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“Real Bitches,” Victims, and Tough Daddies: Male Control, Gender Performativity, and the State in Vice Policing

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“Real Bitches,” Victims, and Tough Daddies:
Male Control, Gender Performativity, and the State in Vice Policing

Senior Project submitted to
The Division of Social Studies
Bard College

by Ezra Broach

Annandale-on-Hudson, NY

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To my friends at Bard, for knowing me well and staying anyway.

To my friends in NOLA, for cheering me on and calling me on my shit in equal measure.

To my parents, for keeping me dressed, fed, medicated and educated.

To Allison McKim, for stitching everything (mostly) together.

To Ryan, for keeping me singing.

To the squad: The best laid schemes of mice and men...

To all the women in hotel rooms and in the backs of squad cars: I'm sorry I couldn't do more, I'm sorry for all the times I stayed quiet, I'm sorry that I will never get the chance to know you. I'm sorry that I wouldn't know what to say even if I could have talked with you.

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1

Going on Dates

A young white woman, Akia, under arrest for prostitution is crying and sitting on one of the hotel room beds as soon as the lieutenant and I enter the second-floor hotel room. The four other men in the vice squad--three other detectives and Sergeant Romano--have left for another room on the first floor already, where two other women being detained are waiting. Akia is in handcuffs, frightened; she's never been to jail before. Her belongings, as well as some of those of the two other women are scattered around her, having been searched and dumped out by the detectives and sergeant prior to our entering. We have been told by one of the detectives that she is resistant, reluctant to give a statement. The lieutenant talks to her, calling her sweetheart, baby, and darling, telling her this isn't the life for her, most of all repeating "we [the police] are not the bad guys."

Two detectives bring up one of the other women, Sheila, also in handcuffs, from the downstairs room, simultaneously bringing Akia out of the upstairs room to the balcony for questioning. She is young, Black, and unresponsive, speaking in short sentences and only when the officers speak directly to her, an attitude they consider "disrespectful." They find a small amount of marijuana in her bag. Detective Jones tells Sheila how lucky she is to have not encountered a far more dangerous client, reminding her of prior violent crimes and murders in the area related to prostitution charges, and the lieutenant moves a Bible, the kind found in hotel rooms across the U.S., in front of her on the bed. "One in every hotel room," he tells her, "try reading it. There are some stories about people like you." Looking tired and frustrated, she quietly mumbles that she has read the Bible.

The third and last woman, Jess, is brought from downstairs to sit on the bed with the second woman; she is also Black, older, mid-30s in comparison to the two other 20-something women. Jess worries openly about losing custody of her children if her grandmother finds out she has been arrested again--to which Detective Torres responds, "why haven't you been doing better for your babies? Why haven't you done better for yourself? You want to be independent?" They ask her about her children, and then demand why she isn't with them: "Why aren't you at home with them? Don't you think they miss you? Babies that young need their mommas." Two detectives and Sgt. Romano swarm around the room, constantly moving, filling out paperwork. In the bathroom, the lieutenant tells me that Sheila and Jess will not be taken to jail, unlike Akia, and that they are being used to incentivize Akia to talk.

Akia is brought upstairs by the third detective, where all three women are made to sit quietly, handcuffed, on the beds for about 45 minutes. Although all three look uncomfortable, Jess asks to be taken out of her handcuffs momentarily, as her hands are falling asleep, and the detectives uncuff her for a few minutes. The lieutenant tries to get all three women to prove coercion or force from an outside source many times, ardently, to no avail. All three end up

crying for almost an hour; the detectives do not attempt to console them, or help them dry their faces, in any way.

After a little over two hours of sporadic questioning by the officers and mostly-motionless stagnancy for the women, the detectives take Akia to jail. She begins to cry and whisper that she wants to be taken home. The lieutenant tells her a runaway hotline number for adolescents. Jess and Sheila, set free from their cuffs, begin to gather their possessions and reassure the first woman that they will take care of most of her things until she is released (probably on overcrowding, in four to six hours) from jail.

This encounter is chosen to exemplify the power dynamics of masculinity, gender, state power, and law enforcement that I witnessed during my three months riding along with a small suburban vice squad in Louisiana. I rode along with the squad two or three days or nights out of the week, witnessing all in all 26 arrests for solicitation, and occasionally for drug possession; in addition, I conducted interviews with several members of the squad and spent a significant amount of informal (non-arrest) time with officers. The structure of arrests can, for the most part, be represented faithfully by the above account. "Dates," as the officers called them, followed a fairly straightforward pattern in practice, followed by an invariable ending: arrestees in the back of squad cars, en route to jail, where they would be quickly released, literalizing what Lynch (2012) calls the expedited revolving door or "assembly line" of justice.

In the process of conducting my research I began to form questions: why did the arrests I witnessed vary so wildly from what I had expected? What were the stories that the officers told to legitimate their work, and did they function in different ways for the officers than for the arrestees? How did the intrinsic genderedness of their work--men arresting, essentially entrapping, women; men exerting state power over women--impact the officers' behavior and self-definition, and the treatment of arrestees? Did what I

witnessed interact with broader discourses--of trafficking and prostitution, of morality and deviancy, of masculinity and state dominance? This study's goal, then, is to begin to answer these questions by focusing on the impact of victim and deviant labels during the arrest, and observing the ways that these were invoked (and revoked). I will study these labels' connection to, as can be expected, the officers' performative masculinity, and the way this masculinity became a tool for managing gender, and symbolic danger, in and out of arrest. Moreover, I will review the implications of my research for both disciplinary discourses within the criminal justice system *and* sociocultural anti-trafficking discourses. In picking out these pieces of my research I hope to challenge the supposition that policing, particularly vice policing, is "really" --or *can* ever truly be--about the control of crime.

This paper is not interested in joining the argument over the statistical disadvantages experienced by marginal groups at the hands of the police, or the debate over the moral and social ethics of prostitution itself--this is fascinating and important but well-covered terrain--but instead in teasing out how the identities, labels, and behaviors that characterize the encounters between the police and criminal women are invoked, interpreted, and deployed during the arrest encounter, as well as how these items shape the encounter itself. I attempt to map out how masculinities enable and prohibit certain forms of policing, and how this interacts, and perhaps strays from, the broader aims of the police institution and the state.

My findings illustrate that gender performativity and ideology are deeply inscribed within the practices and culture of vice policing. Masculinity and its performance--with its norms and requirements produced by the state, the police department, and inside the

squad itself--shape the way that policing is done. Masculinity was produced within the practices, behaviors, and beliefs of the squad; it determined what they did (not) do, and in turn influenced the way that women under arrest were constructed and thus treated.

Different forms of masculinity emerged as products of divergent, contradictory institutional and sociocultural demands: the disciplinary and paternal cultures of policing and the squad, the institutional boundaries (or lack thereof) set by both, trafficking and prostitution debates, fears over moral and physical corruption. These masculinities were also, however, *tools* the squad used to juggle these competing discourses in their work, in addition to allaying anxieties over failure and institutional expendability. *Deviant* and *victim* labels also appeared during arrest as two important, gendered tools, ones that were used in the officers' construction of the women they arrested; troublingly, as I will argue, the two labels collided when put into practice.

This supports the position that gender is always relationally produced: the officers' masculinities were bolstered interactively, by the denigration of the arrestees, and construction of the women as weak, deviant, victimized, and feminized. Moreover, the way that this was accomplished--through the construction of danger through the women's symbolic threat, and through tacit threats of sickness and violence, particularly at the hands of other, spectral "bad men"--reveals the reliance of the squad's "good" masculinity on more physically violent, dangerous forms of masculinity. "Good guys" (the squad) and their practices/values needed to stand in stark contrast to "bad guys" (pimps and johns) in order to gain paternal and moral ground, as well as justify their own work within the police institution, although both sought to control the women under arrest. Deviant and victim

labels, and the masculinities that were tools in constructing and invoking them, reciprocally produced each other during, and outside, the arrest. To this end, I argue, the officers in the squad tacitly (re)produced certain forms of *state-sanctioned* gendered and sexual norms, as well as self-governing citizens, in both the women under arrest and officers themselves, through the work of vice policing.

Gender Boundaries

The institutional functions and social roles of officers were split internally, but the squad as a unit attempted to create a visually, verbally, and physically cohesive, or “coherent,” masculine front (Goffman, 1959). However, the performance of unity and competence was belied by the actual practices of the squad, both in and out of arrest. Vice work, particularly the arrest interaction, was contingent on *multiple masculinities*. Following C.J. Pascoe’s Butlerian reading of masculinity in *Dude, You’re a Fag* (2007) I argue that the vice squad’s performance of masculinity was highly interactive and performatively accomplished. Masculinity emerged not as the expression of a true masculine self or internal identity, although at times it appeared, as Butler (1999) notes, “natural” and “timeless.” Rather, masculine behavior and practices were produced by numerous institutional and sociocultural discourses that shaped the officers’ repeated gendered interactions. I also use Swidler’s (1986) concept of the “cultural toolkit” to make sense of the way masculinity was not only performatively and interactively *produced*, but strategically and tactically *invoked* by the officers. Masculinity as it was produced was a management tool, one that officers used to inform and justify their work, especially in light

of both the discursive contradictions and recent legislative changes that characterized the squad's work over the course of my research.

Indeed, masculinities were tactically mobilized by officers; masculinity was used to manage the danger of arrest, respond to the uncertainties and potential threats that the women under arrest represented, balance institutional and social demands, construct a self-image of themselves as officers, and attempt to find meaning in their work. The officers repeatedly performed and used masculinity to re-iterate their manhood and their role as officers or specifically vice officers (a distinction that I will later clarify). This aided in imposing identities upon the arrestees, a practice that relationally augmented their own masculinity. I call the masculinities produced and invoked by the squad both in and out of arrest *tough daddy* masculinity, characterized by what Pascoe (2007) calls the malleable and performative boundaries of masculinity. I will explicate further on tough daddy masculinity as a tool and response for the officers in and out of the arrest situation in the body of my work.

As I have noted, the officers' work was fraught with limitations, contradictions, and difficulties on legislative and social fronts--challenges that the officers attempted to ignore or shift the blame for. The officers faced multiple, conflicting demands that required multiple responses on a daily basis, although the pattern of arrests was often fairly regularized. This meant that gender performativity that was seemingly inconsistent, contradictory, and problematic (in response to the inconsistent, contradictory, and problematic demands the officers faced) was built into vice and police culture, and expected, if not demanded, of vice officers. This by no means absolved the officers of

responsibility for their practices, particularly their treatment of the women they arrested. Although the squad did work within an institutional and sociocultural setting that limited their practices and valued, or rewarded, particular modes of policing, the officers did have a vast amount of discretion during arrests. There was a lack of specific institutional protocol or constraints on officers' treatment of their arrestees, allowing the officers to act, behave, and, significantly, *punish* the women in ways that they saw fit. Most officers believed that finding "the right kind of guy"--an officer who already possessed certain gendered values and beliefs--and actual experience on the squad were more important than academy training or institutional regulation, and moreover, guaranteed "appropriate" treatment of arrestees. Instead, the boundaries that constrained the officers were broader, more abstract state and social boundaries, ones that they rarely challenged--sensibly so, as the narratives on which the boundaries were founded supported the positions of the squad and the officers themselves. The boundaries allayed institutional expendability and reinforced the necessity of the squad's work by connecting it to broader, socially relevant discourses (trafficking and victimhood, for instance, or female offenders' deviancy). The officers' work was sustained by these boundaries--in effect a crystallization of the squad's state-mandated power both as men and as *policemen*, as I will later elaborate.

Vice Policing Historically

Questioning the arrestees and rifling through the hotel room during arrest helped the squad garner evidence to construct and label the women; these processes determined the ways the women would be allotted privileges or punished (i.e., the removal of handcuffs for a few minutes versus verbally berating arrestees for "abandoning" their

children). Deviancy and victimhood shaped the treatment of arrestees through providing officers with a means of managing offenders and gender in a disciplinary narrative. Victimhood and deviancy have a strong sociohistorical precedent in policing female criminality, particularly prostitutes; the discourses of deviancy and victimhood have been linked to social concerns over morality and attribution of blame, social disorder and corruption, xenophobia and racialized outsiders.¹ Early in the twentieth century, in the Progressive Era, the U.S. engaged in a well-documented campaign against prostitution, marked by a tightening of control--higher rates of harassing, leading eventually to higher policing and prostitution containment, criminalization, and harsher disciplinary measures. Atkins (2012) shows how underlying opinions about prostitution during the 19th century were intertwined with attitudes about poverty, nonwhite populations, and sexuality--attitudes that were intrinsic to the multiple (and often cautionary) roles that the prostitute played. Police attempted to segregate prostitutes, a way of morally and physically sequestering sexually, as well as racially and socially, deviant women (Shumsky, 1986). As my research shows, vice work has not entirely abandoned the view that prostitutes are corrupted deviants from which the community should be shielded; however, vice work has gained in complexity, attributable in part to the rise of anti-trafficking discourses and legislative/social reforms.

The Progressive Era's impetuses to reform drew upon these fears of female corruption and deviancy. The majority of the reforms during the early 20th century were

¹ For the sake of space and exactitude, this paper will be concerned primarily with prostitution discourses situated in the U.S., at a national rather than local level--although a large and fertile corpus has been written about prostitution that falls beyond U.S. boundaries (see, for instance, Bullough et al., 1987; Garon, 1993; Hershatter, 1997; Hayes, 2006; Warren, 2003, among innumerable others).

initiated by proto-feminist middle-class women who used a victimization framework to fight against prostitution and sexual deviancy, augmented by fears of white slavery rings and the sexual indiscrepancies of racialized populations and the lower classes. The emergent struggle against prostitution that vice police began to undertake at the turn of the century was connected directly to the political pressures and rhetoric of the reformers--the fear of deviant, immoral womanhood and ensnared, corrupted women. A not insignificant body of literature has covered the way in which the image of the trafficked woman and the language of sexual slavery, especially the fictitious "white slave trade," was, and continues to be, used as a political tactic stemming from the moral and social purist reforms of the Progressive Era (see Connelly, 1980; Grittner, 1990; Walkowitz, 1980). Jo Doezema (2000) in particular has documented the way that the historical precedent in sexual slavery and anti-trafficking discourses represented a shift both in boundary formation for female sexuality and in constructing victimhood from (what was previously called) deviancy.

One of the most important legal acts regarding prostitution came in the form of the 1910 Mann (or "White-Slave Trade") Act, which targeted sex trafficking, cross-state migration and harboring immigrant prostitutes; this act came at a time when debates around prostitution and fears over white slavery were extremely high-profile, as Langum (1994) points out. Scholars have analysed how the anti-trafficking rhetoric established during this period can be traced forward to modern anti-trafficking movements (most notably by Davidson, 2006 and Doezema, 2000). Indeed, while the Mann Act functioned as one of the broadest-reaching police defenses against prostitution, the Chamberlain-Kahn

Act of 1918, the 1911 *Hoke v. United States* ruling, and the 1944 *Mortensen v. United States* ruling all impacted vice policing at a ground level. These legislative changes refined and made more stringent the measures law enforcement could take against prostitution.

I briefly outline the legal and social history of vice work in order to point out the discursive legacy that underlies the squad's invocation of the deviant and victim labels, particularly the transition (and slippage) between deviancy and victimhood. Similar to this precedent, the officers I studied treated the women they arrested as impotent, corrupted victims under the influence of male control, in need of their protection and help, and, simultaneously, as irresponsible deviants in need of chastisement. This was attributable to the collision between the two discourses, and the inherent contradiction in fulfilling the demands of both. The police institution, and in a broader sense the goals of the state that the police are employed to accomplish, is a heavily disciplinary, punishment-oriented system within the U.S. criminal justice matrix (Herbert, 2001; Prokos, 2002; Cooper, 2009), although many social groups and a few experimental attempts at policing reforms have worked to change this (Ohlin, 1968; Alpert and Dunham, 1988; Herbert, 2001). Police academies often inculcate harsh, punitive methods of policing that institutionalize misogyny and foster a culture of hypermasculinity (Balkin, 1998; Fielding, 1994; Herbert, 2001). The police institution has a continuing history of promoting tough, disciplinary, potentially sexist strategies for dealing with criminals--and encouraging the view that arrestees are punishable, irresponsible deviants. On the other hand, as both I and the vice officers were aware, the field of of *vice* policing has been subject to increased and specific demands for legislative and ground-level reform that are integrated into (inter)national

movements against sex trafficking. These proponents push heightened sensitivity, emotional connection, and (it goes without saying) treatment of the arrestees, or “rescued women,” as victims (Laczko et al., 2003; Gallagher et al., 2008; Yen, 2008). Anti-traffickers’ demand for “softer” policing styles thus entails a reorientation of the gendered strategies and styles of policing as much as the institutional processes. As I will discuss, anti-trafficking discourses have impacted the criminal justice system in Louisiana as much as, if not more than, other states in the U.S. The squad was stretched thin between the goals of these discourses, sometimes openly, most often implicitly; it was impossible to “please both masters.”

