

ALL THESE PLACES ACTUALLY EXIST, though the mayors of these three cities and the tribal councils of these two casinos might pretend otherwise.

ALL THESE PEOPLE ARE REAL and individual, not composites, because no two individuals are alike.

ALL THESE NAMES ARE AUTHENTIC, not nicknames or pseudonyms, and often were confirmed in crime logs, inmate lists, court dockets, obituaries, or death certificates.

ALL THESE EVENTS ARE ACCURATE as witnessed by me, as related by the participants, or as reported in crime logs and court dispositions.

ALL THESE LIFE STORIES ARE TRUE as told to me by the girls, though some may have dramatized their lives. As attributed, these words are theirs, not mine.

M.M.B.



Tammy Sue, Inmate Number 253023,
at ages 24, 27, and 33

INTRODUCTION

Forewarning

These true stories about sex and drugs chronicle some guys' lust for sex and certain girls' love of drugs. So these are modern love stories.

Lovers Lane

At first, I did not go looking them. They came to me, almost knocking on my door. In fact, *Heather* did appear unannounced at my doorstep once, *Renee* twice, and *Darlene* three times. For 26 years, I lived in an old farmhouse set back deep in the woods. Its long driveway led to a sharp bend and then meandered more before delivering visitors to my

front door. The tree-lined driveway was not visible from the spooky old house, nor the house from the winding driveway.

For years, amorous couples had been briefly parking their cars upon that secluded and potholed road. After consummating their nocturnal activities, they tossed out of their car windows emptied beer cans and filled condoms. Litter removal from Illicit Lovers' Lane was delegated to me. While picking up their trash, I romanticized someday discovering in my driveway a car upon whose backseat was stirring an entwined pair of enraptured youths.

Then one night, I did find one such car with two such occupants. But the driver I glimpsed through the windshield was no high school varsity athlete and his passenger no rosy-cheeked cheerleader. He was old and decrepit, and she was young and decrepit. He was a john, and she was a streetwalker.

Despite its remote wooded setting in the Connecticut College Arboretum, the house was just three miles from downtown New London. The historic city, which two centuries ago flourished as a whaling port, now serves as a street fair for street girls on street drugs. Much testosterone-fueled sperm spills onto New London's streets, where the honor of dispensing condoms is entrusted to the sex workers.

After ten years of collecting the sex workers' trash, I began collecting their stories. Perhaps hooked on the idea of hookers, I expanded my field research to two other neighboring cities and the two nearby casinos. To Foxwoods Casino, the nation's largest. To Mohegan Sun, among the nation's poshest. To Norwich, hometown to Wally Lamb, whose ambitious novels mythologized the city. And to Willimantic, whose rightful nickname for decades has been "heroin town."

I bore witness to the girls' troubled and addicted lives. Initially unaccustomed to its pungent brew, I sipped sparingly from the bitter cup of street life. Yet eventually I did acquire a taste for its intoxicating tonic and I persevered on my odd odyssey for an entire decade. Any longer and, assuming I was not from the outset already afflicted, I risked the girls' own despair and dissipation spreading to me.

The Misfortune 500

During those years, I recorded interviews with 122 streetwalker and internet escorts, photographed 144, and met over 200 more. I could have

met 500 more. While others of their clan are woven into their stories, here a spotlight is shined upon 22 lives. One chapter, one life and, often, one death. As narrator and editor, I wrote their profiles, transcribed my recorded interviews, and edited their jailhouse journals. For brevity, I deleted passages and phrases, especially the repetitive colloquialisms of casual conversation, the wastes of oxygen that would further waste ink. “Like, you know, umm, you know what I’m saying?” And I shuffled phrases and passages to create coherency and chronology. But I kept my paws to myself and resisted the ineffable urge to rewrite. Those words are theirs, not mine.

Relieved from their usual carnal commerce, the girls willingly told their tragic tales. Weary of telling their stories to the judge, they hoped to tell them to the world. As a straight-laced puritan, I never once was tempted into partaking of their drugs. As a straight male, only twice was I seduced into colluding in their sex crimes. Paralyzed below the waist, I was effectively a eunuch shut out from enjoying the pleasures of the harem. So instead of their customer, I became their confidant.

While the girls’ common attributes were addiction and prostitution, their stories bestowed soulful human faces upon society’s lowest outcasts. Some girls endured sharing their unsung sorrows for only ten minutes before being overcome with sadness and ending our conversation. Muttered Sandy, high nonstop on crack for four sleepless days, “I’m done talking, because it’s starting to break my heart.”

Twice it was I who aborted the interview when I unwisely invoked just five words. “Tell me about your children.” The first responded with dead silence, the second answered with deathlike wailing. I learned not to ask that again, but even without my pointed question some still cried out their anguish. And when I asked, “What’s a beautiful woman like you doing on the streets of New London?” one deeply wounded woman never spoke a word but instead poured out a cascade of tears.

Call them the Streetwalking Wounded. None were unwilling victims of sex traffickers. Sex on small-city streets does not make enough money for parasitic males to leech from. Except for some internet escorts, all the girls were independent entrepreneurs, solo sex workers who sold themselves all by themselves. Most patrolled the underworld of the streets, many also cruised the hinterland of the internet, and some milked the cash cows of the casinos.

All were small-town girls with big-time habits who attended the same local schools as the cops who occasionally arrested them. Somewhere between schoolhouse and jailhouse, these girls met misfortune. So they sought to anesthetize themselves from sorrow through crack, coke, dope, opioids, and booze, all fleeting fixes that made their lives still more miserable. Addiction was not their choice but their destiny.

Upon hitting their personal skid rows that residents called Main Street, the chronic addicts usually came with five-year expiration dates stamped on their rumps. They had much to hide, but with few years left to live they had less reason to hide it. Knowing their numbed days were numbered, they held back their tears and recounted their life stories as though dictating their last testaments. My recorder became their black boxes recovered from the crash sites of their fragile lives and their presumptive deaths. The stories they recounted may not always have agreed with the facts, but they still expressed some truths. Their stories are an oral history of a moral mystery.

These are stories about chemically crippled women whose lives were ruined by drug addiction and further doomed by drug prohibition. Theirs are stories not of professional prostitutes but of unquenchable addicts. Many die young from AIDS, hep C, OD, or murder. Of several who fatally overdosed, one was a 17-year-old internet escort. Three were murdered by johns. Another became an accessory to two murders. Another committed vehicular manslaughter. Another, after her prison break, was hunted in two states. Another robbed six banks in three states in six consecutive days. When my photos of the serial bank bandit and all three strangled streetwalkers were published in newspapers and broadcast on network TV, interviewer became interviewee. But these stories are theirs, not mine.

So read their tales of withdrawals when they could not find enough drug, of betrayals during their searches, and of overdoses when they found too much. Modesty calls upon us not to underestimate their feelings nor to trivialize their lives. They cry. We can only lament their tragedies. They die. We can only deliver their eulogies.

These pages narrate their unlucky lives, and some memorialize their untimely deaths. Because if the street drugs do not kill them, the streets do.