



January 15, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of my organization, the Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation (CAASE). CAASE is a nonprofit agency in Chicago that works toward the elimination of the demand side of the sex trade. We believe that the sex trade is inherently exploitive and harmful to individuals, families, and communities.

What helps perpetuate the harm in the sex trade is the normalization of the industry, and this "normalization" is growing stronger all the time (the word 'pimp' being used to describe everything from cars to baby clothes, pole dancing classes sprouting up at gyms throughout the country, etc.). No exception are "Pimp N' Ho" parties on college campuses that use the backdrop of the sex trade as an excuse for people to dress up in racist stereotypes of pimps and sexy portrayals of prostituted women.

Campus groups would never tolerate a party where men dress up as slave owners, so why the allowance for "pimps" who often act in that very same role in the lives of the women they prostitute. We feel that it's time we shift a culture around this issue so that we stop tolerating the normalization of abuse against women. We hope that this kit can provide you with actions you can take to protest these parties on your campus.

We encourage your group to read through the materials and use the resources to help educate your community. CAASE is always open and available for questions, comments or additional resources.

Thank You,



# Making the Connection

**Pimp 'n 'Ho Parties &  
Violence Against Women**

Included in this packet:

Information Guide

Fact Sheet Template

Email Template

Poster Template

Speak Out

Resources



## Making the Connection Information Guide

*Pimp 'N 'Ho theme parties are lies about prostitution.*

### **Prostitution is Not Entertainment. Prostitution is Not a Job**

"92% women prostituting said they wanted to get out of prostitution." (Farley, 1998).

Prostitution is sexual harassment, rape, battering, verbal abuse, and domestic violence. It is a racist practice, a violation of human rights, and often results from childhood sexual abuse. Prostitution is a *result* of male domination of women and a means of *maintaining* male domination of women.

### **"Pimp 'N 'Ho" Parties Set Up a Model for How Men Can Hurt Women and Make a Joke of It**

"Pimp N' Ho" parties teach men that pimping women is fun rather than what it really is - coercion, verbal abuse, battering, and sexual assault. Pimps target girls or women who seem naive, lonely, homeless, and rebellious. At first, the attention and feigned affection from the pimp convinces her to "be his woman." But soon the pimp's kindness is replaced by control and abuse. Pimps keep prostituted women in virtual captivity by verbal abuse - making a woman feel that she is utterly worthless: a toilet, a piece of trash; and by physical coercion - beatings and the threat of torture. (Barry, 1995). Eighty five percent of women in prostitution in one study reported being raped by pimps. (Council on Prostitution Alternatives, 1994).

The answer to the question "why do prostitutes stay with their pimps?" is the same as the answer to the question "why do battered women stay with their batterers?" Humans bond emotionally to their abusers as a psychological strategy to survive under conditions of emotional stress and abuse.

### **Prostitution is the Legacy of Colonialism and Gender Inequality**

Prostitution is racist. Women are purchased for their appearance based on race and ethnic stereotyping. Institutions that deal with issues of prostitution also tend to racial profile. Arrest statistics in Chicago reflect this phenomenon since women of color are far more likely to be arrested for charges of prostitution than white women. In 1999, the Chicago Police Department arrested 5,437 women and girls for prostitution. Seventy-five percent of them were black women (Hughes, 2005).

Prostitution is extremely violent. Prostitutes are the most raped group of women on the planet. As one survivor told Dr. Farley, "what is rape for others is normal for us."

Life in prostitution is almost uniformly violent for those involved. Research conducted about prostitution in Chicago found that 100% of survey participants have experienced some type of violence while in the sex trade including being raped, kicked, threatened with a weapon, punched, and slapped. Another study conducted in San Francisco yielded similar statistics about the incidence of violence: eighty two percent of respondents report having been physically assaulted since entering prostitution, with fifty five percent having been assaulted by customers, eighty percent reported physical attacks by pimps and customers that have resulted in serious injury and sixty- eight percent of respondents reported having been raped since entering prostitution (Farley & Barkan, 1998).

Most women enter prostitution as young teenagers, not as worldly women who are playing 'ho' to have a good time. The average age of entry into prostitution is now twelve years (GEMS, 2008).

### **Prostitution Exist Because There is a Demand to Buy Sex**

In prostitution, demand creates supply. Were there no men wanting to buy the vulnerable bodies of women and girls there would be no prostitution. And buying sex is about entitlement as can be seen by these quotes from 'johns':

"[Prostitution is like] going to Circuit City or Best Buy, what's the bigger and better deal?"

"I want to pay someone to do something a normal person wouldn't do. To piss on someone or pay someone to do something degrading [who] is not my girlfriend."

"[When I'm with a prostitute she] feels a lot of force between her legs, because I'm not going to be lenient. I'm going to give her everything I've got. You can pound them, she don't mind." (CAASE, 2008)

### **All Prostitution Causes Harm to Women**

Whether it occurs indoors or outdoors, whether it is a stranger or family member pimping you, whether you are a runaway or someone who enters the sex trade out of economic necessity: all forms of prostitution hurt the women in it.

Like combat veterans, women in prostitution suffer from high rates of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a psychological reaction to extreme physical and emotional trauma. Symptoms are acute anxiety, depression, insomnia, irritability, flashbacks, emotional numbing, and being in a state of emotional and physical hyper alertness. Sixty eight percent of 854 individuals in prostitution from nine countries had PTSD — a rate similar to that of battered women, rape victims, and state-sponsored torture survivors. (Farley, Baral, Kiremire, Sezgin, 1998)

### **What Should We Do About Prostitution?**

When we understand that prostitution is violence against women, it makes no sense to legalize or decriminalize prostitution. The violence in prostitution is not a result of "social stigma" as some maintain. Decriminalizing or legalizing prostitution would normalize and regulate practices which are human rights violations, and which in any other context would be illegal: sexual harassment, physical assault, rape, captivity, economic coercion, or emotional damage.

