

# One of the Girls

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Prologue .....	x
Chapter One - In the Big City .....	1
Chapter Two - Behind the Peephole .....	18
Chapter Three - The Interview .....	35
Chapter Four - Training .....	48
Chapter Five - Cast of Characters .....	71
Chapter Six - Going Back Home .....	97
Chapter Seven - Into the Groove .....	111
Chapter Eight - Ménage a Trois .....	130
Chapter Nine - The Special Night Out .....	141
Chapter Ten - A Large Slice of Pie .....	154
Chapter Eleven - The Big Bust .....	170
Chapter Twelve - Leaving .....	193

## Prologue

I don't usually talk much about it. It's not one of the first things I tell someone about myself. Imagine saying, "Hello, nice to meet you. By the way, I used to be a prostitute." A person would never guess it by looking at me. I don't dress or act anything like that. Not even a little. So when I do choose to confide this little secret about my past it's sure to get a response of surprise, skepticism and questions, lots of questions.

I have to tell you, it's exciting to remember that time, and kind of strange. Some of the questions people ask are: "How did you get started?" or "What did you wear?" "What about diseases?" "Did you get hurt?" And as I tell the story, so many more questions come tumbling out.

Let's begin with a few things that stand out as I look back on the whole experience. The thick, oversized front door with it's sliding peephole. Such a tiny window set smack in the middle of that big door. A small scraping sound produced enough space for a set of eyes to peer out at the guest who had come to visit and determine if they could pass through the gates into the illegal and restricted pleasure palace.

Then there were the characters: Big Joe, Sheryl, Dusty. I remember a sign in the office that read "Heaven loves the Working Girl." And there was so much slang. "Working girl" meant prostitute. "Hit on" or "being fired at" meant being picked up, a way to flirt. Here is an example of how it might be used in a sentence "Oooo-ee, he was fire-in' at chu." The word "party" as in "let's party" or "do you want to party" was a proposition to "get it on."

"Beaver" was a favorite slang word of the truck drivers. I'll let you guess what that referred to.

Before I get ahead of myself, there are some things I want to explain. The details I want to share won't make a lot of sense until I give you a general overview. Allow me to set the stage.

I experienced two very different types of prostitute situations. First, when I was seventeen years old. Yes I was underage. "Jailbait." I looked older. Clients were set up by a friend of a friend of a friend. I had to travel a distance into the neighboring large city. It was all word of mouth and I was never out on the street, but rather people were contacted over the phone. That experience lasted about three months.

My second go at prostitution occurred about four years later and lasted seven months. I was older, and apparently none the wiser. The whole thing began with my intention of exchanging sex for money. After a series of amazing coincidences, I found myself at a house of prostitution. A genuine whorehouse catering to truckers. It was quite an experience, and the details of working in this Mafia run brothel make up most of this story.

This is a work of fiction. All people and events depicted in this novel are products of the authors imagination. Any resemblance to real persons or places is entirely coincidental.

## Chapter One - In the Big City

I was seventeen and living in what people of the early 70's might have called a hippie commune. My friends, Karen and Jim, had one room. They invited me to come and rent the bedroom next to theirs. Steve lived in the last of the three upstairs rooms. A lady named Pat had the downstairs bedroom.

Between the five people of us, we had a lot of company. It seemed there were always plenty of people around, often they were new folks I hadn't seen before. Lots of people and plenty of drugs, especially alcohol, marijuana and LSD.

I remember eating together, cooking, and sharing food, communally. Often I would play my guitar and sing. Sometimes people would gather around to listen. One time, we had a massage party where five or six people all massaged one lucky person in the center. Then we would take turns being the one in the center. Most of all we shared the drugs, alcohol and marijuana, my favorite.

We weren't concerned with how the place was furnished. I slept on a mattress on the floor. I didn't have many clothes or possessions. The place was clean, although I don't remember cleaning being much of an issue, or something I spent time doing. I lived there about five months, tops. I liked it way better than living with my folks. It wasn't really a hippie commune, in truth we were more like friendly roommates. But we liked to say we were living in a hippie commune.

I first left home when I was sixteen, over a year before. I had returned once but only stayed a few months before I decided to leave again. Like many young people my age, it was commonplace at that time to leave home, do drugs and have sex. Common slogans were: "Why don't we do it in the road?" "If you're not with the one you love, love the one you're with." "One pill makes you larger and one pill makes you small."

I had dropped out of high school the year before and it was hard for me to imagine ever going back. School didn't seem to have anything to offer that could enhance my life.

My parents expected me to finish high school and even thought I would go on to college. Imagine that! When I had moved back in with my folks I had thought I could, and talked about it like it was something I would do. Then when the time came to actually do it, I couldn't. I hated high school. My choice not to ride the school bus every day and sit through hour after hour of torture waiting for a bell to ring made it impossible to stay at my parent's house. They were not happy with my decision.

Living on my own meant I needed to work to pay the rent. I found a job at a fast food place. It was hard for me to get it together enough to go to work. I was often high or hung-over, not a very good employee. Even when I did work full time, money was always in short supply. Not only for me, but also for my other roommates living in our little hippie commune.

So when Pat, the lady who lived downstairs, suggested that I could make considerable money just by having sex, I was intrigued. I was not a virgin and not going with anyone. So there was no boyfriend to object. In short, I was horny and had recently brought home a one-night stand. Being with that guy hadn't been that great an

experience. He was a Pisces and had a dark and gloomy mood around him. Something I had chosen to ignore in the moonlight was glaringly obvious in the morning light. He had slid away like some kind of slimy ooze.

I was probably complaining about the one-night stand when Pat brought up the subject of me making some money with sex. Pat said she knew this guy. He was a lawyer that was always trying to get her to do it, exchange sex for money. She didn't want to do it. But if I wanted to, she could set it up for us to meet.

The prospect of making a lot of money sounded great. Easy money, doing something I liked and was good at.

\* \* \*

Pat was in her thirties. She had three daughters. They ranged in age from fifteen to eight. Her ex-husband made a lot of money and she was used to having nice things. She resented her husband's mistress who became his wife after the divorce. She resented that he got custody. She was declared unable to care for her children, only seeing them occasionally in supervised settings. Pat hated knowing that some bitch was sitting in her bedroom putting on expensive make-up and living the life that rightfully belonged to her.

Pat had been raised into, and was accustomed to leading, a conservative lifestyle. She had moved into our little commune only a short time before I had joined the group. Her economic situation suddenly forced her to live with a bunch of hippies. Pat didn't consider herself to be a hippie. Still, she was kind and friendly to us, her roommates.

She liked to be social when folks stopped by, and join in the fun. It was Pat's efforts to clean and decorate that gave the place a homey touch.

Over the coming months I watched while Pat first tried heroin and quickly became an addict.

Pat took me along on the visit to meet her lawyer friend. Sam had been her lawyer for many years and had recently handled her divorce. Pat's break up with her husband had left her on the short end of the income she had when she was married. Sam had offered more than once to set her up with some of his friends. Pat was quite attractive. Selling sexual favors could take the edge off her financial pinch.

Sam was reluctant to see me. He had reservations about promoting a hippie. Pat had to sweet talk him into setting up the meeting. She lied about my age.

He asked me some questions that sounded silly, and gave me some advice I've forgotten. It seemed strange to me that this man who seemed to care for Pat would be so eager to turn her into a prostitute. I didn't like Sam very much. He seemed cavalier and arrogant.

All in all it was an awkward and short meeting. I do remember Sam saying, "You know Pat, this makes you her pimp." It seems Pat got some money from him, something like a finders fee. Anything else he had to say about Pat or pimps only seemed like more nonsense to me. He called someone while we were still there, then gave us the address of this guy who was now expecting us.

So off Pat and I went to meet this guy named Sid at his plumbing parts supply business. Sid's shop was located closer into the heart of the city. This "sugar daddy" was

older, way older than my seventeen-year-old self. He was somewhere in his late forties or early fifties.

Sid escorted Pat and I to his office when we got there. Sid and I liked each other right away. Mostly we just talked small talk, nothing important, certainly nothing sexual. I remember Sid talking about the process of interviewing people. He was speaking in general, about how in his business he did a lot of hiring and firing. Out of the blue he asked, "what's seven times eight?" I knew the answer quickly, and he was impressed. Sid seemed to like it that I had a few brain cells. Pat didn't know the answer. She already felt like the third wheel.

Sid showed us around his business. There was a moment when he was called away for some reason and I was left standing by a glass door. I remember seeing a couple of large dogs. They surprised me by appearing suddenly, and barking ferociously. They were very close, right outside the door. As it turns out I was near the back door to the warehouse, looking out. I was amazed to see the big, barking, scary, powerful dogs, right there at a business in the middle of the city.

It was just for a moment, that I had eye contact with the dogs, but it gave me the strangest feeling. It was a mix of startled fear because this is a mean vicious animal, and the feeling of interest I always get when I see a dog, being a dog lover at heart. Then came the odd mental click that dogs aren't usually kept at stores, especially in the middle of the city. A guy who worked there saw my bewildered stare and explained. "The dogs are for protection. They guard the place at night."

I already knew I wasn't in Kansas anymore, but this really drove the nail home.

\* \* \*

I didn't go to Sid's plumbing store often. There was a dumpy little apartment he kept exclusively for getting together with his side dish. It was a place for fucking. Sid liked to keep a girl on the side. I was one girl out of many in a much longer string.

Sid had a wife and children somewhere else. He kept this little apartment in order to have a place to bring his courtesan. From what he told me I gathered that his wife "kind of" knew about his extramarital apartment, but it wasn't something they ever talked about.

That he had a wife wasn't really anything he and I talked about much. Sid wanted me to know that he and his wife had an unspoken kind of agreement. Purposely, almost jokingly, he assured me she wouldn't show up and try to hurt me. Sid didn't want me to worry. I wasn't worried to begin with. A threat from his wife wouldn't even have occurred to me.

The apartment was small, two rooms sparsely furnished. One room had a couple of not-very-comfortable chairs and a tiny, unused kitchenette. The walls were unadorned save for a small, funny plaque on the wall. It had a comic rendering of a drunken man almost falling off a merry-go-round horse. Underneath it proclaimed, *"Stop the world I want to get off."*

On the one hand, I could relate to that feeling. But it also left me with a creepy, kind of tacky feeling. I didn't really want to be there. Thankfully, I didn't need to spend a lot of time there. I would stay for only one night each time I went.

On a small side table there were a few glasses and a bottle of Seagram's Whiskey. There was no food. Absolutely nothing to eat in the refrigerator or cupboards. It clearly was missing that lived-in look. It's safe to say Sid kept the place without any thought to food. Any cooking going on here was in the bedroom.

The bedroom had a double bed and a stereo that played cassettes. The only artwork there was a small picture of a naked woman. She was standing on the ridge of a mountain with the wind blowing through her hair and her arms up around her head. It wasn't a photograph, it was a fantasy style illustration.

Sid talked about the girl he had been with here before me. He said nostalgically, "She had a great body." He used the past tense like she had died or something. Sid pointed to the small picture on the wall. He continued in a reminiscent tone of voice, "She had a body kind of like that picture there."

When we got around to the part where Sid saw me naked, he told me I had a great body. Not in that way I would have expected a guy to say that. He wasn't excited, playful or enthusiastic. Sid was more apologetic and depressed. Like deep down he knew messing around with a baby like me was less than noble. He spoke in that hushed whisper that was more like an inhale of breath. "Ohhh you have a great body." His dick already getting hard. Using the same kind of hushed tone as if being reverential, he added, "You have a body kind of like that picture there." Nodding toward the wall.

In retrospect, I can see the fantasy woman in his picture was the love of his life, this old geezer. Kind of bittersweet, a small porthole into beauty from the midst of what seemed to me at the time was an overwhelmingly stark terrain that formed his life.

Despite Sid's appreciation of my body and favorable comparison to his fantasy girl, I didn't think I was pretty. Nose too big, ears too big, feet too big. Apparently my rather large bosom and butt were an asset, and I was slim. Not skinny by any stretch, but also not fat. I had a body with something to hold on to. I did look a little like the pretty picture on the wall of that naked woman. Still the way he said it, the way he was about it, everything being the way it was, I took the compliment with a big grain of salt. It was almost as if he was surprised that I had a great body.

After we had our fun, he suggested to me, "If you want to make more money, we could go meet some of my friends." It was OK with him for me to use his apartment to "entertain" these other people. That he was willing to share me with his friends seems strange to me now, but at that time it seemed to make perfect sense. It was his idea.

Apparently, it served his needs in a variety of ways. First it enticed me to make the one-hour each way trip. If I could earn enough money to make it worth my while, it was more likely that I would come more often. Second, he may have offered me to other men as a favor. So on a given night, two or three other men might come over.

Mind you, I did this maybe once a week for a few months. Often, on a weeknight, like Wednesday or Thursday. I remember going and hanging out with him at some piano bar. This was where the gentlemen who might also come up that night had a chance to meet me. There seemed to be a bunch of them who hung out there like regulars.

I remember one conversation at the Piano Bar. I was vegetating on a barstool, nursing a small drink. Bored and just trying to keep a smile on my face. The gentlemen often had conversations between themselves like I wasn't even there. After a while they would remember I was there and turn my way to see if I was still smiling. The conversation I remember had to do with my nose. It came up kind of round about. How much a nose job cost. So and so just paid so much for his wife or daughter to get the surgery. Insurance wouldn't pay for it. Blah, blah, blah.

About four or five gentlemen, including the bartender and Sid, were involved in the discussion when it turned to my nose. Someone asked me if I wanted a nose job. Before I could answer, one said, "Now Bernie, that's a rude question." Another chimed in, "Not really, she may want one, and maybe we could help her get one." The assumption being that I couldn't possibly afford it. It is assumed that prostitutes come from poverty. Why else would they exchange sex for money? Another undercurrent of this offer to pay for something expensive was the desire for the kind of leverage to get me to work hard and long, (doing you know what) to pay for the surgery.

In truth, I had considered a nose job and thought it might make me more attractive. Nose jobs were quite in vogue at the time. Being a hippie, however, meant things like that weren't important to me. Why spend money on a stupid surgery? I would rather buy more and better drugs.

I may have attempted to stammer something in response at some point, although it was hard to get a word in edgewise. Before they could take a formal vote on who thought I needed a nose job, Sid stepped in. "You guys leave her alone, her nose is OK.

Kind of has that classic look. Don't you listen to them, honey, you look real pretty the way you are." Someone else following up with, "So anyway, if she ever did want one, she could go to Dr. Lieberstien, he's a friend of mine." The bartender shook his head and gave me one of those looks that imply, don't listen to these guys, they are a bunch of schmucks.

That was the beginning of my growing distaste for guys describing my looks in a way that says they're sorry for me. They think it's complimentary to use words like classic or Rubenesque.

\* \* \*

Let's get back to the details of being a prostitute. Actually, I didn't think of myself as a whore. It seemed more like I was just fooling around. That it generated big money simply made it seem like big fun. In general, I wasn't really on top of figuring out a whole lot of the details or logistics. It was an effort to keep track of who was who, and who was coming up that night. I was not at all active in the solicitation part. Remember that pot was my drug of choice and making this money meant I had a good supply. Some of the men who came over just seemed to show up at the apartment. Sid would tell me to expect so and so. I did take good care of the men who stopped by, and I went home with a fist full of twenty dollar bills.

That first time at the apartment, I remember Sid asking me to mix a drink. I didn't know anything about mixing drinks. All my friends mostly drank beer. So I had poured half whisky and half water into a big glass.

"Wow, that's a strong one" Sid said. It became a story he liked to tell over and over for a laugh. I may have been naive about a lot of stuff, but I could fuck and I learned to suck and pretend to like it. I did put some creative effort into improving my ability to perform fellatio. And the clients gave me plenty of feedback about what they liked.

Sid was a nice man, and we actually had fun together. I don't remember much about the sex with him or any of his friends. It wasn't particularly memorable. They weren't really interested in pleasing the woman. They did like it that I would make noises like I was getting off. They weren't able or willing to last longer than five or ten minutes. They weren't skilled as love makers. But they gave me money, so I gave them what they wanted. Which was straight up stuff.

The way things were I spent a lot of time in the apartment by myself. It was boring and depressing to be stuck there alone. One night I listened to all of Jesus Christ Superstar, on the cassette playing stereo, twice. There was no TV. You see, since I didn't have a car, it was better for me to spend the night there. I rode the Greyhound bus to get to the city. It was way late at night before I was done working, and not safe to go to the bus station that late even if there had been a bus leaving.

I remember walking in the early morning to the bus station through a deserted section of town. I was dressed in eveningwear, a flashy dress, and uncomfortable shoes. It was cold and windy. I felt very alone and unprotected. Lord knows why I didn't just

call a cab. Perhaps that wouldn't have occurred to me. I came from a lifestyle, far from the big city, where cabs were never used. I didn't really even know how to get one. Or I didn't want to spend the money.

One of the few cars out that lonely morning gave me a catcall whistle as it sped by. Even if they had stopped to offer a ride, it would have been dangerous to get into a stranger's car, especially dressed the way I was. That much I knew.

One time Sid took me shopping. He made a big deal about it, like how great it was of him to do this. It was supposed to be a big treat for me that he set up this special thing. We went to some lady's house. There was a large selection of fancy clothes that were available affordably. Sid had explained earlier that the clothes were "hot" (acquired by a bunch of people having stolen them). A clothing theft ring. So things about it, like her name and the location, were secret. I didn't really want the clothes, but he wanted to do this for me. I guess the hippie clothes I had didn't go well with the places he wanted me to go.

I did pick a few things, mostly to appease him. One was this awful jumpsuit outfit with a form fitting inner shell made from crisp sateen in a bright orange color. The outer part was a flowing see-through taffeta in a print with large orange flowers. Yuk! I can't imagine why I liked it. My friends at home laughed at me when I showed them, so I only wore it a couple times when I went to see Sid. I would change into it after I arrived at the little apartment, and be sure to change out of it before I headed back to the bus station.

There was one thing about the lovemaking Sid taught me that I have found useful to know. That was his instructions to press. He asked me to do this because he really

liked it. Some really hot woman once had done it to him. Sid showed me where to press, between the scrotum and anus and had me practice finding the spot. He was quite detailed and precise in his teaching process. He asked me to press there when he told me. I was willing. He would let me know when I could start getting ready to press. Then he would instruct me how long and hard to press while we were in the middle of sex.

At first, it seemed like just another silly thing or something maybe only he liked - yet another kinky fetish. As time went by and I had the opportunity to try it on other men, I found it worked well. Guys liked this. I would just do it and surprise them. I have later learned that place to press is called the "million dollar point" in oriental teachings. Pressing there enhances the "hold back" technique and also promotes good prostate health. This practice Sid taught me was valuable information indeed.

\* \* \*

Shortly after I started making these trips to the city, another work site was set up. It was arranged for me to hang out with this lady named Dottie. Sid was being helpful in coming up with ideas for me to make money. He knew Dottie and had filled her in about me. She was older, and had a daughter only a few years younger than me. Dottie had been turning tricks for many years. She had a one-bedroom apartment where we would meet and work.

I went over to work with Dottie at least twice, maybe three times. When I was there she would call up some guys and say stuff like "I have a special little treat here."

Sometimes she would refer to me as a cupcake or a nice little cherry. Guys came and came (pun intended). So I might spend the afternoon and evening, staying until late. Dottie lined up the last guy to drive me home in exchange for sexual favors.

It was really kind of fun. I could spend a day or two out of the week and make a lot more than if I had flipped burgers for 40 hours a week. And it was tax-free. I would come home after being gone for a couple days and have maybe two hundred dollars, sometimes more.

Let's compare this to the other job I had been doing at that time. It was a minimum wage fast food job, which was all I had the skill for. I could work 40 hours a week flipping burgers and bring home under \$50 a week. Think about it, I was making more money in one day doing this than I could make working a whole month.

At first I stayed on at my regular job. My trips in to see Sid and make big bucks could happen on my day off. But it wasn't long before I let the fast food job go. Why bother? Come to think of it, they let me go, for not showing up.

After rent and food, which wasn't much living in my little hippie commune, there was enough money left for some good pot. YES!

The way things happened, I had no pimp to share my income. Dottie, when I went there, took a portion of the money. Sid never took money, at least not in front of me. He gave me money and each of the other men I entertained at his place left me some cash.

When I went to Dottie's place, sometimes a client wanted two women. You see, that was something she could promote with me there. Other times she disappeared when the guy wanted to be with me alone. There was a lot of time when we were in between

customers and we just hung out, talked and ate, got cleaned up or manicured. Dottie was on the phone a lot.

I don't remember any particularly exotic or erotic sex at Dottie's. I remember one kind of foreign guy had a fit because I had bits of toilet paper stuck on my pubic hairs. Even after I went specifically to wash them off, he complained they were still there. I was very embarrassed. Dottie intervened by consoling him and sent me to wash again rather than let him leave unhappy. I've since learned these little bits of toilet paper in the pubic hair actually have a name. They are called "dingleberries" if you are from Texas.

Usually just one guy showed up. On one occasion, a regular client of Dottie's had shown up and brought along another man. The friend was perhaps a virgin or just shy, and didn't really want to do it. Or didn't think he could. It posed a bit of a challenge. What I remember is feeling out the situation. Who he was, what he was about, and shifting gears out of the usual way a prostitute was with a "dick". Treating him the same way one might a skittish horse. I was always good with horses and animals in general, this seemed no different. I felt a sense of accomplishment that I was able to get him off. Dottie was impressed. She and the other man were there in the same room the whole time. She praised me after they left.

Working with Dottie was very educational. She told a lot of stories about all different kinds of things. Some stories were about sticky situations with "tricks" and how she got out of them. Other stories were about how it was for her to be in the profession of prostitution. Things she did to get around the illegal aspects of it. How she dealt with

the public. For example, what to say at her daughter's school. More importantly, what to say to her daughter's friends and their parents.

"I tell 'em I'm into sales. It's really kind of true," Dottie volunteered with a shrug. "If they *really got* to know more, I tell 'em I sell windows. Actually I do sell windows. What to buy some windows?" She jeered using a professional kind of tone. "Ah, hell no," Dottie quickly slipped back into her casual mode of talking. "You don't even own a house. But I will tell you this, I do sell these windows and it's a great cover to get me into places where I can make my real money."

One of Dottie's more interesting stories was about her encounter with the neighbor man down the hall. Now remember, this is a woman who has a lot of sex with different guys for money. She's been doing it for many years. A seasoned veteran, you might say. Generally, it's rare for a working girl to get off with a customer. Work is work. In short, Dottie had no "Steady Eddie" in her life. It had been a while, if you catch my drift.

So this guy down the hall had been paying attention. Watching the comings and goings, he guessed about the nature of her business. There were lots of different guys stopping by for a short time. Dottie had carefully chosen this apartment house for conducting her business because it had the kind of neighbors who wouldn't really care. "Picking the right location is very important," she had told me. "I don't want to go to jail for something stupid, like the neighbor ladies don't approve."

So, Dottie's telling me this story about how they got to talking one night. Her and this guy down the hall. Well, one thing led to another. Talking led to touching. He was nice to look at and he had a gentle disposition. Well, as she told it, he took his time, went

real slow. She doesn't normally give "freebies" to just anyone, but this guy was so smooth she didn't want to resist, it was like butter melting in the pan. He's taking his time including playing with her clit till she's on fire. And then what do you think he does? He up and takes a break. Just as nonchalant as can be, knowing how hot she is. He's off in the kitchen making a cup of tea. He brings her a cup. So there they are sipping tea and sipping each other and there's just no hurry before they get around to really making love. Well, she liked it and she liked telling about it. How he took his time, smooth and sweet as honey.

\* \* \*

My introduction to prostitution went by quickly. I had no concerns about venereal disease. I don't remember insisting on men using condoms or myself going to a doctor to get checked. I was very lucky not to have picked up any kind of VD. I was also lucky to have a friend invite me to move far away from the big city and my connections into the seemingly easy money of prostitution.

For the next few years I rarely thought about the experiences and barely ever spoke of them.

## Chapter Two - Behind the Peephole

The front door was massive. There was a slider peephole, just like I've seen in the movies. It was used a lot. Before anyone was allowed to enter the on-duty madam or a security man would first slide open the peephole to take a look at whoever wanted to come inside. They could be selective about who got in.

This was the place I landed at about age twenty-one, some four years after my experience in the big city and at Dottie's apartment. It was considered a high-class place. Only white men were allowed in as customers, or for any reason at all, period. My whorehouse had a reputation as having the best girls and facilities. To keep up the reputation, the whites-only rule had to be enforced.

Of course, I knew that racial segregation was wrong. But there was a whole lot about what I was doing that was wrong. Most everything about the entire experience, for starters. Actually doing it, being a prostitute, had a surreal feel to it. Like it was happening to someone else, or like I was in some kind of cartoon.

The place was full of characters, including the madams. I didn't get to know the night madams as well as I did Sheryl, the madam who worked with me on the day shift. She was around forty years old and looked very attractive, as if she had just stepped out of the beauty salon. Sheryl wasn't her real name. No one used his or her real name. A

person got to pick a name and use it as long as they wanted. Then pick another name if it suited them.

First, I picked Rose. Or rather, Dusty, my mentor and "sister-in-law," picked Rose. I had liked the name right away. Later, after the big bust and girls were reinstated, I was required to pick a different name. Big Joe, the owner and manager, couldn't bring the same girls back after the bust. So, I went back to work after that under the name Lisa.

The day madam, Sheryl, really liked to play the pinball machine in the big main lobby area. She would have spent all her time there, except she ran out of quarters. "Why bother working here in the first place? All my money just ends up in that machine," she complained. There were two pinball machines, but one in particular was her favorite. Sometimes, Big Joe would have a roll or two of quarters when he stopped by. He'd produce them like a shy schoolboy bringing an apple to the teacher. She would trill and coo happily with his gift. He knew those quarters would end up right back inside his pinball machines.

Sheryl and I were there alone much of the time and we played a lot of cards. Gin rummy was the game of choice and we talked as we played. Sometimes she would share advice or entertaining stories. Sheryl was full to the brim with interesting experiences. She would listen to anything I wanted to talk about. A lot of the time we just talked the endless chit-chat that card players find amusing. "Come on now, be nice to Momma," Sheryl would say before she drew a card, as if to coax the deck into giving her a card she wanted. Or I might say, at first coquettish and apologetic, "I hate to do this, I really do, but...GIN!" Finishing with a gleam of triumph as I laid down my cards. Sheryl shaking

her head with a curve to her lips, one side a smile the other a frown. "I just needed one more queen, just one more queen."

One interesting thing about talk there, at the whorehouse, it was never about who a person was, their past or future. Unlike the "straight world" where a person is first met in greeting by asking their name and expecting to get both a first *and* last name. Then you move right along in getting to know a person by asking about where they live, work, and plans for the future, what college they attended, etc. Here in the "underworld" a person was only ever given a first name, undoubtedly a fake name. Last names weren't used or expected.

If there were more than one person who happened to have the same name, say Bob, then qualifiers would be used. For example: big Bob, little Bob, short Bob, old Bob, young Bob. Sometimes it would be "Bob, you know, Tony's cousin Bob". Or, "That guy Bob, you know the one that hangs out at Phil's place." Anything to avoid the use of last names.

Here in the "underworld" it was impolite to inquire about anything personal, past or future. For example, questions like "Where are you from?" or anything about college were not allowed, not considered polite. Forget about it! If someone were antisocial or ignorant enough to ask such a rude question, they could expect a look of scorn along with a strange or ridiculous untrue answer, if any. I learned this the hard way.

We knew our names were just made-up fake names. No one tried to pry into anyone's past. People were able to interact with one another based entirely on their presence in the here and now. Once I got the hang of it, I enjoyed the quality of keeping

social interaction based on the present circumstance. Looking back now, as a person who has studied Zen and other eastern spiritual practices, that quality of being present in the here and now can be an important part of certain religious practices.

Behind the peephole, conversations revolved around people and situations relating to the present circumstance. Sheryl did in fact share many stories from her past, but they were all vague, with no information that would pinpoint anything or anyone. The story's purpose was more to entertain or make a point, by illustrating or illuminating some concept, not to provide any facts or history. People were careful not to reveal information about their past that could get them into trouble now.

For example, Sheryl might tell a story like this, "I remember when I was just getting started and everything was still new to me. I had a gentleman one-day...remind me a lot of the guy you just took back. I ain't thought about him again in all these years. He was so shy, that one I'm telling you about. He had a quiet manner, kept his eyes down and called me ma'am. What few words he did say, to get me to take him back, he seemed to be stuttering trying to get each one out of his mouth." Sheryl shook her head and shrugged one shoulder while she continued, raising one eyebrow, "Till we got back in the room. Seemed like as soon as his pants came down, his mouth opened up. No kidding, I tell you, he talked and talked, non-stop." I gave the correct response to her storytelling, a look of amazed disbelief. Guys don't often change so dramatically. They usually tend to talk less as they become more amorous.

Sheryl continued, in response to my reaction, "Yeah, it was weird, I still remember how strange that was. Him carryin' on about all kind of things. We took care of business

all right, no problem there. He just kept talking the whole time, 'till he put his pants back on. And then he zipped up! Yeah that's right." She nodded and paused for a moment. "Zipped up!" Sheryl continued, shaking her head slowly as she reflected. "He stepped out of that room and barely said three more words. 'Thank you ma'am' on the way out. Left me a nice tip, I remember that. But lawd, I ain't thought of that guy since forever, 'till that one came in here just now, reminded me."

That's the kind of stories Sheryl was full of.

The madam got paid real well for her service. It wasn't what you'd call hard work, most of the time. Answer the door, size up the customers, screen out anyone that looked like trouble, and oversee the intake of money.

There was a system for taking the money. It was a cash only business. Credit cards were just starting to catch on and we didn't offer to take them. We collected money directly from the trick, while still in our room. Immediately after, we put it all in the box in the office and also wrote it down in a book. This procedure for handling the large amounts of cash was very specific. There existed a threat of getting, not only fired, but actually exiled if caught pilfering any. And there was the threat of spies around to check on any suspected larceny.

The madam would also be expected to handle anything else that might come up. One big thing was just keeping the girls "in line." The madam wasn't always on the best-loved list, because sometimes she had to turn girls in, or stop fights between girls.

It was commonplace for the night girls to be fighting about one thing or another. There was ample opportunity for hurt feelings and bruised egos.

Imagine eight to ten wild and beautiful women living in tight quarters and working in direct competition.

Because I worked in the daytime, fighting with other girls was less of an issue. I was the only girl working day shift most of the time. There was no need for more than one girl on the day shift. Still I did have contact with the night girls, and could have gotten involved in their "stuff." By my nature I mostly didn't tend to get into fights.

The madams had been successful working girls themselves with a lot of experience. They were always and endlessly helping any of the girls with less experience through any new challenge. A madam might be roughly in the thirty to forty something age range. The women who worked as madams were ready with a take charge, no nonsense, "*up in your face in a minute*" attitude. "I don't take shit from nobody!" Raven, one of the night madams, would say, her hand on her hip.

\* \* \*

From the outside it was just a plain two-story brick building. Just a rectangular shaped building constructed of cinder blocks. While it clearly was a business and not a home, it had no sign outside and was located out of sight of any main road. For official purposes, the thinly veiled cover was that the business was used for a "Health Spa." And indeed, there was a rather large, barely used room on the lower level with a few pieces of exercise equipment and a dusty-from-lack-of-use sauna.

