

Basic Prostitution Vocabulary

By Joseph Parker, Clinical Director
The Lola Greene Baldwin Foundation

The following list of prostitution terminology was accumulated by working directly with prostituted women, children, and men, as well as pimps. Some also came from law enforcement and other agencies which have contact with prostituted people.

Some prostitution terms are stable and very old. Others are rapidly changing or regional. The main purpose, other than to evade law enforcement, is to make the kids and adults being prostituted feel special and different from "squares" and support their fantasy that they have more glamor and more control of their lives than they do.

Some terms are not from the common language because they refer to experiences luckier people are unlikely ever to have.

ARRANGEMENTS OR UNDERSTANDINGS: in places where prostitution is legal, the drug laws are not abolished, yet prostitution sites need large and regular drug deliveries to keep their prostituted people numb enough to survive and keep working. Agreements are made not to enforce the drug laws around protected establishments. The government officials and businessmen involved usually are paid in money, sometimes in drugs for their own use, but almost always, in special sexual services. These often are secretly videotaped in case the arrangement needs to be helped along with blackmail.

AUTOMATIC: when the pimp is out of town, in jail, or otherwise not in direct control of those he is prostituting, the victims
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special sexual services. These often are secretly videotaped in case the arrangement needs to be helped along with blackmail.

AUTOMATIC: when the pimp is out of town, in jail, or otherwise not in direct control of those he is prostituting, the victims “automatically” go out to prostitute without being ordered to.

AROUND THE WORLD: vaginal intercourse (chiefly from trucking industry).

BABY 'HO: unusually young person being prostituted. Age 12 and younger are not unusual.

BAREBACKING: sex without a condom. Some HIV positive men will not disclose their status but offer extra money. Also sought by others whose HIV status is unknown. Almost everyone in prostitution very long becomes hepatitis C positive.

BED DANCING: a strip club performance in which a naked or nearly naked woman will dance on top of a clothed man on a bed in a private room. Readily escalates to acts of direct prostitution.

BITCH (AS WELL AS CUNT, 'HO, SLUT, ETC.): used by pimps and customers to address or refer to prostituted women, and often nude dancers.

BOTTOM BITCH (PREVIOUSLY BOTTOM LADY): a pimp who has more than one woman under his control will appoint one woman to supervise the others, report rule violations, and often help inflict punishment on them. Some, in later life, will go on to become pimps, madams and escort service operators themselves.

BREAK A BITCH: when the pimp, or someone acting for him, takes all the money a prostituted person has earned. May be done several times a day.

BREAKING IN A NEW BITCH: things a pimp does to take control of a new victim. (Related word: “seasoning”.)

BROTHEL, BORDELLO, CATHOUSE, WHOREHOUSE: may be a large apartment or actual house, or, in Nevada and other countries, a specially built facility for selling sex on the premises. Often has extreme security measures to prevent attacks by other criminals seeking the large amounts of cash and dope kept there. The security is two sided—to keep the women and children in, as well as robbers

out. The places often are guarded (and open) 24 hours a day, but some have closing times in which the victims are locked in from the outside.

CAR TRICK, CAR DATE: prostituted person is picked from the street by a john for the purpose of having sex in the vehicle. Very dangerous, because once in the car, she is isolated and under his control. He can do anything, including robbery, assault, dumping her naked in a remote area, or even murder. Entering a vehicle with more than one man in it, or getting into a closed van are even more dangerous.

CATCHER: usually younger, "wannabe pimps", who watch prostitution victims on "the track" or in other prostitution venues, to make sure they are following the pimp's orders.

CAUGHT A CASE: either the pimp or a prostituted person has been arrested and charged with a crime.

CHOOSE: the victim can be told she has chosen a pimp by as little as making eye contact with him. Usually involuntary, but some more experienced women may be able to negotiate a change of pimps if they have the fee.

CHOOSING FEE OR CHANGING FEE: amount paid by prostituted person to the original pimp to compensate him for what he has lost in the course of the victim changing over to the control of a different pimp.

CIRCUIT (OR TRACK): a set area where prostituted people are regularly available. This can be the area around a group of strip clubs and pornography stores or a particular stretch of street. Within a country, it can be a series of cities among which prostituted people are moved, such as the west coast circuit of San Diego, Las Vegas, Vancouver, BC and cities in between. It can also be a chain of states, such as the "Minnesota pipeline" by which victims are moved through a series of states, from Minnesota to markets in New York.

