

How pimps select and access their victims

National Indigenous Women's Resource Center
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Presentation focus

- Research on how sexual violence perpetrators select their victims
- Factors that increase and reduce risk of victimization
- Risk/protective factors particular to vulnerability of Native women and youth to intimate partner pimps

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Theory on victim selection

Perpetrators:

- "Hunt" in communities where vulnerable people are regularly exposed to dangerous people/activities
- Target people with certain characteristics that the perpetrator views as valuable
- Assess prospective victims' level of "capable guardianship" that could incur consequences for the perpetrator

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IPV/SV risks: Societal level

- Social norms that support aggression toward others
- Media violence
- Income inequality in the social structure
- Weak health, educational, economic, and social policies and laws
- Harmful norms around masculinity and femininity

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IPV/SV risks: Community level

- Neighborhood poverty
- High alcohol outlet density
- Community violence
- Diminished economic opportunities/high unemployment
- Poor neighborhood support and cohesion

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IPV/SV risks: Relationship level

- Social isolation/lack of social support
- Poor parent/child relationships
- Family conflict
- Economic stress
- Associating with delinquent/criminal peers
- Gang involvement

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IPV/SA risks: Individual level

- Low educational attainment
- Lack of non-violent problem-solving skills
- Poor behavioral control (impulsiveness)
- History of violence victimization
- Witnessing violence
- Psychological/mental health problems
- Substance use



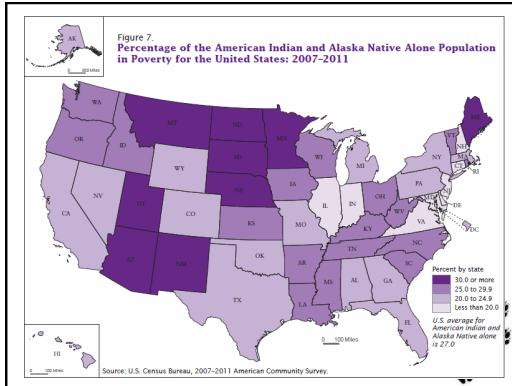
Risk factors affecting Native peoples

- Poverty, few economic opportunities (societal & community)
- High levels of violence (societal, community, & relationship)
- History of violent victimization (relationship & individual)
- Substance abuse (community, relationship, & individual)
- Lack of capable guardianship (all levels)



Poverty by race: 2007-2011

| Group | % living in poverty |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| American Indian/Alaska Native | 27.0% |
| African American | 25.8% |
| Hispanic (all races) | 23.2% |
| Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | 17.6% |
| Asian | 11.7% |
| White | 11.6% |
| Total U.S. population | 14.3% |



Violent victimization by race

| Ages 12 + United States 2012 | Victimization rate per 1,000 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| American Indian/Alaska Native | 26.2 |
| African American | 11.3 |
| Hispanic (all races) | 9.3 |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 9.1 |
| White | 6.8 |

Child maltreatment by race/ethnicity

| United States 2013 | Rate per 1,000 children |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| American Indian/Alaska Native | 12.5 |
| African American | 14.6 |
| Hispanic (all races) | 8.5 |
| Pacific Islander | 7.9 |
| White | 8.1 |
| Asian | 1.7 |

Indigenous views on poverty

Kitimakisowin (Cree)

- Poverty of subsistence
- Poverty of sexual & reproductive health
- Poverty of identity
- Poverty of safety and security
- Poverty of mental/emotional health
- Poverty of social participation
- Poverty of power & knowledge

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Who pimps target: Native women/ youth

Target attractiveness factors:

- Gender (female, transgender)
- “Fresh” appearance
- “Exotic-ness”
- Impulsiveness, risk-taking, magical thinking
- No recognition of “red flags”

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Who pimps target: Native women/ youth

Capable guardianship factors (consequences for victimization are unlikely):

