

## The Dutch version of Sex and the City 17/06/2008 00:00

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**Xaviera Hollander, author of bestseller *The Happy Hooker*, speaks to Susan Tracy about her experiences in New York as a high class prostitute and madam in the sixties and gives her opinion on the state of relations between the sexes today.**

Summer is here and so is the film version of [Sex and the City](#). Women all over the globe are eagerly awaiting their turn to slip into the darkness and revel in the juicy details of the intimate lives of four lovable femme fatales of pop culture. But, even before *Sex and the City*'s creators were talking, there was another kind of sex in the city, something much more adult and taboo; nothing short of a one-woman show.

Fans of sexuality-themed books should consider it required reading to pick up a copy of the candid, groundbreaking book, *The Happy Hooker*. It is, simply, a breathtakingly frank, unabashed account of one free-thinking Dutch woman who took New York City by storm in the 1970s, becoming its most infamous madam.

The book is engrossing and - pardon the pun - hooks you from the very first sentence, and I was thrilled when fate gave me the opportunity of interviewing *The Happy Hooker* herself about that time in her life.

*Susan Tracy*: The stark rawness of the beginning paragraphs of *The Happy Hooker* vividly and immediately describe one aspect of prostitution, that of being arrested and jailed. What is your opinion on why prostitution is considered a crime in America?

*Xaviera Hollander*: Because of all the side elements involved in prostitution: pimping, providing clients, hustling clients, drug abuse, drug dealing, blackmailing of clients, robbing clients.

There is a so-called hooker hierarchy: In Holland and Germany you have the Red-Light districts, women behind windows. There are the women on the street, the junkies who work out of cars or in parks. There are clubs like bordellos and bars, and so-called 'massage parlours' where a lot of Asian women work and give great massages with a little something extra. Then you have the official call or escort girls who work for agencies. Finally, you have women who find their clients via the internet.

It is not especially true that each prostitute is involved with any or all of these activities, but often hookers do have pimps and young girls get involved as white slaves at far-too-young an age. They start off as harmless little hookers and may end up as diseased drug addicts.

*Susan Tracy*: In your days as a prostitute and madam, you made it quite clear to readers that you loved giving pleasure to men and women and that you were very happy in the business.



What percentage of working girls do you feel share the feeling of happiness in prostitution and why?

*Xaviera Hollander:* I think about 25 percent, that is, if they try and have some fun with the people they sleep with. People like my friend Annie Sprinkle used to have as much fun with her clients as I had with mine. We entertained them with all sorts of odd fantasies and tried to make them happy for a short while. Which made us happy and the money was good.

*Susan Tracy:* You say that your parents were constantly devoted to you. Is it fair to say a connection existed between wanting and even needing attention from men and women because of the early adoration you experienced, which prostitution gave you?

*Xaviera Hollander:* Yes, to a degree. We all like to be patted on the head and praised. It is terrific to hear a man say, "Honey, you are the greatest!" and have him tip you handsomely and ask for more the following time he comes to your establishment. It is also a matter of ego.

*Susan Tracy:* Throughout *The Happy Hooker* you recall advice received from your beloved mother. While you were living in South Africa and in love, you remembered your mother's words: "Never live with a man because you'd give away the best years of your life letting him have his cake and eat it too without getting anything in return, because a man never marries a woman who allows him to live with her." What are your thoughts about this sentiment today?

*Xaviera Hollander:* I have come a long way and lived with quite a few men and, strange but true, at this very moment I enjoy a rather conservative, monogamous marriage and love it.

*Susan Tracy:* Looking back on your engagement with the American man you met in South Africa, your subsequent move to New York City to marry him, and the mutual dislike between you and his mother, what would you have done differently? What do you think is the single most important action a woman should expect from a man who says he loves her and wants to marry her?

*Xaviera Hollander:* A man shows he really loves a woman by keeping his promises. If a man proposes to marry a woman, he doesn't let her wait an eternity. He doesn't lie that he is a single man while he is, in fact, still married. A man has to choose his woman's side and not the side of his mother. By treating her as an equal, sharing the same thoughts and ideas and, of course, differ enough with one another to have a few interesting arguments. Always make sure the libidos are matched, the desire for each other still is there, even if after a few years the flame gets a bit lower. Have compassion for one another and be there for each other through thick and thin.

*Susan Tracy:* A friend of mine once said to me, "There are two kinds of people in your life; those who will worship you and those who will deconstruct you." What is your opinion on this statement and which of these would you say describes your then-fiancée's behaviour towards you?

*Xaviera Hollander:* My present husband is the adoring type, something I never really had before. The love of my life 25 years ago, John Drummond, a brilliant and boisterous

Scotsman with a 'Thatcheresque' accent had, especially under the influence of a few Scotches, beers, or wine, become quite destructive towards me. He is the only one who managed to deprive me of my self-esteem or identity, temporarily. He used to say that a British man's way of saying "I love you" is to put his woman down.

*Susan Tracy:* What was the reasoning behind your mother saying, "Never accept money from a man unless you are married to him?"

*Xaviera Hollander:* She did not want me to get a reputation as an easy lay or "Flying Dutchman." She would have preferred it if I married a nice respectable man as a virgin, like she was when she married my dad.

