



Urban Justice Center

123 William Street, 16th floor, New York, NY 10038
Tel: (646) 602-5600 • Fax: (212) 533-4598

PODCAST SERIES: SELENA

SELENA: I'm 23. I've been prostituting for almost two years.

INTERVIEWER: Is it by choice that you got into this?

SELENA: It pays the bills here and there. It brings good money. I take a chance every night at, you know, getting raped, kidnapped, or even worse, going to jail.

INTERVIEWER: So, when you said going to jail... How many times have you been arrested in this line of work?

SELENA: Since I've been here in New York, since I've been a New York resident, since I've been doing this, I've gotten arrested a total of seven times.

INTERVIEWER: You said from New York, so where are you from?

SELENA: I'm... not from here.

INTERVIEWER: You're not from here. Do you live here now?

SELENA: Yes, I do.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So you got arrested seven times, and out of those seven times, have you encountered any type of verbal or physical abuse from policemen?

SELENA: Yeah, hell yeah, every time.

INTERVIEWER: Can you share an experience real quickly?

SELENA: Um, prime example: my third arrest. That was...they could actually say that was for prostitution. And the arrests before and after was just minor loitering bullshit. They couldn't really say that... My third arrest, they could, 'cause they busted into a hotel room that I was in off the Internet.

INTERVIEWER: Off of the Internet? Really?

SELENA: Yeah. Craigslist. Yeah. Me and a friend of mine was working, and we had.. Not knowing at the time that the couple we had we weren't supposed to be, I mean dating with, was undercover cops, and I know it. To make a long story short, that was that. Not less than ten minutes inside the hotel room NYPD busted me. They tell us that they came in our room because we were part of a bank robbery credit card scam and money laundering. We had counterfeit money and a whole bunch of other bullshit. I knew it was phony baloney, like, ok, right, prostitution I already know. Once we got to the precinct, a whole different story, I'm talking about the cheek. I got called so many names it wasn't funny. I got called 'you disgusting bitch,' 'you fucking... all these fucking whores,' 'y'all think that y'all just getting money, y'all don't really get no money,' uh, just so much shit, a whole bunch of shit. Get called bitches and

whores all the time. 'You're nasty,' 'you're not human,' 'you're scum of the earth,' 'why do you do this.' ... And do six weeks on Rikers Island.

INTERVIEWER: Now when you were released out of Rikers Island, did they help you with anything? Housing, transportation, healthcare, food stamps, employment? Nothing?

SELENA: No.

INTERVIEWER: Absolutely nothing?

SELENA: No.

INTERVIEWER: Wow... Is there anything else that you would like to say, that you would like people to know, as your struggle, so they know where you're coming from? So they can't judge when they actually understand where you come from as a human being?

SELENA: Just that if a female is going to be out here and do what she do, to be careful. Just know the chances that you take every day and every night. That's it. I can't say, "Yes, do it," and I can't say, "No, don't do it." I can't judge no one for what they do, 'cause I do it. And I don't plan to stop till I get rich.

3:06