

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

“Loss Must Be Marked and It Cannot Be Represented”:¹ Memorializing Sex Workers in Vancouver’s West End

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We realize a series of paradoxes: the past is irrecoverable and the past is not past; the past is the resource for the future and the future is the redemption of the past; loss must be marked and it cannot be represented; loss fractures representation itself and loss precipitates its own modes of expression.²

IN THIS ARTICLE, we tell a story about how our two-member coalition has spawned varied collaborations, with a focus on our most recent project: the installation of a permanent memorial to commemorate on-street sex workers who were violently and illegally evicted from Vancouver’s West End neighbourhood in July 1984. In what follows, we reflect on our collective process, and we affirm what is unique and meaningful about our site-specific West End Sex Workers Memorial. Inspired by the intimate alliance of Sarah Hunt and Cindy Holmes,³ we understand our joint initiative as one expression of our mutual commitment to anti-colonial queer and feminist practice. We heed Amber Dean’s incitement to grapple with “what lives on” in the aftermath of trauma, in this case, the mass eviction of “hookers on Davie Street.”⁴

¹ This line is borrowed from Judith Butler, “Afterword: After Loss, What Then?,” in *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*, ed. David L. Eng and David Kazanjian (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 467.

² Butler, “Afterword,” 467.

³ Sarah Hunt and Cindy Holmes, “Everyday Decolonizing,” *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 19 (2015): 154–72. They argue eloquently that “a decolonial queer politics is not only anti-normative, but actively engages with anti-colonial, critical race and Indigenous theories and geopolitical issues such as imperialism, colonialism, globalization, migration, neo-liberalism, and nationalism” (156). See also Scott Morgensen, *Spaces between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

⁴ Amber Dean, *Remembering Vancouver’s Disappeared Women: Settler Colonialism and the Difficulty of Inheritance* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 27.

We embrace David Eng and David Kazanjian's insistence on how the past remains "steadfastly alive" for the political work of the present.⁵ And following the wisdom of Glen Coulthard, we question the power of white settler state authorities to resolve "the deleterious social impacts of intrastate violence, mass atrocity, and historical injustice through official apologies advocating 'forgiveness' and 'reconciliation.'"⁶

As Judith Butler notes above, memorializing the past is fraught with contradictions. As such, this story must also reflect our social locations and variable agency in bringing our memorial into being. Ours is a rich and rewarding friendship. Jamie Lee, sixty-two, is Métis Cree, two-spirit and trans, a community leader, entrepreneur, researcher, and sex worker. Becki, fifty-nine, is a white, cis-femme settler of Scottish and Dutch heritage, academic-activist, and sex educator. We became fast friends more than twenty years ago, shortly after Becki's arrival to the city of Vancouver, on the stolen lands of the Tsleil-Waututh, Squamish, and Musqueam nations. Back then, Jamie Lee operated a thrift store, did makeovers for trans folks, saw clients as an "unrepentant ho,"⁷ and rabble-roused as a grassroots political activist. For more than ten years, she has operated Forbidden City – a trans and kink resource – in a variety of downtown locations. On four different occasions, Jamie Lee has campaigned for a political seat on either Vancouver's municipal council or on the Park Board. Becki is a long-time activist in social justice movements for reproductive choice, sexual assault support, LGBTQ₂ rights, trans liberation, and sex workers' rights. She works as a teacher, researcher, and writer at the University of British Columbia (UBC). Jamie Lee is happily hetero-single; Becki is in a long-term queer relationship with her butch girlfriend. For twenty years we have lived geographically close to one another. Each of us is embedded in extensive and overlapping networks of chosen kin and biological family. On top of our enduring friendship and shared political visions, our passions include fashion, MAC makeup, the colour orange, and Chinese cuisine.

Differently racialized, from different class backgrounds, of different genders and different sexualities, we are differently implicated in processes of neoliberal, white settler colonialism and capitalism. Becki benefits from white, middle-class privilege sustained through educational

⁵ David E. Eng and David Kazanjian, "Introduction: Mourning Remains," in *Loss*, 5.

⁶ Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

⁷ See the portrait of Jamie Lee by Michael Harris, "The Unrepentant Whore," in "The Unrepentant Whore: How Jamie Lee Hamilton Changed the Way We Look at Canada's Underclass," *The Walrus* 7, 5 (2010): 40-45.

capital, full-time employment, and home ownership; Jamie Lee lives with economic precarity, substandard social housing, and declining physical health. Becki is aware that white settler narratives of “good intentions” and “benevolence” have long been cornerstones of white settler identity formation in Canada.⁸ As such, and at all times, Becki strives to be accountable to Jamie Lee as well as to broader communities of Indigenous people, trans people, sex workers, and communities of colour.

At every turn of our journey we have lived uncomfortably with our desire to honour the resilience of “hookers on Davie,” all the while haunted by the grisly murders of women from Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside – the majority Indigenous, and many involved in drug use and survival sex work.⁹ In 2007, after decades of disappearances and murders, a serial killer was convicted on six charges of manslaughter.¹⁰ We acknowledge community-based efforts to commemorate those murdered in the Downtown Eastside through monuments lovingly installed in the late 1990s.¹¹ Since the late 1990s, we have borne witness to the unresolved and often fractious debates about what dedicatory marker/s might best reflect the needs and desires of family members left behind, including

⁸ See Eva Mackey, *Unsettled Expectations: Uncertainty, Land, and Settler Decolonization* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2016); Pauline Regan, *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010); Sarah de Leeuw, Emilie Cameron, and Margo Greenwood, “Participatory and Community-Based Research, Indigenous Geographies, and Spaces of Friendship: A Critical Engagement,” *Canadian Geographer* 56, 2 (2012): 182–94; Zoltán Grossman, *Unlikely Alliances: Native Nations and White Communities Join to Defend Rural Lands* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017); and Leslie A. Robertson with the Kwagu’l Gixsam Clan, *Standing Up with Ga’axsta’las: Jane Constance Cook and the Politics of Memory, Church, and Custom* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012).

⁹ Leslie A. Robertson and Dara Culhane define survival sex work as “conducted by impoverished, often drug-addicted women who work on the street where they receive less pay and often endure more dangerous working conditions than those who work through brothels and escort agencies.” See their edited collection, *In Plain Sight: Reflections on Life in Downtown Eastside Vancouver* (Vancouver: Talon Books, 2005), 178.

¹⁰ See Dean, *Remembering Vancouver’s Disappeared Women*. See also Lori Shenher, *That Lonely Section of Hell: The Botched Investigation of a Serial Killer Who Almost Got Away* (Vancouver: Greystone Books, 2015); and, Shawna Ferris, *Street Sex Work and Canadian Cities: Resisting a Dangerous Order* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2015).

¹¹ On a small memorial boulder of engraved granite in Crab Park, in the city’s Downtown Eastside neighbourhood, these words are etched: “The Heart Has Its Own Memory: In honour of the spirit of the people murdered in the Downtown Eastside. Many were women and many were native Aboriginal women. Many of these cases remain unsolved. All my relations.” The memorial was dedicated on 29 July 1997. See Adrienne Burke’s account, *Speaking for a Long Time: Public Space and Social Memory in Vancouver* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010). In the same neighbourhood, a memorial pole, Standing with Courage, Strength, and Pride, was carved by mainly Indigenous carvers; it was raised on 6 June 1998. The inscribed words read: “To our sisters and brothers who have died unnecessarily in the downtown eastside and to those who have survived.” A fuller treatment of these monuments in relation to our memorial lamppost is beyond the scope of this article.

the children of murdered women. Concomitantly, our memorial lamppost is grounded in a different genealogy: it arises from the specificities of full-time street-based sex workers who lived in, worked in, and were displaced from the West End from the late 1960s to July 1984.¹² As we describe below, the idea for our memorial was hatched and nurtured by and for activist sex workers who once worked the sub-strolls on and near Davie Street.

BUILDING OUR EMOTIONAL AND POLITICAL BOND

For over twenty years, we as collaborators have shared involvement with sex workers' rights, trans rights, queer rights, and municipal politics. For years at Vancouver's inner city Thornton Park, and at the February 14th Women's Memorial March, we marched with others to commemorate disappeared and murdered women – disproportionately Indigenous – in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. In 1997, Jamie Lee dumped sixty-seven pairs of stiletto-heeled shoes on the front lawn of Vancouver's City Hall to raise awareness of staggering losses. In 1998, Jamie Lee urged the mayor, Philip Owen, to fund emergency cell phones for on-street sex workers at risk of violence. Also in 1998, Becki joined Jamie Lee as a volunteer, first on Jamie Lee's campaigns for civic election,¹³ and then at Grandma's House – a refuge for street-involved sex workers in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.¹⁴ For two decades, Becki has invited Jamie Lee to lecture at UBC on trans identity and family, colonial violence, experiential sex work, the whore stigma, policing, and the Canadian Criminal Code.

In the late 1990s, Becki interviewed Jamie Lee for her book, *Burlesque West: Showgirls, Sex and Sin in Postwar Vancouver*.¹⁵ Known by her stage name, Flo, Jamie Lee performed as a “gender illusionist” at BJ's show lounge in Vancouver in the early 1980s. Becki interviewed Jamie Lee again, ten years later, for her research project on the lively, robust community of street-involved sex workers in Vancouver's West End,

¹² Commercial sex work in the West End dates back to the late 1800s, with the brothel Maxine's on Bidwell Street. Indoor sex work has been conducted in West End apartments and massage parlours for over a century.

¹³ Jamie Lee Hamilton was the first out trans woman to seek election in Vancouver, British Columbia.

¹⁴ John Lowman, “Crown Expert-Witness Testimony in *Bedford v. Canada: Evidence-Based Argument or Victim-Paradigm Hyperbole?*,” in *Selling Sex: Experience, Advocacy, and Research on Sex Work in Canada*, ed. Emily van der Meulen, Elya M. Durisin, and Victoria Love, 230–50 (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013).

