

Prostitution sting raises legal, moral questions

OUR OPINION: Adults should be allowed to sell their bodies for sex

Following a drug sting operation, Eugene police were back in the Whiteaker neighborhood last week to cart off the city's prostitutes. As "successful" as this operation may have been, it is, at its core, a waste of time and money.

Adult prostitution is a victimless crime and should be legalized.

In the best of all possible worlds, women and men would not need to sell their bodies for sex. No one would be physically or emotionally abused, would run away from home or would become drug-addicted.

Women would have equal economic opportunities and would not find themselves trapped in abusive relationships with pimps, husbands or boyfriends. In an ideal universe, no one would "need" to sell her body to feed her children or get a drug fix. Without question, we should strive to eradicate these factors from our society.

However, making sex for sale illegal does not eliminate these problems. It exacerbates them.

Criminalizing prostitution stigmatizes women who are already clinging to the bottom rung of the socioeconomic ladder. Most Americans consider these women "impure" or "fallen."

This perception is based on a centuries-old idea that a woman's body should not be defiled between the time she leaves the ownership of her father and enters into the service of her husband. Until the 19th century, rape was considered a property

crime, and restitution was paid to whoever "owned" the woman at the time.

As much as we think we may have evolved from this archaic thinking, the attitudes still linger.

When we arrest prostitutes, we think we're protecting them. We think we're helping them to end their wicked lifestyle. Yet, almost all of these women go back to the streets with less cash in their pockets and the need to turn more tricks to pay back the pimp who bailed them out or get the fix they need.

We like to believe that police officers can show these women that they have options and can get off the street if they want to. This is true. But all of that can be accomplished through community outreach programs.

In fact, by legalizing prostitution, but restricting it, we could eliminate many of the problems associated with it.

Street prostitution would remain illegal, but prostitutes would be able to set up shop in zoned districts and take out yellow-pages ads. Like other businesses, sex sellers would need to be licensed by the city. To renew the license, they would need to report for health testing and counseling once a month.

This would increase tax revenue, eliminate prostitute dependence on abusive men, give women a way out and curb the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. It would allow women to have complete control over the use or misuse of their bodies.

No, it wouldn't solve all the problems, but it's a step in the right direction.



LETTERS

Mind exploitation

The Nov. 29 edition of *The Register-Guard* featured an article reporting the role of University psychology professor Ray Hyman in evaluating a CIA psychic research project called Stargate.

I responded with a letter to *The Register-Guard* editor critical of this confluence of the University with CIA activities, but I was more concerned with pointing out the context of Stargate within an ongoing procession of exploitative mind researches (*sic*) sponsored by the U.S. Intelligence community.

I was not surprised that *The Register-Guard* declined to publish my response. Like other Eugene newsprint organs speaking from various stances of so-called progressivism, *The Register-Guard* prefers that those criticisms of the CIA it sometimes publishes deal with remote skullduggeries in far away lands.

Meanwhile, the continuing role of the U.S. Intelligence in high-tech mind experiments upon prisoners, patients and its own all-too-willing corps of recruits continues in hidden corners of America and is generally ignored, as well, by hypocritical human rights organizations such as Amnesty International.

I don't mean to suggest that Stargate itself is necessarily a front for such experiments, but it's naive to imagine that CIA interest in the paranormal is limited to investigations of the performances of a few remote-viewing superstar psychics.

Certain governmentally contracted laboratories such as the Stanford Research Institute, which is discussed in *The Register-Guard* article, are well-known hotbeds of Dr. Strangelove projects intent upon exploring the more literal computer/human interfaces and "psychic" broadcasts possible when microchips, biochips, micro receiver/transmitters and other parasites of genetic/electronic configuration are implanted and wired directly

into mammalian brains.

The total empire of privileged information, which some intelligence factions ultimately expect to consolidate in this country, will, if it comes more fully to pass, be no respecter of those transcendent gifts of mind and spirit bestowed within us through the ages by intelligent nature in response to our own yearnings. Rather, they will invade, colonize, and enslave those human outposts where souls once grew.

John A. Hickam
Eugene

Library lout

I never imagined myself submitting a letter to the editor, most likely as a result of my dominant "laissez faire" attitude. Yet, after an infuriating incident in the library during a recent weekend, the need to vent my frustration and the means to do so became apparent.

On Nov. 19, in an attempt to complete a Women's Studies paper in peace, I headed to the Knight Library. I settled into a window seat and began to tackle the readings necessary for the paper. I specifically chose an area of the library that was virtually unpopulated, assuming that this atmosphere would be the most conducive to studying.

I enjoyed a solid 30 minutes of silence before my ears were assaulted by an unruly individual's headphone clamor. "Of all the available locations to study, he had to come here and disrupt me," I thought.

After half an hour of pencil tapping, horribly off-pitch singing, and the display of numerous other disruptive behaviors, I decided it was time to let this individual know that, yes, this is a library, and that I would appreciate the common courtesy associated with such a place — silence.

His reaction paralleled that of an individual incapable of recognizing any perspective other than his own.

"This is the only table large enough for my map," he blurted. I hadn't asked for a justification for his location, rather that he refrain from polluting the airways of what is usually considered a sanctuary for the ears.

"I don't give a f--- about you," was his next refute.

"Is that what Jerry taught you?" I questioned as I stared at the late-singer's image on the individual's T-shirt.

All I expected from this individual was common courtesy. Because he was in a public setting known for its quietness, my request wasn't unreasonable. The lack of respect this man displayed now manifests itself in the image of the late Jerry Garcia.

I find it hard to believe that there are individuals who feel they have no responsibility as human beings to be respectful of others.

John Fujita
Psychology

Enlightening 'Emerald'

My memory may be failing me, but I seem to recall a time when the *Emerald* was not completely unreadable. If there was, that time has passed.

Reading the *Emerald*, we have learned that the Republican Party has altered the Constitution so that their presidents can remain in office for six years (ODE, Nov. 28). According to the *Emerald*, George Bush began his term in 1987, while Bill Clinton will only receive a four-year term.

In addition, we have been told that residing in Ireland is synonymous with living in an unhappy and abusive marriage. Apparently, all Irish are unfaithful wife-beaters.

We hope that the *Emerald* will continue to enlighten us on the affairs of the world.

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