

Sex Workers as Allies against Child Sexual Abuse

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Maggie McNeill [00:00:04] If you want to fight underage sex work, you need to A) make it easier for minors to be emancipated so that they can get conventional jobs if that's what they want.

Meagan Ingerman [00:00:14] You have to give them another option.

Maggie McNeill [00:00:16] You do, you absolutely do. And the second thing is, is drop-in shelters, because a lot of the shelters, now cops hang around them.

Meagan Ingerman [00:00:25] Hello, my name is Meagan Ingerman and I'm hosting this month's episode of Prostasia Foundation's podcast-vodcast series, "Sex, Human Rights and CSA Prevention". This month, we are very fortunate to have Maggie McNeill, the honest courtesan.

Meagan Ingerman [00:00:40] Maggie is a sex worker, a prolific writer, a former librarian, and she sits on Prostasia's advisory council. So, hi, Maggie.

Maggie McNeill [00:00:49] Hello.

Meagan Ingerman [00:00:50] Thanks for chatting with us today.

Maggie McNeill [00:00:52] It's a pleasure to be here.

Meagan Ingerman [00:00:53] You're a very in-demand sex worker and prolific writer. Now, you're starring in this documentary, The War on Whores. Do you ever get tired?

Maggie McNeill [00:01:02] Yes.

Meagan Ingerman [00:01:02] Ye? Do you do you take breaks? Do you have self-care rituals?

Maggie McNeill [00:01:08] I do. Well, I have my nightly self-care ritual, which is basically getting as stoned as possible.

Meagan Ingerman [00:01:14] [[makes 'thumbs up' gesture]]

Maggie McNeill [00:01:17] Sleeping.

Meagan Ingerman [00:01:19] I made no comment. [[laughs]]

Maggie McNeill [00:01:20] Get as stoned as possible and sleeping.

Meagan Ingerman [00:01:22] Awesome, that's a great self-care ritual. I'm familiar with that one myself.

Maggie McNeill [00:01:26] Mostly for me, it's little rules.

Meagan Ingerman [00:01:29] Okay.

Maggie McNeill [00:01:29] So, for example, I don't make appointments before noon. When I say appointments, I don't mean, sex worker appointments. I mean any kind of appointment.

Meagan Ingerman [00:01:39] Just anything.

Maggie McNeill [00:01:40] I don't get my nails done. I don't get my hair done. I don't make doctor's appointments. I don't. I don't. It doesn't matter unless there's some, even when I go to my my beauty doctor, she only does afternoons one day a week. So my appointments are always on that day of the week.

Meagan Ingerman [00:01:55] Gotcha.

Maggie McNeill [00:01:56] Beause I'm not going in the mornings. Right. So it's little things like that. Yeah. Mostly I'm just, I do get tired, but I'm really pretty good at continuing until whatever it is, is done. And then dropping.

Meagan Ingerman [00:02:13] OK.

Maggie McNeill [00:02:13] So sometimes it seems like I'm very high energy.

Meagan Ingerman [00:02:17] Sometimes it seems like you've got to power through. You make sure to make time for yourself, and drop after.

Maggie McNeill [00:02:21] Yes.

Meagan Ingerman [00:02:22] OK. I'm going to pivot a little bit. As you and many of our viewers know, ProStasia as a child protection organization based on the idea that protecting children should not force consenting adults to give up civil liberties, and that there are allies in the fight against child sexual abuse who are often overlooked. For instance, sex workers. Can you tell me a bit about why sex workers are strong allies in this endeavor?

Maggie McNeill [00:02:48] Well, you know, I think that the whole idea that sex workers would not be comes from the Madonna-whore duality. Right. The idea that's very old, that all women can be divided into Madonna's and whores, and that if you're a whore, you're not a Madonna. And so that view point, I think if people are laboring under that, it's going to make them feel as though sex workers would not be. But in truth, 70 something percent of sex workers worldwide have children and are no different from any other people. And I think that it's natural for humans, even humans who don't have children themselves. I don't have children myself. And yet at the same time, you you feel a sense of protectiveness towards children, you want to protect children. We're very aware that they're not able to navigate the world in the way that we do. But at the same time, I think this idea has arisen. And it's come and gone several times through history. The most recent one started the Victorian era, this idea of children as being uniquely incompetent. And what I mean by that is the idea that children need to be protected from everything, even things that most cultures didn't feel they really need to be protected from.

Meagan Ingerman [00:04:17] Right. Like certain important experiences that just teach us how to be people.

Maggie McNeill [00:04:21] Exactly. Exactly. Or things like, for example, I mean, for most of human history, people were raised on farms. And the idea of the the need to protect children from not seeing dogs fucking or something.

Meagan Ingerman [00:04:36] Right. Because sex and life and death are all such an integral part of the farm. So they used to get a more clear picture of what things are actually like.

Maggie McNeill [00:04:45] And so I think sex workers, I think can in a way be, how do I say it, in a sense, the voice of reason. We can kind of be the ones who can say, you know, it's not as bad as you think.

Meagan Ingerman [00:05:02] Whatever side you fall on, it's not as extreme as that.

Maggie McNeill [00:05:07] Let's kind of back up, take stock. And also, we are the canaries in the civil liberties coal mine. Definitely. You know, we're always the one that get picked on. We're the ones that people will be. And in a sense, it's weird because if anything isn't an adult business, it's ours.

Meagan Ingerman [00:05:26] Absolutely.

Maggie McNeill [00:05:26] And yet people are constantly I mean, there's not a sex worker I know who would see a client who was under age. Right. Or things like that. And yet there's these notions.

Meagan Ingerman [00:05:38] That you're somehow a predator. And then also a victim at that same time. That must be very frustrating.

Maggie McNeill [00:05:44] And of course, the idea, too, there is the idea that our clients prefer very young. And that's all part of the whole thing of demand is the idea that clients are innately predatory. Well, as I've gotten older as a sex worker, the demand has only increased.

Meagan Ingerman [00:06:08] Congratulations!

Maggie McNeill [00:06:08] Thank you. Which, of course, would not be true if all clients really were interested in very, very young.

Meagan Ingerman [00:06:16] Right. Of course. Because as we discover as we move on, sex is a spectrum.

Maggie McNeill [00:06:21] Yes.

Meagan Ingerman [00:06:21] And it's a huge thing.

Maggie McNeill [00:06:23] Very huge.