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I'm A Parent Making Porn To Make Ends Meet During Covid Quarantine

For some of us, porn-making and digital work are our only real option to provide for our families right now.

I have been a stripper for the last 11 years, one who merely dabbled in webcam and porn-making — until, that is, coronavirus quarantines and shutdowns closed Oregon clubs as of March 16, eliminating the bulk of my income.

The pandemic took the world by surprise, many workplaces shuttered indefinitely and I, like many other out-of-work parents, found myself explaining to my child that some things would be different for a while. She won't be playing with her friends, Mommy won't be buying as many books and toys, and our schedules will be unusual.

In this COVID time, I am relying entirely on digital work: such as live webcam solo and partnered sex shows, selling fetish videos, and sexting for tips. Co-parenting gives me time to shoot porn when she's at her dad's house, but the juggle is real when I'm answering emails and sexting for tips long into the night after tucking my kid into bed. Sometimes I'm able to send pics and chat with customers from the tub while she reads from her room.

"Does your family know what you do?" What my daughter knows about Mommy's work is context-appropriate for her age; she's 8. She knows that "Mommy works in a business called a strip club and dances for people and tells them jokes, gives them hugs, and gets tipped money for doing so, because bodies are interesting and beautiful and people will pay money to appreciate them, and because companionship is important."

When she's older I will explain to her that I've worked with people's bodies and genitals, and that I've been paid for sex, and that I've earned money from having conversations and filming myself masturbating or even stepping on cigarettes. I will explain to her that some of this work was legal and some of it was not.

Looking at porn can have positive effects for creativity, for body image, for validating sexual identity and for normalizing activities that people enjoy. Meanwhile, professional sex educators and the major porn platforms are recommending that people have digital and screen sex, to help "flatten the curve."

Millions of Americans are out of work, many are scrambling to figure out how to earn their next rent or mortgage payment and are stuck inside with screens. Some of these folks are trying their chances at porn-making, as they try to determine their best options for making money during quarantine.

But it's not an easy path. People must weigh whether their own families will disown them after learning that they masturbated on a webcam for money, or sold nudes. Parents have to grapple with whether they will be allowed to return to their "regular jobs" if they later get outed for doing porn in order to survive now. Even though adult workers are often encouraged to leave the industry and "find a real job," folks are routinely fired or outed if their past adult work is discovered.

Technology is another obstacle for people like me who are turning to online sex work to make ends meet. It's becoming more difficult to share sexual content privately without government or platform intervention. Skype spies on users' calls, and so does Zoom, monitoring them for "nudity" and "obscenity," and this has been a common policy since April 2018, after the laws known as FOSTA and SESTA passed.

Additionally, payment processors like Paypal, CashApp and Venmo don't allow payment processing for adult-oriented businesses, and they monitor transaction notes specifically for mentions of porn or nudes. It's really difficult to get paid for sex work digitally and legally.

Another tough hurdle for any sex worker: how to amass a social media and fan following to earn income and not simply for "likes? Sites like Instagram, Facebook and Tumblr are increasingly censored since FOSTA/SESTA passed. Small creators are very likely to be deactivated or shadowbanned, making it nearly impossible to direct clients to their work.

Now threatening everyone's privacy is a bill that would give law enforcement and police unfettered access to all our communications. Proponents of the Earn It Act claim it will reduce child trafficking, as lawmakers claimed with FOSTA/SESTA. If this passes, it will ALSO criminalize sex workers, journalists, activists and artists who are caught in the crosshairs of law enforcement and deplatforming due to "obscenity" censorship.

These laws and societal attitudes make it difficult for us to earn a living, to receive and request money; to host our own ads and to keep bigger percentages from platforms. They make it difficult for those like me, for whom porn-making and digital work are our only real option under quarantine, to provide for our families.

At the very least, think of our children. When you hurt a parent's ability to provide for their child, it hurts the child.

"Who bought you those shoes, Mommy?" A customer did, for when I can go back to the club. "A client of mine, they wanted to say thank you," is what I told her, and this is true. She's across the kitchen table from me with her workbook, learning how to multiply and puts her headphones back on as I type this. My quick math is good and she likes checking her answers with me — "What's six times eight?" — because I'm a stripper who uses arithmetic every shift to track my earnings, my payouts and my rates. What I learned in the club is helping me homeschool, and I'm not even surprised.

Porn is important, seeing breasts cheers people up, and what's offered can be for amusement or education, when framed and presented to a porn-literate audience. I love hearing, "Your videos helped me teach my husband how to slow his pace during sex," or "Thank you for normalizing use of a safe word," or "I don't usually like girl/girl porn but yours was so real." Many of my clients are women, and many of my clients are parents, too.

If you want to support working women and families and queers and people who labor despite chronic pain and mental health issues, if you want to support Black creators and trans people, too, please help to normalize pornography because many of "us" make it to make a living. Anti-porn advocates, also known as "porn abolitionists," really hate it when I point out that porn is one of the only industries where femmes typically out-earn their male counterparts, both online and off.

Free porn is pretty available but most is stolen from creators like myself, and now is the best time to buy directly from the creator or request a commission. It's literally keeping our families fed and our spirits lifted.

Pay for your content, or tip for it when possible. Comic [Tina Horn](#) recently and truthfully noted, "Buying porn directly from sex workers is the farmer's market of adult entertainment."

This quarantine has taught me what I already learned as a sex worker and as a parent: to not rely on the government for protection or resources. To have multiple backup plans for income and hustle. To have tenacity. To expect people to push my boundaries and to practice setting them. To model good behavior. To use deliberate and kind touch. To teach and learn consent and better communication skills.

Porn is literally saving many people's lives during quarantine times — and always. Sexual rights are civil rights and we can all do our part to protect and respect both, for ourselves and for our children.

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