

Episode 19: History of the Korean Sex Industry w/ Shawn Yoon Pt. 2

[00:00:00] **Drew Stegmaier:** Hey everybody. This is The Steg Drew Show and I'm your host, Drew Stegmaier. This show is new, evolving and finding itself. We don't yet know what it will turn out to be. And that's exciting. I believe the world has a current civility deficit and with this endeavor, I'll be exploring tough and taboo topics with compassion and incivility so you can do the same with your friends, family, and coworkers.

[00:00:25] Hey guys, this is part two of the history of sex in Korea with Sean Yoon, make sure to catch part one. It is already live. In this episode, we cover Korean sexual history from the world war II era to present day. We also talk about capitalism and the commoditization of all things.

Again, Sean posited in episode one, that you can't have capitalism without the commoditization of women's bodies, which is a pretty big bold claim. And in this episode, we get into why that is the case. And again, this one. Is one of those episodes where we discuss an inconvenient truth. And at the very end, Sean reads a poem.

It is a famous Korean poem, but he has translated it into English and it's quite beautiful and sums up the conversation nicely. So I hope you enjoy it.

[00:01:39] **Drew Stegmaier:** All right, Sean, welcome back.

So little bit of a precursor today. We're going to be talking about the sexual history of Korea from roughly post-World war two to present day, which also includes, um, I'll call it interaction with other nation states and cultures.

[00:02:01] And again, real quick for those who are curious about this, we did part one. That episode is live. It comes from roughly the 14th century. To the world war II era, talking about sexual history, prostitution from Korea in Japan.

[00:02:20] **Shawn Yoon:** Yeah. Um, so, uh, last episode I began with like a disclaimer, talking about how this is not either no extolling of Korean virtues or like, you know, a hating on Japan.

[00:02:40] Uh, and I think, you know, if the listener doubted me in the past, they will become convinced in this episode because the story that I want to, um, illustrate for the listener is that. If Korea seemed like a victim and you know, maybe like, oh, maybe it's, uh, you know, maybe it's acting in a quote unquote moral way.

[00:03:09] Uh, I think that's a mistake first of all. But if it looks like that, it is because it was slower on the uptake on the commodification of women's bodies. Right. So it was quite on board with, I guess, what would you call it? The oppression of women's bodies, which is like the, uh, Confucian sort of, um, you

know, what should I say, uh, you know, the spirit, but as Korea moves from a colonized nation, you know, and that, you know, that.

[00:03:54] Being a little bit slower to the commodification and you get capitalization, um, period of world history allowed Korea to become a victim and therefore appear more moral than, uh, Japan, which was, you know, because it was earlier to, uh, become more mercenary. It was earlier to open up to the west. Uh, it had much more of a, um, uh, you know, it was there and therefore it was able to become a colonizer and therefore seems like a much more immoral, uh, state.

[00:04:37] However, I think today, as we move into modern times, we're really going to see how, you know, it's not a. Ethnic thing or even a cultural thing. It really is. I will argue, uh, the way the system of capitalism, the system of our civilization, right? Like, and if capitalism is such a big, vague word, I would say, look, I don't know what to call it, but our civilization.

[00:05:14] And at this point it really is a global civilization seems to thrive and seems to be based on the commodification of sexuality specifically. And, you know, particularly, I mean, you know, and as we actually go on, we would have to, you know, my, my words, you know, me talking about women's bodies and so on will become, you know, a bit more problematic.

[00:05:42] We, you know, we, we see homosexual prostitution becoming much more, uh, uh, much more, uh, important and so on, but really I'm just going to, um, you know, shorthand say that the commodification of a certain group of people is what our civilization seems to be based upon. And the story really begins, uh, this time in 1945, the wars just ended the Soviet union and the United States.

[00:06:15] They're both on the Korean peninsula and, you know, they're there the Soviet union at that time wanted some part of the Korean peninsula, but you know, not all of it, they were, you know, not super confident of their ability to kill. Uh, and the United States also at the time were a bit iffy about the Korean peninsula.

[00:06:37] They were like, well, maybe we just want Japan. Uh, we can leave this sort of, uh, you know, a bit of an open question, but, uh, that soon changes with the Korean war. Um, and Korea becomes a forward military base for, uh, the cold war. Uh, the coal, uh, the Korean war had ended up with a hundred thousand, uh, widows and, uh, 3 million people died.

[00:07:10] And that led to the conditions, uh, where we begin the story today.

[00:07:18] **Drew Stegmaier:** So before we dive into that, just a few, maybe notes and contextual things for folks. There's a concept. You could say it's a psychological concept called wound matching. There's a lot of wound matching today in our culture. Like, oh, I'm hurt.

[00:07:37] Oh, well, I'm hurting more. Um, that helps nothing. Then it's just to hurt people. Like if I have a broken finger and you say, well, my knees are broken, okay. I still have a broken finger. You have a

broken eat now we're just to hurt people arguing. Right. And I think this happens with nation states too. Right? One nation state can suffer from atrocities.

[00:08:00] So can another comparing them don't lessen any atrocity. It does not less than any harm. You just have to hurt nation states. Um, so I think that's fair to say in terms of mentioning Korea versus Japan, it's like, Hey, messed up stuff happened here and there ranking them. Doesn't help anything. It's like, well, If we rank the atrocities, then they go away.

