

# The New York Times

January 9, 2012

## Portrait of a Prostitute

**To the Editor:**

Re “[52, and Still Working the Streets](#)” (news article, Jan. 1):

Thank you for the sensitive portrait of Barbara Terry. In the moral debates around sex work, it is often hard to see sex workers’ realities clearly. Many of our clients are like Ms. Terry — parents who have done their best to provide, faced dangers with courage, and found humor and even pleasure in their jobs.

It is too bad that these men and women face so much shaming in our society, and that we waste public money arresting women like Ms. Terry over and over again. We need a more balanced understanding of sex workers, instead of polarizing them as either victims or criminals.

SIENNA BASKIN

New York, Jan. 3, 2012

*The writer is co-director of the Sex Workers Project at the Urban Justice Center.*