Responding to Victimhood

A body of scholarly work that I build upon has centered the deviant label (Becker, 1963) and characterized it as socially and affectively “sticky,” difficult to shed once attained (Erikson, 1966, 2011; Goode, 2001; Ahmed, 2004). I argue that, when invoked by the vice squad, the victim label proved equally sticky, and similarly harmful. The subversion of the victim label was a product of the permeable lines conceptually dividing deviancy and victimhood for the squad, and the trouble interpreting victimhood and incorporating anti-trafficking rhetoric within the police institution. Contemporary anti-trafficking rhetoric recognizes no distinction between forced and voluntary prostitution, assigning the victim/trafficked status to all people involved in prostitution (Bernstein, 2007a). The definition of what constitutes a victim--or rather, what constitutes “legitimate” victimhood--for these groups is usually fairly slim, as Surtees (2008) points out. Just as the construction of victimhood in the Progressive Era was limited and often vague, the

anti-trafficking invocation of victimhood today is similarly fuzzy, for anti-trafficking factions and vice police alike.

The 2000 Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) purportedly works toward “three Ps:” the prevention, protection, and prosecution of sex crimes, integrating multiple levels of the criminal justice system in the fight against trafficking and inspiring several states to impose harsher punishments on trafficking perpetrators. A number of critiques have been leveled against the TVPA, not least among them assessments of the human rights claims TVPA makes, and of the dearth of academic information on trafficking available (Logan, 2009). These indicate, within the criminal justice system, a bounded definition of victimhood and coercion, and unaccountable statistics for both. Similar to legal difficulties in defining what exactly constitutes prostitution, as Jaggar (1991) points out, anti-trafficking rhetoric faces substantial challenges in defining victimhood, which translate into sociocultural and institutional uncertainty in defining victimhood for the criminal justice system. Although the TVPA, and the proponents of anti-trafficking that called for it, have exerted pressure on the police, the inability to clearly delineate the boundaries of victimhood has proved problematic on a conceptual level and prohibited more extensive anti-trafficking measures from being enacted.

Entering this dialogue, my research indicates that the conceptual instability of the victim label has permeated ground-level policing, pushing victimhood (or at least, the victim label) into the culture and rhetoric of the squad without providing a realistic map for how victimhood should be navigated during or after arrest. Officers were expected to be white-knight saviors and empowering rescuers while still punishing and managing

arrestees--who were, legally, still criminals. Insofar as policing, as Herbert (2001) notes, “is mythologized as a test of agility, strength, and tenacity [relying on] *the active construction of those elements of the populace against whom the police’s prowess is demonstrated* [emphasis added]” the victimhood discourse worked with the tough, disciplinary masculine culture of policing. Modern and historical trafficking logics, as I have observed, make necessary an “other,” a “bad guy” to ensnare the trafficking victim. (Instead of the discourse of deviancy, in which the woman herself was the “bad guy,” the discourse of victimhood suggested that there was an outside, spectral “bad guy” to combat.) However, the emotionally sensitive, responsive policing that anti-trafficking factions demanded was *not* part of a (non-vice) officer’s academy training or daily work. The style of policing that anti-trafficking discourses demand (which, in comparison to the police’s regular disciplinary work, are tantamount to hand-holding and kumbaya circles) are a significant departure from the demands of the police institution and regular police culture.

To this end, the squad spoke to victims using the language of empowerment and self-respect, as I will later describe, that trafficking discourses promoted as a more “compassionate,” sensitive alternative to the disciplinary goals of the police institution. This rhetoric, however, more often took the form of chastisement and shaming, *effectively* similar to the way the squad treated women labeled deviants. In fact, my work with the vice squad indicated a practical collision in victim and deviant labels that made them difficult to effectively distinguish, for the officers themselves, the arrestees, and outside observers. This was damaging for the women, and quietly troubling for the officers, although this latter problem went mostly unacknowledged. The collision of victim and

deviant labels was representative of the squad's difficulty accommodating competing discourses, ones that sought to make legislative changes in the police institution and social changes in the cultures of the squad and the police.

Gender, Policing, and the State

Just as these categories collided, the lines between various forms of masculinity in response to deviancy or victimhood were tough to differentiate. The squad performed masculinity in multiple ways, all in service to one of the larger goals of vice policing--reproducing and enforcing normative gender boundaries. Paternal masculinity surfaced in the squad's work, an unsurprising finding given the heated debates around chivalry, gender, and the state (Steffensmeier et al., 1993; Crew, 1991; Chesney-Lind, 1977, 1984). Scholars have described the state as employing paternalism to reproduce male dominance and patriarchal power structures (Walby, 1990; Connell, 1987; MacKinnon, 1989). My research supports a theoretical framework that sees the state as having a vested interest not *merely* in producing patriarchy via paternalism, but in producing *and* endorsing many forms of normatively gendered behavior; the justice system and thus police are employed to achieve the state's goals (Daly, 1989; Haney, 1996 and 2000; McCorkel, 2004). Paternal masculinity supported (and chastised women for not adhering to) certain gendered practices and traditions, such as traditional motherhood and conventional family structures--a form of social control for arrestees, as Daly (1989) has noted. For the squad, the performance of paternal masculinity was at its most benevolent a response to victimhood, at its most hostile and disciplinary a response to deviancy (Glick and Fiske, 1997). In this light, paternalism was one practice used to manage the arrest, but

was not the only means of doing so. My research will show that the squad also drew upon more harsh, disciplinary tactics and discourses, drawing upon the construction of danger (which was no less state-sanctioned) as a means of gender management during arrest.

My work supports a view of the state as a multiple and contradictory entity. The state acts as a continually evolving set of often-gendered practices, or “apparatuses,” in specific sites; it is an arena of conflicting and competing impulses (Savage and Witz, 1992; Haney, 1996, 2000; Herbert, 2001). The spaces that I focus on in my research with the vice squad, both in and out of arrest, constitute specific sites in which masculinely gendered practices and identities are produced and deployed, often with very contradictory messages. They are spaces in which state narratives are (supposedly) put into effect, and their efficacy and moral/legal “rightness” re-affirmed. To the extent that narratives of hypermasculinity and danger or social threats are inscribed into the police institution and culture and thus into the state, disciplinary masculinity, I argue, is linked to the work of vice policing and the motives of the state.

For their own part, the women under arrest were literally entrapped by the state, put into a situation in which their own subjectivities--their motives, their lives and past actions, their emotional responses--were subsumed by the officers’ own gendered beliefs and values. In the arrest, these values ranged from appropriate femininity and motherhood to financial responsibility to moral-religious (always Christian) impetuses; the women were rewarded for their successes in adhering to these values, and, more frequently, chastised and disciplined for their failures. Again, questioning and searches aided the officers in this process. The lives of the arrestees were an open book for the officers to

label the women, to fit them more neatly into narratives of victimhood and deviancy. This legitimated the reluctance and silence of many arrestees, like Akia and Sheila above--to deny the squad information in any way possible limited the officers' ability to chastise and shame them. The arrestees' silence is unfortunately duplicated here, attributable to the limitations on (recordable) contact with arrestees set by the IRB by which this paper is bound.

Methodology

Research Site

I conducted fieldwork with a vice squad in a suburban parish just outside of a major city in Louisiana. The second-most populous parish in the state, there are approximately 434,760 residents (as of the 2010 census) of which the majority are republican and roughly middle-to-lower class. On average, the parish is ethnically mixed, although the part of the parish within which the squad mostly made its rounds is inhabited by a majority of people of color, the "poorer part of town." As is expected, the police department in the parish is marginally smaller than the one in the city--but the parish, unlike the city, has a working vice squad.

The reasoning behind my choice of this site to conduct research was threefold. First, Louisiana is an interesting state specifically for its rates of incarceration: as of 2012, Louisiana is the world's prison capital, with one in 86 Louisianans currently doing time--over 40,000 inmates. The local prison business, which is chiefly for-profit, is reliant on a steady and increasing number of inmates, simultaneously allocating the least money per inmate of any state (Chang, 2012). Louisiana also has the highest percentage of

inmates serving life without any chance of parole than any other state. Its policies are reliably harsh on both violent and petty offenders. Second, Louisiana is currently engaged in debates over what constitutes trafficking and sex crimes, debates which have drawn commentary both from grassroots sex work activists and from state legislators. Most recently this took shape in the struggle over the centuries-old Crime Against Nature by Solicitation (CANS) law. Until this was effectively repealed in 2011, prostitution convictions could be labeled a felony instead of a misdemeanor, which forced prostitutes to register as sex offenders--a choice that was used to indiscriminately target women of color and transgender women. This legal shift was considered a huge step for local activists, of course, but it also served to raise interest and awareness of the state's role in anti-trafficking discourses on an (inter)national and global level. Finally, I was born and raised in Louisiana, and thus had access to a number of resources through family and friends that I could not have otherwise obtained. My work is in large part indebted to them.

Research

In May 2014, I began my three month research with the squad. The squad was relatively small, only constituted by five men: Lieutenant Harding, the commander of the squad; Sergeant Romano, his second-in-command and the chief of the Special Investigations Bureau; and three detectives, Jones, Boudreaux, and Torres. Four of the men were white and one was Hispanic, and their ages corresponded to the rank within the squad--the lieutenant was in his late 40s, while the detectives were in their 20s and early 30s. All had worked in separate positions in the department before coming to the vice

squad, and had undergone interviews and debriefings, in addition to the regular processes police candidates must undergo, to determine suitability for the position (more will be said on this subject later). All five men were large, even physically imposing; visible tattoos and shaved heads were common, as were tight shirts and jeans that displayed their muscles--as members of the vice squad, civilian attire was permitted.

For two or three days or nights out of the week in the summer heat I met with the squad in the parking lot of the office while the three detectives chatted and tried to make telephone "dates" with sex workers, finding numbers from internet advertisements, while the lieutenant and sergeant chatted with me and each other. If the detectives were successful (and the calls usually continued until someone could make a date) I rode passenger-side with Lieutenant Harding in his unmarked civilian car, following and followed by the detectives and sergeant in similarly unmarked cars, to the hotel or motel where the date had been made. This is where the process of arrest would begin, and is the locus of my research. This paper seeks to analyze the data I collected during this time period (May to August of 2014), as well as three in-depth, one and a half to two hours-long interviews with Lt. Harding, Sgt. Romano, and one detective (the other two declined to be interviewed).

The people I encountered in the 26 arrests I witnessed were all cisgender women, anywhere from 18 to 35 years old, although few were over 25. They were a small majority Black (50% of the cases involved a Black woman) but also included a small number of white and Latina women. Almost all were originally from out-of-state (96% of the cases) having taken buses or their own cars as a primary means of transportation. 84% of the

cases involved one or two women, but a few--as evidenced in the above narrative--involved three. Most notably, none of the cases involved men, the 'pimp' or 'daddy' that the squad so often demanded. Arrests took anywhere from 45 minutes to almost three hours.

Because of the importance of gender roles within police culture, the specific situations and amount of time I would face with the squad, and my age and status as a college student, I put quite a bit of thought into my conduct and appearance while I was with the squad. I tried to cover my body modifications--for me, a very difficult pursuit--and I wore relatively conservative attire, mostly button-down shirts tucked into knee-length skirts or dark pants. In addition, although I am a queer-identified, non-binary transgender person, I "passed" as a woman during my research. While this degree of concealment might seem excessive, it allowed me the trust of officers that I would not have otherwise had--and arguably allowed me to conduct my research in the first place.

What We Do & What We Say We Do: Masculinities Outside Arrest

I have argued, citing feminist criminologists and scholars studying the gendered state (MacKinnon, 1989; Haney, 1996 and 2000; McCorkel, 2004), that the state makes use of an often-contradictory and constantly evolving set of gendered practices, within its multiple apparatuses, to produce a gendered reality by way of state power, and thus to produce, re-iterate, and support normatively gendered practices--traditional family structures, women's gender roles as mothers and daughters, abstinence or restrained sexuality. In this section of my paper, I will examine the criterion for entry into the squad, as well as the goals the squad held for vice policing and the function that these ideals served for officers, particularly the role of what I call the "model" or idealized officer. I will examine these items through the officers' interactions outside of arrests and in one-on-one interviews--and look at the way these goals interacted with how the officers defined and interpreted their work. Most of all, I will study the way that specific forms of masculinity are produced and used by officers--emerging performatively, interactively and repeatedly--in all these practices, and the way that these masculinities are shaped by the cultures of policing and the squad. On a macro-level, I begin to study the implications of "what the squad says they do" for the state and the police institution.

Goals of the Squad

During interviews, the higher-ranking officers on the squad had fairly straightforward visions of what constituted the prostitution policing that they did; the detectives shared many of their goals, and of course the general objectives of the squad

influenced the work that all officers did. When asked what he believed his goals to be as the head of the squad, the lieutenant responded,

It really comes down more to the goals of the [Louisiana] state but [...] we see every girl as a victim and we're gonna treat her that way. There's no better feeling than *rescuing a girl, rescuing anyone from this life, putting her back in the arms of her mother*. That's the reward for us and that's gonna be the goal. And respect--even when there's no respect, or [...] outright hostility, ideally it would be mutual, we try to treat the girls like the father figure they probably didn't have. [emphasis added]

Similarly, Sergeant Romano answered a question about the goals of the squad during an interview by saying,

If I can make a hundred cases and *recover one girl* I guess it's worth it. We don't do it to make statistics... we're trying to recover juveniles or anybody for that matter. I know a good percentage have been raped and robbed. If we don't succeed it's not our fault--we're still learning and we have work to do of course, but I think our goal is trying to rescue the girls from this life.

These responses open up a larger body of questions about the construction of masculinity, its performance by the squad, and the way masculinity interacted with the actual women being arrested--questions that I will continue to address in the ensuing body of the paper. I will focus first on the most central of the officers' stated goals, "rescuing girls," supposedly treated as unilaterally victims, from the prostitution "life." The work that officers on the squad said they were doing was explicitly tied up in a narrative of trafficking victimhood and saviorship. The women they arrested were treated as victims in need of rescue by the officers, instead of willful agents or groups explicitly oppressed by socioeconomic conditions or prejudice. The officers also used the moniker "girl" to refer to the women they arrested, a telling tendency. Over the course of

my research, the squad never arrested anyone under the age of 18, but the officers often legitimated their work through verbally infantilizing the women in prostitution cases.

Similarly, officers invoked the specter of past or potential inflicted violence on the arrestees but at *no point* during my research attempted to arrest or even contact johns--a troubling phenomenon that I will later elaborate. This echoes Herbert's (1996, 2001) assertion that, whether actual, exaggerated, or illusory, "bad guys" are necessary to substantiate the work of the police institutionally and socioculturally, as well as to legitimate any use of force employed in pursuit of "bad guys." From the perspective of the stated goals of the squad, the officers were the better alternative only when juxtaposed against the troubles inevitable in the life of prostitution, an issue that I will later unpack. Although rates of violence and murder (the actions of "bad guys") against prostitutes in the sex industry are indeed high (Weitzer, 2005) the officers' articulations were not simply statements of fact. The statements addressing the sensitive side of policing--"rescuing a girl, rescuing anyone from this life, putting her back in the arms of her mother" --verbally justified, and indeed, idealized the more sensitive side of the squad's work. Echoing anti-trafficking rhetoric, the officers wanted to "save" the women they arrested, ostensibly by doing (relatively short-term) emotive work during arrest, instead of combatting the sources of the violence. Simultaneously, however, by placing the potential violence against the arrestees onto other men, the officers pushed the responsibility for the well-being of the women away from themselves--as one said, "If we don't succeed it's not our fault".

