

Decriminalize Sex Work

www.DecriminalizeSexWork.net

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Ohio Vice Cop Forces Women To Choose Between Arrest and Rape

The criminalization of sex workers makes them more vulnerable to predators who want to rape or kill them. Andrew Mitchell, the Ohio police officer who murdered single mother and sex worker Donna Dalton after trapping her in his unmarked vehicle last August, has been arrested by the FBI for kidnapping and raping multiple women. The Columbus, Ohio, vice cop is accused of trapping women “under the guise of an arrest,” transporting them to another location, and offering his victims freedom in exchange for oral, vaginal and anal sex.

Kaytlin Bailey, director of communications for Decriminalize Sex Work, says, “The criminalization of sex work perverts the power of police officers, and enables predators like Mitchell to prey on women instead of protecting them.”

Crystal DeBoise, an anti-trafficking expert and advocate, says “Although U.S. police departments don’t release information about their officers having sexual contact with sex workers, in my 10 years of providing direct social services to sex workers, I can tell you that at least 40% have been forced or coerced into sexual contact with a police officer.”

There is also no national data on how many police officers have abused sex workers, or suspected sex workers. In many states it is legal for law enforcement officers to make sexual contact with those suspected of prostitution and then use that sexual contact to make an arrest. In any other context we would call this what it is, rape. Bailey says, “Police officers are already literally hunting prostitutes.”

Bailey concludes, "The difference between what Mitchell did and what police departments are asked to do all over the country is how much paperwork was involved."

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