [...] Something else I saw is girls who post on their CL [Craigslist] ads that they are only accepting money for companionship and no sexual purposes or intent of breaking the law. A disclaimer of sorts. This does not stop LE from going after them and can not hold up in a court of law. So gentlemen do not be fooled. No LE have to tell you anything but what they think you may want to hear”*

-User (potentially a woman) on Chicago General Reports forum, 1/19/07

In a post from October 2010, a user discussing undercover sting operations that occur at fake massage businesses corrects a fellow monger whom he sees as misinformed. To a forum member who seems to argue that men at these places can be arrested for buying full sex with women there but not for buying hand jobs from the women, he writes:

*Your understanding of how arrests happen at MPs is flawed. The cops don’t burst in the front door and kick open each massage room door and only arrest those in flagrante delicto. Instead they send in an undercover, he gets propositioned, he arrests the girl and shuts down the place. He does not care what’s going on in the other rooms.*

84

In other words, this user argues that police officers making arrests at fake massage businesses are concerned with arresting women, not men who buy sex, at the parlors. As mentioned earlier, some men on the USA Sex Guide forums similarly indicate that in practice, laws about prostitution in Illinois punish women in prostitution, and police target women on the street more than in other sex venue locations. Johns on the forums observe this law enforcement behavior and change their behavior accordingly; if johns observe law enforcement activity in one geographic area, they often simply move to another area to continue purchasing sex. Reports of johns moving easily from an area where law enforcement targets johns to areas where they can continue their “mongering” freely point to the importance of investigating a wide array of sex venues in communities. A john posting on the Brooklyn General Reports forum describes gaps he sees in law enforcement initiative regarding prostitution in his community:

*Important point guys: the Fairmont police do not allow streetwalkers to walk their streets at all. They will arrest a girl pronto if they see her on the streets. But they don’t give a shit about people driving to the motels and doing whatever there.*

Many johns report that police can be more lax, however, when it comes to arresting men who buy sex. Some examples of police officers who reportedly act leniently towards johns include:

*“Made one too many passes and pissed off the wrong cop, I guess. In Rockford an officer told me he could arrest me for being a nuisance [sic] on a public street. I had trouble keeping a straight face, but chose not to PO him anymore. He told me to ‘get the hell out of Dodge’ so to speak. I moved to a different part of town and kept looking.”*

-User on Chicago Streetwalker Reports, 6/2/10

*“Night shift cops from 1 am-5 am are a lot more forgiving of what happens in Vegas [referring to prostitution in Chicago] because few people are around to complain.”*

-User on Chicago Streetwalker Reports, 7/9/10

Other johns report that pimps and sex venues might be “paying leo off” in some way in order to avoid arrests. One forum member speculates that “[t]he pimps have to be paying leo [law enforcement] off in some manner, because the girls have been out there [on a particular Chicago street] for years with no problems.” Another john posting on a Joliet forum in March 2011 also lacks first-hand information but similarly writes that he “was told that the place down the street was taking care of leo so there would be no problem.”

#### | ADVICE ABOUT ARRESTS |

When discussing law enforcement procedures, many men on the Illinois johns’ boards focus on what to do if they are pulled over or arrested. When they give each other advice on this topic, it is often detailed and lengthy, including specific tips for how to respond to various law enforcement tactics. A man posting on the Waukegan/Gurnee Streetwalker Reports forum in November 2010 advises other mongers on what to do if they are pulled over while attempting to buy sex with women they find walking the streets, and he warns them of what may happen to mongers who are arrested:

*As I look through ‘rules for safety’ let’s talk about LE. Yes the criminals in uniform. ‘Career Criminals’ for real. LOL! If you are pulled over, here’s the facts; 1. 9 times out of 10 they already know the girl and what they are up to, so ‘just giving her a ride’ isn’t going to get you off the hook and will more than likely piss him off. They have nothing but time on they’re hands, so they can grill you until your blind. I don’t care how old or time consuming this becomes DENY, DENY DENY. I don’t care what scare tactics they use if they don’t have a statement they don’t have s, got it? Bottom line is, and I’ve been there, they get a possible conviction and a \$100. 00 bond / fine for the SW [Sex Worker] and a total of about \$1500 from you / your vehicle plus your 15 min of fame in the newspaper and a call to your wife if you have one. I promise you they are not your friend.*

A man posting on a Joliet forum in September 2010 advises fellow mongers to remain “passive and cooperative” in all interactions with law enforcement and to provide them with as little information as possible. He ends the post by warning, “More talk = jail”:

*The odds are the officers don't want to waste their time on raiding a massage joint or harassing the customer and are probably responding to some political pressure or a complaint. Be passive, cooperative and courteous and let them do their job and leave. Someone who trained police officers once told me that if the police are asking questions, they have nothing. If they had something, they would take you into custody ASAP. I would provide a name, and state the obvious in as few words as possible. Don't agree or deny anything, don't take the bait. 'I'm getting a massage'. or if pulled over leaving ask ' have I violated a traffic law, here is my license and registration'. passive and cooperative. Based on your driving and criminal record, your treatment may vary. 'Am I under arrest, or am I free to go'? 'What charges are you holding me on'? If asked 'do you mind answering some questions' respond, 'I'll be happy to speak with you with my lawyer present'. Cooperation in a technically difficult area, the law. If an officer touches you or grabs you, do not pull away aka resisting arrest, be totally passive. Do not give permission to search your car no matter how much they cajole you, if they threaten to get a warrant, tell them you will be happy to wait until they have the warrant. 'may I call my attorney while we are waiting for the search warrant', Passive and cooperative. On one occasion, I did respond to an officer in a pleasant voice, 'I'll stand on my 4th and 5th amendment rights on that one', they laughed and sent me on my way. More talk = jail.*

86

Some johns share YouTube videos and websites featuring lawyers giving advice on how to avoid prostitution charges or how to otherwise deal with encounters with law enforcement. After posting a link to a YouTube video on the Aurora General Reports forum in February 2011, a john advises fellow members that the video “could help you if you run into any problems.”

