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STREET SHEET

SHELTER WAITLIST UPDATE:

As of May 31st there are **1,049** people on the shelter waitlist in San Francisco.



Reiko Rasch
Instagram @ReikoRasch

Cover image description: a femme figure wearing underwear and high heels sits in a leopard print chair with a kitchen knife in hand, held in between spread legs. At their feet are stacks of money. Behind the figure a giant octopus peers out and its tentacles run chaotically in the background.

Artist bio: "Reiko Rasch is an Oakland based mixed-race, loving-Libra living in a kooky constellation of edge-walkers. Her comic-style illustrations are imbued with introspective surrealism, reflecting her life experiences and sexuality. She engages with themes of family, trauma, and power all while remaining endearingly sincere, dark, and trippy."

Resident artist for Oakland country-punk-cabaret band, Copyslut. If you are interested in working with Reiko or purchasing a print, please send an email to artbyreiko@gmail.com"

PISSED OFF!

DESSA BOBDOG

OR, ARMED LEFTWING IMMIGRANT TRANS WOMAN: SO ARE YOU YT LIBERALS VOLUNTEERING TO BE MY PERSONAL BODYGUARD?

As a sex worker who has carried a .38 Special to great effect for personal protection, I want to thank all of you who want to disarm me while ignoring the police and military who continue to murder and oppress LGBTQ+, poor folks, People of Colour, and people in US occupied nations, so that I can enjoy getting assaulted some more. I want to thank all of you who focus on guns rather than the role that men play in our societies. I want to thank all of you who ignore toxic masculinity. I want to thank all of you who trust Trump over marginalized people like me who cannot rely on the police for protection.

I can see you're still urging gun

control with nary a mention of the police or military.

Don't worry, I'm not even really too upset, deaf ears are part and parcel to my situation. How foolish of me to think liberals (and most anarchists and Leftists, really) actually cared about the opinions, safety, and autonomy of a trans* sex worker of colour over the state sponsored narrative that ensures their comfort.

If disarmament happened from the top down, every nuke, every police officer, every soldier, every bomb, every right-wing militia member, every citizen, and the patriarchal culture of violence, toxic masculinity, and

chauvinism were addressed and dealt with and discussed openly, honestly, and frankly, then we will have accomplished something. Obviously, a simple band aid of a gun ban is far less work, so we'll just go with that, apparently!

Realize this: neither the NRA and Trump's rightwing following want me to defend myself. Nor do the liberal elites in their privileged falsely progressive circles.

White supremacy, whatever form it takes, will never tolerate armed People of Colour who defy and reject colonization. Cheers!

COST ME

JAZMINE BANKS

Cost me s*** u cost me a lot of pain
 My strength my memory and my common thoughts
 I remember when u climbed on top of me n took my streets u looked me in my face with that crook look n banged my streets
 Can't nobody be me
 Can't nobody feel me
 I sit here and look at these white f***ers on the streets
 Using my words taking my swag the streets z cost me the hate of tht white swag
 Tht wanna b our black n brown streets so bad
 Living our life tryna take our bag
 My Samoan sister surviving off the Pheins
 My El Salvadoran sister stabbing to be free
 My black sister trickin with the tricks
 The streets cost me
 It cost me time with my baby so I can make a thousand a night
 I can't stand white ppl who come join my life
 See they got it better then us with they're white Love
 our grandmothers are slaves refugees n immigrants only thing u could say is what your own ppl did to u like hitler yea my brothers took me cause of ur white supremacy
 We can't get military guns the police gave them
 I couldn't post an ad unless the system made it
 So y'all want us f***ed up streets have that tough love
 Rest In Peace to all my homies sometimes I wish that meant return if possible
 But the streets took you so that's not an option
 I remember them cold nights off all that powder
 You couldn't walk in my shoes if we had the same dollars
 Cause we don't got the same color we don't got the same struggle
 You couldn't tell me how to make baking soda look like crack
 Or poor syrup with Benadryl too have ppl thinking they leaning back only my streets could tell me
 The streets didn't cost me s*** but to never turn on my colors for some white s***

COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS

The STREET SHEET is a project of the Coalition on Homelessness. The Coalition on Homelessness organizes poor and homeless people to create permanent solutions to poverty while protecting the civil and human rights of those forced to remain on the streets.

Our organizing is based on extensive peer outreach, and the information gathered directly drives the Coalition's work. We do not bring our agenda to poor and homeless people: They bring their agenda to us.

AT 468 TURK STREET

STREET SHEET STAFF

The Street Sheet is a publication of the Coalition on Homelessness. Some stories are collectively written, and some stories have individual authors. But whoever sets fingers to keyboard, all stories are formed by the collective work of dozens of volunteers, and our outreach to hundreds of homeless people.

