

YOUR QUESTIONS, MY ANSWERS

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ABOUT ME AND MY FAMILY

Tell us about the things that make up your story.

It's the story of an abused and neglected child, a prostitute who is also a mother, a black woman, a madam, a premiere dominatrix. It's the story of a defendant in a spectacular trial in 1998 for operating the Bondage Bungalow. It's the story of a court battle, Bedford Versus Canada, which overturned Canada's prostitution laws in the Supreme Court in 2013. It's the story of an activist thereafter. It's the story of a grandmother. It's also the stories of some of my supporters, lawyers, clients, opponents and others.

How and why did you enter the sex industry?

I knew other women who turned tricks and made good money at it. I needed money so I did too. I was dominatrix part-time as part of that. I followed the money as a desperate youth and then desperate single mother. Later on I was able to be a dominatrix under good conditions.

What is the significance of your story?

It's about the power of the state to control private consenting adult bedroom play. It's about the rationale or lack of behind various measures meant to encourage the sex trade and related activity. It's about the failure to define what is and is not a sex act when legislating. It's about the dangers that exist to providers of sexual services and why the laws hurt them. It's about the various hypocrisies of society and individuals in their attitudes to the sex trade. The story shows what it takes to fight the authorities when the authorities are in the wrong and how to fight. Most importantly it is about what men really want and why.

Why is there so much interest in your story?

This differs according to who is being discussed. The visual media is able to obtain good copy of my trials because of images such as a woman in leather with a riding crop at court, and headlines that include words like dominatrix and S&M. All media acknowledge the important aspect of my legal battles and the ramifications for society of laws with such deficiencies as my legal battles have helped to expose and remedy. The media has regularly found me to be an interesting interviewee and the story of her my compelling. Women are often intrigued by the stories of notorious women like me. Men are often attracted to stories of such women for prurient reasons. My story is so multi-faceted that it may appeal to various audiences or organizations for that reason alone.

Please tell us a bit about yourself now.

I am in my mid-fifties. I am a black woman. I am a mother of one daughter and grandmother to her son. I am Canada's most famous dominatrix by virtue of running two premiere facilities, one in the suburbs just north of Toronto (The "Bondage Bungalow") and one in downtown Toronto (The Bondage Hotel). The former was raided and resulted in a spectacular two week trial where I was convicted and the judge refused to say what the crime was. The second was heavily publicized and not raided, despite being almost identical to the first. I have published my memoirs and written a play about my life. Both will soon be appearing in the United States.

How do you spend your time now?

I am very limited to what I can do physically. Other than going to essential errands and appointments I write for about an hour a day, paint some days, and make a few appearances like this one.

We have heard you were sick. How has that panned out?

I am a long sufferer of Hepatitis-C. I went through 2 rounds of chemotherapy, to no avail. My liver became cirrhotic and it still is. I began to suffer diabetic symptoms. I have fibromyalgia and a deteriorated spine. The miracle drug Harvoni killed the Hep-C virus and my liver has recovered somewhat, but will be significantly scarred permanently. The symptoms of diabetes are gone. However I will never recover fully.

How does it feel to have had your life made public for decades?

Today it feels good. I feel validated. At first it was a bit embarrassing and I worried about confrontations, but gradually I accepted that my life would become

an open book, especially when I signed on for the constitutional challenge. Of course it bothered me a bit when the media got the facts wrong or said negative things about me, but now I expect that sometimes. Today it is actually a constant source of interest to me to see how the media is so often inaccurate, or otherwise misrepresents matters, whether it is about me or the issues in my legal battles. I have been able to set the record straight in my first book. I don't expect fairness in return, and I know that the opinions people have of me and what I have stood for will always vary.

What happens when strangers recognize you?

Most of the time I am not recognized. I am good at disguising myself, and I don't go out that often, but sometimes there are interesting encounters. Most of the time we are both shocked. Some time ago I went to a supermarket, disguised. A woman came up to me and said "Are you Terri-Jean Bedford?" Although I was in my "disguise" I told her I was. She told me she had always wanted to meet me and asked me for my autograph, which I gave her, on the back of a flier she found. We had a nice chat and she told me to keep up the fight and stand up for women victims of our laws. Another time two guys saw me sitting on a park bench and yelled "How much?" A few times I have actually been asked for autographs on the street. Many times people have come up to me and said they were pleased to meet me or have said how much they supported what I was doing (usually referring to the legal battle against the so called prostitution laws). People often stare but do so only briefly and say nothing. Overall, considering how much I change my appearance when I go out, I am surprised at how many people appear to recognize me. Such is the power of images in the media in our lives. Thank goodness the people who recognize me are almost always friendly.