¹⁵ See Becki L. Ross, *Burlesque West: Showgirls, Sex, and Sin in Postwar Vancouver* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

which began to form in the late 1960s. Jamie Lee had once lived in the densely populated West End, where she worked the “tranny stroll” near Davie Street and was involved with the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes (ASP).¹⁶ For two years, Becki used funding from the Canadian state – specifically, from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) – to pay Jamie Lee as a part-time research consultant. Guided by Indigenous researchers’ insistence on ethical enactment of the “4 Rs” – respect, responsibility, relevance, and reciprocity – and drawing on Jamie Lee’s extensive networks, we conducted interviews with former sex workers.¹⁷ Indebted to thirty years of scrupulous research by criminologist John Lowman, we methodically mapped the maturation of a pimp-free stroll comprised of approximately two hundred diversely gendered and racialized sex workers who made the West End their home and workplace.¹⁸

COMPREHENDING THE COMMUNITY’S STRENGTHS AND VULNERABILITIES

As Jamie Lee has long argued, West End sex workers during the “golden era” of Davie Street made prostitution their *culture*. West End-based sex workers in the 1970s and early 1980s experienced little drug use or drug addiction, no exploitation from pimps, and no sense that they were engaged in survival sex in the West End.¹⁹ Others participating in Vancouver’s sex economy hail from various historical trajectories that

¹⁶ The first sex workers’ rights organization in Vancouver, the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes (ASP), was co-founded by Marie Arrington and Sally de Quadros in June 1982.

¹⁷ On the “4 Rs,” see Verna Kirkness and Ray Barnhardt, “First Nations and Higher Education: The 4 Rs – Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, and Responsibility,” in *Knowledge across Culture: A Contribution to Dialogue across Civilizations*, ed. R. Hayoe and J. Pan, 1–18 (Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre, the University of Hong Kong, 2001).

¹⁸ Selected works by John Lowman include *Vancouver Field Study of Prostitution*, Working Papers on Pornography and Prostitution Report No. 8 (Ottawa: Department of Justice, 1984); “Prostitution in Vancouver: Some Notes on the Genesis of a Social Problem,” *Canadian Journal of Criminology* 28, 1 (1986): 1–16; “Violence and the Outlaw Status of (Street) Prostitution in Canada,” *Violence Against Women* 6, 9 (2000): 987–1011; and “Crown Expert-Witness Testimony in Bedford v. Canada: Evidence-Based Argument or Victim-Paradigm Hyperbole?,” in van der Meulen et al., *Selling Sex*, 230–50. Our study of the West End has attracted media coverage – CBC Radio (“Early Edition” and “On the Coast”), the *Vancouver Sun*, the *Georgia Straight*, and *Daily Xtra*.

¹⁹ See Jamie Lee Hamilton, “The Golden Age of Prostitution: One Woman’s Personal Account of an Outdoor Brothel in Vancouver, 1975–1984,” in *Trans Activism in Canada: A Reader*, ed. Dan Irving and Rupert Raj, 27–32 (Toronto: Canadian Scholars’ Press, 2014). See also Becki L. Ross and Rachael Sullivan, “Tracing Lines of Horizontal Hostility: How Sex Workers and Gay Liberation Activists Battled for Space, Voice, and Belonging in Vancouver, 1975–1985,” *Sexualities* 15, 5/6 (2012): 604–21.

place them in differing circumstances and geographical areas of the city.²⁰ Former West End sex workers are proud of what Jamie Lee calls their “outdoor brothel culture”: in interviews with us they emphasized their agency, camaraderie, and resilience. Their earnings fuelled the city’s economic growth, and they contributed to the energy, prosperity, and identity of the densely populated, mixed-use West End. In addition to work on the stroll, they consumed goods and services, fundraised for community organizations such as the Dogwood Monarchist Society, and performed in gay venues. As Jamie Lee has written, “Anti-sex work groups were quick to portray our section of the West End as residential,” however, sex workers “plied their trade in the commercial part that had many 24-hour businesses operating seven days a week.”²¹ Street-based sex workers developed risk assessment and harm reduction strategies, economic capacity building, kinship bonding, commitment to fashion, beauty, style, cohabitation, and grassroots organizing through the first sex workers’ rights group in the city, the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes, which was founded in early 1982. In 1984, in their brief to the federal government’s Fraser Committee on Pornography and Prostitution, ASP members argued that sex workers should be permitted to operate in their own homes singly or in pairs, or in licensed, non-residential brothels.²²

Sex workers who survived the West End expulsion in 1984, including Jamie Lee Hamilton, Stephanie Blaze, Gina Gonzales, Stacey, Raigen D’Angelo, Imelda Mae Santos, and Fraser Doke built a family while working on the diverse sub-strolls; they cared for, and respected, each other. Their caregiving and care-taking practices (writing down licence plate numbers, keeping close tabs on each other, working in pairs, publicizing “bad dates” in ASP’s newsletter, the *Whoreganizer*) were efficacious in helping to keep each other safe. In the 1970s and early 1980s, low-income, street-based sex workers in the West End were strong warriors. Jamie Lee explains that: “We were a pimp-free zone. If a pimp came down, we’d tell him to put on some lipstick and suck cock like the rest of us ... We weren’t like they made us out to be.”²³ Jamie

²⁰ See Deborah Nilsen, “The Social Evil: Prostitution in Vancouver, 1900-1920,” in *In Her Own Right: Selected Essays on Women’s History in British Columbia*, ed. Barbara Latham and Cathy Hess, 205-27 (Victoria: Camosun College, 1980); Daniel Francis, *Red Light Neon: A History of Vancouver’s Sex Trade* (Vancouver: Subway, 2006); and Lowman, “Prostitution in Vancouver” (1986).

²¹ Hamilton, “Golden Age of Prostitution,” 30.

²² Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes, “Brief to the Fraser Committee,” University of British Columbia Rare Books and Special Collections, Service, Office, and Retail Workers Union of Canada, box 1, file 1-13, January 1984, 1-22.

²³ Jamie Lee quoted in Hainsworth, “Sex Worker Memorial Proposed,” 1.

Lee stresses her community's economic independence as well as the disjuncture between sex workers' self-understanding and the dominant perception of them as a "dangerous public nuisance" to be controlled through stepped-up policing strategies.²⁴

Our interrogation of the files of the Concerned Residents of the West End (CROWE) housed at the City of Vancouver Archives confirmed that CROWE was a single-issue residents' group formed in 1981 to purge the neighbourhood of on-street prostitution.²⁵ Sex workers, especially trans women of colour, were scapegoated by CROWE as trespassers responsible for instigating a "grotesque and bizarre carnival."²⁶ Pat Carney, Conservative Member of Parliament (MP) for Vancouver Centre, lambasted "prostitutes" for their "infestation of a quiet and beautiful neighbourhood in one of the most historic centres of the city."²⁷

In the text of his legal injunction delivered on 4 July 1984, Chief Justice Allan McEachern of the British Columbia Supreme Court wrote that "[p]rostitutes on Davie Street" were a "blatant, aggressive, and disorderly public nuisance"; they "defiled our city by taking over the streets and sidewalks for the purpose of prostitution."²⁸ To remedy what he called an "urban tragedy," McEachern prohibited sex workers from living and working in their West End neighbourhood.²⁹ Poring over hundreds of mainstream news articles, we found that Mayor Mike Harcourt, the province's attorney general, Brian Smith, and federal politician Pat Carney championed McEachern's unprecedented ruling. The members of CROWE and their vigilante posse, Shame the Johns, were ecstatic

²⁴ C.J.S.C. [Allan] McEachern, *Attorney General of British Columbia v. Couillard et al.* Judgment, 4 July 1984, in *British Columbia Law Reports*, vol. 59, pt. 1 (Calgary: Carswell Legal Publications, 1985), 110.

²⁵ Concerned Residents of the West End, "Civil Injunction," MSS 1449, 973-B-6, file 20, City of Vancouver Archives, 25 June 1984; Gordon Price, "Brief to the Fraser Committee on Pornography and Prostitution," MSS 1449 973-B-6, file 16, WECAC and Correspondence, vol. 2, City of Vancouver Archives, January 1984, 1-13.

²⁶ West End Community Advisory Council, "Brief to the Fraser Committee on Pornography and Prostitution," City of Vancouver Fonds, Vancouver Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-84, City of Vancouver Archives, January 1984, 5.

²⁷ Pat Carney, "Submission to Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution," City of Vancouver Archives, Mayoral Fonds, 66 G-1, January 1984, 3.

²⁸ McEachern, *Attorney General of British Columbia v. Couillard et al.*, 110.

²⁹ In 2016, criminologist John Lowman reflected, once again, on the tragedy of the West End expulsion: "McEachern did not care one jot about the safety of sex workers; if McEachern had his way, they were detritus that the nuisance injunction would push into the harbour. Public propriety and property values were far more important than a prostitute-citizen's constitutionally protected right to life, liberty and security of the person," 5. See Lowman, "The West End Nuisance Injunction: Effects of the Judicial Discourse of Disposal," unpublished paper, Campbell River, BC, July 2016, 1-6.

about the purge of what they termed a “de facto red light district” from their predominantly white, seaside, middle-class enclave in advance of the World’s Fair, Expo 1986.³⁰ Our archival and ethnographic discoveries of imperiled whiteness and systemic violence wrought against sex workers matched Jamie Lee’s personal experience and fuelled our conviction: justice had been harshly denied.³¹

PREPARING OUR CASE, YEAR AFTER YEAR

At a public forum for Vancouver’s mayoral candidates in October 2008, Jamie Lee posed a question to the two candidates: “Would you support a public apology to sex workers who were violently expelled from the West End in 1984?” Gregor Robertson responded, “Yes, I would be open to an apology.” Candidate Peter Ladner passed.³² Buoyed by Robertson’s affirmative response that night at St. Paul’s Anglican Church, and his subsequent election as mayor, we co-founded the West End Sex Workers Memorial Committee in November 2008. For the next ten months, we hosted monthly meetings of an eclectic group of fifteen to twenty sex workers, artists, community activists, researchers, filmmakers, and fundraisers to commemorate the twenty-fifth “anniversary” of the expulsion of sex workers from the neighbourhood.³³ Our first event on 4 July 2009 was a wildly successful community BBQ held at Little Sister’s Book and Art Emporium in the heart of the West End, followed by our

³⁰ See Rick Ouston, “New Court Ruling Clears Hookers Out of the West End,” *Vancouver Sun*, 5 July 1984; and Becki L. Ross, “Sex and (Evacuation from) the City: The Moral and Legal Regulation of Sex Workers in Vancouver’s West End, 1975–1985,” *Sexualities* 13, 2 (2010): 197–218.

