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Sex Workers Say ‘Stop The Shaming’; Welcome Florida Judge’s Decision To Protect Privacy

Sex Workers Call Out Media For Prurient Pursuit Of Robert Kraft Massage Sting Video; Applaud Florida Judge’s Decision To Block The Release Of Undercover Videos

San Francisco, CA - A sex worker activist group, the Erotic Service Providers Legal Education and Research Project (ESPLERP), today called out national media organizations, including the Associated Press, ESPN, ABC, and the New York Times, for their efforts to make public the video recordings of private massages obtained during the massage parlour sting that ensnared Robert Kraft, owner of the New England Patriots.

“These media organisations claim a public interest in releasing these videos. In truth all they care about is their ratings - because ‘sex sells’. Shame on them,” said Maxine Doogan of ESPLERP. “They know that shaming a prominent businessman like Robert Kraft, will sell papers and draw in viewers. When ratings are at stake, they simply do not care about anyone's constitutional right to privacy. I wonder how they’d feel if Arthur Ochs Sulzberger Jr. (the owner of the New York Times) was caught up in something like this?”

“We applaud Judge Kathleen Roberts for seeing through the police mis-representations - and ruling that the videos are inadmissible,” said Claire Alwyne of ESPLERP. “The police obtained the 'sneak and peek' warrant (questionably authorized under the PATRIOT Act under the guise of stopping terrorism) to film surveillance videos, by claiming ‘trafficking’ was occurring when there was no such thing taking place. Detectives then spent more than six months getting massages from the alleged sex slaves before arresting them on prostitution charges - not trafficking. And now they are trying to cover their tracks by shaming Robert Kraft.”

"The public would probably be more interested in seeing videos of detectives getting tax payer funded massages (and who knows what else) filmed during the six month sting prior to arresting the massage parlor workers," said Domina Elle of ESPLERP. "The public deserves to see how these stings are conducted, such as how often law enforcement engages in sexual contact as a means to investigate and arrest."

Media organisations should not be arguing in court for improperly obtained private videos to be made public. They should instead put more effort into avoiding repeating false and misleading statistics, which fuel these stings in the first place. And law enforcement should not be wasting time arresting adults engaged in consensual activity. ESPLERP calls on legislators in all 50 states to decriminalize sex work immediately.

The Erotic Service Providers Legal, Education and Research Project (ESPLERP) is a diverse community-based coalition advancing sexual privacy rights through litigation, education, and research. Contributions to support our advocacy can be made at www.litigatetoemancipate.com.

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