How has your family felt about your dominatrix career and your legal challenge to the laws against prostitution?

My natural mother and father died when I was only a few years old. My first step father died when I was young as well. My foster mother was a religious woman and when my houses in Windsor and Thornhill were raided she was appalled. She thought what I was doing was sinful. She could not for the life of her understand why men would pay me to do what I did to them. I was an embarrassment to her. Her husband said little to me about what I did. He let her do the talking, but I don't think he was as critical. My foster mother died many years ago. I wonder what she would say now. My natural sisters have not been in touch lately, but I don't know whether it is because of what I do or just the usual awkwardness of staying in

touch when in different cities. My daughter is my biggest supporter. She has no time for anyone who says I have done or am doing anything wrong. My grandson is too young to make much of all this, but he liked showing me pictures of myself in the papers. His biggest criticism of me has been that I made him do homework, read and restrict his video game time when I baby-sat.

In your first book you spoke about your daughter extensively. How do you get along with her now?

My daughter is my biggest supporter. I have trained her as a dominatrix and she may pursue this path in the future in some manner. She has no time for anyone who says I have done or am doing anything wrong. She has never fully forgiven me for not giving her a more stable home to grow up in or for leaving her in foster care. However as she gets older she sees more of what life is about and she realizes that I had none of the many supports she has as a single mother. She does not like being told by her mother what to do, what to wear, who to see and so forth. I think we get along fairly well, but we could do better.

Do you want your daughter to work in the sex trade or be a dominatrix?

I have trained her as a dominatrix and she may pursue this path in the future in some manner. I want her to make lots of money in a manner she is comfortable doing. I don't want her doing menial work, low paid work, dangerous work, or work where she is sexually harassed or assaulted like working for the government police forces or armed forces. She has been a dominatrix. She may do it again. If she wants to have sex for free, that's her business too.

How do you feel about being black, and how did that factor into your role as a dominatrix?

It is a disadvantage to be a person of color, even today, even in a cosmopolitan city like Toronto. Many members of other minority groups, let alone whites, look down on black people. One of the reasons I became a dominatrix was that clients generally preferred white women for sex and some would not pay a black woman for sex. Now for me personally the experience of being a black woman is somewhat unusual. For one thing, I am only a very light brown. Many people seeing me, even without makeup, think I am just tanned. My mother was a white woman, my father black. This explains why I am sometimes mistaken for a white woman. The net effect is that I have been treated better by the world than if I was darker. This extended to when I was a dominatrix, and to today when I am photographed during my legal battle appearances and so on. That is the reality,

and it is sad the world is like that. I consider myself a black woman. However I have not been forward in mentioning that I am black when interviewed or in my writing. There are actually several reasons for this. (1) In each discussion, this issue at hand was the sex trade, the laws and things like that. There was little microphone time to raise the issue of black women. (2) It was made clear to me that my messages would resonate more if I did not make an issue of my ethnicity, whatever it may be. (3) It was also made clear to me that if people recognized me as a black woman it would hurt my message because much of the population is adverse to hearing, or tired of hearing, black women complain in the media. (4) Many ethnic and other groups are in the sex trade disproportionately: aboriginal women, Asian women, women from Eastern Europe, trans, as examples. I did not think it fair to speak only for my own ethnic group.

ABOUT BEING A DOMINATRIX

Are you still in the business?

No. I am too sick, and no longer young. I have concentrated on archiving my memoirs, my papers and writing the stories of some clients and doms I have had over the years. I have also wrote a play about my life and battles. I still make speeches and give interviews from time to time.

How did being a dominatrix change you?