[00:08:22] No, they don't. They don't. Um, second thing in terms of the commoditization of, of sex and women's bodies, I would argue that in a capitalistic system, there are strong incentives for commoditization of everything. I think Peter teal has a pretty decent book, uh, zero to one where he talks about this concept of zero to one, meaning someone invents a technology or let's say a new way of being.

[00:08:53] And then one to N is bringing that to the masses. And often the people who become rich are the one to end people. And at the same time when something gets brought to the masses, um, I would say that's what commoditization is. Right? And when we commoditize things that. I would say are inherently decommoditizing.

[00:09:21] Um, man, that's what I would lump into the group of crimes against humanity. So for example, uh, since that might seem a little esoteric markets themselves break down in a few situations, like what's the price of a friend, how do you value a friend with a dollar amount, even entertaining that thought experiment sounds pretty messed up, right?

[00:09:42] How much do you value your health? Right? How do we price medical drugs? Well, the alternative is, um, you'll die in four months. So how much would you like to pay? Right. And we have prices for these things, but they go into this category of, again, what I would call twisted, just, just wrong. Right? And so you have this reality of, Hey, people want to have sex, people need to have sex, and then you throw a market in there.

[00:10:09] You throw market capitalism in there. Oh, what's the value of this? What's the value of it? Like people, this creates life forms, this activity creates life forms. How do you value that? Uh, poorly you answer is poorly. You, you, you value it poorly.

[00:10:24] **Shawn Yoon:** Um, it is, uh, I think, well, the, the first thing you said, and the second thing you said are actually they go hand in hand, right?

[00:10:32] Like the first thing about wound matching or, um, you know, like victim or victim all at Olympics. I think some, uh, some, you know, some people say, uh, it really is a, you know, it's a very, it's a tale as old as time, you know, divide and conquer the, uh, you know, victims fighting each other instead of fighting, uh, or, um, really figuring out why the wound exists.

[00:11:03] Right. And I think that concept goes really well together with. The commodification of things that aren't supposed to be commodified. And I think it's more than just sex, like a lot of things that, uh,

you know, a lot of symptoms we see with our world today, um, that, you know, we might, we, that we feel like our fucked up, uh, come from this commodify commodification of things that are not supposed to be commodified.

[00:11:35] Things like, um, the commodification of, uh, having a child, right. Having a family. Right. It costs a lot. And that's why fewer and fewer people are having kids, uh, because people are like, well, you know, it would probably cost me X amount of dollars to have a kid and raise, uh, you know, the kid to, you know, self-sufficiency, but it's not, it's, it's, it's so much bigger than that, right?

[00:12:04] Like, how do we commodify. Uh, the right to clean water, right? Like it's water is like literally life. So commodifying water. Oh. You know, and, and, you know, that's kind of the logic of, I think our civilization breaks down, right. Because we're like, well, we can commodify some water, uh, because you know, otherwise we'll have a misallocation of resources, which I think on the surface sounds very sensible.

[00:12:37] But if you take the logic to its extreme, it becomes, uh, a crime against humanity. And that's where you get people who, uh, you know, who are pumping out water from, uh, California aquifers. When, um, you know, the rest of California is, you know, in a drought, like I don't have answers for these problems, but to me, they seem very related.

[00:13:04] That's I think pretty safe for me to say. Um, and you know, I think that's, that's where I want to approach all of this, right? Like that's the context through which I want to see, uh, Korea and the sexual industry. Right? Like, I don't think it's unrelated to everything else. Like I actually, when we look at, and you know, this is sort of, um, uh, prelude to, you know, how I'm going to, where I'm going to take the story by the end of this episode, right?

[00:13:37] Like by the time the 21st century rolls around and we have K-pop and why is K-pop popular? And like, my argument would be that, well, you know, it's really excellent commodification of sexuality, right? Like. Just very well done. Um, they've commodified sexuality in a very enticing and marketized marketable ways in way.

[00:14:04] And you know, like if you look at the history of how the entertainment industry grows up, along with the, the sexual industry and how, um, you know, banning pornography actually increased the demand for these sexually stimulating, but legal quote, unquote entertainment, uh, spurs on the. Development of the K-pop industry, as well as how just below the surface, like K-pop is just fraught and there's rife with sexual, um, oppression and exploitation and, you know, stuff that I'm not really an expert in, but that I clearly can see.

[00:14:54] Right. Almost anybody. I think, you know, if you open up, you know, your, your thought process will see that K-pop is sexually exploitative, not only to D artists, but also I would argue to the consumers of that industry, but not to get too far ahead of myself. I want to, you know, look at how, um, Korean. State the Korean state in 1950s.

[00:15:22] Right? So it's right after world war two, right after the Korean war, there are tens of thousands of us soldiers in Korea. Apparently there were hundreds of thousands, um, of prostitutes living near our base. Right? So Korea in the fifties was such a poor country that the demand for sex work, which comes from, you know, historically it comes from like the urban, rich, you know, the urban elite males, uh, just did not exist, but the state sees women's bodies as a tool for, uh, making dollars basically.

[00:16:14] Um, so they wanted us soldiers to spend their dollars. On these women and for these women to buy things like new clothing, um, make up food and send it to their parents. And so on in order to, uh, jumpstart, a war torn economy. So you have these women who were essentially pimped out by the government right now, I'm going to, um, look at, there were some, uh, interviews from these women who are saying that they were praised as a dollar earning Patriots, right?

