TO DECRIMINALIZE SEX WORK, DEFUND NYPD’S VICE SQUAD

NYPD’S VICE SQUAD

The NYPD’s Vice Enforcement Division is, in theory, tasked with policing so-called quality-of-life offenses such as consensual sex work, narcotics use, and gambling. But in reality, Vice officers use their badges to exploit, sexually harass, and otherwise terrorize sex workers and their clients.

**THE PROBLEM**

- In 2019, a former Vice detective, Ludwig Paz – along with seven other Vice officers – organized an exploitative prostitution ring.
- In 2017, Vice Officer Michael Golden was busted for having sex with numerous noncitizen sex workers while he was on duty, and then arresting them.
- That same year, Yang Song, a 38-year-old immigrant that worked as a masseuse and sex worker in Queens, jumped nearly forty feet to her death during a Vice raid. Before her death, Song confided in her mother and her attorney that she had been sexually assaulted by a Vice officer who made threats and wielded a gun and his badge.
- Since Mayor de Blasio took office, New York City has paid more than $1 million to settle false arrest claims by people targeted for patronizing sex workers.
- 93 percent of those targeted in these fraudulent arrests were men of color. Yet after each of these scandals, the Mayor’s response ranged from anemic to non-existent.

**THE SOLUTION**

The only acceptable option to combat Vice’s reign of terror is to eradicate the unit. Instead of investing in policing, we must elevate sex workers by investing in peer-led outreach, housing, and supportive services, including legal help and medical and mental health care.

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