#### **4. How Johns Avoid the Law**

In addition to sharing information with one another about law enforcement procedures and how to deal with encounters with law enforcement, many johns advise each other on how to avoid law enforcement altogether while buying sex (usually on the street and through online ads), by becoming more informed about law enforcement procedures and tactics and by learning how to avoid drawing attention to oneself. One john says he is “looking for tips on spotting / avoiding LE....How do you look without looking like you're looking?” This question appears in various incarnations throughout many of the USA Sex Guide forums throughout Illinois, and many mongers are willing to oblige their fellow johns with tips on where to go, when to go, how to act, what to say, and what to do. In the following post from August 2010, a user advises another forum member on how to spot and avoid law enforcement while cruising Chicago streets for sex. While the user provides concrete tips on avoiding law enforcement, he also advises “go[ing] with your gut” and reveals that for him, “the thrill in not getting caught is sometimes the motivating factor for a night stroll”:

*Just keep your eyes open, drive during the day and get familiar with the area; so you are not driving blind at night. Also, scout areas for where you can park discretely. Be prepared with an excuse if pulled over. I.e. [sic] You are meeting a friend at the taco bell on so and so street. If asked why you are driving around, tell him you are killing time until your friend calls. As far as spotting decoys, they usually are standing in one place and not usually walking. Cops don't want the decoy to be at risk so she will not get in your car. The last thing they need is to have a high speed chase with their decoy being injured. Do not mention any exchange for sex/money unless she is in the car and you are in drive. Ultimately, there is no garauntee [sic] in this hobby. Sometimes you just have to go with your gut and wish for the best. I find the thrill in not getting caught is sometimes the motivating factor for a night stroll. Another thing, don't drive a car that would attract attention to itself. No one remembers the Honda or Toyota, but the chevy [sic] riding on 22's they remember.*

Another user posting on the Chicago Streetwalker Reports forum in August 2010 gives a “Music Man” brand of advice about avoiding law enforcement, i.e., “you gotta know the territory.” He writes:

*Regarding LE, its [sic] really a matter of knowing the area ahead of time like others have suggested. I would learn the area and also just cruise the area before picking someone up you've never been with. Driving down the cicero [sic] run a few times you'll see all the LE out there and see them up and down the side streets stopping cars. Know where the LE Base is in the area, the last thing you want to do is think you found a good spot a couple blocks away from the station LOL. If a girl is superhot [sic], skip her unless you know for a fact she's not LE. In a new area look for average SW first and see if they get picked up. ...Try not to make your drive and prowl not [sic] look too obvious, look ahead in the distance and for the SW so you don't look like your [sic] watching a tennis match.*

87

Members on the Illinois forums often try to advise one another on how to recognize a law enforcement sting. Some warn each another to avoid “trios of faux ho's” that include a “rainbow cone selection” of one white, one black, and one Hispanic woman. As one user writes in December 2010:

*This sounds like a classic LEO sting. The top brass seem to be fixated on using trios of faux ho's [sic]. Often they are one white, one black, one Hispanic. That rainbow cone selection of flavors is also a dead tip off that it's a trap. Another tip: The faux ho's [sic] usually have much thicker legs and more butt and body weight than a true working girl who is constantly on her feet walking (when she is not on her knees or on her back.)*



In the post below, a john writing on the Chicago Streetwalker Reports forum in late June 2011 gives other mongers a host of advice, including instructing them to drive carefully and calmly in order to avoid drawing attention to themselves; to avoid picking up women who are with potential pimps; to “[a]lways be on the lookout for LEO!”, to avoid women who seem too good to be true, and to use what mongers call the “cop check” or “LE check,” which involves grabbing the private parts of women to make sure they are not undercover police officers. He ends the post by joking that johns can always kick women out of their cars, which he says may be “tricky” but is worth it so mongers are not forced to explain to their families that they are “banging street h\*es”:

*First and foremost, follow the rules of the road! Be careful with the you-turns [sic]. And try not to run over an old lady while scoping out some chick walking down the street (you know them old people love to go out walking after midnight all over the place LOL). By being a smart driver you're less likely to stand out. Last thing you want is to get into a car accident. Also remember to keep your cool. Don't slam on the breaks or double park. Patience. Drive around the block if you have to. Many times the girl will have been scooped up by someone else by the time you go around. But I'd rather be safe than arrested. Every time I've had a stare done [sic] match with another fella, the SW has always chosen to come to my car instead. Must be my winning smile. I'd say never pick up or pursue a girl walking with a guy (s). Thats [sic] just asking for trouble! He might be a pimp down to jack you. Or might be a boyfriend. And you just called his girlfriend a hooker. How do you think that's going to end for you? Always be on the lookout for LEO! I once picked up a chick and got pulled over. The unmarked cop asked me "didn't you see me? I was right there just in front of you!" I maintained I was just giving this girl I ride [sic], and never fell to his pleas to just admit what I was doing. I was assured all they wanted for [sic] was for me to admit it, that I wouldn't be in trouble. I wasn't falling for it. Screw you, sea pig! If a girl seems kinda TGTBT [Too Good To Be True], or something feels wrong, I'd say drive away. If you still decide to go through with it, maybe you just want to stay vague with what you say. Don't discuss \$. Drive a little and string her along, feel up her boobs, ass and sn\*tch [vagina]. An undercover is not likely to go through with all that. You can always decline service and kick her out- LOL. This last one is tricky, but whatever you have to do to avoid having to explain to your wife and kids that you're banging street h\*es.*

In a similarly lengthy post, another forum member writes on the Chicago Streetwalker Reports forum in September 2011 that he has been purchasing sex “for probably close to thirty years,” and he shares the following bits of wisdom with fellow mongers:

*Look, I have been doing this for probably close to thirty years. There is no such thing as an expert, because times change and SWs are different, Also, police tactics change. But some things are constant. You are almost never going to find a '10' on the street. If she is in the sex business, she is an escort, making a thousand a night with bigwigs and doing it in hotel suites. She is not on the street collecting \$20. 00 for blow jobs, hoping she doesn't suck off a vice cop. If a 'ten' is ever on the steet [sic], she has been hitting the pipe and is on the way down- and most likely no longer looks like a 'ten'. So some of you would avoid trouble merely by lowering your expectations. If she looks too good, I would be suspicious. The issue of not getting in the car? It is no different here. Also, you want to*

*go to a spot that you choose, not hers. Hers might have vice waiting. Hers might have a pimp or pimps waiting to rob you, especially [sic] if you go to her room. I know lots of guys have been reporting here good experiences in rooms, but it is a risk. I would at least avoid rooms in private houses. The big thing is to develop patience. You've explored Cicero, North, and 47th and cannot find a thing. You are tired of driving and horny. You are now in danger of doing something stupid because you don't want to go home unfulfilled. Just remember the safety rules are the same when you leave the house as they are after you've been hunting for three hours- or at least they should be.*

Other men share information with one another on the USA Sex Guide about how to avoid law enforcement stings through online sex ads. One forum member says he “damn sure [doesn't] want to make it easier for cops” to arrest him, so he is vague when he calls to make appointments for sex, refuses to discuss sex when he meets the woman, and “proceed[s] to a cop check” before he “get[s] to business.” He believes that using this approach would leave police officers with little “evidence” with which to charge him for prostitution-related offenses. At the end of his post he poses a few questions for fellow mongers about undercover stings and “fake ads used by police”:

*I would like to know from people who have been busted just how far the under covers are willing to go. Every time I have seen undercover busts that are shown on tv, the cop tries to get specifics from the customer on what they want and what it will cost. I figure that with the volume of people they can probably get, the cops would go on to someone else rather than make it harder on themselves with a questionable case. Of course I am doing other things like checking numbers, tiny eye [sic] and another site. I am always suspicious of ads that do not have a price. That puts you in the position of having to talk about specifics on the phone. Does anybody else feel this way. [sic] I would like to see some of the fake ads used by police.*

