

Good Girls on Bad Drugs -- "Trick" Photography

by M. M. Braun

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Portraits of 50 crack- and heroin-addicted prostitutes of the streets of the three small cities of Connecticut's casino country. In the War on some Drugs, these are our civilian casualties.

These 50 are selected from a portfolio of 144 different women whose lives are ruined by drug addiction and doomed by drug prohibition. So 94 more portraits remain to potentially ruin your day.

1st group of NINE

422_01.jpg

FRONTISPIECE

SHANNA, Connecticut Inmate Number 291-860. Addicted to heroin & crack. 2 children. Photo'd Oct 2015 at age 30, posed for the cover photo for the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*. Shanna is a subject of its chapter 4, "Lady Luck: The Escorts' Guide to the Casinos."

Quote from her internet escort ad: "TALL BLONDE BARBIE GIRL. Hey fellas tall sexy blonde bombshell boss lady in town close by both casinos providing safe incall close to Mohegan Sun and willing to travel for outcall no black men generous gentlemen only no explicit talk no block calls 860 574 6663. Poster's age: 23."

Quote: "This tricking has affected me tremendously. I do not enjoy sex at all, I dread doing it. I don't even want to be touched. It's changed me. It gives me anger against men, because you see how many scumbags and dirt bags are out there that have absolutely no respect for you. It makes me start to cry. I can't believe I'm stooping this low."

422_02.jpg

HOPE Becker (1967-2002). Addicted to crack & alcohol. 2 children. Photo'd July 1997 at age 30 (also photo'd Nov 2002, five weeks before her murder). Hope is the subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 8, "Hope: Topless Dancer in a Bottomless Pit." This photo was published on a newspaper front page and broadcast on network TV news.

Sexually abused by three of her mom's successive four husbands, she sacrificed herself to one of them in order to protect her younger sisters from him. Off crack and off the streets for 5 years before relapsing in Sept 2002, Hope was strangled by a john in Dec 2002. Her convicted killer was a married man and previous sexual offender who had cavorted with streetwalkers for years.

Quote: "A lot of people think that I think that I'm better than them. Actually I think I'm worse off than them, because I am aware of my situation. I am aware of who I am and I am aware of my potential. And yet, I'm still doing this [smoking crack and streetwalking]. That makes me worse than them."

422_04.jpg

422_05.jpg (detail)

MICHELLE Comeau (1968-1998). Addicted to crack. 3 children. Michelle is a subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 14. Photo'd Nov 1997 at age 29, six months before her murder. This photo was broadcast on network TV news and published twice on newspaper front pages, the first time about her murder in 1998, and the second time about the arrest of her killer in 2010.

Suffered from Tourette's syndrome, was institutionalized nearly all of her life, under foster care or in a group home or in drug rehab or in jail. Strangled by a John May 1998. Upon the publication of this photo on a newspaper front page, Michelle's daughter, who had been raised under foster care, for her first time saw a photo of her biological mother.

Quote from Michelle's daughter: "I spent my life wondering what Michelle Comeau, my biological mother, would look like. I felt my whole life that my questions would eternally remain open. For some reason, I had always pictured a beautiful blonde. Then I saw in the newspaper the picture of her for the first time in my life. I realized she was not the Cinderella I had imagined."

422_06.jpg

422_07.jpg (detail)

RENEE Pellegrino (1955-1997), Connecticut Inmate Number 196-576. Addicted to crack & later to heroin. 1 child. Renee is the subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 14, "Renee: A Connecticut Lawyer in Judge Arthur's Court." Photo'd Jan 1997 at age 41, six months before her murder. This photo was published in newspapers and broadcast on network TV news.

Strangled in 1997 by a John, Renee's life began as a lawyer and ended as a streetwalker. Renee took two years off from college to work as a prostitute in Las Vegas, then graduated from Connecticut College, a scant two miles from the New London streets that years later she patrolled as a streetwalker. She earned a law degree and passed the bar exam for CT, but the Board withheld her license. Later diagnosed as paranoid schizophrenic, manic depressive, and obsessive-compulsive. Whereas her psychoactive pharmaceutical drugs all failed to remedy her conditions, she claimed her self-prescribed coke and crack succeeded. She acted as a street mom to the street girls all much younger than she, and often advised them of their legal rights.

Quote: "Don't romanticize my life. It's just suck dick, smoke crack, suck dick, smoke crack."

422_08.jpg

ALYSSYA. Addicted to crack & heroin & abuses alcohol, but notably not cigarettes. 2 children. Photo'd Nov 2001 (also Nov 2004) at age 35.

Alyssya married a correctional officer whom she met while in prison. Now divorced, she is a very sophisticated woman, especially for someone working the streets. High society, meaning always high. An orphan raised by foster parents in very affluent Greenwich, CT. Because of her upper-class upbringing, she tightly guards her

identity. But not her honor, corrupted by crack. Here photo'd in New London, however she is a veteran of the meaner streets of Bridgeport.

Quote: “I know what it feels like to shoot someone. It was 4 o'clock in the morning. I wanted drugs, and he was a drug dealer, and he didn't feel like waking up. My viewpoint is, if you want to be a drug dealer, your job is to be up to sell drugs. Don't sell to people at 2 o'clock in the morning and not expect them to be back at 3. I was very drunk. I was very mad. So I shot him in the leg.”