These goals also explain in part the articulation and construction of a moral, sensitive masculinity in the officers' own descriptions of their work. The squad was able to construct an ideal masculinity by constructing the needs of the women they arrested--to be saved or recovered from the prostitution "life," to be back in the arms of their mothers. As Fraser (1989) states, this supports a reading of the state (vis-a-vis the police institution) as both "need interpreter" and "need satisfier." The officers' construction of a "model" masculinity was a relational one, reliant on the (supposed) needs of their arrestees. The centrality of model masculinity to the officers' descriptions of their work also adds another dimension to criminological debates around chivalry and paternalism in the state, particularly in the criminal justice system. Studies of the treatment of women offenders have been cleanly divided into a debate between whether women are treated more (Crew, 1991) or less (Chesney-Lind, 1977, 1984) leniently based on their *own* conduct, gendered behavior, and adherence to normative standards of gender and sexuality. The responses of the officers and what these responses signified for the masculine ideal within the squad indicated that the treatment of women under arrest was just as contingent on the gender performativity of officers themselves. Their descriptions of their work, of course, reveal the beliefs and values of the squad, which are used to construct and label the arrestees. As I will show, the officers' idealizations reflected and altered their policing, making the arrest a gendered, interactive process.

The responses of the officers iterate, perhaps in a more direct way, Glick and Fiske's (1997) characterization of benevolent sexism. In lieu of sexism linked to overtly hostile attitudes ("hostile sexism"), benevolent sexism describes sexism that is

subjectively positive--but that continues to uphold traditional and implicitly derogatory beliefs about gender. Insofar as model masculinity made wide use of anti-trafficking discourses, this indicates, as Chuang (2010) notes, a not insignificant amount of misogyny and paternalism within the anti-trafficking framework itself. The officers supposedly saw “every girl as a victim” (of men) and subsequently believed that the “victims” they arrested were in need of intervention (by men). Women were thus reliant on an external male savior. By construing their work in this way, the officers could continually reiterate and thus establish the squad as “good guys,” set into contrast with the anonymous “bad guys,” with each arrest. A line separated the officers from the men that incited violence and victimized women--a line split by the type of men, i.e. the forms of masculinity, that the officers had constructed as desirable and integral to the work of vice policing. The officers used model masculinity to differentiate themselves from dangerous or violent men; it was a set of masculine values and behaviors that was a frequent referent for vice officers.

Unpacking Model Masculinity

The five men who made up the squad were carefully selected. A position on the squad was, as Lieutenant Harding put it in an interview, “a role for *a man with good morals*. And no alcoholics or gamblers, men who would be sucked up into that lifestyle. I’ve seen it! No johns, of course. And then they have to be credible” [emphasis added]. In order to present a uniform front and be considered capable “squad members” the model officer had to not only possess the regular attributes of an officer--an aversion to illegal activity and a strong moral compass--but in addition a moral compass, one rooted in a

particular alignment of gendered values and beliefs. These were a set of values that, in my discussions with squad officers, were considered to elevate them as both officers and as *men*.

Vice work was certainly a *man's* job, but not a job for every policeman. This, in theory, differentiated the requirements of vice work from that of other departments. The higher-ranking officers on the squad believed the nature of their work to be different from the regular span of police work. During both interviews and informal conversations, the lieutenant and sergeant referenced the "special" or extraordinary quality of the job. The model officer had prior experience policing, but also possessed a strong sense of traditional masculinity--a man who was able to treat women "like the father figure they probably didn't have," who was able to convey a "respectful but *firm*" attitude. As the lieutenant claimed, attempting to rise above whomever and whatever the officers met in each hotel room was a necessity: the model officer had a cool head in what were potentially dangerous and, more importantly, emotionally fraught situations.

This officer displayed an elevated masculinity--in essence, the moral, sensitive masculinity that functioned well with the demands of anti-trafficking discourses. Similar to the discourses of "true" or "real" masculinity, such as those channeled in recent anti-rape/sexual assault awareness campaigns (Aleksanyan, 2013), manhood on the squad was defined formally, in interviews, in a way that emphasized stability, good or productive strength, and an ability to dig deep and gain emotional connection, to "get the girls to see you, to listen to you, to get to them." The goals of the squad, and the power that officers wielded, were made ineffective without emotionally stable, moral

masculinity. Officers were transferred from other departments for expressing an interest in vice work, and were accepted after a brief screening process, which involved one-on-one interviews with the lieutenant and sergeant, and an unofficial “try-out period” of approximately a month. Transferal to the squad was determined interactively, and was a fairly personal process, supposedly allowing for a more intensive examination of the qualities of potential vice officers to ensure a good fit with the culture of the squad and its objectives.

Of course, this was paired with some of the police attributes expected of officers in other units or departments that I have described above; these were attributes taught in the academy or in prior police work before coming to the squad. The squad officers worked as a special unit, with a culture and objectives of its own, but was nonetheless integrated into the greater department as a whole. All the officers on the squad had come to work in vice after somewhat extensive work in other departments. The lieutenant was the only one who emphasized his desire from the start to work as a vice officer. The officers on the squad did not receive specific vice instruction during their five months of academy training, and it remained unclear whether any type of formal training had taken place. Sergeant Romano noted, despite his almost fourteen years working in the parish department,

[T]hose four, five months of class can't teach you what you really need to know here. It's not a hundred percent always dangerous work, but [the instruction] you get in academies is broad, it doesn't really work in vice. You don't learn everything. Like... class teaches you to fill out reports. Paperwork. But you get your [vice] skills on the street. And you have to be *the right kind of man* to even be considered there in the first place [emphasis added].

Like any other department, the majority of what officers considered real “work” (e.g. out-of-the-station street time) for the squad couldn’t be taught in the academy. The investigative work was learned from other detectives on the squad, or from the sergeant or lieutenant; the officers had all been on the squad from periods ranging from three months to twelve years, so street skills were able to be learned on the job and from the guidance of more experienced officers. The gaps in age and experience also imposed a “pecking order” or hierarchy of knowledge and capability in the squad--gaining Detective Torres, the “rookie” detective, good-natured teasing and occasionally extra paperwork. But unlike other departments, vice work supposedly required a masculinity that was not learned through practice, but that was considered *inborn* or *pre-existent*. The stated desire for the “right kind of man” naturalized the more sensitive, moral masculinity--obscuring the performative, repetitious work that went into the construction of masculinity for the squad. This was perhaps an attempt to ameliorate any weakness or femininity that “sensitivity” might imply, a threat especially given the hypermasculinity of the police institution (Balkin, 1998; Fielding, 1994; Herbert, 2001). (Naturalizing masculinity also could have been a way for officers, even subconsciously, to allay anxiety over the immateriality and disembodiedness of gender reality, in a Butlerian reading.)

As Sergeant Romano stated during an interview, vice officers “can’t be weak willed [...] or germaphobes. They have to have what I call a gift for gab. They eventually learn what to say, they have notebooks... For this job I’ve found that everyone’s different--but really the same, you know?” This final sentence spoke to the necessity of a united front in

squad work, and a cohesive squad culture. Ideally there were no displays of individuation within the squad. The lieutenant and sergeant had a clear image of the model squad officer not because there was a single definition within the police institution or because a specific type of man was naturally drawn to the position, but because officers on the squad were hired on the basis of a singular sensitivity or “softness”—i.e. stable, paternal, but most importantly *moral*--manhood. This form of masculinity was valued because it tempered the tough, “manly” masculine attributes intrinsic to the work of the police institution.

“Soft” masculinity was paternal and emotionally on-call. It was said by the officers to characterize vice work in particular. While “manly,” hard masculinity was institutionally taught and socially learned in the culture of the academy and the general police institution, soft masculinity was considered an inborn quality. Soft masculinity was naturalized and thus made an extraordinary quality instead of only a learned skill set or personality trait, masking its interactive, continual production. A successful and desirable candidate for the vice squad possessed the learned (external) masculine attributes required for general police work *and* a more valuable “genuine” or “real” (internal) masculinity; the two were divided as learned and natural, although, as I will show, both were performatively produced. Model masculinity, of course, was an idealization not only of the work that the officers did, but the officers *themselves*, insofar as it was naturalized and elite. In essence, the work was special, but moreso the intrinsic selves of the men who did it.

Sergeant Romano's statement--that "everyone's different--but really the same"--represented a level of disclosure that I found scarce in the formal interviews with squad officers. The officers seemed abnormally wary of my recording device, and the lieutenant double- and triple-checked it before I was allowed to begin; while I did over time accrue the officers' trust and an insider status, I was still often faced with a lack of transparency, particularly during interviews and one-on-one conversations. I emphasize here the level of care that was taken to ensure the information I received was approved by the lieutenant, and implicitly by the police institution that he represented. There was a great degree of pressure to present a restricted, cohesive image of vice policing (the model officer as well as the model squad) in all my interactions with officers, but most prominently in one-on-one conversations and interviews with higher-ranking officers. Thus far I have interpreted what the squad wanted me to see and hear about the vice squad and its officers: that their work was wrapped up in "good," natural masculine behaviors; that they saved/rescued women; that they were special; that their work was important. This could also have been the narratives that the squad genuinely believed: "the ensemble of stories we tell ourselves about ourselves" (Geertz 1975: 448).

Regardless, I will turn now to the *apparent* work and role of officers on the vice squad. I will look at masculinity as it actually manifested in practice.

Model Masculinity "Backstage"

More informal characterizations of the role officers played on the squad emerged in other settings, from my own observation, and offhand discussions among the officers themselves and occasionally myself, particularly among the detectives. The

hyper-awareness that marked interviews disappeared once the officers were in the field, where their attention was focused on the number of daily tasks at hand (and not on my recording device or notebooks). This is, of course, where the brunt of my work is centered. A significant part of my observations were based on the work that the officers did outside of cases--the conversations and arguments they had while waiting for field work to pick up, in and outside the station. These less self-monitored and self-conscious interactions provided fascinating, rich material; it is this material that I will focus on for the moment, before moving in the next chapter to the officers' work when "activated"--making cases and during arrests. This work further indicates that the squad, and by extension the police institution and the state, performs masculinity that is organized via particular sites and particular group "cultures."

Across the board, the *non-vice* officers that I observed "on the job" performed normative masculinity. This is an unsurprising note given the popular cultural connotation of policing with rough, traditional, and even working-class masculinity (Herbert, 2001; Prokos, 2002; Cooper, 2009). Even entering one of the bland office buildings where the parish stations were housed, I noticed a tangible difference: I walked into a space that was populated chiefly by men, a culture that performed and valued, almost farcically, certain forms of hypermasculine behavior--aggression, independence, emotional nondisclosure, even physical strength. Officers I had never spoken to before called me "sweetheart," "darling," and similar pet names; I was greeted in the station by physical and verbal displays of chivalry. In fact, it was difficult to get information about locations and times without explaining my role as a researcher in great detail and even

then I caught officers (thankfully not the ones in the squad that I worked with regularly) looking perplexed or even challenged by my presence in the station even after I had explained my purpose there multiple times prior.

Even the admittedly few men I came into contact with who seemed to work primarily from the station in secretarial or administrative contexts enjoyed public bravado and other performative displays of masculinity to a given extent--among men perceived as weaker officers or co-workers, and at the expense of their women co-workers in the station. It is also telling that the majority of men who worked primarily from the station were older, and many were former officers. In this light, their intensely masculine performance is likely attributable to the fear of appearing feminized or emasculated, as men who were removed from the street, the “action” site where masculinity is most institutionally valued and produced (Herbert, 2001). By all appearances, the performance of traditional masculinity was a requirement of a position in the police, one not merely limited to the vice officers or even officers “in the field.”

The forms of benevolent sexism and paternalism that I observed and experienced firsthand could ostensibly be explained as everyday police strategies. The police institution has been frequently criticized for its lack of transparency or outright hostility for those outside of the institution; it is possible that the nondisclosure I was faced with was actually an everyday amount of caution for outsiders. It appears more likely, however, based on my interactions with the vice squad, that the interactions I had and witnessed with the police were entrenched in a particular mode of masculinity that was learned in the culture of the academy and the police institution. The officers saw me as a

“rookie” woman who had little prior experience with the culture of policing and, moreover, a woman who was effectively (outside the vice squad) an academic, feminine interloper. Their feminized treatment of me, and (among the men who worked primarily in the station) of their non-masculine coworkers, was a means of proving their chops as “hard” masculine actors through reiteration of traditional gendered behavior. This masculinity, like the masculinity of the vice officers, was relational, and dependent on the presence of feminized others. The performance of masculinity helped further legitimate non-vice officers’ work by placing the common tasks of their job, as well as my very *uncommon* presence in the station and with the squad in a performative framework of normative gender behavior.

A noteworthy discrepancy between the model goals/work of the officers and the work I observed them actually do was the absence of *brotherhood* in the officers’ descriptions of their jobs. This, I argue, was a large factor in the performance of tough, hard masculinity learned and encouraged by the police institution. The police are informally known as the “fraternal order,” and indeed, the parish where I did research was in proximity of several official Fraternal Order of Police lodges, the largest of which has over 1800 members (*FOPNO*, 2010). Studies of police as a cultural institution, on micro- and macro-levels, frequently describe the importance of brotherhood in establishing group solidarity among officers (for instance, Beigel, 1977). While the officers never openly discussed the brotherly aspect of their work among themselves or even in one-on-one conversations or interviews with me, they were hardly exceptions to this characterization. When greeting each other, officers playfully called each other

“man,” “brother” or “bro” and hugged or patted each other on the shoulder or back; they asked about each others’ families and joked about their work. They occasionally showed more open displays of support or solidarity. For instance, only a few weeks before I began my research, the lieutenant had undergone a dangerous heart valve surgery; officers in the squad and in the greater department, even in casual conversation, often showed their support through expressions of care or affirmation, saying “we’re all rooting for you” or “we’re here for you, bro.” Similarly, the lieutenant and occasionally the sergeant expressed caring sentiments in interactions with older in-station policemen, suggesting that more open expressions of fraternal sentiment were marked by hierarchies of age as much as actual concern.

The fraternal aspect of policing was amplified by, as I have noted, the proportionally greater number of male officers working in the station. Open displays of brotherhood established inter-department solidarity and safety in an often fraught occupation. The performance of fraternal rituals was part of the performance and sustenance of masculinity (for both vice and non-vice officers; for suspects and arrestees; for me) among departments and in the squad itself. Two of the detectives on the squad were hand-picked by the lieutenant, the other by the sergeant; combined with the small size of the squad, this fostered a sense of brotherhood and intimacy within the squad that was notable even in the already fraternal parish police institution. The ramifications of brotherhood on the squad were most often innocuous, or even beneficial for the officers, as depicted above--it built solidarity and made the job a more pleasant experience for the men who worked there--but on a deeper level brotherhood masked normalized sexism.

Sexist beliefs were integrated particularly into the structure of the squad, as it interacted with gender in an arguably more explicit way than other departments.

A good part of my research took place in parking lots as the detectives made calls for “dates” with women advertising sexual services online; this was also prime time for officers to gossip about past prostitution cases, or as Detective Torres said to me, “the girls that don’t want the help [...] the spitfires, like the... *[half-whispered]* ones that are acting like real bitches, you know? If you’ll excuse my French.” The parking lot was where the detectives laughed about women that were “too cracked out” or high to know they were being arrested (many of the women on prostitution cases were also arrested on drug possession charges, usually for marijuana) or made fun of the old, junky cars some of the women drove and the smell of the hotel rooms. These conversations occurred mostly among the detectives, but the sergeant and lieutenant would occasionally join in when discussing a particularly “memorable” case. These conversations had a greater purpose than merely mocking the women they arrested or the circumstances they were found in. The activity was a performative display of the squad’s brotherhood: trash talk was often a conduit for the officers to brag, to affirm their strength or prowess as officers and to affirm the strength of others on the squad. Trash talk was storytelling; it enabled affective lines in the squad by performatively recalling past displays of admirable, tough police work. This created a sense of shared struggle and success.