89

Another user responds to the request for information with the following advice:

*I've never been busted, but I've read enough legal discussions on the Internet to feel like I know what I'm talking about (Danger! Danger, Will Robinson! [sic] Other than keeping your mouth shut in the event of a sting, I don't think your precautions are doing you much good. At the end of the day, you're a guy in a provider's hotel room. The provider has posted an ad somewhere online. No matter how many code words she's used in the ad, her ad is surrounded by dozens of other ads, all offering sex for money. And you've brought an envelope full of money with you. True, you could conceivably be there for a massage, and just A [sic] massage. Or you could be very lonely, shy, and insecure, and you only wanted to talk To [sic] the provider for the hour-you genuinely had no intention of taking your clothes off. In which case, you're going to have a bad day, because 999 out of 1000 guys in your situation are there trying to buy sex, and everyone knows it. Yes, the cops would love for you to say, 'Yes, here is the \$300 I agreed to pay you in exchange for sex, ' [sic] on tape, because that evidence is pretty solid and makes their lives simpler. But by calling her from the parking lot and showing up at her room with money in an envelope. [sic] Doubtless, a lawyer may make them fight for the conviction, but things aren't looking good. Your precautions aren't hurting You [sic], of course. But by far the*

*best way to stack the deck in your favor is to stick to established providers with reviews who don't work in areas prone to stings. And lay off the streetwalkers altogether (sad to say. With experience, you may begin to develop a sixth sense about when things don't seem 'right. ' [sic] The extent to which you should trust this feeling is something else you'll have to wrestle with.*

It is important to note that many users on the USA Sex Guide mention the importance of other online resources for johns, including websites focused exclusively on profiles and reviews of women in particular sex venues (e.g., fake massage business review websites, escort review websites, etc.).

Accessing multiple online resources helps men feel more protected against law enforcement, “rip-off bitches,” and other perceived dangers to their hobby. Users advise one another to Google for information about online sex ads that may seem “fishy” and to avoid responding to online sex ads that do not provide pictures or that only provide pictures of fully clothed women. One john explains, “[I]f the pics are clothed and no [sic] bare anything than that's an immediate sign of a no no. Even if there's a nip slip [exposed nipple] in a leo posted ad, it's grounds for entrapment so leo always makes sure to cover up the good parts in there [sic] ads even if the face is blurred.” The john ends his post by saying, “Most of this stuff we already know but for you new guys it's always a good idea to remember the basics.”

Posts such as this one highlight how the information exchanged about law enforcement on the Illinois forums of USA Sex Guide both confirm and reinforce “common wisdom” among mongers, as well as inculcate monger “novices” into the best ways to purchase sex without getting caught. One man who responds to a warning on the Chicago Streetwalker Reports forum about a johns sting explains the important role the USA Sex Guide plays in his mongering activities:

*Thanks for the warning this is one of many reason [sic] I like this web site. I have visited this site for about an [sic] year but because [sic] a member when [sic] less then 6 months ago and it has help [sic] me a lot. Thank [sic] for all the tread/ messages [sic] to all who take there [sic] time to make them.*

The next section explores whether certain policies on prostitution may be considered effective in deterring men from purchasing sex, based on comments from johns themselves on the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide.

## 5. Law Enforcement Polices and Practices that Deter Men from Buying Sex

Our analysis of the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide indicates that many men on these boards sense a shift in law enforcement approaches to prostitution in many Illinois communities due in great part to recent legislative changes. Users in the forums notice increasing arrests and stings targeting johns, and they worry about it. For some johns, policies that target johns or increased law enforcement presence in areas where the commercial sex industry operates may simply end their “cruise” for sex for an evening. For others, it may end their mongering permanently. The majority of posts on the boards about demand suppression efforts show that such efforts have created energetic discussions among johns about whether or not to continue buying sex, some of whom state that they will not take the risk of buying anymore.

However, it is important to note that when law enforcement policies that target johns are isolated, posts on the johns’ boards indicate that the demand for commercial sex may shift to nearby communities where local law enforcement agencies have not targeted purchasers. If policies that target men are perceived as temporal or isolated, johns may note the police presence but then indicate that they will return to the same area later, or that they will purchase sex in a different geographic location. Such posts signal the need for policies to be implemented in a coordinated fashion by various communities throughout Illinois in order to effectively deter the demand for commercial sex.

### | POSTS ABOUT POLICIES TARGETING JOHNS |

*“On the last pass there was a Chicago police SUV going northbound on Cicero that suddenly did a u-turn to go southbound. That’s when I decided to leave. Thursday night the inevitable happened. I got pulled over. In Cicero of all places. It was about 2 a.m. and I had made one too many repeat drive bys. I was ordered out of the car and patted down. The cops searched the car but I had nothing incriminating. Fortunately the Supreme Deities smiled on me and the police let me go. Needless to say that ended my mongering for the remainder of my trip.”*

-User on Chicago Streetwalker Reports forum, 5/31/10

*“Either way, as tempted as I was I started getting very paranoid after reading the warnings from the veteran members here and decided I better not try my luck.”*

-User on Chicago Streetwalker Reports forum, 5/23/11

*“I’ve been calling [fake massage business] to see my favorite girl Y\*\*\* [...] As I was knocking on the front window trying to see what was going on and didn’t [sic] notice a black crown vic roll up on me. Uncle Leo flashed a light in my face from their car and told me to keep walking. I went straight home and changed my boxers. No more Vice for me!”*

-User on Chicago Massage Parlor Reports forum, 4/29/11

*“Was out Friday night. Just in the area and not looking to make an actual pick up (thank god) because I saw first hand the last guy on the police offenders list get arrested. Leo was out heavy that night. This poor guy made a stop, a BSW approached his window, just then Leo went in for the kill. It was really a wake up call fellas. They came out of nowhere.”*

-User on Chicago Streetwalker Reports forum, 7/10/11

*"I have no idea why I kept going once I entered that neighborhood. Looking back I can't help but feel I really dodged a bullet that day. I'm sure my days of taking those kind of chances are over also. I've been too lucky for too long with backpage providers, its time for me to reconsider my level of involvement [sic] in the hobby also."*

-User on Chicago BackPage Advertiser Reviews forum, 7/10/11

*"I think we all need to say good by [sic] to this Hobby [sic] or get ready for Felony [sic] charges which also means loss of Job [sic] for professionals. See this link from End Demand organization who are behind this Bill [sic]. [Link to summary of the Illinois Safe Children Act from the End Demand Illinois website]"*

-User on Chicago Escort Reports forum, 8/13/10

*"This is ridiculous. I'll be keeping an eye on this as all mongers in the chicagoland [sic] area should, this is serious stuff. This may end my mongering here and make me take more trips to Detroit (strip clubs), and Toronto (amp's)."*