It was very different from my personal experience as a prostitute selling sex. For the first half of my life my struggles were often for mere survival. I sometimes had to steal to eat. I was so down and out and desperate most of the time that the only people I could associate with were those on the margins and things like drug and alcohol abuse, which got them there, rubbed off on me. I was always just responding to the needs of the day and mistakes of the days before. I was almost always in over my head, sometimes from poor judgment, sometimes from desperation. It was different for me when I was a dominatrix running my houses. I was very business-like and practical and dealing with more well-heeled men and women in more elegant settings that made me feel and act more professional and lady-like. I enjoyed what I was doing and it showed in how I felt and acted. Sometimes I still had pressures, but they were more like the pressures of someone with a challenging business to run or a creative artist under numerous pressures. My time as a dominatrix and the behavior of the authorities in my cases also brought me many allies. So, being a dominatrix changed me most, I would say, in that I did not feel I was alone in facing the world. But then again, this is my

personal experience. I suspect that when you ask me this question you may be thinking about what having helpless men at my mercy and torturing or humiliating them did to my personality. I think it improved it. It did wonders for my ego and confidence to have powerful yet helpless men begging me to punish them, or stop punishing them, and worshiping at my feet.

How do you like not being a dominatrix?

I don't. I still practice my trade in a very limited capacity, never for money, among a close inner circle only. If I was healthy, and was funded to the point that I did not have to make ends meet, I would have no problem with reopening. I do miss doing sessions. However, when your health is as bad as mine, with my failing liver, spinal stenosis and fibromyalgia, you don't feel a big desire to take on responsibilities. I can't even be depended on to make sessions if I booked them. Some days I am bedridden. I only go out when I am feeling relatively well, or when the matter is of great importance. So, as you can see, there are everyday things I miss more than being a dominatrix.

Which dominatrix roles did you like most and least?

Every dominatrix enjoys some things about her job more than others. Obviously we like the pure dominatrix stuff more than the administrative aspects of the job, such as cleaning, paperwork and answering phones. First of all, longer scenes were better. I was always frustrated, as was the client, when the hour went by so quickly. For example, a cross-dresser would take off his clothes, I would help him into restrictive female attire, and there might only be a bit more than enough time of his hour left to get him changed again. Role play can be greatly enhanced when prolonged. Secondly, I would say, honestly, that there were many role-play scenarios I enjoyed above the others, but at that I will stop. Some things are best kept secret. Sorry. It would be like a magician giving away the secrets of doing the magic tricks, and some clients I had might be disappointed in what I say.

Where should a dominatrix operate from?

It depends on what scenes she wishes to do. If it is simple basic bondage and discipline she can do out-calls and bring a bag or suitcase with what she needs, and dress, perhaps under an overcoat, as required. If she does, say, medical or cross-dresser scenes, then she obviously needs a place of her own to keep all the stuff, or she has to rent such a place or be employed by such a place. Some doms have cottages which are fully equipped. Some have bachelor apartments they rent solely for their business appointments, with the equipment locked up ready for

deployment on short notice. So it depends on how much capital she has and overhead she can cope with. I think the idea of the bachelor apartment I described is best of all for a couple of gals just starting out. It is inexpensive, can be shared by more than one dom, can be easily replaced if for some reason it has to close and can be downtown where the businessmen are. They can also, on a part time basis, work in the upper end houses, so as to have that experience as well. Overall, looking back, I would say the key is to be able to make and save money each week, if you don't have money or a big backer at the start.

Where did you get your clothes and equipment?

I got my wardrobe in many ways. Some items had to be bought from fetish clothing stores at a high price, the obvious examples would be thigh high bitch boots with stiletto heels and long black leather gloves. Some items could be bought at second hand shops or yard sales, like leather coats, leather skirts and women's shoes. Some items were bought from middle range retail outlets, like bras, girdles, corsets, stockings and the like. I went to drug stores for most makeup and false eyelashes. For wigs I went to specialty wig stores. Some of my wardrobe was sold to me second hand by doms going out of business, or loaned to me by them when for one reason or another they had too much inventory. Some doms who worked for me had their own wardrobes. Finally, some clients would bring in their own clothes for cross-dressing or buy me or my doms gifts of clothing they wanted to see us in. The same variety of sources applied to my equipment, but I had a couple of clients, S&M enthusiasts, who were also carpenters and renovators. They built a jail cell and some devices clients could be fastened to, and helped construct my dungeons and did other renovations and repairs in return for sessions. Things like chains and fasteners I got at hardware stores. I bought some school desks and blackboards at an auction. Clients also brought me restraints, harnesses and straitjackets they may have owned or bought for me as gifts from the fetish stores in downtown Toronto. However I personally selected my whips, paddles and specialty bondage masks from the best high end fetish outlets.

