

**Personal account of being involved in prostitution
From Rebecca, June 2009**

"In this piece I will try to write on a time when I was living in confusion, so I cannot be sure of my own reality.

I want to write how I found that a well-known lobby group claiming to speak on behalf of women in prostitution was very unhelpful to me, and in many ways made me go backwards in my recovery.

I did not know how pro-prostitution they were, how much they defended the sex trade - the trade that has nearly stolen my life. I went thinking they would help comes to terms with the violence I had been on the receiving of, would give some language to fit the reality of my life.

I was wrong.

When I visited them, I was very close to end of my tether, for I was being confronted my flashbacks of extreme violence; I was still being stalked by men who viewed [me] as a prostitute, even though I was desperate to leave that life; and I had no words for who or what I was. I needed my world to stop, and for someone, anyone to care that I existed.

I was desperate, so I turned to this group, as it seemed the only thing out there.

I travel from one side of England to London to meet them, I phoned a week before to make an appointment.

When I arrived, I was ignored.

Now, imagine that you are me. I was in a deep state of shock, I could hardly know I was real. I had always felt I was worth nothing, and being ignored after making an appointment just confirmed that.

After over an hour, someone saw I was going nowhere, so they talk to me.

It was in a crowded room, with others asking questions or shouting [next to] us. There I was supposed to open up.

I suppose coz [sic] I [was] at the end of my tether, I did "open up" or rather it was like being sick with words. I said the surface of some of the extreme violence I had known.

All I got was a refusal to take me serious.

It was said that because I am middle-class, that it could not have been prostitution - maybe just really bad one-night stands.

They said "if was so bad, how come you are not dead". Really there is no answer for that. [They asked] why did I not buy my way out, I must have had that option. That maybe I was just ashamed coz I enjoyed it really, but was afraid to say that.

I cannot go on, coz [sic] their words are like poison in my heart.

It throw me back into deep silence, and a refusal to know my past.

After all, I must have been so sick to let so much sexual torture happen to me. That was the message they left me with.

They are a highly dangerous group, for they [are] so easy for desperate women to find, they have so much public profile. These women can be manipulated by their messages that prostitution is almost harm-free, and that any "harms" could [be caused] from society not accepting that prostitution is normal.

I am very angry, but I am proud that I survived their lies".

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