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Porn Work: Adult Film at the Point of Production

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Feminist Studies

by
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June 2016

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June 2016

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by

Heather R. Berg

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In solidarity.
Eureka, California, May 2016

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ABSTRACT

Porn Work: Adult Film at the Point of Production

by

Heather R. Berg

Porn Work: Adult Film at the Point of Production investigates labor politics, working conditions, and worker resistance in the US adult film industry. The project draws from fieldwork and interviews with 81 industry workers and managers to explore how porn work is organized, distributed, and remunerated. I argue that porn is unexceptional—feminized, structured around deep racial hierarchies, precarious, and largely unregulated, porn work in fact typifies the conditions of labor in late capitalism. At the same time, porn work offers some workers a better-paid and more creative alternative to other jobs. This dissertation investigates the creative strategies workers develop—ranging from individual efforts to resist precarity to formal and informal collective action—as they navigate their work. Their stories teach us about authenticity, the boundaries between market and nonmarket sexuality, class, and how public policy shapes the workplace.

In framing porn work as unexceptional, I suggest that the problems porn workers confront reflect the conditions of labor in the contemporary economic moment. As wages and casting opportunities continue to decrease, the costs workers must take on simply to be eligible for work grow. Workers pay for sexually transmitted infection testing and treatment for STIs and other worker-related injuries, incur high costs in maintaining a saleable appearance, and spend significant amounts on self-marketing. Indeed, the majority of the work of porn takes place off set and off the clock, including the labors of making oneself

marketable, getting ready for scenes, and resting after them. This is another area in which porn work looks a lot like other jobs in the "new economy." As in any job, the strains of porn work are unevenly distributed. In an industry heavily stratified along racialized lines, performers of color experience drastic pay inequality, difficulty in finding agency representation, and routine microagressions from managers.

Workers resist these conditions in creative ways. In spite of multiple barriers to organizing—their independent contractor status, the itinerant nature of the work, fierce competition for castings, and etcetera—performers have for decades engaged in collective action. They have both formed worker groups modeled on union organizing and ones more focused on education and mutual support. They lobby policymakers for better regulations, push managers for improved work practices, and demand better healthcare from providers. Porn workers also resist in more subtle ways. They creatively manipulate the conditions of porn work in order to maximize earning potential, resist burnout, and otherwise exert control over their work lives. These are just some of the ways workers make porn *work* for them, and I argue that their resistive strategies are instructive for scholars of gender and work.

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"'If You Don't Want to Do it, They'll Find Someone That Will:'[1]

Introducing Porn Work

Porn as Work

"Fuck Overtime!"[2] Origin Stories

"I've worked my entire life and this is so much better," Tara Holiday told me.[3] Before porn, she worked as a massage therapist. "You have to go to school forever," she said, and when you can finally start working, spas pay $15 for a one-hour massage. Porn gigs can be inconsistent, but one scene garners $800-1200 for what typically amounts to around five hours of work. In addition to pay, Holiday explained, porn offers "freedom"—"you get to be your own boss," and this means more control over scheduling and gigs. "You don't have to be a rocket scientist to see what's better there," she added. Porn is still a job, and one has to "see the business as a business" in order to get by. This means not just performing in scenes but also preparing for work, self-marketing, and hustling to cobble together various income streams. Porn work is "in this grey area, because you're having fun *and* you're working," Holiday explained.

"My degree in art was taking me no where," and the investment required to get a head start in the art world was out of reach, said Ana Foxxx.[4] After a few promotions, she was managing at a grocery store but "still barely making enough to live."

> From one day in porn I made what I'd make in a month of my regular job, and I was like, "why would I go back?" A month later, I quit [my other job]. I was just like "fuck overtime! I'd rather be on overtime humping a hot dude or chick." The stress of this is way easier to trade over a 9-5.

Danny Wylde started performing in porn during college. He was one of the first men in straight porn signed to a yearlong contract, and the company paid well and was willing to

work with his school schedule. "I was just like, fuck getting a real job," he explained.[5] Then he graduated, and found that porn still made more sense than a "real job."

> You pay $40K a year, you get out and realize, like, oh shit, I can make like $150 a day doing PA jobs. So I kept doing porn. And over the next several years, it became really important to me. This became my community. I found some ways to make this politically interesting to me and found some way to make it art for me. Other [times], it was just like, "it's a job, the pay is decent, it gives me time to pursue these other interests."

"I had worked retail jobs, that sort of thing. And it was like, 'oh my god, I'm never going to get out of this,'" Samantha Grace told me. She went on:

> We live in a society where its like, this is gonna sound crazy, but I think, to a degree, I feel like we're all kind of slaves. It's the difference between being a slave that's doing well and a slave that's struggling. You have to work, you have no choice. You have to make a living. It's either struggle or survive.[6]

Porn workers come to the porn industry already armed with incisive class analyses. They have a lot to say about work. This dissertation's central contention is that we should listen. Its focus is on workers' perspectives on porn work itself—what does a porn workday look like, I ask, and how is this structured by the economic and regulatory landscape in which porn work takes place? But for the workers whose voices animate this dissertation, before porn, there were "straight" jobs. We begin there because their stories did.

I came upon workers' origin stories somewhat by accident. I wanted to avoid the common move to ask sex workers why they have come to the work—we do not after all, ask this of academics or retail workers when trying to understand the conditions in which they work. And so, I began interviews asking workers *how* they broke into the industry, not why: How did you go about finding an agent, for instance, and how did you know what to charge initially? But workers wanted me to know that they had held other jobs, jobs they wanted out of. Interviewees described pursuing porn not because they could not find other work, but

because they were dissatisfied with the straight jobs they had. Workers seek out jobs in porn for the same reasons those in other industries do—money, usually, combined with quality of life concerns and desires for creativity and autonomy. Many pursued porn work because, like other forms of sex work, it offers a particular combination of low barriers to entry and high pay.[7] Others took a pay cut when they transitioned to porn work, prioritizing creativity, pleasure, or flexible schedules over higher salaries. Still others maintained straight jobs they supplement with porn work income. Porn workers' relationships toward their work—it might be both the best way to get by *and* a source of community and creative expression—trouble any neat boundaries among motivations for pursuing the work. For most interviewees, such motivations were complex and shifting. "I've enjoyed it and hated it," Herschel Savage told me of his decades-long porn career, "it worked for me in that I was able to survive. It was fun."[8] What unites these stories is that the decision to pursue porn work is a response to—and a refusal of—the other options on offer.

Most performers described the choice between mid-waged work—and a lot of it—and porn. Like Tara Holiday and Ana Foxxx, they pointed to porn's comparatively high pay for fewer hours. Ela Darling made $600 from her first scene, a solo shoot. At the time, she worked as a librarian with a take home pay of $100 per day.[9] "There are very few places outside of the medical profession, or specialties, where you can make the rate per hour that you make performing," explained Richie Calhoun.[10] "But then there's always the question of how often you perform," he added. Indeed, most performers work only a few times each month, making their overall take home pay not much more than what it would have been in straight work. The pay is simply "decent," as Danny Wylde put it. The time to pursue a life

outside work is porn's promise. If waged workers have historically called for "eight hours for what we will," porn workers say they want twelve.[11]

Workers cited "flexibility" most when they spoke about the benefits of working in porn. "I do love what I do. I love performing," Chanel Preston told me.[12] "It also gives you a lot of flexibility. I can basically do whatever I want. I go on vacation when I want, I take off any time I want, I can go see my family at Christmas." When she is in town and working, porn allows freedom from a set schedule. When she does not have filming gigs scheduled, Preston explained, she can determine the pace of her day. Among other things, "I can wake up at whatever time I want." "I just have a lot of freedom," she stressed. That this level of autonomy—sleeping when one is tired, for instance—is inaccessible to most waged workers is a striking comment on the problem of work as such.

Porn promises a reprieve from the exhaustion that comes when work consumes so much of life. Paying her way through college while working full time at a coffee shop and part time as a "cigarette girl" circulating local bars and selling cigarettes and candy at a steep markup, Lorelei Lee was "exhausted."[13] "That's really it, I was just tired. So I quit my job and started looking in the back pages of SF Weekly and Bay Guardian for nude shoots." Lee is one of many interviewees who entered the industry as a student and for whom porn's high pay for relatively few hours was a major draw. Current students sought to avoid the exploitative student loan system altogether, and those who had recently graduated were hustling to pay loans off.

The "hours for what we will" porn workers describe include time for rest, pleasure, creative projects, school, family and managing chronic health conditions. For many porn workers, time outside paid work must leave space for a number of these things. At 19,

Sinnamon Love was in college, getting divorced, supporting her two toddlers, and working two jobs.

> I was looking to quit one of my jobs and maintain some economic freedom and still be able to provide for my kids and take care of them myself without having to quit school. And [I wanted to] maintain a better quality of life. Obviously it's very difficult when you're in school and working and you have kids, it's very stressful. I think that, had I not started in the business, I probably would have had to quit school. I didn't have a big support system... I think minimum wage was $5.25 at the time… My [welfare] allotment would have been $425 [per month].[14]

Love's choice of porn work is also a rejection of a broken welfare system, an education system that provides a paucity of support for student parents, and a federal minimum wage that does not begin to keep up with the cost of living. Like other porn worker origin stories, Love's tells us more about the broader political economic moment than it does about the porn industry itself.

For those working low-wage service jobs, porn work offered a way to avoid the ceaseless grind that is making due on the minimum wage. Porn work can mean, as Samantha Grace put it, the difference between struggle and survival. Grace's class critique ran throughout our interview. Creatively subverting the rules of ownership and extraction, she described using paid film performances as advertisements for the products and services *she* owned, such as website memberships and custom scenes. With its comparatively high pay and ample possibilities for claiming the profits one's labor produces, porn offered for her a better way to survive, and it is retail, not sex work, that carries a sense of being trapped.

Other interviewees had access to stable, high paying work that simply left too little space for life—pleasure, creativity, and, again, time. When the option of performing in porn presented itself to Lexington Steele, then an investment banker, he realized that he "had an opportunity to pursue some sort of journey that had only been fantasy."[15]

> The second thing was quality of life. At that age, I was making more than anybody that was 28 that was not either a pro athlete or a doctor or singer or actor. For a 28 year old, I was ballin. But the converse of that was that, as a Wall Street Broker, the work rate is ridiculous. People have no idea. They think the life of a Wall Street broker is all caviar and champagne. What they don't know is you're at your desk for 12-14 hours a day. So regardless of whether or not I had more money, I did have a quality of life where I'm working on Saturday, I'm doing my own research on a Sunday.

"It was very easy to make the leap," he added, "What's the worth of having a really nice apartment, really nice car, if you're never at home and you're always at your office?"

Steele's story crystalizes the point that options are limited not only for some workers in some social classes, but for all waged workers. Work is a source of misery, fatigue, and alienation, suggest porn workers and anti-work theorists alike, not only because it is scarce, low-paid, and increasingly un-benefited, but also because it simply cannot contain our desires.[16] This distinction matters because it positions porn workers as resisters of straight work, rather than unfortunate souls who have been denied access to it. But even those workers who have been denied access to straight work have critiques that extend beyond hopes for inclusion.[17] Taking these seriously beckons different responses, articulating a refusal of work rather than a bid for its gradual improvement by means of policy reform.[18]

Porn Work as Non-Exception

"Why would I go back?" Ana Foxxx wondered upon realizing that she could make in one day of porn work what she could in a month at her straight job. Why would one go back to straight work is, perhaps, a more interesting question than the one more typically posed to porn workers, "what's a nice girl like you doing in a place like this?"[19] Workers have plenty of answers—ones interviewees who left the business voluntarily (rather than because they had "aged out" and work offers dried up) cited as reasons for leaving. Porn work can be fun, but like other jobs in which fun is posited as a job benefit, this can serve to extract more from

workers for less. Alongside the critique of straight work implicit in porn workers' origin stories runs management's interest in peddling the narrative of porn work as an escape *from* work to current and perspective workers. "The best job is a blow job!" an advertisement in an industry trade show program proclaims.[20] That such jobs are the best is as true for capital as it is for workers. Like corporate human resources gurus, porn management seeks out performers who "love" their jobs, noting that those who come to set looking for money, rather than fun, are more likely to cause problems.[21]

Constructing porn as an escape from work can also obscure the ways in which its frustrations, risks, and modes of extraction mirror those of straight work.[22] Like all waged work, porn work is organized to take as much from workers for the smallest possible return. Managers were candid about this. One director/ performer laughed when I asked if having been a performer changed his perspective on rates when he was the boss. *The* question in deciding rates, he explained, is "what is the lowest rate I can pay people where I'd still get people to shoot for me?"[23] He is not an outlier, or even a particularly bad boss. He cited social justice commitments as one reason he entered the industry and is active in advocating for improved health protocols in the industry and raising national attention about the workplace discrimination performers confront when they retire. This calculation—"What is the lowest rate I can pay"—is simply how waged work works. It is, per Marx, the fundamental calculation of the wage relation.[24]

"This is a job, this is a gig," explained another interviewee, later adding "are you gonna get used? Everybody gets used in one way or another. Whether you're a secretary, a janitor, whatever. The difference here is it's sex."[25] Throughout this dissertation, I connect the struggles of porn work to those of other jobs in order to remind that everybody, under

capitalism, "gets used in one way or another." This is, first, to insist that porn workers' stories should not be used to further stigmatize their labor and, second, to suggest that the problem is work, not porn. I am invested in a politics of labor solidarity, not pity, and my hope is that if the reader finds aspects of the porn work process problematic, this will encourage a deeper conversation about the problems of work as such.

"The difference here is sex." That difference means that, in addition to the risks of waged work, porn workers encounter intense social stigma and discrimination in housing, mainstream employment, healthcare access, Now retired from porn, VJ described a "permanent haunting" that followed her when she sought stable straight work.[26] Retired and retiring (that is, trying to ease out of porn gradually) workers had been fired from their jobs in retail, elementary education, the fashion industry, and mainstream modeling and acting when their porn careers were discovered. Stigma also shapes interactions with law enforcement, lobbyists, and policymakers.

Director/ producer/ former performer Nica Noelle explained,

> In the mainstream business world you have legal recourse, or at least the appearance of it, if you're treated unethically. If you're the victim of racism or sexual harassment in the workplace, you can file a complaint or a lawsuit and be taken seriously. In the adult industry these things are far less certain, as nobody seems completely sure what anyone's 'rights' are.[27]

The widespread impression that sex workers forfeit any claims to being treated ethically simply by entering sex work undermines their efforts to seek justice if violations do occur. As labor scholar Melinda Chateauvert in her study of sex worker organizing aptly put it, "exploitation of workers—forget the sex part—is made worse because *everyone* who could do something—managers, owners, labor boards, regulators, and elected officials—can't forget the sex part."[28] When I asked porn workers what they would change about their jobs,

they spoke very little about "the sex part." Instead, they described income insecurity, unfair contracts, occupational health concerns, and the trend toward forcing workers to bear the costs of production.

Wages have declined sharply over the last ten years, and it has become increasingly difficult for workers to make do with performances alone. Meanwhile, today's seemingly endless supply of eager new performers limits current workers' ability to negotiate the terms of their labor with agents, producers, and directors. "When I was in the business [in the early-mid 2000s] it was a lot different than it is now," VJ explained, "now, you're so easily replaced."[29] Current performers confirm this perception. "Talent is replaceable," explained Richie Calhoun.[30] "When I hear models negotiate now, I'm just like 'you're pretty brave," Christopher Daniels told me, "if you don't want to do it, they'll find somebody that will."[31]

Reflecting broader trends in labor relations, the industry increasingly relies on a flexible and itinerant workforce.[32] Misclassified as independent contractors, workers lack basic benefits and protections. State regulation is driven by lobbyists more concerned with pornographic images than production practices, leaving workers under intense surveillance and yet without evidence-based occupational health protections, wage and hour standardization, protection from workplace discrimination, and access to benefits such as worker's compensation and unemployment insurance.

As wages and casting opportunities shrink, the costs workers must take on in hopes of being hired grow. Workers incur high costs in maintaining a saleable appearance, pay for sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing and treatment for STIs and other worker-related injuries, and spend significant amounts on self-marketing. They carry out these self-funded labors on their own time. Indeed, the majority of the work of porn takes place long before

cameras start rolling. Here porn's promise of flexibility functions also as a cover for employers' extraction of value from workers' unpaid time. Workers *can* make from one scene what they would in a week of straight work, but this calculation does not account for the hours they spend off set and off the clock.

Porn work's strains are unevenly distributed. In an industry heavily stratified along racialized lines, performers of color experience drastic pay inequality, difficulty in securing agency representation, and routine microagressions from managers, problems sex work scholar Mireille Miller-Young details in her study of black women's pornographic labor.[33] Racialized hierarchies are, she reminds us, not unique to porn work, but endemic to mainstream economies as well.[34] Thus, while Sinnamon Love decided to pursue porn as an alternative to the low wages available to working class black women in straight economies, she found pay inequality in the porn industry too. Paid $500 per scene while white counterparts made $1000, she also struggled to find work and agency representation in an industry in which there is typically one "token black girl, token Asian girl, token Latin."[35] But Love found workarounds in porn that made it a better way to get by. Working without an agent, it turned out, made it easier to negotiate her own rates and break out of the typecast roles usually available to black women. Porn also allowed for a flexible schedule that made raising two kids possible. These are just some of the ways performers make porn *work* for them.

Resistance Strategies

In theorizing porn workers' resistance strategies, I rely on a dialectical view of workplace relations grounded in the Marxist understanding of labor as a site of ongoing struggle, tension, and contradiction. Scholarship on workplace resistance often falls into the

trap, argues labor scholar Dennis Mumby, of romanticizing worker resistance on the one hand and over-estimating managerial power on the other.[36] A dialectical view, he argues, resists these tendencies in favor of a view of "resistance as a routine feature of organizational life."[37] Social work theorist Margaret Waller charts what such a perspective might look like when applied to the struggles of everyday life.[38] Here, resilience is not the absence of risk, but the product of the shifting relationship between risk and protective factors. Too heavy a focus on risk "may create distortions that highlight deficits, overlook strengths, [and] focus on intrapersonal explanations," Waller et al write.[39] This intervention—originally conceived as a rejoinder to scholarship and practice concerning Indigenous communities—is also instructive for scholars of forms of work in which it is similarly tempting for outsiders to view communities as so abject as to be without the capacity to resist.

Resilience is "multidimensional and multidetermined," Waller writes, "the product of transactions within and between multiple systemic levels over time."[40] She reminds us that what emerges as a risk factor in one context may be a protective one in another, and suggests that the complex interplay of these factors can be best understood through a centering of informants' voices. Workers' framings of porn work as an *escape* from work is one example of this tension, as this view at once makes possible a refusal of straight work and obfuscates porn's own unexceptional modes of exploitation and extraction. Resilience theory allows us to understand this tension as constitutive of workplace relations—indeed, as the meat of our story—rather than as a wrinkle to be smoothed over. This commitment informs my analysis of resistance throughout this dissertation.

Workers resist in creative ways, manipulating the conditions of porn work in order to maximize earning potential, resist burnout, and otherwise exert control over their work lives.

As we have seen, some workers use porn itself as a way of resisting straight work's rules and modes of extraction. They also make independent contractor status work to their benefit by copyrighting their stage names and producing (and hence reaping profits from) their own material. They collaborate with other workers on trade projects that allow them to circumvent the rules of extraction. And they use paid scenes as advertisements for other income-generating work in porn's satellite industries. Management increasingly displaces the costs of doing business onto workers by, for instance, requiring that workers supply their own wardrobe. Subverting this system, workers encourage gifts of lingerie from fans, wear it in scenes, and then sell it back to fans used. I call this the 'underwear dialectic.'

Workers' resistance serves not only to respond and adapt to porn's working conditions, but also to generate new ones. One performer shared her exclusive services contract during our interview. She had been working with an attorney to change its terms, which included below-standard pay for films and the company's entitlement to a percentage of her earnings from any other projects, including gigs she booked herself. In the meantime, she had found a number of work-arounds. The contract stipulated that she could not "work" for other producers, for instance, so she performed in exchange for technology services worth thousands and traded performances with friends who would return the favor when her contract term ended. Explaining each contract clause, she named it after performers who had worked for the company before her—Lucy[41] found one loophole, and the next contract included the "Lucy clause" closing that loophole. The contract included dozens of such amendments. I was struck by the company's transparent attempts to discipline its workers, but even more so by how feeble these efforts were. Even more reliable than employers' persistent attempts at control is that workers are one step ahead. Kurt Vogner, president of

Verified Call, a company that facilitates porn performers' paid phone calls with fans, put it this way: "[workers have] figured out ways to use it that we hadn't even identified."[42] Such stories populate this dissertation.

In spite of multiple barriers to organizing—their independent contractor status, the itinerant nature of the work, fierce competition for castings, and the threat of management retaliation—performers have for decades engaged in collective action.[43] They have both formed worker groups modeled on union organizing and ones more focused on education and mutual support. Peer education efforts matter, interviewees say, because porn's lack of job training means that workers often must learn as they go. "No one sits them down and explains, 'this is what's going to happen.' There's no manual," VJ told me.[44] "In porno, a lot of times, you find out about a pitfall by falling into it first," explained Lexington Steele.[45] The *Porn 101* series, originally conceived in 2007 as a collaboration between industry veterans Nina Ha®tley and Sharon Mitchell and reprised in 2014 by the Adult Performers Advocacy Committee (APAC), represents one such resource. Produced by and starring performers, the films deliver crucial information about sexual health, consent, money management, and contract negotiation. Such efforts aim to arm workers with the tools to protect themselves at work without directly antagonizing management. They also include a professionalizing angle, urging performers to take responsibility for community health by protecting themselves in off-set sex and reminding performers to show up to work on time.[46] This combination of professionalization and information sharing earns peer education efforts industry-wide support (or at least relative non-interference from management).

Interviewees who advocate more aggressive forms of collective action see it as a powerful way to challenge power relations. Management agrees, and has strenuously blocked

such efforts since their inception. Without organized workers, "the producers and production companies have the power," Herschel Savage told me.[47] He had worked to organize workers in mid-1980s San Francisco with what he thought was a modest initial proposal: "I was basically saying, 'no one work under $300.'" But production companies threatened to black ball workers who held the line, and as soon as workers were broke, "they'd work for less… There were so many hungry people." Decades later—we interviewed in 2013—Savage still regrets that the effort never took off: "It would have been the best thing to happen for health, security, retirement pay, everything. I mean, come on. I've done 1000s of scenes and I have no residuals. That's the story for most people."[48]

Some thirty years later, the barriers to organizing Savage described persist—most workers will take what they can get, and companies do everything they can to block organizing attempts they view as threatening. As job opportunities diminish, the pressure to accept the terms offered escalates. Interviewees suggest that this is true even for mid-level management. Most directors and screenwriters are paid a modest sum and have little creative control, and I asked writer/ director Jacky St. James if there was any discussion of their organizing collectively. "Unfortunately, at this point people are so desperate for work, they'll take what they can get," she explained, "there's no solidarity with that."[49] To my question about the possibilities for organizing, performer Kelly Shibari explained, "especially these days with the lack of work, we're more interested in making sure we can pay our bills."[50] Likewise, performer/ director jessica drake explained that rate standardization is "highly improbable," since "there will always be that either super new person or super competitive or super desperate person that will buck the system… it happens everywhere in all walks of life."[51] Indeed, that scarcity complicates solidarity—and that bosses use scarcity to get more

from workers for less—is not unique to porn. Those familiar with organizing in the academy will recognize the same patterns in that context, for example.[52]

Employers' efforts to block collective organizing are also, of course, not unique to porn.

After a series of on-set HIV transmissions in 2004 and the scapegoating of one affected performer, Mr. Marcus decided to get performers together. "Okay, maybe we should have some rights as performers," he thought.[53] He organized meetings but struggled to draw a consistent crowd. Performers do not remain in the industry for very long, he explained, and the community can feel fragmented. "The other hurdle was companies," he explained. They did not want organized workers because

> We would have formed a collective against something that up to this point had been an advantage to them. They take full advantage of how we're segregated… We don't all run in the same circles and think the same things. The companies are able to take advantage of that.

The segregation to which Marcus refers cuts a number of ways. Some performers simply do not like one another, and these tensions do impact organizing efforts.[54] The industry is also explicitly segregated along genre lines. Once one of few black men to work in higher-paid scenes filmed with white women, he spoke candidly about racism in the industry. The difference between (mostly white and 'interracial') 'mainstream' and (black) 'urban' productions is "night and day," he said, "there's differences in pay, consistency of work, representation from agents."[55] As Marcus suggests, this kind of institutional segregation breeds social disconnection. Solidarity building in this atmosphere is a struggle, particularly since so many white workers are intent on maintaining the advantages porn's hierarchies afford them. Likewise, genre-based hierarchies between workers in mainstream

and BBW, straight and gay, and cis and trans productions complicate community and solidarity in the porn work landscape. Again, employers use this to undermine collectivity.

Employers fight organizing attempts even when performer collectives are not modeled on union organizing. Nica Noelle encountered intense intimidation from management when she and colleague January Seraph worked to organize the Adult Performers' Association in 2010. "Our plan wasn't even to form a union," she explained, "just an organization where performers could seek guidance, report unethical or illegal behavior, get reliable information about health and safety, and hopefully implement some new systems that would benefit everyone."[56] But commentators "decided the APA was planning to challenge the FSC [Free Speech Coalition], which was never the goal." "When people saw how were being attacked, they were afraid to get involved," Noelle explained.

Wary of management retaliation and frustrated by past organizing failures, those spearheading subsequent attempts have been careful to distance their efforts from union models management might interpret as antagonistic. In 2014, performers founded the Adult Performers Advocacy Committee (APAC) in hopes of bringing performers together for mutual education and support. After talking about the limited possibilities of organizing around standardized rates, jessica drake, a founding APAC member, explained the group's different focus:

> What we do instead is just try to give performers sort of a starting point and a soundboard for their questions, their ideas and things like that, and just kind of educate them as to what maybe would be a good business practice. We're not mandating particular rate structures because it's not our position to do that, but I speak out on it.[57]

Also a founding member, Chanel Preston explained that APAC hoped to avoid being perceived as "negative or taking something away from someone."[58]

> Education isn't gonna take anything away. It might take away business from a slimy agent that wants to get naive girls in the industry, but who cares about them. So, the first things we do, we want it to be supported by everyone. We don't want to coming out and be like, "by the way, we're demanding!"

The strategy has been successful, and APAC now stands as the longest running performer organization in porn's history. It has found a great deal of support from management and the industry's trade group, the Free Speech Coalition, which has collaborated with APAC in working to defeat mandatory condom legislation in California.

APAC's focus on education and recommending (rather than demanding) best practices also reflects its initial composition—a coalition of performers and performer/ director/ producers. When I asked current members why APAC was not forming as a union, many explained that the organization's then president, a powerful producer/ director/ performer, had told members that forming as a union would "bankrupt the industry. The companies we work for would have to pay back taxes indefinitely," since it would involve a claim for employee, rather than independent contractor status.[59] Another member elaborated this concern:

> I think we have to be labeled as employees to unionize and then that would be a really big deal for producers, because they would be required to give us health insurance, pay for testing, so that would not be good right now. So we're just an organization. A 501C non-profit organization, and that's best for us.[60]

Regardless of whether a successful unionizing drive would indeed bankrupt the industry, this threat was effective, and most members agreed to focus on education, working *with* management on best practices, and serving as a collective voice for performers advocating for better policy. Others left the organization, and some stayed in hopes of shifting its focus.

While most APAC members support its educational programming and lobbying against unwanted occupational health policy, there remain vibrant debates within the

organization about its ideal stance vis-à-vis management. Unsurprisingly, members who also hold managerial roles tend to be most supportive of organizing that benefits "everyone," while workers who only or predominantly perform support more militant strategies. Meanwhile, FSC leadership is invested in a narrative that no class conflict exists between workers and managers, or between a trade organization and a worker group. I interviewed then FSC CEO Diane Duke around the time of APAC's founding, and she was proud to tell me about the FSC's support, which consisted of providing an initial meeting space and legal council, and, evidently, a stamp of approval that saved APAC organizers from the management retribution previous organizers have encountered. I asked about this. "We're providing as much support for them as we can," she explained, "it's not something we would oppose… The industry is extremely supportive of its performers."[61] "Whenever I lobby," she went on, "I talk about the conversations I have with performers, but I'm seen as the employer because I represent a lot of the studios."

Interviewees who identify more strongly as performers than as management were distrustful of the FSC's capacity to represent their interests. A founding APAC member explained her position: "[The FSC is] a trade organization and they do not represent our best interest, they are not fighting for us."[62] This is why, she went on, it is so important that APAC exists as a separate entity. To the threat that forming as a union would "bankrupt the industry," she said, "to me, that's a huge bargaining chip." Initially a founding member, another interviewee left the organization in part because of frustrations about the FSC's role. "They're out of the producer's interest, they shouldn't be meddling," she told me.[63] But it is tricky, she added, because so many performers are also managers. This is especially true of the performers who remain in the industry long enough to invest in a collective organization.

"Find me one performer," she said, "who's been in the industry for two years and has never directed for a company, never directed for their own website, and never produced a scene for a clips4sale store." Indeed, most porn workers are or hope to be also managers; this demands a refined analysis of how class operates in porn.

"The Performer in Me is Managed by the Executive in Me:"[64] *Class Positions in Porn Work*

Porn workers are very rarely only *workers.* Instead, they occupy shifting class positions as entrepreneurs, independent contractors, employees, contracted and freelance managers, and producers. Of the workers I interviewed who were current performers at the time of our interviews, all but one had also occupied other positions in the industry. This is not a testament to sampling that skewed toward elite workers. To the contrary, performers with less economic and social power rely most on creative arrangements such as trade shoots and producing their own low-budget scenes.[65] "A lot of the brothers were quick to start their own companies so that they could have more of a say," explained performer/ director/ producer Mr. Marcus.[66] "How can we demand [a say] if we're not even represented in the production process?" he asked, adding, "you have to get in there, you can't just be a performer." For others, hiring oneself is simply the best way to get work. Thus, BBW genderqueer performer/ director/ producer Courtney Trouble explained, "I produce my own work because I can't get work elsewhere."[67] High paid, frequently cast performers (who are more likely to have access to social and erotic capital) are alone in being able to afford only working for other people. Even they choose to take on management positions in order to diversify incomes, maintain greater control over their scenes, and establish career longevity. Being a manager in porn is, then, not evidence of privilege in any easy way. It is, nonetheless, a position of power. This section aims to unpack that tension.

Beyond questions of access to work is the reality that most people do not want to have a boss. Workers do not typically share what is for some Marxist intellectuals a preoccupation with the dignity of worker status.[68] As Herschel Savage put it, "not owning your product, you're in a desperate place. Any time you're depending on people for your livelihood, you're in bad shape, no matter what the industry."[69] Workers describe their pursuit of directing gigs, self-financed production, and alternative income streams as a way to command greater control over and economic stake in scenes and other products. Such class flexibility is also not unique to porn. Indeed, porn's class formations recall those of historic craft labor (work which relies more heavily on skill than capital investment).[70] The desire to avoid working under other people (in essence, to be free from worker status in its traditional sense) is universal. We should not hope that subjects remain in a "desperate place" only so that they might maintain ideological purity.

This has important implications for my project. It means, first, that most interviewees' perspectives are not coming from a place of worker-only consciousness, but also (and here departing from a significant body of Marxist thought), I am not convinced that such purity is something we should valorize or try to recuperate. To do so would be to prioritize a tidy class analysis over workers' own desires and critiques.[71] It also means that when interviewees' perspectives seem to depart from those that would fit most neatly with what looks like 'working class consciousness,' we are seeing a reflection of complex class affiliations, rather than evidence of false consciousness. It is not that workers misunderstand their own interests, but that those interests are complex and competing.

In understanding how class operates in this context, I borrow from J.K. Gibson-Graham's "anti-essentialist" Marxist feminist framework, which rejects the assumption of

fixed class identities in favor of an understanding that "individuals may participate in a variety of class processes at one moment and over time. Their class identities are therefore potentially multiple and shifting."[72] But if class positions are hybrid and unstable and consciousness does not flow in simple ways from class location, it does not follow that one's class position has no impact on perspective.[73] Class is messy, but it remains true that, as Mao Tsetung famously put it, "every kind of thinking, without exception, is stamped with the brand of a class."[74] The chapters that follow reveal that subjects' perspectives are indeed branded by their locations vis-à-vis the production process. Porn work's class formations shape interviewees' perspectives on matters ranging from internal and external policy to the work ethic.

Interviewees acknowledged this, explicitly connecting their analyses to the role(s) they occupy. Performer/ director/ studio owner Joanna Angel put it this way when, at the close of our interview, I asked if there was anything she wanted to add about work in the industry: "sometimes, I feel like I'm part of the man, so I might not have the same point of view as a lot of other people."[75] Rather than evacuate class of meaning, then, I am advocating that we pay attention to workers' own nuanced analyses of how the class position(s) they inhabit at any given moment shape their perspectives. When I use terms "worker" and "manager," I mean to signal economic rather than normative status. These are, again, statuses that are for the vast majority shifting. "Worker" and "manager" are, as such, particular and time-limited locations, rather than static identities. It is possible to speak as a manager and not *be* one.

When interviewees said they hold simultaneously or have at different times in their careers held different roles, I asked them whether this changed how this shifted their

perspectives. “Are you a different kind of director because you also perform?” I asked, and most said that having performed made them better, more understanding bosses. Interviewees also answered a question I had not thought to ask: “Are you a different kind of performer because you also direct?” On this point they overwhelmingly said that occupying management roles shaped their perspectives as performers, sometimes to greater effect than the other way around.

Thus, performer/ director/ studio owner Lexington Steele explained, “the performer in me is managed by the executive in me.”[76] He went on:

> Being a check writer gives you a whole different perspective… you look at everything from the top down… So as a performer maybe you do your scene and you take a break, you really only need a five-minute break but you take 10… Now as a producer, you start to think about that fact that, okay, each time you guys stop for 15 minutes, [you] stop twice, so [that’s] half an hour. The location is $150 an hour, those 30 minutes cost me 75 bucks… Time is measurable in dollars and cents.[77]

Later in our conversation, Steele talked about why he opposed producer-paid STI testing, likening a test to the tools an independent contractor must bring to work. It would be too simple, though, to suggest that Steele’s loyalties to management overtook his identifications with other workers. Throughout our interview, he used language such as “we as performers,” spoke candidly about the economic pressures black performers in the industry face, noted support for a performers’ union (even as he said its success was unlikely); and even talked about performers as porn’s “proletariat class.” “The performer in me is managed by the executive in me” speaks to a lucid analysis of internalized class conflict.

For others, no conflict exists—once one takes on multiple roles, manager and/ or owner is *the* affiliation. To the same question of whether being a performer changed his perspective as a director, Dave Pounder responded, “do you mean did I pay people more because I’d been a performer? No, for me it was purely capitalistic.”[78] This was not all I

meant in asking the question, but Pounder's response gestures to issues beyond payment. For workers for whom the production process is "purely capitalistic," being a worker is merely a stop along the road to greater control and financial stake. In such a framework, there is nothing personal about the decision to extract as much from workers for as little as possible; that is simply how capitalism operates.

Other interviewees spoke about multiple roles less in terms of class conflict than mutual understanding. Jessica drake, a contract performer and director, noted "I do feel like I'm a different type of director because I came from a performer background," and explained that because she's been on the other side, she always pays performers' full rate, even adding $100 for features that require a longer day; works to make performers comfortable on set by providing quality catering; and is active with the performer advocacy group APAC. "But at the same time," she added,

> I'm more empathetic now as a performer. Because I can now put myself in both positions, and sometimes when I'm on set as just talent, I look at other talent and I wish they understood where the director was coming from. I think it works both ways. It works for me; it makes me both a better director and a better performer, being the other.[79]

Drake's insight was borne out throughout my interviews. Performers suggest that directors who have performed are on the whole better to work for. And performers who also direct do tend to show a sort of empathy for their bosses, evidenced most clearly in a work ethic and approaches to key policy issues that line up better with management's interests than those of workers. It was performers who also direct who were most vocally opposed to employer-funded STI testing, for example.

That so many porn workers can "put [themselves] in both positions" (either because they have worked in management or because they aspire to) shapes their perspectives in

countless ways. This is not evidence of misunderstanding or false consciousness on workers' part but, rather, a reflection of the industry's particular class formations. Following Stuart Hall, we can dispense with the idea of false consciousness as condescending and unhelpful, suggesting as it does that the commentator is armed with "superior wisdom" to which others have yet to gain access.[80] Against the discourse of false consciousness, and following Mireille Miller-Young, I understand interviewees as "critical knowledge producers."[81] The stakes of such a project are particularly high in relation to sex work research, a field in which outsiders have found it particularly difficult to comprehend subjects as complex and agentic.

Engagements

Anti-Porn Feminist Critique

Legal scholar and leading anti-pornography feminist Catherine MacKinnon writes, "one does not have to notice that pornography models are real women to whom something real is being done… The aesthetic of pornography itself, the *way* it provides what those who consume it want, is itself the evidence."[82] According to this perspective, workers are incidental to a critique of the industry in which they labor—the text is enough. Thus, Gail Dines and Robert Jensen celebrate anti-porn feminists' focus on the "meaning of the pornographic text in the context of the lives of the women who are used in [its] making."[83] But finished products—films, factory-made shoes, foods having traveled miles from where they were picked—are not all that meaningful for the workers "used" in their making. The process of their production is. In forgetting this, anti-porn feminists reproduce the very fetishization they claim to contest. Their text is Marx's commodity, a finished product divorced from the process of its production.[84]

This is true even when anti-porn feminists claim an interest in porn at the point of

production. Thus, under the section heading "production of pornography," Sheila Jeffreys describes the "hatred of women that the pornography films *represent* [emphasis added]."[85] Jeffreys here refers to representational, not labor practices. Double penetration—"taking multiple man hammers," as the ad copy she cites puts it—not union busting is the problem.[86] For her, this ad copy is evidence enough—it alone "reveals" the "cruelty of the practices" in which performers are "forced" to engage.[87] Likewise, MacKinnon describes porn as "sex forced on real women… women's bodies trussed and maimed and raped and made into things to be hurt and obtained and accessed."[88] What is striking here is how willing both thinkers are to take capital at its word when it tells us that products have no context or history.

For porn and other workers, the story behind products matters. Their claims for better pay, recognition, and legal protection are contingent on resisting the narrative that their labor is passive and unskilled. Such narratives, ones anti-porn feminists re-inscribe when they reduce sexual labor to "the positions *taken by* the women's bodies [emphasis added]," do the work of capital.[89] Porn performer and activist Nina Ha®tley writes,

> [To conflate] the images on a screen, which are created performances, with the actual experience of the performers themselves, would be laughably literal-minded, were it not so profoundly insulting…We are much more than the characters we play.[90]

But in both the capitalist and anti-porn feminist imaginations, workers *are* the characters they play.

Anti-porn feminism is a political project premised on the elision of work—what Marxist feminist scholar Brooke Beloso describes as "the feminist erasure of class" in sex work debates more broadly.[91] It is curious, then, that anti-porn feminists so confidently claim a monopoly on the material.[92] According to this narrative, it is those in the anti-pornography

camp who truly understand that "the speech of pornographers was once someone else's *life,*" and "force is not a representation. Assault is not a symbol."[93] This again from MacKinnon, only pages after her assertion that "the aesthetic of pornography" is what counts.

According to Sheila Jeffreys, feminists advocating a view of porn performance and other forms of sexual labor as work collude with the neo-liberal state: the "language and concepts of the [sex work] position are precisely those that most suit the present economic ideology of neo-liberalism."[94] In concert with MacKinnon, Jeffreys, and the like, Gail Dines and Robert Jensen reject the term "sex worker" because:

> Women in the sex industry do not perform work as it is typically understood. Most radical feminists are anti-capitalist and supportive of labour organizing, but see pornography as a practice central to the subordination of women and as a form of violence.[95]

Speaking to this argument, sex work scholar Prabha Kotiswaran notes, "perplexingly ... any economic understanding of the sex industry tends to be mischaracterized as a neoliberal move' that normalizes exploitation."[96] Calling sex work "work" is only normalizing if one sees work as unproblematic. It is a strange anti-capitalism indeed that views waged work as a haven from subordination and violence. Those thinkers whose anti-capitalism extends beyond the narrow confines of the sex industry understand work itself to as a form of violence and exploitation.[97] "If the commodification of sex and sexual labor is to be challenged," writes labor scholar Kate Hardy, "this must be a struggle 'against the commodification of everything,' including labour."[98] By exceptionalizing porn and sex work, anti-sex work feminists do everything they can to make this impossible.

In making commercial sex an alibi for our anxieties about capitalism, anti-porn feminists re-direct vital critical energy away from a wholesale critique of the system. Thus, when MacKinnon claims that the "fact that prostitution and modeling are structurally

women's best economic options should give pause to those who would consider women's presence there a true act of free choice," she hints at what could be an important critique of neo-liberal choice rhetoric only to discard it.[99] By way of exposing the special exploitativeness of porn agents (whom she calls "pimps"), Jeffreys laments that "if [porn performers] do not accept [hardcore movies], then the money dries up and they are on the street once more."[100] This—work, or else—is, of course, the threat all workers under capitalism encounter. In restricting their criticism to porn, anti-porn feminists allow other forms of work to escape critique.[101]

Anti-porn feminists' collective failure to understand the problems of porn work as part of the broader story of labor under capitalism helps to explain their choice to approach workers as symbols, rather than "critical knowledge producers."[102] "These are people who to my face deny me my humanity," said Nina Ha®tley, "I'd expect that from the religious right, but it took me 25 years to understand that some women who identify as feminists hate my guts and will never like me and will never listen to me."[103] Perhaps more perverse than not listening, though, is to insist that no one is speaking at all. In her celebration of the condom legislation workers say makes them less safe, Dines confidently claims, "nowhere will you find a currently-employed porn performer talking honestly about the type of bodily injuries that occur on the set for fear of industry retaliation."[104] The dozens of workers who animate the pages that follow insist otherwise. Workers have a lot to say about their working conditions, including, but not only the injuries they sometimes experience at work. One simply has to ask. This is something anti-porn feminists refuse to do.

Porn Studies

Porn studies scholarship offers a powerful rejoinder to anti-porn feminism's a-historical and a-contextual approach to porn, arguing that porn, like other cultural texts, is produced and consumed in varied ways. "Porn is film," "porn is popular culture," insists media studies scholar Constance Penley, who calls upon scholars to ask of porn what they do of other cultural forms: what accounts for its popular appeal, how does it both reflect and contest cultural norms, and what are our investments in reading it in particular ways.[105] Taking up these questions, scholars have critiqued anti-pornography feminist positions, arguing that they flatten the diverse body of pornographic representation,[106] support censorship and constitute dangerous alliances with the repressive state,[107] lack evidence,[108] rely on gender essentialism and fundamentally conservative normative judgments about appropriate sexuality,[109] and ignore that pornographic texts can be read in a variety of different ways.[110] On this last question of pornographic consumption, scholars suggest that class operates as a "formative blind spot" for anti-porn feminists, who display a palpable distain for the working class aesthetics in which it trades.[111]

With important exceptions, critics have had less to say about porn as work.[112] "Porn studies typically maintains a discreet silence on the matter of sex work," writes media studies scholar Helen Hester, who suggests that the field has struggled to reconcile its commitments to framing porn as a potentially transgressive medium with an understanding of porn as a commodity.[113] *Porn Studies* editors Clarissa Smith and Feona Attwood gesture to this tension in their introduction to the journal's inaugural issue. In understanding sex "as a form of work," they write, "sex critical" scholarship "leaves out the possibilities of bodies and pleasure creating sites of resistance."[114] From the perspective from which I operate here, it is precisely through framing porn as *work* that the potential for resistance within it becomes

legible.[115] My project's intervention in the discipline of porn studies may be less its framing of porn as work (though this is also the case), than the particular way it approaches questions of work.

To questions of porn as a capitalist enterprise, gender studies scholar Lynn Comella highlights the importance of context: "branding anyone associated with the world of pornography as a 'predatory capitalist' fails to recognize that consumer capitalism is not fixed and unchanging… the sexual marketplace, like other realms of consumer culture, can be used for socially progressive purposes."[116] Here, Comella is speaking to Gail Dines' claim that pornography, produced in order to fulfill a profit motive, cannot produce the sexual liberation its supporters claim. I agree—consumer capitalism is not a monolith, and it is certainly possible to produce socially progressive products within its constraints. But capitalism is, without exception, predatory. At least until progressive productions go the way of worker-owned cooperatives, we must grapple with what it means to forge sexual freedom through a process that relies on the expropriation of workers' labor. This is the central point at which the framework I deploy here departs from the bulk of both porn studies and anti-porn feminist thought. If, for anti-porn feminism, the only predatory capitalists are pornographers, and, for porn studies, capitalism is not necessarily predatory, I argue that pornographers are predatory in exactly the ways other bosses are.

This framework makes visible the unexceptional stories of exploitation and resistance that get obscured in anti-porn feminist and porn studies debates over matters of representation and consumption. Legal theorist Drucilla Cornell pushes for a separation of legal actions targeting porn's production and those targeting its consumption.[117] We need this, she says, in order to account for porn workers' basic personhood.[118] This analytical

separation has also proven useful for my project, and I disengage with analyses of pornography that focus on its representational politics or consumer impact except where these emerge as important to workers themselves.[119] While important interventions in the literatures with which they engage—film studies and cultural theory—such analyses can aid the processes of reification by which capital mystifies our work.[120] In anti-porn feminist thought and porn studies alike, a focus on porn as text—a product divorced from production process—obscures labor in precisely the way it must be obscured in order for capitalist exploitation to function.

"Sex workers should not be expected to defend the existence of sex work in order to have the right to do it free from harm," writes journalist Melissa Gira Grant.[121] Porn workers should not have to defend porn as a product in order to demand better experiences of making it, yet I read this as the implicit suggestion of studies that work to make porn respectable by defending its social value. Such analyses answer anti-porn feminism on its own terms, terms that, as the previous section details, are built on the erasure of working people.[122] Against this tide, I maintain that porn workers are entitled to rights as workers regardless of whether porn is socially valuable. Social value is in any case a trap, since it asks workers to own the ethical debts associated with the products their labor is extracted to produce, then uses social necessity as a means of blackmailing workers who would refuse that work. As such, I have argued for "an honest day's wage for a dishonest day's work" for all workers.[123] At the same time, as in other forms of work, porn workers sometimes prefer to direct their energies to projects in which their identities and desires feel faithfully represented. I take this seriously while also remaining aware of how workers' self-identification with the products they produce can lead to greater exploitation. I am not suggesting false consciousness, but rather,

pointing to the ways in which loving what you do can be simultaneously a risk and protective factor, a reality with which workers across industries are also familiar.[124]

Sex Work Research

Sex work research has done much to make possible an understanding of workers' experiences at the intersection of economy, policy, and the social. In spite of the enduring narrative that perspectives on sex work tend to uncomplicatedly view sex workers as hapless victims *or* free market agents, a wealth of sex work research refuses this dichotomy.[125] Sex work scholars have been at the vanguard of theorizing constrained agency, a framework that aims to "tak[e] women's agency seriously precisely in order to understand how power works."[126] I am particularly indebted to research that situates workers' decision making within the context of broader trends in late capitalist markets,[127] underscores the ways in which public policy often produces the very vulnerabilities is purports to address,[128] theorizes emotional labor in this particular site of intimate work,[129] and investigates workers' organizing histories.[130]

Even as sex work research articulates a strong vision of workers as agents who make decisions within the context of structural constraint, there is a tendency in the literature to imagine that sex workers' choices are more constrained than those of other workers. In her review of sex work literature published in the past three decades Anthropologist Susan Dewey describes a collective vision of sex work as "one choice out of a limited menu of life options available to poor women."[131] This is an important rejoinder to anti-sex work feminist analyses that deny workers' choice making as such. But I want to be careful to avoid the suggestion, one I see as implicit in framings like this, that sex work is okay (and should be safe and legal) because workers have so few alternatives, or because workers pursue it in

order to survive, feed their children, or whatever other motives meet the conditions of respectability. These forces motivated some of the porn workers I interviewed. Others pursued porn work simply because, as many put it, "I don't like working." This too is okay, even—especially—as it refuses the work of eliciting liberal sympathies.

Methods, or, The Things I Did Not Ask

This dissertation is grounded in eighty-one interviews I conducted between 2012 and 2014 with US adult film industry[132] performers, managers, and crew; non-participatory observation at industry events such as trade shows and trade group meetings; and non-participatory on-set observation.[133]

On-set observations are the aspect of the research process about which I feel most conflicted. Only two directors (both of whom operate queer production companies) asked performers beforehand if they were comfortable with having non-working guests on set. While the performers at the other sets I visited were hospitable and are accustomed to having journalists and other visitors, I often felt that our presence might be yet another distraction for performers to manage. Directors often assume that a performer's scene fee pays for a range of non-sex labors that may or may not be agreed upon in advance, and some volunteered that I was free to conduct interviews on their sets. I declined, thinking that performers might feel compelled to agree under the rubric of work duties, and instead gave performers my contact information should they wish to interview later. Two said that, because there was so much down time on set, it would be more convenient to interview then, and so we did. It was easier to be unobtrusive in observations at industry meetings. The meetings focused primarily on the condom legislation that occupied much of the industry's collective energy during the years in which I conducted research. I also attended industry

meetings at the Adult Entertainment Expo and XBIZ. Because of my writing for non-academic venues, I was able to attend with press access and thus gain access to business meetings.

Interviews lasted between forty-five minutes and two hours. I interviewed workers and managers predominantly in Southern California's San Fernando Valley and San Francisco, where most adult films are produced, as well as those who are retired and live elsewhere or who live in Las Vegas and Miami, also popular filming locations. Interviewees included fifty-nine current or retired performers, many of whom also held other roles in the porn industry, working as managers, crew, or in PR. Twenty-two interviewees had worked only in non-performing roles as agents, producers, directors, screenwriters, photographers, and publicists. Interviewees ranged in age from twenty-one to seventy. Their years active in the industry ranged from 1973 to 2016, with most currently working in the industry.

Interviewees identified as Black, white, Latino, middle-eastern, Asian, and mixed. As in the US racial economy more broadly, such identities can be fluid in the industry. One mixed-race interviewee identified as "black" for some productions and "Asian" for others, for example. Interviewees' gender identities include female, male, transsexual, and gender queer. Informed by queer theoretical analyses of identity, I come to this project understanding that points of identity matter to people at different times. I foreground those identities, if any, that workers mark as most salient in the stories they tell. More often than not, these are those that determine the conditions of their work. When I include identity markers, I mean to signal workers' workplace identities and do so using standard industry terms.[134] When I refer to someone as a "gay" performer, for example, I mean the industry sector in which they work rather than their off-screen sexual identities.

