

Decriminalize Sex Work

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What Robert Kraft Did Should Not Be Illegal

In response to the high-profile arrest of Robert Kraft, owner of the New England Patriots, for getting a “happy ending” massage from a spa in south Florida that’s well known for providing such services, we believe it is time to reevaluate the way we police prostitution. The Juniper police are trying to convince the press, and the public, that Mr. Kraft and the 200 other people being charged in relation to this sting operation are human traffickers, but law enforcement has provided no evidence that any minors — or victims of force, fraud, or coercion — were involved.

Kaytlin Bailey, Director of Communications for Decriminalize Sex Work, said, “If no minors or coercion were involved, no one should have been arrested, including Mr. Kraft.” Far from bullying or coercing an unwilling massage therapist into committing sex acts against their will, Mr. Kraft and the other patrons limited their “solicitations” to a well known “rub and tug” establishment.

In addition to facing up to 60 days in jail, Mr. Kraft and the other men arrested will be forced to attend and pay for classes colloquially called “John Schools,” many of which are religiously affiliated and conflate all forms of adult consensual sex work with the rare and terrible crime of human trafficking.

The police in Palm Beach, Florida spent months and thousands of taxpayer dollars surveilling this spa. They staged a bomb threat to evacuate the building in order to install hidden cameras, and they spent hundreds of police hours spying on unwitting people. Currently, Palm Beach has over 8,500 unsolved rape cases. Bailey continued, “Instead of arresting men who pay women money for sex acts, police should be investigating the men who think they can just take it.”

Alex Andrews, cofounder of SWOP Behind Bars, which is based in Florida, said, “All of the so-called victims in this case were taken away in handcuffs. If the police were serious about combating human trafficking, they’d be investigating hotels, restaurants, and the agricultural industry. Arresting adults for consensual sex helps no one.”

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