

LAP DANCING: SARAH'S STORY

“ I don't know anywhere you get paid a wage. You pay the club £10 up to £80 for being there. They weren't concerned some performers went away having not earned anything. They also take a percentage of what you earn. You'd have to wear the clothing they'd tell you to wear and that comes out of your earnings. They'd tell you to buy a dress from their own range, that would come out of your wages. And shoes. They'd supply all this but you'd pay for it. The club would tell you they'll give you training but it's trial and error. We had to wear special costumes and lots and lots of make up. It's not glamorous. It's out of the pages of a men's mag.

I used to tell clients I was doing a degree in Russian and they'd be visually intimidated and would clam up. They'd want a bimbo who'd be subordinate to them. I'd tell them I didn't - I'd say I'd work in Tesco. A degree was like pouring cold water over their privates. I learnt from that mistake.

There were always more girls than customers and a competition to see who could get to the customers first. Owners loved the fact customers would see dozens of girls. They liked the fact the customers would be dazzled with the choice. Companies sent huge groups of employees to the clubs. Every day it happened. It'd be part of expenses. The employees seemed to be old hands. At the end of a big brainstorming day, they'd head down and be bought vouchers by their bosses.

A lot of people would drink a lot to get through it. Girls would sneak in little bottles and top up their orange juice. Or turn up for work drunk. 90% were drunk by the end of the night. So they were more vulnerable. There were lots of eating disorders. Nobody got to stage where they were very skinny, but often women hadn't eaten for two days because they knew they were coming to work. They'd not eat so would feel the impact of the booze more.

There's a rule regarding distance. You're allowed to get closer than they say in the contract. It's supposed to be three feet, which is quite a lot. That is broken instantly ”

STRIPPING THE ILLUSION

Since 2005 lap dance clubs are licensed in the same way as cafes and restaurants. This has acted as a green light to the industry which has doubled in size since 2004. OBJECT is campaigning to change this because:

- Financial and sexual exploitation are common across the largely self-regulated industry.
- Mainstreaming of lap dance clubs fits into a sexist 'sex object culture' underpinning gender based violence and discrimination.
- Licensing laws prevent councils from considering applications in relation to gender equality.

CHALLENGE SEX OBJECT CULTURE
CHALLENGE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION
SUPPORT CHANGE TO LICENSING LAWS

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Women Not
Sex Objects

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