I located interviewees primarily through referrals. Porn workers are often regarded as a "difficult-to-access population."[135] This was not my experience. If a population seems difficult to access, this may be because we are asking the wrong questions, or asking them in the wrong way. At the most basic level, I found success locating interviewees because porn workers and managers wanted to talk about their jobs and be heard. This is not to say that my research process was easy or seamless. It took years to establish the interpersonal connections that made possible layered interviews with a broad group of workers and managers. Many porn workers and managers have had countless negative interactions with academic and journalistic interviewers, and it was my job to demonstrate that I would not re-create those interactions.

Interviewees described invasive anti-porn feminists who jumped directly to questions about performers' childhoods or the rape they presumed happens on set. Others were frustrated by overly familiar interviewers who seemed to use the interview as an excuse to get close to the performers they admired. Workers were also concerned that their words not be appropriated to serve narratives that did not represent them. Stoya described a "sense of panic when I'm about to say something that could be misquoted."[136] "Make me sound smart!" Raylene joked at the close of our interview after telling me about a previous experience in which she felt her words had been twisted to undermine her voice.[137] Tara Holiday talked about being reticent to give interviews because she had had so many negative experiences, but said she agreed because she had gotten a good feeling when we met at the Adult Entertainment Expo. When I thanked her for her confidence in me, she replied, "absolutely, sweetie. I trust you completely."[138] Laughing, she added, "and don't throw me

under the bus." I have tried to honor those concerns while also engaging in the sustained critique to which interviewees, as knowledge producers, are entitled.

A particular set of circumstances facilitated the process of earning trust among potential interviewees. I came to the research process with some connections to the community because of my previous involvement in sex worker organizing. Perhaps more important than connections, this background allowed me to enter the research encounter with a base knowledge of the frustrations sex workers often experience when dealing with researchers and journalists and an understanding of how I might avoid reproducing them. I also had a great deal of help. I was fortunate to have the support of Mireille Miller-Young and Constance Penley, two mentors who have together spent decades building reputations in the porn worker community. The stamp of approval these connections provided gave potential interviewees a sense of who I might be. As Juba Kalamka put it when I asked if he had any questions of me before our interview began, "no, you're with Mireille so you're all good."[139]

Interviewees were tremendously generous in helping me to connect with others who might be interested in speaking with me. Some did this by passing my information onto friends and colleagues. Porn worker communities are tight knit, and word spreads quickly. "Your name has come up at a couple of [Adult Performers Advocacy Committee] meetings," jessica drake told me, "that's how I knew you were good and okay to talk to."[140] Others posted on social media or otherwise spoke publicly about a positive interview experience. After our interview, director and popular industry blogger Mike South published a blog post encouraging people to contact me. "She was very nice and mostly listens," he wrote.[141] "She is not anti porn. She is studying the biz and needs input, it isn't about the psychological

aspects or anything and it isn't in any way combative or one sided." South is a controversial figure in the industry, and about half of the flood of respondents who wrote to me after the post said they did so to make sure I heard a different perspective.

After our interview, an industry publicist asked me to work the 2014 Adult Entertainment Expo as the interviewer for his press circuit during the three-day event. I did not include information from these interviews in this dissertation—most were rather short and superficial, designed for the particular flows of the event and intended for a web series made for fans. But the experience made me visible in a way not typically accessible to academic interviewers and accelerated the process of making my face and name recognizable. Later, a director organizing an awards ceremony asked me to seat guests and work the greenroom. I also did not solicit interviews here, but it was another experience that helped to nurture the community connections I had been building.

In these moments, working for free facilitated the process of connecting with interviewees. I struggled with the decision to take these unpaid gigs for the same reasons I later critique 'exposure' as free labor in the porn context—accepting exposure (or, in my case, community visibility and potential connections) as pay undermines other workers' ability to demand payment. No one would have been paid for these labors. "If you don't want to do it, they'll find someone that will" applies here too, and any number of those hoping for industry connections—fans, aspiring actors, the curious—would have happily accepted. But this is not the point. In taking these gigs, I occupied the position of scab, a class position Yasmin Nair incisively critiques in the figure of academics experimenting with journalism for little or no pay (a sin I have also committed).[142] There is something rather perverse about being party to a system that devalues work in order to write about work. I note this to make

clear that I—and indeed, all workers, perhaps especially academics—am implicated in the same problematics and compromises I write about in the porn work context.

Coming into the project, I anticipated that it might be difficult to find managers who were willing to interview with someone who presented her project as a labor study. With one exception—an employers' attorney I met at the Adult Entertainment Expo who replied "oh, shit" and scuttled away when I told him what I was writing about—this was not the case. Instead, managers were both eager to talk and surprisingly forthcoming, volunteering copies of employment contracts and modeling releases, talking about how they get performers to work for less money, and speaking openly about profit as a priority. I suspect that part of what made the idea of a labor study seem less threatening than I had anticipated is that the atmosphere in which porn research and writing take place is so heavily dominated by debates about representation and the value of porn as such. When asked, I answered honestly that I am agnostic on questions surrounding porn as a product; this was enough. As South's post suggests, what was important for people to know is that I am not "anti-porn." Workers and managers alike were willing to engage openly about labor conditions so long as they knew I was not there to shoehorn their stories into the same tired narrative. "I can read people very well, that's part of why I'm good at my job," said performer/ director Lily Cade when I asked if she had any questions of me before our interview began.[143] She added, "I can tell the difference between your being interested in the realities of this job and trying to trick me into saying I'm exploited."

I think it is absolutely vital to center on workers' voices when writing about their jobs. Their stories are the heart of this dissertation and I cannot imagine an analysis of porn work without them. At the same time, I remain conflicted about the interview as method,

particularly when workers already have tremendous demands on their time, many of which are (like our interviews) unpaid. Knowing precisely how hard performers work, I struggled with asking them to do more.[144] Again, workers were incredibly generous. Lorelei Lee came to our interview at her office in the Kink Armory having just performed and directed in two scenes, asked me to wait a moment while she changed out of work clothes, and returned somehow able to muster the energy for what would be a two hour interview. Sara Jay paused our interview to turn off her ringing phone sex line and was gracious when I worried aloud that she was losing money in order to talk to me. After my particularly clunky pre-interview speech about appreciating her time and offering to reciprocate if there was anything I might be able to do in the future, Nina Ha®tley, my first interviewee, assured me that she was happy to do it. "I want you to succeed, I want you to have a good life," she said.[145] This reminder has remained present for me throughout the research process, and I am acutely aware that the substance of our interview exchanges was workers doing me a favor.

Workers also want their stories heard,[146] and most wanted their names attached to their ideas. Both before and after interviews, I asked workers whether they would like to remain anonymous in some or all quotes. The vast majority wanted to be on record. Later, when I transcribed interviews and particularly controversial topics (particularly those that might risk lost work in the future) came up, I contacted workers again to ensure that they still wanted to use their stage names in connection with quotes. Again, most did. The primary exceptions were when workers directly criticized the industry's trade organization, talked about specific workplace injuries, spoke about prostitution, or described specific negative experiences with management. In these instances, some workers did decide to make quotes anonymous. Attributions throughout this dissertation are in accordance with workers' wishes.

I posed questions about wage and hour issues, workplace health, emotional labor, and work processes, making clear that interviewees were free to skip over anything they would rather not discuss. Interviewees were overwhelmingly eager to talk about these nuts and bolts realities of their jobs, and many told me they enjoyed the reprieve from the questions they often encounter. I often excused myself before asking about wages with a joke about how I knew this was not generally understood as a polite question, and workers overwhelmingly said that they were happy to discuss it. Juba Kalamka, who is also a musician, said he was glad I asked, and talked about his frustration with most music interviews in which "none of the performers talk about the reality of the working artist."[147] Stoya volunteered detailed information about her rates and said "that's a thing that workers need to start getting comfortable talking about."[148] I also asked workers what they enjoyed about their jobs, and on this question some hesitated because this is not a query they often receive outside of interviews intended for fans in which the ideal answer is something like "all the double anal!" When I posed this question to Conner Habib, he replied, "it's just a weird thing to say because I'm so used to telling people 'oh, I love my job' because they think porn stars hate it. But asking the specifics of it, it's funny."[149]

Equally important were the questions I did not ask. These omissions were purposeful and interviewees noted and appreciated them. They included anything about performers' childhoods, porn's social effects, performers' medical information, or off-camera interpersonal lives. Performers are whole people, and I appreciate those studies that look at other aspects of sex workers' lives. I am also wary of a research encounter that in any way reproduces the perception by fans and in marketing that any part of a performer's life is up for grabs. As such, I did not ask interviewees about their sexual orientations or off-camera

preferences. I felt this would reproduce the inquiries they often encounter from fans, journalists, and other academics, which assume entitlement to knowledge about their "real" sexuality. Some interviewees did volunteer this information, and I include it where they identify off-screen sexuality as relevant to their work.

Even as I expressly introduced my project as focused on work and excluded any questions about representation, the discursive landscape is so over determined in favor of representational analyses that these seeped into interviewees' responses. Interviewees are so accustomed to being asked about porn as a product that they often offered answers to the questions I explicitly did not ask. Thus, after Dominic Ace asked me what I was interested in writing about and I told him "porn as a workplace, how workers experience their jobs, how the work is organized, things like that." He replied, "can porn affect relationships, absolutely, can drinking too much affect relationships, absolutely… There's a hundred different ways of looking at the effects of porn on people, on girls."[150] Others (mostly men in management) volunteered their own understandings of whether the trope of porn performers as childhood abuse survivors is supported by evidence, and went out of their way to explain that they do not condone recreational drug use on set, even as I never asked about these things.

In other moments, interviewees' answers to unasked questions radically shifted my thinking and, indeed, the directions this project took. Workers' origin stories are one example of this, and their descriptions of porn as an escape from waged work have pushed me to think differently about the stakes of a sex work as *work* frame. Interviewees exploded my thinking on authenticity, class, the boundaries between work and non-work, the capacity of the state to address harms, and the politics of precarity. In the chapters that follow, the interview data I

have engaged with most intensely is that that which most unsettled the premises with which I came to this project.

Chapter Outline

Chapter two—"'Maybe the State Should Pay:'[151] Policy and Pushback"—explores the employment policies that shape the experience of porn work. It focuses on the problems of outdated employment policy ill suited to the realities of flexible work. The chapter investigates performers' (mis)classification as independent contractors and its effects on their access to a range of workplace protections and entitlements. The chapter then moves to a discussion of workers' and managers' perspectives on state intervention, particularly where health policy is concerned. The capitalist state will not deliver liberation from work, argue workers and theorists alike. At the same time, workers say they need better conditions *now,* and so this chapter advocates what I call "a politics of the meantime" that includes policy demands. With these dual commitments in mind, the chapter closes with a sketch of what better policy might look like.

Chapter three—"'Porn Feels Different than It Looks:'[152] Porn Work on Set"— turns to the set shop floor to explore the work of porn production. It focuses on the aspects of porn work that get lost when we assume that a finished scene tells us about the process of its production, such as preparation, negotiation, waiting, and check writing. Following a standard production timeline, the chapter begins with a discussion of pre-scene labors and argues that porn work's immense preparatory demands challenge conventional understandings of where work begins and ends. The chapter then turns to the work of filming the porn scene itself, focusing on emotional and physical labor and workers' analyses of what

makes porn sex different. After scenes close, performers are paid. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how pay rates are structured.

Chapter four—"'A Scene Is Just a Marketing Tool:'[153] Alternative Income Streams in Porn's Gig Economy"—explores workers' efforts to cobble together multiple income streams and charts how alternative income streams function in porn's political economy. I argue that alternative income streams at once maintain and undermine workers' power. By sustaining a reserve army of labor—workers willing to perform in porn even when pay and conditions are poor—alternative income streams subsidize employers and help maintain the status quo. At the same time, workers pursuing alternative income streams creatively manipulate the conditions of porn work. The chapter's later half explores the particular alternative income streams workers take up, including gigs in neighboring sex industries, direct to consumer services, and managerial roles in porn production.

Chapter five—"'I'm Kind of Always Working, but it's Also Almost Always Really Fun:'[154] Porn Work and the Labor of Authenticity"—explores work/ life boundaries in the porn work landscape, tying workers' stories to the broader context of blurred boundaries in the late capitalist workplace. Workers describe porn work as a potentially constant set of labors. They navigate these demands in creative ways, both refusing a total commodification of life and insisting that doing what they love makes these traditional boundaries less important. The chapter turns to a discussion of how "life put to work"[155] functions as a human resources management strategy. Cultural discomfort with market-driven sexuality, combined with ubiquitous calls to be authentic in the late capitalist workplace, create for porn workers intense demands from all sides to "be themselves" at work.[156] I then turn to

workers' stories of navigating, resisting, and, re-inscribing the demand for authenticity in their work.

Finally, the dissertation's epilogue— "'The Most Obscene Thing is 'Working for a Living:'[157] Porn Work as Escape"—returns to workers' framing of porn work as an escape from work. Disidentifying with constructions of porn and other sex work as misery-dealing, porn workers re-write their labor as that which allows them to escape the miseries of *legitimate* jobs. At the same time, they insist that porn work is *work.* The dissertation closes with a discussion of this apparent tension.

"Maybe the State Should Pay"[1]:

Policy and Pushback

"The hard hat is not about the boss personally giving a shit about the worker," mused queer performer and sex worker rights activist Juba Kalamka as we discussed health regulations in porn. In construction, bosses "figured out that with liability, 'it's cheaper for me to give you basic protections for my long run bottom line.' I think that's the difference in porn. The economic bottom line is affected in a different direction."[2] This chapter focuses on porn work and policy with an eye for how it came to be that, in some ways porn's "bottom line is affected in a different direction." What policy structures make porn workers precarious in ways other laborers are not? Part of this story concerns sex work stigma, and the chapter explores how stigma shapes both state approaches to porn work and workers' perspectives on state intervention. Porn workers have come to view the state as a poor ally. While the experiences that contribute to this stance center largely on regulation pertaining to health practices, they set the tone for many workers' perspectives on state intervention in other sectors, even when workers are dissatisfied with the conditions their employers impose.

Also key is the problem of employment policy designed to fit a kind of workplace that does not exist for porn and other freelance workers. Porn workers are among the millions of American workers who, to employers' benefit, labor on a contingent basis and in employment relationships that labor law has yet to fully account for.[3] The chapter investigates performers' (mis)classification as independent contractors and its effects on their access to a range of workplace protections and entitlements. In this regard, this chapter explores too the ways in which, in porn, the bottom line is affected in precisely the same direction as that of countless other industries in which bad policy and lax enforcement make

workers precarious. The capitalist state is not the place to turn for liberation from work. But while calling for a sex *work* frame that is part of a broader anti-capitalist critique, I also support a politics of the meantime that includes policy demands.[4] These dual commitments inform the analysis that follows.

The chapter begins with an overview of existing labor law most relevant to the conditions of porn work. It then turns to a discussion of workers' and managers' perspectives on state intervention, particularly where health policy is concerned. Here we explore the discourses of privacy, choice, and freedom of speech that dominate recent policy debates. I close with a sketch of what better policy might look like.

Employee Status

"The thing with being an outlaw is that the retirement package sucks"[5]: (Mis)Classification and Its Effects

"Here's the grim reality," replied Christian Mann, then manager of major distribution company Evil Angel and longtime board member of the FSC, when I asked him about performers' employment status. "Performers, even if the state of California says that they are employees, they are independent contractors. They are performing in a way that looks like independent contracting."[6] Likewise, directors maintained that calling performers "independent contractors" solidifies this status. To the same question about employment status, gonzo producer/director Jon Rodgers responded,

> I can talk about that because I was in the trucking business for 30 years and the state has been trying to get owner-operators classed as employees, same type of situation. If I hire a talent I'm supposed to follow all the employment laws. We're supposed to do withholding. That's not gonna cut it. It's nothing but a bureaucratic money grab to get more withholding taxes... When talent comes to work for me, my paperwork specifically states that they're an independent contractor and that talent is responsible for all taxes and that kind of stuff, and that there are no known STDs.[7]

A dogged insistence that performers are contractors—even if the state says otherwise—was management's most common response when I asked about employment status. Regardless of actual policy, management's persistent treatment of workers as independent contractors has rendered it a largely unquestioned industrial norm. Modeling releases like Rodgers' have the de-facto effect of excusing employers' responsibility for a range of workplace practices simply by putting it in writing, and interviewees representing a range of class positions told me they were independent contractors because their producers treat them as such. This is common in the broader world of work, so much so that the state of California's Department of Industrial Relations alerts workers that being told by an employer that one is an independent contractor, or signing an agreement stating that this is the case, does not make it so.[8]

Nonetheless, in this moment in which the discursive turn comes to employment policy, management continues to insist on workers' independent contractor status. That is, except when they are simply not sure. I asked contract director Alex Linko about his own employment status, as well as that of the performers he shoots:

> "When you shoot a commissioned film, are you a contractor or an employee?" I asked.
> "A contractor," he responded.
> "And the performer you hire is a day employee?" I asked, referring to the employment classification used in mainstream film productions.
> "I don't think so. She fills out a 1099 and I don't do her taxes," Alex replied.
> Referring to a recent OSHA ruling on the matter, I asked, "but for OSHA, is she an employee?"
> Never loosing patience with my wonkish questions, he answered, "is that what it is? I don't know."[9]

Major production companies too appear to be not quite sure whether or when they are, indeed, employers. Stoya described her frustrated attempts to get a straight answer about employment status when she worked under exclusive contract with a large production

company. “I think I’m gonna have to pay the government money with taxes, it’s not being taken out, I don’t know,” she remembered thinking. “So I go into the office and I’m like, ‘am I an employee or an independent contractor?’ In my entire time with that company, I never once got a straight answer.”[10]

Stoya went on to describe the various features of her work that send conflicting messages about employment status.

> You tell me when I’m being shot, but I pay for my own transportation from the east coast. You do pick me up from my hotel and take me to set, but then when I get to set, there’s a script. The contract said I wasn’t allowed to take outside jobs without [the company’s] approval, even in non-conflicting fields… The whole thing is really fucked up. *They have the benefits of dealing with an employee as far as telling us what to do, but then they also have the benefits of an independent contractor as far as not paying payroll tax, social security, all those things.*

Likewise, when I asked Charity Bangs whether she worked as an employee or an independent contractor, she responded, “it seems like directors want to get the benefits of both.”[11]

Conducting business as if performers are independent contractors, porn management typically operates as if the regulations and norms (i.e. voluntary programs such as retirement benefits) governing employer-employee relationships do not apply.[12] That is, as Bangs and Stoya suggest, except where maintaining control over the work process is concerned. There, directors are bosses all the way. Control on the one hand and a lack of protections and benefits on the other characterize the porn work experience. Thus, when I asked Richie Calhoun about the benefits available to performers, he responded, “we have nothing, we have no medical insurance, we have no union, we have no residuals or royalties.”[13] These conditions can all be traced to management’s success at getting “the benefits of both.” There

are three main ways in which workers' de-facto independent contractor status impacts their access to basic benefits and protections.

First, management does not typically observe wage and hour regulations such as overtime and minimum wage requirements. Because of performers' generally high average hourly rate, minimum wage requirements are less relevant here—even on an exceptionally long day, rates would average out to equal more than the minimum hourly wage. But the industrial norm of not paying overtime means that there is little incentive for directors to limit workers' time on set.[14] Paid the same rate regardless of how long a workday lasts, performers and crew could work for two or 20 hours with no change in pay. Second, treating performers as independent contractors and directing them to file taxes accordingly, employers avoid paying and withholding Social Security and Medicare taxes, paying unemployment tax, and withholding and processing Income tax.

Third, treating performers as independent contractors impacts occupational health practices in a number of ways, both shaping the level of risk workers encounter on set and determining what happens when they sustain an infection or injury. Because OSHA has jurisdiction only over employees, management argues that their workplaces are not covered under OSHA regulations. As we shall see, OSHA disagrees, but employers' conduct has greater material effects on workers than selectively enforced policy. Likewise, while California Labor Code and California's Film Commission both require that temporary employers secure workers compensation insurance, most producers refuse to.[15] For workers, this means that if a workplace injury occurs, their choices are to sue for compensation or cover the costs themselves. Hoping to avoid being blacklisted, most workers choose the

latter. If a worker were to sue, guessed performer Kelley Shibari, "the producer may pay, but then he'll never hire her again."[16]

Dealing with work-related illness is a major part of the porn workflow. In the vast majority of cases it goes without saying that workers will bear the associated costs, including testing, treatment, and time off work.[17] Reflecting the experience of many other women performers, one performer described "a carousel of yeast infection, bacterial infection… That puts you out of commission, and no one pays you for the days you have to take off of work. No one pays for the yeast infection medicine or your trip to the doctor."[18]

Another interviewee explained that during her first month performing, she was hired to do a four-day location shoot with one scene scheduled each day. Such a schedule makes sense for the studio, reducing the costs associated with crews, locations, and hotel stays, but for performers it leaves no time to recuperate between scenes. As a result, the performer explained, "I was torn so badly I had to have surgery… the last two days I almost could not do the work at all. I just kind of gritted my teeth and went through with it."[19] Luckily, she had purchased private health insurance, but $15,000 in out of pocket expenses remained.

I asked if she considered filing suit against her uninsured employer. "I guess that I could have," she explained. But at the time, she remembered thinking, "'if I do anything with workman's comp, they're not gonna hire me again, I'm burning that bridge, and I kind of need that exposure right now.' It's a really tough position to be in." So she paid the $15,000—much more than her wages for the scenes in which she had been injured—took some (unpaid) time off work, and chalked the experience up to her own naiveté. It's not that anyone forced her to shoot on such a grueling schedule, she told me, just that "I didn't know my physical limits at that time." After healing, she went back to work but insisted on breaks

between filming. This mirrors how most workers approached questions of workplace safety—they learn quickly that the protections available will be the ones they insist upon, and they carefully calculate how much insisting they can do without losing work.

With ill-fitting policy and lax enforcement of the policies that do apply, management has indeed figured out, as Kalamka noted at the beginning of this chapter, that their bottom line favors against basic protections. At no cost for the company, $15,000 and weeks off work for the above worker was cheaper for management than the cost of an extra day or two on location. Likewise, Christopher Daniels explained,

> Some studios during location shoots won't use silicone lube, and that really angers me because water-based lube dries up and tears your skin. But they're like 'we don't want to damage the furniture.' Little things like that. They don't care. It's a simple thing, it's health. I've left some shoots bleeding because of a little thing like water based lube.[20]

When rental agreements are stricter than labor law, damaged furniture costs studios more than injury to workers. Policy makes this possible.

While individual workers bear the costs of testing, treatment, and recovery, the entire porn workforce absorbs the costs of the lack of paid sick time. Employers' failure to provide paid sick time forces workers to chose to either perform when ill (and thus put co-workers at risk) or lose critical income. Production companies that require testing bar those from performing who have tested positive for included STIs. Herpes outbreaks, yeast infections, and even the common cold or flu are not tested for, and so workers make tough choices about whether to work when experiencing these ailments. One performer told me that eight months of recurring yeast infections made it impossible to work consistently, "I'm not going to give some poor girl thrush just because I need to make $800."[21] Others cannot afford the loss of income. "I got yeast infections and BV [bacterial vaginosis], all that stuff," explained another

performer, "and I'd just be like, 'when I go home I'm gonna take care of it. Right now, I'm gonna douche and keep working."[22] Cancelling work would have meant not only lost wages but also paying the "kill fee" her agent required to offset his lost cut. In addition to economic penalties, workers face steep reputational penalties for cancelling work. Too many days off work can mark a performer as flaky, and word spreads quickly. Yeast and bacterial infections such as these are difficult to transmit sexually, but the industry's policies create the same pressures for workers with more transmittable ailments such as staph, a herpes outbreak, or a cold or flu.

Other workers said agents made the decision for them. Wanting their cut and hoping to preserve their own reputations with directors, some agents push performers to work even when ill. Performers are free to say "no," of course, but, as in negotiations with directors and producers, confront the threat of lost work. VJ asked her agent to cancel a shoot after she discovered a staph infection. "If you have a clean test and you have all your limbs, you have to work," he replied.[23] "I cried through the whole scene," she told me, "because I knew that I was working with a contagious bacteria and I knew that it was going to be spread." A number of workers who were in the industry during this period noted the rapid spread of staff infections at the time. The industry's internal policies, coupled with a lack of functional state apparatus for addressing them, are directly responsible for these risks, and yet the industry's discourse around workplace risk places sole responsibility on workers who recklessly endanger colleagues' health. "Your body is part of your living," explained then FSC CEO Diane Duke, "and you can't put other people at risk."[24]

Hiring discrimination and pay inequality are additional areas in which de facto independent contractor status makes workers vulnerable. Here too, the vulnerabilities porn

workers face are also evident across a range of industries.[25] Title VII of the *Civil Rights Act* prohibits discriminatory hiring practices and workplace segregation, but explicitly applies only to the employer-employee relationship.[26] The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has not made clear whether provisions prohibiting racialized pay inequality apply to contractors. Beyond the problem of independent contractor status, porn workers' status as entertainment workers further complicates the question of their coverage under anti-discrimination law. Hiring discrimination is ubiquitous in entertainment industries and yet rarely challenged, let alone subject to legal sanction.[27] Title VII's bona fide occupational qualification (BFOQ)—which permits limited exceptions to Title VII—includes provisions for gender-based hiring when "necessary for the purpose of authenticity or genuineness," but no such exception exists for race-based hiring. Because so little case law exists on race discrimination in casting, legal scholarship on this issue focuses on the hypothetical.[28] Scholars writing on discriminatory casting in Hollywood suggest that, were an actor to file a VII claim, workers' protection from discriminatory hiring practices would need to be weighed against First Amendment rights to unencumbered artistic expression.[29] The same would likely be true were a porn performer to file a race discrimination case against an employer. We will return to a discussion of "free speech" as a shield against regulation later in this chapter.

Porn workers' liminal employment status and the lack of clarity around discrimination policy more generally create the conditions for ubiquitous and unchecked racial inequality. Agents hire and directors cast in racialized terms. Agent Mark Schechter listed "look, age, demographics, ethnicity" as the primary factors he considers when deciding to take on new talent.[30] These are, indeed, the factors directors apply when casting. It's not

personal or motivated by individuals' prejudices, decision makers were always careful to tell me. The question is, simply, whether a worker is "viable for me to market them."[31] The "market" took on an almost magical air in conversations about racism in the industry, managers fully at the whims of its dictates.[32] "Porn is such a racist business, but so is Hollywood," explained one director.[33]

> It's also marketing. If you're selling to some white trash hick in the Midwest who doesn't want to see a black guy, you can't sell the movie. So you saturate it with all white people and label it what it is. Then you have the interracial movies and they're labeled as such because that's what is selling. It doesn't really make sense from a social standpoint, but from a sales standpoint it does.

The white trash Midwestern and Southern consumer appeared throughout my interviews with both managers and workers as the true culprit for the industry's racial politics. Consumer preference does not, incidentally, qualify as a BFOQ.[34]

Whether racial inequality is the fault of racist managers or small-minded consumers, the impact on workers is the same—striking differences in access to agency representation, work opportunity, and wages. Reflecting the industry's dichotomized approach to racialized marketing, interviewees overwhelmingly talked about race in terms of a black/ white dichotomy. "There's two different sides, there's the black side and the white side… They usually only mix when they're doing interracial stuff" explained Raylene.[35] As a result, industrial segregation impacts black workers most intensely. Interviewees representing other racial identities did not report hiring discrimination or pay inequality at anywhere near the rates of black workers.

Some black performers described getting paid less when working for big-budget mainstream (read: mostly white) companies. Agents' decisions not to represent black workers contribute to this problem, since agency workers tend to secure higher rates. More

commonly than lower pay from big-budget companies is that this kind of work is simply not available. Instead, available work is with smaller companies that specialize in "urban" or "interracial" content. Sinnamon Love described a significant pay cut when working for such productions: "lower budget, ethnically-themed movies would only pay $4 or $500 for boy-girl scenes, and at the same time, I'd go work for another company and they'd pay my standard rate of $1000... It's a budget issue."[36] Describing this differential, Ana Foxx said, "it'll be like a $400 decrease for the same exact thing, for the same act."[37] When better paying companies hire black women much less frequently, hiring discrimination is directly responsible for porn's racial pay gap. Porn workers' defacto independent contractor status, coupled with lax enforcement of anti-discrimination law, lends this practice an air of permissibility. In occupational health as in institutionalized racial inequality, policy makes workers precarious.

Finally, workers' defacto independent contractor status makes them vulnerable to poverty upon retirement. Producers do not participate in voluntary retirement programs (a benefit that is increasingly illusive even to recognized employees),[38] and they refuse to pay royalties. Most of the retirement-age performers I interviewed experienced severe financial insecurity, one became homeless soon after our interview, and two others were concerned about their ability to pay mounting medical debt. They had all starred in highly successful films such as the iconic *Debbie Does Dallas* and made producers a great deal of money, but their lack of access to royalties ensured that they never saw these profits. Poverty among Golden Age stars is so prevalent that a group of fans and industry historians launched the Golden Age Appreciation Fund in 2014 to raise funds for stars in need.[39] Golden age performer/ director Carter Stevens explained, "Ninety-nine percent of the old timers in this

business are broke or living on food stamps, social security, or they have another job… The thing with being an outlaw is that the retirement package sucks."[40] Stevens added, "the kids in the business today aren't even there long enough to worry about that."

But the threat of post-retirement financial insecurity persists for today's workers. Current workers were indeed worried about what would come next. Most live more or less month-to-month, with little savings, and they fear hiring discrimination in mainstream jobs once they leave porn. Kelly Shibari explained, "there's no pension, there's no 401K, there's no IRA, there's nothing in place as far as the industry is concerned, because it's so rogue and there is no union, there is no guild, there's nothing."[41]

These are the various reasons employers in porn and other industries prefer to (mis)classify workers as independent contractors. But contractors are legally entitled to a level of autonomy unavailable in the vast majority of porn work. While legal definitions of employment status shift within various policy contexts, they share a common focus on the extent to which the "employer" controls the terms by which work tasks are performed.[42] California's "Borello" test, for example, establishes that the primary measure of employment status is the worker's "right to control the manner and means of accomplishing the desired result."[43] Borello includes six factors intended to be considered together; no one criterion establishes employment status. We turn now to a discussion of a 2014 case in which Borello's application was central.

Legal Definitions of Employment Status: The Treasure Island Media Case

In response to a 2009 complaint filed by the Aids Healthcare Foundation, California's Occupational Health and Safety Administration (Cal/ OSHA) investigated gay bareback production studio Treasure Island Media and found the studio noncompliant with regulations

requiring barrier methods to reduce the risk of workplace transmission of blood borne pathogens.[44] In 2014, a Cal/ OSHA judge ruled against Treasure Island's appeal of the charges, finding that porn performers are employees and not, as the company claimed, independent contractors. Performers' employee status matters to OSHA as a matter of jurisdiction—OSHA regulations apply only to the employer-employee relationship. The *employer* is required to "furnish to each of his *employees* employment and a place of employment which are free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to his employees [emphasis added],"[45] and this includes exposure to blood borne pathogens such as HIV.[46]

I will take in turn the Borello criteria at stake here, noting the areas in which the conditions of the productions reviewed in the case run parallel to and, sometimes, diverge from those of the majority of other porn workplaces. The first concerns the extent to which the employer exerts control over the production process, and the *Treasure Island* ruling noted a number of characteristics of the porn workplace that demonstrate such control. These include that Treasure Island screened applicants and hired only those who were willing to perform particular sex acts, hired filming crews and provided the workspace (filming location), directed and scheduled shoots, and edited and produced the final product.[47] These conditions are nearly ubiquitous in professionally produced porn. One exception is some queer and feminist productions, which do not screen according to the sex acts performers are willing to perform, but do meet the other conditions this criterion elaborates. Next, citing a second Borello criterion that measures workers' ability to share financial profit and loss associated with final products, the court found similarly that performers, paid by the day and

with no other claims to income, meet the standards of employment.[48] This too is standard in paid porn performance.

A third Borello criterion concerns who supplies work equipment. Workers who supply their own equipment are more likely to be contractors. Here too the court found that performers are employees. Treasure Island asked performers to supply their own toys and costumes but provided work equipment such as cameras and lights, the court found. Further, the court noted that the work equipment criterion must be understood in light of the reality that employers may require workers to supply work equipment "in order to bolster the argument that they are independent contractors, as well as to save costs."[49] Here, again, the conditions of work the court cites are representative of those in the vast majority of porn production—producers typically provide some work equipment and require performers to provide others.

Though not relevant to the *Treasure Island* case—the company allows HIV-positive performers to work and does not require that performers test before work—testing costs are another area in which this criterion is meaningful more broadly. Producers require that performers pay for STI tests not only to externalize this cost, but out of a concern that paying for tests would make production companies look like employers. An employer's attorney explained that proposed legislation requiring that producers pay for tests was an attempt to "defeat the Borello test by requiring employers—production companies—to pay" for work supplies.

> They know that if you're litigating a case and a production company says, 'oh yes, I had to pay for testing for these people,' that's gonna weigh heavily because you're basically paying for them to do the work for you. I think who pays for testing is a big factor and I think that [with] that bill [AB 1576], they're trying to work it backwards, to say, 'okay, if we want these people to be absolutely employees, how are we going

> to do it?' … They're trying to create scenarios where if you were doing an analysis from Borello, you'd be an employee.[50]

One problem with laws governing employment status is that, in circular fashion, externalizing costs onto workers now (whether or not this conforms to prevailing legal norms) can help to ensure that managers can legally externalize costs onto workers later. The attorney's linguistic slip—she calls producers "employers" even while explaining to me that they are not, and then corrects herself—also speaks to the extent to which employment status is in flux, even for those who have much at stake.

A fourth Borello criterion concerns whether the service rendered requires "special skill." "Special skill" can help establish a worker as an independent contractor. No doubt informed by the pervasive assumption that sex work is unskilled labor, the *Treasure Island* court found "no evidence" that the performance at hand required special skill.[51] Tellingly, the court demonstrates porn performance's lack of required skill by unfavorably comparing it to plumbing, bricklaying, and other "skilled" trades. Porn work's illegibility as a trade that likewise relies on a special skillset speaks to the law's broader failure to grasp the conditions of creative, immaterial and feminized labor.[52] The chapters that follow demonstrate the many ways in which porn performance absolutely requires skill.

In every area *except* discussions of employment status, managers were quick to represent workers as without talent or skill. Directors talked about their frustration with performers' poor acting skills frequently, for instance. "I know what they're capable of doing acting wise, they're not trained, usually," said one screenwriter/ director by way of explaining the importance of simple, easy to follow scripts.[53] But where employment status is concerned, managers have a stake in demonstrating that performers are skilled workers, since doing so can help to establish workers as independent contractors under Borello's standards.

Skill in this case makes one less entitled to workplace protections. When I asked the attorney above whether porn workers might be understood as "day employees"—a designation the Screen Actors Guild has made possible for Hollywood actors, who, like porn performers, have multiple employers—she responded, "I would contrast that a bit to adult film performances, [in] which generally, you're hired for the job, but you really bring your own niche and you *bring your own skills* to the set for a role play or improvisation, as opposed to something that's very scripted and directed." For management, performers are skilled when it counts.

Borello's fifth criterion concerns the permanency of the employment relationship, and here the court found varying degrees of permanency—some performers were exclusively contracted with the company, while others had shot several scenes, and still others had performed only once. This represents the norm elsewhere in porn production. In this case, the employer's testimony insisted that performers were free to work for other companies, but the court notes that sole employment is not a necessary quality of an employer-employee relationship.[54] In our interviews, workers and managers alike thought that working for multiple employers alone demonstrates that performers are independent contractors.

The reality that performers have many bosses was a favored response among management when I asked about costs employers typically bear, such as worker's compensation. I asked talent agent Chris Caine, "who covers treatment costs when performers contract curable STIs?" "How would you know where you got it? he responded, "why would the studio have to pay? You can't hold the studio responsible unless someone falls down and gets injured on set."[55] He is very likely right that, as the law now stands, it would be very difficult for workers to prove the origin of a curable STI in the ways required

to secure payment from employers. OSHA regulations provide for multiple employer liability in cases in which multiple parties control a single work environment, such as when a temp agency supplies workers to contracting firms.[56] A talent agent, director, and producer for a single production might fit under this rubric. Trickier is identifying a responsible employer when workers labor in discrete workspaces and under the direction of discrete managers.

The sixth Borello criterion is whether the services rendered are "an integral part of the employer's business." Here the court found that performers' work was the "key element" of the productions upon which the company derived its revenue.[57] Porn production remains integral to the operations of most large production companies. This may shift in coming years as companies, like workers, diversify revenue sources.

Finally, Treasure Island claimed that the copyright of the film in question and the reality that performers are not entitled to royalties meant that Borello should not apply in the porn context. Ironically, denying performers media rights in this case actually helped to establish employee status, since the *U.S. Copyright Act* (1976) gives such rights to artists, except in cases where "an *employer* is entitled to copyright ownership in works produced by its *employees* [emphasis added]." [58] The court found that the production company structured its model release form "as an employment contract" precisely so that performers would have no ownership rights over final scenes.[59] In so doing, the company undermined its claim that performers are independent contractors. These conditions too are standard in porn production.

The *Treasure Island* court's findings establish a strong precedent for understanding porn workers as employees. The features of the porn workplace the court addressed in its discussion of the Borello test are, with some exceptions, standard across porn genres. This

brings us to a discussion of the various ways in which the porn production process is organized. I review these with an eye for how they complicate the single employer relationship most labor law presumes.

Ways of Organizing the Production Process

Here I sketch three modes of organizing the porn production process. This is not meant to be exhaustive—possible arrangements are various and sundry and space does not permit a full exploration of every possible organizational form. What follows are descriptions of the most common forms as they emerged in my interviews and set visits. The first mode of organization, and the one in which lines of managerial control are clearest, involves cases in which a scene or film is directed, produced, and financed by the same person. Producer/ directors who work with distribution company Evil Angel offer one example of this arrangement. "They don't work with us on an employment basis. They submit movies and we distribute them and share in the revenue," explained then company manager Christian Mann. The company takes a distribution fee, he explained, while directors maintain exclusive ownership of the content. So long as they adhere to Evil Angel's "content guidelines" and "very basic production protocols," producer/ directors have control over the production process.[60] It would be relatively easy in this case to demonstrate that a single producer/ director is the responsible employer.

Similar cases involve producer/ directors who own small and mid-size production studios and distribute their content via various distributors or on personal websites. Producer/ director interviewees whose work is organized in this way have a great deal of creative and managerial control, but also suggest that market pressures can make that autonomy difficult to exercise. "One of the challenges that I've always had is that I'm independently financed,"

explained Lexington Steele. Comparing his situation to that of large companies who finance porn production through other facets of the business, he explained that financial decisions are much tighter in a self-financed business.

> For me, when I have to re-circulate my profits, I've got to apply those with surgical precision. That's a big difference. I cannot sustain the hit of a bad movie. If I put out a movie that I've spent $15-20k on, I've got to insure that the market is going to consume that in such a way that I can see that profitability.[61]

These pressures shape how management approaches decisions about creative risk taking and labor management, such as whether to allow condom use in scenes, produce scenes with racialized themes they know will sell, or cast performers who fall outside the industry's beauty norms.

Identifying lines of managerial control in the second mode of organization is murkier. Here a production company contracts a director to film a scene on their behalf, and either pays the director a fee on top of other production costs or a flat sum out of which the director takes her own fee as well as other production costs, such as performer and crew wages, set rentals, and the like. Such arrangements were the most common among the directors I interviewed. Here production companies have varying levels of artistic and managerial control. They may control the casting process or delegate this to directors, they may set the terms for which acts are to be performed or leave this to the director's discretion, and they generally determine occupational health standards (or lack thereof) which directors are then responsible for enforcing. Production companies typically maintain ownership rights in this model.

Lily Cade works as a contract director for a production company and starts with a budget of about $8,000 for a four scene film. She determines how the budget will be allocated and her director's fee is whatever is left over after the movie is made. "It's hard to

make that stretch," she told me, but "I have creative control. I'll sacrifice a lot for that."[62] This common arrangement puts significant pressure on directors to cut costs, and shapes how they approach managerial questions such as who pays STI testing costs. I asked Cade about this, wondering if, given that she also performs, she is more likely to cover such costs when in a managerial role. "I kind of have to go along with everyone else," she explained, "I'm not enough of a power player to be like, I'm gonna pay for tests! How? With what? I'm a contractor, I get a shitty budget and I have to try to make it into a movie." The vast majority of those I interviewed who hold management roles shared the sense that money is too tight and their own power position too tenuous to make any substantial changes in business practices, suggesting that this is not the group we should look to for voluntary industrial change.

Other contracted directors have far less creative control, taking direction from producers about who they will cast, what acts they will film, and often churning out scenes that follow a tested formula. Directors in this model often occupy many roles simultaneously, at once performing, operating camera equipment, and directing. Alex Linko, a performer/ director who films "point of view" (POV)[63] scenes, listed the many facets of his job: casting co-stars, handling their paperwork and payment, coordinating location and sometimes a makeup artist, operating camera and lighting equipment, providing scene direction, and, finally, performing. "Or, at least, my penis [is] performing," he clarified, gesturing to POV scenes' exclusion of male performers' bodies and faces.[64] The women he performs with are paid between $800 and $1,200, and his budget includes set rentals and agent and makeup artist fees where necessary. He is paid $700 for directing, operating camera equipment, and performing. He is a manager, but also a worker, and one who is making less than the people

he manages. This set up is not uncommon in POV and other gonzo scene production. As in Cade's situation, it puts significant pressure on Linko to minimize costs. For some performer/ directors, it also engenders the sense that managers are trod upon—worse off, in some ways, than the workers who are only performing.

Both above ways of organizing the porn production process also frequently involve talent agents. The ten-to-fifteen percent cuts and booking fees agents command are the bulk (if not the entirety) of their incomes. Performers' work could, then, be understood as "an integral part of the employer's business"[65] for agents as well as for directors and producers. To questions of control: agents execute scheduling, have some power over hiring and firing, and negotiate working conditions and pay. Control was indeed the central issue for performers when we spoke about agents. Workers noted a distinct trend in which performers increasingly seemed to "work for" agents rather than the other way around. "You are talent," noted Tanya Tate when discussing her frustration with this style of representation, "it's the agent's job to get you the jobs that you want. It's not their job to get every job and shove you in it regardless of whether you want to do it or not."[66] Wolf Hudson put it this way: "The agent is the boss, which should not be the case. It's the performer. 'I'm paying you to do me a service,' and somehow it gets turned around."[67] It is no surprise, then, that workers try to circumvent the agency system when they can. Trade shoots offer one way of doing so.

Trade shoots, the third mode of organizing the porn production process, involve the least clear lines of managerial control. Performers increasingly set up trade shoots as a way to protect their autonomy, reduce the costs associated with producing and owning their own material, and manufacture work opportunities in a shrinking industry. "A lot of people have gone to making their own content," Maxine Holloway told me, "there's been this really

amazing network of doing trade content… I feel like we've all had to reinvent the wheel."[68] Avoiding agents and making private agreements with other performers, workers either share media rights or produce more than one scene and alternate who will have these rights. They can then use scenes as paid content for website members, sell them on direct to consumer sites such as Clips4Sale and Customs4U, or use more traditional distribution channels such as DVD. This affords workers a unique opportunity to "seize the means of production," and workers can make significant income from the scenes. Typically, no wages are exchanged, and scheduling is informal and bypasses agents. Performers doing trade shoots usually abide by record keeping requirements strictly; some are less observant of internal policies that govern STI testing and external permitting and labor regulations.

The informal nature of trade scenes puts them in liminal social and legal spaces. Performers often do trade scenes with friends or lovers, and it can feel invasive to ask for standardized test results, for example. Testing is also incredibly expensive, and some performers do not feel comfortable asking colleagues to pay for a test in order to film an unpaid scene. One performer explained her choice to ask about STI status verbally before trade shoots rather than to require a formal test:

> [With] my partners on my site, I don't require testing. I will only do scenes with the people I'd sleep with in real life, and I'm not going to test them in real life. I don't want to make them pay for it. I'm being really open about this. I think a lot of people would chase me with a pitchfork.[69]

The informality of trade shoots also means that if something does go wrong, performers absorb the costs not because they're afraid of management retaliation, but because there is no boss. Kimora Klein described her experience of getting injured on a trade set. She wasn't insured at the time, so self medicated with ice and anti-inflammatories. "This was for content trade," she explained, "[so] I wouldn't be able to do anything anyway. *These people are*

working with me, they're not working under me or above me, they're like my business partners."[70] Workplace compensation policy designed to fit long-term single employer relationships leaves workers in Klein's situation unprotected.

New policy, even that designed explicitly for the porn context, also misunderstands how "right to control" works in the porn context. A public conversation between performer and APAC board member Ela Darling and the Aids Healthcare Foundation's (AHF) Michael Weinstein illustrates regulators and outside advocates' tone deafness on this issue. In a public comment at an AHF press conference regarding its advocacy for the California Safer Sex in the Adult Film Industry Act, Darling addressed the Act's proposed "whistleblower" clause, which allows private citizens to sue "producers" who violate the act by failing to use condoms during filming.

> "How would you address adult performers who are afraid of the provision that allows private citizens to sue us for the work that we do?" she asked, speaking to workers' concerns that the provision would make workers who produce their own material vulnerable to civil suit and provide stalkers access to performers.
> "The right to sue is not [to sue] the performers, it's [to sue] the producer," replied Weinstein.
> "But performers create their own content," Darling replied.
> Weinstein's response was flatly, "they're subject to the same laws as anybody else."[71]

Weinstein's response—and the fact that Darling had to explain that "producer" could mean something other than a porn kingpin making money by putting other people at risk—speaks to regulators' troubling conviction that they need not understand the particulars of porn work in order to regulate it.

The collectivist nature of trade and self-produced shoots makes them a poor fit for labor laws structured around one person "working under or above" another. This is significant—the law is designed to make the mode of organizing work that allows workers greatest control and financial stake also the one in which they are least protected. The

opportunities that trade shoots present make this compromise worthwhile for most performers, but alternative policies could give workers choices other than autonomy *or* basic protections.

Limitations of Employment Law

If porn workers and their bosses are not exactly sure whether performers are employees or independent contractors, this is due in part to the reality that the state is also not sure. Courts determine employment status on a case-by-case basis, and then generally only when workers sue to contest their misclassification as independent contractors. In porn as in other contingent work, the heavy costs of employer retaliation make such civil action rare. Whether the employee classification established in the *Treasure Island* case will apply outside California or in matters about which agencies other than OSHA have jurisdiction remains to be seen. A worker can be an employee for the purposes of OSHA jurisdiction, and not according to federal wage and hour standards, for example. This lack of consistency is among the major weakness of employment law.

The law is limited too because it was designed to fit a kind of workplace that is less and less a reality for American workers and has never been for porn and other workers whose working arrangements fall outside the full-time, long-term employer model broadly understood as "Fordist." Porn workers should be understood as part of the one third of US workers made precarious—economically and under the law—by contingent employment relationships.[72] Here we can look to feminist legal scholars, who suggest that labor law modeled on Fordist modes of employment is ill-equipped to address the challenges facing workers in today's flexible, service-based and creative economies.[73] The state knows this, and the problems of the "new economy" are not in fact all that new. In 1994 the US

Department of Labor issued a report calling for a "modernized, simplified, and standardized" legal definition of employment in light of the reality that "more workers now find themselves in contingent employment relationships than ever before."[74] A modernized definition of employment has not been forthcoming, though, and employers continue to evade their responsibilities to workers by exploiting the law's loopholes.

Among the areas most in need of modernization is employment law's assumption of a single responsible employer.[75] Even if we can say that performers are employees, this does not answer the equally relevant question, "Who's the boss?" For porn and other contingent workers, such clear lines of managerial control may not exist. Rather, the porn work process can be organized in a number of ways, all of which have different implications for labor law. Directors *or* producers may control hiring and firing, set workplace policy, and be responsible for payment. The same person might perform these various roles. As such, to the question about his perspective on laws requiring management to pay for STI tests, one performer/ director asked, "[would] I pay myself?"[76]

A more nuanced set of policies could help to make sense of who the responsible employer is in the many cases in which there are multiple controlling parties who may or may not represent the same core business. Policy scholar David Weil's analysis of "fissured workplaces" is useful here. In the "fissured workplace," employers outsource job tasks to various contractors, thereby evading responsibility for labor law compliance, the provision of employment benefits, and other entitlements afforded to workers with a single direct employer.[77] Porn production companies who contract with outside directors are one example of such an arrangement. The policy changes that would address this situation in mainstream fissured workplaces could also help identify controlling employer(s) in porn work.

But even were more sophisticated means of identifying a controlling employer of a particular film or scene available, this does not address workers' vulnerabilities to work-related health problems that build over time and are difficult to trace. But these ailments—yeast and bacterial infections, side effects of performance-enhancing medication, issues associated with over-use of antibiotics, and cumulative muscle strain—were the ones workers encountered most persistently.

I spoke to Danny Wylde just weeks after he learned that prolonged off-label use of injectable erectile aids was putting him at risk for long-term complications and possible dependency. He was "pretty much in panic mode," he explained, "this has been an overnight change."[78] With "no substantial savings" and faced with an early and unplanned for retirement, Wylde found no support from employers or the state. The years of cumulative injury he experienced could not be traced back to a single employer, and erectile aid use, while an open secret in the industry, is not exactly a spoken job requirement. This is in spite of the fact that it is hardly a stretch to imagine that workers might resort to chemical assistance in meeting the demand to as Christopher Daniels put it, "stay hard… in an awkward position for 8 hours."[79] We need more than a single clearly identifiable employer to address this lacuna.

A single controlling employer is more illusive still when we consider that porn workers do the bulk of their labor off set and off the clock. Preparing for work carries its own health risks. Frequent douching can disrupt the vagina's delicate bacterial environment, making workers vulnerable to bacterial vaginosis and yeast infections and pelvic inflammatory disease. The fasting many workers undertake before anal sex scenes can create short-term fatigue and long-term metabolic issues. And long-term steroid can impact brain

function and make one more susceptible to cancer. Worker's compensation policy includes no provisions for ailments of this sort.

As chapter four's discussion of porn's gig economy shows, porn workers rely on alternative income streams in order to subsidize porn's decreasing returns. Escorting, erotic dance, and web camming, among others, sustain the porn workforce, and this further muddies lines of managerial control and responsibility. This is particularly true where occupational health is concerned, since these various income streams can present similar and compounding risks to workers' health. An infection might have originated on set, in a private session with an escorting client, or at a strip club with lax sanitation. Management was quick to point this out. A director in the audience of a panel on industry health protocols volunteered, to much audience support, that he would not be paying to test for and treat STIs "talent probably caught escorting anyway."[80] Likewise, in our interviews, managers and even some performers expressed doubt that it would be "fair" for management to cover the costs of injuries and infections of unknown origin.