[00:17:01] The government not only sponsored classes, uh, for these prostitutes about basic English and etiquette, but also praise them when they were making, um, you know, When they were getting a lot of customers, right. They were like, oh wow. You know, our English lessons really helped you get more customers, which is making more dollars.

[00:17:23] Right. And it's not just that, like they were explicitly providing, uh, you know, condoms, STD, uh, protection, uh, and, um, you know, uh, testing in order to basically allow these American GIS to feel comfortable using these women's bodies in order to make more dollars. Right. It was. And in 1961, Uh, the, um, the th the conflicts inherent in this system where a government, which is supposed to be a democratic government and Korea at this time was, uh, also becoming quite rapidly, a Christian country.

[00:18:19] Now, Korea is not a Christian country in the sense that say, you know, Italy or France is culturally a Catholic country, right? Like no one would, uh, deny that Italy is a Catholic as a culturally Catholic country. However, um, whereas Italy today, I would say, I don't know about Italy, but I've heard that France is a very, um, uh, you know, a lot of people are atheist.

[00:18:49] That's not very, uh, you know, it's not very. Polite to talk about, um, Catholicism, but in Korea today, um, Protestantism is actually a huge political and social force. And the reason why that happened was, you know, the seeds of that were planted in the forties and fifties, where being American was equated to being Western, which was equated with being capitalist, which was equated at being modern.

[00:19:24] And all of that was packaged in, Hey, if you're a Protestant, if you go to church, that means you're modern. It means you're pro-American it means you're anticommunist it means your capitalist. It means you're a civilized, et cetera, et cetera. But how can a nominally civilized Christian nation. Be a pimping state, right?

[00:19:49] So in 1961, they created a law against, uh, and this is actually really funny. And you know, a lot of these laws have, uh, very illuminating names. So it is, uh right now that means nothing. So

Unilock actually means a fallen woman, right? So this is a prevention of the fallen women act. Right. So, um, pretty funny, I think, uh,

[00:20:18] **Drew Stegmaier:** Before we dive into that I wanted to backtrack. Um, so Japan has the prostitution prevention act of 1957, right? So from then till present day, I would say that was a preventative measure, right? It's it's not illegal, but it's discouraged this stuff that was happening in Korea. The I'll call it state sponsored prostitutes. Were there laws that put this into effect or was it more of a case of, Hey, there's no laws against prostitution.

[00:20:46] And so the governments, the governments allocating funding towards this industry, right? This is economic stimulus via sex. Where are laws on the books about this? Did those laws get overturned? What's the story pre this 1961 new law.

[00:21:02] **Shawn Yoon:** So the government itself was born only, you know, maybe a decade and a half before this law.

[00:21:12] The, you know, there's, that's the difference with the Japanese state, um, which had existed. Um, whereas Korea after 1945, just went through a complete sort of wipe and reset, right. Um, there might have been, uh, some laws on the books. Certainly the chosen dynasty had strong, um, injunctions against it, but it's, it's seems that prior to this, basically it was a free for all.

[00:21:46] Okay. Um, and after 1961, you know, it was still mostly a free for all, except now they, uh, were a bit more concentrated into certain areas. They were a bit more, uh, you know, hush, hush. Uh, but another thing to, uh, note in sort of the way these things work in Korea is that these laws. Are illuminating because of what, how they fail.

[00:22:22] Right. It's really not how they work that, uh, that, that tells us anything because none of these laws work and we're going to see this again, then again, um, and really the, the, the way we learn through. So through the study of these laws seem to be feeding how they were circumvented and how they were designed to fail.

[00:22:50] Right? So for example, this D you know, the, you know, the prevention of fallen women act right, was essentially circumvented by the vagueness. You know, being a fallen woman, right. What, what does that really mean? Uh, and certain, you know, and also being circumvented by, um, geographic locations, they classified certain areas as, um, as you know, no-go zones for, um, Korea, uh, for, I guess, upstanding citizens where, uh, the law no longer, uh, function so that the, so through the sixties and seventies, Korea.

[00:23:43] So during the sixties, careers just stay, you know, it's a war torn nation is very poor. Women's bodies are commoditized, commoditized in a lot of different ways as well. This is also a time when women are, uh, famously were selling their hair to be made as wigs. Um, to be sold, um, abroad, uh, I think today, the country that does, that does that the most is, uh, Brazil.

[00:24:16] So you often see Brazilian women's hair, uh, made into wigs and in the sixties it was Korean women. And that is, um, that changes in the seventies. Right? So in the seventies, as the Korean economy, uh, sort of, I guess, uh, quote unquote improves, it becomes, um, a bit more of a service economy and also, uh, signals careers entering into the global market proper.

[00:24:54] Right. So, whereas previously it was just like, oh, it's a military camp where women shaved their heads and, you know, make wigs. Right, but in the seventies it became more of a tourist destination. So the seventies, when we talk about, uh, the sexual industry is the rise of the sex tour industry and the sex tour industry predominantly catered to Japanese men because, uh, because Japanese society, as it modernized had, uh, you know, they, the, these Japanese businessmen came to Korea, looking for cheap sex and quote unquote, uh, obedient, traditional, uh, women.