The culture of brotherhood within the squad was an important aspect of hard masculinity for the officers. It also revealed some squad values that departed from the

ones officers had told me in interviews and one-on-one chats. These values lay far closer to the attributes of the hard masculine policeman, fostered in the police institution and academy. Therefore, insofar as fraternity was intrinsic to police work, group solidarity through brotherhood was institutionalized--or at the very least expected and encouraged, as other scholars have noted (Balkin, 1998; Fielding, 1994; Herbert, 2001; Prokos, 2002). This is not to say that the soft, moral, paternal masculinity that the squad believed to characterize vice work existed on a completely separate plane from hard, tough, fraternal masculinity, or to say that the former was entirely a product of officers' idealized dreams. Indeed, the emotional lines within the squad, between officers, were quite strong, and, although unacknowledged, officers trusted each other faithfully.

The toughness and unemotionality of hard masculinity were deployed specifically for certain groups, a masculine performance that functioned to exclude and intimidate "outsiders." (And that actually enhanced affective group cohesion between "insiders.") Moreover, although soft masculinity was not a part of the culture of the police institution, it emerged in other aspects of the squad's work and social sphere, as I will show. To this end, I argue that soft and hard masculinities were co-existent in the scope of vice officers' work. Both were influential tools, but were drawn upon and repudiated in very different settings, in ways that were strategic and varied. Hard and soft masculinities were part of what Milkie and Denny (2014) term "cultural equipment," building on Ann Swidler's "toolkit." Gendered choices, skills, and behaviors, influenced by the culture of the squad, and of the police institution as a whole, made up officers' masculine performance. Hard

and soft masculine behavior was used strategically and in specific situations, performed for specific groups, the solution to institutional and sociocultural uncertainties.

Multiple Masculinities, Diverse Demands

Waiting time was not only dedicated to trash talk. Lieutenant Harding chatted with me in his car on the occasions that I rode along with him to hotels--chatter that much of the time was dedicated to sports or other everyday talk. Every so often, however, he grew unusually contemplative; during one such ride, he noted, "we're really actors, good actors. We just have to hope they take the act. We all have fake lives [...] that's the fun part I guess you could say." Officers on the squad idealized the model officer; it was a way to understand and justify the work that they did in relation to the squad's goals and the broader practices of the police institution and perhaps the state. But the lieutenant also understood, in a small way, that acting was already structurally integrated into vice work, not least in the actual process of entrapping women--an aspect of vice work that literalized performative masculinity.²

The lieutenant's claims indicate a multi-leveled performativity intrinsic to vice work, one that officers were perhaps aware of. Regardless of officers' explanations as to why, vice work *was* a complicated and specialized job with atypical requirements that attracted and encouraged types of masculinity that were unusual for police work.

Paternalism was discursively complex for the squad, a part of performative masculinity that was integrated into the state. For instance, in an interview Sergeant Romano spoke

² As a side note, I was barred both by the IRB and the officers from watching, even at a distance, the initial process of entrapment; officers similarly refused to give me information about how this process occurred. When I asked the lieutenant for descriptions of officers' "performances" and strategies during these moments, he simply shook his head.

of the necessity of “firmness [...] but killing them with kindness” as an ethos for the unit, and as quoted above, Lieutenant Harding wanted to treat arrested women “like the father figure they probably didn’t have.” Both men, however, acknowledged that this goal had grown more difficult for officers to do as the nature of prostitution policing on the levels of local *and* state governance had evolved.

Pulling back for a moment, it appears that online advertising and interstate travel in prostitution have become far more common (Bernstein, 2007, although this statistic has been difficult to precisely measure as Weitzer, 2013 notes); the parish in which the squad worked was no exception. Unlike the younger detectives, the lieutenant and the sergeant had both worked in vice long enough to witness the shift from primarily street- to internet-based prostitution, and spoke to the hardships it had at first presented. This shift was a jarring change in many ways, not least among them the departure from knowing “every girl out on that street”. This affected the physical/locational aspects of the squad’s work and the technology they used, of course, but it also made model masculinity and “killing them with kindness” a far more difficult ethos to maintain. The imposition of morals and appeals at a deeper level based on an emotional connection valued in vice work were harder, if not impossible, for the one-shot solitary encounters that characterized contemporary prostitution policing--women who the squad would arrest, interact with for a few hours at most, and rarely meet again.

Moreover, the context in which the squad operated was in flux at a state level. Beginning in the early 2000s, Louisiana faced a great amount of grassroots pressure to ameliorate legislation associated with Crimes Against Nature law convictions. In 2011,

House Bill 141 was signed by Governor Bobby Jindal, effectively equalizing the penalties for prostitution and solicitation of “crimes against nature,” making solicitation a misdemeanor (from a felony) and removing prostitution from the sex offender registry--a movement that was not retroactive. Subsequently, in 2013, hundreds of people previously convicted of solicitation of crimes against nature were removed from the Louisiana sex offender registry (Woodward, 2011a, 2011b, 2013, 2014). The shift from a felony to misdemeanor had ramifications for vice policing: the holding period in jail was shortened, and arrestees were usually released in 4-6 hours due to overcrowding. In an interview, Detective Jones, for instance, thought the recent legislature “hurts us, it hurts the girls... we can’t keep the girls to talk to them.” Sergeant Romano similarly noted that without the longer holding period, it was more difficult to “get the girls to see you, to listen to you, to get to them [...] to see you as a friendly guy who’s seen it all and genuinely wants to help them get out of [prostitution].” The general consensus among officers on the squad was that these changes had made their job harder, and thus saw them as a negative: in essence, the changes made their jobs less effective, and although they were unwilling to admit this, anxiety over this ineffectivity underlaid their problems with the changes in legislation.

The recent state shift in solicitation legislation, much like longer-term and broader changes in prostitution, challenged the work of the vice squad on two levels. First, and most bluntly, as the officers noted, it created an institutional shift--a change in routines and paperwork that was an unpleasant, difficult adjustment. I will speak to this institutional shift later in the paper, when I address the processes involved in prostitution

cases in-depth. Second, the shift removed power from the vice squad by curtailing their ability to enact affective (and, as they argued, effective) change. Notably, of all the officers I talked to, not one mentioned the removal of prostitution from the sex offender registry and its retroactive expunging; the single time I attempted to discuss it with the lieutenant he skimmed over it quickly, brushing it off--“I believe that [that aspect] is bad, certainly, but...” (He appeared surprised that I was aware of the change in legislation.) Instead, the complaint leveled against the changes was rooted in the officers’ inability to talk for an extended period of time to the women they arrested. By their perception, the efficacy of their work was wrapped up in their ability to form emotional connections and speak to the women they arrested: the model officer could “get through” to the arrestees by acting as paternal and moral guides, giving “kind,” fatherly advice, referencing the officers’ soft, sensitive masculinity. However, as I show in the forthcoming chapter, the de facto means that the officers used to combat changes in legislation had far more in common with the attributes of hard masculinity--attributes that crossed the work of the squad into a more disciplinary scope. This did not entail the disappearance of soft masculinity, but was able to change its meaning, and practice, profoundly.

“Misguided”: Corruption, Danger, and Morality

One morning, after almost an hour of calls, the detectives finally make a date. Riding with Lieutenant Harding, we follow the three other nondescript cars driven by the sergeant and other detectives. As the lieutenant drove, he cautions me against getting too close to the women in the hotel rooms. He talks casually, chuckling, about the experiences the squad has had in the past with “crazy” prostitutes, angry ones who spit at the officers, or try to scratch or bite anyone who comes near. Occasionally he seems to grow self-conscious, looking over in the direction of my notebook, surreptitiously trying to check the small, quick notes I take as he drives.

We stop at a small motel, one the lieutenant notes as a known “bad one.” To be arrested on prostitution charges, the women must state the sex act and price, although the price is usually online and the sex act itself is often coded because of the (justifiable) fear of arrest. The coded language and online pricing, however, is still used--and held up--in court. This part of the arrest is not visible: the lieutenant and I wait in the car while the detectives make the initial arrest, a precautionary measure taken supposedly for my safety. We wait for the detectives to “secure the scene,” checking for weapons and drugs, and give us the okay through the radio before we enter the room.

A 21 year old Black woman is sitting on the bed when we enter. She matches the description of “noncooperative” prostitutes that the detectives have characterized before: silent, refusing to meet anyone’s eyes, but not visibly or verbally aggressive. All five officers still use the intimidation tactics and patronizing language that I have grown used to, calling her “sweetheart” and “honey,” walking quickly around the room and sifting through her bags. Sergeant Romano reprimands her, saying not to be rude to me when she quietly asks me why I’m there, cutting me off; she protests a little, but soon goes quiet again. The three detectives try to warn her of the risks of prostitution, saying that “girls have been murdered before here” and that it’s easy to catch diseases. She responds with a nod and slight roll of her eyes. In the room’s small bathroom, I ask Detective Jones about condoms services or health/STI testing services that they collaborate with, and he comes up short, mentioning only the services of a few halfway houses in the area that I know aren’t often used by the squad.

During the majority of the arrest the arrestee remains blank, staring into space or a mirror on the wall, giving brief responses to the questions the officers ask. The other officers swarm around the room constantly, picking through the woman’s possessions, checking drawers. Detective Jones sits at a table writing down the scarce personal information she gives them for paperwork (later to be filed, with photographic evidence, at the DA’s office) while the others search. The officers continually hover around her and ask her questions quickly, and talk to each other and chuckle to each other about her responses--how long she’s been in the state, her arrest record, her hometown, if she has children.

The lieutenant presses her for information about who she’s with, and asks if she has more money. He doesn’t believe her answers, that she only has \$20 and that she’s there alone, having

taken the bus into the state. His dismissal of her answers puts her on the verge of tears--the most emotion she's showed throughout the entire arrest.

The detectives inform her that she has to go pick up her property from the motel's front desk after she's released. They lead her out from the room into the back of one of their cars, where they take her across the lake and to jail.

The characterizations of their work that the higher-ranking officers had given me in interviews (i.e. their understandings of their own masculinity and their idealization of masculinity for the squad) contradicted the masculinity that I witnessed in informal discussions and non-interview interactions between officers and each other and officers and myself. The arrest interaction, and the gender performances I witnessed therein, however, provided a third reading of the officers' masculinity--particularly when the central foci of their work--the women themselves--entered the picture. It is on this third reading that I will now concentrate. The interactions that the squad had with their "dates" helped reiterate the *interactivity* of performative masculinity; they revealed the dependence of the officers' masculinity on the presence of the weak arrestees, who were constructed as victim and/or deviant and treated accordingly. I explore the use of moralizing and the threat of violence as strategies of arrest management and control that link to disciplinary and anti-trafficking discourses. I will show the reliance of the squad's work on the construction of *danger*, implicitly integrating their work into hard masculine police culture and working in tandem with cultural and state narratives of masculinity. Finally, I look at what masculinity as a tool during arrest implies, not only for the squad, but for the police institution and the state's gender ideologies.

Hard Masculinity and Danger "On the Job"

The discrepancy between interviews/non-arrest vice work and the arrest interaction is partly attributable to the lack of self-consciousness or institutional pressure--the push to present the "party line," in short--that I have already noted in the parking lot discussions and informal talk of the officers, particularly the three detectives. The physical space of the hotel room was a boundary, the *true* "front stage" of vice work (Goffman, 1959). Officers didn't have the time or desire to filter their activities through an idealized, institutional lens for me as they worked in this space. Arrests thus tested the officers' narratives and claims, and allowed the officers' actual behavior and practices to emerge. While the danger I noted in the vignette above was rarely actualized, it was an ever-present force working on the squad's conception of the hotel room, and the arrest interaction. This was undoubtedly due to my presence with the squad, and the actual desire to keep me out of harm's way. However, during the time I spent with the squad I never saw arrestees with weapons of any kind, or even had an arrestee approach me or the other officers with harmful intentions; I never saw an officer actually use a gun or weapon of any kind.

Despite the lack of apparent danger, the squad operated as though weapons and violence were on the verge of being discovered every time they went in for arrest. When I asked about the extensive searches of each hotel room, the sergeant responded that "it's for safety [...] your safety! Anything could be in there, you know you can't predict it. Could be doing drugs when we walk in, could maybe have weapons just in case some john gets violent." Officers always treated the hotel room and the situation of arrest as potentially dangerous spaces, ones that I (and ostensibly civilians as a larger group) had to be shielded

from by the attentiveness of the officers, even if the actuality was far more frequently banal.

The reasoning behind the exaggerated amount of caution was complicated. The training of the police academy readied officers for danger and encouraged caution and attentiveness (Prokos, 2002). The culture of the academy, as well as the valuation of hypermasculinity within masculinity at large and *particularly* within pop culture narratives of police (Crank, 2010), all acted as part of officers' nonofficial police socialization. This echoes Herbert's assertion that policemen often magnify the dangerousness of policing as a way of constructing masculinity, legitimating force, and constructing boundaries between themselves and civilians; as he states, "the desire of officers to demonstrate their bravery often makes them overanxious to define situations as dangerous" (2001). Again, the gendered culture of the police institution was not without its beneficial attributes for the officers and, more importantly, for the institution. Outside of the arrest, it constructed a line between the officers and outsiders, and created boundaries of group membership aided by fraternity and solidarity. It also helped make the officers' work technically effective and efficient, and fit them into the extended fraternal order of police.

During arrests, the performance of hard masculinity fit vice work into the broader category of police work: the officers could repeatedly display their masculine prowess and toughness, proving their worth as *policemen*. It simultaneously worked as a management strategy for arrestees. The performance of hard masculinity during arrests was "put on," consequently, for both the women under arrest and the officers themselves. It manifested in a variety of ways: the officers wore specific clothing for "dates," tight *muscle-revealing*

civilian attire that was not only intended to disguise their professional motives during the process of entrapment, but implicitly to intimidate arrestees into compliance with their physical display of strength. The officers' attire was thus an aspect of their performance of masculinity just as much as their verbal interactions with the women under arrest. Other non-verbal gestures enabled the officers' performance of hard masculinity as well. The squad's disregard for personal space or property during arrest mirrored the fraternal dynamic of the squad; both were intimidation tactics for the front stage that the room symbolized. As I have previously noted, the use of infantilizing terms to refer to the arrestees also demeaned and devalued them, and re-iterated the squad's own role as dominant masculine officers. By using and performing fraternal, hard masculinity the squad sought to create a visually, verbally, and physically united, or "coherent" masculine front (Goffman, 1959). In turn, this front was used to foster intimidation and accordance in the arrestees. These tactics may seem mild, especially in comparison to the far harsher, even lethal hypermasculine police tactics increasingly visible in national (and international) police conduct; nevertheless, the squad's masculine behaviors *were* attempts, albeit on a more micro-level, to manage arrestees through intimidation, and to assuage ostensible danger.

Hard masculinity was a way to combat the danger that the officers saw in their work. Of course, this was not merely a product of officers' individual fears or anxieties. Hard masculinity gave the squad a skill set, practices and behaviors that were functionally useful for their work--and thus for the police institution. The "successes" of the officers were the successes of the police as a state apparatus; law enforcement and the broader

criminal justice system are extensions of the state's interest. This implies that the interests of the police institution, and thus the state, lie in producing and sustaining hypermasculinity/hard masculinity in police officers, as some scholars have noted (Prokos, 2002; Cooper, 2009). It also potentially explains the institution's documented *disinterest* and reluctance in changing or wholesale reforming these gendered behaviors and practices. In turn, the construction of danger--for which hard masculinity is a response--that undergirds police work and infuses police culture is *also* institutionally useful, for both benevolent (keeping officers alert and prepared) and hostile (readying officers for--and legitimating when used--extreme, often violent, methods of controlling "crime") reasons. Although the vice squad appeared especially exempt from the surmised dangers of policing (in contrast, for instance, to narcotics divisions), the threat of danger was no less discursively present in the officers' work. The tough, hard masculinity used as a buffer against danger in other forms of policing was redirected towards other, non-violent "dangerous" elements that I will detail. Needless to say, the state's interest in producing this form of masculinity is troubling not only for factions attempting to change vice work (such as anti-trafficking activists, or, for that matter, prostitution activists) but for any contemporary proponents of police reform.

