

Great Escapes

Resistance Is Not Futile . . .
by Judith Reisman

The Story of Shelley Lubben, Former Porn Star

Pulitzer Prize-winning author Chris Hedges, in *Empire of Illusion: The End of Literacy and the Triumph of Spectacle*, writes that the “cruelty” of the “new” pornography “takes a toll on the bodies, as well as the emotions, of porn actresses.” But someone is trying to help them:

The Pink Cross booth has a table of anti-porn tracts and is set up in the far corner of the Sands Expos Convention Center in Las Vegas. It is an unlikely participant at the annual Adult Video News (AVN) expo. Pink Cross is a Christian outreach program for women in the porno industry, run by ex-porn star Shelley Lubben.

I first watched Shelley Lubben on YouTube in early 2009. An “ex-porn star,” she has created the Pink Cross (www.thepinkcross.org) as a public charity to reach out to “adult industry workers, offering emotional, financial and transitional support.” In the YouTube segment, filmed before a church audience, Shelley describes her past life and her current work. A tall, stately woman, she treads the boards, moving her hands to emphasize her words, looking directly and earnestly at her listeners.

As a veteran student of pornography and prostitution, I did not expect to learn anything new from watching Shelley Lubben’s public testimony. I was wrong. Shelley’s description of the sexual violence and degradation of modern pornography was a shock, even to me. It made me think that it made perfect sense to hear that she had left her economically rewarding “star” roles to return to a safer life doing “straight” prostitution. The “glamour” of porn is only a mask:

You have to do what they want on the



sets. . . . Girls . . . feel like stars. They get attention. . . . They don’t realize the degradation. . . . Raised on porn, [they] don’t even ask if it’s wrong. . . . They get into drugs to numb themselves. They get their [bodies] ripped. . . . They get HPV and herpes, and they turn themselves off emotionally and die.

Shelley says such women totally lose their identity and live on drugs and alcohol. They cannot plan, save their money, or eat properly. The survivors commonly have only sexual diseases and “fake boobs” to show for their lives in porn. She used to be one of them.

The Back Story

In the autobiography she wrote for her website (www.shelleylubben.com), Shelley, born in 1968, notes that she attended “a good church” with her family and that, “as a little girl, I knew and loved Jesus very much.” Unfortunately, her stable if unaffectionate family moved to another location and stopped going to church. Television became the basis of their family life. A creative child, Shelley put on her own plays at her elementary school, with the approval of her amazed first-grade teacher.

Then, at age nine, a classmate and the girl's teenage brother sexually molested Shelley. With no one to turn to or redress her abuse, Shelley defused her anxiety via autoeroticism and furtive sexual forays with both girls and boys. "It felt good to be wanted by someone and to receive attention, but at the same time I felt dirty. I didn't recognize until much later that my entire childhood had been sexually hijacked."

She carried shame and self-blame into her teen years. "It must be something evil in me," she thought. She "started having sex at age 16" and became a "rebellious resentful teenager who acted out to get attention." Hoping to keep peace in the home, her parents let Shelley dress up as a Playboy bunny and date strange boys, who led her into drug and alcohol abuse. The family tried counseling to no avail. Unable to understand what to do, her parents "told me to leave home at age 18."

She landed in the San Fernando valley with no food and no money. "A 'nice' man saw I was upset and told me how sorry he was." Still shocked and angry about being kicked out the house, so "that I didn't care any more . . . I sold myself for \$35."

Thus Shelley entered the "glamorous" life of prostitution, but the money, jewelry, and gifts soon included bizarre sex with strangers who stalked her, slashed her tires, and threatened to kill her if she demurred from performing certain sex acts. One man tried to kill her with his truck, and she often had to lie her way out of frightening situations. During her eight years as a prostitute and exotic dancer, she had two miscarriages and one birth. Little Tiffany grew up living "with a lewd wild woman."

Now a single mom, "Jesus kept tugging at my heart," Shelley writes, "but I ignored him. I figured, God wasn't taking care of me, so I had to do whatever I could to survive."

