Twitter Thread by ■Jessica Starling■



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So I wanna start with a disclaimer:

I do *not* fuck with pimps.

I do not like pimps.

I think that they are generally scum.

But they probably don’t operate like how you imagine.

> I feel like so many people don\u2019t know what a pimp actually is, like, in the real world, and that lack of understanding is often harmful to sex workers.
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> Would anyone be interested in an educational thread based on my and other ppls experiences?
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> — \u2728Jessica Starling\u2728 (@J3ssicaStarling) December 24, 2020

First, I wanna address the cultural conception of the “pimp”

This conception is based in white supremacy

It is a black and/or foreign man, who kidnaps little white girls and sells their innocence against their will with violence

This is what you’ve been told is a “pimp”

I need you to delete this from your brain because this caricature of white supremacist fear of physically and sexually aggressive black men does not exist

The first person in the sex industry who tried to be my “pimp” was a skinny 30 year old white woman who was also a stripper.

There’s a reason anti-SW orgs push the imagery of evil non-white men as pimps

I also need everyone to know 99.9999% of pimps are not in the business of kidnapping people and locking them in a hotel room against their will to service customers.

I can't say it never ever ever ever could happen, but, the VAST majority of the time, it is not that

In my experience with the women and sex workers I have worked with, people have pimps because they have been convinced it's a good financial decision, or they have actively sought out a pimp to make more money

Yes, there are many people who actively seek out pimps. There are people who want to have pimps!

It was so normal in the clubs I worked at that it was weird that I didn't have a pimp, and most of the women I spoke to tried to convince me I was missing out on money.

Why would someone want to have a pimp?

There are actually plenty of reasons, most of which are financial or pertain to survival.

A pimp can provide clients for you and guarantee you money.

A pimp can give you a condo to live in and a car for mobility, and then allow you to pay them back.

A pimp can make sure a client doesn't scam you out of money or assault you.

If someone fucks with you in any way, your pimp can take care of it, one way or another

Is this relationship inherently exploitative? Yes, but it's also mutually beneficial.

Therefore, most pimps are not going to beat the women that work for them to get money out of them. The sex worker, in a lot of cases, wants to work with the pimp.

In my experience, instead of physical violence, most pimps use emotional manipulation.

I've met a lot of sex workers who feel like they "owe" their pimps. Their pimps will buy them gifts, take them out to dinner, have sex with them in a romantic context.

I once heard a woman say she would take a bullet for her pimp.

You don't need to hit anyone when people will work for you and give you money out of guilt or fabricated emotional closeness

You also have to understand that their is a certain culture, at least in the clubs I worked at, that encouraged the workers to get pimps. Women who want to be on the same "team" and will try to recruit you. Forming a kind of sisterhood under working for the same pimp.

Sometimes, sex workers will act as pimps for other sex workers. Sometimes they'll stop being sex workers and just be pimps.

(Which is why you can't be too friendly with everyone when you're working at a club)

This is the most common sort of archetype of pimp I have experienced. People of any sex or race who use emotional and financial manipulation for monetary gain, in exchange for some services for the sex worker

I have also seen pimps who are violent. I saw a woman have to hide under a table while her pimp attempted to hit her in the middle of the club.

I also know there are pimps who do lock women in hotel rooms.

But it is not the majority of cases.

The second type of prominent pimp, however, is the abusive boyfriend, who is way worse than the typical pimp who you'll find at a strip club.

In fact, I suspect this is the most common type of pimp, but it's hidden as most things happen behind closed doors.

Yes, your boyfriend can be your pimp. If your boyfriend or partner forces you to work and takes your money, they're a pimp.

And then there a people who are "legally" pimps but do not resemble the cultural perception as a pimp

These are managers, agencies, and brothel owners

(By legally, I mean by the legal definition are pimps, not that their business is legal)

These businesses can be shitty and abusive, but vary from company to company.

Many workers choose to work for these companies for a variety of reasons, including more guaranteed clients, safety, and not having to deal with your own marketing/business

Through this, you can see that most sex workers with pimps have chosen to have pimps for one reason or another.

As well, in most cases where a sex worker is in a forced relationship with a pimp, it is typically an abusive intimate partner