

Spearmint Rhino Sheffield – Extensive Sexual Contact and Sex

Dances from £20 include:

- **Constant sexual touching by performers of themselves and investigators**
- **Breasts in investigators' mouths**
- **Fondling and rubbing of investigators' genitals**
- **Lap dancers fondling themselves and each other**
- **Dancers putting their fingers into their vaginas and other dancers' vaginas**
- **Dancers masturbating themselves**
- **Dancers straddling, grinding ¹ on and lying across investigators**
- **Dancers putting their mouths around investigators' genitals**
- **Dancers performing oral sex on each other**
- **Sex between performers (oral and masturbation)**
- **Dancer giving out phone number**
- **Very high ratio of dancers to punters noted (approx. 1:1)**
- **Evidence that punters are encouraged to become drunk in club**

Club Rules

- Dancers may not perform any act that clearly simulates masturbation, oral sex or intercourse including inserting any object or their own fingers into any genital opening.
- Dancers may not touch their breasts with their mouths, lips or tongues
- Dancers must not sit on or straddle punters
- Dancers must keep one foot on the floor at all times; must not place their feet on the booth seat
- Dancers may not place knee or knees on booth seat
- Dancers may only touch customers above their chest and only with their hands
- Dancers may not use any sexual, graphic language
- Dancers are never to intentionally touch another dancer's breasts or genitals
- Dancers are never to engage in prostitution (receiving money for any form of sexual favour)
- Or engage in communication that suggests prostitution
- Dancers must never allow a romantic partner into the club

¹ Performer straddles punter (facing or with her back to him), rubs or gyrates her genitals or buttocks over his crotch

About the Exposé

- Two Undercover Investigators, former police detectives, visited Spearmint Rhino, Sheffield, on two occasions posing as punters. Their visits demonstrate what lap dancers do to earn even £20.
- Their statements, redacted to protect lap dancers' names and other identifiers, are in Appendix 1.
- Since this exposé the police have visited the club and 'had concerns' even though the club was fully aware of their visit and the police made no effort to hide their identity.
- Days after the investigators' visits came to light, the sex trade lobby demanded that pimping and brothel keeping be decriminalised in Sheffield ².
- The club has also just put in for its license to be renewed.
- This club, like many others, has always been found to be 'fully compliant' with its licensing conditions from all Council secret *on site* checks and checks of its CCTV footage. Likewise, management and numerous staff always testify that the rules are never broken and the club is a 'happy, feminist family'.
- At a recent full council meeting a handful of excerpts from Appendix 1 were read out exposing the activities at the strip club the Council has licensed for many years. Several Councillors, including the Council Leader, left the room as they found the information 'too offensive'.
- This seems surprising when one of the Councillors at this meeting, Coun Gibson, does the books for an Escort agency ³ and 'is in favour of brothels' ⁴. He is also on the committee that decides licensing policy on strip clubs. Another Councillor, Coun Wilson, also a strident supporter of the strip club, has had to be reprimanded for her public 'hate speech' against human rights groups ³.
- The Council, like all others across the UK, could easily cease licensing this strip club on the grounds of its totally inappropriate locality ⁵ (it is on the campus of Sheffield Hallam University). Over the years, people have objected to it in their 100s, numerous women have testified to being harassed outside and its former lap dancers have exposed serious abuse inside ⁶.
- It speaks to a total corruption of local democracy that this club has had its license rubber stamped year-on-year. An indication as to why this might be comes from a former Sheffield councillor who has stated that 'our advice was always to license the club or we would be taken to court and lose'. Sheffield City Council has really gone the extra mile thought – it has spent over £130,000 of tax payers money in failed court cases defending its strip trade.

² <https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/politics/calls-to-decriminalise-sex-work-in-sheffield-1-9738267>

³ <https://notbuyingit.org.uk/escort-councillor-2/>

⁴ <https://www.jusnews.net/stripping-the-licence-updates-on-the-campaign-to-close-sheffields-only-strip-club/>

⁵ www.notbuyingit.org.uk/StripLegal

⁶ <https://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/sites/default/files/SR%20Sammy%20Objection.pdf>

The Sex Trade Lobby?

