

Sex Radicals' Vision for Rhode Island

At the end of July, 50 academics sent a letter to Rhode Islanders supporting the status quo of decriminalized prostitution. The letter strained the limits of credibility by claiming that prostitutes had a high-level of job satisfaction and that most women in prostitution would choose to do it all over again.

The letter urged the Rhode Island General Assembly not to pass a prostitution bill because our current system of criminalizing prostitution outdoors while having no laws on indoor prostitution was “a step in the right direction.”

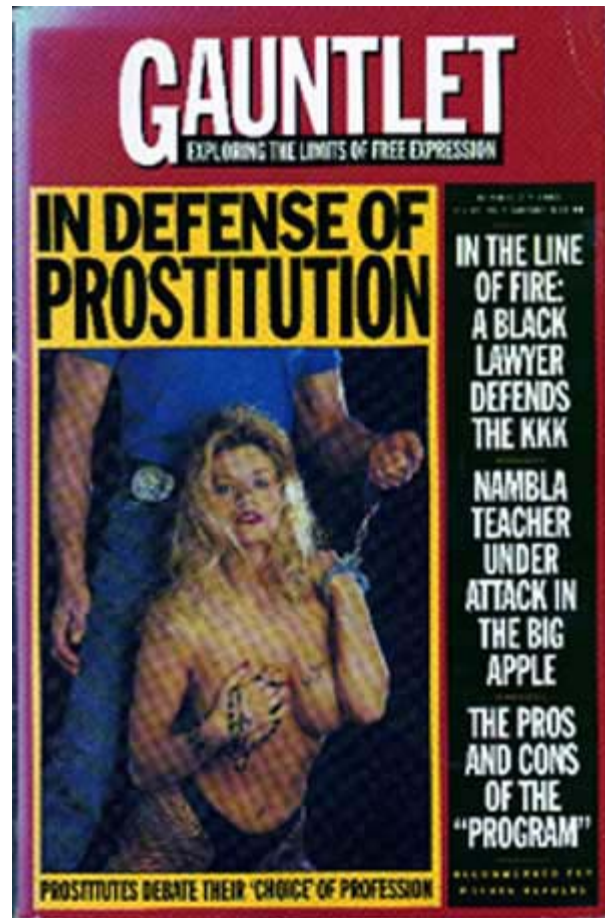
One of the co-authors of the letter is Ronald Weitzer, Professor of Sociology at George Washington University. He is a long time proponent of permitting indoor prostitution.

As early as 1994, Weitzer was writing about prostitution in a lurid pulp magazine *Gauntlet: Exploring the Limits of Free Expression*. Consistent themes of the publication are sexual sadism and defense of sex offenders.

The cover of the special issue “In Defense of Prostitution” appears at the right. It depicts a woman—presumably a prostitute—embracing her bondage as her pimp keeps a tight grip on her chain. This issue of *Gauntlet* was edited by a well-known proponent of decriminalized prostitution. (Note the article defending a NAMBLA teacher. NAMBLA is the North American Man Boy Love Association, a pedophile organization.)

Weitzer has kept up a steady drumbeat over the years of always criticizing researchers who find that prostitution is harmful and always finding ways to promote the legality of indoor prostitution.

More recently, in another article extolling the happiness and contentment of women in legal prostitution, Weitzer talked about prostitution in Amsterdam.¹ In this article, he includes a photo of a woman standing in a window brothel on display to the public and available for sex to



any passerby. Many of the women in the windows of Amsterdam are victims of trafficking from Russia and other eastern European countries.

He writes that the “vast majority of workers in Dutch brothels and window units report that they often or always feel safe.” This claim flies in the face of recent findings by the city of Amsterdam that the legal system of prostitution is a magnet for organized crime and money laundering. Criminals control most of the women and prostitution businesses there. Over the last few years, the mayor of Amsterdam has closed many of the window brothels and turned the buildings into shops.

Weitzer also includes his photo of De Wallenwinkel—The Prostitution Information Center. A mannequin stands in this window representing all the women who stand in windows in Amsterdam. The center exists to promote the business of prostitution.



Photo by Jacco J. van Giessen



Earlier this summer, Weitzer wrote in the *Providence Journal* (June 19, 2009), that Rhode Island’s current lack of law on indoor prostitution is a “model for other states.”

Are the windows of Amsterdam Weitzer’s vision for Rhode Island?

