

From the archives: The Happy Hooker

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Video



- **All About Women** Xaviera Hollander, ex-prostitute and author of *The Happy Hooker*, talks about sex and prostitution, and about her experience with men. **Watch:** 27:45

Prostitution laws in Canada have been in the media spotlight recently after an Ontario court threw out key provisions of anti-prostitution laws last year in response to a constitutional challenge made by sex workers.

But the debate over prostitution, and whether it should be decriminalized, is nothing new in Canada. Check out this fascinating and frank 1972 interview with Xaviera Hollander, a former high-end call girl and author of *The Happy Hooker: My Own Story* (posted online as part of CBC's look back at 75 years of broadcasting).



Hollander was a young secretary living in South Africa when she fell in love with a visiting American businessman. The romance didn't last and Hollander went to New York City to start over. She found employment at the Dutch consulate, and at night, was drawn to the city's club scene. But Hollander was often lonely, and sought comfort through casual sex. Eventually, she began accepting money from these acquaintances.

"I'd always liked sex and I'd always liked men as well as women and to me it then became a combination of business and pleasure," she said.

This led to a double life of typing memos by day and then rushing out on her bicycle to service clients (sometimes during breaks at work). As one of the city's top call girls, she made \$1,000 a night. Soon after, she opened her own brothel and became a madam.

Her memoir, *The Happy Hooker*, co-authored with Robin Moore and Yvonne Dunleavy, was published in 1971, and became known as one of the most

revealing and upfront books about sexuality at the time.

In her CBC interview, Hollander supports the sex trade, but wants to make a distinction between a "hooker" (a term she thinks has negative connotations) and a high-end "call girl."

"The average hooker sees about 30 customers a day," she said. "I tell you one thing, if I had to see 30 customers a day, I wouldn't look the way I look now."

She went on to offer an opinion on the legalization of the sex trade: "I think prostitution should be tolerated. However, the girls on the street, the street hookers, they should, in my opinion, be supervised or at least controlled to a certain ghetto area. The word 'ghetto' might sound nasty, but it should be controlled or regulated to certain areas in certain areas of the city -- like in Amsterdam's red light [district] or Hamburg's Reeperbahn and under medical control for [venereal disease]."

What's your take on Canada's prostitution laws? Should the sex trade be decriminalized?

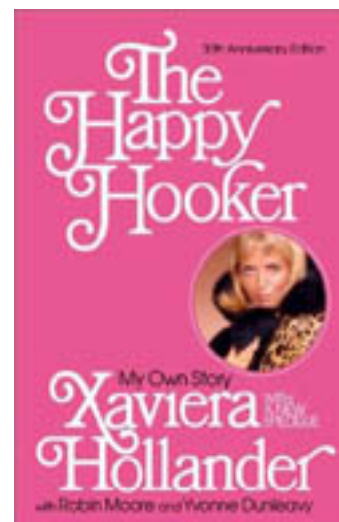
The Happy Hooker: My Own Story
by **Xaviera Hollander**

Buy this book at:

chapters.indigo.ca

From HarperCollins:

"How did you first learn about sex? If you grew up in the 1970s, it may have been from a gleefully lusty tour guide named Xaviera Hollander. In the late 1960s -- that era of sexual chaos, when Playboy Clubs and love-ins were competing for national attention -- a beautiful, intelligent young Dutch secretary named Xaviera de Vries moved to New York, grew



swiftly tired of her desk job...and soon became the most visible and glamorous madam the city had ever seen. As Xaviera Hollander, she published a shockingly candid account of her life behind the brothel door. The Happy Hooker shot straight to the top of the bestseller lists, sold more than fifteen million copies, and made this enterprising young woman an international phenomenon."

Read more at [HarperCollins](#).