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SWORD SWALLOWER TRIPTYCH I

RARE BIRD

When I met him, I was homeless.
 When he left, I felt unmoored.

My anger at you is actually a feeling of helplessness that illuminates how powerless I feel with myself.

Some there are who say that the fairest thing seen after wet sex is an orgy of cuddling;
 Some, laughter; some would say talk; but I say it is stacked green bills.

You want to love a girl without a bed?
 You'll have to f*** me in the road, I said.

It seems to me,
 she said,

that you're punishing each other
 for falling in love with each other.

F*** him,
 I said.

HOW LAWS THAT CLAIM TO PROTECT VICTIMS ACTUALLY CREATE POVERTY AND VIOLENCE

DILARA YARBROUGH

Over the past five years I have been interviewing unhoused people who sell or trade sex, as well as service providers and grassroots organizers, to gather stories and strategies for fighting back against the criminalization of sex work, drug use, and homelessness. Laws outlawing sex work, drug use, and resting in public space are all part of the criminalization of poverty. Yet poor people's political organizations sometimes fall into the trap of respectability politics, silencing sex workers and others who do things deemed unacceptable by mainstream society. Now is the time for grassroots movements for racial, gender and economic justice to listen to sex workers and to act in solidarity. In a moment when politicians are using simplistic narratives about individual violence and victimization to criminalize vulnerable groups of people who sell or trade sex, this issue of The Street Sheet centers the stories and analyses of people who have been without housing in San Francisco and have sold or traded sex to get by.

Many people who experience housing deprivation sell or trade sex for a living. People who sell or trade sex are diverse group including people of all genders and races. People do sex work for the same reason that people do any other type of work: To earn enough money to meet their needs. For some people I interviewed, selling sex was

a way out of exploitative minimum wage jobs. Compared to working long unpredictable hours for low pay to enrich large corporations, sex work gave them more control over their schedules and working conditions. Jay, a cisgender man, started doing sex work to supplement inadequate wages from his full-time job in food service. Unpredictable shifts and long hours led him to quit the food service job and start doing sex work full time. After he started escorting, Jay was finally able to afford a Single Room Occupancy hotel room. Jess, a cisgender woman, says that sex work allowed her to pay for college and housing that she couldn't access otherwise. Online platforms allowed some sex workers to carefully screen clients for histories of past violence and develop caring relationships with regular clients. Income from sex work helped many people move from unstable into stable housing. Jess considers sex work her "chosen profession," a rewarding job that she enjoys more than any other work she's done.

Others, like Ana, dislike doing sex work but don't have other ways to make ends meet. Ana was kicked out of her family's home at a young age, and unable to get other jobs due to anti-transgender discrimination. Shelters weren't safe or accessible so

...CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Con Huevos, Put@

INOPOGU

Oye, guey, ven, lempiame con huevos
Que yo siento que ya on aguanto
To be dealing with these pigs, no quiero
Con respeto a todos los cerdos

Oye, guey, ven, lempiame con huevos
I just wana f*** s*** up pero no puedo
These new laws got me f***ed up
This is work, this isn't fun

I was gonna go out looking for daddies
I'm just gonna wait till they come to me
I was gonna go out to approach some daddies
But I'm just gonna wait till they approach me

Daddy, pay me... Daddy, pay me.... Daddy, pay me...

Oye, guey, ven, lempiame con huevos
Que yo siento que ya on aguanto
To be dealing with these pigs, no quiero
Con respeto a todos los cerdos

Oye, guey, ven, lempiame con huevos
I just wana f*** s*** up pero no puedo
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I was gonna go out to approach some daddies
But I'm just gonna wait till they approach me

Daddy, pay me... Daddy, pay me.... Daddy, pay me...

<https://inopogu.bandcamp.com/>

Lost It Akk (Rebuilding Again)

A F*** SESTA/FOSTA Poem of a Transgender Sex Worker

DELIRIUM SADE

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In madness, in darkness
Sucking dicks, flashing tits
In sadness, in silence
Forced to submit to their fantasies so sick
Mistreated, hated
Their transmisogynist abuse knows no limits

That's what life looks like in a motherf***ing post-SESTA/FOSTA world!

In corporate bondage
My humanity always caged
Paying too much for healthcare that don't do shit
Disabled, Medicaid won't even pay for my fucking pussy – they're transphobic
F*** the police
They harass and treat me like I'm their prison bitch
A prison for the mind
But I'd rather be free than to live another cold night trying to survive

That's what life looks like in a motherf***ing post-SESTA/FOSTA world!

Used to have money
Life was amazing
Had a home
Never alone
Security in safer screening
A blacklist to let my sex worker friends know how to stay safe
No fear, consensual sexual lifestyle so healthy
Then came the day the motherf***ing Nazis signed this bill that made us all unsafe

This was life before motherf***ing SESTA/FOSTA!