The building itself was built in a hill. From the street you could only see the top story. The bottom story was more of a basement. One side of the lower level had no windows. The rooms with no windows were the least desirable rooms. The other side of the basement with windows was only slightly more desirable. There were eight rooms upstairs and six rooms downstairs.

Each room had a sink, a double bed and a dresser. Each floor had one bathroom for the girls to share. Things were kept clean. There was a lady to clean and everyone expected things to stay clean. The customers used a bathroom off the main lobby, specifically for the public. No customer was allowed back unless he was with a girl, and only then to go directly to her room and come back out after.

The entrance to the building was that double thick front door with the peephole leading into a small foyer with another door. That door opened into a large L-shaped room that served as the area for clients to meet girls. In this large main lobby area was a jukebox at the far end, lots of folding chairs around the edge, and a couple of pinball machines. The big L-shaped lobby wrapped around a smaller room that was the office. The office had two windows that gave us a good view of both directions so we could watch people as they approached. One window allowed us to look out into our little parking lot with a view up the road a ways. The other window looked out across a small field and the large parking lot of the truck stop. A lot of customers approached on foot from that direction.

Right outside the office door was a low credenza with the coffee service. Free coffee was available twenty four hours a day. All you could drink. Across from the

office door was a large desk. It was positioned just inside the foyer, so it was the first thing a person passed as they came in. It also formed a little cubby place where a couple people could sit and have a somewhat private conversation.

Just behind the desk, one door led to the attic, and another door went to the lower floor. The attic was rarely used and unfinished. The downstairs door led to the "spa" room and was also rarely used. It was better not to drag a customer through that room. There was a washer and dryer in the "spa" room, along with the few pieces of old and neglected exercise equipment, and the seldom used sauna.

Back upstairs, just around the corner from the attic and basement doors, right beside the two pinball machines, a door led away from the main lobby and down a corridor. Rooms on either side flanked the hallway that ran the full length down the building. The first room on the right was the kitchen, fully equipped and rather small. The kitchen was off limits to customers. It was just for the staff, "employees only". So a girl could hang out in the kitchen in her curlers and not worry that the "John's" would see her.

Each girl had her own room. We lived in our room. It was where we slept and conducted our business. As I mentioned before, each room had a sink, double bed and chest of drawers. Some rooms had two chests of drawers, one tall dresser and another chest of drawers lower and wider. The bedroom suites in each room were a matched set. The furniture was different from room to room. The more desirable rooms, based on location, seemed to have the best furniture. The poorer quality furniture ended up in the basement rooms.

Some girls had a few things to spruce the room up or make it more comfy, but generally there wasn't much in the way of personal belongings. For example, no one kept pictures out of loved ones, such as boyfriends or children. I suppose a girl could have a picture of her pet.

During my time there I stayed in at least six different rooms. First I was downstairs and later I was upstairs. Being the daytime girl, it was better for me to have a room that was close to the main lobby, so there was less chance of disturbing the night girls when I brought a man back.

There was someone on staff as cook. She shopped for food and kept the cupboards stocked with snacks and food that we liked. We could request items be supplied. She would cook one meal that would be ready about five o'clock in the evening so the night girls could eat before their shift started. We were charged daily for room and board.

The kitchen was a place I remember hanging out with the girls. Our dinner times were often quite lively. Food was a topic we could all talk about easily. What was for dinner? What did we want for dinner? Great meals we had had. How bad this cook was, how much better she is than the last one. Heaven forbid, look out if there was no cook! Then perhaps Louie would fill in, and that man could NOT cook.

The girls would tell stories. Sometimes about the customers, frustrations, hair, nails, pills. Never talk about anything too personal. It was common in a conversation to have someone pause, as if considering what she were about to say. Turning over in her mind who was listening. How they might take it. Who they might know that shouldn't know.

We all wore the same thing, leotards, nylons and high heels. The leotards were the very same as the kind dancers wear. Short sleeved, long sleeved, V-neck or scoop-round neck, all different colors of leotards. I hated the high heels and took them off whenever I could, which was easy, seeing as how things were more casual working the day shift.

There were two shifts. Each shift was twelve hours. Day shift started at six o'clock in the morning. Night shift started at six o'clock in the evening. To get ready for day shift I would wake up about five in the morning or five thirty if I was dragging. I needed time to bathe, do my make-up and hair, then get dressed. I had a wig and I always wore one leotard or another, so it wasn't a big challenge, deciding what to wear. Nonetheless to have my eyes open that early in the morning was a challenge to me.

When it was slow, and it often was that time of the early morning, there was no big rush to be ready in time. I could poke my head out and find out pretty quick if there was much business going on. Each day was different, and truckers could stop by any time. Still, I didn't have to be the same kind of ready as is required by a "real job." The kind of job where you have to drive somewhere else and arrive at a specific time.

I could always eat or whatever, while we waited in between clients. Lots of days no one would show up at all until closer to noon. On slow mornings I might snooze a bit, in my room, or on the couch in the office. Sheryl would wake me up if it looked like someone was coming. Sometimes we both snoozed. When there were no customers, there really wasn't anything we had to do. Still, I had to be ready. I didn't want to miss a trick.

It was the same with shift change in the evening at six o'clock. If it was slow, the night girls could dawdle and hang out in the kitchen over dinner. If it was busy, the madam might even wake some of the night girls and get them out earlier, but that was rare.

We were there to make money, so we wanted to turn tricks. If they walked through the door, we wanted to take their money. Some of the girls were more "hungry" than others. Some really wanted to make as much money as possible. Other girls were kind of burned out or just not real motivated. Sometimes the hustler just gets tired of hustling.

My income came entirely from the tricks I turned. If I had no business in a day, I was still charged for room and board. Basically a girl usually turned in at least \$100 in a day. That would be a bad day, a very bad day, and there were a few of those. \$200 and up was more the average. On one most amazing day, I did set an all time record. I took in 780 dollars!

Of all the income, the house takes half, 50% right off the top, plus takes off another \$15 for a day's room and board. For example, if I collected \$200 in a day, \$85 is how much I earned.

We worked for three weeks on and one week off. That's twenty-one days straight of living in that place. It felt a little like being in jail or being out to sea in a submarine. Once a month we got a week off. Imagine having a week vacation every month, and lots of money to spend. Assuming a girl brought in \$200 or more a day, she would leave after her 21 days with close to \$2,000 dollars in take home pay. Most girls made at least that

and some a lot more. Even with the house taking so much, a girl still left with a lot of money.

For comparison, this was at a time when the typical straight job for a young uneducated woman paid maybe two dollars an hour. Working forty hours a week could result in a paycheck of maybe fifty to sixty dollars by the time they took out taxes and other deductions.

All of the girls had pimps. At first I was more or less clueless about pimps. I learned some things by hearing other girls talk about their pimps. Most girls were guarded about the whole subject. Occasionally, in frustration, a girl might complain about something her pimp had done. Mostly there was a guarded secrecy, as if reluctant to share. Relationships to pimps were both business and personal.

Most of the girls I met there were long term, professionals if you will, regulars. They had grown up in the underworld. They knew the jargon, the expectations, the societal myths and moral attitudes. I had to scramble to pick up clues.

I hadn't grown up within this society. I came from a middle class family, raised in a mid-western suburban environment. Before entering the whorehouse, I had chosen to lead the life of a hippie. There was a lot to learn about the prostitution lifestyle, this unique culture based on longstanding traditions and existing outside the law. I wanted desperately to fit in, once allowed entrance to the world behind the peephole.

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It had been four long years since I left my big city connections and Dottie's apartment. I had been seventeen, now I was twenty-one. I had attended college for a couple years, then dropped out. I worked a variety of insignificant jobs, one as short as a day, working in a label factory. Other jobs lasted a few weeks or months. Most notably, I had worked over a year as a nurse aide in a small town hospital. Because I liked that job so much, I went on to nursing school. That didn't work out. Officially I quit, unofficially I got kicked out.

My hippie beliefs made it hard to pursue the traditional college career track laid out in front of me by family tradition. My life had become a quagmire of contradictions. I was caught in the swampy murk of depression and emptiness. Looking back on it, mental illness may have played a part in my life.

Along the way I had taken a weekend workshop learning about self-awareness and techniques to increase psychic abilities. I was totally captivated by this subject.

The man who taught it was very charismatic along with being psychic. He especially liked to charm the ladies. His name was Eddie and we spent a carefree summer hanging out together. I fell in love with him. He wasn't interested in the kind of devotion I wanted to give him.

Time passed and I had tried a variety of ways to get Eddie to want to be with me. Desperately in love and trying to hang on to this man, all my efforts only seemed to send him farther away from me. I was literally obsessed with him.

Eddie started talking about writing a book about self-awareness and psychic potential. People were often saying, "Oh Eddie, you should write a book." He would say, "I'd like to write this book, but it would take ten thousand dollars to promote it."

I was not thinking straight when I made up my mind to earn the money. It was crazy and stupid, but I was desperate to make Eddie love me. I realize now I was basically lonely and restless, eager for an adventure. Anyhow, I set my resolve to earn a thousand dollars as quickly as possible. I fantasized that I would hand him money and then we could work together on his book, and we would live happily ever after. With this resolve I had a purpose, twisted as it was.

I decided to head to Florida. Miami, to be specific. One crazy friend had told me there was lots of money in Miami. The way she told it, men who wanted sex for money were lining up on every corner. I would only have to sit down in a bar and soon my pockets would be lined with gold. "And don't forget to ask 'em for a Jaguar, honey! When they want to know what kind of car to buy for you, you tell 'em Jaguar XKE" my friend had said.

I hitchhiked down and had a lot of strange experiences and setbacks. The turning point was a terrible cold and flu that left me dreadfully sick. I was just outside of Jacksonville where, I was told, it was illegal to hitchhike. That's as far into Florida as I got.

This one guy who picked me up and gave me a ride, was kind enough to also get me a hotel room. It wasn't anything fancy, but I was so grateful to be able to be sick in peace. I would have exchanged sexual favors to pay for the room, but as it turned out,

once we started, he was so big, largely endowed. I was still sick and so I just told him, he was too big for me. He actually seemed complimented that I thought he was too large. Anyway he was a sweetheart about it. That night I decided I had had enough. The next morning I began to head home with my tail between my legs.

As luck would have it, the very next person to pick me up was a truck driver. His name was Jerry Larkin. He was nice looking, not so old, and lots of fun. Jerry was headed north for quite a ways and I found him to be most personable. We had a great time. He was hauling an extra wide load, so he couldn't drive after dark.

When we stopped for the night just outside Atlanta Georgia, he looked in the paper to find something fun to do. Jerry took me to see a full-scale production of "The Man of la Mancha". It was a dinner show. We traveled in a taxicab from the truck stop, 25 miles into the city. "You only live once, why not live it up," he said. Jerry was driving a mobile home as his cargo and we could sleep in it. We had to be careful not to mess it up, while we did mess around in it.

We had lots of time for talking, so I shared my plan and my defeat. He suggested I come with him. Jerry was heading, after he delivered his load, to a whorehouse. Not just any whorehouse, it was the best whorehouse this side of the Mississippi. Its reputation was known far and wide, at least in trucking circles. He was a regular there and the girls liked to see him coming, at least that's the way Jerry told it. Said he was a big spender, often taking more than one girl.

There was one girl in particular that Jerry liked to see when she was available. Her name was Dusty. He thought she had some clout. There were no guarantees, but he

could inquire on my behalf. He offered to ask around to see if I could work there. It wasn't far out of my way, so I had little to lose. He said, "It's gonna be a long shot. But what the heck, won't know 'till you ask." That's how I first learned about the "Health Spa."

To say I was quite different than most girls who worked there would be putting it mildly. I was a hippie chick, basically. I wasn't shaving my legs or armpits. Had no knowledge or interest in makeup or hairstyles. I knew very little about the Mafia, the mob, the underworld, as it's sometimes called. So the entire plan was something out of the ordinary.

Jerry decided to get a hotel room for me, so I stayed there while he went over and had his fun. Mind you Jerry and I had been having a lot of "fun" all along. Still, he was a fun loving kind of guy. So I waited for what seemed like a long time.

When Jerry got back, he filled me in. "Yeah, Dusty was there and I did get to talk with her. She likes me cause I spend a lot of money. She listened while I told her about you." He shrugged, "I don't know honey, they're funny there, real funny about stuff. She seemed reluctant, cautious." He shook his head back and forth in not a very encouraging way. "Dusty said she would have to think about it, talk to some other people. I gave her your hotel room number and said you'd be here 'till tomorrow." He flashed me a cheerful Jerry smile and added, "Who knows, maybe they will call."

Jerry was "bob-tailing it" which meant he was driving only his cab. He had dropped his trailer some three hundred miles back. Jerry was anxious to get going and hook-up with his next load. He had left my calling card there at the whorehouse, but it

didn't seem very hopeful. I bid my trucker friend a fond farewell. He needed to keep on trucking. In fact he had been very generous, getting me a room and leaving me some money for food.

I was sad to see him go. It was a lot of fun being around a cheerful up-beat person like Jerry. He had gingerly explored the possibility of me staying with him. I couldn't. I was too obsessed with Eddie back home, and I didn't care for life on the road.

It was real hard to wait there in that hotel room. It seemed hopeless for starters. I was bored there all by myself. It felt both scary and exciting to think someone might call. I was nervous about the prospect of what I might be getting into. Mostly I was lonely in general, a feeling that seemed to be my most constant companion.

It was after eleven o'clock the next morning when the phone rang. I had given up all hope by then and was preparing to hit the road. A male voice on the phone asked me to meet him outside in fifteen minutes. My heart was in my throat as I checked out of the hotel. I had only my purse and a tattered small duffel bag slung over my shoulder.

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As I found out later, it was incredibly unusual for anyone to take me in as a prostitute with no pimp. I was a total unknown. Even so, I got to meet with the Boss Man. The owner and operator of the establishment, Big Joe.

### Chapter Three - The Interview

Before I had time to even breathe, much less fathom the potential danger I was stepping into, Big Joe arrived. He was driving a light brown Chrysler New Yorker, about 3 or 4 years old. Somehow I had expected a big, long black car with tinted windows. When Big Joe arrived in this very normal looking car, the kind my grandfather drove, I relaxed a bit and hopped right in.

Basically, we drove around some, and parked and talked. Big Joe was always driving around, stopping somewhere to use the pay phone. Then he would drive somewhere else and use a different pay phone. The reason he used pay phones was to make it very difficult for anyone to trace the origin of any calls he made. Vigilance about the possibility of phones being bugged or calls being traced was an ever-present consideration. I later learned that people here most often talked in code over the phone, because of these same concerns. Seeming to say nothing, while the code words meant something. A conversation might go like this, "I'll meet you at that place we went before and bring the you-know-what." It could make talking confusing.

Another thing about Big Joe was that he always kept the radio on. When sports scores came on the radio he insisted on quiet while he listened intently. He informed me ahead of time about this anomaly, so I was forewarned. Regardless of how intent our conversation was, when the sports scores came on, his hand would go up. He would

either point at the radio or motion with his palm flat down. Punctuating the interlude with grunts of disappointment or sounds of excitement. I was way too naive then to realize he also handled betting on the sports. I was later to learn how he kept a lot of numbers in his head. The results of the sports scores meant he gained or lost money.

Looking back, Big Joe was a real smart, quick thinking man. A regular genius to handle that many numbers and money amounts in his head. Big Joe was a big man in many ways. Tall and quite heavy, you knew when he entered a room. He had a commanding air, like any good businessman. There was no doubt he could be fierce when he needed to be. Still, on this first meeting, I was impressed not only with his sheer mass of size, but also with the way he looked regular. He looked like any other man you might see walking down the street. He was middle aged, had on a lightweight brown jacket, casual clothes. There was nothing about his appearance, or the way he dressed, that would lead me to believe he was part of the criminal world.

I felt more than a little intimidated at first. Guys in authoritative positions made me nervous in general. On top of that I really wanted the job and suspected that my credentials might not stack up. Jerry's parting warning hadn't helped make it any easier. My truck-driving friend had warned me not to mess with Big Joe. "Dusty says you better be straight with him." Jerry had cautioned.

It was Dusty who apparently talked Big Joe into checking me out. With Big Joe being her "old man" (slang for pimp), and her many years of experience in the profession, this made Dusty a person with influence.

At that particular time Dusty was filling in on the day shift, because there was no one else who would take it. No one wanted days, mostly because it didn't offer the possibility of big bucks, not like nighttime did. And it was less fun in general, very boring compared to the action of nights. In reality, sometimes the less successful night girls made less than the day girl, who had no competition. Since there was no one else available for the job, Dusty was doing it. My willingness to work days was in my favor. Also, Dusty was way past ready for a break and hiring someone in just now meant she could take an extra week or two off.

It didn't take long for me to warm up to Joe. He had a sort of compassionate quality. Although if he ever heard himself described so, he would have hated it. It was easy to spend time with Big Joe. Something about simply being with him left me feeling better about myself. I was to discover later that most everyone liked Big Joe. Of course if someone didn't like him, they didn't stick around. He was fair and honest and he cared about the girls. Yeah, he was a businessman and we were his stock and trade. Still he was very personable despite being very busy. We seemed to like each other right away.

Here is some background information about Joe, which I was to learn about later. He had a wife and children. One of his sons was about thirteen years old. He had a regular looking house in a quiet residential part of town. His home was unassuming from the outside, but really fixed up nice inside. Big Joe once explained to me how it was better to buy a cheap old house and fix it up. Because "they" (mostly IRS) couldn't trace the value of the improvements, only the purchase amount of the home. He could easily find people to pay under the table for all sorts of home improvement projects. So he had

a nicely fixed up old house for the wife and kids. He also had an apartment that he kept for business.

He did talk about his apartment during my initial interview. We went there later that same day. It was a place he could hang out and relax. The main purpose of the apartment was to serve as a place to keep his girl or girls. He usually had one girl, occasionally two girls, and only rarely might he "sponsor" more than two girls. At that time he had only one steady girl, Dusty. The two-bedroom apartment was in a very modern swank building. The rooms were large and the furnishings modern. It was on the top floor and afforded a great view.

I didn't know any of this background information as I sat that first time talking with Big Joe.

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We were parked in some parking lot. He had just used the pay phone and would again at intervals during our time together. This "interview" lasted a while. There was much to talk about. Aside from Big Joe taking breaks to make phone calls that didn't last very long, he had an air of not being rushed. I mean it didn't feel like there was a need to get done quickly.

Any previous job interviews I had were rushed and impersonal by comparison. Big Joe asked none of the normal questions for a job interview, like: Could I do the work? What about my past experience? References? Resume? These traditional concerns had

no place here. From the start Big Joe was very interested in who I was as a person. It felt more like a first date than an interview.

He started by asking me, "Was I a cop?" That was standard. After he asked, and I laughed, he insisted I answer directly. He required that I say, "I am not a cop." I said it while rolling my eyes and shaking my head like this was sure a silly game. Then he explained that a cop had to say he (or she) was a cop if asked directly. So, if I ever suspected someone was a cop or wanted to be sure, he recommended that I ask them outright. My amazement at this information probably worked in my favor.

Next he asked if I was any kind of reporter, trying to get inside, so I could write some kind of expose on prostitution. He would really hate that. Exposure to the media, especially any form of the mainstream media, could be very dangerous and costly. So he asked and I told him "No Way." Still he was very specific about this issue. He asked from every angle that he could think of to make sure I wasn't someone interested in "the scoop."

I assured him many times I really was only interested in making a thousand dollars. Interest in money was an answer he could relate to. It was the right response. Still he threatened that if I was lying, if anything got printed and it made any trouble for him, look out. He would hunt me down and make my life miserable. Coming from Big Joe that was no idle threat. I didn't realize it at the time, but he meant it quite literally.

Apparently my nonchalant response to his threat reassured him. I really had a story to stick with and as strange as it was, the pieces added up. I was who I seemed to be. He had heard pieces of my story already from Dusty. Now I had the chance to fill in the

bigger picture to his satisfaction. He patiently listened and asked questions while I told my story in detail for him.

I told Big Joe about the guy back home, named Eddie and how crazy I was about him. The target of my obsessive love didn't really take me seriously or return my affections the way I wanted. Eddie was charismatic and charming. My beloved had a project, to write and promote a book. I had heard Eddie say many times, "I would need ten thousand dollars to make this thing work." Silly, stupid, young me, thought if only I could hand him a large chunk of money, he would be mine forever.

What I didn't know then was that often people use all kind of excuses for not following through on a project. His reference to not having X amount of money (a large X amount) was just a way to rationalize not doing anything. I was so infatuated, I couldn't see what a do-nothing Eddie really was.

Perhaps the truth I didn't know then was that I was simply sad and restless and that is what put me on the road to Miami. What I told Big Joe centered on the stories I'd heard about Miami's streets being paved with gold. If not paved with gold, then paved with rich men wanting to spend their money for sex. As I told Joe, I had been hitchhiking to Miami, hoping to cash in on some of those rich guys.

I can laugh now at what Big Joe must have thought as I told him this ridiculous story about Eddie and rich guys in Miami. I remember him laughing at some stuff that I hadn't expected to be funny. I talked about being sick and hitchhiking, and about the guy who picked me up, the one who brought me here. He seemed satisfied with the story. It was bazaar enough to perhaps be true.

Big Joe's had lots of practice dealing with people on the fringes, practice listening to strange stories. Perhaps he had come to believe that truth was usually stranger than fiction. Any story with too clean of corners was suspect. My story was plenty sloppy with queerness and I was able to stick to it despite his clever way of asking questions from a variety of angles.

That I continually repeated my interest in making one thousand dollars, exactly one thousand dollars, kept the focus. I was very pointed in asking the question, "Can I really make a thousand dollars working here?" He said "It depends a lot on you, but it's possible." He continued, "A lotta girls leave with two, three thousand, or more.... You won't make that much, your first time out the gate. But a grand, yeah, could happen. It's all about can you do the work and how you are with them." Them meant the customers, the John's, the tricks of the trade.

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After that first round of questions and answers we both kind of relaxed a bit. It was as if after that I was hired. He didn't actually say that, nor did I know it then. Really I had satisfied his most important concerns at that point, the rest was downhill. Next he started to explain some of the logistics. Like the 12-hour shift, 3 weeks on, one week off, doctor check-up every week, security provided 24 hours, general things in a general way. He didn't go into a lot of detail at this point, but explained that I would be in training at first. That Dusty would be my coach. Then he launched into a brief explanation of the

pimp problem. At the time I didn't understand it exactly, so I just listened and hoped none of this meant I didn't get the job. I really wanted to do this.

It seems that girls coming to work usually have a pimp. So the fact that I didn't have a pimp was a problem. Big Joe would basically have to be my pimp. At least for the time being. As far as I could see, there wasn't much need for a pimp, since the house provided the protection and steady stream of customers. But tradition is tradition. And the possibility of girls thinking they didn't need a pimp was dangerous. Big Joe talked about stuff to take care of outside the house, like laundering the money. How could a girl buy anything big with her money, like a house or business or nice car, without the IRS finding out and the girl ending up in jail. He alluded there were other things a pimp did. It turned out this subject, along with many others, was something I would learn more about as I went along.

One of the problems with Big Joe being my pimp was that he didn't really know *anything* about me. I had just blown in on the breeze. That made him *real* uncomfortable. As I found out later, it was an honor to have Big Joe as a pimp. He didn't take just any girl. Basically, being my pimp made him "my old man," as if we were going together. It meant he was taking responsibility for me. It also made Dusty my sister in law, so to speak. Dusty and I had not yet met, only heard of each other from Jerry, our fun loving trucker guy.

Big Joe was trying to warn me. Coming into "the life" was something more complicated than a little romp in the park.

After the pimp stuff got explained, he wanted to know more about my background, my family, and previous work. I told him about the time that I had worked as a call girl a few years back. He was more interested in what I had been doing recently. I was getting a small amount of unemployment. I had been cleaning used appliances, part time, sporadically, at a store owned by a friend. He paid under the table. I had been a college student up until about 6 months ago, when I decided not to be a nurse. I had spent a day doing temp work at a label factory.

He strongly recommended that I discontinue receiving the unemployment, especially given it was some pitiful amount like \$32/week. He advised, as a general rule, women who came into this line of work stop receiving either unemployment or welfare. Often the girl could get busted or found out simply because of this. Imagine a woman somewhere and folks know she's getting welfare, then suddenly she shows up with a bunch of expensive stuff. Not a good practice. That I had been working somewhere already getting money under the table was a good thing. People were already used to seeing me getting by without a steady job.

His next concern had to do with whether I'd be missed, being gone for another three weeks. Would anyone come looking for me? My family and friends had long since adjusted to my unorthodox lifestyle. They wouldn't think it out of the ordinary not to hear from me for a matter of weeks. The few people closest to me assumed I was headed away on an adventure to Miami.

The sad truth was, no one really gave a hoot about me. This state of affairs was of my own making. I pushed away anyone who tried to get too close.

Big Joe then started a line of questioning about my relationship to my family. I was surprised at this until he explained his reasons. His concern was that during a bust, the police, or whomever, might threaten to tell my parents I was a prostitute. Would this threat get me to rat on him?

You see that by taking me on, he was automatically making me privy to a lot of things that were meant to stay secret. This kind of information should not be shared with the wrong people. He talked about loyalty to him and asked about loyalty to my parents. How would they take the news that their daughter was "in the business?"

People "in the business" rarely used the words "whore" or "prostitute," except perhaps as punctuation in telling a story, or in light-hearted repartee. It was not polite to use those harsh words in regular conversation about each other.

Did my parents know I was doing this? Would I tell them? I said, honestly, that I hadn't told my parents, but that I could and would tell them rather than rat on his business. I had to promise to keep his secrets.

I explained that I had been on my own since I was sixteen years old. My family was used to me doing my own thing. They wouldn't miss me if I were gone for a few weeks. No one was going to come looking for me. My friends, the few I had told, knew I could be away for a while.

That pretty much concluded the interview. He explained that it would take some money to get me set up, at least \$200 for starters. I would need clothes, makeup and so forth. That would come out of my earnings at the end, when it was time to cash out. He

was taking a chance with me. He was risking this start up money and he wanted me to assure him I would stay long enough to earn the money to pay it back.

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What I had no way of knowing that clear crisp autumn day was that there was a hands-on, live action, part to the interview. It was not explained to me at the time. I figured it out later. Big Joe wanted to make sure I could perform between the sheets before he invested time and money, and introduced this strange and potentially dangerous straight-world hippie chick girl. From the perspective of group dynamics, Big Joe was stirring the soup, causing ripples, and he knew it. But, heck, finding a good day girl was never easy.

There were reasons why Big Joe didn't take me himself for the hands on part. First of all, believe it or not, Big Joe considered himself faithful to his wife. Any sexual play he was involved with never went farther than foreplay, perhaps active foreplay, but not active intercourse. Also, Big Joe was a busy man, he didn't choose to take more time just now for this. He had already spent a lot of time "interviewing" me. Time he hadn't really planned on before the wind blew me his way.

Another thing, Big Joe was like the opposite of sex-starved. His business was sex, so for him to "get happy" he wanted to be in just the right mood. Lastly, being with Big Joe in that way was something to be earned, worked up to. We barely knew each other. As it turned out, during the course of the seven months I was to spend with Big Joe as his

girl, there was only one time when Big Joe and I were sexually active, as in making out. More about that later.

As you can imagine, Big Joe knew lots of people. He was really connected. So one of the many calls he took time to make was to arrange for his assistant, Mackey to take over. Next Big Joe took me to his apartment. He had me undress and took a good look at my naked body. Looking for tracks to show drug misuse or any other identifying marks that might give him information. He was appraising and enjoying the merchandise. By his rules, now, I belonged to him. When Mackey arrived, Big Joe explained that I would spend the night at Mackey's place, and in the morning we'd go over to the house, meet Dusty, and start my training. He asked me to leave the room while he talked with Mackey for a while. Then Mackey took me to his place.

During the whole process of the drive up from Florida and waiting around here, I had time to rest and was feeling better. It was a relaxing evening. Mackey ordered pizza and he ordered me to shave my legs, well suggested really. When I did shave my legs, it made a big mess in the tub. Clogging up the drain and leaving a big ring of hair to clean up, which he thought was really gross and really funny.

Mackey was an interesting character, recently out of prison for some small petty charge. He was small and lean. He moved like a bobcat, his motions contained and optimized. He was friendly and likeable. Not real bright, but he knew how to get along with people and on the street. While he didn't exactly look like Brad Pitt, he had the same kind of attraction as the character Brad Pitt played in the movie "Thelma and Louise." I felt right away that he was on my side, my comrade in arms.

He did make an effort to seduce me. Being playful and flirtatious led me to believe that we wanted to fuck for the fun of it. He wasn't exactly my type, I barely knew him and wasn't too interested at first. He seemed interested and very insistent. I was not the kind of girl to say no for long. Along with being quite charming and appealing, it turned out he was also very good in bed. He was young, and someone had obviously spent some time training that boy in the right moves. We tore up the sheets into the night. Let's just say the hands on part of the interview went quite well.

When we showed up the next morning, Big Joe only had to look at the both of us to see we were freshly satisfied from a thirsty bout of trysting. That morning afterglow was unmistakable, and my legs were shaved. Mackey assured Big Joe I could heat the sheets. Then they had a big belly laugh over the hairy legs in the tub story told in detail. Before long I was off to meet Dusty and get my first tour of the "Health Spa". Word had already leaked out there about the hairy-legged hippie girl.

## Chapter Four - Training

It was still morning when we arrived. The place was virtually empty. The night girls were all sleeping in their rooms. Dusty, my new sister-in-law, and the day madam Sheryl, were both expecting my arrival. Dusty was cool, more like aloof, as that was her nature in general. Her formal distance may have been a result of being burned out, or skeptical of me, this new person, about to encroach on her life. Someone shoved under her nose, an automatic sister-in law, acquired sight unseen. It's likely she was part of the decision making process, and for sure she wanted someone else to be the daytime girl. Her steely nature left a person wondering what could be going on inside her mind.

I found Dusty beautiful and intriguing from my first glimpse of her. Truly, her aloof, self-confident stance added to the allure. Her ambience, movement and attitude were a lot like the character Erika on the daytime TV show "All My Children" played by Susan Lucci. Imagine the actress Mary Stuart Masterson in a big hair brunette wig. Again, she was aloof, confident, a shade of arrogant, definitely sure of her ability to be beautiful and attractive. I was mesmerized. The possibility of there being a cruel edge to her was not well concealed.

I am struck now with the memory of how time was different there. Handling time was different. In the "real world" people seem continually time driven, especially in regards to the workplace. Work two hours. Don't stop working. Work real hard, then

after two hours exactly, take a fifteen minute break, fifteen minutes exactly. Start work and stop work, by the clock, unrelated to actually finishing a task. Always racing to the next appointment or meeting.

I needed to make a shift in my attitude about "time at work" to fit in here. Of course we hustled (forgive the pun) when there was money to be made. But during the in-between time, there was no hurry. Mostly we were hanging out, making it a very relaxed environment, especially on slow days such as this one. There was no where to go. That I was filled with a restless kind of nervous energy made adjusting to this time-shift surprisingly uncomfortable for me. It felt more like being on vacation than reporting for work. At least at first it did. Here was a lifestyle where we waited, like the spider whose web is spun waits for the fly.