422_09.jpg

ELIZABETH Gagne, Connecticut Inmate Number 154-637. Addicted to heroin & IV coke. Liz is the subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 21, “Liz: Woman Who Runs with the Werewolves.” In 2007, Liz was sentenced to a minimum of 13 years in prison as an accessory to a double murder. Photo'd May 2002 (also August 2000) at age 26.

Quote: “I used to be into so many things. Now I don't give a crap about anything, now I don't even know who I am. I'm sick of everything, of the life, of the drugs, of sex, of people. I miss my family. I want love. I want my mommy.”

Quote from her September 2007 letter: “I never in a zillion years expected to be sitting in prison in Vermont for accessory to murder. Jim had this idea of robbing this dude of over 150 lbs. of pot, so I offered to go for the ride as he promised No One Will Get Hurt! The gun was only for a showpiece he said. Well things went *Very Wrong, Very Fast* and the next thing he's killing 2 people. Now here I sit for 10 more years for handing someone a gun, for driving away. It all comes back to you in the end because I've done a lot of shit over the years, I've hurt a lot of people, not physically, but emotionally & mentally.”

422_10.jpg

TRISHA, Connecticut Inmate Number 241-405. Addicted to crack and heroin, smoked crack to ward off heroin. 1 child. Trisha is a subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 21. Photo'd Sept 2006 (also March 2004) at age 29.

Same as do many sex workers, Trish conducted sexual commerce with men, but professed sexual love for women. Former lover of Elizabeth Gagne (Liz), the accessory to a double murder.

Quote: “Jim was a hit man for Hell's Angels, a career criminal. Liz was a hippie, not a Hell's Angel. To think of her hurting anyone, I can't fathom it.... Me and Liz were best friends. She was the first woman I was ever in love with. I loved her in every way. Me and Liz used to shoot heroin and coke together. We were kids living a fast life. If I could hang out with anyone right now, it would be Liz out here on the streets. It's hard out here. Easier when you're with someone who goes thru the same pain. We would cry all the time.... I'm no better than the next chick selling her ass for ten dollars. But there will be no one like Liz.”

2nd group of NINE

422_11.jpg

HEATHER Brown (1) Connecticut Inmate Number 241-947. Addicted to crack & alcohol. No children. Photo'd May 2001 (& March 1997 & March 2000) at age 25. Chore Boy in the photo is drug paraphernalia for smoking crack. Heather is the subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 13, “Heather: The Serial Bank Robber Conceived in a Cemetery on Halloween Night.”

After being paroled in May 2009 for bank robbery, 4 months later she robbed 6 banks a day for 6 days in 3 states. Obese here because she had recently been released from jail where, off cigs and crack, she gained 20 pounds a year.

Quote: “I had started working at a massage parlor in New London, bringing home \$1,000 a night and even more on the weekends. I began to smoke crack all night long and before I knew it I was working to support my drug habit. All I did was work and get high. I started to lose a lot of weight which I thought was great because I was always overweight and this was a quick and enjoyable way to lose the weight.”

422_12.jpg

422_13.jpg (detail)

HEATHER Brown (2) Connecticut Inmate Number 241-947. Addicted to crack & alcohol. No children. Heather is the subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 13, “Heather: The Serial Bank Robber Conceived in a Cemetery on Halloween Night.” Photo'd March 1997 (& March 2000 & May 2001) at age 21. This photo was broadcast on network TV news and published on a newspaper front page with its article titled “Crimes Often Fueled by Crack Habit,” about my photos of and interviews with Heather.

Quote from the caption for the photo *of* me reads: “Mark Mathew Braunstein talks about his decade-long project photographing and interviewing local prostitutes and drug addicts, during which he came to know suspected bank robber Heather Brown.”

Quote from the caption for the photo *by* me reads: “Heather Brown, formerly of Norwich, was photographed by Waterford photographer and author Mark Mathew Braunstein in March 2000.”

422_19.jpg

DARLENE Kripps, Connecticut Inmate Number 239-635. Addicted to heroin & alcohol, abuses crack & coke. 3 children. Darlene is the subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 18, “Darlene: Escape to Never-Never Land.” Photo'd Oct 1997 (& Dec 1999 & Oct 2001) at age 33.

Addict with a “monkey on her back.” In 2016, Darlene was caught on surveillance video pilfering a church donation box. The video was broadcast on RI network TV news and the story carried nationwide on the AP newswire. In 2004, Darlene escaped from prison and was the target of a two-state manhunt.

Quote: “I once had my own home, children, a man, a dog, arts + crafts table at the church bazaar. I used to have home interior parties, toy parties. I was a volunteer teacher's aide. I got into drugs, it took my life. I told my husband that I had a love affair with heroin, cheating on heroin with crack. This drug thing has been such a struggle. I am not a scum. I just got caught up with drugs.”

422_14.jpg

MICHELLE Missino (1972-2005). Addicted to heroin & crack. 4 children. Michelle is a subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 5, “The Three Graces: Outcasts on Outcalls.” Photo’d July 2002 at age 30, three years before her fatal heroin overdose.