Was it comfortable to dress as a dominatrix? Did you enjoy it?

You can't always be comfortable when you make yourself attractive because you are turned out for the occasion, and not according to how you are feeling at the time. That aside, wearing the tight clothing, such as a corset we were expected to wear, the boots, gloves and so forth was not comfortable, but most of us loved getting dressed up. We loved the look on the men's faces when they saw us, how their jaws would drop, eyes widen and mouths go dry. We loved the feeling of

empowerment that comes from being worshiped simply because of how we looked. Very few women can enjoy this based on their natural looks.

Did you feel safe running your houses?

You bet I did. I had male security there almost all the time. Even when they were not present I felt safer than working the streets or as an escort. I even felt safer than most women feel in their offices, where men sexually harass them so often, or on dates where so many are raped, not to mention being assaulted walking the streets or in home invasions. Few of these incidents are even reported. Only about ten per cent of rapes, I have read, are reported. I never felt safer in my life. Having men helpless and at my mercy certainly didn't make me feel less safe either.

What did being a dominatrix do to your sex drive?

Strange as it may sound, I am not sure. For one thing, I had two partial hysterectomies. Both were before I ran my last house in Toronto. So I had them when I was in my late thirties. Before that, when I ran my earlier houses, I did enjoy sex and had numerous boyfriends. I was able to separate my work as a dominatrix from my occasional dating. But when I was a dominatrix I was simply too busy and too tired to be concerned about meeting guys. There were times, brief times, when I was neither a sex worker nor a dominatrix. When I worked in offices I found I enjoyed meeting men and sometimes sleeping with them in my off hours. When I did manual work, I was usually too tired to care about sex. So I guess that it was all the other things, mainly the pressures, not just being in leather and whipping men and so forth, that impacted on my sex drive. I really don't know if, absent the pressures, being a dominatrix would have impacted on my sex drive.

What type of clients were you most attracted to personally?

I never fell in love with a client. Our contact was too fleeting and I had to keep focused. I had a business to run. Of course I found some clients charming and some attractive, but I never got to know any but a few well enough to have any chance of being seriously attracted to them. The ones I liked most, as I look back, were the short, fat and bald older clients. They seemed so grateful for my attention. Also, like so many women as they age, I put a higher value on a man's status in society, such as how successful he was, as well as how mature he is. So I guess all these things led me to be more attracted to that type. If I was to have dated a client, it would probably have been those that I looked to.

Were you ever confronted by the wives of clients?

I was never confronted. Some wives came in with their husbands for sessions, but I never had an irate wife tearing at my hair because her husband was visiting me. A couple of clients told me their wives found out about me because they found my phone number on a phone bill or in his phone book, and called to see what it was, but they never confronted me, just him.

Did the parents of doms who worked for you ever confront you?

I did meet a couple of mothers, single mothers, of girls who worked for me. They did not confront me. Their daughters took them to visit me. The mothers were feminist or independent women and supported me in my legal battles, so there was no confrontation. To my knowledge very few of the girls who worked for me told their parents what they were up to, despite many of them appearing on the Internet or in trade paper ads undisguised.

Did you like torturing women?

Very much! They are prettier and more responsive and expressive than men. I liked torturing some women more than some men, but overall I liked torturing men more.

What have your personal fantasies been over the years?

I have had and have several. One is being massaged with hot oil by several sexy men at once. I also have luxury fantasies such as shopping without looking at prices and being pampered in a beauty salon for hours. I would love to have a large house and order people about, but only if I felt like it at the time and not because they paid me to follow such a script. With all that being said, I would still role-play as a dominatrix from time to time, purely for the pleasure of it.

Did you prefer running the Bondage Bungalow in Thornhill or the Bondage Hotel and Sissy Maid Academy in Toronto?

I still can't say. The Thornhill house was serene and had beautiful grounds. It was so much less hectic than the Toronto house. There was also less financial pressure, with less overhead and fewer, if any employees. But the Toronto house was a major statement to society and figured in my legal battles and was a home for my daughter where we were finally reunited. I met so many more interesting people, both clients and others, at the Toronto house. Of course I was open there longer. So, I don't know. I would say that the Toronto house had more positives and

negatives for me personally than did the Thornhill house, but today, looking back, I would say I appreciate them both equally.

