



## Who speaks for Lenora Fargo?

This was submitted by email, by @itsjustahobby. Many thanks for writing this piece for us.

Any money paid to the adult escorts listed on this website is for their time and companionship only. Whatever else that may occur if and when contact is made is the choice of consenting adults.

That is the disclaimer that appears on the largest UK website for independent sex workers, it is pretty standard. Given the variety of laws around the world on solicit it is also legally vital. In the UK being paid for sex is not illegal, even while a whole host of other things around it are (working with another sex worker for example)

In some countries the whole of sex work is heavily criminalized, America is one such country. Craigs list is therefore a common way for someone to get in touch with a sex worker in the US, either via their casual encounters or offers of massage. Sex workers for their own protection against prosecution will have to include some version of the above disclaimer.

Four years ago Ezekiel Gilbert contacted someone via Craigslist. She turned up and was paid at the start of the encounter, as is standard practice. Some time later she tried to leave, and Gilbert shot her. His defence, he assumed that she was obliged to have sex with him after the payment of \$150 and he wanted his money back.

Let's just pause a moment to let that sink in, a woman meets a man, she declines sex and he shoots her, and a jury has decided that it's OK because she was a sex worker.

The defence is based on the Texan (what you mean you hadn't guessed which state it was?) law that allows the use of force in the recovery of property, during a night time theft, in this case Gilberts \$150 dollars.

It is hard to know where to even start with how scary the decision of the jury is, there are so many ways it blames the victim and excuses a man for ever being responsible for his behaviour. The implications for all women should make anyone reading very afraid too.

Firstly consent is never blanket. This has to be hammered home again and again, because some people are just not getting it. If I consent to have sex with you today, it doesn't mean I consent tomorrow. If I consent to one sex act it does not mean I consent to another. That's how consent works, it is an on-going process.

The decision by the jury just threw this out of the window, saying a man's assumptions about consent are what matters. Gilbert assumed (or so he claims) that the \$150 included sex. So by refusing to have sex or give the money back Lenora Frago was stealing from him. He then shot her to recover his money.

Perhaps he smelt, perhaps he scared her, perhaps she realised he was the kind of man who shoots someone in the neck for saying no to him. The fact is she wanted to leave, she had



performed her part of the deal, which was showing up, and he didn't like the fact he had not got laid. So he shot her.

If a man's assumption about sex being an automatic right after a gift, or money, or marriage, is now the situation in Texas how many other women are in danger? If a man assumes the exchange of wedding vows means he can have sex with his wife how can marital rape ever be prosecuted? If a man assumes that an expensive steak means sex can a date ever end in just coffee again?

Of course people will say it's different because money was involved, I have already seen some of this victim blaming going on. There are a number of scenarios here; they all blame the victim though.

Not content with killing Frago Gilbert has smeared her name, accusing her of trying to con him. How often have we heard this from men that women flirt then say no, that we fool and delude them, that they cannot be responsible for their actions because we led them on?

Perhaps as Gilbert claims she was trying to "upsell", it happens, in far more than sex work. It does not negate her right to say no. Sadly despite the fact Lenora lived for seven months after being shot there is no evidence I can find of her testimony.

She may have been too seriously injured, or it may be yet another case of the victim's words being irrelevant in the face of male violence.

I recognise there will be some reading this who are opposed to sex work. It is worth pointing out again I think that in America sex work is illegal and heavily prosecuted. Even more important though is the fact that a woman lies dead because she refused to have sex with a man, and a jury agreed she did not have the right to say no.