Now I'm homeless
Starving, life's a bitch
On the road to California
From Brattleboro to the Bay Area
From Burlington to Los Angeles
Holding on, never an ounce of quit
Rebuilding, rebranding
Reclaiming, renaming
Recreating, resurrecting
Reliving trauma, finding healing

Now I live in a post-SESTA/FOSTA world as a genderqueer/transgender woman
A sex worker
A porn star
A rope bondage model
A proud whore
Freak flag flying
Webcam slut
Holding on for a better tomorrow
Instead of living in Trump's Nazi Amerika in sorrow
Who cares if one more light goes out?
Well, you do – you make sure that I never fade away
Who cares if my time's run out?
Well, you do – you make sure that I live to fight another day

I may hate this motherf***ing post-SESTA/FOSTA world
But you, the community of freaks, kinksters, outcasts, cam-whores, streetwalkers, Pro Doms/Dommes, Pro Switches/submissives, porn stars, rope riggers, photographers, filmmakers, bondage toymakers – you all give me hope for a better tomorrow.
Thank you for reminding this transgender freak that I should never let life harden my heart and soul.

F*** SESTA/FOSTA!
#WeGotThis
#LetUsThrive
#SexWorkIsMotherf***ingWorkDEALWITHIT!

The end – mic drop worthy moment for the motherf***ing awesome people in the back.
Boom.
(Fin.)

SWORD SWALLOWER TRIPTYCH II

RARE BIRD

She called me and said what's up, I said life is good, it's my boo's birthday, he came over, I roasted beef bones and we scooped the marrow out on fresh french bread, squeezed out slices of lemons, I was going to feed him on the roof but we decided the wind was too sharp, I spread out a scarf on the glass coffee table, we ate smiling across from each other on the floor, we were so full, neither of us thought we'd even be able to have sex—but of course we did—just lying there on my bed groaning a little bit at first—get the fuck off my stomach it's too full!—our favorite position that we always end up in, we just started that way, both of us embracing our whole chests touching and we can just hold onto each others lips with our lips and my legs tossed over his hips so we just rock into each other softly, it felt so good—stop, I said to his ear and he stopped—I quivered, start, I said, and he stopped mostly and I groaned and couldn't quite stop for a minute—he started back and it was even better and then I went tense—stop stop stop stop stop stop stop stop stop I'm coming I'm coming I'm coming I'm coming I'm coming and then I went limp—he went into action, he pushed into me, he gripped me by the throat, he used my body like a shovel on a stuck rock and then he came with a long grunt like a low note clenched from a bass clarinet and I felt him wet in me and we both just lay there panting and holding on to each other for a while until—I have two grams of ketamine in my bag right now he said, do you want to,—yes I said, what's it like, I said—like being underwater and floating on the moon he said,—yes—but turn on the music—he put on his regular old shit that I never want to hear unless it's party and I'm dancing, he didn't understand my stereo, it was just blathering out of his iPhone with its stupid beat I roused myself like a queen I strode across the bed and switched out the cellphones, my limbs were floating, I paused his music and dropped his iPhone like a slug with a shudder—ugh—I connected my stereo to my phone I put on Coltrane A Love Supreme we both sighed and I lay my body down and he held me again and I held him and I couldn't feel him and the daylight was too intense and I closed my eyes and every once in a while I opened them and saw his hairy chest and was like what—what is this tan skin body thing—then only Coltrane—then, murder, I could murder, I could murder a person, I could push the knife into a flab of skin and there would just be the rubber sensation of the skin folding slowly around my utensil,—wish I'd been there for that, she cut in on the phone— —but my limbs were totally paralyzed so I couldn't act on it— —that's too bad, she said. Then she hung up.

Six hours later she tried to jump out a window. We had the cops drag her out of her apartment. She was handcuffed, screaming, alive.

So. I love him.

CRIMINALIZING SEX WORK CREATES VIOLENCE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

she did sex work to keep a roof over her head. Ana has been profiled as a transgender woman and an immigrant, has been arrested and incarcerated multiple times for prostitution, and has lost her housing as a result of being locked up. At protests to divest from incarceration and invest in housing, Ana chants the loudest because it's personal: Most of the money that has been spent in response to Ana's poverty has been to pay police to arrest her, prison guards to beat her, and private corporations to build and manage structures to confine her.

Laws regulating homelessness, drug use and the sex trade funnel resources into policing and prisons in the name of protecting the people most vulnerable to victimization. Ironically, the laws prohibiting prostitution and the enforcement of these laws fail to protect people in the sex trade. Instead, these laws make people in the sex trade even more vulnerable to poverty and violence. Unhoused people who work on the street are especially likely to be targeted for arrest and incarceration, and have fewer protections against violence by police or clients.