³¹ For a brilliant excavation of endangered whiteness, see Renisa Mawani, *Colonial Proximities: Crossracial Intimacies and Juridical Truths in British Columbia, 1871–1921* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 88.

³² Past relations between sex workers and other Vancouver residents were not always adversarial. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the sex trade represented an essential engine of the city’s economic growth, with legendary brothels operating until the 1920s. As Trina Ricketts et al. conclude, “Sex workers have always been, and remain to this day an integral part of our city and have contributed greatly to its colour, diversity, and personality.” See Trina Ricketts, Susan Davis, Stacey Grayer, Candice Hansen, Jennifer Allan, and Chanel Martin, *History of Sex Work: Vancouver. Who We Were/Who We Are* (Vancouver: Simon Fraser University Continuing Studies Development Fund, 2007), i.

³³ Committee members included co-founders Jamie Lee and Becki as well as Scarlett Lake, Raigen D’Angelo, Fraser Doke, Sadie Kuehn, Rory Richards, Hinda Avery, Billy Wong, Brent Granby, Rachael Sullivan, Casson Brown, Mandy McRae, Esther Shannon, Katrina Pacey, and Laura McDiarmid. We believe that our committee’s small number of activist sex workers from the “Davie days” reflects myriad factors, including relocation outside Vancouver; premature death due to murder and/or illness, including HIV/AIDS; and, for some still alive, the desire to put this chapter behind them.

“Commemorative Stroll” along Davie Street.³⁴ At our final destination, Vancity Theatre, we screened the documentary film *Hookers on Davie* (1984) to a sold-out audience of 175, with more than one hundred turned away.³⁵ After the film, Becki moderated a panel that included Jamie Lee, sex workers Raigen D’Angelo and Fraser Doke, as well as Katrina Pacey from Pivot Legal Society.³⁶ Five years later, in July 2014, on the thirtieth “anniversary” of the expulsion, we sent a twelve-page submission to mayor, city councillors, and Park Board members.³⁷ We argued that former West End sex workers, as citizens, deserved justice. City officials had a moral duty to right a historical wrong. We co-wrote an op-ed for the *Vancouver Sun* in July 2014 wherein we demanded a public apology and financial reparations.³⁸ Finally, in April 2015, after another civic election (with Gregor Robertson re-elected as mayor for a second term), and ten months following our initial submission, we were invited to City Hall to meet with staff from the Social Planning Department – Mary Clare Zak, Debbie Anderson Eng, and Ty Mistry.

At our first meeting with city staff we were told that more concrete evidence was required to support our claim for financial redress. So we prepared a second submission in June 2015.³⁹ We outlined three key developments: (1) the 1981 vote by city councillors for landscape changes to deter on-street sex work in the West End; (2) the 1982 bylaw imposing fines on sex workers for soliciting; and (3) an untendered contract for a West End resident to lead the anti-prostitution campaign. We expand on each of these developments below.

³⁴ Along our Commemorative Stroll, stops pivotal to sex workers’ community formation in the 1970s and early 1980s include: Columbia Inn, Tranny Stroll, Hustlers’ Row, Black Angus Steak House, Au Petit Bou Café, Little Sister’s bookstore, Celebrities, Numbers, Taurus Steambath, Champagne Charlie’s, Casa Felicia brothel, and the Fruit Loop.

³⁵ The documentary film, *Hookers on Davie* (1984), was directed by Toronto-based lesbian filmmakers Janis Cole and Holly Dale. Curiously, filming stopped before the legal injunction was levelled in July 1984.

³⁶ Raigen D’Angelo is an Indigenous, trans, former West End sex worker; the late Fraser Doke worked on the West End’s “hustler row” (near the “tranny stroll”) as a white gay man. Katrina Pacey is a white feminist lawyer and sex work advocate. Fraser Doke died on 6 March 2017 at the age of fifty-four. He was a sweet, loving, spirited, gifted, compassionate man and community activist. We mourn his passing.

³⁷ Becki Ross and Jamie Lee Hamilton, *Redress for Sex Workers Expelled from Vancouver’s West End, Part 1*, report prepared for Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson and City Councillors, 16 July 2014, 1–12.

³⁸ Becki Ross and Jamie Lee Hamilton, “Sex Workers Seek Apology, Redress,” *Vancouver Sun*, 2 July 2014.

³⁹ Becki Ross and Jamie Lee Hamilton, *Redress for Sex Workers Expelled from Vancouver’s West End, Part 2*, report prepared for Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson and City Councillors, 22 June 2015, 1–4.

First, in November 1981, city councillors voted to approve an estimated \$28,000 for the installation of seven mini-parks, five traffic circles, four cement traffic diverters, three traffic islands, laneway lighting, and a cul-de-sac. The explicit objective was to “deter prostitution-related traffic in the area.”⁴⁰

Second, the Street Activities Bylaw – dubbed the “anti-hooker” bylaw in the press, was passed by city councillors and first implemented on 6 April 1982.⁴¹ The bylaw stated: “No person shall, upon any street, sell or offer to sell to another person or purchase or offer to purchase, sexual services.”⁴² Fines for on-street solicitation ranged from \$350 to \$2,000. On 29 September 1982, the *Vancouver Sun* reported that the bylaw had “become a lucrative revenue source for the city,” with an “estimated \$28,000 in fines” collected through bylaw prosecutions. However, in January 1983, the Supreme Court of Canada, in *Westendorp v. Regina*, ruled that the Street Activities bylaw in Calgary, Alberta, was unconstitutional because it was declared *ultra vires* of federal jurisdiction.⁴³ As a result, Vancouver’s municipal bylaw was rescinded and all outstanding charges were dropped. Criminologist John Lowman makes the convincing case that the fines were illegally administered by (often undercover) police officers and that the illegal fines levied amounted to significant financial hardship for street-based sex workers who had to work even harder to pay them off.⁴⁴ On 29 January 1983, *Vancouver Sun* reporter Les Bewley informed Vancouverites that “Mayor Harcourt and his council [would] not return the illegally obtained money.”⁴⁵

Third, in September 1983, in addition to traffic diverters and illegal fines, Mayor Harcourt approved an untendered six-month contract for \$15,000 (through the Social Planning Department) to hire a white gay man, Gordon Price, as the new community coordinator for the West End

⁴⁰ See Mike Harcourt, cited in Gordon Price Fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS1449, 973-B-6, file 1, CROWE minutes, 10 August 1981, City of Vancouver Archives; City Council and Office of City Fonds, Council Minutes, MCRI (microfilm), vol. 142, “West End Prostitution/Nuisance Problem,” 4-5, City of Vancouver Archives, 3 November 1981.

⁴¹ See Anonymous, “Hooker Ruling Appealed,” *Vancouver Sun*, 29 September 1982.

⁴² Cited in Anonymous, “Hooker Ruling Appealed.” In this *Vancouver Sun* article, the city’s bylaw prosecutor, Roland Bouwman, estimated that eighty fines of \$350 each, totalling \$28,000, had been paid to date. According to a later report made at a City Council meeting, six hundred charges had been laid. See R. Henry, “Extract from the Minutes of City Council Meeting,” City of Vancouver Fonds, Vancouver Office of the City Clerk, series 62, 239-G-1, file 3, Community and Environmental Protection – Prostitution and Delinquents, 1982-84, City of Vancouver Archives, 13 March 1984.

⁴³ Ros Oberlyn, “Ruling ‘Destroys’ Prostitute Bylaw,” *Vancouver Sun*, 27 January 1983.

⁴⁴ Lowman, “Violence and the Outlaw Status.”

⁴⁵ Les Bewley, “Restore Order with Vagrancy Laws,” *Vancouver Sun*, 5 January 1982.

Community Advisory Council.⁴⁶ Though Price stepped down as leader of CROWE, the powerful anti-prostitution lobby group, he remained one of its members. Price's contract to "study the conflict" internal to what he termed a "red-light ghetto" advanced Mayor Harcourt's self-described "war on hookers."⁴⁷ Indeed, Price's fears were amplified by lawyers for the province's attorney general, such as Jack Giles, who blamed prostitutes in the West End for "human degradation" as well as for "offences to standards of public morality" and "public health hazards."⁴⁸

In our final submission to Mayor Robertson and city councillors dated June 2015, we made the case that this unprecedented sequence of three city-financed social and legal initiatives confirmed city officials' anti-prostitution agenda in the early to mid-1980s. We also argued that these initiatives culminated in the legal erasure of street-level prostitution and the evacuation of sex workers' bodies, including those most vulnerable to dispossession – Indigenous, African Canadian, Asian, and Filipina trans women – from the city's West End.⁴⁹ We explained that it was only after sex workers were displaced east, first to Mount Pleasant and then to the industrial, poorly lit, and dangerous reaches of the Downtown Eastside, that sixty-five women – disproportionately Indigenous – began to go missing and murdered.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ In 1983, Gordon Price named his city-contracted initiative the "West End Livability Directions" project, or WELD, and his newsletter, the *Welder*. See Gordon Price, "Memo to Mike Harcourt, 4 July, Gordon Price Fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End," MSS 1449 973-B-3, file 4, CROWE Core Strategy Papers, City of Vancouver Archives, 4 July 1983; Gordon Price, CROWE Newsletter no. 4, Gordon Price Fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 973-B-1, file 5, CROWE newsletters 1-4, 1982-83, City of Vancouver Archives, August 1983; and, Gordon Price, the *Welder*, City of Vancouver Fonds, Vancouver Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-84, City of Vancouver Archives, 11 October 1983.