My training started with a tour accompanied by a general explanation of the rules and expectations. Some were the same as Big Joe had already explained, only with a lot more detail. "Here is the book we write in to keep track of how much money we make each day." Dusty explained. "Here is the box we put the money in." She suggested, "You'll want to keep track of your own earnings yourself, each day. But any discrepancy and that big book is the deciding record."

The rooms were bugged. There was a control console in the office and the staff, the madam or security men could listen into any of the rooms. "They do that mostly for security, you know, for our protection." Dusty delivered the commentary, like it was a canned presentation. "If we get any suspicious client or activity, well, they can listen in." Her eyes were monitoring me expecting a reaction, then qualifying when she saw the

expected cock of my head and rolling of my eyes. "If a girl could possibly be in any danger they would know and be able to take care of it. The security here is the reason this is such a good place to work. That there are always people around for security is a big reason we get and keep the best girls."

While it appeared Dusty was presenting a canned kind of speech, she herself seemed rather nonchalant or even cynical.

"Another reason for listening to what goes on in the rooms is to tell how much a girl is getting paid for the trick." Dusty continued with more earnest. "Although most of the time they aren't listening, you never know when they might be. In general, the amount of money you're supposed to come back with is judged by how long you're back in the room, turning the trick." Dusty looked me square in the eye before she continued, "Still, if any one suspects a girl might be "holding back," they would listen carefully into her room. Sometimes they might even set up a man posing as a trick, like a spy, to tempt a girl to not report all her income. If you get caught holding back money, it's a serious thing. They don't play here about that Rose. A girl can get blacklisted and not be able to find decent work anywhere."

In general, most tricks were about fifteen to twenty minutes. There was a house minimum. They had to pay at least twenty dollars. Most tricks were in the range of twenty-five to forty dollars. If you were back for half an hour it was fifty dollars and an hour was a hundred. It was the job of the Madame to keep track of how long the girl was gone in relationship to how much she brought back. Discrepancies required talking about it and resolving what went wrong or why the money wasn't in line.

Dusty was more playful when she shared the other purpose of the listening bugs in the room, "Sometimes they just listen for fun." She shrugged, I was interested. They would listen in for entertainment. "No reason to hide the obvious, not in this business." Dusty's carefree manner was flippant. "They listen in various rooms just for the fun of it sometimes. Nothing better to do, I guess. Sometimes, a client might pay to listen, but that almost never happens anymore."

Dusty was dead serious when she spoke of the next piece of information. "They always listen if they know or suspect kinky behavior, especially sadistic stuff."

"It's rare for us to entertain really hard core sadistic clients." Dusty continued, now sounding almost like a college professor delivering a "take notes" kind of lecture. "Any guy like that gets carefully screened and watched. Same for masochistic clients, we don't *usually* get many of them either. But, you know what Rose? We watch them like a hawk, too. Both kinds." Expecting and noticing my surprised look, Dusty decided to elaborate. "Yeah, it's a fine line between the two, sadist and masochist, liking to hurt and liking to get hurt. Trust me, I know from lots of first hand experience. A guy comes in asking for one or the other, next thing you know, quicker than shit, they can switch, just like that! Personally, I demand to be the one in control." She paused for a long moment as if about to say something more.

Then shaking her head, her voice softening, she said reassuringly, "Oh Rose, you don't have to worry about any of this shit. Not on day shift, it's not gonna happen. And Sheryl's the best we ever had. She don't let nothin' slip by her."

Dusty was right about that. Anytime a madam let a new guest in, she would question him about expectations and tastes. All the madams had a natural talent for sizing up the customers. Sheryl was exceptionally astute at "making the mark."

"Most all of *those* kind of tricks gonna come in for night shift anyway. There's a few girls on nights that can handle it." Dusty lowered her voice before continuing as if whispering a secret. "Generally speaking, Big Joe don't like to hire in the girls who specialize in weird shit. Too much trouble, he says. As for me, I don't mind taking the tricks where I get to be the bitch. Comes natural for me. Those tricks are less work anyway. Less work and more money, a lot more money. So, yeah! I can handle that."

Then she drew herself up into full pose and challenged me through squinted eyes before adding, "I like to be mean."

Eventually I got my chance with a kinky customer. It represents the extent of my experience turning oddball tricks. This particular client was generally more work than he was worth, so the other girls hadn't wanted him. He was definitely weird, kind of whiney and fussy. A lot of the time for this trick was spent fooling around, me trying a variety of things to find out what he really wanted. It had taken a while before we realized that an emery board was available. I basically ended up spanking his balls with an emery board. He liked that a lot and would tell me detailed instructions as I performed the service, like how hard to spank and where.

He did end up spending a bit more for me than he regularly did. When I came out (and after he left, or was out of earshot) they were laughing in the office and congratulating me on handling him well and getting so much money for the trick. I had

used a time-honored technique. Get a guy going, then say, "Oh, I would love to spend more time doing this," and he's going to pay up rather than stop. That's a tip for turning tricks.

Back to our tour on that first day. Dusty continued talking about the nature of the business. "A lot of the guys are repeat business. Some stop by only once or twice a year. Others are hanging around all the time. So the staff knows a lot of the jokers. They often ask for the same girl. If any guy makes a bad scene, nobody's gonna let him back in."

Dusty then admonished, "It's up to everyone, not just the madam or the security men, to watch new customers carefully." She was trying to get me up to speed on this business, "The night girls really get more of a chance to check out a "John" before going back to the room. The day girl often just takes them back with little time to 'read' the guy." Being able to read people was an important part of success in this line of work.

That first morning, along with my tour, I was given more specific details. Every Friday after my shift, I would be driven into town to get checked at the doctor's. Checked for any kind of VD, sexually transmitted venereal disease. Also, the doctor would write any script I wanted. It seemed uppers and downers were quite popular.

I was shown my room downstairs, at the far end of the hall. It was across the hall from Dusty's room. I didn't know it at first, but these rooms were less desirable according to the prevailing pecking order. Dusty liked her room there for two reasons. She was less likely to be disturbed by the other girls and their continual goings on. Also, she didn't have to move out of this room, she could keep her things in there even during

her time off. Remember she was Big Joe's number one girl, so she could have what she wanted, pretty much.

Each girl had a room assigned when she arrived to work. When she left, she took all her stuff and someone else got the room. When that same girl came back, say after a week off, she got her choice of the open and available rooms. Only rarely were choice rooms held for someone. Of course, when a girl leaves and a room opens up, someone might move into the room. So who gets what room and shuffling around, especially into the preferred rooms, was continually going on. It was one of the major items that could cause ill will among the girls. The preferred rooms were on the top floor, closer to the kitchen, bathroom and main lobby.

Our next stop was the kitchen. With so many women sharing one kitchen, it meant a detailed set of rules and expectations had evolved over time. Staying within the tried and true boundaries was important. As I mentioned before, one meal was cooked and ready about five o'clock in the evening. When there was a cook she would prepare it. If there was no cook, we were kind of on our own.

Snack foods were readily available. I could help myself to food in the kitchen at any time. We weren't allowed to take food back to our rooms. The cook or maid took care of most of the dishes. However, I was expected to wash any dishes I used other than at suppertime. Here Dusty punctuated the rather bland flow of information with a more personal look and a shrug of her shoulder, "So the kitchen doesn't turn into a pigpen." She whispered, as if this were a very private conversation.

Dusty had a way of being very aloof and cold, then turning in an instant and drawing me in, making me feel like I was so special and intimate with her. There was a special twinkle in her eye.

The next instant, she was back explaining the routine. If I wanted food that wasn't available, there was a list. The cook or housekeeper would do the shopping. Again a break in the narrative, as she gave a look of disdain to the aforementioned list, "You go ahead, write on this list. Don't hold your breath. This cook..." Emphasis on the word 'this' and a pause for Dusty to shake her head and give that sneer implying hopelessness. "Who knows what she'll bring back from the store."

Picking up the pace and returning to her tour guide mode she added, "Anyway, there's always something to eat so you can just help yourself."

In general, we girls weren't big eaters. Watching our weight was an important part of this occupation. And even though it was a supper time kind of meal cooked at five o'clock in the evening, that really was breakfast time for the night girls. As a result, anytime 24 hours a day, someone could be in the kitchen eating whatever.

The kitchen was often a place we would gather, to eat, talk and laugh. It was very informal. If certain girls weren't getting along, it was easy for them to avoid each other and eat at different times. Also the kitchen was a bit small for servicing so many people. Only about four to six people could fit in the kitchen around the table at one time. There were eight to twelve girls working at any given time, plus staff.

After the tour of the "Health Spa" was complete, I was given a shopping list, some money and instructions. I needed two leotards and nylons, a pair of high-heeled shoes,

make up and a wig. My hair was not quite nice enough. It was thick and curly, but definitely unkempt and short. The wig would give me the appearance of longer hair, and be more polished. Also, and perhaps more importantly, it could easily and quickly be put on, eliminating the need to spend time fixing my hair.

Dusty also told me to buy some better street clothes. The town I would be going to now and each Friday to shop and see the Doctor, was not a huge city. It was larger than a small town, still it had few hippies.

My blue jeans had holes in the knees and butt. I was wearing dirty sneakers, a raggedy T-shirt and no bra. I would draw unwanted attention. Actually, drawing attention was something we girls who worked at the "Health Spa" couldn't help but do, no matter how we were dressed. But Dusty didn't want me looking so "raggedy."

It's kind of ironic, but it would have drawn more attention in that little town to see a gal dressed in colorful worn out hippie duds than to see her dressed like a whore in a tight-fitting mini-dress. God Bless America.

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So, off I went with Mackey as my escort. He drove me first to the Doctor for a check-up. Then he dropped me off downtown, at the big department store. We arranged a time and place to meet. It was fun to do some shopping.

The high point of my shopping trip was to buy a bedspread. Each girl brought her own. The house provided sheets, pillows, towels, and blankets. A girl can't carry all that kind of stuff each time she comes and goes.

Tricks are turned on top of the bedspread. So washable was a good idea. When Dusty talked with me about this, I asked her right away whether the bedspreads get messy quick. I was used to messy, sweaty, slimy, drippy sex. She gave me a funny kind of look and said it wasn't really a big problem. She shrugged in that off-handed way she had, and said I could lay down a towel if I wanted. The way she said it implied that laying down a towel wouldn't really be needed or wasn't a good idea.

We always had clean towels available in the room to wipe up or use if needed. Towels were also handy for washing the guys each time. I didn't have to buy my own towels, they were provided by the house.

I ended up buying the most inexpensive bedspread. Later, after I was more in the groove I upgraded to a better bedspread. After I had time to see what the other girls used, I noticed that some were real nice. I finally settled on a deep purple velour bedspread that was somewhat expensive. That came later, after I was making more money.

When I got back from my shopping trip that day, we continued my training. Dusty moved into some more specific information. My room was equipped with a sink and peter pan. "Peter pan" was the nickname for the small plastic tub, just like the kind issued by hospitals when people check in. They can be used for bed baths. Here we used them for peter baths and so we called them peter pans. Each "John" who came in for a session got his private parts washed. It was the first thing to do, usually before the girl

even bothered to get undressed. The lights stayed on bright for this part because it also was the time to check him for venereal disease (VD). Generally, most guys passed. I only found a few to turn away for not passing the check test.

The peter pan is easy to use. Just ask the guy to lower his pants, most just take them right off. Fill the peter pan with nice warm water, about half full or less, don't need a lot. I would have the guy hold the pan under his privates. This would keep his hands busy so I could concentrate on washing and checking.

Even before getting the guys privates wet, I would take a good look. It's important to check for rashes, bumps, warts, or anything out of the ordinary like an open cut. I would gently milk the shaft from the underside. If a man had gonorrhea, snotty pus would come out. It's easier to milk for that pus if he's a little hard.

Then I would wet the genital area, and use a little soap to rub up a lather. All guys enjoy this part. It feels real good, and most are hot, hard and "ready to go" by this time. I washed both the cock and balls thoroughly, with lots of fondling along the way. Most guys would have so much fun they didn't realize they were being scrutinized, and the whole procedure only took a few minutes.

Many guys will produce a clear or slightly whitish, milky colored tacky kind of fluid. That is normal and to be expected. The pus that comes out of a sick penis is nasty, greenish, thick and stinky.

Smell was also a part of checking, but that was harder to teach. It was more something to pick up with experience. A lot of the guys would be fairly clean when they arrived at the "Health Spa". Still, there were plenty of guys that maybe came straight

from a long day of work and some who only bathe once a week whether they need it or not. So the smell that greeted a working girl when she started to check was often quite ripe. Still, there is a putrid, rancid kind of smell to a sick pecker. Dusty talked about it some. Basically, you could tell if someone had bad hygiene, and be sure to check him extra well.

Learning how to check a guy was a pretty important lesson, so she got some volunteers. Finding willing volunteers was not hard, no shortage of men in a whorehouse. Men like to let women look at their "equipment," all for the sake of education.

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Another very important and tricky thing I had to learn was how to negotiate with a gentleman to get the money. This would usually happen in the room and I was on my own there. The point is to get the trick to spend more money. Get him hot and his wallet opens. Laugh, joke, give him a good time and that directly translates into big earnings.

Every guy is different. It was cool if you got the money up front. Some guys would just lay down thirty dollars and say, "Give me a good time for this much". Most customers wanted to be serviced first and then get out their money. Dusty said it didn't matter, either way was fine. Because we were working in a house like this with protection, it was extremely rare for a guy to try to walk out without paying. So there was no need to worry about getting stiffed.

More important and harder to learn were the ways to get a man to spend more money. This was an art. Another thing to be learned with experience. A good girl used every contact minute to analyze the guy, figure out what turns him on, and then give it to him, slowly. It helped to be playful around the money, or include it in the seduction, make it part of the sex play. For example, "Oh baby, I'm so hot, you make me so hot, I wish I could have more time to *really* feel good with you. Just another twenty dollars and it would be so good." Some guys were easier to work with than others.

A lot of the money stuff I learned as I went along. The way to "feel out" the situation and the guy. Was he tight or loose with money? What might flip his trigger? I learned a lot by talking over the tricks with Sheryl the madam. We had a lot of time to talk things over in detail. She would often ask "So, how did that one go?" Or console me with "Don't worry honey, he never spends more than twenty dollars, you did real good to get twenty five out of that tightwad." Often times Sheryl knew the customer and would coach me during the time between when she saw them coming and she got up to let them in the door. Fill me in about special needs or ways to get him to spend more money. A fair amount of guys were regulars. Even with a new customer, she might have something to say before hand. Sometimes she even had me wait in the office so she could scrutinize the guy, before she called me out.

Before I could start that first day, Dusty explained the general logistics. "Twenty dollars is the house minimum, that's the bottom line. When you take a guy back, he's got to pay at least twenty dollars. The guys know this already, before they get to you. Most know it from word of mouth on the street, or else it gets explained to them at the door.

They can just leave right away if they don't like it. For twenty dollars, they get a straight up fuck. That's it!" She said emphatically. "No sucking, or very little, and not much time to get them off. You can play with it to get it hard. Usually they're ready by the time they're getting washed."

As a side note, the twenty dollar trick was in some ways the most difficult, because it needed to happen so fast. I would be my charming alluring self, one never knew who might want to spend more once they got behind closed doors. But if they only wanted to spend twenty dollars, they had fifteen minutes and that was that. No fooling around, for that kind of money. If they didn't get off right away, they had to pay more or leave.

In actual practice we didn't turn a lot of twenty-dollar tricks. Most guys wanted to pay a little more. Twenty five to thirty dollars was the most common kind of trick. And for that they basically got about the same amount of time. Fifteen to twenty minutes, only they could get sucking. Sucking was a real favorite request. Some sucking and some fucking, that was the most common trick. It was still expected to be pretty straightforward stuff for this money. There wasn't really much time for anything too out of the ordinary. If they wanted more time or anything else in the way of a special request it was fifty dollars for half an hour and a hundred dollars for an hour. For two girls it started at a hundred dollars for half an hour.

These were general guidelines rather than hard and fast rules. What it came down to was asking the "John" what he wanted. Then trying to get him to pay as much as possible. Each guy was different. This fine art of tempting for money required a lot of skill and experience. A good hooker could read the man and the situation, his body

language, his reactions. Listening for what is said and what isn't said. The challenge of it made the game fun to play. It was fun to make money, and fun to be sexy and attractive.

Dusty talked about some other guidelines that were more like rules. Here are two big ones. No kissing on the mouth. Partly, because of the obvious potential of spreading germs. "Mouths are the dirtiest part of the body." Dusty insisted. This was the reason I was to give if ever asked by a client. Mostly it never came up. The more important reason and the one I shouldn't tell the customers was, that it was just plain disgusting. She said, "Most of these guys you just don't wanna be kissing on the mouth, Ea-uh!" and Dusty made that face, the one like she just sucked on a lemon.

The other rule was no fingers in the vagina. Dusty's reason was obvious. "Most guys' hands are real rough and could hurt a girls' money maker".

Of course these rules were merely guidelines. If a girl wanted to kiss or be felt up, she might go ahead and do it. She might want to just for fun or to make more money. Dusty made a big point about explaining the rules and for the most part I followed them.

She also talked about anal sex. First Dusty asked if I liked it. I didn't, not at all. It turns out anal sex was mostly discouraged here. Only a few of the girls offered it (for big money). The girls who did were not well respected because of it. Since I didn't like it, I didn't have to do it. If any guy asked for it I was to let the madam know about him. I was to let her handle the arrangements. It fell into the kinky category and that meant clients were expected to pay more money and they were closely scrutinized and monitored. Dusty alluded that we didn't really do that here. Most guys who wanted that

went elsewhere. Girls who liked it were gross. I was glad I had emphatically said up front that I wasn't interested.

We didn't go into a lot more detail about kinky stuff on that first day. Dusty said a trick with two girls was fun to do, and a good one to talk about. She encouraged me to try to sell guys on the idea of it. Often guys get hot thinking about having two girls, so talk about that could serve as a form of foreplay. Even though most guys decided not to spend the money for the more expensive trick, it was still a fantasy they could enjoy thinking about. She said, "If a guy comes in during the daytime who really wants anything kinky, talk about it with the madam. Let him come back at night."

Before I was turned loose to actually make my first trick, Dusty had gone over the pay structure in a very business like way. She forgot or didn't realize what a naive unprofessional I was. So as I began to negotiate with my first trick, I simply repeated what she had said. Twenty dollars for a straight fuck, twenty five to thirty five for some sucking and fucking. Fifty dollars for a half-hour, and so on. The man acted funny. He kind of chuckled, then sheepishly said he had never had it explained quite that way before. I forget exactly how much he actually paid or anything much else about that, except when I got done, Dusty and Sheryl took turns scolding me and laughing about it. "You don't talk to a trick like that, good God." Then they would laugh and tell some story or other. There was a lot of laughing and joking and a fair amount of downright fun in-between the tricks.

This time Sheryl reminisced, "Reminds me of that sparky redhead we had, a couple of years back. Remember her Dusty? Oh yeah, Bubbles, that was it. She was a pistol!

But I'll tell you what she did. She'd take the guy back and start washing him, really wash him up!. Then, right in the middle of that, she'd say, real matter-of-fact like, 'I know you brought me a hundred dollars.' Just like that, just like she knew it was true. Well, half the time, they'd pull out their wallet and pay, one hundred dollars, just like that. If they put up a fuss, she'd shame them, made them pull up their pants and head for the door. Then she'd say, 'Oh hell, get back here, what did you bring me?' Lots of times they'd start at fifty. She did make some money, that one." Sheryl and Dusty were both shaking their heads remembering this girl. Dusty finished the story, "Yeah I remember her, she did make some money, at first. But, Rose, dint' no one want to take her back any other time. Word got around, and not so many wanted to pick her. Big Joe tried to talk to her. We all tried to talk to her. Told her she can't be like that, but she didn't want to change. Big Joe had to let her go."

Sheryl continued, "Yeah, she didn't stay long. Something not hooked up right, upstairs, on that one." Sheryl didn't like to call people crazy. "Still Rose, it's good to keep an up-beat attitude, expect that they're gonna open up their wallets and spend a lot. It's your attitude that makes all the difference. You don't wanna be like Bubbles - demanding and making the guys feel bad. You'll learn."

Another one of the first tricks I remember was a man about forty years old, not attractive to me at all, heavy set, and known to be stingy. It was tough to get him to pay even thirty dollars. Dusty explained a lot of this to me ahead of time as well as her tips about how to entice him to pay more. This is what the training is all about. How to get

men to pay money. If my prostitute training included any tricks or tips about better sex it was only a by-product of the "Prime Objective." Get the money.

What happened with this uninviting customer was less than ideal, perhaps because of the complete lack of chemistry between us, perhaps due to my nervousness. Not only was I nervous, this guy seemed perpetually nervous, that unhappy kind of nervous that's more like irritation, like a tea kettle about to boil over. After using all of Dusty's tricks, the things she told me to say, and getting him to pay thirty five dollars, what happened was, I serviced him rather mechanically. The sucking and fucking proceeded much too fast. In other words he came almost right away after entering me. He was not happy. I was confused. I knew Dusty and Sheryl were listening in and I had wanted to make it go well. This only added to my nervousness and mechanical behavior, as you can imagine.

We finished and went out. Next thing I knew he and Dusty were huddled in a corner. He was complaining to Dusty. Crying on her shoulder. It seems he was a regular of hers and had wanted to see her. She had talked him into taking me. He wanted to blame me for his inability to hold back. He had come sooner than he wanted, had spent all that money and hadn't had a good time. I felt he had been serviced so what was his beef. That's why he was crying to Dusty and not to me.

I also felt terrible, I should have gotten praise for getting the money, but there was this funky feeling hanging in the air. Like it was my fault. Of course I was good at taking whatever was going wrong and making it my fault.

Dusty spent what seemed like a lot of time talking with him before he left. Turns out along with soothing his soul, she had promised to treat him extra special next time.

What she said to me was "Forget about him, he's just a pain in the neck, nothing but a big baby, really. Don't worry, he won't take *you* again." At this, both she and Sheryl bust up laughing. Tricks who fell into the category of "pain in the neck" were plentiful and we all put up with them. Still, it was hard to be patient with their unpleasant personalities and them not wanting to pay much. They were regulars and we saw them coming. As you might imagine, certain girls could put up with certain guys better than others, and they invariable ended up together. That I would have one less clown on my calling card was a blessing, I guess. The laughter was just a way to break the icky feeling that had descended on the place since he walked through the door.

What Dusty and Sheryl launched into next was a talk about control. Dusty said emphatically, "The woman is always the one in control." Sheryl chimed right in. "And the way you do it best is by leaving him thinking he's in control." They were enjoying my look of skeptical wonder, so Dusty continued. "He's not. You are. Always. You control how fast it goes, the level of excitement. You can always step it up or slow it down." The way I scrunched up my face in a little puzzled look, she knew I was clueless.

"It's about a lot of things. You'll learn. How close you are. The closer you are, the faster it moves. Want to slow it down? Then move away, or talk about sports or something." They both responded "Yeah" in a kind of chuckle that is very low pitched, while nodding their heads. Dusty went on, not missing a beat, "To speed it up, move closer." Sheryl added "Or rub up against him, that always gets 'em." Dusty said, "Yeah, men are easy to manipulate, especially when their dick is hard."

"That's all the time!" Sheryl chuckled with an emphasis on the word that. Dusty, still talking, "That's why *you are* the one always in control. Somebody *got* to be! So you be the one watchin' everything and, well, he knows you're running the show. *Really*, he wants it that way. And have some *fun* girl, at least *look* like you having fun."

That got the two of them going and what followed was a short, I guess you could call it an enactment. Dusty and Sheryl got up and pretended one was the "working girl" and the other one the trick. They showed how a girl might flirt and play with a trick. They took turns being "Ho" and "Dick." First Dusty, kinda moving close to Sheryl as if to touch but not really, "Oh Sweetie, ya know you about the best hunk of stuff I seen walk in here all day, now we *could* really have some fun." Her fingers walking up Sheryl's arm coquettishly. "I sure wish I could spend some real time with you." It wasn't really important what words she was saying. The communication rested in large part with the body language, eye contact and tone of voice. She was literally purring, I could see how provocative it was.

My middle class, prude self, reacted by thinking how stupid this was. It seemed so corny. I couldn't believe that guys, anyone really, would fall for such an obvious act.

They switched roles and Sheryl murmured, "Oh baby, momma got something special for you." Her eyes moving down to her bosom and her shoulders rocked slightly. Dusty played into the enthusiastic role of the over excited "John," by trying to grab at her. "Now you just behave yourself, you better be a good boy, cause momma got something nice, real nice if you a good little boy" Then she corrected herself and turned to me deadpan in the face to say, "Well better not to use a word like little." We all cut up into

big belly laughing, till the tears ran down our faces. It still rings in my ears today, Dusty saying, "Don't forget now Rose, you the one in control"

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Now there was one trick I remember from early on in the training. We could say everything I had learned just about flew out the door. We could say, all they talked about took a while to sink in. It took a while before some of what I had heard and seen meant anything to me. So I had to go through the experiences, make the mistakes and that's how I learned. Anyway, this one guy showed up and he was young, tall, handsome and charming. "Yummy," 'bout sums that guy up. We ended up spending at least an hour or more and he only paid twenty-five dollars. Worse yet, or from my standpoint better yet, he had a joint and we smoked it. That obviously took up some of the time. We then proceeded to take our time smokin' on top of the bedspread and in a variety of positions. I had a good time and I believe he did too.

After the trick I was faced with the same odd blend of scolding and laughter. I was still learning their perspective that allowed for approval laced with the necessary reproaching. I was scolded for spending so much time and not producing enough money. I was told that if this happened with any regularity I would be suspected of holding back money and that was reason for dismissal. The money part was a serious thing and so was the part about smoking a joint. Pot smoking was just plain not allowed inside the house. Period. And to do it with a trick was real bad. I said I was sorry, real sorry, pleaded

ignorance, and also pleaded getting carried away with this hunk-o-la. I swore, soberly, I would never do it again, ever. It was the right tact to take.

The laughter and approval was a more subtle thing, kind of like tittering or chuckling at the same time I was being scolded. At that time I had no way to process the look of acceptance that I also caught a glimpse of after this trick. Of course there had been a bunch of them listening in from the intercom in the office. I had forgotten, or not expected they would be listening. After all, I had no concept of myself as an important person or someone worth the time to listen in on. Truthfully, I had been swept away, what with the smoke and him being such a charmer. So, when I surfaced after that trick and suspected they had been listening, I felt embarrassed in a strange way. It seems they had enjoyed tuning into our very good fuck. It obviously had been quite entertaining. For all I knew there could have been hidden video cameras.

So, they knew exactly how much he had paid me. They knew that I had brought the same amount up to the office. They also knew I had knowingly disregarded the rule about not smoking pot. This outright display of rule breaking made me a criminal type. They liked it, gave them something "up" on me. Seems I had come in with and carried a bit of a prude attitude. That I had been "so bad" made me good. Go figure. Progress, in the sense of fitting in with the gang.

Looking back, it's possible that Mr. Handsome could have been "planted" or what do you call it? "Set up." Planted by Big Joe as part of my training. He might have asked this guy to come and take me for a spin. It might have served more than one purpose. Along with providing entertainment for the ones listening, it might have been like a favor

for the guy to come. Like Big Joe says to him, "Hey, you want to have some fun? I got this new hippie chick and she's kind of different. You could have a real fun time." It might have served as advertising. This guy might have been the kind to spread the word. It might have been Big Joe's way of getting to know me better by staging this tryst with home team players. Could it be a good thing when, at the time we live through things in life, we don't always know all the angles?

Another thing I remember about training is that it ended real soon. Dusty was supposed to hang around longer, at least a week. But she got sick, so I was on my own after just a day or two. I remember feeling nervous. It felt like being left to the wolves, although there was a madam on duty.

Sheryl turned out to be a peach. I was in good hands. I'm sure those first few weeks required some special help above and beyond the normal call of duty from Sheryl and the other women who filled in as madam on days. And no doubt it gave them new material for a few more good stories to tell.

## Chapter Five - Cast of Characters

Sheryl, the day madam, became the main person in my life. We spent a lot of time together, mostly playing cards and talking. We laughed a lot. Sheryl was probably about 40 years old but looked younger. Her hair, makeup and clothes were always impeccable, without looking ostentatious. She had a way about her that just naturally put people at ease.

Sheryl had been in the business, really, all her life. Her family, including her mother, grandmother and various male relatives, had all been in this business, one way or another.

Sheryl rarely talked about her family or home life. Over the course of time I pieced together information about her. She had a main squeeze in her life, but he was not the father of her children, and did not live with her. Her three children, one boy and two girls, had two different dads, and Sheryl had married the second one. They had stayed together for seven years. Her oldest girl was going to college and Sheryl was counting on her daughters not following the family tradition of working as prostitutes.

About her son, she shrugged and said, "He's a wildcard, but that's to be expected. He's too young to know what's good for him."

At five foot four inches, Sheryl always wore heels and a swept up hairstyle piled high to give the appearance that she was taller. Sheryl had a down-to-earth cheerful

attitude and the ability to make a person feel at home right away. Her air of authority combined with self-confidence made her able to direct the show without giving off the appearance that she was at all bossy. There was no doubt that she was in charge, and not to be messed with. She could size up a person in seconds. Her ability to analyze someone and draw useful conclusions would be the envy of the psychological profession.

In all my days there, Sheryl never had a harsh word for me. Despite my many mistakes and blunders she never laughed at me or scolded in a mean way. She taught me with stories and encouraging words. She could dish out some deep wisdom and philosophy, always timing it to fit the occasion or circumstance. On a bad day Sheryl might say, "Keep your chin up sweetie, bad luck don't last." Or, "Everybody got troubles, baby. All you gotta do is keep breathing and put one foot ahead of the next. That's all you got to do. And stop thinking so much, girl, it's all that thinking 'n worrying gonna mess you up."

Sheryl was the madam who had been there the longest, and working the day job was easier and more desirable. There were two other full time madams, Raven and Carla, who worked the night shift. Three other women were available to fill in when the full time madams were off duty.

All the women who worked as madams had been hookers themselves for many years. They had survived the experience and gained a great deal of savvy, authority and ability to deal with the many problems and situations intrinsic with the day-to-day operations of a whorehouse.

The madam had a lot of responsibility and got paid very well. She handled the intake of the money. She kept track of which girls went back with whom, how long they were gone and how much they brought back. Greeting and screening the guests, along with watching for and attempting to divert any fights between the girls or clients, required poise and authority.

Sometimes the nature of the job meant tough situations and hard choices. The madams seemed to know everything, and were quick to take action.

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By working days, I had a good chance to know most everyone at the "Health Spa." Two of the people who came to work during the day were the cook and the cleaning lady. They both showed up pretty regular, most days, and stayed at least a few hours. They were women who lived nearby.

The most important job skill needed for these positions was that they could be trusted to keep the secrets of the whorehouse. Their ability to be trusted and "fit in" was far more important than their ability to cook or clean.

They were paid a good bit more than the going rate for cooks and housekeepers on the outside. They had to be people whose neighbors or associates wouldn't be wondering where they worked or how they got the money. Big Joe had to be careful. "It's those small details that can often bring a place like this down," he would say.

