On the Separation of Personal and Professional: Sex, Work,
Law, the Girlfriend Experience, and the Interpersonal
Relationships of Independent Escorts

by

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Abstract

I explore the ways in which independent escorts who offer the Girlfriend Experience (GFE) create and maintain boundaries between their personal and professional lives. These boundaries are important for both escorts and their personal partners. Occasionally, some of these boundaries are crossed with certain clients. I also explore how the interpersonal relationships of sex workers affect the spaces in which they work. Most of my participants have been in relationships wherein their partner did not support their work as independent escorts. Often, these workers would transition into agency-based massage to mitigate the intimacy between themselves and their clients, which is perceived as less threatening to their partners. Due to the criminalization and stigmatization of sex work, sex workers who work in these spaces experience barriers to being intimate with clients. Furthermore, they experience adverse working conditions. It is for these reasons that the sex workers I interviewed preferred working independently.

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Introduction

James had been her client for over two years when he called with news that Matthew was talking. She fondly referred to James as her 'lunchtime quickie' client. They saw each other every two weeks.

Sometimes they laugh when they think about how they met; their relationship has grown so much in the years they've known each other and she tells him things now she wouldn't dream of telling him when they first met.

She talks to him about her family, her boyfriend, and the pressure she feels at home, work, and at school. When she has a bad day it was not uncommon for her to text him for emotional support and he gladly provided it. It was not uncommon for him to do the same.

He often feels bad that he can't be there for her in a more tangible and physical way, and provide the kind of day-to-day support a partner can, but they both understand and respect the limitations of their relationship.

They both have families they love, after all, but enjoyed each others' company.

One day, he sent her a text message and asked whether he could call her. She was concerned something was wrong so she agreed.

"I'll be right back," she said to her partner, Jonah.

"What's up?" he asked.

"I need to talk to a client," she replied hesitantly. She knew this would cause tension between them. When her work interfered with their time together he often got upset and accused her of having inappropriate boundaries, or a lack of priorities. She took the risk though, because James was an important client.

He shrugged when she left the room. She sighed.

She took a moment to think before answering her phone and thought something must be terribly wrong.

"Hello," she said.

"Hey! Sorry to bother you. Is this a good time to talk?" he said with excitement.

"Oh yeah, no problem. What's up?" she said with a smile in her voice, relieved nothing was amiss.

"Matthew is talking!" he said.

"Oh my fucking god," she said, "I'm so happy!"

"What did he say?" she asked.

"My wife asked him whether he wanted more potatoes over dinner and he replied. He didn't want any so he just said 'no'. Then he just... he just talked! You know? Was saying lots of stuff. Jess and I were both really excited. We stared at him but tried not to make a big deal out of it. We didn't want to freak him out," he continued.

She laughed and said "wow! That's intense! But amazing! My goodness, this is great news" she said.

"Now that he's started he won't stop," he continued, "I can hardly remember what he said now, but he's really smart. I mean we've always known that but this is the first time he's actually said anything to confirm it," he laughed.

"I'm so happy for you and Jess," she repeated.

"Anyway," he said, "Sorry to bother you. How are you doing?" he asked.

"I'm at Jonah's place actually," she said, "so I can't talk long"

"Oh shit Vera, I'm sorry. I didn't know," he said.

"Don't worry about it," she said, "I know you wouldn't call if it wasn't important and you know how it is... Jonah will sulk a bit but I'm sure he'll get over it," she said.

"I'm sorry, I really shouldn't have called," he said, "Will I see you next week?" he asked.

"Yes, same time," she replied as she looked around, "I'm really happy for you," she whispered as she glanced at the closed door and hung up.

She thought of Matthew. She didn't know much about people with autism, let alone when or how they talk. He spent the first 8 years of his life in speech therapy and this was the first time he had spoken. Wow, she thought, my life is complicated. She opened the door and thought of Jonah. She sighed and hoped it wouldn't be a big deal.

I open with this fictional story to represent the complexity of relationships in the sex industry, a complexity I examine in this thesis. When the protagonist receives a call from James while she is with her boyfriend, she knows it will cause tension between her and her partner. When she glances at the door as she says “I’m really happy for you” she is thinking about Jonah, hoping it will not “be a big deal”. She knows he gets upset when she has what he perceives to be “inappropriate boundaries”. James knows of these tensions because he apologizes for calling when he realizes she is at Jonah’s place. This thesis explores such moments of boundary blurring, crossing, or merging, between escorts who offer the Girlfriend Experience (GFE), their clients, and their interpersonal partners.

The GFE is a service offered by many escorts around the world, including Ottawa, Ontario (Canada), the site of my research. Sex comprises only a small portion of the GFE. The remainder of the time is spent cuddling, watching movies, eating dinner, talking, drinking wine, and doing other activities traditionally associated with being in a romantic relationship. According to the Urban Dictionary, the GFE is “when an escort offers a service more akin to a 'real' relationship rather than just sex. The escort may go with the payer to dinner / the movies etc. and engage in conversation, kissing and so forth, before retiring for sex (as what might occur when dating). Men who indulge in such Girlfriend Experiences with escorts are said to be enjoying The Hobby” (Urban Dictionary, 2010). Offering the GFE as an independent escort is the standard in the sex industry in Canada. It is uncommon to find an independent escort who does not offer this experience. This service is often contrasted with the Porn Star Experience (PSE),

which is perceived as less intimate because of its focus on particular sexual practices. It often includes specific services (such as anal sex, group-sex, and double-penetration) which many GFE escorts do not provide.

My thesis examines the GFE from the point of view of sex workers who offer it, looking at how independent escorts understand, maintain, and in some cases cross or merge the boundaries between their personal and professional lives. What does it mean to be a professional escort, a term which was frequently used in my interviews? How do independent escorts maintain the boundaries between their personal and professional lives? How have scholars understood and interpreted the boundaries of independent escorts who offer the GFE? How does the criminalization of indoor sex work through Section 210 of the *Criminal Code* mediate how intimacy is negotiated with clients when escorts move from independent escorting to agency-based massage provision?¹ How do the interpersonal relationships of escorts affect their work? These are the research questions that fuel my research.²

In Chapter I, entitled “Hostile Worlds, Hostile Practices”, I argue the boundaries between an independent escort’s personal and professional life are very important and are often reinforced through a variety of practices. In this chapter, I explore these practices, how they are negotiated, and what they mean. Some of these practices

¹ Section 210 of the *Criminal Code* criminalizes anyone operating or found in a common bawdy house.

² Intimacy, love, and emotion are purposefully undefined throughout my thesis. To define these feelings would complicate my arguments unnecessarily. Similar to Zelizer (2005), I believe that “because we are dealing with a continuum [between personal and professional services or private and public emotions], exactly where we set the limit between intimacy and impersonal relations remains arbitrary” (Zelizer, 2005, p. 16).

include having a separate work space (either a different apartment, hotel room, or a separate bedroom/office for the purpose of escorting in the apartment in which they live), using different lingerie and clothing with clients that are different from the lingerie and clothing worn in their personal lives, maintaining temporal boundaries by not spending time with clients 'off the clock' (in an unpaid context), and not divulging a lot of personal information about themselves to clients.

In Chapter II entitled "Spatially Yours: Space, the Law, and the Interpersonal Relationships of Escorts", I explore how despite these practices meant to separate personal and professional life, independent escorts who offer the GFE experience tension in their interpersonal relationships because their partners have traditional and monogamous understandings of intimacy, sex, and money. I observe that this tension in their personal lives often reverberates into their professional lives in significant ways. For example, most of my participants have worked for a third party (i.e. an agency) because their partners are not supportive of their work as independent escorts who offer an intimate service, such as the GFE. Working for a third party is therefore a way for the sex worker to continue working in the sex industry, but offer a service that is perceived as less intimate by their partners. Because it is perceived as less intimate, this form of work causes less tension in their romantic relationships. However, working for a third party meant my participants had less control over their labour conditions (the shifts they worked, the cleanliness of the space, remuneration, and who they saw as clients). Unfortunately due to the stigmatization and criminalization of sex work in Canada, it is very difficult (if not impossible) for sex workers to access workers' rights

through the Ontario Ministry of Labour, and various workers' rights through the Criminal Code. In addition to the inaccessibility of these human rights, the illegibility of bawdyhouses in Canada creates a context in which agency-based sex workers must ensure their clients are not police officers. I argue this is a barrier to intimacy with clients in agencies, spas, and parlours.

In Chapter III entitled "Temporally Yours: the Permeable Boundaries of Escorts who offer the GFE" I explore the permeability of boundaries between an independent escort's personal and professional life. For example, some independent escorts who offer the GFE spend time with clients 'off the clock', pursue friendships with clients in their personal lives, and develop long-term and meaningful relationships with clients. Some of my participants have transitioned into traditional romantic relationships or friendships with former clients. In this chapter, I argue that while some boundaries are crossed with certain clients at certain times, the boundaries are still incredibly important. Every escort I interviewed relates to these boundaries, and their crossings, differently. Therefore, I believe it is important to explore these differences and shed light on how independent escorts negotiate these boundaries with clients.

1.1 Sex Work in Academia

Some scholars of sex work describe the work of escorts as involving emotional labour (Bernstein, 2007; Frank, 1998; Zelizer, 2005). 'Emotional labour' refers to a theoretical concept derived from Marxism by Arlie Hochschild in the early 1980s. She looked at how the commercialization of feeling is detrimental to the self in two very specific contexts: Delta Airlines flight attendants and bill collectors. Hochschild (1983)

defines emotional labour as “the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display” (p. 7) calling attention to how people manage their own feelings as a way to create a particular emotional state in another person. This has been studied in a variety of contexts such as midwifery (Hunter, 2004), waitering/waitressing (Hall, 1993), adventure tour guiding (Sharpe, 2005), policing (Martin, 1999), private law firms (Lively, 2000), nursing (Gray, 2009; Henderson, 2001; Lopez, 2006; Mann and Cowburn, 2005; Sass, 2000), and sex work (Frank, 1998; Hoang, 2010; Bernstein, 2001; Gulcur, 2002; Zelizer, 2005). Hochschild (1983) argues that there is a difference between emotion work, and emotional labour. The former is the type of work conducted privately, and not in the context of work. Some of the interactions people have with their friends and loved ones would be a good example of this. People engage in emotional work in the private sector regularly, but this is not a major concern for Hochschild (1983). Hochschild (1983) is most concerned about emotional labour in the context of paid employment, because she claims that it is this type of work that causes people to be estranged from their true selves.

Hochschild (1983) argues that emotional labour involves two distinctive features. The first is surface acting, which is defined as a conscious process of pretending to feel what we do not feel (i.e. through suppressing feelings of disgust, or masking feelings of irritation with an annoying customer) (p. 33). The second is deep acting, which she describes a form of self-deception. She states “in deep acting we make feigning easy by making it unnecessary” (p. 33). She uses the example of the Delta airline employee who suppresses her anger at a passenger who insults her. In ‘acting deeply’ (in acting

‘unconsciously’), this Delta airline employee forgets what she would have felt if she were not pretending to feel something else. Due to deep acting, and the exploitation of her emotional labour by employers, Hochschild (1983) argues this type of labour is inherently exploitative because it creates emotional dissonance and estranges people from themselves.

Most scholars who explore the labour of independent escorts who offer the GFE draw on Hochschild’s (1983) framework of emotional labour to understand the labour involved in the sex industry, including but not limited to, Elizabeth Bernstein (2007), Teela Sanders (2008), Victoria Love (2013), Viviana Zelizer (2005), and Katherine Frank (1998).³ Some authors who draw on Hochschild (1983) discuss emotional labour to draw attention to how sex workers either engage in ‘repressive emotional labour’ or ‘expressive emotional labour’.⁴ ‘Repressive emotional labour’ refers to the need to repress feelings of disgust, dislike, or irritation with a client. ‘Expressive emotional labour’ refers to the need to make a client feel a certain way by acting a certain way, for example, by flirting or moaning to signal enjoyment of a particular sexual practice. This type of analysis is important, but not what I focus on in my thesis. In this thesis, I take

³ There are many other sex work scholars who draw on Hochschild’s (1983) framework of emotional labour but they are not looking at the particular context I am interested in, which is predominantly white, middle-class, and North American escorts who have no intention to migrate from their home country. Many ‘sex work’ scholars interested in international migration, migrant labour in the sex industry, and ‘sex tourism’ also use emotional labour as a framework for understanding the cross-continental overlap between intimacy and the marketplace. ‘Sex work’ is placed in quotations because some of these authors questions the category of ‘sex work’ to understand the work, relationships, and lives of people engaged in this form of intimate labour (Cobble, 2010; Cabezas, 2009; Constable, 2003; Hoang, 2010; Hoang, 2011)

⁴ For example, see Hoang (2010).

issue with the concept of 'deep acting' as something 'unconscious' and inherently exploitative. While Bernstein (2007), Sanders (2008), Love (2013), Zelizer (2005), and Frank (1998) do not argue that sex work is inherently exploitation and damaging, these authors draw on various dichotomies to understand the labour involved including but not limited to private/public emotions, non-commercial/commercial relationships, professional/personal relationships, etc. Initially I began my research with the goal of critiquing the usage of the emotional labour framework in understanding the type of labour involved in providing the GFE. For example, I was very interested in the work of Molly George (2008) who uses the work of Hochschild (1983) in the context of independent personal trainers. She argues that people who are self-employed find their emotional labour rewarding, and not necessarily harmful. I wanted to apply this idea to independent escorts who offer the girlfriend experience. While this is fascinating, I am not interested in pursuing research on emotional labour in the sex industry at this time because this was not a primary concern for my participants. Through my interviews, I realized the type of labour involved in the sex industry is not a very important consideration for sex workers. More importantly for the independent escorts I interviewed was/is how to navigate the often-porous boundaries between their personal and professional lives, how to manage relationships with clients, and how to manage their relationships with their partners given traditional understandings of monogamy and sex.

Elizabeth Bernstein is one of the sex work scholars discussed above who partly draws on the theoretical framework of emotional labour to understand the work of

independent escorts who offer the GFE. She completed her fieldwork from 1994-2002, at a time when most street-based workers were moving to indoor locations because of the advent of the Internet and postindustrialization.⁵ Her exploration of the shifting relationships between independent escorts and clients through the Girlfriend Experience was the first time it had been acknowledged and discussed in an academic context. She interviewed many sex-positive sex workers, who were mainly white and middle class. She describes their attraction to the sex industry as a method of self-expression, self-exploration, and a desire for independent employment. While her research also explored the context of street-based sex work, and sex work under a variety of legal/quasi-legal/illegal regimes around the world, her book predominantly focuses on middle-class and independent sex workers in the United States. She noted what was being purchased in the indoor market versus the outdoor market was not sex *per se*, but rather, intimacy (which may or may not include sex). She describes that both escorts and clients desire an authentic relationship, but one that is clearly bound by a financial exchange. She states “successful commercial transactions are ones in which the market basis of the exchange provides an important emotional boundary for both worker and client, but one which can also be temporarily subordinated to the client’s desire for authentic interpersonal connection” (p. 483). This is not only a sought after commodity for clients, but as Bernstein (2007) later discusses, it is also something that

⁵ I say most here because not all outdoor-based workers were able, or wanted to, move indoors. Those that could move to indoor locations often did, but there are many reasons why some did not. Some of these reasons include, but are not limited to, homelessness, poverty, addiction, colonization, racialization, migration status, etc.

independent middle-class sex workers desire. Therefore, emotional boundaries are not only temporarily subordinated to the client's desire, but also to the sex workers. She calls this "bounded authenticity".

Bernstein (2001) argues that the location of intimacy in the marketplace facilitates connection between sex workers and clients (p. 397) and that this is preferable to the 'non-professional affair' because of the "clarifying effect of payment" (Bernstein, 2001, p. 399). As mentioned above, the middle-class and independent workers she interviewed desired an authentic connection with their clients, but she argues these

repeated claims about authentic interpersonal connection are particularly striking to consider in light of the fact the vast majority of sex workers I spoke with imposed very rigid emotional boundaries between their customers and their non-professional lovers. For sex-workers, the former almost always constituted a thoroughly de-eroticized category of identity that was rarely if ever transgressed. (Bernstein, 2001, p. 403)

This aspect of Bernstein's (2001) research, wherein she looks at the boundaries between an independent escort's personal and professional life, speaks directly to my research interest. Through my activism with POWER (Prostitutes of Ottawa-Gatineau, Work, Educate, Resist) and through informal conversations with friends who offer the GFE and through my interviews, I realized these 'rigid boundaries' are more fluid than they appear. Therefore, I explore the permeability of these 'rigid boundaries' between an escort's personal and professional life and how their work in the sex industry affects their interpersonal relationships. I demonstrate some of the relationships between independent escorts who offer the GFE and the clients who purchase their services are

not as bound by the financial exchange as they may appear and this can reverberate into their personal lives in unintended ways by putting them in a position wherein they need to choose between a relationship with their partner and working independently as an escort. Relationships, be they in the industry or not, are messy and complicated. To my knowledge, how these boundaries are crossed and the effects this has on the interpersonal relationships of sex workers who offer the GFE has not been addressed in the academic community looking at sex work.

Katherine Frank (1998) also draws on emotional labour to describe the work of erotic dancers. While this is a different sector of the sex industry, there are parallels that can be drawn between how erotic dancers manage the boundaries between their personal and professional lives with their regular clients and how independent escorts do the same. She outlines the general discomfort felt when intimacy and the marketplace intersect. She does this through Giddens's (1992) conceptualization of the 'pure relationship' – a relationship entered into for its own sake with no financial consideration. She draws on Zelizer's (2005) discussion of the 'hostile worlds' view of intimacy and the marketplace. The 'hostile worlds' conceptualization of love and money reinforces traditional understandings of intimacy and the market without recognizing that many relationships are mediated by a financial exchange. Love and money, in the 'hostile worlds' view are distinct "arenas for economic activity and intimate relations, with inevitable contamination and disorder resulting when the two spheres come into contact with each other" (Zelizer, 2005, p. 20-21). The hostile worlds view condemns "any intersection of money and intimacy as dangerously corrupting" (p. 22). Frank

(1998) argues the commodified relationships between dancers and their regulars do involve an intimate exchange, and that this exchange is not always 'inauthentic' ("while I'm always performing, I'm not always pretending"). According to Frank (1998), the more 'real' a relationship seems in the sex industry, the more the exchange of money undermines that realness. Love and friendship are not supposed to be bought with money, and yet it is money that facilitates these relationships.⁶ She looks at how the relationships between regulars and erotic dancers get more complicated as time goes by. Katherine Frank's work is auto-ethnographic and illuminating as a result, because it provides first-hand experiences of the messiness of some of these relationships. She describes many of the tensions the independent escorts I interviewed described, and which I would like to explore in more detail in this thesis. One of her suggestions for future research was to encourage sex work scholars to look at the implication of working in the industry on the interpersonal relationships of sex workers. I do this in Chapter II.