-User on Chicago Escort Reports forum, 8/17/10

*"I'm not in Chicago for the moment, so I haven't posted, but I read the forum every few days, and I can't believe all the busts. I thought this would calm down after the November elections, but it has not. Stay safe."*

-User on Chicago Massage Parlor Reports forum, 1/7/11

*"The push is on though to get the mongerers [sic]. I have two friends who got nailed and it cost them plenty, including having to spend a day at some program called Amends at Madison & California AND having to pay for it on top of the towed vehicle and bond."*

-User on Chicago Streetwalker Reports forum, 9/28/09

*"I think the beat cop who arrests you will suggest you 'tell it to the judge'. Meanwhile, your picture shows up in the mugshot section of Chicago Breaking News. Where it gets picked up around the country. How easy do you think it will be to get that info out of Google once it gets in there? So. You can tell everyone you meet about how innocent you are. Meanwhile, enjoy losing out on every job you ever apply for going forward. All for \$40."*

-User on Chicago Massage Parlor Reports forum, 3/8/11

*"Be thankful they are trying to clean up the streets the old fashioned way by getting the SWers off. The Cook County Sheriff's police headed by Tom Dart is piloting a program they hope brings them national notoriety [sic]. It is called get rid of demand and is focusing on putting away the mongers. The simple fact is they make more money by impounding a monger's vehicle then sending a SW to court that will be out the next day. They are also getting some funding from some woman's group, which thinks that it's going to help the SW which is B. S it will stop the demand for awhile and then when things blow over in a few months it will be business as usual again."*

-User on Rockford General Reports forum, 9/22/09



*“Careful boys. Our local paper is printing prostitution busts with pictures. Check out today's online RRSATR [Rockford Register Star, a local news source]. This is the first I have seen in Rockford.”*

-User on Rockford General Reports forum, 3/2/10

*“Be Careful - An undercover sting by Rockford Police nets another seven arrests. It's part of a crackdown the department's M3 StreetTeam began at the start of the year. This is the seventh prostitution detail in the Midtown District in the past two months, and during that time police arrested 47 people. [pasted article about “new tactics” in the Rockford police department that are “targeting ‘johns’”]*

-User on Rockford General Reports forum, 3/22/10

*“With all the arrests in stings, I am staying away from the street and am going to try to find regulars or go to lingerie shops. I don't want my picture in the Rockford Star.”*

-User on Rockford General Reports forum, 4/7/10

*“What I found amazing is the reporter said so far this year, there have been 80 arrests in the area for prostitution, drug dealing, soliciting, etc. Last year at this time, there were 5. Another four girls bit the dust on Sunday. It appears that Chief Chet Chit Chat is serious about cleaning up the ol' town. Be careful and be safe guys. It's an election - and NOT erection - year. I can approve of the drug-gies and such, but leave the ladies alone or we'll all be playing with Mama Hand and her five daughters. ...Bummed Out.”*

-User on Rockford General Reports forum, 4/21/10

*“You followed your gut feeling and avoided the place [a fake massage business]. I know you made a wise decision. I don't know what would happen if you get caught inside. Nonetheless, it can't be a pleasant moment. If I were a cop, I'd take control of the situation and make you uncomfortable with questions. If I were a ‘shady’ cop, I would even go out to your car and see if you deserve ticket [sic] for your car. You know, broken tail light, expired plates sticker. If possible, just get out of the hobby.”*

-User on Evanston/Skokie General Reports forum, 6/18/11

*“There are so many stings in Aurora that I decided to stay away.”*

-User on Aurora Massage Parlor Reports forum, 3/30/11

*“WSW [White Street Walker] on La Salle in the daytime. Slender and not bad looking. It is just that Aurora is heavy with stings, did want to chance it.”*

-User on Aurora General Reports forum, 5/18/11

*“Be careful out there LEO and all his uncles are out in the streets doing some serious cleaning. Naperville is the latest to be attacked by LEO with 20 individuals arrested. Be safe out there! I think I might quit this hobby soon, the busts are just getting too close to home!”*

-User on Mt Prospect General Reports forum, 11/14/10



These posts offer valuable insight into which types of policies seem to help deter men from purchasing sex. They include experiencing, seeing, or reading about increased numbers of stings targeting johns, especially in their own neighborhoods or favorite purchasing sites; perceiving an increased political will to target johns; and seeing johns' photos posted in public forums such as newspapers. The next section explores instances in which johns might not just be deterred by these policies, but might quit their "hobby" altogether.

## 6. Law Enforcement Responses that Might End "Hobbying"

One john posting on a Chicago forum tells fellow mongers that he is ending his "hobby" of purchasing sex, after being "busted" in Chicago. He asks other johns on the forum for help cleaning his record and thanks members of the "usasexguide community" for their "years of help":

*Well boys after 20+ years being in this hobby it has finally came to an end. I WAS BUSTED in Chicago. Thats [sic] all I will say for now regarding the bust. I will say I am OUT! But I need help to keep my record cleaned. Can you please pass on to me any attorneys that can get me expunged [sic] (is that the word?) from this? I talked to 1 already but he said it will be in the Thousands [sic] of dollars to clear me! Damn if I had that kind of money I would be with escorts. Please help. Also if you were busted can you txt me back and tell me what happened? I can swap stories with ya. Thanks usasexguide community for all these years of help!*

94 Other johns on the forum express sympathy for the john who was "busted" and provide him with information about how to expunge his record and what to do at the courthouse. One forum member says that he "feels for" the busted john, and he expresses anger at "Uncle Leo" for forcing a fellow monger out of the hobby. He relates to the busted john by recounting several instances in which he claims he "called it a night" after being "scared" by the presence of law enforcement. He ends the post by saying he might be "getting to old" for the hobby and should save his money:

*Uncle Leo just makes me so mad sometimes. [User who was busted] I totally feel for you and I hope everything gets taken care of. It sucks with all this activity. Again I guess it's getting warmer and it was an election year and all. But there really isn't any harm going on. I was out on 47th about two weeks ago and saw LEO all over the place saw the unmarked at the truck place just kinda sitting there didn't like it and called it a night. Also about a week ago was on Pulaski between [two streets] around 9PM and saw a girl walking gave me the look was going to do a turn around in the preserves and saw Leo there with a spot light on me. Didn't get busted, but scared me enough to again call it a night. I am a bargain hunter and well sometimes like to look for a good deal, so why is that a crime that I like to have the company of women. Are there not better things out there for Leo to do then to bother us hobbyist and the girls? Well I guess I am getting too old for this and will have to save up my money. Sorry for the rant and the not so valuable info. Just had to get it off my chest.*

In July 2011, a john posting on a Backpage Advertiser Reviews forum reports getting "the scare of [his] life that pretty much ended [his] hobbying." In a long post, he narrates experiencing reported police abuse when he is arrested in Rockford while arriving for an incall appointment (where the john comes to the woman's location) with a woman who was adver-

tised on Backpage.com. He expresses relief that in the end, he was reportedly not arrested and the police did not discover drugs that he had on his person and in his car. He ends the post by saying he decided at that point that he had gotten “the biggest break of [his] life” and that he was going to stop purchasing sex.