⁴⁷ See Karenn Krangle, "Harcourt to Seek Street Hooker Bylaw," *Vancouver Sun*, 23 March 1982; William Boei, "City Backs Crackdown on Hookers," *Vancouver Sun*, 18 May 1983; and Terry Glavin, "Hooker Defenders Tired of the Abuse," *Vancouver Sun*, 16 January 1984.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Larry Still, "West End Hooker Ghetto Feared," *Vancouver Sun*, 29 June 1984.

⁴⁹ See Becki L. Ross, "Outdoor Brothel Culture: The Un/Making of a Transsexual Stroll in Vancouver's West End, 1975-1984," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 25, 1 (2012): 126-50.

⁵⁰ See Stevie Cameron, *On the Farm: Robert William Pickton and the Tragic Story of Vancouver's Missing Women* (Toronto: A.A. Knopf Canada, 2010); Jasmin Jiwani and Mary Lynn Young, "Missing and Murdered Women: Reproducing Marginality in News Discourse," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 31, 4 (2006): 895-917; Geraldine Pratt, "Abandoned Women and the Spaces of Exception," *Antipode* 37, 5 (2005): 1052-78; and Robertson and Culhane, *Plain Sight*.

LOBBYING SETTLER STATE AGENTS

In November 2008, the sex workers who belonged to our West End Sex Workers Memorial Committee decided that, rather than pursue individual claims of redress or a class-action suit, they wanted some form of public commemoration in tandem with an official civic apology. Committee members agreed upon a lamppost with a bronze plaque. For Jamie Lee and others, the lamppost is a potent, recognizable symbol of outdoor sexual commerce for workers and their clients. Decades ago, by the light from street lamps, Vancouver's West End sex workers made themselves visible to prospective buyers and to each other. The lamppost served as a place to "size up" one another and to negotiate the terms of a transaction. For more than a century, the lamppost has functioned not only as a beacon for customers but also as a symbol of safety, security, and belonging for sex sellers.

After a series of meetings at City Hall, in July 2015 we secured financial support for our memorial from Mayor Robertson and then city manager Penny Ballem.⁵¹ We were elated. We were assured that the total budget for our memorial – \$28,000 – would be commensurate with the \$28,000 in fines illegally collected in 1982. We were told that there would be no financial redress for either the vehicular deterrence on streets of the West End (\$28,000) or the untendered contract (\$15,000) paid to Gordon Price, noted above. Moreover, the final budget did not include interest accrued over thirty-plus years. Nevertheless, our settlement included thousands of additional dollars paid out as salaries to city staff in the departments of social planning, engineering, cultural services, and communications.

Our triumph cannot be underplayed: had the city agreed to an apology, but refused to pay for a memorial, we would have had no alternative to bankroll our dream. Fundraising for a sex workers' monument is not like fundraising for breast cancer, childhood diabetes, or heart disease. In the case of the Crab Park boulder put in place in 1997 to memorialize disappearances and deaths of women in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, Adrienne Burke notes: "It did not go through a juried art process, it did not attract negative press or spark a public outcry, and it did not require large amounts of money to be built."⁵² For us, coincidentally, the city's

⁵¹ On 15 September 2015, the contract of city manager Penny Ballem was unexpectedly terminated. Mary Clare Zak, managing director of the Social Planning Department, reassured us that our memorial would not be negatively affected by Ballem's departure.

⁵² See Burke, *Speaking for a Long Time*, 56. Here, Burke also explores the complex process of fundraising for and installing the Marker of Change monument in Vancouver's Thornton Park to commemorate the massacre of fourteen women at École Polytechnique in Montreal on 6 December 1989.



Figure 1. 16 September 2016. Lamppost and plaques dedicated to the community of sex workers violently and illegally expelled from Vancouver's West End, 1984. Photo by Ine Beljaars.

engineering department fabricates a range of lamps for city streets, parks, and facilities, and so we worked with engineering and the manufacturer, Nova Poles, to adapt a current design with a Victorian flair (see Figure 1).

In August 2015, we met for a site visit with the engineering department and cultural services. Here, we met Ty Mistry, hired as a social planner and sex work liaison officer, who would become a valued member of our team. We also met Marcia Belluce from cultural services and Brian Charleston from the engineering department. In August, we met Rector Jessica Schaap at St. Paul's Anglican Church on Jervis Street. After shaking our hands, Rector Schaap, chuckling, announced that "Jesus enjoyed keeping the company of sex workers." Ecstatic to hear this,

though thrown a little off-kilter, we conveyed to the rector our desire to situate our memorial on the grassy boulevard at the southeast corner of Pendrell and Jervis streets in the West End – the very corner at which the sub-strolls developed by trans women, cis-women, and male hustlers had once converged. This is the same corner occupied by St. Paul’s Anglican Church for the past one hundred years.

We communicated our appreciation to Rector Schaap for the leadership shown by St. Paul’s during the HIV/AIDS crisis in the 1980s as well as during same-sex marriage debates and LGBTQ2 pride celebrations in the West End. We reminded the rector that Anglicans at Christ Church Cathedral on Burrard Street had provided sanctuary for five days and nights to sex workers who had been expelled from living and working in Vancouver’s West End in July 1984.⁵³ Rector Schaap acknowledged the long and rich history of social justice activism by the Anglican Church, while admitting the Church’s heinous complicity in the century-long cultural genocide of Indigenous youth forced to attend residential schools.⁵⁴ We were there to seek the rector’s endorsement for our memorial lamppost; we left with her enthusiastic blessing and support. Rector Schaap offered to rent us the Lower Hall of the church for our “Community Meeting.” We accepted.

On top of regular meetings, in September 2015 we co-led a “Lunch and Learn” workshop on the history of sex work in Vancouver for twenty city staff from all departments with a stake in our process and goals. We also planned a “community meeting” for early November. With Eric Kowalski, we designed a poster for wide distribution. We sent an e-invite to major stakeholders, including Gordon Neighbourhood House, West End Seniors Network, West End Community Centre, and Coal Harbour Community Centre. We hand delivered our poster to neighbourhood organizations and pasted it to hydro poles; we contacted nine different media outlets. We obtained formal endorsement from the board of QMUNITY – a non-governmental organization for LGBTQ2+ communities – and additional written and/or verbal support from a number of community-based organizations and leaders.⁵⁵ We also

⁵³ See Terry Glavin, “Hookers Find a Heavenly Haven,” *Vancouver Sun*, 23 July 1984; Don Larventz, “Prostitutes Seek Sanctuary, Dialogue,” *Angles* 1, 8 (1984): 8.

⁵⁴ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, vol. 1, Summary. Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 2015).

⁵⁵ In October 2015, social planners Ty Mistry and Debbie Anderson Eng arranged a subsequent “notification letter,” which was hand-delivered to the managers at rental units and members of condominium boards in the vicinity of the memorial’s planned location. The letter communicated how the goal of our memorial aligned with City Council’s priority to build

secured the support of local sex workers' organizations such as PACE Society, Downtown Eastside Sex Workers United Against Violence, Supporting Women's Alternatives Network (SWAN), BC Coalition of Experiential Communities, Triple-X Workers' Solidarity Association of BC, Hustle, and Boys R U, as well as advocacy groups such as Pivot Legal Society and FIRST: feminists advocating for the decriminalization of sex work.

On Wednesday, 4 November 2015, we co-hosted our "community meeting" for stakeholders – local residents, business owners, community organizers, city officials, friends, and family. Our aim was to notify interested parties, not to consult with them about our plan. We assembled a panel of "experiential workers" – those who had once worked the Davie Street strolls – to tell stories of their lives: Jamie Lee, Imelda Mae Santos, Gina Hormone, Stephanie Blaze, and the late Fraser Doke. Also on the panel were social planners Ty Mistry and Jessica Wood.⁵⁶ Becki served as the evening's moderator. St. Paul's warden, David Facey-Crowther, opened the meeting (Rector Schaap was ill) and shared warm greetings from the church. Sixty-five people attended, including photographer James Loewen and journalist Jeremy Hainsworth.⁵⁷ The emotionally moving testimonials, combined with sensitive questions and spirited discussion, made the community forum a smashing success.⁵⁸

The winter and spring of 2016 brought regular meetings with social planners, engineers, and designers as well as another round of notifications to West End residents. We composed the words for the plaque, wrote the text of the mayor's civic apology, and laid the foundation for the report prepared for city councillors and the mayor in June 2016. With the engineering department we worked on the style of the lamppost, and we obtained assurance that the light – operated by a sensor at night – would

safe and inclusive communities for all residents, in keeping with Vancouver's Healthy City Strategy. In late January 2016, a follow-up "Notification" letter was hand-delivered to West End apartment buildings, condominium managers, and business owners.

⁵⁶ Ty Mistry's position was a direct result of recommendations made by commissioner Wally Oppall in his report, *Forsaken: The Report of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry*, Executive Summary, British Columbia, 19 November 2012, at <http://www.missingwomeninquiry.ca/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Forsaken-ES-web-RGB.pdf>.