As the lieutenant said after an arrest with a "noncooperative" woman, "getting through to the tough nuts any way we can, it makes you feel good about yourself and the work the police are trying to do." The performance of hard masculinity referenced a broader standard of police work that was founded on the interests of the police institution and the work of *policemen*. The (relatively) harder aspects of arrest work for the squad

were ways for the officers to perform and confirm their strength, physicality, toughness, and so forth, and prove themselves as institutional and cultural members of the police institution. Arrests thus functioned in a similar way to outside-the-arrest interactions between officers, constructing brotherhood and boundaries of group membership. What differentiated the actions of the squad, and indeed differentiated the squad's work as a whole, were the parts that did not fit so quickly or easily into the typical paradigms of police work and especially of arrest, the parts that were impacted by the officers' soft masculinity. This was tied to the softer, paternal masculinity to which they so often made reference. What I call "tough daddy" masculinity is intrinsic specifically to the type of work that the squad does, to vice policing, the performance of both hard and soft masculinities, drawing on both anti-trafficking and institutional policing discourses.

Just the Tip of the Iceberg

One such difference between general police arrests and vice work was the placement of the danger in the arrest situation. While danger was certainly treated as intrinsic to the arrest, it was never transferred onto the arrestees themselves: the situation was dangerous, but the women were not. This was tangible in the ways the officers spoke about women on arrests--their hostility or aggression against officers was at worst laughable, as the lieutenant proved, and the weapons they "could have" were not a danger to officers thanks to their academy training. Moreover, the frequency with which weapons appeared in the arrest situation was tenuous. The threats the women could have presented were managed by the masculine prowess of the officers. The vague danger--of potential weapons--was something that the officers magnified in their conversations with me,

because they did not truly believe that the arrest presented any real danger *from weapons*. Beyond vague warnings against the looming danger of weapons or drug-fueled violent frenzies, I never heard an officer discuss an arrest where a woman had presented a threat, much less actually used or even owned a weapon. Given the prevalence of reminiscing about past arrests among the squad, particularly in the officers' trash talk, it is unlikely that these incidents would not have popped up at least once. It appeared that the threat of weapons wasn't the real danger during arrests--and was perhaps a mostly spectral threat that the officers could use to bolster their bravado, and perhaps to ameliorate the actual threat.

Instead of weapons or violence, the women were manifestations of a symbolic *social threat* in the eyes of the officers--one that I will continue to dissect throughout the remainder of this paper--that linked them with (sub)urban disorder. Broken windows theory (Wilson and Kelling, 1982) represents the view that, by preventing petty or minor crime (i.e., shoplifting, vandalism, and in this case prostitution), major crime can also be controlled. In this view, small crimes are indicators of present or forthcoming larger social decay in primarily urban or suburban areas. The officers shared a focus on eradicating prostitution to avoid the spread of (more major) crime, such as drug and weapons trafficking, and increased violence. The lieutenant spoke to me about the domino effect that he believed would be a result of lapsed prostitution policing, if the parish were allowed to be overrun:

It's a matter of protecting the parish too. It's tough to keep neighborhoods clean [...] this area is residential as well as commercial, even when you don't see it at first glance [...] the girls are part of a larger--just the tip of the iceberg. Part of the work is keeping the neighborhood a safe, really good place.

Prostitution was similar to a gateway drug for an area, and could lead to a panoply of other “vices.” A “good place” was differentiated from a bad place, in this perspective, by the absence of petty crime, which supposedly had a domino effect--but more importantly, the absence of prostitution, which represented unacceptable, non-normative, commercialized sexuality (and thus non-normative gender performance by the women involved.)

What the women under arrest represented was a symbolic threat instead of something embodied; it was something that infused the situations that officers regularly found themselves in, but not something that was intrinsic to the women themselves. Previously, when describing the state’s interest in producing hard masculinity in the police institution, I noted the redirection of hard masculinity in the squad, given the absence of actual (i.e. violent) danger. The placement of the arrestees--as symbolic, corrupted threats--gave the officers a tangible danger to combat during arrests, making the space of arrest the masculine “field of action” valued within police culture (Herbert, 2001). This danger, however, was rooted in far more abstract anxieties: physical and moral corruption, that, I argue, was intrinsic to fears of non-normative gender behavior and sexuality. The women were smaller players, “just the tip of the iceberg” compared to the larger threat they represented, but ones that nevertheless had to be dealt with in some way. Arrestees became something to be *managed*--as I have shown, by the use of hard-line intimidation tactics, or as I will show, with paternal-moral appeals to order, responsibility, and respectability.

Implicitly, the control the officers assumed over the women through these different management tactics, as well as over the mild risks (spitting, clawing, scratching, and so on)

that the women could actualize, allowed the officers to take on even greater masculine competence and wield more authority over their arrestees. As Detective Boudreaux noted,

They're not necessarily bad girls, not all of them, some are just *misguided* and gone a little wild, you know! But lots of the women we see don't have anything against the police. They don't really want to try to get at us, they're more a danger to themselves usually [...] Sometimes they just need to be *guided away* from prostituting [emphasis added].

It was the vice squad's duty to "guide" women from prostitution, a life that produced and encouraged non-normative gender and sexuality. Of course, the squad's masculinity was intrinsically dependent on this non-normativity--in essence, the women's *deviancy*--to exist. The displacement of danger onto the scene of arrest and the threat of social corruption via deviant sexuality and gender allowed the officers to more efficaciously perform masculinity for themselves and for the arrestees. Hard masculinity was thus interactive and relational, as was the construction of danger. Danger was a force underlying their perception of their work, one that would potentially appear at any time--even if it appeared only rarely from the women themselves. It was nevertheless contingent on the presence of, and the control over, the women themselves. The construction of danger relied on the women during arrest in order to appear a legitimate "threat." This in turn allowed the officers to perform the hard masculinity valued in police culture and act as the gatekeepers of social order (i.e. normative gender and sexuality).

Daddy's Guidance

The fact that the women themselves did not present an immediate, violent threat made their interactions with the officers complex--the women were not only deviants (although this was an influential way that the officers constructed arrestees, as I have

noted). The impact of national and local anti-trafficking discourses and the demand for more sensitive, soft policing styles shifted the language and rhetoric officers used during arrest, just as it shifted the way the officers understood their work. This echoed the idealization of the model officer, what Sergeant Romano called “firmness [...] but killing them with kindness,” or the lieutenant’s need to treat women “like the father figure they probably didn’t have.” It would be a mistake to call this a form of more lenient or loose policing, contradicting the expectations of anti-trafficking factions: as I will show, more “sensitive” policing styles in practice proved just as damaging to arrestees as hard masculinity as a tool for managing arrest. The women were not dangerous, but they were certainly labeled in part as *deviant*, emblematic of deviance. They were not intrinsically morally corrupt as women or offenders, not the “evil women” that Chesney-Lind (1974) describes. Instead, they were potential corrupters, women that were in a lifestyle that fostered non-normative sexuality and gender. The way that the officers managed the threat that this presented to the community in large part hinged on deciding who was to blame for the corruption of the arrestees--the women themselves, or outside forces. This introduced, as I will show, the approach that saw arrestees as warranting moral paternalism on the part of every member of the squad. This created, as I will later detail, a tension between deviant and victim labels, and potential collision of the two.

The officers’ soft, moral masculinity entailed policing approaches that were closer to the “model” masculinity the squad idealized. Soft masculinity demanded a moral basis in dealing with arrestees. But similar to the separation between the model officer and the way that the idealized values manifested in officers outside of the arrest, there was a

significant gap between the supposed values and performance of soft masculinity and the masculine practices of each officer *during* arrests. A central part of this concerned the strength and emotional connection of model masculinity. During the arrest, I witnessed multiple moments that the lieutenant afterwards characterized as “getting to the girls”--arrests that he considered successful because he had managed to get through to the women he arrested, particularly the “tough nuts.” This was especially successful given the aforementioned difficulty in “connecting with the girls” that the officers saw as a byproduct of legislative changes. Detective Torres similarly noted this after an arrest, even saying “that’s what brings you back to work every day, man.” The ability to access a more emotional, deeper connection with the women they arrested appeared to be the satisfaction of the officers’ work in vice policing.

The performance of masculinity that I actually witnessed in the arrests, however, spoke far more to the imposition of paternalism and morality than to the success of emotional appeals between each officer and the women. This was evident from the officers’ word choice, the use of pet names and “fatherly advice” to each “girl,” to the invocation of religion, God and the Bible, to frequent questions about each arrestee’s background--whether they had a family who was looking for them, whether they had children, even on one occasion if “they thought their mother would be happy with what [they’re] doing.” The lattermost occurrence was especially striking given the lieutenant’s insistence that the women needed father figures. The implication of questions about the arrestee’s families and home life seemed to be more a verification of the officers’ prior beliefs about the women (as both corrupted and victims) than an actual inquiry into their

background. The women were questioned (and subsequently chastised) for failing to fit into the paradigm of the nuclear family that the squad valued, explaining the officers' desire to put arrestees "back in the arms of her mother".

The reproaches of the squad found purchase not only in their attempts to reprimand the arrestees for working in the sex trade, but for the lapses in normative gendered and sexual behavior that the profession necessitated. Women with children, particularly young children, were subject to intense inquiry: the lieutenant and sergeant often asked these women if they wanted to make their children happy, or if they thought they were making their children happy. During one arrest, the sergeant asked a woman with two young children who were living a few states over with the children's grandparents,

Do you think this is the only way? You have to educate yourself, you have to get off this life [...] you have to be more than you're letting yourself be right now. This isn't the life for you. You want your kids to live with, with their grandma or your baby daddy for the rest of their lives? No? You have to respect yourself more than this. There are other ways to make money--go work in a bar or some club, but don't do it in here. This isn't any way to have a real life.

The sergeant's words were often reiterated in similar fashion during arrests by the different members of the squad. The squad also emphasized the harm that the women potentially could bring to their families through sickness or disease, literally tainting the idealized family that the officers envisioned. As Sergeant Romano said to an arrestee on a different call,

Baby, this isn't the life for you. In these kind of places, in this work, you don't know what you're picking up! You don't know what you're taking back to your home with you when you see your family again. You do want to see them again? You don't have any reassurance you're really keeping [them] safe when you live like this [...] Gotta take care of yourself for them.

Tough daddy masculinity in these interactions took the form of quick, firm advice--advice that seemed to confuse the women being arrested (but was still interpreted after the fact as helpful guidance by the officers). Many of their directives could have been at home in a career counselor's office, but unlike a counselor's advice it was backed by the compulsory power of the criminal justice system and the state. Officers were able to legally enforce normative standards of gender and sexuality, and reprimand women for their failures to adhere to these standards.

In and out of arrests, I frequently heard Lieutenant Harding say "we're not the bad guys [...] we're the good guys. We want to help." This also appeared to be a squad ethos, as I heard other officers reiterate it, particularly to women under arrest who were crying or appeared visibly upset. Being demanded to view the officers as "good guys" situated the women in an unpleasant predicament, particularly when these declarations were joined with the moral mandates of the officers: women under arrest were subjected to the officers' demands for "better living," self-respect, and family participation/involvement, but were also forced (at least in the minds of the officers) to view these demands as beneficial, caring, even fatherly. The officers were, of course, blind to the real-life difficulties of getting a professional job given the low-income background and scarce education and work experience that many of the women described--situations that the squad made no attempt to "guide" the women through. This was a poignant lapse given the significant number of women with no postsecondary education heading low-income families in Louisiana and its bordering states (Povich et al., 2013-2014). Indeed, only two of the women who were arrested while I studied the squad had completed college, and most described work

experience that was limited to the service sector--food preparation or entertainment industry work stripping in the clubs that the officers pushed.

Similarly, the risks that the officers used as cautionary warnings against prostitution, such as violence and sexually transmitted disease, functioned as risks in part because the officers made no attempt to ameliorate them. Venereal disease has long been a point of consternation and fear in prostitution and trafficking discourses, particularly during the AIDS crisis (Rosenthal, 1958; Altman, 1987; Rosenberg, 1988; Levine, 2003); the officers' use of disease as a cautionary tool to deter women from prostitution has a historical precedent that links women in the sex industry to the spread of diseases, turpitudes both moral and physical. However, as Detective Jones proved in the opening vignette, the officers made no attempts to facilitate condom distribution or testing for sexually transmitted diseases, although distribution and testing services were present in the nearby area, nor did they attempt to entrap the johns who bought services from the women the squad arrested.

I often heard the officers tell their arrestees, "you could have come across someone way worse than us [...] you should be thankful [...] you're lucky you got us at that door instead of someone worse." The impetus to "be thankful" that the police had come not only invoked the specter of violent and potentially homicidal johns, but discredited any concerns or complaints the women would have about the officers' treatment. Any treatment the squad gave would be better than being raped, beaten, or killed; as prostitutes the women were *lucky* to even get the (kind, fatherly, helpful) advice that the officers gave them. Although the officers called themselves "good guys," contrasting themselves against

the spectral threat of “bad guys,” their own role in their discursive threats was based on the threat of male control over the women. The abusers and rapists represented masculinity that controlled through violence and murder; this, in the eyes of the officers, was *bad* control. On the other hand, the officers themselves *also* sought control--albeit one that went unacknowledged--over the women through paternalism and the bounds of morality and family. The spectral threat of bad johns held up the officers’ own role as paternal and moral good men, and made, at face value, their own attempts to exert control over the arrestees appear benevolent and innocuous.³

The issue of policing johns was a tentative one; addressing officers about it was a difficult procedure. The lieutenant had no clear answer as to why the squad chose to forego the pursuit of johns, saying only that “it’s easier, legally, to try to target the women and the men who are involved in keeping them in the life.” Although I asked this question of both the higher- and lower-ranking officers, none had a direct response; one detective answered, in response to my inquiry, that “occasionally [the squad] uses a female officer as a decoy,” to entrap potential customers. This, if it occurred, would have redefined or challenged the masculine culture and system on which the squad and police institution relied. However, I never witnessed this, or heard any reference to this event taking place from any other officer, vice or non-vice. This could be partially attributable, of course, to my limited time with the squad; it could also be an exaggerated, or even fictitious answer. The reality was unclear. Regardless, it *was* clear that instead of attempting to change or

³ A huge body of scholarly work has addressed the attempts of the state to seek control over women through paternalist and, in some cases, patriarchal means--see, for example, work written on gender and the patriarchal state by Chesney-Lind (1973, 1974, 1977, 1984, 1986, 1992) and Haney (1996, 2000) as well as work by MacKinnon (1989), Walby (1990), and Connell (1987).

prevent the threats of violence and sickness from reaching the women, the officers' purposes were better served by tactically using these threats as masculine tools, as auxiliaries of their own state-mandated power--moral-paternal control backed by the power of the criminal justice system, masked as "fatherly advice."

Paternalism and Chivalry

This raises the discourse around paternalism--further supporting the view that the treatment of female offenders is something highly contingent on the specific gendering of the individual offender and, as I argue, the gendering of the officer involved. As Chesney-Lind (1974, 1973) has argued, younger women offenders face far harsher treatment due to police disapprobation at the perceived violation of gender norms. While the women that I witnessed being arrested over the course of my research were all over the age of 18, the majority were younger than 30, and were certainly in violation of the gender norms that the officers of the squad held to be appropriate--for their positions as mothers, young women, uneducated women, etc.--in a variety of ways, as the officers made explicit. The women were violators of the ideals that the officers held for them, the legitimate profession and familial participation that were harbingers of a "real life."