Teela Sanders is a prolific sex work scholar that has studied a variety of contexts in the sex industry. She wrote a book called Paying for Pleasure: Men Who Buy Sex, as well as many academic journal articles which address the types of sexual, intimate, and romantic scripts followed by sex workers and their clients. She does not draw on emotional labour *per se*, but her work is important and has contributed to shifts in how sex work scholars understand the relationships between sex workers and their regulars,

⁶ For more on how money facilitates relationships, please see Appendix 3 "More on the Normalization of Prostitution" in Brown (2011).

particularly from the perspective of clients. Sanders (2008) argues the sexual scripts of men who become regular clients of sex workers do not differ significantly from those who desire traditional relationships outside of the sex industry. From a policy perspective, she argues that sex work regulation “relies on false dichotomies that distinguish commercial and non-commercial sexual relationships as dissonant” (p. 402). I agree that the relationships between many escorts and clients, as well as escorts and their personal partners, do follow various sexual scripts as defined by Sanders (2008). However, at times escorts and clients develop alternate forms of relationships that challenge these scripts, whilst simultaneously reinforcing them. Furthermore, the escorts I interviewed do not necessarily view these relationships as ‘traditional’ or as following a script. In fact, the transition from a paid to an unpaid relationship is fraught with negotiations, silences, and misunderstandings as well as love, excitement, and desire. While I do not use the term ‘scripts’, I take from Saunders (2008) the notion that there can be many parallels between relationships with clients and relationships with interpersonal partners. I bring this forward in my analysis in Chapter III.

Affect theorists (Ahmed, 2004; Anderson, 2006; Hardt, 1999; Weeks, 2007; Cobble, 2010) also address care work, an umbrella term which sometimes includes sex work. Some of them draw on emotional labour whilst simultaneously critiquing it. Some of them use ‘affective labour’ or ‘intimate labour’ as a way of addressing the critiques of emotional labour as a theoretical framework. Cobble (2010) describes sex work as involving intimate labour. Cobble (2010) defines sex work as an intimate labour that also involves care work. She argues that the boundaries between these two categories are

often fluid and overlap, particularly because of the sexualization of many forms of labor not traditionally associated with the sex industry. Cobble defines intimate labour very widely, which is useful. She states, “the worker may be engaged in ‘deep’, and potentially ‘self-alienating’ forms of emotional labor or simply ‘surface’, ritualistic performance. Service encounters then may be exploitative as well as mutually beneficial. There is room for multiple and shifting possibilities” (p. 282). She suggests that there is no pre-determined affective state when trying to understand intimate labor, which appeals to me as a theoretical framework through which I could (potentially) understand labour in the sex industry because she does not romanticize a true self untainted by emotional labour (or a self pre-estrangement/alienation). However, I do not draw on her throughout my thesis because the type of work they engage in, as independent escorts who offer the GFE, did not overly concern my participants. Rather, they seemed most concerned with how to navigate relationship with clients, and their partners.

I seek to understand how independent escorts who offer the GFE manage the boundaries between their professional and personal lives. Particularly when those boundaries become blurred, overlap, or are permeable. However, I am not interested in identifying the type of labour involved in the sex industry *per se* because this was not important to my participants. Rather, I want to see how the illegality of indoor sex work mediates the intimacy escorts experience with clients, how their interpersonal relationships are affected by their sex work, and vice versa. These were the issues that came up most in my interviews, and therefore shape my thesis.

1 Methodology

Through my involvement in the sex workers' human rights movement and as a board member of POWER (Prostitutes of Ottawa-Gatineau, Work, Educate, Resist), I have had many informal conversations with escorts who offer the GFE. The experiences of one escort in particular inspired my research topic. Her name is Melanie (a pseudonym) and she has given me permission to recreate her narrative in my own words here. Melanie confided in me the story of how she had married a woman named Angie a few years ago. She was passionately in love with Angie, but they were experiencing difficulties both because of Melanie's involvement in the industry and because of incompatible communication styles. While they were experiencing tension, Melanie fell in love with one of her clients. This particular client had never seen her 'off-the-clock' but they shared quite a bit of their personal lives with one another. They wrote extensively to one another and confided in each other about a variety of private things, including her marriage and his relationship with his ex-wife. When Melanie told Angie about her relationship with this client, Angie felt she had cheated on her. According to Melanie, this was "the beginning of the end of their relationship" because until this point, Angie had not realized her work involved more than just sex, but encompassed a range of intimate activities. Melanie met with this particular client a few months after she separated from her partner but no longer felt the same way about him. At the time, she mentioned being confused because, as she stated, "I liked him more when he was paying me". The experience of an escort falling in love with a client is not necessarily uncommon. It is also common for escorts to develop long-term and

meaningful friendships with clients, regardless of their negotiated (or unnegotiated) financial dynamics. Thinking through these issues made me realize many relationships are mediated by money in some way. What is so special about sex, work, and money? I could not help but wonder how escorts and clients navigate these tensions, particularly in their interpersonal relationships. I became curious about the context of their relationships in the sex industry, and about how independent escorts navigate these tensions with their partners.

At the time of this research, I can say that my closest friends, lovers, and acquaintances are all involved in the sex industry in some way (as sex workers, activists, clients, frontline workers, social workers, and academics involved in sex work research). This involvement informs my research in substantial ways. I have given workshops and presentations to social service providers, health service providers, and police service providers on how to meaningfully engage with sex workers as a part of my work with POWER. I have also participated in demonstrations, written letters to members of parliament, and helped fundraise for sex workers' human rights. Currently I am a lobbyist with the Canadian Alliance for Sex Work Law Reform against Bill C-36 "Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act". This act seeks to criminalize the entirety of the sex industry, including clients and sex workers. This act also seeks to criminalize sex workers and third parties, preventing them from advertising their services or hiring security personnel. Social science research has demonstrated that any law that criminalizes the sex industry will and does have an adverse affect on the health, safety, and well-being of people involved in the industry (POWER and PIVOT, 2014).

1.1 Institutional Ethnography

This thesis uses institutional ethnography as its methodological approach. In institutional ethnography, there is a commitment to learning from participants, respecting their voices and opinions, and hearing their concerns with an open mind. However, this does not necessarily mean taking what participants say at face value. The goal of the institutional ethnography is to understand the social relations that shape people's lives. According to Dorothy Smith (2005), "institutional ethnographer works from the social in people's experience to discover its presence and organization in their lives and to explicate or map that organization beyond the local of the everyday" (p. 11). For example, George Smith (1990) emphasizes the importance of understanding how social relations are organized. In studying the policing of gay men in Toronto through his work with the Right to Privacy Committee (RTPC), he discovered that most men assumed the police raids of bathhouses occurred because of police homophobia. Rather than take this at face value, he tried to understand the broader context in which this policing happened. He concluded that while police homophobia might be a factor in the policing of gay men, the predominant reason this was happening was because of the legal regime that reinforces a specific type of heterosexuality through the bawdyhouse law described above (see footnote 5). Understanding these social relations provided an opportunity for meaningful social justice efforts. Institutional ethnography

provides a method of looking at how individuals organize themselves vis-à-vis one another. The notion of 'social relations,' in this sense, does not stand for a thing to be looked for in carrying out research, rather, it is what is used to do the

looking. It operates as a methodological injunction that requires sociologists to examine empirically how people's activities are reflexively/recursively knitted together into particular forms of social organization" (Smith G. W., 1990, p. 636).

Inspired by Smith G. (1990) I look at how intimacy is mediated by the law in massage parlours and spas. Independent escorts who offer the GFE assume massage parlours are less intimate because of the way the work is structured, but a huge factor in terms of how the work is structured is directly related to a fear of criminalization via the bawdyhouse provisions. I use the sex work theory described in my introduction to understand how sex work scholars understand the lives of independent escorts who offer the GFE, but move away from it and build upon it based on their own experiences in a particular (il)legal context.

The work value of institutional ethnography "lies in directing analytical attention to the practical activities of everyday life in a way that begins to make visible how those activities gear into, are called out by, shape and are shaped by, extended translocal relations of large-scale coordination (What Smith calls relations of ruling)" (McCoy, 2006, pp. 110-111) such as the rule of law and popular understandings of monogamy. Because of our own understandings of the influence of the rule of law, the 'hostile worlds' view of intimacy and the marketplace, and popular understandings of monogamy and relationships, many sex work scholars, including myself, struggle to understand the tensions between the personal and professional lives of independent escorts who offer the GFE. Rather than view the boundaries between the personal and professional lives of escorts as porous, overlapping, and fluid, sex work scholars who

have interviewed independent escorts who offer the GFE have often tried to understand the boundaries in a dichotomous way. Independent escorts who offer the GFE navigate these tensions in a social, political, legal and economic reality which

- 1) reinforces that sex work *is* work through the paradigms of the sex workers' human rights (POWER, 2008)
- 2) positions intimacy and money as 'hostile worlds' that corrupt one another (Zelizer, 2005)
- 3) privileges a monogamous understanding of relationships, which makes it very difficult for sex workers to have interpersonal relationships in which their partners are supportive of their work as independent escorts who offer the GFE,
- 4) and finally, criminalizes various aspects of the sex industry.

My research seeks to understand the relationships between an escort's personal and professional life, between escorts and their clients, between escorts and the law, and between escorts and their interpersonal partners. I believe using institutional ethnography is the best way for me to answer these questions while prioritizing the voices and experiences of sex workers. As a feminist scholar, Smith E. D. (2005) similarly believes it is important to prioritize women's experiential knowledge in research, despite the fact that it has become "contentious in postmodern/poststructuralist circles" (Campbell, 2006, p. 92). Simply put, institutional ethnography is a project of "research and discovery" (Smith D. E., 2005, p. 24). The aim of

the sociology we call 'institutional ethnography' is to reorganize the social relations of knowledge of the social so that people can take that knowledge up as an extension of our ordinary knowledge of the local actualities of our lives. It is a method of inquiry into the social that proposes to enlarge the scope of what becomes visible from that site, mapping the relations that connect one local site to others. Like a map, it aims to be through and through indexical to the local sites of people's experience, making visible how we are connected into the extended social relations of ruling and economic and their intersections. And though some of the work of inquiry must be technical, as mapmaking is, its product should be ordinarily accessible and useable, just as a well-made map is, to those on the terrain it maps. (p. 29)

I seek to map the social relations listed above, which impact the lives and interpersonal relationships of independent escorts who offer the GFE.

1.2 Sex, Work, and Criminalization

Currently in Canada, the laws that apply to indoor workers involve living off the avails of prostitution and the bawdyhouse provisions.⁷ On December 20th, 2013, the Supreme Court of Canada decriminalized these provisions on the basis that they infringe upon the right to life, liberty and security of the persons of workers; however, these laws are still in place until December 20th, 2014 and the Supreme Court of Canada told Parliament they have the right to introduce new legislation if they so choose, as long as

⁷ These are the two laws that are used to target indoor workers in the sex industry, be they independent or agency-based. The former, living off the avails of prostitution, prohibits living wholly or in part on the avails of the prostitution of another (section 212(1j)); the latter criminalizes people who are found in a common bawdyhouse, or operates a common bawdyhouse with the knowledge that prostitution is occurring on the premises (section 210). Section 213 criminalizes communicating for the purposes of prostitution but is most often used to target outdoor and visible sex workers. This is the law that is the most damaging to the sex working community because it is used to target the most marginalized of workers.

it is in accordance with the principles as laid out in *Bedford*. In response to *Bedford*, the Conservative government has tabled Bill C-36 (discussed above), which will be detrimental to the health, security, and well-being of sex workers. I explore how these illegal contexts (both the current legal system and the system which will (likely) receive Royal Assent in October/November 2014) influence the negotiation of intimacy in publically accessible spaces such as massage parlours.⁸ I will also examine how traditional understandings of sex, intimacy, money, and monogamy influence the boundaries between the personal and professional lives of escorts who offer the GFE.

Sex workers have voices and are experts on how the laws affect their lives. Caroline Newcastle, an independent sex worker in Ottawa and member of POWER, recently wrote an op-ed about her experiences at the House Justice Committee on Human Rights as they heard from witnesses about their interpretations of Bill C-36. She wrote about the egregious treatment of sex workers by members of the Conservative Party, and the hypocrisy of the Government to both frame all sex workers as victims whilst simultaneously criminalizing them and ignoring those sex workers ('victims') that disagree with their position. She discussed how each and every single sex worker or ally whom spoke before committee was disregarded, disrespected, and cut-off by members of the Conservative Party. She stated "while we heard about 'giving a voice to the

⁸ When I conducted my interviews, the Conservative Government of Canada had not tabled Bill C-36 at the House of Commons. Sex work scholars, activists, allies, and sex workers themselves could not have anticipated the specifics of the Bill even if we knew, generally speaking, the government intended on criminalizing the clients of sex workers (an 'end-the-demand' approach). That being said, my interviews focused on the legal context at the time of my interviews prior to Bill C-36.

voiceless' throughout the week, sex workers do have voices and we can use them, but that does not mean everyone will listen to what we have to say" (Newcastle, 2014). I am equally disheartened and angered by how the voices of sex workers are silenced and their expertise is disregarded. It was difficult for me to attend the committee with Caroline. It was equally difficult for me to listen to the clause-by-clause analysis of the bill the following week, whilst simultaneously working on my thesis from home. I do not want to silence workers, nor do I think my thesis 'provides a voice to the voiceless' because sex workers *have* a voice. They speak truth to power, and I listen. I listen whilst simultaneously recognizing the role I play in supporting our fight as a community for sex workers' human rights.

Given my topic and the fact that sex workers are so often spoken to (by those who assume to know what is in their best interest), spoken for (by those abolitionist and prohibitionist feminists who believe to represent their interests) and spoken about (by law makers and legislators who have not sought meaningful consultation with sex workers), I think institutional ethnography is the only appropriate methodologically framework through which I can understand the boundaries between their personal and professional lives while respecting their expertise on the topic. Institutional ethnography begins with some "issues, concerns, or problems that are real for people and that are situated in their relationships to an institutional order" (p. 32). The issue faced by many independent escorts who offer the GFE is not how to articulate the type of work involved in the sex industry to their partners, the broader public, government,

members of parliament, and lawmakers; rather, it is how to make people listen to what they have to say.

Institutional ethnography has “no prior interpretive commitment such as that which follows from concepts such as global dominance and resistance” (Smith D. E., 2005, p. 36). Institutional ethnography also “rejects the dominance of theory” (p. 49). While theory has informed my understanding of the boundaries between an escort’s personal and professional life, particularly the work of Elizabeth Bernstein (2007), I move away from theory because I do not believe it captures the realities of the everyday existence of the escorts I interviewed. That being said, I am not interested in how escorts and clients resist or uphold traditional understandings of intimacy and money; rather, I am interested in how they understand and make sense of their own lives.

1.3 A Note on Language

According to Smith E. D. (2005) “the institutional ethnographer must find the generalizing and standardizing processes in the ethnographic data, in people’s local practices, including language” (p. 135). I have been very careful about the language use throughout my work. Not all independent escorts who offer the GFE identify themselves as sex workers, and not all people I spoke to identify as escorts. Rather, they identify themselves as companions, sex workers, and/or escorts. Sometimes their identity shifts based on context, and the boundaries between their identities shift as well. For example, Jessica stated:

Katherine: With clients do you ever identify as a sex worker or do usually say ‘escort’?

Jessica: I think I usually say escort if it comes up.

K: I'm asking because a lot of people think, or I've heard some people talk about sex worker as a sort of politicized identity that some people want to distance themselves from. They don't want to be associated with politics. Do you feel any of that?

J: I actually do think that's accurate. I think maybe that's why I do say that in the more general population because it's...yeah...I don't know...it is more of a political stance. What's someone gonna say to you if you just say 'I'm a sex worker'? You know? Like it's such a confident statement. You know? [K: Yeah] It leaves it up for interpretation or questions. I think if you say 'I'm a sex worker' it's just like 'Ok'. You know? Like there's no room for argument or anything like that. You made that statement.

K: Mmm

K: Also, if you say 'sex worker' I also feel like...people...people don't know what that means

[J + K <*Laughter*>]

K: they don't know what sector of the industry you're in so they don't know if you're a stripper or a ...

J: I do like that aspect. That's why I said that to that woman yesterday. I said 'I'm in the adult industry, actually, I'm a sex worker' because I didn't particularly care to tell her. So as far as she knows I could be a dancer, I could be in porn, umm... I could run an agency. Like... ummm she doesn't know anything and that's fine because she doesn't need to know.

The language I have used throughout my thesis is based on the experiences of the sex workers I interviewed. Similarly to issues of identity, independent escorts who offer the GFE do not use terms like emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983) and affective labour (Hardt, 1999) to describe their experiences in the sex industry (see my introduction for more on this). Concepts related to private and/or public emotions are not used either (popular amongst sex work scholars). Rather, independent escorts who offer the GFE

talk about their personal and professional lives, and boundaries between both. Therefore, this is how I discuss these tensions in my research.

1.4 Participation

To understand the boundaries between an escort's personal and professional life, I completed five semi-structured interviews with independents who offer the GFE using a snowball sampling technique (for a bio of each participant, see the end of this section). Participants were recruited online through an e-mail list serve, and on the Canadian Escort Recommendation Board (CERB). I used POWER's (Prostitutes of Ottawa, Gatineau, Work, Educate Resist) list serve. The lists serves are anonymous and participants were encouraged to e-mail me directly if they would like to participate in the research. The invitation to participate on CERB was posted in the section specifically created for research in the sex industry. I did not need the permission of the moderator to post in this section. I personally recorded and transcribed all of the interviews with the exception of one participant who did not want the interview recorded (Julie). Extensive notes were taken during the interview with Julie and I wrote down my thoughts afterward. Each participant was more or less open about their employment with friends, family, and the public. Some were very worried about friends and family finding out about their involvement whereas others fully disclosed their employment status to their loved ones. Some of my participants showed their faces on their websites while others did not. As will be discussed in Chapter I, being 'out' as a sex worker has broader social, legal, and personally ramifications.

1.5 Biography of my participants

Rebecca is thirty-six years old, white, married, and has a son. She has been involved in the sex industry for a little over 14 years and has worked in a variety of sectors of the sex industry including agency-based massage parlours, and agency-based massage and escorting. At one point in her career she owned an agency and hired escorts to work for her while she was on maternity leave to take care of her son. She has worked full-time as an independent escort for the past four years.

Julie is thirty-nine years old, white, widowed, and has a son. At the time of the interview, she was working full-time in the sex industry but is in the process of transitioning to full-time employment outside of the industry with the intention of working part-time as an escort once the transition is complete. She has worked in a variety of contexts, including agency-based escort services and independently. She has a Bachelor's degree in Public Affairs.