Since you closed, have your former clients gone to other doms? How do you feel about that?

I have been in touch with several former clients who have visited other doms since, or doms who have mentioned them to me. I think that it's great that they do. After all, I couldn't see them any more even if I wanted to. The other doms are not competition to me any more.

Who was your favorite client of all time?

No comment, except to say it is not by a large margin that I would name one.

Did you ever lose control when torturing a helpless client? Were you ever tempted to go too far?

Never! For one thing, I was too scared of the possible consequences. For another, I had no reason to want to seriously hurt someone I had never met, or hardly met and who was paying me. I always respected the code words, meaning that if the client said to stop I did. However there were a few times when the guy was obviously a jerk and I thought he deserved more than I was dishing out, but I never lost control.

ABOUT MY EARLIER LEGAL BATTLES

Please tell us about your legal battles before Bedford Versus Canada.

I have been in and out of the criminal justice system most of my life Here is a blurb, which I have recently revised, of my legal encounters before 2007.

AUGUST 1986 – I was raided in Windsor, Ontario and charged with keeping a common bawdy house and so forth. I subsequently went to jail for close to a year.

MAY 1993 – I opened the “Bondage Bungalow” (so called by the media) in Thornhill, Ontario as Madame deSade.

SEPTEMBER 1994 - York Regional Police stage a 15 officer raid of the bungalow. Two moving vans of furniture, equipment and possessions seized. Five of us charged. Police publicized the raid in a press conference that received wide

attention. The Crown asked that I be held without bail, but I made bail.

OCTOBER 1995 - First trial. Judge rules authorities did not specify in their charges what the crime was (i.e. judge agreed that Constitution protects citizens against vague charges). Charges were thrown out for all 5 defendants. Crown announces intention to appeal. My possessions remained seized. Crown refused to drop charges on any of the defendants or return any possessions.

AUGUST 1996 - Crown wins appeal before Ontario Court of Appeal. Matter ordered back to trial. All 5 defendants in turn appeal to Supreme Court of Canada. All maintained their innocence fully.

JUNE 1997 - Supreme Court of Canada refuses to hear the case due to reasons of jurisdiction. Trial to proceed.

APRIL 1998 - Crown Attorney James McKeachie replaced by Peter Westgate. No reason given for the replacement.

Defendants now have defense team consisting of Murray Klippenstein, George Callahan and Brian Blumenthal. Crown drops the charges against all defendants, after almost 4 years, except Bedford. Blumenthal, who had represented only one of the other defendants, retires from defense team. Crown argues for disqualification of Klippenstein and Callahan from continuing to represent Bedford because they had represented 3 of the 4 former defendants. Klippenstein and Callahan argue against existence of conflict saying all those previously charged agree on facts and innocence. Judge ruled that Klippenstein and Callahan could no longer represent Bedford due to specific conflict regulations. The trial was postponed for 3 months to allow me to obtain new counsel.

MAY 1998 - Alan Young, professor of criminal law at Osgoode Hall Law School heads new defense team along with Leah Daniels, professor of administrative law at Seneca College.

AUGUST to OCTOBER 1998 - A 9 day trial spread over several weeks with in depth and often humorous media coverage. Transcripts total over 1,500 pages in 8 volumes. Numerous expert witness called by defense. At conclusion judge convicts me and fines me \$3,000. Judge was not forthcoming about whether bondage or any of the other activities in the Bungalow were in and of themselves

illegal. In my words, on the day of the verdict: "The Judge still hasn't said what I can and can't do".

JANUARY 1998 - I reopen in downtown Toronto in a 6 room establishment with a fully equipped dungeon and facilities for cross-dressers.

MARCH 2000 - I appeal to the Ontario Court of Appeal. Represented by Professor Young and high profile Toronto lawyer Paul Burstein. The appeal has many grounds including arguments of improper rulings on evidence, search and seizure and the basis for ruling an establishment as being a bawdy-house. In short, that I did not get a fair trial. The appeal was denied in what has widely been regarded as one of the most controversial and poorly written decisions of the Ontario Court of Appeal.