Criminalization of sex work allows police to harm unhoused sex workers

Too often, policymakers ignore the voices of communities that are most affected by their decisions. Advocates of more punitive policies use stories of violent traffickers and sex work clients, but ignore violence perpetrated by police. Yet sex workers have repeatedly called on lawmakers to address police violence. Police violence disproportionately targets poor people of color and queer and trans people who live or work in public space. A majority of the unhoused sex workers I spoke with had harmful encounters with police. From being ticketed or kicked awake when they were sleeping in public space to being threatened with arrest if they did not have sex with officers, sex workers consistently experienced policing as a source of harm. Maria said: "There are so many crooked cops out there. I've been harassed by them on some really shady levels...If I were to report them, it's like my word against theirs. And I'm like a drug addict street prostitute—and to them I'm like the lowest of the low. There's no way in hell that his whole life and his career is gonna be taken away from him on my word."

Instead of more police, the people I interviewed wanted access to safe, stable housing, food and medical care. Access to these basic resources would help prevent exploitative and dangerous conditions.

Despite this reality, a rhetoric of protection is used to increase punishment of sex workers, drug users, and poor people more generally. Punitive law enforcement responses are cloaked in a language of rescuing victims. Public pressure to protect victims of violence creates misguided support for policies that harm the most vulnerable people in the sex trade, including homeless people who sell or trade sex. In particular, anti-trafficking legislation has historically resulted in more policing of immigrants and sex workers.

Police enforcement of laws meant to target traffickers more often targets poor people who sell or trade sex, especially transgender women and women of color who are without stable housing. Furthermore, by focusing narrowly on violent individuals, these laws ignore systems of violence: Housing deprivation, mass incarceration, and corporate labor exploitation disproportionately harm the poorest people in the sex trade.

How anti-trafficking legislation can cause poverty and vulnerability to violence

Legislation meant to "protect victims" has instead ended up causing more poverty and vulnerability. Recent examples include the Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act (FOSTA) and Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act (SESTA), federal legislation criminalizing and impeding sex workers' online communications.

Many policymakers who supported these laws expressed their intention to "rescue" trafficking victims by banning online advertisements, but sex worker activists, trafficking survivors and allies explain that this will instead push sex workers into more dangerous conditions on the street.

The criminalization of prostitution, along with new anti-trafficking legislation and enforcement, disproportionately target the most impoverished group of people in the sex trade. Shutting down online platforms takes away sex workers' autonomy and reduces sex workers' ability to screen clients to make sure they haven't committed violence in the past. Sex workers without housing are especially vulnerable to violence because they often work in less predictable environments and don't have the resources to adequately screen and select safe clients. Taking away online platforms threatens indoor sex workers' livelihood and pushes sex workers into more dangerous conditions on the street.

Police officers' unions, Business Improvement Districts, Sheriff's Associations, and other groups whose financial interests are tied to the criminalization of poverty have lobbied for punitive policies regulating sex work, homelessness and drug use and against activists' efforts to pass legislation that would decriminalize homelessness, sex work or drug use. These groups have pushed lawmakers to invest in policing, a response that strengthens the central role of incarceration in the U.S. economy.

Fighting back

Grassroots organizations are fighting back against harmful laws and investments, and this has resulted in some important gains in the past few years. For example, in 2013, sex worker activists succeeded in changing local legislation to decriminalize possession of condoms in San Francisco. Before the passage of this law, SFPD could confiscate condoms and use them as evidence of intent to commit a crime. This practice targeted transgender women and street-based sex workers. Now that San Francisco police officers are no longer allowed to confiscate condoms, communities have more protection against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

Sex worker activists in California very recently defeated SB 1204, a California Senate Bill to amend the definition of "pandering"

SEX WORKERS & COMMUNITY PROTEST TO OPPOSE FOSTA/SESTA

HARMFUL LEGISLATION DOES NOTHING TO SUPPORT SEX WORKERS OR SURVIVORS OF TRAFFICKING

DILARA YARBROUGH

in a way that would further criminalize sex workers, trafficking survivors and their supporters. This legislation proposed to broaden the definition of pandering, introducing new sweeping language that threatened sex workers who work in teams for safety and clients of sex workers, as well as the provision of harm reduction-based support services. Sex workers and supporters from dozens of organizations mobilized to Sacramento to defeat the bill.

We must oppose funneling more resources into criminalization and punishment. Instead, let's support sex worker activists' push for investment in no-strings-attached resources that allow people to get out of poverty: Housing, healthcare, harm reduction resources and access to voluntary, stigma-free care for drug addiction, mental illness and trauma. Decriminalizing sex work, drug use and homelessness will help break the cycle of poverty and criminalization that disproportionately targets people of color and queer and trans people.