Peggy the housekeeper also offered her services as chauffeur. Taking a taxi was discouraged because it might draw attention to the reality that there was something going on at our little business. Big Joe preferred to keep things as discreet as possible. So various people might be enlisted to drive us anywhere we were allowed to go. Usually Peggy was the one to drive me in on Friday when I went to the doctor.

I paid a lot for someone to drive me into town. The night girls could go a bunch in the same car. I had to ride all by myself, so I had to pay full price. Of course Peggy took me door to door. Sometimes she would wait while I went in and other times she would drop me and then come back later. Most Fridays I also wanted to go shopping after the doctor visit.

Peggy had a spunky, cheerful personality and always seemed in a chipper kind of mood. She was of Irish descent, and very down to earth. She told stories about her kids and the latest goings on in town. Seeming to know (and know about) most everyone. Older than us girls by at least a decade, Peggy was short and a bit on the plump side. Fashion and make-up advice was a common topic for conversation, yet when shared with Peggy, she might respond by saying, "I ain't trying out for no beauty pageant."

It was clear that the money she made here at the "Health Spa" meant a lot to her and her family, plus she genuinely enjoyed hanging out with us working girls. She liked the exotic intrigue that accompanied all the "goings on." Peggy wasn't very good at cleaning.

Her husband of many years had worked steady for Big Joe. He still did, occasionally. What exact "work" the men did for Big Joe was never mentioned. Any

reference to it was casual, in passing. It wasn't a subject I felt comfortable asking questions about. Some things I preferred not to know.

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The cook, Maybel, was more quiet and aloof than Peggy. If I had to guess, I'd say she was about forty years old. She seemed to want to do her job with a minimum of contact with other people. She had the kind of personality you didn't really want to get to know. She seemed critical of most things and when anyone approached her she assumed it would be to offer criticism. Of course trying to keep the cupboards stocked and fixing meals that would please all of us girls was practically impossible.

Still, in my opinion, she did a great job. But then I was a fan of tuna noodle casserole. Snack foods like french onion chip dip seemed like the Ritz to me. All us girls were on some kind of diet, you know, perpetually watching our weight. So we tended to be on the cranky side, especially about food. Mostly, Maybel would do her job, have dinner ready and be out of there before the night girls woke up, if she could. She didn't stick around and socialize.

Sometimes Maybel and I got to talking. She'd tell me about her youth, her days of being my age. People never told their stories just right out, in linear fashion. More likely a person would drop bits and pieces along life's way. Listening, I tried to knit the bits and pieces together. I always wondered how much of what I heard was really true and how much was fabricated into a fantasy, someone's version of what might have been.

I believe it was unusual for Maybel to share herself personally with anyone. It was only because in the day it was quiet a lot of the time, and more often than not I would hang out in the kitchen when it was slow. I liked to help. I helped her carry groceries every now and again or peel potatoes. Stuff like that. Whatever the reason, she did open up, at least a little. Come to find out, she sure had plenty of resentments all bottled up.

Seems she had been a hooker herself, and it was something that didn't turn out too good for her. Seems she did it for a few years, mostly to please a pimp she was in love with. When he got whacked she just kind of lost it. After his death, she did something, she didn't say what exactly, and ended up in jail for about 10 years. Now, she'd been out for about as many years, yet still didn't really seem to fit it any place. She had trouble finding a job and had been shacking up with a man for a few years now. That man was another one who worked for Big Joe.

The subject of food was the one Maybel and I talked about the most. Food was one of my favorite subjects. As a result, anything at all I ever mentioned as something I liked to eat would soon appear in the cupboard or fridge. It took a while for the other girls to catch on that some kind of different food was showing up and it was all stuff I liked. Some of them might outright demand items, even write them on the list. Maybel seemed to have a selective memory when she shopped, depending on whether or not she liked a person.

Later on, after I'd been there a while, there was a time when Maybel didn't show up. At first they said she was sick. Well, as it turns out, her old man had beat her up,

bad. Sheryl was the first to find out, because she suspected as much and went over there. Big Joe wasn't happy when he found out. He said he would "take care of it." What that meant exactly, I still wonder. Perhaps it meant that he would talk to the man and get him not to beat her up any more. If anyone in the world could persuade this man it would be Big Joe. Perhaps it also meant that he would look into making sure she got whatever medical attention she needed.

Big Joe's decision to "take care of it" may have been motivated by more than altruism. Finding someone willing to come out and take on the cook job was not easy and Big Joe didn't like losing his help. Louie cooked for a few days. When Maybel came back after about a week, with a few bruises still showing, everyone, even the bitchiest night girls, were real nice to her. At least for a little while.

About a month later, Maybel stopped coming to work for good. Nobody really explained the reason she left. It happened while I was off for a week. When I got back, about all Sheryl had to say was that she had moved on. California she thought. Maybel wasn't the kind of person anyone seemed to miss.

The next woman who came to cook was a real mess. She had trouble remembering things or thinking in general. How she managed to get food and prepare it is still a mystery to me. She lasted less than a week.

After that we got Carrie Anne for a cook and she was great. Another ex-hooker, she was upbeat and a really good cook. Sheryl had worked with Carrie Anne before. Sheryl told me, "She was a hooker 'round about these parts some time back. Damn good one too. Then, let's see, 'bout five-six years ago she took off for Holl-e-wood."

The word Hollywood was always pronounced slowly, each syllable evenly spaced. Depending on the story to tell it got a variety of dramatic representations. If the story was funny the word Hollywood might be almost sung, with a touch of sarcasm. If the story were poignant the word might get delivered with a sneer, or disgust, like a sorry excuse. Most often the word Hollywood got delivered with a touch of despair, like it was some kind of black hole. Like a dangerous mine shaft a parent continually warns their child not to play in, knowing he will anyway. It was in this last way that Sheryl used the word in reference to Carrie Anne.

A lot of the working girls talked about wanting to become famous movie stars. They would talk about certain already famous actresses who may have been working girls before they were movie stars. There was something inspiring or comforting about this train of thought. The idea that one possible destination for a hooker was fame and fortune and the glamorous life of a movie star had an appealing ring to it. One girl told me, "So-and so worked real hard, until she got enough money to promote herself. That's all a girl needs to be a star is enough money to get good promotion." Plenty of fantasy stories circulated in that environment.

Carrie Anne was full of interesting stories. After years of trying to make it as an actress or anything else in Hollywood, she was sick of the West Coast rat race. So when her mother's health took a turn for the worse, Carrie packed her bags and got a one-way ticket on an airplane headed back home.

When Carrie Anne got back in town she looked up Big Joe. He really needed a cook. She was willing to do it, for a while, but her real interest was in being a madam. I

guessed what she made as a cook was good enough to be a living wage, but it couldn't touch the kind of money a madam made.

At first I was simply in awe of Carrie Anne. She was so beautiful, so utterly self-confident. I got real nervous around her and she was a little suspicious of me at first, too. It seems most of the working girls could sense I wasn't exactly one of them. Even after I'd been there a while. Was it the way I talked with my stuck-up college girl words? Was it my Yankee accent? Was it my prudish mid-west mannerisms?

Most people would warm up to me when they got to know me, as did Carrie Anne. It didn't take long before we were thick as thieves. As fate would have it I only spent a couple of months working with Carrie Anne before I left. But now I'm getting ahead of myself.

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The security or protection guys were an important part of the staff. Remember Mackey? He was the first person I met after Big Joe. Mackey was the guy who took me for a test drive the night of my pre-employment interview. As I found out later, he often worked as one of the security staff.

There were a few things about Mackey that made him less than perfect for a protection guy. First, he was kind of small, so he didn't present a big, tough guy persona, at least not from just looking at him. However, he was in fact tough, very tough. But a lot of that job had to do with looking tough to the customers.

Another thing about Mackey was that he was "hot" (meaning sexually attractive) and a few of the girls were screwing around with him. This meant that anytime he showed up at the "Health Spa," it could cause quarrels among some of the girls.

As I was to find out much later, the list of girls in the Mackey fan club included Dusty. Of course Big Joe knew, and Dusty and Mackey knew he knew that they were "mess'n around." Big Joe didn't seem to mind or feel threatened. Big Joe may have even encouraged Mackey to "take care of her" or "treat her right."

The other thing about Mackey was that he was young and foolish. For example, one night he was out late, driving drunk. When he got pulled over for drunk driving, the police found a large amount of marijuana in the trunk. Big Joe was really pissed, because Mackey was supposed to have dropped the load of pot somewhere and hadn't done it when he was supposed to. He shouldn't have been out driving around drunk with an undelivered load. Driving drunk was simply considered a ho hum misdeed, but not taking care of business first was a real stupid thing to do.

Despite all these things, Mackey was around a lot. He ran a lot of the errands. Often he would drive girls one place or another, like to the doctor. Who got to ride with Mackey was sometimes a "thing". Occasionally, he filled in as security, generally when there was no one else available.

I remember more than one conversation that worked it's way around to talking about Mackey. Someone would produce an explanation for why he was around so much, despite his scatterbrain mishaps. It was said "he owes Big Joe a lot", and that said it all.

The reference to so-and-so owing somebody would come up from time to time in the underworld. It would be accompanied by knowing nods and perhaps even a moment of silence, almost reverential silence. Perhaps it provided everyone a moment to reflect on who owed what or their own list of debts and collectibles in the favors department. Owing favors as debt was a palpable currency.

Most of the security guys worked nights. Sometimes on days, it was just Sheryl and me. Also, on days, there was likely to be a variety of people who might be in and out. Big Joe would likely stop in and sometimes he stayed around.

Louie was the guy most likely to show up to be the daytime protection. He tended to work a noon to midnight kind of shift. He'd been around a long time and didn't seem to have any family or life beside this one, hanging here working for Big Joe.

Louie didn't look like a real tough guy either. He had a calm nature and got along well with the girls. Louie wasn't the kind of guy the girls went nuts for, not like Mackey. He was older, perhaps in his early fifties, starting to go bald, about 5' 10". He always wore a suit. His suits never looked new, they looked comfortably worn in. Louie's shoulders slumped and his walk was a shuffle. There were dark bags under his eyes. Everyone liked Louie. He was a nice guy, pleasant and courteous.

Looking back, it's possible the protection guy had a dual purpose. Along with the obvious one of protecting the girls and the house from evil doers and rowdies, was the less obvious one of helping the girls to get along with each other. Ten or so strikingly attractive young girls with big psychological problems were in close quarters. Girls stuck together twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Add into the equation that all the

night girls were in direct competition for money, and you have one continually explosive situation. That Louie had been there a long time made him a seasoned veteran of many a volatile episode involving bruised egos, angry words, hurt feelings and occasionally real down and dirty cat fights.

You better believe, physical fighting of any kind between the girls was a serious offence and could lead to one or both of the girls getting fired. Still, when it actually happened, girls tearing into each other, it made for grand entertainment. Interest in the event was enormous and that was good for business. Cat fights would be talked about for months. Some guys would hang around just hoping to be present for such a lively show.

Like the time Ginger and Barbie got into it. They were rolling around on the floor, throwing punches and scratching. I slept right through the whole thing. Ginger and Barbie used to be close friends and had shared the same pimp. A guy named Kilo. Rumor had it Barbie dumped them both to move uptown with a newcomer pimp named Smooth, short for Smooth Operator.

"Bitch, you crazy bitch," Ginger had hissed under her breath as Barbie walked by. Barbie had replied, "Bet'er shut yo mouf, you lying cunt." "Who's gonna make me?" Ginger taunted. It all happened so quickly. "Ye-ah! I'll make you sorry you was ever....Owww!" They were both tearing into each other. Pulling, shaking, slapping, wrestling. Barbie had pulled Ginger up from her chair and tried to slap her hard in the face. Ginger grabbed Barbie's arms and pushed and shook her. They both fell off balance and ended up on the floor in a most unladylike fashion. While they continued to wrestle down on the floor, a circle of men formed around them almost immediately. It was a

Friday night and the place was packed. At least forty customers were on hand for the entertainment.

It took the two security guys, Louie and Tony, to break it up. Louie got scratched. Neither girl was seriously hurt, but they both had a few scratches and bruises. The worst damage was that Ginger's wig had been dislodged, flying across the room. The audience burst into laughter. Like I said, people would talk about it for months. Sheryl said, about Ginger's losing her wig, "Serves her right for starting it."

Big Joe said, "I should have known those two would make trouble." He added, "I ought to put in a big mud pit. Could charge lotsa money, for watching you girls tear up in a mud pit."

Personally, I thought that was a fabulous idea. I volunteered for mud wrestling duty, preferably as naked as possible. Big Joe smiled.

Another type of desirable asset for the protection/security guy was that he not be too sexy or weird about being around all the sexy stuff. If the man was too sexy himself, it might make the girls go nuts just competing for his attention. You really don't want a security guard that's going to spend his time trying to make time with the girls. And the girls did respond with that competition thing, over a hot guy. Even if it weren't about actually fucking him, it would be for his attention.

Also, if the security man got too rattled being around all the sexual talk and the gorgeous women, it just wouldn't work out. The kind of guy who would think he had died and gone to heaven for the chance to be bodyguard at a whorehouse, that's the kind of guy Big Joe would definitely *not* hire.

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Along with the employees, there were a few regulars who hung around. They hung around so much that they almost seemed like staff, only they weren't on the payroll. Perhaps these guys could be considered "volunteers." Basically, they were lonely guys with not much else to do. If they didn't cause a problem, no one made any effort to chase them away. There was free coffee twenty-four hours a day and no rule that anyone had to pay money and take a girl back.

I remember one guy in particular named Dan. He was a veteran and was missing an arm and a leg. He was kind of short and he got around without a wheel chair. His prosthesis and cane were most obvious. He had a great spirit, a positive attitude and always enjoyed a philosophical conversation. He had been hanging around the "Health Spa" for many years and offered me a tremendous amount of information about its history. He also had plenty of interesting opinions about the "energy" of the place and how the girls interacted based on their personalities.

For example, one theory he had was about once a girl starts really decorating her room, as in making it special or personal, she was on the way out. "She won't last long," he said. "She's startin' to nest." At first I didn't believe him. It made no sense. He went ahead and named a couple of the girls there. He suspected both of them were starting to nest, as he called it. Sure enough, before long both of them were history. As it

happened, this proved true for me as well. It was the month I started to nest that turned into my last.

Looking back it makes perfect sense to me now. The nature of the work requires the girl to be detached from any sense of herself as a person or individual. She must be this Barbie doll, vixen temptress. Any attempt to decorate her room or self in a way that might reveal her true personality was not good for business.

A girl could put a couple of magazines like Hustler or Penthouse or even a hardcore porn magazine out on the dresser. That would be a prop for work. It would be a mistake to put out pictures of her kids or family. That would be personal. A man who comes in to screw a hooker doesn't want to see a picture of her husband and kids.

As a sidelight, I did use the porno magazine out on the dresser trick. It worked fabulously. Most guys would notice and at least comment on it. Many would pick it up and thumb through it. They would put a funny look on their face and say stuff like "You don't really look at this do you?" Like that's supposed to be some kind of joke. Or they might say, "Oh you bad girl!" What ever was said or implied by their looking at it gave me an opening to play into it. I'd put on my deep flirt self and say stuff like "Oh, that one, baby I only read the articles." We both knew there were no articles and it would get a laugh. Or I do that turn of the head and sideways look and say, "Ummm, sweetie, those pictures get me hot, but you are so much hotter than those pictures." I'm stroking the muscles of his arm while I talk. Here's another one. "Oh yeah, I'm a bad girl. I'm so bad - I'm good!" The delivery on those lines was everything. I did it in a low kind of purr, with appropriate eye gestures.

It was a good idea to be touching the man as much as possible, on the shoulder, arms, and butt. As soon as he gets into the room, lots of touch contact, and lots of compliments. I would try to compliment anything I could think of. "Wow honey I sure like a man with nice hard muscles." A lot of the truck drivers did tend to be muscular. Or "Yummy, look at all this hair, I really love a lot of hair on the chest." or "Nice smooth skin, oh darlin' I just want to rub right here."

Anyway, the porno magazine on the dresser just served so many purposes. It would keep his hands busy. With a lot of guys, I just had to keep their hands busy or they'd be all over me. Some guys really liked to look at pictures to help them get hard and stay hard.

Dan, the one-legged veteran, did not need magazines. . He did take girls back from time to time, but he wasn't a big spender. He was careful to choose a time to go back when it was real slow. That way the girl could take her time with him and not feel like she was losing money.

Dan hung around enough that he knew which of the girls were making lots of money and which weren't. He liked to pick a girl who was not making much money. His way of helping her out. He believed she would be more likely to be pleased with his money, even if it were a small amount.

He needed extra time for two reasons. First, he was a bit shy and sensitive about revealing the nakedness of his body. Secondly, it took him more time to deal with removing his clothes and positioning his body with his prosthesis for the missing arm and

leg. These things were a bit awkward and time-consuming. He was also most sensitive about the possibility that someone might laugh or feel sorry for him.

Dan and I got along fabulously. But, in spite of us getting along real well as friends, or perhaps because of it, he told me I wasn't really his type. He liked shorter girls. He told me "it" just seemed to work better with shorter girls and he liked 'em kind of spunky. I was a bit on the quiet, somewhat melancholy side. I was sweet and accommodating, but not outgoing and playful like some of the girls just naturally were.

He liked to try each of the girls at least once, if she were around long enough. So he promised he would take me back someday, when it felt right and I was having a slow day. He would know when it was just the right time. Perhaps the right time had to do with when his check arrived in the mail.

It was a surprise when he finally did say, "Let's go back." Took me a minute to realize what he was talking about. It was the only time we went back and I don't remember anything much about it, the sex part that is. Must have been about the same as any trick. I do remember a fascination with seeing him reveal and remove his fake limbs. He did it so routinely, his motions obviously streamlined over many years of practice.

The sight of him naked was intriguing. He noticed I was shy and invited me to touch the places where the skin was covering the stubs. I do remember at first, having that energy between us like teenagers who don't really know what to do with themselves. That's probably because we were already good friends by then, and I was accustomed to tricking strangers, never friends. For Dan it may have seemed more of an obligatory ritual than a regular trick.

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The people I got to know the best while I was there were Big Joe, Sheryl and Dusty. With Big Joe I came to form a strong relationship we never did name as love or friendship. He would show up at least once a day. I was always glad to see him, as were the other girls. He was the owner and boss, no doubt about that. Still there was none of that feeling, like at most jobs, where if the boss walks in, you had better shape up and act busy. There was no one talking bad about him or saying anything like "Yuk, he's such a mean awful boss man."

Big Joe always wanted to know everything that was going on. If we were having a good day we could brag. If we were having a bad day we could gripe. He made time to listen. Our world was so full of stories. Most were funny stories, and there would be a lot of laughter. Some stories were poignant or scary. Occasionally, Big Joe would provide a news flash. For example, someone got whacked, or someone showed up after being away, or so-and so broke up or got back together.

The underworld was like a super extended family. I remained mostly ignorant of the politics, nuances and implications. I hadn't met most of the people he talked about. It was confusing to try and figure out much about any of the details. Still when Big Joe stopped in it was fun and lively, a break in the monotony for sure. Sometimes he stayed for a while. Usually he was on the go.

I liked Big Joe and he took a special interest in me. Perhaps because he owned me. (He was my pimp and I was his girl.) Also, it being days, I was the only girl awake when he stopped by so I got a lot of one-on-one time with him.

I think my straight-world-hippie-girl behaviors were intriguing to Big Joe. He was especially interested in my attitude toward work. I came so fresh from the experience of straight jobs. Working in a variety of other jobs had given me a unique perspective. I looked at this situation as just another job. Get hired, get fired, life goes on. To most of the other girls this job was a way of life. To me, I was there to earn a thousand bucks and then go back home.

Some girls had been "turned out" (became prostitutes) at an early age. Most had never worked any other job. Often a girl would literally be related to "family" (Mafia). That made job mobility difficult. The prospect of "getting out of the business" was complicated and often not a viable alternative.

Imagine the psychological effects on a young girl that could result from defining herself, and her entire life, around being a hooker. What that does to a girls' character could vary from person to person, but some common effects were to view oneself as a prima donna, a bitch, or to be depressed. After a while, the focus shifts from making money to getting needs met. To sum it up, a lot of Big Joe's workers didn't want to be there, and didn't really care about making money. Strange and bitter fruit.

Then there was me. Here I come, walking in with this "fresh" attitude, and Big Joe liked it. My view of "the profession" as work and my eagerness to make money was

a quality he hoped would rub off. In a way it did, a little. It also had the effect of causing some of the girls to not like me.

What is so ironic here is that I had a less than great track record from my previous jobs. I had a tendency to be late to work, or no show. I had been fired or just not fit in for any number of reasons, mostly I was easily bored and got restless.

That some of the girls didn't like me was not a big problem. To have girls not getting along was common enough. That I worked days made it easier.

It wasn't too long after I started working that we got busted. It was the fourth "term of duty" I served at the "Health Spa". After the bust, only some of the girls who had been there came back. Seemed like the ones that were most unhappy with me, didn't come back.

That Big Joe protected me, looked out for me, mentored me was obvious. I believe he also enjoyed observing me, much the same way a child enjoys watching a new bug under a magnifying glass. For him it was recreational to analyze my behaviors and attitudes. I represented the equivalent of a new toy, something different to play around with. He seemed to enjoy the opportunity to really get to know a "straight" girl. My innocence and ignorance of the Mafia was a novelty. Our backgrounds were so different.

I believe that sometimes he would set me up with a question or situation, just to see what I would do. He could ask me very personal questions and experiment with how I would react to various situations or information. I am referring to the daily kinds of personal interaction that is possible in a comfortable relaxed atmosphere. Trust,

playfulness, kindness, caring and curiosity were some of the elements. It was a two way street. We were both learning, experimenting and enjoying the exchange.

Sure, sometimes pimps brought Big Joe girls who came from a "straight" background. But the girls were already "turned out." And because the girl belonged to another pimp, Big Joe had to maintain a respectful distance. He couldn't get up close and personal, beyond the ever present kind of banter that everyone exchanged. Also Big Joe usually hired seasoned girls who already had significant experience.

So many things were new and strange to me. Simple behaviors and figures of speech that seemed ordinary to Big Joe seemed unfamiliar to me based on my previous experience. This gave me a unique perspective Big Joe found curious. He often would be tickled, and I hadn't a clue about what I had done or said that so affected him.

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Of all the girls at the "Health Spa" I was most intrigued by Dusty. She was glamorous, witty and full of surprises. More to the point, Dusty played a significant roll because she was the only working girl who remained a co-worker throughout my entire tenure at the brothel.

In reality, we spent little "real" time together. Not only because she worked nights and I worked days, but also because she maintained boundaries about not getting close to anyone.

Dusty was my sister-in-law and provided me with encouragement and support in a world where some girls didn't like me much. Her acceptance and willingness to work with me made her my comrade, even if from a distance.

Dusty and I were always courteous and we got along OK. Her nature was aloof. We never really warmed up to each other. She was significantly older than me and sometimes treated me like a pesky little sister. I adored her, perhaps even idolized her. She liked that. At the end of my stay, she was the only one who could talk with me and comfort me. Dusty had a gift of being able to look deeply into a soul and then leave it be. Like a person walking on the beach might pick up a pebble and really look at it, then place it back into the sand and waves.

Dusty disappeared after my first few days at the "Health Spa." She was supposed to stay for at least a week to train me, but she got sick. She was well overdue for a break. Since I was a quick learner and doing pretty good, it was clear I would be just fine. Also, Sheryl, the day madam, was very good about explaining things to a novice and willing to work with me. Sheryl and I got along well from day one. So it was easy for Dusty to persuade Big Joe to let her take a break and allow me to work on my own.

Two girls working days resulted in neither one making much money. Dusty was used to making big bucks so she wasn't content cooling her heels for a whole week babysitting me.

That Dusty disappeared so quickly that first week left me feeling unsupported. There was just so much new stuff all at once. Also, I adored Dusty as I mentioned before. When she left suddenly I felt like a kid who got a nice new toy and then had it

taken away. I felt abandoned and it must have shown. For whatever reason, it was arranged for me to have a night out to go visit Dusty.

I went to spend the night at the same apartment Big Joe had taken me to that first day. Dusty stayed there on her days off. I felt uncomfortable and it was awkward at first, neither of us knowing how to get a toehold into defining our new relationship. Our one thing in common was that Big Joe was our pimp, so we could call each other sister-in-law. Dusty scoffed and said, "Should be called sister-out-law, ain't nothing lawful 'bout it."

We watched TV, had pizza and popcorn. I could smoke pot there at her place. Dusty didn't want to smoke marijuana. We both smoked cigarettes and we had some wine spritzers. It felt good to kick back a little.

I remember asking if her hair was real. Of course it was a wig. Most people could tell that right away. A long dark shag wig, of excellent quality and well maintained. She gave me a long penetrating look when I asked, discerning if I could be so stupid as to really be asking or was I playing with her. Reaching the conclusion that I was genuinely and totally ignorant, she shook her head with a little short kind of dismissive laugh and replied "You bet it's real." She continued, tossing her hair and looking over her shoulder, "If people can't tell the difference, I tell 'em it's real. It's what they want to hear. Besides, it IS my hair. I bought it. It's my hair real enough." I felt stupid for knowing next to nothing about hair and hairstyles.

I also felt a strange fondness for being in Dusty's clutches. It was the way she delivered even this scoffing information that also held a form of flirting or drawing me in.

Perhaps it was the look in her eyes or the tone of her voice that was so purely sexual and sensual. Perhaps it was the same feeling a small kitten has when momma cat is dragging it around by the scruff of the neck. Surrender to the larger animal who knows best.

One thing I remember from Dusty's large amount of sage advice had to do with her ideas about marriage. The topic had come up casually in conversation. I asked the seemingly harmless, polite question. "So, you ever get married?" She shifted into her hard bitch persona and pointedly responded, "I ain't no dog! Do I look like a dog? No, Uh-Uh. No one has papers on me!" This was her canned response and she used it like a spear. I didn't disappoint her. She got the expected response of dubious shock, mixed with a questioning look. She continued, explaining as if to a moron. "When you get hitched a man thinks he owns you. Forget about it. I ain't belong'n to nobody. No sir-ee. Nobody's got papers on me"

That particular attitude was jolting to me at the time. All my prior reference to discussion about marriage implied or entailed some very different attitudes. That woman wanted marriage and guys didn't, along with the rapidly changing, but still in play at the time, belief that sex should occur only within the confines of marriage. I found her attitude in stark contrast and refreshingly so. "Yeah," I said slowly, my head nodding, as I turned the newfound perspective over in my head. Repeating again both as question and response to myself, "Yeah."

Using that line in reference to marriage has stayed in the back of my head all these years. On a few occasions I have pulled it out, to use as Dusty had used it. It falls

flat. No one seems to get it. Our social attitudes about relationship and marriage are strongly set and not easily disturbed.

Later in the evening we got to talk about some of the other previous sister-in-laws. Dusty called them her ex-sister-in-laws. These were girls who had belonged to Big Joe in the past. These girls were no longer, what do you say? employed? related? They were history as far as Dusty was concerned.

I was strongly warned about a girl currently named Angela, but she might also be called Vivian or Angel. Dusty said, "She's real trouble. You see her coming - watch out! Run the other way, fast as you can. And you tell me. You tell me right away if she comes sniffin' around. 'Cause she will, I know she will, and she's trouble. Got to watch your back." Dusty wasn't inclined to give out the exact details of the altercation between her and the other girl. What was obvious was that Dusty was still in place as Big Joe's girl and Angela was not. I simply sat there with my look of horror mixed with admiration and loyalty towards Dusty, nodding in agreement. She concluded the explanation with, "She's a back stabber, Rose, you leave that bitch alone."

I was learning that girls could move in and out of favor or from one pimp to another. Dusty talked about a few other previous sister-in-laws. There was Amber who was in jail now, she was just plain stupid. There was Lana who went back home to her momma for a rest. Dusty wasn't sure what happened to the girl called Coyote. "That girl called herself Coyote. Imagine that. Joe knew he was a fool to take her on," referring to Big Joe. "Everybody knows she's nothin' but crazy. She probably got herself checked into the Nut Hatch." Slang for the local mental facility. "That girl could make some

money though." That last thought generated a respectful pause followed by. "No accountin' for it, though, she just plain crazy."

It was common for people to be referred to as trouble or not to be trusted or just plain crazy. No additional information was required or expected.

During the visit that night we did touch on the subject of did we want to fool around. Have sex with each other. I turned it down. She was still getting over a cold. I was scared of her really, intimidated. She intrigued me, yes, I was fascinated, but not ready to get so close so soon. I usually wasn't interested in girls, although I had played around some in certain situations with other women. Mostly, that night, I was tired. I had worked a twelve-hour shift already that day before coming over to visit. And she caught me by surprise. I hadn't expected the invitation, not in a million years.

Dusty instructed me to sleep on the couch then. The couch was real short and I was uncomfortable. She hadn't seemed affected by my rejection, she made no effort to insist or pursue me. That she made the offer may simply have been part of some unwritten code about sister-in-law etiquette.

Big Joe raised an eyebrow when he heard I had spent the night on the couch. It was clear he had anticipated a different outcome and a juicier story.

It was hard to wake up in the morning. I was driven back to the "Health Spa" in time to get ready for work by six o'clock the next morning.

## Chapter Six - Going Back Home

Those first three weeks passed by and it was time to go. I had learned quickly and moved into being a whore with my own style and grace. I was looking forward to going home and being with Eddie. At that time, my plan was to go back home and not return to the "Health Spa." I had stayed the twenty-one days, expecting that to be the end of it. It is often easier to do something distasteful knowing it is for a short, limited time.

As for the money, I ended up walking away with exactly the one thousand dollars I had asked for. I kept careful track of my daily earnings and knew I had made just over fifteen hundred dollars. Not bad for a new girl. I knew Big Joe would take out the first two hundred he had loaned me when I started. I had spent another hundred and fifty dollars in town shopping. By my calculations I expected to get more than the aforementioned thousand dollars.

Big Joe said there were additional expenses to my training. I was miffed and wanted to know what he meant. He hesitated and I could tell he was choosing his words very carefully. "There was some stuff I had to 'clean up'." Was he hoping that would make any kind of sense to me? My puzzled look remained, so he continued, "Stuff. Um, some pay offs. You don't want to know about this." Then he took the offensive tactic, "By rights as your pimp I could take half or all of this money. But it's not that way

between us. Really, you cost me more than you know, so I'm giving you a sweet deal here. I know you wanted the 'grand' so here it is."

A thousand dollars cash in twenty-dollar bills is a big wad of money and I was satisfied to take the envelope from him. I would count it in my room.

Big Joe encouraged me to come back. He said, "Next time you could make a lot more, maybe leave with something like two grand easy. This month you were just getting warmed up, next time you could really make some money, big money. Think about it." I smiled and felt wanted, needed. He continued, "Here I'll give you this number, it's my special number so don't give it to nobody else, see? Call this number and you'll get a machine so go ahead and leave a message. Just say something like 'I want to make arrangements to ship the roses.' Don't matter really what you say, I'll know your voice, baby. I won't forget you." He was being endearing and I was enjoying it. He said, "I'll know what you mean, and then leave your number, a number I can call you back."

No doubt he would call from a pay phone. I think he kept the pinball machines specifically to provide him with lots of change for the phone.