Quote from Jennifer: “She...shot a bag of dope. She lay back in her chair. People thought she was resting, until they noticed that she had passed out. They called the ambulance. The ambulance got there, they said she was brain dead. In the hospital, they put her on life support. Her sister and her mother decided on Christmas Day to pull the plug.”

Quote from Michelle: “I’m a very cold person inside. I block everything. Happiness, sadness, I don’t feel any of that. I do feel hate. I hate men because of what I do, a consequence of my drugs, my lifestyle....I’ve worked the streets and the parlors all my life, and now the casino. I even make money just walking to the casino. I work around the clock....What amazes me is, when I was 12, I used to drive and throw M&M’s out the window at the hookers and say, ‘Fucking Hooker!’ This is my payback.”

422_15.jpg

AMY-LEE (sister of Jessica) Canwell. Addicted to heroin. Amy-Lee is a subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 19, “The Riddle of the Syringe.” Photo’d Feb 2004 at age 22.

Granted interviews to newspaper reporters to warn others away from heroin, but she later regretted confiding in the reporters.

Quote from Amy-Lee’s street sister, Crystal: “They [reporters] made them look like they enjoy life on the street, and yet it’s total opposite. No one wants to be strung out on heroin and on the street and having to do what we have to do to get money [for heroin]. No one wants that. No one.”

Quote from Amy-Lee: “I let them use my name and photographs because I wanted it as a warning to others to not do the same mistakes I did. The reporters made me believe they wanted to help people like me. ... And then there were a lot of busts because of the article, and everyone blamed me. Some people wanted to kill me. I ended up not being able to go out of the house alone. ... That article ruined my life.”

422_17.jpg

MARY Gibbs (known on the streets as Scary Mary). Addicted to crack. Photo’d May 1998 at age 45.

Soon after the murder of Renee Pellegrino in June 1997, a john tried to strangle Mary, too, which she survived and reported to the police. An AP newspaper article, titled “Norwich Hookers Say They Are Being Stalked,” chronicles my interview with Mary about that attempted strangling.

Quote from the AP article: “A New London librarian who has been interviewing prostitutes for a book he is writing says he was recently told about two assaults on hookers in Norwich. Each time, the attacker was said to have tried to strangle his would-be victims, said Mark Braunstein, who works at Connecticut College.”

422_20.jpg

JENNIFER, Connecticut Inmate Number 180-256. Addicted to heroin & abuses IV coke. 4 children, all from different dads. Photo'd June 2007 (& May 2002 & Dec 2000) at age 35. Jennifer is the subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 22, “Jennifer: Beauty and the Beasts.”

Her dad was a prison guard, including at Connecticut's sole prison for women, where Jen was an inmate eight times. Was nearly fatally stabbed in eight parts of her body Feb 2002. Three weeks later was back on heroin and back on the streets, so still struggling as a beauty amid the beasts.

Quote: “The streets have left their marks on me. I have awful scars. I don't know why I'm out here. I wonder all the time. It becomes a habit, not just the getting high, but the whole thing that comes with it. ... Girls on the streets are individuals, not just prostitutes, not just drug addicts. They have personalities, feelings, they think about things. I'm a person too, just like anybody else.”

422_18.jpg

ANN MARIE Brochu, Connecticut Inmate Number 234-210. Addicted to heroin & IV coke. Ann-Marie is a subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 21. Photo'd May 2000 at age 25, 5 months before her head-on car collision.

Sentenced to 7 years for vehicular manslaughter, in which she killed a college student commuting home from school. On account of her previous convictions for prostitution and drugs, Ann-Marie was treated harshly by prosecutors who believed she did not just fall asleep, but rather nodded out on heroin, while at the wheel. An article in the May 18, 2001 *Hartford Courant* states that the grieving mother “...said her anger wouldn't be so intense if it had truly been an accident. But she said Brochu's recklessness caused her son's death. ‘I wanted her dead. I couldn't figure out why she couldn't take herself out.’”

Quote, July 2001 while out on bail and awaiting trial: “Friday evening I had gotten high, cocaine and heroin. By Monday, I hadn't slept in two days. Monday morning, I was going to court for prostitution charges, criminal trespassing, breach of peace. In the past, all I've ever been charged with are possession of cocaine, heroin, alcohol by a minor, bad checks, prostitution. A bunch of petty charges. I left the courthouse, driving on my way back, I think I fell asleep. After that, I don't know what happened. I woke up in the Trauma Unit of Hartford Hospital. My sister asked me, ‘Do you know what happened?’ I said, I think I had a car accident. She said, ‘Yeah, you hit another car. You killed a 22-year-old kid.’ I was in shock. Of course they found drugs in my blood, so they assumed I was high during the accident. Then I read an article in the paper saying: ‘Heroin Addict Kills 22-Year-Old.’ I did not know what to say. I still do not know what to say. I was not purposely out there to hurt anybody. I figured maybe someday I'd kill myself, not end up killing somebody else.”

3rd Group of Nine

422_21.jpg [was 422_36]

BETH Sikorski, Connecticut Inmate Number 221-004. Addicted to crack. Photo'd Sept 2007 at age 39.

