

# Stripclubs According to Strippers: Exposing Workplace Sexual Violence

## Part 2, Survey Data

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### PART 2: SURVEY DATA

One hundred percent of the eighteen women in the survey report being physically abused in the stripclub. The physical abuse ranged from three to fifteen times with a mean of 7.7 occurrences over the course of their involvement in stripping. One hundred percent of the eighteen women in this study report sexual abuse in the stripclub. The sexual abuse ranged from two to nine occurrences with a mean of 4.4 occurrences over the course of their involvement in stripping. One hundred percent of the women report verbal harassment in the stripclub. The verbal abuse ranged from one to seven occurrences with a mean of 4.8 occurrences over the course of their involvement in stripping. One hundred percent of the women report being propositioned for prostitution. Seventy eight percent of the women were stalked by someone associated with the stripclub with a range of one to seven incidents. Sixty one percent of the women report that someone associated with the stripclub has attempted to sexually assault her with a range of one to eleven attempts. Not only do women suffer the abuse they experience, all of women in the survey witnessed these things happen to other strippers in the clubs. The overwhelming trend for violence against women in stripclubs was committed by customers of the establishments. Stripclub owners, managers, assistant managers, and the staff of bartenders, music programmers or disc jockeys, bouncers, security guards, floorwalkers, doormen, and valet were significantly less involved in violence against the women. According to the women in this study, almost all of the perpetrators suffered no consequence whatsoever for their actions.

### Physical Abuse

Customers spit on women, spray beer, and flick cigarettes at them. Strippers are pelted with ice, coins, trash, condoms, room keys, pornography, and golf balls. Men pitched a live guinea pig and a dead squirrel at two women in the survey. Some women have been hit with cans and bottles thrown from the audience. Customers pull women's hair, yank them by the arm or ankle, rip their costumes, and try to pull their costumes off. Women are commonly bitten, licked, slapped, punched, and pinched. See Table 1 Frequency of Physical Abuse.

Table 1 - Frequency of Physical Abuse

Abusive Action	Ever (by men in stripclub) (%)	At Least Once Every Day (%)	At Least Once Every Week (%)	At Least Once Every Month (%)	At Least Once Every Year (%)
Grabbed by arm	78	44 C 6 M 11 S	17 C 6 O 6 M	11 C 6 O 6 M	6 M



			11 S		
Grabbed by ankle	56	28 C		6 C 6 M	11 C
Grabbed by waist	94	50 C 6 M 11 S	33 C 11 M 11 S	6 M	11 C
Bitten	56	6 C	11 C		11 C
Licked	78	28 C	17 C	11 C 6 O 6 M 11 S	22 C
Slapped	39	6 C	11 C		17 C
Hair pulled	39	6 C	6 C	11 C	
Punched	72	6 C			
Pinched	72	17 C	17 C	6 C 6 M 6 S	22 C 6 S
Kicked	11	6 C			
Spit on	61	6 C			28 C
Pulled costume off	83	22 C		6 C 6 O 6 M	22 C 6 S
Ripped costume	44	6 C		6 C	17 C
Flicked cigarette	33	6 C	6 C		11 C
Sprayed beer	39	6 C	6 C	6 C	6 C
Threw ice	61	6 C	11 C	6 C	6 C
Threw coins	83	17 C	11 C	11 C 6 S	28 C
Threw cans/glasses	22	6 C			
Threw garbage	39	17 C	11 C		
Threw other	28	11 C			

N = 18 Key: C = customers, O = owners, M = managers, S = staff

## Sexual Abuse

Stripclub customers frequently grab women's breasts, buttocks, and genitals. Customers often attempt and succeed at penetrating strippers vaginally and anally with their fingers, dollar bills, and bottles. Customers expose their penises, rub their penises on women, and masturbate in front of the women. Women in this study consistently connected lap dances to the sexual abuse they suffered in the club. *"That's the first thing men try to do when they get close to you and always in a lap dance."* Stripclub owners, managers, and staff also expect women to masturbate them and some have forced intercourse on strippers. See Table 2 Frequency of Sexual Abuse and Table 3 Attempted and Completed Sexual Abuse.