I am less interested in fairness towards management than in how this murkiness exposes yet another limitation of outdated policy. What *is* work related injury in the gig economies of late capitalism? Injuries that take place (at once or over time) while workers prepare for work, as they undertake the self-making and marketing activities that make them hirable, or as they pursue alternative income streams that subsidize the work are, to be sure, related to work. But they are not, at least by prevailing standards, "work related." Indeed, like so much employment regulation, OSHA determines employer responsibility based on measures of place and payment that do not fit today's flexible economies. Work related injuries are those that take place "in the work environment," and for pay.[81] While OSHA

standards include provisions for work done at home, the burden of showing that this is paid work sets up yet another circular arrangement in which an employer's choice to treat an activity as non-work places it outside the purview of employment protections.

Finally, labor law governing employment status is limited because it forces workers to make trade offs that many find untenable. As their origin stories show, workers often come to porn work to escape the inflexibility and lack of autonomy of straight jobs, many of which do come with employee status. They *want* to "be their own boss," and many associate independent contractor status with the kinds of freedom they hoped to find in porn work. Lorelei Lee had recently transitioned to employee status in her job as an in house director for Kink.com when we spoke.

> I have health insurance and a matching 401K. I've never had benefits before. Oh my god, I get sick days now, vacation Time! It's great… But I also loved be an independent contractor. I loved having the total freedom, being like 'if I want to, I can never come back. I have no responsibility to you… I made my own schedule.[82]

Before porn, when she worked an office job for an hourly wage, she added, "I didn't want to be an employee, *I hated being an employee*."

Other performers resist employee status because the economic security it confers does not match the potential gains associated with independence. As industry attorney Karen Tynan explained, "quite a few of the very successful models and more business savvy models are their own incorp. [corporation] or LLC. 'Employee' is defined as a person in the California code, so when someone is an incorp., they can't be an employee."[83] Tynan offered this as evidence that performers are not employees, but it also gestures to another reason workers may prefer to maintain their (mis)classification as independent contractors. Incorporation has tax and liability benefits for workers, and may make it easier for workers to make legal claims for their creative property such as in pursuing damages from online piracy.

When corporations have more rights than individuals,[84] it makes sense that individual workers would seek the liberties associated with corporate status. But, as Tynan suggests, the rights of corporate personhood are most accessible to performers who already have the greatest access to social and economic capital. Most workers must settle for non-corporate personhood, but even then the sacrifice of autonomy they associate with employee status may make independent contractor status more attractive.

That autonomy comes at the cost of precariousness is as much the fault of flawed labor law as it is opportunistic producers. It is not self-evident that workers should have to choose between security and autonomy; policy decisions institutionalize this. Thus, labor scholars Eileen Boris and Noah Zatz explore the legal-historical process by which access to basic benefits and coverage under labor law have been tethered to official employment status.[85] Consider, for instance, the National Labor Relations Act, and the choice to protect the right to organize only for formal employees.[86] When I asked performer Chelsea Poe her perspective on mandatory condom legislation, she explained that mandatory condom use is less an issue in queer porn because most sets already use protective barriers, but she still opposes a legal mandate. "I feel like what should really be done is not having us be private contractors so we can actually unionize like any other sort of athletic entertainment. I feel like having porn performers unionize and have their own testing is the best possible way, not having a government mandate."[87] Interviewees prefer the self-determination that comes with collective organizing over top-down policy from the state. It is not the case, then, that most porn workers oppose all government intervention, but rather that they oppose government intervention to address vulnerabilities that were created by poorly designed policy in the first place.

Interviewees who had worked in other legal regimes made this clear. A French performer/ director critiqued the tethering of healthcare to employment status when I asked who should cover the costs of work related injury: "I don't think it has to be a work related injury. If you sprain an ankle on set or whatever. You should have health insurance in America. It doesn't matter where it happens."[88] English performer/ director Tanya Tate described her difficulty in registering for private health insurance in the US. Independent contractors like her are on their own in finding insurance and paying high premiums, she explained, whereas the few who have employment contracts with large production studios get quality, affordable care. In England, she explained, "we have free healthcare."[89] At the time of our interviews, interviewees had not benefited significantly from the Affordable Care Act (2010).

To the question of who should cover STI testing costs, performer Tara Holiday, originally from Chile, ventured, "Maybe the state should pay. It's for the state's convenience that we're all [testing]."[90] Maybe the state *should* pay, and maybe one shouldn't have to sprain one's ankle at work (and then prove that that work is a certain kind of state-recognized employment) in order to receive care. Porn workers' interventions on these questions re-center the responsibilities of the state, and question the tethering of essential protections to employment status. This deeper critique is, arguably, more compelling than an effort to fit porn work into the ill-formed employment categories on offer. And yet, for a politics of the meantime, performers' employment status has major impacts on their wellbeing.[91] Holding that tension, we close—or, rather, leave necessarily open—this discussion of employment policy and turn to workers' perspectives on state regulation.

Sex Work and the State

Perspectives on Regulation

"There's no way that another person can tell two grown adults what to do with our bodies," performer/ director/ producer Prince Yahshua told me when I asked his perspective on California's ongoing efforts to institute stricter health regulations on porn sets.[92] To the same question, Chelsea Poe noted that she felt queer porn's standard of leaving discussions about protection and testing up to performers was "the only fair way." "You're addressing it like it's actual sex," she explained, "it's just between you and your partner, I don't see why other people need to get involved."[93] Meanwhile, the FSC advocates for the "constitutionally grounded rights of adults to make their own decisions regarding private sexual behavior."[94] Among interviewees representing various class positions and sectors of the industry, the idea that porn is sex and therefore an inappropriate site for state regulation prevails.[95] Employers' interest in representing paid sex as "private" is rather uncomplicated—*public* employment relationships are subject to regulations that get in the way of profit. It is also unexceptional in the history of policy and pushback across a range of intimate labors.[96] I have argued elsewhere and maintain here that once an exchange enters the realm of commerce, it is no longer "private sexual behavior."[97] This is not to say, however, that such exchanges are a good fit with existing regulation. Again, workers in a range of jobs tell us that few are well served by policy as it now stands. Imagining something better requires first a deeper look at what is not working now.

This section approaches that task first with an overview of two dominant perspectives on state regulation among those who view porn and other sex work as forms of labor. Because this dissertation begins from the premise that porn workers deserve protection as *workers,* I do not devote space to abolitionist policy programs—those geared toward the

criminalization of sex work industries rather than the improvement of working conditions within them. Legal scholar Adrienne Davis proposes "erotic assimilationism" and "erotic exceptionalism" as rubrics for understanding the two distinct regulatory perspectives proffered by sex work advocates.[98] While in contrast to sex work abolitionists, both groups nominally support a sex work as work approach and oppose criminalization, their perspectives on the proper role of the regulatory state differ markedly. Exceptionalists suggest "that the sexual nature of their work trumps its role as labor" and maintain that sex work's status as sexual should make it exempt from state oversight.[99] Assimilationists argue that sex work is work like any other, and suggest that sex markets should be regulated just as other workplaces are. In so doing, they ignore the vast complexity of labor law and fail to ask "*which* type of labor sex work would most likely be assimilated to."[100] The protections they imagine formal work status would confer are almost exclusively reserved for employees, and the status of sex workers as employees versus independent contractors remains hotly contested.[101] In reducing workplace policy to a monolith, assimilationists ignore "how much of standard workplace law will almost certainly fail sex workers."[102]

I argue that this is not only because of the problems of fit Davis elaborates—sex work in some ways looks different from the jobs workplace policy was designed to regulation—but also because policy makes workers precarious in a range of workplaces and employment relationships. The vulnerabilities porn workers describe are part of a larger story of all workers' precarity. The past decade has seen a coordinated and highly successful effort by employer-friendly lawmakers and management in various industries to gut the workers compensation system.[103] Employment discrimination remains rampant widespread half a century after the passage of the Civil Rights Act.[104] And regulators have failed to address the

wage stagnation that puts millions at risk of economic insecurity.[105] If standard workplace law will fail sex workers, this is in no small part due to the reality that it fails all workers.

Like the assimilationists in Davis' framework, I maintain that sex work is *work,* and I am critical of exceptionalism. But work means something different in the framework I offer here, and I maintain that policy can ameliorate but not erase the problems of waged work under capitalism. I also depart from an assimilationist stance in listening to workers when they talk about their distrust of the capacity of the state to effectively address concerns. Against exceptionalism, I contend that the state will likely fail not (only) because sex work is sexual, but (also) because it is work. Assimilating sex work to other forms of labor would reduce sex workers' vulnerabilities to the violence and stigma they find as workers on the margins, but does not address the myriad ways in which workplace policy fails workers in all manner of jobs.

I have elsewhere argued that an exceptionalist stance reflects ultimately conservative labor politics, ones that play to employers' interests by shielding workplace relations under the banner of "privacy."[106] Here I follow sex work scholar Julia O'Connell Davidson, who is both skeptical of the state's capacity to be a reliable ally in any struggle against exploitation *and* critical of a hard anti-regulation approach—"the sort of minimal regulation on industry that even Milton Freidman would approve."[107]

Exceptionalism dominates policy perspectives among interviewees representing a range of class positions. Such an approach is evident, for example, when workers rally alongside management to resist occupational health regulation on privacy grounds.[108] The aim of the following section is to unpack this dynamic, taking workers' privacy claims

seriously while also critiquing the alliances such claims make possible and the voices they exclude.

Privacy

Privacy is an unsteady foundation for politics. Feminist activists and scholars have long pointed to the failures of privacy rhetoric, for example, for poor women of color in their struggles for welfare[109] and reproductive[110] justice. Privacy is, they show, a luxury denied to those who rely on various forms of state support. Queer theorists, meanwhile, suggest that recourse to privacy betrays certain commitments to normativity and liberal citizenship—"there is nothing more public than privacy," remind Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner.[111] In theorizing intimate labor, Eileen Boris and Rhacel Salazar Parreñas suggest that recourse to privacy supports the idea that the intimacy of such work should shield it from regulation.[112] Workers in intimate fields have struggled against the notion that work in private spaces, or work that involves exchanges coded as private, should escape state oversight. In the sex work context, "the demand for sexual privacy reinforces class differences by presuming people have access to private space," reminds Melinda Chateauvert.[113] The terrains of exclusion such a frame brings to prostitution policy are clear—workers who labor on the street (who are more likely to be poor and women of color) find themselves excluded from the protections of privacy.

These are the legacies scholars and activists evoke when they make privacy claims. The exceptionalism upon which privacy rhetoric rests also undermines a sex work as work frame: "if its sexual nature exempts it from regulation, then people will certainly call it sex, and not work, and fairly so," cautions Davis.[114] For reasons ranging from marketing to avoiding labor law, calling porn "sex," and not "work" is exactly what employers want. But,

particularly where regulations pertaining to sexual health are concerned, workers are also wary of outside regulation. Understanding the context in which porn policy is enacted and contested requires taking workers' privacy claims seriously. Even with its troubled attachments (and perhaps in part because of them—they are what makes 'privacy' stick),[115] workers find privacy a useful rhetoric in opposing state intervention. First, though, some context to explain workers' overwhelming sense that the state is no ally.

"We know that we're pariahs, we know we're a cockroach," veteran porn performer Nina Ha®tley explained to me when I asked about her perspective on mandatory condom use legislation. She went on:

> We're pornographers, *we know that you hate us*. We understand that people don't care about us. So the idea [of] 'the poor performers we're protecting,' it goes back to the idea that no healthy sane person would choose sex work, so therefore [we] must be in need of protection.[116]

The workers, managers, and crew I interviewed disagreed on a lot—best practices in production, fair wages, ideal health protocols, and etcetera—but one point on which they overwhelmingly agreed is that policy makers, voters, and activists coming from outside the industry "don't care about us." Informed by porn's history as a target of obscenity prosecution and sex work's history as a target for anti-vice campaigns, this perspective understands subsequent regulations targeting the porn industry as encroachments onto individual freedoms dressed up in various guises. Health policy is the primary area in which this dynamic plays out, so first, an overview of existing and proposed policy.

Occupational Health Policy

From 2012-2016, when this research took place, the industry was relatively self-policed. Most straight productions and some gay and trans ones require performers to pass a sexually transmitted infection (STI) panel within two weeks of working.[117] As a rule,

performers pay for their own $155 tests. On a voluntary basis, some production companies cover a portion of testing costs. Most gay and trans and a minority of straight productions use condoms in vaginal and anal sex scenes. A small number of mostly queer, feminist, and BDSM companies leave health protocols up to performers.

The straight mainstream industry insists that its policy of relying on testing in lieu of barrier methods works. From the perspective of HIV prevention, this is true—there have been no documented on set transmissions since 2004.[118] Most straight performers said they were comfortable with testing as the primary method of HIV prevention. They were more concerned about less severe but also more frequent bacterial and yeast infections, and yet regulatory attention has focused almost exclusively on HIV. This is symptomatic of the bigger problem with regulation—at no point have policymakers taken care to ask workers what would make their jobs safer. "We're the most important part of this discussion, and yet we're routinely shut out," noted Madeline Marlowe.[119]

Indeed, an outside organization, not workers, is behind these lobbying efforts. Arguing that the industry's internal policies set a poor example for viewers and fail to fully protect workers, the Aids Healthcare Foundation (AHF) has lobbied for a series of reforms.[120] Mandatory condom use for vaginal and anal intercourse and porn-specific licensing are at the core of these proposals. Some also include provisions for mandatory and employer-funded testing and vaccinations, barrier methods for oral sex and facial ejaculation, and employer record keeping of performers' medical records. Proposals have also included worrying provisions for enforcement, such as a "whistleblower" clause that would allow private citizens to sue anyone—including workers—involved with the production of scenes that fall outside regulatory guidelines.[121] Weinstein and the AHF have undertaken this fight

without input from current performers and against their repeated claims that proposed regulation would make them less safe. The organization's crucial mistake, as Richie Calhoun put it, was that "they tried to represent performers without getting with performers."[122]

The AHF also used targeted litigation to shut down Adult Industry Medical (AIM), which until 2010 operated as a performer run and centralized testing facility located in the San Fernando Valley. Performers experienced AIM's closure as a tremendous loss, and overwhelmingly say they feel less safe in its absence. For Nina Ha®tley, AHF's narrative of "caring about the health of workers is a crock of lies… they deliberately and with intent set out to destroy our very well functioning community-based health service."[123] In view of this history, even workers who are dissatisfied with the industry's status quo insist that they do not want AHF's help in changing it. Workers' organizing energy has focused more heavily on resisting proposed regulation than on lobbying for worker-led reforms.

There is no clear consensus among workers about ideal protective measures. Some workers prefer to work with condoms, while others find that condoms make it harder or more dangerous to do their jobs. This diversity of perspectives is, indeed, why workers' collective call has been for performer choice, rather than a broad mandate. Some receptive partners suggest that condom use during long sex scenes can cause chafing and fissures that are painful and, counterproductively, make them more vulnerable to STI infection. Thus, in response to the common argument that condoms on set are no different from any other required protective gear (such as hard hats for construction workers), Lorelei Lee countered, "construction workers usually aren't injured by their protective gear."[124] "Condoms break," some workers insist, and this is particularly worrying when one considers that chafing could increase the risk of infection should an exposure occur.

Other workers would be unable to work at all were condoms required. Some insertive partners suggest that condoms make an already difficult job that much harder: "once I put a condom on, no boner," explained Alex Linko, "I wouldn't have a job."[125] Venus Lux explained that filming with condoms can be particularly difficult for transwomen who are taking hormones, which on its own can make it difficult to maintain an erection: "imagine someone who already has difficulties getting hard, and then you smack a condom on her and expect her to be hard enough."[126] Performers with latex allergies say they are unable to perform with condoms unless alternative materials are available on set.

For others, the risks and frustrations associated with on-set condom use paled in comparison to the risks of STI exposure. "I'd rather get a rash than a disease," said Tiffany Fox. For Herschel Savage, "personally, you've got to be crazy not to use condoms. I agree it's not as pleasurable."[127] Gay and queer performers were most likely to prefer condoms. Recalling LGBTQ communities' struggles against quarantine mentality, they were also critical of the straight industry's reliance on testing in lieu of protection. Juba Kalamka saw a homophobic "fear mongering" in the straight industry's line that condoms don't work: "I see that as specious."[128] He wanted to make clear that he was not suggesting that performers who make this argument are not entitled their perspective. "But," he added, "it's a positionality that's not supported by the actual evidence. It's called lube, really basically." "There are a lot of ways to talk about it that aren't 'condoms are bad on a porn set,'" said Conner Habib. "Implicitly homophobic," the straight industry's anti-condom argument disregards that gay sets have been successfully using condoms, not quarantine, for decades.[129]

If there is no consensus about condom use and testing protocols on set, workers do agree that proposed regulations could mean the end of their jobs or, at the very least, make

them less safe. With dental dams and condoms for oral sex, unwieldy record keeping requirements, and expensive testing and vaccine provisions, it seems clear to workers that management will ignore proposed regulation. Indeed, managers already do ignore regulation. Condoms are currently mandatory according to Cal/ OSHA rules, and yet the vast majority of straight producers refuse to use them. With the exception of a small number of Cal/ OSHA citations resulting in fines, this has gone without coordinated response from the state. Porn is not alone in this sense. As one studio owner at an industry legal panel jokingly reminded the audience, OSHA cannot keep track of construction workers falling off roves. Surely, they don't have time to deal with porn. To an audience member's question of whether she was concerned about a just-announced OSHA case involving the production company she represents, an attorney on the panel replied, "OSHA is overworked and just wants this off their desk. They just want to hear 'this lovely girl is a corporation and not an employee.'"[130]

The Risks of Regulation

Bosses warn and workers worry that the industry will wither or go underground if more stringent regulations are imposed and enforced. Producers insist that they cannot sell content with condoms, let alone the other barrier methods some proposed regulations require. "Those movies don't sell… Obviously you have to look out for the performers, but you also have to consider your bottom line," explained director/ screenwriter Jacky St. James and a chorus of others.[131] Contracted directors too could lose their jobs if producers became unhappy with sluggish sales they attribute to decisions such as allowing condom use on set. The bottom line and management's own job security, not performers' autonomous sexual decision making, is the primary concern among managers who oppose regulation. Workers know this. "The producers don't give a shit about my health," Fox told me, "they care about

the content they can produce and how much money they can make off it."[132] "Studios have the perception (which may or may not be true) that porn in which condoms are used is not profitable," Habib explained. "That is their main motivation in fighting state proposals."[133]

But workers see their fates as tied to employers.' They also care about the content producers can produce and how much money they can make from it. Hard hit by online piracy, workers and managers together are worried about a fragile industry. "Studios can barely afford to keep their lights on," said performer Christopher Daniels, "and people want bareback content. You have to care about models' health and safety, but you're also trying to sell a product."[134] Workers too weigh health concerns with economic ones. "We welcome safety standards," explained performer Ela Darling during public comment at a 2015 Cal/ OSHA meeting, "we only ask that you hear our voices and implement sensible regulations that allow us to continue to do our jobs."[135]

Alongside the concern that stricter regulation will put porn out of business is the worry that it will drive production underground. Like other kinds of sex work, workers argue, condomless porn will have a market regardless of whether it is legal to produce. Aware of the tremendous risks of working in underground economies, workers say they would rather an imperfect but legal workplace than what they feel would be in effect a criminalized one. "The actual effect of condom mandates is to drive the industry underground," explained Lorelei Lee, a performer/ director and central voice in organizing efforts against proposed regulations.[136]

> We simply are not in the same situation that a construction worker is in. Our industry is agile and was illegal until the '80s, not that long ago. And many people who work in porn have anti-authoritarian attitudes. *The actual effect is to create fewer worker protections*, to push people underground. Women who are performing in scenes then have less accountability for their employers because they're scared to report if something happens on set. If something happens worse than getting an STI. We know

> this from other avenues of sex work. People are much less likely to report an incident if they're working illegally. That to me is horrifying.

Many workers share this concern—the porn community is populated by outlaws who will not abide regulation, they say, so to impose it is to invite an even more precarious underground economy. In view of porn bosses' dogged insistence on flouting other labor laws, this prediction could very well bear out. The proposed steep civil penalties for *anyone* involved in the production of scenes that fall outside regulations would almost certainly have the effect of making it harder for workers to report abuse. With their labor not exactly criminalized, but subject to civil penalty, porn workers could well find themselves working in a defacto underground economy. As Lee suggests, we know from other forms of sex work that this dramatically increases the likelihood of worker abuse.

But opponents have argued that regulation would push porn underground even when proposals did not put workers at risk of civil action.[137] In this spirit, "legalize porn" is a popular rallying cry among workers and managers lobbying against *all* proposed regulation. The bigger argument is that producers will not follow any external safety regulation, so workers are best served by the relative non-interference the industry has come to expect. There is something rather dangerous about this line, proposing as it does that the best response to employers breaking the law is to not have laws. It also obscures the reality that workers are already wary of reporting on-set labor abuses, not because they fear civil penalties for working on the set, but because they fear blacklisting and (rightfully) anticipate that the state will not take sex workers' concerns seriously. That workers are overwhelmingly more wary of state than producer power is a testament to the state's well-deserved reputation as a perpetrator of violence against sex workers. It also speaks to management's cynical attempts to manufacture a sense of solidarity that evaporates when not expedient.

Workers understand that management's interests are different from their own. This is complicated, but not negated, by the large numbers of workers who entertain hybrid class interests as worker/ managers. Performer Danny Wylde called for policy makers to "work with people in the industry, and particularly the people whose lives are at stake, *which is not producers*."[138] Policymakers attempting to meet this challenge will have to enter the conversation with a sophisticated understanding of porn's complex class positions. They will also need to take seriously that workers *and* managers are concerned with how regulation will impact their livelihoods. Wylde went on:

> If you save everyone's lives medically but they can't make a living, it doesn't matter. And if you're out there making money to do something where you're very likely for this bad thing to happen to you medically, that also sucks! … How can people do this for a living legally and still be okay in the end? I don't think that's really been addressed by anyone.[139]

Indeed, policymakers and lobbyists appear to have given little thought to how proposed regulation will impact workers' economic wellbeing.

This fits within the context of the long history of policy approaches to sex work that treat workers as vectors of disease and are designed to eradicate rather than improve the labor conditions in commercial sex industries. Forced HIV and STI testing, barring those who have tested positive from work, and requiring sex workers to disclose their legal names—all aspects of proposed legislation for the porn industry—are familiar legal tactics in sex work regulation.[140] While overwhelmingly understood as superior to explicit criminalization,[141] such regulation has had overwhelmingly negative consequences for workers, grounded as it is in what sociologist Yasmina Katsulis describes as the treatment of sex workers as "a particular type of people, people whose private lives are made public, whose bodies are subject to regulation, and who are important only insofar as they present a threat to the public

health."[142] Porn workers are acutely aware of this history. Thus, for Stoya, "being described as a 'public health risk' feels a lot like being called a dirty whore."[143] This is the context in which porn workers have come to the conclusion that, as Ha®tley put it, "people don't care about us."

In our discussion of ways to organize against unwanted regulation, Queer performer Chelsea Poe explained that performers' appeals to personal rights would hold little sway with legislators. "The people protesting and saying 'you're taking my rights away'" don't understand that "the legislators don't give a fuck. You're a sex worker, you're a whore, they don't care."[144] Indeed, the policy process surrounding mandatory condom and related legislation has only compounded this perception, as AHF and its allies trade explicitly in narratives of porn performers as a "particular type of people." Juba Kalamka described LA County condom mandate Measure B's public campaign as "[taking] advantage of the general public's perception of the porn industry."

> People were invested in it in a politic of respectability, public morality kind of way that didn't have shit to do with the welfare of the performers. It was about fear and people being able to keep these freaky coodies in the San Fernando Valley and out of my house or my bedroom.[145]

Indeed, Measure B's text betrays its commitments, beginning with a discussion of the AIDS epidemic and stating that its intent is to "minimize the spread of sexually transmitted infections resulting from the production of adult films… which have caused a negative impact on public health and the quality of life of citizens living in Los Angeles."[146] This, in spite of the reality that no evidence of such an impact exists. More to the point, though, is that even if a negative impact on public health were demonstrated, it does not go without saying that these concerns trump workers' claims to safety and medical privacy.

For LBGTQ workers, and particularly gay, bisexual, and queer men and transwomen and their allies, the stakes of discussions about medical privacy are particularly high. Gay performer and APAC board member Conner Habib described the gay porn community's "deeper education surrounding HIV infection and its accompanying cultural stigma" which shapes gay porn's standard practice of "deciding to treat everyone on set as if they were positive" and so foregoing mandatory testing in favor of condom use.[147] Privacy takes on particular meaning in this context, and informs concerns among this part of the porn worker community that, as Habib put it, "[mandatory condom and testing legislation] AB 1576 will find HIV-positive people, expose their status to others, and ban them completely from any sexual representation or sex work."[148]

Barring HIV-positive people from work and outing current performers who test positive are standard practice for the mainstream porn industry. Thus, Christopher Daniels described what happened when gay production studio Men.com, a subsidiary of Manwin, which also operates straight productions, instituted mandatory HIV testing: "They lost like half their models…

These performers who were doing new scenes every week went to no scenes, so everyone knew. That sucked. It was really unfair to them that their status was sort of revealed that way."[149] This is where privacy rhetoric runs up against itself. A major argument from the industry in opposing outside regulation is, after all, that state intervention is redundant, addressing a problem internal policy has already solved. The Free Speech Coalition (FSC) has worked to rally online support with the Twitter hashtag #performertestingworks, and described proponents of outside regulation as "fomenting a crisis where none exists."[150] If

"its not broken, why fix it?" said talent agent and FSC board member Mark Schechter, "the industry itself is very self-policed and regulated."[151]

Likewise, for performer/ director/ producer Prince Yahshua,

> Law has no place in what we do, it's not needed at all… People on the outside, we call 'civilians.' The last four scares we had have nothing to do with the people in the industry. There were people on the outside trying to come in, but because of our lovely testing centers, they catch it before they ever get to people like me… We have got to be the cleanest people on the planet. [152]

The HIV scares to which Yahshua refers did involve current performers, but the origin of their HIV infections remains contested. More relevant for our purposes here, though, is how the argument that internal policies are strict enough works against claims that self-regulation values individual choice or privacy.

Self-regulation is not characterized by laudable sex positivity either. Alongside looming discourses painting those impacted by STI infection and particularly HIV as "dirty" and the straight mainstream's tested population as "clean" is the suggestion that STI risk is a matter of personal responsibility. Diane Duke, then CEO of the FSC, put it this way:

> Out of 4000 people (the number of performers in the industry's testing database), somebody is going to come up [HIV] positive. I think performers are more careful with what they do with their bodies for the most part. But out of 4000, you're going to get some who aren't. And those are the ones who are going to come to the top. If they haven't protected themselves in their personal lives, we're gonna catch it. And they're gonna get treatment a lot sooner. That part is good. But then they are without work, because you can't work in the industry.

Duke deftly reconfigures the dynamics of workplace risk—careless personal behavior, not production practices, puts individuals at risk. It follows that the task of industry policy is to weed out external risk, rather than to prevent internal harm.

Speech

The industry argues that external policy is not only redundant, but a violation of filmmakers' rights to free speech. The vast majority of performers I interviewed viewed mandatory condom use legislation as an encroachment onto privacy and free speech. Performer Raylene described LA County's 2012 Measure B this way:

> Porn really is an easy business to attack… I don't think that anybody has the right to come in when the issue of porn has already been in court and things have already been legalized and we've already been through this, you know? I don't think anybody has the right to come in and tell us what we can or can't do unless they are a performer that actually engages in the activity that we engage in.[153]

The conviction that "the issue of porn has already been in court… things have already been legalized" was common among interviewees, and speaks to the general perception that various attempts at regulating porn are really about one thing—restricting pornographers' constitutionally protected speech.

Interviewees mobilize *free speech* in support of workplace practices extending beyond occupational health. If the market is the culprit for porn's racial inequality in management's narratives, speech is what protects them from oversight. The sanctity of a scene cast with the bodies the producer/ director envisions emerges in these narratives as obviously outweighing workers' rights to equal access to work opportunity and pay.

I resist the suggestion that any and all working conditions and management behavior are protectable speech. Such a collapse of final products and the process of making them permits management any number of abuses and leaves workers intensely vulnerable. Here is one of few instances in which I am disposed to favorably quote Catherine MacKinnon, who reminded us, "before the pornography became the pornographer's speech, it was somebody's life."[154] But, as I have argued elsewhere, the perspectives of actual workers whose lives are impacted by porn production are nowhere in evidence in MacKinnon's analysis or those

aligned with it.[155] Indeed, such analyses are focused on questions of representation that have, as Raylene suggests, already been decided in court and, for the most part, in support of pornography as protected speech.[156]

But unfettered free speech might be at odds with the interests of workers and the state; a more rigorous conversation about porn's regulation requires thinking more deeply about what that conflict means. Director/ producer/ former performer Nica Noelle, who at the time of our interview had recently gone on record as having transitioned to all-condom production,[157] spoke to the inevitable conflicts between producer speech and workplace regulation:

> First Amendment violations will definitely occur if the government forces adult filmmakers to use condoms during sex scenes without any provisions or exceptions… That said, there are also health and safety concerns, and workers' rights issues that need to be addressed. My freedom of speech doesn't override your right to a safe work environment.[158]

Noelle is in the minority in holding this perspective. Most managers did not acknowledge any conflict between their rights and workers,' or when they did, indicated that free speech *does* override workers' rights to a safe work environment.

If we should be wary of the argument that all management practices are protectable as artistic speech, it is also true that porn's critics focus on matters of speech. Porn's critics are quick to point to the industry's racism, but confine their critiques exclusively to the realm of representation. Mireille Miller-Young's work is unique in centering on workers, rather than viewers and *culture* at large, as the primary victims of racism in porn.[159] Likewise, those lobbying for regulations under the guise of protecting workers, non-consenting children viewers or participants, or even the amorphous "public" betray their interests in curtailing speech as such. Michael Weinstein makes clear, that *"as important"* as performers' health is

the example that porn as speech sets for viewers: "The fact that most straight porn is made without condoms sends a horrible message that the only kind of sex that is hot is unsafe," he writes.[160] While so many of porn's working conditions are unexceptional, this one—lobbyists arguing (and successfully so) for workplace regulation that workers say will make them less safe in order to send a message to consumers—is rather unique to sex work.

Whose Speech?

We return now to the 2014 decision in which Cal/OSHA's Appeals Board found that performers contracted by production studio Treasure Island Media were indeed employees. Here, I focus on the context in which the case came to be. As we have seen, the factors that led the court to decide that porn workers are employees are nearly ubiquitous in the industry. The circumstances surrounding the case were, however, exceptional. This configuration—policy that might otherwise be a boon to workers delivered through the most stigmatizing means possible—speaks further to the broader context of the industry's troubled relationship with the state.

A gay studio that specializes in "bareback" (condom-less) sex, relies on serosorting rather than HIV testing, and produces material that fetishizes HIV and HIV transmission, Treasure Island is something of a pariah in the porn business community.[161] Treasure Island's renegade status no doubt contributed to its being subject to OSHA's scrutiny. Indeed, it was AHF, not an aggrieved worker, who filed suit against the company. In a turn that is now familiar, AHF's Michael Weinstein appears to have targeted Treasure Island because of disagreements about the sexual practices its films *represent*, rather than because of any complaint on the part of workers. Referring to the theme of the film about which he lodged an OSHA complaint—1,000 "loads" of semen delivered via turkey baster—Weinstein

declared, "exposing a person to a thousand loads of cum is not a trifle. In what bizarre world does Treasure Island think this is normal?"[162] The normal, not workers' wellbeing, is at stake here.

Treasure Island owner Paul Mason described the decision to take the OSHA case to trial as "a matter of principle, not money… This was an attack on our rights, and the rights of our models."[163] Likewise, legal scholar Chris Ashford frames the charges as part of broader "attempts to erase the bareback image," adding, "that law should seek to silence such a depiction arguably underlines the radical and transgressive power of bareback."[164] Both things are true—the biopolitical state's policing of transgressive sexual expression *is* part of the story of the Treasure Island case. I am sympathetic to this argument, as well as to the broader body of queer theory insisting that bareback can be a political act that radically refuses "good queer" status, homonormativity, and rights-seeking discourses.[165] I have devoted this space to the Treasure Island case in part because it heightens the stakes of the conversation at hand. There is, I think, a stronger case for protecting the artistic speech and sexual expression of gay bareback production than there is for protecting straight producers' right to show images of condom free sex. I make this claim not by way of suggesting that we should only fight for the sorts of speech we endorse, but rather to highlight that the straight sex management says they want to protect—overwhelmingly white, able bodied, made respectable by the troubling language of a "clean test," and generally quite square—has never been subject to policing in the ways non-normative sexuality has.

The straight porn industry evokes respectability in their criticism of mandatory condom legislation. Critics' favored example to demonstrate the absurdity of mandatory condom legislation is, after all, that the law would force a straight married couple to use

condoms. "A monogamous married couple that wanted to film themselves having sex is technically required to get a permit… if Measure B passes, they'll also be required to use condoms… How can you have a law that reaches so far into the marital bedroom?" asked industry attorney Michael Fattorosi in a refrain I encountered again and again in interviews and at trade events.[166] The ostensibly extreme example of a married couple reduced to condom use trades in porn exceptionalism. Making the most normative coupling possible the poster case for free sexual speech also betrays the straight porn industry's investments in conservative sexual politics and the sense of entitlement to sexual privacy that, as we have seen, is a privilege functionally reserved for the straight, able bodied, white, middle class.

These investments are also evident in the industry's oft-repeated dig at Assemblyman Isadore Hall, who regularly sponsors the mandatory condom legislation Weinstein puts forward. At the time when he sponsored AB 1576, Hall represented California's 64th District, which encompasses Compton and Watts and has a predominately poor and working class Black and Latino population. Referencing a recent article addressing high rates of HIV among gay men of color in the area, industry media attempted to discredit Hall with the sensational headline "Rampant HIV 'killing young black men' in AB 1576 sponsor Isadore Hall's backyard."[167] Others picked up this thread and ran with it. In the wake of AB 1576's passage, industry attorney Marc Randazza prodded, "Isadore Hall would do much better to require condoms in his district, which has a much higher rate of STDs than the adult entertainment industry."[168]

The statement does a number of things: it makes a claim of whiteness and class status about the porn production community: the industry, it suggests, is outside the 64th District, and the 64th District has no place in the industry; having erased working class performers of

color, it suggests that white middle-class performers have a greater claim to sexual privacy than the District's residents; and finally, it purposefully blurs the boundary between commercial and non-commercial sex (a bill like Hall's could not require condoms in private sex because it is an *occupational* health measure). Taken together, the image of the monogamously married straight couple absurdly having to use a condom and the implication that Hall should focus on policing the sexuality of the gay men of color in his "own backyard" betray the straight industry's indignance at legislators' category error, rather than any real critique of state surveillance.

This is all to say that the straight porn industry cannot lay claim to the same political questions the Treasure Island case evokes in gay porn. Condom-less sex means something different in these contexts. But even if bareback as it manifests in the Treasure Island case is a kind of political speech worth protecting, the "bareback *image,*" as Ashford puts it, is not all that is at stake here. The other part of the story concerns the workers who produce such images. And there is little evidence, despite Treasure Island owner Paul Mason's claim to the contrary, that this or any other production company is particularly concerned with violations of performers' rights.

The industry's self-policing is deeply flawed, relying on conservative (and, perhaps ironically, sex negative) ideas about risk and trading in sloppy conflations of market and non-market sex. But it does not follow that external regulation will be less so. The fact remains that neither approach has involved substantial input from workers, either during the policymaking process or as policies are enacted on the set shop floor.

Choice

In spite of management's oft-repeated support for "performer choice," workers reported that having the actual autonomy to choose protection methods was rare. Tiffany Fox described telling a producer "I want to wear a condom, I don't feel safe working," to which he responded, "you should pick another profession, then. We'll find someone else that will shoot without it."[169] Likewise, performer/ director Justin Linko explained that he cannot work for companies that do require condoms because he is unable to perform while using them: "I could not do the job I do if I was required to wear a condom."[170] Production companies that use condoms in scenes typically require them; those that do not typically require that performers forgo them. In sectors of the industry that use STI testing, getting hired requires abiding by industry testing protocols. One cannot choose not to test, or what happens to their medical records. Notable exceptions are queer and feminist productions, and productions managed by a small number of mainstream, gay, and kink performer-directors who, depending on the production company they work with at a given time, sometimes take performer choice more seriously. But on most sets and for most workers, one submits to policies they had no part in designing if they want work. This is what choice means in practice.

Diane Duke summed this up quite well when I asked the group's stance on companies such as Wicked Pictures that require condoms on set. The FSC has led campaigns against state-mandated condom use, arguing, among other things, that condoms can actually make on-set sex less safe, and I wanted to know how this narrative shaped relationships with companies that require them. "We have no problem with that—condom optional. If directors and producers want to do that, absolutely, go for it! We're not anti-condom. We believe it

should be the choice. And we believe that the performers should have that choice."[171]

Likewise, talent agent Mark Schechter explained that his perspective on on-set condom is

> Pro-choice in the respect that if a performer or a company chooses to work with a level of protection such as a condom, we support that here, I support that personally. Likewise, if a production company or a performer chooses to participate without that level of barrier protection, I support that as well.[172]

On a more public scale, managers and their representatives in the FSC have made a concerted effort to conflate their choice with performers' and present opposition to legislation as, first and foremost, a question of performer rights. The FSC's publicity materials stress the need for "performer" input and cite "wide opposition from performers," tactically avoiding that the FSC's express purpose, as a trade organization, is to push for *producer* input and, in this case, represent wide opposition from *producers.*[173] "MISGUIDED CON-dumb regs will ONLY HURT PERFORMERS," warned the FSC of proposed Cal/OSHA regulations, again asking us to forget that they represent management, not workers.[174]

Management's commitment to their own freedom to choose reaches beyond on set barrier methods to a spectrum of workplace practices. When I asked him who he thought should cover testing costs, performer/ director/ producer Lexington Steele explained, "porno performers are independent contractors who work for a number of people, if I want to voluntarily pay for your test, then okay, but by no means should it be obligatory."[175] Management's right to choose shapes approaches to worker's compensation too, even in cases in which it is obvious that the infection or injury originated on a particular set. When an errant penis pump chipped Lorelei Lee's tooth on set, there were no established channels through which she could seek care. Instead, her agent had to negotiate with the director. In the end, the director was "willing to pay for it, but I had to go to his dentist," Lee explained. Also at the mercy of management's free choice were the performers infected with HIV on a

1998 set Herschel Savage described. One of ten men performing in a gang bang, Savage agreed only if he could be "the first one up." He would later discover that both women performers had been infected with HIV that day. To my question of whether there was any system in place to ensure that they received treatment, he replied, "they may have gotten something, but it was out of the kindness of people's hearts."[176] This is what management choice means in practice.

One cannot vigorously support managerial *and* performer choice. Management and workers are sometimes the same people, but internal and external policies can either support performer self-determination *or* empower management to determine workplace practices. Many workers recognize that their autonomy is in direct conflict with management's power to set the terms of a scene. What they want, they say, is freedom from *both* state and employer incursion. As Habib put it, "I've long been an advocate for performer, rather than studio, choice when it comes to *any and all* forms of protection."[177] Studios will be poor "allies in resistance against state control of our bodies. They have different motivations than us, as well as a much narrower perspective."[178] That narrowed perspective is grounded in profit motive. Stoya explained, "I think the FSC is very good at what they they're supposed to do, which is protect producers' interests and defend adult content under the 1st Amendment. And they need to keep their fingers out of performers' business."[179]

Workers suggest that the regulation they do want is that which protects their autonomy. Stoya explained that she "believe[s] in performer choice," and ventured that there are concrete shifts in policy that could help to make that choice meaningful.[180] Regulation that would make sexual health practices "*actually* a performer's choice" would allow workers "to report to a regulatory body," if, for instance, they were denied work after

requesting a condom in a scene.[181] Lorelei Lee explained, "if they passed a law that producers and directors have to have condoms on set available and that performers have the right to choose whether or not to use one, that would be a very helpful law. I think it would be a situation in which performers could then be empowered, if they're on a set and are denied a condom, or if they feel like they're being hired around, they can complain and not be working illegally."[182] This is the kind of outside regulation workers say would support their wellbeing.

But in spite of a coordinated party line that "we [the industry] are not against regulation," there is no evidence that the *industry* would support regulations that protect workers' autonomous decision making.[183] The "we" here is slippery, and while workers and managers have come together in apparent consensus when resisting proposed regulation, it is not at all clear that that same solidarity would apply if performers advocated for policies that would redistribute power from management to workers. After a major 2016 victory in which workers and managers successfully lobbied against poorly designed Cal/OSHA regulations, workers suggested that the next step would be to design new policy that supports their ability to choose the protective methods they use.[184] Will management show up for the party?

Conclusion

What such policy would look like is an open question, and the policymaking process will be complicated by the burdens of outdated labor policy and the state's continued failures to consider sex worker perspectives when designing the policies that impact their lives. The way forward is muddied too by the realities of work under capitalism. No regulatory apparatus can fully protect workers' freedom of choice when one must work to live and "if you don't want to do it, they'll find someone who will."[185] Only a radical refusal of these

terms will make choice meaningful in the fullest sense. There are, however, concrete policy changes that can support workers' wellbeing in the meantime. The central question remains: "How can people do this for a living legally and still be okay in the end?"[186] I close this chapter offering some preliminary answers.

How could occupational health policy be designed in ways that support workers' autonomy? Beyond the problem of management's likely noncooperation, such policy would have to accommodate for the diversity in performer preferences for testing practices and barrier method use, since all but solo scenes involve at least two performers. A centralized casting system could ensure that performers were paired according to their preferred safer sex methods. But questions remain. At its best, occupational health policy has been grounded in a commitment to workers' collective control; workers' nonconsensus about preferred methods would require a focus instead on individual choice making.[187] A danger of individual choice could be that producers hold even more fervently to notions of performers' personal responsibility for any work-related illness or injury: if workers are empowered to choose safer sex methods, will they still be entitled to compensation if their chosen method fails? Protecting workers' autonomy without bolstering neoliberal ideas of free choice would require a reconfiguration of the notion that workers are entitled to coverage only when an employer unilaterally controls the work process.

A reworking of labor law that provides basic protections regardless of the presence of a single controlling employer would go far in reducing workers' precarity. Workers should not have to choose between the autonomy and income generating possibilities of independent contractor status and the security afforded to workers who labor under a single employer. An alternative might be arranged in one of two ways. The first and perhaps most practicable

would be to establish a centralized, producer-funded system that provides healthcare, paid sick time, and retirement and unemployment benefits to workers. This process might be complicated by debates over status and responsibility. Should employers contribute based on the number of scenes produced, or profits garnered? What of small performer/ producer outfits and trade scenes? Would all performers be eligible, or would one have to work at a certain frequency in order to be entitled to benefits? Is it appropriate for more cautious producers to shoulder the burden of costs produced by those whose productions involve more risk to workers? Does it make sense to force producers to cover the costs of ailments that might have originated in satellite industries? Such conversations would do doubt feature worries about "fairness" that rarely enter the conversation now, when the costs of doing business are displaced onto workers.

The second alternative would involve a wholesale untethering of protections to employment status. It was a concerted decision to make the benefits of the welfare state contingent on employment status, not a historical inevitability. This configuration is not inexorable. Universal healthcare and a robust state-run system for the provision of unemployment, retirement, and paid sick time benefits would address a whole litany of the problems I have outlined in this chapter. These problematics also describe freelance workplaces outside of porn, and scholars and policymakers are well served to pay attention to porn workers' policy critiques. Detaching basic benefits and protections from a single employer makes sense in an economy increasingly dominated by contingent and flexible work arrangements. It would also make a tangible difference for the workers across industries and employment models who are made vulnerable by weakening workplace protections and a crumbling welfare state. "Maybe the state should pay.

"Porn feels different than it looks"[1]: Porn Work On Set

Laughing about the mundane scene as performers waited poolside at a San Fernando Valley set house, Dick Chibbles said, "most people think behind the set there's big orgies going on. We're all sitting around."[2] Gesturing to a performer reclined with his cell phone, Chibbles added, "he's probably messaging with his kid." Pointing to two others chatting near the catering table, he added, "they're talking about cars." We had all been told to arrive at 10 a.m. and filming would not begin until that afternoon. Devlyn Red, his co-star that day, joked that I should title this dissertation "hurry up and wait."[3] This sordid tableau describes a typical porn set—monotonous, often boring, and with a lot of lag time. Like most jobs.

When fans tell Conner Habib they "love [his] work," he thinks,

> What do you mean you love my work? You masturbated watching me last night, why don't you say that. Because you don't love that I spent nine hours and balanced myself on a motorcycle with five people, shining lights down on me, that's not the part that you like. You don't even think of that part.[4]

This chapter focuses on *that* part. "Porn feels different than it looks."[5] Taking as a point of departure veteran porn performer Nina Ha®tley's rejoinder to those who would attempt to read pornography's labor practices through its final products, this chapter turns to the set to explore the work of porn production. The chapter follows a standard production timeline. I focus on the set shop floor, but begin with a sketch of the various labors of self-making performers undertake long before they arrive at *work.* Next, I turn to the paperwork performers fill out upon coming to set, connecting this to the policy and consent practices that precede filming. I then address labor-management interactions on set, understanding interactions with management as one of the many registers on which workers do the emotional labor of porn. The chapter then turns to a discussion of work hours, and we find

that workers identify unpredictable hours and long waiting periods before scenes as among the most trying aspects of the job. The work of waiting is one of the many aspects of porn work that gets lost when one looks for labor only in finished scenes.

I then turn to the work of filming the porn scene itself, focusing on emotional and physical labor in turn. At the same time, I suggest that porn work teaches us that these labors cannot be regarded as distinct—workers describe the emotional work of making physical performance possible. Here I examine the occupational health risks of porn work, deconstructing along the way conventional approaches to risk in sexual labor. After scenes close, performers are paid. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how rates are structured.

Getting Ready

Becoming and Remaining Employable

Most porn work takes place off set and off the clock. While this chapter focuses on the porn set, I also argue that the gym, the home, the salon, and the health clinic are workspaces for performers. In understanding workspaces and tasks in this way, I draw from the Marxist feminist tradition of understanding the reproduction of labor as itself a form of work.[6] These labors are gendered but not gender specific and workers of all genders reproduce themselves and others *as workers.* This is increasingly so to the extent that labor in the contemporary economy takes on the trappings of feminized reproductive work, transforming not only labor's defining character but also the relations of value extraction.[7] Capital, in expropriating "the commons"—resources inherent in and produced by communities, rather than on the shop floor—operates more as a parasite than as a manager in the conventional sense.[8] In porn work, the commons includes the labors of self-making and

marketing that workers undertake "for the privilege of being eligible to be hired," as Richie Calhoun put it.[9] Producers do not compensate performers for this reproductive work; instead, it requires a significant investment on workers' part. As in other labors, consumption is itself a crucial part of the work of porn.[10]

While there is more bodily diversity among performers than the stereotype of a "porn star" suggests, performers are expected to undertake extensive beauty work. The demands of pre-scene preparation vary by porn genre, gender, and race. Professional and pro-amateur straight, trans, and gay productions have the strictest beauty rules and require the most time and money of performers preparing for shoots. These gigs also tend to pay more than those in genres that require less intensive beauty work, such as queer and amateur porn. As queer performer/ director/ producer Courtney Trouble put it, performers may make less on queer sets, but

> You're not going to have to get waxed, you're not going to have to get fake tits to work for me, there's so much money you're not spending as an independent contractor to do queer or feminist porn. You don't even have to shave your legs. You can just show up and be hirable, with no investment.[11]

Performers in genres that require beauty work spend hours of unpaid time and hundreds of dollars each month readying themselves for film scenes. For those who get cast in many mainstream gigs each month, such costs are negligible in comparison to a month's wages. But most workers work much less frequently, and the costs of being hirable consume a huge portion of their wage. "I only shoot three times a year," explained Devlyn Red.

> If you're only shooting once, and you're only getting $400, and your test is $165, plus the gas to drive to LA, plus you've got to go get waxed, get your hair and nails done… I'm breaking even sometimes. Or I'm making $100 on something I'm spending 5 hours shooting.[12]

Some beauty work is explicitly required. Exclusive contracts with production companies include clauses indicating that the contract will be terminated if the performer's hair, weight, or other facets of her appearance change,[13] and directors give specific self-presentation instructions upon casting. Agents are straightforward in instructing new talent about what sells, and some recommend particular cosmetic procedures and provide an advance that helps workers cover their cost. In addition, hiring norms constitute their own implicit beauty rules. Performers in non-BBW genres are overwhelmingly thin, and most workers maintain high levels of fitness, requiring regular trips to the gym, restrictive dieting, and sometimes, cosmetic surgery. In order to be hired in trans porn, "We have to look pretty," explained Venus Lux, "*and* we have to do what it takes stay hard."[14] "Looking pretty" in prescribed ways means performing a kind of conventional femininity that requires a hormone regimen. At the same time, hormones make it more difficult to "stay hard," and so transwomen are caught in a double bind of preparatory labor that requires erectile aids to counter the effects of hormones.

The conventional femininity implicated in beauty work is in various ways defined by a systemic devaluation of blackness, a story Mireille Miller-Young charts in *A Taste for Brown Sugar*.[15] Beauty work for women of color thus means doing what one can to manipulate racialized markers. Kimora Klein, who identifies as half black and half Asian, explained that shifting her beauty work routine gives her access to different kinds of work: "With my hair curly and I look slightly more 'ethnic.' If I tan a little bit I do look like a light skinned black girl. But otherwise, if I put on the right eyeliner and straighten my hair, I look Asian. I can play to both."[16] "I mostly market myself as Asian," Klein added, gesturing to the higher pay and greater work opportunity available to women who can pass.

Beauty work's demands also shift over the course of one's work life, and changing one's look can be an important tool in prolonging one's career. New performers often work for a core list of productions when they start out in the business and struggle to find work once they have made the rounds. Performers will fade out, explained publicist Dominic Ace, "unless something is changed, maybe you got smaller boobs, bigger boobs, dyed your hair, gone postal and killed 20 people in the post office."[17] Christopher Daniels charted this trajectory for gay performers who hope for career longevity: "Start as a twink. A year later, start doing steroids and going to the gym, beef up, and be a big strong man."[18] In her early 30s—the precarious place in which a woman performer is "not a Teen, not yet a MILF"[19]—once hugely popular performer Dana DeArmond found herself without bookings.[20] Together with fellow performer Asa Akira, she launched "Project MILF," a crowd funding campaign organized to raise enough money for the breast implants she hoped would reinvigorate her career.