Eve is twenty-nine year old, white, and has no children. At the time of the interview, her relationship with her partner was tenuous because of her involvement in the sex industry. She currently works part-time in the industry and works full-time as a frontline service worker in the not-for-profit sector. At the time of the interview, she was in the process of completing a Bachelor's degree in Arts.

Nicole is forty-two, white, divorced, and does not have any children. She has multiple post-graduate degrees and has worked in a variety of sectors of the sex industry

including cam work, pornography (both as an actress, director, and producer), agency-based escort services, and independently. She's been working independently since 2008, and at the time of our interview was working full-time.

Jessica is thirty-three, white, single, and does not have any children. She has a bachelor's degree in art, and has worked in a variety of sectors of the sex industry including agency-based massage, and as an independent escort. She has been working full-time in the sex industry for the past four years, before which she worked full-time for the federal government.

2 Chapter: Hostile Practices, Hostile Worlds

The independent escorts I interviewed established a variety of boundaries between their personal and professional lives. All of my participants were very clear that there *are* boundaries between their personal and professional lives, even if my interviews suggest that these boundaries are permeable and/or subordinated under certain circumstances (explored further in Chapter III). None of my interview participants spoke about public or private relationships, or commercial/non-commercial relationships. They spoke about their work lives and their personal lives. They disclosed how they maintain the boundary between both worlds through various practices. Some of these practices include, but are not limited to: temporal boundaries (how long they will spend with a client), spatial boundaries (where they work), physical boundaries (practices they will/will not do with clients), and boundaries around what they will/will not disclose to clients. While many sex work scholars draw on the private/public distinction when discussing the intersection between intimacy and the marketplace, I will discuss these boundaries using the terms personal and professional (for more on this, refer to my introduction). This captures the essence of what most escorts struggle with when providing the GFE, namely the tension between offering the GFE (an intimate service) and keeping the relationship professional.

Most of the escorts I interviewed used the term 'professional' at some point during their interviews to refer to themselves and the work they do. Sex work is a criminalized, stigmatized, and often misunderstood form of labour. Referring to oneself as a professional escort or professional sex worker serves many purposes, one of which

is fighting the stigma associated with the industry. Simultaneously, using the term 'professional' pushes back against the traditional understanding of sex work as 'easy money'. This also resists the assumption that all sex workers are victims of sexual violence and patriarchy. Furthermore, using the term 'professional' often meant that there was no (or very little) overlap between their personal and professional lives. That which happens at work stays at work, and that which happens at home stays at home. This plays into the desire to keep both worlds separate, which I will talk more about below.

Bernstein (2007) states that for many independent sex workers who offer the girlfriend experience, "emotional authenticity is incorporated explicitly into the economic contract, challenging the view that commodification and intimacy constitutes 'hostile worlds', which has often prevailed in sociological discussions of the subject" (Bernstein, 2007, p. 485). The 'hostile worlds' conceptualization of love and money reinforces traditional understandings of intimacy and the marketplace. This view does not recognize that many relationships are mediated by a financial exchange (for example, many but not all marriages have unnegotiated financial dynamics that mediate the relationship).⁹ Like Zelizer (2005) and Bernstein (2007), I contest the notion that the

⁹ This idea comes directly from Zelizer (2005) when she states "the surprising thing about such debates is their usual failure to recognize how regularly intimate social transactions coexist with monetary transactions: parents pay nannies or child-care workers to tend their children, adoptive parents pay money to obtain babies, divorced spouses pay or receive alimony and child support payments, and parents give their children allowances, subsidize their college educations, help them with their first mortgage, and offer them substantial bequests at their wills. Friends and relatives send gifts of money as wedding presents, and friends loan each other money. Meanwhile, immigrants support their families back home with regular transmission of remittances" (p. 27).

intersection of money and intimacy is dangerously corrupting. I do so by drawing on the relationships my participants have with their clients, and how they navigate the boundaries between their personal and professional lives.

Zelizer (2005) examines the intersection between intimacy and the marketplace in a variety of contexts, including traditional relationships, sex work, the settlement of estates, parenting, and a variety of professional relationships (such as the relationship between a boss and employee, etc.). She argues throughout the “world of commercial sex, we find the distinction of different, well-bounded intimate relations, the matching of relation, transactions, and media, heavy involvement of third parties in enforcing those boundaries, and further negotiation of meanings by the parties. We see participants engaging in delicate consequential relationship work” (Zelizer, 2005, p. 129). This ‘delicate consequential relationship work’ often occurs through the use of ‘hostile world practices’, which she describes as “using forms of speech, body language, clothing, uniforms, and spatial locations to signify whether the relationship between this man and this woman is boss-secretary, husband-wife, patron-prostitute, lover-mistress, father-daughter, customer-waitress, or something else. They thus prevent confusion with the ‘wrong’ relationship” (Zelizer, 2005, p. 29). In this chapter, I describe how independent escorts who offer the GFE engage in this ‘delicate consequential relationship work’. I explore the ‘hostile world practices’ escorts use to maintain the boundary between their personal and professional lives to illuminate the tensions between offering intimate service in the context of work, and how these relationships are often confusing and therefore require a great deal of ‘delicate consequential

relationship work’.

The escorts I interviewed described boundaries about how, when, and under what circumstances they would discuss financial arrangements with clients. They often use “code words” (Eve) to discuss money, such as a ‘tribute’, ‘donation’ or ‘gift’. All of my participants establish financial boundaries, and negotiate financial compensation by explicitly stating their rates on their websites, or by discussing their rates with clients via e-mail. This was preferred over face-to-face discussions of money, which were described as “uncomfortable” (Julie), “cheap” (Rebecca), “awkward” (Eve and Julie), and “bitchy” (Eve). Their discomfort is exemplary of how difficult it is to discuss the purchase of intimacy openly and without discomfort in a general sense. There was also a fear that discussing the financial arrangement of their relationship(s) with clients would ruin the ‘fantasy’ of the Girlfriend Experience (the fantasy being that it is a traditional relationship not mediated by a financial exchange). For many of the escorts I interviewed, it is quite common for the people they see as clients to forget to provide their donation (their rate) upfront. This puts the escorts in a position whereby she either needs to ask for the money, or needs to wait for them to give it to her, which might occur at the end of the encounter. One escort stated,

Julie: It’s the thing I hate the most [asking for the money at the beginning of an appointment]. It makes me feel so...I don’t know how to describe it... it’s the most uncomfortable feeling. Listen you’re coming here for a reason and the understanding is that you owe me for this amount of time. Via e-mail it’s easy, but at the encounter itself face-to-face it’s awkward.

Similarly, Eve reinforced the awkwardness of discussing finances face-to-face:

Katherine: Mmhmm. Um. Has it ever happened where... you know, in the context of someone not putting it [the donation] down right away, that you've had to ask? [E: Yeah] And how does that conversation usually happen?

Eve: Um, I personally find it awkward. I, um, I also find it awkward when, like, especially if we're naked and we've just had orgasms, and they're lying there, and they're thinking about things, like, I've had clients ask me, like, "Oh, how much is your overnight package" and, I'm, like, uh, it, it's, to me it's not, I, I'm not comfortable with it either. Um. Anyway that's something that I personally want to work on, is being able to discuss finances and make it more of a work thing, but I also find... uhm... yeah, discussing the money is kind of an awkward position where I try to get that out of the way via emails, so that when they come in, it's just putting it down and [K: Mhm] going into the session.

In reference to discussing finances face-to-face, Eve stated she preferred to discuss it over e-mail because she could re-read what she had written and make sure it did not sound 'bitchy', a gendered term but one that might also denote someone who is not being a 'good girlfriend':

Eve: it's not... comfortable. And a lot of it happens over email, which is easier for me, because then I have the opportunity to sit and read what I've written and make sure it doesn't sound super... bitchy?

Eve referred to herself as 'bitchy' in this excerpt, which I find telling. Discussing money with clients face-to-face does many things. Firstly, it brings money to the forefront of their interaction, which is unappealing to both parties. It becomes something explicitly discussed, rather than implicitly assumed through a discrete transference of money from one hand to the other, or through the placement of an envelope in an obvious location. The escorts I interviewed do not want to be perceived by their clients as engaging in a strictly financial exchange, even if both the escort and client understand

its crucial role in the encounter. It is the undercurrent of every encounter between an escort and client, but the financial exchange is often understood to cast a shadow of doubt upon the sincerity of the exchange (particularly with first-time clients, or clients who are new to the 'hobby' because they have less of a grasp of what is at play). Secondly, it causes both the escort and client to acknowledge the role of money in facilitating the encounter which otherwise would not have happened. According to the escorts I interviewed, there is a sense that most clients are kind, and deserving of love, intimacy, and touch. Many escorts drew on the humanity of their clients throughout the interviews, giving me their personal stories and offering testimonials. Many escorts discussed the necessity of providing escort services to fill this gap; however, many equally thought it was unfortunate clients had to pay for these services in the first place. Independent escorts who offer the GFE want their clients to feel cared for (this is part of their job description), and one of the ways to do this is to avoid discussing the financial dynamics of the relationship face-to-face. To do so reminds clients the encounter did not happen organically. As I have heard many escorts say, "I would not be fucking him if he wasn't paying me".

Later in the interview Eve discussed how people talk about money in code words:

Eve: it's always very, kinda, code-worded around the money, um... But generally I haven't had a problem, if I do ask for it, that they... they are genuine and, like, "Oh my gosh, I'm so sorry, here, it's in my pocket and I'm gonna put it down." [K: Mhm] Uhm... As long as I'm not standing there going, like, "Where's my fee?" Katherine: Yeah. Yeah. And why, um, why the code words, do you think? Like, why?

E: Again, it's [K: the whole Girlfriend Experience thing]. Ruining the fantasy, or the illusion.

K: Okay.

E: Yeah. It's a lotta, I mean, even websites allude to, it's a "donation" or a "tribute" or...

[K: Yeah. Yeah.]

What is interesting to note about this excerpt is the idea that "standing there" in anticipation of a "fee" would be unacceptable in the context of the GFE. Rather, escorts encourage clients to think of their 'fee' as a 'donation', 'gift', or 'tribute' to insinuate they are not paying for sexual services, rather, they are giving the escort a gift for her time and being generous. Many other escorts I interviewed echoed this sentiment. It was delicate to ask for their donation, because this could be perceived as ruining the fantasy or illusion of the GFE (the illusion or fantasy being that it is a traditional relationship not mediated by a financial exchange). Not all of the independent escorts I interviewed ask for their donation upfront. This was often determined by how they screen their clients. Screening refers to the information an escort requires before agreeing to meet with a new client for an appointment. For example, Rebecca screens her clients using a reference from another independent provider and asking for a verifiable first and last name. She will ask every client for a reference and contact that service provider to make sure the client is someone who was nice, respectful, and hygienic. Because she asks for references, she feels comfortable waiting until the very end of the encounter to ask for her donation. Apart from Julie, the other escorts I interviewed, on the other hand, book same-day appointments on the telephone and do not ask for references. This means they need to be more careful and ensure adequate

compensation up front. If they do not ask for their donation upfront and the client decides not to pay them, they do not have much recourse to fix this injustice apart from bad-dating the client to make sure other providers do not see them.¹⁰ While this behaviour is fraudulent and constitutive of sexual assault (fraud negating consent), independent escorts who offer the GFE, and sex workers more generally, do not trust the police to intervene in their lives in meaningful ways (POWER, 2008). Nonetheless, the encounter is one in which the escort is supposed to ignore the financial dynamics of the relationship while with the client, and hope that everything is made clear enough via e-mail and through their websites so that awkward conversations do not occur face-to-face. For example, many escort websites state that their donation should be placed in an unsealed envelop or card and given to the provider at the beginning of the encounter, and/or put in plain view for the escort to discreetly put away before the encounter starts. Part of providing the GFE is maintaining the fantasy or illusion whilst simultaneously trying to ensure the appropriate amount of compensation. Navigating these tensions can be very difficult.

Independent escorts engage in many 'hostile world' practices to maintain what they define as professional or appropriate boundaries with clients. All participants, at some point during their careers, had an apartment in which they worked and an

¹⁰ "Bad dating" a client refers to the process undertaken to warn other sex workers of a negative experience with a client. Bad dating is done by posting the clients phone number, e-mail address, and other important information such as what they did or did not do, and why the worker wants to 'bad date' them. These lists are often found online on recommendation and review boards and/or are circulated by various sex workers human rights' organizations and allied organizations.

apartment in which they lived. When these interviews were conducted, Nicole, Rebecca, and Julie did not work and live in the same location whereas Jessica and Eve did. While Jessica and Eve both worked and live in the same place (both lived and worked in two-bedroom apartments), they often maintain the illusion that they do not live in the apartment and use a separate bedroom to host clients. They do this to mitigate how personal clients think the encounter is. Jessica also has separate clothing, lingerie, and towels for clients. In fact, she refused to wear the same lingerie set with a personal lover if she has worn it in the past with a client, or intends to wear it with a client in the future. Both Eve and Jessica do not want clients to think they are working from home, as 'home' is very personal for them. For example, the following excerpt is worth quoting at length because it reveals the complexities of navigating these boundaries between the personal and professional for some of the independent escorts I interviewed.

Jessica: my mother knows, my sisters know, like everyone in my family knows what I do.

Umm... I'm reporting my income 100% honestly to the CRA. I pay fucking HST. I am an escort 100%. So, in my personal life I don't really have any boundaries but I still in my professional life do put up some boundaries like umm...I don't tell people my real name. I have one client who knows my real name because he's sent me some presents in the mail. Jacob, he sent me a bunch of LuluLemon clothes. He uses my real name in every text he sends me. Hi Jessica. Hi Jessica. Hi Jessica. He never used to say Hi Nadine, Hi Nadine. Now that he knows my name he says it at every opportunity and it drives me fucking mental. You don't know Jessica, you know Nadine, so stop it. Just stop. Like the fact that I gave you that privilege of knowing that name doesn't mean that you can use it. I think I was telling you the other day how Matthew I told him my real name because he was going to scout out my friends bar for the social. So I said by the way he's not

going to know who Nadine is, so use my name, Jessica. I saw him as a client after that and as he was leaving he kind of laughed and said I almost called you Jessica when I came in but of course I wouldn't do that. I said thank you because you shouldn't call me Jessica. You know, like, you still, you still are still here seeing Nadine. If you were seeing Jessica, there would be no money on the table. You would be calling me on my other phone. All of these things would be different and you would be welcomed into...that's the other biggest difference...with clients when they come into my apartment I usher them right down the hall to my work room. I have a separate work room and my room. I don't sleep in the bed that I see clients in. My cats don't go in there. When clients come in my cats are held separate in my other room. I shut my cats in my bedroom and the door is shut. Umm...they don't, my clients don't come into my living room and that's why my personal pictures are up here on the wall they can't see. So even if they do step down that stair, they can't see any of my personal photographs. They can't see my personal things. They can't see my books. They can't see my movie collection. I don't want them to. Umm...for the longest time I was even pretending that I didn't live here. Sometimes I still do to one off clients I tell them that this is my friends apartment and not mine and that's because I don't want them, it's because I don't want them to know that I don't, I don't want them to have that privilege of knowing that they're in my home. I want them to think that I didn't give that. It's harder and harder to continue that illusion now because, I used to put [my dog] in my room also but now that I have the two dogs, I don't so the dogs are out so I tell clients that I bring my dogs with me which is such a bullshit excuse. [...] That is the biggest thing that I keep separate. My personal life, my name, where I live, my cats, my personal likes, it's, I don't want my clients to know any of that. [...] as far as my clients know I don't drink, ever, umm, and things like that. [...] I don't want anyone to know anything about my party girl lifestyle that I've had in the past.

This excerpt reveals many aspects of how some escorts establish boundaries between their personal and professional lives. The GFE is an intimate service, usually provided in an escorts' home and/or incall location, which is usually a second apartment, condo, or hotel room rented by the service provider. Clients are invited into a private space, but many escorts want to make it clear that this is not the space in which they live, such as Jessica in the above excerpt. This creates a boundary between their personal and professional lives, which is very important. We can see that Jessica seeks to segregate the relationships she has at work from the relationships she has at home or in her personal life. She has a separate work area, and does not want her clients to have the privilege of knowing they are in her home. They do not see her personal photographs, movie collection, or books. For Rebecca and Julie, it is impossible to work from home because of their children. However, I know of other escorts with children that do work from home, and they only work while their children are in school. Nicole only provides outcall appointments to the hotels of people who are travelling through the city in which she resides. She does this to lower her overhead expenses. That is another factor to take into consideration when addressing why escorts work from home rather than in a separate unit (condo, apartment, or hotel room). Owning or renting two apartments can be very expensive, particularly when revenue is never guaranteed because it is, ultimately, an on-call industry. Both Eve and Jessica are less financially secure than Nicole, Rebecca, and Julie who can more easily afford to work in segregated spaces.

Furthermore, both Eve and Jessica work from home but have a separate workroom within their home to host clients. This space is considered by both of them to

be a workspace or office, and not a personal space. Jessica said she would never sleep in a bed that she had been intimate with a client in. Eve, on the other hand, moved into her two-bedroom apartment because her boyfriend at the time was uncomfortable with the fact that she hosted clients from home in the same bed they slept in. Personally, she had no issue sleeping in the same bed as her clients. Before working from a two-bedroom apartment, she had a one-bedroom apartment and worked from home and had no issues with it. She moved to facilitate the creation of a spatial segregation for her boyfriend's sake. This points towards issues with monogamy/non-monogamy, and her partner's understanding of intimacy, work, and money. Many of the escorts I interviewed spoke about the tension of working as an escort whilst simultaneously maintaining an intimate relationship in their personal lives. Sometimes they maintained boundaries for the sake of their interpersonal relationships, such as Eve who moved into a two-bedroom apartment to maintain a separation between her workroom and personal room. Offering the GFE from home can make the encounter too intimate (or too personal) for the two providers who work from home or for their partners, which is one of the reasons why these escorts segregate their workspace from their personal space. This also helped them explain to their interpersonal partners that the sex they have with clients is work, whereas the sex they have with their partners is personal. This points towards the "delicate consequential relationship work" (Zelizer, 2005) of escorts who want to make sure their partners understand the distinctions between the relationships they have at work versus the relationships they have in their personal lives. This will be explored further in Chapter II.

