

What was John Ashcroft doing on Sept. 11th, 2001?

By Vanessa Forro Vindicator Sept. 2004 (2)

After the third anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 tragedies, one has to wonder, "Are we really any safer?" Does the war the US has waged on terrorism make ant American feel safe when boarding a plane or opening a piece of mail? No. As a matter of fact, the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 have made Americans act like the very people who pulled off the attacks. Not even a week after the attacks hate crimes against those of Middle Eastern or Arab decent (or those with resembling characteristics) numbered close to 700 ("*Raising Our Voices: Resource guide*," SAALT (South Asian American Leaders of Tomorrow), 2002). The questions of who did it, what could we (the US) have done to prevent it, etc. all resound in almost every news show, paper, political commentator's voice. So, here's another point to ponder when making arguments whether the US government was prepared or actually knew what was about to happen on Sept. 11, 2001.

The information here is from the website for the International Sex Workers' Foundation for Arts, Culture and Entertainment (www.iswface.org). This information along with much more can be found on this website.

On the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, just as the World Trade Center Towers in New York were being attacked, our dedicated FBI agents, under the command of Attorney General John Ashcroft, were busy setting up wiretaps on the phones of a number of madams across the country. Their goal was to entrap as many of them as possible in their sting operation to stop what US Attorney Sal Perricone says is "the vilest form of racketeering there is, and that is the exploitation of women for the sake of a buck." So why was the Attorney General so adamant on setting up the wiretaps? The answer lies in an event that occurred months before the attacks in Florida. A prostitute who worked for a madam named Judy Krueger had an Arabic client who told the call girl about the plans his terrorist group had, including the hijacking of planes and the WTC. After her "date" with the Arabic client, the girl called her madam with the terrifying information. The madam decided they should tell the police, which they did. The local police decided that this was a matter for the FBI, so they sent the call girl and the madam to the local FBI office. Rather than investigating the information the call girl and the madam had given them, the FBI began investigating the madam and subsequently set her up and turned her into an informant to help them set up other madams across the nation. Thus, on the morning that thousands of people were being murdered in the WTC and the Pentagon by the terrorist (who had visited the prostitute) and his accomplices, the FBI were busy placing wiretaps on the phones of a national network of madams and prostitutes. Obviously, the terrorists knew our government would be more interested in the activities of prostitutes and madams than the information that ultimately cost the American people thousands of lives on that fateful day, and continues to cost the lives of hundreds of innocent Americans overseas as well as innocent victims in other countries.

So next time you're sitting around with friends or family and remembering what you were doing the morning of the September 11 attacks, think about what our government thought was so much more important than heeding the warnings of a prostitute and her madam.

More on those dirty whores....

A recent NY Times article (September 14, 2004) announced that a bid for the

decriminalization of prostitution in Berkeley, CA will be on the campaign ballot this November. Robyn Few, a former prostitute, has been advocating for this initiative for quite some time now, and it seems that despite the backlashes from feminists, the community, and some law enforcement, the measure will be on this year's ballot. Surprisingly enough, even prominent politicians such as State Senator John Burton and former San Francisco district attorney Terrence Hallihan, who see Ms. Few's initiative as a means to "shield prostitutes from violence" as well as allow them some security in their chosen profession. Many of the supporters of this bid, called the Angel Initiative, after Angel Lopez, a prostitute who was murdered in 1993, say that the issue needs to be seen as a public health and safety and a women's rights issue. Ms. Few is the founder of a sex worker's advocacy group called the Sex Workers Outreach Project.

Bid to Decriminalize Prostitution in Berkeley by Carolyn Marshall. NY Times, September 14, 2004.

All Clevelanders have a soft spot in their hearts for our lovable, truly missed Mr. Art Modell, right? Well, he certainly had a soft spot for two of his players back in 1989. When police broke up a prominent call girl ring they confiscated a little black book with over 100 names in it from the ring's madam, Karen Panek. Two of the names in it were our very own Cleveland Brown's quarterback Bernie Kosar and cornerback Hanford Dixon and Indian's outfielder Mel Hall. Dixon claims he knew Ms. Panek because she had "won" him in a March of Dimes auction event in October 1986. They never went on a date, and never saw each other since, according to him. As for Kosar, he claims that he only knew her because they both used to live in the same condominium complex in Rocky River. He said that in 1988 he changed his phone number 12 times, and has no idea how Panek got his new, recent phone number. Modell, in defending his prized player, claimed that, "Kosar is the one man of the highest moral standards." Too bad we can't say much of him.....

"Browns alert NFL over call girl ring" by Wally Guenther and John Griffith. The Plain Dealer, February 5, 1989.

Many politicians, judges, lawyers, etc. have gone out of their way to make some of the most horrifying statements against prostitutes and prostitution. For example, Pasadena Superior Court Judge Gilbert C. Alston said in 1986 that, "A woman who goes out on the street and makes a whore out of herself opens herself up to anybody. She steps outside of the protection of the law. That's a basic and fundamental legal concept." Alston made this statement during a hearing against a former South Gate police jailer who was accused of raping and sodomizing a prostitute in jail. The officer was found not guilty, basically on the grounds that prostitutes "can't" be raped, according to the judge!

"Judge says law doesn't protect prostitutes, drops rape count" by Mark Arax. Los Angeles Times, April 24, 1986.

Another outrageous example of how the law tries to curb prostitution is in Costa Mesa, CA. When prostitutes are picked up by police and charged, they have their clothes taken away from them and are given paper jump suits instead upon release. The reason, according to city officials, is to make prostitutes feel less attractive and, therefore, curb their desire to go back on the streets when they are released. Now if this isn't a civil rights violation, then I don't know what is!

“Police Seize Clothes to Collar Prostitution” by Lee Romney. Los Angeles Times, February 20, 1996.

All of these articles cited above and many others can be accessed on the International Sex Worker’s Foundation for Arts, Culture and Entertainment (ISWFACE) website at www.iswface.org.

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