The other co-author of the 50 academics letter, Elizabeth Wood, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Nassau Community College, writes that

having “sexually oriented businesses on busy main streets in our own towns would be healthy for our communities and for the businesses.”²

Turning that vision into reality has been the goal of the sex radicals for decades. They first targeted Rhode Island in 1976 when the prostitutes’ rights’ group COYOTE sued the state for sex discrimination against prostitutes. The outcome was decriminalized prostitution since 1980.

The sex radicals who defend prostitution exist all over the world. Their goal is to make prostitution acceptable work for women so girls can grow up to be a “sex workers.” They say the women need prostitution to live. They claim to speak for women in prostitution, but they are really pimps, promoting the selling of women and girls around the world.

Look at this photo from a “sex workers’ rally” in Cambodia. The writing on their t-shirts says “Sex Work is Work: Defend the Right to Livelihood.” Look at the faces of these women. Do they look like happy, empowered women and girls rallying to demand their right to be prostitutes? Or do they look like victims of trafficking told to put on t-shirts and sit while someone takes their picture?

A Rhode Island police officer who has been in the brothel-spas looked at this photo and said, “The women I saw in the spa looked just like that.”

This image appeared on a web site advertising a “sex worker’s film festival” earlier this year. The organizer was the same woman who edited *The Gauntlet’s* “In Defense of Prostitution” issue.



The “sex workers’ rights” activists are mostly pimps or their allies who profit from exploiting women and children. This image cuts through their endless verbiage and shows how the women doing the sex acts really feel about their “work” and how the pimps will use them.

Rhode Island is now close to fixing the misstep of decriminalizing prostitution. A law against prostitution sets a standard that makes the buying and selling of sex unacceptable. Women and girls (and some men and boys) will be less likely to be drawn into personally destructive activity and the pimps will face the justice system.

But the advocates for prostitution are still active in Rhode Island. In fact, a new center to campaign for sexual rights is trying to open in Pawtucket. The Center for Sexual Pleasure and Health calls itself the “Dormitory for Armatory.” The proprietor, Megan Andelloux, is a member of the Woodhull Freedom Foundation, which is a subsidiary of COYOTE, the group that originally sued for decriminalization of prostitution in the 1970s. It too advocates for the decriminalization of prostitution. To date, the city of Pawtucket has prevented the center from opening saying it violates their zoning ordinances.

The sex radicals are entitled to free speech, but citizens of Rhode Island communities are entitled to resist their advocacy of prostitution and violence. The proprietor of the proposed

center is a prostitute (she calls herself a “foot fetish model”) and a dominatrix. She is also on the “faculty” of the Kink Academy in Boston which holds “classes” to demonstrate sexual sadism, masochism, and torture.³ The classes often include live models. (The images are too obscene to include here.) One of the students at the Academy claims she became a “sex slave” to one of the instructors and was ordered to prepare to be a prostitute. Andelloux claims to be an “educator” on spanking, whipping, and bondage. She is a frequent speaker on college campuses⁴ where she demonstrates whipping⁵ and has the students try on sex gear.⁶

Citizens Against Trafficking rejects the sex radicals’ vision for Rhode Island. We don’t believe they represent the vast majority of women in prostitution who want to escape prostitution. We oppose sexualized inequality and violence. We support equality and the right to be free and live our lives with dignity. We support healthy sexuality and will continue to work to end sexual exploitation and abuse.

¹ Ronald Weitzer, “Prostitution: Facts and Fictions,” *Contexts*, 2007.

² Elizabeth Wood, “How to Close a Strip Club,” *Sex in the Public Square* web site, June 29, 2009
<http://sexinthepublicsquare.wordpress.com/2006/06/29/how-to-close-a-strip-club>

³ Kink Academy, <http://www.kinkacademy.com/>

⁴ <http://media.www.trinitytripod.com/media/storage/paper520/news/2008/04/08/Features/Fred-Hosts.Andelloux.Dominatrix.And.Foot.Fetish.Model-3308689.shtml>

⁵ <http://www.dailyfreepress.com/racy-holiday-stocking-stuffers-exhibited-at-gsu-1.1096184>

⁶ <http://media.www.berkeleybeacon.com/media/storage/paper169/news/2009/04/16/Lifestyle/Adventures.In.Toyland.Plastic.Playmate.Pleasure-3713068.shtml>