All participants had chosen a work name that was different than the name they used in their personal lives. In fact, one of my participants had many names for the various personas she has in the sex industry, including her work as a porn actress, producer, and cam worker. Escorts use names that are different than their legal names for a variety of reasons which include, but are not limited to, the stigma associated with the industry, a need for discretion, a desire for privacy, a concern for how being 'outed' will affect their children or future employment opportunities, and a concern for the legalities of offering services in a nation that criminalizes most aspects of the sex industry.¹¹ It is interesting to note that the escorts I interviewed who screen their clients more heavily through the use of references, and sometimes, deposits via Interac e-Transfer, often felt more comfortable divulging their real name to clients. These were the same workers, however, that did not work from home. This is important because while they may be more lax about certain boundaries (their first name), they are firmer about others (the spaces in which they work as completely segregated from their home). Many escorts I have spoken to throughout my activism with POWER discuss the importance of keeping a work name and personal name separate, and often talk about how disrespectful it is when clients ask what their real name is. There is an assumption that under their work persona, they are not truly themselves (as if there is only one

¹¹ At the time this is being written, the three statutes of the criminal code that regulate consensual sex work between adults have been successfully challenged. However, they will remain in effect until December 20th, 2014. On June 3rd, 2014, the Conservative Party of Canada tabled new legislation (Bill C-36) that criminalizes the entirety of the sex industry. At the time of my interviews, this bill had not been tabled yet, and the effects of this bill remain to be seen when it receives Royal Assent if it passes third reading sometime in October-December 2014. This bill will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapters and in my conclusion.

self). It is common knowledge in the industry that many workers have a fake 'real name' they give to clients who are insistent. Clients know that escorts are not using their legal names to work in the industry. According to the escorts I interviewed, their clients think the encounter is less intimate when real names are not shared. Clients have a desire for the encounter to be as authentic as possible, particularly when paying for the GFE. Meanwhile, many escorts struggle to maintain what they define as appropriate boundaries with clients.

Eve expressed a very similar spatial separation between her workspace and personal space in her home as Jessica did. She also spoke about her use of a work name in the following excerpt:

Eve: Um... So I have two clients that do know my real name. Um. One is because I took a trip with him, so he did need to know, um, that information. Um. Because we crossed borders together. Um... And I do have another client who knows my real name, but it's because of circumstances. It was... I met him through another companion that I was friends with at the time, and... um, because of where he worked, like, we would often go to his place of employment and kind of hang out? And so... I was comfortable disclosing that information to him, um... but I've had other... clients, like, really push that boundary? I don't like telling them my real name. Um. Especially because my last name is, uh, I'm the only one in the city with my last name? Um... And so that's just super privacy for me, I don't want them to ever know that. Um. But, I mean, I do get invasive questions, like "do you live here?" at my incall, because, I mean, it is pretty obvious. It's a home, and not just a place of work. Um. But I do try to maintain that, that boundary, that this is not my home, that you are coming into my, like, workspace. It may seem homey, I may spend a lot of time here, but a lot of them think that I also live in another area with roommates, and so kind of... um...

maintaining that, like, you can't just come find me at home when you want to. Um... And it, it's kinda, it's always setting lines like that. Like, I do share that I'm in school, that I do share, like, what university I go to, and what I'm taking, but not sp, specifics. Like, some of them will only get that I'm in Humanities. And some of them get that I'm taking psychology. It, it really depends on how I feel that they'll take that information, and what they may do with it. Um. [K: Mmhm] Especially with the online forums. There's a lot of clients who will go on that forum and share information that maybe should not be shared? Publically or with other clients, and that's... stuff that I don't want getting out there.

On a case-by-case basis Eve evaluates what she will say to clients about her personal life. She has a story about her life, which she modifies depending on the circumstances with that particular client. While she shifts her story depending on the client, she is stricter in terms of telling them where she lives and what her legal name is, which she considers very private. She feels this information will put her at risk of exposure because clients are known to go on forums and discuss "information that maybe should not be shared". She resists her clients' desire to know whether she lives in the apartment in which she works by telling her clients that she live elsewhere with roommates but spends a lot of time at her work apartment. This is to maintain a boundary between her personal and professional life, and this boundary is very important for Eve.

In addition to maintaining spatial boundaries, and determining what they should and should not say to clients, the independent escorts I interviewed also maintain temporal boundaries with their clients. Generally speaking, companionship is not a fee-for-service industry (i.e. 'x' amount per blowjob), but rather, a fee-per-hour industry (within which the escort and client can do whatever they both mutually desire). That

being said, most escorts do not let clients stay beyond their allocated time. If a client books an appointment for two hours, independent escorts try to make sure their client has left the premises when their time has elapsed. To allow a client to stay longer would confuse the boundary between their personal and professional lives because that time has not been compensated. In addition, many independent escorts have a 'social rate' for clients who are interested in seeing them publically or do not have enough money to see them privately for more intimate companionship. This rate does not include private time in the bedroom and is usually substantially lower than their hourly rates for indoor services. For example, Eve stated,

Eve: Yeah. So... Yeah, I mean my boundaries are, like, I generally... respect the time that they've booked for us. Sometimes they can go over by five or ten minutes, especially if they're, y'know, in the shower

Similarly, Julie stated,

Julie: My clients are not integrated into my personal life at all. I'm sometimes Veronica [her real name] and sometimes Julie. I'm the same person and bring the same thing. I don't want to be in my private life and worrying about clients. I do it for pleasure. I don't want headaches. If I wanted headaches I would have a boyfriend or a girlfriend, or both. When I have multiple clients... I have friendships with clients... but not to the limitation of my personal life. I want clients to understand that we will see each other during an arrangement. We can go for a weekend, but you'll see me as Veronica and you'll pay me. I don't want to make exceptions. I don't want a dinner date and then two hours after... then the lines get blurred. If I see you for dinner non-paid then I think you meet Julie. If you pay me for sex then you see Veronica. I just mixed both. It would be my fault if the client had doubts about my intentions. Or if I guided him...it wasn't

wanted. I really want to stay professional. It doesn't mean I like my clients less. I have clear lines. It takes away a lot of the confusion.

Staying professional and not letting clients stay beyond their time ensures both parties do not get confused about the nature of the relationship. Julie, in the previous excerpt, stated if she allowed a client to stay for an unpaid encounter, he would become confused about the nature of their relationship and doubt her intentions. According to Julie, the GFE is a no-strings-attached relationship that is supposed to be 'fun'. If she allows clients to stay beyond their allocated time, they might think she is interested in a traditional relationship with them, which would be confusing. Meanwhile, she is also one of the escorts mentioned above who finds it very difficult and disrespectful to discuss finances with clients face-to-face. This points towards the complexities of offering intimate services such as the GFE.

Eve also discussed her temporal boundaries when offering the GFE. At one point in her career her boundaries were not as strict as they are now and she would spend a significant amount of time with clients 'off the clock' in an 'unpaid' context (they would often pay for her food or drinks and it was usually after a paid encounter in the context of the GFE). Her boundaries shifted because of her intimate partner who needed her to have clearer boundaries about what constituted work and what constituted her personal life, her time constraints because of her academic degree, her jobs, and the desire to keep her work and personal life separate.

Eve: in the industry [K: yeah] yeah. Um... And I think part of that, too, is now, like, I have more time constraints? Like, I'm also, I'm in school, and I, I have other employments, and I have other... like, m, other friends and other partners...

that... y'know, I don't have as much free time? [K: yep] anymore. Like, I don't... Yeah. So, part of it, too, is that, like, a lot of my life is full right now? Um... but also, part of it, too, is, like, I... I saw, kind of, how... I was getting involved with clients and I... wanted, personally, to take a step back and not be so involved with them. And not be dragged into, like, my work persona is not me, and so I found myself either getting dragged more into "her" or disclosing to them more about [K: about you] me, because there was this discord between [K: between the two] yeah. Um... And so now... I've learned how to... still have a good time with a client, but maintain that boundary. And... like, five or ten minutes is not the end of the world—

K: No, of course not

E: —But when they're here for an hour and a half, then... it's having that discussion with them. Um, [K: yeah] so I find there's not as much off the clock anymore, now.

The independent escorts I interviewed, as well as those I have spoken to informally through my activism with POWER, often discuss the concept of 'clock-watching'. This is described as the practice of pressuring a client to leave when their time is up. This can be done in a variety of ways. For example, an escort might offer to take a shower with their client to insinuate their time is up, or start mentioning that they have things to do after their appointment, or simply start getting dressed. Some escorts have been accused of clock-watching when a client is trying to achieve a second orgasm very close to the end of an appointment and the escort mentions he will not necessarily have enough time to finish (insinuating they should not get too sexually excited unless they think they can finish within a few minutes). If an escort is described publicly as being a 'clock-watcher' on one of the recommendation or review boards where they advertise their services this can negatively affect their business. Elizabeth

Bernstein (2007) also found the independent escorts she interviewed did not want to be perceived as clock-watchers. This causes tension because to be deemed a 'clock-watcher' means an escort is professionalizing the experience too much. The tension between offering a service, being a professional, and making the experience personal and intimate for clients is difficult to navigate. Essentially, it means an escort is explicitly reinforcing the temporal and financial boundaries of the relationship by not letting someone stay beyond their allocated paid time. This does not mean that clients who stay past their time exploit the workers either knowingly or unknowingly. I believe it is up to the workers themselves to determine whether a situation is exploitative or not. Some escorts, for a variety of reasons, make a choice to allow a client to stay beyond their allocated time. This will be explored in the following chapters.

Some escorts have various sexual practices that differentiate their personal from their professional lives. For example, Jessica stated she did not like kissing, or doing the '69 position' (both performing and receiving oral sex simultaneously, usually with the woman on top) because of her carpal tunnel in her wrists; however, she provided these services to clients because it is an expectation clients have of escorts who offer the GFE. She stated,

Jessica: I hate doing 69, I have carpal tunnel in my wrist. I fucking hate it, it hurts because I have to put so much pressure on my wrists. I can't stand it. But I do it because I know clients love it. I don't feel like that's something I can tell clients that I don't do. Umm...because it's just one of those things. You have to do that. You have to. So I don't tell them that. The whole time I'm usually like chocking back tears because it fucking hurts so I don't do that in my personal life. I – in my personal life I'm not always as happy bouncy and "yaye let's kiss". I don't actually

like kissing that much. I don't. Umm.... especially when they are such deep kissers and their tongues are hugely in my mouth and I mean, fuck you, read all the reviews if she doesn't do DFK [deep French kissing] she's not gonna make it. And I want to give these clients that experience. I want to. So it's not like I'm doing things I don't wanna do, I do want to provide these services for the client whether I enjoy them or not if that makes sense.

Katherine: I totally get it

J: yeah... so like there's like that. But in my personal life, no I'm not going to do that. Uhh...in my personal life sex is a lot more about sex. About getting laid. Weirdly enough my work sex is more intimate than my personal sex. Umm because again I'm giving them that full girlfriend experience that I'm not in my personal life.

K: Yeah, that's interesting.

J: In my personal life especially because like, I've stopped doing any drugs and I don't really drink anymore umm...but it's true me and my friends used to party and stuff and I'd have sex then. So I haven't had sex except for when I'm in a relationship just for like personal one offs. Most of the time I've been drinking, most of the time I'm drunk and I don't necessarily remember the whole experience. Umm...so that's something that clients are ever going to see and I like that because I'm always in control and I remember everything. Umm...but like there are these varying aspects. You have to be that cuddly girlfriend because that's what they're paying for but that's not necessarily who I am.

Jessica is providing an experience. She is providing a service, and doing things at work that she would not do in her personal life. Later in the conversation Jessica discussed how she saves rough sex for her personal life and never does this with clients. She stated,

Jessica: That's one thing that definitely differs from my personal life to my work life is, personally, I love rough sex. Love it. Like, that's the easiest way for me to have an orgasm is for a man to be firm with me but I never ever ever ever do that,

well not ever ever, I have on like two occasions, with a client because I don't want to...I never want to let a client be in a position of power over me.

Jessica: I save that for my personal life [rough sex]

Again, there are very specific practices she saves for her personal life (in this case, rough sex). However, even if she makes exceptions to this with particular clients at particular times, for example, with the two clients she mentioned, the boundary still exists for reasons that are important to her ("I never want to let a client be in a position of power over me").

In terms of differing sexual practices from personal to professional life, Nicole was the only escort to discuss boundaries in terms of safer-sex practices. She described how she consistently uses condoms with clients.

Nicole: But never— oh, sor— [K: Oh, no, go ahead] Never in sex acts. Sex acts have always been really consistent. Like: condoms for this; the kissing has always been fine; I don't mind someone going down on me; um... It's all hygiene-related, usually. [K: Yeah] Uhm... In terms of how much, how far I go down the balls. Y'know. If it's not, if it's too, if I can't find them, 'cause he's so hairy, like, then, ynnnnn... [K: not] not letting him go there. [K: Yeah] Um. ... Like, th, the physical stuff has always been pre, l, d, pretty consistent. [K: Yeah. Yeah.] Pretty consistent.

Considering Nicole was the only escort I spoke with who describes using barriers consistently with clients, I question Teela Sanders' (2002) idea that escorts use condoms as an emotional barrier between themselves and their clients, and their work lives and personal lives. According to Sanders (2002) using condoms help maintain the boundaries between escorts' personal and professional lives, and it also helps them manage the negative feelings they associate with their clients. The condom, according

to Sanders (2002) creates both a physical barrier and also an emotional barrier between a sex worker and their client. While this was not the focus of my interview, in informal conversations with escorts through my activism with POWER, we have often discussed how some escorts are 'fluid bonded' with certain clients at certain times (i.e. they do not use protection) or how in their personal lives they always use condoms for a variety of reasons. Escorts have a variety of relationships in their personal lives, but whether or not they use a condom in those relationships is not indicative of whether that relationship is personal or not. Traditionally, people have understood condom use as less intimate than bareback sex. However, there has been a turn towards recognizing that safer sex practices, particularly through the use of gloves, dental dams, plastic wrap (otherwise known as "Saran wrap"), and condoms can be sexy and erotic.¹² For most escorts I have spoken to, a condom is *just a condom*, an instrument used to prevent sexually transmitted infection, prevent yeast infections, prevent the growth of bacteria known to cause bacterial vaginosis, and to prevent pregnancy.¹³ I also think it is important to note that 'personal' and 'intimate' are not synonymous, and it is possible to be intimate with a client without that relationship becoming personal.

Another boundary between an escort's personal and professional life concerns whether they will confide in a client about something adverse happening in their personal life. The independent escorts I interviewed stated they did not rely on clients

¹² For example, see the queer pornographic series "Crashpad" at www.crashpadseries.com.

¹³ I have purposefully added yeast infections and bacterial vaginosis to this list because many people use condoms to protect against those infections, as well. It is well known in the escorting community that seminal fluid can change a person's internal flora and this can negatively affect the balance of healthy/unhealthy bacteria within the vaginal canal.

for emotional support if there was something bothering them in their personal life because it would cross a boundary and potentially make the relationship confusing for the client. For example, Nicole stated,

Nicole: But I don't bring in too much baggage of my... I mean, like [Katherine: yeah] big challenges. I try to stay positive. [K: Yeah] Um. If it's someone I've seen for a long time? Mm. I was going through a divorce, and I let, y'know, I was, like, "I'm going through a divorce. I was married". Or I might say I was married. Um... I was in an open relationship. So I share that information. [K: Yeah] Um. In part to... have the connection? There is also something that seems to happen with my clientele: By having this kind of wild life, I think that makes them, makes me attractive to them? [K: Yeah] By being this hedonist [K: Yes] So I'm, by sh — That seems to have, like... encouraged repeat customers 'cause I'm this, like... artistic wild thing that they have in their life. But, so that's where I feel I'd still, like I'm a lover. I'm a muse. I'm a... the courtesan stuff happens. [K: Mmhmm...] So that part... um. I tend to be pretty realistic and down to earth, but I don't chal — I don't go there to challenge their life.

Similarly, in reference to confiding to clients about her personal life, Julie stated,

Julie: I don't want to get support as Vero because if I start talking about problems about my son — etcetera — it changes the dynamic of the relationship. I want to keep distance. It's more productive for me. Context is important. It's not profitable for the relationship.

Julie's excerpt is particularly poignant. She stated she does not want to confide in clients about her problems because it is 'not profitable for the relationship'. This suggests she does not want the relationships she has with clients to be too personal and she prioritizes the financial component of the relationship. She does not want to jeopardize the 'business friendship' (discussed below). Independent escorts who offer the GFE do

not disclose everything about their personal lives to clients, and try to stay positive for clients. In addition to not divulging personal hardships to clients, both Julie, and Rebecca, who were my only participants with children, disclosed they would not introduce clients to their children.

The independent escorts I interviewed all stated they would not become friends with clients. They refer to their relationships with clients as ‘business relationships’ or ‘business friendships’. For example, Julie stated,

Julie: A client has never come a friend. I have very good friends in my personal life and I love my clients where they are. Professional friendship. Friendship in the context of work.

Similarly, in the context of her appointments with couples, Nicole stated,

Nicole: Often with couples, I share a little more. Now that’s goin’ up, too. Like... I’m shuttin’ down the doors, I’m g, I’m yeah. And, I’m—

Katherine: Yeah. Do you, do you feel safer when you’re seeing couples? I know you’re, that’s changing, you just said, but have you felt safer with couples?¹⁴

N: Um... Yes. [K: Like, to share information] In the sense that... um... like it’s been useful for me to say, when I was married, to say I was married, because then they understood that I was, like, I’m genuinely, I, y’know, love group sex, and it’s... it’s something I really enjoy, so. Um... They see—, it seemed to, they seemed to relate more to me, when I was, and now that I’m divorced, uh... It may, I may, it may come up but... They’d, I tend to get their real names. They give me a photo beforehand. They let me... They give me their linkedin pages, they’d give me a lot of information. [K: Mmhmm] Nine times out of ten.

K: Okay.

¹⁴ When I said “safer” to Nicole, I did not mean physically safer, but rather, safer in terms of disclosing personal information. She understood this but I do not think it comes across as clearly when reading a transcript.

N: Nine times out of ten.

K: Yeah.

N: Um. So they have that info and... they tend, and they're American, and they don't... yeah, I, but... They don't. I guess I'm not too worried that they're gonna do something harmful to me. [K: Mmhm] Maybe, and they have children, usually I have to just avoid that topic. 'Cause they don't wanna break their fantasy ni— time? Don't talk about children. So I have to not talk about my niece, [K: Yes] and how much I love babies, or anything. Um.... So the guard is up, but it's not too much. But now I'm even putting it more, because some of them—

K: 'Cause of what just happened.

N: What just happened, and I have had a couple of couples who think, like, "now we're really true friends". And then I was [K: Oh, I see] like, "We're not really true—" I mean, like,

K: Yeah. Yeah.

N: I'm like, "I don't have room for new friends in my life".