I spent some time back in my room counting and feeling the money. I had never had that much cash in my hands before. I put it into five little piles of two hundred dollars each. Talk about being filthy rich, I was.

It was time to pack and go home. I planned to take the bus, so I wanted to be extra careful about packing the money to protect against the possibility of theft. Carefully, I packed each of the piles of two hundred dollars into different places. One pile went directly into my purse. I'd probably need about fifty dollars for the bus ticket and

expenses until I got home. One pile went into the pocket of my big suitcase, and another went into the cosmetic case kept in my smaller traveling bag. There was a zipper pocket in the inside lining of my coat that seemed a perfect spot to put another two hundred dollars. The last pile I folded and put in the crevice of my brassiere. That seemed appropriate. I felt just like a character in a western movie, where the lady coyly tucks the money in the pocket formed between her breasts.

Later I would travel to and from the "Health Spa" by airplane. But this time I wanted to save as much money as I could to impress you-know-who. So, I decided to take the bus. It was a long tiring bus ride home. There was a six-hour lay over in the middle of the night. I was stuck in a filthy dirty bus stop in some big city from midnight to dawn. Nothing to do, nowhere to sleep. Some creep tried to pick me up.

It was especially queer to have this creepy low life try to pick me up. I was still on autopilot for behaving with men the way we did at the "Health Spa". Alluring, coquettish, sending out emotional signals pretending to find the man attractive. This guy was putty in my hands. No, wait, I had to shift gears and mentally remember. I had no protection. This guy probably didn't expect to pay me, he just wanted me to get it on. I was back in the "real world." I was stuck with him by then, it was hard to make him go away.

When I did get home, guess what? I was staring at my same stuff, sitting just where I left it. Was it good to be home? Yes, always. There was my heartbreak, right where I left it. There was my depression, still hanging in the air like a thick fog. Where was the cleaning lady? Where was the cook? Oh, *I am* the cleaning person and the cook.

What was really staring me in the face was that I hadn't been honest to myself. I was trying to buy someone's love. My deepest self knew this was fucked up! Still my lovesick self liked to sugar coat it by telling my deeper self I was working on an important project. Contributing to a higher good. Like the benefit there could be to people when this joker Eddie got his book published.

Guess what happened when I showed up after being gone for over a month? Mind you, Eddie and I usually saw each other at least every few days at the Center, a place where he taught and folks hung out. He had been concerned about where I was and no one had been able to give him an explanation. When I did show up I looked different. Most noticeable, my bushy eyebrows were plucked into a thin line.

Eddie was a particularly observant fellow. Did I mention he was incredibly psychic? Not just a little. He became very psychic after an experience six years previous when he died for eight minutes from a heart attack. Nonetheless, it didn't require a great psychic to sense the change in me. Eddie knew right away that something significant was different.

Even people less psychic noticed a difference in my demeanor, my carriage. That I was standing up straight, walking differently, with an air of confidence. This was in contrast to the person they knew. A girl who was often stoned and good at being invisible. And my hairy legs were shaved.

My hairy legs seemed to be a topic of conversation in both worlds. At the "Health Spa" they were referenced with ribald laughter, shaking of the head and questioning disbelief that any woman would not shave her legs, especially when she had such a thick

dark growth. Someone said, only prostitutes shave their legs in Europe. I wonder, could that really be true?

Anyway, here in my circle of home people, my hairy legs had become some kind of informal trademark. For example, my girlfriend's six-year-old daughter had named me Hairy Legs Guitar. She was amazed with my hairy legs and I traveled with my guitar at that time and would often perform or practice at her house.

When people noticed my legs were shaved it was a surprise. They wanted an explanation. Their reaction of curiosity and suspicion mixed with a little dissatisfaction, stirred an underlying, unspoken feeling that something had been lost.

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I didn't begin to consider the magnitude of the differences between the two "worlds" until I got back home and ran into so many things I never anticipated.

Big Joe had tried to warn me and prepare me. He had instructed me more than once. He had been very precise and plain about warning me not to tell anyone where I had been. Certainly, I had to keep my mouth shut about all the obvious secrets. Can't talk about the location, the people, or the nature of the business. We made up a story I could tell about how I had gone to visit an ailing elderly aunt. That would work for friends, but not family. For my family I could say I had stayed with some friends.

Big Joe was no fool, he knew I would need to talk about the experience. Especially to my closest friends, like this guy Eddie. He said when I talk with someone I really

trust, I could reveal that I had turned tricks, but camouflage it by saying it was in Chicago. I could talk about things that had happened as long as I was careful to reference only vague unidentifiable circumstances. He encouraged me to talk about stuff that happened from the viewpoint of how I felt, my feelings. "Take it slow, just tell a little and see how it goes," he had advised. "Straight people are real funny about this stuff." Boy, was he right about that!

There's more. Big Joe had really talked to me a lot about this. He said, "Be careful Rose, don't tell anything, anything at all. It's a small world. Our world really is a small one. You don't know. Certain kinds of information, word has a way of traveling out on the streets. You tell someone something, you don't know what they know. Then next thing you know, who knows who they tell? Who knows who's listening when they talk? It's a small world Rose, you remember that."

Big Joe often repeated important thoughts. He continued, "You say the wrong thing, Rose, it could cause a lot of trouble. Could cost a lot of money, or someone could end up killed, all because you got to talk about something, the wrong something." At the time it didn't occur to me to interpret this as a threat implying I could get killed. I had managed a mental block against the truth that people involved with the Mob got "whacked". If I didn't think about it, it wasn't real.

To sum it up, Big Joe knew I was an idiot when it came to understanding the subtle nuances of the politics of the underworld. The best strategy was to encourage me to stay silent. Keep my mouth shut. He had Dusty and Sheryl talk with me about this issue, just to make sure I got the message from as many different viewpoints as possible.

So I returned home after having had a most amazing journey, and couldn't talk about it.

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I found a time when we were alone and could speak privately before I attempted to present Eddie with the money, and talk about my experiences. At first he was shocked and apprehensive to see so much money. Psychic that he was, he was still unprepared for this. He asked where I got the money, not even wanting to put his hands on it. He knew I was unemployed and poor. When I lightheartedly shared that I had made it turning tricks, he was really astounded. He went into a strange state of confusion. The moral part of him gave me feedback that it was a disgusting thing, repulsive. I felt like some kind of Jezebel. The compassionate side of him knew his moral side was shaming me by the look on my face. He wanted to make it OK, somehow, he just didn't have a clue what to do.

He suggested we take a few minutes to just be together, to breathe and meditate. He held me close.

I'm reminded of a time before all this when Eddie and I were sipping coffee late one night at a local cafe. Freddie was there when we walked in. He was there a lot, and we joined him. Freddie was also very psychic and he and Eddie would sometimes joke that they were brothers, soul brothers. It was particularly funny because Eddie was a

white man and kind of small. Freddie was a black man and kind of big. Still, they had the same last name, Wheeler. Eddie and Freddie Wheeler, it really did seem like a joke.

Anyway, these two Wheeler's were talking to each other about me like I wasn't there. Freddie said to Eddie, nodding toward me, "You know I can usually see inside the closet, you know. Look right in, whether I want to or not." Eddie nodded like he knew just what Freddie was talking about, strangely enough I also knew. Freddie continued, still looking at Eddie and not at me, like I was some kind of statue with no ears. "But not this one, not her." Nodding towards me, "I don't know what it is, not too many like that. How about you? Can you see anything?" Eddie, looking off into the air above my left ear, slowly, thoughtfully shook his head in reply, as if he was scanning my closet now for a view. He said, "Not much, sometimes a glimmer of something, but not much. Dangest thing." They concluded that it probably meant I was somehow wrapped up in their own karma. We shared a belief that, usually, a psychic person can read everyone except the ones closest to them, the people whose lives intersect their own.

So, back to Eddie and I, breathing, meditating and holding each other. Even if he couldn't "see into my closet" Eddie knew I had some serious mental problems. Can you spell depression? He knew I wanted him to love me in a way he wasn't available for or interested in. We did talk for a short while about my recent adventure, but not much. It was hard for him to listen to any of the story. He took the money and said he would pray about it.

I was left with a huge psychic wound. Facing the reality that my plan had not worked. His love was not for sale. That his reaction had been so complicated, both

warm and cold along with a string of unidentifiable emotions, left me unable to process anything. It was so disappointing that we weren't living happily ever after. I shut down entirely. Went home, crawled into bed, and disappeared. It hurt so bad. I couldn't even cry.

The next day Eddie gave the money back, all of it. He said he couldn't take it. The money had karma he didn't want to be involved with.

Well, here's some karma for you Eddie.

Sometime in the next few months, Eddie was to fall madly in love with a woman named Teddy, short for Theodora. Before long they married and had a little girl. About seven years later they would divorce. Teddy left Eddie. Eddie was destined to remain heartbroken over Teddy for some time.

Even if I had known the course of Eddie's future way back then it would have given me little comfort. Shortly after Eddie and Teddy seemingly found true love, I heard a country song performed by Barbara Fairchild. Its heart-wrenching refrain was to stay with me for some time. I couldn't get it out of my head and would often find myself humming or singing its chorus. "I wish I was a teddy bear. Not livin' or lovin', nor going nowhere. I wish I was a teddy bear, and I'm wishin' that I hadn't fallen in love with you."

\* \* \*

So there I was. I had my cozy little apartment with no car and no job. Here comes heartbreak knocking at the door. I had an awful broken heart and no tools to help me feel

my pain or heal my sorrow. I did have money to buy some good pot. With the help of a thick cloud of smoke and my well-honed ability to not feel my feelings, I was able to freeze the hurtful emotions and bury them so very deep. I used this time to pack up the heartbreak into as small a box as possible so it could go way into the back of my closet. No one would ever find it, especially not me.

Since Eddie and I were never really going together, there were only a few people who knew the way I felt about him. Those few people had long since gotten sick of hearing me whine about this guy who wasn't interested in returning my love. No one suspected the extent of my neurotic, obsessive attachment to Eddie.

I had shifted my entire life to be near him. Had dropped out of college, and moved to his city. He had never asked or even encouraged me to do these things. The most he ever did was try and let me down gently. My apartment was just a few blocks from The Center. The Center was where Eddie taught people about being self-aware. It was a weekend long class and I had taken the class so many times. I had even taken a class to learn how to teach this self-awareness class.

Our affair had started over a year before. We had spent a lighthearted summer drinking cheap wine and enjoying occasional trysts. I wrote a lot of songs, some about my love for him and some about the inspiration I felt being included in the Self Awareness Fellowship (SAF). We pronounced the acronym as "safe." There were quite a few people who were graduates of his class. I was part of this fellowship.

Eddie was a real womanizer and I knew it. A few of the other women he was having sex with and I would talk about him and our feelings about him. He had a wife who "didn't understand him."

Eddie was a busy boy. Once we had a threesome, when Eddie showed up to visit my friend Abbey. He was surprised to find I was already visiting Abbey. Add some wine, candlelight and massage oil. Voila, a threesome.

About six years ago, Eddie had died and gotten psychic. Before that, he was a real jerk and had little success getting any interest from women. His wife had loved him since high school. She loved him, despite his recent behavior, which she considered strange. She understood him better before he had gotten psychic and quit his good paying job. Now that he was such a sensitive guy, many women could not resist him. He had a powerful magnetism, especially for wounded, needy women.

Truth was he had a very small dick and would sometimes come before he even got it out of his pants. It could happen just from rubbing against him when he was in the mood. Janet said he could come many times, she was amazed how many times. I didn't find that to be the case. Once, for me, always too soon, and he was done.

None of that mattered. He had a way of being that was very charismatic. I loved to be around him. Once I had cut my foot, out walking around barefoot. He had been so loving, bringing me a Band-Aid. It sounds like such a small thing, yet the amount or flavor of LOVE that I sensed was literally palpable. I just wanted to be close to him and felt inspired by his mission of teaching people to be self-aware.

It wasn't just me, lots of people liked to have him around. If someone was having a SAF party or gathering, people would invariably ask, "Is Eddie coming?" Plenty of people, both male and female, would hang on his every word.

\* \* \*

So, here I was stuck with two big secrets I couldn't talk about. That I had just spent three most amazing weeks at the whorehouse and was busting at the seams with stories I couldn't tell. And my heart was broken. I finally "got it" that Eddie was not "the one." I put on a stiff upper lip and didn't even tell myself how much I hurt. And it felt shameful to admit how stupid I had acted, trying to get him to love me. I didn't want to think about it.

Being depressed with a pocket full of green backs is better than being depressed with no money. I could offer to take people out to eat. I could go shopping. I paid the rent. I bought a sewing machine from Sears for \$150.00. I still have that machine and the receipt.

Big Joe had warned me to be careful about letting people know I suddenly had a lot of money. "That's how people get caught, stupid shit like that," he had cautioned. "People know you poor, and then you show up buying a new stereo, a new car, a new boat. Pretty soon they all over your business." Fortunately, I already owned a pretty nice stereo I had bought used from a former roommate.

It wasn't hard to follow Big Joe's advice. My thousand dollars that had seemed like so much money was almost gone after just a few weeks. I liked the feeling of having some money. I was looking at the last little pile of five twenty dollar bills when I found myself dialing the number Big Joe had given me and leaving a message about delivering roses.

He wasn't surprised at all to hear from me. Said he was expecting my call, any day now. At the sound of his voice I felt a huge relief. I knew so little about love, so I couldn't know that what I was feeling might be love. I'm not talking about romantic or sexy kind of love. It's the kind of love that works like glue and binds people together for whatever reason and for whatever length of time. That glue was doing it's magic and it was good to hear his voice.

He asked if I had enough money to pay up the rent and to buy an airline ticket. I had enough for the rent, but not for the airfare. He told me there would be a ticket waiting for me at the counter when I got to the airport. He picked a fake name to use, saying "Better not to use your real name, Rose, someone might make something of it." I was to ask for a ticket for Lucy Carter. "They never ask for ID," he said.

Big Joe called back again after about an hour and asked, "Can you get to the airport tomorrow afternoon to catch a three o'clock flight? Better be there at least an hour early." I said I could. He added, "When you get to our airport, look for Mackey, he'll be there."

Most of the people at home wouldn't miss me. My one girlfriend Abbey, with whom I had shared the most, drove me to the airport. She complained the whole way about my going back. Trying to talk me out of leaving. She wasn't very effective. I did

tell her I was travelling under a different name, in case the plane went down, someone would know.

I had called my family a couple of times while I was home for those few weeks. No one had noticed that I had been gone. I said nothing to them about preparing to go away again for three weeks. Most people didn't have answering machines at that time. I sure didn't have one. If they called and got no answer, they would just try again later. We didn't normally call each other often, so there was nothing out of the ordinary there. It wasn't until my fourth or fifth month at the "Health Spa" that my mother would say to me when I did call, "Boy, it sure is hard to get a hold of you. You don't seem to be home much."

Abbey was the only person who knew I was going away and she didn't know my destination. It didn't take much to get ready to go. I packed up my suitcase. Lucy Carter picked up the prepaid ticket waiting for her at the airport and got on the plane.

## Chapter Seven - Into the Groove

When I returned to the "Health Spa" I was more confident and composed. My first time there I had felt like some kind of strange alien. Now I returned as Big Joe's prize girl, sister-in-law to Dusty. It seemed good to have a place to fit into where I was desired and respected.

During that first time working I expected to breeze in and breeze out. I had avoided making ties of any kind. This created a buffer, I wasn't really "doing it." Now the invisible buffer that had separated me from this strange new world was not there. I was officially a working girl.

This was my second term of twenty-one days. On my fourth term, we got busted and I stayed a little longer. My record setting day was in the fifth term. On that day I brought in seven hundred eighty dollars and set a record for the house, imagine that. "Holy Moley, that's a lotta YaYa." The sixth term would be my last.

Dusty was around the whole time I worked there. Still, I saw very little of her. If she worked at all, it was at night. She tended to be aloof and distant, as was her nature. Every now and then she would appear as if out of a cloud and be so very captivating. When Dusty chose to turn on the charm she was simply irresistible. Most of the time she was sullen and dark and best left alone. We were always cordial to one another. There was never any problem between us.

My willingness to work days, actually I preferred it, made me a huge asset to Big Joe and Dusty. It meant less time on days for her. She had an interest in keeping me around for that reason. Another reason we got along was that both Dusty and I had the same focus. Our interest was on the money. Work was work and we were doing it for the money. Period. We entertained none of those side interests or strange reasons that motivated some of the other girls. We weren't doing it to have fun, or to please some pimp we were in love with. We were earning a living.

Dusty didn't find me intimidating or any stranger than anyone else. As far as sharing Big Joe, that was never a problem. I presented no competition for his time or resources. I asked for very little from either Big Joe or Dusty. In short I was very little trouble and a valuable asset. By this time most of my straight world quirky wrinkles had been ironed out.

The other girls came and went in a virtual parade. None of the other girls stayed around and worked straight through during the same time I was there. Sometimes girls were kicked out before they finished the standard three weeks of working. Some girls who had been kicked out were let back in on probation. If they had messed up before, they often messed up again.

Take Bambi and Missy, for example. They showed up at the same time like a matched set. They had the same pimp. A creep named Jocko. Bambi and Missy were as different as night and day. Oddly enough, they seemed to fit together like sweet and sour. They were almost the same age, barely over the 18-year-old age limit Big Joe insisted on maintaining. They were both local girls, born and raised nearby. Missy was a

member of the extended family that stayed connected to illegal activities such as ours.

Bambi's past remained undisclosed.

Bambi was about five foot seven inches tall, with short blond hair that seemed to show the roots even a day after she bleached it. She was a tough girl, a pre-runner of the punk rock look. Bambi belonged in leotards about as much as a marine soldier would belong in a tutu.

Sheryl filled me in on Bambi. "That girl's always using. Jocko must a had ta beg Big Joe. Ya wanna bet?" Shaking her head and rolling her eyes, her reference to "using" in this context meant Bambi was using heroin. Other kinds of drugs people used were not referred to in this way. Sheryl continued, "That man," still talking about Big Joe, "he's got too big a heart, that's what I'm always saying, too big a heart. 'S-gonna get him in trouble one of these days. I'm telling you."

Sheryl paused to reflect. "That girl, she may be clean for a day, maybe two, but you wait and see. First time she gets into town with a dollar in her hand, we'll be scraping her off the floor again. I don't know what that man thinking. Must be he got something going for Jocko." Sheryl implied an ulterior motive, some kind of exchange between Big Joe and Jocko beyond the business of the two girls.

Bambi was not popular with any of us girls or with the customers. She was downright mean, just plain rude and icy cold.

One time I overheard her talking about a recent visit into town. "Yeah, so I ran into PeeWee an Spike and them. They was hangin' on the corner, not expecting to see my ass. So I walk on over and get all up into it like ain't nothin' happening. They be like *trying* to

be nice and shit." Bambi paused briefly before mimicking their way of talking. "So I hear you working now?" Bambi obviously felt this question from her friend was invasive. She resumed her tirade, "I'm like 'Where you hear that?' I ain't telling them shit. They can just kiss my ass." The story continued, containing reference to people and innuendoes I was not familiar with. Her tone was confrontational and irritating.

All that talking and she finally got around to making a point. Bambi never admitted to having money even if she did. This explained her irritation at being asked about her work and her reluctance to tell them she was working. People knew working girls made a LOT of money. Bambi didn't want anyone to suspect she had money. It was her strategy to avoid ever offering anything or being generous. By always claiming to be without money, other people would often buy things for her. The grand finale to Bambi's story was that PeeWee bought her a Coke. Despite his kindness, PeeWee still got slammed. "So, finally he, like, bought me a coke. I'm like whatever. He is such a wuz." Bambi sneered.

While Bambi was angular Missy was round. Missy had full red lips and lots of curves to her soft liquid figure. She was outgoing and hyperactive. Like a balloon full of energy, there was no way to predict which direction she might head when turned loose. Making money was not her primary goal. Missy was more interested in having a good time.

About five foot six inches tall, with a wholesome, fresh-from-the-farm face, Missy should have had a name like Mary Beth Buttermilk. Along with being young, barely over 18 years old, she looked sweet, puppy dog sweet. Singing in the church choir sweet.

Her thick, over-the-shoulder length, shiny brown hair was straight as can be. Despite her attempts each day to put some curl in it, the curl was gone within an hour. Her creamy complexion, crystal green eyes, along with that animated vitality made it hard to keep your eyes off her.

Missy's voice was a high pitched vibrato, many of her words delivered in rapid succession like keys tapping on a keyboard. Here's how Missy would talk. "Oh my god, he was such a hunk, I couldn't believe it. When he walked in I saw him clear across the room, oh yeah! Girl, I could *smell* him across the room. I took one look and hollered "Look out girls, this one's mine" right across the room. I wasn't letting that one get away. Oo-Wee. Not very often we get one with a fine ass like that walk in the door."

Missy's acting this way could cause the other girls to become incensed. They got upset, mostly because it was embarrassing the way she behaved. She might almost attack a guy when he walked in the door, and start right away feeling his arm muscles and gushing all over him. The result was effective, but got old quick. Sometimes it put the guy or the other girls in an uncomfortable position, especially if the guy was someone else's regular.

Sheryl knew Missy's family from way back. "It's really pretty sad," Sheryl started to tell me one afternoon while we were playing cards. "Girl got turned out before she was even sixteen. Her daddy liked to gamble. Got so he couldn't make good, so he offered her, his own daughter. It's a shame really. Ain't nothing wrong with this profession, just a shame when it has ta go *that* way. Her daddy was a good man, just d'int have no sense. Now he done crawl'd in a corner, drunk all the time, cain't no one hire him. Sad, that's

what it is. And Missy, oh ho, that girl's just plain crazy. Cain't say as I blame her."

Sheryl and I continued to play gin rummy for a while in silence. There didn't seem like anything to say after that.

Missy didn't work at the "Health Spa" long. One Friday when all the girls went to see the doctor, there was a car parked across the street from the doctor's office. Quick as you please, she ran across the street, hopped in the car and sped off into the not yet setting sun. Nobody knew how she arranged it or who she left with. "Probably some John she sparked up with," Sheryl hypothesized. Big Joe wasn't surprised and had little to say. "She'll be back, just like yesterday's news."

Bambi didn't last much longer than Missy. As Sheryl had predicted, Bambi got some heroine first chance she had, overdosed, and was taken to the hospital. Sheryl was glad Bambi had the sense to do it somewhere other than in our disreputable place of business. "Would have cost Big Joe a lot to clean up that mess." Sheryl was referring to the bribes Big Joe would have to pay to keep something like an overdose and ambulance visit quiet, unnoticed by the people who would love to shut us down.

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There was a steady stream of girls coming and going. Always someone was leaving for a week, and I never knew if I would see them again. Girls who were new to me would come into work all the time. High turnover. The result was I rarely got close to anyone. Never time to get to know someone or form a lasting kind of bond. That's the

way it was. Just as well, personal alliances were dangerous. People came with a set of baggage that involved the circle of people they belonged to. The circles didn't always get along. Personal alliances implied loyalties that could result in unwanted complications.

Big Joe warned me about getting too close to anyone. He always kept an eye out for which of the girls were getting along and which weren't. I was also warned that sometimes guys came into our "Health Spa" trying to get girls to leave. "There's some guys gonna try to get you to come away and work for them," Big Joe said. "Don't listen to 'em, Rose. They're gonna promise you this and promise you that. You go with them and you'll find they were lying. All that stuff they promising, they just trying to get you to go with them. Don't listen to 'em, Rose. It won't do you no good. This place is a good one, we treat you right here." Sheryl nodded in agreement.

Big Joe continued, "You tell me or Sheryl now, if anybody comes 'round here trying to steal you away. You tell him no, then you point him out to one of us. Don't let slime like that get to you."

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Hold onto your bubble gum here. It's time to get up-close and personal. What I'm about to share is very confidential and so it's only between you and me. OK?

Let me share some about how it was for me, sexually, at that time. Here I was offering my sexual services professionally. But what was going on inside myself, my

own feelings? I want to talk about my personal orientation to sex and my own sexual feelings.

I wasn't really that interested in having a lot of sex. A couple of times a week would have been about right for me. That is, assuming I had a steady partner that only wanted to do it when I did. (Talk about a fantasy!)

I believed there were levels of excitement and qualities to an orgasm. What I'm saying is, some times were better than other times. I rarely had an orgasm while doing it with a man, whether a boyfriend or a trick. I could stimulate myself into a great orgasm. The relatively few times I had an orgasm while with a guy, they were of such small size it seemed to barely count.

Don't get me wrong, I felt pleasure doing it, occasionally lots of pleasure. But it was as if sexual excitement could store itself away for later when I would masturbate.

While there were a number of stimulating experiences, for the most part I simply viewed what I did at the "Health Spa" as work. There were some similarities about this "ho" job and a previous employment of mine. I had already been a nurse aide for over a year. That was the longest I had held one job so far in my young life. I had worked the night shift in a small hospital.

Both jobs involved up close, personal contact. As a nurse aide I had cleaned up barf, poop and pee. I had watched three people die, all in the middle of the night. Once I even cleaned up a dead man before he was taken to the morgue.

I did a lot of very personal service as a nurse aide. For example, I had an older woman for a patient, and I would hold her close as we slowly walked to the bathroom.

She needed this trip about once every hour through the night. I had changed a lot of bed linen and been privy to a wide range of unpleasant smells. I had turned people in bed who were unable to move themselves.

Both jobs used the "peter pan," except that in the hospital it was called the wash basin. When I worked in the hospital there had been a couple of times when old farts - gnarly coarse men - had made strange remarks upon seeing the green basin. Everyone got one when they were checked in. Each basin had a toothbrush and some mouthwash in it. "Oh look at that" Mr. Smart-Mouth would say, "Want me to show you how to use it?" or "Bet you don't know what that's for." Or the really creative fellow might say, "Want to wash me up with that peter pan? How about a special bed bath?"

In truth it was rare to find licentious or lecherous customers in the hospital. In general, the male patients were most congenial. It was only a few men who enjoyed seeing me blush and not know what the heck they were talking about. I kind of suspected something by the tone of their voice when they made those remarks. It seemed best to leave the room quickly when a guy was acting that way.

Obviously, a big difference between the two jobs was how I responded to men like that. Another big difference was the amount of money I made.

Both jobs involved caring for the person in a direct personal way and helping them feel better. Many of the customers at the "Health Spa" fell into the category of people only their mother would love. Not attractive men, to put it mildly. They were shy, ugly, disagreeable, stinky, mean-tempered, strangely shaped, or all of the above.

Ironically, aspects of the prostitution gig allowed me to be like a Florence Nightingale for the guys whose "dis-ease" was being unlovable or untouchable. Some of the guys were simply unable to attract or hold onto a girlfriend or wife. For them paying for it offered their only chance for sex.

For me it wasn't the sex that was of interest. That the job involved having sex was a necessary happenstance. What was of interest to me was the challenge of getting the money. It was an easily understood and measurable goal. Get money, lots of it. I could measure my progress in cold hard numbers. I could go home with a big stack of twenty-dollar bills.

Also appealing was being adored, admired, and complemented. There was a steady stream of men, telling me I was so beautiful. "Oh look at you, you so pretty." or "You know, Rose, you just about as pretty as a rose, anybody ever tell you that before?" and "Your skin is so soft, anybody ever tell you, you got soft skin?"

I was sexually desirable. No one could dispute the reality that I was successful in one of the top-notch "places". I was competing with some of the best in the business and holding my own. From that standpoint, I had reason to be proud. But I wasn't.

What stood in the way of any attempt to feel proud about my work was my unshakable, nagging belief that selling sex for money was shameful. I also had my ever-present inner critic telling me I wasn't near as charming or cute as the next girl. With my own internal faultfinding being so persistent, it really didn't matter what compliments the outside world handed me. I stayed stuck in the mud, believing I was too big and not enough.

Occasionally, a fellow might show up on days, take one look at me and leave. Sheryl was quick to say something derogatory like, "He had a stupid hat anyway, did you get a load of that hat?" or "Forget him, he's only got twenty dollars in his pocket anyway." Sheryl softened the blow, but I still took it as a very personal rejection.

On the topic of body image, I'll share another memory. One night it was kind of slow there in the early evening. Some of us girls were hanging out in this one girl's room, just talking and being casual. The subject of breast size came up in the flow of the conversation. Breast implants were mentioned. We got into a casual debate about whether large breast size directly related to how much money a girl could make.

Consensus was mixed. The opinion of Sophie, who had large breasts, was that it didn't really matter. She knew girls with smaller breasts who routinely made more money than she did. Sophie thought making a lot of money had more to do with personality. Nikki had small breasts and she disagreed. Nikki insisted that it made a big difference, and she was saving for the operation.

When my opinion was solicited I kind of blushed, not really ready with any opinion. I preferred to be invisible in social debates such as these. My conflicted beliefs about body image swirled in my head and left me speechless.

I preferred not to think about my own physical appearance. I seemed to dwell on the negative aspects a lot more than the positive features. Besides, hippies were big on "Love, baby. Peace!" Hippies accepted people as beautiful in their natural state, whatever that was. Curly hair, straight hair, big nose, small nose, short, tall, big breast,

little breast, hey! Hippies say, "Love, peace, and here, have a flower." I knew better than to get started sharing these thoughts with the girls.

The thought of an operation to change breast size seemed abhorrent to me. I agreed with Sophie, personality affected earning power much more than breast size. While my brain turned, attempting to find some suitable words, I was hoping the quest for my opinion would be abandoned and I could return to my comfortable invisibility. The girls were not having this.

Since I didn't seem to have anything to say, their interest turned to my breasts. I didn't consider my breasts as overly large, but I did consider them in the bigger rather than smaller category. "Are they real?" Nikki asked. I nodded in answer. They were real. Meaning my breasts did not contain silicone implants. DeeDee, whose room it was, suggested I model for them. "Yeah," they all coaxed, "take it off." Someone started singing that refrain often played when someone strips. "Da da daah, da da da daah" It sounds strange telling about it now, but at the time it seemed to be all in fun. I shrugged and then complied. At first a bit shy, and then more playfully provocative, strutting a little and showing off.

DeeDee said, "Rose, you've got a real nice set of knockers." Everybody laughed.

To have my breasts admired by the "tricks" was no big deal, but to get a compliment from my contemporaries was kind of nice. At least I felt that way about it. I wore a padded pushup bra, as did all the girls. The girls with less to work with added even more padding, which was a nuisance given that clothes came off and on so many

times over the course of a day's work. A girl wanted to be quick and discreet about putting the padding back in place.

There was a story about the one hooker who was so padded up that when her trick got to the room and saw the naked truth, he up and walked back out. It's a bad story any way that it's told. It's not likely anything like that might ever really happen. Whatever the story, breast size was often a topic of respectable conversation at the "Health Spa". Always interesting, always good for another laugh.

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Did I wake up each morning and think, "Oh boy, I get to 'DO IT' today?" or "Yahoo, today I'm getting some!" No, not hardly! The actual fact that I did fuck and suck was something to be tolerated. Fortunately, I was good at not thinking about anything I didn't want to think about. So I got through the sex as easily and painlessly as possible. I kept my focus on the money.

I remember the first few days, perhaps the first week I worked at the "Health Spa." I got real sore, literally sore in my vagina, from so much copulation. Also my rectum felt different, not exactly sore, but the poop got packed back and it felt different. It wasn't a huge discomfort and it didn't last long. When I returned to work after a week or two off, I noticed the same effect, only less uncomfortable, not like the first time.

