

# The Trafficking Patchwork

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# Sex Trafficking in the News

- “UK plans *clampdown* on sex trafficking” (CNN, 19 Nov 2008)
- “*Selling sex* is like the weather: you just can’t legislate for it” (Telegraph, 22 Nov 2008)
- “Will this be *the end of prostitution*” (The Times, 19 Nov 2008)
- “*Damaged women* are safer now, thanks to Jacqui Smith” (Independent, 22 Nov 2008)
- “The *Body Shop*” (Financial Times, 19 Nov 2008)
- “Women Trafficked For Sex *Freed* in South Florida” (CBS, 22 Nov 2008)
- “Four People Arrested For Sex Trafficking Of *Immigrant Women* in South Florida” (10 News, 22 Nov 2008)

# Sex Trafficking in the News

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November 19, 2008 -- Updated 1635 GMT (0035 HKT)

## UK plans clampdown on sex trafficking

**LONDON, England (CNN)** -- Paying for sex with trafficked or exploited women would be a criminal offense under new laws proposed by the UK government Wednesday.



The act of purchasing sex is a criminal offense in England & Wales, but there are no laws against paying for sex in public places and persistently soliciting for sex.

Now UK Home Secretary (introduced by Jacqui Smith) says she is proposing to protect vulnerable women from the demand for prostitution.

Britain's interior ministry, known as the Home Office, introduced the new measures after a six-month review that found that the government could do to protect women exploited for sexual gain.

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November 19, 2008

## Will this be the end of prostitution?

Jacqui Smith, Britain's first female Home Secretary, wants to tackle the problem of prostitution. But the move faces strong opposition



Alice Thomson

When Richard Gere picked up Julia Roberts in his Lotus Esprit in *Pretty Woman*, it was the start of a great Hollywood romance. The classic prostitute with a heart of gold, she was transformed almost instantly into a glamorous sex kitten, equally at home shopping on Rodeo Drive, decorating his arm at the opera in San Francisco or stamping the divots at a polo match. And, of course, there was a

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### TIMES RECOMMENDS

- ▶ It was all too easy to lose my son
- ▶ First-time buyers hit the auctions to find a house
- ▶ Jennifer Aniston, time to be a real bitch

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# Terminology and Issues

- *Clampdown*
- *Selling sex*
- *The end of prostitution*
- *Body Shop*
- *Damaged women*
- *Immigrant*
- *Freed*
- Trafficking = Sex work
- Vulnerable, injured female bodies
- An 'other' that needs to be rescued

# Predominant narratives around women trafficked for sex

- Define how we approach sex trafficking
- Women's experiences after the intervention

The premise is that (women) are poor victims with the history of violence, stupid and naïve ... or the moral one: they are all whores.

*Sandra Ljubinkovic, NGO Anti-Trafficking Centre, Belgrade, Serbia*

Women are viewed as totally hopeless victims, unable to look after themselves, naïve and stupid, or as streetwise and manipulative, ready to take advantage of the situation. In both cases they are expendable. They are just objects.

*Solicitor, Victorian Legal Aid, Melbourne, Australia*

# Contrasted Images of Trafficking

It is a contradictory situation. When people imagine the worst-case scenario of trafficking, when women are abducted or completely deceived, abused and raped, they have such a sense of outrage about (trafficking); I think people believe it is the worst crime of all. But most women do not have this worst-case experience and they fall very quickly into the category of prostitutes. Women who have been trafficked and who end up having lots of boyfriends, engage in prostitution and are party girls, they are not seen as real victims. *Victims are not defined by what has been done to them. If they are not sobbing in the corner they are not seen as victim.*

***Kathleen Maltzahn, NGO Project Respect, Melbourne, Australia (emphasis added)***

# Responsibility to Protect?

- Prevent, React, Rebuild
- Just cause, right intention, proportional means, reasonable prospect of success, and right authority
- Just cause, right intention, right authority:
  - Poor, innocent women
  - “21<sup>st</sup> Century Abolitionist Movement”

*(US Ambassador John Miller, US House of Representatives' Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations 2006: 27)*

- Proportional and reasonable?

# The Harm

- Moral panic around 2006 FIFA World Cup
- Uncontested figures, range of actors
- Trafficking DID NOT happen
- Outcomes:
  - Crackdown on sex industry
  - Tough visa regimes
  - No critical evaluation

# Burning Questions

- Critical voices in contemporary trafficking debate?
- Contesting 'guestimates'?
- Sex trafficking, and not other forms of exploitation?
- Broader concepts of globalisation and migrations?
- Are we taking the attention away from serious analysis by slogans and campaigns?
- Are we making self-serving assessments that are just masqueraded as humanitarian intervention?
- Acknowledging the harm?
- The responsibility of the destination countries
- 'One size fits all' trauma/welfare intervention
- Making migrations more flexible and available
- Why, if the intervention is so good, women run away from their rescuers?
- Do we really need saviours vs. people with no agency divisions in trafficking?
- Where are the voices of beneficiaries that we want to protect?