Table 2 - Frequency of Sexual Abuse

Abusive Action	Ever (by men in	At Least Once Every	At Least Once Every	At Least Once Every	At Least Once
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	stripclub (%)	Day (%)	Week (%)	Month (%)	Every Year (%)
Grabbed breasts	94	28 C 6 M	17 C	17 C 6 M	17 C 6 O
Grabbed buttocks	89	39 C	11 C	39 C 6 M 6 S	6 O 6 S
Grabbed genitals	67	17 C		11 C 6 M	17 C
Exposed penis to her	67	11 C	6 C	6 C 6 O 6 M	33 C
Rubbed penis on her	78	39 C 6 M	22 C 6 O 6 M 6 S	6 C	22 C 6 O
Masturbated in front of her	78	33 C 6 M	11 C	28 C	6 C

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**Table 3 - Attempted and Completed Sexual Abuse**

Abusive Action	Experienced Attempted Abuse (%)	Experienced Successfully Completed Abuse (%)
Penetrate her vaginally with fingers	61 C 6 M	39
Penetrate her anally with fingers	33 C	17
Penetrate her with object	33 C 6 O	11
Force her to masturbate him	28 C 6 O 6 M	17
Force intercourse on her	17 C 6 O 6 M	11

N = 18 Key: C = customers, O = owners, M = managers, S = staff

### Verbal Abuse

Customers, owners, managers, and staff alike engage in harassing namecalling. Women are continually called "cunt", "whore", "pussy", "slut", and "bitch". Women in this study charge that men in the stripclub called them other demeaning or degrading names like ugly, looser, fat, pregnant, boy, stupid, crack, slash, snatch, beaver, dog, dyke, lezzie, brown eye, hooters, junkie, crackhead, and shit. See Table 4 Frequency of Namecalling Verbal Abuse.

**Table 4 Frequency of Namecalling - Verbal Abuse**

Abusive Action	Ever (by men in stripclub) (%)	At Least Once Every Day (%)	At Least Once Every Week (%)	At Least Once Every Month (%)	At Least Once Every Year (%)
Called "cunt"	61	28 C 6 M	6 C	17 C	11 C 6 M
Called "slut"	61	28 C 6 S	6 C	17 C 6 O 6 M 6 S	11 C
Called "whore"	78	28 C 6 S	6 C	17 C 6 O 6 M 6 S	22 C
Called "pussy"	72	39 C 6 S	11 C	11 C	11 C
Called "bitch"	89	39 C 6 S	11 C 6 O 6 M 6 S	6 C	22 C 6 M
Called other	56	17 C	6 C	17 C 6 M	6 C

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Forty four percent of the women report that men associated with the stripclub have threatened to hurt them physically. These women report from three to 150 threats during their involvement in stripping. Threats range from verbal threats of slaps, ass whippings, and rapes to physical postures of punching and back hand slapping. *"When I wouldn't let a customer grab on me, he would call me a bitch and threaten to kick my ass or rape me."* *"When a customer grabs and the woman and the girl takes action, they threaten".*

### Stalking

Men associated with stripclubs repeatedly attempt to contact the women against their wishes. Strippers are followed home and stalked by stripclub customers. Customers telephone, write letters, send gifts, and follow the women around against their wishes. Women recount stories of catching customers following them to fitness clubs, parks and lakes, day care centers, and even lesbian bars. They describe times when customers have broken into their homes and taken underwear, hairbrushes, and family photographs. Women say that other customers have used their jobs at the telephone company or within the criminal justice system to target the women. The women complain that customers also have followed them home masturbating while driving in the next lane. Women who travel the strip circuit to rural areas report that customers and stripclub owners, managers, and staff alike follow women from city to city and state to state. Furthermore, local men in small towns harass the visiting women by calling and knocking on the doors of the motel rooms and have been caught peeping in the windows of strippers' motel rooms. See Table 5 Stalking Occurrences.