While some law enforcement approaches appear effective at deterring johns from continued mongering, it is also evident from many of the posts that certain approaches are not effective. The next section will explore the ineffectiveness of some law enforcement approaches to prostitution in Illinois, with respect to addressing the demand for commercial sex in communities throughout the state.

## **7. Law Enforcement Policies and Practices that Do Not Deter Men From Purchasing Sex**

Illinois legislators have passed three laws in the past three years to increase penalties against pimps, johns, and traffickers and create resources for survivors of the sex trade. Still, law enforcement approaches to prostitution throughout the state often fall short when it comes to deterring men from purchasing sex. Many approaches to prostitution and the commercial sex industry throughout the state still disproportionately target women, and johns posting on the USA Sex Guide forums for Illinois report being “released” by police officers who pull them over while they are purchasing sex, or they advise one another on the relative ease of expunging their records if they are charged for buying sex.

In contrast to the johns’ comments cited earlier, which point toward the effectiveness of some policies that target men who buy sex, other comments made by men on the USA Sex Guide about law enforcement and policy efforts to combat prostitution in Illinois reveal the ineffectiveness of policies and practices that that punish prostituted women, fail to hold johns accountable, lack follow-through, and may only target johns of color.

95

In Chicago and in other communities in Illinois, the majority of prostitution-related arrests are of women in prostitution, not of men who buy commercial sex. According to the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, the system that deals with prostitution in Chicago is “severely inequitable”:

In Chicago there are about 5,000 prostitution-related arrests over the course of the year. And about three fourths of them are of the prostitute. And about 25 percent are of the customer, and less than one percent are the pimps. So it’s a severely inequitable system. It costs nearly \$9 million a year to arrest, detain and prosecute persons engaging in prostitution in Chicago. (Daria Mueller, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, in Stroger 2007, 10)

Sometimes, the disproportionate number of arrests of women instead of men provides johns another means of identifying prostituted people for purchase. Several johns on the USA Sex Guide report using local law enforcement arrest websites and news articles about arrests to shop for the next woman from whom to purchase sex. At the start of July 2010, a john posting on a Peoria forum announces:

*PPD [Peoria Police Department] found a sexy WSW [White Street Walker] for us to search for yum yum I wanna find her she is sexy. Imagine her showered up fixed up with a sexy outfit hell yeah !!! this pic is from their web page says she was arrested 7-1-2010.*

Regarding the arrest of three prostituted women in a Naperville sting, a user posting on the Lombard General Reports forum writes:

*I wish the news reports included screen names, websites and email addys on these girls so we would know who the dickens they are talking about. It would also be nice if the news report included a pic from a website, put next to the mug shot showing the before and after. Just a thought.*

Other johns similarly ask one another for more information about women who have been arrested on prostitution-related charges, often noting that they plan to have sex with the women once they are released.

When making routine reports on the “activity” on streets where prostitution occurs, many johns posting on forums throughout Illinois reportedly see women being arrested by police. Some men describe these “hooker arrests,” as one john terms them. A john posting on a Melrose Park forum in February 2011 notes:

*[Street intersection] marked LE on the prowl on Mannheim for the past three weeks Melrose plainclothes had a blonde (most likely SW) captured. Did not see any cuffs on her but they had her cornered.*

A man posting on a Rockford forum in June 2011 reports being out on a known “track” (area where street prostitution occurs) at night to “pick up a friend.” He states that when he passed by a particular street, he noticed three “SW’s,” and when he returned to the same street five minutes later, “there were 2 squad cars and 3 ladies in handcuffs.”

96

In a post on the Peoria General Reports forum in August 2010, a john reports that a “regular” of his told him that “the cops are trying to bust girls from online now here in ptown.” He advises fellow mongers to be “careful guys won’t be long before they try to lure us guys into a [sic] internet trap,” as his “regular” informed him that “she knows of 2 girls already who have been nabbed from web adds [sic].”

The USA Sex Guide forums in Illinois respond almost instantly to police raids, stings, and arrests, in many cases. Johns often repost the text of or links to news articles or police websites that provide information about recent arrests and stings. They often re-post long lists exposing the names of women in prostitution. If johns are noted in the list of people arrested, usually only one or two men are mentioned.

One john posting on a Rockford forum in late September 2009 reposts information about a Rockford police “mission” to arrest middle-aged women in prostitution:

*With many city streets dangerous to drive on due to potholes, the city diverted money that could be used to fix them into sending the Rockford police on a mission to arrest middle aged women in a prostitution sting late Wednesday night in the city’s Midtown District and other areas of the city. During the course of the operation, undercover officers posed as customers and went after street walkers. They found ten of them. Not going after the younger girls most guys like to pick up, all but three of the women arrested in the sting were over the age of 40. Arrested were: [list of the women’s names].*

Posts on the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide seem to indicate that when arrests are made at fake massage businesses that sell sex, police are reportedly more interested in arresting women who work at the parlors than men who buy sex there. On the Evanston/Skokie General Reports forum, a man writes a post in June 2011 in which he describes experiencing a raid while buying sex at a fake massage business “a long time ago.” He says that the police officers looked at his driver’s license, questioned him “a bit,” and then told him “to get out and don’t come back.” He recalls that the “worst part” of the experience was when he walked down the stairs and outside, where a group from a nearby club had gathered to watch what was going on.” He reports that the girls and another man at the fake massage business were arrested, but he does not know what happened to them.

A john posting on a Mt. Prospect, Illinois forum in January 2011 writes that he believes the reason for the disproportionate arrest of women at fake massage businesses and at other sex venues is because “it’s easier for Leo to bust girls than to bust guys.” He explains further, “I doubt Ms. Leo will give a back rub then wait for the flip before entrapping you.”

In contrast to the numerous reports on the USA Sex Guide forums in Illinois about the arrest of women for prostitution-related charges, many johns express a “peace of mind” similar to that described by a john in Belvidere who claims that local law enforcement does not interfere with commercial sex being sold in brothels using massage therapy as fronts. In 2010 one john writes, “In over 30 years of doin[sic] this, I have never been arrested, and only hassled once (In Cicero, no less) by the cops.” As has been mentioned earlier, many johns who are pulled over or questioned are subsequently “let go” or even given “valuable info” about the specifics of when and why johns are arrested, as well as the consequences for being arrested on prostitution-related charges. In light of previously discussed comments about racial profiling that may occur when police arrest men who buy sex, it is interesting to contemplate which johns police choose to arrest and which they choose to let go or offer tips about avoiding future arrest. Additionally, forum reports by johns about the possible abuse and arrests of prostituted women who are compelled to give “freebies,” or free sex, to police in order to not be arrested raise concerns about the extent to which some men in law enforcement may corrupt, rather than uphold, the law.