[00:25:47] And this is also, uh, the, the parallels, the parallel development in Korea was that Korea was rapidly urbanizing and the rural population. Was moving into the cities for jobs. Now, if you remember, from the last episode, we thought, how in the forties and fifties Japan had, uh, as it experienced, um, you know, the shutting of mine, coal mining towns, and, you know, these small industrial towns experienced the same influx of, uh, rural women into cities, looking for jobs and, you know, falling into the sexual industry, you know, when they failed to find, um, well-paying jobs.

[00:26:44] But by the time the sixties roll around Japan, uh, you know, 1964, Japan, uh, you know, the Tokyo Olympics Shinkansen, the Japanese miracle, et cetera, et cetera. Women were no longer, um, being thrown into the sexual, uh, you know, industry, you know, at such, you know, uh, you know, bargain costs, right? So in the 1970s, the Korean, um, sexual market, the sexual industry is divided into the traditional, uh, military base, uh, prostitution and the new somewhat more, um, I guess, modernized, perhaps a bit more service oriented, uh, form of sex tourism.

[00:27:40] **Drew Stegmaier:** Before getting deeper into that, I'm curious. Um, so this log gets past the fallen women act of 1961, um, a few things, and we don't have to go deep, deep into these. To zoom out a bit, historically, it sounds like, um, at first, and this happened kind of with Japan as well, but in a different way, it was, uh, for lack of a better term, we'll call it barbarism right or free for all.

[00:28:09] Then there was some pressure to conform as a means of creating economic growth. Um, and in Japan, that was the 1872 Maria Luiz incident, right. Was, oh man, we have to, you know, clean ourselves up to make sure this money keeps flowing. Then in Korea, that similar moment was in 1960. One of, Hey, we need to have the appearance of, you know, being a well-to-do country.

[00:28:40] Um, and I have this idea it's it feels pompous and weird to like cite yourself, but there's an economic idea. Maybe it exists somewhere. If it does, I haven't read it into the book, but. It's very simple as where there is demand supply, we'll find a way to exist, period. Right? You have your economic supply and demand curves.

[00:29:02] And the thing is sex is one of those things where there is demand. There will always be demand for sex, whether the supply is legal or not, doesn't really matter. It'll find a way to exist. And it

sounds like that's, that's, what's happening here. And then another quick aside, um, maybe, maybe we could go deeper on this.

[00:29:25] We'll see. Cause it's, it's not directly related to sex, but I think where sex kind of ties in and it's interesting where you have the laws. Switching is in capitalism. We have this weird thing, which is you have small businesses, you have big businesses, you have monopolies right now. There's a lot of people who hate Amazon, right?

[00:29:47] Amazon is bad, evil, et cetera. At some point, Amazon was the. At some point, it was like, go Amazon, there's a little guy go, you got this. And there's not, as far as I understand, a clear point in what I'll call the corporate life cycle, where a company goes from being an underdog to you're too big and you got to go down.

[00:30:09] Right. And, and when it comes to the sex and sexual history, you could say the nation was an underdog in terms of the global economic Zeit Geist, if you will. Right. And it's like, Hey, we gotta be scrappy. What can we do to get economic growth? Oh, this sex thing can promote economic growth. Okay. Well now we're at X level of civilized.

[00:30:34] We can't do that anymore. We need to do something else to fuel growth. And, and I think there's some interesting parallel. It's like at what point does a company become big and evil versus you're cheering them on to survive. And it sounds like when it comes to. Sex in Korea. There's a, there's an odd parallel there where it's like, this is actively encouraged by the state.

[00:30:55] And then the state says, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. We're beyond that. Now. That is not okay. And, um, it's, it's unclear exactly where that threshold lies.

[00:31:07] **Shawn Yoon:** It's I think a bit different from my perspective, right? My perspective is that there is a long history of this and much longer than say from, you know, the fifth, you know, like maybe, you know, the thirties to two thousands, right.

[00:31:29] It's not the history of this oppression. I don't think is, is a hundred years old. I mean, I, what I'm trying to say, um, I think that's clear to you obviously, right? Like, you know, it's not like not, none of us is arguing that the oppression of women. It's a hundred years old or that like, we were cheering it like, you know, before the 20th century.

[00:31:48] Right. But what I'm trying to say is that I see a clear line that begins from the 14th century, right. Or like even before, like what I w you know, the argument that I was trying to make at the beginning of the last episode, which everyone should listen to, is that D progression of a change to the stature of women right now, the modern sort of, uh, conception of women's status is, oh, like women were oppressed, but in like the sixties, women fought for the right to vote.

[00:32:35] And like, you know, in the eighties, women fought for the right to like, you know, equal pay. And in the two thousands, women are fighting for like the right to equal representation and, you know,

we're just getting better and better and better, you know, kind of starting with the sixties. Right. Um, or, you know, like some people might push that back.

[00:32:56] They're like, oh, you know, starting in the 19th century, women were fighting for stuff like the Victorian and the, you know, era was the worst. We're getting better and better. I disagree with that conception. I, I'm not an expert on women's history, but my conception of civilization is that it's been a very steady path on, um, the exploitation of women.

[00:33:26] Right. We begin, in my opinion, we begin in like prehistoric era. As, you know, uh, you know, as the, as matriarchal civilizations, the sacredness of sexual activity, because the sacredness of life and, um, and the sacredness of life to not only, you know, life itself, but also to agriculture, to society, and, you know, the, the, the role of women being sort of sacrosanct to the invention of religion, the invention of con you know, states to the invent, you know, to the separation of religion and entertainment.