AUGUST 2000 – I sought leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada. Application for leave prepared by lawyers David Corbett, Lucy McSweeney and Timothy Banks. The court declined to hear the appeal. I paid the fine. Mr. Corbett is an expert in constitutional law. He is now a judge. Two of the important reasons for seeking to appeal concern the Ontario Court's extended definition of prostitution and the need to prevent abuse of authority during investigations and in collecting evidence.

OCTOBER 2000 - Accompanied by the media, I retrieved over 700 items seized by the police in 1994 - including the famous baby chandelier and common dictionary.

JUNE 2001 - I expanded my establishment to 11 rooms. It now included a "Bondage Hotel" catering to tourists.

JUNE 2002 – I closed my establishment as the building required major repairs.

2003 to 2006 - I met with activists, but was mainly focused on my health problems and looking after my grandson while my daughter worked. Work on the constitutional challenge, Bedford Versus Canada began in 2006 and it was formally filed in 2007.

In the years following I home bound most of the time. I wrote, painted and made some appearances.

These legal battle could not have been fought without the support: financial and otherwise, of so many.

ABOUT BEDFORD VERSUS CANADA

How did you find yourself fighting the Canadian government about prostitution laws?

I was raided in 1994. As I fought the charges against I sought clarification of exactly what under the law was not legal between consenting adults in private. Professor young was foremost in those representing me. Years later he asked me to be a plaintiff in a constitutional challenge to Canada's prostitution laws.

Were you surprised by the judge's decision?

No. There were years of hearings with dozens of experts. The law was clearly in need of change, and we were clearly right.

Were you surprised by the Supreme Court's decision?

No. There were years of hearings with dozens of experts. The law was clearly in need of change, and we were clearly right. We had won in the previous two levels of court.

If you had it to do over again, would you fight Ottawa?

There are now legions of young women, and men, and lawyers who are taking up the battle. I will do my bit. I am told that I can best help by telling my story. I am also getting on in years and my health leaves much to be desired. If I had it to do over again, was healthy, was younger, and had the support I had back then, yes..

What were some of the main take-aways from the initial Bedford decision?

The judge said that the laws prevented prostitutes from protecting themselves, and that the laws protected the perpetrators of violence against women more than they inhibited such violence. She agreed that indoor prostitution was safer than street prostitution. She agreed that the current prostitution laws were only minimally enforced. She agreed that the laws were too broad, leading to unelected officials distinguishing right from wrong. She agreed that striking down the laws would not lead to a dramatic increase in prostitution. She pointed out that numerous other laws are already on the books to combat the worst aspects of the sex trade. She

went to great length to point out that Alan was right to say that the Crown's witnesses were advocates more than experts, and that the Crown was often off point in arguing against our application. She further noted that the arguments against the application were also more rhetorical than relevant.

ABOUT THE SEX TRADE

Do you see the solution as government regulation of the industry?

Of course. Governments regulate almost every industry.

In the absence of the present laws, what laws would you recommend be instituted to eliminate street level solicitation and indecency acts in public spaces that are associated to the sex trade?

None. The judges said laws outside of C-36 would deal with that.

Do Prostitutes want to be Prostitutes?

Some do, some don't. Same with waitresses. Same with office cleaners. Same with factory workers. Same with nursing home orderlies. Women all over the place are doing things they might not wish to do, to earn a living. If a woman can make a living in a few hours a week, safely if the prostitution laws remain struck down, having sex rather than work many days a week in hard physical labour, shouldn't that be her choice?

Is sex work bad for society?

No, it's under-enforcement of laws against abuse of people, in all walks of life, that is bad for society. For example, weak enforcement of immigration laws in the workplace has led to sweatshops, illegal farm workers being exploited, illegal nannies, and illegal caregivers for the elderly, recruits for organized crime and so forth. Within each of those situations we see women being treated miserably and sexually abused. Why doesn't the government crack down on that? Why pick on the sex workers? It's a booming business. There is a market for the sale of sex and fantasy role play, not to mention hard core pornography, soft core pornography and "mommy porn". Almost everyone agrees these things are not going away and that people do not want to be told how to live their lives in private.

I understand the desire of sex workers to be able to work in safety, and I support that, but how does society target those who are exploiting sex workers, such as pimps.

Not all pimps exploit sex workers. Laws that apply to all sectors of the economy, to ensure people are of legal age, legally in the country, and not being forced to do what they do, should apply to sex work.

Do you see the solution as government regulation of the industry?

Of course. Governments regulate almost every industry.