97

The posts described in this section seem to point to the ineffectiveness of the traditional legal approach to prostitution, whose cornerstone is to arrest and re-arrest prostituted people. The posts indicate that many men who perceive few consequences to buying sex will continue to do so.

The final section of this report has explored how the Illinois johns’ boards play a key role in helping to educate men who buy sex about efforts to restrict, punish, or end their “hobby.” As a brotherhood of mongers who share the belief that they have the right to purchase sex with women, the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide appear to help johns bond together against their perceived common enemy, “Uncle Leo,” along with other perceived threats, including feminists, politicians, and activists who attempt to draw the focus away from women in prostitution and toward the men who buy sex.

## Research in Context

The posts appear to confirm that women and girls involved in prostitution in Chicago experience violence and other harm, across all sex venue types (see Raphael & Shapiro 2002, 18). It should be noted that stating that many women in the commercial sex industry experience harm is not equivalent to claiming that all women in the sex industry experience harm. However, studies on prostitution in Chicago, in the United States, and throughout the world overwhelmingly confirm that abuse to women in prostitution is persistent and widespread.

Research on men who buy sex confirms that “men do know that the women and girls they’re buying are exploited and harmed” (Lloyd 2011, 109). Durchslag & Goswami (2008) found that 57% of the johns they interviewed in Chicago believed that most women in the sex industry had experienced sexual abuse in childhood, and 32% thought that most women entered the sex industry before the age of 18. Twenty percent of the men interviewed said they had bought sex from women who were trafficked from other countries, and others mentioned buying sex from women who had been trafficked domestically. Forty percent had knowingly bought sex from a woman who had a pimp or “manager,” and 42% believed that prostitution “causes psychological and physical harm.” Faced with these statistics, activist and survivor of sexual exploitation Lloyd (2011) poses the question, “So if men know that the sex industry is harmful to girls and women, why do they still participate in it?” She explains:

Many of the men in the study, and men I’ve talked to, cite peer pressure; being introduced to the sex industry by family, friends, even coworkers; the belief that women in the sex industry are ‘different’ and therefore more acceptable to abuse. Most men cited the lack of consequences as a factor in their decision to purchase sex. In most cases, though, men don’t ask the questions that they really don’t want to know the answers to. Easier to go along with the fantasy when she tells you her name is Extasy or Seduction, that she’s eighteen, nineteen, twenty... Most men would rather believe that she likes it, that she likes them, and that there’s no real harm being done. Ultimately, however, most men in that situation just don’t care. (109-110)

It seems from the posts analyzed on the Illinois board of the USA Sex Guide and from research on johns that their desire to buy into a fantasy of sex with a woman who is there by choice and who enjoys her “work” is so strong that many of them are willing to overlook evidence of abuse and even trafficking of women and girls in the commercial sex industry. As Lloyd puts it, “There are a million rationalizations that men employ to deny the exploitation that they’re a part of” (2011, 108).

In Chicago and other cities in Illinois, as in most parts of the United States, women are punished in greater numbers than men for their involvement in prostitution, and victims and survivors of prostitution often do not receive the respect and services they need. We all need to help transform the way communities respond to prostitution and sex trafficking, so that the focus shifts from punishing women and focusing predominately on the “supply” side of the sex industry to protecting women in prostitution and addressing the demand for sex by holding pimps and johns accountable for the harm they cause. The remainder of the report introduces several recommendations for transforming community responses to the commercial sex industry and sexual exploitation, in light of our analysis of the Illinois forums of the USA Sex Guide.



# Recommendations

**The following recommendations are based on selected findings of the analysis of the johns' boards:**

A key finding of this report is that johns respond to law enforcement efforts to suppress demand. Johns report that they are deterred from buying sex in a community when they see, hear, or read that law enforcement is holding customers accountable. Johns are particularly compelled by heightened penalties they could face from purchasing sex. Conversely, johns express relief when police officers release them with only a warning to stay out of a neighborhood where they were attempting to purchase sex.

- **Based on these findings, it is recommended that communities devote resources to the investigation, arrest, and charging of customers using the full range of statutory penalties that exist under federal and state law. Law enforcement is encouraged to coordinate with neighboring communities to ensure that customers do not shift their activities to nearby communities.**

By contrast, many of the posts reveal that johns feel encouraged to continue buying sex when they see or hear that police are focusing exclusively on prostituted people. These law enforcement tactics simply reinforce to johns the notion that they are immune from criminal liability and may continue to buy sex, exacerbating prostitution in communities. In fact, some johns report using mug shots of prostituted women in the news as a way to identify where and from whom to buy sex. Johns will be deterred if they witness a transformation in how law enforcement treats prostituted people.

- **Based on these findings, we recommend that law enforcement agencies end the habitual arrest of prostituted people, collaborate with local providers to offer meaningful supportive services for prostituted people, and screen them for potential human trafficking in order to uncover trafficking crimes.**

99

Posts to the USA Sex Guide reveal that the commercial sex trade is thriving in urban, suburban, and rural communities throughout Illinois. In fact, the sex trade often operates behind the protection of legal businesses such as fake massage businesses, strip clubs, and hotels. To reduce commercial sexual exploitation and enforce existing trafficking laws, communities must first recognize the extent of the problem within their local area.

- **We recommend that communities invest resources in the mapping of indoor and outdoor venues of the commercial sex trade, and law enforcement should implement creative criminal investigative techniques grounded in existing best practices that seek to hold business owners, profiteers, and customers accountable for human trafficking crimes.**

Another key finding of the research is that the USA Sex Guide is a brotherhood for men who buy sex. Together, these men thrive in an anonymous online culture that normalizes the commodification of women, praises hyper-masculinity, and reinforces men's entitlement to sex. The report documents johns' awareness of the violence and harm perpetrated against prostituted people on the street and behind closed doors.

- **We recommend that communities invest resources in programs that teach young men how to create healthy constructs of masculinity and provide safe spaces for young men to learn about gender-based violence. In addition, Illinois residents, elected officials, and opinion shapers would benefit from a public awareness campaign to focus attention on the harms to people in prostitution and offer practical steps for the community to take action to end commercial sexual exploitation.**



## | Further Research |

While the Internet has become one of the greatest facilitators of commercial sexual exploitation in the 21st century, it could potentially become one of the greatest tools in combating that exploitation. For this reason, **we recommend exploring how the Internet might be used to end, not contribute, to commercial sexual exploitation.**

Already, the internet has helped survivors of exploitation and activists to identify and connect with one another through statewide, national, and international networks. They share information, strategies for campaigning, lobbying, and raising awareness. With the widespread access information it provides, the Internet can also be used to widen the reach of survivor voices and to connect the experiences of survivors of sexual exploitation throughout the world. Participants in grassroots campaigns that might otherwise remain isolated can share their experiences and practices with other groups interested in addressing sexual exploitation and the demand for commercial sex. Even the johns' boards and other online commercial sex resources normally used by pimps, johns, and traffickers can be beneficial for the movement to end commercial sexual exploitation, if the data is used appropriately. In these and other ways, the demand for commercial sex can be addressed in a comprehensive way, so that sexual exploitation is not merely pushed from one community to another.