[00:34:19] Through the separation of entertainment and sex work through the, uh, to develop of sex, work into a commodified form through markets and through prostitution, through the service economy. And finally, um, you know, to the present day where I would argue that, uh, we have become so thoroughly, we have fallen so thoroughly from grace that, um, that we have to sell that all of us are commodified, that all of us are.

[00:34:55] I would argue that all of us are at this point, uh, fallen women right now. Um, I don't know what that means to people, but what I'm trying to say is that all of us are to commodify ourselves and. Only a prostitute would have been asked to say 300 years ago.

[00:35:22] **Drew Stegmaier:** I agree is slavery. Nonetheless. I think SIM talks about that.

[00:35:25] And one of his books, I want to say blacks one, but, um, wage, slavery, or what's coming up for me is there's an article. I'll try to find it and put it in the show notes. Um, I wrote a story called the side hustle, ization of everything, right? And this is like contemporary America, this woman, uh, she sees her friend, she meets someone and they're just chit chatting, you know, getting to know each other.

[00:35:51] And it turns out one of her hobbies is making dresses, designing and making dresses. And she's like, oh, cool. Do you have an Etsy store? And I think that encapsulates exactly what you're saying. It's like, we're not allowed to have hobbies. You can't just design and make dresses because she wants to like, oh, you do that.

[00:36:09] Well, you should have an Etsy store, Shopify. You know?

[00:36:12] **Shawn Yoon:** Or an Instagram presence, right. At least they portfolio. Yes. Right? No, absolutely. Like I, I think, and you know, this also relates to like the K pop ization of, um, of pop culture, right? Like, um, you know, I would say if you, uh, if you turn back, you know, if you use the time machine to go back, you know, and, you know, you showed modern day K-pop to say, you know, even

Brittany Spears and you know, like the producers of Brittany Spears in the, in the nineties, they would be like, whoa, this is way too crass.

[00:36:53] Right. Like, I mean, we're, we're like, Brittany is. Character, right? Like she has a personality, right? Like who are these faceless women? Um, you know, who are going to be popular for like an album or two, we're making an artist here. Right? Like I think that is D D the Neo liberalization of like the entertainment industry is mirrored by the Neo liberalization of the sexual industry, which is mirrored by the Neo liberalization of everything.

[00:37:27] Like, there is, there is no escape. Like we are just quite poorly poured out. Um, I'm sorry to say, like, you know, and I, I am, you know, like purposefully trying to be, um, Uh, crass here. Like I think there are no better words for it. Like this is the horrific location of our culture of you and me, of our, my mother, our, um, friends, everyone.

[00:38:00] And that's why I feel like this is worth talking about that this is worth like this. Isn't some story, uh, of a foreign country, right? Like this is actually the dissonances inherent in our, in our societies. Right? Like in yours and mine, that's just been, that's really audible in this history. Right? Like in, in this history lake, we can really see like, A little bit of that.

[00:38:36] And, you know, and I think, and you know, this is, this, this goes to why I am quite passionate about, um, about, about history, about politics and about, um, uh, about imperialist history and imperialist politics, right? Like, although I'm not an expert, I think when we look at how the modern Japanese state and, you know, one thing that's famous about Japan, and I think most American listeners would know that like, you know, Japan is, um, at this point, you know, people, a lot of people say, see it as a sexless nation, right.

[00:39:17] It is a, a country of, in celibates, a country that has sort of, you know, that's just gradually getting older. That's just becoming, uh, No, that's just face that seems to be going towards some sort of an apocalypse. And we see it in all sorts of popular culture all the way back to the eighties. Right. Evan Gelien Akira, all of these things are, you know, these, these continuous reimagination of, of apocalypse, right?

[00:39:48] Like it's another, you know, we get more Hiroshima, more Nagasaki and today, right? Like there is not even that, right? Like today we have, uh, you know, like, you know, I'm passionate about Monga. Like I love it. And, but if you look at Japanese Monga today, like so much of it is, is just like Hollywood. It is lifeless.

[00:40:10] It is a repetition of what works of, you know, of that little of that, you know, the spark of life, that spark of creativity, that spark of beauty, you know, um, That I think that represents to me what happens when you. When you don't fight back against the empire, right? Whether it is the empire, whether the empire is your state, right?

[00:40:38] Like whether the empire is the Japanese empire, you are a Japanese Imperial citizen, whether the empire is, you know, the, you know, the Japanese empire and you're a Korean colonize,

uh, you know, you know, you're a Korean colonial, or whether it's the U S led global Neo liberal empire, and you are a celery men in Japan who finds it too expensive to get, you know, your local prostitutes.

[00:41:08] So you have to travel to Korea where you were, you know, to your formal colonial nation and, you know, feel for a little bit for, you know, for like a weekend, for a week that oh, You know, I also, our country or my ethnicity was also at one point powerful and I am actually also rich and powerful. And you know, that exact same thing is mirrored today by Koreans traveling to, uh, Southeast Asia and participating in neoliberal empire, you know, you know, and they're like, well, you know, the Korean one because of its status as a first world, currency has Imperial power over say the Filipino currency or the Thai currency.