Table 5 - Stalking Occurrences

Abusive Action	Ever (by men in stripclub) (%)	Range of occurrences
Sent her letters against her wishes	28	3-100 times
Sent her gifts against her wishes	22	2-100 times
Called her home against her wishes	39	2-360 times
Followed her home against her wishes	56	2-500 times
Followed her to her car against her wishes	67	12-500 times
Followed her around on her private time	28	1-150 times
Followed her from club to club, city, and state	28	6-360 times
Other	28	1-360 times

N = 18

Twelve percent of the women who reported being followed to their cars further reported that they were robbed (5.6 %), beaten (11.1%), threatened with a weapon (5.6%), verbally sexually harassed (66.7%), and sexually assaulted (16.7%) by customers. A customer who claimed he was in love with the woman followed her to her car, called her a "fucking cunt" and strangled her hard enough to cause blood to squirt from her neck.

### Sexual Exploitation

Only a minority of women report that they were asked to perform sexual acts on men associated with the stripclub in order to return to work (11% by owners); as a condition of being hired (11% by managers, 11% by owners); in order to continue working there (17% by owners); in order to get a better schedule (6% by owners); or for drugs (17% by customers, 11% by managers, 22% by owners, 11% by staff).

A majority of the women, however, report they were asked to perform sexual acts on men associated with the stripclub for money (100% by customers, 6% by managers, 17% by owners, 11% by staff). Customers and pimps constantly proposition women (Boles and Garbin 1974; Forsyth and Deshotels 1997; Ronai 1992; Ronai and Ellis 1989). Fourteen (78%) women from the survey report they are propositioned for prostitution every day by customers, three (17%) every week, one (6 %) every year. Women comment that customers ask them "Do you date?" all night long. *"Infinite...too many too count."* Women say that prostitution is influenced and suggested by management. One woman new to stripping was dumbfounded at how little money she was making taking her clothes off, so she asked the manager for his advice on increasing tips. He suggested turning tricks and said he could help her set up dates. Management sets up tricks, says it is good for business, and obligates women to turn over money from prostitution to the club. Women say prostitution is promoted even though owners tell women they would be punished if they turn tricks. Some stripclubs are notorious for promoting prostitution. *"You have to be a 'ho to work there'."*

Women disclosed that they were recruited into prostitution through stripping. Although the

strip industry markets stripping as something other than prostitution, some women consider prostitution an extension of stripping and stripping a form of prostitution. Pimps season women first with stripping and then turn them out into brothels or escort services for more money. Tricks, sugar daddies, pimps, and drug dealers in the stripclub seek to engage women in prostitution. Another young woman said that soon after she became involved in stripping, a pimp who posed as a customer in the stripclub manipulated her into an escort service by promising that she could make more money in less time simply by accompanying businessmen to dinner. She agreed in order to feed her crack addiction and as her addiction increased she slid down from gentlemen's clubs to escort service to brothel to street and crack house prostitution.

Not only are women in stripping pressured by customers to perform sexual acts on them, owners, managers, and staff pressure the women to perform sexual acts on them, their relatives and associates, on vice officers and police officers. Women explain the pressure could range from being coerced into dancing for the intended with an expectation to put on a real good show with special treatment, extra time, and sexual contact, to engaging in prostitution. Strippers, like other subordinates in worker-management relationships, respond with obedience to directives from management and others with authority (McMahon 1989). See Table 6 Percentage of Women Pressured for Sexual Exploitation.

**Table 6 - Percentage of Women Pressured for Sexual Exploitation**

Recipient	Pressured by customer (%)	Pressured by owner (%)	Pressured by manager (%)	Pressured by staff (%)	Pressured by vice officer (%)	Pressured by police officer (%)
Owner's friend		39				
Owner's relative		11				
Owner's business associate		33				
Manager's friend			17			
Manager's relative			6			
Manager's business associate			11			
Customer	72	22	17	6		
Vice officer		17	11	6	11	
Police officer		17	11	6		22

N = 18

Stripclubs, Part 3, Women's Thoughts of Stripping