Most of her prostitution money went for drugs and alcohol to blot out the trauma of her life. To avoid the rapes and arrests for prostitution, she turned to pornography because "it seemed safer and more legal." However, even prostitution did not involve the brutal kinds of rape and degradation that she endured while "starring" in pornography. Soon she was required to do very hardcore scenes.

[O]nly more drugs and alcohol could get me through them. . . . I sold what was left of my heart, mind and femininity to the porn industry and the woman and person in me died completely on the porn set."



Shelley Lubben & Family

Her message is one of **exposing the \$57 billion porn industry** for what it is—full of lies and **deceit, addiction and broken lives.**

After becoming infected with herpes, I quietly left the porn industry but went back to prostitution to survive.

The Rescue

In 1994 Shelley met her husband Garrett at a bar. At first she refused his requests for a date, but when she finally accepted and the two went out, they became instant friends. Garrett was raised in a Christian home and had attended a Christian school. He wanted to rescue Shelley. She says, "He was a friend to a prostitute, just like Jesus. We knew God was working in our lives, so we turned back to Jesus and got married on February 14, 1995."

It was a rough marriage, but Shelley says God sent them to a church called Champions Centre in Tacoma, Washington, where they learned "to live a champion life."

With God, I had true forgiveness from all my sins and a chance to grow into a whole new person without being perfect first. That was a relief! I learned that God loved me unconditionally, regardless of my past, and even had a plan for my future. God

had a plan for my life? It was like someone turned the light on for me.

Shelley says she “practiced God’s principles in everything I did.” She learned web design and operated her own web design business for four years. She also attended college and got a bachelor’s degree in theology and counseling. She had walked into Champions Centre “broken and shattered,” she says. Eight years later, she was a

Champion woman healed and excited to live life! God restored me from drugs, alcohol addiction, painful memories, mental illness, sexual addiction, sexual trauma, and the guilt and shame from my past. . . . He also restored my femininity and healed my sexuality, which is a major miracle for me.

Shelley reports herself cured not only of herpes but also of cervical cancer. In addition, she says, “God also healed our marriage in a remarkable way. Garrett and I have a beautiful and loving relationship and are best friends!” Their “three beautiful daughters are being raised as Champions,” and, says Shelley, her daughter Tiffany has forgiven her and “allows me to be a mother to her.”

The Ministry

As a child, Shelley had dreamed of being a preacher. Having received her bachelor’s of theology degree, she is indeed a preacher now, sharing her testimony of transformation and rescue out of drugs, porn, and prostitution “by the power of Jesus Christ.” Her website says:

Now happily married to Garrett, her husband, and the mother of three daughters, Shelley takes a message of transformation against-all-odds to prisons, TV, radio, film,

conferences and rescue missions. She has been a guest on talk shows such as *Dr. Phil*, *Michael Reagan* and most recently, *FOXNews*. Her message is one of exposing the \$57 billion porn industry for what it is—full of lies and deceit, addiction and broken lives. Shelley maintains that women who turn to the industry to make money “probably didn’t grow up in healthy childhoods.

“Almost all pornography performers were sexually assaulted as children,” she says, but hide their broken hearts. “That would *kill* the fantasy, now wouldn’t it?” She told Chris Hedges:


Porn is like any other addiction. . . . First, you are curious. Then you need harder and harder drugs to get off. You need gang bangs and bestiality and child porn. Porn gets grosser and grosser. . . . And meanwhile the addicts make their wives feel like they can’t live up to the illusion of the porn star. . . . He wants what isn’t real. Porn destroys intimacy.

She says, “God now sends me out to proclaim to the world the reality of his awesome love. I also want everyone to know that whatever God did for me, he will do for you. He’ll do this because he *loves* you and sent his Son Jesus in order to give you a whole new life.”

Shelley tells the women she rescues that God has a plan for their lives and that they “were made for greater things.” Her website offers the real stories of these women, and includes a tragic Dead Porn Stars Memorial.

Shelley’s story is indeed inspirational. “All I wanted was a normal life. Then I discovered the truth. Sure enough, I *finally* found the life I always wanted.” ☺



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