

WORKER

SPRING
1995



TRANSEXUALS
and Sex Work

STALKING

male

RAPE

PCV

worker

WB

boy

GM

CONTENTS

features

3 **stalking** a guide to what stalking is and what you can do about it.

4 **male rape** reports on the difficulties faced by men who have been raped

6 **transsexuals and sex work** discusses the problems faced by transsexuals who take up sex work

8 **daring to dabble** looks at the issue of burnout in relation to sex worker advocates

regulars

2 **letter(s)**

credits/legal

Prostitutes Collective of Victoria (PCV).

Hours: Monday to Friday 11am - 5pm.

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Working Girl/Worker Boy, believe the hype, it's hot, hot, hot, the magazine for the nineties of the Prostitutes Collective of Victoria - aka PCV. Thanks to the following for thier contributions to the mag: Maria McMahon and Phillip Moore (Chach) - editorial & concept; Richard, Tim, Neenipops, Kerry-Anne and little Gazza for layout & design. Little Timmy did our delightful cover design and original photos were snapped by John Fadden. The fabulous Farrago five - we love you. Contributors: Josephine Cameron, Lynn Kelleher, Kylie Carter, Lauren Finestone, Jocelyn Snow, Maria McMahon,

Allison Arnott, Rebecca Lustig, Janeen Lynch, Phillip Moore, Dona Macik, Arnold E. Dix and Keith Gilbert.

The usual and useful disclaimer; articles produced herein do not necessarily represent yhe views of the Prostitutes Collective of Victoria. No offence intended, however controversy we ain't sorry for! Please feel free to comment by calling or writing (in fact we would really appreciate more letters so that we don't have to fill the space with ads or pad out the correspondence).

Submit. Your Work may well grace our next edition - but send us a copy (not your only copy!) and then give us a call to discuss your royalties, errrr layout.

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letter(s)

EXCELLENT! EXCELLENT! EXCELLENT!

"Working Girl/Worker Boy" #18 is EXCELLENT! If I were Program Manager, I'd approve buying a case of Andrew Garrett champagne, and closing early this Friday...

Keith Gilbert
Co-Ordinator
Gay & Lesbian
Counselling Service
Surrey Hills, NSW.



Police on the beat by Maria and Jap Girl Drag

**do you
have sex for
money?
are you hiv+?**

*t*he prostitutes collective of victoria has an ***hiv support worker*** who can provide safe and confidential advice, support, and referral.

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* WE CARE FOR OUR CUSTOMERS *

As sex workers, we can be faced with a variety of potentially dangerous situations. But what do you do when a client wants to see you outside work and won't take no for an answer, even to the point where he may turn up at your home, or continually ring you on your private or work phone number. In 1994 the Victorian State Government made it a criminal act for one person to stalk another.

What is stalking?

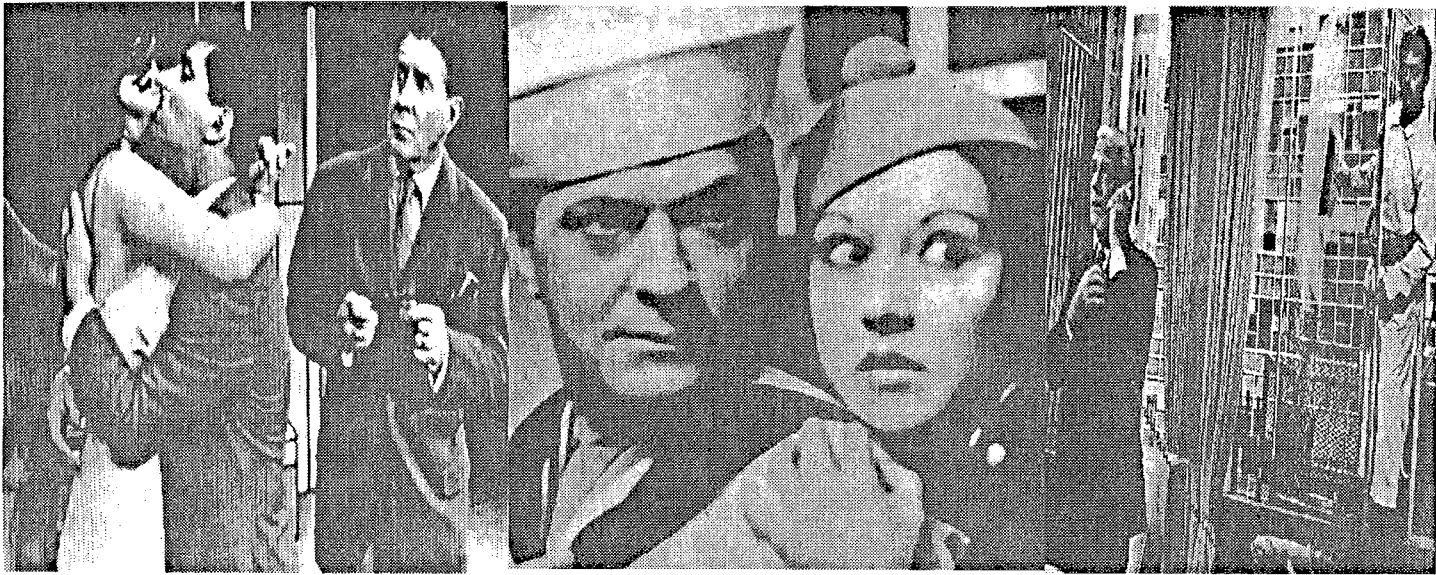
Stalking is the general harassment of one person by another. The harassment doesn't necessarily