Nine years earlier, Beth had all her teeth extracted, else she would have died from the infections in her gums caused by smoking cigs and crack. Yet she was smoking both of them tonight. And last night. And every night last week and last month and, unless in jail, last year.

In July 2013, Beth was arrested twice within 24 hours for streetwalking in Norwich, for which notoriety the *Hartford Courant*, *The Day* (of New London), and *The Bulletin* (of Norwich) all accorded her entire articles rather than relegating her petty double crime merely to the crime log.

422_16.jpg

HOLLIE LaPalme. Addicted to crack. 2 children. Hollie is a subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 9. Photo'd Nov 2005 (also Jan 2006) at age 41, two years after being beaten and raped, her scars still clearly visible.

Quote: “He had me in a headlock, and he asked me if I worked on the street. I told him occasionally, but I wasn't that night, and I wasn't interested. The chock hold got harder, and he said, ‘You need to do something for me.’ ... He got rough. ‘Do this!’ and ‘Do that!’ And calling me, ‘Fucking whore!’ ... He kicked my face in, kicked me over and over. He told me, ‘Don't scream no more.’ I screamed until I couldn't scream no more. A scream came out of me like no other, a final scream to God. And that's when I heard this voice say, ‘Hey! What are you doing!’ He got off of me and disappeared. ... I have to end this story by saying my mom told me to fear black men. But the man who almost killed me was white. And the man who saved my life was black.”

422_36.jpg

JUDITH Martinez (1972-2016). Addicted to heroin & coke. 2 children. Judith is a subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 13. Photo'd September 1999 at age 27.

With uncommon candor, she admitted she had AIDS, pandemic among streetwalkers on IV drugs. A stench rose from her soiled clothes. Or her fetid sores. Or her dried tears. But Judith cries no more. “You gonna die anyway,” she said, “you might as well die high.” At age 44, she died not of AIDS but, according to her death certificate, of “acute heroin toxicity.” Expressed in the vernacular, she OD'd. Judith indeed died high.

Quote: “I like to get high, I like it. When I do heroin, I'm outgoing and affectionate. On cocaine, I'm just the opposite, I don't want to be touched, I don't want no one to bother me. I get high every day. I sniff one bag of heroin. I go out at night to make money. And at night, I sniff cocaine too. I switched to heroin because I know if I smoked crack, I'd be out there 24 hours a day.”

422_39.jpg

CHRIS Worski (1958-2004). Addicted to crack & coke. 1 child. Photo'd June 2004 (also July 1998) at age 46, four months before her death from AIDS.

IV drugs and sex work prove an often fatal combination. A University of Miami survey found 41% of streetwalkers had AIDS (not just HIV). Another study showed that 61% of streetwalkers were either HIV-positive or AIDS-infected. Many don't know their HIV status, and only few who know they are poz will admit it. Chris was one of those few to admit it. And she had given up fighting it. Repeatedly lapsed from her antiviral meds, instead she was reconciled to her imminent death.

Quote: “My only meds are crack and IV coke. I'm in love with coke. If coke had a head on its shoulders and a cock between its legs, I'd marry it.”

422_28.jpg

KATRINA, Connecticut Inmate Number 301-820. Addicted to heroin and “an equal opportunity drug user” of all else. 1 child. Katrina is the subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 7, “Katrina: Life as Hurricane.” Photo'd June 2007 at age 27 (also photo'd 2008, 2009 & 2014).

Katrina reads many books when she is in jail, nine times so far. While in jail, she wrote much of her life story, and is waiting until she again is in jail to write the rest.

Quote: “There are strippers and there are dancers. I chose to be a dancer. I was never good at hustling the customers. Lap dances weren't my forte. My expertise was entertainment. I loved to put on a show. The only thing that got in the way of my putting on a good performance was my drug use. If I was up all night at an afterhours strip club, high on ecstasy, it made it hard for me to show up for work on time. And when I did show up, I would be exhausted. Soon I found myself fired from the strip club!”

422_30.jpg

LYNNE, Connecticut Inmate Number 209-201. Addicted to crack & alcohol, formerly to meth before anyone knew about meth. 4 children by 4 different fathers. Lynne is the subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 9, “Lynne: The Crackhead Addicted to Prostitution.” Photo'd March 2000 at age 33.

Lynne broke all the rules, including being black and three times marrying white men, two of them her johns. (In Connecticut, many white women hook up with black men, but few if any black women hook up with white men.)

Quote: “When I reached 13, I was sent to reform school. There I met different types of people, thieves, carjackers, drug addicts, gang members, runaways, hookers. No one appealed more to my curiosity than hookers. ... What do I want? I want Lynne. I don't know who the hell this is running around the streets, but it's not Lynne. And I want Lynne.”

422_22a.jpg

422_22b.jpg

TAMMY (1) & (2), Connecticut Inmate Number 253-023. Addicted to crack, on and off to heroin. 4 children, 1 deceased. Married 3 of her johns. Tammy is a subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 14. Photo'd August 1998 & March 2001 & November 2006 at ages 24 & 27 & 33.