⁵⁷ Jeremy Hainsworth, "Sex Worker Memorial Proposed for Vancouver's West End," *Daily Xtra*, 5 November 2015.

⁵⁸ For a decade we co-presented our research findings about the mass eviction from the West End at history, gender, sexuality, and labour studies conferences in Vancouver and Victoria. In addition, we were invited to speak on panels at the Fox Cabaret, Strathcona Community Centre, the Ending Violence Association of British Columbia, Vancouver Police Museum, Museum of Vancouver (MOV), the University of British Columbia (UBC), Simon Fraser University (SFU), Thompson Rivers University, Mount Royal University, McMaster University, and the University of California, Santa Barbara.

be permanently and luminously red. The colour red is especially salient given that, a century ago, across western Canada red lights were forbidden from the windows of brothels.⁵⁹ On Friday 16 September 2016, we oversaw the unveiling of our precious memorial, with 150 people in attendance. Two Indigenous elders – Stuart Gonzales and Sandra Laframboise – offered greetings; in addition, we had twenty-five speakers, including former mayor Philip Owen, as well as community leaders and politicians from across the political spectrum. We were deeply disappointed by what we perceived as Mayor Robertson’s cowardice in declining our invitation to deliver a formal apology.⁶⁰ Unexpectedly, Superintendent Michelle Davey apologized for years of disrespectful treatment towards sex workers by members of the Vancouver Police Department (see Figure 2).

THE URGENT NEED FOR MEMORIALIZATION

For four decades across the West, sex work activists have forced, and continue to force, a transformation in the politics of representation: they reject hackneyed images of whores that trade in centuries-old stereotypes (see Figure 3).⁶¹ Indeed, the words engraved on the four-sided base of our memorial lamppost attest to the multi-dimensional lives of West End sex workers as workers, lovers, sex educators, friends, healers, community activists, and freedom fighters. The words are: “Dedicated to a Diverse Community of Sex Workers; People Who Lived and Worked Here: Late 1960s to 1984; Today We Commemorate and Honour their Lives; and, In Memory of their Ongoing Struggle for Equality.” We want our memorial to teach the preventative lesson: never forget, and never again. And yet we are mindful of Judith Butler’s wisdom: “loss must be marked

⁵⁹ On the prohibition of red lights in brothels in Winnipeg in the early twentieth century, see Rhonda Hinter, “The Oldest Profession in Winnipeg: The Culture of Prostitution in the Point Douglas Segregated District, 1909-1912,” *Manitoba History* 41 (2001): 2-13.

⁶⁰ Earlier in the summer of 2016, Mayor Robertson blocked us from giving a formal presentation to city councillors at City Hall and then refused to endorse our campaign publicly. We were furious with the mayor’s hypocrisy: he agreed to pay for our memorial, but he acted on fear of backlash from well-organized abolitionists, who, in 2009, had secured his agreement that “prostitution is violence against women.” See Meghan Murphy, “Vancouver Residents and Women’s Groups Demand Mayor Gregor Robertson Enforce the Law Criminalizing Johns,” 15 June 2016, *Feministcurrent.com*, <http://www.feministcurrent.com/2016/06/15/vancouver-demands-gregor-robertson-enforce-prostitution-law/>.

⁶¹ See Frederique Delacoste and Priscilla Alexander, eds., *Sex Work: Writings by Women in the Sex Industry* (Pittsburgh, PA: Cleis Press, 1987); Jill Nagle, ed. *Whores and Other Feminists* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Jacqueline Lewis, Frances M. Shaver, and Eleanor Maticka-Tyndale, “Going Round Again: The Persistence of Prostitution-Related Stigma,” in van der Meulen et al., *Selling Sex, 198-208* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013); and Melinda Chateauvert, *Sex Workers Unite! A History of the Movement from Stonewall to Slut Walk* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015).



Figure 2. Superintendent of the Vancouver Police Department, Michelle Davey (middle), apologizes for disrespect towards sex workers over many decades. Jamie Lee Hamilton (right) and Becki Ross at launch of West End Sex Workers Memorial, 16 September 2016. Photo by Ine Beljaars.

and it cannot be represented.”⁶² In other words, the forced displacement of West End sex workers demands urgent redress, and yet the losses experienced by sex workers – of home, workplace, livelihood, networks, and kin relations – can never be adequately apprehended or compensated. Importantly, along the way we found evidence of how sex workers and allies in other geopolitical spaces have tried to reconcile this paradox.

⁶² Butler, “Afterword,” 467.



Figure 3. Jamie Lee Hamilton addresses the crowd at the unveiling of the West End Sex Workers Memorial, 16 September 2016, Vancouver, BC, with Becki Ross (right). Photo by Ine Beljaars.

MEMORIALS FOR SEX WORKERS IN THE WEST

To help convince city officials in Vancouver of the merit of our project, we claimed that our sex workers' memorial would be the first in Canada – a laudable, albeit controversial distinction. We also made the point that an estimated 90 percent of statuary reveres the achievements of men – military leaders, politicians, artists, sports heroes, and captains of industry. Because we were conscious of settler state agents' residual anxieties about funded apologies, we felt it was strategically shrewd to

share our discovery of six other sex workers' memorials across the West. In Sydney, Australia, sculptor Loui Fraser built her life-sized statue, *Joy*, out of cement, marble dust, and steel.⁶³ In 1997, *Joy* was placed within a red frame and situated in the sculpture garden at Macquarie University. Fraser wanted to pay tribute to the thousands of women who had historically sold sexual services in the area. She recalled, "I believed it was time these women were recognized as part of our society and our history, particularly in that part of Sydney."⁶⁴ For historians Raelene Frances and Julie Kimber, "Joy did what good public art arguably should do: she forced people to confront issues that might otherwise have remained submerged. In doing so, she uncovered the limits of tolerance in a Sydney inner-city community that had lived with prostitution in its midst for most of its history."⁶⁵

In the red light district of Amsterdam, Netherlands, a life-sized bronze statue that honours "millions of prostitutes" around the world was unveiled in 2007. Titled *Belle*, the monument depicts a woman who stands confidently, even defiantly, in a doorway. The inscription on the bronze plaque reads: "Respect sex workers all over the world." Created by Dutch artist Els Rijeerse, the sculpture resides in front of the Oude Kerk, Amsterdam's oldest church. *Belle* was inspired by Mariska Majoor, a former sex worker and community activist in Amsterdam.

In 2010, the Cross Bones Graveyard Plaque and Memorial Shrine was installed at the Cross Bones graveyard in South London, England, to honour unnamed prostitutes – the "Winchester Geese" – who were buried underground during medieval times. People who visit the plaque, and the iron fence to which it is attached, leave mementos such as flowers, gloves, fans, feathers, ribbons, charms, poems, pictures, oranges, and stockings. According to local historian Patricia Dark, the Cross Bones shrine is a place where one goes to celebrate the "Outcast Dead" – "the people that no one remembers."⁶⁶

The final three memorials are comprised of modest plaques, all in California. One is the bronze plaque affixed to the Condor Club, a

⁶³ See Raelene Frances, "Introduction," in *Selling Sex: A Hidden History of Prostitution*, (Sydney: University of New South Wales, 2007), 1-7. *Joy* was originally installed at Stanley and Yurong streets, East Sydney, Australia (1995-97), after the sculptor Loui Fraser's proposal was passed by city councillors by one vote. In 1997, *Joy* was relocated to Macquarie University's Sculpture Park (1997-present) after having sustained considerable damage.

⁶⁴ Fraser, quoted in Raelene Frances and Julia Kimber, "Joy: Memorialisation and the Limits of Tolerance," *Public History Review* 15 (2008): 81.

⁶⁵ Frances and Kimber, "Joy," 88.

⁶⁶ Dark, quoted in Bess Lovejoy, "The London Graveyard That's Become a Memorial for the City's Seedier Past." 21 October 2014. Smithsonian.com. <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/london-graveyard-s-become-memorial-citys-seedier-past-180953104/?no-ist>.

nightclub and (later) striptease bar in North Beach, San Francisco. The plaque, titled “Where it all began,” honours the birthplace of the “World’s first topless & bottomless entertainment, Topless, June 19, 1964; bottomless, September 3, 1969, Starring Carol Doda.” Doda (1937–2015) was a gutsy white American exotic dancer who challenged obscenity laws and danced until the 1980s. Second, a plaque was attached to a small granite boulder in downtown Ukiah, California (pop. 16,000): “To the Ladies of the Night Who Plied Their Trade Upon This Site.” In 1996, Ukiah, in Mendocino County north of San Francisco, was voted the “best small town to live in California.” Third, in January 2007, a bronze plaque honouring Anne Davis was installed on the red brick façade of the Davis Hotel in the small town of Marysville, California (pop. 12,000). Davis’s history as a madam became part of that city’s colourful past, from 1934 to 1969. She was respected for her contributions to the community, allegedly funded by her brisk trade.

