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Night and day: Ex-Hub call girl and college lecturer takes wraps off her dual life

By Tenley Woodman

Monday, August 9, 2004

Her nights were fueled by champagne and cocaine; there was sex atop boardroom tables, threesomes, bondage - and \$200 when the hour was up.

The life of a call girl - it doesn't sound like the girl next door.

But maybe she is.

Cambridge author Jeannette Angell pulls the down the covers on Boston's invisible, nocturnal culture in her memoir, "Callgirl" (The Permanent Press, \$26).

"The only grief I'm getting is from people who are saying, 'Oh I thought I knew you.' That's where my anxiety has come. Writing about it has put it to rest for me," she said during a phone interview. "My life feels fairly removed right now. I'm glad I did it as quickly as I did. As I look at it now, it's like it happened to a different person."

"Could I do it now, no. It was a *job*."

Ten years ago, when Angell was 34, her boyfriend wiped out her bank account. With only her meager college lecturer's salary, the graduate of Yale and Boston universities needed to scrape cash together fast to make ends meet.

That's when she answered an escort service ad in the Boston Phoenix.

Her madam, whom she refers to as Peach in the book, didn't provide any tips before Angell went on her first call.

"For a madam, she talks very little about sex. She would say, 'Go out and see if it's for you. It's not for everybody.' Until I met other girls who worked for her I couldn't talk to anybody about it because she wouldn't."

So Angell created her own approach.

"At first, what I would put in my mind was this is a blind date. Then it became second nature," the French-born writer said about snuggling up to strangers.

"I saw them as a client. Their looks, bad breath, are secondary. The bad breath got to me more than anything."

"A waitress waits on somebody who's really rude to her and moves on. In most jobs we don't always choose our assignments. Some people who have to pay for sex are not the most attractive. You think, 'This is my client. I have to make him feel good.' It's totally different (than sex in your personal life)."

During Angell's three years in the business, she made calls to Revere, Milton, the Ritz Carlton, Beacon Hill and weekend-long gigs to Mohegan Sun - none of which required thigh-high boots, wigs or excessive make-up as Hollywood would have you believe.

In fact, you may have sat next to her at Biba, or in the same row at Symphony Hall while she was in the company of a client.

Her regulars included a North End restaurateur, a mob-connected suburbanite, and businessmen in town looking for companionship.

PHOTO GALLERY



Cambridge author Jeannette Angell

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While working for the escort service, Angell maintained her college lecturing schedule. She taught classes on the subject of prostitution and its role in history, while keeping her night job secret.

"Either she's bad because she does it or she's good because she quits," she said of the double standard for call girls. "We are multidimensional people."

In 224 pages, Angell shares what makes the sex trade tick: mind games.

"One of the cruxes of the whole business is power. The words have power to hurt and power to demean."

Angell recalls clients who at one moment would beg for her to talk dirty, then at the next call her a whore and hooker.

"One of the things I've observed is that the people who tend to throw out words that are hurtful, and people who say this is demeaning are those who feel demeaned. Certainly enough people use it that way. A lot of the guys get off on that."

Angell said Boston's sex market requires different attributes than Heidi Fleiss' Hollywood operation.

"I was older - I'm not sure that would work in other venues. I did have a niche here. Clients were looking for culture, conversation. I do think that everything with my experience was that it was in Boston. I'm not sure I could have tolerated a place that was just hung up on what someone looks like."

Angell, who has since changed her name, is now married and has left both academia and the escort world behind to focus on writing. She is working on a follow-up to "Callgirl" called "Madam," which Peach is helping her write.

(Go to www.jeannetteangell.com for more information.)

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