After a two year respite as a housewife and mother, during which she gained considerable weight from being off crack, she abandoned her husband and her child and was back on crack and back on the streets.

Quote from her poem, “Petals in the Wind,” about life as a crack addict and streetwalker: “We take life in stride / Like some roller coaster ride / We see life flash by in a glance / As we become petals in the wind / Of circumstance”

422_23.jpg

CANDY. Addicted to heroin. Initiated into prostitution by her stepdad who raped her & paid her to shut her up. She is a subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 22. Photo'd August 1999 & May 2004 at ages 30 & 35.

In 1999, Candy had a boyfriend who knew she snorted heroin, but not that she financed it with sex work. She was asked, were not secrets also lies? Quote: “No, secrecy is safety.”

4th Group of Nine

422_24.jpg

MAGGIE, Connecticut Inmate Number 265-762. Addicted to crack, but notably not to cigarettes. 1 child. Photo'd Nov 2003 (left) & May 1998 (right) (also photo'd July 1997) at ages 31 & 26.

Quote: “No, I’m not addicted to cigarettes, but I am to chocolate.”

422_25.jpg

BRANDI. Addicted to crack, and after her recent “run” on the streets of Hartford, to heroin & alcohol. 3 children. Photo'd August 2006 and Dec 2007 at ages 25 and 26.

Quote: “I’ve had three children. Every time I had a child, I gained close to 100 pounds. I was 350 pounds a year ago. I now weigh 165. I’ve smoked crack all year. Instead of eating, I took a hit. I’m still losing [weight].”

422_26.jpg

BRENDA Anna MacDonald (1965-2013), Connecticut Inmate Number 323-033. Addicted to heroin. 1 child, deceased. Brenda is a subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 9. Photo'd (left) Jan 2007 happy on heroin & (right) Oct 2007 “dopesick” from lack of dope because released 30 minutes earlier from detainment in a police station holding cell after her arrest on a prostitution charge, at ages 41 & 42.

According to her obituary, “She passed away very suddenly ... and leaves behind her NA family.” NA are the initials for Narcotics Anonymous, and her sudden death was from an overdose of heroin.

422_52.jpg

DEVON Darling (1964-2014). Addicted to crack and alcohol. 4 children. Devon is the subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 6, “Devon: Casino Escort of Last Resort.” Photo’d August 1997 & Sept 2004 at ages 33 & 40.

Quote: “If two years ago someone told me I’d be a streetwalker, I’d have laughed in his face. ... One time at Mohegan [Sun Casino], I was drunk. I said to some guy, ‘I’ll do anything you want for one hundred dollars.’ He said, ‘No, no thank you!’ Not nicely either, and so I walked away. Staggered away, actually. And he reported me. So five minutes later the head security guard came out. He was very serious looking, and he said, ‘May I have a word with you, miss?’ And he grabbed me by the arm and brought me to his office. He told me in no uncertain terms that I was not allowed back to the casino. He took my picture. And he told me that if I ever showed up in Mohegan Sun again, that I would be arrested for trespassing.”

422_40.jpg

TRISH, Connecticut Inmate Number 222-571. Addicted to crack. 2 children. Trish is the subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 15, “Trish: Off to See the Wizard of Poz.” Photo’d June 2004 (also Aug 1998) at age 27.

Quote: “In jail, I asked if I could be tested, because I was working the streets and I wasn’t using condoms. I found out I was HIV-positive. I get colds, and the colds last for months. I get run down a lot. I’ve got cancer of the cervix too. I got out three weeks ago. Since then, I’ve been walking the streets for crack, food, cigarettes, though mostly crack. I’m getting high like crazy. The crack is killing me, but this virus in my body is going to kill me too. I’m doing nothing to manage it. Last time I was on retroviral drugs was about a year ago. Right now, I’m in denial, like I don’t have it.... I’m just sick of this. Sick of waking up with no cigarettes. Sick of waking up wanting to get high. Sick of waking up hungry. Waking up lonely. I’m just fed up with it all.”

422_27.jpg

AMBROSIA, Connecticut Inmate Number 270-808. Addicted to heroin & IV coke. 1 child, from a rape. She is the subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 23, “Walking through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.” Photo’d August 2000 at age 22.

Raped at age 3 by an uncle who went to jail for it. At 14, she again was raped, got pregnant, yet chose not to abort the child. Heroin addict since 16. Quote: “When I was 14, I got pregnant. I wanted a baby. I wanted to be loved, somehow. Through my whole pregnancy, I was suicidal. I was suicidal before that too. I used to cut my arms, and that pain lessened the pain in my heart. It hurts. I use coke and heroin as a way of blocking all the feelings. I don’t feel, I don’t think, I don’t talk. I don’t wanna feel, I don’t wanna think, I don’t wanna be alive. Many, many times I’ve contemplated suicide. Overdose.”

422_29.jpg

CHRISTINE Turner. Addicted to crack. 3 children. Photo’d April 2005 (also Oct 2003) at age 33.

Quote: “A lot of people tell me that I have an innocent look. I don’t know. ... Things I said I’d never do, I’ve done. I’ve let everything go. I’ve completely let the drug take over my entire life. Completely. ... I’ve been smoking all day, smoking all night. I’m tired. I’m worn out and tired. I have 3 kids out there who need their mom, if they even want her. And I’m just tired.”