- A few years ago, strip clubs were licensed like cafes. At that time, lap dancers were deeply offended that the industry was to be reclassified as part of the sex trade, researchers slammed campaigners for even using the term 'lap dancing' and a leading representative of the industry swore to Parliament that lap dancing wasn't even sexual ⁷.
- Now the sex trade lobby has rushed to defend the licensing breaches in the Sheffield club and others as 'sex workers rights'.
- Those who challenge the strip industry are slammed for 'putting women out of work' and into poverty if clubs close (funnily there is no such outrage over the closure of Debenham stores), clearly implying that women who strip couldn't possibly do anything else.
- Yet when campaigners call for exit support to be provided to lap dancers they are called 'patronising' and told that lap dancers have degrees, PhDs, other work and businesses on the side, that they are not stripping through lack of choice or as their only option, rather they 'choose to strip because they love it'.
- We are told lap dancers will be forced into prostitution if strip clubs close, when the fact is it is strip clubs that directly feed the sex trade: they put lap dancers well onto the slippery slope of prostitution and directly feed the local brothels with drunk, sexually aroused men.
- We are slammed for investigators collecting some filmed evidence of the activities in strip clubs. This has been dubbed a breach of club rules, illegal and even 'revenge porn'. But such filming is not only perfectly legal but lap dancers are filmed all the time by clubs' own CCTV. And, of course, if no filmed evidence had been collected (with strict GDPR conditions attached), written testimonies alone would have been ignored by the Council and discredited by the industry as 'unverified lies'. Clearly there was no option but to ensure some filmed evidence.

What has been exposed in Sheffield is an industry-wide phenomenon:

- The same undercover investigators exposed sexual contact as standard at Manchester's strip clubs ⁸, which the Council is now investigating.
- Rotherham City Council has also recently found extensive breaches at its strip club. Although the club is under investigation it has just applied to have its license not only renewed but extended.

⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2008/nov/25/lap-dancing-parliament>

⁸ www.notbuyingit.org.uk/ManchesterPIs

- Undercover investigations in 2018 showed similar breaches at the long-standing LA Confidential, Ealing ⁹ and The Windmill Theatre ¹⁰, the world's most respected strip club. Both of these investigations, and subsequent court cases, were covered in graphic detail by the press and with no outcry from the sex trade lobby.
- However, the shocking truth is that sexual contact and more is taking place industry-wide. Nearly 100 incidences, including sexual contact, assaults, drink spiking, drugs, pimping and prostitution, have been recorded in well over 60 strip clubs across the country - 1/3 of the entire UK strip trade¹¹.
- Testimonies from dozens of former lap dancers ¹² and research ¹³ (evidence from more than 200 individuals) show that harassment, coercion, intimidation and abuse of strippers is also routine.
- This was reiterated in 2018, by a journalist working undercover as a lap dancer who exposed the constant harassment, intimidation, abuse and assaults that she experienced in numerous clubs ¹⁴.
- Constant licensing breaches at the Spearmint Rhino chain has been documented since the it opened in 2000 – from prostitution inside to pimping outside ¹⁵.

What Women's Groups Want

- **Immediate Closure of Spearmint Rhino Sheffield**
- **All performers supported into safe, alternative work as needed**
- **A policy for Zero strip clubs in Sheffield**
- **All other Councils to follow suit**
- **All Councils to receive training on the reality of the strip trade and the impossibility of regulating it**
- **Ultimately for the Home Office to shut down the strip industry**

Sign the petition in support: www.notbuyingit.org.uk/Petition

⁹ <https://www.ftbchambers.co.uk/news/ealing's-la-confidential-loses-its-sev-licence>

¹⁰ <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/historic-soho-lapdancing-club-the-windmill-theatre-faces-closure-after-sting-finds-performers-flout-a3736546.html>