*Susan Tracy:* Briefly describe for a moment Evelyn St. John and his role in your life. He said to you, "You have all the qualities a man should pay for."

*Xaviera Hollander:* I was young, horny, and bright, had a good job at the Dutch consulate with a lousy salary, had fun in life but was desperately lonely and looking for Mr. Goodbar. I was naïve and believed I had fallen in love, realizing that he was married and lived in Paris, with me alone in New York. He meant that someone as frivolous, charming, mostly enthusiastic and spontaneous as me should find a nice sugar daddy I could fall in love with, have fun and sex with, and get rewarded for it with cash. I preferred to become a call-girl and call my own shots rather than sit and wait for the phone to ring in case your sugar daddy wanted you on duty.

*Susan Tracy:* Soon after Mr. St. John went home to Paris, you met a Dutchman named Dirk. What was his influence on you?



*Xaviera Hollander:* It was the beginning of a lot of often unemotional, short-term sexual relationships; sometimes kinky, sometimes rude and short, and sometimes fun with repeat performances, but usually rewarded by payment. I learnt to enjoy sex for the sake of sex and tried to exclude my emotions with clients, though sometimes I would have massive crushes on some of them and then I found it most difficult to take their money after a while.

*Susan Tracy:* You discuss the wives of your customers, how they lead lives of luxury, but

don't give their husbands sex, which is where prostitutes come in to satisfy a need. Why are wives not having sex with their husbands?

*Xaviera Hollander:* It was just not done in those days that wives really liked sex. Nowadays those things have changed. In the late nineties women started taking the lead in bed more and more. Often almost emasculating their men, their men started to develop erection problems, as they were worried about not living up to their woman's expectations. Now we have Viagra. And the chance of failure has diminished.

Swinging was not in, neither were kinky S&M parties. Key-swapping parties started in the 1980s. As a hooker I noticed how often men talked about their wives in a horrid way; "My wife, she is as cold as a starfish, etc., or, "She is d.i.b." (Dead in Bed). So I taught them that there is no such thing as a frigid woman, only the case of a lousy lay - the man. I was the one to teach them how to please a woman and often told them, "Now go home and practice what I preach on your wife." Some had given their spouses such great lessons, that their wives indeed learned how to please their man and vice versa and then I sometimes lost them as clients.

*Susan Tracy:* You learned a great deal about sex, the male psyche, and the know-how of pleasing men and women. You also mentioned that your clientele became "better quality" – please elaborate on what "better quality" means...?

*Xaviera Hollander:* I mean a man who sticks to the rules of decency, has a better fantasy, lets me play certain role games, uses his imagination and initiative and, in fact, also learns how to please me sexually. I was one of the few hookers I have ever known who insisted on having some real fun as well. "An orgasm a day keeps the doctor away" was my slogan.



*Susan Tracy:* What do brothels represent psychologically to men? And why don't bordellos exist that cater to women?

*Xaviera Hollander:* Brothels represent a safe harbour where just about anything goes: their wish was our demand, or vice versa.

There are certain countries where women do get what they want, certain Caribbean islands have loads of handsome dark men who cater to elderly schoolteacher-type Caucasian tourists in exchange for money or favours or clothes, etc. In Montenegro, the former Yugoslavia, there are some of the handsomest men in the world, who all cater to elderly women, so-called gigolos. In London there was even not only a butler school but also a gigolo school!

*Susan Tracy:* What are the differences between a prostitute and a courtesan, if any?

*Xaviera Hollander:* The hierarchy. A time and place for everything, but it is still the same act, just in a different ambiance.

*Susan Tracy:* Very recently in the anything-goes town of Amsterdam, its most famous high-class brothel, [YabYum](#), was closed down in addition to the as-famous live-sex show nightclub, Casa Rosso. Why do you think this is taking place?

*Xaviera Hollander:* They have just decided not to close YabYum down but to convert it into an escort service. A lot of mafia and drug money is behind it and that's what the main concern is, not the hookers. Nothing against prostitution, but apparently they were filming the clients and blackmailing some for a lot of money.

*Susan Tracy:* What is your opinion on the state of relations between the sexes these days? In which ways do you think life is now better for both men and women after the sexual revolution? In which ways do you feel life might be worse?

*Xaviera Hollander:* Today, anything goes, there are no more taboos. Life gets boring sexually when there is little more to discover. In *Sex and the City* all questions about sex are being discussed. On porno websites and Playboy channels sex is being played out ad nauseum -- there is just nothing new to discover anymore. The more money there is to be spent, the kinkier the men get and the more blasé they become. Gone are romance and sneaky trips to the park or woods or beach to discover sex with your young lover-to-be. Dad and Mom hand out the pill to their 14-year-old before their teenage daughter even wants it. Prevention is not always better than precaution.

*Susan Tracy:* Any final thoughts/advice you'd like to share with our readers?



*Xaviera Hollander:* For me there's no Botox, face or boob lifts. I don't smoke cigarettes, nor do I drink booze, but sure love my sweets, and I am not just referring to my lover. I still know how to enjoy life to its fullest. I am a survivor and am constantly reinventing myself.

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