422_31.jpg

LINDA. Addicted to heroin & legally prescribed opioids. Photo’d June 2002 at age 35.

Quote: “When I was 21, I just woke up one day and couldn’t walk. I had chronic inflammatory polyneuropathy. I had to learn to walk all over again, like a baby. Seven years ago, I threw away my crutches. I still have my trips and falls. I have drop foot, so I have ankle braces. ... For pain, I’ve been taking OxyContin and Percocet, ten Percocets at a time. One day, I snorted heroin. And booooooyyyyyy!!!! That took away the pain. I’ve been using heroin four months. I’ve been addicted four months. I’ve been on the streets four months.”

422_32.jpg

LISA (called “Lisa Lipstick”) **Downey.** Connecticut Inmate Number 105-244. Addicted to heroin, uses crack & alcohol. Lisa is a subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 15. Photo’d Sept 2001 at age 40.

Quote, after recounting an episode of a violent attack by a john one year earlier: “I haven’t worked the streets since. I’m finished with that. I’m too scared to be out there.” Two years later, in this photo, she was back “out there.” But now accompanied by her dog. Half as decoy which she appears to be walking rather than loitering, so cops won’t hassle her. And half as guard dog, so johns won’t attack her. Lisa stands out from the pack. Lives with 6 dogs and 10 cats.

5th Group of Nine

422_33.jpg

LANA. Addicted to heroin. Photo’d March 2005 at age 40.

Good girls on bad drugs? Not all the girls are good. And the bad ones can be very bad. Lana has done time in CT’s state prison for women, part-time residence of ALL of the other girls portrayed here. But Lana also has done penance in the federal penitentiary in Danbury, CT. And not just for drug dealing, for which most women are incarcerated, but also for interstate gun trafficking. Now 40, Lana began streetwalking at age 14, then as now beyond the help of her mom. Lana says that her mom was a psychiatrist and author of two popular self-help books years before the genre came to be called “self-help.”

422_55.jpg

JULIE. Addicted to heroin. Photo’d August 2003 at age 22.

422_53.jpg

SANDY. Addicted to heroin & alcohol. 1 child. Photo'd May 1998 at age 30.

Quote: “When I was 18, I used to be a CO [correctional officer] for a year at Niantic prison [York Correctional Institution for Women]. Then I quite because my lifestyle was hectic and wild, and I didn't feel right holding the keys.” Sandy viewed York from both sides of the bars, as she was imprisoned there in 1995 and again in 1998.

422_57.jpg

TAMMY, Connecticut Inmate Number 239-157. Addicted to crack. Photo'd June 1999 at age 28.

Quote, about her bust for prostitution during a sting: “I got a weird feeling, and looked in the passenger side mirror, and there were two cars behind us. I said, ‘Pull over, let me out right now.’ He pulled over, but it wasn't to let me out. Then the undercover cars pulled behind us. They came out, they were in plainclothes. So I got arrested for prostitution, and they had a paddy wagon nearby, drove to the police station. They booked me for prostitution and possession of drug paraphernalia, kept me there till the whole sting was over. Eight hours later, they let me out at 9 o'clock at night. They released me, without bail, on a promise to appear in court two weeks later. I want to plead in my defense, to say I'm an addict, that I need help rather than prison. Since the arrest, I try to stay clean. I go a couple of days, then I mess up again. Like right now.”

422_54.jpg

PENNY Hill. Addicted to crack. Photo'd August 1998 at age 36. Shown reading the newspaper crime log about her arrest for prostitution two days before.

422_34.jpg

TROELL. Addicted to crack, abuses alcohol & pot. Troell is a subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 14. Photo'd Feb 2000 at age 35.

Quote: “Everybody gets paranoid when they geek [smoke crack]. I don't get paranoid. I don't get nothing. I just get high and curl up like a little baby.”

The girls all hate the johns, though few johns realize this, least of all the married ones that the girls hate the most. Troell picked a john's pocket when his pants were down. Proud of her prize, she shows off the wristwatch she stole from him earlier that evening.

Quote from Troell's street sister Bonnie: “Half the johns might be gentlemen, but I think they're all scum. I hate them all. I look at myself through their eyes, johns think I'm garbage. They have no clue that I'm not enjoying myself. It doesn't matter, they don't have to be anything but ignorant. They're paying me to do something, I do it. Who'd think of doing that? People who don't have all their moral faculties, but are just fucked up. But thank God for them. What if they did have all their moral faculties? I'd be assed out.”

422_35.jpg

ANA. Addicted to heroin. Photo'd March 2003 at age 37.

The plaque in the background cites “The Honorable” John Rowland. To avoid impeachment as Governor of Connecticut, Rowland resigned in disgrace in 2004. In 2005, bargaining for leniency, he pleaded guilty to a reduced charge of accepting bribes. Convicted of the felony, he served time in a federal prison in PA.

Ana was born in Puerto Rico and lived briefly in Brooklyn and Hartford. She settled in Willimantic (“Thread City,” merged with Windham) in 2001, the year the renovation of this bridge was completed. On her daily stroll to finance her heroin habit, she passes within 150 feet of this plaque. While Ana’s teeth may not be the only thing about her that are false, she readily reveals this falsity and she indeed works for a living, yet no one addresses her as Honorable.