¹¹ www.notbuyingit.org.uk/StripSleaze

¹² www.notbuyingit.org.uk/Publications#Performers

¹³ www.notbuyingit.org.uk/Publications#Research

¹⁴ www.notbuyingit.org.uk/Publications#SamRea

¹⁵ www.notbuyingit.org.uk/Publications#PressRhino

Appendix 1: The Visits in Detail

Visit 1

Summary

- **Constant touching of investigators, including of their genitals with their hands and mouth**
- **Dancers touching themselves and each other**
- **Dancer masturbating themselves**
- **Dancers straddling and lying across investigators**
- **Dancers grinding on investigators' laps**
- **A very high ratio of dancers to customers (18 dancers, 20 customers)**

Detail

Investigator 1

On entering my colleague and I sat at the bar and were immediately approached by two lap dancers, who explained the pricing of the dances – stating that the more expensive dances were related to their duration and 'naughtiness'. One of the lap dancers, Dancer A, sat with me and talked with me. The DJ announced a '2 for 1' – two dances for the price of one. Dancer A asked if I would like a £20 dance and said she could touch me.

Dancer A - £20

Dancer A told me to put my hands by my side, took off her clothing and started to dance.

- Almost immediately she placed her foot on the bench beside me, bringing her genitals very close to my face
- She frequently put one foot on the bench like this throughout the dance
- She straddled me whilst facing me, pushing her genitals towards my thigh and crotch area
- She pushed her breasts towards my face, squeezing them with her hands.
- On occasions during the 'dance' her breasts lightly touched my nose.
- She lay across me facing the ceiling with her bottom in my crotch, opened her legs and stroked her genitals with one of her fingers in a single motion from the bottom to the top.
- She faced away from me in a squatting position and pushed her bottom into my crotch, moving it forwards and backwards and from side to side.

- During this move, she had her bottom tightly pressed against my crotch and would have been able to feel my genitals.
- Whilst doing this she pushed her hand between her bottom and my crotch and through my trousers, rubbed the palm of her hand, with pressure up and down over my genital area.
- These moves were repeated throughout the duration of the dance.
- At the conclusion she stood up, smiled and signaled that the dance was over.

Dancer B - £20

On returning to the bar I was approached by another woman, Dancer B. She invited me for a £20 dance which I accepted.

- She instructed me to sit on the bench with my hands by my sides but also to take my keys and phone from my pockets so she could make close contact with me. I did this.
- She then removed her clothes and the dance commenced.
- She immediately placed her left foot onto the bench beside me.
- Throughout the dance she routinely placed one or either foot on the bench beside me.
- Her routine included her straddling me whilst facing me and pushing her genitals towards my thigh and crotch area.
- She pushed her breasts towards my face, squeezing them with her hands.
- Her breasts were deliberately pushed into my face so that my nose was between them.
- She rubbed her nipples along the line of and touching my lips.
- She lay across me facing on her back with her bottom in my crotch, opened her legs and stroked her genitals with one of her fingers in a single motion from the bottom to the top.
- She put her mouth to my right ear and breathed heavily into my ear.
- She used her hand to rub the front of my trousers in the area of my genitals applying pressure as she did this.
- She then squatted in front of me, looked into my eyes and then moved her mouth to the area of my crotch.
- She placed her mouth around the area of my genitals again using pressure and simulating oral sex.
- After this she put her forehead gently into my crotch and placed further pressure on my genitals.
- With the exception of the putting her mouth around the area of my genitals, these moves were repeated throughout the duration of the dance.
- At the conclusion of the dance, she leant towards me and kissed me gently on the lips.
- After the dance, she put her clothes back on.

- I asked her if it was possible to have her telephone number, so I could check to see in advance, if she was dancing, next time I planned on coming to the club. She responded that she would get her phone and write the number down and bring it to me in the club.
- We walked back to where we were previously seated, had a brief chat and she then departed.

Dancer B - £20

Dancer B joined me again and said she had gone to the dressing room to get her phone but someone was in there so she had left. She asked me if I wanted another dance and she could type her number into my phone. I accepted, and we went to one of the dance rooms. The room was empty. I took out my mobile phone and Dancer B put in her number.