The women that the squad arrested were expected to adhere to normative standards of sexuality and gender that the officers themselves held and that the police institution and state promoted; they faced significant reproaches and reprimands from the officers for not doing so. The arrestees themselves were pressured to share these beliefs, and moreover, to see the officers' mandates as beneficial and kindly. The squad's reproaches also veiled the threats that the officers' fatherly advice rested upon; while the

threats obviously did not actually extend to the officers enacting violence upon the women themselves, or to the women forcibly becoming infected with a sexually transmitted disease, the officers attempted to use these fears to compel their arrestees to obey their demands and comply with the definition of self they deemed legitimate. As “good guys,” their position was reliant on “bad guys” to legitimate their performance of paternal, moral masculinity and to justify their strategies for managing the *actual* danger (of spreading corruption and non-normativity) that the women represented. These processes revealed the squad’s often explicit support for women’s control by men; the squad supported normative gender and sexual roles, ones that enabled the control of the arrestees by normative, even patriarchal, familial structures and previously absent “father figures.” Vice policing, as a particularly gendered line of police work, was able to enforce these roles more openly than other departments.

Wells (1994) also argues that the police are less likely to take women offenders seriously because they are considered to represent a lesser threat to the community. In the cases of the women arrestees that I witnessed, the offenses of the women were treated as lesser--again, the “tip of the iceberg.” The offenses of the women were still taken seriously (without doing so, the work of the squad would not be!) but not necessarily due to the intrinsic qualities of the women themselves, nor the huge evil of the crime itself. Indeed, gendered or sexualized work was not the issue--officers encouraged women to take work in bars or even in strip clubs. The women were not considered to be the “evil women” (who necessitated complete salvation or imprisonment) that Chesney-Lind (1974) confronts in her work. The officers tried to shame the women for failing to adhere to their

standards of self-care and responsibility, and attempted to make them responsible and advise them towards a legitimate life path--one that they assumed the women *could*, or desired to, pursue. (The tangible challenges to simply “getting another job” or “going back home” for many of the women were not taken seriously--or even acknowledged.) Instead, the real threat that the women presented was a symbolic one that could spread and penetrate the community; this was a threat that the squad had a duty to confront, a threat for which masculinity was a tool for response and management. Thus, the women *did* face unusually gendered, albeit discretionary, discipline from the criminal justice system. The treatment of the women was a gendered phenomenon, but also one that did not necessarily infuse the arrestees as an *innate* threat.

The performance of hard masculinity was an intrinsic part of the squad’s work. It intimidated arrestees and compelled them to listen and obey; it created fraternal solidarity within the squad and connected the officers and their work to the masculine culture and goals of the police institution; it was a corollary of state power and control over non-normative gender and sexuality. It was a set of masculine practices and processes that allowed the squad to both construct and combat danger, for which the women themselves were integral. The officers *also* used what they viewed as emotionally sensitive, softer masculine practices. This was the masculinity that the squad made reference to in conversation and interviews, that supposedly allowed the officers to make valuable and beneficial connections with each woman they arrested--to crack the “tough nuts.” In actuality, tough daddy masculinity was both hard *and* damagingly moral and paternal, and not particularly useful for the arrestees. If anything, the officers’ supposedly sensitive

tactics radically prevented emotional connection with the women they sought to bond with; the tough daddy's strategic "guidance" presented far more problems for the women under arrest than it solved.

The way their masculinities were interpreted by the squad differed strongly from the way the masculinities were performed and used, in and out of arrests. Both were tools for controlling the women they arrested, and the symbolic danger they represented, albeit in ways that were more or less overt. Hard masculinity was present but unacknowledged, while soft masculinity was moral, paternal, and just as disciplinary (but reinterpreted as helpful). This latter endeavor can be considered understandable on the part of the squad, if only on a professional level. Similar to their reinterpreted analyses of the locational changes that the squad had undergone (in the shift from street- to internet-based prostitution and legislative border wars over offender status), the officers needed to present the actions they took during arrest as helpful to avoid institutional expendability--to bolster the beliefs that their work was important, useful, and morally justifiable. While all the officers were peripherally aware that their work was usually little more than a revolving door for the women they arrested (and this knowledge led to cracks in the "party line," as I will show), they needed to believe that their work effected change on an individual level, by connecting with their arrestees. This, in their eyes, made their positions in vice policing exclusive and elite in the police institution, and instilled some degree of meaning and satisfaction in their jobs--even if it had scarce positive effect among their audience.

Over the course of my time with the squad, I wondered how the officers managed to use masculinity to respond to a variety of institutional and sociocultural demands, and strategically pull them out of their cultural “toolkit” in varying situations. I gradually realized that the masculinities of the officers were highly contingent on their interaction with arrestees, and the way that the arrestees were constructed and labeled by the squad. To this end, they were socially and collectively produced; they were performative for the officers and arrestees alike, and importantly, dependent on the presence of the arrestees to really “work.” Regardless of the squad’s more concrete framing of their work, particularly with reference to the model officer, the officers’ masculine identities in action were pliable, with significant slippage. As may have become apparent, the harshness and toughness of hard masculinity and the paternalism and morality of soft masculinity began to bleed together in use. This was reflected in the slippery invocation of deviant and victim labels, which proved similarly indistinguishable. Indeed, during arrests the officers struggled to label the women they arrested as *either* victims or deviants. As I argue, the problems in constructing and navigating borders (of gender, of criminality, of blame, and so forth) arose because the squad was failing at balancing the demands of competing discourses that sought to shape their policing, making the construction of victim and deviant labels difficult and fluid.

Deviant Daughters, Victimized Girls

An increasing corpus of work has been written about the placement of the deviant label on female offenders (see, for example, Chesney-Lind, 1984 and 1986; Schur, 1984; Steffensmeier et al., 1996; Odem, 1995). This work has focused on the larger spectrum of the criminal justice system (for instance, its impact on women, especially vis-a-vis welfare and incarceration) or women offenders' implications for the patriarchal state, but seldom has it turned to the microlevel of actually *policing* female offenders. This is likely due to the supposed triviality of women's presence in the criminal justice system--women have lower arrest rates than men for virtually all crime categories (Greenfeld and Snell, 1999).

Although a number of historical studies of women criminals have centered vice policing and prostitution and looked at the way the deviant label is morally charged for women arrested as prostitutes, few studies have made the foray into the contemporary period, much less addressed the way that deviance has collided with victimhood and anti-trafficking discourses (Bernstein, 2007a, 2007b, and 2010) and been shaped by normative gender and sexuality ideologies through vice policing as a state apparatus.

In order to address this gap, I will turn here in my analysis of the arrest interaction from the officers' performance of masculinity and gendered methods of arrest management, to the constructions and labeling of arrestees that their masculinities were reliant on. I will examine the tension between deviant and victim labels, and what this implies for the police institution, the masculine culture of policing, and the discourses of victimhood and anti-trafficking. I examine the roles victimhood and deviancy played

during arrest--the former in legitimating the officers' harsh treatment and attempting to responsabilize and shame the women; the latter in their construction of saviorship, victimhood, and empowerment rhetorics. I unpack the interlocking of deviant and victim labels during arrest as ways of accommodating contradictory institutional and sociocultural demands; in essence, I look further at the way that gender continued to work (and *not* to work) for the officers as a means of managing arrests.

"A poor decision": Financial and Sexual Irresponsibility

The deviant label is conferred primarily as a response by authority figures to the violation of norms, notably by the police (Erikson, 1966). The placement of the arrestees--as offenders and as women, and moreover as people arrested for solicitation--situated the women in a nexus of gendered, sexual, and legal norm violation. They were marked as deviants for their failure to achieve the goals of appropriate womanhood and familial boundaries in which the squad was invested; they were marked as deviants for commodifying intimacy that was, in the eyes of the officers, meant to be saved for family and loved ones. As Sergeant Romano mused outside a hotel room,

These girls, some of them don't have their heads on straight when it comes to what sex is really about. Girls can be messing around, maybe having a little fun, okay [...] but to *sell* themselves, it's their own downfall in the end! They don't take it seriously, they're irresponsible with their bodies. It's honestly just a poor decision [and] sometimes they're not smart enough to see.

Although for the sergeant a small amount of casual sexual encounters were acceptable for women--suggesting at first glance some degree of comfort with women's sexual expression, like the officers' suggestion that women work in "bars or [strip] clubs"--a strong boundary existed between these casual encounters and nonpermissible, illegitimate ones. In "selling

themselves,” substituting economic motives for emotional ones, the women stepped over this sexual boundary into non-permissible, non-normative forms of sexual activity. This is reflected in the sergeant’s prior statements about the parameters of acceptable sexuality and sexual activity: “There are other ways to make money--go work in a bar or some club, but don’t do it in [the hotel room].” It appeared that for the officers, commodifying the *act* of sex cheapened its symbolic value. Implicitly, although alternatives (“messaging around,” or employment in a sexualized workplace) existed, valuable and acceptable sexuality for adult women manifested primarily in romantic attachments and relationships. In lacking these forms of legitimacy the women’s sexual activity was labeled deviant.

Within the arrest interaction, however, the women’s deviant sexual behaviors indicated a far more troublesome *internal* flaw--irresponsibility. The officers liberally chastised the women for their failure to assume responsibility, a failing that appeared to inordinately frustrate the officers, even to the point of violence. As Detective Jones bemoaned after an arrest, “It’s like... sometimes you do want to shake them for being so irresponsible with themselves! And they don’t care. Or they’re making these [...] ridiculous excuses.” The women needed to be shaken out of their own irresponsibility and idiocy, evoking the cultural image of the hysterical woman. The arrestees, as the sergeant suggested, were not intelligent enough to recognize the poor decisions that they were making; not only had they failed at permissible feminine sexuality, they were not smart enough to recognize that they had done so. It appeared that the officers’ touting of respect and understanding in the “model” masculinity of the ideal officer masked, at least in part,

some anger and frustration (perhaps to the point of physical violence) at the women's departure from sexual and gender norms.

Arrestees were also condemned as *financially* irresponsible, a corollary of their sexual irresponsibility--although with low-income, low-education backgrounds, sex work appeared for many of the women to be a very viable option. The squad reprimanded and shamed the women for their attempts to independently make money, while simultaneously espousing a "bootstraps" rhetoric of self-provision and financial independence (and, of course, providing no means of doing so.) During one arrest, in response to the officers' questioning, one woman maintained that it was hard to find work, and that she had tried for months to find a job that would provide enough money to live on while working at minimum wage. Detective Boudreaux replied aggravatedly, "Don't complain now, baby. You know you always have other options. There's always another path [...] to keep you from here." Deviancy was linked to irresponsibility that was not only sexual but, surprisingly, financial. This contradicted the narratives of women controlled by father figures and familial structures that the squad promoted: why did the squad give lip service both to the confines of motherhood and family *and* to the benefits of legitimate work? One option would be that the truly "responsible" woman would be able to manage both work and family; another would be that the squad was aware that the only work that the arrestees would find would be already feminized, or even sexualized (in a [strip] club or a bar) and thus continue to keep the women under male control. Either way, the rhetoric of sexual and financial responsibility combined with the paternal and moral logics of

traditional family and gender structures pointed to the influence of sensitive, empowering discourses on vice policing.

Barbara Cruikshank (1999) argues that the production of self-governing citizens in liberal democracies occurs mainly in the small-scale and everyday--including through voluntary choice and projects of self-esteem, self-help and empowerment. To the extent that the construction of empowerment and self-help are technologies of the state, Cruikshank claims that they are actually form of subjection to the state. The squad's mandates for the women to assume responsibility (I will later discuss the even greater link between the squad's work and state efforts to empower) can be linked to the broader state project not merely of (re)producing particular forms of normative gendered and sexual behavior, but of fostering self-governing behavior. For the arrestees, this manifested as financial and sexual responsibility: the ability to stay with and care for their families (to keep their children from living with extended family, to stay off welfare); the protection of the community and the parish from sexual diseases and corruption; work in a legitimate job that provided the government with taxes; and the ability to protect themselves (by leaving the prostitution "life") from violence, sexual assault, and sickness. Although it was the stated work of the squad to *provide help* for women working as prostitutes, the squad's reprimanding rhetoric combined with the real result of their interactions with the arrestees (which often amounted solely to a four to six hour trip to jail and an adolescent "runaway hotline" card) indicated that the squad, and the police institution, were far more invested in pressuring the women to help themselves. This removed the culpability from the squad for high recidivism rates or failure to actually "help," i.e. provide resources to

arrestees--as the sergeant stated, "If we don't succeed it's not our fault". The squad's construction of deviancy transferred the actual responsibility for changing or assisting the women to the women themselves and legitimated the officers' work even when their work failed to help the arrestees.

Granted, the squad's discontent at their arrestees' inability to find legitimate work was attributable in part to their own working-class backgrounds. Although the officers were working within the historically working-class realm of policing (Herbert 2001; Prokos 2002; Cooper 2009), they *had* achieved professional stability and financial independency by "working their way up" into police work, and subsequently climbing the institutional and social hierarchies of the job. During interviews and in informal one-on-one talks, officers spoke proudly, even bragging, about starting from the bottom and climbing the institutional ladder. The fraternal order was bolstered by the officers' admiration and respect for older, higher-ranking, and retired officers. The "bootstraps" rhetoric was popular among the officers--particularly the higher-ranking ones--in part because they perceived their own experiences, and the experiences of elders within the institution, to legitimate its success for working-class and low-income people (ie, their arrestees). As many scholars have argued, the "American Dream" of independence and expendable wealth is inaccessible to the majority of the working class. The officers' interactions with the women occurred *within* lower- and middle-class boundaries--particularly for the lower-ranking officers.⁴ It appeared, however, that working for the police amended the reality of the working class for the officers (at least in

⁴ My inability to record data from contact with arrestees makes verifying this claim difficult. However, the predominance of working-class, low-income women in prostitution historically and in contemporary times has been well-documented (Walkowitz, 1980; Shumsky, 1986; Atkins, 2012).

the discursive culture of the force, if not the actual financial situation of all of its officers). The position as government workers within the police institution and the state that the officers possessed elevated them morally and symbolically, despite an often shared economic class. The women under arrest had no such benefit. The officers didn't acknowledge what differentiated their experiences from those of the women they arrested. Instead, chiding platitudes and blunt, unhelpful mandates were treated as a panacea for the women's financial irresponsibility.

Motherhood and Race

Although it seemed that in the arrest interaction the women were unilaterally damned as deviants for their sexual and financial lapses, one form of irresponsibility warranted more aggressive confrontation and condemnation--while it simultaneously represented a form of gendered success. As I have previously noted, the discovery of *motherhood* during questioning both frustrated and pleased the officers. Motherhood represented a gendered subjectivity, a traditional role that was appropriate for women in the eyes of the officers. Revealing that she had children occasionally gave an arrestee certain privileges during arrest--being allowed out of handcuffs, or being the first to receive a runaway hotline number, as in the opening vignette. These small moments stand in contrast to feminist scholars' readings of motherhood as *always* a damning factor for the treatment of criminal or deviant women, particularly with regards to welfare (Roberts, 1995; Williams, 1995; Mink, 2001; Hays, 2003; Kreager, 2010). However, motherhood could also condemn an arrestee in the eyes of the squad. Detective Jones, upon discovering

that a woman had children, asked if she “knew any mothers like [her]”; when the arrestee began to tear up and shake her head, he said, with a sneer, “I’m sure you *don’t*.”

Although enabling better treatment in very small ways, motherhood more frequently enabled the squad’s explicit and harsh judgment. The officers could appeal to (and berate) the women on a highly personal, emotional level: their standing as mothers and the well-being of their children. As Detective Torres claimed after one exceptionally long arrest of a woman with a child out-of-state, in response to a comment I made about the arrest’s duration, “these girls can bring the worst out in anyone [...] the mommas who don’t even *want* to change? Who won’t even talk about it? Just keep on hurting their families, leaving their children? No joke [...] it’s enough to make you scream.” Indeed, in spite of their “successful” achievement of one of the central goals of womanhood, the women were *bad* mothers. The arrestees were failed mothers who did not possess, in the eyes of the officers, what was considered appropriate for women with children: a responsible and respectable life. These arrestees were thus shamed in inordinately harsh, emotive ways.

