

Turning Pro: A Guide to Sex Work for the Ambitious and the Intrigued

Magdalene Meretrix

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"I started stripping when Louisville changed the nudity/alcohol laws. I was 18 and had been working in the live girl shows." Callous, coarse, and candid, the author draws from her extensive body of experience and offers glimpses of sex work from the streets and sheets to those whose interests lie with either profit or preoccupation.

Meretrix is a former prostitute, phone sex operator, escort, and professional submissive, among other positions held in the sex industry. With this book, she strives to bring legitimacy to the sex industry, to unveil it as a viable career choice. Oriented for the female sex trades, the book devotes entire chapters to the numerous identifiable branches, including prostitution (both streetwalking and legal brothels), live shows, escorting, phone sex, and pornography.

"Is sex work right for you?" Before the tour of the safe and the seedy sides of the sex industry begins, the author poses this question to prospective sex industry initiates. In pursuit of an honest answer, the author suggests either a "thought experiment," which entails envisioning having sex with strangers at a singles bar, or a real-life trial which requires propositioning a stranger: "Then go to a hotel room and have sex with him. The experience should give you a good idea of how you feel about no-strings sex with strangers."

Subsequent chapters offer insight on how to enter the profession, and street-smart advice on how to survive, once hired, in an industry riddled with risk and peril. Sexually transmitted diseases including herpes, molluscum contagiosum, and HIV/AIDS are described in lay terminology regarding limited etiology, symptoms, and treatment, in a chapter dealing with "Safer Sex." Frankly written, each chapter concludes with a list of related Internet information sources.

Additional topics that may appeal to those working within the industry include marketing advice, frequently asked questions, work burnout, and incarceration issues. Despite the brevity of many chapters, Meretrix cinches ample information with the starkness of literary utility. With the luxuries of adjectives and tone stripped, the mechanics of the book's pragmatic nature are visible in functional descriptions of jobs, scenarios and trade tips.

Intended as primarily a resource for an audience considering a career in the adult entertainment industry, and only secondarily for voyeurs intrigued by the underpinnings of the sex trade, *Turning Pro* may prove a valuable tool of interest to some-and for others, a tool of simple interest.

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