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Work was work. As I mentioned before, most tricks were in and out under twenty minutes, easy. That included: getting dressed and undressed, wash him, check him, a little fellatio, a little of the old in and out, and he was out the door with a smile on his face.

I always cleaned myself after each trick. I could do it so fast the John barely even noticed it was happening. I kept a little douche bag handy by the sink. To fill it took less time than to wash my hands. Squatting over the peter pan, it only took a few seconds to administer the douche, little towel dry and I was good to go.

During the course of a trick, I often got fondled a lot. Most of the fondling occurred earlier, rather than later, in the trick. Almost exclusively the touching would be on my breasts and ass. I'd be lying to say that I didn't have the occasional sexual responses to this touch. It was as if I was in a constant state of heightened sexual arousal. It's hard to explain exactly. It wasn't something I was aware of at the time, so I didn't really keep track of it or measure it.

Looking back now it's obvious. We girls were in some kind of altered state, some kind of sexual overdrive. It was almost as if we were dripping with sex, sexuality, and sensuality.

I remember a time just after I had arrived. I was sitting in the kitchen with some other girls, watching and thinking. This gorgeous woman sitting across from me, as well as the woman next to me, both have just had sex. Have just fucked about a dozen

different men. It was a strange moment that didn't last long. I myself had just fucked about as many paying customers as well.

Of course all women are sexual beings, to some degree. I still wonder about how much of the "sexiness" we possessed to do our job came from doing the job and how much was simply there to begin with. Did it have to do with cause and effect? Could it be each of us prostitutes simply were sexy and sensual to begin with? Or does the nature of the work turn a less sexy lady into a sexier lady? I think it's a little of both.

I sometimes feel that sexual energy is something a person might be able to cultivate and store. It could almost be considered a source of power. Sexual energy can be used in a positive way for healing and well being, or used in a negative way to result in disease.

Despite us girls being super-sexy, few had any idea how to channel that energy into something positive. It seemed prostitution often was not good for the health. A large number of prostitutes don't live to grow old, many never reached their thirtieth birthday. One thing or another leads to sickness and death. Suicide, excessive alcohol and drug use, VD, rough company, mental illness, all were common pitfalls for girls in this profession.

Health insurance was not one of the benefits of this job.

The possibility of suffering from mental illness was ever present. Many girls continued to work despite having glaring undiagnosed psychological ailments. Many others got out of the business, for reasons associated with "craziness." We should have had daily group therapy sessions along with going to the doctor once a week. I believe Big Joe, in his way, was working to better understand some of the complicated dynamics,

and hoping to put a damper on hostility and strife. He was motivated from the standpoint that good help was hard to find and his turnover was tremendous. It made good business sense to work toward a goal of happy, well-balanced employees who would stick around. This would seem like a ridiculous, unattainable goal when applied to employees in a whorehouse.

At the time I didn't appreciate or fathom the sexually-charged environment I lived in. Some of the complex sexual energies and emotions of that time and place remain a mystery to me still.

\* \* \*

And so the days passed.

Most every day, I played cards with Sheryl. It was a great way to pass the time while we talked. Sheryl liked to talk. The office was right by the road and the parking lot, so Sheryl had a really great view of anyone arriving. She would look out anytime she heard that gravel crunching sound and announce the prospect.

It might be some kind of delivery or the arrival of a fellow staff member reporting for work, in which case, I could relax. False alarm, no need to put on my shoes.

Big Joe stopped by at least once each day. He rarely stayed long. Sometimes, he would hang out to relax a bit. He stayed long enough to take care of any business and to tease me a little. Sometimes he would ask me to leave so he could talk with Sheryl alone.

More often the gravel crunching sound signaled a potential customer. Many cars Sheryl recognized on sight and knew who was in the car. If not, she could make an educated guess about the person based on the car they drove. What kind of personality they had and how much money they might spend. At first she would simply announce to me the information, the make, model, year, color or condition of the automobile. For example: "Heads up Rose, we got us a big black Cadillac." or "Look out, old Chevy pick-up truck."

It didn't take long for her to realize I was too young and inexperienced to make distinctions based solely on that information. Soon, she always made sure to add the interpretation after the observation. For example: "Big Black Cadillac, you go for a hundred on this one, Rose. Just start at a hundred dollars and go from there. Tell him you gonna help him relax today." or "Old Chevy pick-up truck, shit here comes a twenty dollar trick."

In short, Sheryl saw them coming. Sometimes we would look out the window together, but we always tried to be discreet. We didn't want both of us to be staring out the window, in case the visitor might look up and see us. So Sheryl would peek and then I might peek.

Sheryl could be counted on to give me all relevant information about the trick. Sometimes just her look would speak volumes. We quickly got into a groove. I could read her body language just like it was words. The shrug of her shoulder might mean this guy is a jerk or loser. An eye expression or gesture might mean he could be fun and

spend money, have a good time. The accuracy with which Sheryl could predict my future with the trick was amazing.

Usually the unspoken language, done from where the trick wasn't looking, was enough to communicate all that was needed. Occasionally, Sheryl would pull me aside to tell me specific information she thought would help me handle the trick and get more money. "This guy likes feet, offer to rub his toes and let him smell your shoes," Sheryl coached. We had to wait until I was done laughing, and convinced she was serious, before I could go back out for that one. Another time Sheryl coached me, "This guy likes it if you pretend to be a little girl. Play it up and he starts at fifty."

Occasionally it required a longer explanation, "Act real mean for this guy, he likes a tough girl. He'll want to start at thirty, don't let him. Tell him he's a fool, you're not gonna put up with that. Insist he pay forty dollars right now, cause you don't even like the way he looks. Make him get the money out. Then before long make him get more money out. Be bossy Rose, you can do it."

Usually it was pretty quiet on the day shift. Guys would trickle in one by one. The cleaning lady and the cook would disappear when customers arrived, or keep a low profile.

Many customers arrived on foot. Most likely they were truckers who parked their rig at the near-by truck stop. It could be local guys who didn't want anyone spotting their car in our parking lot. It was worth the short walk to maintain anonymity.

Sheryl would greet the Johns, cordially or warmly. She offered coffee and some chitchat about the weather and current events. If they were new, Sheryl would ask them

some questions, like how they found the place. She might answer questions as well as ask them. On rare occasions the price might be brought up. Sheryl would explain about the twenty dollar minimum, cash payment. A very few would say no thanks and leave. They could finish their coffee if they wanted.

Often enough, I would walk out after finishing one trick and find another one waiting. Sheryl had them all warmed up. I would say bye-bye to one guy, then go into the office to put away the money and write down the record of it. That gave Sheryl the opportunity to coach me if she needed to. Or if not, it was just another straightforward trick, and off I went, down the hall with the next one. In the daytime, guys mostly wanted to take care of business and then get back to work.

Truck drivers came from all over. Some had looked forward to their chance to stop here at our "Health Spa" for weeks, hoping for a load that would bring them down our highway.

## Chapter Eight - Ménage a Trois

Let's talk about twosomes. We were always trying to talk a customer into paying for a trick where he would have two girls at the same time. It meant a lot of money. We got paid at least a hundred dollars or more for each girl. When a guy wanted two girls it meant he was a big spender. With two girls to do the work that made it easier and more fun. Like the old saying, many hands make light work.

I found it particularly amusing that if I used the French term "ménage a trois," almost no one got it. I'd be looking at this blank stare followed by an uncomfortable pause. I thought it was a commonly known expression. Ménage a trois is derived from French and refers to a threesome. It usually implies two girls and one guy. Despite continually hearing truckers say "excuse my French" after swearing, they really didn't know any French.

Speaking of French, there was a popular song that included some French. The lyrics "Voulez-vous coucher avec moi, ce soir?" were French for "Want to go to bed with me this evening?" Patti LaBelle and the Bluebirds performed the song. Most truckers didn't know the lyrics, because the song wasn't played on the country stations. Additional lyrics from the same song, "Gitchi Gitchi Ya Ya Hee-A!" seemed to translate universally.

Another not as popular song had the lyrics "It ain't the meat it's the motion that makes your momma wanna rock." I was able to use that phrase "It ain't the meat it's the

motion" quite successfully more than once. That song did play on the country stations. Even if someone hadn't heard the song, they got the message. The lighthearted jingle was good for at least a small chuckle, and might help break the tension.

Another joke I used a lot was the young bull, old bull. The young bull and the old bull are grazing up on a hill. (Not likely, horny bulls don't tend to be on speaking terms.) As they watch the waiting herd of heifers, the young bull says to the old bull, "Let's run down and get us a few." The old bull keeps chewing his cud while he calmly and slowly replies "Let's walk down and get 'em all."

I also knew how to say, "Do you want to go to bed?" in German. That piece of trivia was of absolutely no value at this job. I thought it might be mildly amusing to share this gem of foreign language achievement. It landed with a thud and was more annoying than amusing to my audience. I kept it to myself after Bambi overheard and retorted to no one in particular, loud enough for all to hear, "She some kind of commie bastard? Better not be no Krauts coming in here."

\* \* \*

The possibility of having a ménage a trois was a big deal. It was in our best interest to promote this two-on-one trick every chance we found. I could tease guys by suggesting how great it would be, how much of a good time we would have. It was easy and fun to speculate about what it would be like with this girl or that girl along with him

and myself. The added bonus of promoting this more expensive and exotic trick was that just talking about it could turn guys on.

Occasionally, a big spender might simply walk in the door ripe and ready for a date with two or more girls. More often it was something a client got talked into. Perhaps a regular who thought about it awhile and finally decided to go for it. Perhaps it got planned ahead of time so the two girls he wanted were available. Our efforts to promote and encourage this kind of trick did pay off. Often enough a fellow would just spontaneously say "Yes, let's do it!"

Working days it was a bit more complicated to set up a two on one. The other girls were sleeping. Guys tend to not be interested in the wilder side of sex during the day. Still, arrangements would be made for the willing customer who had money in hand. The madam could be relied upon to take care of arrangements, behind the scenes, so the customer was unaware of the details.

As I mentioned before, it would be rare for a trick to simply walk in the door and want two girls, any two girls, and just pick his two favorites. More often, the twosome trick would belong to the girl who promoted it and set it up. The other girl was along for the ride so to speak. In that way, the two girls pulling the trick were likely to be on friendly terms. Sometimes very friendly terms, if you catch my drift.

Now, in a two-on-one, lots of times, the guy wanted all the attention on himself. Other times the guy might want to watch as the girls got busy on each other. He might want to play around in the middle of the girls doing stuff. Most of the time everybody was busy doing something. You can see that there were a lot of possibilities for what

three people could be up to. Describing some of these possibilities helped in promoting the trick.

I remember the first time I talked a guy into this big deal, two on one trick. I was still pretty new. The other girl was a more experienced professional. There was a time of awkwardness at first. I was waiting for it all to happen, deferring to the more experienced girl, not realizing I was in the lead. There was a lot to learn about all the potential possibilities. The brief moment of awkwardness passed quickly, we got busy, and everything went well.

\* \* \*

There was one threesome I enjoyed the most. It was with a girl I really liked. Mona and I worked there together for only a couple weeks. Our 21-day terms didn't line up exactly. She showed up a week into my term. As fate would have it, Mona only served one term herself.

I was infatuated with Mona from the moment I saw her. She was shorter and softly plump. Not fat, no girl there was fat. She had long, thick, shiny, luminous, buttery blonde hair. It was her hair that I loved the most. The hairstyle reminded me of Wendy from the Casper cartoon. Casper the Friendly Ghost had a girlfriend named Wendy, who had hair like Mona's, with a flip at the bottom.

Mona and I had two things in common right from the start. First of all, she had grown up not far from the same place I was from. Secondly, she was new to the

underworld and our profession. She had not been raised up in this culture like so many of the other girls. Although Mona had about six months experience under her belt, a lot of the jargon and mannerisms were still new to her.

Mona had a pimp named Dequindre. He was someone Big Joe didn't usually do business with and did not yet trust.

The reason Mona didn't stay on had more to do with Big Joe and Dequindre getting along than anything pertaining to Mona or her work ability. When I got back after a time off and realized she wasn't around I asked Big Joe about her and if she would be back. He knew I liked her. "Sorry baby," he said, "she ain't comin' back. Her piss-ant pimp needs to learn some manners. Why she chose his sorry ass..." shaking his head pitifully as his voice trailed off. There was a long pause.

This kind of logic served as enough explanation as far as Big Joe was concerned. Perhaps he was simply pausing to consider how much to tell of the whole story. Before continuing, Big Joe turned to Sheryl as if to imply that this was the complicated stuff, the down-and-dirty details only she would understand. Perhaps he simply wanted to look away from my disappointed, questioning face. "Fuck-for-brains had the MIS-understanding that just cause I take his best girl, I got to take some of that other trash he got. Well DE-Quin-DER can kiss my ass. He thinks he can just take all their sorry asses off to Jersey. Well good, let him." Here's where he lost me, I didn't know if Jersey referred to a location, like a house in New Jersey somewhere, or if it referred to a person named Jersey. I had already learned not to ask this kind of stupid question.

\* \* \*

Back to Mona. For me it was love at first sight. I'm not talking about fiery sexual attraction. I simply loved to see her. She looked so beautiful. I loved to be around her. Then we got to talking and it felt like home. She talked the same way as me. We shared a similar outlook about a lot of what this 'ho' life was like. Mona was the first person I found who bridged the two lifestyles in a way similar to mine.

A few people commented that when the two of us got to talking they couldn't understand us. Yes, we were both speaking American English. Something about our distinct dialect, idiosyncratic phrases and the speed that we could talk, made it seem to others that we were speaking a foreign language. Some even suspected we had a sinister agenda and this code language was how we were concocting our evil plan. A wisp of suspicion still surrounded my strange appearance a few months prior. Now this other girl shows up from the same neck of the woods as me. Big Joe had no worries, so any concerns or rumors were quickly squelched.

The day came for Mona and I to turn a twosome trick. It may have been a set up, the whole thing really arranged by Big Joe. He might have selected a suitable man, someone he does business with, no doubt. I can hear Big Joe saying. "I got these two hot numbers, one small and blond the other tall and brunette. You'll WANT a piece of that action. These two chicks are wild, I'm telling you they are like something you never seen before. Take you for quite a ride." Limited time offer, stuff like that.

It didn't matter to me, when that guy showed up and asked for a twosome, it was good news. Of course I suggested Mona and Sheryl took care of the arrangements.

A room had been prepared for us and Mona was waiting in the room. Since I set up the trick, I brought the guy in. It was in the daytime and we were in a room without windows. The gentleman was overwhelmed and a bit bashful at first. We both helped him feel at ease. He had a tall brunette and a shorter blond giving him their full attention. Before long he asked to have us play with each other while he watched and touched.

I remember eating her out. The soft little flaps of skin, the slimy warm feeling of my tongue and lips pressing into her vulva. The pungent smell of her warm inner fruit seemed to fill the room. Softly opening, nudging with my fingers and mouth, peeking up at her face from time to time. Licking and teasing her little nub, round and round, up and down.

Nothing else about the entire menage a trois was important. Not that we were so young, so innocent and so adept at pleasure. Not that everyone available was gathered in the office listening in on the intercom. Nothing else was of importance except the smell, the taste, the sound of her moans, the sight of her naked skin. And touch, endless touch.

The rest is a blur - that the man pleased me, that she pleased me, that he had his turn with both of us, that we played until we were tired and collapsed in a heap. That is all inconsequential to the memory of being present in a moment. We were met by applause from the peanut gallery when we surfaced.

\* \* \*

Once Mona and I talked about going out somewhere together. My idea was based on the concept of two co-workers going out for a cup of coffee after work. Only for us it would have to be between work. Mona worked nights and I worked days. We thought it was a good idea. Well, really, I thought it was a good idea. Mona said, "OK, but you ask Big Joe." It was more my idea than Mona's. Big Joe told me her pimp said no. Although, that would have been a diplomatic way for him to say no.

Big Joe said, "Girls don't just go out. It just isn't done. First off, you would need an escort for protection. Beautiful young ladies don't just walk around this part of the country, especially at night. Maybe where you come from...but not around here. Besides, Rose. What's her pimp gonna think? He don't know you. He'll think something is up. Why's his girl out of the crib. He'll think maybe she went to a party, he don't know."

From the start this elusive subject of parties had come up from time to time. Dusty had been the first to ask if I would be interested in joining, when she had a party set up. Not knowing better I had said, "Sure."

As it turns out I never did go out to a party. Had it happened, it would have been arranged by Big Joe and Dusty. I would have gone to a party with Dusty, had she asked. Depending on the size of the party and nature of the customers, it could possibly have employed more girls than us two.

The other girls who would join us to go work a party might come from the "Health Spa". More likely they would be other local girls. There were quite a few women who

might be available. Some girls had "gone straight" but could be called for a one-time thing. Some girls that had been banned from the "Health Spa" were still available for an on-call party. Dusty had laughed and rolled her eyes, "Some girls around here are, well, you know... I guess you might say 'famous'," she concluded with a smirk, raised eyebrow and a wink. I smiled back and concluded she meant they were notorious.

For me, going out to a party like that offered the promise of big bucks, potentially hundreds of dollars. It offered a change of pace, a break in the monotony. Luckily I was never called to a party.

Later I talked with Tootsie, a seasoned vet, who warned me. "Those parties are bad news. There's a good chance for trouble. Girls get hurt or killed sometimes, and cops are likely to bust up a rowdy party. And who do you think gets to spend the night in jail?" she cautioned. "It's a mess. There's no place to wash up. No light to check 'em with."

"Yeah," Ruby interrupted, "I always bring a little flashlight, so at least I can see. Once the lights went out. Shit, I couldn't even find my clothes. It was terrible, so now I always bring a little flashlight ... and a whistle." She added triumphantly.

"Oh yeah, the whistle" Tootsie reminisced. Ruby was on a roll and Ruby talked fast. "Remember the time Tiffany got up and blew that whistle? Things were getting out of hand, couldn't nobody hear nothin'. Tiffany, she jumps up on the table and blows that whistle. Well that got their attention I can tell you that!" Ruby paused for a quick breath before continuing with her story, "She tells those cocksuckers 'Shut the fuck up.' She tells em where to go, 'Get out, go on, anybody want their cock sucked better do as I say!' That's what Tiffany says and they do it. That's cause she had that little whistle to blow.

Guys listen up when they hear a whistle. Kinda gets their attention." Ruby nodded with satisfaction, then cocked her head and added, "Maybe it's like that locker room coach kind of thing." While we were mulling all this information over, Ruby had seemed to run out of steam. Tootsie added very sincerely, "Maybe it's like dogs'll come when you whistle." We all bust up laughing.

Tootsie continued her end of the story. "It's near impossible to wash and check a guy at one of them parties. No account'n your party spot will even have a bed, much less a sink with soap or a peter pan. Those places never have any kind of light, can't see to check 'em." Tootsie paused to take a deep breath. "And sweaty drunken men. Talk about rude. Rose, you don't wanna go to no parties." Didn't sound like any girls dream date to me.

Still Dusty had said working a party could be fun. Getting all dressed up. Dusty had reminisced about a time when she had on her best wig, got all dressed up in those slinky tight black pants and tall leather boots. "I was lookin' good." She boasted. "Made a lot of money, and didn't have to hardly work." She cocked her head and displayed her palm, her eyes cast to the ceiling then focused on her palm "I had 'em eating out of the palm of my hand." She mused. "I started out that party by getting on a table and dancing. Oh yeah, I was feeling good that night."

Dusty asked if I could dance. I hadn't ever taken any dancing lessons, but I felt I could move. She wanted to see, so I danced a little for her. She smiled and shook her head, thoroughly amused. She said scoffing, "Rose, I'm talking about dancing." Then she showed me some of her moves. Dusty was a great dancer. Without any music

playing, she moved in rhythm to her own beat. Her shoulders seductively shimmying and dipping, her head cocked, her eyes flashing. Moving just enough, all-sensual, not lewd. Her hips were slightly grinding with little kicks for punctuation. It was her hands that led the eye wherever they moved over her body. Dusty was so cool.

I wish I had asked her for dancing lessons because they don't teach that kind of dancing at any place I know about.

## Chapter Nine - The Special Night Out

Somewhere around the middle of my tour of duty at the "Health Spa" was the special night out. Big Joe took me into the neighboring big city, an hour's drive away, to shop for clothes. He talked about wanting to do this for a long time before it happened. There was a lot of anticipation and build up prior to actually going. Sheryl told me how lucky I was to have a night out with Big Joe. I was eager for the opportunity to do something different and potentially fun. Simply leaving the place for any reason was a treat.

We left sometime after six o'clock in the evening, when my workday was over. Our destination was a large shopping mall containing a small shop called Victoria's Secret. This store sold mostly lingerie. It also carried a large selection of sexy and exotic clothes. This particular store had a large section of flashy, unique items, especially appealing for ladies of the night to choose from.

The whole shopping thing was entirely Big Joe's idea. I much preferred t-shirts and jeans with holes in the knees to any of this stuff. If I had been asked about where I liked to shop or what I wanted to do, it would have been a bookstore or go see a movie. Since I wasn't consulted about the plan, my big treat involved clothes shopping, supposedly every girl's dream.

Big Joe had talked about his vision for improving the ambience of the "Health Spa". He wanted to see his girls dress in something other than the leotards. He was sick of leotards and wished the girls would dress in more interesting, creative ways. Sheryl and Big Joe talked about a brothel in Nevada where the girls dress real fancy. The owner encouraged them to wear evening gowns complete with rhinestones and sequins

Despite Big Joe's wishes, he had been unable to persuade the girls to alter their way of dressing. He wanted to get me decked out in fancy duds with the hope that others would follow suit. I was being used as a guinea pig, an experiment for dress-up possibilities.

It was lots of fun to go to the store and try on all sorts of sexy little numbers. Big Joe patiently waited outside the dressing room. Each time I found something that fit, I would come out and model it for him. He gave me plenty of praise, telling me how great I looked. The sales lady waited on me so attentively. She knew the minute Big Joe and I walked through the door we were going to spend some significant cash money. She was not disappointed.

It felt strange to me, being the center of attention like that. To have the sales lady so quick to anticipate my every need felt creepy. "Can I get that for you in another size, dear?" she would say immediately after I said something didn't fit. I was not familiar with shopping in high-priced clothing stores.

As it turned out there was not much selection in my size. Most of the really cool stuff was made for women smaller than myself. Still, the sales lady was very resourceful in coming up with possible items in my size.

I left with three outfits and a new push-up bra. The outfit I liked the best was a vivid shade of royal blue. It was made of a synthetic fabric that felt smooth and looked satiny. The jumpsuit had floor length legs so full they seemed to form a skirt. It could almost pass for a formal dress, the kind a girl might wear to the prom. Except it looked more like something worn only in the bedroom. Sleeveless and form fitting, tight, but not uncomfortably so, it fit me perfectly. It gave the appearance of draped material. It was low cut in the bodice and had a panel of material sewn down the front in such a way as to gather the material, giving the outfit a draped look.

I felt like a million bucks wearing this outfit. The color was striking, the style slimming, and it looked luxurious. I absolutely adored wearing this fancy outfit and I received a lot of compliments.

Aside from a working girl in a bordello, I wondered who else might ever wear that dress and for what occasion. It would not be acceptable as formal wear, so I guessed that made it lounging wear. Something to casually wear around the house. Certainly not on days when there were dishes to wash, floors to clean or babies to burp. I supposed that made it special nighttime loungewear. I wondered if it might even appeal to a guy who wanted to dress in drag.

I kept that outfit for many years, long after all other vestiges of my hooker days had disappeared, long after I had any hope of ever squeezing into it again. I liked to take it out of storage from time to time to see the color, feel the material, and remember the time I wore it and the special night out.

As I mentioned before, there had not been a large selection of items in my size. The other two outfits seemed utterly ridiculous to me. The momentum of the evening required that we buy some clothes, so we weren't leaving empty-handed. These other two selections were the best of the somewhat limited supply available.

One was pure white, a little mini skirt and vest with 2 inches of fringe all around the bottom of the skirt and the vest. It offered a kind of cowgirl motif that might have been popular in Texas. I needed a little holster and a couple of cap pistols to round out the look. When I wore this outfit I mostly got stared at, and people tried not to laugh too much. I looked cute and sexy, but it was more like something for a cheerleader or the star of a B rated movie. Mackey was astonished by the outfit, and he came up with, "Ohheee, howdy partner, time to round up them little doggies out in the OK corral!" Still on a roll he added, "Gawd girl, you aughta get a starring role in Debbie Does Dallas." There were a series of triple X-rated movies starring Debbie that were popular at the time. Needless to say I didn't wear that fancy white outfit much after that.

The third item was a black lace teddy. It was very sexy. Unfortunately, the first time I wore that outfit, it got a huge rip straight up the back. Guess it really was a shade too small.

Big Joe and I left the Victoria's Secret store with a lot less cash and a not very big bag of new clothes to show for it. Our shopping mission complete, he took me to a hotel. It was OK for me to smoke pot, and Big Joe ordered room service. We wouldn't have gone to a restaurant to eat. No reason to be seen in public. Big Joe took no chances, and being in a public place was risky business. This hotel was a place where Big Joe felt safe.

We did get into some sex play, there at the hotel. We got naked and did a lot of fondling and oral play, but no actual intercourse. Big Joe believed that by not copulating, he was remaining faithful to his wife. To me it felt more like an obligatory ritual rather than something either of us was real excited about.

It was odd, what happened next. Even then I knew it was odd. Another girl came over named Lola. For a short time we all played together. That another girl appeared and we all played, that was not the strange part. I was stoned and another playmate seemed within the natural order of things. The strange thing was that Big Joe left. He excused himself, loosely explaining he would be gone for a while.

Whether he specifically wanted us to spend time together or it just happened that he needed to attend to something else is unclear and not important.

I later learned Lola was the one Dusty had warned me about. The one Dusty had called plenty of trouble and goes by Angel, Angela or Vivian. That she was called something else this night, was an attempt to trick Dusty and me. Dusty had warned me to run away fast from this girl. Since she had a different name, how could I know it was the same girl?

Here I was stuck in a hotel room with this exceptionally beautiful and enticingly melancholy person. I had no idea that she was the back stabber Dusty had talked about. In a roundabout way it was hinted that Lola still "belonged" to Big Joe. There was a relationship between them, but it was in some kind of limbo land. Something prevented her from working. Her continuing relationship with Big Joe was something to keep a

secret from Dusty. I would learn most of this later. At that time all I knew was we were two girls left alone. There was food to eat, and we could talk.

At first I was nervous around Lola after Big Joe left. We were done with sex play. What was left? Also I liked her right away, or rather was enchanted by her. I found her enticing because along with her striking good looks, she had a bewitching presence. She was charismatic, cool and warm in a way that spoke, don't take your eyes off me. Lola's movements were languid, like a crane in a faraway pond. When she spoke, her choice of words and the sound of her voice proved to be disarmingly charming. A country girl through and through.

She had long dark wispy hair and bright blue eyes. Her eyes had a strange hypnotic effect. They invited a person to dive in and get wet, being that bright sparkly blue like a Caribbean Sea on a sunny day. There was a darker shade of blue forming the outer rim of her crystal blue eyes. The melancholy sadness behind her eyes gave a harrowed, drawn paleness to the otherwise jewel tones. I couldn't stop starrng directly into those eyes.

Lola was thin, very thin with sharply chiseled features. She moved like a dancer. As apparent as her beauty was her tiredness. She looked worn around the edges, sickly. We relaxed and talked the way girls do. Especially girls hungry for social exchange, girls who don't often get a chance to share with anyone. It's interesting the things a person can share with a total stranger, someone about whom we know nothing. It's like writing on a blank slate. We both shared bits and pieces of our stories.

Lola had started in the business young. She grew up around here and Big Joe had known her since she was a baby. Her dad and Big Joe had worked together. Her father died when she was ten years old. Before she was sixteen she had run off with her boyfriend to New York City seeking fame and fortune. She wanted to be an actress. Although she had no training or experience, her boyfriend encouraged her. They both believed her good looks would be all it took to become a star.

Bad company and street life was not what she had expected, but it was what she found in New York. After only a few weeks her boyfriend disappeared, just didn't show up. Maybe he left, took off with some other girl, was locked up, or even killed. Lola never found out. It wouldn't have occurred to her to go to a police station and file a missing person report. She was young and inexperienced with no apparent way to search for him.

It didn't take long for a smooth talking pimp named Johnny-O to find her. He cleaned her up and turned her out. Lola felt she had bad luck, because it wasn't long after that Johnny-O met an untimely death.

Lola only worked the streets a short time before finding a safer and more lucrative assignment as a call girl. An escort service. Lola wasn't into drugs of any kind, very unusual for a hooker. Perhaps it was her clear head that allowed her to save a little money and attempt to head back home. When she got back, no one was left. Her mother had moved off with some guy. Her brother was in prison. She had no home.

There was a circuit of houses in the area where a girl could work. She had found Big Joe and had been with him for a few years now. Only she had this problem. It seems

Lola got pregnant. Despite every form of birth control possible, Lola got pregnant a lot. She had seventeen abortions total, six in a row, this last year, forcing her to stop work. Now she was using abstinence as a form of birth control. This problem obviously spelled unemployment for Lola. As you might guess a hooker is not eligible for unemployment benefits.

She couldn't imagine having a baby, certainly not a "trick" baby. She couldn't work without getting pregnant. She couldn't work while being pregnant. In spite of the fact that Lola certainly had significant experience, she was still too young, beautiful and inexperienced to be a madam.

It had been hard on Lola to suffer so many abortions. The trauma had taken its toll, both physically and emotionally. That explained why she looked so worn out. At the end of her rope, she was being taken care of by Big Joe. She had no resources or allies, except him. He was keeping her tucked away in a small apartment. She had food to eat but rarely had any appetite. The plan was to get her strength back up so she could go back to work. It seemed to me that a key ingredient missing from her road to wellness was intensive therapy and friendly positive social interaction. Mostly Lola was terribly afraid of getting pregnant.

I suggested she think about some other line of work. That thought only made her sadder. She had no training or experience to prepare her for any job that would pay more than minimum wage. Lola couldn't imagine living a "legit" lifestyle. She didn't even know how to talk to "straight people". Perhaps Big Joe had put us together for Lola to practice talking with a mutant straight person. Hoping someone like me could translate

concepts across the huge gap dividing the two cultural worlds. By chance I might offer some insight or help find a solution. It was hopeful to expect even a small amount of social transformation to occur in a couple of hours. Perhaps Big Joe simply wanted to give Lola a night out. He got two for one in giving his girls a night out. Perhaps he also wanted to see how we would get along.

We were about the same age, Lola and I, but she seemed so much older. Despite her facade of street smarts, she was still young and seemed to be so stuck. In contrast, I did not feel stuck at all. I still believed I could walk away any time I wanted. I also believed that pretty women had all the luck. It was eye opening for me at the time to realize how out of luck this pretty woman believed she was. Such an attractive woman, yet so messed-up and unhappy.

Our time together was soon up. My heart went out to Lola. There was nothing I could do for her. Our paths would not cross again.

On the drive back to the "Health Spa" Big Joe and I talked the whole way. We talked about Lola a little. He asked how I liked her, what I thought of her. I suggested therapy. Big Joe gave a grunt in answer that could be interpreted to mean "Forget about it."

