

# SELL/BUY/DATE

## A Performance by Sarah Jones

Thursday, September 26, 2019  
Bing Theatre



“My goal was not to tell anyone what to think about any of this. I wanted to create a play that unlike some of the work that I’ve seen on this topic, you didn’t leave the theater wanting to die. I didn’t want anyone to think this topic is impossible to look at or is so painful there is nowhere to go. This subject is closer to all of us than we realize.”

—Sarah Jones

### KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- *Sell/Buy/Date* is a one-woman show by Sarah Jones that looks at the sex industry from the perspective of multiple different characters.
- Sarah Jones is a Tony and Obie Award-winning playwright and performer.
- The performance will be followed by a Q&A with **Sarah Jones**; **Brent Blair**, a professor in the USC School of Dramatic Arts; and **Oree Freeman**, a sex worker survivor.
- *Sell/Buy/Date* was commissioned by the NoVo Foundation, which works to end violence and discrimination against girls and women around the world.

### SARAH JONES

Sarah Jones is a playwright and performer known for the multi-character, one-person Broadway hit *Bridge & Tunnel* and the critically acclaimed *Sell/Buy/Date*. Her TED talks have garnered nearly six million views. She performed at the White House and the United State of Women Summit for President and First Lady Obama and at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

The daughter of two physicians, Jones was educated at the United Nations International School and Bryn Mawr College. A vocal advocate for the empowerment of women and girls globally, she has performed around the world as a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, raising awareness of ethnic, racial, and economic disparities in the United States. *Sell/Buy/Date* was the first production of Jones’s social justice-focused entertainment company Foment Productions, which is co-producing a docuseries with CNN.

Public opinion research shows that when thinking about sex work, people tend to focus on the idea of an individual woman or girl, rather than thinking about the people paying for sex (mostly men) or the larger economic and cultural context in which sex work happens.

### SARAH JONES ON SELF-CARE

In *Los Angeles* magazine, LaShea Delaney asked Sarah Jones how she takes care of herself to be able to perform a 20-character one-woman show. Here's what Jones said:

"I have to get sleep! I have to sleep for 20 people. I feel responsible for these 20 people so I have to treat them well and exercise well. I meditate and go to therapy twice a week if I can because it's a lot to feel. I'm feeling people's experiences every time I do the show."

### REALITY AND THEATRE

Sarah Jones started researching for *Sell/Buy/Date* in 2012. Donald Trump was a character in one of the early drafts of the piece, but Jones took him out in 2014. "I just didn't want to dignify him with a presence in the theatre," she said. "I'd say he overshot the theatre world quite a bit and unfortunately now he's writ large all over our history as a country."



Sarah Jones changes personas with the simplest of wardrobe swaps at 2014 TED Talk.

## VOCABULARY CORNER

**labor:** human activity that provides goods or services in an economy; services provided by workers for wages (as distinct from those rendered by entrepreneurs for profits)

**sex trafficking:** trafficking (i.e., illegal dealing or trading) of human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation; trafficking often involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion

**sex work:** the provision of sexual services for money or goods

**survivor vs. victim:** someone who has been affected by violence or a crime may choose to identify as a survivor, a victim, or both. The word *victim* might emphasize having recently experienced the violence or crime, whereas *survivor* might emphasize that someone has gone through a recovery process and/or is living with the effects of the violence. *Survivor* is often perceived as signifying the agency and empowerment of the person affected rather than focusing on their victimization by someone else. When referring to another person, it's always best to check in about how they identify themselves and use their preferred terms.

## FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

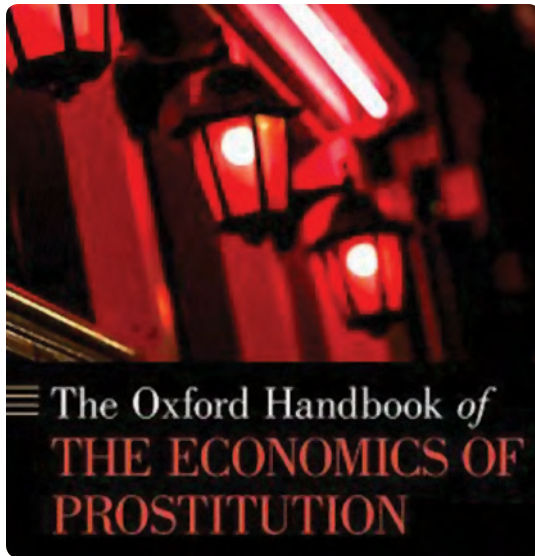
- Some sex workers are fighting for decriminalization of sex work. The NoVo Foundation argues that full decriminalization would grow the sex trade by unleashing market forces, and instead advocates partial decriminalization, which protects sex workers from arrest, but not those who pay for sex work or exploit sex workers. What do you think?
- What is your personal experience of sex work? How does that inform your opinions about it?
- Did your opinions shift in any way as a result of watching *Sell/Buy/Date*?
- Sarah Jones has said, "The times we are living in are a character in the show." What is the character of these times? How do they shape the issues *Sell/Buy/Date* addresses?

## IF YOU LIKED THIS EVENT, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT:

- Sarah Jones online [www.sarahjonesonline.com](http://www.sarahjonesonline.com)
- Sarah Jones's 2014 TED Talk: "What Does the Future Hold?" <http://bit.ly/VVSJTEDtalk>
- The NoVo Foundation <https://novofoundation.org>
- Young Women's Empowerment Project [youarepriceless.org](http://youarepriceless.org)
- OnStage LA <https://onstage.la>

## DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES

**STACY WILLIAMS** of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about this event. Those with a call number (e.g., books) are physical items which you can find in our campus libraries. Those without a call number (e.g. journal articles and databases) are electronic resources, which you can access through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at [libraries.usc.edu](http://libraries.usc.edu).



## BOOKS

- ☉ Cunningham, Scott, and Manisha Shah. *The Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Prostitution*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.  
**DOHENY MEMORIAL LIBRARY: HQ121 .O94 2016**
- ☉ Dewey, Susan. *The Routledge International Handbook of Sex Industry Research*. New York: Routledge, 2019. **(EBOOK)**
- ☉ Laing, Mary, Katy Pilcher, and Nicola Smith. *Queer Sex Work*. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015.  
**DOHENY MEMORIAL LIBRARY: HQ118 .Q44 2015**
- ☉ Nichols, Andrea J. *Sex Trafficking in the United States: Theory, Research, Policy, and Practice*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016. **(EBOOK)**
- ☉ Smith, Molly, and Juno Mac. *Revolted Prostitutes: The Fight for Sex Workers' Rights*. London: Verso, 2018.  
**LEAVEY LIBRARY: HQ118 .S65 2018**

## JOURNAL ARTICLES

- Mletzko, Deborah, Lucia Summers, and Ashley N. Arnio. "Spatial Patterns of Urban Sex Trafficking." *Journal of Criminal Justice* 58 (2018): 87–96.
- Sapiro, Beth, Laura Johnson, Judy L. Postmus, and Cassandra Simmel. "Supporting Youth Involved in Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking: Divergent Perspectives on Youth Agency." *Child Abuse & Neglect* 58 (August 2016): 99–110.

## DATABASES

### GenderWatch

Features publications that focus on the impact of gender across a broad spectrum of subject areas including media, health sciences, political science, and more.

### ProQuest Central

Serves as the central resource for researchers at all levels. Covers more than 160 subjects areas and is one of the largest aggregated databases of content that includes scholarly journals, trade publications, magazines, books, newspapers, reports, and videos.

## ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS

Gladys A. Papers (available at our USC Libraries Special Collections)  
 The Gladys A. papers consist principally of diaries detailing Gladys's daily activities and life as a sex worker in Los Angeles from January 1949, when she arrived from Michigan, through April 1952. The collection also contains photographs of Gladys and others in her life, correspondence, and personal items including high school graduation memorabilia, receipts, and other notes. Her documented life gives insight into the complex realities of race, gender, and socioeconomic relationships of Los Angeles in the early 1950s.