it is left where you will find it.

- They keep you, your family, friends, associates, or workmates under surveillance.
- They act in any way that could reasonably be expected to arouse fear for your safety, or the safety of any person associated to you.

What can you do?

Stalking is potentially very difficult for the victim to prove (depending on individual circumstances). If you are being stalked, the best thing to do is to compile as much information about the situation as you can. This means keeping a detailed diary of



stalking

need to be violent or abusive as such, but any kind of continual contact that makes the victim feel fear for their own physical or mental well being. This definition also covers friends, relatives, work mates and associates of the victim who also may be contacted by the stalker. You can consider using stalking laws against someone if:

- They follow you or someone associated with you.
- You are telephoned, sent electronic messages (ie. internet) or otherwise contacted.
- They enter or loiter outside or near your home, work, or anywhere else you go (ie. cafes, cinema etc.).
- A person interferes with your property or possessions, even if they have an interest in it (ie. a partner you have bought a flat with).
- You are given or sent offensive material by the stalker (this includes if it is sent or given to someone who will bring it to your attention), or

all contact you have with the person who is stalking you. This information should include details such as dates and times when contact was made, and what actually happened (ie. what was said by whom, what was done, what type of contact - phone or face to face etc., names of any witnesses who may have been around etc.). From here a complaint to the Police, contact with the PCV or a legal service is advisable, and this is the point where you will find out whether you have a case or not (this can depend on the circumstances surrounding your harassment and the sympathy of individual Police members you deal with). If your case for lodging a stalking complaint is strong enough, it may be possible for you to take out an intervention order against your stalker, which means they are legally obligated to stay away from you and can be arrested if they make any further contact with you.

A YOUNG MAN presents himself at his local Police station and states that he has been raped by another man. After answering a furlong of questions fired at him by an officer who seems somewhat disbelieving of the responses he is given (Are you gay? What did you do to encourage him? Why were you there in the first place?), he is taken to a local rape crisis centre for examination by a forensic doctor. As it is a relatively normal procedure for a rape victims' clothing to be seized as evidence or for further forensic testing, rape crisis centres keep clothing to replace those seized. On removal of his underwear, the young man is given a pair of ladies panties to put on.

was asking for it!), and the issue of a wife's "duties" in regard to her husband's sexual needs. And while all this debate has had positive overall outcomes for women, it has also caused general stereotyping about who can and cannot be raped. It appears that in the minds of the masses the only role men play in rape is that of perpetrator, never that of victim, and this is where the problems begin.

While Governments have been eager to fund rape crisis services for women, the issue of male rape has long been overlooked and disbelieved, which puts a male rape survivor in a no mans' land (no pun intended!). Although male rape survivors have shared experiences with

women who are raped (loss of power, anger, fear etc.),

bility for their assault. As men we are meant to be able to "take care of ourselves", and a rape can cause men to feel they have "failed" as men because they were overpowered physically and sexually. We tend to feel we are responsible for the rape because as men we should have been able to fight our attacker off (if not hospitalise him!).

isolation

As male rape is an issue that is only just being acknowledged within the community, men are likely to see themselves as the only man who has ever been raped. This isolation is internalised by many men and can impact on a variety of areas in mens' lives.

power and powerlessness

As men we are meant to be powerful, and while rape is about

male

rape

As participants in a patriarchal society, we have set ourselves up to allow the above scenario to take place. As men, we gauge our success in regard to how different we are from women, and are given very clear messages about what is masculine or feminine behaviour: Real men don't eat quiche, boys don't cry, women are passive while men are aggressive. What these messages are saying in regard to rape is that men cannot be raped, and that any man that is raped by another man is assumed to be either gay (You were asking for it. You wanted it.), or weak (You should have fought him off).