I then sat on the bench once more, removed my keys from my pocket and put my hands by my side. Dancer B removed her clothing and then started dancing. Her routine was almost identical to the first dance with the exception of putting her mouth around my genital area. There was the same level of deliberate physical contact. Again, at the conclusion of the dance she kissed me on the lips.

I thanked her for the dance and also for her number. I told her I wouldn't pester her but just call in advance of attendance to see if she was dancing. She laughed before we parted company. I returned to my seat and she went in the direction of the bar.

Investigator 2

When we entered the venue one of the staff told us it was 'quite busy' tonight and that there were 18 'girls' working. We saw around 20 customers. At the bar area we were immediately approached by two lap dancers. One, Dancer C, spoke with me. She sat on my lap.

She explained to me the pricing of dancers and asked if I would like a dance with her and another 'girl' and got another dancer from the bar. On her return, Dancer C again sat on my lap. The dancers asked if I wanted them to both dance for me. They both kept using suggestive phrases like 'you will love it', 'we won't disappoint you', 'we know how to show someone a good time' without being specific about what they meant. I said I'd think about it and went outside for a vape.

I went outside to vape and chatted to one of the doormen about the club. His first comment was 'it's not a brothel'. While we were talking, a performer came out of the venue, talking about having to get a box out of the car. Her eyes were red and it appeared she had been crying. She seemed agitated and upset. After she left, I asked the doorman if she was OK. He said she was a dancer and had to go out with club flyers to hand them out nearby. I said there probably wasn't much money in that and the doorman said that was probably why she was upset.

I returned to the club to the 2 dancers and agreed to a dance in a private booth.

Dancers C and D Together

During the dance:

- Both dancers regularly knelt on the bench seat next to me
- One regularly tapped my crotch quite hard with her hand.
- One knelt on the bench and regularly pressed her breasts into my face and rubbed her nipples against my mouth.
- Both dancers regularly slapped each other's buttocks.
- Both dancers regularly grabbed and touched my crotch with their hands.
- One sat astride me with her back to me pressing her buttocks into my groin.
- Both rubbed their breasts together and one stroked the other's nipple.
- One sat astride me on my lap.
- Both masturbated their vaginas with their fingers.
- One rubbed the other's breasts.
- One lay back on the bench seat with her legs open and masturbated her vagina with her fingers.
- One masturbated her vagina with her fingers with one foot on the bench next to me.
- One simulated oral sex by placing her mouth over my crotch.
- One knelt on the bench facing away from me on all fours masturbating her vagina with her fingers.
- One dancer licked the other's nipple and both masturbated their own vaginas with their fingers.
- Both kissed each other on the lips.
- One grabbed and wobbled the other's buttock.
- One sat astride me and gyrated up and down pressing into my crotch.
- One rubbed the other's lower abdomen above her vagina.
- One masturbated her vagina, inserted her fingers and put her fingers under my nose.

Visit 2

Summary

- **Dances very similar to before**
- **But in addition, 2 performers had sex with each other (oral sex & masturbation)**
- **Suggestion that customers are encouraged to routinely get drunk in the club**
- **Very high ratio of dancers to customers (1:1)**

Investigator 1

We entered the club and went to the bar. I immediately saw Dancer B, who I had met last time I was there and had given me her phone number. She greeted me and we began talking. She asked me if I had tried calling her. I said I had but it wouldn't connect (I had not in fact called her). I got my phone out but she told me to put it back in my pocket and that we would check the number later, indicating towards a security officer who was standing close by, near the entrance to the toilets.

We spoke about my last visit and how busy the club was. She also told me of a social event she had been to (dates unknown) with other 'girls' from the club. She said it had been on a Sunday as the club was shut and had been 'wild'.

We spoke about the behaviour of customers at different times of the night. I commented that late in the evening of a weekend, I assumed that some of the customers would come to the club after drinking heavily elsewhere and that they would probably be difficult to deal with. She said that they rarely got into the club badly drunk but many got drunk inside the club. She remarked that the more drunk they got the more money they spent and laughed.