422_37.jpg

KATE Newman (1979-2004). Addicted to heroin. 1 child. Photo'd April 2004 at age 24, five months before her death by heroin overdose.

Quote from Stacy (see next photo), Kate’s “street angel sister”: “When I first met Kate, March of 2004, we were both 25, we both had children, we both were broken. We spent time together getting high, and talking, and crying about our kids. We felt a lot of each other’s pain. We would work together, and she taught me about ho-ing. We were the Street Angel Sisters. We would shoot up, and I always used to tell her, ‘Kate, this is going to kill you.’ ... In early September, she over-dosed. She had gotten money, gotten high, and she fell over and fell down. She was nodding out. In the hospital, her kidneys shut down, she went into a coma, and died. ... The deal is, she had cancer. She gave up on her life. Period. She was done. It was her time to go. I’m glad she’s no longer suffering. I’m just thankful that she wasn’t murdered.”

422_38.jpg

STACY Collins, Connecticut Inmate Number 325-113. Addicted to heroin. 2 children. Photo'd Jan 2005 at age 26.

Quote: “I was born on Friday the 13th. I have borderline personality disorder. Which means loss of identity, feelings of emptiness, depression, fear of abandonment, stormy relationships, anger, repressed rage, suicidal cries for attention, addictive personality, and risky behavior. It stems from an abused childhood. I got kicked out when I was 14. I never felt love my whole life, ever. ... I have no plans. I don’t make plans, because I just get disappointed. I’m lost. I want to go home. But I just don’t know where it is.”

6th Group of Nine

422_51.jpg

JEN, Connecticut Inmate Number 272-214. Addicted to crack. 3 children, 2 still living with her, an exception to all these other moms whose children are in foster care or

permanently adopted. Jen is a subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 14. Photo'd Nov 2006 at age 29.

Jen's facial wounds are only a few of the bruises throughout her body, which her husband inflicted upon her by pushing her down a staircase. That landed him in jail as a violation of a protective order already in place for his previous assaults upon her. Losing his salaried support for their two kids, Jen began to work the streets to provide both for them and for her crack habit, her first resort for coping with all the stress. She lost 30 pounds in 3 months. During that low point in her life, she bartered sex for crack with the very killer of Renee Pellegrino. The killer admitted to police that he often had traded crack for sex with prostitutes.

Quote: “I was shocked to see someone on TV I used to party with being arrested for murder. I was even more floored seeing the articles with his face and that shit-eating grin. I always had found something odd about him. I had the opportunity of being in his presence only two times, thank God. I never really got into deep conversation with him, it was more just getting high [and having sex]. He did have a violent temperament when he didn't get what he wanted. He always made me feel nervous. Thinking back now it puts shivers down my spine. Scary!”

422_41.jpg

ROSE. Addicted to crack. Photo'd Sept 2006 (also Oct 2002) at age 53.

Suffering from metastasizing cancer, Rose displays the incision from surgery one month earlier to remove from her right shoulder the bone and tissue cancer with which she has been afflicted for six years. She is on four prescribed psycho-meds to treat her bi-polar disorder, and self-prescribed crack to treat the pain from the cancer that now resides in her left shoulder and arm. The State pays for her psycho-meds, and johns pay for her crack. Very visibly elderly and sickly, she works the streets only under the cover of the darkness of late night.

422_42.jpg

MISSY. Addicted to crack, abuses pot. 4 children. Photo'd Nov 2001 at age 34.

Missy has survived two heart attacks induced by crack. When her pacemaker was implanted just one month earlier, the doctors advised her she would not survive a third heart attack. Heading to jail the next day to begin a nine-month sentence, she was back smoking crack that day. And the day before. And for the previous two weeks. Knowing that incarceration will keep her clean beginning the next day, Missy intends to smoke crack only one day more, though all day long. Quote: “One day at a time.”

422_43.jpg

YVETTE. Addicted to heroin, uses crack. Photo'd July 2001 at age 19.

Heroin addiction grants no medical leave. Three days earlier, Yvette was with a john who coarsely groped her crotch while driving. As she opened the door, she commanded him to stop the car and let her out. Rather than stop, he pushed her out of the moving car. She hit the asphalt on her knees, shoulder, and face. Quote: “Even with this face, guys still stop for me.”

422_44.jpg

ROBIN McGrath. Addicted to crack & alcohol, abuses heroin. 3 children, 2 killed in a fire that left her a double amputee. Robin is the subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 24, “Robin: The Prosthetic Prostitute.” Photo’d Dec 1998 at age 38.

Robin’s home was on fire. Attempted to rescue her children, but succumbed to smoke inhalation. In the hospital, revived from a coma to find her body 70% burned and her two children dead. You can figure out the rest.