Rape has always been a contentious issue within the Government, the Judiciary and the general community since the evolution of the Feminist Movement, when women took control over their bodies and decided that "No means No". Debate has been fast and furious for years around what constitutes rape, the female victim's "role" in the rape (short skirt and high heels-she

men who experience sexual assault have a range of issues that are unique to their experience, and even those experiences shared with female rape survivors impact differently on men. Rape effects men on a number of levels depending on how they personally have been conditioned, and their own self-perceptions due to that conditioning.

so what issues are men faced with when they are raped?

responsibility

Men who are raped are likely to experience a feeling of responsi-

power as opposed to sex, men who experience this loss of power see themselves once again as "failures" as men because they were not in control of the situation. This is not discounting a woman's feelings of powerlessness when she is assaulted, but in men this feeling can manifest itself in more outwardly destructive ways. A man's feeling of powerlessness after a rape can often result in that man becoming more aggressive, even to the point where he is violent, or over time may become a perpetrator himself depending on the various circumstances around his assault (ie. his age at the time of the attack; what values/role models he was raised with; sex of the perpetrator; his present personal values and in-built coping mechanisms, etc.). These type of behaviours are often a reaction

to that loss of power, and a way to reclaim the power that was taken from them.

questioning of sexuality

Men who are raped (in particular heterosexual men) often question their sexuality, especially when they have been assaulted by another man. Men tend to take on board that they did something that attracted their attacker to them, something that suggested that they were 'gay and available'. This in turn can impact on relationships (both sexual and non-sexual with men and women), and lead to sexual problems. Often during a sexual assault, a man will ejaculate. If ejaculation occurs it is more a reaction to their fear than of sexual excitement. Men often take the fact that ejaculation has occurred and perceive it as an indication they are in fact homosexual (I came...I must have enjoyed it...I must be gay), rather than a physical sign of their terror.

misplaced homophobic tendencies. This is most common in heterosexual men, who can become aggressive or even violent when confronted with a gay man. This is in spite of the fact that rape is about power and the bulk of perpetrators in a male to male rape scenario identify themselves as heterosexual.