[00:42:01] And, you know, that is I think the same form of appropriation, just a different name. And I think that's a, a, an excellent sort of return to the seventies because the seventies, apparently 80% of Japanese tourists to Korea. Said that, uh, Korean geishas or Korean key things were what they most remembered about Korea.

[00:42:29] And this isn't like a, you know, 80% of Japanese tourists, you went to these key things, these prostitution shops, but 80% said that was the highlight of their trip. So, you know, probably nearly a hundred percent of Japanese tourists at this time were coming, uh, to be, uh, you know, coming to use sexual tourism, right?

[00:42:56] Apparently seeing an older Japanese men with a younger Korean woman was really common in the seventies. Right. Which also led to a lot of anti, um, Japanese feelings and Thai prostitution fields. And, you know, in a way made these women even more ostracized, even more, um, eBay, lower class have a separate class that you know, that, that they are colonials, right?

[00:43:34] They're still colonized. Maybe the rest of society has become an independent country, but these women through the power of currency are still, um, colonized. But it's not just that you actually have a separate of system of appropriation happening, apparently these, uh, so the money that, you know, so the sex industry makes money.

[00:44:00] Right. And it was divided into, uh, uh, three, right? So. 33% when to the Japanese tour agency. So the, so I guess the marketers, right, the 33% went to the restaurant where these key sayings, the geisha, the Korean geishas would be, uh, performing, right? So that is, I guess, rent and the 33% and the last 33% would be the, would be going to the sex workers themselves.

[00:44:36] However, from that 33%, they would have to spend a lot of it bribing the police officers, bribing the hotel workers. And, you know, I have heard anecdotally from, uh, you know, my parents that the seventies were a time of rampant corruption, right. The police. You know, took bribes as a way of life, you know, this wasn't, um, hush, hush, right.

[00:45:06] They would literally come over and be like, all right, time to collect some money and better pay up. Right. So that's the seventies and these women, uh, were, you know, they would, they would,

you know, use, use heroin. Um, apparently heroin use is quite common at this time, despite career's, uh, reputation even today of being a pretty drug-free country right now that's the seventies.

[00:45:35] But as the eighties roll around yet another development, um, occurs. Right. And I think this is, uh, why the Korean story is quite illuminated because Korea goes from a colonized nation to one in, uh, to a, you know, basically a, uh, Like a raw materials, exporting nation to a industrial nation, to a service economy nation to now a financial, um, I guess, uh, advanced, um, you know, up on the value chain economy, we really see a rapid change, uh, that allows us to sort of understand things a bit more clearly than in the eighties.

[00:46:28] Uh, you have two things. So, um, the advancement of the domestic economy creates an urban elite. So now for the first time, since the chosen dynasty, Koreans are rich enough to afford their own prostitutes and, um, the. The wages are going up, which means that Japanese tourists are, um, you know, they're going to Thailand and Cambodia instead of Korea.

[00:47:06] So the eighties is, um, from what little bit I research is just an incredibly like, um, I guess a boom economy for prostitution, right? We, you have all sorts of strange forms of prostitution appearing, um, prostitution in, uh, you know, So prostitution with beer and whiskey, which would be the top level and then prostitution with tea, which is like a, you know, a lower level.

[00:47:38] And then there were a prostitution, uh, going on in barber shops, which was the cheapest, um, as well as the first home grown development of the pornographic industry. Now I, I I've, I've tried to, I've tried to look at the pornographic industry because I think it's very closely related, but I've given up, it's such so huge.

[00:48:06] It's its own topic. I can't handle it.

[00:48:08] **Drew Stegmaier:** We will call it sex adjacent. Yes.

[00:48:11] **Shawn Yoon:** Yeah. And the eighties also sees a change in the sexual mores. Society. Right. So as the liberalization of Korean society progresses, um, more and more women are seeing, uh, prostitution as a, uh, maybe not as a job, but as a way to, um, as a transition into, uh, independence.

[00:48:46] Right? So this is, uh, connected to the destination of the rural economy where, you know, there, the rural folk had just no currency and sending your daughter to the city to become a factory worker. Or perhaps a small time like clerk or a secretary was seen as, you know, Duffy to do, right. Like, you know, maybe your daughter will go to high school, learn some maths and then go on to become a clerk at a small business somewhere.

[00:49:28] And that would, and then she would send money back home to her brothers and maybe her brother will, um, you know, use that money to go to college and then, you know, open his own small

business or become a lawyer or, or something. And, you know, that was sort of the Korean dream. Right. Of course, you know, it's a dream because you know, you'd have to be asleep to believe in it.

[00:49:54] And a lot of women fell through the cracks and ended up being prostitutes. Right. That is the eighties now in another really important context all the way from 1945, all the way to 1989 is that all of this is happening under a dictatorship, right? It is either a, you know, it's a right wing dictatorship or a right wing military dictatorship, or a chaotic, uh, you know, bullshit between two dictatorships.

[00:50:38] Right. But in 1989, for the first time, free elections and meaningfully free elections and a civilian. Led government comes to power. And this is where I would say, I would sort of clarify the difference between, uh, the sixties in Japan and Korea, right? Like you said, oh, well, you know, Korea and the sixties wanted to seem civilized.