Big Joe spent a lot of time on our ride home coaching me about what I could say to whom about my night out. What I had better keep my mouth shut about. Stories I could tell to various people when they asked. This type of thing could get very complicated. He knew a lot of people there would say something to me about "So Rose, how was your

night out?" Some people were just making conversation. For them I could casually respond with "Had a great time. Wanna see what I got?"

If anybody tried to pry about where we had gone I could talk about going to the Victoria's Secret store. I was *not* to tell about the hotel we had gone to, especially the name or location of the hotel. We had been riding around in the dark of night in a city I was totally unfamiliar with. In truth, I hadn't even noticed the name or been paying attention to the location. Still, I wasn't to say anything, however general or vague. I was to be circumspect to these kind of inquiries, they were rude anyway so it was OK to blow them off.

Big Joe was most specific about what I could tell Dusty. He still didn't reveal that Lola was the supposedly former sister-in-law of ill repute, but then he hadn't heard Dusty warning me. He did know that Dusty was not happy about Lola and would get angry if she found out he was still with her. I was to not under any circumstances to tell Dusty that another woman was there in the hotel room. Luckily, I could talk openly with Sheryl. She knew everything. Just make sure no one else was listening when we talked. Sheryl also had known Lola since she was a baby.

We arrived back at the "Health Spa" at five o'clock in the morning, an hour before I was to be up and ready for work. I slept between what tricks there were that day and life went on.

Dusty did indeed question me directly. She knew right away that I was lying. She had suspected Big Joe was still with Lola alias Angel a.k.a. Angelica or Vivian. Dusty specifically asked, "So, did a girl show up during your big night out?" The look on my

face gave it away. I couldn't help it. She came at me out of left field with both guns loaded. Right away she said, "Oh shit Rose, don't say nothin', it ain't your fault, That lying S.O.B." Dusty knew in a flash that I had been coached to lie.

Lying was an expected part of communication. Everyone did it all the time. Every question and answer was suspect. The words exchanged were such a small part of the communication process. Thinking about the person's relationship to other parties, about their past history, about who stands to gain what by the information. Watching for the body language, the facial expression and tone of voice. Knowing ahead of time, that the person is probably lying and trying to guess why they would want to lie.

It's like that riddle, about you walk up to two doors and each has a talking face on it. Behind one door is a tiger that will eat you up immediately. The other door has a beautiful lady to save and you are a hero. One of the faces always lies and the other one always tells the truth. You can ask only one question of each of the faces.

I was a terrible liar, still am. On top of that I'm often very slow to make up plausible stories to cover for a lie. Being a bad liar was the equivalent of a handicap in this line of work.

As for the clothes we bought that night, I did have fun showing them off. The black teddy that ripped went home with Peggy the housekeeper, who was glad to have it. Peggy said she could sew it up just fine. I did wear the other outfits occasionally. Since they were more trouble to get in and out of than the leotards, I preferred not to wear them. Also the gentlemen didn't respond as well to these outfits. They liked the leotards.

I only wore the little white vest and miniskirt outfit a couple of times. All agreed that it really was a bit too much. Big Joe joked by suggesting I get a matching hat.

What is so ironic about that stupid white outfit is that it was my downfall, when it came to my mother. It was later, after I had left entirely, that my family did come to know I had been working as a prostitute. My mother was the last to know and the last to want to know. It was hard for her to believe that I had really done something like that. Seeing this outfit in my things was proof positive in her eyes. Leotards did not seem like hooker clothing. That dumb white outfit, the one no hooker in her right mind would ever wear, that ridiculous little vest and skirt, is what gave it away. My mother believed it was the kind of thing a prostitute would wear. The rumors circulating might be true. I should have started a rumor that I had been in a play, yeah that's right, a musical comedy, set in Texas. Would you believe all the girls wore that silly outfit while we tap danced?

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Upon occasion, Sheryl would look out the window and see Big Joe's car driving up. She would say, "Rose, here comes Big Joe, hurry go change into that blue jumpsuit." Then I would come prancing out wearing it, pretending like I didn't know he was there and had been wearing it all along. Sheryl would say, "Hey Rose, look who's here." Turning to Big Joe she would say, "Don't she look nice?" He would smile and nod, saying, "Yum, look out, somebody might just eat you right up. You lookin' so hot!"

My new clothes did not inspire any of the other girls to dress more creatively. Our special night out had proven an opportunity for Big Joe and I to get to know each other better. Even later, after the thrill was gone, after the novelty of the new clothes had long passed, every now and then, Big Joe would ask, "Hey baby, go put that blue suit on, would ya? I just want to see you wearing it."

## Chapter Ten - A Large Slice of Pie

There were so many different kinds of guys who came in for service. Most were so polite and appreciative. I'd get called Miss Rose or Miss Lisa. A huge amount of the fun could occur during the undressing process. I learned to get good results from being coy or coquettish about revealing my bosom. Playing the vixen or the tease, I might have my leotard down and my bra still on. Depending on the nature of the guy, or my mood, I might let him take off my bra.

There were endless possibilities for teasing and exciting a man by using facial expressions combined with activity around my breasts. I could make that pouting kind of face with my lower lip extended. I might lick my lips or use my tongue in a variety of suggestive ways, wiggling it this way or that. Perhaps I would hold my breasts as if cradling a sleeping kitty, rocking back and forth. My eyes not simply giving permission to stroke and fondle, but inviting attention. Guys seemed to respond instantly to these kinds of nonverbal cues.

Using this kind of foreplay made my job a lot easier. Exciting the man by simply looking and acting turned on got him turned on faster, more easily. Running my hands over my body, especially over and around my breasts, was effective. Taking his hand and guiding it over my body was a good trick. Of course, running my hands over his

body could never go wrong. Matching the right approach to the person was part of the job.

Many of the guys were real nice and easy to read. The majority of the fellows had been frequenting bordellos like ours for many years and knew the drill. They would request what they wanted, easily and frankly. A gentleman might ask, while pointing with his eyes, "Leave that on, I want to take it off." Some wanted me to undress them. "Pretend like you're a nurse," might be a request. That was easy for me.

It was easy to tell when a customer was here for the first time, or kind of new to the whole game. Shyness mixed with eager innocence would give them away. Most of the time the new guy would say more than once that he was new to this. It wasn't unusual for a guy to show up with money in his hand and say, "My friends chipped in. They said it's about time I got laid."

Every now and again I would get a guy who wanted to spend a hundred dollars and not even want to fornicate. One time, it was this guy's birthday and his friends had given him this gift, an hour with a prostitute. He was kind of sheepish about telling me, but he was quite certain that he didn't want to even get undressed. "It's like a religious thing," he told me, believing he needed to explain himself to me. It was altogether OK with me to take his money and not do any work. He agreed to let me rub his back. Had to do something to take up the time. He asked me, "Could you, I mean when we go out there...Could you pretend like something happened? The guys'll be out there, you know..." "Sure honey, just leave it to me." I replied.

He didn't want to disappoint his friends. I was good at that sort of show by now. I made a special non-verbal response in front of his friends to express what a success he had been, what a manly man. That kind of communication is best done in a kind of wordless mime, using exclusively facial gestures, mostly eyes and nodding, just the right way and at the right time.

On another occasion, I got a guy who paid for an hour and didn't want any sex. He had come with his buddies, and he wanted to play along. Really he wanted to spend some quiet time relaxing. It was more comfortable lying on my bed than out in the big room, sitting on a folding chair, waiting while his friends had a good time. We talked a little, I rubbed his feet and woke him when the hour was up. Again he asked for a similar performance for the benefit of his friends.

Unfortunately, there was another all too common personality type. I'll call him the surly, crabby guy. This kind of guy did not seem to like women or life in general. He would be cantankerous, unfriendly, nasty and downright rude. Underneath all of that was the anger. I had to make an effort to talk with this type in order to turn the trick. It was like walking in a minefield. Any attempt to play or joke lightheartedly could easily blow up. At best it felt like knocking on a brick wall.

At first I was polite and all business, and got terrible results. I learned to walk a fine line with this kind of fellow. I would start with a polite, business-like approach and could always return to that place. What I learned was not to take the crap. I found ways to feed it back in a playful way. I had to be careful, feel him out, go slow. I'll tell you, this approach got results. It got the best results when I could stay on the humorous side.

For example, "How are you doing today?" I might say in casual conversation. "You don't wanna know," he would snarl back. Seriously, what can you politely say to that? I came up with something like, "Damn straight, and you can just keep your fucking mouth shut from now on." I'd square my shoulders, cock my head and deliver the line with an air of authority that is expected from a good whore, all the time looking him squarely in the eye, with just the hint of a smile.

Believe it or not, these kinds of repartee served to disarm this type of client and even occasionally elicit a snide laugh. That crabby kind of guy seemed to like the idea that he didn't have to talk from now on if he didn't want to. He'd know I was teasing, and know I meant business. Whatever I choose to say, I wanted to make two things clear. I'm a cunt who swears and I don't take his crap. Strangely enough, that kind of approach seemed to comfort this personality type.

There were all kinds and everything in between. The challenge was to read the guy quickly and accurately. Sheryl was so good at reading people.

One guy I remember showed up during the day. He was on the good looking side and young. He hung out all day, talked about being a songwriter and aspiring to become a country singer. Sheryl said, "I don't trust him further than I can throw a brick." It was unusual for a new customer like him to just hang out. Sure we had our few regulars who would hang out, but this guy was different.

On the surface he did look kind of handsome, tall and thin. But he had a creepy feel about him, like moth eaten around the psychological edges. He may have had sinister motives or perhaps just a screw loose. Maybe he had nowhere to go and wanted

to wait for the night girls to show up. Turns out he was waiting for Big Joe to show up. He was hoping to get some money from him.

Occasionally some guy showed up who would just start talking and not stop. He might have some sob story or other. Perhaps his sweetheart left him, or he lost his job. Some would just complain non-stop about the ex-wife and the alimony or child payments being too high.

When there were no other customers waiting for service, I might sit and listen. When he got tired of hearing himself talk, most likely he would be ready to "take me back."

We sure got the characters coming through that big door with the slider peephole. It certainly was an education for me to meet such a large slice of "Humanity Pie." The experience of getting naked and being intimate with so many people affected me. It forced me to broaden my definition of the human condition.

No longer could I conveniently fit people into neat little boxes that defined them based on popular categories. Rich or poor, educated or uneducated, nice or cruel, single little boxes couldn't contain the enormity of a person's soul. I had seen and tasted the juice, the fluid, like the sap that runs all through a tree, I was knee deep in human sensuality. This was way more than just shaking a person's hand. I had the opportunity to experience a fundamental human reality lurking under the conveniently constructed facades designed to mask it. I learned some things about human sexual desire, lust and obsession. Specifically, I was face to face with a large slice of the dis-ease affecting human beings and their relationship to sexuality.

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Another part of the experience turned out to be a bonus, although I didn't recognize it as a bonus at the time. It was the opportunity to see and handle so many penises, dicks, cocks, hard-ons, stiffies, wangs, you name it. Folks, I'm here to tell you there are all kinds. Fat ones, skinny ones, long ones, short ones. Can't always tell the size a soft dick will grow to exactly when it gets hard. I found the circumcised guys were easier to clean and check.

Over the years since my days of prostitution, I have been in on numerous conversations between women referencing that part of the male anatomy. It is clear many women are misinformed about the nature of the penis and the variety of available sizes. In my opinion it should be like trying on shoes to find a good fit. We all know how fussy women can be about getting the right size shoe. I have come to believe now that my experience with so many wang-doodles was good for my education.

There was one guy we girls called Captain Hook. His penis had a severe bend, like a right hook at the end. No one liked to see him coming, (no pun intended) mostly because he wasn't very nice. He was surly, demanding and unpleasant. On top of that, he didn't want to pay much. It really was uncomfortable to have sex with that strangely shaped penis. Some people say there is a match for everyone. I wonder about the woman who would be the match for Captain Hook.

It was always OK for a girl to take a man back and then refuse to take him as a trick for any reason. An obvious reason might be that he didn't pass the check. A working girl could refuse a man any time she wanted. For whatever reason, she could just say, "get lost." So, if a girl didn't want to take a certain shape or size she didn't have to. He could pick another girl or leave.

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Let me tell you about Tina. Tina was a long timer, she was mostly quiet and kept to herself. She had long silky straight blond hair. Everything about Tina seemed average, middle of the road. She was of medium height. She was pretty, yes, very pretty, but amongst our crew she was average in her beauty. Her breast size was right about in the middle between large and small. Tina's enchanting hazel eyes were her most remarkable feature. They were aqueous like the ocean with blue green and speckles of brown seeming to swirl into a whirlpool inviting the viewer to look closer. Tina was known as the girl who rarely talked. She didn't seem to talk with anyone about anything, ever.

Tina was an old timer, which meant she had been a working girl for longer than most. I would guess she was twenty-five or twenty-six years old, if that. For a hooker working in houses like ours, thirty was considered old. Truck drivers wanted and expected young females. After the age of thirty, a girl had to find some other way of

doing business. Most likely she had gone straight, died, become a madam, or spun off her own private set of clients on a call girl basis.

Tina was a good, solid worker. Dependable, and not crazy (so you noticed.) She did her work, got her money, and went home. Nobody seemed to like her. It was rare for her to open her mouth and talk for any reason. Consequently, she seemed invisible most of the time like some kind of decoration on the wall. She would always sit in the same chair out in the big room, while she was working.

One day, out of the blue, Tina and I got to talking with each other. We were all by ourselves and suddenly for no particular reason, Tina wanted to share her strategy. It was unusual for Tina to be even a little social, so I simply listened. She was acting as my mentor, the more experienced older girl giving pointers to the new girl. I liked it.

"Rose" she started out, "I'm gonna tell you something I ain't told nobody, cause them other girls aren't worth the time of day. But I've been watching, and you're different from the others. Wanna hear what I got to say?" I nodded in answer, so she continued. "Each girl got her own way of doing things, of getting guys..." My face gave me away, I had rolled my eyes and scrunched my face. "No Rose, I ain't talking about back there," she nodded towards our rooms, "I'm talking about out here in the big room." We were sitting in the large L shaped room where the gentlemen met the girls before they were taken back for "a date." "I'm talking about how you get the guys to pick you. I know, working days, it ain't no thing, but on nights, and you might wanna work nights, Rose, you know. You might wanna try nights sometimes, you can make a lot more

money...sometimes. Anyway, how do you get a guy to pick you? That's the thing." Tina paused to collect her thoughts.

"You see every girl has an M.O., you know, method of doing things." Basically she was talking about styles of flirting. I was all ears. "Some girls are outgoing and giggly like. They're loud and go right up to a fella and start touching him. Like Missy. Remember Missy? That's what Missy would do. All over a guy before he has a chance to look at anyone else. That's one way." Tina paused, drew a long breath, and we both shook our heads in non-verbal agreement. That way sucked.

"You ever watch Candy?" Tina continued. I nodded slowly switching gears to reflect on our top moneymaker. Candy looked great. She was tall, blond, thin, but more than her looks, along with her looks, she had something else, electric, magnetic. Candy was "cool", and she was HOT!

To this day I don't know if that characteristic we might call charisma, is a result of learned behavior or simply a genetic anomaly. On the sexual attraction scale Candy was off the top.

Tina continued with her explanation, "She don't have to do nothin'. She just got to walk into the room. Candy can get away with it. She just ignores them. The more she ignores a guy the more he wants her. She walks out here, saunters over to the jukebox, like she's better than all of them. Sometimes she talks to one of the other girls, just so she can stand near a guy while still ignoring him. She's something to watch. Then she'll, like, turn and 'accidentally' bump into the guy. Gets 'em every time." Tina shook her head. "There's always someone like Candy around, kind of disgusting really, how easy it

is for her. Don't matter Rose, there's still plenty of ways around girls like Candy. Don't let her get to you, that's for starters."

Tina looked me in the eye and asked, "This is just between me and you Rose, right? You won't go telling any of them other lying bitches I said any of this?" I nodded appropriately up and down then side to side, and said, "I ain't crazy Tina. Well, not *that* kind of crazy." We both chuckled conspiratorially. She continued, "It's the self confidence thing that's really important. No matter how you really feel inside, ya gotta put it out there like you're so hot, act like you really got it."

"I'll tell you what I do, it's what works for me." Tina paused to make sure she had my attention. She also scanned the room to check that no one was around who could be listening "I stare at them." She stared at me to make her point. "That's right Rose, I just sit here, quiet as can be and stare at a guy. The other girls don't even know what I'm doing, but I get 'em, yes I do." Tina laughed a little. "It's foolproof Rose, I swear. Try it sometime, you'll see. Guys can't stand it, first they look away then they look back to see if I'm still watching. Sometimes it takes longer than other times, but then I got 'em. He's hooked. I just move my eyes and nod my head." Tina demonstrated as she talked. "They come over and sit down next to me, or we go right back." This time she made the same gesture and nodded toward our rooms down the hall.

"Guys don't know what to do when they see me staring at them. Makes 'em real nervous, but they like it, they like it a lot." Tina was winding down. "Don't tell anyone else Rose, promise? I don't want all the girls around here using my staring trick." I nodded and promised not to tell, then slowly began to think about what it would be like if

all the girls used this staring technique and I started to giggle. I said "Yeah right, then a guy walks in and nobody talks, nobody says nothing, we all be like staring." I got all bug eyed to demonstrate my exaggerated stare. We both just split up laughing.

I have always remembered Tina and her advice. It works amazingly well. Try it yourself sometime. A person seems to know somehow that they are being stared at. Whether male or female, I have found it to have the same effect. The person I stare at will sooner than later turn to look at me. If I continue to stare, it gets interesting results depending on the situation. In a brothel, it got the right results. Men love to be admired, adored, the center of attention. They love a woman to look at them like they are the most interesting, most sexy guy in the room.

I recently watched a president of the United States being sworn into office on TV. His family was gathered close by. Specifically, his daughter was gazing at him with a look of such love and admiration. It caused me to reflect about the times in each of our lives when we are in a position to receive such a gaze. The look in someone's eye can say, "Someone is proud of you, glad to see you. Happy you're alive." Such a simple thing it is to give a person a loving gaze, doesn't cost a penny. I have heard that babies thrive with this kind of direct gaze into their eyes, and I believe it.

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Let me tell you about some of the other "ho's." I chummed up with Katie during the short time we worked together. Even though she worked nights we still hit it off right

away. Katie was short with thick, curly, dark red hair. She reminded me of Reba McEntire, the country singer.

Her hair always looked great and she didn't wear a wig. I asked her to teach me how she did it. "I don't really do much of anything," she said. "I put on some moisturizer, then some gel. I only blow dry the front curls and a little in the back." Katie demonstrated with some curls around her finger. "Then I just pin it up here and here." She pointed to the two combs that swept her hair up into a cascade of curls from their placement on the side toward the top and back of her head. "Then I just spray the hell out of it." meaning she applied a lot of hair spray. "It's good to go for the whole night," Katie concluded.

I remember being amazed at how she approached eating her chips and dip. She got out a paper plate and dished a modest portion of dip, and a small pile of chips. When I asked her why she did that, she said, "Keeps me from pigging out. I just love chips and dip and I could eat all of it, right now. This way I only eat this much." I was impressed and thought it was an excellent idea. One I have yet to be able to implement.

Her pimp was her husband, and they had three kids. Katie was older than most of us working there. She had been in the business since she was a teen. She had taken a long break recently and had come back to the "Health Spa" to work for only a short time. The money she could make in a few months would last the family for a while. At least that was her plan.

Katie's husband had recently become unemployed and the family was between homes. As it turns out, the husband and three children were staying at a nearby hotel.

Katie would often go over and spend time with them when she wasn't working.

Somehow it got arranged for me to go with her to visit her family at the hotel room.

It was fun to get out, any change in the monotony was good. But let me tell you, this family with three small children stuck in one little hotel room was crazy. The kids were bouncing off the walls. They were three, five and seven years old. The younger two children were boys. I had a great time playing games with the kids, watching TV, eating pizza and drinking cola.

It never came up to talk about where true home was for Katie. That would have been a rude question, "Where are you from?" or "Where do you live?" Not the kind of question anyone would ask or expect to receive a truthful answer.

I couldn't imagine she would take much money home after paying for the hotel bill and food for her family. But she wasn't complaining or asking for advice. Katie and her family were simply living one day at a time, and it seemed to me they were having some good times along the way.

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Another girl who was around for only a short time was so sad. Bonnie had a pimp who pushed her into working. He evidently had some kind of power over her, to talk her into coming to work. He had begged and lied to Big Joe to get her in. It turns out she had just given birth to her first born son six weeks prior to coming to work. Her breasts were large and sore from not being able to continue breast-feeding. Needless to say she

missed her baby terribly. Bonnie cried all the time. She was so unhappy and uncomfortable. She was still bleeding, literally and figuratively.

Apparently her pimp had threatened some harm to her family if she didn't show up for work. Bonnie was not a real sharp looker. Her body was still misshapen from the pregnancy and her face puffy from crying all the time. Even if Bonnie had been in tiptop shape it's not likely she would have been a big money maker. As it was, she made very little money and stayed less than a week.

Big Joe put her on days. I really felt her pain and was helpless to do anything to console her. It was hard to have that drama right in front of my nose. It gave me a very bad feeling about the nature of this business.

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This would not be a complete story without mention of the little old men. They were regulars and most of the girls liked them. They were easy work and paid \$30. The little old men were predictable. Still, I was surprised when it was my turn to waltz with them. A few girls thought they were just too weird, "He takes out his teeth, Yuck!" I had heard one girl say. They were distinct and different individuals, these little old men, but it was easy to lump them into a group. I'll tell you about two of them.

One of them wanted me not to douche after a trick. Then he would take me back right after. To pull this off meant he needed to hang around for a while. He wanted to pick the trick. It was all pre-arranged between him and me. Sheryl had known about

this guy and explained it all before-hand to me. Since he was a regular, she knew what he wanted. He watched and waited, then gave me a signal before I took the selected man back. For his trick, all he wanted to do was eat the cum out. It may seem gross, but it was an easy way to earn thirty dollars.

Another one of these gentlemen was the nicest little old man, and he did take out his teeth. I was supposed to lay back, relax and not do a thing. He was especially explicit that I need not pretend to like it. Paying thirty dollars at the start of his time, he deliberately placed it on the dresser saying, "I know this ain't much to pay such a pretty lady. You just let me know when the time's up." He had waited until it was not busy and no one else was waiting for me, knowing I would be more relaxed and receptive. Being very specific about wanting me to relax and not do anything, he repeated his request more than once for me to not fake it. I didn't need to do or say anything. I also didn't need to wash or check him since he didn't plan to get undressed.

Very slow about his business, he approached my sex like it was a dainty flower. Caressing the petals one by one all the way around. Then methodically and diligently performing cunnilingus, oral stimulation of the vulva and clitoris. He knew the no fingers rule and followed it, had even talked about that at the beginning. He had asked if he could touch me there, assuring me he wouldn't go in deep at all and I could tell him to stop any time.

Laughing when he took his teeth out, and smacking his gums, he talked a blue streak in his raspy, hoarse, old man voice. "I know you think I'm kinda funny here...smack, smack... I'll tell ya, it's mighty nice of you's to let me see ya'll here today. I

know you girls work real hard. Well I won't take much of yo time, not really. Ya just tell me when it's time to go. That's right....just relax, oh you mighty pretty, Miss Rose. That's what you are. When our times up you tell me. I don't wanna make you no trouble now, Miss Rose. That's right sweetheart, just lay back and relax. Oh, let me just take a look at you. You smell so good, so fresh. You relaxed? You comfortable?" His talking stopped when he got busy.

I let that trick last a little longer than most thirty-dollar tricks.

## Chapter Eleven - The Big Bust

Big Joe had tried to warn me ahead of time. He had known it would come down that night. He couldn't let on that he knew and had tried to tell me by speaking in code. I didn't understand or couldn't comprehend his attempts to communicate. He must have thought I got it. Whatever, there was a failure to communicate. Later he explained that he had tried to tell me. It didn't really matter, one way or another. Everything came down about the same either way. It was all a surprise, everything that happened. For most of the other girls, it seemed like this was old hat. To me, it was a shock when the police arrived to arrest everyone at our whorehouse.

It happened on a Friday night. After working a full day shift, I had gone to the doctor and also done some shopping, making it a big day. I was ready for a nice long rest. It felt like I had only been asleep for a minute, in fact I had slept a couple hours. I was roused from a sound sleep by shouts, thumps and banging noises.

My room was at the far end of the hall. Suddenly, my door was thrown open, light flooded the room. There, in the doorway, was a big policeman dressed in full riot gear with a large rifle held ready in front of him. He was wearing a bulletproof vest and something down over his face. A corner of my mind thought this might be an alien invasion.

We were both surprised to see each other. He had not expected to find a sleepy girl in her not-very-sexy pajamas. He had, of course, expected to find something else going on behind the closed door. Some doors he opened could offer that much more interesting opportunity to surprise two people. In a flash he realized there was only one boring person here. Time was of the essence for him to have the best chance of finding the really occupied rooms. Half a second later, without saying a word he was gone. He left the light on and the door open.

By then the wheels were starting to turn in my head. I was realizing this was it, the place was being busted. I had listened to the stories other people told about being busted, not really believing it would happen to me. But here I was, a working girl in a house of prostitution, being raided by the police. It was happening to me, right now. I was terrified. That was a big guy with a big gun. What was I supposed to do?

A minute later another one showed up. This policeman had his rifle slung more casually behind his shoulder. He took a long look at me rubbing the sleep out of my eyes, my hair a mess. He said, "Get dressed." then as an after thought he added, "And leave the door open." He was matter of fact. Then, perhaps because of my bewildered look, he added, "You'll want to be dressed in your street clothes." This he said more calming than gruff. His empathizing tone formed odd counterpoint. "Stay right here, I'll be back." he said, and was gone.

Some of these cops were also clients on other days. Some had friends, relatives, or friends of friends in the business, our illegal business. That policeman was there simply doing his job and he could see I was scared. He was not out to bust my chops. The

peculiar symbiotic relationships playing out in this complex game of small town cops and robbers gave an interesting slant to the event.

I am still attempting to unravel some of the nuances of relationships and favors between the good guys and the bad guys. It formed a backdrop of surreal motivations, some ludicrous, some puzzling. Idiosyncrasies abounded, of which this policeman, being somewhat kind as he prepared me for arrest, was just the beginning.

Before I got dressed, I located my small stash of pot and prescription drugs, one little bottle of uppers and one of downers. I sneakily tossed them out the window, quickly, before that policeman came back for me. The only coaching I had about being busted involved not telling the police anything. I had no idea what to do about all these smaller decisions. So I did as I was told, got dressed and waited, sitting on the bed. I didn't wait long.

A lot happened in those first few seconds and minutes of the bust. Countless stories would be told and retold about the different ways that people responded. What they saw and did. It was those first few seconds that offered certain people the opportunity for escape, assuming they were quick and had a plan.

Take for example, the stuff I threw out the window. I learned later someone was outside specifically watching and saw something thrown out the window. The police found my stash. Big Joe told me he had to pay some extra money to cover for them finding it. Still, it was a small matter. I had done the right thing, it would have cost him more money if they had found the stuff in my room. He had hoped by warning me that I

would have been able to hide my stash. But I hadn't understood his warning. There really was no other thing I could have done to prepare had I known, except worry.

Soon, the policeman came back and escorted me out to the big room. Despite all the commotion, most of the girls were already seated. Someone had pulled a bunch of chairs out into the middle of the room. Usually the chairs were along the wall. I joined my fellow co-workers amid a lot of loud talk. It was Friday night and the house had been in full swing, really hopping. Everyone's adrenaline was pumping.

What I had experienced up until then was the scariest part of the whole experience. When I heard those loud unfamiliar noises from a sound sleep and then that riot gear policeman bust into my room, turning on the lights. That had gotten my adrenaline pumping. As it turned out, from then on, the rest of the bust was significantly less exciting. It involved a lot of waiting in unpleasant situations and uncomfortable chairs.

A couple of the girls were still missing. They had been hard at work when the bust came down and were still getting dressed. One by one they each showed up until all the girls were gathered. Neither of the two madams or three security men were in sight. I knew they had been here when I went to sleep a couple of hours ago. To have these key people who were supposed to be taking care of things missing left me feeling a bit naked. I wondered where they could be and if they were safe.

There was a lot of hullabaloo as the police were still collecting and escorting the Johns out of our place of business. Some went into waiting patrol cars. Some received tickets and paid fines, right on the spot, so they were free to go.

There was always at least one cop guarding us. The rest of the policemen seemed to be busy in other rooms. They would pass through our big room as they moved in and out of the building. Slowly things got quieter.

The police needed to drive all the people they were arresting into the police station. This required that the relatively few available squad cars drive into town with a backseat full of "the prisoners" and then come back. The round trip to town and back took about forty minutes. First they drove the men, then they started with the girls.

It was mid-winter, so the men waiting for their turn to take a ride in the patrol car were kept inside. Close to the entrance foyer, they could still see and hear the entire goings on in the main lobby. We girls were corralled in a bunch of chairs forming a kind of circle to contain our activity.

At first the talk amongst us girls, or with the policemen, was pretty rowdy, full of jibes and teasing. Candy, our top moneymaker, had been through this kind of bust numerous times. She had a bold fearless nature and was not intimidated. I was amazed when she spoke so disdainfully to the cop guarding us. "You guys think you're so tough, with your big guns. You make me sick." Candy stood up, cocked her head. "Why don't you just go away and leave us alone?" The policeman guarding us at that time was exceptionally good looking. A very clean-cut, muscular marine type, the kind that is so full of testosterone. It could be Candy specifically targeted him to pester.

He was clearly jeering at her, but he replied in a very formal tone, his words careful and slowly formed. "Sit down, you, sit down," he said. Not being eloquent with words, he nodded his head and moved his gun as he spoke to enhance his authority. Candy

wasn't having it. She took a pose, squared up her shoulders at the same time shaking her chest and hips and taunted, "Gonna make me, big scary cop, come on and make me. Gonna shoot me with your big gun? Huh? Right in front of everybody? Go ahead big man..." Candy looked him straight in the eye for a long pause. She had gotten her desired reaction and so she slowly did sit down muttering, "Mr. Hot Shot with the big gun, you just hiding behind that badge." Someone else shrewdly added "Big gun to match his little dick."

As it happened, another policeman showed up to take over guarding us about that time. I was mortified, afraid of the cops, shocked at Candy's behavior. I wasn't used to how the night girls played with men all the time. It was their job. They take drugs to help them be so wound up, so sassy. These cops were just more men, interrupting their party. Oddly enough, that policeman seemed to like it or at least expect this crude, rude conduct. Candy's bad behavior was enticing, it allowed Mr. Marine Man to get his blood pumping. Seemed like they both got some kind of payoff from the exchange.

Another girl named Trixie, had a different jibe. She hollered out as one cop was passing through, "Hey you, I know you!" The policeman automatically turned to look at her. Trixie, having hooked her prey, turned to the girl next to her calling out loud enough for everyone to hear, "I sucked his dick last week." The cop shook his head, unruffled, and continued on his way. Trixie stood up, pointing her finger and shaking her arm as she kept on hollering to that policeman's rapidly disappearing back. "You better not come back again next week, sugar. Cause I know your face now and you ain't getting no more cocksuckin', no uh-uh, not from this bitch. I know your pretty face now." Trixie

kept on with her disclosure long after the intended party was far down the hall. Her voice grew louder as he disappeared. To polish off her act she turned to no one in particular, as she sat back down, her voice still loud. "Yeah, I remember him, that one, clear as day." Perhaps it was true, more likely she was making it all up, just for the heck of it.