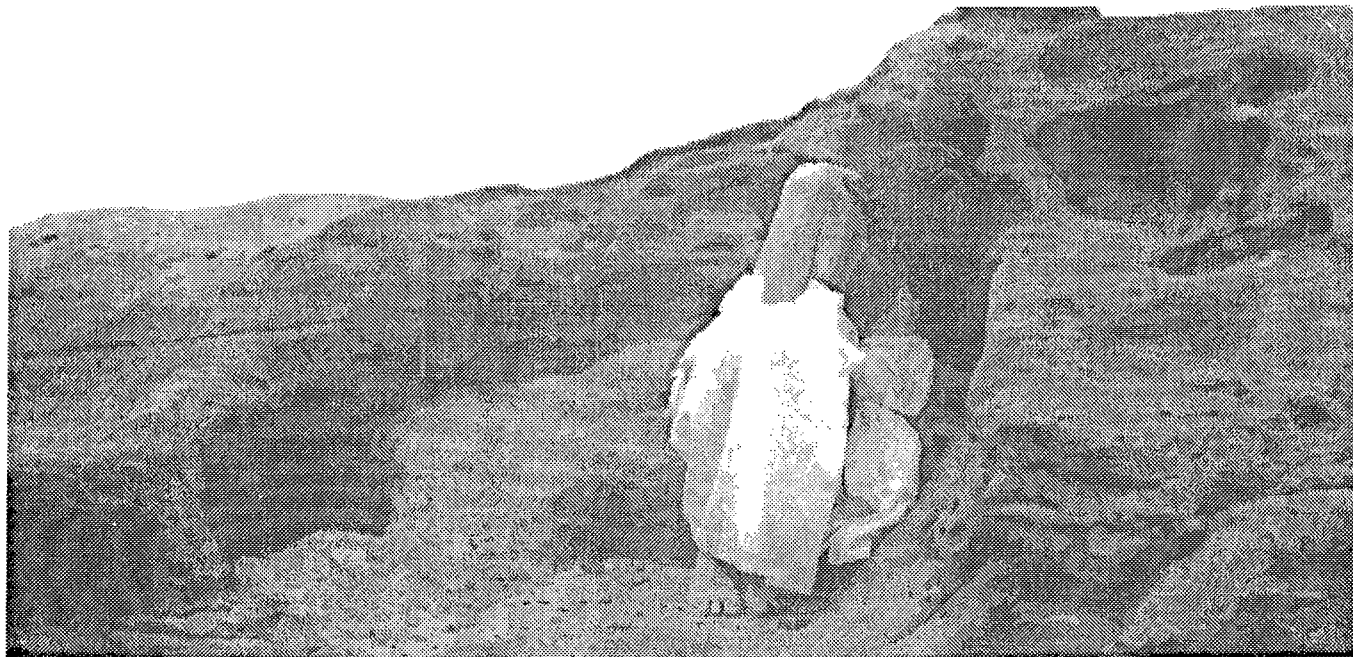
lack of services

As rape is still perceived as something that only happens to women, there are no services that deal specifically with male rape survivors in Victoria. While some rape crisis services will deal with men, the approach is from a woman's point of view, usually with the counsellor being female (which is not always appropriate for male survivors). In some cases, men who present themselves at rape crisis centres that are willing to deal with male survivors, can find themselves dealing with a female counsellor who treats them with

sexual assault. Like aggression, this is obviously a self destructive path to follow, but when you consider our conditioning and the lack of services, what other options do we have?

the future for male rape survivors

AT A RECENT FORUM about male rape, around 100 community workers, social workers, youth workers, Police and rape counsellors were in attendance. All of these people had, at some time or another, dealt with male rape survivors. This in itself is an indication that the issue of male rape is one that clearly needs to be addressed. One of the common problems identified by those at the forum was the non-existence of appropriate services that deal with male rape



fear of other men

Like women, men can experience a fear of men after an assault. The outcome for men is that they have problems trusting other men, and therefore establishing and/or maintaining "mateship" with other men. This further impacts on feelings of isolation.

homophobia

Men who experience rape by another man will often manifest

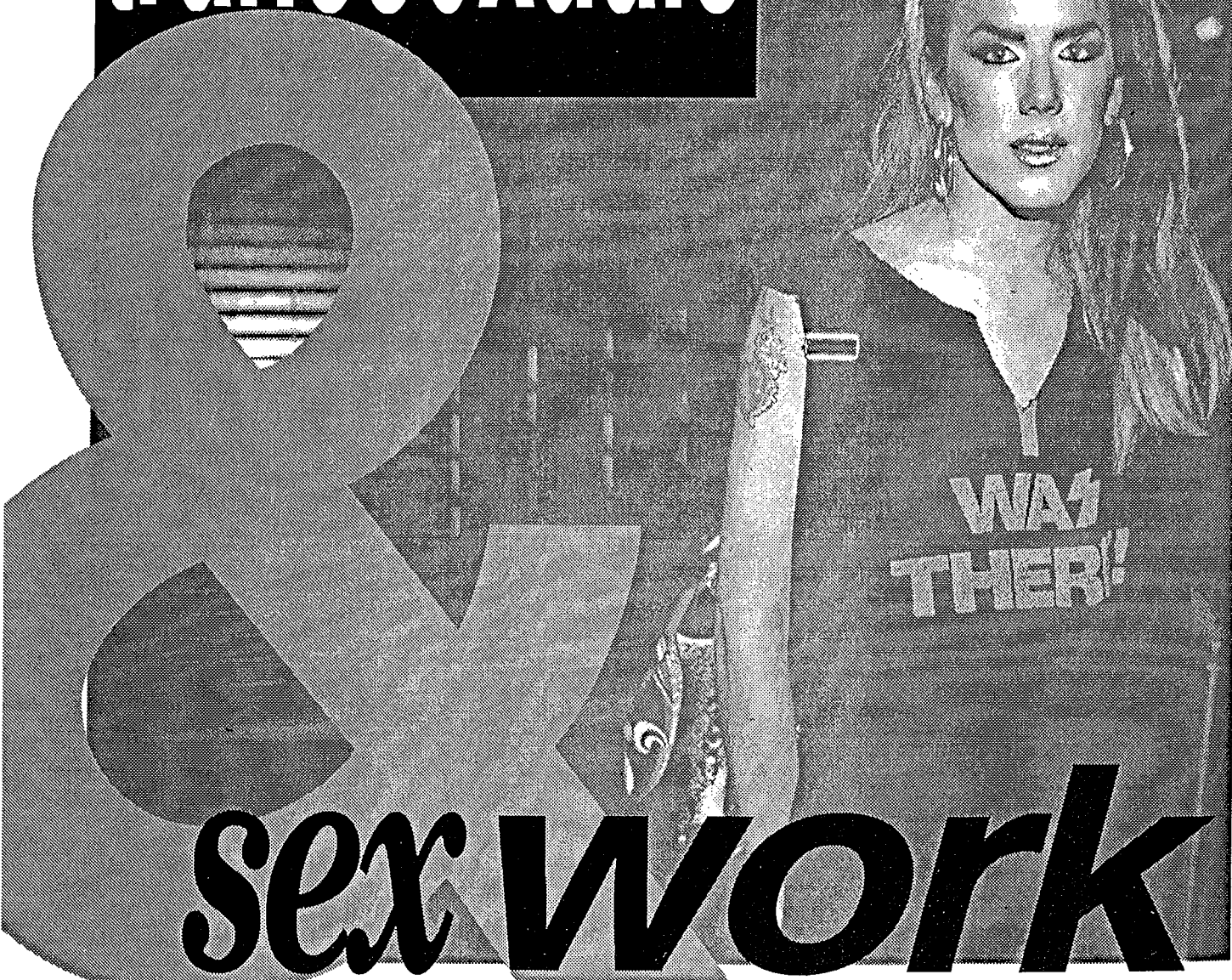
an attitude of contempt (men are PERPETRATORS NOT VICTIMS) which compounds once again on feelings of isolation and responsibility. A man who discloses that he is a sex worker and was raped in a commercial setting faces further judgement and isolation (You're a prostitute. What did you expect?).