Quote: “They call me a BK, below-the-knees amputee. I’ve got no feet. ... Right now I’m prescribed 300 Percocet a month, that’s 12 a day, a triple prescription, from the hospital pain clinic. I haven’t gotten them in quite a while, because I don’t have transportation. So I medicate myself with crack, a painkiller which is more locally available. ... Nobody gives me a paycheck to take care of Robin. So Robin takes care of Robin. I started tricking. I’m not ashamed of what I do. ... People are so judgmental. What I’m doing is none of their business. Most people couldn’t walk in my shoes for five minutes.”

422_45.jpg

SUZANNE Nolan, Connecticut Inmate Number 276-728. Addicted to heroin & crack. Photo’d Sept 2005 (also April 2003 & June 2007) at age 36.

Suzanne is a slasher, a mental illness marked by self-mutilation. Quote: “I’m seeking what a lot of other drug addicts are seeking. That’s death, the nothingness, the absence of feeling and thought and consciousness. And conscience. ... Self-hate and self-destruction. I cut myself on my arms with razors, I burn myself with cigarettes, and I shoot myself with needles. Because if your left foot hurts, step on your right foot and you forget about the left one. ... Because death probably feels better than whatever else I’m feeling.”

422_46.jpg

YORK Correctional Institution for Women, Niantic, CT. After a string of inmate suicides, a dark cloud hangs over Connecticut’s sole prison for women. York is a subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 10.

Prison is a rite of passage common to most drug-addicted sex workers. In fact, every girl portrayed here is a current or former inmate of York C.I. Numbers are published online only during the inmate’s incarceration. Any name not appended with a Connecticut Inmate Number does not mean that she was never incarcerated, but rather that she was not imprisoned during the research for this project.

Connecticut’s sole girl jail, York is conveniently located merely 8 miles from New London’s police stations and courthouses. York’s edifice is modern in style and, like much modern architecture, it actually looks like a prison. Built during a progressive era of prison reform, it is one of the few American prisons designed specifically for women, most notably in its medical unit. With one-half of its inmates infected with hep C and over one-quarter with HIV, it is a veritable AIDS colony.

422_47.jpg

MEREDITH, Connecticut Inmate Number 198-509. Addicted to heroin & uses crack. 3 children. She is a subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapter 10. Photo'd July 2006 at age 38 in front of the local methadone clinic, awaiting her daily dose.

Quote, written from jail while awaiting sentencing on a drug charge: “Here I am sitting up on my counter, in my window, enjoying watching the misty rain come down from the heavens above. How I would love to be able to go out and walk in the rain barefoot in the grass and appreciate nature. Even though they have me locked up here, confined behind this magnetized metal door, there are more times than not that I have never felt freer. They may be able to confine my body, however they will never confine or break my spirit or soul.”

422_48.jpg

422_49.jpg (detail)

MARK. No addictions, uses marijuana medicinally for below the waist and recreationally for above. He is the author and photographer of *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*. Photo'd August 1999 at age 48.

An AP-syndicated article, titled “Paralyzed Academic Chronicles Lives of Prostitutes,” chronicles his initial interviews with the sex workers only of New London.

Caption for the photo reads: “Mark Mathew Braunstein, an art librarian at Connecticut College in New London, poses in his car on the campus last week. Braunstein has spent two years interviewing New London streetwalkers for a book he is writing.”

Thoreau wrote that it takes two to tell the truth, one to speak it, and another to hear it. Similarly, Mark served as conduit to all these women's life stories. Mark became paraplegic from a diving accident in 1990 and lost all sexual function and genital sensation, his alibi for consorting with prostitutes, whose services are useless to him. His neutered state may explain why these women confide in him despite his being male. In their world, the only males they meet are drug dealers, cops, judges, prison guards, parole officers, and of course johns.

422_50.jpg

LACIE. Addicted to crack. 2 children. Fully recovered from gunshot wounds and paraplegia from a car accident. Photo'd March 2005 at age 24.

Lacie briefly was paraplegic from an auto accident in 1994, but after several weeks experienced total recovery and walked out of the hospital. She also has survived two gunshot wounds. She often mentions her past calamities to new acquaintances, especially to johns she meets on the streets, perhaps to justify to herself that her life as a crack addict and streetwalker is not so bad, that her life could have been worse.

422_56.jpg

MAP. Map (adapted and appropriated via Photoshop) of Southeast Connecticut pinpointing New London, Willimantic, Norwich, and Mohegan Sun and Foxwoods

casinos, worksites of all these streetwalkers and internet escorts; as well as York Correctional Institution for Women, their drug rehab facility and nursing home.

not uploaded

CRYSTAL. Addicted to heroin & IV coke. Photo'd Oct 2003 (left) & June 1999 (right) at ages 30 & 26. She is a subject of the book *GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS*, chapters 19 & 23. Ambrosia's lover, Crystal is too drugged to realize how miserable she is, and Ambrosia is too miserable to realize how drugged she is.

Quote: “I never had a childhood. I started drinking alcohol like around 11 or 12. I started smoking pot around 13 or 14. I started going to bars when I was like 16. The legal age was 21. Going to the bars, I got into the coke scene. Then at 21, I started bartending. Making a lot of money, I was doing a lot of coke. ... When I was 22, then I started doing heroin. I was still bartending, which was enough money at first. But after six months, I realized I was an addict. Then I started shoplifting. I didn't like stealing, so at 24 I started working the streets.”