- Runaway/homeless/couch-hopping
- Have small children, precarious housing
- Absence of clean/sober Native support
- Living with FASD, mental illness
- History of childhood sexual abuse
- Domestic, sexual, dating violence common in her social network

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Generational trauma's role

Unresolved grief/trauma over generations

- Emotional numbing
- Normalization of violence
- Victim-blaming
- "Mind your own business" in a way that is NOT cultural

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Necessary changes

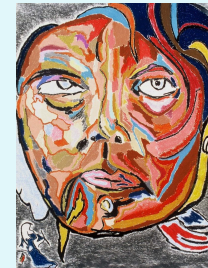
- Re-instate capable guardianship
- Take action as individuals, families, and communities to protect one another from predators
- Recognize that victimization is not the victim's fault, and she/he must not be shamed
- Support and comfort victims

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Christine Stark

Writer,
Organizer,
Artist, Speaker
for 25 years



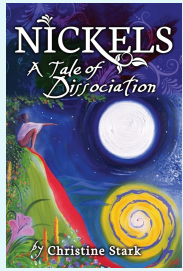
MFA in
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Nickels: A Tale of Dissociation, novel

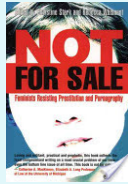


Lambda Literary Award Finalist

Follows a girl from childhood to adulthood as she survives homophobic sexual violence in her home

Available at any bookstore and online

Not For Sale: Feminists Resisting Prostitution and Pornography



Christine Stark & Rebecca Whisnant, co-editors

International collection of essays about prostitution and pornography

Three essays about Native women

First essay about prostitution in rural area (Upper Midwest)

Momma's Song



Poem by Christine Stark

Commissioned and recorded by Fred Ho and the Afro Asian Music Ensemble

About a young girl who witnesses her father murder her mother and the girl's healing journey

Garden of Truth: The Prostitution & Trafficking of Native Women in Minnesota



Authors: Melissa Farley, Nicole Matthews, Guadalupe Lopez, Sarah Deer, Christine Stark, Eileen Hudon

Results of interviews with 105 Native prostituted and trafficked women in Minnesota

MIWSAC & PRE

Entire report available online at www.miwsac.org

How Could Trafficking Happen Here?



Pimps in the U.S.?



Europe at time of Columbus

- European society: warfare, disease, poverty, religious oppression
- ❑ Inquisition: 100,000s of Jewish people slaughtered
- ❑ Murdered Jewish property used to fund Columbus's "exploration"
- ❑ Milan, 1476: mob murdered man, tore apart, ate him
- ❑ Paris: Huguenots were dismembered and body parts sold in streets
- ❑ Torture, murder, bizarre cannibalism were common (Conquest)
- ❑ Public beheadings were carnival-like events
- ❑ Slavery throughout Europe common (History of White People)

Christopher Columbus

"A hundred castellanos (a Spanish coin) are as easily obtained for a woman as for a farm, and it is very general and there are plenty of dealers who go about looking for girls; those from nine to ten (years old) are now in demand."

--Christopher Columbus



As Columbus began exporting Tainos for slavery, sex slavery became an important aspect of his slave trade

The Taino resisted their enslavement so Columbus cut off their hands and set dogs on them as punishment. By 1555 every single Taino was dead.

Recontextualize Pimping

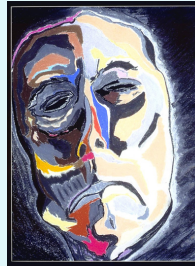
- ❑ African American men receive the attention – Reconstruction, lack of job and housing
- ❑ First pimps on Turtle Island – European men
- ❑ Columbus & spread of European culture
- ❑ Slavery of Native women and girls
- ❑ Slavery of Africans
 - Black women scholars write about plantations as brothels

Recontextualize Pimping

- ❑ Selling Indian/ African women and girls for sex and breeding and labor at center of "US"
- ❑ Slave labor built much of U.S.
- ❑ Selling African American, Indigenous to European men

"Stranger Danger?"

