

## Why do men buy sex?

***Find out at the next FIRST Forum: Nov. 23***

**VANCOUVER:** Ever wondered why men buy sex? Ever wondered what sex workers think about men who buy sex?

The public forum “Sex Workers, Clients and the Law,” by FIRST, a sex worker advocacy organization, promises to answer those questions and more on November 23rd.

“Our forum focuses on the men who buy sex, and the experiences of sex workers with their clients. It will make clear why criminalizing sex workers or their clients will only make things worse for sex workers,” said forum moderator Scarlett Lake, a madam who has been involved in the sex work industry for over 20 years.

Chris Atchison, a Simon Fraser University criminologist, will report on his groundbreaking “Johns’ Voice” study. With almost 1000 respondents, it represents the largest study of sex buyers ever completed.

“The study opens what has been a tightly closed door”, said Atchison. “Men reveal their experiences in the sex industry: they talk openly about their attitudes and beliefs.”

Atchison’s research reveals that the nature and scope of violence perpetrated by sex buyers against sex workers is far more complex than typically presented.

“The vast majority of sex buyers who participated in my research indicated that they have not, and would not, resolve conflicts with sex workers by resorting to violence,” he said. Former sex worker Jody Salerno, currently Director of Women’s Services for the BC/Yukon Society of Transition Houses, will speak on how her family and the child welfare system failed her, while the men she sold sex to honoured their agreements.

“The men who paid me asked permission to spend time with me and negotiated with me,” Salerno said. “They asked for and received my consent. They were respectful and honoured their agreements. These men were not criminals.”

Sponsored by FIRST, the “Sex Workers, Clients and the Law” public forum will be held Monday, November 23, from 7–9 pm, at the Vancouver Public Library, Central Branch, 350 W. Georgia St. (Alma Van Dusen & Peter Kay rooms).

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**FIRST Contacts:** Esther Shannon: 604.254.9963  
Tamara O’Doherty: 778.772.2998

*FIRST is a national coalition of feminists that advocates for the complete decriminalization of sex work, for both sex workers and clients. FIRST believes that Canada’s prostitution laws rob sex workers of their livelihood and prevent them from creating safe and empowering working conditions.*