

Gay Male Prostitution in America versus Canada

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The 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen a paradigm shift in the way homosexual practices are viewed in society. Up to the last decade in some societies, and for other societies to date, there is homophobia and rejection to the homosexuals. Among the many reasons that usually prompt teens and this case men to turn into gay prostitution, is the kind of rejection that they experience from their families for their sexual orientation. There is great need for sobriety, open-mindedness and shunning of homophobia when it comes to handling this sensitive topic. For a fact, it is a real in 2016 that homosexuality is so much her with us. The rejection of a young man by his family and relatives due to his sexuality it serves as a terribly big blow to him, especially when he is faced with the challenge of tackling major issues in connection to his self-esteem. This emanates from the issues of denial, alarm, rejection, disorientation, among many other factors that can lead one into doing anything in a bid to survive after rejection. It is real that the stingy alleys can burn like the underworld or strike like a cold bitter wake-up call no matter what.

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From my research, it is coming out clearly that Canada is more receptive to gay prostitution as compare to the US. It could also be true that the Canadians' tolerance to the gay lifestyle is substantial. An overview of Canada reveals a lifestyle where the nightlife is ruled by bars, taverns, and clubs that are famous for the intense excitement experienced therein. It is said that Montreal is historically a sexual emancipation place while Quebec has also become synonymous with strip clubs over the years (Chung, 2011). The shopping districts, historical landmarks, hotels, movie, comedy and concerts theatres, just to mention a few are all absolute fun venues. With the kind of reputation Canada has got, what you involve yourself in does not really matter, but you are guaranteed of having charming experiences. There are several places in the US that can match up to the Canadian nightlife standards excluding the LGBT lifestyle. By 2011, Montreal's gay village

boasted of four risqué stripper bars, with dancers, most of whom are men, who strip for money as compared to Toronto, a city twice bigger than Montreal which had only one (Chung, 2011). The kind of lifestyle and culture in Canadian cities that is more liberal on matters of sexuality and promotes extreme fun fosters the development and propagation of gay tendencies and gay prostitution. From the fact that the American cities are a bit modest on these issues makes the occurrence of this tendency less prevalent in America.

The Canadian people have been very liberal on issues of sexuality for several decades now. They have had a culture of accepting and welcoming LGBT persons amongst them, including the immigrants who have been going to their country. While doing a research in Montreal on the origins and development of the Gay Village, Donald Hinrichs writes that his informants confided in him that the local residents welcomed the influx of businesses without putting any consideration to their orientation to gay people (Hinrichs, 2012). Actually some of his informants told him that these gay oriented businesses and gay people found the locals very welcoming to LGBT persons. Other than this there were other reasons that influenced the choices on suitable neighborhoods for the setting up and concentration of gay taverns, clubs and businesses. This area had very few establishments of that kind as at that time and it was a low life neighborhood whose property was cheap to buy and vacant buildings' leasing rates were low. This made it easy for young and single college graduates to settle in this area.

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Businessmen who had interests in pornography and gay oriented businesses were also able to comfortably settle, establish, and develop their gay shops and cinemas, and were even able to sponsor gay events and festivals. Just like Gay Village, Boston's South End experienced the influx of LGBT persons in the 1940s when it became home to middle class African Americans. This was

because of the several single-sex apartments that gave the gay persons a social shield. Poverty and crime became synonymous with this region in the early 1960s but by late 1970s it had undergone another pioneered by gay men basically (Bu Today, 2015). It currently stands out as a very diverse neighborhood and home to a large gay society. The gay culture thrived in this area when it had been abandoned and it was languishing in poverty such that there wasn't much resistance from the native residents because they were not there anyway. This is unlike the Gay Village case where the residents were welcoming to this culture. However in both cases poverty contribute to the thriving of the gay culture in these concentrated settlements of the gays as much as the business community and other parts of the society did not do much in the development of this culture in Boston.

The male prostitutes are always exposed to a myriad of challenges and risks. The kind of activities they always involve themselves in incorporate the primary transmission methods of HIV. They engage in unprotected anal sex with men, unprotected sex with women, and intravenous drug intake that involves the sharing of needles, which put them at a high risk of getting HIV infections (McNamara, 1994). These practices are very real in New York City, a place where the AIDS prevalence is high, mostly in areas like the Times Square where gay prostitution and sex trade in general has been practiced for a long time. These sex workers, some of whom are young and homeless are also molested and abused as they go about their trade. This has been experienced in other cities in America where gay prostitution is practiced like in Providence. A big percentage of these men offer sexual services to get money which they spend on drugs (Johnson, 2011). According to studies that have been done in Providence more than 60% of these guys are homeless. These sex workers at times get themselves in the hands of the police and end up in jail, but the correctional facilities do not have what it takes to support them and rehabilitate

them. They are generally a marginalized people when an honest analysis is done on what happens to them and how they are generally viewed and treated.

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The case is not any different in the Canadian side. Although the Canadians have been seen to be more liberal on the whole issue of sexuality, the gay prostitutes still suffer from marginalization and rejection by society in one way or another. Their seriousness of this situation is seen by the discomfort discussions about male prostitution brings to some people. Just like it is with their female counterparts, a research on 40 men who worked in the sex trade in Saskatchewan revealed that they also have backgrounds of sexual and physical molestation (CBC News, 2008). Another serious thing that has presented itself about the male prostitutes is that a good number of them join the trade at much tender ages than it is seen in their female counterparts. There is a bit of homophobia towards them and some of them are forced to go out in the streets and offer sexual services for survival after they have been rejected at home, only to be taken advantage of and exploited in the streets. It is clear that both in the American and Canadian cities, the male prostitutes suffer homophobia, rejection and exploitation of varying levels. Researches that have been conducted reveal that in both countries, male prostitution has not been fully accepted as a lifestyle as much as the society in both countries is trying to come to terms with this new developments in the societal norms.

The way the American and the Canadian societies handle the issue of gay prostitution varies slightly but is more or less the same. The Canadian society has been more liberal and free on LGBT issues than the American society but the challenges that the gay prostitutes face in the cities of both countries are very similar, only that the degrees and the situations vary slightly. The causes and reasons that lead to the emergence and development of gay societies are also similar, same to

the reasons that lead young males to resort into practicing prostitutions in the streets of these major cities of these two countries.

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