Our research on sex work memorials demonstrates courage and commitment on the part of sex workers and allies in conjunction with city officials (and some private donors) in various cities across the West. We expect that our memorial in Vancouver’s West End will add to complicated, multi-layered stories about sex work conveyed through other memorials as well as through guided tours and exhibits staged by museums, such as the Museum of Sex in New York, the Sex Museum in Mumbai, the Museum of Eroticism in Paris, the Sexmuseum in Amsterdam, the Erotic Museum in Berlin, the China Sex Museum in Shanghai, the Erotic Museum in Warsaw, and the Museo de la Erotica in Barcelona.⁶⁷

Permanent monuments have been installed across Vancouver to honour other marginalized groups, including Indigenous youth incarcerated in residential schools from the 1870s to the 1990s; survivors of Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, the survivors of colonialism, gentrification, or poverty; South Asian British citizen-passengers who were prohibited from leaving the *Komagata Maru* in Burrard Inlet in 1914; Japanese Canadians forcibly displaced during the Second World War; women murdered at École Polytechnique de Montréal in 1989; Chinese immigrants who paid the head tax and faced the Chinese Exclusion Act

⁶⁷ See Simon Adams and Rae Frances, “Lifting the Veil: The Sex Industry, Museums and Galleries,” *Labour History: A Journal of Labour and Social History* 85 (November 2003): 47–64; Viviane Gosselin, “Civic Museography, Porous Narratives and the Choir Effect: Sex Talk in the City at the Museum of Vancouver,” *THEMA: La revue des Musées de la civilisation* 1 (2014): 107–15; and Jennifer Tyburczy, *Sex Museums: The Politics of Performance and Display* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

(1923–47); ironworkers who died constructing the Second Narrows Crossing in 1958; African Canadians displaced from the black community of Hogan’s Alley in the late 1960s, and those who died of HIV/AIDS.⁶⁸ Our memorial will shed light on a little-known chapter of Vancouver’s sex work industry.⁶⁹

WHAT LIVES ON

Jamie Lee Hamilton and the few other former sex workers we interviewed want their West End community to be remembered for glamour, pluck, kinship, tenacity, humour, hard work, and creativity. Sex workers lived lives of integrity; they want their memorial to honour their past, present, and future. To quote long-time Canadian sex work activist Valerie Scott: “Sex workers have always had to fight. We fight for our safety, fight to have our voices heard, fight for the right to choose our career, and to carry out our jobs. We are fighters.”⁷⁰ Trans sex workers of colour on the city’s first and only tranny stroll heightened the visibility of trans lives, they led the struggle for trans rights and inclusion, and they challenged misogynist, racist, femmephobic, and transphobic barriers within the medical system, policing, the law, front-line social services, housing, ceremonial spaces, activist groups, and faith-based organizations.⁷¹ Trans sex workers shared a vision and a passion for justice with the African American and Latinx hookers and trannies who fought against police violence at Compton’s Cafeteria in San Francisco in 1966, and at

⁶⁸ In May 2014, British Columbia’s premier Christy Clark formally apologized to Chinese Canadians on behalf of the provincial government. For 140 years, Chinese immigrants were subjected to discrimination, destitution, and death. Clark apologized for over one hundred discriminatory laws passed against Chinese immigrants. In July 2007, the Hogan’s Alley Memorial Project (HAMP), led by Lauren Marsden, installed “guerilla art” to memorialize the urban black community, which was subjected to what Wayne Compton calls “Negro Removal” in Vancouver’s East End/Strathcona. Flowers were planted to spell out the words “Hogan’s Alley Welcomes You” on the grassy slope near the Georgia Street viaduct and 200-block Union Street. HAMP was founded in Vancouver in 2002. See Wayne Compton, *After Canaan: Essays on Race, Region, and Religion* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2010), 84.

⁶⁹ For other histories of sex work in Vancouver, see Deborah Nilsen, “The Social Evil: Prostitution in Vancouver, 1900–1920,” in *Selected Essays on Women’s History in BC*, ed. Barbara Latham and Cathy Less, 205–28 (Victoria: Camosun College, 1980); Robert Wilson, *The Wendy King Story* (Vancouver: Langen Communications, 1980); Daniel Francis, *Red Light Neon: A History of Vancouver’s Sex Trade* (Vancouver: Subway Books, 2006); Lindsey McMaster, *Working Girls in the West: Representations of Wage-Earning Women* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008).

⁷⁰ Valerie Scott, “Someone You Love Could Be a Sex Worker,” TED Talk, Toronto, October 2015, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQG3MqAK-w4>.

⁷¹ For more than forty years in Vancouver, the Dogwood Monarchist Society – an elaborate drag court system, with crowned emperors and empresses – has raised thousands of dollars for queer and trans organizations, including Health Initiatives for Men (HIM) and Qmunity.

the Stonewall Inn in New York in 1969.⁷² Much like their American counterparts, Jamie Lee Hamilton and other survivors from Vancouver's West End expulsion were militant, unapologetic, and fierce. Loud and unruly, they raised consciousness about working the strolls, customers, cops, lovers, co-workers, families, and foes, largely without the support of second-wave feminists, gay liberationists, or labour organizers. Activist sex workers argued that a "blow job was better than no job" and that sex work was part of a broader service sector, which included working in hotels, hospital laundries, hair salons, and restaurants.⁷³

In the 1970s and 1980s, activist sex workers – cis women, trans women, women of colour, and cis hustlers – punctured the idealized norms of white domesticized hetero-monogamy, romance, marriage, and cis-reproductivity. In so doing, they redefined the parameters of intimacy.⁷⁴ And yet, because they unapologetically comingled sex and economic transaction, they were routinely subjected to the moral charge of corruption and to legal logics that (still) adjudicate proper and improper sexual intimacy. Notwithstanding Viviana Zelizer's claim that, intrinsic to large webs of mutual obligation, "money cohabits regularly with intimacy, and even sustains it," sex workers then, and now, have been made to pay in blood for their subaltern transgressions.⁷⁵

In Vancouver's "war on hookers," sex workers were cast as enemies, thus as disposable to authorities emboldened by what Achille Mbembe terms necropower: "the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die."⁷⁶ As Jamie Lee has always made clear, the West End's necropolitical mass eviction was an act of illegal, immoral, and colonial domestic terrorism, with murderous consequences still unfolding decades later.⁷⁷

⁷² See Susan Stryker, *Transgender History* (Berkeley, CA: Seal Press, 2008); Martin Duberman, *Stonewall* (New York: Dutton, 1993); and Melinda Chateauvert, *Sex Workers Unite! A History of the Movement from Stonewall to Slutwalk* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2013).

⁷³ See Marie Arrington, "Community Organizing," in *Good Girls Bad Girls: Feminists and Sex Trade Workers Face to Face*, ed. Laurie Bell, 104-8 (Toronto: Women's Press, 1987).

⁷⁴ See Elizabeth Bernstein, *Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Commerce of Sex* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); and Becki L. Ross, "Whorganizers and Gay Activists: Histories of Convergence, Contemporary Currents of Divergence, and the Promise of Non-Normative Futures," in *Sex/Work: Regulation, Agency, and Resistance*, ed. Chris Bruckert, Elya Durison, and Emily van der Meulen (Vancouver: UBC Press, forthcoming).

⁷⁵ Viviana Zelizer, *The Purchase of Intimacy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 28.

⁷⁶ Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics," *Public Culture* 15, 1 (2003): 11.

⁷⁷ Michael Fellman, in *The Name of God and Country: Reconsidering Terrorism in American History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), argues: "Terrorism is violence or the threat of violence used in pursuit of political aims ... Those engaged in terrorism deliberately and systematically create and exploit fear" (237).

AMPLIFIED VOICES OF SEX WORKERS TELL TRUTHS

So why now? To quote Jamie Lee, “It’s sex workers’ time ... The sex worker movement is focused on ensuring that human respect and dignity remain intact in our society. It’s a fight for equality, fairness, and justice, and *we are not going away*.”⁷⁸ Though they forged the West End’s emergent gaybourhood, sex workers – the queerest of queer rebels – have never been publicly recognized for their work as leaders in the fight for gender, sexual, racial, and economic justice.⁷⁹ Indigenous feminists Sarah Hunt, Colleen Hele, Naomi Sayers, and Jessica Wood are speaking out with Indigenous sex workers, including two-spirits, as agents instead of victims.⁸⁰ We echo Sarah Hunt’s insistence that “the voices of sex workers must be at the centre of efforts to improve safety, increase choice and agency, and humanize their experiences within the context of our communities and families.”⁸¹

In 2015 alone, across Canada and the United States twenty trans people were viciously murdered; eight were trans women of colour and all eight worked in the sex industry.⁸² In January 2016, Tammy Le, an Asian Canadian trans sex worker, was murdered in Hamilton, Ontario – the third killed Canada in the past two years.⁸³ Our memorial’s dedicated lamppost in Vancouver’s West End will not resolve centuries of vilification or contemporary violence and homicide against sex workers. Indeed, sex workers continue to go missing and murdered in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Ciudad Juarez, and other cities around the world. Still, we hope that our memorial provokes long-overdue conversations

⁷⁸ Hamilton, “Golden Age of Prostitution,” 31. Emphasis in original.

⁷⁹ See Jamie Hamilton and Becki Ross, “Why Some Objections to Vancouver’s New Sex Workers Memorial Smack of Moralism and Sex Shame: The Second Coming of CROWE 2.0,” *Daily Xtra*, 14 October 2016, at <https://www.dailyxtra.com/why-some-objections-to-sex-workers-memorial-smack-of-moralism-and-sex-shame-72174>.

⁸⁰ See Sarah Hunt, “Decolonizing Sex Work: Developing an Intersectional Indigenous Approach,” in van der Meulen et al., *Selling Sex*; Colleen Hele, Naomi Sayers, and Jessica Wood, “What’s Missing from the Conversation on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls,” *The Toast.com*, 14 September 2015, 1-7, at <http://the-toast.net/2015/09/14/whats-missing-from-the-conversation-on-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women/>.

⁸¹ Hunt, “Decolonizing Sex Work,” 95.

⁸² See Jorge Rivas, “20 Trans People Were Murdered This Year. This Is What Happened,” *Fusion*, 20 August 2015, at <http://fusion.net/story/185799/2015-transgender-women-murdered-underreported/>; Katy Steinmetz, “Why Transgenders Are Being Murdered at a Historic Rate,” *Time.com*, 17 August 2015, at <http://time.com/3999348/transgender-murders-2015/>; Zach Stafford, “Transgender Homicide Rate Hits Historic High in US, Says New Report,” 13 November 2015, at *The Guardian.com*, <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/nov/13/transgender-homicide-victims-us-has-hit-historic-high>.

