

CNN Normalizes Prostitution in Latest Lisa Ling Report

Award-winning journalist Lisa Ling's latest report on CNN's *This is Life* went inside the Moonlight Bunny Ranch, a legal brothel in Nevada owned by pimp Dennis Hof. The National Center on Sexual Exploitation denounces this episode as socially irresponsible journalism that normalized the inherently exploitative organized sexual exploitation industry.

"Does Lisa Ling think that a world where men can freely buy women's bodies is compatible with gender equality or safety?" said Dawn Hawkins, executive director of the National Center on Sexual Exploitation. "Ling's failure to question the sexual exploitation inherent in a system that offers male sex buyers their choice of 'blondes, brunettes, a fresh face or seasoned professionals' and sex acts from a 'menu' is appalling."

"One woman who Lisa profiled as an autonomous 'brothel worker' was Katherine Stone, an aspiring lawyer whose family was devastated after a fire scorched their property and left them with nothing. After this calamity, Stone agreed to auction off her virginity as a part of the 'America's Next Top Bunny Ranch Virgin' competition sponsored by Hof."

"Tragically, Ling portrays Stone as a woman who is choosing a career path, but what I see is a young woman with economic desperation as her coercive pimp," Hawkins continued. "Our society should seek to protect the economically vulnerable, not 'auction them off' to be used as sexual objects by the financially privileged. The fact that Moonlight Bunny Ranch owner Dennis Hof welcomed Stone into his virgin auction is further proof of the commercial sex industry's predatory dependence on women primed for prostitution through homelessness, poverty, incest and sexual assault."

“Promotional copy from Hof’s virgin auction webpage explains that contestants are judged on ‘hymen hygiene, poise under sexual pressure, degree of virtuosity, ability to resist temptation, non-intercourse sex skills, and finally, how they actually perform sexually when they lose their virginity to the \$\$\$ highest bidder.’ Moreover, Stone’s virgin purity is purportedly ‘being safeguarded 24/7 with a multi-pad-locked custom leather chastity belt made specially for her.’ A spectacle reminiscent of Medieval misogyny occurring in the 21 century deserves outrage, not a glossy commercial masquerading as a journalist endeavor.”

“By his own admission, Hof is a man who ‘dates’ women in his brothel. In plain English this means he engages in sex acts with his ‘employees.’ This is sexual exploitation, plain and simple—the kind of sexual exploitation that in any other context would get him fired, but which Ling fails to recognize. Instead, Ling characterizes Hof as a ‘sales trainer’ and ‘self-made millionaire.’ There is nothing self-made about Dennis Hof,” Hawkins commented. “His millions have come at the expense of the thousands of women Hof has made living off of selling.”

“Ling’s attempt to get ‘beyond the reality show veneer’ of Hof’s Moonlight Bunny Ranch was an abject failure. CNN and Lisa Ling owe an apology to survivors of prostitution, and should do the due diligence required to conduct a full report on the extensive and well-documented harms of legal organized sexual exploitation.”

“To begin, Ling should review the study of prostituted persons from nine different countries which found that 71 percent were physically assaulted in prostitution, 63 percent were raped, and 89 percent ‘wanted to escape prostitution, but did not have other options for survival.’ These research findings reveal the stark contrast between the sanitized picture of prostitution presented on *This Is Life* and the real lives of prostitution survivors. To read the stories of amazing women

and men who survived commercial sexual exploitation visit .“