This tensions between traditional friendship and a 'business friendship' is interesting. Every escort I have spoken to, either in the context of these interviews, or in the context of my activism with POWER, often discuss how difficult it is to explain to clients that while the business friendship is genuine and authentic, the relationship cannot transition into a traditional friendship or relationship. Many independent escorts who offer the GFE talk about how they have friends, family, and lovers in their personal life, and if they transitioned every single client they enjoyed spending time with into their personal life, they would not have any time left for themselves, and their friends, family, and lovers. It is difficult for independent escorts to explain to clients that 'true friendship' can also occur within the context of the GFE without leaving that context. Because of the financial dynamics of the relationship, escorts are often put in positions

where they need to convince their clients of the authenticity of their feelings whilst simultaneously making it very clear that an important part of the relationship is the financial dimension.

Later in the interview Nicole stated she had never had sex with a client off the clock. Every escort I spoke with expressed a similar experience. All of the escorts I interviewed mentioned they would never and have never spent time with a client 'off the clock'. On/off the clock was an important distinction for the escorts I interviewed, as it represented the shift from their professional to personal lives. It also interlaces with other boundaries discussed in this chapter, such as spatial boundaries, financial boundaries (in terms of temporal boundaries), and information shared. Personal time is not something escorts want to share with clients as it changes the dynamics of the relationship and makes the relationship more difficult to manage for the independent escorts I interviewed. According to the escorts I interviewed, it also confuses things for clients, which makes the boundaries between their personal and professional lives more challenging to navigate. These moments of tensions will be explored in the next two chapters. Chapter 2 explores how emotional intimacy with clients is mitigated by the space of employment (for an agency versus independently), and Chapter 3 explores how 'hostile world' practices are sometimes subordinated with certain clients at certain times throughout an escort's career.

3 Chapter: Spatially Yours: Space, the Law, and the Interpersonal

Relationships of Escorts

I will start this chapter with an excerpt of my interview with Eve. She was describing her various jobs in the sex industry as she transitioned in and out of independent escorting. She explained that while she started her career working independently as an escort, she transitioned into erotic massage at a spa because her partner at the time was uncomfortable with her work as an independent escort (which he perceived to be more intimate than erotic massage). I asked her whether she perceived a difference in the intimacy she shared with clients while working independently as an escort versus working at the spa. Here is what she said:

Eve: So, they would pay a door fee when they came in [to the massage parlour], like, you would collect that money and then you'd put them in the room... And then... **'cause there was this whole, like, police thing...** you know, you'd wanna get them naked and start rubbing, like, you'd give them the massage, but then you would halfway through, negotiate what the rest of the massage was gonna look like. And that was always really uncomfortable for me to have this naked man, face down on the table, and me going, like, y'know, "I can offer you a topless massage. I can offer you a nude massage. I can offer you a body-slide." Um... and, because they're naked, face down on the table, you're not getting that money right away. So I actually did get ripped off a few times, where the client would agree to, like, a hundred dollar body-slide, and then, when the session finished, they either didn't have money in their wallet, or they didn't have enough money in their wallet. And so... I learned to actually just offer one session up front. They would pay, um... I think it was a hundred and fifty for forty-five minutes, and that included the door fee, and that included my part of the fee. And so it was more like I was showering with them up front. And... those

experiences were a little, a little more... um, intimate, but again, you were in a building with other businesses in it, there were other girls working next door. Like, in the next room from you. Um... So definitely, like, the setting was not as intimate as them coming to my in-call [as an independent worker].

This excerpt is foundational to this chapter. Within it, Eve describes why her encounters with clients at the spa are less intimate than when she worked as an independent escort. She says it is because of the setting, namely, the need to negotiate money upfront with clients in a building with other businesses and close to other sex workers who were also on shift at the spa. However, this interview excerpt clearly demonstrates that one of the barriers to being intimate with clients at the spas is a fear of criminalization through Canada's bawdyhouse provisions ("cause there was this whole, like, police thing...").

This chapter explores the physical spaces of sex work. In the first part of this chapter, I look at the reasons why independent escorts who offer the GFE prefer to be self-employed rather than working for a third party at a spa or agency. One of the main reasons independent escorts worked for third parties is because of their relationships in their personal lives. Therefore, I explore how the partnerships of sex workers in their personal lives (i.e. with boyfriends/girlfriends and lovers) influence their engagement with the spaces in which they work.¹⁵ The partners of the escorts I interviewed were

¹⁵ The fact that some sex workers compromise their ideal working for their interpersonal relationships does not mean their partner is exploitative, abusive, or 'bad'. In addition, not all partners of sex workers are men, as my friendship with Melanie in my introduction made dear. I point this out because I want to address the critique of my work as reproducing the 'pimp' mythology which views all partners of sex workers as evil. I recognize in this chapter that relationships are complicated. We all make choices in relationships and this does not mean our

challenged by the perceived intimacy they shared with clients. According to the escorts I interviewed, the intimacy threatened their partners' traditional understandings of intimacy, love, sex, and money to the point where they often had to choose between their job as an independent escort or their relationship with their partner. A compromise was often sought out, whereby the escort would work for a massage parlour or spa run by third party managers because this was perceived as less intimate and therefore less threatening to the primacy of the relationship. When I discussed this with my participants, many assumed working independently in the sex industry was more intimate than working for a massage parlour or spa because of the working conditions and the presence of third party management. However, it is clear to me that criminalization shapes the working environment, and therefore also has an effect on intimacy. To date, the interpersonal relationships of sex workers who offer the GFE has not been explored in a scholarly context.¹⁶ In the second part of this chapter, I look at how touring (working a lot in a variety of different cities across Canada) affects the abilities of independent escorts to be emotionally and physically intimate with clients and personal partners.

relationships are exploitative or 'unhealthy'. I respect those choices, while also pointing towards the effect of those choices on the lives of people who do sex work.

¹⁶ There are, however, some resources available in the sex working community for the partners of workers. For example, see the YouTube clip "Every Ho I know Says So" by Scarlet Alliance (the sex workers' human rights group in Sydney, Australia): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTdBXLC01Qk>, "How to Date a Sex Worker" by Anonymous: <http://christianbvega.blogspot.com.au/2013/04/how-to-date-sex-worker.html>, "Ho Lover: About Dating and Friending Sex Workers" by Sunny Drake: http://www.qzap.org/v5/gallery/main.php?g2_itemId=1930 and finally, "An Addendum" by Nathalie Lefebvre: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EN-OTqBolyoXN8sgZ6VZERmLHU5GIj_xKckelvfabKg/edit

I noticed throughout my interviews that whether money is tacitly negotiated (through websites/e-mails, and discretely placed envelopes on tables) or overtly discussed (through face-to-face negotiation of fees for particular services) during an appointment depends very much on the space in which someone is working. The illegality of working from a publicly accessible and permanent location plays a significant role in how intimacy is negotiated in massage parlours. Due to the bawdyhouse provisions, escorts and massage attendants who work for agencies need to negotiate fees and services 'in room' whilst simultaneously screening for potential police officers. Clients who enter a publicly accessible massage parlour pay management a 'door fee' (usually about \$80-100). Additional services are negotiated in the room with the massage attendant and are different from provider to provider. For example, one provider might be comfortable with kissing, full-nudity, and a hand release for 'x' amount, but another might only be comfortable with topless massage, no kissing, and a hand release for 'y' amount (which may be lower or higher than 'x'). While the escorts I spoke to state agency-based services are less intimate for a variety of reasons (including the face-to-face negotiation of fee-for-services), one of the underlying reasons for this is the bawdyhouse provision. This provision creates a context in which agency owners cannot be upfront about what services are provided and their subsequent costs. It also means there are no standardization of services provided at a particular spa and clients do not know what to expect from one provider to the next. Needing to screen out police officers also creates a context in which escorts and massage attendants do not feel safe

providing certain services, and are not as forthcoming with personal information, which can create a barrier for the exchange of intimacy.

While most of the independent escorts I interviewed preferred working for themselves rather than third parties, this was not because they desired intimacy with their clients. Bernstein (2007), observed that most middle-class independent sex workers prefer to work independently because of the “crude economic self-interest and lack of authenticity” (p. 478) evident when working for third parties. For all of the workers I interviewed, they were not necessarily inclined to “[remove] themselves from locales that seemed to foster a purely instrumentalist relationship to the labour” (p. 478). Rather, they preferred working for themselves because of the working conditions at the agency and the criminalization of prostitution more generally. The stigmatization of sexual labour, and the criminalization of agency-based sex work through the bawdyhouse provision make it very difficult (if not impossible) for agency employees to fight for better working conditions. Many of my participants disclosed labour rights abuses while they were working for third parties, such as discriminatory hiring practices, poor compensation as contract labourers, poor and dangerous working conditions, and a lack of institutional support to deal with dangerous clients. Despite these issues, some of the workers I interviewed preferred working for third parties because of the lack of emotional connection and/or because of a partner in their personal life (explored later in this chapter). For example, when I asked Jessica how working at the spa versus working independently shaped intimacy, she stated:

Katherine: Speaking of the time that you were working for Desires [an agency-based massage parlour], umm, how do you perceive intimacy differed? Between clients that you now see independently as an escort and the times you worked at Desires? Was there overlap in your clients?

Jessica: Very little. When people would tell me I saw you before and I want to come and see you at the massage parlour I would pretty much just say no because I said yes a couple time and then they came in and expected the GFE and I'd have to shoot them down. The intimacy level differs because for one they would normally walk in and then you would have to negotiate money with them so money was on the table rather than just presented and there now you don't have to talk about it. So that made it very different. Like it was more business transaction. Umm...it was more business transaction than an intimacy thing. Umm...and I never kissed my clients.

K: At Desires?

J: At Desires. I think that was the biggest reason why I wasn't busy there because I didn't kiss them. It was massage and a handjob and that was it. Um... so there wasn't the emotional laying in bed and there wasn't the connection, there wasn't the girlfriend part. It wasn't there. So it was very easy, or it was a lot easier for me to, sometimes I would be sitting there and holding back tears thinking of things that were going on in my personal life but I could do that because they weren't looking at me. They were on their stomach. Umm...I would just give them a massage. It was a lot easier to keep things separate.

Working at Desires was a clearly-delineated business transaction for Jessica for two reasons: 1) she needed to negotiate fees with clients face-to-face and 2) she did not kiss her clients. As previously noted, in agencies the workers start massaging the client before they offer 'extra' services. Which extra services are offered depends on the worker and can include but are not limited to: kissing, oral sex, penetrative sex, mutual touching, etc. It is common knowledge in the sex industry that some massage

attendants will have sex with their clients, which is illegal in a licensed massage parlour. In fact, if bylaw does an inspection of the establishment and finds condoms, this is sometimes used as a reason to revoke the establishment's massage license, which undercuts harm reduction in reducing the transmission of STIs. Massage attendants start offering 'extra' services once the massage has started to make sure the person is not a police officer. There is the assumption that police officers cannot accept sexual services from workers if they are going to arrest them (i.e. entrapment). This is not the case, and some police officers have in fact accepted services from sex workers before charging them with prostitution related offenses (POWER, 2008). More recently, police officers have also posed as clients to gain entry into the homes and places of work of independent escorts and agencies (Ascah, 2014).¹⁷

Jessica's motivations for working at the spa, versus working independently, were very clear in her interview. Prior to working for the spa, three of Jessica's friends passed away and she started dating someone who was not comfortable with her involvement in the industry. Because she was less emotionally available, she decided to work for an agency. This was a great way for her to remain employed in the industry without the emotional availability necessary when providing the girlfriend experience. This was

¹⁷ How these policing tactics affect the lives and relationship of independent escorts who offer the GFE is not a focus of my research because at the time of my interviews, this had not occurred. Any future research should take into account these changes in police tactics because they are increasingly invading the lives of workers. This will likely get worse if Bill C-36 receives Royal Assent. According to Officer Paul Johnston with the Ottawa Police, whom I have met with on a multitude of occasions, the Ottawa Police Service is being increasingly pressured to address 'human trafficking'. Unfortunately, the methods by which they have chosen to do so jeopardize the security of people working in the sex industry. Booking appointments with workers under false pretences to gain access to their spaces of employment also violates their trust and further engrains distrust between sex workers and police officers in Ottawa.

preferable to Jessica at the time. While the relationships she had in this sector of the industry felt more like 'business transactions', this was not something she perceived negatively at the time. She stated,

Jessica: I retired from escorting briefly to be a, to work at a massage parlour. That was about 9 months. I did that because I was having a hard time balancing work life and I had three friends pass away in a short period of time and it was just really emotional. I started dating someone. All of those things together, it was a little easier to do massage.

It was a common theme in my interviews that the interpersonal relationships of sex workers often interfered with their abilities to work independently. Because of traditional understandings of monogamy and intimacy, the intimate partners of sex workers often struggled to understand the type of work involved in their jobs. It is a form of intimate labour and while sex workers might create and maintain very clear boundaries between their personal and professional lives, many of my participants disclosed situations when their partners were not supportive of their involvement in the sex industry. When Jessica decided to start working independently as an escort again, it was for two reasons. She and her boyfriend had broken up, and she was also ready to be more emotionally involved with her clients because a significant amount of time had elapsed since her friends had passed away. She stated:

J: So yeah, I did that for a while and after my boyfriend and I broke up, I realized that all my issues of why I took a break [from working independently] were done. So I've been back as an escort ever since.

These interview excerpts demonstrate that depending on the context, not all independent escorts who offer the girlfriend experience enjoy being intimate with their

clients *all the time*. Rather, based on their own comfort levels and attachments in their personal lives, some independent escorts may prefer working for third parties to working independently.

To my knowledge, there are no sex work scholars who have addressed the tension felt by independent escorts who offer the GFE whilst simultaneously maintaining ongoing romantic relationships in their personal lives. Traditionally, romantic relationships are assumed to be monogamous, which forces many independent escorts who offer the GFE to navigate this with partners who may or may not be supportive of the work they do. All five of the escorts I spoke to discussed this tension, some in the context of monogamy and some in the context of non-monogamy. Some sex workers consider themselves monogamous with their partners, because they do not consider the intimacy they share with clients at work to be synonymous with the intimacy they share with their partners in their personal lives. Other sex workers identify as non-monogamous and enjoy a plurality of relationships in their personal and professional lives. The interpersonal relationships of sex workers take many forms and cross a variety of gender and sexual expressions.

Some of the workers I interviewed started their careers independently, but moved to agency-based massage because the person they were dating was not comfortable with them providing the GFE, usually considered to be the most intimate of sexual services in the industry. Informally through my activism with POWER, many sex workers have discussed situations in which their intimate partners created an environment where they needed to choose between their involvement in the industry

or their relationship with their significant other. Through informal discussions with sex workers, I discovered that there are many reasons the partners of sex workers have a difficult time being supportive of their intimate partners in the industry. Some of these reasons include, but are not limited to,

- Insecurity, jealousy, and possessiveness;
- A fear of sexually transmitted infections;
- Frustration with being with someone who works on-call;
- Irritation because their partners have an erratic and unpredictable work schedule;
- Irritation because their partners often need to reschedule dates to accommodate last-minute appointment requests.

Jessica (quoted above) started working for Desires because three of her friends had passed away, but also because her boyfriend was not supportive of the intimacy she shared with clients while providing the GFE in her home. In the following example Eve expresses a similar situation:

Eve: Um... I started as an independent escort, and... I actually got involved with someone who... uh, while he was a client of the industry, was totally not okay with me being an escort, and... so that caused in our relationship and, so I went into massage [for a massage parlour]. Um... and I worked... for twoooooo, I guess, spas, before I went independent for massage? And then, just recently, I've gone back to independent escorting.

This was a choice that was illuminated by personal circumstances rather than an inability to be emotionally intimate with her clients. Her boyfriend was not understanding of her work and therefore she worked for a third-party who mediated

the intimacy between her and her clients. Her partner believed that if she only offered massage, particularly in the context of third-party management for a massage parlour, she would not be afforded the opportunity to cross boundaries again. However, when she returned to independent massage she did offer escort services, and the GFE, to her clients. She simply did not tell her partner. When they broke up she returned to independent escorting. In referring to her current partner, she stated,

Eve: He's having difficulties... kind of ii— getting... wrapping his head around, kind of, the intimacy of what I do and the fact that it is just work for me, and that... I don't take it home with me? So, around him, it's constantly, like, "I'm a sex-worker", "this is *work*", "I have an *appointment*" like, not a "date".

This indicates that the relationships escorts have with personal partners shape the spaces in which they work. Their interpersonal relationships can also shape how they work and under what circumstances. It also shapes how they understand the boundaries between their personal and professional lives. The partners of sex workers often police the boundaries in a way that makes it very difficult for them to discuss the permeability of the boundaries between their personal and professional lives (addressed further in Chapter III).

While Nicole was touring (both independently and for Night Life), she found it very difficult to be in a relationship. She stated,

Nicole: —the work affected it, in the sense of I w, the touring. I was gone for a week, a month, and... uh, and then coming back... and that, they were r, working, like, five to eight clients a day for four to five days a week, is really draining for me? Um, so I'd have to reboot and, y'know, try and, like... oh, now I have to do tons of laundry, and we were just having a *lot* of pressure, financially, so me going

away p, to work, was the way in which we were making ends meet. At the, by the, y'know, at the end of the day sort of thing? Our buss – our mutual business that we had together was struggling? And so that was putting a lot of pressure, so the sex part? Nope. Not in a, not, the nature of my work wasn't the problem. B, it was the being away, and the fact that I was, like, the primary bread [Katherine: yep] winner. And we were, we had enough tensions... before I started work, working. Um... With the rebound relationship? He, uh... he couldn't, he didn't understand sex work. He was, like, why don't you just, he didn't understand having sex with people I wasn't attracted to. Um... He was, like, why don't you just meet people and get drunk... I'm like, "I'm not" ... "I mean, just meet them at bars," and it was, like, well, I, and then, I get *paid*, and it sounds, that sounds *awful*. Um... Having drunk, one-night-stands. I've done a coup— I've had a few of those, and they were never something for me. [K: Yeah] Um... And he wasn't a good support-person. Like, to... My ex-husband was. Like, I could come and talk about my work, and he would not... he got it. Um. We used to have a porn site together, so... he... he was a sex worker, too, in a way. Y'know, I'm not [K: Yeah.] He wouldn't identify as one, but he was one. And we just knew... how sex can be, doesn't have to be about attraction, it doesn't have to be about love, it can be about business, and fun. It, y'know, that sex can be so many different things. [K: Yep] He really got that. So that part was okay. Um... And the... uh, I did have a boyfriend, uh, when I was married. I had an open relationship? And... we were struggling, 'cause it, we'd moved to a long distance relationship, and I could only visit him, I would only visit him if there was a work engagement also there. And... he hated that. I wouldn't visit him *just* to see him. But, I didn't have time. For personal travel. It was, like, work-work-work-work-work. Find it, yeah. And I'd been, like, working on my period, 'specially... um... like, three or five clients a day, that's... it, one client I can [K: You're tender] sort of manage but, like, that's a lot of action on the, [K: yeah] on a, on a vagina that wants to be...

Katherine: Yeah, that just wants...

N: to expel.