Provincial governments seem to have no problem taking money from problem gamblers and regulating that particular “sin” industry. Should they begin regulating the sex industry too.

Yes. But first it must be made fully legal with clear rules.

Do sex-trade workers plan to lobby for a regulation regime that would include things like workers’ compensation, health standards and inclusion in the income tax regime?

I cannot speak for the various groups or their representatives.

What are the main differences, in your opinion, between legalization and decriminalization of sex work. Do you think legalization would allow for better protection of sex workers, or would decriminalization be preferred?

I think first of all that this is a question for lawyers, judges, scholars and governments. But I do think that the answer would emerge when the full range of reforms is being considered.

I am concerned that legalization won’t serve to protect prostitutes who are most vulnerable. Do you agree?

They would be less vulnerable than under current law for several reasons. Also, just because legalization isn’t perfect doesn’t mean it isn’t better.

Given the lucrative nature of the sex trade, what would be the incentive for sex workers to give up a significant portion of their income?

I presume you are referring to payment of taxes. The same applies to numerous businesses and incomes. Why single out this type of service?

Will the legalization of sex work help curb the spread of disease?

Yes. Women will more freely seek advice and assistance, and this is one of the ways they can protect themselves. This was also a health and safety matter.

I think that violence against sex workers is very deeply set into the culture of this society through the obvious narratives of hatred of women as well as racism, classism, etc. I personally remember jokes about “whores” going back to my grade school. Do you think that explaining sex work should be part of sex education in schools as part of a larger program of normalizing the labour and dissolving harmful myths about it?

I am not sure that teaching about sex work in the early grades of school would be that helpful. Maybe in high school. It depends, again, on what the law will allow as sex work going forward.

Why is the image of the sex worker so often taboo?

This is a very difficult question to deal with for several reasons. For one thing, what does one mean by the term sex worker? Is a pure dominatrix a sex worker? Is a masseuse who does not tug as well as rub a sex worker? If a woman agrees to go on an expensive paid vacation with a man, but who is not directly paid, is she a sex worker? Is a stripper a sex worker? Is a porn actress a sex worker? All that being said, let's just say that a sex worker is a man or woman who accepts money for the act of sexual intercourse. Even then, taboos of all types are very uneven. For example, in some circles in Europe being a mistress of an important man is considered prestigious for a woman. So let's narrow it down further, and take the example of a woman in Canada who advertises in the paper as an escort and has sex with men in hotels for money, and is not being coerced by anyone. Let's look at the question of why anyone would object to that. Well, for one thing, there are people who object to almost anything. Some condemn birth control. Some condemn pre-marital sex. Some condemn anonymous sex for free. Some people condemn cross-dressing. Some condemn homosexuality. Some condemn group sex. Some people condemn bondage and consensual and safe torture. Others condemn marriage. Some condemn having children in an overpopulated world. I think that the reason the image of the sex worker is often taboo is because there are instances of young women being coerced or forced into the business by pimps. There is also some sentiment to the effect that women selling sex, even if it is fully voluntary and the woman enjoys her work, is somehow immoral. There is some truth to the accusation that the sex worker makes it easier for one to cheat on their partner. But as you know, sex work in Canada is not illegal and the laws restricting it were found unconstitutional. It is wrong to ban alcohol because some people drive drunk. It is wrong to ban sugar in food because some people are too fat. It is wrong to ban driving because some people are not careful. It is wrong to ban body contact sports because some athletes get hurt. Rather than ban the

activities, such as drinking, society regulates them. But with sex, the idea of women being free and empowered is threatening to many male egos and women who have religious or other hang-ups.

Moving forward, how would you want the government, and society to view sex work?

As legal recreation and therapy.

TIPS FOR WOMEN

What are your appearance tips for women?