drug and alcohol abuse

Drug and alcohol abuse is another way men "cope" with the ordeal of

victims and survivors. Indeed it is up to Governments to fund appropriate services, but this is unlikely to happen until more is known about the issue and the impact it has on those affected by it. In order for this to happen, men need to be able to feel safe about disclosing rape, and when you consider how men are conditioned (not to mention all of the above) this is unlikely to happen for quite some time.

transsexuals



sex work

ALTHOUGH TRANSSEXUALS have shared issues with both male and female sex workers, transys have issues which are unique to their position in the sex industry and indeed the cosmos...

Community prejudice Due to a lack of community education and poor portrayal in the media, the issues surrounding gender dysphoria are often misrepresented and rarely understood. For a transsexual working in the sex industry, this compounds stress and issues of emotional health when you consider they have the "freak" label to contend with as well as all those other labels sex workers get tagged with (ie. Presumption of HIV+

status, moral judgements, homophobia, sex worker phobia etc.).

Government Hypocrisy Although State Governments around the country will allow a person to undergo gender reassignment surgery, (once they have met the appropriate screening criteria) they do not allow these individuals the same rights to privacy as the rest of the community. Some documents (such as drivers licence and passport) may be reissued stating the chosen sex of the individual, while other documents (such as birth certificates) have to remain as they were at the time of original issue. This leaves transys open to discrimination when they need to produce this type

of documentation (to open a bank account or apply for a passport for example), and puts their sexual history on display for all the world to judge. Marriage is another area the Government Policy makers need to address before transys will get even basic human rights. For example, a post-operative male to female transsexual cannot legally marry a man, yet cannot legally consummate a marriage to a woman.

Isolation Transys often lose the love and support of their families and friends when they make the decision to start the steps toward gender reassignment. This loss of day to day intimacy with those close to them can compound feelings of isolation, which in turn can lead to emotional conditions such as depression and stress.

Discrimination Transys suffer discrimination often on a daily basis from services and all sectors of the community on a variety of levels: from friends and family through to employers, Police, Legal and health services and the gay community. Constant exposure to discrimination compounds issues surrounding self esteem and personal boundaries, which in turn can lead to emotional and general health problems. No State Government in Australia has anti-discrimination laws in place to protect transsexuals.