[00:51:12] Well, you know, maybe it did, but absolutely nobody was fooled, right? Like American, um, American, uh, you know, journalists and you know, other, other Western journalists, you know, famously a lot of German journalists came to Korea to. Um, for on these atrocities of military dictatorship and D you know, the, the pimping, the state acting as a pimp of, you know, whether it is a military base, whether it's Japanese sex tourism, whether it is these new, urban elite, all of this is not happening.

[00:51:58] Um, you know, all of this is happening under the explicit protection of the very corrupt, very militaristic, very top down dictatorship regimes, um, of, you know, of, of succeeding presidents. However things do change in the nineties, right? And as the liberalization of society, the democratisation of society progresses, Korean society comes to see prostitution as a serious issue.

[00:52:36] Several things pushed us. Number one, as I have mentioned earlier, the Protestant strain, and I guess the, you know, the, the, the Christian Puritan sort of, and Thai, uh, prostitution sort of stance is one of them. And another one is just a social fear of sex trafficking right now. Remember how, you know, all throughout the Japanese colonization period, the military base period, and the seventies and eighties.

[00:53:17] These women are coming from these rural towns and villages to, you know, to try and get a job in the city. But what happened was a lot of them were being kidnapped and raped and then, you know, uh, being threatened with shame and being sort of forced into sexual slavery right now, earlier in the sixties, the fallen women, um, uh, the provision of follow women act allowed some, uh, institutions instituted some, um, organizations for former prostitutes, right?

[00:54:05] They, they had, you know, these schools where these women could, uh, learn skills, right. So that they could get a job. Right. However, In 1995, there was a fire in a technical school where these former prostitutes were locked up in a school, uh, where they were supposed to be being taught these skills. And there was a fire and because it was locked up because it was, uh, it was, it was a shantytown lock.

[00:54:44] Exactly. Everyone asked that question. Why was it locked? And it was locked because these women knew that this was bullshit, that all this technical education weren't gonna find them real jobs

and that, you know, they were, they were like, look, I, at least if I'm, uh, if I'm a prostitute, at least I'm somewhat three, right.

[00:55:11] I am free to do with my body. I have a. Maybe I have a, a cordial relationship with my pimp, maybe, uh, this is better than, um, you know, being taught to sit in front of a sewing machine for 16 hours for really shitty pay. Right? So D so what came out was they were like, oh my goodness, these technical schools had massive issues.

[00:55:41] Uh, there, the teachers were sexually harassing these women, maybe raping them. Um, and just, just, just, you know, just exploiting the shit out of them. You know what I'm saying? And that was why it was locked up. And that was why when there was a fire, no one could escape. And that's why hundreds of women died.

[00:56:02] And when people learned about that, they were like, okay, that's not okay. Right. This law, this prevention of fallen women act is bullshit. Um, this is a real problem and, uh, and a social movement around a full on prohibition. Finally getting rid of these special zones, finally getting rid of these, um, you know, these, uh, basically, uh, a dead law that was the following women's act and turning it into a, a law with teeth begins to form, uh, and in 2001, Uh, the Korean state is a finger point.

[00:56:58] You know, uh, the United States state department points the finger at the Korean state and says, look, you guys got to do something about this human trafficking stuff, right? You are a, uh, and you know, I think today, right? Like, um, you know, countries, I'm not sure which countries, but, uh, there are countries that are still on the list of, you know, human trafficking countries, right.

[00:57:24] Korea was on that list. And, um, you know, in 2001 and all throughout the nineties and eighties, um, and that was in this new now democratic now relatively middle income, uh, advancing economy that was no longer acceptable. So in 2004, a new law. Uh, his past, and that is the, uh, the special law against, uh, sexual, um, buying and selling.

[00:58:03] Right. And that is the law still on the books today. And it punishes the buyer. I mean, it is, um, it is a modern law in the sense that it was, it takes a lot of notes from, um, other countries, other advanced, uh, nations and how they dealt with, uh, prostitution, sex work and seeing, um, you know, and punishing the Johns and the pimps rather than the workers themselves.

[00:58:40] Um, and, uh, and really getting rid of the formerly red light districts where the law was not in effect. And I think that is where I want to bring us to the final chapter of this story. And really this is, I, I, you know, I've made so many, I probably made so many, uh, miss, uh, in, do you know, the, the, the specific histories and the specific laws and stuff, you know, but all of that was really that I wanted to talk about this hour, my era of the 21st century.

[00:59:27] And I, um, I was, uh, I, I mentioned that the beginning of the first episode that I have participated in buying sex before, and that I have, uh, participated in others. Areas of the sexual industry, namely maybe not, uh, sex itself, but you know, um, related services, uh, et cetera. And the reason why I, uh, say this is because I want to emphasize to the degree that, which this modern law,

that this so-called called a special law that was passed because all the other laws that failed that was because Korea is now a democratic nation.

[01:00:28] That is an advanced economy is still just as much of a failure. So much of a failure earlier that my first experience with, uh, the sexual industry was, uh, when I was under age. Right. I was, um, I think I was 17. Maybe I was, uh, maybe just recently 18. Um, it was, and I was taken there by some older guy that I knew that I was nominally friends with.

[01:01:01] It was, and I have done the same for other people. Right. I have taken my friends to the sexual market to participate. I've bought them, uh, sexual encounters as birthday gifts. And again, I'm saying all of this to illustrate how rampant it is and the only reason why I am able to see myself, uh, and see that not only that I was, um, exploiting women or whatever, but also that I was extremely unhappy.