It is important that coalitions and efforts aimed at addressing the demand for commercial sex enact concrete policy change that hold people accountable for harm in the commercial sex industry. Only then will buying sex cease to be the "great hobby" that many men currently believe it to be.

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# Appendix

## “22 Rules for Street Mongers”; “19 Rules for Street Walkers”; and “Streetwalker Rules”

(Lists created by three different forum users that were so popular and widely shared that the founder of USA Sex Guide posted links to the lists on the main page of the USA Sex Guide. Lists are re-printed as they appear on the website.)

### | 22 Rules for Street Mongering |

1. IS SHE WORKING? - It ain't like in the movies -They wear ordinary clothes, and are just walking alone, with no bags, or maybe making a phone call at a pay phone (but if you checked, there's no one on the line). Believe it or not, a girl walking alone and without shopping bags on a hobbyist street is almost always a SW.
2. If you aren't sure, come back in a few minutes. Non-pros who happen to be walking are going somewhere, which isn't up and down the same stretch of road. And on hobbyist streets, the local women tend to avoid looking like they might be in business, unless they are!
3. If she is watching traffic, she's probably a SW.
4. If she makes eye contact with you, she's probably a SW.
5. If she then smiles at you, she is a SW. After all, you're just some dude driving by.
6. If she's with a "boyfriend", who disappears when you come around again, he's pimping her. Be careful! Don't unlock the door until she's ready to get in, with him nowhere to be seen! If you follow these rules, you're in control of the situation.
7. MAKING THE PICKUP - Pull over at the next parking lot, or around the next corner and park nearby. If you're sure she saw you - smile back at her, dummy! - then feel free to pull further down the block, so it's not so easily observed by LE. She'll casually turn down your block, walk past - and then suddenly walk up to see if you're letting her in. Keep eye contact, keep smiling - invite her in.
8. Lock the other doors! You're in a crime-filled neighborhood!
9. AVOIDING LE STINGS - Do not EVER EVER EVER discuss anything with a girl who isn't seated in your car, except to offer her a ride. THAT'S ALL YOU'RE DOING! IT'S LEGAL! Just being a nice guy... On every board I've seen, LE always tries to make the bust without the F LE risking her ass by getting in. READ THIS RULE AGAIN! IT'S IMPORTANT!
10. This is the perfect time for LE to pull you over for rolling through a stop sign, just to harass your ass. Drive like a preacher! It's an effective way of intimidating we hobbyists, and they'll use any opportunity if they're watching.
11. Make a turn or two before discussing \$\$, just in case. Watch your rear view - you can bet she will, too! I've never heard of LE getting in the car, with a follower, but better safe than sorry. A known LE trick - she doesn't get in, but directs you to meet her around the corner. Guess who's waiting there, instead of her? If she doesn't get in right away, move on!

12. AVOIDING SCAMS - If you do a car date, and you let her pick the spot (she'll try to direct you), be aware that she may be setting you up for a robbery. Don't settle for her spot - or at least, force her to come up with a second choice. Her boyfriend can't be in two places at once.
13. If you go back to a hotel, and she picked it, be aware that this could be a setup for cash&dash, or her pimp busting in & robbing you.
14. If you go back to her place - are you mad? The "boyfriend busting in mad, waving a gun" scam probably happens a lot - since the victims won't report the robbery, they get by with it, even though the victims know where the robbers are staying!
15. If you go back to your hotel, um, have fun! (OK, that's not a rule. If you go back to your hotel, be discreet so the mgmt doesn't call LE on you.)
16. If you go back to your house - are you really ok with a potentially-addicted SW knowing where you live?
17. YOUR WALLET - Do not leave your wallet within her reach. If you think you know a clever spot to hide it, remember that 100's of others have thought of it, too. While you're distracted, her free hand can be working...
18. YOUR MONEY - Do not have more in your pocket than you want to spend. She (and your dick) will talk it out of you. If she's really worth an extra few dollars, you can go get it (out of the trunk, the ATM, your other pocket, whatever). Current street rates are 20 for BJ, 40-50 for FS, and you can tip later if you think it's worth it. Remember, it isn't worth it just because you came. She'll always demand a tip, if she thinks it's coming. Many will claim they "usually charge more" - the word on this board is: they don't. But, hey, some of these girls are hard-working, quality-driven providers, even though they're SW (really - I mean it!), and they deserve a break.
19. HUNTING HOURS - They're out at all times, in most weather. I've heard of them walking as early as 4:30am, and well past midnight. They work the lunch hours for guys on lunch, afternoons for guys on early shifts, mornings for guys who'll be late for work, and all through the evening and night. If it's lightly raining, there will be less, but there will be some. Most of these girls are drug addicts; their addiction doesn't have a "M-F, excluding legal holidays" schedule.
20. CFS!!! Carry a condom. Usually, they don't have one (which I think is so fuc\*ing stupid, but then, if they had a clue they wouldn't be SW-ing). You don't want to be tempted to skip the cover because that pussy is so fine.  
  
And the freebie: Every time some SW claims "I'm the best! I'm worth more", it really means, "I'm a lame-ass lying lazy talent less junkie!" The good ones don't have to brag; they'll get your return business.
21. Don't let her use your cellphone. It's a very common request. She'll call her friend, or her own phone, and that will give her access to your # - which might set you up for unexpected & inopportune calls for business or bail money.



22. Be friendly. As has been noted in other threads, these are people with feelings, not just automaton sex dispensers. If you're friendly, chatty, and warm, she'll open up, relax, and probably be more generous with her service, in all the little ways that matter most. Remember, if she's never hooked up with you before, she's worried that you might be either LE, or some psycho SW-stalker.

As always Play Safe

### **| 19 Rules for Street Walkers |**

1. When I am done, GET OUT OF MY CAR!
2. See rule #1, just needs to be said twice.
3. If you think you are going to light the pipe in my ride, think again.
4. If you need a ride at the end and I am feeling gracious enough to bend rule #1, it better be close, and you better know where the hell you are going.
5. I am not as comfortable as you with my status as a 'john', this means yelling to your cracker-jack friends out my window will get you nowhere fast.
6. I am paying you, at the very least act interested.
7. Acting like a Jerry Springer guest on crank is not cool, stop freaking out.
8. I have good eyesight, I don't need you to jump up and down, wave, send up flares, etc. Before I pick you up. If I drive by you and pass you up, its because A) Not interested B) I'm busy C) You have a face/body that could stop a clock D) You look like Steve Buscemi on glue-bender. Make eye contact. That's all I need and that's all I prefer. I may well drive by a few times, it's all about my comfort level.
9. If you give me lack luster service, you will be compensated accordingly. I mean really, is this why you are doing what your doing, did the formula for success as a waitress truly baffle you?
10. Act polite, small talk relaxes everyone involved. Small talk about your court date for felony assault doesn't.
11. Asking me if I am the police is about the stupidest thing I have ever heard of. Reach over and give me a gentle squeeze, thats the proof (or hey, at least it works for me.)
12. You need to supply the condoms, not me. I can't have that shit hanging around my car. I don't bring my own sugar for my coffee at Denny's.
13. State the way you want me to 'release' beforehand.
14. Wash that funky ass.
15. Its my car, don't change the radio stations, adjust the seats or anything that I will have to reset later (or alternately forget to reset and have to answer the questions like 'Who adjusted this seat?')