CLUB EXECUTIVE: manages sex industry clubs and bars. Often claims to own or partially own the business. Often they do not, but are acting to conceal ownership by one of the communities major "respectable businessmen" or organized crime. Attempts to trace true ownership often lead only to holding companies and corporations that only exist in some attorney's office.

COMBAT ZONE: municipal strategy of trying to confine sexually oriented businesses to a small area, one in which the residents are poor and small legitimate businesses in decline. The zone also becomes the center for street prostitution, drug dealing and high rates of other crime. The idea is to protect "better" areas from the increased crime rates, degraded quality of life and falling property values. This strategy has generally failed because the combat zones bring in more customers from a wider area, and more businesses are established, resulting in the problems spreading to other parts of the community.

COMIN' UP: refers to a victim recently turned out who is bringing in good money.

COUCH DANCING: a strip club performance which may vary from club to club and area to area. Sometimes it will involve dancing on a box between the trick's legs, other times it will consist of straddling the trick while he lies on a couch. The customer usually is clothed, while the woman is naked or nearly so. It may take place in an open club area, or in a private booth set up to facilitate direct prostitution.

DADDY: what pimps require their victims to call them. They may refer to themselves as "Pimp Daddy" when among people like themselves.

DATE: describes a prostitution customer or the activity of prostitution. For example, "with a date" or "dating". The word "trick" also has dual meaning.

DUAL SYSTEM: in jurisdictions with legal prostitution, one part of the industry complies with licensing, health checks, and taxes. Inevitably, a parallel system develops outside the law, because many pimps do not want to pay taxes, and do want the freedom to use underage children and high levels of violence. Legal or not, almost all operators of prostitution businesses have a fundamental criminal orientation.

ESCORT SERVICE: organization operating chiefly through cell phones and pagers, which sends prostituted people to the trick's location (an outcall), or arranges to have the john come to a house or apartment which may be the workplace of a single woman or actually a small brothel (an incall). Some are networked with others and can assemble large numbers of women for parties and conventions. Others serve those with special tastes such as children or sadomasochism.

EUROPEAN: sometimes used to refer to acts involving urine, feces, and other things.

EXIT FEE: money a pimp will demand from a victim who is thinking about trying to leave. It will be an exorbitant sum, to discourage her from leaving. Most pimps never let their victims leave freely.

FAMILY OR FOLK: group of people under the control of one pimp, who plays the role of "father". This idea can be psychologically complicating for a victim who never had a family before.

FINES, TAXES: failed ideas for controlling prostitution. When people are convicted of prostitution and fined, they must do even more prostitution to pay the fines. When governments tax legal sex businesses in which prostitution is none the less allowed, the taxes are paid in large part from the income from prostitution. The courts and government become just another layer of pimps who have to be paid.

FINESSE PIMP: one who prides himself on controlling others primarily through psychological manipulation. Still, the threat of violence is always there.

FISTING: forcing a closed fist up someone's vagina or anus. For a few people, an erotic act. More commonly used by pimps and johns to extensively damage a woman's pelvic organs, permanently injuring her. Can be imperfectly repaired if the victim is able to seek treatment.

FOLLOW YOUR MONEY: phrase pimps use to warn prostituted people to take care of the money they are given. Losing money by some means, such as being robbed by a trick, will result in being turned back out to work 24 hours a day until the money is replaced, and the daily quota is also met.

FRONTS: money a pimp will give his victims to use for cab fare, drinks and condoms. Also called "walking around money".

THE GAME: the sex industry generally. Pimps are called "players".

GOLDEN SHOWER: a "sex" act in which one person urinates on another. Also "water sports", a term more commonly used in gay prostitution.

GORILLA PIMP: one who controls his victims almost entirely through violence. Also, there are gorilla 'hoes who assist a pimp in controlling his "stable" chiefly through violence.

HALF AND HALF: an act of prostitution in which there is both oral and vaginal sex. Priced somewhat lower than each act would be individually.

HAND JOB: prostituted person brings john to orgasm by manual masturbation. In massage parlors, called a "hand finish".