Lack of career/job opportunities

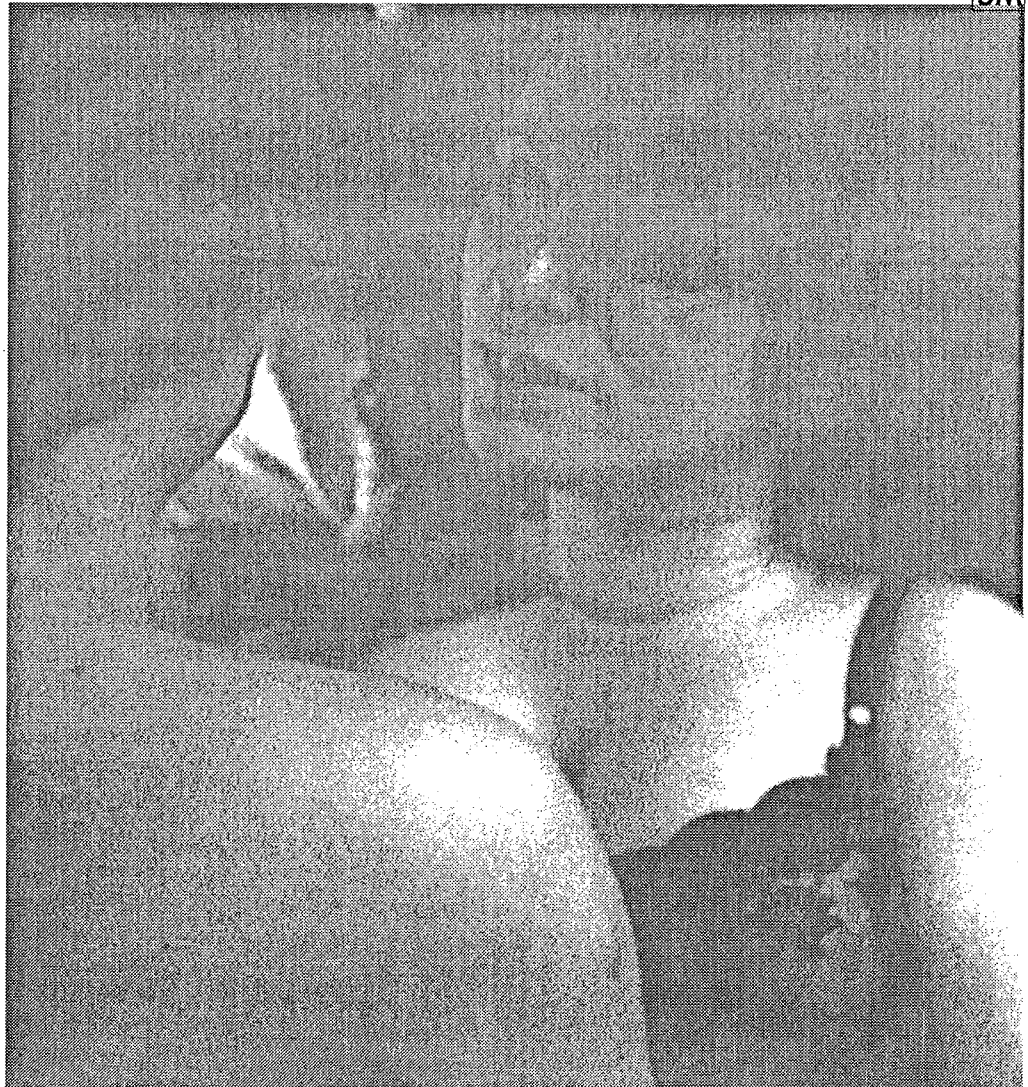
As sex workers we know that this job is not for everybody. Due to discrimination issues and societies' perception of transsexuality, the only career option for a lot of transys is to work in the sex industry. Many transys find they are out of a job once they start the reassignment process, and then find no other employer is prepared to take them on. This compounds financial issues surrounding gender reassignment (ie. Legal & medical costs; clothing, toiletries, footwear etc. appropriate to the chosen sex; electrolysis; cosmetic surgery etc.). Despite this, only two sex worker organisations in Australia (SWOP-New

South Wales & SIERA- Western Australia) have funded workers that deal specifically with transsexual sex workers.

HIV risk Transys are around 9 times as likely as the general community to be at risk for contracting HIV (about the same risk as gay men), yet are not identified as a specific risk group with unique issues and needs. This results in transys being grouped with gay men as an afterthought in regard to HIV education and prevention strategies. Despite this, there are no Transy specific projects or education campaigns within Australian AIDS Councils. The double bind for transys who are diagnosed HIV+ is that in most states gender reassignment surgery is only available to individuals who give an HIV- test result. This compounds on the emotional and mental well being of those infected transsexuals.

