

I stripped once a week while getting my bachelor's degree in nursing, magna cum laude, enjoying it to the fullest and using the performance opportunity to develop the public side of my sexuality. I went into full time movie work immediately following graduation, having done a few movies while still in school.

I know there are people who wonder, "Is she naive or something? What kind of a cause is porno?" But let's face it, folks: while the sex drive may be innate, modes of sexual behavior are learned, and I don't see Nancy Reagan setting up any "Happy, Healthy, Sex Life" institutes in the near future. If the media can have an effect on people's behavior, and I believe it does, why is it assumed that sex movies must always reinforce the most negative imagery of women? That certainly isn't what I'm about. From my very first movie I have always refused to portray rape, coercion, pain-as-pleasure, woman-as-victim, domination, humiliation and other forms of non-consensual sex.

I can look back on all of my performances and see that I have not contributed to any negative images or depictions of women; and the feedback I get from men and women of all ages supports my contention. I get a lot of satisfaction from my job — for me it is a job of choice. As feminists, we must all fight to change our society so that women who don't want to do gender-stereotyped jobs can be free to work, support their families decently, and fulfill their potential in whatever job they choose. This includes not feeling compelled to do sex work because other well-paying options are severely limited.

Each of us has some idea or action that we hate but that is still protected by the First Amendment. I consider myself a reformer, and as a reformer I need a broad interpretation of the First Amendment to make my point. As a feminist I have principles that won't allow me to take license with that precious right to free speech. There have always been, and to some degree will always be, extremists who see the First Amendment as their license to do or say whatever, and not as a right which has implied responsibilities. Of course the sexual entertainment medium is no exception to this. I say censure them, but do not censor me.

The Right to Protection from Rape

Karen

Several years ago, I was working as a prostitute on the streets, in Fresno, California. I was walking to my hotel room with a birthday cake when I met a man who said he wanted to do business with me for fifty dollars. He proceeded to pull an ice pick out and rape me. He kept me about three hours, and then was walking me to a park, not far away, where he said he was going to kill me. Suddenly, my friend Alice spotted me. She jumped out of the car she was in, approached the man who had raped me, and pulled me away from him. We went back to the hotel room and were sitting on the bed. They were trying to calm me down, when suddenly I saw him walking down the driveway, again. I screamed and pointed to him and my friends took off after him. They cornered him and he pulled out his ice pick, again. Somebody got it away from him, and they held him there for the police. We went back to our room, where there was a loud banging on the door. Alice asked who it was.

It was the police. They said, "Open the goddamn door or we will break it down." Less than five seconds later, the door came crashing in, hitting Alice. They barged in, and four shotguns and two handguns were staring us in the face. They said we were under arrest for assault on the man who had just raped me repeatedly. Alice went outside with one of the officers and was explaining what had happened. He, in turn, told her it was impossible because I was a prostitute and could not be raped. He also said the man was too drunk to do anything. We told the officer where the ice pick was, and he tried to make one of us go on the roof to get it, because he did not believe there was an ice pick. When someone finally got it down, they grudgingly decided it had happened.

When I told them I wanted to press charges for rape, the officer would not take a police report. They just took him to jail for being drunk in public. After three hours he was released. I was very disappointed and outraged at the police for their callous and uncaring attitude. At the time I was only seventeen years old and still believed in our justice system. Even though I am a prostitute, I feel I should still be entitled to protection from the police.

The Continuing Saga of Scarlot Harlot VIII

Carol Leigh

I sit at my typewriter and try to figure out what I can do to make the world safe for prostitution. That doesn't sound so good. I know why. It's the word prostitution. I looked it up in the dictionary:

1. Trading sexual services for money or goods;
2. Selling one's talents for an unworthy cause.

That second definition tarnishes our reputation. There's plenty of causes less worthy than survival or feeding your family. What about Porsche-titution? That's selling one's talents for a Porsche.

Oh, how I love wallowing in these complications. But, seriously, there are women for whom providing sexual services is not synonymous with compromise. Some women seem to relish careers as sexual facilitators. They enjoy their work and make lots of money. I think they should be afforded the same status as doctors. And me? Well, I don't wanna be a sex doctor. I just wanna write and think.

Have you heard the news about the prostitutes in Bologna, Italy? Well, the Associated Press says that eight hundred high school students marched through downtown Bologna to protest cancellation of a sex-education lecture by a prostitute. Teachers had invited her to speak on "relations between men and women in society."

The Education Ministry in Rome vetoed it.