HARD CORE: two meanings when used in pornography. May mean showing an erect penis in action. May also refer to pornography when an actor, usually female, gets hurt, such as by violent anal sex.

'HO: person being prostituted. Short for whore.

HO VINE: "grape vine"-like networks of communication among people being prostituted.

HO LINE: loose network of communication between pimps, chiefly by phone, inter-city and interstate. Often uses changing slang and code words to confound law enforcement along the "circuit". Used to trade, buy, and sell prostituted women and children.

HUSTLER: someone who will do anything for money: sell drugs, steal, scam and pimp. Also more specific to a person prostituted in the gay trade.

IZZ OR IZZN: added to words to give a different sound, like "pig latin". To make surveillance and presenting evidence in court more difficult. Along with changing specialized slang, may require prosecutors to provide expert witness to translate for the court.

JACK SHACK: lingerie modeling, massage parlors and other operations where tricks masturbate while watching women in revealing clothes, underwear or lack thereof. Almost always have facilities for on-site prostitution.

JOHN: person buying another for sexual gratification. Primary cause of prostitution. Comes from alias often used by customer if asked their name. May also derive from euphemism for toilet.

KIDDIE STROLL: area of the stroll featuring kids under sixteen, often much younger. Especially prominent in countries where prostitution is legal, but has minimum age limits of 18 years or so. Largest kiddie stroll in North America is in Vancouver, B.C., Canada, where public solicitation is illegal but not prostitution itself.

LAP DANCING: strip club act in which a woman will grind her body into the lap of a trick. While the trick is clothed, the woman may be naked or nearly so.

LAY SOME DRAG: the way the victim is taught to talk to people not involved in prostitution.

LICK HITTER: severely addicted person who prostitutes just enough to get a dose of drugs or alcohol. When that wears off, she is back on the "track" until she can get another dose. May go on for days or weeks at a time, with serious health consequences.

THE LIFE: in earlier times, "the sporting life" The experience of being used in prostitution. Virtually always involves heavy drug and alcohol use, violence and other crime.

LOT LIZARD: person who picks up tricks at truck stops. May service an individual trucker while traveling with him from place to place.

MADAME: older woman who manages brothel. May have been prostituted in her earlier years, but may be a pimp/career criminal in her own right. Often supports the women's outside pimp/boyfriend/fiancee/husband by calling him when victim gets off work, and telling him exactly at what time she left and exactly how much money she had when she left.

OUT OF POCKET: person not under control of a pimp. Will be vulnerable to threats, harassment and violence in order to make them "choose" a pimp. Also may mean in violation of pimp's rules.

OUTLAW: prostituted person generally successful in avoiding control by pimps.

PEEL A TRICK: when a prostituted person steals money, checkbooks, and credit cards from a customer. May be used by members of prostitution group or sold to others who "hang paper" or do identity theft.

PEEP SHOWS, LIVE SEX SHOWS: usually found in pornography stores. The trick sits behind a glass partition, and directs sexual activity by women and/or men, with or without sex toys and other props, to fulfill his fantasies.

PIMP: person who persuades or forces his victims to engage in prostitution. The pimp collects the money paid by the johns, essentially for his services in using whatever manipulation or force is needed to keep the women and kids serving the johns desires.

PIMP HARD: to raise quotas, reduce rest times, and/or require victims to accept tricks they would ordinarily avoid.

PIMP PARTY: when several pimps come together to rape, beat, drug, and torture someone who is resisting being prostituted, or who was "out of line" by trying to escape, talking to the police, or whatever. Can go on for days.

PIMP STICK: a steel whip made out of coat hanger wire. May be heated on a stove to burn as well as cut tissue. Other items, such as appliance cord, towel bars and shower curtain rods, cigarettes and curling irons also may be used to inflict overwhelming pain.

PORNOGRAPHY: sexual activity depicted in words, pictures or films solely for sexual stimulation of others, and for monetary gain. The sex industry tries to keep it protected by claiming it to be "art", under freedom of speech. Generally repetitive, following only a few standard formulas. Some "actors" are voluntary, but many are prostituted, having been "ordered" from a local pimp for particular roles. Is addictive to many people. Obsession with it may terminate any normal sex life the addicts had, and cause them to spend far more money and time on their addiction than they can afford. Has a major role in "fueling" some users to the point they cross over from fantasy to actual violent crime.