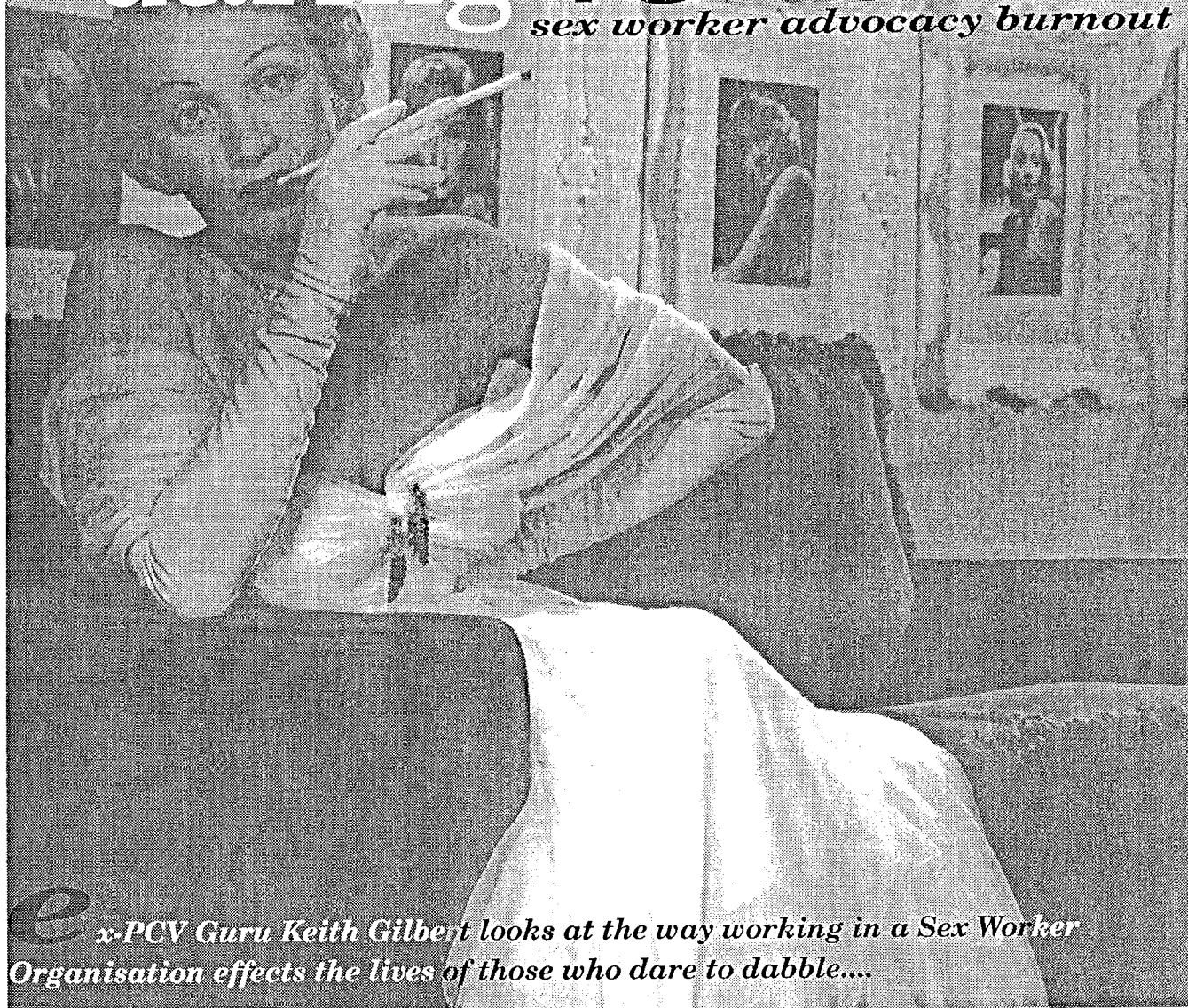
Lack of services At present there are no appropriate and specific services for transys in Victoria. In Sydney, The Gender Centre caters specifically for transys, but that doesn't give you a direct line to peer support and services if you live in Ringwood or Broadmeadows.

WB
GM



daring *to* dabble

sex worker advocacy burnout



ex-PCV Guru Keith Gilbert looks at the way working in a Sex Worker Organisation effects the lives of those who dare to dabble....

remember me? It's been about a year since I left PCV: I was Co-ordinator for a year (including editor of the magazine) and before that I was Boys Project Worker for three years. Yes it's Keith aka Miss Informed aka half of Anara. I found Deb's article ('Deb's Departure'-WG#18) very moving: it's a rare experience to work in prostitutes' rights and support, and it's very difficult to make the decision to leave. Out of thousands of sex industry workers, why is it that only a handful of us are advocates? The answer is quite simple: hookers crave anonymity, and rightly so.