K: Yes.

In the previous excerpt Nicole discussed an eclectic mix of relationships she had while working in the sex industry. In one of her relationships she was the principle breadwinner and her partner had difficulties managing that. This was a relationship she had as a rebound from her ex-husband, who was also a 'sex worker' but would not identify as such according to Nicole. Her and her ex-husband shared a business in the online sex industry and he was very understanding of her work as an escort and pornographic actress. While she was married to her ex-husband she was in a relationship with someone she visited while on business trips (while touring other cities for work). In discussing her travel plans she articulated a division between work travel and personal travel. Her boyfriend was upset because she would not travel to him solely for the purposes of visiting him, but rather, would often travel for work and visit him then. This competition he felt between her work and personal life caused a lot of tension. Nicole stopped touring as extensively as a result. Her desire to work independently versus for Night Life, and her desire to tour versus working permanently in a larger metropolitan city in Canada, had little to do with her abilities or inability to connect emotionally with her clients.

Nicole referred to herself as a "professional ho" while she was on tour:

Katherine: Yeah. Uh, you mentioned, earlier, that your boundaries, when you first started, were different than the boundaries that you currently have. Can you talk to me about the evolution, [Nicole: Uhm...] a little bit, of your boundaries? Like when you first started, I know you were working for Night Life —

N: And I was doing, so I was touring, so I was doing one-hour appointments. [K: but, when—] Uhm...

K: Let's *minus* Night Life and just do, like, when you started working independently for yourself.

N: Yeah. And it, so I took, I did tour quite a bit [K: Oh, yeah] 'cause it's really, really hard for me to get business [in the metropolitan city in which she resided]. [K: Okay] It was really difficult. Um... So I'd go away one week a month, either to Ottawa or to Calgary. And I would see three to five people a day, for four, like, for, for three to five days. I was, I was high volume. Um... And I was fine with that. Like, the body could take it, um... only once I d, I-left my husband, and then I did that for about three months. And then it was, like, I'm... I was on a c, I was drinking, like, an energy drink, and then having wine with a client, energy drink, and I could just feel my internals going "Okay! Done!" And I was really, really tired and... um... so boundaries were... .. Y'know what? I was checking out a lot. Like, I felt like I was checking out. Like I was just going through the motions... and... generally sloppy. Y'know? Um, so, they weren't so much *boundaries*, but I wasn't very professional. And so, and I... Yeah. Um... And then a couple of high-maintenance clients. Um... ..

K: Interesting.

N: Yeah. I was, I was just *sloppy*. That, that, I remember there was like three months of, like, um... and then... I felt, like, very... pro-h—, like, very *professional* ho. Y'know? I'd be just, and I had a, a rhythm of my life. And so I actually, my boundaries were... they were really strict and then they got, they went loose, because I think I got comfortable, and I thought I was okay. Complacent, a little bit? [K: Mmhm] Also, seeing couples is where my boundaries go down. And I start sharing too much about my life. [K: Mmhm] And now, like, now I leave, this, the pendulum is going back to... like—

K: A little bit more strict.

N: Yeah.

According to Nicole, being a 'professional ho' involves having strict boundaries between her personal and professional life, being high volume, and hosting shorter appointments (30-60 minute appointments rather than the longer appointments often advertised by independent escorts who offer the GFE).

The previous quotes from Nicole also demonstrate that sharing intimate moments with clients and intimate partners is not always possible because of the way the work is organized. When an escort is touring, the goal is to pay for travel expenses (hotel, train or airfare, food, etc.) whilst simultaneously making as much, if not more money than what is possible while working in their home city. In order to make the desired amount of money and pay for basic touring expenses, touring escorts tend to be higher volume (i.e. they see more than 3 clients per day). Nicole mentioned that while on tour she would see anywhere from five to eight clients a day for four or five days a week. She states this was very 'draining' for her. Being a touring escort therefore limits the possibilities of sharing intimate moments with clients and partners because of fatigue, both emotionally and physically.¹⁸ This is not necessarily because of a lack of a desire to do so, but rather, because of intense working conditions. This would be the same in other sectors of the labour market if someone were working non-stop for four

¹⁸ From my understanding, many sex workers do not like thinking about the possibility of connecting and being intimate with people as limited (i.e. there is a resistance in the sex working community that if you are a higher volume provider you cannot connect as readily or easily with clients). However, from what I have observed, there *is* a limit on how emotionally and physically available a person can be if they have invested a lot of energy connecting to a multiplicity of people over a short period of time. This is the case whether a person is on tour, or working a lot in one city. Regardless of the sector of the labour market, when someone is overworked it is difficult to be emotionally available to your partner(s) or people you work with (i.e. clients).

to five days a week, for anywhere from 8-12 hours a day. It is important to note, however, that intimacy is not always desirable for the independent escorts I interviewed. As will be explored in Chapter III, Nicole lost interest for sex in her personal life because of her work.

Throughout my interviews, it became clear that people preferred to work independently rather than working for a third party at a spa or massage parlour. This was the case regardless of whether they were touring or not. I asked my participants whether they preferred working independently as an escort, or for a third party at a spa or massage parlour. When I asked Eve (quoted earlier in my chapter) she stated,

Katherine: What do you think... What do you think the motivations are, um... well, (a) which did you prefer, working in the spas, or working independently?

Eve: *Definitely* working independently. Partly because... at the spas, you were, you had a five-hour shift, for example, or a six-hour shift. And if there were no clients, you still had to sit there and you didn't make any money, and you couldn't do anything else and, like, sometimes the people I worked with on shift annoyed the shit out of me. Um... and I had no control over, like, my environment, how many clean towels there were. That was another big thing for me was that sometimes there were no clean towels, and some of the girls would just flip towels over, and that was really disgusting.

[Later in the interview]

Eve: So... It definitely, like, here [independently from her home], I was more comfortable, so they [clients] got a more intimate session. I would make out with them. Whereas, at the spa, it was, like, "Fuck this. Here's a hand-job. Get out the door." [We laughed] Uhm... And then, I mean that's a lot, like, the clients that came to the spa were just looking for that. They didn't want, um, a massage. Most of them, like, they would try to, y'know, grab you while you were

rubbing their back, whereas here, like, they got a full massage. It was more about the experience of being touched and ha, having that intimacy. Um... And at the spa, it was a lot of, like, how many fingers can I try to stick up your vagina, when... that was not a rule that you were allowed to do, um... yeah.

The working conditions at the spa were some of the primary reasons why Eve preferred to work independently. At the spa she had little or no control over the labour conditions, the hours she worked and whether she was paid for those hours, and whether there were clean towels and sheets available. Criminalization of indoor sex work through the bawdyhouse provisions, as well as stigma related to the sex industry, makes it really difficult for indoor workers who work for third parties to complain to the labour board about poor working conditions. To launch a complaint to the labour board, a person needs to provide all of their legal information. Many sex workers who work for third parties do not divulge their legal names to their employers, as they are often paid cash and on the black market.

Nicole also expressed a preference for working independently over working for a third party because of the work conditions in the cooperative she was a member of (Night Life). She wanted to work independently because she did not like how her employer was screening her clients, and did not like how her tours were organized. She stated,

Katherine: Have you always been working independently?

Nicole: Um. I worked, briefly, with Night Life. But I saw, maybe, five clients from them?

I went independent really quickly? [K: Okay] So... the, the way Night Life works, and it's still pretty much the same, it's... they have, like, an "entry level" person? So, so it's, 'specially if you have *never* worked? So, she introduces those clients,

Danielle, who runs Night Life, she introduces people who *love* seeing the new, like, a *lot* of new people. So there's the people who've been, she's been managing appointments for clients for, like, ten, fifteen years, they're, [K: On short term?] they love seeing new people. Y'know? And so, and they, um... some of them are really nice, some of them are... I don't understand, I don't see them as good clients, but she seems to be fine with them, but I find them, like, 'noying.

K: Yeah.

N: I'm pretty picky. Um... Maybe because I'm older, and I have, like, a little less patience in life, in general, I don't know. Um... Uh... my tolerance is very different than...[...] So, then, um... so I was with them, but it was the worst, it was when the crash had happened? And that, on the market? So there was very few people coming from [K: The States] the states. [K: Yeah] And the dollar was, had changed by then, and... uh... so... I started touring. And [K: With Night Life?] With Night Life [K: With Night Life, okay] and they managed my tours... So, you, you'd pay your advertising, and you'd give a small cut per appointment. Very minor. Like, fifty bucks or something. Um... and then I did Ottawa and Calgary as my tours. And I did Edmonton. And then... I did that for, maybe, two tours were organized by someone? And I did my own tours, I didn't feel she was screening well? I didn't... like what was going [K: Okay] I didn't like... so I decided to start organizing my own tours, and... yeah. So then I, I started doing that.

Nicole started screening her own clients and organizing her own tours because she did not like how Danielle was organizing them. In screening her own clients as an independent worker, she could make sure there was more compatibility and time between each appointment to give herself enough time to emotionally recuperate between appointments. This made her more emotionally available for clients.

This chapter has shown that the sex workers I interviewed generally prefer to work independently versus for a third party at a massage parlour or spa. They prefer this type of work because as an independent escort, they have more control over the space in which they work, and their working conditions. Unfortunately, due to the stigmatization and criminalization of indoor sex work under Canada's bawdyhouse provisions, sex workers who work for third parties do not have access to the same rights and protections as other workers in Canada. This makes it very difficult for them (if not impossible) for them to complain to the Ontario Labour Board if there are abuses at the workplace. Also, because police officers and bylaw officers often target massage parlours and escort agencies, people who work in these environments are constantly suspicious of potential clients and this is a barrier to them being intimate. This creates a structural barrier to ameliorating working conditions in the spa. While some independent escorts who offer the GFE prefer working independent because of the ability to be emotionally intimate with clients, this was not always the case. In this way, my research differs from Bernstein's (2007) in a substantial way. Bernstein (2007) generalized that escorts always prefer working independent because when they do so, they can be more intimate with their clients. However, providing emotional intimacy to clients is not always a preferable mode of service provision for the independent escorts I interviewed. For example, Jessica made it very clear that she preferred to work for the agency when she was experiencing loss in her personal life and was not emotionally available to clients. It was easier for her to work at the agency because clients do not expect emotional intimacy in these spaces.

Throughout my interviews, it became apparent that the interpersonal relationships of escorts who offer the GFE often interfere with their abilities to work independently as escorts even if they prefer this type of work. Therefore, the relationships in their personal lives reverberate into their professional lives in unintended, and often negative, ways by limiting the ways in which they can work. This notion that the interpersonal relationships of escorts who offer the GFE reverberate into their professional lives is important, and has been largely ignored (although I believe not intentionally) in sex work scholarship. This chapter shows that independent escorts who offer the GFE move into a variety of different locals based on their own personal comfort levels and interpersonal relationships. Regardless of the spatial context of their labour, the independent escorts I interviewed fostered a variety of relationships with clients. This will be explored in the following chapter.

4 Chapter: Temporally Yours: the Permeable Boundaries of Escorts who offer the GFE

My friend Melanie, whom I discussed in my methodology section and at various points throughout my thesis, recently told me she had an interesting conversation with her partner about her work, and the boundaries she has between her personal and professional life. She said she explained to him that every situation she encounters in the sex industry is different. While there might be similarities between certain situations, each is different because she is different, and her relationship to clients, and the industry as a whole, shifts depending on a variety of factors. She said she has general rules with the understanding that not all rules apply all the time, and that she can never really generalize her experiences. That being said, she explained to her partner that while she learns from all of her relationships in the industry, each situation is different which makes it difficult for her to manage her relationship. In this chapter I explore these messy moments, or moments of tension, when those “rigid emotional boundaries” (Bernstein, 2001, p. 403) between customers and non-commercial partners become fluid, permeable, or overlap. My goal is not to dispute whether there is a boundary between the personal and professional lives of independent escorts who offer the GFE, or to argue those boundaries are not important; rather, I seek to understand

how and under what circumstances boundaries become permeable from the perspective of the escorts I interviewed.¹⁹

One of the boundaries discussed by my participants in Chapter I involve which sexual practices they will or will not engage in with clients. For example, Jessica and I spoke at length about the services she offers as an independent escort. She stated she never bottoms (is submissive) for any of her clients or offers any form of power play²⁰ or rough sex with her clients. She was adamant that she never allowed her clients to be in a position of power over her both physically and emotionally. However, in the same breath, she disclosed she had rough sex with two regular clients.

Jessica: So those are services I don't offer. Any form of power play, or any form of rough play.

Katherine: Mhm

J: Yeah... I save that for my personal life

K: Mhm, can you, you did mention that on two instances that you had had rough sex in the context of your work. Ummm, could you speak to that a bit?

J: Umm...when I started in the industry I briefly worked with another girl who was a train wreck but she was dating a client for a while and he was very into the kink

¹⁹ This chapter is dedicated to the partners' of sex workers who struggle to understand the types of relationships that exist in the sex industry and what those relationships mean in the broader context of their interpersonal relationship. Being a member of the sex workers' human rights movement, I have noticed that while stigma, discrimination, and criminalization is the 'public' war being fought to have sex work be recognized as a legitimate form of labour, there is an equally important 'private' war happening in the homes and relationships of sex workers because of traditional understandings of love, sex, intimacy, and money. This chapter demonstrates that while boundaries are sometimes crossed at certain times with certain clients, the boundaries are still there and still important. Furthermore, I believe it is important to take each incident as an isolated incident. As Melanie stated, each situation in the sex industry is different, and while there may be general rules (like those described in Chapter I), she cannot generalize her experiences from one client to another.

²⁰ Power play refers to the negotiated and consensual power dynamics in many kinky relationships.

community and he'd show me pictures on his fetlife account of things he had built himself and his dungeon and stuff. I got to know him a lot through her and so I trusted him. And he would come and see me as a client and he would come in with his duffle bag full of stuff and he would tie me to the bed and do everything but I felt like I knew him and I knew his full name and I know that I knew his full name and knew his phone number and everything so I also had like in my spot where my girlfriends know if anything were to ever happen to me they know where I keep my appointment information ummm his full name and phone number was written in there so you know if you know, for some reason, then that was there. And then I have another client who I see regularly who I just know, I trust, and we've recently been talking about, he's like "I know you don't play that way" and I'm like "maybe with you I'll make an exception" and, umm, but it would also be the same thing.

[...]

K: Umm, you mentioned that you trusted him but what else made you feel comfortable with this one particular client?

J: I don't know

K: What is it about him?

J: Umm...

K: How long have you known him?

J: I've been seeing him for about a year.

K: Ok

J: I know where he works. Umm...I...like...I know where he goes to eat. I know...we talk a lot about his past times, I know other girls he's seen. I just, I just sometimes... Sometimes with clients you just know you feel you know things. With this guy he's just an open book. Umm...and I do trust him. I have no reason not to. I also like him. I'm somewhat attracted to him. So I think that makes the difference as well.

Jessica was reluctant to admit she liked these clients, and was attracted to the second one in particular. I sensed that she was slightly embarrassed by the fact that she liked and was attracted to this client, and therefore subordinated one of her boundaries with him. Through my activism with POWER, many escorts I have spoken to discuss how their clients are people they are *not* genuinely attracted to. They talk about how clients are people they like, but not people they would have sex with in their personal life if it were not for the financial compensation involved. I have been told other escorts perceive it negatively if a worker admits to being attracted to and liking a client 'more than they should'. It is perceived as less 'professional' because when this happens, boundaries (sometimes) become more permeable and a person might do things with this client they would not otherwise do without someone else. This is known as YMMV (your mileage may vary) in the industry. It is a process whereby based on chemistry, personal hygiene, and a variety of other characteristics, a sex worker may provide 'extra' services to a client they like (or conversely, do not like by providing less services). Jessica both liked and was attracted to this client and therefore, his 'mileage may vary' in comparison to other clients. In addition, she trusted him, which meant that she felt comfortable providing this service to him. According to Jessica, rough sex makes her vulnerable and she never wants a client to be in a position of power over her, both emotionally and physically. However, because of the trust they shared, she felt comfortable doing so. This shows that while the boundaries between an escort's personal and professional life are important, some of those boundaries can be subordinated at particular times with particular clients. However, this does not mean all of the boundaries disappear nor does

it mean the relationship transitions into the escorts' personal life. Jessica still understands this relationship as one occurring in the context of her work.

Jessica is one of the participants who hosts clients from home. She viewed her living room as a personal space because this was the location in which she had many pictures of friends and family (explored in Chapter I). However, she has let a few clients visit her living room. Here is an excerpt of our conversation about that:

Jessica: my clients don't come into my living room and that's why my personal pictures are up here on the wall they can't see [at this point Jessica pointed to the pictures on her wall]. So even if they do step down that stair, they can't see any of my personal photographs. They can't see my personal things. They can't see my books. They can't see my movie collection. I don't want them to. Umm...for the longest time I was even pretending that I didn't live here. Sometimes I still do to one off clients I tell them that this is my friends apartment and not mine and that's because I don't want them, it's because I don't want them to know that I don't, I don't want them to have that privilege of knowing that they're in my home. I want them to think that I didn't give that. It's harder and harder to continue that illusion now [because of pets]

K: But I doubt that clients call you out on it...

J: Exactly. They know it's one of those necessary illusions umm...but I just don't think anyone ever believes me if I say that now. That's fine. I still kind of continue with that illusion because I don't want to flat out say that you're in my home because what's to prevent them from saying why can't we go sit on the couch and I'll say no I don't want you there. Umm...I have two clients I can think of that are welcome to sit in my living room. One is the guy I told you about earlier who is friends with Maureen. I know his name, I see him in public, we have mutual friends. He knows who my friends are. He can go ahead and see these pictures because he's seen me at the bar with these people before. The other one is a

CEO of a huge company. I know all his personal information. I would give him my passport number if he asked it for some reason. I trust him 100%. Umm and he is so in love with Martha [her dog] that he comes in and he sits on my couch and snuggles my dog for an hour so he is welcome to come and do whatever. He used to drive me home to my old house when I used to work out of hotels and uhh...and I had a separate home. He would drive me. He was welcome to know where I lived.

K: Yeah

J: But for the most part, that is the biggest thing that I keep separate. My personal life, my name, where I live, my [animals], my personal likes, it's, I don't want my clients to know any of that.

K: Can you talk to me about a little bit more about that CEO?

J: Yeah

K: If you don't mind. Are you still seeing him?

J: Yeah

K: Yeah?

J: Yeah.

K: How often do you see him?

J: Not too often because he's really busy. He travels for work a lot. So I haven't seen him in the, a while and the last time I saw him was in August.

K: Ok

J: But...he's great.

[K + J: <*laughter*>]

J: He uhh... I used to see him years ago, umm and then obviously when I went to massage I stopped.

