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540 • July 2018

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Confessions of a Stripper

BY PUSSY PER SE

YOU'RE BEING WATCHED



Have you always wanted to star in a porn film? If you're a regular patron of strip clubs, good news, you already have. The bad news is that you were filmed without your knowledge or approval, and it was not done in your best interests.

Most clubs I've worked in have multiple surveillance cameras strategically positioned. For the most part, I ignore them. They are supposedly there for "my safety," something I seriously doubt. (When did strip club owners become caring nurturers?) They are also there, theoretically, to make sure customers and dancers don't do anything illegal. Or perhaps it's more accurate to say that the club owners are using the cameras to convince various state and local authorities that they are policing dancers and customers to short-circuit anyone having too much fun. It's hypocritical to the max. The club wants us to make money for them. How do they think we do that? A girl is more likely to get fired for not making enough money than for stretching a few rules. It's like the interstate. The speed limit is 65 mph, but you can run through a speed trap easily at 69. Which is not to say that anyone is doing 69 in my club.

One of the strangest things that ever happened was a few years ago when a group of private eyes were secretly videotaping dancers and customers at

various clubs in California and Nevada. The investigators, under the direction of Thomas Martin, president of Martin Investigative Services, of Newport Beach, California, were not working for the clubs in which they were snooping. Martin, a former federal agent, had been hired by an owner of competing clubs who was hoping to sabotage his competition.

Martin said he was attempting "to determine if they [dancers and customers] were doing things that they were prohibited from doing." And they were: dances behind closed doors, lap dances in open spaces, "inappropriate touching," massages, and the like. "We kept it simple," said Martin. "Didn't record any sound." Martin's operatives sneaked in tiny cameras "in a shirt lapel or in a baseball cap or tucked into a sport coat." It didn't take long. "Most customers don't lolly-gag. They cut right to the chase. Like shooting fish in a barrel."

Though his agents were in the strip clubs to catch what they felt were infractions, Martin was appreciative of the strip club ambience. "You get a synergy," he said. "The girls have one idea that they want to make some money, and do what they want to do. And the guys are on a mission to do what they got to do. It's a nice atmosphere. Everybody's happy."

His client then took the videos to city council meetings to either get his

competitors shut down or to force them to adhere to the law so as to create a fair playing field for his own dancers. Think about it. You've put in a long day at work, wash up, and ride your Harley down to the club for a beer with your buddies and a dance with Desiree. You're happy, Desiree is cooperative. A couple nights later there you and Desiree are on the big video screen at the city council meeting. "Oh my god," says one of the councilwomen. "Isn't that Big Earl who manages the Jiffy Lube?" There are no criminal charges but your ol' lady says, "So this is why you couldn't take me to the Save the Leeches benefit."

Martin says this kind of intrusion into your privacy has become rare, but there is still the plain-vanilla surveillance from the on-site strip club owners to contend with. It's not the cops so much you have to worry about because, after all, many of our best customers are cops. Most of the heat falls on us dancers when the owner or manager catches us doing something risqué on camera. Their complaint is likely to be, "You do that for the customers? Why don't you come into the back office where you can do it for *me*?"

It's mostly just a pain, and today's video systems are more sophisticated so the club owner can sit at home watching the action. Not only will you be paying for lap dances, you'll be performing free for the owner, manager, and possibly their friends. As Martin puts it, "Somebody's going to be sitting with a beer and a box of popcorn watching you get your jollies off."

In the next issue, we will pursue the legalities of strip club surveillance, your legal rights and countermeasures, and how you can protect yourself. In the meantime, I had many a giggle reading Thomas Martin's tell-all book, *Seeing Life Through Private Eyes*. Martin recounts some of his best cases in many fields. My favorite was the bride who gave birth to a baby, nine months after her wedding, that was not her new husband's. Turns out the brides' friends hired a studly male stripper for her bachelorette party and....

Martin Investigative Services can be reached at martinpi.com.