The Madonna/whore stigma that every hooker has to deal with in the rooms or the bucket seats is so well described in Sabina's poem (WG #18). That stigma is magnified incredibly when you announce to a room full of doctors, community workers or cops..."I'm from the Prostitutes Collective..."

Chach(current Boys Project worker) and I got together during his recent trip to Sydney for the AFAO Gay Educators Conference and chewed the fat about the whole thing -the impact that working at PCV has on you; on your public, private and sexual personae.

Chach told me how he felt isolated walking into a room full of eighty gay educators. Although recent research suggests that twenty of them would have sex-worked at some time, only three people -all working in prostitutes rights groups-carried the prostitute label. And what a loaded label it is. Say: "My name is...I'm from the Prostitutes Collective..." and watch those mouths drop (in a strictly non-sexual way!). Listen to the pin. Drop. More to the point: listen to the clicking and whirring going on inside their heads:

"A prostitute. Wonder if he's a junkie"....."I'd like to get him in the sack before the conference is over (for free

of course.)... "What is he thinking?"... "I'm better looking than that"..." I thought I'd gotten away from the industry"..." I wonder if he's better in bed than me"... "Must give good head"..." I wonder if he's better in bed than my lover"..." I wonder if he's better in bed than the prostitute I saw last week"..." So that's what a prostitute looks like"..." How exotic"..." How disgusting-exploiting sex for money"..." "A prostitute. What's he doing at an AIDS Conference for gay men?"

Of course, these thoughts are never so clearly verbalised, but it can't be ascribed to mere paranoia.

If hooking teaches you one thing, it's to trust your gut instinct. And in your guts you hear every word they are thinking, along with your own inner voice (a prostitute, what are you thinking?): "Chin up! Tits out! You're a prostitute and they're not!" Their mouths close again. Back to the business at hand. The chasm between you and the rest of the people in the room has been silently, efficiently established. Whether it's you or them on the pedestal, you know: "I am a prostitute. They are not." All

right, so it's isolating work (and being a man in a mainly-womans' organisation can be even further isolating: the sex industry is based on the polarisation of the sexes). But someone's gotta do it. So what sort of impact can it have on you? Your privacy becomes paramount. You screen your phone calls. You avoid gay bars. You lose a lot of friends who just don't understand when you say "I want to be alone." Your sex life becomes a series of anonymous encounters (satisfying yet "standard") because such a huge part of your private self is already public property. And besides, who's got the time or energy to give to more-than- a-one-night-stand? And really, the bottom line is you just don't trust men any more, with all their preconceived ideas of what you are: "A prostitute"...in a gay man's clothing.

I needed anonymity so much after 4 years at PCV that I moved to a different city (Sydney). Of course, Jeff Kennett and the Melbourne weather helped me to make that decision. (Thanks Jeff. It's the best

thing you've ever done. Actually, the only good thing as far as I can tell). But even now, a year later, when men find out what I used to do, their mouths will drop (not necessarily in a non-sexual way). And they think they can treat me any old how. The sad thing is: part of me thinks they can, too. (Time to re-learn those assertiveness and boundary setting skills. Take control!) Yep. Although I'm extremely proud of most of the work I did at PCV and in the sex industry, my self esteem took a battering at times.

The themes of sex work are the themes of PCV

wonder if he's a junkie
what is he thinking?
i'd like to get him in the sack before the conference is over (for free of course.)
must give good head
i thought i'd gotten away from the industry
i wonder if he's better in bed than me
i wonder if he's better in bed than my lover
i wonder if he's better in bed than the prostitute i saw last week
how exotic
so that's what a prostitute looks like
how disgusting-exploiting sex for money
i'm better looking than that
what's he doing at an AIDS Conference for gay men?

work: your privacy becomes incredibly important; you learn to take control; your boundaries are constantly being pushed; you do great work and please a lot of people; you take a lot of shit; you are deviant; you are loved; you are other; it's not the work that fucks you over but the attitude of the people you come into contact with.

So, WHY DO IT? You do sex work for the money, but at about \$15 an hour before tax as a PCV Community Worker, the money's not enough (regular though it is). The one true answer I know is: the people. Wonderful Gorgeous creatures like Deb Mayson. Yeah I'd spend top dollar for an hour with any of you!

And, like sex work, you do it while you can. While you can draw on resources that enable you to cop so much love, so much hatred, and so much self-questioning all in the one day.