Part of the officers’ treatment of mothers hinged on their successful fulfilment of maternity. However, this tolerable treatment was minimal, and motherhood hurt the women on a shaming, emotive level during arrest more than it it helped. The women were constructed by the officers not only as *deviants*, but as “bad mothers,” a stigma that has long been attached to mothers who do not meet appropriate, normative standards of gender and sexuality (Roberts, 1993, 1995, 1997; Hays, 2003). The women under arrest had overstepped the boundaries of these norms in a variety of ways, ironically in no small

part by attempting to access the financial independency the officers pressed. Moreover, in the arrest, they were put “between a rock and a hard place”: their silence was seen as unrepentance for their deviancy and a lack of concern for their families, while crying or attempts to argue earned them chastisement and demands that they “take responsibility” and “stop making excuses.” As the sergeant said to a protesting mother of two, “This isn’t the life for you! You want your kids to live with, with their grandma or your baby daddy for the rest of their lives? No? No way, baby. Don’t argue with me now.” The officers continued to shame and reprimand mothers for their failings even when the women became visually disturbed or began to cry. These arrestees’ violation of the norms of motherhood, of parental care and familial structure, made them exceptionally deviant in the eyes of the squad.

Motherhood, of course, is also a racialized role. Roberts (1993; 1997) has studied the construction of the social meanings of motherhood, specifically for Black women in the U.S. Although motherhood is an imperative for women as a broad group, it is praised and held sacred only as long as it remains within the scope of (white, upper-middle class, monogamous and heterosexual) normativity. Although motherhood was as a significant presence in the squad’s frustration and condemnation, a significant *absence*--the supposed non-impact of race--also marked the squad’s “dates.” In interviews, the lieutenant and sergeant responded briefly and bluntly to questions about the race of their arrestees, particularly the lieutenant:

EB: [Do] you think the race of the women you arrest impacts your work at all?

LH: We see all the women--all the races, all the same way. Black, white, Hispanic, doesn’t matter.

One detective, in response to a similar question, responded, “It doesn’t matter. Everyone’s on equal footing in [our work].” The officers espoused purportedly colorblind beliefs during arrest. At face value this appeared viable: based on what I saw, the squad was no more actively discriminatory towards women of color than towards white women. This was puzzling. Although the distribution of white and Black/non-white arrestees in the arrests I witnessed was only slightly tilted towards Black women, African Americans arrestees constitute a staggering 90% of arrests in New Orleans, compared to 75% across the state and 30% nationally (Bonner, 2011). Blackness continues to be a significant factor in arrest likelihood for Louisiana.

Given this evidence, I believe that the discrepancy between my own data and the statewide (and national) statistics on non-whiteness and criminality is largely attributable to my own impact before and during arrests as a white researcher. My presence probably changed the way that officers discussed women of color in “trash talk,” outside of arrests and in interviews, as well as the way that officers treated women of color during arrests. In all likelihood, it also impacted the officers’ selection processes as they looked online for “dates.” My attempts to “blend in” could not make me invisible; although the officers were off-guard (to my presence) in many ways during arrests, I believe that, especially given the increased visibility of racist police brutality in contemporary media, the officers were wary of appearing racially discriminatory. My whiteness (and perceived gender, age, etc.) also impacted how officers responded to me outside of the arrest situation, and likely aided me in my ability to conduct research with the squad in the first place. This impacts my data in a limiting and unpleasant--but likely unavoidable--way.

Alexander (2010) argues that colorblindness activates racial discrimination, markedly against Black men, in the criminal justice system, and further augments greater racial inequality (see also Siegel, 2000). She attests that while “it is no longer socially permissible to use race, explicitly, as a justification for discrimination, exclusion, and social contempt [...] we use our criminal justice system to label people of color ‘criminals’ and then engage in all the practices we supposedly left behind.” “Colorblindness,” at least while I studied the squad, removed race from the ground-level discussion. But as critical race and criminology scholars have stated, you cannot remove race from the discussion around policing and arrests in the U.S., particularly for Louisiana.

From Women’s Bodies to the Social Body

The so-called “choice” of the women to be irresponsible was not merely an innocuous matter. Sexual and financial irresponsibility could lead, as the sergeant believed, to arrestees’ “downfall,” ostensibly through the threats of violence or sexually transmitted disease that the squad so often used as cautionary warnings, or through the looming but unacknowledged threats of poverty and homelessness. These threats relied, as I have argued, upon mostly spectral “bad men” that allowed the squad to construct themselves as “good guys.” The threat of violent or sexual contamination in particular impacted not only the women’s bodies but their families, the community, and the larger social body. In addition, this located the danger that was important for the squad’s work in the abstract fears around gender and sexual non-normativity represented in the women themselves. By being irresponsible the women could lead the way to symbolic disorder, which it was the

officers' job, following state and police discourses, to combat (and implicitly to construct) with hard masculinity.

A small amount of work has explored the construction of deviant women, particularly prostitutes, as corrupt and leading to social decay (for instance, Rosenblum, 1975). The deviant narrative used by the squad was certainly centered more on the domino effect of their arrestees' deviancy than the larger-scale threats that the women *themselves* could effect, but the discourse was a similar one. The women were not necessarily intrinsically corrupted--they were not evil women. But their sexual and gendered deviancy were *dangerous* for their potential to spread beyond the boundaries of the room and arrest. The irresponsibility of choosing to, as Detective Jones claimed, "sell [their] bodies [...] to degrade themselves in that way" became integrated into the deviant labels placed upon the women; the subsidiary effect of their sexual irresponsibility was social corruption.

The squad juxtaposed the community at large with the physiological and moral disorder that the women represented; the duty of vice policing, then, was to stand between the two, and keep them separate. (This, as I will argue, was integrated into the rhetoric of "saviorship" that was a response to the construction of victimhood.) As I have quoted, for the sergeant the girls were "part of a larger--just the tip of the iceberg." The sergeant was not the only one voicing his beliefs about the women's potential to spread disorder, particularly upon themselves, as a result of deviancy: after one arrest, Detectives Jones and Torres talked outside the motel room about the "sexual sicknesses" the recent arrestee purportedly had, and how they didn't "expect her to last [...] selling herself for another

year.” Trash talk constructed fraternity and affective lines within the squad by mocking the women the officers arrested. More obviously, the mockery in trash talk differentiated the women by denigrating them and thus separating them from the officers and from the community. By being sexually and financially irresponsible--and potentially spreading deviant activity and behaviors--the women were bound to their own emotional and physical decay. The women represented an important and troubling symbolic threat: the destruction of the community and those who were uncorrupted. The officers discursively worked to separate the women from the community, while simultaneously demanding that they re-enter the community through familial structures and sexual/financial responsibility--which were, in turn, ways of keeping the arrestees under culturally- and state-sanctioned male control.

Tellingly, the officers reframed the women’s bodies (and the sexual activity of their bodies) as their *selves*. This implied an internal connection between (deviant) irresponsible sexual/financial activity and (deviant) selfhood. By commodifying and thus cheapening sex--in the eyes of the officers, a morally and symbolically sacred activity--the women degraded themselves, furthering the officers’ view of them as deviants. This transformed the deviant label into a *sticky*, internally attached identity (Erikson 1966, Goode 2001). Once labeled deviant, the women remained deviant: although the squad pressed the arrestees to assume responsibility and leave the prostitution “life,” there was little evidence that the officers would consider the women free of the deviant label (and her predicted “downfall”) if the women did so. The detectives didn’t expect one arrestee to “last [...] selling herself for another year” while, on a similar arrest, Detective Torres

claimed, “lots of these girls just don’t want to leave the life, they’ll be in and out of the [police] stations forever and it’ll be their end.” Deviancy was literally a lifelong label for many of the women. The arrestees’ deviant sexuality signified an inability or unwillingness to change, to become responsible for themselves or their families, to leave the corrupt life of prostitution. Although ostensibly the goal of the squad was to achieve this change in their arrestees by any means, this was an unsuccessful and already aborted endeavor.

While the deviant label suggested that the women were to blame for their own degradation and failings, a concurrent, contradictory label shaped the officers’ rhetoric and placement of responsibility--or more accurately, blame--during arrest. The squad could not shed the belief that there was a larger force at work, one that contradicted the image of the deviant, willfully irresponsible woman the officers invoked. Instead, this counter-discourse portrayed the women as victims, *corrupted* and helpless, not accountable for their failings. The squad could not separate their work from the anti-trafficking discourses that have exerted increasing pressure on both national and state politics. Indeed, these discourses allowed the officers to work within noble narratives of saviorship and responsibility. Of course, while anti-trafficking discourses and the victim label shifted blame from the women, as well as *potentially* offering them more concrete guidance and “a way out,” this framework denied women agency and control over their own lives, as Bernstein (2007a, 2007b, 2010) and others have indicated. Subtly, victimhood was just as harmful for the women under arrest as deviance.

“Misguided” Girls and the Problem of Pimps

While the deviant label had roots in anxieties over disorder, social corruption, and norm violation, and was galvanized primarily by the officers, the victim label had roots in more tangled discourses, and thus was more difficult to unknot when attempting to understand the process of arrest. Beginning with the words of the officers is useful here, especially since victimhood, unlike deviancy, could be more cogently and explicitly elaborated (to a point). Victimhood had a fairly concrete narrative, as elaborated by the lieutenant in the parking lot before a “date” one afternoon:

LH: Most of these girls have had no father figures. It's not--it's not something they have had in their lives. They don't get why we want to intervene because they haven't had anyone do it before! It's so easy when you haven't had that guidance to get sucked in.

EB: But how do they get sucked in?

LH: It's simple, how it goes. [The girls] go to a mall, or gas station, or they go to the movies [...] they go out with their friends, maybe one or two of them together. And some guy comes up and says, hey, want to go hang out, get some food? And lots of these guys, they're Romeos, they're heartbreakers. They convince girls to come out with them, maybe say they can earn a little money. Just like that, they're exposed to it. They're hooked. A lot of the girls love these guys, you know, the ones that are putting them out, selling them out. They call these men--the pimps--daddies.

EB: It's really that easy?

LH: That easy.

This was not an isolated belief. Officers claimed, with seemingly genuine belief, that the women they arrested were so desperate for paternal guidance (or strapped for cash, or subject to romantic and sexual whims, and so on) that they would follow a handsome man who they had never met before, from a gas station, into “the life.” The officers believed that, as I have quoted from Detective Boudreaux, “some [girls] are just misguided [...] Sometimes they just need to be guided away from prostituting.”

Many scholars have studied the effects of paternal absence on delinquency among women, especially on young women (see, for instance, Hetherington, 1972); similar research has centered the effects of sexual assault and molestation on likelihood of entering into prostitution and delinquency among women (Simons and Whitbeck 1991; Farley and Barkan 1998; Silbert et al. 1983; Silbert 2002). This research has entered into the unresolved academic debate around whether prostitutes are more or equally as likely to have had absent fathers or to have been sexually assaulted as adolescents. The officers' statements that the women they arrested had faced paternal abandonment in youth or been sexually assaulted were not entirely unfounded: prostitution carries high rates of sexual assault, both for women entering the work and while working, and potentially high rates of paternal absence. This gave new depth to the officers' characterization of the arrests as dates. In this framing, the women *were--and had been--* on one long, terrible date, with their absent fathers, with the "daddy" pimps that had introduced them to the "life," with the men that bought their services, and, I argue, with the officers themselves (although the squad's paternalism, of course, was implicit and purportedly beneficial). The women had been swayed blindly by men who took advantage of them at every step of the way, and thus their deviant behaviors and corruption and bad lifestyle were, quite simply, *not their fault*. As I will discuss, this framing was largely attributable to the impact of national and local anti-trafficking discourses, and the way that these discourses built rhetorics of victimhood (and saviorship, and empowerment) within the squad.

Curiously, however, there were no male arrestees present during the arrests that I witnessed; the women did not speak openly about their pimps or "daddies." These had

certainly characterized past arrests that the officers discussed, and even potentially ongoing arrests, but the ones I witnessed never bore the controlling pimps that the officers alleged. During arrests, the detectives asked the women who had brought them into the state, who had set up their online ads and taken pictures for them or who had told them how to set up the ads--even demanding, in extreme circumstances, who was forcing them to do it. The responses rarely provided the incriminating answer the officers sought--the women claimed to have written and placed the ads, taken buses or driven cars they owned or had taken from their grandparents, and so forth, by themselves, or at most with the help of their friends. Moreover, the recurrent answer for "why" was financial: the women viewed prostitution as a means of making money quickly and easily, and claimed that nobody had told or forced them into it, or, for that matter, any so-called "life." The women made the victim label astoundingly difficult for the officers to convincingly use. Arrestees were quick to point out the difficulties in gaining the non-prostitution, "legitimate" work that the squad valued. (Indeed, it appeared in these moments that the women sought the self-determination and agency that the officers, and the victim label, denied them--and the financial independence that the officers chastised them for lacking.)

Why, then, did officers refer to bad men and pimps so insistently? Why was the victim label still placed onto women in the "dates" that I witnessed if there was no visible evidence that the women had been coerced? One possible cause was the past (or present) role of pimps in the squad's work; the officers had experience with "bad guys" before, and refused to believe that this did not characterize all arrests. When I asked Detective Jones if all the women they arrested had a man behind them, forcing them into prostitution, he

answered that “there’s always a man involved somewhere *even if [the women] don’t want to tell us or we can’t always find the guy*. There’s sometimes brainwashing that goes on [emphasis added].” The detective indicated that the women were deceiving the officers to protect their pimps, or that the women had been somehow “brainwash[ed]” into silence or lies; this protected the squad from the fact that their presupposition was occasionally simply wrong. This was also a contradictory claim for the officers to make at face value, given their unwillingness to arrest and prosecute johns--who could easily have taken the place of “bad men” that the officers sought.

Similar to the deviant label, the responses and beliefs of the women were relatively inconsequential to the officers’ perception of the “reality”: there was a clear disconnect between what the women said and what the officers believed was the truth, or more accurately between what the women said and what the officers believed they weren’t saying. The deviant label relied on informal castigation and blanket claims of moral corruption; victimhood, although occupying a similar moral, chastising terrain, was institutionally and informally harder to prove (even with pimps removed from the picture) and subsequently a harder “tool” for the squad to use. Therefore, while it is perhaps true that the entirety of the arrests I witnessed were misrepresentative of the squad’s work, or that I had come during a “dry season” for pimps, I believe the looming threat of “bad men” and violent male control is only a partial answer, even if it is (implausibly) true. I will now explore some of the other rationales behind the victim label, and why the officers clung to it so readily.

“Real Bitches”

The squad's performance of masculinity during arrest relied heavily on implicitly--and occasionally overtly--misogynistic claims about the women they arrested. The officers were tempted at times to shake or yell at the women, and many of their claims were bolstered by the idea that the women were intellectually lacking, i.e. that the women they arrested were not intelligent or experienced enough to realize that they had done something morally "wrong" or even illegal. Victimhood used a similar agency-denying rhetoric. As Sergeant Romano noted after an arrest, "it's frustrating because [...] we want to help them but they're just--they don't think, sometimes! It's like they're not thinking. But stubborn. It kills you just like how foolish they can be when they're deep in it, you know?" This, like Detective Jones' statement that some of the girls were "brainwashed," suggested that the women were so "deep in it" they were unable to make the *rational, sensible* choice to leave the "life" of prostitution, or give up the names of their pimps, or generally act and answer in ways that the officers desired. The performative (re)articulation of officers' masculinity was dependent on, as Butler (1993) claims, "abjected femininity": officers' interactions with the women were based on the women's degradation. This was a gendered interaction that was always already part of the structure of vice work. The squad's misogyny was integrated into tough daddy masculinity; it was encouraged by the hard masculine culture of policing and the masculinist, paternal aims of the state working through the police apparatus--not to mention by the ingrained sexism and misogyny of masculinity itself.

The inability (or unwillingness) to cooperate was not the fault of the arrestees, attributable to their unintelligence and inability to be self-sufficient. The subtler

manifestations of misogyny in the squad's comments are examples of benevolent sexism (Glick and Fiske, 1997)--sexism that was innocuous at face value, but masked traditional (at best) and openly misogynistic (at worst) beliefs about the women they arrested.

