

## LAP DANCING: ZOE'S STORY

“ For a time lap dancing was great, and a job that I truly enjoyed. I felt sexy and confident in work and felt part of a team with the other girls; the manager really liked me and was always complimentary to me and fair. At the end it was dehumanising, soul destroying and filled with desperation. The strange thing about lap dancing is how things that would be unacceptable in real life become normal in the club. Even before the shift from good place to work to awful, the things happening in during the ‘good’ time are strange to think about now.

The club intentionally choose the girls working to ensure a range of choice for the men, so there were blondes, brunettes, older girls, younger girls, slim girls, bigger girls etc. My place was assured as I was one of the few black girls and at one time the only black girl. At the time this process seemed normal but with hindsight it is dehumanising and basically a form of cattle market. Men would come in and ask the manager did she have any black girls and I would be wheeled over like a prize cow.

I began to frequently have arguments with customers, they would touch me and grab me and one even bit me during a dance, I did not feel safe. I also felt ashamed to be working in the club and thought to myself if someone attacked me in here or when I walked home no court would prosecute the attacker, people would say that I deserved it. I frequently was only making enough to cover the house fee, train tickets and the cost of a bed and breakfast with no extra profit for myself. I increasingly, rather than getting dances, was making customers buy me a drink instead, and on more nights that I am too ashamed to admit would be so drunk that I would lose my dancing money, fight with other girls and customers and not remember getting back home.

Often if a person has asked about my experience as a dancer I have responded with a socially desirable answer, and simply asserted that I enjoyed dancing, that I made a lot of money but in the end dancing was not for me. This explanation has in no way conveyed the extremity of emotion and mental distress I have experienced as a dancer and in no way conveys the sexual degradation and humiliation I have experienced and observed during my short dancing career. ”

## STRIPPING THE ILLUSION

Since 2005 lap dance clubs are licensed in the same way as cafes and restaurants. This has acted as a green light to the industry which has doubled in size since 2004. OBJECT is campaigning to change this because:

- Financial and sexual exploitation are common across the largely self-regulated industry.
- Mainstreaming of lap dance clubs fits into a sexist ‘sex object culture’ underpinning gender based violence and discrimination.
- Licensing laws prevent councils from considering applications in relation to gender equality.

**CHALLENGE SEX OBJECT CULTURE**  
**CHALLENGE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**  
**SUPPORT CHANGE TO LICENSING LAWS**

# OBJECT

Women Not  
Sex Objects

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