⁸³ The man who murdered Tammy Le subsequently killed himself. See <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/suspect-in-tammy-le-s-death-would-have-been-charged-if-he-d-lived-police-say-1.3557811>.

about sex workers' rights to self-determination. We see our memorial as marking the return of seditious outlaws who once dared to ply their trade; live as neighbours; defy conventions of gendered, racial, class-bound, and sexual propriety; and persevere in the face of neoliberal and settler indignation. For Indigenous sex workers such as Jamie Lee, Raigen, and the late Mark-Michelle, our memorial emblemizes a reckoning with double expulsion – first from land expropriated by European colonizers and second from Coast Salish lands upon which they made their homes in Vancouver's West End.

In December 2013, all nine justices on the Supreme Court of Canada unanimously declared prostitution-related laws to be unconstitutional. "Sex for money is not a crime," wrote Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin in *Canada v. Bedford*.⁸⁴ However, in 2014, a new anti-prostitution law was passed by federal Conservative politicians: Bill C-36, "The Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act," which has been roundly criticized for gravely endangering the safety and security of outdoor and indoor sex workers.⁸⁵ The Nordic model of criminalizing the buyers of sexual services, which lies at the heart of Canada's Bill C-36, has come under vigorous critique in Sweden, Iceland, and Norway over the past decade.⁸⁶ For criminologist John Lowman, the irony of demand-side prohibition is that its goal of eliminating harm would subject sex workers to a greater degree of risk than they would experience if they worked in a secure and monitored indoor location.⁸⁷ Rather, as Jacqueline Lewis et al. point out, evidence-based policy reforms that foster equality and rights for sex workers can "facilitate attitudinal and behavioural change and lessen stigma."⁸⁸

In many Canadian cities, including Vancouver, police forces are entering into dialogue with sex workers rather than enforcing laws that

⁸⁴ See Supreme Court of Canada, Beverley McLachlin et al., *Canada (Attorney General) v. Bedford*, December 2013, at <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/13389/index.do>.

⁸⁵ See Monica Forrester, "Bill C-36 Won't Help Sex Workers," *NowToronto.com*, 14 December 2014, at <https://nowtoronto.com/news/bill-c-36-wont-help-sex-workers/>; Elene Lam, "Bill C-36's Negative Impact on Racialized and Migrant Sex Workers," *Rabble.ca*, 26 November 2014, at <http://rabble.ca/news/2014/11/bill-c-36s-negative-impact-on-racialized-and-migrant-sex-workers>.

⁸⁶ See Jay Levy and Pye Jakobsson, "Sweden's Abolitionist Discourse and Law: Effects on the Dynamics of Swedish Sex Work and on the Lives of Sweden's Sex Workers," *Criminology and Criminal Justice* 14, 145 (2014): 593-607; and Gregg Bucken-Knapp, Johan Karlsson Schaffer, and Pia Levin, "Comrades Push the Red Button! Prohibiting the Purchase of Sexual Services in Sweden But Not in Finland," in *Negotiating Sex Work: Unintended Consequences of Policy and Activism*, 195-220 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

⁸⁷ Lowman, "Crown Expert Witness Testimony," 245.

⁸⁸ Lewis, Shaver, and Matika-Tyndale, "Going 'Round Again," 205.

criminalize elements of adult sexual commerce.⁸⁹ At the same time, law enforcers in other communities are pushing back. In a recent letter to the British Columbia Association of Chiefs of Police, the sex workers' organization, SWAN, condemned Operation Northern Spotlight's "shock and awe raids" on indoor sex work venues around the province. They explained that "pulling people out of the sex industry without their consent and penalizing those who do not agree to exit the sex industry does not 'save' or 'rescue' them"; rather, they continued, "these actions foster distrust and adversarial relationships with law enforcement."⁹⁰

David Eng and David Kazanjian argue that "avowals of and attachments to loss can produce ... a world of new representations and alternative meanings."⁹¹ Activist sex workers on Canada's west coast are maximizing their meaning-making through multiple media, including the play *Hooker Monologues* (2016); neo-burlesque troupes Sweet Soul, (all Indigenous) Beaver Hills, and Operation Snatch; the *(art)work(sport) work(sex)work* installation at Toronto's Power Plant (2015); Amber Dawn's memoir, *How Poetry Saved My Life* (2013); Annie Temple's website NakedTruth.ca; the exhibition *Sex Talk in the City* at the Museum of Vancouver (2013); and Vancouver's annual International Burlesque Festival, among other ventures. Indeed, sex workers' rights movements are growing internationally from India to Cambodia to New Zealand to Mexico.⁹² In 2015, Amnesty International voted to support global

⁸⁹ Geoff Leo, "2 Cities, 2 Very Different Approaches to Massage Parlours," CBC News.com, 27 March 2014, at <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/2-cities-2-very-different-approaches-to-massage-parlours-1.2587572>. Since 2008, Linda Malcolm has served as the sex industry liaison officer for the Vancouver Police Department. On the municipal front, the *City of Vancouver's Sex Work Response Guidelines* (September 2015) attest to a fundamental shift towards cooperation between sex workers and law enforcement. See <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/sex-work-response-guidelines.pdf>.

⁹⁰ Supporting Women's Alternatives Network (SWAN), "Call for Non-Participation in Operation Northern Spotlight in British Columbia," 6 July 2017, at http://www.pivotlegal.org/open_letter_to_bc_police_forces_end_participation_in_operation_northern_spotlight. In the *Guardian*, Beulah Maud Devaney reports that, since 2007, the city government in Amsterdam has set out to "clean up" the red-light district, with closures of an estimated 126 brothel windows and displacements of sex workers. In April 2015, more than two hundred sex workers, co-led by the Prostitution Information Centre and PROUD, the Dutch sex workers' union, marched through Amsterdam's city centre to protest the demonization of their industry and the closure of the windows. See Devaney, "Amsterdam's Sex Workers: The Unlikely Victims of Gentrification," *The Guardian*.com, 15 January 2016, at <http://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/jan/15/amsterdam-sex-workers-unlikely-victims-gentrification-red-light-district>.

⁹¹ Eng and Kazanjian, "Introduction," 5.

⁹² Since prostitution was decriminalized in New Zealand in 2003, sex workers have successfully established worker-run cooperatives, paid taxes, insisted on freedom from police intimidation, and pursued legal recourse in the event of sexual harassment. See Catherine Zangger, *For Better or Worse? Decriminalization, Work Conditions, and Indoor Sex Work in Auckland, New Zealand/Aotearoa* (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2015); and Lynzi Armstrong,

initiatives to decriminalize sex work; it joined other organizations that advocate for decriminalization as a first step, including Human Rights Watch, UN AIDS, the World Health Organization, the Global Commission on HIV, and the Law and Open Society Foundation.⁹³ To this efflorescence of brave truth telling, we add our majestic West End Sex Workers Memorial, our website, and our commemorative stroll.⁹⁴

CONCLUSION

Our process over eight years illuminates the episodic fits and starts of unfunded social justice work, the joy of small victories, and the unsettled scores that endure. Across the West, anti-trafficking discourse by prohibitionists, or “modern day helpers” heats up. Ideological conflicts about sex work persist, misinformation swirls, and feminists remain divided.⁹⁵ We understand the impossibility of symbolizing, through any kind of memorial, all of the complex facets of the sex industry with its internal stratification along lines of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, ability, age, class, and citizenship. We are well aware of the modesty of our imposition on the late-capitalist settler state, as well as the limits of institutional

“Decriminalizing Sex Work Is the Only Way to Protect Women – And New Zealand Has Proved That It Works,” the *Independent*, 29 May 2017, at <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/sex-workers-decriminalisation-of-prostitution-new-zealand-new-law-works-research-proves-sex-workers-a7761426.html>. For other research on sex workers’ activism globally, see Gregor Gall, *Sex Worker Unionization* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Prabha Kotiswaran, “Beyond the Allures of Criminalization: Rethinking the Regulation of Sex Work in India,” *Criminology and Criminal Justice* 14, 5 (2014): 565–79; and Oralia Gomez-Ramirez, *Trans Organizing and Sex Work Activism in Mexico City* (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, forthcoming).

⁹³ Charlotte Alter, “Amnesty International Votes to Recommend Decriminalizing Sex Work,” *Time.com*, 11 August 2015, at <http://time.com/3992788/amnesty-international-decriminalizing-sex-work/>. And see Emily Bazelon, “Should Prostitution Be a Crime?” *New York Times Magazine*, 6 May 2016.

⁹⁴ We are immensely grateful to volunteers Victor Temprano and Becca Schwank who have worked to update and expand our project’s website, www.westendsexworkhistory.com, and to begin creating an online app for a guided walking tour of commemorative sites in the West End, including our memorial.

⁹⁵ See Laura Agustín, *Sex at the Margins: Migration, Labour Markets and the Rescue Industry* (New York: Zed Books, 2007); Annalee Lepp, “Repeat Performance? Human Trafficking and the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics,” in van der Meulen et al., *Selling Sex*, 251–68; Joyce Arthur, Susan Davis, and Esther Shannon, “Overcoming Challenges: Vancouver’s Sex Worker Movement,” in van der Meulen et al., *Selling Sex*, 130–46; Bazelon, “Should Prostitution Be a Crime?”; Adrienne Davis, “Regulating Sex Work: Erotic Assimilationism, Erotic Exceptionalism, and the Challenge of Intimate Labour,” *California Law Review* 103, 5 (2015): 1195–275; and Shawna Ferris, “Safe Sex Work and the City: Canadian Sex Work Activists Re-imagine Real/Virtual Cityscapes,” in *We Still Demand! Redefining Resistance in Sex and Gender Struggles*, ed. Patrizia Gentile, Gary Kinsman, and L. Pauline Rankin, 203–21 (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017).

accommodation. Indigenous scholar Glen Coulthard warns of the “assimilative lure” of the state politics of recognition: “In settler-colonial contexts such as Canada ... reconciliation itself becomes temporally framed as the process of individually and collectively overcoming the harmful ‘legacy’ left in the wake of past abuse, while leaving the present structure of colonial rule largely unscathed.”⁹⁶ We continue to grapple with this primary contradiction.