Another thing that needed to happen before we could leave was for each girl to change clothes. I had already put on street clothes so I was all set. The few girls who were caught in the act also had been able to put on their street clothes before coming to the big room. Most of the other girls were still wearing leotards and had to change before they could go downtown. Each girl, one at a time, was escorted to her room. It required a policeman to keep watch while she changed. Unless her room had already been searched.

Each room was torn apart, literally. The police were specifically and comprehensively searching for contraband. All the drawers were pulled out and dumped. The bedclothes pulled off and tossed. Mattresses lifted and turned over. There was a lot of complaining from the girls as each went to her room and either saw the big mess or had to change clothes with the guard watching.

Slowly it got quieter until we were just sitting there in the big room. Just sitting and waiting for our turn to ride downtown in the cop car.

The police made a lot of money that night. Most of the John's didn't spend any time in jail. They paid money, a lot of money and walked away. The less record of their being at the scene, the more money they might pay. The men who were caught in the act with their pants down received a stricter penalty, had to pay even more. At least that's

what I could make out of the many stories people had to tell about this bust and other busts.

So many stories would get told. Not only every detail about this bust, but many details from other busts. "Remember the bust two years ago when they got Louie?" someone would start to reminisce. "Remember the time that Senator, what's his name, was caught with his pants down." followed by, "Yeah, he sure picked the wrong night." Invariably someone would say, "Did you see the look on that one guys face?" followed by "Yeah, I swear, I thought he was gonna pee his pants."

\* \* \*

It was about one o'clock in the morning before I was put into a patrol car. It was a cold night. There were no handcuffs necessary. We girls pretty much did as we were told. We were squeezed into the patrol car, so they could make fewer trips and get us there sooner. None of us liked waiting. Five of us rode in the back seat, the lighter girls sitting on laps. Seatbelts weren't even mentioned. Soon we were all gathered at the police station.

The police station had a bare bones kind of large room with very bright lights. Lots of small wooden folding chairs were set up in rows facing front, with an aisle down the middle. It was a miserable place to wait and we waited a long time. Slowly, imperceptibly, someone would be called, but it seemed more people were arriving than were being called. The place was packed with well over a hundred people. I didn't know

who all the people were or where they came from. Most of the people seemed to be waiting, the same as I was. There were only a few cops standing around or walking through.

Again here, as before, the Johns were processed first. Us, the real criminals, had to wait until the tax paying, usually law-abiding, gentlemen got booked. They needed to go home to their most likely already notified wives.

Some wives showed up. That offered a few hair-raising examples of how married people can react in a bad situation. In the big room, we could all see everything, and no one had anything to do but to look on at the very personal commotion. It makes sense the cops wanted the men out of there as quickly as possible. Their presence portended the most likelihood of explosive behavior coming from the distraught wives or girlfriends.

One wife was pitiful. Just sitting there, sobbing loudly. She would stop crying long enough to yell obscenities at her husband, then go back to sobbing. Another woman came in yelling and attempted to sock-it-to her husband. She literally started pounding him, right there in the police station. It took two policemen to pull her off and escort her back outside. Each woman who arrived for her husband did something noisy and harsh. Some arrived with a whole gang of backup friends and family to harangue and humiliate the offender.

One woman arrived cool as a cucumber and loudly announced how glad she was. "I'm so glad to be here, thank you honey. Now we can go ahead and get that new car, cause I know you got lots of money. You out spending at the "ho" house, I know you got so much money just laying around. Yup, time for me to buy that new car, cause now I

know just how loaded you are. Yes, sir-e-e, I'm so glad to come down here in the middle of the night and take you home with me." Most likely this wasn't the first night she had come down to the police station to take her husband home.

\* \* \*

I found out why there were so many people at the police station. It turns out they had busted two houses, ours and another bordello up the road from ours, referred to as The Plum Tree. It turns out our "Health Spa" was locally known as The Roadhouse. There was an aisle down the middle of the room and our side seemed to be people from our Roadhouse and the other side was people from The Plum Tree. Having both houses in the same room meant there was a lot of tension in the room. Occasionally people would start up saying mean things or making like they wanted to fight.

Everyone was either cranky, tired, hungry, angry, depressed or all of the above. Along with waiting in uncomfortable surroundings for an interminable amount of time, none of us were making any money. Remember playing Monopoly? Remember pulling that chance card? Go directly to jail, do not pass GO, do not collect \$200. Many of the people in that room were losing far more than \$200. We were not a happy crew. Add into the mess that some of the people did not get along. Some of the people were long-time enemies. Needless to say the air was strained.

I had been sitting in my little wooden folding chair for about an hour when I started needing to go to the bathroom. I got up and asked the nearest cop, "Where's the

bathroom?" I was told to wait. About fifteen minutes later I got up and went to the guy up front to ask again. He told me to wait. "You have to sit down, Miss. Go sit down." The sneer in his voice left me feeling like a pesky insect he could just arbitrarily flick away.

About half an hour later I couldn't wait any longer. So I got up again and this time I signaled a cop to come over, because I knew I was supposed to stay put. Also, I was trying to not make such a spectacle of myself. When he told me again there was no bathroom, "Sorry, Miss, you just got to wait." I lost it and started yelling, each word clearly enunciated like I was a stern schoolteacher speaking to a naughty boy. "You *better* find a place I *can* go cause I GOT TO GO! Unless you want to clean up a mess right *here*, right *now*, you *better* let me GO!"

The room busted up clapping and laughing. The cop shook his head, raised his eyebrows, the guy up front nodded, and I was beckoned to follow. I did the pee-pee dance all the way up the aisle to a nearby facility. I could hear words of encouragement like, "Way to go Rose, you tell 'em." and "Yeah, let her go." or "We got to go too." After that they took some other people to the bathroom one by one.

\* \* \*

It was after four o'clock in the morning before my name was called. It was finally my turn. I wasn't nervous or tense. I was way too tired to have any feelings. If anything, I was mad, angry that I was stuck in such unpleasant circumstance, at the mercy of these

mean people. By this time I had become accustomed to being herded around like an animal. Well, perhaps I was a little apprehensive about what would come next. I didn't know what the upcoming interrogation would be like.

First I was fingerprinted, then taken into a small room. I sat there all by myself for a short time before the door opened and in walked two policemen. One was short and wiry, he was dressed in a regular police uniform. The other man was tall and husky. He was dressed in street clothes, wearing a not very expensive suit. I noticed they were both rather perky, considering how many people they were processing. It was as if they thrived on this kind of action.

The short, thin one asked most of the questions and the other one only asked a few. This was the part of the entire arresting event I had been coached for. I knew I should and could tell them nothing. Big Joe had coached me to say, "I don't remember."

There is another strange thing I should tell you about. I regularly paid money, a small amount, at specific intervals, for an address. It was a run down apartment somewhere I had never been. Officially, a lot of girls lived in this little slum apartment. I had memorized the address ahead of time for just such an occasion as this. There was some kind of legal thing about if my address was local it would cost less to bail me out and pay my fines.

The first cop asked, "Where are you from?" I said, "I don't remember." He asked, "Where is your home?" I gave them the address.

They knew I was not a local girl. They could tell by the way that I talked. Plus, they knew all the local girls. So the second cop asked, "Where did you grow up?" I said,

"I don't remember." The first cop asked, "How long have you been working at the Roadhouse?" I said, "It's hard to say, I guess I don't remember working there." He asked, "Who is your pimp?" I shook my head sadly and slowly said, "I don't remember." The second cop, the tall husky one said, "That's enough. I just wanna say one thing, honey." His voice dripped with sarcasm. "I don't know what a nice girl like you is doing so far from home, but I hope you remember how to get back home. Cause this is some kind of bad crowd you caught up with, you remember that."

My next stop was a nasty cold metal room where I was strip searched by two large women with an attitude. They were not gentle and not in the mood to take any crap from whores. I did what they said and it didn't take long. They kept my purse, "for safekeeping." When my purse was returned the next day, it was missing a few items including all the cash from my wallet, about fifty dollars.

After the welcome team had their way with me, it was a short walk to the jail, a large cell with bunk beds. Six upper and six lower bunks, a total of twelve twin size, stinky thin mattresses, with no sheets or pillows. There was one toilet, sitting out in the open at one end of the large room. There were more people than beds, so girls were doubling up on the mattresses.

As I mentioned before, they busted both houses on the same night. Why they did that I still don't have a clue. It was a small town and a small police force, why would they do both at the same time? And then throw us all in the same cell together? That was crazy! Some of the girls knew each other and got along. Some were sworn enemies and had to be watched to prevent them from killing each other.

About every twenty minutes another girl would show up and find a place to lie down. One girl didn't seem to want to settle down. For a long time, she either paced back and forth or stood leaning on the bars.

It was mostly quiet in the cell, except for occasional loud accusations by girls who didn't get along with each other. They would hiss and shout mean words as jabs at each other. Even after things seemed settled down, one might think of something and it would start again. Brief but spiteful repartee.

The two whorehouses were competitors. The Roadhouse was the more respectable, more elite place to work. At least that's how my fellow "Health Spa" employees had explained it to me. "They let just anybody work there." I had heard this kind of thing being said in reference to The Plum Tree staff, many times, by different people at our Roadhouse. "Some of their girls are really ugly. They even let a fat girl work there." Imagine that? Now that I was face to face with these girls, they didn't seem much different from us.

All of us were in terrible spirits by now. Most of the girls were used to being up all-night and sleeping days. It was early in the morning by now and people were ready to try and sleep.

Two things were up-front for us girls. First, this represented a major loss of income. Friday and Saturday were the big nights when most of the money is made. "Why, oh why couldn't they have come on Saturday or Sunday?" was the chorus. That we were enduring humiliating conditions was nothing compared to the hit in the pocketbook.

The other bad part was the uncertainty. A bust like this always meant shake-up. Time off, for sure. We girls wouldn't all just go right back to work. It was unclear when, or even if, the house would re-open for business. It would, at the very least, require significant cleaning before the doors could re-open.

Some of the girls expressed concern about how their pimps would take it. It would cost money to get us out. I overheard a few discussions about this. Some, like Candy, were confident: "He's right outside. I'll be out of here before they can slam the door shut." Others were literally scared: "Oh shit, Buck's gonna be pissed. There's gonna be hell to pay. He don't have that kind of money, I know. Damn, I'm never getting out." I also heard questions like, "When you get out will you call so-and-so and tell them I'm here?"

It was almost five o'clock in the morning when I arrived. It took me a little while to get my bearings and settle. I wandered about the cell for a minute not really knowing what to do next. Wondering where I dared to lie down. One girl sitting up on the edge of a lower bunk asked softly, "So Rose, you feel like singing now?" Her request didn't actually require a response so I groaned. She had meant it as a joke.

I had a reputation for singing or humming little tunes. Just humming to myself when I thought no one was around. As it was, at the "Health Spa" there was little privacy. So I would be singing little ditties while I bathed or was in the kitchen. The other girls found it either amusing or annoying, and it had become my signature.

Still, I was surprised by her request. I was trying to keep a low profile and here she had drawn attention to me. I was feeling extremely dismal at that moment. By that time

the whole ordeal had taken its toll and I felt lifeless. Her request had placed an expectant hesitancy into the air, so I followed my dismissive grunt with a whispered response. "I don't feel much like singing," I said as I shook my head and felt the weight of the world on my shoulders. Truthfully, I felt more like crying than singing.

A long pause later, without even thinking about it, I burst into song. More precisely it was a pitifully executed, softly sung version of a well-known country tune. "Wasted days and wasted nights." Just that one part of the song I slowly sang right out, clear as a bell, hamming it up a little by the time I got to the last word "nights". The entire room responded, at least those who were awake, with about as much enthusiasm as a wet pancake. There were grunts and groans, a weak snort, and a few comments like, "yeah..." and "I know that's right." The proverbial, "shut the fuck up," echoed softly from one of the upper bunks. Despite the gloomy response, I knew I had performed well and true for my audience of fellow captives.

A girl on a top bunk nearby encouraged me to climb up and bunk with her.

\* \* \* \* \*

It took a while to settle down. All the time, more girls arrived at intervals. One girl, from The Plum Tree, just went straight to a bunk, curled up in a fetal position and slept soundlessly, as if catatonic. Most were quietly settling into a restless sleep by about six or seven o'clock in the morning.

The jail cell was basically quiet for most of the morning. What sleep I found was fitful and filled with uneasy dreams. Some donuts were brought, but no one seemed hungry. Everyone was simply shut down. Starting about noon, there would be an occasional clatter or noise and one or two girls would leave. While there was no spoken rule, it seemed the girls who were the biggest moneymakers tended to leave first. Candy was indeed the first to go. She was out of there before noon.

I was surprised to hear my name called. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when I left the big cell and headed out toward the sunshine, or what was left of it on a winter day. Robbie had come to pick me up. Robbie was Big Joe's nephew. I had already met him a few times, he would occasionally fill in for a variety of errands.

Big Joe didn't want to come to the police station in person to get me out. Dusty had conveniently not been working that night. A subject that had been broached as we waited the previous night, one girl observed, "I should have known when Dusty didn't show up." Another one replied, "Wish I could just not show up."

Big Joe didn't want to alert the police, beyond what they could figure out on their own, that there was any connection between him and me. Big Joe avoided all contact with the police if at all possible. He wasn't about to waltz into the station just to bail a girl out. So he sent the best representative he had to pick me up.

I liked Robbie and was glad to see him. He took me out to eat, then we stopped at a little store to pick up a few things, like a toothbrush. I was still wearing the same clothes. Robbie said no one had gone into the busted house yet, but he was going there

soon. He promised to get some of my clothes real soon. We bought a T-shirt I could change into for now.

He began telling me some of the many stories that would allow me to piece together what had happened.

There had been two madams, Raven and Carla, along with the three security guards working that night - Louie, a guy named Ken, who often worked weekends, and a new guy named Lance. What had happened to them? I wanted to know. The dust hadn't yet settled and Robbie didn't know a lot, but he told me what he did know.

Louie and Carla had left minutes before the bust. Big Joe had it set up for someone to call at the right time to say Carla had an emergency at home, and Louie had to drive her. I later learned that Big Joe had lots of allies in strategic places. Someone was able to notify Big Joe about what was going to happen when.

The police had mistaken the new security guard named Lance for a John. Lance had paid a fine and walked. Robbie told me Raven was OK. She had called Big Joe, but he wasn't sure how she got away.

Robbie laughed and rolled his eyes as he told me about what Ken had done. Ken sized up the situation a few minutes before the police arrived to break down the front door. He had grabbed his coat and took off running, down the stairs and out the back door. A minute later and he would have been caught, but he eluded capture. He had made his way over to the truck stop and watched from a safe distance. "Crazy fool!" Robbie concluded, his tone of voice implying that Ken had done well and was to be admired.

After dinner, Robbie took me to a hotel and got me settled into my room. It was a nice enough hotel, but it was in the middle of nowhere. There was no pool or room service and nowhere close enough to walk. So I could watch TV and pace the floor. I felt lonely and bored. Worst of all, Robbie had not brought the one thing I most wanted, some pot.

About noon the next day Robbie showed up and took me back to the Roadhouse. I was the first girl back. There were three other people working at cleaning up. Peggy, our regular housekeeper, Louie, and a woman named Doris who was available for odd errands and filled in as a cook sometimes. The main room was back in order, and Louie was setting the office straight. There were a few rooms cleaned and put back together.

I collected my things from the room I had been in. Everything was thrown all over the place. I packed what there was into my suitcase and moved to a downstairs room. Big Joe wanted me in a room where I could have the light on at night and not draw extra attention. I was to avoid going upstairs and turning on lights unless I really needed to. Also, Big Joe had sent a small stash of what he knew I wanted - some marijuana. It was pretty good stuff. I had special permission, just for this time, until people came back. I could smoke in my room.

I took a long bath, sang little ditties to myself knowing there was no one to eavesdrop, enjoyed a little solitude and relaxation, and got a good buzz on. There was still food in the kitchen, plenty of snack food, so I had no worries.

I could have gone home with Robbie, or stayed another night in the hotel, but I preferred to stay there, in the brothel. It felt like home to me. Louie was on guard until

close to midnight, and then Mackey took over the night watch. Someone had to be there, like a guard, to assure the peace. Clients who didn't know about the bust would stop by. They were greeted and sent on their way. The possibility of putting up a big hand painted sign that read, "Closed on account of the bust" was considered only for its comic value.

The next morning, Sheryl showed up about ten o'clock in the morning. I put on my working clothes and we were back in business. I used an upstairs room near the big room to do business. There were only a few customers anyway, but we wanted to keep them away from any cleaning that was still going on. Along with the cleaning, each girl's belongings had to be packed up and sent away, unless someone came for them.

A girl named April showed up that afternoon to work the night shift. Dusty also came in to work that night, and Carla, the night madam, showed up about seven o'clock. Sheryl and I were hanging around. It was a slow startup.

Right away, I had to pick a new name. I liked Rose a lot, but this was some kind of new beginning so I needed a new name. Dusty talked about how Big Joe told everybody none of the same girls were coming back, so the name Rose had to go. After trying on a number of names, we decided on Lisa. Dusty thought it suited me and I agreed.

There was the usual stream of horny truckers still showing up. Most of them hadn't heard about the bust. We also got a lot of extra traffic from the locals and regulars stopping by. Some of the guys had been there that night and wanted to tell about what they had seen and what had happened to them. Many of the regulars who stopped by had heard about the bust and were curious to see what was up and if we were still in business. That meant there was a lot of activity and a fair amount of it was not paying customers.

We got to tell stories and listen to stories. Soon I got tired of hearing the same things over and over. The scene was re-created many times from each person's perspective.

It turns out two customers had figured things out about as quickly as Ken. One had seen Ken take off running. He grabbed his buddy and they both followed suit. They had run out the back door, through the fields, making their way stealthily around the long way to the truck stop. Having both served in the military, they were quite descriptive about their use of evasive tactics. Then they safely watched from afar, along with a small crowd of on-lookers from the truck stop. Their quick reflexes and evasive tactics had paid off. The police who quickly surrounded the building apprehended the next guys who tried to get out the back door.

One young customer had frozen solid from fright, then fainted. Various people's actions and reactions were scrutinized. Comparisons were made between this bust and previous raids. Ideas were formulated about what could be done differently next time to make it go better.

I was most interested in finding out what had happened to Raven. She had seen the cop cars coming up the road. She knew exactly what was coming down and had a plan ready. Still, she only had seconds to put it into action. As Raven told her story, she would punctuate the telling emphatically with, "No way was I going down, *No Way!*" and "I wasn't about to let them get me this time, not me, not ever again." and "One more bust and that would be it for me. I just can't go there, no way." Raven wasn't simply afraid of staying overnight in jail as I had, she was legally on the verge of serving serious prison

time for violations. It was the threat of serving time in prison that motivated Raven to evade capture.

There was an elaborate way of storing the money so that a certain small amount was left out, while the bulk of the money was kept in a more secure spot. That early in the night about half was left out and the other half was stashed. Luckily, Raven could get it quick.

Raven had grabbed that money pouch and the big black book. Some money had been left for the police to find and hopefully conclude that it must have been a slow night. There was a place in the attic specifically for hiding the big black book and the money. It made Raven a hero that she had done this successfully. It made the bust less damaging for Big Joe and less successful for the police. The big black book, specifically, was evidence.

She knew there was a small niche in the attic. It was in between the rafters and under the floorboards. A small person could barely fit in there. Raven had squeezed in and stayed very quiet. It had been dusty and uncomfortable. She could hear a lot of what was going on downstairs, and so she crouched down and waited. The police came up and searched the attic thoroughly, coming within inches of finding her. She held her breath. She said, "I almost sneezed. I swear. I thought they could hear me shivering I was so afraid they would find me." She stayed in her hiding place long after it got very quiet. Raven didn't want to take any chances. She had to relieve herself and had made a mess rather than come out of hiding. "Couldn't be helped." she said.

It was just before dawn when Raven tiptoed downstairs. She went out the back door and walked the distance to the truck stop without another soul in sight. Raven was a mess, but she was a free woman and a hero.

All in all it was a fairly routine kind of bust. Just another part of doing business. Big Joe talked with me shortly after. He gave me time to talk about everything. Asked me how the police were, he was especially interested in exactly what they had asked me. He already knew I had told them nothing and he said, "You did a good job Rose."

## Chapter Twelve - Leaving

My record-breaking day started early. The place was hopping all night. There was so much business the night girls couldn't handle it all. Even when it was four and five o'clock in the early morning, it was still busy. Lots of guys were waiting around in the big room. One of the night girls woke me up early, "Lisa, wake up, you won't believe it, it's soooo busy. Get up Lisa!" So I started early.

The night girls were tired and happy. They had all made a lot of money. I had a steady stream of customers. Johns were lined up and waiting in the big room until well after noon. For me it was very exciting, and each one was so pleasant, kind, thoughtful and appreciative. More importantly they were generous that day. Lots of forty and fifty-dollar tricks and even a couple of hundred-dollar big spenders. I really didn't even notice the time until after noon, when it slowed down for a moment and I stopped for a bite to eat. Work seemed a lot more fun when I was making so much money.

All afternoon, guys were showing up. They weren't so much lined up waiting the way they had been all morning, but there was still a steady stream of tricks. It was extremely unusual to have so much traffic on the day shift. I wondered if the moon was full or the planets aligned just right. What else could possibly make guys horny and pleasant?

Big Joe was happy about such a good night and day. Everyone had made a lot of money. When everything was counted up, I had brought in \$780 dollars that day. Big Joe said it was not only a record for days, it was a record for the most money made in one day. I had made more money on my shift than any other girl, even Candy.

\* \* \*

After working there for about six months, I was getting pretty good at my job. I had a large number of regulars who liked me. That meant repeat business. Big Joe told me that word was out favorably about my services. "See Lisa for a good time." He valued word of mouth promotion highly. There was no formal advertising for our business.

One night the girls had gone a little wild on the CB radio enticing traffic to stop by. It must have been a slow night and the girls were bored. The next day Big Joe was very specific about not doing that. It could cause a lot of trouble if the wrong people heard or if the girls chose the wrong words when promoting their services. Any form of public solicitation could attract unwanted attention.

I was starting to get attached to some of the people. It was suggested that I get an apartment nearby so I wouldn't have to travel so far home on my week off. More importantly, I was losing touch with the people back home. I was rarely around, and when I was, what did I have to talk about? People back home didn't want to hear any of my whore stories, even if I had been allowed to talk about it. The few people back home

who really knew what I was doing were uncomfortable about it. The people who didn't know were constantly asking pesky questions. "So, what kind of work do you do?" or "What are you up to now?" or "How's work going?" I was worried that some people may have noticed I had more money than I should, and no excuse for it.

Most of all, it was hard to make the switch from who I was while working at the "Health Spa," back to the person my hometown expected to see. To bounce from one reality to the other with only a short plane ride in-between was psychologically tiresome.

One example was the swearing. I was expected to swear like a sailor at the "Health Spa" and I had to clean up my potty mouth quick at home. Along with the swearing, there was so much jargon at my "ho" job that was not to be used back home. Even more difficult was the transition from acting like a bold sexy siren to being the modest hippie chick "straight girl" that was my more familiar nature.

Big Joe had asked me about my long-term plans. What did I want in my future? He would have helped me realize my goals if I had any. Up until this time I still held onto the belief that being a whore was something I was doing just for fun and just for a short time. By my sixth tour of duty, it was coming to my attention that this was becoming a permanent, long-term job.

\* \* \*

Seemingly out of the blue, something happened. I snapped. It wasn't something I consciously planned. Some power greater than myself had taken charge. I had an

unexpected form of mental breakdown that will forever remain undiagnosed. My vision was affected, in that the edges of my peripheral vision were blurry and what I could see in the middle appeared to me as if I was looking down a long tunnel. I would just stare into space. Various hallucinations filled my conscious mind. At times, it was also as if I were in a darkened room with unclear boundaries. The odd thing about it was that it felt comfortable and familiar, almost like returning to the womb. I didn't want to look out from my imaginary inner space. The "outside" world seemed brightly lit, confusing and unfriendly.

It started on a Friday after I had been out to see the doctor and gone shopping. We had stopped at a phone booth so I could make a call back home. Mackey was driving me around that day. He was waiting in the car and had to come and get me after a while. I was staring into space with the phone hanging down off the hook.

"What's the matter?" Mackey asked. I couldn't talk. On the way back to the car I mumbled, "My mother is dead." It wasn't based on reality, but more on a feeling or belief, and it was what came out of my mouth. Unplanned by me, the simple statement achieved the result of communicating that I was in grief. This served as a sufficient explanation to Mackey. He left me alone and didn't ask any more questions.

How could I explain that something inside of me had died? I, myself, didn't have a clue about the possible parts of myself that were at war or which parts had won or lost. My brain was in something like an endless loop, working overtime saying, "This does not compute, this does not add up, this cannot continue." I was in la-la land. How could I begin to explain any of this to the people I worked with?

It quickly became clear to everyone that something was wrong, something had changed. I saw Louie and perceived him as the devil himself and gave him a look to kill. Luckily for everyone, I really only wanted to be in my room and didn't go out to make any big scene. Dusty came in and talked a little. She was trying to figure out what was going on. Dusty was very familiar with mental instability and was able to determine, before long, that I was genuinely way out in left field. Her solution was to bring a very strong downer. Strong sleeping pills were very popular among the girls. It was hard to swallow the big dark capsule. I slept a dreamless sleep.

The next morning I woke up late. They had let me sleep in and one of the night girls filled in for the day shift. When I ventured into the office only Sheryl was there. I hadn't known ahead of time that I would announce firmly, "I can't fuck another trucker." It surprised me even as it came out of my mouth. Any attempt on Sheryl's part to talk with me, find out what was bothering me, was met solely by my repeating in various ways, firmly, sadly, softly or loudly, shaking my head, "I just can't fuck another trucker." It didn't take long for her to get the picture. It was especially hard breaking the news to Sheryl. A part of me felt like I was personally letting her down.

I was so scared inside, to be giving up all this money and a lifestyle that I did find rewarding in some ways. The lunatic part of myself gave me no choice in the matter. The thought of fucking another trucker, turning another trick was making me sick to my stomach. It made my head hurt.

Sheryl suggested I go back to my room. Before long Big Joe came to talk with me. He recognized "crazy talk." It was a familiar visitor in this line of work. He didn't

attempt to reason with me or talk me out of it. He did listen to as much as I could talk about (which wasn't much) and then he let me go. He wasn't happy with this turn of events. Clearly, it was time for me to go.

He impressed on me that I was putting him in a bind. To leave as I was, with no notice, meant he had to scramble to find a day girl. Someone would have to fill in for me. He didn't outright say I would not be welcome back, but he made it clear that I couldn't just come right back after pulling a stunt like this. "Are you really sure you want to leave like this?" he asked. "You know you can't just come right back now, not after this."

All of the other people heard the story that I had a death in my family and that rumor was allowed to perpetuate. Only Sheryl, Big Joe and Dusty heard me say, "I can't fuck another trucker." Big Joe asked me to keep that to myself, to stay in my room and not talk with anyone else, except Dusty, him or Sheryl. He said it would take him a day or two to get me cashed out and my travel arrangements set up. Meanwhile, I was to stay in my room as much as possible.

I was content to stay in my room. All I wanted was to be left alone. I was feeling a lot of sad feelings, mostly grief and feeling sorry for myself. I was crying a lot. I tried to keep my bouts of sobbing from being too loud.

Dusty showed up that night with another strong sleeping pill. Before I took it we talked. Or rather she talked. For some reason, Dusty opened up and shared her story with me. She didn't just start right out with it. We began talking about philosophical things. We were talking about our past, and got onto the subject of childhood.

Dusty had been born into a very poor family. "We lived way out in the back hills," she called it, meaning they lived out in the mountains, far from any city. "My daddy was a coal miner, when he could find work. Mostly our family lived off the land in a little bitty shack. I was the oldest. My 'mams' had ten children." Dusty paused, as she was lost in the memories.

"Two died as babies, never stood a chance." Dusty shook her head. "Russell James was my favorite, I loved that boy. He was sweet and cuddly like a little puppy. We all called him Rusty 'cause his hair was the color of rusty red" Dusty looked me square in the eye before continuing. "He died in my arms, only two and a half." Her chin quivered, but the cold stare from her eyes challenged me, I was to show no pity. "I was 'bout twelve at the time."

No one could console the twelve year old Dusty. "Callie Mae you got to eat. Eat something." Her mother had repeated endlessly. Her name then, her real name, was Callie Mae. "Don't tell no one, I swear Rose, if you tell..." She knew I wasn't going to tell and that I wasn't going to be around for long.

Dusty felt her little brother might have lived if only he had gotten the right medicine. Medicine they couldn't afford. A doctor visit they couldn't afford. She'd sworn to herself that she would never live this life of poverty that was her lot as a child.

Shortly after that time, she grew into puberty and becoming a woman. It was painfully clear that Dusty was a striking beauty and men were paying notice. In the back hills it was a common practice for some men to take what they wanted, and more than a few wanted her. She was raped shortly before her fourteenth birthday. It was a relative,

an uncle, and so it got swept under the rug. No one did anything about it, even though she told her mother.

Dusty had a sweetheart, a boy she had grown up with. When she told him, he went after the man and the result was that her sweetheart got shot in the head. It was a horrible story. It seemed she had never really let it all out in one long line the way she was that night in my room. Once she got going, she couldn't stop. Perhaps the grief and desolation I had dripping from every corner of my room welcomed her to relieve herself of some of her own.

Her friend being murdered had caused Dusty to leave and never go back. With no money and without knowing or caring where she was going, she had hitched a ride, first chance she got, with someone heading anywhere but there. She ended up in the big city, penniless and in rags. At first she stayed in a shelter, then did the foster home thing for a while, she was still so young. Her good looks meant it wasn't long before someone turned her out.

She paid her dues and had worked her way up the ladder of prostitute success. She had first worked the streets, then worked as a call girl and escort service. Working in a house like the one we were in was the easiest in Dusty's opinion. She had worked in some of the other houses in the area before finding our "Health Spa" and hooking up with Big Joe. "He's the best Rose, I got to tell you. Big Joe's the best pimp a girl could hope to have."

One last feeble attempt, "You sure you got to go, Rose?" Even though my name was Lisa now to everyone else, Dusty used Rose between us, in private. We both liked it

better and it was her way of being familiar. We didn't say good-bye at that time and I would not see her again.

I took the big sleeping pill.

The next day, the place was pretty slow. Sometime around mid-morning, Big Joe showed up with my money. It was a brief and relatively painless good-bye. He hugged me and wished me well. He didn't say any of that stuff like "Stay in touch." In a matter of fact way, Big Joe explained that he had booked me on a plane. It left that afternoon and Mackey would drive me. Then he was gone, out the door.

My good-bye with Sheryl was thankfully very brief. I would miss her the most. Next thing I knew I was on a plane, headed home with some cash in my boot and a heart full of tears. That big policeman's words ringing in my ear, "I hope you remember how to get back home." I hoped so too.