Like Other
Kinds of
Violence
Against Women
& Children,
Trafficking is
Perpetrated by
Family and
by Those
Known to the
Victims



This is true across
race and class and
religious lines

Native people
have seen family
trafficking in
northern
Minnesota and
Twin Cities

Husk by Christine Stark

How Do We Know Trafficking Occurs Among Family & Friends?

- ❑ Decades of listening to and believing survivors
- ❑ Police & FBI
- ❑ Prosecutions
- ❑ Research
 - Mississippi – trafficked children sold by family
 - "functioned" in community and at school
 - prevalent in areas with high police corruption

Wunderland Club Child Porn Ring

- ▣ Named after Alice in Wonderland, written 1865
- ▣ Author: Reverend Charles Lutwidge Dodgson aka Lewis Carroll photographed naked girls --suspected pedophile
- ▣ Men from 27 countries "Main Street" --computer technicians, fathers, youth leaders, taxi drivers, engineers, salesmen, teachers



Filmed own children & other children, including toddlers
 750,000 images of child porn + 1800 videos initially discovered in UK
 Members needed to have 10,000 unique images of child pornography
 KGB level encryption
 Sexual abuse of California girl by friend's father led to investigation

Other Trafficking and Pornography Rings: Holitna

Trafficking

- ▣ Looks like other kinds of violence against women and children: incest, domestic violence, physical violence, stalking because it is all those

And More

Impact on Victim/Survivors: To Be Sold and Bought for Sex

- ▣ Not just objectified, but you are a literal object
- ▣ Someone profits financially from your pain and humiliation
- ▣ They use that \$ to purchase objects, pay bills, go on vacations, enjoy themselves
- ▣ Some \$ will be spent to abuse you & others again: clothes, make up, technology, air fare, gas, food, maintenance of vehicle to get you to the next site where you will be sold again

**Impact on Victim/Survivors:
To Be Sold and Bought for Sex**

- ❑ You learn \$ and “things” are more important than you, your well being, and your needs
- ❑ You learn you exist for others
- ❑ You learn you do not matter
- ❑ Can cause victim survivors to misplace their value, their spirit, their selves outside of their bodies because their bodies & spirits have been taken/colonized
- ❑ Women in “Garden of Truth” compared prostitution & trafficking to colonization

**Impact on Victim/Survivors:
To Be Sold and Bought for Sex**

- ❑ Manifests in a variety of ways
- ❑ Obsessions, chemical dependency, over dependence on others, lack of confidence, bravado, anger, aggression, and other responses similar to DV and SA survivors
- ❑ May value themselves through/as money
- ❑ May fear \$ and get rid of it as quickly as possible to avoid being reminded of connection between \$ and rape

**Impact on Victim/Survivors:
To Be Sold and Bought for Sex**

But something else happens to trafficked people

- ❑ Being sold and bought strips people of their human dignity, making them exist in the world as an object, as something on a shelf in Target, as at times, more similar to a chair, a car, a ceiling fan, etc than a human being

**Impact on Victim/Survivors:
To Be Sold and Bought for Sex**

- ▣ In other words, survivors can “click” into a state where they have no agency, no human rights
- ▣ Akin to a cup waiting to be filled with liquid
- ▣ This is then used against them by pimps and buyers as evidence that they “want it” and it is “their fault”
- ▣ Scarlet Letter: fear that men can “see” victim
- ▣ This is in sharp contrast to Indigenous beliefs that value all living “things” and animals & view women and children as sacred

**Impact on Victim/Survivors:
To Be Sold and Bought for Sexual Assault**

- ▣ You also have multiple perpetrators: the person or people who sell you, and the (primarily) men who buy you
- ▣ You learn that it is not just one person who devalues you, but that many will and do
- ▣ You learn society blames you for being trafficked
- ▣ This creates a very different experience of and view toward the “world”, especially men, and especially men in positions of power
- ▣ You are treated differently than others
- ▣ You ARE conspired against—organized rape
- ▣ You learn you do not belong to the same “world”