At this point in the interview, Jessica became nervous. She was picking at the skin on her toenails. She became embarrassed when I noticed her doing it and we laughed as she admitted to her nervous behaviour. I disclosed I had a similar habit since I had recently

stopped chewing my fingernails. I told her that she did not need to discuss any of this if it made her feel uncomfortable, and she decided to continue. She stated,

J: I used to see him years ago. He was a regular client of mine and uhhh...he'd take me for dinner and stuff and fancy dinner. I never asked for or expected a social rate. He pretty much, he's paid me [x]/hour since I started seeing him. My rate was always [y, a value lower than x]. Umm...and I just really enjoy my time with him so if he was like "I want to take you out to dinner", I'm like "that's great". He took me to an expensive steak house and he spent hundreds of dollars on dinner but I wouldn't ask him for a social rate ever. I wouldn't care. But also like at the same time I would answer my work phone while we were having dinner. So umm...there's that difference there. Umm...and he's just, again I trust him. I feel like if ever I was in financial need, I think I could ask him for money and he would lend it to me. Umm... I was telling him once about how I wanted to buy a condo and just talked about finances with him and I could see his brain reeling and he was trying to give me some advice on things to do. So I just I trust him and I enjoy my time with him.

K: Yeah. Are you attracted to him?

J: Yeah

K: Yeah?

J: He's an older man but I mean at the same time I don't feel odd being out in public with him. I did a two-day date with Brian. Fuck it was humiliating walking around in public with him. Like, even though he doesn't. He's just a 40-year-old man in jeans and a t-shirt but I didn't feel comfortable being out in public with him and he's holding my hand and stuff like that. I was just "urggggh" so stupid. But with this guy umm...I don't care even though he's white-haired old man. I'll put on a dress and go out in public with him and I, because I'm comfortable with him I feel comfortable with him in public. Umm so yeah, I'm definitely attracted to him.

There are many layers to the relationship between Jessica and the CEO. Jessica stated the CEO always paid more than whatever her rate was at the time. She mentioned she would not feel comfortable charging the CEO her social rate when they went out to dinner together, which is normally what escorts charge clients for time spent in public together. He would spend hundreds of dollars on dinner, something she may or may not be able to afford on her own, and he gave her advice she appreciated and sometimes solicited from him. She trusted him, and felt he was someone she could rely on if she were in a financially dire situation. This relationship definitely blurs the boundaries between personal and professional. Clearly there is a financial dynamic (she may not charge him for social time, but he buys her dinner and tips her in addition to providing her rate), but there is also something *else*: a merging of sorts, as described by Rebecca later in this chapter. Jessica likes the CEO, she's 'definitely attracted to him', and she compared her relationships with him to her relationship with Brian whom she does not feel comfortable to be in public with. Later in the interview she stated,

Jessica: [...] like that CEO, he comes in and sits down and we sit on the couch and play with my dogs for an hour. He pays me for an hour but he's always here for at least two to two and a half hours and that's my choice. Umm...and it's because at least an hour of that is us just talking. Umm... and hanging out with my dogs... you know other people other people don't get to see that.

All independent escorts who offer the GFE have temporal boundaries with clients (see Chapter I). Jessica and Eve have spatial boundaries as well because they work from home. Jessica was comfortable inviting this client into her personal space, where he saw photographs of her family and friends, played with her dog, and enjoyed her company

for a period of time, which he had not explicitly compensated her for. She placed a lot of emphasis on her choice (“that’s my choice”, she said) to spend additional time with him. This emphasis on choice counteracts the assumptions people would make about the CEO, particularly anti-sex work feminists who believe the sex industry puts women at an inherent risk of exploitation without recognizing the broader legal context which contributes to peoples’ vulnerabilities in the industry (MacKinnon, 1993; Dworkin, 1993; Farley, 1998; Raymond, 2004). Many people would assume the CEO is taking advantage of Jessica by spending time with her ‘off the clock’ and not compensating her ‘fairly’, but Jessica does not view their relationship in this way. There is also a tension because many independent escorts who offer the GFE would judge Jessica harshly for not being compensated for her time. This is not viewed as professional behaviour. Similarly, Eve stated there was one client she saw off the clock and she also emphasized how this was a choice for her.

Eve: Like, there was one client that I genuinely did get along with very well as friends, and... um... he ended up getting married and kind of getting out of the whole scene of sex workers. Um. But, like, we did. Like, we got along really well. And it was very friendly, like, we would sit in his apartment after the session and, like, just... show youtube videos to each other of music that we thought the other person would ag, would enjoy, and... so it was off the clock, but it was, like, he would always be, y’know, “Are you sure you’re okay to stay? Do you want to go home now?” He was always more aware of the time than I was, and it was always, like, it was always framed in that my choice to stay off the clock, um, and it was just someone whose company I really enjoyed and who I connected with really well. And it was... I... it was fun! <*laughter*>

The boundary being discussed here is a temporal boundary. There are many reasons some independent escorts who offer the GFE may see clients 'off the clock'. For example, Eve decided to spend time with this one client 'off the clock' because he always framed it as her choice by being aware of the time and not wanting to take advantage of her. Furthermore, in making sure she was consensual and he was not overstaying his welcome, he did not make assumptions about their relationships. Many of the escorts I interviewed seemed more inclined to spend time 'off the clock' with clients who did not attempt to change the nature of the relationship by removing its negotiated financial dynamic.

Jessica, in referring to the CEO whom she had seen occasionally 'off the clock', stated,

J: Yeah well, again, like...with that guy [the CEO], I love spending time with him. Umm...the last time I saw him I had a friend from out of town who was visiting so I kicked him out for an hour and I told my client "I'm really sorry but I'm going to have to keep it to an hour today" and that felt weird even though he only paid me for an hour I still felt like I was short changing him by kicking him out after the hour. Umm...but yeah...like that's really it I have a few people who I don't mind but I also like, I do tend to make sure things wrap up within an acceptable time frame because I don't ever want clients to think that we've moved past a client/service provider relationship.

K: that's fair

J: yeah

Jessica felt she shortchanged the CEO when she kept her appointment length with him to an hour, which is what he compensated her for. Generally, he would spend two to two and a half hours with her, but only compensated her for one. This created a

situation for Jessica whereby she felt she was cheating him of their time together, or not providing the same service she usually does. She stated she tries to wrap things up with clients within an acceptable timeframe so they do not think they have moved beyond the client/service provider relationship. However, with the CEO she felt uncomfortable keeping the temporal boundary because she liked him and enjoyed her time with him. Jessica's interaction with the CEO is complicated, and has become more complicated with the passage of time. Jessica's desire to cross the boundaries between her personal and professional life with this one particular client is very clear in the following excerpt:

K: Umm...in talking about the CEO, what motivated you to...I know you described that you were just talking and he would cuddle your dog, but what was the thought process involved in letting him stay?

J: Because I like him.

K: Yeah, just cause you like him?

J: Yeah, because I like him. I like spending time with him. I look forward to my time with him. I love that he walks in and he loves my [animals]. He is, he says and I believe him, that he's just as happy to see my [animals] as he is to see me and clearly I'm nuts about my animals so the facts that he walks in and loves them so much like, it just, it endears him to me. Umm...and...like it was right when I first got her and she still was still having some behavioral issues and she loved him. She sat on his lap and melted into a little ball of happiness. That means a lot to me too.

She crosses these boundaries with him because she likes him. It may seem obvious, but acknowledging the role of desire in how and when boundaries are crossed is rather elusive within sex work literature that addresses the relationships of independent escorts who offer the GFE. Frank (1998), in reference to her relationship with her regulars at the gentlemen's club stated,

while we were always performing, however, we were not always *pretending*. After all, I cannot say that the intimacy I developed with my regulars in the strip club was really false, for sometimes our mutual performances were also authentic. There was positive affect involved; I sometimes held their hands or kissed them on the cheek; I listened with interest (sometimes) to their stories; I missed them when I returned to North Carolina for school. I became familiar with their idiosyncrasies in conversation and the multiple ways that they reacted to my talk and my body. Would I have listened if they hadn't been paying me? Maybe. Maybe not. (p. 197 emphasis in original).

While Jessica has crossed certain boundaries with the CEO, it is still a relationship mediated through a financial exchange, sometimes explicit, and sometimes implicit. I will never know whether she would pursue a relationship with him outside of the industry and if so, what that relationship would look like. What I find particularly fascinating about the relationship between Jessica and the CEO is that she does not really know how to categorize her relationship with him either. She considers hanging out with her dogs, hanging out 'off the clock' and going out for dinner as more personal activities. She seems uncomfortable with this (i.e. the picking at the toenails and her discomfort at making him leave after an hour). She struggles to understand the tension between her personal and professional life in this one particular instance.

Rebecca, on the other hand, disclosed her intent to pursue relationships with some of her clients after she retires from the sex industry. She also disclosed that it is important to cross the boundaries between her personal and professional life with certain clients, particularly her long-term regulars if they were in need of her companionship because of something happening in their personal life. She drew on

their humanity, and said, “at the end of the day, [companionship is] not just about money”. As stated by Lever and Dolnick (2000), “call girls also formed particular attachments to some of their long-standing clients. One woman explained: ‘You cannot know someone that long without it being a real relationships’” (Lever and Dolnick 2000: 97-98 as cited in Zelizer, p. 127). In reference to one of her long-term regulars, Rebecca said

Rebecca: But, um, so when I went there the last time, he’s like, “I’d like to see you,” Well, why don’t you just come on over and chat. He goes “How ‘bout I take you out for dinner?” And I was like, “Okay”, ‘cause whenever I’d go to [x town] for a date, we’d drive an hour and a half and we’d eat the best Chinese food I’d ever had, in this really shitty strip-mall, and it was like... amazing. I know it sounds really funny, but [K: No, no, it’s great, yeah] just, like, when you have good food of some cuisine, you think about it, right? And I’m like “I’m tellin’ all the ladies, they’re all comin’ to [x town], you’re takin’ us all out for dinner, and” y’know? So last time, he took me out to this, like, fine dining, amazing restaurant, and he’s, like, “It’s the least I can do” and, it’s like: you don’t owe me anything. Y’know? And he’s like “No,” he said, “The fact that we’ve become friends,” like, that kind of thing? Like, [K: Yeah]

K: And he didn’t, he didn’t compensate you for that dinner, did he, [P: No] You guys just went out for a dinner date.

R: We just went out for dinner. He needed to talk about his divorce, and there’s only so much you can talk over an email and a text [K: Yeah] and a phone. He needed conversation; the guy’s seen me for two years. ‘Kay? He’s... He’s compensated me in more ways than just money. And if I can’t give him a couple hours of my time when I’m *not booked anyway*, and even if I wasn’t, I would have made the time to see him. If I can’t... You can’t treat people like that. In any business, there comes a point where you have to give, ‘cause people are giving to you all

the time. Yeah, they give me a fucking headache, but I have to give back. You know what I mean? [K: Yeah] Like. There comes a point where you look past the stupidity, and you realize that people are humans, too. Y'know

[...]

R: It's not just, at the end of the day, it's not [K: and] just about the money

In this excerpt, Rebecca talks about how in any business relationship, people need to 'give back', particularly with long-term regulars who have compensated her 'in more ways than just money'. Her emphasis on how she should give him a few hours of her time when she is 'not booked anyway' was interesting. She was quick to point out that she would have made time for him even if she had been booked, which suggests to me she was not certain. She sought my validation, asking me if I knew what she meant about giving back to people in business relationships. This suggests she was hesitating, and trying to convince me that she would. Her tone insinuated this as well, which is much harder to verbalize via text. Despite her insistence that she would see him, she might not have been able to do so if she had an appointment booked with another client. I also think it is important to note that Rebecca is an anomaly amongst my participants. She seems to have very different boundaries than the rest of my participants and I believe this is the case for three reasons: firstly, her personality and openness to these sorts of relationships, secondly, her husband who is very supportive of the work she does as an independent escort who offers the GFE, and third, the length of time she has worked in the sex industry. Among all of my participants, Rebecca has worked in the industry the longest, and I think such longevity in the industry brings a certain understanding to her work that others might not have.

In terms of boundaries regarding personal information (discussed in Chapter I), Rebecca discussed how she crosses boundaries by disclosing personal information about herself. She stated,

R: Like, yeah, I have a handful of clients that know my real name, my real first name, that's a trust thing. However... you gotta give something, somewhere. Do you know what I mean? They're divulging all their information to me, and at some point I've had the odd time someone's asked, and was like "Oh, it's Joanna". You, eventually you let your guard down and it's... if you're gonna spend that amount, amount of time with people, and you're comfortable, and they're telling you about your, their family, you gotta give something back. And I don't e — it's not, it's, I don't even think about it anymore. If I enjoy the person and I like the person, [K: yeah, yeah] 'mean just, if it, if it comes out in conversation, so be it. [K: Yep] You know what I mean? I know that that stuff will stay in the room. Do you know what I mean? I know that it will never leave. [K: Mmhm] I trust them. [K: Mmhm] If I, I wouldn't be spending time with them, I mean there are a few clients who are gossips, but you just sort of [K: Yeah, well, you know, usually, in advance] you, you, if they need to name-drop prior to a date, you know what they're going to do during the date. You know? "I've seen her, and her, and her," Okay, great. Y'know. [K: Same things] But, yeah, you keep, you keep your boundaries close when you feel you, y— invaded, I guess you could say.

Again, in this excerpt she is expressing how you 'gotta give something' or 'give back' with certain clients, as long as they are trustworthy and not prone to gossiping. She would not disclose information about herself indiscriminately, but rather, if a client demonstrated himself to be trustworthy and things came up organically in conversation (like her real name, or information about her family) she would disclose it. This boundary crossing is calculated, and it is not necessarily perceived as a boundary

crossing to Rebecca. Rather, she stated she is not “crossing the line, but merging the line” and how much “you divulge to that person is selective to the circumstances”. As trust is established, boundaries become more fluid and permeable. This is applicable to most relationships, be they in the sex industry or not. She said, “y’know, like your guard is always up, but eventually it comes down for those that are genuine.”

Rebecca, at one point during the interview, compared her relationship with her husband and five-year old as being “harder work than going to work”. She stated,

Rebecca: So, there’s another gentleman I see when I go to [x city], we go for, we don’t visit on a client-SP relationship anymore, we just go out for lunch every time I come to town, and catch up. Um. He’s my old web-designer. [K: Okay] Um. He still does my who— I trust him with my life. When I moved, he picked my cats up from the airport, like, right there that’s a *huge*, those are my babies, y’know? He’s, um, he’s a really, really good friend. You know what I mean? He, ah, he’s had ups and downs in life and he, I have too, and... we just click really well. You know what I mean, and we can... he’ll email me to vent about something, and I’ll vent back: I’m like “fuckin’ Christ, it’s driving me nuts at home” and he’s like “You need to get back on the road”, I’m like “I know! I’ve been home four days, I’m going *fucking nuts!*” ‘Cause, like, I can’t, I’m not used to being at home. And I was home for two weeks in October and I was ready to pull my fucking hair out. Like, a five-year-old and husband is, like, harder work than going to work.

This excerpt is rich and fascinating. She is disclosing a shift from a professional to personal relationship with her former web-designer. She discusses her work with him, and he provides her with emotional support. Rebecca is on the road touring for three weeks a month for work because she does not enjoy being at home, but loves her husband and child very much. Thinking her home life is harder than work, in

combination with the relationships she has with her regular clients, is emblematic of a blurring of boundaries, or a 'merging of lines'. In fact it is really messy and complicated, and demonstrates how much these boundaries overlap at times, and how things we consider work shift and fluctuate depending on a multitude of circumstances. Initially when she said having a child and husband was 'harder work than going to work' I was shocked. I wrongly assumed she would want to stay at home given her disclosure at loving her husband and child. It was sexist of me to assume this, and I caught myself making assumptions based on the fact that she is a mother. If the roles were reversed and her husband had a job that kept him on the road for weeks at a time, I likely would not have reacted in the same way. Regardless of what sector of the labour market people are in, they can and often do perceive work at home to be draining and this does not necessarily reflect upon how much they love their partners' and children. Regardless, this interview excerpt speaks to the boundaries that are blurred – boundaries between what is considered personal and what is considered professional for Rebecca. For example, she discusses how this relationship transitioned from one of intimate companionship in the context of her work to a meaningful friendship in her personal life. How this negotiation occurred (from professional to personal) is not something I discussed with her, but would be interesting to reveal in future research. For Rebecca, the boundaries between her personal and professional life are much more fluid than the other escorts I interviewed, and she does not express confusion or anxiety when things are blurred. Rather, she seems to appreciate the multiplicity of

relationships she has both in and out of the industry, and does not seem to mind when they overlap.

In my interview with Eve, she disclosed how she transitioned from a professional to a personal relationship with one of her former clients. Their relationship was described in Chapter II when she worked for an agency because he was not supportive of her involvement in the industry. She stated,

Eve: I did have a client that I actually became romantically involved with. Um... That was kind of a one-in-a-million thing... Um. But, yeah, there was definitely, like, there was real connection, there was real chemistry, and... so it started out as a friendship where, like, I genuinely enjoyed this person's company and I sought that out. Like, it wasn't... him... blurring the boundaries. It was me blurring the boundaries and me making that choice to say, like, "I would like to go out for lunch with you off the clock". Um... Just because I did. Like, I felt a real, real connection to this person and... I guess, at the time, too, like, I was also very lonely. I don't think it would happen as much now, where I have a lot of friends and I have... a partner in my life, and... um, at the time I'd just gotten out of a relationship and I was... um... I had friends, but I had just kind of lost a couple of really important friends? And so... having this person who... reciprocated kind of that "I want to get to know you" feelings, like, it was nice, it was... it was what I needed at that time. And I actually genuinely enjoyed my relationship with this person.

[....]

We had a great time. And I... y'know, was very, very connected. And so... I, I invited him out for lunch once, and he actually picked me up and... uh... which is something like most clients don't, at the time I was living separate from where I was working, so most clients didn't know where I lived. Um... And we went out for lunch, and he actually dropped me off at the hotel I'd booked for an in-call to

go to see a client. Um... And it just kind of progressed from there. Like, we... I didn't even know how it happened. Like, e just kind of... he came over to my house, and we had sex, and it was unpaid, and it was kind of my choice, and it was what I wanted at the time, and... I mean, at the time, he was married and he was never gonna leave his wife, and so it was... We were friends with benefits. Um... and that worked for both of us. Um... and then it just kind of, a lot of the emotions grew, and we ended up... dating. And... yeah. It was. I don't know. It was very organic, the way that it evolved. [K: Mmhmm] Even from the beginning.