Twice-monthly STI and HIV testing totaling $340 per month is a major cost for performers who work in sectors of the industry in which it is required. As the previous chapter demonstrates, performers also shoulder the cost of treating STIs, sprained ankles, damaged tissue, and other work-related injuries. Because a flare up could mean the loss of work, it is common practice for impacted performers to take herpes medication every day as a preventative rather than, as intended, only when they experience symptoms. These costs contribute to the financial burdens of getting ready.

As with beauty work, we can understand occupational health maintenance as a site of expropriation in which capital displaces the costs of doing business onto workers and taxpayers. But, as I discuss in the previous chapter, this is one area in which many

performers—who often self-identify as independent contractors and feel personally responsible for coming to work with the "equipment necessary to execute the job"—would disagree with me.[21] It is possible, of course, that performers would undertake these activities and incur these costs regardless of their status as porn workers. This was a common refrain among management and some workers when I asked who covered the cost of services such as hair extensions and STI testing. While it is true that one might go to the gym, get tested, or maintain hair extensions "for themselves" rather than just for work, it remains true that producers extract value from these activities. They are therefore work. Because of the ways in which self and worker blur in the contemporary labor market, there are no neat distinctions to be made between putting effort into the self and reproducing oneself as a worker.[22] The absence of such distinctions is a compelling argument for the demand that capital absorb the costs of reproduction.

Pre-Scene Preparation

In addition to these quotidian labors of upkeep, porn work can require extensive pre-scene preparation. At the close of our interview, I asked Ana Foxxx if there was anything she wanted to add. "Man, we really do work hard," she said, "the day I realized how hard it is to work in the industry is the day I did my first anal scene. All the preparation I had to do… *The scene was fine, just the preparation for it*."[23] Preparing for work (fasting and using enemas, in this case) is, for Foxxx and others, often more labored than the scene itself. Such preparation also requires doing one's own research—Foxxx solicited advice from experienced performers as well as her gay cousin. This is the form on the job training for porn work most often takes, and performers are ready to share tricks of the trade with

newcomers. Performer groups confronting the industry's often isolating structure have for decades sought to centralize and standardize such information sharing.[24]

Workers often organize their schedules for the day before a scene in hopes of performing and looking their best on camera. These goals are sometimes in conflict with one another, as when performers fast or significantly restrict their food intake before a scene in order to appear most slim, but then must contend with fatigue and lack of stamina when filming a demanding scene. Performers also restrict activities in the days leading up to a scene to be sure that they do not have sunburn, scrapes, or other blemishes when they come to set. These are particularly acute concerns for workers who perform in BDSM scenes or participate in kink play in their off-screen lives, as a bruise or rope burn could result in being sent home from set with no pay. A rate for a scene in which these are likely should be understood to cover not only time on set, but also the subsequent days in which workers will be unable to accept gigs.

Performers often abstain from (paid and unpaid) sex and masturbation before a scene. For receptive partners, abstaining from sex before a shoot can mean less risk of coming to work already sore or with micro-fissures that might make them more susceptible to STIs. Men and transwomen who perform as insertive partners (or "tops") hope that abstaining from sex before a shoot will help stay erect and provide for a more explosive ejaculation shot. Being unable to maintain an erection, or "failing a shoot," as those in the industry sometimes call it, is a major source of stress. It can mean not only a lost day's wage and a tense day on set, but also serious reputational damage and subsequent loss of work.

For this reason, pre-scene preparation often involves purchasing (at performers' cost) medicines for erectile dysfunction. As one performer explained, "The pressure to have a hard

dick it gets in your head, it's really difficult… [Studios] need to provide that stuff… Most performers don't have health insurance. I do have good health insurance and they wouldn't pay for it. I think I got five vials, and each could do like one and a half hard ons… I think that cost me like $350, and then the needles. It's expensive."[25] It can also be difficult to procure such medicines as a young person with no medical indexes for erectile dysfunction. Large numbers of performers in the San Fernando Valley see the same doctor, whom many call the "candy man" because he is willing to prescribe off-label.

Unless a scene demands a highly specific costume such as those required for big-budget porn parodies and BDSM shoots, performers are expected to bring their own wardrobe, including lingerie. Wardrobe costs are higher for women, who are expected to come to set with various sets of expensive lingerie. "Once you shoot in something, you retire it and replace it," explained Charity Bangs, who estimated monthly wardrobe costs of upwards of $200.[26] "A dead give-a-way that you're in porn is buying 20 pairs of matching bras and panties at once," joked Chanel Preston.[27] Some performers manage this expense by selling lingerie they have worn in scenes to their fans at significant markup, what I describe in chapter four as the "underwear dialectic."

On Set, Off-scene

Paperwork

Porn sets may be company-owned locations, the director's home, or private residences rented out to directors for the day. Call times are usually around 10 a.m. for workers slated to perform in the first scene of the day. Performers begin by fill out paperwork, including modeling releases, independent contractor tax forms, and the mandated form proving that they are over 18 ("2257" in industry shorthand). The law requires

producers to maintain 2257 records that include performers' legal names and copies of their photo identifications, requirements which workers say present serious privacy concerns.[28] This is yet another instance of ostensibly protective regulation making workers more vulnerable.

In addition to confirming consent to engage in filmed sex, modeling releases often include language that releases producers of liability in the event of on-set injury or STI exposure. Releases may include a field asking performers whether they were injured at work. A producer's assistant explained that part of her job in preparing pre-scene paperwork was to check a box confirming "no, I was not injured" in advance of distributing the form to performers.[29] To my surprise, one producer-director offered to send me the entire file of legal documents he used on shoots. With the exception of a minority of production companies that maintain workers' compensation insurance, this "Model Release Agreement" is representative of those across the industry. The release included:

> I understand that I am an independent contractor, and as such, I understand that the benefits of workmen's compensation laws and pension plans do not apply to independent contractors. I further understand that I am responsible for my own income taxes as an independent contractor.[30]

That the director volunteered to give me this form suggests that he, like many performers, is unaware that some of its provisions are patently illegal.

Releases for companies that bar those who test positive for certain STIs from work often ask the performer to confirm that they are "in good health, with no known sexually transmitted diseases," and include additional language attesting to the performer's having undergone the industry's standard STI test panel and confirming that their partner has done the same.[31] Clauses attesting to performers' negative status give the impression of employers' non-responsibility for workplace health and safety. The few producers who are

aware of provisions in the Americans with Disabilities Act that prohibit employers from enquiring about workers' HIV status perceive that requiring performers to confirm each others' negative status excuses employers of liability. This has little formal legal standing but shapes workers' perceptions of the rights they have and how they exercise them.

Modeling releases ask performers to consent not only to the sex scene itself but also to any future content that may come from it. This means that a day's rate buys permanent rights to a performer's image and name (for which workers do not receive residuals or royalties) and that performers have no input in how scene content is manipulated or marketed. The release I have excerpted here, for instance, permits producers and any entities with which they may have licensing agreements to use scene content in any way they choose, "even though the finished product may be distorted, blurred, altered, or used in composite form, either intentionally or otherwise and subject [the performer] to scandal, ridicule, reproach, scorn or indignity."[32]

Producers want such control because they can garner greater profits by licensing content to others than from distributing scenes themselves. In manipulating scenes post-production, they can manufacture content performers would not sign onto knowingly. Workers want post-production in order to protect their brands and interest in being associated with projects they are proud of and which represent them respectfully. Performers of color find their images emblazoned with racial epithets on DVD covers, for instance, and have no recourse because of contract clauses giving producers total power over how an image is manipulated and marketed. Only one director—Bella Vendetta—described making a point of clearing post-production marketing decisions with performers who work for her. Vendetta, who works in the BDSM and "alt"[33] genres, is also a performer, and instituted this policy in

her own films after being frustrated by how scenes in which she performed were marketed. "I ended up in a movie called 'Whore of Darkness,'" she told me, "I never consented to being called a 'whore of darkness.'"[34]

Finally, pre-scene paperwork may include confirmations of performers' consent to engage in a sex scene that day. Written consent for those directors that require it varies. One checklist asks performers to check "yes" or "no" next to particular acts but reminds "those in blue are required."[35] In this instance, performers who want to shoot for the company should be willing to "'help' a male pee" and administer "hand jobs" but can specify what kind of insertive sex (vaginal, anal, or group) they are comfortable with.

Productions for types of content that appear to most blur boundaries of consent tend to be most mindful of such boundaries. Again, working conditions cannot be read through final products. BDSM company Kink.com has the strictest protocols in attaining explicit consent,[36] providing to performers extensive checklists that address the sex acts they are comfortable with, those they refuse, any areas of the body they prefer to be touched or not, and double-blind indications of whether workers wish to use a condom (such that directors do not have this information when casting a scene).[37] Workers' practical experiences of these policies vary. Some said that Kink is the best place to work precisely because of these safeguards, while others reported consent violations even with such policies in place and suggest that the performers who tend to be re-hired for scenes are those who have fewer restrictions.

Other employers assume that if a performer has agreed to do a particular scene, they are aware of the acts involved and consent to them implicitly. Most performers come to set knowing what to expect, including the type of scene in which they will perform (i.e. oral,

anal, or group). It is not cost effective for directors or agents to mislead workers about this, since both lose money when performers walk off a shoot or are unable or unwilling to complete a scene. Individual sex acts are explicitly monetized in porn's fee structure, and agents also lose commission if workers perform acts for which they are not paid. Performer Siri explained the conversation about consent she had with her agent:

> It wasn't explained explicitly, like, 'you have the right to say "no" to anything,' because he's an agent and his best interest is to profit as much as possible from the work he's getting me. The way that he framed the information was kind of like, 'if they book you for a boy girl scene at X amount of money and you get to set and they're like, 'hey, we're going to shoot you for this three way scene as well, that's not okay.' It wasn't framed like, 'if you don't feel comfortable, say 'no,'' it was like 'you're not being paid to do that extra work, so say 'no.''[38]

In this atmosphere, performers usually come to set with a general sense of the kind of sex they will be having that day. No interviewees reported being forced to perform sex acts they had initially refused. Indeed, with so many willing workers, there is little reason to cajole unwilling ones. "A lot of people don't understand," explained producer/ director Matt Frackas, "we do not need to seduce or convince or trick girls into this. There's always a supply."[39]

Where performers do experience pressure is in making themselves competitive amidst this seemingly endless supply of willing workers. One can say "no" to any number of acts, but in so doing they risk damaged reputations, strained relationships, and lost work. Director Chi Chi LaRue explained that gay performers used to choose the sex roles they would play; some preferred "topping," while others chose to "bottom." "Nowadays it's a lot of versatiles. Even the straight guys kind of have to be versatile."[40] "You don't have to be," he added, "no one *has* to do anything." Likewise, performer/ director jessica drake explained why she found outsiders' assumptions about consent in porn frustrating: "I definitely have made all of

my own choices in my career, and my life for that matter. It makes me mad when people imply anything else."[41] She added:

> Although, I think talent these days are a bit more malleable than we were back then. There certainly are more people in the industry now, and they do get really competitive. Sometimes I think people tend to loose their voice a little bit. At the end, we have the right to do what we want to do.

Workers and managers echoed this sentiment—performers are free to say 'no' to any scene they are not comfortable with. Whether they will find work is another question.

The process of consenting to any kind of work is necessarily mediated. Performer Maxine Holloway, who works in BDSM as well as queer, feminist, and mainstream productions, put it this way:

> Consent is the most explicit with lists and everything like that in BDSM porn… But I think a lot of responsibility is put on the performer to know their safe word, know their boundaries, to be in control. Which is important. But understanding the position of power that the director and the company have is important too; you're the one with the money, you hired this person, you have the ability to re-hire, give this person a good referral, or not.[42]

The dynamics of the wage relation shape what consent means in practice. This is not, of course, unique to porn or other sexual labor. If, as drake suggests, "talent these days are a bit more malleable than we were back then," this is true of all workers facing the pressures of an increasingly precarious labor market. The "silent compulsion of economic relations," as Marx described it, constrains (but does not foreclose) consent across labors.[43]

Workers make calculations about what they are willing to do based on material concerns, their own sexual desires, and work ethic-informed desires to "do a good job" and "be a team player." These factors are mutually constitutive—there are no neat distinctions to be made between what one (sex worker or otherwise) desires sexually and the host of material concerns that provide the backdrop on which desire comes to being. Work ethics are

also informed by sexual codes, such that being *authentically* up for most anything and *genuinely* aroused during scenes means not only that one is a good worker, but also a good sexual subject—open minded, adventurous, enthusiastic. I do not mean to suggest (as some have) that financial exchange negates consent in sex work. Such a proposition underestimates sex workers' ability to consent as it grossly over-states autonomous consent in other areas of work and (unpaid) sex. Instead, I want to make clear that in porn work, as elsewhere, "yes" and "no" lists broadly conceived are always questions of economy.

Labor-Management Relations on Set

As Maxine suggests, porn workers negotiate on-set activity in the context of the same power imbalances workers find throughout relations with management. They also exploit the power they do have. Porn workers are keenly aware of their precariousness as de-facto independent contractors who can be fired or simply not hired again, at will. "If you don't want to do it, they'll find someone who will" was a sentiment workers frequently shared when addressing the subject of negotiating rates, on-set activity, partners, and such with management.[44] But performers also understand that producers rely on performers' names and reputations for sales, and they calibrate the demands they feel comfortable making accordingly. Popular women performers in straight mainstream and men in gay productions have more power in this respect than men in straight productions, as it is almost exclusively their "brands" companies use to market product. Men in straight mainstream productions, on the other hand, are keenly aware of their own disposability—"I'm a piece of meat to them," Herschel Savage explained.[45]

Even those who can leverage the power of their brands in negotiations with management may find it difficult to do so in the particular context of being on set. Ela

Darling explained, "When you're on set, you're fucking, so anything that takes you out of the sexy mindset, when you have to be angry business girl, [means] I don't have the same chemistry. It's hard to go from that mindset to a scene."[46] Performers who find that this character shift makes their jobs harder often prefer to work with agents, who can, as Darling put it, "be the asshole for you." Such interactions are gendered on multiple levels. Women workers are called upon to perform normative femininity not only in front of the camera, but also behind the scenes in their interactions with management. Darling explained that having an agent (the vast majority of whom are men) say "no" for you can make it easier to sustain that performance. Men too are discouraged from complaining to management directly, but because this suggests that they do not know their place as disposable.

Hurry Up and Wait

Performers are increasingly expected to do their own hair and makeup and to own the necessary supplies, but production companies sometimes hire makeup artists. When producers do provide a hair and makeup artist on set, this is the first task for women when they come to set. Makeup artists make an average of $150 per performer and provide their own supplies. Some work exclusively in this position; it is also a popular income source for female performers who retire or find filming opportunities dwindling. The hair and makeup process has become one of the more visible aspects of the work of porn thanks to before and after photos showcasing the work of popular makeup artist Melissa Murphy that have gone viral on the internet. Though they are typically presented as a voyeuristic look at performers' "real" faces, these photos can also be read as an important entrée into the *process* of porn for outsiders who typically see only finished products. "Your porn is someone's job," they announce.

After makeup, performers wait; this is often the most tedious aspect of a porn workday. A performer's scene rate and a crewmember's day rate pays for however long it takes to get the job done, and this can be two or twenty hours. Though some directors, production companies, and types of scenes are known to take longer than others, performers generally have little indication before coming to work of how long their workday will be. This makes it difficult to schedule other paid work, classes, childcare, or, interviews (as I learned during one five hour wait at a sports bar in Reseda). Only one interviewee—Lorelei Lee, formerly an independently contracted performer and now employed as an in-house director-performer at Kink.com—works on a standard schedule. Kink.com shoots are ten-to-six, and Lorelei explained that, while "sometimes that feels like a much longer shoot, other times I'm like, 'it's 6 o'clock, I'm going home.' I never have to be on set until 2 am—that's nice. You can plan a life."[47] A common complaint among porn workers is that unpredictable schedules make it difficult to "plan a life," and this was a priority when I asked what they would change about their work.

Some of the contingencies that make workdays longer cannot be planned for. On sets I visited, scenes had to be halted because of audible fire sirens, broken camera equipment, smudged makeup, and lost erections. Most set locations are deep in the San Fernando Valley, a traffic-clogged thirty-to-sixty minute drive from Los Angeles, where many performers prefer to live. Other performers, especially those who live in agent-owned model houses in the Valley, rely on agents' drivers to get them to set. Los Angeles traffic is both unpredictable and relentless and it is not uncommon for workers to be late to set. Long hours on set are just as often attributable to directors' calculation that performers' time is simply less valuable than theirs. It is in the director's best interest to keep to the schedule, as they

pay hourly rates of around $150 for locations. But as profits and production budgets diminish, directors increasingly schedule multiple scenes in one day in order to save money on locations and extract as much labor as possible from crews. On sets with multiple scenes to be shot in a day, directors generally want everyone on set at the same time so that if the first scene's performers are late, they can shoot the second, and so on. Performers, then, must "hurry up and wait."[48]

Feature-length films with dialogue in addition to hardcore sex generally make for the longest shoots—fourteen-to-twenty hours days are standard. Produced by larger companies with bigger budgets, features typically pay slightly higher rates, but average hourly pay works out to be less here than in many sex-only films. Again, that performers are paid a flat fee incentivizes long days from management's perspective. One director explained that, on dialogue only days, performers command a $300-500 non-sex rate, but "if they have sex and dialogue on the same day, they're only getting the sex rate. If they have 12 scenes of dialogue and one sex scene. So we try and push as much dialogue into the sex day as possible so we don't have to pay multiple days, just to keep budget down."[49]

Features have much larger production budgets and aim for higher production quality, requiring multiple takes of both dialogue and sex scenes. This makes for longer but also more physically and emotionally demanding work as performers transition between getting into character and talking to the camera operator about lighting, for example. Dialogue calls upon a different skill set entirely. Some performers find this trying, while others find dialogue-driven scenes a welcome break from the daily grind. Charity Bangs performs in gonzo films and explained that she had no interest in doing dialogue-driven features "because I've heard how much time and effort is put into [them]."[50] Siri, a self-professed "theater geek,"

explained that she does not mind features' long hours and enjoys the opportunity to practice her craft.[51] Bad acting in porn is a running joke in the industry, and those who are comfortable acting are proud of it. Feature films offer significantly more status than gonzo ones—they are more aggressively advertised, and more likely to win recognition at the industry's annual award shows. Because these productions are higher-stakes, producers tend to cast the most popular performers, and so being in a feature film is itself a mark of success. As Jacky St. James, a screenwriter and director of romance[52] features, explained, "You can get more attention for a feature than just a sex role. It's grueling work and it's exhausting, but it can put you on the map. If [performers] think strategically, they get it."[53]

Because they aim to produce scenes that appear "less manufactured,"[54] pro-amateur[55] and queer and feminist productions require fewer re-takes. These sets are also less likely to use stacked scheduling than mainstream sex-only productions, as their lower budgets do not allow for shooting two or more scenes back-to-back. During my visit on a set for queer porn studio Crash Pad, performer call times were just before scenes began, there was very little waiting time, and the shoot consisted of filming performers' self-directed interaction from start to finish. In both pro-amateur and queer and feminist productions, makeup and set designs tend to be less elaborate or non-existent (again, because the aim is to produce something "real"). This too saves time.

Workers may desire not just better work (measured by management's demands, the work's social impact, or the pleasure they may experience in doing the work), but less of it.[56] In this way, some performers prefer productions that claim to offer neither quality content (either in terms of production values, as in features, or social value, as in queer and feminist porn) nor particularly cushy work environments. Here, gonzo films may make for an easier

and shorter workday. With only moderate production budgets, directors of such films tend to be less concerned with getting the scene exactly right. Unlike feature and activist-minded directors who take on projects in part because of their own interest in producing particular content, gonzo directors are often contracted by production companies to produce content over which they have little creative control. These directors tend to be more aware, then, that performers may want to get done and go home, and they are more interested in cooperation and efficiency than in workers performing authentic interest in a project. No gonzo directors told me they looked for workers who were passionate about the "concept," and, unlike directors in queer and feminist productions, they do not ask workers to volunteer their time for special projects or causes.

Efficiency and cooperation are straining in other ways. Directors intent on sticking to schedule can put an enormous amount of pressure on workers to perform. While sex-only films require less in terms of acting, time input, and the emotional work of convincing a director that you are thrilled to be part of their pet project, these films tend to compensate for light story lines with more intense sex scenes. Gonzo films are more likely to include multiple partners (as in "double penetration" and "gang bang" scenes), rougher sex, and activities that appeal to a particular market niche (such as internal ejaculation or oral sex involving gagging). These types of scenes pose generally greater health risk, involving sex that is more likely to cause the tissue fissures that make one more susceptible to fluid-borne infections. Such scenes are also less likely to include barrier methods.

When performers talk about certain scene types as more intense or harder on the body, they do not generally mean that they experience them as violent or even that they call for sex acts that performers would prefer to avoid. Indeed, many performers said they prefer

hardcore gonzo sex to the boring "vanilla" sex of romance features. As performer Chanel Preston put it when I asked what types of scenes she preferred to shoot,

> I like that I can switch it up. I like acting, I enjoy it, I'm not amazing at it but it's something different, so I enjoy features. I don't enjoy being on set until four a.m. But I like that I can go do that, and on another day I can go shoot something really crazy and wild and be out of the office in four hours. But then, I can't shoot that all the time because it's really hard on my body. So some months I am shooting a lot of that and some months I'm shooting a lot of features, and both of them get really tiring. One's physically draining, the other you're up all night.[57]

Deciding what genres to work in often means choosing between the more physically intense work of formulaic gonzo and the labors of authenticity and endurance. Most performers, like Preston, prefer to work in a variety of scenes, and they recognize distinct benefits associated with each. Director/performer Lily Cade explained, "my favorite sets are those where the people involved care about what they're doing, or, sets where it's just fast. Either one. If I'm going to be there all day, have it be for a reason. Or get me out in two hours."[58]

Preston is one of the top performers in the industry—of all interviewees, she worked most frequently (with eight-to-twenty shoots per month)—and so has the rare ability to pick and choose projects. Both she and Cade are white, and can therefore traverse the industry's genre boundaries more freely. Most performers take the jobs they are offered, and this is particularly true for black performers, who are usually confined to "urban" and "interracial" films, which are exclusively gonzo productions with plot lines that often begin and end with racialized themes. Ana Foxxx, one of the few black women who gets cast in feature and BDSM films, described being thrilled to be offered work that departed from the standard formulas in black-only and interracial gonzo films. In addition to offering the opportunity to do something different, these films offer higher pay and better working conditions overall. Ana explained,

> Even sometimes working for the same company, just under a different title, I've noticed a difference… Whenever I'm on set and it's a mixed demographic, they have everything on set: pizza, hair, makeup. And then I go and it's a black only title and you're looking around for water. There's a difference.[59]

These may seem like small details, but things such as having food and water on set, in addition to consent practices, conscientious scheduling, and pay, give performers a sense of being valued. These subtle but important markers of respect are, as in other workplaces, deeply racialized and classed.

To the extent that waiting is the hardest part, the strain is at least partially alleviated when workers have the on-set provisions they need. This is not simply a matter of feeling pampered, or, as directors sometimes suggested, being a "diva." Having food and water on set is also an important occupational health measure in a form of work that can be both physically exhausting (for performers and crew alike) and require fasting. Workers described low blood sugar, fainting, and dehydration as health concerns on set. On-set hours are longest for crewmembers, who arrive first and leave last. They too describe exhaustion and fatigue as significant concerns.[60] These cannot be accounted for in scholarly or policy approaches to porn and other sex work that reduce the labor to sex and occupational health risks to sexually transmitted infection.

But waiting on set is not only a source of strain. It can also be an important space of community building. Between scenes, performers share information ranging from what hair products they recommend to which companies and directors pay best. On one set, I overheard an experienced performer recommending to a newcomer that she switch talent agents, as the agent she had at the time was known for pressuring performers to take scenes below-rate. When the more junior performer explained that she was concerned her contract with the agent made it impossible to leave, the more senior explained that such contracts rarely hold

up in court and shared her attorney's contact information. On another set, one performer explained to another that the herbal erectile dysfunction medicine he was using had been causing adverse reactions in friends. Performers sometimes use waiting time on set to talk about wages, a subject to which I will return in a discussion of pay rates. These forms of community push against the popular perception that porn and other independently contracted work is viciously competitive. While competition, undercutting, and hostility among workers are features of the porn workplace, mutual assistance and solidarity are, too. In addition to more formal organizing, I understood these as forms of collective action.

Waiting can itself be exhausting, and workers may find themselves already drained by the time they are called to shoot a scene. As Nina Ha®tley put it,

> Watch the feature movies for the 2 a.m. scene, it's the one where people are clearly exhausted, they've been there all day. They stagger into the room, fall into the bed, you can tell… One two cowgirl, three four doggie, five six spooning, seven eight come on tits, can we go home now, please?[61]

Alongside waiting, monotony is an aspect of performers complain about most. This is also true for crew. One production assistant described his job as mostly populated by handing paperwork, setting up and taking down lights, and "a lot of rubbing baby oil on a girl's ass."[62] "It sounds fun the first couple times, but it gets really annoying, and you're not paid that much." As in other jobs, one of the most painful aspects of the porn workday is boredom. I now turn to a discussion of the work of sex scenes.

On Scene

The first part of the workday in a more formal sense (expressly included in a contract and following the signing of work agreements) is modeling for promotional stills. "Promo stills" include glamour-style solo shots of women performers in straight productions (directors often call these "pretty girl shots") and of both performers in gay male productions.

Next, performers shoot "sex stills," which generally include all performers who will act in the scene. Promo stills will be featured in advertisements for the scene and on DVD covers. In addition, directors often invite journalists (both from trade and mainstream outlets) to set, and they are free to take still photos as well. The modeling release performers sign for the scene applies here too, and performers are not paid extra for stills regardless of who takes them or where the photos end up. When I asked why this was, Dominic Ace explained, "Yes, in theory, the talent could bitch—'I don't want this dude taking pictures of me for free.' The producer would say, 'don't hire this bitch again. This guy is gonna get me $10k worth of promo for free, you're gonna get me another blonde girl.'"[63] As in other stages of the production process, workers must balance the desire to demand more with the knowledge of their own disposability.

Sex stills require performers to hold sex positions (including insertion) in order to allow camera operators to capture various angles. It is particularly difficult for receptive partners to be sufficiently lubricated and relaxed, and for insertive partners to maintain erections in such an atmosphere. This is hard work, and not, as one might imagine, the sexiest way to prepare for the hardcore sex that comes next.

It need not reinforce the conservative idea of a neat distinction between porn sex and "real" sex to point out that sex on set is labor-intensive in particular ways.[64] Partner choice, setting, audience, the particular types of sex directors ask for, the need to be constantly aware of the camera, and timing are the factors porn workers most often identify as making on-set sex labored. Performer/director/producer Prince Yahshua's description of teaching new performers what the job takes is instructive in this regard:

> We're not fucking at home, we're playing to the camera, everything we have to do is open. Some people can get it through the gate, [for] some it takes a few months... I've

> actually taught quite a few girls. They're like "Prince, I really need some help here." So [as himself] "okay, you can come do a scene for my website. Your training will be a full scene but it's pretty much me positioning you… 'No, sweetie, hold this, arch your back.'" This is an art form. When guys ask me to help them get into this, [I explain] "you're probably King Kong behind closed doors. But when you're on the stage, it's lights, camera, action, you've got 15-20 people in the room, it's a whole different demon. Not for the 15 minutes or less, but five hours you're keeping your dick hard with a million eyes on you with a girl that might be into you or is a diva." It's only 20% physical, the rest of it is mental.... You see the same 16 guys for a reason. If any heterosexual guy could do this, they'd be doing this. The lure is that every day it's a fresh woman, but you don't know what mood she's having. If she's saying, "uh, let's get this over with." Anything like that can break a guy mentally. You have to go with the blinders on.[65]

Porn workers develop finely tuned ways of dealing with these demands.

Emotion Work

In addition to managing connections with screen partners, sex on set requires performing in front of an audience of strangers, who may include bored-looking production assistants, journalists absorbed in the spectacle of their first porn set, and, at least on the sets I visited, graduate students nervously trying to stay out of the way. Directors tend to be rather cavalier about who they allow on set, assuming that performers will work in front of almost any audience. Various "visit a porn set" services go so far as to invite tour groups onto set, in which case a scene fee includes not only on-film sex but also a live sex show for a room full of spectators. Porn work may also require performing in front of people one knows all too well, such as a camera operator one had an unfriendly breakup with last year, or a reviewer who panned one's last film. Managing interactions with spectators as well as crewmembers is one of many registers on which workers do the emotional labor of porn.

The task of managing such interactions is magnified by the distinct tasks various on set players must attend to, and it can be hard to synchronize across performing, crew, and directing roles. "Sometimes during a shoot people forget that they're dealing with human

beings," said performer Kay Parker, "the crew get caught up in timing and technical issues."[66] Meanwhile, performers need

> Time to get back into that space, we're getting ready to be intimate. And there were a couple of times during a scene that I yelled 'cut.' I was at the point where I knew I could take liberties like that. And I said [pointing to herself] 'human being,' you guys need to take a moment. And they listened to me.

Likewise, Venus Lux described the routinized format of some sets as a source of strain between performers, crews, and directors.

> Sometimes it's like "come on, just get fucked. Spread those ass checks, let's do it." I'm like, "come on, really?" You sometimes feel like you're treated like a piece of meat. Especially when it comes to people who don't know you, they just want to make money off you. And sometimes you encounter photographers, whether it's a bad day or who they are, they just look at you like "here's the meat."[67]

Sets like this can complicate the emotional work of connecting with scene partners.

While popular performers, including the now-rare contract star, have more power to determine who their scene partners will be, management increasingly regards those who have strict parameters here as inflexible. It is not the case that performers are forced to shoot a scene with partners they wish not to work with, but rather, that directors will simply choose to hire someone who is "easier to work with." The dynamics of partner choice have changed significantly over time. With a performer pool that has grown dramatically during the past thirty years, performers have come to expect that they may arrive on set slated to work with someone they have never met. Parker, who performed from 1976-1985, explained that, during that time,

> It was a fairly small group of people, there were about six men who were mostly cast. We all knew each other and we were fairly comfortable. These were not necessarily people I would have taken as sex partners in my private life, but I felt comfortable with them. Some, I even went as far as to call friends.

In contrast, Raylene, who worked as a contract star in the late 1990's, retired, and returned to performing as an un-signed performer in 2009, noted, "when I was under contract, I had a

'yes' and a 'no' list. This time around, you work with people you've never met and you'll never see again, which I find dangerous."[68] Some described the surprise as exciting, affording the opportunity to be with a "fresh woman" as Prince put it. But most performers explained that they prefer to know who their screen partner will be, or, better yet, to have a say in who that person is, not because they want to be sure they are attracted to that person, but because they feel this information is useful in gearing up for a scene. Working with a partner one knows can also facilitate the process of negotiating on-set boundaries.

Beyond confirming to a director that one consents to a particular sex act, it is up to performers to discuss any other boundaries with each other before filming begins. For most workers, this is a casual conversation along the lines of "what do you like, what do you not like, what can we do? What are your dos and don'ts?"[69] With the basic sex positions already established, these dos and don'ts typically concern more subtle issues, such as whether one enjoys hair pulling or finds a particular term triggering. Working with someone who fails to respect these boundaries was the most common reason workers cited for placing performers on a "no" list of people with whom they are unwilling to work with again. Performers reported that co-stars usually but not always respect such boundaries.

"There's what performers themselves want to do and don't want to do, and there's no question there, among performers at least," explained Richie Calhoun.[70] "But then," he went on, "there's always some limitation, whether it's that you have to be slow or that you have to keep this angle or that you have to do these four positions or that you have to not do anything wild." If performers' limits are usually respected, it does not follow that their desires drive a scene. There are products to be made, and performers are *working.* Sex can be tedious, boring, and even physically uncomfortable and still consensual. Consent is not the same

thing as desire, and workers pushed against outsiders' tendency to conflate the two. Indeed, anti-sex work thinkers mobilize the narrative that the only okay kind of sex is that driven by *pure* desire precisely to dismiss sex workers' capacity for consent. Thus, in response to this argument in the anti-porn documentary *Hot Girls Wanted,* activist sex worker Jolene Parton said, "as long as a sex worker is getting paid fairly for their non-coerced work, I don't care about enjoyment."[71]

Workers' complaints about porn sex centered on the various workplace practices addressed throughout this chapter, not on whether on-set sex was the best they ever had. None of the performers I interviewed said they only perform with partners they are attracted to, and many described the ability to shoot a convincing scene regardless of sexual chemistry as a key element of their professionalism. Likewise, management expects these skills of performers. Performer/ director Lily Cade put it quite plainly:

> We're making a product. I'm not attracted to all my co-stars. They don't know and they shouldn't know that. If you're a good performer, they shouldn't know. Once you show up, even if you're not attracted to them [screen partner], find something you are attracted to and get over yourself.

Performers who fail to do the emotional work of convincing their scene partner that they are attracted to them are called upon to "get over themselves" lest they, as in Yahshua's account, be regarded as "divas."

For most performers, "finding something you're attracted to" is rather more complicated, and requires a delicate balance of both focusing in on one's scene partner and sustaining a sense of separation from partners as well as the larger context of the scene and even one's own body. Christopher Daniels described it this way:

> When you're not attracted to your scene partner… just grin and bear it. Just get through the day. The scene needs to be finished and you need to get your paycheck and you need to catch a flight… Remove yourself mentally, really zero in on one thing you

like, or zero in on your laundry, your to do list, whatever. Remove yourself from the situation.[72]

Manufacturing feeling—both as it can be read by the viewer and as it impacts relationships with management and co-workers—is a primary task of porn work. When asked what they looked for in a performer, management cited "professionalism" as a key trait. But when I asked them to explain what professionalism looked like in this context, they described not duty-bound following orders, but personal investment in the work. Workers are adept at performing this sort of professionalism—some describe "wanting to be there" as a sort of work ethic—and they hope that on-screen partners will bring this ethic to scenes as well. More precisely, performers hope for a delicate balance of wanting to be there and detached professionalism in their on-screen partners. Ela Darling described the frustration of working with female performers who don't actually enjoy having sex with women, but added, "As far as I'm concerned, as long as you can convince me that you're attracted to me right now, I don't care what your sexual identity is."[73] Willingness to do this relational work is part of what it means to have a sex-work ethic.

But performers must at once seem to want to work "not just for the check" and keep production budgets in mind at all times. Performers who want to be there *too* much can slow things down, frustrating co-workers who would like to get done and go home, and adding expense for producers, who pay hourly rates for locations and some crew salaries. On one set I visited, a first-time performer showed far too much interest in his more experienced partner, pestering her during down times and wanting to kiss after the cameras had stopped rolling and she, as she told me later, "just want[ed] to go home." On another, a director admonished a female performer for having an orgasm during her scene. Production had to be halted mid-scene so that makeup artists could "fix" the situation. Interviewees described having to

minimize a sense of connection with on-screen partners in order to avoid 'finishing' (ejaculating) too quickly or forgetting to "open up for the camera."

The work of simultaneous connecting and distancing is demanding, a reality with which workers across intimate labors are familiar.[74] At the same time, some workers describe cultivated detachment as also important for their own emotional wellbeing. As in other forms of intimate and creative labor, porn workers sometimes find themselves emotionally drained at the close of a workday. Christopher Daniels described filmed sex as a "physical act that affects you emotionally."[75] "It can wear on you a bit," he added. Raylene spoke of an "emotional hangover" after scenes, but learned how to "compartmentalize and walk away and forget that I even had the day. Like, well, 'that was fun,' and then I don't remember who I worked with."[76] Detaching just enough—a calculation unique to each performer—can help mitigate work's emotional strain.

At the same time, workers describe forging meaningful interpersonal connections on set. Such connections are less often characterized by intense sexual passion than by collegiality, friendship, and community. Ela Darling described the outpouring of support she received when she came down with the flu on set by way of dramatizing the warm collegiality workers can find. After the director tied her up—a time consuming process—in preparation for a BDSM scene, Darling began to feel nauseous, and told the director. The director patiently untied Darling as her co-star, rubbing her back, said, "'it's okay girl, we've all been there.'"[77] They returned the following day, and Darling found herself fatigued during a strap on scene. The director and Darling's co-star agreed that they would change the scene so that Darling could lay down and her partner would take on the more demanding role. "And through it all," Darling told me,

> Nobody complained. Everyone was totally supportive, kind, caring, and loving. That's the industry I'm working in. People think I'm victimized about my work, but there's no other job where I could get sick or have to flake for all of the reasons I was unable to perform my job that day, and still have nothing but support.

Others echoed this sense that porn sets are a unique workplace in which mutual understanding and support among workers (and sometimes, managers) are the norm. "I just love being on set because you're friends with everyone for the most part, it's like a really weird family," Chanel Preston told me.[78] On other days, she added, "shoots are really difficult, [with] a lot of negativity or stress on the set for some reason." Like most jobs, the experience of being on set changes throughout the workweek.

The demands of boundary work expand when performers take on multiple roles in a production. As budgets decrease, it becomes more and more common for directors to perform in their own scenes. Performer/directors take on distinct and sometimes (class) conflicting roles simultaneously. Tanya Tate, who began as a performer and now directs as well, explained, "you're a one man band, so to speak."[79] After coordinating crews, dealing with any no-shows, making sure paper work is done, and checking lighting and sound, performer/directors must then "jump behind the camera, be on set, *enjoy everything.* At the same time you're directing the way it's going… In the back of your mind, there's still a part that's like, 'is this going well?'" Likewise, Alex Linko described the "balancing act between thinking technically and thinking sexually" that informs his work as a performer/director.[80] Such dual roles are not limited to performers who take on directing positions in an official capacity. Tate explained that by the time of her first directing gig, she already had years of experience "leading" scenes in which she performed. More experienced performers take on such roles regularly, both because they hope that a well-done scene will enhance their own brand and because they see being helpful in this way as part of a porn work ethic.

Directors who do not perform also describe relational work as a central job task, but its tenor is different in this context. As veteran director Chi Chi LaRue put it, "When you're a director of pornography, you're a cheerleader, you're a counselor, you're a father, you're a mother, you're a boyfriend, you're a girlfriend, you're Dr. Phil for god's sake!"[81] I did not see this sort of work on the sets I visited, and workers did not identify it as a major part of their work experience. Of course, one does not always know they are being emotionally managed. All the same, when I asked directors what tasks made up their work, this kind of emotional management, emerged as equally, if not more, important than staging a scene, directing performances, coordinating lighting and sound, and keeping budgets in check. As in LaRue's telling, this management often had a distinctly paternal character—I heard the phrase "herding cats" more times than I care to count.

When I asked performers what made a good director, they described someone who pays well, asks what one is comfortable doing rather than demands it, keeps to a schedule, and has a well-provisioned set with water, food, lubricant, and condoms for those performers who wish to use them. Directors, on the other hand, often responded to this question by listing they ways in which they "took care" of performers (whom straight directors almost exclusively framed as young women) by dissuading those they thought were too young or wanted to work "out of desperation" from working in porn, for example.

I take up these themes in greater depth in the following chapter's discussion of authenticity in porn work. For now, I return to a general sketch of what porn work looks like.

Body Work

As Yahshua suggests, the task of remaining "open" for the camera is a key feature distinguishing on and off-screen sex. Opening up for the camera requires manipulating one's

body such that the camera can capture a variety of angels, including the act of insertion. The positions most conducive to open shots can be very different and more physically demanding than those performers find most comfortable or pleasurable. Performers can decline to shoot a certain position, but as with partner choice, they are keenly aware of the costs of being seen as inflexible. One impromptu on-set interview with two scene partners led to a particularly instructive discussion about the physical labors of porn.

Devlyn Red, a BBW performer[82] explained:

> Reverse cowgirl[83] is the most common [position] requested but it's the hardest and most painful. [That is] porn reverse cowgirl, not where you're bent over. You're using your thigh muscles to lift your body and then you have really big boobs that are levitating and then dropping with nothing to cushion them. It hurts like a bitch. And they want it for an extended period of time because it's the best overall visual of your entire body… *It's ideal for a movie, not ideal for the performer*. And the guys are always helpful, they put their arms up to balance you.[84]
>
> Dick Chibbles, her screen partner, interjected: "we do what we can."[85]
>
> "You can balance your hands on their chest," Devlyn responded.
>
> "Not directly on the sternum," Dick said, "cuz it's like CPR."
>
> "And if you move and you're wearing nails or anything, you jab them or slice them," Devlyn added.

Dick went on:

> Or if the girl's moving to phantom length zone where they come completely off… It's one of the reasons I don't like to do girl on top unless I'm controlling your depth. I usually just say "it's gonna be the easiest day for you, if we do any girl on top, just hover above me, I'm gonna [thrust] from underneath."

The conversation was a rich view into how porn workers interact as colleagues and the efforts workers make in order to facilitate for each other. Not all workers interact this way, but the collaborative spirit Chibbles and Red model is common among experienced performers.

In addition to the work of collaboration, Chibbles and Red's conversation shows that the physical strain and potential risks of porn work are far from limited to STI contraction. Repetitive stress injury, pulled muscles, sprained ankles, sunburn, pinched nerves, and even cuts from too-sharp acrylic nails are often more present concerns for porn workers. Dick went on to describe a scene in which, playing Chewbacca in a *Star Wars* parody, he had to wear a costume of "thirty pounds of fur." "It was about 135 degrees inside that outfit," he explained, and after each five minutes of filming, he had to halt production and cool down. The scene took five hours to shoot. In this case his screen partner, crew, and director were understanding.

Long scenes, especially with partners who have larger than average penises, can pose the risk of friction burn and torn tissue. That performers are often not attracted to their screen partners or are simply too busy paying attention to the many aspects of performance for their bodies to be aroused (and thusly lubricated and relaxed) compounds this. Lubricant is necessary here, but it can be difficult to stop a scene to re-apply. In addition, only the most conscientious directors stock a variety of lubricants from which performers may choose. As the previous chapter's discussion of policy illuminated, employers have little incentive to provide such safeguards because, overwhelmingly, they do not pay the costs associated with workplace injury.

Prince Yahshua's experience of on-set injury further demonstrates this. While filming "phantom length," as Chibbles put it earlier—a camera-friendly shot in which a performer's penis fully exits their partner with each thrust—the woman performer's weight came down on Yahshua's penis at the wrong angle. It "broke," as Yahshua described it, requiring multiple surgeries and four months off work. His medical care alone cost $120,000. Except

for $20,000 the production company offered, Yahshua covered this cost, as well as the lost wages from four months off work. When I asked him if the producers had production insurance, he explained, "Most companies don't. They're supposed to."[86] Yahshua seemed neither surprised nor particularly bothered by this. Trying to figure out why, I ventured, "It's funny, what seems outrageous to me versus what actually bothers workers. To me, this is one of the clearest workplace injuries imaginable. It's on film!" Laughing, he responded:

> It really is on film. But we're independent contractors, and we've never had a union or anything. It's a competitive industry, we can say we're going to get together 'till we're blue in the face but it never really happens… *It worked itself out*. [The company] was there to bring their people around to make sure I was okay. As soon as I was good enough to come back, my first job was with them.

Most of the workers I interviewed had some experience of paying out of pocket to treat an injury or infection that was very likely work related. They had varying perspectives on this—not everyone was as unperturbed as Prince—but most offered some variation of "it worked itself out." Except for those who work with Kink.com and Wicked Pictures, companies that do carry production insurance and consistently secure care for performers injured on set, not one currently working performer had filed a worker's compensation claim. "Working it out," instead, means paying out of pocket to avoid being blacklisted. Again, employers have little reason to change production practices when they can be confident that they will avoid any costs that come from them.

As described in the previous chapter, performers commonly rely on potentially risky performance enhancing medications in order to meet porn's demands. The erectile aids men and transwomen often use present potential risks of dependency, cardiovascular stress, and priapism (a painful condition which requires that the penis be drained by a medical professional). Receptive partners often use muscle relaxers in order to more comfortably

accommodate particularly large or multiple partners (as in "double penetration"), and sometimes experience dependency and fatigue as a result. The demand that workers resort to potentially harmful means in order to force their bodies or minds to perform according to job rules is another area in which porn looks like other forms of work. It is important here to recall that the biopolitical state has long measured a body's functionality against its ability to productively labor.[87] A central aim of modern medicine is to *restore* such functionality, and as Arlie Hochschild points out in her foundational study of emotional labor, drugs are among the tools institutions use to manufacture feeling.[88] So, rather than view the event of priapism or Xanax dependency as evidence of the sensational harms of porn, these cases call for a reevaluation of how the heavy costs (financial and otherwise) of *functionality* across waged work are assigned.

It was important to porn workers that the risks associated with their jobs not be taken up as evidence for porn's unique horrors. Most have worked other jobs, the reader will recall, and they remembered experiencing risks in those too. Noting the connections between porn and other work, Conner Habib pointed to stress as "probably the biggest health problem in the industry. You're stressed out about going in, you're stressed out about looking good, you're stressed out about eating the right thing, you're stressed out about how people are going to perceive you, how you're going to perform."[89] Workers across industries can appreciate these concerns.

To our earlier-cited discussion of the varied strains of work in different genres, Chanel Preston made a point of adding that she did not see physical wear and tear as exceptional to porn work. "It drives me nuts," she said, when outsiders approach the physical strains of porn work in "shaming" and sex negative ways.[90] "What's the big deal? You go to

another job you might get sore, it's not a big deal to me." Christopher Daniels also hoped to de-stabilize the idea of porn as an exceptional site of workplace risk. "There's a risk in my job just like any job," he said,

> I have a friend who worked in the VIP lounge for American Airlines and he has horrible problems with his shoulder because the set up of the desk in these lounges is too low. It's the same thing with any job, you know? I'd rather deal with being exposed to chlamydia than be scalded by hot coffee. You take a pill and you deal with it. It took me years to realize the really horrible, negative stigma around any sexually transmitted disease. It's been very recent that I'm just like "okay, it's a part of life, it happens, you get taken care of and move on."

Indeed, it becomes difficult to talk about the potential occupational hazards of porn work—even those as mundane as stress or fatigue—without playing to narratives of porn as an exceptionally abusive sort of work (if one understands it as work at all). At the risk of putting too fine a point on how very ordinary the struggles of porn work are: work hurts. But how to suggest that yes, the fact of workers' bodies as tools of capital accumulation is a "big deal," but a quotidian, systemic, sort of big deal. Not the sensational one those who wish to exceptionalize porn work would suggest.[91]

It is trickier still to address sexually transmitted infection and particularly HIV as potential occupational hazards of porn work without playing to narratives that are both politically untenable and unhelpful for understanding how workers experience their labor and the internal and public policy changes they feel would make their work safer. That porn work poses the risk of HIV transmission is a popular rallying cry among anti-porn feminists and conservatives seeking to highlight porn's unique harms. In unilaterally focusing on sexually transmitted infection, and in framing such risks as the result of gendered violence or irresponsible sexual behavior rather than particular work processes, these accounts dangerously suggest that porn work (or, being "pornographed,"[92] in their words) is somehow

unique in posing harm to workers. Anti-porn feminist pundit Gail Dines, for example, suggested that the 2013 "HIV Crisis in the Porn Industry" is evidence of the ways in which the porn industry is "built on the degradation and debasement of human beings."[93] In using work-related illness as a vehicle for anti-porn arguments, accounts like Dines' position disabled bodies—particularly HIV-positive ones—as the specter that tells us all we need to know about porn. This profoundly conservative move has troubling consequences for how we theorize and legislate serostatus, as well as the matrix of ability, class, race, sexuality, and place that intersect with it.[94]

The task becomes, then, how to describe workers' disposability in systems of value extraction without reinforcing the idea that disabled bodies are always, already disposed of, or, in Dines' words, "degraded" and "debased." In so doing, we might interrogate the ways in which the porn worker body is "deemed available for injury," as queer disability theorist Jasbir Puar puts it in her discussion of ability and capital flows more broadly.[95] This must coincide, as it does in queer theories of disability, with a sustained critique of the social construction of injury itself. Returning, then, to HIV and other STI transmission in porn work, I want to make very clear first, that workers do not necessarily view these risks as more pressing than other occupational risks and, second, that the social, economic, and even biological meanings of disability and seropositivity in particular are constructed through and through.

As I address at length in the previous chapter's discussion of the industry's internal health policy, a minority of employers in heterosexual mainstream production allow condom use on set. Performers have varied perspectives about on-set condom use, and these should not be confused with their perspectives on the appropriateness of mandatory condom

legislation. Interviewees who worked in genres and for companies where testing is standard were, by and large, confident in the testing system's ability to keep them safe from HIV, hepatitis C, and syphilis, the sexual health risks which most concerned them. Most regard chlamydia, gonorrhea, herpes, and the human papilloma virus as risks that are not inevitable but that they might reasonably expect at some point in their careers. I did not ask performers about their current or past STI status. Some volunteered that they had contracted infections but did not know whether they were exposed at work or in their private lives; others identified that they were exposed at work; and still others told me they had worked for years in the industry without incident. The latter case was more likely among workers who work on condom-only shoots, female performers who perform only with female screen partners (called "girl-girl" in the industry), and workers who shoot BDSM and queer porn, in which insertive sex is less common and fluid exchange is minimal. As with other workplace injuries, performers pay the cost of treating any STIs to which they are exposed.

Getting Paid

Production studios set the terms of how performers are paid. Some pay same-day, while others mail checks to agents or directly to performers who work independently. There can be significant lag times in receiving checks, and performers are often willing to take lower rates in exchange for same-day pay. Scene rates are negotiated beforehand between directors and agents, if performers work with representation, or with performers themselves, if they work independently. There may be discrepancies between the amount performers were told to expect and the amount they receive. On one set I visited, a performer was in the uncomfortable position of having to call her agent after receiving a check for $200 less than she expected. The agent then called the director, who grumpily paid the performer the

agreed-upon amount. Whether this was deliberate or not is unclear, but performers do report that such discrepancies are a concern, and a key reason they maintain agents' services is so that they can rely on someone else to resolve such situations.