PRIVATE DANCE: couch, bed or other "dances" which often take place in private rooms at an extra charge. This offers men the opportunity to pressure women into more direct acts of prostitution to earn tips.

QUOTA: amount of money prostituted person must turn over to the pimp before they can stop prostituting and go home. Commonly \$500/day.

RABBIT: a prostituted person who goes from one pimp to another too frequently.

RECKLESS EYEBALLING: when a prostituted person looks at another pimp, which is strictly forbidden.

RENEGADE: prostituted person not under control of a pimp.

ROLL A TRICK: robbing a trick with force by prostituted person, the pimp, or his associates. Usually involves weak or intoxicated tricks.

SCAT: sexual activity centered on feces.

SEASONING: combination of psychological manipulation, intimidation, gang rape and sodomy, beatings, deprivation of food and sleep, cutting off from family, friends and other sources of support and threatening or holding hostage of victim's children. Purpose is to totally break down victim's resistance and ensure that she will do anything she is told.

SHOWER DANCING: strip club performance in which women are placed naked in a transparent shower. Paying customers may be allowed to apply soap or lotions to their bodies.

SISTER WIFE, SISTER-IN-LAW, WIFE-IN-LAW, STABLE SISTER: what women in a pimp's stable call each other.

SPONGES: pimps keep their victims working all day, every day, year round ("24/7" is originally a prostitution term). There is no time off for menstruation. Instead of being allowed to use tampons, the women are required to cut up pieces of kitchen sponges and insert them in their vaginas to absorb menstrual blood without the john's noticing, as they would with a tampon. Pimps who want to humiliate the women may make them trade sponges. If he wants to inflict pain, he may make them use sponge/scotchbrite pads with the scotchbrite facing inward.

SPORT, BJ, BLOW JOB, FRENCH: oral sex

SQUARE: anyone not involved in the life of prostitution.

STABLE: group of people under the control of a single pimp. The choice of a farming word is not accidental. Pimps consider their victims to be no better than animals.

STRAIGHT SEX, STRAIGHT LAY: vaginal intercourse.

STREETWALKER, 'WALKER: someone who primarily contacts tricks by walking the street and making nonverbal signals that they are available. May do car tricks or have a motel room nearby.

STRIP CLUBS: a legal system of prostitution in which women and men take their clothes off for the sexual stimulation of customers. Often have private "VIP rooms" for on-site prostitution.

STROLL: sections of street commonly used to market sex between johns in cars and women and kids on foot. If it is in a poor neighborhood, or a commercial area not open at night, and therefore there are few complaints to city officials by anyone considered to matter, the area may serve as a kind of "red light" district for decades.

SWEATING A BITCH: when a pimp puts pressure on a prostituted person to accept them as their pimp. Methods include stalking, harassment, assaults and outright kidnapping.

TABLE DANCING: strip club performance in which a woman will dance on a small platform they carry around with them, or dance on the actual table around which one or more men are seated. The men are clothed while the dancer may be nude or nearly so.

TIP: a term used in the escort and massage areas of prostitution. This is the amount actually received by the prostituted person, while the agency gets the "service charge".

TRAP: the money or the location where it is hidden while on the circuit. A pimp may empty these traps several times a day.

TRACKER: a man who will go after an escaping prostituted person, kidnap them, and return them to the pimp for a fee.

TRADE UP, TRADE DOWN, BUY AND SELL: pimps dispose of victims giving them problems, or who no longer match the profile sought by the clientele the pimp normally serves. They may trade straight across, with some money or in return for two or more other victims. The buy/sell price is usually low: \$2500 to \$3500. The women/kids can be moved long distances rapidly, such as from Portland, OR to Atlanta, GA, with a guard, overnight by air.

TRICK: describes both the act of prostitution and the person buying it. Or example, "turning a trick" or "with a trick".

TURN OUT: used both to describe being forced into prostitution and a person newly involved in prostitution. "She was turned out at the age of 14 years", or "Syd is a turn out".

WORKING: engaged in active prostitution.

WORKING GIRL: euphemism for a prostituted woman.

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