To support sex workers in fighting for real solutions to the problems of poverty and violence, share your time or your money. Allies can join sex worker activists on Saturday, June 2nd at Oscar Grant Plaza for a press conference and protest march, beginning at 1pm. Those who are able can also donate to the Saint James Infirmary, a sex worker run clinic that serves people in the sex trade and helps fight against criminalization and for economic racial and gender justice. Donate online at: https://stjamesinfirmary.org/wordpress/?page_id=3312

For more information:

Watch an interview with Alexandra Lutnick, author of *Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking: Beyond Victims and Villains*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYxERZ01oHo>

Read a report from the Young Women's Empowerment Project: <https://youarepriceless.org>

Read Emi Koyama's article "The War on Terror & the War on Trafficking": <http://eminism.org/blog/entry/231>

Read an analysis of transgender sex workers' experiences of housing deprivation and police violence: http://www.transequality.org/sites/default/files/Meaningful%20Work-Full%20Report_FINAL_3.pdf

www.vox.com/culture/2018/4/13/17172762/fosta-sesta-backpage-230-internet-freedom

OAKLAND, CA: On June 2, International Sex Worker's Day, communities from all over the country will gather to advocate for the health, safety, and protection of sex workers in the wake of FOSTA / SESTA (Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act and Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act) legislation. Bay Area Pros Support (BAPS) and St. James Infirmary along with other community organizations and supporters will gather at Oscar Grant Plaza in Downtown Oakland to support Bay Area residents who deserve respect and safety during this heightened political time.

Cary Escovedo, HIV Services Manager at St James Infirmary, a clinic run for and by sex workers, says "When sex work and sex trafficking are conflated, there is harm done to both populations. FOSTA does nothing to help survivors of sex traf-

ficking, rather pushing it deeper underground. And it puts consenting adult sex workers in danger. Without safe ways to advertise and screen clients, many providers are going to the streets into unsafe situations."

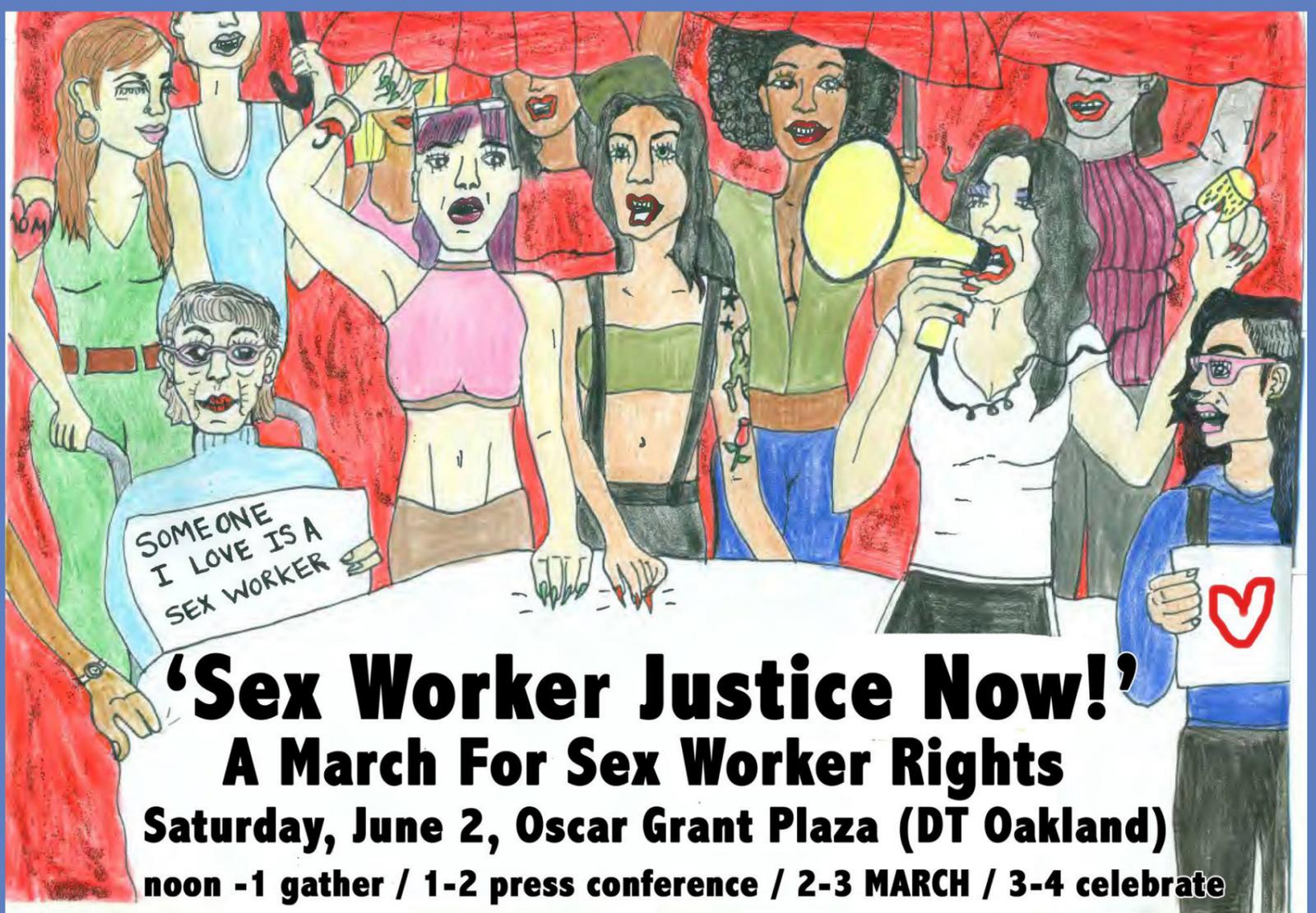
Organizers of the protest Arabelle Raphael and Maxine Holloway, who are sex workers and sex worker advocates say that sex worker justice is inherently tied to the justice of Black and Indigenous People of Color (BI-POC), LGBTQ, disabled, undocumented, poor or low-income, and drug using communities. "We live in a time where civil liberties are threatened by legislation and doctrine. From net neutrality, Black Lives Matter, the Bay's housing crisis, to immigration laws, marginalized groups are experiencing heightened levels of persecution and violence. It is crucial that we recognize sex workers within