As in other jobs, porn managers generally do what they can to extract as much labor from workers for the lowest possible pay. "We do try to low ball [performers], but I think everybody does," one director told me.[96] If porn employers pay the lowest possible rates, the social world in which porn is produced shapes which workers can be most effectively "low balled." Porn is one of any number of industries in which, as theorist Rosemary Hennessy puts it, "surplus value depends on cultural value."[97] Social identity is, then, a "second skin" that allows capital to extract the maximum from workers.[98] In porn, managers find racial and sexual hierarchy a helpful tool in getting as much from workers for as little as possible. Porn's hierarchies are, then, not evidence of the industry's uniquely poor racial, gender, or sexual politics, but are rather endemic to capitalism. "At the executive level," explained performer/ producer/ director Lexington Steele, "there's one predominant color, it ain't white, it ain't black, it's green."[99]

Pay Secrecy

Of the various topics we discussed, wages were the only thing interviewees were consistently unwilling to go on record about. Surprised when gay porn performer Connor Habib readily volunteered information about his rates, I mentioned this to him: "I suppose it's rude to ask someone you have just met what they make, but rates seem even more secretive in porn." "I don't think it's rude, I wish it weren't rude," Conner responded. He went on, "It's so dumb that people who got over the sex thing still won't talk about money."[100] Indeed, there is a striking gap between the ease with which porn workers discuss

issues most outsiders would think of as far more sensitive than money, and many workers' refusal to discuss money at all.

This silence applies not only to on-record interviews with those outside the community, but also to conversations among workers. Performers who are close friends may discuss rates with each other. It is not uncommon for more experienced performers to tell newcomers that they are working for too little; both parties have a stake in this, of course, as established performers are concerned about new workers undercutting them. However, standard practice is that workers simply do not discuss pay rates. Rates also tend to be actively concealed on set. Performers have access to a full STI testing panel for everyone they work with, but are meant to have no idea what their coworkers make in a day. Across industries, secrecy around pay rates serves as a ballast for wage inequality. Employers know this, and expressly prohibit workers from sharing information about wages.[101] Some employers include non-disclosure agreements in modeling releases and threaten performers with retaliation should they discuss rates, but more commonly, a culture of non-disclosure simply discourages these conversations. Such codes did not, however, stop workers from sharing information about pay rates with me. They had a lot to say.

Performers are aware of pay disparity in spite of employers' efforts to obscure it. More to the point, performers who are paid lower than standard rates due to race, size, age, and appearance are keenly aware of this, while performers who make top rates in their gender and genre categories assume that wages are generally equal across such lines. To my question about wage disparity, one white woman responded, "I don't know, I'm not black." Laughing nervously, she added, "please don't make that sound racial in there because it's so not."[102] Black performers may come to work an "interracial" set, then, knowing that they are

being paid less for the same job, even in comparison to the performers they will be working with that day. As Ana Foxxx put it, "We're doing the same thing. We're both gonna suck a dick."[103] Black male performers described the additional emotional work required to perform with white women they knew were charging higher rates for scenes with black partners. Upon seeing his white screen partner's inflated "interracial" rate, Yahshua remembered thinking, "do you know how many scenes a black girl would have to do to get this one check?"[104]

Sexual Codes and Pay Disparity

Standard pay rates are structured by normative ideas about sexuality. As is so often the case with matters attributed to the "free market," decisions about whose labor is worth how much are deeply political. At the most basic level, rates are structured around the perception that women need cajoling in order to agree to sex, whereas men have always, already consented to it. This is explicitly the rationale workers and managers alike presented when I asked why women are paid more than men in the straight mainstream industry. Director/ performer Dave Pounder explained gendered rate differentials this way:

> Most guys want to do porn. Most girls don't want to do porn. If you find someone who's willing, the only reason they want to do it is because they're getting paid. If you pay the guys half of what you pay the girls, they're still gonna want to do it…. In order to have a working male talent pool, you have to pay enough for them to make an exclusive living out of it. And I don't want to lowball guys. If I get a crappy guy who can't perform, I paid the location, I paid for the girl, if he climaxes in two minutes I have to shoot all over again. If I tell a girl it's $20 for a shoot, nobody will shoot for me. If I tell a guy its $20 for a shoot, he'll do it but he'll fail.[105]

Mr. Marcus explained that when management attempts to pressure workers to accept lower rates, "Everyone has this little thing they like to poke you with. Like, 'I know guys who will do it for free, I know guys who will do it for cheaper.' Girls won't do it for free, but they might do it for less."[106] Several lower-end director-producers reported not needing to pay

male performers at all.

Entrenched codes in the broader sexual economy that mark black bodies as "hypersexual," available, and cheap help to rationalize racialized pay inequality.[107] Pay disparity is most pronounced among women, as men's rates in straight productions are so low in the first instance that there would be nothing left if black men's wages were cut in proportion to black women's. Black women's average wages fall $200-400 below those of their white counterparts. The black men I interviewed happened to be among the top paid in the industry, due to their long tenures in the industry, strong fan bases, and, perhaps most importantly for rate determination, having won the status of one of few black performers white women will agree to work with. "A lot of girls who wouldn't normally have sex with a black guy," explained Mr. Marcus, "but for some reason, I'd get picked."[108] Interviewees acknowledged they were among the token few and that this afforded them casting opportunities in mainstream, "interracial" productions, which pay significantly more. They were also more likely than other performers to start their own production companies, affording more control over their own rates as well as the rates they pay black performers who work for them.

Alongside gendered and racialized pay differentials, the presence or absence of penile penetration is the central measure by which pay rates are determined. Pay, Kink.com CEO Peter Ackworth explained, is "determined by how many cocks are involved. There's a base and then an extra $200 for each extra man."[109] "Girl-girl" scenes pay less (even when they involve penetration by sex toys) because, as one performer put it, "they don't have a penis," a logic that speaks to the ways in which the industry mirrors wider cultural perceptions about sexuality, including the idea that the presence of a penis is what makes sex *sex*.[110] It is

standard to add between $100-200 to a receptive partner's scene rate for each additional male-bodied partner in group sex scenes, and an additional fee for "double penetration" scenes involving two male-bodied partners at once. Men and transwomen working as insertive partners ("tops") do not typically receive an additional fee for such scenes, even though such scenes mean additional work—longer wait times on set, more bodies and personalities to contend with, and more potential STI risk— for them too. Finally, women can charge additional fees for their first scene of a certain type as they move up the hierarchy of penile penetration. A first straight (for performers who have only shot with other women), anal, or group sex scene could garner fees upwards of two-to-three times the standard rate, for instance. It is standard for white women to wait to film scenes with black men so that they can charge a premium for their first "interracial" scene. Conventions such as this pose a conundrum from a labor perspective—one generally wishes to celebrate anything workers can do to demand higher wages, but in this instance the tactic reinforces deeply problematic racialized codes and further entrenches wage disparity.

Scene Rates

Interviewees who worked as far back as the 1970s reported flat day rates (that is, equal among all performers) of $100 per day (approximately $500 in today's dollars) for full-length films and $50-70 for stag films. Interviewees whose time in the business spanned the '70s and '80s suggest that the convention of paying female performers more began around the time of video. Men's rates dropped further with the advent of Viagra, which meant that "any guy could be a porn star," explained Carter Stevens.[111] Both cases can be understood as instances of technology de-skilling work and driving down wages. Female performers' rates grew in the 1980s, when $1,500 was standard, and this maintained throughout the 1990s.

There are fabled rates in the tens of thousands among top performers during this period, though none of my interviewees who worked at the time reported such amounts. Performers in gay male porn could make far more in the '90s than today. Chi Chi LaRue, who has been directing in the genre for 24 years, reported rates of up to $25,000 in the early 90s, in contrast to the $600-800 average rates he pays today. Across genres and demographics, rates have fallen in the last 15 years, most sharply since the 2008 recession.

Producers and directors cite piracy, the ongoing recession, and an influx of new performers as reasons for this decrease. Production companies' books are closed, so one must take employers at their word—or not—when they lament having to cut rates. Some company owners did demonstrate to me that profits have dropped significantly—while a producer could expect to quadruple his investment in the early 2000s, it might double today. These are profits nonetheless, and paying the bare minimum helps to secure them. As in other industries, porn employers hope to pay as little as possible, and they find in "the economy" a helpful alibi for slashed wages. "They use this 'economy' shit to bargain down wages," one performer/director told me.[112] In rationalizing wage disparities, management also makes clear that they pay the rates workers are willing to take. Agents play a central part in maintaining rate structures, as they are most often in the position of negotiating rates with directors and counseling performers on their labor's market value.

I lay out standard rate ranges for the most common scene types in mainstream production in the chart below. Figures are based on performers' reported earnings, agents' reported benchmark rates, and directors' reported labor costs. Interviewees across these class positions reported similar numbers, though agents and directors almost exclusively reported averages for non-black women performers and denied any systemic pay inequality. While

these numbers represent industry standards, there is significant variation among performer demographic groups and activity categories. Performer name recognition, saleable appearance, and reputation among managers and other performers help to determine where a performer falls in rate ranges. Performers also make tactical decisions about rates according to their self-marketing needs. "If you're working too much, raise your rate. If you're not getting enough work, lower your rate," explained Charity Bangs.[113]

The highest paid woman performer I interviewed charges $1,500 for a standard "boy-girl" scene, in contrast to the $500 the lowest paid women reported. Likewise, top men performers reported rates of $1,600 per heterosexual scene, while others work without pay simply for the opportunity to have sex with a "porn star." The highest paid man in gay productions can command $5,000 per scene, while others make only $600. The increasingly rare contract performer, who works exclusively for one production company and is paid a salary, has the highest standard scene rates, though their pay also includes a host of mandatory unpaid activities, such as guest appearances and DVD signings. One woman on contract in heterosexual mainstream porn made $3,000 per scene, while a gay production company's contract guaranteed $2,500-5,000.

Average Rate Range in Mainstream Pornographic Production

Performer Demographic	**Scene Type**	**Rate**

Cisgenered women	Penile-vaginal intercourse	$800-1000
	Penile-anal intercourse	$1000-1200
	Sex with another cis woman (“girl-girl”)	$600-800
Transwomen	Intercourse, insertive and receptive (“top” or “bottom”)	$800-1000
Women (cisgendered and trans)	Oral sex (“blow job”)	$250-500
	Solo masturbation	$300-500
	Additional partner	Add $100-200 to above numbers
Cisgendered men*	Penile-vaginal or penile-anal intercourse, straight production	$300-600
	Oral sex (“blow job”) or manual stimulation (“hand job”), straight production	$200-400
	Penile-anal intercourse (receptive or insertive), gay production	$800-1200

Figures reflect average rates as reported by interviewees for most common scene types. Based on interview data collected from 2012-2014.
*The market for transmen performers is almost exclusively in queer porn, where flat rates are standard.

Standard rates in porn's other genres vary, but are generally lower than those in mainstream. Queer and feminist productions pay flat rates—equal among all performers and independent of the sex acts in which performers are willing to engage—of $200-600 per scene, with most rates at the lower end of this range. Directors in queer and feminist porn hope that flat rates help to combat mainstream's pay hierarchies and establish more meaningful consent practices, as performers will not be compelled to have a kind of sex with which they are not comfortable simply for the money. But workers may prefer doing more for higher pay to bosses making this choice for them, especially since flat rates equalize pay by lowering everyone's rate. Flat rates may be more attractive to new performers and those who are unlikely to be offered employment in mainstream, but can be hard to swallow for workers accustomed to making much more for similar labors elsewhere. With their small, do it yourself ("DIY") style productions, queer and feminist porn producers claim they are unable to pay higher rates in the first instance. As Maxine Holloway, who performs in queer, feminist, BDSM, and mainstream productions suggests, the idea that flat rates promote meaningful consent and equality among performers is

> A nice theory, but it's not as if it's coming from a place of their being able to offer extra money anyway. It probably means I'm just not going to do anal, because that's my valuation... So the flat rate is I think more derived from budgetary needs than equalization.[114]

that not

Such productions are for-profit enterprises—how *much* profit we do not know because, as in mainstream production, producers and directors in queer and feminist productions are not

forthcoming about their profits. In chapter five, we return to the politics of substandard pay packaged in socially conscious terms.[115]

"BBW" productions pay significantly lower rates than mainstream—$400-600 for a "boy-girl" scene. Like "urban" productions, BBW shoots tend to be with smaller companies, and major mainstream productions almost never include BBW performers. One set to which I was invited was for an instructional video filmed by Wicked Pictures, a large mainstream studio. "This is a big deal," Devlyn Red noted.[116] The film's director, jessica drake (also a veteran performer in the mainstream industry), insisted on paying full rates and described being "appalled" to learn the "plus-size rate difference."

> They're taking the same risks that we're taking, they're putting things in their body, they're having sex with other people, and wait a minute, you're saying that because, let's just say, this person weighs twice as much as I do, they're getting paid half as much. Are you kidding me?

Performers on set were thrilled to be paid the full standard rate for their performance that day and described the casting as a once in a career opportunity.

Amateur film distribution companies typically pay for filmed scenes, rather than particular performances. "Submitters"—both amateurs who submit scenes and business owners are careful not to use the term "performers"—are paid $200-700 for an entire scene, to be distributed among submitters as they choose. Submitters do not typically think of themselves as workers. Self-identified amateur performers Fifi and Edwin explicitly disavowed the idea that they were working. "What we try to do is get paid for living our life," Edwin explained.[117] These labors still have a place in a study of porn work, though, because business owners extract profits from them. Disinterested in claiming false consciousness, I want to acknowledge but not resolve this asymmetry between workers' own identities and the classed positions I ascribe to them.

Conclusion

We close this chapter with a return to its beginning—"porn feels different than it looks." One cannot watch a porn film and imagine workers' experience of making it. Coming from anti-porn critics, the idea that porn feels like it looks misunderstands the frustrations workers most often cite—fatigue, not force; pay inequality, not being "trussed and maimed" as Catherine MacKinnon's purple prose suggests.[118] Coming from scholars who appreciate a given production style, this idea makes workers' frustrations illegible in a different way. If "porn for women," for instance, is *good,* it can be difficult to remember that actors in such productions may experience longer work hours for less pay. From porn fans, the assumption that porn feels like it looks simply takes part in the delusion consumers of all kinds of labor prefer to entertain. This is unremarkable. This chapter's exploration of the set shop floor proposes an anecdote to these various flavors of reification. If reification is the process by which products, divorced from the process of their production, acquire "an independent existence," this chapter pushes for a thoroughly *dependent* one.[119]

"A Scene Is Just a Marketing Tool"[1]:

Alternative Income Streams in Porn's Gig Economy

"I do everything. I'm the biggest hustler," said Sara Jay when I asked her whether porn performance was her main income source. She went on:

> I do affiliate programs, I have an online store, I have different kinds of Internet revenues. I have my website, which is a big bulk of my income. I do everything from hosting nightclubs to signings at bookstores to feature performing… My phone sex line is going off as I'm talking to you.[2]

My interviews with porn workers often followed the same progression. We talked about how performers got started in the porn industry, how on-set work is structured, and what they enjoy and would change about porn work. And then, they explained that the labors we had just discussed occupy a relatively small part of their work lives.

This chapter explores the porn work hustle and charts how alternative income streams function in porn's political economy. Alternative income streams at once maintain and undermine workers' power. By sustaining a reserve army of labor—workers willing to perform even when pay and conditions are poor—the alternative income streams that make up porn's gig economy subsidize employers and help maintain the status quo. At the same time, workers pursuing alternative income streams creatively manipulate the conditions of porn work to maximize earning potential, resist burnout, and otherwise exert control over their work lives. As this chapter's title suggests, they use scenes as marketing tools for income generating endeavors in which they have more ownership and control. The chapter's latter half lays out the particular income streams workers most commonly take up and explores how work processes are organized within them.

The Political Economy of "Satellite Industries"

"These days I work maybe once a month as a performer," Kelly Shibari explained.

> [I perform] just to kind of keep things interesting, and so my performances don't look stale. And it's a little bit of mad money. But it's not what I depend on, what I bank on… These days, there's just not as much work as there used to be, especially steady work.[3]

Later, she added:

> People who were in porn in the 70s, it became a career. But for those of us in the industry now, it's not a career, it's a hobby… If I depended on this for a living, I'd be devastated. The other thing I have going for me is the fact that I've always been freelancing. Even before I got into porn. I was a roadie, then a production designer. Even the PR work I do. I've never worked 9-5 for a corporation… I think I had to clock-in in high school.

A multiple award-winner, Shibari is among the most popular performers in the BBW genre. Still, there are only a few studios that shoot BBW content, and those that do often choose fat phobic storylines Shibari said don't interest her. Performers who meet mainstream's beauty rules have access to more casting opportunities, but even they struggle to make ends meet through performing gigs alone. For all but the most popular performers (and then usually for only a short time), there are simply not enough film performance gigs to sustain an income.

Working for trade, performers produce content they can then sell using direct-to-consumer services. Others work as "feature dancers" at strip clubs, offer services such as the "porn star experience" ("PSE" on escort ad sites), and advertise under the banner of "porn star" on webcam sites. Porn workers also monetize quotidian moments of their lives by building Twitter brands, soliciting online gifts, offering paid phone calls and texts, and auctioning used lingerie and clothing to fans. Marketing themselves as "porn stars" affords workers significantly increased income potential in these industries. These jobs are structurally connected to porn film industry, and yet their day-to-day operations require different skill sets and present distinct costs and benefits to workers.

Workers pursue alternative income streams for different reasons. Some take non-performing gigs in order to sustain themselves between performing gigs or before the hoped for take off of their porn careers, while others remain in porn primarily so that they can increase earnings in these other gigs. Both approaches represent workers' creative strategies for navigating an increasingly precarious industry. Workers are savvy about making porn *work* for them, but when they succeed at this, it is *in spite of* management's efforts to extract as much as they can for as little as possible. The problems of precarious labor are not confined to the porn industry. In porn as elsewhere, the gig economy is a site of struggle. We should neither celebrate it as a new frontier in workers' autonomy nor wax nostalgic about more stable employment models. Workers *want* flexibility; so too do employers, but for very different reasons.

Classed Positions in Porn's Gig Economy: Desiring Flexibility

Porn workers pursue alternative income streams as a way to command greater control—and ownership—over scenes and other products. Autonomous control is particularly vital for workers whose work is most devalued when they do work under a boss. As they navigate this terrain, workers find themselves in shifting positions as entrepreneurs, independent contractors, employees, contracted and freelance managers, and producers. Such shifting class positions are characteristic of late capitalism's "gig economy," a phrase coined by Freelancer's Union founder Sara Horowitz.[4] Across a range of industries, dramatic changes in work's organization mean that "careers consist of piecing together various types of work, juggling multiple clients, learning to be marketing and accounting experts, and creating offices in bedrooms/ coffee shops/ co-working spaces."[5] The language of "gig economy" aptly describes porn workers' experiences of cobbling together livable incomes;

navigating relationships with multiple clients, bosses, and fans; cultivating diverse skill sets; and establishing workspaces in what are otherwise understood as domestic or leisure zones. Shibari gestures to these connections when she suggests that her success juggling multiple income streams is in part due to her past experiences as a freelancer in the mainstream Hollywood film industry. Like so many in the gig economy, she has never had a nine-to-five job, and yet she "always seem[s] to find [her] own work."

The timeline she plots—porn could have been a career for performers in the 1970s, but "these days, there's just not as much work as there used to be"—mirrors how scholars historicize the dramatic emergence of the gig economy. But the gig economy is only new for the predominately white, middle-class professionals who now find illusive the career stability that once seemed an entitlement of their socioeconomic status. Likewise, porn's Golden Era was remunerative only for a particular class of performers.[6] Sex workers' reliance on multiple income sources should also be understood in the context of the creative ways of getting by that those on the margins of the economy have long deployed—what Robin Kelley describes as the "hustle" in black working class communities in the midcentury US.[7] Porn workers' relationship to multiple income streams is, then, both symptomatic of radical post-Fordist economic restructuring and part of a much longer history of working people's efforts to survive and thrive.

Crucially, the control and autonomy most porn workers say they desire is distinct from the kind of routinized *security* that organized workers have historically sought.[8] Many left secure, full time jobs precisely because they wanted the flexibility sex work affords. Thus, the precarity that concerns contemporary labor activists and scholars—"we are hirable on demand, available on call, exploitable at will and fireable at whim. We have become

skillful jugglers of jobs and contortionists of flexibility," as one worker group put it[9]—was not, at least in our interviews, porn workers' primary concern. For the present focus on alternative income streams, this reminds us that workers may hustle various income streams not only because they cannot find steady work in porn filming exclusively, but because they don't desire such security in the first place. Put otherwise, it is not (only) that porn management has established a set of conditions that leaves workers no choice but to hustle, but (also) that workers desire the flexibility and autonomy that the hustle permits.

It is in many instances the actions of workers themselves that dictate and reinforce conditions in porn and its satellite industries. Porn workers use gig economies not only to respond and adapt to management's rules, but also to resist and re-craft them. As in the broader study of work, reading workers' resilience as merely a reaction to management's top-down exercises of power assumes too much of management and too little of workers.

The Need for Alternative Income Streams: Labor Perspectives

Porn workers pursue alternative income streams as one way to resist the precarity they find in the porn film industry. One might be cast in twenty scenes one month and two the next, a capricious agent could withhold castings, an injury or positive test result for a curable STI could mean two weeks unpaid time off, or a moratorium due to another's testing positive for HIV could result in the last minute cancellation of weeks of work. "There were a lot of times where it was bottom of the barrel scraping for me," explained VJ, "I would go from making $20,000 a month to making $3500… that's just how the business fluctuates."[10] Amidst these fluctuations, alternative income streams keep performers afloat. They also help sustain the performer workforce in a moment in which pay from performing alone is insufficient even without unplanned work interruptions. Even in the best circumstances—an

uninterrupted month with many castings that pay one's full rate—most performers cannot sustain themselves through film work alone. "If a girl tells you she's only shooting for a living, she's lying," ventured Charity Bangs, who performs in straight gonzo films on average twice a month.[11]

Performers pursue alternative income streams both to stay afloat in the short-term and in an effort to attain long-term economic stability. In turn, they rely on filmed performances, however intermittent, to build a brand that will be marketable in these endeavors. Satellite industries thus subsidize the porn industry's wages and fund the costly maintenance, marketing, and other preparatory work the industry requires of performers. One might take erotic dance gigs in order to finance a trip to a porn convention, or go on tour as an escort in order to fund trips to destination film shoots. When traveling for out of town porn shoots, one performer explained,

> Obviously, flying out there and paying for hotels, I broke even. For the sake of building my brand and my name, I told myself 'if you make money, awesome, if you don't, whatever.' I had to sustain myself through escorting, how else am I going to pay for airfare and whatnot?[12]

Performers traveling for porn film gigs commonly rely on escorting to make their trips worthwhile, or, as in the example above, to simply break even. Producers thus rely on escort and other satellite work to subsidize the low wages they pay and the travel and lodging expenses they increasingly displace onto workers. Management's assumption that workers can and will cobble together multiple forms of income is an implicit (and sometimes explicit) feature of rate negotiations.

Without satellite industries, most workers would not be able to sustain careers in porn, but it would also not be worthwhile for them to do so. Gay porn performer and escort Christopher Daniels explained, for example, that he started performing in porn because he

"noticed that the guys doing porn got better rates and did better as escorts. That was the sole reason I went into porn."[13] Across satellite industries, "porn star" billing can increase earnings substantially. In some, such as the novelty business in which performers are paid to have sex toys molded after them and marketed with their name and image, being a porn star is a prerequisite to securing a gig in the first place. Thus, for most workers, porn performance is the primary work identity and the secondary (or tertiary) income source. In this context, porn scenes become more than individual work opportunities. Instead, like song singles in the post-piracy music world, they provide access to a host of other income streams.[14] Workers who rely on alternative income streams and use film performances primarily as marketing tools hope to schedule filming gigs in ways that maximize the capital of a "porn star" brand. They suggest that the average performer can carry "porn star" status for about six moths after her last released scene, at which point fans—potential clients—lose interest. One interviewee has recently decided to retire, but was waiting to tell her fans in hopes of keeping them on as paying clients in her side gigs. Webcam clients, she feared, would not pay "porn star" rates to a retired performers, and website subscribers would cancel memberships to sites they expect will stop adding new material. In the meantime, she was slowly releasing previously recorded scenes in an effort to sustain the illusion that she was still a working "porn star."

Workers take on scenes, as the anonymous performer cited above suggests, "for the sake of [their] brand." "A scene is just a marketing tool," explained longtime industry publicist and photographer Dominic Ace.[15] Performer Samantha Grace explained, "you have to do other things to make money. Film work is a form of marketing. I work with other companies so I can promote *my own* website, my own films, my own custom videos, pro-

domming."[16] Grace's earlier-cited description of how she came to work in the porn industry—"You have to work, you have no choice. You have to make a living. It's either struggle or survive"—helps contextualize her class analysis.

In re-appropriating scenes as marketing tools, performers take advantage of capital investment, using porn productions essentially as a cost-effective form of advertising. As brand-building marketing tools, scenes have the power to dramatically increase workers' earning potential in satellite industries. This can mean the difference between, in Grace's terms, struggle and survival. As she suggests, porn workers have a keen understanding of the relations of content ownership—they work for others so that they can promote *their own* websites, films, custom videos, direct services, and etcetera. This perspective on ownership was common among the workers I interviewed. Not all performers so explicitly crystallized their relationships to the means of production and extraction. Nonetheless, their clear distinctions between waged work and entrepreneurship—and indeed, references to using waged work to facilitate entrepreneurship—populated our interviews. Workers know that their choices are entrepreneurship (fused as it so often is with becoming management) or making money for the boss. Again, the stakes here are particularly high for workers whose labor is most devalued when they work for others.

Self-employment in porn and its satellite industries is, as J.K. Gibson Graham put it, a relation in which "individuals might appropriate their own surplus labor."[17] Gibson Graham argue that this potential makes self-employment a non-capitalist economic relationship, but the realities of porn work suggest that this might be a too romantic reading. The employer is not the only person or force doing the extracting—we see also a constellation of value-extracting intermediaries and third party providers, as well as the porn film managers who

profit because of the industry's dialectical relationship to gig economies. Minimizing this is, I think, quite dangerous in a labor market characterized by growing independent contracting and contingency and one in which self-employed workers are often the most ready to work more for less.

Worker control is meaningful not only to the extent that it allows workers to reap profits from their work, but also because it affords autonomy over work processes. Workers seek out alternative income streams to mitigate the stresses porn work presents and exert greater control over pricing, scheduling, and the particular nature of services rendered. After great success as a contract star, Raylene left the porn industry and pursued a career in real estate. But after the 2008 market crash, she found herself a single mother needing work, and returned to porn. The landscape, and her marketability, had changed. There was less work, and the work that was available was less desirable, with lower pay, less discretion over sex partners, and less autonomy to decide which safer sex methods one could use.

"A few years ago, I gained a bunch of weight and nobody was hiring me," Raylene explained,

> I had no way of making money and I had no idea what I was going to do. I ended up jumping on the webcam and making tons of money. So I kind of slowed down from shooting because I was able to work alone, in my house, during school hours, and then, you know, have the rest of the evening with my child and make a better living at home than when I was in front of the camera and getting less hated, you know, for not looking good for the public.[18]

Webcamming was not only about making extra money or sustaining herself in between sporadic castings, though these motivations are certainly part of Raylene's story. It also meant better hours and a reprieve from the ridicule she encountered as she transitioned from a waifish contract girl to a post-childbirth MILF. Meanwhile, even sporadic porn performances helped to maintain Raylene's reputation as a "porn star" cam model.

Direct-to-consumer exchanges offer another alternative income source that can give workers greater control over the terms of their work. Performers manage the costs of getting ready for porn work in creative ways. First, in online wish lists, they ask fans to buy them lingerie, clothing, and shoes. Fans can then see their gifts featured in porn scenes. Next, after a scene, performers sell lingerie and clothing items they have worn in scenes, a clear example of using scenes as marketing tools. Through these means, performers can offset the costs of having to provide their own wardrobes, sometimes making more money than they would have had the production company provided wardrobe in the first instance.

Illuminating workers' creative strategies for managing the costs of doing porn does not change the reality that the initial move to require that performers supply their own wardrobe is obviously an exploitative managerial strategy meant to displace the costs of doing business onto workers. It does, however, speak to porn workers' ingenuity. Had producers considered the money to be made in selling used underwear to fans, this would be institutionalized in the business, with performers signing away their lingerie along with their performances in modeling releases and exclusive performer contracts. In the underwear dialectic, companies attempt to save money by placing the cost of business onto workers, and workers, in turn, use scenes as advertisement for products for which they get sole profit.

Defining Satellite Industries: Management Perspectives

The various industries in which workers pursue alternative income sources function as satellites from the perspective of the porn film industry. At the same time, satellite industries de-stabilize the idea of porn as a discrete and cohesive *industry*. Boundaries separating adult film from other industries are amorphous and growing increasingly so as both workers and bosses alike find new ways to maximize profit by integrating porn with

other products and services. Satellite industries exist outside the porn film industry in a number of ways: they organize work processes differently, are subject to distinct regulatory schemes, and they often (though not always) generate capital for different parties. Porn and its satellite industries are nonetheless deeply entangled. These tensions form the context in which porn workers navigate the gig economy.

Porn and its satellite industries are connected too by their common locations on the margins of respectable employment relations. The intense social stigma porn workers encounter when seeking employment in straight industries ensures that porn and its satellite industries are something of a closed loop. Porn performers do sometimes take on supplementary work in straight industries, but face workplace harassment from customers, coworkers, and management in the event that they are recognized, and are without legal protections should they be fired because of their participation in commercial sex.[19] The mainstream jobs workers most commonly seek out pay less than sex work and have schedules incompatible with porn's inconsistent hours and last minute scheduling. Whereas being a porn star is an asset when working in sex industries, it is a tremendous liability in mainstream. Understanding this, most workers pursue alternative income streams in which their porn star status brings money and autonomy rather than financial insecurity and stigma.

A central theme of this chapter is the porn industry's co-dependence with satellite sex industries. If we cannot take for granted any fixed class positions in the porn industry, it is still the case that management and owner classes stand to benefit from the gig economy. Porn's management and owner classes rely on satellite industries in three main ways. First, work in satellite industries sustains the porn performer workforce. This work in effect subsidizes film work's inconsistent wages and funds the financial investments performers

must make in order to be hirable. Second, increased income potential in satellite industries is a key reason workers pursue porn work in the first instance. And third, work in satellite industries gets folded into porn work under the auspices of promotion, exposure, and marketing. In turn, satellite industries profit because of their associations with porn. Some satellite industries, such as sectors of the adult novelty industry that specialize in sex toys modeled in porn performers' likenesses, depend upon the "porn star" for their business model. Others, such as escorting and erotic dance, exist outside the porn film industry and often operate autonomously, but have integrated porn as both a marketing tool and a source of ready workers.

Porn industry management maintains a conflicted posture toward satellite industries, their co-dependence both widely acknowledged and strategically minimized. On an institutional level, management embraces satellite industries' entanglement with porn production. Major production companies Hustler and Vivid also operate strip clubs, for example, and many large production companies, including Playboy and Kink.com, have webcam components. The diversity of industries represented at the Adult Video News's (AVN) annual Adult Entertainment Expo also speaks to institutional recognition of porn's connections to other sex businesses. The AVN awards honor the most popular "webcam girl," the expo's schedule advertises porn performers' special performances at local strip clubs during the week of the event, and the adult novelty business occupies a large convention floor space and operates a seminar series at the AEE's concurrent sister event, the Adult Novelty Expo. Throughout the year, these and other satellite businesses receive coverage in shared industry news sources, including trade news outlets AVN and XBIZ.

Talent agents and production companies that hold exclusive contracts with performers assert control over workers' activities in side industries. Management's own definitions of what constitutes "unfair competition" demonstrate how fluid the boundaries between porn production and satellite industries are. A large production company's exclusive services contract stipulates that, in addition to performing in a particular number of scenes per year, the performer is obliged to provide the following "promotional" services: web cam performances, attendance at trade shows and other events upon request, personal appearances to promote new films and products, and appearance at erotic dance shows organized by the producer.[20] Accordingly, these and a litany of other activities (including adult novelty modeling, participating in educational seminars, and allowing the use of one's likeness in computerized gaming) constitute the "performances" in which contracted workers are not permitted to engage for anyone other than the contracting production company.

The contract's conflicting approaches to what exactly the artist will be compensated for reflect industry-wide ambiguity over what a performer's job entails. The contract structures payment around scene performances, the performers' annual income to equal the scene rate multiplied by the number of scenes performed. The additional services listed above are, however, included in the performer's "salary" and command no additional compensation. This implied arrangement—the performer is paid for scene work and, in exchange, compelled to offer a host of other labors for free—is rehearsed in various ways in industry management discourse. As in the contract I have referenced, stipulations to work for free are often presented as *promotion* (or, more commonly for freelancers, "exposure"), even as this promotion can require more time of workers than scene work itself. Workers in a host

of creative, freelance professions can of course recognize the demand to work for free in exchange for exposure.[21]

If porn management openly embraces most satellite industries, its relationship to the escort industry is more vexed. Both straight porn management and its workers at once rely on the escort industry and disavow this dependency. Performers who also escort are a favorite scapegoat in the business. Almost every straight porn manager and many workers I interviewed cited escorting (or doing "privates" in industry speak) as a scourge on the industry, blaming escorts for bringing STIs into the performer pool and inviting public ridicule. The charge of doing privates is a common weapon in bullying among performers, including in very public fora such as Twitter. Industry bloggers make a sport of outing performers who they claim escort, asserting that this makes them more likely to bring HIV into the industry. And many producers and agents say they refuse to work with performers who escort.[22]

When I asked talent agent Mark Schechter about the stigma escorts face in the industry, he explained, "it's a very valid reason… Because we have a very stringent testing policy, if we don't protect that pool from the outside elements, then we are [at risk of] potentially damaging or poisoning that pool."[23] This narrative, rehearsed every time there is a positive HIV test in the industry or an outside bid for new regulation, maintains that porn star escorts are *outside* the industry. But the escort business is a major source of willing workers in an industry whose primary mode of production—film—has increasingly diminishing returns. "Everybody does it," performers told me of escorting. Those who do it the wrong way (that is, indiscreetly and in ways that invite public scrutiny) are the problem. As Melissa Gira Grant argues is the case for anti-sex work reformers, for those in the porn industry who

wish to police its boundaries, it is prostitution's public visibility, not the exchange itself, that is most threatening.[24]

External interest and internal self-policing around porn star escorting have intensified as the porn industry's policy of using STI testing and no condoms has come under heightened scrutiny. Scapegoating escorts whenever an HIV positive result appears allows industry management to sustain the narrative that testing works, or would, were "outside elements" not "poisoning" the performer pool. That the vast majority of escorts (including those in my interview sample) insist on condom use with clients is irrelevant for this narrative, invested as it is in upholding testing as *the* effective means of preventing the spread of STIs on set. Porn industry management needs the specter of the barebacking escort to assert a moral boundary between porn and illegal prostitution and support the suggestion that the industry's internal policies function so long as these boundaries are maintained. But, as I suggest throughout this chapter, relying on satellite industries, including escorting, to subsidize porn workers is as much industry policy as mandatory testing. The tension between these investments helps to explain the industry's contradictory approach to the fact of porn star escorting.

With their distinct health protocols, different cultural norms surrounding serostatus, and removed location from discourses of feminine sexual vulnerability, the gay, trans, and queer porn production communities have distinctly different orientations toward escorting. Workers and managers in gay porn were overwhelmingly exasperated by the straight community's conservative approach to prostitution, and explained that escorting is both common and unremarkable in the gay porn community. Connor Habib ventured,

> I don't really understand what the problem is with the straight industry being pissed off at people who are escorting. Why are you the arbiter of what kind of sex work should be

happening? A lot of it has less to do with concern about health and more with this dumb "I'm not a whore, I'm a porn star" thing, and status anxiety.[25]

There is also, Conner added, "less legal crackdown" on male escorts—"As a male escort, you can be 95% sure no one is going to come after you." Those in the gay porn community are less concerned about performers escorting in part because so too is the state. As sex work activists and scholars have long noted, whore stigma and state violence disproportionately impact women workers because prohibitions around commercial sex exist to control women's sexuality.[26] Gay performer Colby Jansen thus theorized that the radically different approaches to escorting in the gay and straight industries could be explained by the gendered double standard: "With women… you're a slut if you're having sex with multiple people and you're even worse if you're getting paid for it. With guys, you're a stud for having sex with multiple people and if you get paid for it, you're an even bigger stud."[27]

Gay porn managers and even community organizations share with gay porn workers a general acceptance of porn's interdependence with escorting and other forms of sex work. The HustlaBall, an annual party whose website boasts a "world of hustlers, hookers, pimps, streetwalkers, flesh-peddlers, porn stars and other scandalous sorts," is one example of gay sex business' less segmented approach.[28] HustlaBall 2015 was sponsored by gay male escort site Rentboy.com, webcam site Flirt4Free (also a frequent sponsor of straight porn industry events), a number of gay porn production companies, and gay talent management company Pacifico Entertainment, among others.[29] Cross-industry advertising is common in the straight porn events as well, but the level of integration evidenced in gay events such as HustlaBall is unheard of in the straight porn context.

Escorting is even less stigmatized in the transwoman performer community. After one transwoman performer disclosed that she also works as an escort, I asked her whether she

faced any stigma from other performers or management. With a rueful laugh, she explained, "the typical standard when you think of a transsexual is a prostitute, you know. That's the word best associated next to 'transsexual.' They look at us and see 'prostitute.' It's the default expectation. There's not the expectation, 'she's a transsexual, she's a doctor.'"[30] There is the "internal stigma," she added. Because sex work is one of a dramatically limited number of employment options for transwomen, she theorizes, escorting among porn workers is by community standards an accepted means of getting by.

Identities at Work

Satellite industries call upon different skillsets than performing on camera, and while some workers found relief in varying jobs tasks and enjoyed direct contact with clients, others described sex work in which they had to interact directly with clients as a kind of demotion. Their frustrations mainly centered on the role of tipping in these industries. Accustomed to having flat fees for porn performances and leaving any negotiations to porn agents, some performers found the transition to many different transactions negotiated in the moment jarring, humiliating even. "I feature danced once," VJ explained, "it wasn't for me. I looked at it as, 'I can go do x,y,z on set and get paid $2k, why would I go sit here and beg for dollars?'"[31] Chanel Preston explained, "I love dancing, it's so much fun, but I hate hustling for money, it's not my style, I'm not very good at it… I don't like to give people control over what I'm doing."[32] Workers frequently made distinctions between taking direction from directors and giving customers control, and between negotiations over scene rates and the "hustling" or "begging" they associated with industries requiring direct interaction with consumers. Others, as we have seen, feel they have more autonomy in satellite industries. In both cases, how these industries organize work tasks and payment shapes workers'

experience of their jobs. This would be obvious in the context of other labors—whether a waitress works for tips or an hourly wage matters—but such distinctions become difficult to grasp in analyses of porn and other sex work that focus exclusively on their sexual character.

As in the porn film industry, income and work opportunity in satellite industries are hierarchized according to race, age, gender presentation, sexuality, and other registers of embodiment and identification. Thus, those who can expect the best working conditions, casting opportunities, and pay in film work—young, white, conventionally attractive, cis women who perform in straight scenes and men who perform in gay scenes—find their privileged status reproduced in satellite industries. The workers who would most benefit from incorporating alternative income streams as a way to resist porn's work rules are often least able to profitably do so.[33]

Sinnamon Love explained that rejecting low paying porn film gigs is in some ways a privilege available to workers who can make ends meet in other ways. Love relayed a conversation she had recently had with a white performer friend. Her friend had expressed frustration that some performers take scenes that pay below standard rates. "If no one worked for low wages, producers would not be able to pay them" was a sentiment many of the white women I interviewed shared. "But not everybody has the advantages, especially women of color, in terms of working outside of porn and being able to make enough money off set in various different business ventures to be able to turn down work," Love noted. She went on:

> Your ability to market yourself outside of filming makes it easier to turn down work. If you have a successful webcam business or you have a toy line with a company or you're able to feature dance in clubs or you have big nightclubs that want you to do appearances, whatever the case might be. That will allow you to turn down work for less money. A lot of times, women of color don't have those advantages. It makes that [rate] disparity a lot bigger. Because there are a lot of women of color that are willing to take work for less money because they need it and they can't afford to turn

> it down. If they could afford to turn it down, you wouldn't see as many companies offering them work for less money.[34]

The dance, webcam, escort, and erotic photography industries valorize white (and white-passing), young, thin, apparently able-bodied, gender conforming performance. Workers who fall outside that ideal overwhelmingly make less, have fewer work opportunities, and encounter poorer working conditions.[35] In addition, sex worker activists have long documented the state's focused efforts to disproportionately incarcerate, harass, and abuse cis-and-transgender women of color (particularly black women) in criminalized sex industries.[36] Satellite industries that operate in direct relation to the porn film industry, such as porn star branded novelties, follow porn's hierarchies and beauty rules even more strictly. At the time of this writing, the performers afforded the potentially lucrative opportunity to have a branded Fleshlight® "male masturbator" included twenty-three white, one black, and two Asian women, all of whom conform to conventional beauty ideals.[37]

But alternative income streams offer opportunities for subverting porn's work structures even as they also re-inscribe them. Workers most marginalized in the mainstream porn film industry are both more likely to produce their own content and to pursue alternative income streams in which they have the greatest amounts of autonomy. It is easier to control working conditions when you are the boss. Independent (that is, not through an agency) escorting and webcam work have the least institutionalized barriers to entry. Anyone, provided they are of legal age, can advertise their services in these industries. Whether they secure clients is another question, but workers suggest that clients have a much broader range of sexual tastes than management can imagine. Because workers in these sectors have more control over their schedules and negotiate pay rates autonomously (though obviously within the confines of established markets), they are less vulnerable to the sorts of management-

enforced pay inequality workers describe in porn and erotic dance. It is very possible, then, that a performer could struggle to find work in the porn film industry but have significant success in independent escorting, for example. This is particularly true for white women who are slightly larger than porn mainstream allows, or who are too mature to be marketed as teens and too young for the MILF market.

Women (cis-and-transgendered) performers, who are generally paid more per scene but tend to work less regularly than their men counterparts, tend to rely most heavily on alternative income streams in other forms of sex work. Women's career lifespans are generally shorter, and the employment discrimination they face upon retiring from sex work is far greater. Thus, making a living means not only paying the bills each month, but maximizing earnings during the short available window in hopes of building both savings and a brand that will sustain one post-retirement. At twenty-five years old, trans performer Venus Lux is already working on a retirement plan. By building her own production company while she is still a performer, she hopes to transition away from performing by age thirty. Lux explained,

> You can't do porn forever. By the time you hit thirty, that's the point when you're considered a MILF. I do not want that under my title. Hopefully by the time I hit thirty, I can say "I'm a hall of famer, I've got my award, I've got my company, and I'm making money off my brand."[38]

The looming threat of 'aging out' informs the drive to work as much as possible *now.* Alternative income streams are an integral part of performers' creative retirement plans. This is particularly crucial for transwomen, who experience intense discrimination in the mainstream labor market *both* as transwomen and as former sex workers. Cis women also described alternative income streams as crucial to staying afloat as porn work dries up. "Later on in my career when I started to slow down, I did what a lot of girls did and segued

into escorting," one performer explained, "that's just a natural transition for a majority of the girls."[39]

Men in gay porn tend to both have longer possible lifespans in the industry and experience less intense stigma in pursuing jobs outside sex work. Alternative income streams are vital to straight men performers' economic stability too, but the gigs on offer for these workers are overwhelmingly less remunerative than those available to women and gay men. While women and gay men can command high pay as escorts, dancers, and the like, men in straight porn who are unwilling to work in the gay sex services sector typically take on behind-the-scenes roles as camera operators, post-production editors, and directors of low-budget gonzo productions.[40] With the exception of directing, these gigs offer generally lower pay than those where performance and direct customer service are required. Camera operators report rates of $150-500 per day, depending on experience, production budgets, and how many scenes one will shoot that day. Production assistants make an average of $100-150 per scene. Behind the scenes work, however, carries less risk of exposure, stigma, and discrimination in the mainstream labor market.

Stigma shapes not only performers' access to alternative forms of income, but also workers' approaches to workplace identity. "Whorearchy"—a phrase sex worker activists use to describe the "class system among sex workers"—structures the porn worker community's hierarchical valuation of the various income streams performers pursue.[41] The overwhelming perception in the mainstream straight porn industry is that, as performer/director Lilly Cade put it, "there is a hierarchy of sex work and porn star is the top. Anything else is beneath that."[42] As such, while almost every woman I interviewed noted that it is impossible to make a living through performing alone, performing remains for most the primary work identity.

But identifying as a porn star (rather than a web cam model or escort who sometimes does porn, for example) is about more than simply staking one's position at the top of an abstract whorearchy. In so identifying, workers seek to control where they fall in relation to structures that differentially apply risk—of criminalization, social stigma, workplace abuse, illness, discrimination upon retirement, and etcetera—to workers according to the kind of sex work they do.[43] We turn now to a discussion of how satellite industries are organized.

Alternative Income Streams in Sex Work Industries

In the following pages, I explore the sex work jobs porn workers most frequently take on,[44] reviewing how labor processes in each are organized and how workers describe their experiences in these industries. Each has commanded dedicated scholarly analyses. My aim here is to provide a brief review of how these industries are structured in view of how workers describe their experiences in these fields in relation to porn work.

Erotic Dance

Work in the erotic dance industry plays a key role in the porn work career cycle. It was the most common first sex work job for my women interviewees, is a popular alternative income stream while workers are actively pursuing porn careers, and is a common transitional industry for performers retiring from porn. A common trajectory began with dancing at a local strip club, meeting "feature dancers" (current or former porn performers on tour), and deciding to pursue porn performance after learning about its high earning potential, both as a discrete income source and a boost for one's dancing career. Felicia Fox started working as an erotic dancer at age 18, then began to tour for "crappy wages" on what she called the "kindergarten circuit"—the kind of dance tour available to dancers who could not

bill themselves as "porn stars." After two years, she decided to take on porn performance, and her base fee as a touring dancer climbed from $100 to $500.[45]

Fox started dancing in the late 1990s. Now, touring rates for feature dancers have fallen alongside porn scene rates. Women performers' current rates for feature dance gigs average between $200-500 per show, with a show lasting one or two songs. Performers make tips on top of this, and charge special rates (around double the standard club rate) for lap dances. They typically book four or more shows in a weekend, and then move on to another club if they are on "tour." Most performers use dance agents, who take a fifteen percent commission, to book and coordinate feature performance gigs. Dancers or their agents may negotiate to insure that clubs pay for travel and lodging during a trip. Dancers who have been in the business for many years suggest that, like base fees, bargaining power over travel and lodging has decreased.

While stripping is available almost exclusively to women who perform in straight mainstream porn, gay men performers commonly take on go-go dancing gigs at gay clubs. Their base rates are much lower, averaging $50. Interviewees noted average tips of only $100. Go-go dancing gigs are, they suggest, more useful as forms of publicity—"exposure, if you're working on building your brand."[46] The earnings they garner, while modest, can add up as part of the broader sex work hustle. "If you go to a city and you book that one shoot and you book a couple of clients and you book a sex show here and you book a dance gig there," Christopher Daniels explained, "it adds up and I'll come home with a nice amount of money."[47]

Fame, appearance, race, and age, among other factors, determine access to gigs and earnings from them. In addition, the pay gap between sex workers who market themselves as

"porn stars" and those who do not can be a source of tension in clubs. Sara Jay explained her uneven experiences as a feature dancer interacting with a club's regular dancers:

> At some clubs [the tension with regular staff is] so bad that they keep you completely away from the other girls. Then there's other clubs where the girls are amazing and nice and they help. It's usually fantastic for them. They see how much busier they are when there's a feature performer here.[48]

Stories of such tensions populate ethnographic accounts of work in the erotic dance industry. Susan Dewey, for example, describes a sense among regular dancers that feature dancers made regular dancers' jobs harder by encouraging regular customers' to expect more sexually explicit performances. Regular dancers also resented the more lucrative and standardized payment structures and personalized advertising features command.[49] As traveling "guest" dancers, features also seem to avoid many of the most exploitative labor practices regular dancers describe, such as the ironic combination of incredible managerial control over hours worked, job tasks, and even appearance, coupled with independent contractor status and its attendant lack of security and labor protections.[50]

In addition to touring as features, some porn performers work as regular dancers at a single club. This was more common among the porn performers who had less frequent access to porn gigs. In these cases, "porn star" status may not protect workers from the various hierarchies at play in the erotic dance industry. Workers in this context reported average rates of $20 per song. A MILF performer in her forties, Tara Holiday works in porn only a couple of days a month and relies primarily on dancing to pay her bills.

> At this point in my life, I get the day shift, I'm not allowed to go at night, even though I'm a porn star, they don't care, I have to work the day shift. Which I have come to appreciate a lot. You get the guys who come to the convention and they take a lunch break at the strip club. Besides having money, they're not totally fucked up. It's actually pretty cool. At the beginning I was like, "oh no, I was rejected by the system, I have to have the day shift." Because you feel that, you know? After a while, even if I could, I wouldn't dance the night shift.

Holiday found a way to make being relegated to the day shift work for her, establishing stronger connections with sober customers. In any case, even working less desirable shifts, dancing far surpasses the straight jobs she has held. Readers may recall the observation featured in this dissertation's introduction: "I've worked my entire life and this is so much better." When I asked Holiday what she liked about dancing, she explained, "the freedom! The money you make. There are no rules, you make your own rules." In addition to its frustrations and even humiliations—being "rejected by the system," for instance—erotic dance can, for some workers, present better pay, more autonomy, and indeed, more fun than other jobs on offer. As the earlier-cited accounts suggest, however, the work some experience as offering freedom and the ability to "make your own rules" is for others a job in which one is asked to "give other people control over what [one is] doing." Workers' diverse perspectives on the experience of working in satellite industries defy any easy ranking of these labors in relation to porn work.

Web Cam Modeling

Web cam performance is another core income stream for many performers. Flexibility, convenience, low barriers to entry, and earning potential are, as Raylene's earlier-cited story shows, key draws in webcam work. Earning *potential,* though, is key here. Interviewees reported payments nowhere near the weekly $10,000 Streamate and similar sites advertise in their recruitment materials. As in porn film work, camming wages have diminished in recent years. Along with convenience and flexibility, camming brings intense demands for emotional labor, both as workers seek to negotiate interactions with clients and perform the identity management necessary in a job in which one's appearance and personality are so blatantly subject to appraisal.

Webcam services operate by providing workers—"models"—with access to a centralized site used to drive web traffic and process payments. Most offer group chat at no cost, but encourage customers to purchase tokens with which they can pay for private time with a performer or, on their own or pooling with other viewers, meet the minimum fee workers set for negotiated performances. Workers' pay is dependent on the fees they command in paid private or fee-only group sessions and the "tips" they make in public "chats." From these, webcam services take thirty to seventy percent. Sites often organize percentage scales whereby workers who make more for the site keep a higher percentage of their earnings. What remains is then re-branded as a "commission" workers receive in (usually biweekly) paychecks. Workers suggest that those sites offering better percentage splits tend to have less consumer traffic—more popular sites can take a larger portion of workers' earnings and still have willing workers. Other considerations in choosing which site to work with include whether workers can be "charged back" for disputed credit card charges (i.e. when a customer complains to the company), what privacy settings are available (i.e. can workers block abusive customers or viewers for their home state), and whether the site retains the right to record one's shows or use one's image in advertising.

