

What It Was Like Being Controlled By Dennis Hof, a Nevada Legal Pimp

by Madison Graham

October, 2018

I was Dennis Hof's personal assistant and publicist for 3 years and I was also prostituted in his brothels. In the beginning, I believed the myths about how the women in Hof's brothels were there by choice, how the women but not the pimps or johns were in control, and how they were safer in a brothel than on the streets.

Slowly I came to realize nothing was further from the truth. We were all constantly told how lucky we are to work for Hof and Suzette Cole, how fair and honest they were. It was just like brainwashing, and when you hear this over and over, critical thinking is impaired and you ignore the obvious. You just nod and repeat the lies. I have seen Hof abuse, choke, and throw women against a wall. Maybe they felt like they deserved being abused by a pimp. Since his death, I have seen some of these women defend Hof, probably because his successor pimp Suzette Cole continues to control some of the women.

But if you escape Hof's brothels, you hear a different story. Women have talked about their mental anguish, humiliation, physical abuse and sexual assaults.

I saw a consistent bruise pattern on women who were known to be involved with Hof. Most of the women in Hof's brothels had outside pimps who provided Hof and Cole with women for the brothels. But Hof didn't eat out with those guys; that was a working partnership that didn't happen in front of the cameras. Wherever Hof was, there were organized criminals and thugs. Melissa Farley told me that after explaining to her that prostitution was "a cash business," Hof bragged that a Russian trafficker offered to buy one of his Lyon County brothels.

I saw a bartender get fired because he refused to serve alcohol to an underage working lady whom Hof liked. There were lots of drugs and drug dealers who were treated like VIPs in Hof's legal brothels. I was disturbed at Hof's narcissism, his cruelty and his racism toward Lamar Odom. Hof made racist jokes about Odom and seemed to use the overdose as a way to gain more publicity.

I was a first responder to the death of a woman in the brothel from a heroin overdose. While we waited in shock for the coroner to arrive, Hof was furious that we were not in the front parlor, waiting for johns to show up, ready to make money. He treated us like we were not human.

After these experiences, I began to see Hof's cruelty and lack of compassion more clearly. He saw humans as tools to gain what he wanted, usually money. He expected total loyalty from others yet was loyal to no one. He valued D-level celebrity over talent and hard work from those of us who were not famous. To him everyone was replaceable.

We were all expected to defend and protect Hof's lies. Hof fired an employee because she was tired of his verbal abuse and started to defend herself. When she went to collect unemployment

insurance, Hof ordered 3 women at the brothel to perjure themselves by lying that they had seen her drinking on the job. This was Hof's way of not having to pay her unemployment.

We were told that Hof owned us and that we could never work for a competitor. Hof made us all sign a fake contract that prevented us from leaving his brothel to work elsewhere. This limited our freedom. If you did escape, Hof might threaten or stalk you and then tell your family or employer that you had been a prostitute. Hof seemed to love hurting women. He once threatened my nursing license. To protect myself, I took photos of the illegal drugs and paraphernalia at his brothel before I escaped. I knew I would need that evidence as leverage to keep Hof away from my new life.

Most women do not end up in prostitution because life is going well. They are there because they need money and because they have no alternatives. Hof took vulnerable women who may not have had another place to go, exploited his power to control and harm them. In the end, people in Lyon and other counties gave him a license to do that. The women however, have no governmental agency looking out for them. The system that legalizes brothels in Nevada is a system that does not view the women as humans with rights to safety and dignity. As long as Lyon County licenses pimps who are criminals regardless of their legal status, the cycle of abuse will continue, and the legal prostitutes will be no safer than out on the streets.

I hope Nevada is ready for a change. Making brothels legal obviously does not fix the kinds of abuse perpetrated by pimps like Hof. All prostitution is the business of sexual exploitation, whether or not it's legal. Prostitution is a crime with a victim and several perps. When you pimp a woman, you victimize her. Let's make pimping illegal - vote **YES ON LC1**. [Lyon County Question 1 was a ballot initiative for removal of legal prostitution in that Nevada county]