these struggles."

A press conference at 1pm features Celeste Guap, The Electronic Frontier Foundation, St. James Infirmary, and more.

Sex Worker Rights Rally & March, Saturday, June 2, 2018, Noon-4pm, Oscar Grant Plaza, 1 Frank H Oga-wa Plz, Downtown Oakland, CA 94612, b/t San Pablo Ave & 15th St <https://www.facebook.com/events/619421805075885/>

Bay Area Pros Support (BAPS) A group of Bay Area advocates that fight for the health, safety and livelihoods of sex workers post-FOSTA/SESTA legislation. We are organizing our community resources, skill-sets, knowledge, and power to provide: Support & resources for Bay Area workers; Immediate relief/connections for emergency needs; Strategic actions around sex worker safety, media advocacy, and policy. www.twitter.com/BayProsSupport ###



'Sex Worker Justice Now!'

A March For Sex Worker Rights

Saturday, June 2, Oscar Grant Plaza (DT Oakland)

noon -1 gather / 1-2 press conference / 2-3 MARCH / 3-4 celebrate

Sponsored by Bay Area Pros Support (BAPS) & St. James Infirmary // @BayProsSupport twitter for more info

WHEN SEX MEANS SURVIVAL

GARRICK WILHELM

I'm not homeless anymore thanks to a subsidy from the City and support I received from several wonderful agencies that gave me the stability to overcome addiction and mental health issues and the chance to continue my education. Now I'm a student at San Francisco State University finishing a bachelor's degree.

In my Contemporary Sexuality class, we had to critique an article from an academic journal on sexuality. I bumped into research on the prevalence of survival sex among people experiencing homelessness and got intrigued. Survival sex is defined as trading sex for food, shelter, drugs or money. Some people are appalled that a

homeless person would have to resort to sex as a survival mechanism. Some even go so far as to equate it to human trafficking. When I looked back at my 4 years of homelessness, this research just seemed wrong.

Homeless people have sex like any other human. They need food and shelter and sometimes drugs and money. Just because they often gain what they need in relation to people they have sex with doesn't seem to me to be a problem. I never traded sex for anything. Whenever I would find myself without a place to be at night, I would go to a 24hr coffee shop and get online. I would find someone to hookup with and I would have

a place to be for the night. I could often get a shower, a meal and they never even knew I was homeless, nor did they often care. I met a guy at the mall who would get a few dollars, go to a bar and find a chick that would take him home. I've also watched guys drive up to encampments and hit on girls, offering them food and a shower.

Being Homeless is work, work to survive. Anyone who ever tried to tell you homeless people are lazy, has never been homeless. We do what it takes to survive as human beings. There is nothing pathological or wrong about it. It would be nice if we didn't have to struggle for food and shelter. Someday society will learn that lesson. Until then

stop pathologizing the problem and get out of our way.

The last thing I have to share is hope. It's hard to have when the world is stacked against you. Now that I have hope I try to give it away as much as possible. If I can go from where you are to a prestigious University doing research on human rights and social justice, then you can do it too. Yes you. Today may not be so great, but it won't always be this way. Hope for the future when you have the stability to pursue what you love and how you think you can make the world a better place. Your voice and your experience can make a difference.

THE HOOKER WITH A HEART

RAMSEY E. DUNLAP

He invited me to his apartment; afterward, he told me he was an escort. Then we sat on his couch in silence: me glancing up at the ceiling, him looking at me while holding a package for which he'd just signed.

"Oh," I said, "an escort."