The DJ then announced a '2 for 1' and Dancer B asked me if I'd like a dance. I said I would and she led me to the private dance rooms.

Dancer B - £20

I removed my phone and keys from my pockets as I had been instructed to do on my previous visit and Dancer B positioned my hands to my sides. She then asked if my phone was on, I showed her my phone and we talked about her telephone number. I showed it to her in my contacts list and she told me that I had recorded the number incorrectly so I amended it.

She then started to dance:

- She removed her bra and pants.
- She used the bench beside me to rest her feet, bringing her genitals very close to my face
- She squeezed her breasts repeatedly and rubbed them into my face
- She rubbed my genitals through my jeans repeatedly with the palm of her hands and also her head.
- She used her hand to rub across the front of her genitals.
- She sat on my lap and ground her buttocks into my crotch.

At the end of the dance, I thanked her and then left the room and went to the bar.

Investigator 2

On arriving at the club, I noticed that there were about a dozen apparent customers and a similar number of dancers. I noticed some of the same lap dancers from the last visit. I was approached by Dancer D who had performed with Dancer C for me on our last visit. She asked me to buy a dance and then led me to a private room.

Dancer D

I sat down and put my drink on a table nearby. Dancer D asked me to move slightly saying she wanted to be able to climb on and not kick my drink off the table.

- She leant into me cupping her breasts outside her bra.
- She removed her bra leaving her knickers on and put her breasts into and against my face.
- Dancer turned and slapped her buttocks and sat back on my lap squirming her buttocks hard into my genitals.
- She grasped my genitals through my trousers. She did this repeatedly throughout the dance.
- She turned and knelt on the floor in front of me. She touched and rubbed my genitals with her fingers and placed her mouth over my penis over my trousers.
- Other dancers then entered the room with male customers.
- A doorman entered the room and asked the dancers how long. Dancer said '15' and the other dancers spoke to him about the duration of their dance.
- She again rubbed my genitals with her fingers and stood turned and slapped her buttocks and removed her knickers.

- She turned in front of me, bent over forwards, opened up her buttocks and sat back onto my lap gyrating her buttocks into my genitals.
- She then knelt on the floor, leant back and masturbated her vagina.
- She again touched, grasped and rubbed my genitals with her hand.
- She stood, turned and touched her vagina with her fingers from the front.
- She knelt in front of me, put her face in my lap, licked my trousers over my genitals and rubbed her breasts against my genitals.
- She stood, turned, slapped her buttocks and sat on my lap facing away from me. She reached between her legs and grabbed and massaged my genitals.
- She turned and rubbed her breasts in my face putting her nipples up against my mouth.
- She then placed her right foot on the bench next to me, repeatedly rubbed my genitals with her hand and pushed her nipples against my mouth.
- The dance ended and she stretched her arms out and asked for a naked hug.

Dancer E - £20

My next dance was with Dancer E. We agreed on a standard £20 dance and she led me to a booth.

- She asked if I had any lumps apart from my penis which she said she liked. I took this to mean objects in my pockets.
- She asked if I was ready for action. I sat on the bench seating.
- She started dancing, saying unless you go VIP no touching and removed her bikini bottoms.
- She sat back on the bench next to me and masturbated her vagina with her fingers, inserted her finger into her vagina and put it in her mouth.
- She knelt down in front of me and grabbed and rubbed my genitals saying 'hello, good evening'. She then placed her mouth outside my trousers over my penis.
- She stood in front of me, put her right foot on the bench next to me and masturbated her vagina with her right hand whilst touching her vagina with her left in front of my face. She inserted a finger in her vagina and then put it in her mouth saying 'yeah, it tastes like juicy vagina, naughty vagina'.
- She turned, bent forwards and stroked her vagina and anus with the fingers of her left hand.
- She then lowered herself onto my lap facing away from me, gyrating her buttocks into my genitals and reaching forwards grabbed and massaged my testicles. She said I had nice balls and that she 'loved balls and loved dick and squeezing balls'. I commented she had spent most of the dance touching them. She laughed saying sorry, that was what she liked and she can touch anything she wants.
- She then sat back on the bench next to me and opened her legs with her left leg to one side, her right foot up and behind my head and rubbed and patted her vagina with her fingers.