Because the relationship developed organically and in a context she is no longer living (i.e. when she first started her career as an independent worker and did not have many friends), it was hard for Eve to describe the transition from paid to unpaid with this particular person. At the time, she was lonely and did not have many friends in the sex industry. Later in the interview she described how she is not 'out' to her family about her involvement in the sex industry and is afraid of disclosing this information to friends because of the stigma associated with the industry. This loneliness she felt is likely a contributing factor to her involvement with this person, as she disclosed later in the excerpt when she said it was something that probably would not happen now because she has a partner and lots of friends. Her description that it was a 'one-in-a-million-thing' is noteworthy, because she disclosed other types of friendships and relationships that have resulted from her work as an independent escort. Again, the emphasis for her (and Jessica above) was on choice. I think Jessica and Eve, in their emphasis on choice, were trying to demonstrate to me that they were not vulnerable and had agency. They also wanted to emphasize to me that despite these boundary crossings, they were still

professional escorts. They could and do choose to merge or cross these boundaries when they see fit. Later in the interview Eve described her relationship with some of her other clients:

Katherine: Um. And so, apart from the one instance where you spoke to me of your previous partner... [Eve: Mmhm] That he was, he was someone who became a friend, then also became a lover, h, has there been, um, other clients that have become friends? In, and not necessarily friends that you see off the clock, but people that you would consider friends?

Eve: Um... Not really, no. Um... I have one, like, the one client that does think that we're friends... I still... have that, like, personally, I, I don't. I still see him as a client. Like... I know that when I leave this industry, I will be leaving him behind. And that may be a little sad. Like, we have shared a lot of things together? But... Um... At the end of the day, I know that it's not something that I'm gonna keep in my personal life, and I don't really have any clients now that I could say the same— actually, no. Sorry. I have one. One that I may continue to see, but just 'cause we totally connect on, um... kind of an artistic level, if that makes sense? Um... the way that he lives his life, and the things that he creates, um... are very much in tune with my own personal philosophy, and I think that that would be someone that, if I left the industry, I might continue to... connect with. Like, not necessarily physically, but... just check in with via email or a text every now and again because I do genuinely have an interest in what he has to say. Um... And that's not to say that I don't have an interest in my clients now, it's just... I

K: It's that work—

Eve: Yeah. Like I, and I— [K: and personal life] —don't have a problem maintaining work boundaries with this person. Um. It's just that... yeah, the, there's, there's interest in what he does. And I think it's... Yeah. I think it, it, it's the artistic part. Like, I genuinely enjoy what he creates, and I want to continue to follow that. Um... But I, I still wouldn't call him a "friend". He's still a, he's still a client, and I

think I've learned how to do that? At the beginning, I did have a few clients that I would go out and have a beer with off the clock. Um. But I've learned that that just blurs lines, and blurs boundaries, for both of us. And so... For my sanity and theirs, like, it's better to maintain these boundaries, even though I may genuinely care for them, and, y'know, we may have a more genuine connection than others? It's still important to keep those boundaries for both of us.

Eve goes back and forth about whether she would pursue a friendship with him 'off the clock' if she was to retire from the industry. She calls him a friend, and then backtracks. In this interview excerpt, she blurs the boundaries near the beginning and simultaneously reinforces them near the end as she thinks about it on a deeper level. I think it is important to note that throughout her career as an escort, her understanding of the importance of boundaries between her personal and professional life has shifted. While in the beginning of her career she discussed instances where she crossed boundaries, she clearly articulates that she would not do this anymore. This contrasts with Rebecca, who had no qualms blurring the boundaries with certain clients at certain times and had no doubts she would pursue a friendship with some of her clients once she retired from the industry. Many of the escorts I interviewed were worried about the relationship being misinterpreted if they blurred boundaries between personal and professional with certain clients. They often feared the client would want to see them off the clock, assume they were friends, or assume they could always stay past their allocated time if it happened once in the past. These types of situations can and do lead to miscommunications and ruptures in relationships between escorts and their regular clients. For all of my participants, with the exception of Rebecca, it was very important

the relationships remain professional relationships even if at times certain boundaries were crossed at certain time.

Nicole has also occasionally blurred the boundaries between her personal and professional life in the context of offering the GFE as an independent escort. Here is what she said when we discussed it:

Nicole: There's another person I went for, like, coffee with. He was going through a divorce, I was going through a divorce. And that's, so there the boundaries went down. But once that happened... He, we stopped seeing each other. He also didn't have the budget to see me. Because he was going through his divorce. And we've stayed in touch. Um... And then it turns out we have a mutual friend, but— We stayed friends, but we stopped, there was, like, the... [K: Yeah] The service, the sex, everything stopped after that. [K: Yeah.] Um...

K: Can you talk to me about the transition, like, with that person in particular, the transition from, like, a paid to an unpaid context? Like, [P: Uhm...] if you guys became friends?

N: Y-Yes.

K: Okay. [P: And...] Can you talk to me a little bit about that?

N: We just had a lot of nerd and geek in common? Um... Maybe with the divorce, actually, we would talk a little [K: I'm gonna turn on (off?) the light while you're talking] bit about— yeah— our divorces. And we talked a little bit about that in common. [K: Yeah] Um. [K: I'm gonna grab this, too. I'm totally, like—] I'm trying to think... he started seeing someone, like a pers, like a *girlfriend*. So he stopped hiring... [K: Okay] Turns out, I knew the girlfriend. So we... But I socialized with him at least once, where we met up for coffee, and we just met up for coffee because, and then it turns out... um... yeah. And then... It was, like, organic, over about three months. [K: Okay] So, but—

K: How often did you see him as a client?

N: I probably saw him for two years, ove, like, six times [K: Oh, okay. Okay] in two years.

K: So, like, semi-regular?

N: Yeah. Um... And it was always fun with him. Um. 'Cause we were close in age. Also, we're close in age. So that has always affect— that... I never had, like, a really... I's, I'm trying to think if there's anyone else I've ever seen off the clock... I've never had sex off the clock, with anyone. I gave someone, I-like, an extra hour once. Very early on. He was *very* young, and it was my last appointment of the day, and it was, like, *really* good sex. So I gave him, like, [K: <*laughter*>] an extra hour. But I did— it's not that I gave him an extra [K: Yeah.] hour, I kind of, like,

K: You wanted it.

N: Yeah.

K: Yeah-yeah.

N: And he was *very* young. He was, like, completely hot and young, and I'd just done, like, stinky-old-man, y'know, guys. Not stinky but, y'know.

K: Yeah-yeah. Oh, I get it.

N: Yeah. Overweight.

K: And he fucked you well?

N: It was fi— he was younger than me. He's was, like, twenty. Now... That wouldn't happen ever, anymore, now. I wouldn't have, anymore.

K: Why not, do you think?

N: Um... I don't know! I just, I, ih, it, gyah. No. My, g, my interest in sex has changed, I guess? Uh... in the last couple of years?

K: Mmhm.

N: Um... I don't have, really, much of a private sex life, so... if you're not paying me, I don't wanna have sex with you. It's kind of, like, become that way, in a way. It's like, "You're not paying me? I'm... I have a vibrator." And, it, I think I want, if I'm going to have something off, I want to r, like I want to be *really* romanced. I'm looking for, like... gr, *really* high level of lust, br, and romance right now. ... That's where I am in my life, right now.

Nicole spent time off the clock with her client who was experiencing a divorce because she was also divorcing her husband at the time and they had a lot in common. She clearly emphasized that the 'service' aspect of their relationship stopped, and they were no longer sexually intimate. This excerpt of the interview was near the end of our time together and Nicole and I had developed a level of rapport and ease which facilitated me asking her about the sex she had with the client she spent an extra hour with ("he fucked you well?" I asked). I was curious about why she would never do something like that again, and her response was striking. She stated she does not have a personal sex life anymore. She found it more satisfying to masturbate than have sex with a partner unless there was a high level of lust and romance. This was interesting because it points to how her work as an escort has shifted her relationship to her sexuality in her personal life and changed her desires and expectations of her partners in her personal life. They both influence one another in meaningful and significant ways, despite the boundaries between both. Nicole was the only escort I spoke with who discussed the influences of her work on her personal life in this way.

This chapter has demonstrated the permeability, but also the importance, of boundaries between the personal and professional lives of the escorts I interviewed. It is important to highlight the importance of these boundaries, because while there might be similarities between some of the relationships they have with their regular clients and traditional relationships, there are some stark differences as well according to the escorts I interviewed. By similarities, I mean similarities in the intimacy that is shared, not necessarily whether there is financial compensation or not. These boundaries are

important for their mental health, safety, privacy, and for their interpersonal relationships as well. Every escort I spoke to has different boundaries. Every escort blurred those boundaries at one point or another with clients they like, trust, and were attracted to (either mentally, physically, or for financial reasons). However, when this happened they were not in a relationship in their personal life. Furthermore, in the instances this happened there were usually circumstances that led to them wanting a personal relationship with a client in the first place, such as loneliness and isolation. At the time of the interviews, most could not imagine dating a client in a traditional sense, even if they had dated clients in the past and continued to blur certain boundaries with clients (such as the intimacy they share, for example Jessica and the CEO, and how much time they spend together, for example Eve and the client she sees 'off the clock'). Rebecca was the only escort I spoke to who was very comfortable blurring (or merging, as she called it) the boundaries between her personal and professional life by divulging personal information and spending time with many of her clients off the clock. She also intended on pursuing relationships with some of her clients once she retired. Rebecca has been in the industry for over a decade and has no intention of leaving the industry even if she mentioned retiring at some point in the distant future, whereas all of my other participants disclosed a desire to find more mainstream work at some point in the future. All of these various factors need to be taken into consideration when looking at the boundaries between an escorts' personal and professional life. As Melanie once told me, "it is hard to grasp the mix of love, disgust, money, desire, irritation, and care I have for my clients. It's really fucking complicated to describe. So sometimes I don't bother".

Conclusion

A month ago, about a week after the tabling of Bill C-36 at the House of Commons, I wrote the following:

“Over the past couple of years Melanie, whom I introduced in my section on methodology, has become a dear friend. Over a glass of wine, we often discuss various situations that arise with her clients and we chitchat about her work, my work, our lives, and our partners. About a year ago she started dating a former client who is very supportive of her involvement in the sex industry. I admire their relationship and the difficult conversations they have had along the way about intimacy, money, and sex. When she reflects upon the time she shared with Angie, and the struggles they faced over the love she felt for one of her clients, she tells me “that would never happen now” because she is in a stable, loving, and kind relationship with a partner she loves. Her relationships in the sex industry remain what she terms ‘professional’, even if certain boundaries are crossed at particular times (like when she met her current partner). Although her main motivation for entering the sex industry was money, there were many secondary benefits such as great life experiences, fine dining, meeting new people and experiencing new things. As an extrovert (although she likes to think of herself as an introvert), being an escort facilitated a multiplicity of social connections and bonds for her. When she talks about her involvement in the sex industry now, she tells me the novelty has worn out after four years in the industry. She said if she could find a job making the money she is making now in

another sector of the labour market, she would transition into other employment. She recognizes this is unlikely to happen anytime soon but is hoping some of the skills she has learned as an escort are transferable to other sectors of the market.”

Fast-forward to today, July 18th, 2014. Melanie has decided to transition out of the sex industry. She feels the (potential) risks associated with the industry are no longer worth the financial benefits. One of her closest friends was recently ‘outed’ as a sex worker in a small rural community (someone linked her professional identity with her personal identity in a blog post). While the realities of being ‘outed’ were always on the periphery of her imagination, the realities of what that meant had never registered for her. Melanie’s partner has two children, and she does not feel comfortable asking her partner and his children to fight stigma and discrimination with her if circumstances were to arise whereby her privacy was compromised. Bill C-36 and its implications (criminalization) make her fearful of the future of the sex industry as well. I fully support her decision, and recognize the circumstances with her former partner, Angie, and her current partner, Jacob, are vastly different.

Sex work is work, but it is a criminalized, stigmatized, and often misunderstood and misrepresented profession. Melanie’s experiences, as well as the escorts I interviewed for this project, helped me understand the layers of complexity as people navigate the multiplicity of their lives. While independent escorts who offer the GFE struggle to manage the boundaries between their personal and professional lives, and struggle in their interpersonal relationships as a result of traditional understandings of

monogamy, intimacy, sex, and money, they struggle within a legal and social environment of criminalization, stigma, and discrimination.

Sex work is work, but it *is* qualitatively different though, isn't it? It is different because it involves sex, intimacy, and the marketplace. When these three things intersect, people become very uncomfortable. The purchase of intimacy in the context of sex work makes people squirm in their seats in ways that other care labour does not. Money is assumed to corrupt intimacy and 'real' intimacy, according to popular notions of love, cannot be bought and sold on the market. It is on that note that my thesis began, and it is on that note that it will now end. What did the escorts I interview think about these intersections? What preoccupied them most about navigating the tensions between their personal and professional lives?

In Chapter I of my thesis, entitled "Hostile Worlds, Hostile Practices", I explored what defines the boundaries between my participants' personal and professional lives. For the escorts I interviewed, it was incredibly important they be perceived as professional escorts. Being a professional escort entailed maintaining boundaries between their personal and professional lives, particularly because they are providing the Girlfriend Experience. By definition, the GFE involves a certain amount of intimacy and connection. This causes tension because both the escorts who offer the GFE, and their interpersonal partners' understand intimacy and connection to be personal, and not professional. The escorts I interviewed reinforced the boundaries between their personal and professional lives through the use of hostile world practices (Zelizer, 2005). These hostile world practices included: using code words to talk about money, having a

separate work space and personal space when hosting clients, having a separate set of work clothes, having a separate work name, not divulging too much personal information to clients, not engaging in certain practices (sexual or otherwise) with clients, and never seeing clients 'off the clock' (or in an unpaid context). All of the escorts I interviewed related to these boundaries differently but they all had boundaries nonetheless. They all expressed the importance of these boundaries throughout the interviews.

In Chapter II of my thesis, entitled "Spatially Yours: Space, the Law, and the Interpersonal Relationships of Escorts", I explored the interpersonal relationships of sex workers. Through my work with POWER, I knew many sex workers who were in relationships with partners that were not supportive of their involvement in the sex industry, and I wondered how this impacted their work. Many of these workers transitioned to other sectors of the sex industry (such as massage parlours) because their partners were more comfortable when they offered what they perceived to be less intimate services (i.e. a hand job in a massage parlour). The two escorts I interviewed who had experienced this transition because of their unsupportive partners said being a massage attendant was inherently less intimate than being an independent escort who offers the GFE. They suggested it was less intimate because it occurs in a more public setting and often have labour conditions that are not conducive to intimacy. While the labour conditions might not be conducive to intimacy, I quickly realized through Eve's interview that the bawdyhouse provisions in the Criminal Code prevent sex workers in these sectors of the market from being intimate with clients because they need to

constantly make sure the people they are massaging are not police officers. How sex workers manage their interpersonal relationships has never been discussed in academic literature on the topic and this is a main contribution of my thesis.

The final chapter of my thesis, entitled “Temporally Yours: the Permeable Boundaries of Escorts who offer the GFE”, explored the permeability of boundaries between an escort’s personal and professional life. This is the chapter that inspired my thesis topic. What happened when Melanie fell in love with her client? How did the transition from a paid to unpaid context occur? What did it mean for her and her partner? What circumstances led to her and her client falling in love? Did other escorts experience similar tensions or was this an isolated incident because of who Melanie is and the context of their relationship? I explored the messiness, the tension, the overlap, and permeability of their lives. I explored those situations in which escorts date clients, become friends with clients, or subordinate the boundaries so clearly expressed and articulated in Chapter I. I had read Elizabeth Bernstein’s book Temporarily Yours and thought it was an apt description of the GFE, but thought it lacked an analysis of these messier moments and how these moments negatively affect the interpersonal relationships of escorts. The motivation for crossing/blurring/merging boundaries is usually quite simple: attraction, trust, and desire. With the exception of Rebecca, I discovered that while these boundaries are sometimes subordinated with certain clients at certain times, they are never forgotten. However, even Rebecca recognized the importance of respecting boundaries, she simply merged them in a calculated way.

There are so many misconceptions about sex work. My thesis challenges many of these misconceptions. It challenges the notion that sex work is 'easy money'. It is clear throughout my thesis that working as an independent escort is not easy. In fact, it demands the following: a heightened awareness of boundaries, interpersonal skills, and the ability to navigate a criminalized and stigmatized sector of the labour market. Furthermore, for those sex workers who are not "out", managing a multiplicity of legal, personal, and professional identities is draining. There is constant worry about being "outed" and this can and does have effects on the health and well-being of sex workers, and the health and well-being of their interpersonal relationships. My thesis also highlights the challenges faced by independent escorts with their interpersonal partners. Due to traditional understandings of monogamy, sex, intimacy, and money, it is very difficult for the partners of sex workers to understand the type of labour involved in the industry. It is an intimate form of labour, and the boundaries are incredibly important even if they are occasionally crossed with certain clients at certain times. I hope this thesis, if read by the partner of a sex worker, sheds light on how difficult these situations are to manage. I also hope it sheds light on the importance of boundaries for those escorts who offer the GFE. Institutional ethnography shed light on these issues, whilst prioritizing the voices and experiences of sex workers who offer the GFE. Sex workers have a voice and use it, and I remain amazed at their abilities to articulate boundaries, reinforce them, and manage them in a criminalized and stigmatized environment.

My thesis complete, I still have many questions. For example, I wonder how Bill C-36 (the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act, an act to amend the Criminal Code in response to the Supreme Court of Canada decision in *Attorney General of Canada v. Bedford*) will impact the sex industry and the escorts I interviewed. According to POWER and PIVOT Legal Society (2014), social science evidence “from Canada and throughout the world indicates that, if this Bill becomes law, it will force the sex industry further into the shadows, restrict sex workers’ access to important safety strategies and have significant and profound negative consequences on sex workers’ health, security, equality, and human rights” (p. 1). According to Caroline Newcastle (2014), an independent sex worker and spokesperson for POWER, this Bill criminalizes the *entirety* of the sex industry and will maintain an environment where people die because they are prevented from engaging in life-saving safety measures. While it is not a law yet, there is no doubt in the mind of most sex workers that it will be passed under our current Conservative Government. How will this Bill impact the life, liberty, and security of the persons of sex workers in Canada? How will this Bill impact the interpersonal relationships of escorts who offer the GFE? Melanie has already transitioned out of the industry, with Bill C-36 being one of the factors leading to her decision. How will it impact the relationships with escorts and clients? If this law passes, it will impact them negatively, regardless of whether they are located in indoor or outdoor sectors. I recommended further research given the impending change in the legal regulation of sex work in Canada. Sex work scholars, sex workers’ human rights allies, and sex workers themselves are demanding answers from the government. We

are demanding to know how these laws will be applied by police services, how they will be interpreted by the courts, and how they will impact our communities. Any law regulating sex work needs to be written in collaboration with sex workers. When there is no collaboration between sex workers and law makers, laws are implemented with egregious consequences. “Nothing about us, without us” as the slogan goes.

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