At the same time, we have striven to enact what Eng and Kazanjian call a “politics of mourning that might be active rather than reactive, prescient rather than nostalgic, abundant rather than lacking, social rather than solipsistic, militant rather than reactionary.”⁹⁷ For sex workers all too familiar with misrecognition and the imposition of shame, our memorial may enable affirmative self-recognition and empowerment as well as recognition from others.

Our intervention into the streetscape of Vancouver’s West End comes at a time of significant gaybourhood reconstruction in cities across Canada and the United States.⁹⁸ Under the guise of “revitalization,” settler capitalist profiteering across Vancouver’s core has intensified: mid-century rental apartments and small-scale cooperatives are being demolished and replaced by multi-storey condominium towers with individual suites priced at \$1 million and up. Told by landlords that their suites were in need of renovation, renters have been evicted and their rents doubled or tripled; the crisis of housing affordability has worsened through these patterns of “renoviction.”⁹⁹ Near our memorial, city officials recently designated the junction at Davie and Bute streets “Jim Deva Plaza” to honour the beloved gay community leader and co-owner of Little Sister’s bookstore who died suddenly in 2014.¹⁰⁰ Today, Little Sister’s bravely limps along, vulnerable to the wave of closures that has hammered independent booksellers. Only a handful of queer clubs, community spaces, and cafés bravely hang on against the levelling

⁹⁶ Coulthard, *Red Skin White Masks*, 49. On ninety-four recommendations made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, see *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, vol. 1, Summary (Toronto: James Lorimer, 2015).

⁹⁷ Eng and Kazanjian, “Introduction,” 2.

⁹⁸ See Amin Ghaziani, *There Goes the Gayborhood?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014).

⁹⁹ See Yolande Cole, “Vancouver MLA Calls for Better Protection for Renters Following Eviction Notices for West End Tenants,” 10 October 2014. Straight.com, at <http://www.straight.com/news/727501/vancouver-mla-calls-better-protection-renters-following-eviction-notice-west-end-tenants>; and Kerry Gold, “The Highest Bidder,” *The Walrus* 13, 4 (2016): 22–32.

¹⁰⁰ Jeremy Hainsworth and Robin Perelle, “We’re Not Going to Live in Shame: The Legacy of Jim Deva,” *Daily Xtra*, 10 October 2014; Tom Hawthorn, “Jim Deva Was a Champion of Gay Rights, Free Speech,” *Globe and Mail*, 10 October 2014.

march of gentrification.¹⁰¹ While Qmunity, Vancouver's queer resource centre, has been promised a large new home, it has yet to materialize. Street-based sexual soliciting in the West End has disappeared; upscale escort services operate in high-rise condos but are discretely shuttered indoors. A once sexually vibrant city-space has been drained of erotic energy.

Our West End Sex Workers Memorial's dual message of strife and resilience invites residents and visitors to embrace empathy for those marginalized by the unconcealed, unilateral, and coercive actions of settler state agents.¹⁰² A pedagogical instrument of symbolic justice and recognition, our memorial will aid in efforts to combat the scourge of forgetting. And yet we are keenly cognizant that our lamppost will not "reconcile" the structural and symbolic violence that imperils sex workers, LGBTQ₂ people, low-income folks, those living with mental illness and/or addictions, and immigrants of colour. We harbour no illusions that our monument will magically transform shame into pride or exclusion into inclusion. While we plot our way towards a more inclusive future, we end with cautionary queries: What are the limits of settler state largesse packaged as reconciliation and forgiveness? How will sex workers and allies continue to find ways to interrupt the logics of dispossession and repudiation? And what new coalitions must be spawned to disturb, and ultimately shatter, the intransigence of neoliberal, cis-heteropatriarchal, whorephobic, and colonial rule?

AFTERWORDS

The challenges and rewards of engaging in a university-community project are multiple, as others have documented.¹⁰³ The dangers of misunderstanding, misrepresentation, appropriation, and mistrust lurk

¹⁰¹ For gentrification in American cities, see Peter Moskowitz, *How to Kill a City: Gentrification, Inequality, and the Fight for the Neighborhood* (New York: Nation Books, 2017).

¹⁰² Coulthard, *Red Skin White Masks*, 4.

¹⁰³ For a selection of writings about public scholarship born of community/academic collaboration, see Robertson with the Kwagu'l Gixsam Clan, *Standing Up with Ga'axsta'las*; Lina Sunseri, "Indigenous Voice Matters: Claiming Our Space through Decolonising Research," *Junctures* 9 (December 2007): 93-106; Lynn F. Lavallée, "Practical Application of an Indigenous Research Framework and Two Qualitative Indigenous Research Methods: Sharing Circles and Anishnaabe Symbol-Based Reflection," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 8, 1 (2009): 21-40; Elizabeth Kennedy, with Madeline Davis, "Constructing an Ethnohistory of the Buffalo Lesbian Community: Reflexivity, Dialogue, and Politics," in *Out in the Field: Reflections of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists*, ed. E. Lewin and W. Leap, 171-99 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996); Gillian Creese, Xin Huang, Wendy Frisby, Edith Ngene Kambere, "Working across Race, Language, and Culture with African and Chinese Immigrant Communities," in *Feminist Community Research: Case Studies and Methodologies*, ed.

around every corner. We strove to embrace Oneida feminist scholar Lina Sunseri's call for "participatory connectedness" by blending our unique skills and strengths, holding fast to our fundamental commitment to mutual respect.¹⁰⁴ Over the past ten years our meetings with community activists (in the piano room of Becki's condominium building), debriefing sessions in cafés after meetings with city staff, joint media interviews, regular phone calls, Facebook messages and e-mails, lunches over soup from Stock Market, and multiple public co-presentations cemented our bond of kinship.

Community activist Jamie Lee writes: "Working with Becki Ross over two decades has really inspired, nourished, and sustained me. I first met Becki at a forum at Emily Carr College where she was on a panel of esteemed and prominent lesbians. In the audience when I was introduced by Becki (in an era of feminist anti-trans sentiment), I saw a bull-headed dyke stomp to the microphone yelling, "She's No Lady!" This was in reference to my trans identity, and I recall wanting to slink down in my chair. I looked to the stage and I could feel Becki's caring, beautiful eyes, unwavering compassion, and spiritual warmth enveloping me. I knew at this point that Becki would be instrumental in my life and that I could trust her never to betray my trust or confidence. And that is not an easy task since I have been involved in the sex trade for most of my life."

Jamie Lee continues: "At no time have I ever felt inferior to Becki even though she is this amazing intellectual and academic and I am not a scholar. But we both share the same love of our designer lipsticks although in different shades. Hers is more soft and subdued and mine is loud and brash. This lipstick analogy I think really sums up our connectedness to each other. Over the many years that Becki and I have collaborated on various projects the kinship bond that we have has really deepened. She is like family to me. The younger sister that I never had. I trust Becki to never judge and she has been so instrumental in me achieving my dreams of a better place in society for sex working individuals. I know at times I may have taken Becki out of her natural

G. Creese and W. Frisby, 89–109 (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011); Colleen Varcoe, Helen Brown, Betty Calam, Marla Buchanan, and Vera Newman, "Capacity Building Is a Two-Way Street: Learning from Doing Research within Aboriginal Communities," in Creese and Frisby, *Feminist Community Research*, 210–31; Gary Kinsman and Patrizia Gentile, *The Canadian War on Queers: National Security as Sexual Regulation* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010); and Leila Rupp and Verta Taylor, "Going Back and Giving Back: The Ethics of Staying in the Field," *Qualitative Sociology* 34, 3 (2011): 483–96.

¹⁰⁴ See Lina Sunseri, "Indigenous Voice Matters: Claiming Our Space through Decolonising Research," *Junctures* 9 (December 2007): 93–106.

comfort zone but she has never wavered in her steadfast belief in doing the right thing. I know that Becki will always be there. I know that because of her commitment and dedication to the sex work community, and with her on our side, our issues will never again be swept aside. Our beautiful, statuesque West End sex workers monument is a testament to our collective vision of our shared values of respect, equality, and justice for sex workers. This bond will live on forever. Our beautiful red light adorning our monument can never be extinguished because our spirits are forever entwined, always on the same page, and always presented in a celebratory and honouring way. Love my Becki Ross!”

Academic-activist Becki writes: “From Jamie Lee Hamilton I have gained incalculable wisdom about community, loss, grief, pleasure, grace, resilience, and ‘doing what’s right.’ Above all, Jamie Lee’s unbending integrity, humility, and selfless spirit have inspired me, indeed impelled me, to join her as a ‘sister warrior.’ I adore her femme glamour, beauty, and sexiness. Without Jamie Lee’s razor-sharp memory, clear-eyed intelligence, and principled stubbornness, as well as her carefully tended networks and hard-won political capital, we would not have accomplished our goal of a permanent monument. Public bruising from prostitution abolitionists only fuelled our determination. Whenever possible, we celebrated steps forward; we devised new tactics to overcome setbacks. From start to finish we mindfully made efforts to co-organize, co-research, co-present, and co-write for multiple counter-publics. We maximized our opportunities to educate, plan events, and fundraise while we worked at full-time jobs, which was both draining and uplifting. Jamie Lee’s wry sense of humour has always kept me laughing. Year after year, a deep, unshakable trust in each other, and in the necessary justice we sought, prevailed. I love Jamie Lee. Onward we go, steadfast comrades, arm in arm.”