Because most cam sites offer minimal training and pay only according to the business individual workers bring, their financial investment in individual workers is low. As a result, web cam work is fairly democratically available. Anyone can do it, whether they make money is another question. KinkLive's 2012 transition from paying webcam models guaranteed minimums to a commission-only system offers one example of how payment structures shape work access and earnings. When KinkLive, the webcam arm of Kink.com, abruptly changed their payment structure, then cam performer Maxine Holloway organized

models in protest of the change and was soon fired.[51] In our interview two years later, I asked CEO Peter Ackworth about the decision to change payment structures. Not paying workers a guaranteed minimum— placing all risk onto workers—allowed the company to hire more widely, he said: "I think we shouldn't turn down an application of someone who's legally able to work. The market should determine who works."[52]

Indeed, the company's hiring norms changed once they were no longer paying workers a guaranteed minimum wage. Chelsea Poe, who started working for KinkLive after the change, told me "I probably wouldn't have gotten hired if [they were still paying minimums], they probably wouldn't have hired a trans woman."[53]Ackworth went on: "[Under the new system] rates are dictated by market forces." "It's a completely free market. If you're very popular, you make very good money, if you're not, then you have to learn how the system works… how to hustle the customer." The discourse of the free market, of course, does an excellent job of covering up all that the hustle entails and the institutionally reproduced structures that shape the hustle's differential demands and rewards.

What, then, does this hustle look like? Workers set their own rates, varying these according to demand (determined by fame, appearance and demographics, and rapport with clients), the type of "show" they provide (i.e. what acts they perform and for how many viewers), and whether shows are private (with only one viewer) or available to groups. Customers' perceptions of what a performance is "worth" and the extent to which they feel entitled to services for free are shaped by their readings of performers' class status. As such, hierarchies of race, age, size, gender presentation, and other registers of embodiment impact the rates workers can afford to charge. Managing negotiations with customers and sustaining the emotional labor required to weather such persistent appraisal makes up the majority of

the work of camming. Such negotiations have become more taxing, workers suggest, as customers' sense of entitlement has ballooned.

When she started camming in 2009, Samantha Grace averaged $1000 for just a few hours of work. Now, she explained, "I've seen a huge decline." She understands this decline as a consequence of the emergence of cam sites that allow "anything goes" on free chat.[54]

> What you have now are these guys who come in to chat and they sit there all day waiting for whatever peek they can get without tipping. [They] don't pay a cent. It enrages me. Four years ago, you would have had to take me to private to see that… Camming that way, working for tips, it sucks. In the beginning, people were just taking me to private.

As in other forms of work, one business or a few workers offering something for free that had previously commanded payment can have a dramatic impact on wages. Tensions surrounding what should or should not be given away for free populated interviewees' accounts of cam work.

But even in the face of pressures to give more for less, performers keep to strict boundaries surrounding what they will do on cam and for how much. In contrast to sex work jobs organized to obscure what exactly one is being paid for, the outwardly transactional nature of cam work can make it easier for workers to enforce boundaries.[55] An interviewee who invited me to sit in on her cam session, for instance, clearly stipulated terms such as "$4 to stand," "$6 to show ass," and "panties off in exclusive only."[56] "If you continue to make requests and do not tip, I will block you," she warned one demanding guest. Later, when another guest asked how much she charged for "exclusive" time, she responded, "$14.99 per minute. I know it sounds like a lot, but I only get 35% guys. I'm not here to work for free." "Pay me, you little fucks," she later added. When customers attempted to push these boundaries, she re-asserted them playfully but firmly. Protecting boundaries and reminding

customers of their terms all while appearing approachable, sexy, and authentically engaged (and, in a formulation that will now be familiar to readers, not 'just for the money') is a delicate and potentially draining task.[57] Some porn performer interviewees are unwilling to do this kind of emotion work, feeling that negotiations with customers constituted a sort of "begging." "I feel like webcam is degrading," one woman remarked, "I know this is going to sound super arrogant, but I've worked really hard to not have to [cam]."[58] Camming remains, however, the most accessible alternative income source, and so porn workers who face more difficulty securing gigs in film, erotic dance, and other income streams often pursue camming even as they object to how the work is organized.

Escorting

Finally, some porn workers parlay their porn star brands into escorting work. Interviewees who spoke about doing this work reported overwhelmingly positive experiences, appreciating escorting's high pay for few hours and greater control over scheduling and work terms. "Of all the possibilities that you have, I think escorting is the best. I love it," one performer told me.[59] "There's a difference between being a regular girl escort and being a porn star," she explained, pointing to higher rates and the free marketing porn scenes provide as benefits porn star escorts can access. In less time, she could make more from escorting than from performing in scenes.

In spite of moral panic within the porn industry surrounding porn star escorts as vectors of STIs, performers who also escort told me they felt that sex with clients was safer than on-set sex. "I think it's safer," one performer/ escort explained, "you have these screened older married men that wear condoms… I know a ton of escorts in the business and none of them go without condoms, none of them."[60] That workers have the individual

discretion to make this call is another factor that distinguishes escort from porn work. Performers also suggest that the sex they have with escort clients is less tiring than on-set sex. Even if escort clients think they want the "porn star experience," most cannot begin to keep up with porn's physical requirements. Sex with clients tends to be shorter, clients tend to have more modest penis sizes, and the positions clients can sustain tend towards the less physically demanding. "I like escorting because you have so much fun, no one is filming you so you can have sex like you have in regular life," one worker told me.[61] Gesturing to the double speak required of workers in criminalized economies, she added, laughing, "oh, did I say have sex in escorting? No, you can accompany people." Clients are not professionals, though, and so sex in this context can be labor intensive in other ways—a bit clumsier, and with partners who may struggle to communicate their needs. Sex in this context requires emotional labor on a different register, a kind of engagement Elizabeth Bernstein writes about extensively in her ethnography of prostitution.[62]

Working in a particularly class-privileged stratum of escort work, porn performer escorts find themselves largely free of police harassment and legal scrutiny. They nonetheless have to contend with the risks of laboring in a criminalized economy. One worker told me that her agent, who booked her for both porn shoots and "privates," was taking more than the agreed-upon cut of her earnings.[63] Because she worked illegally, she felt unable to complain or seek redress. Others choose to operate independently and rely upon dedicated advertising platforms to draw clients. In the years in which I conducted fieldwork, two major advertising sites were shut down and seized by the FBI. Workers lost a major income source and felt less safe in the absence of the facilitated client screening these sites provided. Working as porn performers, however, meant that workers had visibility without

needing to rely wholly on external advertising. In this sense too, the privilege of porn star status protects performer/ escorts from some of the risks associated with criminalized work. It is perhaps in part because of this protection that performers describe overwhelmingly positive experiences with escort work in spite of the legal risks associated with it.

The economics of escorting offer powerful evidence for alternative income streams' potential to threaten porn's status quo. Managers told me as much. When I asked agent Chris Caine about his perspective on performer escorting, he replied,

> I don't like it because girls start getting lazy. They would rather go spend an hour with a guy and make $500 than spend six hours on set and make $1000. They start to evaluate everything by time instead of by the job. They'll say, "I'd rather spend one hour with this guy for $500 than six and only make $1000. In that six hours I could have done four guys and made more money."[64]

From management's perspective, this is the risk of a gig economy that does not sustain workers with performing alone—workers may find that they prefer side gigs and come to rely less and less on porn.

Monetizing the Moment: Paid and Unpaid Labors in the Day-to-Day

Economies of Exposure

If the typical worker in the feminized labor of late capital is, as theorist Nina Power suggests, "like an advert for yourself," this is even truer for porn workers.[65] Workers' status as freelancers who must constantly hustle for their next gig, combined with fans' and management's interest in *authentic* performances make self-marketing a particularly loaded task for porn performers. Across porn and its satellite industries, social media is a major avenue for self-marketing, and it impacts hiring and firing, as in other sectors of the economy.[66]

Porn workers cultivate social media presences not only to secure work, but as part of the work of performing. A director/ producer explained that she observes perspective

performers' social media presences before casting, looking for those who are engaged with fans and who market their scenes: "we do make a lot of money off social media, we want girls that are going to promote their scenes, they're not just going to come in and do it and we're never going to hear from them again."[67] Connecting this to management's interest in hiring workers who are not "just there for the money," she implied that workers who are overly focused on money will stop working after the hours for which they are paid come to a close. Because workers are paid a one time fee and do not receive royalties, managers hoping that they will work even after they have been paid look for performers who are willing to promote scenes for no direct material gain. As in the earlier-described exclusive services contract, exposure and promotion are at once defined as outside work in that they do not count towards paid work hours *and* are integral to the work itself. Extra-work in both senses of the term.

Workers build their personal brands (and, at the same time, those of their employers) on Twitter and other social media, interacting with fans, sharing photos (both pornographic and otherwise) and anecdotes from their daily lives, and advertising the goods and services they provide. They blog about their work and other aspects of their lives and answer questions through their personal websites and with Ask Me Anything events on Reddit and Tumblr.

As I address at greater length in the following chapter, the labors of self-marketing blur the boundaries between work and non-work time, being oneself and performing one's work persona.

Workers negotiate these boundaries in different ways. Some present an online persona indistinguishable from their porn film performances, only appearing in full makeup and

Tweeting about how much they enjoyed the sex on set that day, for instance. Others break character with makeup-free photos of themselves going about daily activities, Tweets about their families and hobbies, and even fourth wall-busting commentaries about their workplace frustrations.

Performers are acutely aware of how intensely their social media presence is scrutinized by management, fans, co-workers, and interested outsiders, yet many refuse to present one-dimensional online personas. I offer two Twitter discussions by way of example. Just before the January 2015 Adult Video News Awards, performer Ela Darling initiated the #realpornawards on Twitter. The hashtag exploded, drawing Tweets from performers across the industry. Contained within the #realpornawards is a rich and not altogether flattering story of labor relations in the industry. Proposed awards include: "Best justification for not doing interracial while not sounding racist," a comment on white performers' role in reproducing the industry's conservative racial politics; "Best blowjob in a Xanax haze," a strikingly open acknowledgement of workers' use of performance enhancing drugs; and "Dr. Riggs Award of Excellence (Most self-diagnosed cases of chlamydia in one year)," naming the San Fernando Valley doctor frequented by many in the industry and disclosing the prevalence of STIs on set.[68] Workers may be "advert[s] for [themselves]," but this is not as straightforwardly controlling as some laments of "personal branding" and the panopticon of social media would suggest.

Likewise, workers approach online interactions with fans in different ways. These can require heavy emotional work as performers endeavor to at once create accessible personas and establish boundaries. Most do this by posting somewhat personal photos (of themselves at home, on vacation, or with friends, family and pets, for instance) and musings (about day

to day activities, news or politics, or their work days), but otherwise minimizing direct engagement with fans (including those who comment on their posts or otherwise address them directly). This kind of direct engagement is available through the various satellite industries that facilitate it, but costs money, and performers are generally quick to point this out. When a fan asked for a free private chat for his birthday, for instance, the generally cheery Tanya Tate replied, "you do your job for free too? #thoughtnot."[69]

While workers resist calls to work for free in many ways, they remain ubiquitous. Some workers explicitly adopt free work or other giveaways as part of a marketing strategy. "There's a lot of free stuff that I offer so that when I do have something that costs something, then [fans] feel like that's an okay trade, I think it's called 'freemium,'" Kelly Shibari explained.[70] More commonly, free work is packaged not as such, but as "exposure" one cultivates in hopes of securing work. As in the porn film business, workers in satellite industries may spend more (unpaid) time campaigning for paid work than they do working (at least to the extent that "working" is defined by remuneration). But if we define "work" as activity that makes money for *someone,* it becomes clear that self-marketing is work, in addition to something workers undertake in preparation for work.[71]

"Constant marketing is the key to success," Verified Call's recruitment materials remind prospective providers.[72] The demands of constant—and unpaid—marketing trouble claims of easy and fast money in porn and its satellite industries. One can "get started now!" and "make your own schedule," perhaps even earning "up to $10,000 per week," as webcam service Streamate attests, but the company's claim that webcam work is "easy and fun!" does not bear out in performers' experiences of the work.[73] Instead, workers must engage in constant marketing, be consistently online and available for work in hopes that someone will

be ready to buy time, and vigorously court perspective buyers in open chat rooms. Each satellite industry has its own conventions tying free work now to paid work later.

The demand to work for free in order to sustain the possibility of future pay is not unique to porn and its satellite industries. Workers across industries are implored to offer unpaid work as volunteers or interns in exchange for the promise of potential future employment. Ubiquitous calls for job seekers across industries to expand their "human capital" through unpaid internships set up unpaid work as a pre-condition, but not a guarantee, of paid employment.[74] Free work is an increasingly popular feature of job interviews in industries ranging from food service to corporate sales, where the "stage" [unpaid shift] and research presentation, respectively, are normalized aspects of the hiring process.[75] As a *Fortune* article un-ironically put it, "how to get a job: work for free."[76] For independently contracted and freelance workers, especially those in creative industries, demands to work for free persist throughout a career. Freelance writers, for example, find their unpaid labor re-packaged as "free promotion" in the "attention economy."[77] As freelancers, porn workers encounter similar demands to work for free in hopes of building brands and securing future work.

This free work brings inconsistent and unpredictable returns. Stoya described a host of unpaid labors—interviews, conventions, Twitter—she undertakes "because hopefully somehow it translates into sales."[78] There are no royalties for scenes, and so the benefits of self-marketing here are harder to trace. "[Producers] already gave me my paycheck," she explained, so "how much do I actually care." But the Stoya-branded Flesh Light male masturbator device does draw royalties, and self-marketing helps to sustain its popularity. A loyal fan base can make a tremendous difference in workers' ability to sustain incomes

through multiple sources. However, constant marketing and cultivation of fan relationships do not always have the returns one expects. Exposure should be understood in the context of the broader political economy of self-promotion. Media studies scholar Theresa Sneft describes "the paradox of late capitalism": (paid) labor markets are contracting just as access to "microcelebrity" status opens up.[79] For porn and other workers, such status has no reliable connection to material security. One publicist explained in frustration that a client with over 100,000 Twitter followers had only ten paying subscribers to her website.[80] Likewise, the free webcam shows performers offer in hopes of driving paying clientele can instead make it more difficult for everyone to charge for interactive time. The "exposure" porn workers are offered in lieu of pay (or as a supplement to low pay) in exchange for their participation in a host of projects and events (including interviews for online and print media, television, and radio) also promises benefits that are difficult to measure.

Workers' calculations about the delicate balance between giving too much and too little away must also be understood in the context of porn piracy, which has, workers suggest, conditioned many consumers to feel entitled to the fruits of performers' labors at no cost. In this context, it is particularly important to nurture a fan base that feels deeply connected to you and is motivated to, as Tanya Tate described her fans, "go out of their way to be good to me, look out for me."[81]

Personalized Goods and Services

Porn workers fill the workweek with an array of gigs creatively scheduled to make the most of their time. They have learned that one can make money (or at least build a fan base that can produce income in the future) almost anywhere and at any time. Workers described this "hustle" as a more or less constant set of labors. As I will explore in greater

depth in the following chapter, when one knows there is money to be made while driving to and from a scene, or that the strip club near your vacation destination will pay $1000 for a guest appearance, it can be difficult to establish discrete time off work. Here, I describe the particular means by which porn workers monetize the quotidian.

Ways of nurturing connections with fans have become increasingly specialized and personal as performers seek to distinguish the direct services they offer from the scenes fans can access for free from tube sites. With 150,000 Twitter followers, Siri has developed a significant fan following with whom she interacts on a regular basis. For fifty-seven dollars, fans can buy her worn and unwashed "everyday panties" along with a photo of her wearing them. They can purchase signed DVDs directly from her, including a filming of an event in which she and fellow performer Sara Jay gave oral sex to their fans in celebration of Germany's winning the 2014 World Cup soccer championship. "Not only does it have all the footage of the entire TEAM BJ event," the product blurb boasts, "but there's tons of fun and interesting BTS [behind the scenes] footage, too, including before and after interviews with the real-life fans who got BJs from Sara and I."[82] Siri sends signed DVDs along with a message; one fan proudly posted a photo of his delivery on Twitter with the hash tag #payforyourporn, an anti-piracy slogan. "Thank you for your support," Siri had included in her note.[83]

Personalized products and services are rarely direct to consumer. In hopes of both protecting their personal information and driving web traffic, workers contract with third party businesses. A universe of satellite businesses, all with different payment structures, caters to performers who wish to market specialized services to fans. The extent to which performers rely on supplementary income streams determines their dependence on these third

party providers. In part because most performers do not associate their primary work identity with supplementary gigs (even as these may be the primary income generator), there is little sense of worker self-organization in satellite industries and few workers described individual or collective efforts to exert control over how their relationships to third party providers are structured.

Performers use their websites to sell scene access to fans, but also market DVDs, still photos, and previously-worn clothing there. Most performers opt for third-party operated sites, agreeing that the initial cost—around $5,000—to set up one's own site is too high and monthly maintenance too labor intensive. Sites operated by third-party providers typically take a percentage split of performers' web sales, and some help produce and then maintain ownership of uploaded scene content. Fans can bid for performers' lingerie, clothing, or shoes on auction sites such as BabeBids, designed precisely for this purpose. The site takes a ten percent "transaction fee" of the final bid, plus additional fees for featured products and pages. Performers offer telephone conversations through services such as Verified Call, through which they set rates of two-to-fifteen dollars per minute. The company charges a "convenience fee" on top of the rates workers set, a strategy its president, Kurt Vogner, hopes is more performer-friendly. Kurt told me the company's inspiration was to provide a more user-friendly platform than 1-800 phone sex services. As such, fans pay for a block of minutes in advance, and workers keep their fee regardless of whether the fan finishes the call. Among the workers' creative ways of using the system that management "hadn't even identified" is that financial dominatrices instruct clients to pay for a block of 100 minutes only to have them hang up after one minute.[84]

Performers have also found ways to use mainstream (that is, not designed with adult services in mind) third-party services in ways their makers did not intend, though this sort of off-label use carries risks. For particularly popular performers who nurture strong connections with their fans, Amazon wish lists can produce hundreds of dollars in gifted products per month. Performers ask not only for lingerie and clothing to be worn in scenes, but also for beauty products, books and music, furniture, gift cards, electronics, and etcetera. In exchange, they offer personalized thank you notes, sometimes with photos of the performer using the gifted item. In 2014, Amazon shut down a number of performer wish list accounts without warning and erased their gift card balances. The company justified this move by accusing performers of using such thank you gifts as forms of "barter," when the service was designed for gift giving for personal use among family and friends. But porn work troubles the boundaries between personal and economic. After having her wish list deleted, a vexed Tanya Tate reasoned, "if the wish list is intended for family and friends, my fans are my friends. And if they wish to treat me to something, they should have that right."[85]

Also in 2014, WePay (the payment processor connected to crowd funding site GiveForward) withheld funds raised to assist critically ill performer Eden Alexander in paying her medical bills. Crowd funding for medical costs is fairly common in the industry, as performers who lack health insurance ask fans to subsidize the health costs producers refuse to pay. Prince Yahshua also turned to this method after sustaining an on-set injury. In justifying their action in Alexander's case, WePay explained that the pornographic material her friends offered to donors constituted inappropriate barter.[86] The same year, Chase bank closed multiple performers' bank accounts. The banks gave no formal explanation but the pattern of worker account closures was tied to the bank's concerns about account holders'

potential (but unproven) connections to illegal adult businesses.[87] Porn and other sex workers turn to adult-industry specific third party businesses in part because they are systematically excluded from mainstream ones, and this empowers some adult-specific business to use particularly exploitative payment structures. Doing business without stigma costs extra.

Managerial Roles in Porn: Directing and Producing

Performers take on directing and producing projects as another way to exert control over their incomes, work environments, and the representations in which they are featured. They do this by becoming management, and thus take control over their own work lives by becoming controlling parties in others.' Having devoted space elsewhere in this dissertation to discussions of worker/ managers' hybrid class positions, and the experience of performing/ directing on set, I focus here on how performers come to take on managerial roles.

Directing for Established Production Companies

Production companies may either recruit established performers to direct or make a case to company management that they should be given the opportunity to do so. In these cases, they are often paid a fee in addition to their performance rate to direct the scene in which they feature. These wages range widely, but are generally lower when directors perform in their own scenes than they would be were two people occupying these positions—a package deal of sorts. Performers agree to this setup for two main reasons: directing can be a way to supplement or ease the transition out of performing, and workers are attracted to the greater creative control it promises.

As in other industries, managing a porn set carries some level of status, and companies use this as a form of immaterial payment. Performers described taking on directing work for free because they wanted the experience and were happy to have the

opportunity. This was more common with the women I interviewed, who tended to have more remunerative work as performers but craved the respect, creative control, and long-term income stability that can come with directing. Jessica drake "realized that the more creative control I had over my movies, the happier I am with them, the more I really get into it. With wardrobe, if I had script ideas, if I had sexual scenarios that I wanted to act out. I was given the creative control to do all those things, so then I started writing."[88] Where performer/ directors get creative control and, perhaps, status from this deal, large, big-budget production companies can access the branding capital well-known stars have accrued. For smaller production companies that operate on lower budgets, performer/ director arrangements with generally less well known male performers operate as a cost-saving measure. Such companies increasingly expect one person do to multiple jobs at once.

In both cases—established performers working for large production companies and less well known ones working for smaller companies—producers, not directors, typically maintain ownership of content and directors receive no royalties. The alternative is to self-finance and create one's own content.

Self-Production

Maintaining ownership over one's performances is important to workers for various reasons. For performers who have exceptionally large fan followings and during periods in which video sales were stronger, owning particularly valuable performances could mean significant earnings. In the mid-1990s, Asia Carerra opted to self-produce her first anal sex scenes, garnering $300,000 in profits. "She made as much money as a producer would have made off her," noted Bud Lee, the film's director and her partner at the time.[89] Today, such

profits are rare even for big-budget studio produced features, but performers still have reason to claim the profits producers would otherwise make off their work.

Self-production of scenes or films to be distributed en mass, usually via "creating a product with your own money and using [an established] company's distribution channels,"[90] requires significant financial investment. And DVD sales are "not as good as they used to be," Kelly Shibari explained.[91]

> You might break even. If you're lucky, you might make an extra couple grand with every movie. It just becomes this kind of staying afloat kind of process. Even four or five years ago you were actually turning a profit, whereas now you're like, okay, 'I spent $12,000 on a DVD, I made $15,000, so now I have 12k for the next movie plus three for my bills.

In this atmosphere, self-producing is less about massive profits than insuring that "at least you get to stay in the business that you love."

Self-producing scenes for one's own website[92] and for direct-to-consumer distribution venues such as Customs4U and Clips4Sale is generally a low-budget endeavor, often relying on reduced production costs and trade labor. Save for the fees involved with operating a website or using such services, workers reap sole profit from the scenes they produce. Self-producers maintain copyrights for these scenes, and can re-post them in a variety of venues. They also maintain decision-making power. "It's really easy to set the price to what you're comfortable with," explained Maxine Holloway, "people do try to haggle with you sometimes but usually, it's like, 'this is the menu, this is the price, do you want to buy it or not?"[93] Performers may or may not view themselves as producers when they create such material. "I'd always kind of produced in a way I didn't realize I was," said Tanya Tate. "When I got into the industry I shot things for my own personal website… In a round about

way, I was producing, I just didn't realize it."[94] As discussed in chapter one, the state too may or may not view self-producers as *producers*.

Beyond claiming the profits from their performances, workers seek ownership over their own scenes in order to command control over the production process. Such control can be particularly important for workers who are routinely shut out of decision making and denied opportunity in the mainstream studio system. For others, self-production is *the* means of getting performing work in the industry. Performers who do not fit within the industry's narrow appearance rules pursue self-production as a way to hire themselves for performance work. Holloway, a queer and feminist porn performer/director, explained, "I didn't really fit into the mainstream category or a lot of the marketable categories in porn, so I feel like if I want to be in porn, I make my own stuff."[95]

Men performer/ directors were most likely to say they were willing to direct for low or no additional fee because this was the only way they could break into the business or ensure regular castings. Production companies are reticent to hire 'unproven' male talent (that is, performers who have not yet demonstrated their ability to maintain an erection and ejaculate as directed). Men typically experience less appearance body policing, but castings are nonetheless generally reserved for younger, attractive men. As such, producing scenes is for many men the surest way to be cast in porn. Some use small-scale production as a means of having legal sex with women porn performers, and find that hiring someone for a scene can be both less legally risky and less expensive than hiring an escort. In such productions, one person often performs, directs, produces, and handles lighting and sound.

Technological advances that have enabled an explosion of amateur content (one cause of diminishing wages and casting opportunities in the industry) have also made professional

performers less dependent on large production companies. Performers hoping to self-produce once had to acquire and learn how to use expensive and complicated camera equipment and handle distribution and marketing themselves, thus risking getting lost in a system that privileged large production companies who had existing relationships with cable networks and retailers. Today, they can produce and sell content fairly easily online, maintaining control over production practices and ownership. In view of its democratizing potential, Mireille Miller-Young describes self-produced online porn as "an intensely politicized space where the line between exploitation and empowerment, pleasure and peril, community and alienation is totally blurred."[96] There is radical potential in that blurring.

For Conner Habib, porn's DIY spirit poses a challenge to institutionalized management: "We don't need your, corporations', money to do whatever we want. We're gonna do it, and we're gonna pay each other somehow.'"[97]

> That system is not in place, but the more of us that do that, the more the system will fail. There's all these crises right now: 'who's gonna pay musicians, who's gonna pay journalists,' who the fuck cares? Why don't we just figure out something else. It's this huge attachment to this old model, 'who's gonna pay me?' Great, until this system is fucking gone, let's figure that out, but in the meantime, let's have our foot in something bigger.

Having a foot in something bigger while also addressing the problem of who will pay workers *now* is a set of commitments that should by now be familiar to readers. For the present discussion, it beckons us to return to the dialectic of porn's gig economy.

Conclusion

Porn's symbiotic relationship to satellite industries at once sustains workers' precarity and allows them to resist it. To the extent that workers view the exposure and brand-building potential porn presents as supplementary (or primary) payment for their film work, the porn industry can count on a willing pool of performers. This relation contributes to workers'

willingness to accept the conditions and pay on offer. If one only performs under another person's management two or three times a month, and needs those performances to sustain their brand as escorts, web cam models, erotic dancers, and custom video producers, they may find too little incentive and too high stakes in making individual or collective demands of their managers in porn. In addition, porn, like other freelance workers, face barriers to collective organizing and vulnerabilities in an employment law system designed around long-term work for a single employer shape.

But if the pitfalls of freelance work apply to porn's gig economy, so too do its promises. In the freelance future, as Freelancer's Union founder Sara Horowitz puts it, "management won't be top-down so much as grassroots-up."[98] Porn workers' creative interventions in porn and its satellite industries bear this out. Workers are often one step ahead, even when it seems that management is exerting control in a straightforwardly top-down fashion. This signals what might become a radical redistribution of control over both profit and work processes. In this sense, the economic form that is now preserving porn's status quo—flexible, precarious, work in which workers shoulder the costs of doing business—could also be its undoing.

"I'm Kind of Always Working, but it's Also Almost Always Really Fun"[1]: The Labor of Authenticity

When I asked porn performer Stoya how she separated work from non-work, she responded, laughing, "I don't." She went on:

> I'm just me… Any hobby gets turned into work, and all of my work, because I'm such a pain in the ass about, "well, it has to be fun for me, these are the people I'm willing to work with," my whole life is a really awesome hobby. So I'm kind of always working, but it's also almost always really fun.[2]

Stoya explained that she is now at a point in her career and receiving enough royalties from the sex toy line modeled after her that she can pick and choose projects, signing on only to those with a concept she is excited about, management she respects, and scene partners she enjoys working with. When we spoke, Stoya was taking a break from shooting for other people to work on a self-produced film.

Stoya is also a writer, and her unguarded and bitingly funny pieces reflect her "I'm just me" approach. In a *Vice* piece titled "Natural Beauty is Just a Marketing Tool," Stoya, for whose personal brand natural beauty is indeed a key marketing tool, details the lengths she goes to in order to manufacture it: "people have told me how much they love the fact that I don't wear a bunch of crap on my face when I am, in fact, wearing a ton of crap on my face."[3] In a *New York Times* piece on privacy, she continues to play with the idea of authenticity. The strangers who call her by her non-stage name "lean in far too close," she writes, and she theorizes performer names as a way to manage the "aspects of ourselves *currently* on display [emphasis added]."[4]

Stoya may be just herself, but that self is not boundlessly available to the public or employers. This chapter opens with a discussion of how porn workers negotiate such boundaries. When life is "put to work," as theorists Christina Morini and Andrea Fumagalli

put it, how do workers claim parts of life to withhold?[5] Blurred work/ life boundaries are explicitly tied to authenticity demands. Thus, critical management scholars Peter Fleming and Andrew Sturdy describe of the work of being oneself as a mode of managerial control according to which "[employees] ought to express more of their *true* selves by breaking the traditional work/ now-work boundary, particularly by being playful and having fun at work."[6]

The chapter then turns to a discussion of how "life put to work" functions as a human resources (HR) management strategy on set. Porn managers' and anti-porn critics' shared discomfort with market-driven sexuality, combined with ubiquitous calls to be authentic in the late capitalist workplace, create for porn workers intense demands from all sides to "be themselves" at work. Such demands are, perhaps ironically, most intense for workers in genres which position themselves as more progressive alternatives to mainstream—queer, feminist, and amateur. I then turn to workers' stories of navigating, resisting, and, indeed, sometimes re-inscribing the demand for authenticity in their work. Because commodified sexuality is so pervasively posited as the polar opposite of authentic sexuality, I close with a discussion of porn workers' perspectives on payment as it relates to boundary work.

Paid and Unpaid Life

Porn work, like other forms of intimate and creative labor, refuses hard boundaries of private and public, home and work, non-market and market. Or, put otherwise, these boundaries are fabricated precisely to obscure such labors.[7] As we shall see, porn workers acknowledge these tensions. So, rather than explore how workers negotiate work-life boundaries, I begin with the premise that these do not exist in the typical sense. Marxist theorist Paulo Virno suggests that, in late capitalism, "the old [Fordist] distinction between

'labor' and 'non-labor' ends up in the distinction between remunerated life and non-remunerated life. The border between these two lives is arbitrary, changeable, subject to political decision making."[8] Paid and unpaid life may be more analytically useful in the porn work context than the concept of work time and life time (and the "work-life balance" that emerges from it), but even these cannot account for the often-intentional blurriness surrounding what time exactly porn workers are paid for. Does a scene fee cover one's time filming a sex scene, a whole day on set, or the hours spent readying oneself for work and recouping from it? Is interacting with fans on Twitter paid time because it might generate more members of a performer's paid site?

The conditions of labor under late capitalism Marxist theorists Christina Morini and Andrea Fumagalli describe under the rubric of "life put to work" are typified in porn performance, a form of labor which harnesses the creative and intimate capacities upon which theorists of late capitalism focus, but often regard as discrete. As in other service and creative industries, porn workers of all genders perform feminized labor.[9] "The *separation between working-time and life-time*" is overcome for performers, who do countless hours of unpaid beauty work, maintain their porn personas even after scenes close, and cultivate their personal brands in order to secure future work.[10] The "*separation between working-place and life-place* is overcome" quite literally for the many workers who shoot film or perform in webcam shows in their own homes.[11] Scholars of creative and intimate labor will recognize in porn work the constant self-making and marketing workers do off set and off the clock. The *separation between production and reproduction* is overcome" to the extent that the production of pornographic films relies upon the performance of the reproductive labor of sex, but also because of the ways in which porn performance demands reproductive

interpersonal and communicative work with co-workers, management, and fans.[12] Though porn workers do put parts of their lives to work, most would resist the suggestion that this process erases any boundary between worker and self.

When she first moved to Los Angeles, Lorelei Lee worked "constantly," shooting five-to-seven days a week, sometimes twice a day. Some weeks, though, she was scheduled for just one scene. "I never knew where I was working the next day or if I was working, so I could never plan anything," she told me.[13] Performers are free to take days off, but the nagging sense that work might dry up made planning time off feel like too heavy a risk. This was not because pressing financial need compelled her to take as many bookings as possible. At the time, Lee said, "I had more money than I'd ever had in my life and I wasn't spending it at all. I was hoarding it, actually." When in LA, she was there to work. During the three weeks per month she was in town, Lee lived in a "model house" owned by her agent with a number of other performers. Her agent lived at the house too, providing transportation to jobs and industry events as well as taking performers to dinners, shopping, and the movies. For agent and performers alike, the workday had no finite end point. Industry heavy hitters would visit the house throughout the day, or performers hoping to make contacts would go with the agency's driver to pick up someone from set, so even on days when no shoot was scheduled, one had to be "on" and ready to be seen. "You're constantly auditioning," Lee explained.

When it won't do to maintain strict boundaries between work and life within the space of a day, some find it helpful to create even stricter lines, marked not by clocking out, but by leaving town for a few days or months. Lee kept an apartment in San Francisco when she lived in the model house, and scheduled a week each month in which she would go home and rest. Other performers leave home in order to find work, rather than to escape it.

Performers who live throughout the US travel to Los Angeles once or twice a month, booking as many filming gigs as possible. This is sometimes based on proximity to family or cost of living. Living away from film work is also a way for workers to establish some separation between their lives as performers and the other roles they occupy. With rates and opportunities for booking many film gigs at a time declining, it is now more important than ever that performers can cobble together as many income sources as possible in order to make the trip worthwhile. Christopher Daniels, a gay performer who commuted from Las Vegas to Los Angeles, explained that, during work trips, "you're hustling the entire time."[14]

But keeping filming and living spatially separate does not address the constant labors of self-making and marketing porn workers undertake in workspaces ranging from cars and bathrooms to dance clubs and gyms. Perceptions of what constitutes "time off" vary among workers and over time and place for individuals. For most of the performers I interviewed, time off meant taking a break from filming and other paid gigs, but continuing to maintain websites, interact with fans on Twitter, pursue bookings, and undertake the countless other unpaid tasks porn work comprises. Time off also has different meanings where beauty work and what are widely understood as necessary tasks of physical maintenance are concerned—a performer might take a few days break from stage makeup and hair removal, but continue a rigorous gym schedule, for instance. As intimate and creative laborers well know, time away from in-person job duties rarely translates to a reprieve from the labors we typically undertake in "private," whether they are express functions of the job or required in order to maintain ourselves as employable. The academic sabbatical is a good example of this.

Much of what performers described to me as "time off" seemed instead to be time to heal from the physical wear and tear of the job—curing an infection, nursing a sprained

ankle, giving the heart a reprieve from Viagra, or abstaining from penetrative sex while tears in mucous membranes repair. Workers across industries can identify with taking time off simply so that we can return to work. Social workers are advised to undertake "self-care" in order to avoid "burnout" and "compassion fatigue," for instance.[15] Posters in my university's hallway advise us to step away from the computer every fifteen minutes, and the university provides break reminders with tellingly branded "Efficiency Software."[16]

Like the spaces and times in which work gets done, work tasks blend into life for porn and other workers. Porn workers are skilled at monetizing even the most mundane aspects of daily life. Where not explicitly monetized, the day-to-day gets folded into the matrix of self-making and marketing workers do in hopes that exposure will pay off at some future moment. Venus Lux put it this way:

> You have to imbed yourself into social media. Every single day. I hated it in the very beginning, you just sacrifice so much privacy. You're eating dinner, take a picture. You're going to the bathroom, take a picture. You're sitting on the toilet, take a picture… Sometimes you loose a sense of enjoying the moment.[17]

Lux explained that though this is the most time consuming and invasive kind of marketing, it is also the most accessible to workers. At this stage in her career, in addition to maintaining a social media presence, Lux has taught herself marketing and web management over time, and she can afford to hire a publicist, targeted marketing services, and a tech person to manage online content. Someone without startup capital or technological expertise can use bathroom selfies and the like for self-marketing.

As Lux says, turning the everyday into work can, among other things, make it difficult to enjoy the moment. Performers manage this risk in different ways. Some have personas complete with discrete tones of voice, and even birthdays, attached to their performer names. The moments one might be less able to enjoy, then, are not your own, but a

character's, and this can make it feel like less of a loss to interrupt them with a selfie. Others struggle to organize workspaces, times, and activities in such a way that they can clearly identify where work ends and life begins. Some refuse such boundaries altogether, finding in work that feels like self-expression an escape from the drudgery of a nine-to-five job. Blurred boundaries between life and work can make workers fight harder to ensure that work brings pleasure. They can also push workers to work harder. We turn now to a discussion of this tension, beginning by situating porn's authenticity politics in the overlapping contexts of feminist critique and late capitalist HR norms.

Situating Authenticity

Market Sexuality and the Authentic

Anti-porn feminist Gail Dines describes porn as a "Multibillion-dollar Industry that Renders All Authentic Desire Plastic."[18] In so doing, she points to a central tenant of anti-porn feminism—authentic sexuality is antithetical to market-based sexuality. This rests on the assumptions that there is such a thing as authentic sexuality and that authenticity is necessarily a social and political good. Investments in authenticity loom large in the story of the feminist "sex wars," shaping the conversation about the pleasures and perils of sexual performance (commercial and otherwise).[19] Consider anti-porn feminist Catherine MacKinnon's claim that the "fact that prostitution and modeling are structurally women's best economic options should give pause to those who would consider women's presence there a true act of free choice."[20] Anti-porn feminists have so successfully set the terms of these debates that their fundamental assumptions about the value of authenticity populate the narratives of those who make porn, even (and perhaps especially) feminist pornographers.

Thus, in her piece in *The Feminist Porn Book,* "porn star, writer, social worker, performance artist, and self-professed gender and sexuality geek" Dylan Ryan describes authenticity's central role in feminist porn. As she and director Shine Louise Houston envisioned what would become the first film in the *Crash Pad Series*, "'authenticity' took on a somewhat mythological quality and became the Holy Grail in our vision of pornographic filmmaking: if we could achieve it, we truly would have transcended the existing constraints of the known porn world."[21] Authenticity has the status of "Holy Grail" throughout the feminist porn community, and, as I will show, across even those porn genres which have not emerged in response to feminist critique. Though they disagree on what those constraints are, anti-porn feminists appear to agree with porn management that authentic sexuality can transcend the constraints of the "known porn world."

Porn scholars have interrogated authenticity's central role in porn's representational politics and marketing practices.[22] I focus here on how authenticity demands shape the experience of porn work. Feminist critique merges with post-Fordist work ethics[23] to make the performance of authenticity a central component of porn work. Thus, porn is one of the many neoliberal workplaces in which the exhortation to "just be yourself!" functions as a management tool.[24] Brooke Beloso argues that both sex positive and radical feminism, in framing sexual labor as a question of gender and sexuality rather than class, have left us with a paucity of resources for understanding sex work as *work*.[25] In turn, the theoretical commitments that render sex work an allegory for class-neutral gender and sexuality politics also leave us with a "dramatically declassified" feminism in a more general sense.[26] Various scholars have argued that certain strains of feminist thought have been far too easily absorbed

into the apparatuses of the capitalist state.[27] The compatibility of feminist critiques of manufactured sexuality with porn management's HR strategies is part of this story.

Authenticity as HR

"The emphasis on 'pleasure in work,'" cultural theorist Angela McRobbie suggests, "can be a profoundly effective form of new disciplinarity."[28] Management's intensified focus on 'attitude' in hiring and firing is one area in which such discipline is enacted. A 2012 human resources management study tracking 20,000 new corporate hires found that, of the 46 percent that failed within a year and a half, eighty-nine percent were due to "attitudinal" reasons such as low levels of "coachability," "emotional intelligence," "motivation," and poor "temperament," rather than lack of concrete skills.[29] These findings, taken from companies such as IBM, General Motors, and MasterCard, resonate with what porn directors told me they look for in a performer. More than the most conventionally attractive or athletically gifted performer, they seek someone with a 'good attitude' who, on and off camera, seems not to be there only for the check.

Authenticity can also compel additional (and unpaid) work and obscure operations of power in the workplace. Thus, for Huffington Post UK's editor-in-chief Stephen Hull, paying journalists is "not a real authentic way of presenting copy. When somebody writes something for us, we know it's real, we know they want to write it. It's not been forced or paid."[30] Porn management, as we shall see, shares an interest in authenticity untainted by money. Such purity of motivation is, for Kathi Weeks, a cornerstone of the post-Fordist work ethic. Here, calls for committed self-identification with work take the place of duty-bound acquiescence to the fact of working to live.[31] Loving and identifying with what you do is in some ways a welcome reprieve from the alienation and boredom that characterizes work's other affective

regimes. But management's commitments to authenticity are inextricably tied up with the profit motive.

Despite their different approaches to visual representations of authenticity, feminist and mainstream porn integrate authenticity as a HR management and public relations strategy in similar ways. Its key feature is workers' performed interest in sex, creativity, and/or political expression as primary motivations for porn work. I use "authenticity" in its capacity as a type of emotional and communicative labor and a marketed commodity. The authenticity with which I am concerned here includes but also goes beyond the evidence of (male) orgasm film theorist Linda Williams identifies as central to porn's visual culture since its inception.[32] I focus instead on authenticity as a performance of being oneself and 'wanting to be there'—and, emphatically, not 'just for the money.' I am not interested in arbitrating whether pornographic representations or performances are indeed authentic, nor am I in search of a *true* authenticity against which other forms can be understood as copies.[33] "If authenticity is constructed and subject to continual change," music scholar Richard Peterson concludes, it takes "authenticity work" to maintain.[34] In what follows, I explore authenticity work from management and worker perspectives, respectively. My framing of authenticity demands as HR management tools is not intended to suggest that porn workers meet these demands unthinkingly. Instead, as we shall see, workers navigate, appropriate, and resist authenticity demands in various ways.

Authenticity On Set

Performers describe conjuring up authenticity as one of their main job tasks on set and off. This impacts the final product, but it also shapes workplace relations the camera

cannot capture. Producers perceive that authentic scenes bring higher sales and directors suggest that the performance of authenticity on set lubricates work environments.

The Market for Authenticity

The striking popularity of amateur-appearing pornography[35] (whether starring non-professionals or simply marketed as such) is a testament to authenticity's market value. Though amateur style porn is not a new historical artifact, the commodity of authenticity takes on different meanings in today's political economic context. (Post)modern consumption across various markets is infused with a nostalgia for a purer, more authentic time.[36] In the porn context, such aesthetics are, writes porn scholar Susanna Passonen, "coded as truthful, authentic, and somehow *less manufactured* than professionally produced images [emphasis added]."[37]

Less manufactured means less labored, shaping the work process of porn production in two key ways. First, the demand for less manufactured porn can make those who do such manufacturing obsolete. Professional screenwriters, camera crews, and film editors are unessential for the production of scenes produced to appear amateurish, and skilled performers become more dispensable than ever when amateurs will work for low or no wages. Performers in Kink.com's amateur upper floor parties, Melissa Gira Grant explains, "may be acting out S&M sex they also enjoy at home, but on set, they are performing work that once commanded a fee."[38]

We see similar trends in the mainstream new media sector, which, as media scholar Chuck Kleinhans points out, has "shed regular jobs while trying to change to amateur or volunteer labor for content."[39] Second, throughout the production process, those who retain their jobs must do the additional labor of performing authenticity—'wanting to be there,' and not just

for the money; being oneself; and engaging with coworkers in ways that are not straightforwardly performed.

In addition to the affective pull of the real that, as Paasonen points out, draws viewers to reality-style media, the illusion of less manufacturing has particular currency when considered alongside sex work stigma and attendant anxieties around purchasing sexual products and services. In the context of messages that sex workers are forced into their work at the hands of monstrous consumers—what anti-sex work lobbyists call an "end demand" approach—there is an air of ethical consumerism in seeking out authentic porn. The stigma of selling and buying sex is not quite as heavy, perhaps, when performers appear to be there 'not just for the money.' Thus, if the market for authenticity reflects consumers' increased interest in "the interiority, multifacetedness, and behind-the-scenes lives of porn performers," as media scholar Feona Attwood puts it, I think we can understand this as a manifestation of consumers' discomfort with commercial sexuality.[40] But like anti-sex work 'end demand' campaigns more broadly[41] ending demand for professionally produced pornography can degrade working conditions, require additional (and unpaid) labor of workers, and ensure management increased power and profit.

The ease with which porn managers integrate anti-porn feminist narratives of sexual labor into their HR strategies underscores this point. Across mainstream, amateur, and even feminist porn genres, the managers I interviewed overwhelmingly shared with anti-porn feminists the belief that economic need negates real consent. For many managers, this translated into the conviction that they—management—should arbitrate the correct reasons to do sex work. Managers' agreement with anti-porn feminists on these points was so pervasive

that narratives of saving wayward women populated management's responses to my queries about labor processes from casting to payment.

Mike South, a straight gonzo director, detailed his selective casting process:

> I don't shoot anybody that I believe is doing it out of desperation, whether it's for drugs [or] a quick fix of a financial problem that's only going to be back in 30 or 60 days… And then on the flip side, I had one girl who was from a very wealthy family here in Atlanta. She went to country clubs, she had a great job, and when I asked her why she wanted to do it, she said "because I'm a freak." That's more along the lines of the answer I'm looking for. I don't care if you're doing it for the money, that's part of it. That's understood. But what I'm looking to weed out is that whole desperation factor.[42]

Mike went on to explain what he does when an applicant does seem to want to get into porn out of desperation. "I'll look for other ways that I can help her. Maybe get her a job at the local video store or the local magazine. Whoever I know that might need a girl Friday." Such well-intentioned efforts to "help" young women who are struggling financially sound strikingly similar to those anti-sex work feminist "rescue" operations that seek to bar women's entry into sex work, offering in its place lower-paid but more respectable factory and domestic work.[43] In both cases, the helper's investment in authentic, non-market-driven sexuality—rather than a critique of forced work under capitalism—drives the desire to help.

Adopting the narrative that sex for money is a problem, some porn managers posited less money as a solution. Farrell Timlake, owner of amateur porn distributor Homegrown Video, explained:

> Our pay is a little lower than the typical producers are paying… So, part of the intention of that is to really get the people that want to be doing it for the exhibitionist thrill. We definitely stay away from people that seem desperate about the money… Part of our whole pitch is that it's got to be about the fun. That's really what we're looking for; it's got to be real emotion. Keeping that authenticity is all about getting that emotional connection of people that are really there for the *right reasons.*[44]

Likewise, queer porn director-producer Courtney Trouble noted that, because queer and feminist porn pays so much less than mainstream—$200-400 in contrast to $800-1000 per scene—performers come to queer porn for the right reasons:

> People only apply to work for me if they really want to, which is kind of nice. I'm never concerned that somebody doesn't want to do porn but they're coming to me because they're desperate for $2000. Even then, it's sex work, so that's what you do for $2000, but there's a certain amount of ethics from the people creating the pornography, too, of taking advantage of sex workers.[45]

For both Trouble and Timlake, lower-than-average pay helps to allay concerns about consent and authenticity in commercial sex. It also saves companies money. But it is far too simple to dismiss these perspectives as pure opportunism, and such a move obscures precisely what is so toxic about late capitalist work regimes. Conscious capitalism is not a superficial ruse; it is thoroughly integrated into the mechanisms of extraction.

A shared discomfort with market-based sexuality merges with post-Fordist management strategies to make porn a perfect laboratory for the dictate to "do what you love."[46] Thus, narratives of protection and the HR truism that workers who love their jobs work harder function together to help managers get more out of workers for less. When casting, a straight gonzo director/producer speaking on a panel at the 2015 Adult Entertainment Expo explained,

> It's great now… because you have social media, you get an idea of the girls' personalities a little bit. Before you cast someone, you can tell a little bit about their psychological state… How eager they are to do it. How motivated by money they are to do it, as opposed to the fun aspect.[47]

To this an audience member probed: "Is it better to hire people who are there for money, or fun?" He replied: "Well, you have someone who might not put in the best performance, they might not have a great attitude. They might be a little distant to the other talent. It might not work out as well as someone who's really eager to be there for the experience as opposed to

the paycheck." On the same panel a director/producer regarded for her work in "alt" (alternative, housed within the mainstream industry but modeled on a punk aesthetic) porn concurred. She added, "[in casting] when you do contact them, if the first thing they say is 'how much do I get paid?' we usually stop talking to them after that because we've had experiences in the past, we know that [with] that kind of girl, there's going to be a problem somewhere down the line."[48]

The performance of 'wanting to be there' is itself a form of work—part of the implicit job description when managers require that workers be there for the "fun aspect," or, in activist porn, political motivations. Such a performance of authentic enjoyment also helps management extract more of the other labors porn workers do. As chapter three's discussion of on set work shows, performers are expected to adapt to unpredictable hours, the changing demands of a scene, and a number of other contingencies. Having a 'good attitude' in this context means being happy to work how and for as long as management says it takes. Part of this is the desire among management across industries that workers not pollute the workplace atmosphere with reminders that they would rather be elsewhere. In interviews, I encountered much grousing about "divas," but no one complained that an actress lacked the agility to do a certain sex position.

Performing authenticity can help secure consistent casting opportunities, but it is also a way for performers to ease job strain and connect with fans. Performers' hoped for outcome from an individual gig extends beyond a day's pay and the promise of being hired again. A scene is also advertisement for the various income-producing activities workers undertake. One may wish to withhold one's full effort from a producer who pays poorly, but a lackluster scene could be as damaging to the performer trying to draw customers to her webcam shows

as it is to the producer. In addition to blurring the boundaries of where work begins and ends, porn work can make unclear for whom workers are working.

Wanting to be There: Workers' Commitments

Managers are not alone in their discomfort with mercenary sexuality. Workers exist in the same discursive landscape, and many want to make clear that they are in porn for the 'right reasons.' As such, while I did not ask interviewees about their motivations for doing porn work, they wanted me to know. For many, it was important that I know that they were not just there for the money. While mainstream management does not typically present the scenes they produce as politicized, mainstream performers see their work as politically meaningful. Having been involved with feminist and queer organizing during her undergraduate career, Siri entered the industry committed to combatting the "hatred of women's sexuality."[49] "Having a job where I can be openly sexual is so freeing," she explained, "and then the fact that I'm getting paid to do it is just the cherry on top."[50] Nina Ha®tley described herself as a "sexual missionary," and, like many workers, said that she was proud of porn's role in a broader movement for sex positivity.[51] Richie Calhoun talked about his decision to enter porn as a way "get into that conversation" about sexual shame: "I wanted to be part of pushing that out of that spot in our psychology."[52] Raylene talked about porn as an important outlet for viewers, and joked that sperm banks would be at a loss without it. "I do think that it really does help some people," she said.[53]

Performers who work in queer and feminist porn were even more likely to point to such motivations. Chelsea Poe explained that, in contrast to the mainly financial motivations she ascribed to mainstream performers, queer performers are driven by a "queer, punk ethic."