In 1999, the Swedish Parliament defined the purchasing of sex as an act of violence against the person selling. To substantiate this definition, Sweden passed a law that

criminalizes the buying of sexual services but not the selling. This is a compassionate, social interventionist legal response to the cruelty of prostitution, which gets at the root of the problem: the demand side – pimps, traffickers, and “johns”. The Swedish law does not criminalize women in prostitution; instead, it created additional needed social services such as housing, drug & alcohol treatment, healthcare, and job training. By addressing the root cause, Sweden has seen street prostitution and international sex trafficking practically disappear.

## Making the Connection Fact Sheet



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### Prostitution is:

- a) sexual harassment
- b) rape
- c) battering
- d) verbal abuse
- e) domestic violence
- f) a racist practice
- g) a violation of human rights
- h) childhood sexual abuse
- i) a consequence of male domination of women
- j) a means of maintaining male domination of women
- k) all of the above

**FACT: 62% reported having been raped in prostitution.**

**FACT: 73% reported having experienced physical assault in prostitution.**

**FACT: 72% were currently or formerly homeless**

**FACT: 92% stated that they wanted to escape prostitution immediately**

# Making the Connection

## Email Template

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing as a concerned student in response to "Pimp N' Ho" parties that take place on our campus. As you probably know, the phrase "Pimp N' Ho" is used to describe acts of prostitution. It's a sad fact that many women who are involved in prostitution often start out believing that the industry is glamorous, as these parties make them out to be, but they soon discover that the sex trade is violent, degrading and psychologically harmful.

As a student of \_\_\_\_\_ College/University I am disappointed to discover that parties of this nature are taking place on campus and on designated off-campus housing with no response from administration. This is an issue of normalizing violence against women, and \_\_\_\_\_ College/ University should take a stand against any student activity that normalizes harm.

Women involved in the commercial sex trade are exposed to physical, emotional and sexual violence on a daily basis. The majority suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, disassociation, and long-term physical harms. Making light of a destructive industry perpetuates the harm that is done when we normalize abuse against women and girls.

I know that this is not the image that your college envisions to promote. [insert comment about the mission statement of the school]. As a student and member of [insert women's group] I implore you to take an outspoken stance against these parties.

Some ways in which \_\_\_\_\_ college/ University can take a proactive stance is through: educating Resident Assistants and Hall Directors about the inappropriateness of these parties and how to discipline students who host them; releasing a campus-wide statement that takes a stance against these types of parties; and hosting educational forums on the realities of the sex trade.

\_\_\_\_\_ is a College/ University with a long history of championing the rights of all minority and marginalized individuals. We now need you to take a leadership role to ensure that women who are harmed in the sex trade do not become the sexualized subject of college parties. Please create a campus wide declaration that \_\_\_\_\_ College/ University will not tolerate "Pimp N' Ho" parties and that those who host such parties will be held accountable and face disciplinary action.

Thank you,



## Making the Connection Poster Template

### **Why Attending a Pimp N' Ho Party is a Good Time for Everyone!**

Ladies: Have You ever wanted to dress up as a "ho"? To let your inner- prostituted self come through? Well now you have the chance! Attend the upcoming Pimp N' Ho party to celebrate what really makes a "ho".

Plan your outfit carefully because you want your costume to be the most realistic at the party. Remember that the glamour of prostitution often includes being raped, hit, spit on, yelled at, stolen from, kicked, drugged, infected with STD's and even murdered!

What is more fun then dressing up as an abused woman in a sexy outfit?!

And make sure your p\*i\*m\*p partner portrays his role accurately as well. Pimps are consistently identified as violent rapists who prey on young girls and homeless women, now if that's not sexy, I don't know what is...



## Making the Connections Speak OUT!

*Now that you have been empowered with the knowledge. . . what can your group do about it?*

1. **Educate:** Distribute fact sheets about the harms of prostitution in common student areas.
2. **Enlist:** Enlist the help of Resident Assistants and Hall Directors to educate students about the harms of the sex trade and how these parties normalize that harm.
3. **Action:** Get your school on board with taking a stance against these parties on your campus. Work with the Residence Life or Student Affairs office to release a statement against "Pimps N' Ho" parties. Work with them to develop strict penalties for people that do host these parties.
4. **Pass It On:** Spread this knowledge to other school clubs and local colleges/ universities.
5. **Results:** Let us know how we can improve our kit. Share your "lessons learned" and success stories with us! We'd love to hear about it and spotlight your efforts on the CAASE website.

# Making the Connections

## Resources

**Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation:** [www.caase.org](http://www.caase.org)

**BeyondMedia:** Turning the Corner.  
Documentary that explains the realities of life in prostitution.

**Chicago Coalition for the Homeless- Prostitution Alternatives Round Table:**  
[www.chicagohomeless.org](http://www.chicagohomeless.org)

**Chicago Foundation For Women** [www.cfw.org](http://www.cfw.org)

**Partnership to Rescue Our Minors From Sexual Exploitation:**  
[www.promisechicago.org](http://www.promisechicago.org)

**Promoting Awareness, Victim Empowerment:** [www.pavingtheway.net](http://www.pavingtheway.net)

**Girls Educational and Mentoring Services (GEMS):** [www.gems-girls.org](http://www.gems-girls.org)

**Prostitution Research and Education:** [www.prostitutionresearch.com](http://www.prostitutionresearch.com)

**Coalition Against Trafficking in Women:** [www.catwinternational.org](http://www.catwinternational.org)