16. I'm not sure about anyone else, but I will NEVER pick up a girl whose pimp/boyfriend/WTF ever is following, lose the dude and we can do business.
17. Put out the cigarette. Unless you're like me and smoke in which case feel free (to smoke your own)
18. If you rip me off, I will make it my life's work to find you and run you over. Lest you forget, you are a street WALKER, I am a street DRIVER, you must see the advantages of my situation.
19. GET OUT OF MY CAR WHEN I AM DONE!

### **| Streetwalker Rules |**

#### RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

1. Never talk through the window! Period.
2. Never pick up a gal on the main drag (motion them or signal them to go down a side street). If they are too dense, or lazy to walk down the side street ... just move on.
3. Let them open the passenger door and hop in (you will miss a lot of action this way, but you are guaranteed not to get busted: I hope) The best pickups are when they hop in and immediately grab your crotch (which rarely happens). Asking "Do you need a ride" is better than.."I need to get laid" or "Looking to date", etc. If a girl says meet me "over there, around the corner" etc. Just drive away in the opposite direction - say "Sorry there must be a mistake; I thought you were hitching for a ride".
4. Once in your car:
  - A. Generally from what I understand if they are inside your car it's a good chance they are not affiliated with LE.
  - B. Do a "cop check". Grab a tit or have her grab your crotch, or anything resembling that. Experienced girls will automatically do this. I still shy away from that unless I have driven a block or two.
  - C. Don't tell them what you want nor how much you want to spend (many will ask "how much you got?".. that's irrelevant), I usually ask "what's on the menu"? if they are reluctant to say, I make that I'll drop them back off, and usually they will say what they offer and what they want to charge. I usually negotiate down and then if it's been a good session I tip them. It doesn't pay to be cheap with a few bucks.
5. Never pick up a girl on impulse, drive around, check her out, and see what is going on. If you miss her (i.e. another dude picks her up, then you know she's good to go) - later you may get another chance.
6. Recon the area. I usually cruise a few loops around adjacent blocks to get a feel for the area (I have often spotted LE lurking around the next corner and even actually scoping out the same girl!)
7. Don't count on them having condoms. Bring some with you.

8. Don't count on them being freshly showered: I usually bring cleaning supplies with me. Please don't think you're the first guy they have dated that day, because, frankly, you're probably not.
9. If you go for 1/2 and 1/2 get them totally naked, if you can. If they ask for money first, give it to them after they are stripped. DO NOT pay money up front if possible. If not possible, pay half now half later when done. Remember if it was a good date and you want to see them again. Tip generously. If you pay all money up front be prepared to get burned in some way.
10. Hide your wallet and stuff, have the money separate from the wallet.
11. Have a spare key made! Use a dummy key ring in case they rip it off.
12. Insist they turn off their phone. I tell them if the phone rings and interrupts us and I get soft, we start over again. It doesn't always work, but they put the damn thing on vibrate and ignore it.
13. I've started to walk their stroll, this gets me closer to them so I can see what they look like. Usually I can strike up a conversation, they do the cop thing at that point, sometimes I walk away, sometimes I negotiate them to go down a side street, often you get a number.
14. Its best to pass up a dynamite chick than to break any rules and take the chance. Remember "If it's too good to be true it probably is".
15. Run away from the ones that yell "You want a date? You got \$80 bucks!?"
16. Recon Recon Recon.
17. Have patience, patience, and patience.
18. Average 1/2 & 1/2 = 60 bucks. Carry 20's. 10's and 5's. If you get a cheaper deal, how you going to break a 20? or tip a smaller amount?
19. Don't go to their place (for a car date). Always have a spot picked out of your own. It took me two weeks to find a spot. If they don't want to go to your spot, drop them back off. Note: If you have dated them before and have a "relationship" then their spot is OK. The point is you don't want to get mugged by a new girls pimp.
20. Bring a camera phone?
21. Wet wipes for cleaning up before or after.
22. If you go to a clinic to get a checkup; destroy all paperwork before you leave the clinic. If you must keep some document, leave it in a secure place at work.
23. If you get a good deal (like a 1/2 1/2 for .4), and you think you want to repeat later, give them a tip. They will remember you and give better service next time. I even tipped one 20 bucks one month later (because I didn't have any more \$ on me,) she was like, "you got my #, call me soon, I'll do you even better". Yeah baby.
24. Bring along a banana, you may get hungry later, or...

25. Take a piss right afterwards, so drink some water before the stroll.
26. If you keep your napkins in the glove box (this is the first place these girls look for cleaning up jizz), make sure your registration and checkbook and any other ID material or valuables is not in there.
27. When done with your date and BEFORE you go home. Pull over at a Drug store, clean out your car, look for tissues, crack, empty condom packets, parts (no matter how small) of condom packets, combs, earrings, etc..... look under the seat, in the door, under the mats. Buy a fresh air freshener and stick it in the car. Even look for any condoms that may not have been thrown out like you thought but were tangled up in a towel that inadvertently got washed in the washing machine before the wife finds it!!
28. If you had a good date; share her # with everyone you can vouch for. Get a pic too.
29. Don't rush into anything! They will be out there later. There is always another girl.
30. Be aware of your surroundings. Look for LE , look for LE in unmarked cars, look for guys nearby, other girls? Is their too much action going on? Is the girl glued to one spot and won't move (decoy) or does she walk the streets from spot to spot? Does she talk th ru the window?
31. Watch how other guys pick up, or try to pick up, and avoid their mistakes. But also it gives you a clue about the girls they are trying to pick up.
32. Do not drop them off where you picked them up or on the main drag. I always drop off at least a block or two away.
33. If you want to extend the time of the date. Be prepared to give them DATY. this always adds a good half hour to the date. Most like it, some don't. YOU must like it though.
34. Do not date anyone that goes by the name of Delicious. Trust me ...she is far from it. Nickname: BOOTFACE. do a search!
35. Be respectful to these girls, even if you get robbed.









**Produced by:** [Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation](#)

Phone: (773) 244-2230 ext.3

[www.caase.org](http://www.caase.org)

[www.enddemandillinois.org](http://www.enddemandillinois.org)

Twitter: @TheCAASE

3304 N. Lincoln Ave.

Suite 202

Chicago, IL 60657

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