He was staring at me as if I might drop onto him a spontaneous critique about his life that would demand (before his rebuttal), first, his own quiet self-analysis.

"No, it's cool," he said, "and the money's f&%king great."

I wasn't shocked. A bit nicked, maybe. Like when shaving and the razor suddenly cuts skin. I looked at him and thought, okay, good for you.

Yet, still, there was a part of me thinking, people really pay YOU—for THAT. Cynical, yes. But we'd hung out before, and I liked him. It's just that . . . if you've had sex with a dude, and afterward he up and told you he had sex with other people (but those other people paid him) regardless of how open-minded, how with-it, you thought you were, naturally, your mind might U-turn and come up with some wild s#@t; like, hold up, I'm not your practice F&%k, am I?

"Well, what's being an 'escort' like?" I asked.

He slid off the couch and sat on the

floor. He waved me over. "Come sit down here with me," he said.

I sat beside him. I didn't know what to expect. He sighed. The mood got serious; heavier, but not dismal. Then he started talking.

He said the work was easy, and he averaged a couple thousand dollars per week. Most of that money from regular clients. He told me his job was to satisfy the client, to make the client feel good.

The thing that surprised him most, he said, might also surprise me: A lot of clients only wanted to talk. That's it.

And on his own personal time, he sometimes called or texted clients because he thought they might be lonely. Other times he might mail them an actual card, run an errand, or offer to accompany them to a doctor's appointment (none of that for money) more because, he said, it's the human thing to do.

"I guess you can call me a hooker with a heart."

He never divulged explicit, sexual details; instead, he explained how he'd worked his way through college—twice—in the end earning a Master's degree. And that for the next phase of his life he planned to relax. To travel the world.

He seemed like, someone who'd

not only made peace with his job but, who'd also discovered (surprisingly—even to himself) that outside judgments needn't define the gratification a person received from work; instead, it's the worker who assigned value to the work and who quantified his own satisfaction. He'd gained freedom: the freedom that people, whom are shackled to a bosses' schedule, fantasize self-employed people have. A certain, god-of-one's own-doings, freedom.

We talked for hours. Afterward, I decided my previous opinions about sex work deserved re-examining, and I suffered those opinions to scrutiny. As a result, I've expanded my understanding of sex work, sex workers, and sex itself.

My newest opinions on sex work and sex workers have made me think of sex as the guarantor, whom by design, transcends a sole guarantee of offspring (genetic heirs) and further serve as a recreation that elevates the body, mind and soul's ability to rise to sheer pleasure.

In my opinion, sex work's a legitimate means to this pleasure. I arrive at this opinion if I ask myself these questions (and challenge others to ask themselves): On one side, can one support sex workers' rights to engage in their profession without patronizing sex work; conversely, on the other side, if one decides to reject those arguments favoring sex work-



ers' rights, can one oppose sex work without despise and diminishing sex workers to, say, criminal-minded deviants glorifying a fringe 'profession'? If yes—and you've chosen a side—then, ultimately, how does one argue and defend one's opinion if a consequence of committing wholly to either side possibly means one relinquishes objectivity?

My answer: it requires that one sacrifice any instinct to dismiss sex work and one consciously elevates a conversation involving sex work to a level where only a thoughtful, actively-engaged dialogue survives and defines the discourse. This is paramount to any deeper, yet arguably more difficult to arrive at (but more nuanced), understanding of sex work.

This deeper understanding is a signal one has abandoned denial and accepts that some people are going to feed their sexual appetites, via a sex worker, until one of the following happens: humans 'devolve' into a monolithic people who pity desires while willfully ignorant of carnal knowledge, or—someone creates an app people can literally F&%k.

Since 1989, the STREET SHEET has been an independent media organization that provides a powerful platform to homeless people to reclaim and shift narratives about homelessness in San Francisco. visit www.cohsf.org and click "Donate Now" to help keep it that way!

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HOW TO GET INVOLVED, CONTACT QUIVER WATTS AT QWATTS@COHSF.ORG

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SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR

JUNE 2	JUNE 3	JUNE 4 & 11	JUNE 8
<p>SEX WORKER JUSTICE NOW!</p> <p>WHERE: OSCAR GRANT PLAZA, OAKLAND</p> <p>WHAT: On Saturday, June 2, SWers and our allies will be standing up for justice all over the country. Join us at Oscar Grant Plaza in Downtown Oakland, CA to make the voices & needs of our Bay Area communities loud & visible: Sex Worker Justice Now! (Allies wanted & welcome)</p> <p>ACCESS: Will be updated on the facebook event page ASAP:</p>	<p>OUR CITY OUR HOME SIGNATURE GATHERING KICKOFF!</p> <p>WHERE: GLIDE, 330 ELLIS ST</p> <p>WHAT: We're gathering signatures to put the "Our City, Our Home" measure on the ballot in November. This measure would provide \$300 million dollars of resources for affordable housing, mental health care, and other services needed to get everyone in our City indoors and protect all of us who are vulnerable to losing our housing.</p> <p>ACCESS: Email slew@cohsf.org for access information</p>	<p>ENCUENTRA TU PODER: UN TALLER GRATUITO PARA TRABAJADOR@S SEXUALES</p> <p>WHERE: ST JAMES INFIRMARY, 234 EDDY ST</p> <p>WHAT: Descubra tu Poder es un taller gratuito de 4 semana en español para personas que han trabajado o estan trabajando en el Trabajo Sexual. El taller se enfocara en desarrollando una practica de autocuidado y el amor propio. Ven y descubra habilidades que ayuden en que usted se sienta mas segur@ en este clima politico.</p> <p>ACCESS: Para Mas informacion llame 415-857-2859</p>	<p>COPYSLOT ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY PARTY</p> <p>WHERE: EL RIO, 3158 MISSION ST</p> <p>WHAT: Join us as we celebrate our one year band anniversary. This Friday evening affair is gonna sparkle with live music, theatrics, libations, and gluten free creations.</p> <p>ACCESS: FREE ADMISSION with passcode: *SYLVIA RIVERA. The entrance and most of the club at El Rio are wheelchair accessible. The bathrooms are not wheelchair accessible, they do not have grab bars, and would not be accessible without assistance.</p>
JUNE 18	JUNE 22	JUNE 22	JUNE 23
<p>ENCUENTRA TU PODER: UN TALLER GRATUITO PARA TRABAJADOR@S SEXUALES</p> <p>WHERE: ST JAMES INFIRMARY, 234 EDDY ST</p> <p>WHAT: Descubra tu Poder es un taller gratuito de 4 semana en español para personas que han trabajado o estan trabajando en el Trabajo Sexual. El taller se enfocara en desarrollando una practica de autocuidado y el amor propio. Ven y descubra habilidades que ayuden en que usted se sienta mas segur@ en este clima politico.</p> <p>ACCESS: Para Mas informacion llame 415-857-2859</p>	<p>BUSTIN OUT 13: PARTY AGAINST THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX</p> <p>WHERE: EL RIO, 3158 MISSION ST @7PM</p> <p>WHAT: Join us for the 13th Annual Trans March After Party fundraiser for TGI Justice Project (TGJJP)!</p> <p>ACCESS: \$13-33. We welcome people with disabilities. Our entrance and most of the club is wheelchair accessible, including the back deck, but not the yard. Our bathrooms are NOT wheelchair accessible and do NOT have grab bars (and would not be accessible without assistance). Our back patio is now smoke free, but we are unfortunately not a fragrance free space.</p>	<p>TRANS MARCH 2018</p> <p>WHERE: MISSION DOLORES PARK @11AM</p> <p>WHAT: Our rights and existence have been more intensely under attack since the election so it's even more critical that we gather this year to fight back, resist, celebrate and create community. Let's make this a huge showing of how powerful and incredible we are!</p> <p>ACCESS: 45 minute march, access information not currently public</p>	<p>26TH ANNUAL DYKE MARCH</p> <p>WHERE: 5-8PM, MORE INFO HERE: HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/EVENTS/1964763266927203/</p> <p>WHAT: The San Francisco Dyke March is a call to action. Marching reminds us that complacency is not an option. We cannot be divided - we must raise our voices!</p> <p>ACCESS: We will also have trained counselors at the Emotional Security Tent who are also dykes who will be available for your needs.</p>

SWORD SWALLOWER TRIPTYCH III

RARE BIRD

Where is the emoji for two 5150's in two months?

How do I find the emoji for I didn't realize he had two girlfriends—

I mean, if love exists (and really what is it, what the fuck is it), then I feel it and if it doesn't it doesn't matter.

But, I asked, how did she not know her boyfriend hanged himself until way later?

She opened her eyes wide and held her chopsticks over sushi.
"All of my friends are hookers and all of my friends are crazy."

I became what you wanted in a woman through sex work, and through it I became what nobody wants.

I swallowed the sword.
But I did not first swallow the sheath.
I got this. It'll floss right out of my throat.

When we met you asked what made me happy and I said, No.
When you left for the last time I crouched on the floor of the shower for a long time with
my palm raised up beneath the stream of water.

The thing I value:
It is good art done.

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Uncensored conversations about sex, gender, culture, and politics led by sex workers, sex educators, and queer folks.

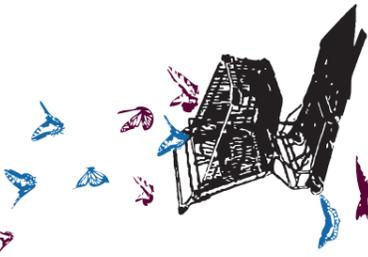
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