> I think we do care about paying our bills and stuff, but it's such a punk ethic that's so much about our political beliefs... Porn has no interest to me if I'm just sitting there

> contributing to something that I'm against. It's what makes it different than working at Starbucks. You're just paying someone else's bills and getting a cut.[54]

In line with this perspective, Poe has been a vocal opponent of transmisogenist language and themes in porn, and she generally works for queer productions whose politics are more in line with hers. But as the above quotes suggest, her assumption that mainstream performers feel that they are "contributing to something [they are] against" but do so anyway because it pays is not borne out in their own narratives. Most workers across porn genres were in some ways proud of the products they produce. They also share with queer and feminist performers a sense of satisfaction in doing work not just for the money, but because they enjoy it.

If it matters to management not to be the kind of boss who employs sex workers who do not really want to be there, it also matters to some workers that they are not the sort of (sex) worker who only shows up for the check.[55] Personal investment in work is particularly loaded in the context of sex worker stigma and whorerarcy. It is also a testament to the pleasure workers across industries take in doing work they are passionate about and producing products and services that are socially useful. Again, this is an approach to work that is increasingly demanded of workers in late capitalism.

Worker Control

The independence and "DIY" spirit that characterize feminist and amateur porn provide ample opportunity for workers to control the terms of their labor. Labor scholars have long praised worker control over production processes as a means of improving both working conditions and workers' sense of autonomy.[56] Along with amateur production, queer and feminist porn seem to offer a prime example of what worker control can look like. In her *Feminist Porn Book* essay on the practice of directing and producing feminist pornography, Tristan Taormino notes, "the production must be a fair and ethical process and a positive

working environment for everyone."[57] In the service of this goal, Taormino seeks to "empower the performers to show us what they want to do, to share a part of their sexuality with the camera," and she hopes that this will allow her to "capture some level of authenticity, a connection between partners, and sense that everyone's having a good time."[58] We can think of films produced with these priorities in mind as "organic, fair trade porn."[59] Queer and feminist porn's focus on worker-driven production is an important intervention in mainstream's gender and sexual codes, as well as the conditions in which workers are asked to perform in ways that bring physical or psychological distress. It can also function to ask workers to do more for less. "Shar[ing]" one's sexuality can be more labor-intensive than simply playing a part.

As chapter three's discussion of worker/ manager interactions on set shows, performers suggest that the demands of performing authenticity can make it harder to negotiate pay and working conditions. Performing authenticity—here being excited and willing—is both a form of work in itself and can make it harder to negotiate other work terms. Other performers described this problematic in relation to work hours. On sets I observed in which the director seemed invested in creating a relaxed and fun atmosphere, workers stayed on set to hang out after their scenes completed. On more straightforwardly business-like sets, they tended to get paid and go on with their days directly after filming.

Performer/ producer/ director Joanna Angel explained how her sets are different from big-budget mainstream productions:

> My sets are kind of family-like… *It's not just another day at work*... I always say to people, hey, "come at one o'clock, but you're probably going to be sitting around 'til four," we're not the most punctual of sets because we tend to take a long time to shoot things because we're all joking around and hanging out. I try to make it feel like a summer camp… I really do want the energy to be good and I want everyone to have fun. I used to have a camera guy that worked for me, and he was so militant

> about everything running a certain way and the quality being held at a certain standard. That didn't work out on our set because I want everyone to have fun.[60]

Here again, having fun at work is a job requirement, with joking around and hanging out as part of the relational work of porn. Like other manifestations of the 'have fun!' management approach, this can both improve the experience of working—who would prefer bad energy, after all?—*and* function as a tactic of control.

Mobilizing 'fun at work' is not necessarily exclusive of management's efforts to create positive working environments in other ways. Nonetheless, management's tendency to view authentic, fun sex *as a working condition* can distract from (other) material concerns. Girl-girl studio Girlfriends Films president Dan O'Connell talked about his commitment to treating performers well. I asked what such treatment looks like on set. Directors for the studio go out of their way to hire crews who will be respectful, he explained.

> Also, most of my scenes result from one girl asking to shoot with another. We only shoot bisexual and lesbian girls. If the girl is straight, we don't use her. Sometimes you just don't know. We want the girls to be having fun sex… That makes them happy and satisfied and gets us a much better scene at the end of the day.[61]

Performers had told me that Girlfriends also pays better than most girl-girl studios, so I asked O'Connell about this. "Oh yeah, we pay $800 and most of the other companies are nickel and diming the girls. We also pay everybody the day that they shoot," he responded. In addition to producing a better product, fun at work is presented as central to leaving workers "happy and satisfied." Indeed, this comes to be seen as more important than wages.

For some workers it is. Stoya noted, for instance, that too much focus on porn as a job like any other can leave out the fact that "I only do my job when I love my job."[62] Interviewees did present fun and sex, in addition to money, flexible hours, and other benefits, as draws to porn work. Others made a point of taking about porn work as "just a job." My

interest is not in suggesting that workers should approach porn work in one way or the other. The point here is that management's tendency to cite authentic, fun sex as a key aspect of positive working conditions, meanwhile presenting payment as tertiary, is one example of the ways in which a discourse of authenticity can obscure matters of the material.

The discourse of authenticity can function this way regardless of the political commitments with which management operates. Feminist director/ producer Madison Young, for instance, wants no part of mainstream porn in which, she says,

> Young women with crisp fake tans, long platinum blonde hair extensions, silicon breasts, and acrylic nails are fucking cocks that are artificially erect. They vocalize a performative sense of pleasure… this assemblage of 'fast food' pornographic sex continues until the female performer is instructed to 'fake' an orgasm."[63]

In stark contrast, she describes feminist porn as "creating space for the expression of authentic self in relation to our sexual desires [that] has the ability to radically change pornography." But, as we have seen, mainstream productions are as invested in authentic self-expression as are their feminist and queer counterparts.

This is not to say that the mainstream model that Young caricaturizes[64] is less extractive. Indeed, the mainstream performers Young conjures would no doubt pay for their own hair extensions, breast augmentations, and erectile performance enhancers, and, as we shall see, some find scriptedness draining. All the same, to assume that the performance of an *authentic* self is less labored devalues performers' work. Further, the suggestion that there is such a thing as non-performative sexuality runs counter to the insights of queer and feminist critique from which feminist and queer porn ostensibly draw their language and ethics.[65] Young's criticism of mainstream porn also gestures to an undercurrent of classism in organic porn. Along with obviously labored performances, class-coded "fast-food" production and garish markers of feminine sexuality emerge as the most offensive features of mainstream

production, and feminist porn appears as respectable upmarket alternative. Labor falls out of view.[66]

Bella Vendetta is a 13-year performer and director in the straight alt and BDSM genres. She does not usually take gigs in feminist porn because the rates are so low, but signed on to shoot with a well-known feminist director because she felt passionate about the project. While an outspoken critic of low pay rates in feminist porn, Vendetta maintains that "there's a special magic to 'you guys do whatever you want and we'll film it.'"[67] But after paying her own travel expenses to get to the shooting location and covering her own STI testing costs, Vendetta arrived on a set that had worker control in abundance: "I'm like, 'oh, so, you're not just hiring me for $400 to be a performer, I'm also styling, doing my own hair and makeup, and coming up with the content for the scene. Okay, I get it, so I'm really doing like four jobs. That's cool, but be up front about that."

Offering a similar critique against producers who extract additional labor under the guise of feminist authenticity, sex worker activist Mikey Way writes "fuck your feminist porn."[68] Writing about a particularly frustrating experience working for a feminist porn company, they explain, "this company gets everyone so worked up about them supposedly being an ethical alternative to mainstream porn that nobody notices that they're an international corporation paying next to nothing for people to style, shoot, produce, edit, and perform in their own work."[69]

It is not so much that authentic scenes are less produced, then, as that the labor of their production is both concealed and concentrated with performers. This is the case not only in those queer/ feminist productions that employ such an approach, but also in mainstream's gonzo genre. Gonzo performer/director/ camera man Alex Linko explained his

understanding of management's rationale behind creating jobs like his: "If the camera man and the male talent could be the same guy, that saves someone's salary. No sound guy anymore. All the sudden, these big crews that people were used to turned into two people, then one person."[70] Champions of corporate downsizing and "lean" production would no doubt recognize this strategy.

It is not only that performers in queer and feminist porn often do multiple jobs for the price of one, but also that, with the rare exception of feminist directors who work for large, big-budget production companies, that price is a fraction of what performers in other genres can expect. Most queer and feminist directors use a flat rate structure, avoiding mainstream's pay hierarchies. These productions, managers suggest, are far less lucrative than mainstream ones, but low profits are an excuse for low pay only if we buy into the romance[71] of DIY entrepreneurship. Some performers flatly rejected this discourse, and so opted against performing in such productions. "Queer porn pays $300, but they get away with it by saying it's 'art,' whatever," said one mainstream performer who identifies as queer and feminist but prefers not to perform in films marketed as such.[72] She went on:

> But you know what, you want to make a porn business, pay me a fair rate, if you want to have a hobby, have a fucking hobby. If you want to make it your career, you need to respect that it's also my career. I can't have my career if you're not paying me a fair rate. They don't want to hear that.

This perspective was common among mainstream performers, who often described queer and feminist productions as, perhaps ironically, at once the most pretentious and the worst paid. Performer/ director Lily Cade put it this way: "I always thought I'd end up in queer porn… But I ended up here, being LA's token lesbian. Rates are better here, working conditions are better, and we're not full of shit. In LA porn, people know that we're here to make a product."[73] Not all mainstream workers experience LA porn this way. As we have seen, here

too the boundaries between expressing oneself and making a product blur, and this eases some strains as it creates new ones.

Performers who work regularly in queer and feminist porn and identify with the communities that surround them generally appreciated their flat rate policy and complained little about pay, believing that their bosses were not cashing in on their performances. "It's a really a punk ethic, you're getting what they can give you," Chelsea Poe told me. Overwhelmingly, workers in the genres connected the low pay they received to the authenticity of their performances. Poe explained that she has "never had an issue with wanting to ask for more money" for queer porn performances.[74]

> Mainstream is very much work. I've had fun shoots with them… but it's work, where it's about the shots more than just going and fucking… Compared to queer porn where it's all about, "we're just gonna set the cameras up and you guys are gonna fuck and whatever's the product is the product."

When I asked her how she felt about the genre's rate structure, Siouxsie Q, a sex work activist, writer, and performer in feminist, mainstream, and BDSM porn, explained,

> You get to have this exciting sexual experience that for me—the part of myself that's an exhibitionist—it's very fulfilling in that way. When the camera is there, it is hotter for me. And then at the end of it, I get paid too. I don't think that's a very sustainable model and if we want feminist porn to move forward, I hope it's not always like that. But speaking from my experience, I've always felt great about how much I got paid.[75]

Not long after our interview, Q published an article that further crystalized how complex questions of commodification and authenticity can be. In it, she wondered whether "'authentic' is just another genre of porn, like 'MILF' or 'casting couch' that places performers in a box for marketability."[76] Echoing colleague Arabelle Raphel's Tweeted concern that the language of authenticity "erases the fact that performing is labor and not just 'fun,'" Q offers this challenge to queer and feminist producers: "I would like to see more emphasis placed on fair labor practices than on whether or not I have a 'real' orgasm." Porn

work for Q is an exhibitionist pleasure for which pay is tertiary. Yet at the same time, labor practices are more important to her than the real or perceived authenticity of that pleasure. Such seemingly conflicting perspectives populated my interviews with porn workers. Workers representing various porn genres spoke about the authentic self-expression and pleasure they experienced on set *and* consistently critiqued discourses of authenticity around their work.

Again, workers and worker/ managers acknowledge these tensions. "It's hard in the indie, feminist, and queer scene," explained Maxine Holloway, "because there isn't a big budget and I really am super behind a lot of the things politically and want to support feminist and queer and indie pornography, it would be really nice if we got paid a little better."[77] "But then," she added, "as someone who produces and directs, I get it. It's not easy to come up with those funds." She went on to describe her own process co-producing and performing in the "porn theater" performance group Cum and Glitter:

> Being able to pay people as well as we could was really important to me. Not just giving people this stage for artistic expression and all these things that are important to us, I want to give people that but, I want them to be compensated and feel valued for their performance and their time.

This meant being straightforward about the show's funding and dividing ticket sales evenly among all performers. "I think being very transparent with your finances, especially when there may or may not be a lot, is key," she explained. The show did well, and performers' take home pay was more than the typical queer porn rate. "I think it was a good feeling," Holloway said, "to have total creative control over your performance and really be doing something that you want to do and receive good payment." But this perspective—workers are entitled to creative control (authenticity, if you will) *and* good pay—was uncommon among interviewees in decision-making positions. Most, as we have seen, see autonomy and good

pay, being oneself and doing a job, as conflicting. This means, explains Miller-Young, that "workers must lower their rates if they wish to perform in spaces where they may experience greater care and respect, and enhanced autonomy in their scenes."[78]

Performing Authenticity

Queer performer/director Courtney Trouble suggests that, in contrast to mainstream porn, "You aren't really working as hard," in queer productions: "It's still sex for money but most of the time, there's no script, there's no formula, you don't have to do a soft core version then a hard core version, you don't have a director telling you which sex positions to be in."[79] As we saw in chapter three, mainstream's conventions and workflows can indeed be labor intensive and tedious. But worker control as it exists in "less manufactured" productions can create new areas of strain as it alleviates others. Performers in unscripted, authentic porn labor on a different register, but most workers do not share management's perception that they are "not really working as hard" in these contexts.

Workers' wage-hour calculations of work in different genres illustrate the complexity of defining what "working as hard" means. We have seen that genres marketing authenticity tend to make for shorter work days. But while less time is spent waiting on sets directed by queer and feminist porn directors (who tend to be more mindful of performers' time), workdays here can be longer than those for gonzo scenes (which average two hours) because, as Danny Wylde explained,

> They have this process of, "oh, we'll interview you, talk about it, go over everything, and then at the end we're gonna decompress." And the process of the films seems very important to those producers. Because they want to make sure that everyone is okay with what they're doing and *they also want to capture that on tape*. They have never been the type of people to keep you for 12-15 hours.[80]

Most performers appreciated this attention to consent both because it improves their own experience and models explicit consent to viewers. Sometimes, though, they simply want to shoot a scene and go home. As the above quote suggests, directors take more time to discuss consent not only for performers' benefit, but also because this is part of the brand—they want to capture it on tape. Workers are, however, unlikely to discuss the aspects of the work process that they would change directly after shooting a tiring scene, on film, and before they have been paid. The post-scene interview is one of many instances in which, when working conditions are part of the brand, modeling those positive conditions may mean more work. Likewise, Australian performer/producer Gala Vanting describes a required unpaid training in "'paradigm' porn performance" required of performers who hope to work for a production company which boasts 'natural,' 'unscripted,' and 'amateur' content.[81]

Queer and feminist performers at once framed their porn work as an extension of their personal politics and desires and spoke about the strains of authenticity. Maxine Holloway described pleasure and sexual exploration as job benefits alongside more flexible hours and higher pay than she could find in other fields. She acknowledged, too, that the pleasurable, political, and artistic aspects of performance sometimes encouraged her to work for lower rates or to volunteer her time altogether. Holloway described the emotional work she does to assure that some parts of herself are not put to work:

> The first scenes I did were mostly for queer, indie, [and] feminist productions, so all about authenticity. So I brought it, I brought everything I had to these scenes. And it wasn't [until] about a year into it where I started to realize that I needed to set boundaries. I didn't really know where my porn began and my personal sex life ended. Which I think made for some really awesome experiences, amazing performances, but it wasn't until later that I realized I kind of needed to separate those things. Which I feel like has been good for sustainability of doing sex work.[82]

Her description of the emotional work required to maintain a self outside of work is a concern echoed by critics of immaterial labor in late capitalism.[83] Sex work scholarship already offers vibrant discussions in sex work research about whether such boundary work is indeed necessary for workers,[84] my aim here is to show that, for workers who do desire such a boundary, authenticity can be experienced as a strain.

In various and subtle ways, performers across porn genres describe desire as labored, even as they resist an economistic understanding of their work. During the same conversation in which he playfully pushed against my use of the term "porn work," gay mainstream performer Conner Habib described making a conscious choice to "go in and like it" on set. Habib remembered making a similar decision while working at a bookstore:

> There was a moment where I started hating my job, and I was like, okay, there are two choices, aside from quitting. I can either be totally involved and try to make this store the best store in the world or I can just not give a shit and just come and put my time in, and those will be my two ways of enjoying this. [In porn] the people who check out when they come in are choosing the latter choice, which is fine.[85]

Choosing to "go in and like it" does not, however, require giving oneself totally to the work. In the same interview, Habib explained,

> When you do sex work right it creates a healthy detachment from your body. When you do it wrong, it makes you even more dependent and locked into your body. And that makes things really bad in your life because you confuse yourself with your body.

Dialectics of detachment and investment trouble any neat boundaries among varying strategies for managing emotional labor. One can be "totally involved" *and* cultivate a "healthy detachment from [one's] body." Performers' emotion management strategies shift fluidly, changing throughout their careers and even during a given workday. Such flexibility is important in part because porn performers are called upon to perform on at least three

levels: for the camera, for management, and for and with co-workers. Emotion work strategies function differently according to the context in which workers deploy them.

Performers across genres suggest that the work of manufacturing realness is lubricated when all screen partners are willing to participate. Refusing to do that work withholds labor from management, but can also make work more difficult for co-workers. This theme emerged most frequently in interviews with performers who do same-sex scenes with screen partners who may not engage in same-sex sex in their non-work lives. There are ongoing discussions in performer, manager, and fan communities about performers who are perceived as "gay for pay," that is, willing to engage in same-sex encounters only for money and with no pretense of authentic desire.

I asked Ela Darling, then a "girl-girl" performer, about her perspective on this. The reader may recall Darling's analysis, featured in chapter three, that convincing one's partner of one's attraction, rather than the attraction itself, is what is most important. She went on:

> What bugs me is when before the scene, a girl is like "I never have a real orgasm, I always fake my orgasms."… I'm a professional… If you can't come on camera, I understand, but if you're gonna fake it anyway, I don't need to know beforehand… We're trying to reach a goal together.[86]

The work of performance is not only creative, but also relational—performers endeavor to reach the goal of a successful scene *together.* Realness here is multi-layered. While producers may be satisfied with faking it for the camera—what might be understood in sociologist Arlie Hochschild's terms as "surface acting"—most performers pursue "deep acting" in their own practice and hope that co-workers will do the same.[87] The scenes performers talked about feeling most proud of and energized by were those in which they experienced a connection with their on-screen partners. This connection need not be based on

sexual desire, however. Performers also describe camaraderie between friends and respect between colleagues as *real* connections that facilitate the work of performance.

On sets, I observed screen partners helping each other to become emotionally and physically ready to perform, trading notes on each other's sexual preferences, flirting, and touching one another. These exchanges are absolutely gendered—female performers tend to do more of the work of physically readying their male partners for a scene, for example—but performers of all genders manufacture authenticity together. Such exchanges can be technical to an extent that is difficult to imagine in other contexts. A performer might explain to her scene partner that she prefers to have her nipples touched in a particular way, but never after orgasm, for example. These conversations were governed by often-unspoken boundaries and felt more friendly and playful than intimate and earnest.

Performers' descriptions of interactions with screen partners complicate any neat divisions between the real and the performed. Thirty-nine year veteran Herschel Savage put it this way:

> What worked for me as a sexual performer is that I'm basically a romantic, the time I was with a woman, assuming that we connected on some level, it was a romantic scene, I was in love! And then it was over. I never crossed that line. I could find beauty in anyone, especially women that didn't feel very attractive. I would make them feel beautiful. That meant something. And it meant something to me.[88]

Thinking about the work of falling in and out of love hundreds of times (Herschel is credited with having performed in over 1,000 scenes), I offered: "That's such an incredible skill" Herschel responded, "I wouldn't think of using that word, it's who I am. I always try to make people feel good about themselves. But I believed it, I wasn't *just* performing." On the backdrop of a discourse that sets up the real against the performed, terming Savage's ability to fall in and out of love at just the right time a "skill" cheapened the meaningful connections

he had with co-workers. While naming such abilities "job skills" is useful from a labor studies perspective, it may be less so to workers themselves.

But whether one "believe[s] it" or is "performing" has little impact on the reality that connecting in this way helps management and workers alike make money, both as it may produce more saleable scenes and ease the production process. But these connections are not only tools of production and exchange. Deeply felt connections among performers can also help to build relationships and solidarity that work against labor discipline. Much of the informal organizing and information sharing that comprise collective resistance in the industry begins when performers connect on set. Such connections can also make work less straining. In Savage's case, these connections "meant something," allowing him to construct an identity apart from the hyper-masculine "stud" roles he lamented being type cast in. Relationships among workers can mitigate the alienation some performers, like workers in other industries, experience in their work. Capital can also take up these connections and both market them as part of the product and integrate them as tools of labor discipline. Again, the same strategies can both help workers negotiate the demands of authenticity work and facilitate the commodification of intimacy.

Playing the Part: The Labor of Inauthenticity

Some performers do describe mainstream scenes as more taxing because of their scriptedness. Mainstream scenes require a great deal of unpaid preparatory labor; scenes produced to appear authentic tend to be less demanding in this respect. Mainstream productions typically require more physically strenuous performances and are more likely to carry the risks associated with insertive sex and fluid exchange. As Trouble suggests, the physical work of mainstream—hours of shooting bareback sex in prescribed positions all

while ‘opening up’ for the camera—is wholly different from the work one does on a queer set, which commonly involves sex using sterilized toys and gloves and in whatever positions performers find most pleasurable. Mainstream scenes can also involve scenarios that run counter to performers’ politics, ethics, or preferred self-presentations, less of a risk when performers themselves are setting the terms of a scene.

While some performers care little about the final product so long as they get paid, most want to be part of projects they are proud of and which represent them and the social groups with which they identify respectfully. Importantly, workers’ accounts do not line up with anti-pornography feminists’ understandings of what makes a sex scene demeaning. Instead, they took exception to being asked to fake orgasms, act out cheating plots instead of ones featuring consensual swinging, and use racial and trans phobic epithets in scripted dialogue. Some workers refuse to perform roles they find politically objectionable, but most cannot afford to turn down all such work. Instead, they develop ways of working within and against the conditions on offer.

Workers who do turn down roles for representational reasons are more likely to rely on income sources outside of porn performance and view porn as an avenue for sexual and political expression. Kelly Shibari talked about her frustrations with BBW scenes that caricaturize fat women. In one instance, she turned down work with a series called “Feed Her, Fuck Her” in which the scene called for her to order large amounts of what she called “unhealthy” food from a hotel’s room service and have sex with the man who brought it to her room, eating all the while. From her perspective, the scene was “just more, ‘oh, fat girls are fat because they eat a lot and they eat unhealthy food,’” not a sort of representation she was comfortable being a part of.[89] Turning down work is a privilege many performers do not

have. Shibari, who also works as a successful publicist and social media consultant and draws royalties from novelty (sex toy) products marketed under her name, is among the performers whose access to diverse income streams allows them to sign on to film work selectively.

Ana Foxxx is unwilling to fully embrace the "mad black chick" characters she is often called upon to perform. "That's not who I am," she said. But with limited alternative casting opportunities, she cannot reject all these roles either. Instead, "I just try to take the roles that want me to be that way and tweak them in my way, so that it's still me," she explained.[90] Here, workers' desires for authenticity cannot be reduced to the work ethic, and their instance on "tweaking" roles to make them feel a bit more "me" might undermine bosses' power rather than entrench it.

Eighteen-year industry veteran Lexington Steele spoke of how he negotiates roles that require him to perform aggressive black male sexuality:

> Very early in my association with adult, I knew that I fit what is called the "BBC," big black cock. I knew that I fit that mold. I chose to lean into the mold, make it my own, and change the stereotype and glorify in it. If you're going to be a bear, be a motherfucking grizzly… So yeah, I've portrayed some roles in video where I was like, "man, I really don't want to do or say this or be on the receiving end of this or that commentary," but maybe I decide to do it… Do I understand that I facilitate the fantasy? Yeah! I completely glorify it and I base my whole brand upon it. But the important thing is, in taking the stereotype and embracing it, I'm now more able to change the mold.[91]

Steele, who majored in history and African American studies in college, spoke of being "very aware of what I deliver for what the market demands." "I fit a particular mold that existed before me and will exist after me," he said, "if you're not comfortable with the mold that you provide, you can either try to get into another slot, or you have to leave the business."

Steele choose to "lean into the mold," refusing to be reduced to the trope by agentically inhabiting it.

Cognizant of the simultaneous fetishization and devaluation of black female sexuality, black female porn performers in Mireille Miller-Young's study deploy a similar strategy, what Miller-Young terms "putting hypersexuality to work."[92] Other performers similarly opted to "lean into" the molds available to them. "There's a huge niche for Spanish-speaking people, people love that," Chilean Tara Holiday told me.[93] Nonetheless, the demands of leaning in were exaggerated for black interviewees. I attribute this in large part to the particularly rigid black/white divide in the adult film industry, where "ethnic," "urban" and "interracial" mean "black," and other racialized boundaries are more readily traversed, if they are marked as salient at all.

White women performers have a wider but nonetheless limited range of available representational molds. As various porn scholars suggest, narratives of female sexuality in porn are more diverse than monolithic.[94] White women performers too describe 'leaning in' to tropes of prescribed white feminine sexuality, both in their on-camera performances and behind the scenes. Lorelei Lee described her strategy for resolving disputes with directors:

> If something went wrong or a director was just like, "well I'm just gonna add another dude into the scene." Instead of being like "fuck you, we can do math," we were like [here Lee's voice raised several octaves] "we're totally willing and excited to do everything all the time, I'm just gonna call [my agent] and make sure that's okay."… I was like, "*I'm in this system; this is where I have power*."[95]

Hard business dealings did not fit within the role Lee was hired to perform. Stepping out of the role of a submissive and sexually available woman who is "excited to do everything all the time" (and with no concern for pay) would have risked future bookings, but also would

have required the additional emotional work of shifting gears mid-workday. Instead, Lee maximized her power by pretending she had none.

Performers' strategies resonate with sociologist Danielle Egan's analysis of the "covert mimesis" erotic dancers in her study deploy, performing object status as a means of harnessing their power.[96] Mimesis can be both playful and labored, and porn workers describe both feeling put upon by managers who require them to perform emotionally straining, hackneyed, or politically troubling tropes *and* experiencing pleasure in mimesis. This is, significantly, not the pleasure of a job well done in the classic sense of the work ethic, but, rather, the pleasure of executing a power play in which being a savvy businesswoman can require a performer to mimic the opposite (someone naïve and not economically-motivated).

Like the dancers in Eagan's study, porn performers are acutely aware of their locations within economies of fantasy. But these locations are shifting and blurry in adult film to an extent they are not in the world of erotic dance. Eagan discusses the calculations dancers make, negotiating resistance in view of economic pressures such as the threat of termination and fines levied by management. Porn performers do weigh the risk of being denied casting opportunities and in the rare event that they refuse to perform in a scene after first agreeing to do it, fines from agents. Some performers who deploy "covert mimesis" as a resistive strategy do so simply in order to sustain themselves economically, but more common among the performers I interviewed was a matrix of motivations that included both a waged worker's economic need and a entrepreneur's desire to win market share and generate profits beyond those required for economic survival. Like so many porn performers (and unlike most dancers), Steele is also a business owner, producer, and director. *Profits,* in

addition to wages, are part of the calculus. Even for performers who worked at the time only as waged workers, top-down pressure from management is not the only force that pressures workers to perform physically and emotionally in ways they would not otherwise choose. Workers also answer to their own desires, as independent contractors, to maintain their personal brands.

When I first presented this research, audience members largely sympathized with workers' need to perform as directed. Only the most disconnected anti-porn feminists would demand that workers opt out of economically sustaining performances on principal. But listeners' permission ended where workers' classed positions became murky. For them, it was okay for *performers* to mimetically 'lean in' to racialized and gendered tropes, but their bosses were dangerously reproducing damaging images. Porn's complex class politics suggest a re-thinking of the ethical meanings we attach to the reproduction of politically problematic tropes. Is performing such tropes subversive mimesis when workers do it, but the pernicious retrenchment of epistemic violence when employers demand it? Both of these things are true, but this is also far too simple. Indeed, these were the sort of ethical distinctions I maintained before undertaking this research. I have come to see them as specious, grounded as they are in a perspective that seems to first, pity waged workers just enough to give them a pass on otherwise untenable decisions and second, desire a purity of worker identity that runs counter to what workers actually want. Workers do not want to be *purely* workers. Instead, they desire entrepreneurship; they want to be the ones profiting from their own labor, however problematic its representational currency. I have elsewhere argued that capital, not workers, owns the ethical burdens associated with their labor—if labor (re)produces negative products, representations, or relations, capital, not workers, is

responsible.[97] The complications porn's class structure presents for this argument are further evidence of the contradictions inherent in (late) capitalism.

Money Matters: Negotiation as an Emotion Management Strategy

Performers' on-scene emotional labor strategies vary, but most describe self-conscious performance as a protective factor. This trend aligns with what sex work scholars in other contexts have documented as the ways in which self-aware performance can reduce job strain.[98] In her study of middle-class sex workers in San Francisco, sociologist Elizabeth Bernstein locates "bounded authenticity" as both a key emotion management strategy for workers and a central component of the services rendered to clients. "Bounded authenticity" ranges from what Arlie Hochschild terms "surface acting" to the work of maintaining real, but time-limited and emotionally and physically circumscribed, intimacy with clients.[99] Sociologist Teela Sanders finds that British prostitutes craft workplace sexual identities that simultaneously enhance earnings by performing femininity in a manner that appeals to customer demand *and* emotional health by encouraging workers to put on a sort of performance that is clearly distinguishable from their non-work selves.[100] Likewise, erotic dancers in anthropologist Susan Dewey's study describe emotional labor similar to "surface acting." Diamond, a dancer, notes, "You have to keep smiling and pretending you're having a great time, but the minute you forget its just business, you're really in for it."[101]

Workers describe clearly defined and monetized performances as central to staving off over-investment and burnout. VJ is a retired performer who worked in atypically rough scenes. We know by now that the final product of a scene is not necessarily reflective of how workers experience making it—labor practices on a hardcore BDSM set can be superior to those on a soft core romance one, for instance—but in this case, scene content does represent

what had been exceptionally poor working conditions. The scenes "pushed [her] mentally and physically" and VJ turned the work of weathering that strain into a "game."

> I figured out really quick that it was a mental game, if you could get past the so-called "verbal abuse and physical abuse" and push past that and understand that you signed up for this to basically sell yourself *for whatever period of time*… How do you play the game, how do you make it safe for you, how do you make the most money? It's all strategic.[102]

Marking her performances as *performances* with a clear beginning and end and a defined price tag—expressly not "sharing sexuality with the camera"—made physically and emotionally straining work more tenable for VJ.

Workers' experiences of effective emotion management strategies is closely tied to the extent to which they can leave set feeling that a performance was "worth it." Money matters. Performers describe experiencing the same work processes differently when they are differently monetized. Scene rates are closely tied to specific sex acts, and so anal sex at the rate one expects for vaginal sex, partner sex for a solo rate, or other performances that are inappropriately valued, can feel unwelcome or exploitative, and this has no necessary relationship to one's unpaid sexual preferences. Some performers described enjoying anal sex in their private lives, for example, but refuse to perform it on screen unless they are compensated appropriately. When performers spoke about feeling "exploited" or "taken advantage of," it was in reference to being underpaid, not compelled to have sex in the ways anti-porn feminists assume. When new performers ask her how to set scene rates, Sara Jay told me, "I always say, 'close your eyes and think, 'how much would it take for me to do that?' That's probably what your rate should be. If you do it for less than that, you're probably not going to feel good."[103] Maxine Holloway said, "knowing your price and your value is something that's really important and helped me sustain my career."[104]

The relationship between payment and workers' experience of the emotional work of performance is not only relevant in the negative (that is, to the extent that low pay can bring a sense of poor working experience). Performers also describe higher scene rates as one factor that helps them to feel positively about the work they've done. Ana Foxxx waited to sign on to her first anal scene until she was able to command the fee she felt was reasonable.

> It was $5000 for the movie, I had two scenes. And I was excited. There was a company that wanted to shoot me, and I was like, "well, if I do it man, it's my butthole on the screen, I want to walk away happy not just because I had good sex, *I want it to be worth it*." And I'm still keeping to my same rate. It's harder work for me. It's not something I do all the time. I want it to still be special.[105]

The $3500 Foxxx now charges for one anal scene is far above the standard rate of $1200. She had been told as much by a number of directors and even some agents she consulted. That she is black no doubt contributed to directors' and agents' refusal to take the rate she demanded seriously. Her insistence on a high rate is particularly powerful when considered in the context of the industry's racial politics.

Foxxx's negotiation story speaks to the ways in which payment shapes the experience of porn work. Some performers describe *authentic* pleasure as part of what makes work satisfying for them, but, for Foxxx and others, *payment* is what makes a scene "worth it." For Tara Holiday, payment brings not only work satisfaction, but also a pleasure inaccessible in non-commercial encounters. Holiday, who began performing at 43, described her first porn shoot as transformative:

> It wasn't until the moment I got paid that I got hooked…The moment I got paid, in my inner being I felt, *"this is the best thing sex has ever given me."* Why? Because any other time I'd had sex, I either wasn't sure if I wanted to have it, or I wanted the guy to go longer. It wasn't satisfactory, for many reasons. And at the end of the day, I always felt empty afterwards. This is perfect for a woman like me. I loved it. And I got hooked from then on. "Fuck, this is it," you know?[106]

Holiday flips on its head the narrative that paid sex brings feelings of emptiness or disconnection from one's "real identity and real self," as anti-sex work thinker Kathleen Barry puts it.[107] For Holiday, paid sex brings mutual benefit in a way unpaid sex never did.

Conclusion

From an anti-porn feminist perspective that views market sexuality as antithetical to authentic sexuality, the idea of money as "the best thing sex ever gave [one]" could be decried as evidence of how sexual commerce disconnects women from 'real' pleasure. From managers' perspectives, money as the best thing one might expect from sex could be lamented as evidence of workers' lack of authentic investment in the job. Anti-porn feminists and managers agree here. Such readings rest on the assumption that a *real* exists, a premise that social theorists have long critiqued as both not borne out in history and troublingly normative in its politics.[108] Recalling that the marking of the intimate as discrete from the commercial operates precisely to obscure unpaid labor, we should be wary of any move to posit authentic sexuality as incompatible with the market. And because the idea of "authentic sexuality" has long been used as a mode of social control, we should be wary of its deployments. If there is any historical continuity, it is that sex has long been a central space of both social regulation and market activity.[109] What is notable in the sex work context is that sexualized exchange is transparent. That transparency can, for some workers, mean more power to negotiate the terms of sex exchange and, as Holiday suggests, more control over what one takes away from a sexual encounter. This is not to suggest that commoditized relations neutralize power imbalance. Rather, all relations are commoditized, and those that are more straightforwardly so can be less extractive and taxing.

The narrative of authenticity articulated in the feminist sex wars informs the push for realness in porn's marketing and HR. As porn worker and manager stories illuminate, the drive for authenticity shapes porn's production practices in important ways, determining both the content and form of labor in the industry. Interviewees complicate long-taken-for-granted assumptions about authenticity as a libratory anecdote to commodified sexuality. Workers and managers alike suggest that authentic sexuality is work, rather than an escape from it. For managers, authenticity is work because it produces capital. For workers, authenticity is something one works at. If 'performing authenticity' seems like a contradiction in terms, that is precisely the point—porn workers' relational and creative labor troubles boundaries between the real and performed, authentic and manufactured. Troubling authenticity asks us to take seriously the possibility that ideas posited as radical alternatives can become disciplining. If authenticity is both a form of labor and a discourse that conceals labor, how might feminists re-think the idea of authenticity as the cure for the dangers of commercial sex? This is an urgent question not only for porn and sex work scholars, but also for feminists concerned that our critiques not be appropriated to serve the interests of capital. If my analysis seems to come down particularly harshly on queer and feminist porn managers, this is because cultural producers who posit themselves as offering *the* alternative are entitled to sustained critique.

But what of the workers for whom authenticity remains a meaningful counter to the alienation waged work engenders? Being oneself can be a powerful tool in resisting the ceaseless grind of waged work; this is as true for porn workers as it is for workers across industries. It can also make us more vulnerable to exploitation, and this may be particularly true in industries that most explicitly put life to work. Theorist Franco Berardi suggests that

late capitalism ("semiocapitalism" in the language he uses) is "an impoverishment, since communication loses its character of gratuitous, pleasurable, and erotic contact, becoming an economic necessity, a joyless fiction."[110] In many ways, this describes the casualties porn and other workers who do intense creative and interpersonal work encounter. But porn workers' stories also push us to resist the tendency to lament the shifts that put our communicative and psychic capacities to work and to attribute to capital the unchecked power to colonize every part of us.

Work *is* an impoverishment of life, and capital's appetite for expanded sites of commodification is indeed endless. As Venus Lux reminds us, not even the toilet is sacred. Putting our intimate selves to work can be uniquely draining, and maintaining personas, sexualities, spaces, and times that are not consumed by work is an enduring challenge. But it is one to which porn workers respond in creative ways, both claiming parts of self that will not be put to work, and locating spaces within work in which pleasure, self-exploration, and relationality are possible. Intimacy in this sense can be an economic necessity without being rendered joyless. This matters not so that we can allay concerns about the violence of late capitalism, but, rather, because workers' capacity to resist might be even more expansive than capital's ability to locate new commodities.

"The Most Obscene thing is 'Working for a Living'"[1]: Porn Work as Escape

After a long and fruitful interview that covered wages, emotional labor, the disciplinary state, and the ways in which porn performance is a lot like working in a bookstore, Conner Habib asked what I planned for this dissertation's title. "I'm thinking *Porn Work,*" I explained. Habib wondered whether I might be missing something. "There's a part of the work aspect that's distasteful to me," he said, "I don't like the idea of jobs; the most obscene thing is 'working for a living.'"[2] He went on:

> I'm tired of hearing people, especially feminists, saying "it's just a job," just like any other job. There's a difference… I get to have and give pleasure every day, for my job. Is that not in some ways a great potential to sidestep, "I get to give and experience misery"? That makes it less of a job in some ways. And I know we're not supposed to say that because we're at this moment where we're trying to prove to people that this that this is a job. But then let's take one step beyond that and say, "okay, fuck jobs."

Laughing, he added, "that should be your title." I agreed—"fuck jobs" is a great title—but worried that, since academia (like porn) has constraints that tie marketing to making a living, research funding would elude me with a title like "fuck jobs." But "fuck jobs," is this dissertation's guiding principal. It gestures both to what I see as the irretrievable "problem with work," as Kathi Weeks puts it,[3] and to workers' remarkable strategies for resisting within and against. I told Habib as much, and we closed our interview with a rousing chat about anti-work theory and prefigurative politics.

"I'm so happy that we're doing this and I'm happy that you're doing this. That people are putting the effort into legitimizing it as a job," Habib said,

> But it really in a lot of ways seems like a subtle excuse for shame and guilt. And I want us to stop doing that. There's all sorts of guilt about not having a job. And that guilt about not being able to seek pleasure all day is deeply related to the guilt of not being able to have sex.

We talked about the Weeksian distinction that guides my approach here—to call something work is, from the anti-work position Weeks elaborates, precisely not to bid for legitimacy or repudiate pleasure.[4] It is, instead, to refuse that pleasure be appropriated and bled dry as yet another site of extraction.[5] There is indeed something radical about getting paid to give and receive pleasure. It is an exchange that beckons a post-work utopia in which guaranteed annual incomes replace the compulsion to work and pleasure seeking takes the place of drudgery. We're not there yet. Instead, ours is a moment in which employers peddle the language of pleasure at work even in the most implausible contexts.

"I will never refer to myself as a sex worker because I don't like the worker part," Habib told me, "I'll use 'porn star,' that's fine. I like being a constellation instead of a laborer."[6] After our interview, concerned that the language I use would reflect interviewees' own identifications, I began asking interviewees what they thought of "porn worker." "I absolutely am a porn worker," Ela Darling responded, "I respect if someone doesn't want to think of it as work, but it is. You can think of it as dancing on the moon, *that doesn't change the fact that this is how your pay your bills*… This isn't your sex, this is a product we're trying to sell."[7] She added, "I don't just need attention, I do this because it's my work." In this, porn is no different from other jobs. "I wasn't a librarian because it's what I felt like doing that day," Darling added, "I did it because it was my career." This does not mean that porn (or library work, for that matter) is drudgery: "I love my work… Just because it's work doesn't mean you can't enjoy it." There are material stakes in insisting that porn is a *job.*

"We're not supposed to say" that porn is "less of a job," Habib ventured, and I shared my concern that doing so would play to management, the state, anti-porn feminists, and any number of other forces intent on diminishing porn workers' labor and making it even

more precarious. What we call 'porn work' matters for sex work organizing, including the demand for policies that ensure sex workers' access to labor protections and freedom from violence and harassment.[8] It is also crucial for articulating porn work as a form of creative labor characterized by the blurring of work and life[9] and the exhortation to "be yourself!" at work.[10] Indeed, these are the concerns that motivate the workers featured throughout this dissertation to insist that porn performance is work, not self-expression that need not command pay, or pathological behavior that warrants repression and pity.

The narrative of porn as escape performs a number of functions simultaneously. First and most important from an ethnographic perspective, it makes the day-to-day experience of working for a living a little bit less crushing. Loving porn work also rejects stigmas that assign misery to monetized sex, at once revising fundamental assumptions about sex workers' abjection and reminding us that straight work trades in misery. But the idea of porn as a fun departure from the daily grind can also obscure that porn work shares many of the tediums, vulnerabilities, and frustrations associated with straight work.

But sometimes the things we are not supposed to say are the ones that most need saying, and there is real danger that calling porn work 'work' will legitimize it in ways no work should be legitimized. We see this when managers talk about porn as a business 'like any other' by way of resisting state oversight and borrowing HR techniques and corporate restructuring tools from mainstream. It is also evident when scholars and other commentators acknowledge porn as a business but fail to problematize *business* as such. Here, it matters not only that we call porn 'work,' but also that we are clear about what 'work' means—exploitation and struggle. I close with a meditation on the dual commitment to mark porn as work while also taking "one step beyond that."

"Fuck Jobs," and, in the Meantime

This dissertation opened with workers' critiques of straight jobs. Like Habib, many define straight work as misery dealing, and interviewees framed their career choices as ways of resisting what straight work has to offer—tedium, fatigue, inflexible hours, low wages, stress. At the same time, they make clear that the problems of porn work in many ways mirror those of straight jobs. Porn is "a job… a gig."[11] Porn work can be, simultaneously or during different points in a day or career, both 'just a job' and an alternative to having a job in a more traditional sense. I have sought not to resolve that tension, or to suggest that it arises from workers' misunderstanding their own conditions, but rather to theorize what it tells us about work under and against late capitalism. Throughout this dissertation, this has meant a commitment to saying, "fuck jobs while also articulating a politics of the meantime

In "'Maybe the State Should Pay:'[12] Policy and Pushback," this commitment meant both looking toward futures in which access to benefits and care are not tethered to employment and plotting policy proposals that might protect workers in the meantime. This demanded a critique of the precaritizing influence of contractor status, but one that refused the tendency to romanticize its most obvious alternative—full employment. It also meant taking seriously workers' critiques of the regulatory state. Porn work cannot be regulated just as any other kind of work, they say, because sexual privacy—particularly where matters of sexual health are concerned—needs special protections. The task, I suggested, is to articulate a vision for privacy that bosses cannot appropriate in the service of putting workers at greater risk.

In "'Porn Feels Different than It Looks:'[13] Porn Work on Set," this commitment gave way to an exploration of porn work on the set shop floor. Here, even those workers who

elsewhere frame porn work as an escape talk about sex on set as *work.* They highlight the physical and emotional skill required to meet the demands of a scene, describe porn as tedious and repetitive in the ways of other jobs, and underscore that managers rely on the strict controls typical of waged work. Here on set, the stakes of a politics of the meantime become particularly urgent. Workers encounter extreme pay inequality, get injured at work, and are compelled to sign restrictive contracts *now,* and internal and external regulation could bring material benefit. But the realities of on set work also highlight the need to 'take one step beyond,' since the issues workers encounter on set are ubiquitous across a range of jobs. It will take much more than more worker-friendly contracts, for instance, to ensure holistic consent. For this, we will need to say "fuck jobs."

In "'A Scene Is Just a Marketing Tool:'[14] Alternative Income Streams in Porn's Gig Economy," these dual commitments made way for a consideration of porn work's gig economy. As in chapter two's discussion of policy, we recognized here that most porn workers want flexibility. At the same time, they resist the precarity it brings. A critique of the gig economy should aim for something wholly different, rather than a return to the kinds of stable, full employment workers across industries find strangling. Alternative income streams can provide workers control without changing policy or directly confronting porn management, making the gig economy a major tool for getting by in the meantime. As is so often the case with methods of the meantime, this also risks entrenching the status quo. But porn workers use alternative income streams in creative ways management cannot appropriate or even anticipate, and so porn's reliance on satellite industries could also mean the erosion of managerial power. This is the dialectic of the gig economy.

In chapter five, "I'm Kind of Always Working, but it's Also Almost Always Really Fun:'[15] Porn Work and the Labor of Authenticity," the dual commitment to a sex *work* politics and one that takes "one step beyond that" meant wrestling with porn managers' and workers' various commitments to authenticity at work. As in other jobs, authenticity—'loving the job'—is a work requirement, and one that can serve to extract more from workers, for less.[16] A politics of the meantime asks that we resist that pull, marking the kind of distinctions between being oneself and doing a job that can protect from wholesale commodification of life. But taking "one step beyond" demands taking seriously the ways in which loving the job makes it feel less like work.

Porn Work, Post Work: Steps Forward

We are left with the ongoing task of forging a politics that can make work better now, and obsolete in the future. What that might look like is a question that has long concerned left critics, and I do not pretend to offer a definitive answer here. Following Weeks, we *can* say that "utopian demands" need not be in conflict with more present-oriented solutions.[17] Throughout this dissertation, I have worked to articulate a politics of the meantime that leaves open more radical future possibilities. This dissertation makes a claim for how we might tell stories about what work looks like now with an eye for that which is "one step beyond."