Add in Family as Perpetrators

- ▣ Not a stranger, but your own blood and kin
- ▣ Compounds the other abuse “in the home”, ie incest, domestic violence
- ▣ Often multiple familial perpetrators
- ▣ Family operates as a “unit”
- ▣ Family/trafficking ring is often closed, tight knit and interdependent
- ▣ Familial pimps often tell victims they will never have a family, home, or belonging outside of their network
- ▣ Where does one belong if not with their family, their people?
- ▣ What are these victim/survivors’ options to become safe, free? A life without a family?

Add in Family as Perpetrators

- ▣ Impacts having children – may fear/avoid wanting to have children if they will be used by family
- ▣ May believe that is what children are for/normalize trafficking
- ▣ May help/be involved with abuse of their children and others in family
- ▣ Maybe forced to participate--criminalize to control
- ▣ Difficult and unsafe to leave the family system
- ▣ Parental and spousal power over children and women

Add in Family as Perpetrators

- ▣ Pimps teach others in family, passed down generations
- ▣ Typically from adult men to younger males
- ▣ Pimps use tactics of brainwashing and torture
- ▣ Pimps and rings protect themselves – train victims what to say, “test” them, etc
- ▣ Sell up to the “edge” and then let off a little so the victim “recovers”
- ▣ Expect that some will “make a break” and rebel as older teens/young adults
- ▣ Prepared for this – threats, fear, luring back
- ▣ Sophisticated – low tendency to “throw away” or discard victims because they are part of family/network and can be sold repeatedly & have more children

Add in Family as Perpetrators

- ▣ Dissociation – created by victim to survive and purposefully induced by some perpetrators
- ▣ Take on/create different “personas”
- ▣ Allows child and adult victims to survive and “function” by compartmentalizing abuse
- ▣ Becomes a hindrance to leaving the abuse
- ▣ Can become a vulnerability if not understood
 - Easily triggered
- ▣ A pathology in Western thought
- ▣ A gift in traditional Anishinaabe thought

Add in Family as Perpetrators

- Cultural narrative of family as loving, etc furthers abused children's blame of self
- Constant physical reminder of perpetrator via physical resemblances to family perpetrators
- Sadism from family members who sell their own children
- Sadism from the "good, normal" men who buy the children creates a virtually insurmountable wall of silence, disbelief, and lack of support

Add in Family as Perpetrators

- But family/network has to maintain some level of normal appearance
- If some victims cannot survive it, act out, have bizarre behaviors just dump them in the mental health system where chances are very high they will be misdiagnosed, dismissed, misunderstood, silenced, and discredited
- Leaves these people extremely vulnerable to further abuse by family and others

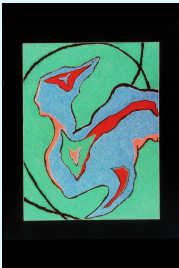
Add in Family as Perpetrators

- Accountability—lack of in trafficking in general
- "Power" of societal ideas about family makes accountability even more difficult
- Professionals in social work, criminal justice system, and so on must act on behalf of victim
- Easier for all involved to blame and stigmatize the victim, especially if family indicated as perpetrators
- Ask why victims don't "tell"
- Let's ask why brothels are next door to police stations and state capitols instead
- Ask who among us will believe and defend a Native, homeless woman who was bought and sold by white professional men
- Ask who will believe a "troubled" teen who says her charismatic father sells her on the weekends

Social Change

- ▣ Dominant society values commerce over people
 - Spotted Cow Beer sold in Minnesota bar – felony
 - License revoked, ownership restructured
- ▣ Some people are commerce
- ▣ Indigenous values and healing ways are powerful
- ▣ Elders can lead the way back to a world where human beings do not exist to be used sexually
- ▣ A world where the earth, animals, plants, water do not exist to be exploited either

The Loon



by Christine Stark