Detective Torres' complaint about the "real bitches" during arrest represents the more overtly misogynistic end, although this comment was not a standard one for its extremity.

Although the majority of the misogyny within the construction of the victim label was masked as attempts to aid, it devalued and implicitly degraded the women no less. This misogyny, in turn, was linked to trafficking discourses that legitimated and justified the beliefs.

Trafficking Logic

The lieutenant spoke at length about "[seeing] every girl as a victim and treating her that way" when describing the goals of the squad. While I have dismissed the majority of the squad's stated goals in favor of looking at the often radically different reality of their work, the idea that "every girl" is a victim (and deserves to be treated accordingly) bears notice precisely *because* it differs strongly from the squad's actual work. Louisiana has hosted a number of grassroots and national anti-trafficking campaigns--a number that has intensified following recent claims that it has been a "significant source, transit and destination location for human trafficking" following Hurricane Katrina (National Human Trafficking Resource Center, via Linderman, 2014). The state has also been ranked best in the nation by an international anti-trafficking advocacy group for both legislative and local attempts to "combat trafficking" and "aid trafficking victims" (Avery, 2014). As Janie Chuang notes, anti-traffickers have deployed "a reductive narrative of trafficking that

simplistically depicts trafficking as involving women and girls forced into ‘sexual slavery’ by social deviants [...] control over the meaning of trafficking has been perhaps the greatest of the neo-abolitionists’ gains” (2010:1658). On a local level, Kinchen (2013), in an article for a local newspaper, also suggests that the term “trafficking victim” is nebulous and Louisiana’s “significant source” status unsubstantiated. In spite of these critiques, the state is immersed in a governmental and sociocultural dialogue around (but mostly against) trafficking--a dialogue that has successfully conflated volitional sex work with involuntary trafficking.

As one recent and important example, in 2014 Governor Bobby Jindal signed into law four bills designed, purportedly, to “crack down on human trafficking and protect victims” by expanding the state’s definition of human trafficking to include “receiving, isolating, and enticing another person in order to engage in sexual services or labor,” requiring district courts to designate a section or division of court to human trafficking courts, posting the National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline in outpatient abortion facilities and providing women with information about coerced abortion and human trafficking (Office of the Governor, 2014). Lauren McGaughy, a New Orleans news reporter who covered the legislative changes, writes that the shift in legislature allows the state criminal justice system to legally treat prostitution as sex trafficking (2014). As she notes, the laws “crack down on prostitution writ large in Louisiana” and “give victims of human trafficking a legal mechanism to vacate a prostitution conviction.” McGaughy herself differentiates between “human trafficking” and “prostitution” in word use, but acknowledges that legal treatment of the two under the 2014 laws is equalized, making

them effectively the same under state law. While these laws do not institutionalize the view that all people selling sex or sexual services are human trafficking victims, they are effectively used to do so--explaining the squad's reliance on the framework of sex trafficking and victimhood. Anti-trafficking rhetoric is now written into the Louisiana criminal justice system.

The police institution, and the squad, could not legally leave behind the construction of victimhood or language of empowerment and saviorship that anti-trafficking discourse had provided them with. Anti-trafficking rhetoric infused the arrest interaction. But, I argue, this was an appropriation, or inappropriate use, of this language insofar as the officers' actual treatment of arrestees remained, in the tradition of hard masculine policing styles, insensitive and disciplinary. This appeared particularly in the language of empowerment and self-respect. This rhetoric helped the squad give lip service to their squad goals and legitimated their claims of being kindly "good guys," even if the way that the language was used was chastising. During one afternoon arrest, Detective Jones asked an arrestee:

This isn't the life you dreamed, right? Really, baby, it's a real question... This isn't what--this isn't the life you got promised. You're more than this! You want to go to school, make proud for your parents, your kids. You have to be stronger!

I have discussed Cruikshank's (1999) description of self-help/esteem practices as part of state aims to create self-governing citizens. Cruikshank's larger argument targets the language of *empowerment* as a rhetoric specific to these aims. Anti-trafficking discourse uses the construction of victimhood and the language of empowerment as a more emotionally sensitive way of treating "victims" and as a means of removing blame and thus

responsibility from women selling sex or sexual services. During arrest, however, women were effectively still at fault for failing to desire their own rescue, or for hindering their own empowerment. Detective Boudreaux, in a motel parking lot after an arrest, bemoaned the brief answers of the arrestee minutes before; when I asked what had bothered him about it, he answered “the girl in there... she’s one of the girls that don’t even want help! They’re too victimized to even try to get themselves out.” The squad’s use of victimhood and the language of empowerment indicates that the use--or appropriation--of anti-trafficking rhetoric, no matter how (supposedly) innocuous and beneficial, cannot be removed from the state pursuit of creating self-governing subjects, and the police institution’s disciplinary mode of implementing state aims. Empowering language was certainly better than physical violence or outright coercion, but it was nevertheless more helpful for the goals of the police institution and the state than for the arrestees themselves.

The squad used the language of self-respect and empowerment that the anti-trafficking movement had provided; their use, however, was far removed from the ideals of anti-trafficking, or from the ideals that the squad held for themselves. Their construction of victimhood did, however, serve state goals of producing normatively gendered and sexual subjects. Moreover, the language of empowerment was appropriated to deflect responsibility from the squad and create good, responsible citizens out of the women who could help themselves in a variety of ways. This supports the perception that strains of anti-trafficking discourse have had a silencing and unhelpful effect on so-called “victims” (Bernstein, 2007a; Ahmed and Seshu, 2010; Chuang, 2010). In this light, the

squad's use of victimhood rhetoric suggests that this discourse has had a correspondingly negative effect for the women it purports to "help" in the criminal justice system as well.

White Knights?

The anti-trafficking discourse also inevitably enabled the officers' transformation into benevolent saviors of the women they arrested and supposedly "aided." Saviorship was a more subtle framework, appearing primarily in the squad's articulation of their goals--to rescue and recover women from prostitution--but it also appeared on the job, in the arrest interaction. Saviorship appeared in the officers' reiterations that they were "good guys," and in their statements that the women were lucky to receive their assistance--that they "could have come across someone way worse" and "should be thankful". Saviorship drew upon the officers' self-image, influenced by anti-trafficking discourses, as protective, paternal "father figures," ones that would chivalrously rescue the hapless women who had fallen into prostitution. This allowed the squad to ignore the break, as I have noted, between their moralizing advice to the women and the advice that could have affected actual change, i.e. state/local resources for condom distribution or disease testing, or assistance in finding employment for low-education and low-income mothers, instead of age-inappropriate runaway hotline cards. Indeed, saviorship even legitimated the implicit use of social threats (poverty, STDs, violence, and the like) that the squad could have had a role in preventing. It was a way for the officers to claim responsibility for what they called the "successful" arrests without actually taking responsibility and helping the arrestees, and thus admitting their failings. The framing of vice work as benevolent and valuable masked the truth that the officers' work was part of a

larger “assembly line” (Lynch, 2012) of justice, a revolving door that did little to aid “victims” at any step of the way.

These three factors influenced the squad’s construction of, and attempts to manage, victimhood for the arrestees. They allowed the squad to overlook, or ignore, the lower number of pimps among the women they arrested: the role of “good men” necessitated the presence, even if spectral, of “bad men,” legitimating the officers’ position in the police institution and fitting it into the hard masculine culture of policing (Herbert, 2001). This reworks the gendered and disciplinary aspects of the victim label in ways that have been under-explored. While the deviant label has been primarily characterized as coercive and “sticky” (Erikson 1966, Goode 2001), the officers’ use of the victim label among the women indicates a similar stickiness, coercion, and shaming impact. This suggests that the language used in tandem with the victim discourse, that of self-respect and empowerment, and subsequently of saviorship, can be appropriated for punishing, silencing, and chastising means--and made harmful when set into use.

The squad’s construction of victimhood was a far cry from the actual intent behind anti-trafficking discourses’ rhetorics of victimhood and liberation. It also challenges the supposition, made by anti-trafficking factions (such as *IACP* (2006) and Yen (2008)) that the adoption of victim-centered, “sensitive” policing styles with regards to trafficking is an appropriate, beneficial response. Instead, it indicates that the labeling of arrestees as victims and the use of self-respect and empowerment as techniques are primarily (and perhaps unsurprisingly) beneficial primarily for the state and its goals--creating

self-governing citizens, producing and sustaining norms of gender and sexuality-- when set into practice by a subset of a state apparatus.

Conclusion: “It isn’t like you always expected or want it to be”

My data reveals that the squad’s constructions of victimhood and deviancy began to bleed into one another in de facto use. This, of course, parallels the collision of two versions of masculinity, hard and soft, for the squad. Hard masculine behavior provided the chastising, tough, *policeman* edge that was a response to the construction of deviancy for the arrestees, while, on its premise, soft masculine behavior was fastened to the emotive, sensitive construction of victimhood. Masculinity was a way for the officers to manage the arrest interaction, *and* to manage contradictory demands by the state and the police institution, national and local anti-trafficking discourses and their gradual influence on (inter)national prostitution legislation, the masculine culture of the police institution and academy. Labeling arrestees deviant and victim, and treating them accordingly, repeatedly reaffirmed the masculinity of the squad.

Tough daddy masculinity, a set of masculine behaviors, beliefs, practices, and strategies, validated the squad’s attempts to discipline and chastise the women while simultaneously purporting to help and save them; simultaneously, this masculinity was relational and dependent on the women. The squad’s masculinity was contingent on the presence, and denigration, of the arrestees. The activities of chastisement and trash talk (about the women and about past arrests) allowed the officers both to build brotherhood and connect their work to *policeman* masculinity, and to symbolically separate the arrestees from the community and thereby assuage any threat of moral or physical corruption. Victimhood and deviancy emerged as weak, feminized roles in and out of the

arrest--helping officers reify and maintain the borders of tough daddy masculinity, which was, in effect, the same as traditionally sexist, paternal policing.

Drawing on national and statewide sociocultural and legal discourses (fears of social disorder, anti-trafficking and empowerment, traditional family/motherhood, moral and financial responsibility, male control, and so forth), the officers constructed not only deviance and victimhood, but the meanings of their own work and the way that their work related to the practices of the police institution and the state. The model officer was one articulation of this. It was an idealized narrative marked by saviorship, morality, and sensitivity that the officers used at times to justify and find satisfaction in their work. My time with the squad, however, revealed that the descriptions of the ideal officer had little influence on the actual arrest interaction. One of the few ways that it did manifest was through morality and paternalism--from invasive and unnecessary questions about family life and children, to fears of a "domino effect" of moral decay and neighborhood corruption by the sexually and gender non-normative women. This was emblematic not of soft masculine policing, but of traditional masculinist styles of policing.

This echoes Shumsky's (1986) claim that law enforcement played a significant role in morally segregating deviant women, including women arrested as prostitutes, during the 19th century. While the squad was unable to segregate the arrestees, and begin to halt the spread of moral disorder, permanently--not least because this would repudiate their goals of saviorship and rescue--the process of arrest *did* entail continually removing the women from the symbolic and physical boundaries of the community, even if this was a short-lived and unsuccessful response. The limited contact was attributable to the 2011 change in

legislation with Crimes Against Nature law convictions. For the officers, the lost time supposedly hindered emotional connection and “getting through” to arrestees, as the lieutenant desired. (Ironically, although perhaps not surprisingly, it was the arrests that took the longest that garnered the most hostile or “noncooperative” women.)

The idealization of victimhood, the belief that “every girl is a victim,” that was rooted in anti-trafficking discourses, had much more in common with the illusory ideal of model masculinity. For the squad, victimhood and deviancy were the same in practice, particularly with regards to blame. Officers held the women responsible for perpetuating their own “victimhood,” or for being too foolish to “free” themselves and take control and responsibility over their lives. This is attributable to the connection of the vice squad with the police institution and to the state: as a part of the police apparatus the squad served the aims of the state, which (re)produces hard masculinity socially and institutionally for officers (in the culture and academy of the police institution), gender and sexual normativity (in the arrestees, and implicitly for the officers themselves), and, as Cruikshank (1999) points out, self-respect and empowerment as a way to produce “independent,” or self-governing, citizens. The officers used a narrative of saviorship as a part of their construction of model masculinity; it worked in tandem with the construction of victimhood and allowed them to satisfy, if only in word, the demands of anti-trafficking discourses for more “sensitive” and victim-oriented policing.

The officers’ troubles in finding a singular, cohesive squad narrative for the “problem of prostitution” were institutionally acceptable, of course, given the squad’s discretionary purview--the ability, within the point of physical violence, to talk to and treat

their arrestees as they saw fit. However, the inability to find an appropriate, effective (for the women) cultural or institutional response, caused some of strain and uncertainty for the squad. This uncertainty invoked covert professional malaise in (at least) one of the younger officers, indicating an underlying strand of instability (and tacit insecurity). This had to be masked, perhaps attributable to the desire to present a cohesive, coherent front (Goffman, 1959) as masculine actors and as vice officers. This surfaced explicitly only once, during an interview with Detective Jones--who was uncharacteristically open and reflective:

EB: Do you think the squad usually meets the goals--recovering victims from prostitution, helping them start over--that you and some of the other officers have told me?

DJ: I'll tell you... the way some of the girls respond... it's not encouraging. It's not like this job really--when you come home at the end of the day, the other guys won't tell you this, but when you come home you aren't always sure you've really done something, you know. That's hard. What keeps you coming back is the promise that some days you'll make a change for one girl but [it] was a hard adjustment for me to see that [the work] and all, *it isn't like you always expected or want it to be.* [emphasis added]

Tellingly, professional and social insecurity could only surface in the closed interview space. Unlike the open idealization of model masculinity it was not broadly discussed--indeed, "the other guys" wouldn't tell me this. Officers perhaps feared the social repercussions from others in the squad for discussing their uncertainties, or the professional ramifications of admitting the tenuousness of the squad's goals and revealing their own institutional expendability.

As Detective Jones indicated, job satisfaction for the officers hinged on the way that "the girls respond." This left little space for the girls to resist or assert their own agency

and self-definition during the arrest, beyond surreptitious and mostly aborted efforts.⁵ At an institutional level, instituting protocols that encourage open dialogue with arrestees and providing training for emotional (and physical) harm reduction during these dialogues would help ameliorate some of the more damaging aspects of arrest. While the assumption of victimhood as a squad goal is certainly better than actively, openly naming arrestees sexual deviants--or, in a legislative light, sex offenders--and inciting physical violence against the women, it is nonetheless far from ideal. Discouraging the assumption of victimhood among arrestees, and the conflation of prostitution with trafficking, would go hand-in-hand with promoting open dialogues between arrestees and officers. More bounded protocols for vice work would allow women under arrest to assert their own agency and perhaps reveal the “self-respect” that officers demand in a way that is noncoercive and helpful. Moreover, providing spaces that actually allow the women to respond and detail police treatment in ways that do not put them at legal risk would also be one more step forward.

I also acknowledge that this is an unrealistic and probably unfeasible goal, given the stringent and closed attitude of the police institution. On a more achievable level, I argue that what is missing from (and quite blatantly essential to) the arrest interaction are tangible *methods* for the officers to provide help for the arrestees. At a schematic minimum, providing international-, state- and local-level resources, ones beyond runaway hotline cards--i.e., STD testing resources, names and numbers for more general health care services, drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility names and numbers, family/group and

⁵ Efforts that unfortunately remain unseen, given IRB limitations on my contact and recorded data with the women.

mental wellness counseling, violence and sexual assault outreach programs and hotlines, numbers for halfway houses, “safe ride” plans for out-of-state arrestees women, and so on. Giving the women access to any of these would start the process of enabling the real-world care that officers *did* seem to want to provide.

Listening to the women under arrest is an important and too often overlooked goal, not only for vice officers and the police institution. Instead of speaking over and thus silencing arrestees, as so many organizations and activists and theorists have already done, further writing that centers the experiences of sex work, writing that is without political agendas that willfully distort and misrepresent and that is physically and linguistically accessible (far more accessible than this paper will undoubtedly reveal itself to be) will effect more concrete change, both in and out of the criminal justice system.

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