How we talk about the problems of work—as exceptional or mundane, impermeable or porous—shapes the politics that emerge from these stories. How we talk about struggle shapes these politics too, and porn work is only one site in which an invigorated commitment to dialectical thinking reveals new possibilities. But how we talk about porn work does not, as Darling reminds us, "change the fact that this is how your pay your bills," and debates

surrounding such language and the commitments it represents should take care to be grounded in workers' day to day experience of getting by. Thus, this dissertation makes a claim for how scholars might situate workers vis-à-vis theory and politics. Workers' strategies for navigating, resisting, and reimagining porn work are instructive in this moment of profound capitalist crisis. "Okay, fuck jobs.'"[18]

Endnotes

Notes to the Introduction

[1] Christopher Daniels, Interview by Author, Los Angeles, April 9, 2014.
[2] Ana Foxxx, Interview by Author, Los Angeles, January 24, 2014.
[3] Tara Holiday, Interview by Author, Phone, February 22, 2014.
[4] Ana Foxxx, Interview by Author. Los Angeles, CA., January 24, 2014.
[5] Danny Wylde, Interview by Author. Los Angeles, CA., November 4, 2014.
[6] Samantha Grace, Interview by Author, Los Angeles, November 2, 2013. I want to acknowledge the problematics surrounding the use of slavery as analogy. See David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London; New York: Verso, 1999).
[7] Susan Dewey, "The Feminized Labor of Sex Work: Two Decades of Feminist Historical and Ethnographic Research," *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 9, no. 2 (2012): 119.
[8] Herschel Savage, Interview by Author, Los Angeles, CA, April 5, 2013.
[9] Ela Darling, Interview by Author, Los Angeles, May 7, 2014.
[10] Richie Calhoun, Interview by Author, Los Angeles, October 15, 2013.
[11] Here I am gesturing to the organizing call that historically accompanied demands for an eight hour work day. Kathi Weeks, *The Problem With Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 151.
[12] Chanel Preston, Interview by Author, Los Angeles, November 13, 2013.
[13] Lorelei Lee, Interview by Author. San Francisco, CA., June 5, 2014.
[14] Sinnamon Love, Interview by Author, phone, January 13, 2014.
[15] Lexington Steele, Interview by Author. Phone., January 20, 2014.
[16] See Bob Black, *The Abolition of Work and Other Essays* (Port Townsend, WA: Loompanics Unlimited, 1986). Weeks, *The Problem With Work*. Peter Fleming, *The Mythology of Work: How Capitalism Persists Despite Itself* (London: Pluto Press, 2015).
[17] Here I am gesturing to the vibrant body of queer theory organized against inclusion. See Michael Warner, *The Trouble With Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life* (New York: Free Press, 1999). Judith Jack Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011). Ryan Conrad, ed., *Against Equality: Queer Revolution, Not Mere Inclusion* (Oakland: AK Press, 2014).
[18] On the theoretical distinctions between work refusal and reform, see Weeks, *The Problem With Work*. These are queer commitments. "Straight work" cuts two ways. First, it is the term interviewees and other sex workers use to describe non-sex work jobs. It also gestures to the ways in which there is something decidedly straight about work and, indeed, queer in refusing it. In rejecting the status quo rather than trying to fix it, queer theorists and anti-work Marxists agree. See Heather Berg, "An Honest Day's Wage for a Dishonest Day's Work: (Re)Productivism and Refusal," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 42, no. 1/2 (2014): 161–77.
[19] Likewise, in her study of sex workers in Tijuana, Yasmina Yatsulis notes, "looking at the limited options available to women who want or need to be economically independent, I am always struck by how many *don't* engage in commercial sex work" and suggests that future research might explore this question, rather than the more common one of why people turn to sex work. Yasmina Katsulis, *Sex Work and the City: The Social Geography of Health and Safety in Tijuana, Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), 40.
[20] "'The Best Job Is a Blowjob,' Arrangement Finders Advertisement," *Adult Entertainment Expo Program*, 2015.
[21] Mark Murphy, *Hiring for Attitude: A Revolutionary Approach to Recruiting Star Performers with Both Tremendous Skills and Superb Attitude* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012).
[22] On the parallels between porn and creative labor in mainstream industries, see Alan McKee, "Pornography as Creative Industry" (International Communication Association, Washington, DC, 2014).
[23] Annon., Interview by Author. Phone, April 10, 2014.
[24] Karl Marx, *Wage-Labor and Capital*, trans. Harriet Lothrop (New York Labor News, 1902), 27. Karl Marx and Frederick Engles, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, trans. Martin Milligan (Radford, VA: Wilder Publications, 1844), 21. Porn work is exploitative in the ways of all waged work. I mean "exploitation" in the Marxist sense, as a descriptor of the relations by which capital extracts the surplus value workers produce. It matters that we be specific in this and resist the watering down of 'exploitation' as 'taking advantage of' or harming in some amorphous way. Likewise, by 'work,' I mean to connote a site of classed struggle, rather than

simply 'effort.' This is not a value judgment or normalizing gesture. I am indebted to Kathi Weeks for the game-changing analysis that makes this distinction possible. Weeks, *The Problem With Work*, 67.
[25] Annon., Interview by Author, Reseda, CA, January 31, 2014.
[26] VJ, Interview by Author, Phone, November 18, 2013.
[27] Nica Noelle, Interview by Author, email., October 14, 2013.
[28] Melinda Chateauvert, *Sex Workers Unite: A History of the Movement from Stonewall to Slutwalk* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2013), 121.
[29] VJ, Interview by Author, Phone.
[30] Calhoun, Interview by Author, Los Angeles.
[31] Daniels, Interview by Author, Los Angeles.
[32] See Andrew Ross, *Nice Work If You Can Get It: Life and Labor in Precarious Times* (New York: New York University Press, 2009). Martha King, "Protecting and Representing Workers in the New Gig Economy: The Case of the Freelancers Union," in *New Labor in New York: Precarious Workers and the Future of the Labor Movement*, ed. Ruth Milkman and Ed Ott (Ithaca: ILR Press, Cornell University Press, 2014), 150–70.
[33] Mireille Miller-Young, *A Taste for Brown Sugar: Black Women in Pornography* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).
[34] Mireille Miller-Young, "Putting Hypersexuality to Work: Black Women and Illicit Eroticism in Pornography," *Sexualities* 13, no. 2 (April 7, 2010): 225.
[35] Sinnamon Love, Interview by Author, Phone, January 13, 2014.
[36] Dennis Mumby, "Theorizing Resistance in Organization Studies: A Dialectical Approach," *Management Communication Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (2005): 19–44, doi:10.1177/0893318905276558.
[37] Ibid., 39.
[38] Margaret Waller, "Resilience in Ecosystemic Context: Evolution of the Concept," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 71, no. 3 (2001).
[39] Waller, M., Risley-Curtiss, C., Murphy, S., Medill, A., and Moore, G. "Harnessing the Positive Power of Language: American Indian Women, a Case Example." *In Pressing Issues of Inequality and American Indian Communities*. Eds. Segal, Elizabeth; Keith M. Kilty, pp. 63-81. (Routledge: New York, 2001), 71.
[40] Waller, "Resilience in Ecosystemic Context: Evolution of the Concept," 295.
[41] A pseudonym.
[42] Kurt Vogner, Interview by Author, Phone, November 11, 2013.
[43] See Gregor Gall, *An Agency of Their Own: Sex Worker Union Organizing* (Winchester, UK; Washington: Zero Books, 2012), 28-31.
[44] VJ, Interview by Author, Phone.
[45] Lexington Steele, Interview by Author, Phone, January 20, 2014.
[46] APAC, *Porn 101*, 2014, 101, http://apac-usa.com/education/.
[47] Savage, Interview by Author, Los Angeles, CA.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Jacky St. James, Interview by Author, Northridge, November 4, 2013.
[50] Kelly Shibari, Interview by Author, Northridge, November 1, 2013.
[51] jessica drake, Interview by Author, Phone, February 25, 2014.
[52] See Edu-Factory Collective, ed., *Toward a Global Autonomous University: Cognitive Labor, the Production of Knowledge, and Exodus from the Education Factory* (New York: Autonomedia, 2009).
[53] Mr. Marcus, Interview by Author, Balboa Park, October 29, 2013.
[54] Several interviewees echoed the concern that factionalism within the porn worker community is a barrier to organizing. Richie Calhoun suggested that an outside organization might help to combat that, but added that porn workers are wary of outside intervention. In order to gain trust, outside organizers would need to approach workers making clear that "there's no question that we are on the side of the performers, that's all we're doing here, we've done unionizing with hotel workers and circus performers and these people and those people and we know how to do it." Calhoun, Interview by Author, Los Angeles.
[55] Marcus, Interview by Author, Balboa Park.
[56] Noelle, Interview by Author, email.
[57] drake, Interview by Author, Phone.
[58] Preston, Interview by Author, Los Angeles.
[59] Annon., Interview by Author, Los Angeles, May 7, 2014.
[60] Annon., Interview by Author, Los Angeles, CA, November 1, 2013.

[61] Diane Duke, Interview by Author, Canoga Park, CA, November 5, 2013.
[62] Annon., Interview by Author, Los Angeles.
[63] Annon., Interview by Author, Woodland Hills, CA, May 10, 2014.
[64] Steele, Interview by Author, Phone.
[65] Thus, Mireille Miller-Young describes income streams outside of porn performance as central to the economic survival of many black women performers, whose porn work is systematically devalued and hyper-exploited. Mireille Miller-Young, *A Taste for Brown Sugar: Black Women in Porn* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 217.
[66] Marcus, Interview by Author, Balboa Park.
[67] Courtney Trouble, "Love the One You're With," in *Adult Entertainment Expo Fan Seminar* (Las Vegas, NV, 2015).
[68] Critiques reveal workerism as an ideological strain that is particularly prone to such a romanticizing view. See Collective Isizwe, "Errors of Workerism," *South African Labour Bulletin* 12, no. 3 (1987): 51–63. Wildcat UK, "Critique of Workerism," 1995, http://www.prole.info/texts/critiqueofworkerism.html.
[69] Savage, Interview by Author, Los Angeles, CA.
[70] Historian Andrew Wender Cohen, for example, describes Chicago's early-mid 20th century craft economy as one in which "some workers started their own businesses while many failed entrepreneurs returned to wage labor." Andrew Wender Cohen, *The Racketeer's Progress: Chicago and the Struggle for the Modern American Economy, 1900 - 1940*, Cambridge Historical Studies in American Law and Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 3.
[71] Here I am gesturing to debates regarding E.P. Thompson's articulation of class as "a relationship and not a thing." While I am sympathetic to critiques suggesting that Thompson's empiricism leads him to falsely evacuate class of its mechanical relationship to production processes, my approach here follows from his insistence that class is dynamic, rather than static, and that historical subjects are active in constituting their own class perspectives. E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London, New York: Penguin Books, 1963), 11. See also Ellen Meiksins Wood, "The Politics of Theory and the Concept of Class: E.P. Thompson and His Critics," *Studies in Political Economy* 9 (1982): 45–75.
[72] J. K. Gibson-Graham, *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 19.
[73] For an overview of core Marxist perspectives on class composition, see Erik Olin Wright, "Varieties of Marxist Conceptions of Class Structure," *Politics & Society* 9, no. 3 (1980): 325–70.
[74] Mao Tsetung, *Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tsetung* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1971), 66.
[75] Joanna Angel, Interview by Author. Phone, January 23, 2014.
[76] Steele, Interview by Author, Phone.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Dave Pounder, Interview by Author. Phone, April 8, 2014.
[79] drake, Interview by Author, Phone.
[80] Stuart Hall, "The Problem of Ideology: Marxism without Guarantees," in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (London: Routeledge, 1996), 31.
[81] Miller-Young, "Putting Hypersexuality to Work," 221.
[82] Emphasis is MacKinnon's. MacKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified*, 149-50.
[83] Gail Dines and Robert Jensen, "Pornography, Feminist Debates On," September 10, 2009, http://gaildines.com/2009/09/pornography-feminist-debates-on/ Page 1 of 6.
[84] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Vol. 3*, trans. David Fernbach (New York: Penguin Books, 1993), 384–5.
[85] Sheila Jeffreys, *The Industrial Vagina: The Political Economy of the Global Sex Trade* (London; New York: Routledge, 2009), 78.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.
[88] MacKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified*, 128,138, 147.
[89] Ibid., 138.
[90] Nina Ha®tley "Feminist for Porn: Thus I Refute Chyng Sun," *Counter Punch*, February 2, 2005, http://www.counterpunch.org/2005/02/02/feminists-for-porn/.
[91] Heather Berg, "Labouring Porn Studies," *Porn Studies* 1, no. 1–2 (2014): 75–79.

[92] Dines and Jensen, "Pornography, Feminist Debates On."
[93] MacKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified*, 157, 212.
[94] Jeffreys, *The Industrial Vagina*, 18.
[95] Dines and Jensen, "Pornography, Feminist Debates On."
[96] Prabha Kotiswaran, *Dangerous Sex, Invisible Labor: Sex Work and the Law in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 186.
[97] Weeks, *The Problem With Work*.
[98] Kate Hardy, "Equal to Any Other, but Not the Same as Any Other: The Politics of Sexual Labour, the Body, and Intercorporeality," in *Body/Sex/Work: Intimate, Embodied and Sexualized Labour*, ed. Carol Wolkowitz et al. (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 56.
[99] MacKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified*, 180.
[100] Jeffreys, *The Industrial Vagina*, 78.
[101] Heather Berg, "Labouring Porn Studies," *Porn Studies* 1, no. 1–2 (January 2, 2014): 77. Helen Hester, "After the Image: Labour in Pornography," in *Queer Sex Work* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2015), 34.
[102] Miller-Young, "Putting Hypersexuality to Work," 221.
[103] Nina Hartley, Interview by author, Los Angeles, CA, February 17, 2012.
[104] Gail Dines, "LA County's Measure B Is a Major Win for Safe Sex in Adult Entertainment," *The Guardian*, November 12, 2012, http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/nov/12/la-county-measureb-safe-sex.
[105] Constance Penley, "A Feminist Teaching Pornography? That's Like Scopes Teaching Evolution!," in *The Feminist Porn Book: The Politics of Producing Pleasure*, ed. Tristan Taormino et al. (New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2013), 187-188.
[106] See Linda Williams, *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the "Frenzy of the Visible"* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). Tristan Taormino et al., eds., *Feminist Porn Book* (New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2013). Clarissa Smith and Feona Attwood, "Anti/ Pro/ Critical Porn Studies," *Porn Studies* 1, no. 1–2 (2014): 7–23.
[107] Lisa Duggan and Nan D Hunter, *Sex Wars: Sexual Dissent and Political Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2006). Ellen Willis, "Feminism, Moralism, and Pornography," in *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, ed. Ann Barr Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983), 460–67. Wendy Brown, *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995). Zahra Stardust, "'Fisting Is Not Permitted': Criminal Intimacies, Queer Sexualities and Feminist Porn in the Australian Legal Context.," *Porn Studies* 1, no. 3 (2014): 242–59.
[108] Ron Weitzer, ed., *Sex for Sale: Prostitution, Pornography, and the Sex Industry* (London: Routledge, 2009). Clarissa Smith and Feona Attwood, "Emotional Truths and Thrilling Sideshows: The Resurgence of Antiporn Feminism," in *The Feminist Porn Book: The Politics of Producing Pleasure*, ed. Tristan Taormino et al. (New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2013).
[109] Gayle Rubin, "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality," in *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality* (London: Pandora Press, 1984), 267–93. Drucilla Cornell, *The Imaginary Domain: Abortion, Pornography, and Sexual Harassment* (New York: Rutledge, 1995), 96.
[110] Williams, *Hard Core*. Jennifer Nash, *The Black Body in Ecstasy: Reading Race, Reading Pornography*, Next Wave (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).
[111] Laura Kipnis, *Bound and Gagged: Pornography and the Politics of Fantasy in America* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999), 175. Constance Penley, "Crackers and Whackers: The White Trashing of Porn," in *Porn Studies*, ed. Linda Williams (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).
[112] Sharon Abbott, "Motivations for Pursuing a Career in Pornography," in *Sex for Sale: Prostitution, Pornography, and the Sex Industry*, ed. Ron Weitzer (London: Routledge, 2009). See Jeffrey Escoffier's history of gay male porn explores wages, ongoing conflict surrounding safer sex, and performers' branding labors. Jeffrey Escoffier, *Bigger than Life the History of Gay Porn Cinema from Beefcake to Hardcore* (Philadelphia: Running Press, 2009). Sociologist Sharon Abbott investigates workers' diverse motivations for entering the industry and career trajectories therein. Abbott, "Motivations for Pursuing a Career in Pornography." Sharon Abbott, "Doing Porn," in *Deviance: The Interactionist Perspective* (New York: Routeledge, 1996), 309–15. Media scholar Feona Attwood investigates the "new porn professionalism" in view of larger trends in creative labor. Feona Attwood, ed., *Porn.com: Making Sense of Online Pornography*, Digital Formations (New York: Peter Lang, 2010). Sociologist Chauntelle Tibbals explores women's behind-the-scenes office work in the industry and debates surrounding condom regulation. Chauntelle Tibbals, "'Anything the Forces Itself into My Vagina Is by Definition Raping Me...'--Adult Performers and Occupational Safety and Health," *Stanford Law*

and Policy Review 23, no. 1 (2012): 231–52. Chauntelle Anne Tibbals, "Sex Work, Office Work: Women Working Behind the Scenes in the US Adult Film Industry," *Gender, Work & Organization* 20, no. 1 (January 2013): 20–35. Technology scholar Georgina Voss uses the framework of "dirty work" to link work in the porn industry to other stigmatized jobs. Georgina Voss, *Stigma and the Shaping of the Pornography Industry* (London: Routledge, 2015). Writing on the French context, gender studies scholar Mathieu Trachman points to porn work's commonalities with other jobs that demand both interpersonal and creative labor. Mathieu Trachman, "The Market for Actresses: Gender, Reputation, and Intermediation in French Pornography," in *Brokerage and Production in the American and French Entertainment Industries: Invisible Hands in Cultural Markets*, ed. Violaine Roussel and Denise Bielby (London: Lexington Books, 2015). Gender and cultural studies scholar Zahra Stardust writes on regulation and resistive performance in the Australian queer porn industry. Stardust, "'Fisting Is Not Permitted': Criminal Intimacies, Queer Sexualities and Feminist Porn in the Australian Legal Context." Cultural studies scholars Rebecca Sullivan and Alan McKee situate porn performance alongside other creative labors. Rebecca Sullivan and Alan McKee, *Pornography: Structures, Agency and Performance* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2015). Sex work scholar Mireille Miller-Young's exploration of black women's pornographic labor is the most sustained analysis of porn work, and stands out for its commitment to foregrounding workers' creative strategies for moving "within and against" advanced capitalism. Miller-Young, *A Taste for Brown Sugar*, 9. Gender studies scholar Shira Tarrant explores monopoly and globalization in porn's political economy. Shira Tarrant, *The Pornography Industry: What Everyone Needs to Know*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[113] Hester, "After the Image: Labour in Pornography," 38.

[114] Smith and Attwood, "Anti/ Pro/ Critical Porn Studies," 13.

[115] In this, I am indebted to the Autonomist Marxist tradition. See Sylvère Lotringer and Christian Marazzi, eds., *Autonomia: Post-Political Politics*, Semiotext(e) Intervention Series 1 (Cambridge: Semiotext(e), 2007).

[116] Lynn Comella, "From Text to Context: Feminist Porn and the Making of a Market," in *The Feminist Porn Book: The Politics of Producing Pleasure*, ed. Tristan Taormino et al. (New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2013), 92.

[117] Cornell, *The Imaginary Domain: Abortion, Pornography, and Sexual Harassment*, 96.

[118] Ibid.

[119] Genre boundaries and trends matter to workers because they shape hiring practices. Race and age are two areas in which this is particularly true. See Miller-Young, *A Taste for Brown Sugar*. Chauntelle Tibbals, "Gonzo, Trannys, and Teens--Current Trends in US Adult Content Production, Distribution, and Consumption," *Porn Studies* 1, no. 1–2 (2014): 127–35.

[120] Berg, "Labouring Porn Studies," 2014.

[121] Melissa Gira Grant, *Playing the Whore: The Work of Sex Work* (London, Brooklyn: Verso, 2014), 39.

[122] I elaborate this argument in the context of sex work debates more broadly here: Heather Berg, "Working for Love, Loving for Work: Discourses of Labor in Feminist Sex-Work Activism," *Feminist Studies* 40, no. 3 (2014): 693–721.

[123] Berg, "An Honest Day's Wage for a Dishonest Day's Work: (Re)Productivism and Refusal."

[124] On loving what you do, see Miya Tokumitsu, *Do What You Love: And Other Lies About Success and Happiness*, Regan Arts (New York: Regan Arts, 2015). On risk and protective factors, see Waller, "Resilience in Ecosystemic Context: Evolution of the Concept."

[125] Dewey, "The Feminized Labor of Sex Work."

[126] Clare Hemmings, *Why Stories Matter: The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 206.

[127] See Elizabeth Bernstein, *Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Commerce of Sex* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). Susan Dewey, *Neon Wasteland: On Love, Motherhood, and Sex Work in a Rust Belt Town* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

[128] See Kemala Kempadoo, "From Moral Panic to Global Justice: Changing Perspectives on Trafficking," in *Trafficking and Prostitution Reconsidered: New Perspectives on Migration, Sex Work, and Human Rights*, ed. Kamala Kempadoo, Jyoti Sanghera, and Bandana Pattanaik (Boulder, Colo.: Paradigm Publishers, 2005). Laura María Agustín, *Sex at the Margins: Migration, Labour Markets and the Rescue Industry* (London; New York: Zed Books, 2007). Patty Kelly, *Lydia's Open Door Inside Mexico's Most Modern Brothel.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008). Thaddeus Gregory Blanchette and Ana Paula da Silva, "Prostitution in Contemporary Rio de Janeiro," in *Policing Pleasure: Sex Work, Policy, and the State in Global Perspective*, ed. Susan Dewey and Patty Kelly (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 130–45. Rhacel Salazar

Parreñas, *Illicit Flirtations: Labor, Migration, and Sex Trafficking in Tokyo* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2011).
[129] See Danielle Egan, *Dancing for Dollars and Paying for Love: The Relationships Between Exotic Dancers and Their Regulars* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006). Bernstein, *Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Commerce of Sex*. Amalia Lucia Cabezas, *Economies of Desire : Sex and Tourism in Cuba and the Dominican Republic* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009).
[130] Kotiswaran, *Dangerous Sex, Invisible Labor*. Gall, *An Agency of Their Own*. Chateauvert, *Sex Workers Unite*.
[131] Dewey, "The Feminized Labor of Sex Work," 119.
[132] My use of the term "industry" should not be understood, then, as suggesting a monolithic or internally consistent body. Instead, by using the term, I mean to indicate the constellation of studio executives, investors, producers, directors, technical set workers, and performers whose combined labors bring forth commercial pornography.
[133] My on-set observations were non-participatory. I was invited to observe the sets of gonzo (low-budget, sex only scenes), feature (big budget, multi-scene film with dialogue), feminist (low-budget with explicitly social justice commitments), and trade productions.
[134] "Gay" refers to productions involving males only and is commonly regarded as a discrete industry, while "girl-girl" refers to scenes featuring two or more female performers and is included in the mainstream heterosexual industry. As with so many discourses of sexuality, the heterosexual industry is not named as such, but is, simply "mainstream." "Queer" and "feminist" porn share key players, production practices, a common award show and annual conference, and similar representational norms.
[135] James Griffith et al., "Pornography Actors: A Qualitative Analysis of Motivations and Dislikes," *North American Journal of Psychology* 14, no. 2 (2012): 245.
[136] Stoya, Interview by Author, Woodland Hills, CA, May 7, 2014.
[137] Raylene, Interview by Autor, Northridge, October 29, 2013.
[138] Holiday, Interview by Author, Phone.
[139] Juba Kalamka, Interview by Author. Las Vegas., July 17, 2013.
[140] drake, Interview by Author, Phone.
[141] Mike South, "A PhD Candidate at UC Santa Barbara Would Like to Interview to You," October 30, 2013, http://www.mikesouth.com/mike-south-commentary/a-phd-candidate-at-uc-santa-barbara-would-like-to-interview-to-you-8678/.
[142] Yasmin Nair, "Scabs: Academic and Others Who Write for Free," *Yasmin Nair*, March 11, 2014, http://yasminnair.net/content/scabs-academics-and-others-who-write-free.
[143] Lily Cade, Interview by Author, Pasadena, CA, November 10, 2013.
[144] I unpack the interview as a site of labor here. Berg, "Labouring Porn Studies," 2014, 76.
[145] Nina Ha®tley, Interview by author, Los Angeles, CA, February 17, 2012.
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Notes to Chapter Two

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[6] Christian Mann, Interview by Author, Van Nuys, CA, October 8, 2013.
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[10] Stoya, Interview by Author, Woodland Hills, CA, May 7, 2014.
[11] Charity Bangs, Interview by Author, Phone, November 7, 2013.
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[21] Annon., Interview by Author, Los Angeles, May 7, 2014.
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[45] *Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970*, *29 USC*, vol. 654, n.d., https://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=OSHACT&p_id=3359.
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Notes to Chapter Three
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[27] Chanel Preston, "Twitter Post," May 24, 2014, https://twitter.com/ChanelPreston/status/470320533054033921.
[28] *Record Keeping Requirements*, *18 U.S. Code § 2257*, 2005. Furry Girl, "2257 Laws, Privacy, and the Mass Outing of Porn Performers: Where Do We Go from Here?" *Feminisnt*, April 1, 2011, http://www.feminisnt.com/2011/2257-laws-privacy-and-the-mass-outing-of-porn-performers-where-do-we-go-from-here/.
[29] Raylene, Interview by Author. Reseda, CA., October 29, 2013.
[30] Annon., "Model Release Agreement. Original in My Possession.," November 1, 2013.
[31] Annon., "Model Release Agreement. Original in My Possession."
[32] Annon., "Model Release Agreement. Original in My Possession."
[33] "Alt" in the industry means that a scene features "alternative" performers who generally have a punk aesthetic, with tattoos, piercings, and more experimental hair and makeup. Suicide Girls
[34] Bella Vendetta, Interview by Author. Phone., March 18, 2014.
[35] Annon., "Talent Interview Form & Checklist. In My Possession.," November 1, 2013.
[36] Queer and feminist productions tend to have rigorous, but less standardized consent practices. Screen partners are encouraged to discuss what will be done on camera informally.
[37] Kink.com, "Limits Check List," March 17, 2014. Kink's internal policies are more stringent than other BDSM productions, in part because, as the most high-profile in the business, the company is particularly vulnerable to ridicule and legal liability. But Kink and other BDSM productions also often emerge from kink communities themselves and remain invested in the politics of consent that are central to these communities.
[38] Siri, Interview by Author. Los Angeles, CA., February 27, 2014.
[39] Matt Frackas, Interview by Author, phone, December 12, 2013.
[40] Chi Chi LaRue, Interview by Author. Los Angeles, CA., April 10, 2014.
[41] jessica drake, Interview by Author, Phone, February 25, 2014.
[42] Maxine Holloway, Interview by Author. San Francisco, CA., March 19, 2014.
[43] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Vol. 1*, trans. Ben Fowkes (London; New York, N.Y: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review, 1976 [1867]), 900.
[44] Daniels, Interview by Author. Los Angeles, CA.
[45] Herschel Savage, Interview by Author. Los Angeles, CA., March 5, 2013.
[46] Ela Darling, Interview by Author. Los Angeles, CA., May 7, 2014.
[47] Lorelei Lee, Interview by Author. San Francisco, CA., June 5, 2014.
[48] Kay Parker, Interview by Author. Woodland Hills, CA., November 13, 2013.
[49] Annon., Interview by Author, Northridge, November 4, 2013.
[50] Bangs, Interview by Author. Phone.
[51] Siri, Interview by Author. Los Angeles, CA.
[52] That is, marketed toward heterosexual couples.
[53] Jacky St. James, Interview by Author. Northridge, CA., November 4, 2013.

[54] For an analysis of amateur porn as "less manufactured," see Susanna Paasonen, *Carnal Resonance: Affect and Online Pornography* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011).
[55] Professional scenes made to appear amateurish
[56] On the labor politics of "socially necessary" work, see Heather Berg, "An Honest Day's Wage for a Dishonest Day's Work: (Re)productivism and Refusal," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 42, no. 1–2 Debt [Special Issue] (2014): 161–77. For a discussion of "postwork imaginaries," see Kathi Weeks, *The Problem With Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).
[57] Chanel Preston, Interivew by Author. Los Angeles, CA., November 13, 2013.
[58] Lily Cade, Interview by Author. Pasadena, CA., November 11, 2013.
[59] Foxxx, Interview by Author. Los Angeles, CA.
[60] On crew labor in softcore production, see Vicki Mayer, *Below the Line: Producers and Production Studies in the New Television Economy* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 74.
[61] Hartley, Interview by author, Los Angeles, CA.
[62] Alex Linko, Interview by Author. Los Angeles, CA., November 9, 2013.
[63] Ace, Interview by Author, Reseda.
[64] Such a distinction is a mainstay of anti-porn feminist argument and conservatively reinforces the idea that such a thing as "real" sex exists and can be identified as such presumably by virtue of its featuring the sorts of sexual activity with which one feels politically comfortable. This distinction also suggests that sex off camera or unpaid is not also labored, a premise Marxist feminists have helpfully deconstructed. On "the real" in porn, see Julie Levin Russo, "'The Real Thing': Reframing Queer Pornography for Virtual Spaces," in *C'lickme: A Netporn Studies Reader*, ed. Katrien Jacobs, Marjie Janssen, and Metteo Pasquinelli (Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2007). On sex as work, see Silvia Federici, "Why Sexuality Is Work," in *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle* (Oakland, CA; Brooklyn, NY; London: PM Press, 1975).
[65] Prince Yahshua, Interview by Author, Canoga Park., February 28, 2014.
[66] Parker, Interview by Author. Woodland Hills, CA.
[67] Lux, Interview by Author, Phone.
[68] Raylene, Interview by Author. Reseda, CA.
[69] drake, Interview by Author, Phone.
[70] Calhoun, Interview by Author. Los Angeles, CA.
[71] Jolene Parton, "Twitter Post," January 31, 2015, https://twitter.com/jolenestarshine/status/561686375552925696.
[72] Daniels, Interview by Author. Los Angeles, CA.
[73] Darling, Interview by Author. Los Angeles, CA.
[74] See, e.g. Rene Almeling, *Sex Cells: The Medical Market in Sperm and Eggs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 125. Mar de la Luz Ibarra, "My Reward Is Not Money," in *Intimate Labors: Cultures, Technologies, and the Politics of Care*, ed. Eileen Boris and Eileen Boris (Stanford: Stanford Social Sciences, 2010), 117–131: 118. Elizabeth Bernstein, *Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Commerce of Sex* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 103.
[75] Daniels, Interview by Author. Los Angeles, CA.
[76] Raylene, Interview by Author. Reseda, CA.
[77] Darling, Interview by Author. Los Angeles, CA.
[78] Preston, Interivew by Author. Los Angeles, CA.
[79] Tanya Tate, Interview by Author. Phone., February 4, 2014.
[80] Linko, Interview by Author. Los Angeles, CA.
[81] LaRue, Interview by Author. Los Angeles, CA.
[82] "BBW"—big beautiful woman—is industry-terminology for performers of size.
[83] In this position, the receptive partner is on top, facing away from their partner.
[84] Devlyn Red, Interview by Author. Granada Hills, CA, February 21, 2014.
[85] Chibbles, Interview by Author. Granada Hills, CA.
[86] Prince Yashua, Interview by Author. Canoga Park, CA., February 28, 2014.
[87] Robert McRuer, ed., *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 8.
[88] Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California, 2003), 54.

[89] Conner Habib, Interview by Author. Los Angeles, CA, February 27, 2014.
[90] Chanel Preston, Interview by Author, Los Angeles, November 13, 2013.
[91] Jeffreys, for example, offers, dramatically, "live girls and women do have their orifices penetrated to produce pornography. They take drugs to survive the pain and humiliation, and they bleed." Sheila Jeffreys, *The Industrial Vagina: The Political Economy of the Global Sex Trade* (London; New York: Routledge, 2009), 76.
[92] Catharine MacKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified Discourses on Life and Law* (Harvard University Press, 1988), 128.
[93] Gail Dines, "Invisible Violence: The HIV Crisis in the Porn Industry," *Counter Punch*, September 27, 2013.
[94] For HIV/AIDS policy in historical context, see Jennifer Brier, *Infectious Ideas U.S. Political Responses to the AIDS Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).
[95] Jasbir Puar, "Prognosis Time: Towards a Geopolitics of Affect, Debility, and Capacity," *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 19, no. 2 (2009): 168.
[96] Annon., Interview by Author, Northridge.
[97] Rosemary Hennessy, "The Value of a Second Skin," in *Intersections in Feminist and Queer Theory: Sexualities, Cultures and Identities*, ed. Diane Richardson, Janice McLaughlin, and Mark Casey (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 125.
[98] Hennessy, "The Value of a Second Skin." On "second skins" in the sex work context, see Brooke Meredith Beloso, "Sex, Work, and the Feminist Erasure of Class," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 38, no. 1 (2012): 62.
[99] Steele, Interview by Author, Phone.
[100] Habib, Interview by Author. Los Angeles, CA.
[101] Institute for Women's Policy Research, "Pay Secrecy and Wage Discrimination: Quick Figures" (Washington, DC, January 2014).
[102] Annon., Interview by Autor, Northridge, October 29, 2013.
[103] Foxxx, Interview by Author. Los Angeles, CA.
[104] Yahshua, Interview by Author, Canoga Park.
[105] Dave Pounder, Interview by Author. Phone, April 8, 2014.
[106] Mr. Marcus, Interview by Author. Balboa Park, CA., October 29, 2013.
[107] For a discussion of "hypersexuality" in historical context, see Mireille Miller-Young, *A Taste for Brown Sugar: Black Women in Porn* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).
[108] Mr. Marcus, Interview by Author, Balboa Park, October 29, 2013.
[109] Peter Ackworth, Interview by Author, San Francisco, March 17, 2014.
[110] Foxxx, Interview by Author. Los Angeles, CA.
[111] Carter Stevens, Interview by Author, Skype, November 1, 2013.
[112] Annon., Interview by Author, February 4, 2012.
[113] Bangs, Interview by Author. Phone.
[114] Holloway, Interview by Author. San Francisco, CA.
[115] For more on the labor politics of "fair trade" porn, see Heather Berg, "Sex, Work, Queerly: Identity, Authenticity, and Laboured Performance," in *Queer Sex Work*, ed. Mary Laing, Katy Pilcher, and Nicola Smith (London: Routledge, 2015).
[116] Red, Interview by Author. Granada Hills, CA.
[117] Fifi and Edwin, Interview by Author, Skype, November 1, 2013.
[118] MacKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified*, 128,138, 147.
[119] Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Vol. 3*, 384–5.

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[2] Sara Jay, Interview by Author. Phone., December 10, 2013.
[3] Kelly Shibari, Interview by Author. Northridge, CA., November 1, 2013.
[4] Martha King, "Protecting and Representing Workers in the New Gig Economy: The Case of the Freelancers Union," in *New Labor in New York: Precarious Workers and the Future of the Labor Movement*, ed. Ruth Milkman and Ed Ott (Ithaca: ILR Press, Cornell University Press, 2014), 150–70.
[5] Ibid., 154.
[6] Even for this select group, the wages of the Golden Era have not made for secure retirements. Most of the performers I interviewed who were stars during that time are now facing extreme financial insecurity.

[7] Robin D. G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class*, 1st Free Press paperback ed (New York: Free Press, 1996), 176.
[8] Nelson Lichtenstein, *State of the Union: A Century of American Labor* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 27.
[9] Andrew Ross, *Nice Work If You Can Get It: Life and Labor in Precarious Times* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 34.
[10] VJ, Interview by Author, Phone, November 18, 2013.
[11] Charity Bangs, Interview by Author. Phone., November 7, 2013.
[12] Annon. A, Interview by Author. Los Angeles., June 29, 2014.
[13] Christopher Daniels, Interview by Author. Los Angeles, CA., April 9, 2014. I anonymize other performers' quotes regarding escorting in order to protect them from legal reproductions. Daniels has published a book about his escorting work and was as such willing to go on record.
[14] Heather Berg and Constance Penley, "Creative Precarity in the Adult Film Industry," in *Precarious Creativity: Global Media, Local Labor*, ed. Michael Curtin and Kevin Sanson (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), 162.
[15] Ace, Interview by Author. Reseda, CA.
[16] Samantha Grace, Interview by Author. Los Angeles., November 3, 2013.
[17] J. K. Gibson-Graham, *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 170.
[18] Raylene, Interview by Author. Reseda, CA., October 29, 2013.
[19] On termination due to off-duty conduct, see Marisa Anne Pagnattaro, "What Do You Do When You Are Not At Work?: Limiting the Use of Off-Duty Conduct as the Basis for Adverse Employment Decisions," *University of Pennsylvania Journal of Business Law* 6, no. 3 (2004).
[20] Annon., "Exclusive Services Agreement," 2012.
[21] Ta-Nehisi Coates, "'Lucrative Work-for-Free Opportunity,'" *The Atlantic*, March 9, 2013, http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2013/03/lucrative-work-for-free-opportunity/273846/.
[22] Management is, of course, often unaware of workers' off-set activity. I suspect that proclamations of refusing to work with women who escort are more matters of identity management than actual practice.
[23] Mark Schechter, Interview by Author. Woodland Hills, CA., October 24, 2013.
[24] Gira Grant suggests that reformers' "near pornographic focus" on online escort adds "proves what reformers view as the real threat: the visibility of sex work." Melissa Gira Grant, *Playing the Whore* (London and Brooklyn: Verso, 2014), 65.
[25] Conner Habib, Interview by Author. Los Angeles, CA, February 27, 2014.
[26] See, e.g. Melinda Chateauvert, *Sex Workers Unite!: A History of the Movement from Stonewall to Slutwalk* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2014), 22.
[27] Colby Jansen, Interview by Author. Phone., March 6, 2014.
[28] "The History of HustlaBall," *HustlaBall*, accessed March 1, 2015, http://www.hustlaball.com/history/.
[29] "Las Vegas 2015," *HustlaBall*, accessed March 1, 2015, http://www.hustlaball.com/lasvegas-2015/. Pacifico represents porn stars, drag queens, DJs, singers, and go go dancers, another testament to the gay male industry's integration of various satellite industries. "Talent," *Pacifico Entertainment*, accessed March 1, 2015, http://pacificoentertainment.com/.
[30] Annon., Interview by Author, Phone, July 15, 2014.
[31] VJ, Interview by Author, Phone.
[32] Chanel Preston, "Twitter Post," May 24, 2014, https://twitter.com/ChanelPreston/status/470320533054033921.
[33] Mireille Miller-Young, *A Taste for Brown Sugar: Black Women in Porn* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 254.
[34] Sinnamon Love, Interview by Author, Phone, January 13, 2014.
[35] On black women porn performers' experiences in other sex industries, see Miller-Young, *A Taste for Brown Sugar: Black Women in Porn*, 254.. On racialized hierarchy and "erotic capital" in the stripping industry, see Siobhan Brooks, *Unequal Desires: Race and Erotic Capital in the Stripping Industry* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2010).. On hierarchies according to weight, breast size, and appearance in the stripping industry, see Bernadette Barton, *Stripped: Inside the Lives of Exotic Dancers* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 19.. On middle-class escorting as dominated by class-privileged white women, see Elizabeth Bernstein,

Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Commerce of Sex (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 75..
[36] Chateauvert, *Sex Workers Unite!*
[37] "Fleshlight Girls: The Hottest Adult Stars," *Fleshlight*, accessed February 23, 2015, https://www.fleshlight.com/fleshlight-girls/fleshlight-toys/. According to the ethnicities listed for each performer on
the Internet Adult Film Database, http://www.iafd.com.
[38] Venus Lux, Interview by Author. Phone., June 30, 2014. There is money to be made as a MILF performer in the business, but for all but a select few, the transition to the MILF market brings both a pay cut and a drop in casting opportunities. As Venus suggests, it can also mean a decrease in status and self-esteem.
[39] Annon., Interview by Author, Phone, November 28, 2013.
[40] I understand the lack of opportunities available to straight-identified men in satellite industries not as evidence of straight-identified women's lack of interest in purchasing sexual services, but rather as a result of the lack of institutionalized and socially-sanctioned avenues for commercial sex exchange in this sector.
[41] Maggie McNeill, "Whorearchy," *The Honest Courtesan*, May 10, 2012, https://maggiemcneill.wordpress.com/2012/05/10/whorearchy/.
[42] Lily Cade, Interview by Author. Pasadena, CA., November 11, 2013.
[43] On workers' negotiations of the risks associated with different types of sex work, see Gira Grant, *Playing the Whore*.
[44] In addition to erotic dance, web camming, and escorting—the gigs on which I focus here—performers draw incomes from a number of sources they spoke about less frequently. These include affiliate networks which provide referral commissions for new website signups and scene downloads, self-branded toys and other merchandise, and product endorsements.
[45] Felicia Fox, Interview by Author. Phone., November 4, 2013.
[46] Daniels, Interview by Author. Los Angeles, CA.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Jay, Interview by Author. Phone.
[49] Susan Dewey, *Neon Wasteland: On Love, Motherhood, and Sex Work in a Rust Belt Town* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 83.
[50] On labor practices in the erotic dance industry, see Kim Price-Glynn, *Strip Club: Gender, Power, and Sex Work*, Intersections (New York: New York University Press, 2010).
[51] Chris Hall, "Is Porn Darling Kink.com Ripping Off Its Webcam Girls," *SF Weekly*, June 18, 2012, http://www.sfweekly.com/exhibitionist/2012/06/18/is-porn-darling-kinkcom-ripping-off-its-webcam-girls.
[52] Peter Ackworth, Interview by Author. San Francisco, CA., March 17, 2014.
[53] Chelsea Poe, Interview by Author, Skype, June 17, 2014.
[54] Grace, Interview by Author. Los Angeles.
[55] Paul Bleakley, "'500 Tokens to Go Private': Camgirls, Cybersex and Feminist Entrepreneurship," *Sexuality & jayCulture* 18, no. 4 (December 2014): 892–910.
[56] Annon., "Streammate Session," February 12, 2015.
[57] On "the myth of the free exhibitionist," see Theresa Senft, *Camgirls: Celebrity and Community in the Age of Social Networks*, Digital Formations (New York: Lang, 2008), 80.
[58] Annon. A, Interview by Author. Los Angeles.
[59] Annon., Interview by Author, Phone, February 1, 2014.
[60] Annon., Interview by Autor, Northridge, November 29, 2013.
[61] Annon., Interview by Author, Phone, February 1, 2014.
[62] See Bernstein, *Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Commerce of Sex*.
[63] Annon., Interview by Author, Skype., June 3, 2014.
[64] Chris Caine, Interview by Author, Canoga Park, November 6, 2013.
[65] Nina Power, *One-Dimensional Woman* (Winchester, UK; Washington, USA: 0 [Zero] Books, 2009), 23.
[66] On employer scrutiny of workers' social media presence across mainstream industries, see Patricia Sanchez Abril, Avner Levin, and Alissa Del Riego, "Blurred Boundaries: Social Privacy and the Twenty-First Century Employee," *American Business Law Journal* 49, no. 1 (2012): 63-124.
[67] "A Primer on Scene Direction & Production" (Adult Entertainment Expo, Las Vegas, NV, January 24, 2015).
[68] From @brianstreetteam, @ElaDarling, and @AsaAkira respectively. "#realpornawards," *Twitter*, January 17, 2015, https://twitter.com/search?q=%23realpornawards&src=typd.

[69] Tanya Tate, "Twitter Post," Twitter, (June 24, 2014).
[70] Shibari, Interview by Author. Northridge, CA.
[71] As promotion for goods and services management profits from, self-marketing is productive of capital. In addition, scholars of digital labor make a case for understanding online data production as a form of labor—"productive consumption." User data, Christian Fuchs argues, is a commodity bought and sold, and so we should understand its production as *labor.* Christian Fuchs, *Digital Labor and Karl Marx* (New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2014), 246.
[72] "Verified Call: How It Works," accessed May 6, 2014, https://verifiedcall.com/how-it-works/.
[73] Streamate, "Live Models Wanted Now!," *Streammate*, accessed January 19, 2015, https://www.streamatemodels.com/.
[74] Ross Perlin, *Intern Nation: Earning Nothing and Learning Little in the Brave New Economy* (London; New York: Verso, 2012), 129.
[75] Ivy Knight, "When 'Stage' Is Just A French Word For Free Labor," *Swallow*, July 23, 2012, http://swallowdaily.com/2012/07/when-stage-is-just-a-french-word-for-free-labor/.
[76] Jennifer Alsever, "How to Get a Job: Work for Free," *Fortune*, March 14, 2012, http://fortune.com/2012/03/14/how-to-get-a-job-work-for-free/.
[77] Andrew Ross, "In Search of the Lost Paycheck," in *Digital Labor: The Internet as Playground and Factory*, ed. Trebor Scholz (New York: Routledge, 2013), 14.
[78] Stoya, Interview by Author, Woodland Hills, CA, May 7, 2014.
[79] Theresa Sneft, "Microcelebrity and the Branded Self," in *A Companion to New Media Dynamics*, ed. John Hartley, Jean Burgess, and Axel Bruns (Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 349.
[80] Ace, Interview by Author. Reseda, CA.
[81] Tate, "Twitter Post."
[82] Siri, "The Official TeamBJ DVD!," *The Official Blog of Siri*, accessed January 18, 2015, http://blog.siripornstar.com/shop/product/teambj-dvd/.
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[84] Kurt Vogner, Interview by Author. Phone., November 13, 2013.
[85] EJ Dickson, "Amazon Is Deleting Sex Workers' Wish Lists Without Warning," *The Daily Dot*, May 2, 2014, http://www.dailydot.com/lifestyle/amazon-sex-worker-wish-lists/.
[86] Nitasha Tiku, "WePay Blames 'The Rules' For Withholding Medical Funds from Sex Worker," *Gawker*, May 17, 2014, http://valleywag.gawker.com/wepay-blames-the-rules-for-withholding-medical-funds-1578017696/all.
[87] Mark Kernes, "JP Morgan Chase Closes Porn Star Accounts, Citing 'Ethics'!?!," *Adult Video News*, April 22, 2014, http://business.avn.com/articles/legal/JPMorgan-Chase-Closes-Porn-Star-Accounts-Citing-Ethics-557577.html.
[88] jessica drake, Interview by Author, Phone, February 25, 2014.
[89] Bug Lee, Interview by Author, West Hills, November 6, 2013.
[90] Kelly Shibari, Interview by Author, Northridge, November 1, 2013.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Performers have two main options in setting up personal websites. They can purchase a domain name and operate the site themselves (or directly pay someone to do so), maintaining ownership of all uploaded content and deriving sole profit; or they enlist with a web hosting platform and maintain a percentage split with the host, but own and produce all their own content.
[93] Maxine Holloway, Interview by Author, San Francisco, March 19, 2014.
[94] Tate, "Twitter Post."
[95] Holloway, Interview by Author, San Francisco.
[96] Mireille Miller-Young, "Sexy and Smart: Black Women and the Politics of Self-Authorship in Netporn," in *C'lickme: A Netporn Studies Reader*, ed. Katrien Jacobs and Marjie Janssen (Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2007), 207.
[97] Habib, Interview by Author. Los Angeles, CA.
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[2] Ibid.
[3] Stoya, "Natural Beauty Is Just a Marketing Tool," *Vice*, June 21, 2013, https://www.vice.com/en_uk/read/natural-beauty-is-nothing-more-than-a-marketing-tool.
[4] Stoya, "Can We Learn About Privacy From Porn Stars?," *New York Times*, March 8, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/09/opinion/sunday/can-we-learn-about-privacy-from-porn-stars.html?_r=0.
[5] Christina Morini and Andrea Fumagalli, "Life Put to Work: Towards a Life Theory of Value," *Ephemera: Theory & Politics in Organization* 10, no. 3 (2010).
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[7] Feminist labor scholars have long suggested that what comes to be understood as 'private' is historically contingent, see Evelyn Nakano Glenn, "From Servitude to Service Work: Historical Continuities in the Racial Division of Paid Reproductive Labor," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 18, no. 1 (1992). Eileen Boris, "Working in the Home: Continuing the Discussion of Women's Labors," *Journal of Women's History* 16, no. 2 (2004). Silvia Federici, *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle* (Oakland: PM Press, 2012).
[8] Paolo Virno, *Grammar of the Multitude: For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2004), 103. We know from Marxist feminists that the "old distinction" between labor and non-labor has been a fiction since long before the advent of post-Fordism or immaterial labor theory. Wages for Housework advocates use the analytics of paid and unpaid life, for example, and have interrogated for decades the ways in which such borders are shifting and politically-loaded (See, e.g. Fortunati 1995).
[9] On the "feminization of labour" see Cristina Morini, "The Feminization of Labour in Cognitive Capitalism," *Feminist Review* 87, no. 1 (2007): 40–59.
[10] Morini and Fumagalli, "Life Put to Work," 240.
[11] Morini and Fumagalli, "Life Put to Work."
[12] Ibid. Marxist feminists have theorized interpersonal labor as part of the spectrum of labors that make up reproductive work. (See e.g., Weeks 2011, 141-142).
[13] Lorelei Lee, Interview by Author. San Francisco, CA., June 5, 2014.
[14] Christopher Daniels, Interview by Author. Los Angeles, CA., April 9, 2014.
[15] Jason Newell and Gordon MacNeil, "Jason Newell and Gordon MacNeil, 'Professional Burnout, Vicarious Trauma, Secondary Traumatic Stress, and Compassion Fatigue,' Best Practices in Mental Health 6, No. 2 (2013): 57–69," *Best Practices in Mental Health* 6, no. 2 (2013): 57–69.
[16] "'Ergonomics Program,'" accessed July 18, 2014, http://ehs.ucsb.edu/units/ergo/ergo.html.
[17] Venus Lux, Interview by Author. Phone., June 30, 2014.
[18] Gail Dines, "Porn: A Multibillion-Dollar Industry That Renders All Authentic Desire Plastic," *The Guardian*, January 4, 2011, http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/jan/04/pornography-big-business-influence-culture.
[19] See Lisa Duggan and Nan D Hunter, *Sex Wars: Sexual Dissent and Political Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2006).
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[21] Dylan Ryan, "Fucking Feminism," in *The Feminist Porn Book: The Politics of Producing Pleasure*, ed. Tristan Taormino et al. (New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2013), 125.
[22] See Florian Cramer, "Sodom Blogging: Alternative Porn and Aesthetic Sensibility," in *C'lickme: A Netporn Studies Reader*, ed. Katrien Jacobs and Marjie Janssen (Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2007), 171–76. Julia Levin Russo, "'The Real Thing': Reframing Queer Pornography for Virtual Spaces.","in *C'lickme: A Netporn Studies Reader*, ed. Katrien Jacobs and Marjie Janssen (Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2007), 239–51. Susana Paasonen, *Carnal Resonance: Affect and Online Pornography* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011). Helen Hester, *Beyond Explicit: Pornography and the Displacement of Sex* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2015).
[23] See Weeks, *The Problem With Work*.
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[52] Richie Calhoun, Interview by Author, Los Angeles, October 15, 2013.
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[60] Joanna Angel, Interview by Author. Phone, January 23, 2014.
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[62] Stoya, Interview by Author, Woodland Hills, CA.
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[67] Bella Vendetta, Interview by Author, Phone, March 18, 2014.
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[70] Alex Linko, Interview by Author, Los Angeles, CA, November 9, 2013.
[71] Kristoffer Smemo describes a "petit-bourgeois entrepreneurship" that covers up classed relations in hardcore punk music production. The DIY entrepreneur is, he reminds us, still a boss.
Kristoffer Smemo, "Black Flag and the Political Economy of Hardcore," *U.S. Intellectual History Blog*, June 24, 2014, http://s-usih.org/2014/06/guest-post-kristoffer-smemo-on-black-flag-and-the-political-economy-of-hardcore.html.
[72] Annon., Interview by Author, Los Angeles, May 7, 2014.
[73] Lily Cade, Interview by Author, Pasadena, CA, November 10, 2013. Melissa Gira Grant describes similar critiques in her interviews with feminist porn performers. Melissa Gira Grant, "Who Speaks for Women Who Work in the Adult Industry?," *The Guardian*, March 12, 2013, http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/mar/12/who-speaks-for-women-work-adult-industry.
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[75] Siouxsie Q, Interview by Author, Oakland, March 19, 2014.
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[77] Maxine Holloway, Interview by Author, San Francisco, March 19, 2014.
[78] Mireille Miller-Young, *A Taste for Brown Sugar: Black Women in Pornography* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 278.
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[80] Danny Wylde, Interview by Author, Los Angeles, November 4, 2013.
[81] Gala Vanting, "Manufacturing Realness" (Feminist Porn Conference, Toronto, April 5, 2014).
[82] Holloway, Interview by Author, San Francisco.
[83] See Franco Berardi, *The Soul at Work: From Alienation to Autonomy* (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2009). Weeks, *The Problem With Work*.
[84] See Elizabeth Bernstein, *Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Commerce of Sex* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). Katherine Frank, "The Production of Identity and the Negotiation of Intimacy," *Sexualities* 1, no. 2 (1998): 175–201. Teela Sanders, "'It's Just Acting': Sex Workers' Strategies for Capitalizing on Sexuality.," *Gender, Work and Organization* 12, no. 4 (2005): 319–42.
[85] Conner Habib, Interview by Author, Los Angeles, February 27, 2014.
[86] (Darling 2014)
[87] Hochschild identifies three stances workers take in relation to what exactly they exchange in doing emotional labor: Some develop too sincere an identification with work, which makes them more vulnerable to burnout. Others make clear distinctions between their work and non-work selves, thus being less vulnerable to burnout but more likely to feel guilt about being insincere. A third group makes clear distinctions between work and non-work selves but feels no guilt about this, instead viewing performance as part of the job, and this worker is most at risk for estrangement and cynicism. Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California, 2003).
[88] Herschel Savage, Interview by Author, Los Angeles, CA, April 5, 2013.
[89] Kelly Shibari, Interview by Author, Northridge, November 1, 2013.
[90] Ana Foxxx, Interview by Author, Los Angeles, January 24, 2014.
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[98] Such scholars have found an indispensable resource in the theory of emotional labor Arlie Hochschild developed in her study of flight attendants. Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 187.
[99] Bernstein, *Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Commerce of Sex*, 103.
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Notes to the Epilogue
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