It depends on what you are appearing for. Do you want men to whistle at you? Are you a professional woman in a conservative business office who wants to get ahead? Are you a secretary in that office who wants to seduce the men who work there? Are you a dominatrix in practice? Are you a housewife at a PTA meeting? Are you getting yourself ready for church? So the first and most important thing is to recognize that certain looks work better in certain situations. But let's say that we are talking about basic attractiveness, not becoming glamorously beautiful, in most of the situations I listed above. I would say the second thing is to never trust your own judgment. Get both women and men to advise you on how to change your appearance for any of these given situations. I have seen television shows where they transform women's appearances, and it is amazing how much transforming they do. Next, accept that you can never feel comfortable with what works best. It is for the comfort of others. That is a price you pay. Then accept that like every other form of success there is hard work. Accept as well that it is not cheap. Now that I have said all that I will give a few quick tips. Women spend too much time worrying about their weight. A woman's hair is half her beauty. Invest time and money in that and get the best advice you can. Visit the hairdresser every two weeks. Maintain in between. Next, a woman in a dress, showing her legs, is a different woman than one in pants. Women who say they are attractive in pant suits are wrong. Next to hair, legs make the woman. Men love women's feet. A woman in high heels is a different woman than when she is wearing low heels. Wear leather boots where appropriate. They drive men wild, so be selective about when you wear them. It's bad for your back, but there you are. Wear nylons or attractive stockings as much as possible. Finally, make sure your clothes fit well, and wear a girdle if it makes a noticeable improvement in your figure. Spend lots on tailoring. Wear makeup. Take makeup courses (not just one). Finally, note I say finally, you may want to work on your weight. I say finally because our figures are

hard to control, whereas the other things I mentioned can be done in a day, or thereabouts. Do not worry about your weight until you have addressed all the other things. In fact, you will feel better if you look better and will eat less and better. I do believe in exercise and good nutrition, but you asked me how to become more attractive. Young women in jeans and shorts and spandex are attractive, but even they should consider what I have said above. The key is to remember that most men have fetishes and are attracted by a woman well turned out, almost regardless of her natural beauty.

What makes the perfect partner for you, or for any woman?

Let's start with me. When I was young I liked them big and tough, like bikers and so on. Today, I like them short, fat, bald and rich. But that is only from a dating perspective. I think if I was to get married, if that's what you mean by partner, I would want a balanced person: meaning one who is financially secure if not rich, mature but not too old, healthy, with many interests and who is a good listener and tolerant of differences in others. That's a long list and not very glamorous or exciting, but you have to remember that I am now in my fifties and am in poor health. This brings me back to your question as it relates not only to me. That in turn brings me to a very, perhaps sad, truth, or truths, that women have a great deal of difficulty facing. For one thing, women will want different things from the man in their life. They want him to be sexually attracted to her forever. They want him to be a good provider. They want him to be a good son and son-in-law. They want him to be a respected member of the community. They want him to be a good father. They want him to be handsome. They want him to be tall. How many men are any of those things for any length of time, if at all? Now let me add something else girls. He has his list too, and let me add to that that men generally are not in love with women, in the fullest sense, for more than a few years, if that. They are conditioned to be promiscuous. The perfect partner, for both sexes, is a moving target. If you want a good father for your children, you will have to forgo almost all the other things on the list. If you don't want children, you might want to consider changing partners frequently. When you get older, you may find men your age dying or chasing younger women, and you may settle for even less. So I guess to conclude, if I can conclude anything, I consider the perfect partner, for say permanent marriage, one who is comfortable with who we are and who we will become and who will not make the mistake of expecting too much from us.

OTHER QUESTIONS

What are your views on feminism?

I was recently asked how I defined a feminist and whether I see myself as a feminist. I believe a feminist is a woman, or man for that matter, who believes in maximizing the equality of the sexes in every respect and minimizing discrimination of any type based on gender. I see myself as a feminist in terms of supporting equality of opportunity in the workplace, but I do not believe in pure equality in relationships. For example, as a dominatrix I see this desire of men to submit to women all the time, not to be equal. They want to revel in female superiority and worship a woman as a goddess, at least when they are role playing with them. I don't think that describes feminism in relationships.

Feminism is a topic that has been coming up in recent political discourse. Do you think feminism has a place in the discussion about sex work? If so, do you blame this on patriarchy as some advocates and scholars have?

First of all that depends on what is meant by Feminism. Whatever your answer to that, of course it has a role. So do other movements and so forth. Meaning, why exclude them? I am not sure what you mean by "blaming this." Do you mean someone should be blamed for Feminism, whatever that is? All that being said, "feminists" are split on whether the purchase of sex and so forth should be prohibited. However, the feminists who are abolitionists are anything but the tools of the patriarchy, whatever that is, which is also split on the issue. Much ideology and religious belief filters into the debate and should not be part of the debate.