- She then sat back on my lap facing away from me and rubbed her buttocks up and down into my genitals.
- She stood, turned and said 'there you go darling' indicating the dance was over and kissed me on the lips.

We then rejoined my colleague at the bar.

Dancer E and F: 'VIP' for both Investigators

Shortly afterwards the 3 of us were joined by another woman, Dancer F. Dancer E, she said had 'fucked' Dancer F many times by 'finger blasting', which I took to mean inserting her fingers into her vagina. She referred to it as 'FB'. She also stated they had licked each other many times including the other dancer's arsehole. They urged us to buy a dance with both of them and then led us to the VIP area.

- Dancer E commenced to dance in front of me and Dancer F stayed near Investigator 1 initially.
- E unbuttoned about 4 buttons of my shirt and rubbed my bare chest then took off her bikini top.
- E rubbed her breasts in my face and pushed them across my mouth.
- E took off her bikini bottoms.
- E turned and sat on my lap gyrating her buttocks into my genitals.
- E lay on the bench next to me, placed her right foot behind my head, masturbated her vagina with the fingers of her right hand, inserted a finger into her vagina and pushed that finger into my mouth and then her mouth.
- E turned and sat on my lap gyrating her buttocks into my genitals.
- E knelt in front of me and gently bit my penis through my trousers, rubbed my genitals with her hand saying she loved 'old dick' and that she loved balls as well. She repeatedly rubbed my genitals outside of my trousers.
- E rubbed her breasts up against my genitals.
- E then said to F that she thought she needed to 'lick F's pussy' to which F said 'ok of course you can' and told me to move closer.
- F then lay on her back on the bench seat next to my colleague and opened her legs with her left leg across my colleague's lap.
- E knelt on the floor in front of her, rubbed F's vagina with the fingers of her right hand, and licked her vagina with her tongue, kissed her vagina, rubbed her vagina with her fingers and then put those fingers into my colleague's mouth saying 'taste it' then put her fingers into my mouth.
- E inserted her right forefinger into F's vagina, licked and patted F's vagina then kissed F's mouth.
- F licked E's breasts.
- F told my colleague to move closer and E lay on the bench seat on my left and opened her legs.

- F knelt in front of her and licked her vagina, licked and rubbed E's clitoris, inserted a finger into E's vagina and rubbed E's clitoris with her thumb.
- The dancers kissed each other's mouths and rubbed each other's breasts.
- F stood up and stood with her back to me opening her legs.
- Dancer E rubbed F's anus and vagina with her fingers, opened up F's buttocks and licked her anus.
- Both dancers kissed each other's mouths.
- F then moved towards me and E moved towards my colleague.
- I asked Dancer F what her name was again. Dancer E said it was 'slut'.
- F rubbed her breasts into my face.
- F turned and sat on my lap gyrating her buttocks into my genitals.
- E stood, bent forwards and opened her buttocks showing her anus.
- E rubbed her breasts into my genitals.
- E knelt in front of me and repeatedly placed her mouth outside my trousers over my penis.
- I touched E's shoulders.
- F said she loved having her arse grabbed and I said I was wondering about the no touching. E said it does not apply in here apart from the 'fangina' area, which I took to mean as slang for vagina. E said 'obviously that does not apply to us as you have seen'.
- E leant back on my left and F leant forwards and licked E's vagina.
- The dancers kissed each other's mouths.
- F kissed me on the lips.
- F turned and sat on my lap gyrating her buttocks into my genitals up and down.
- E said 'oh grandad give me some dick now'.
- The performance concluded with the dancers both kissing me on the lips.
- E referred to her and F as 'sluts'. E said she was a 'dirt bag' and she loved it.
- The dancers led us out of the room, across the hall and back up the stairs. As we went up the stairs behind them, Dancer E said 'follow the arses, guys'.
- We returned to the bar engaging in chat during which E jokingly said she has been the instigator.