[01:01:47] And that all of it was really very, uh, masochistic too, to show that this is a great evil, uh, and I don't mean that in the moralistic way that it's a sin. I mean that we de-sacralize ourselves when we commodify, uh, uh, you know, our, our, our sisters, when our society commodifies the women living in that society.

[01:02:20] We commodify life itself and, and, and, and men are, um, we're alive and we are not safe from the commodification. And it doesn't matter if you are a, um, part of the empire or part of the colonies and affects all of us. And, um, and, and, and that is my enemy, but, and yeah. Yeah.

[01:02:51] **Drew Stegmaier:** That was, that was a big share. Um, you know, that, that was big, you know, you're taking responsibility speaking from experience like, Hey, I know this because I've been in it and it's messed up. Right. That's a very powerful thing to share.

[01:03:09] **Shawn Yoon:** It's uh, I remember, like, I remember just being, like, I remember like walking through like certain neighborhoods and, you know, when I was like even younger, like when I had no sexual urges and being like puzzled by certain stores being puzzled by like these flyers.

[01:03:35] Um, and when I was slightly older and you know, when I was like, you know, when I was, when I was, you know, about when I was getting warning, um, just being like enticed by these flyers, that, that like were everywhere, uh, these pictures of women, um, which were mirrored by women, like who would, uh, wave at you from doorsteps and being, and thinking, wait, I have money, my parents money, I want to have sex.

[01:04:17] Clearly they are, uh, you know, just being confused and puzzled and, and weirdly and paced and, and, and all of it being forbidden and just, just, it was, and I'm, and I'm telling you, it is, it is pain. It is. And I see that same pain reproduced, not only through and today that same pain is reproduced, not perhaps in these red light districts in these, um, in these, uh, in these sort of hidden industries, but through only fans through PornHub, through K-pop and through just the wholesale commodification of our.

[01:05:13] Sexuality in our everyday life. And, and I see myself desperately trying to fight to keep porn away from me. Not because I think it's evil and I think Jesus will hate me, but because it makes me horny and I don't need to be warning right now. Like it's hard, it's, it's genuinely painful. And like, and, and I see why Islam made that decision a thousand something years ago to be like, oh, okay.

[01:05:59] So, uh, you know, we already that women are, um, different women are not equal and okay, well, I guess the best way to do this, the best way to keep this in check. Is to ban, uh, women from showing themselves then all depiction of, uh, human beings, uh, banned depiction of real life in art ban. Um, and you know, that was the same sort of, I think, impetus of why Islam banned, um, the collection of interest, right?

[01:06:38] It seems to be the same exact impetus of, okay. Like our society, our civilization has been decentralized and we're going to fight that now, do I say this to argue that women should wear her jobs? Hell no. But when we study why they fought the depiction of the female form, And we will learn something and maybe if we learn something and instead of being like, okay, like women in, um, Caboodles should be free to wear bikini's, which I think they should be.

[01:07:29] But, but does that, if that comes weird, women in Kabul should feel the economic pressure to have only fans accounts. I find that deeply problematic, right? Like, and I think instead of vilifying and canceling, if we can, if we can discuss things, which I think is the point of all this, we might actually figure something out.

[01:08:07] We might actually progress as human.

[01:08:10] **Drew Stegmaier:** Yeah, it's interesting you say that because, um, something that came up for me earlier was the abortion debate. Right. And what I find interesting about it, again, it's related to this supply and demand thing and related to this idea that whether or not something is legal doesn't really in many cases make a difference in terms of whether or not it happens.

[01:08:34] It might decrease it. Uh, sometimes it decreases it, it, it absolutely brings it into the shadows, which makes it very hard for the state to measure. Right. It's like, what's the United States. Government's human trafficking statistics. Oh, well, you see, it's kind of illegal. So it's not really reported to the state.

[01:08:52] So we actually have no clue. No, we have no clue. Well, how come? Oh, because it's illegal, right? I'm not saying we should make human trafficking legal. Right. But when it comes to abortion, there's a, there's a simple question I have, you know, for people who say abortion should be made illegal, find me a woman.

[01:09:13] Who's excited about getting an abortion, find me one. Right? I don't know a single woman who's ever excited about that ever. Right. But what, you know, what would possess a person to do such a thing? Um, if it was their last resort, if they were a part of a larger system that said, Hey, it turns out if you bring a life form into this world, your life will change forever in a negative way.

[01:09:38] And that life form might not even survive. Cause you can't afford to provide for their needs.

[01:09:43] **Shawn Yoon:** Such a brutal. It's so brutal and it's. It really? Yeah. And you know, if like, um, like, yeah, you S you, you, you said it, man, sex trafficking definitely exists in the United States and it is, it seems quite rampant, right?

[01:10:03] Like I like the sex industry in the United States is quite alive and well, I just don't know to what extent. And actually that is the story of the 21st century sex industry in Korea as D D D D as this, because as the country progresses economically, as it becomes richer, there are both, uh, Filipino and Russian.

[01:10:38] Who are illegally immigrating to the, to Korea, to work as entertainers, uh, on, you know, on entertainment basis and then to, you know, to, uh, to become sex workers. But also, uh, there is an outflow of Korean women going to Japan and to America and to Australia, to these, uh, to these Western countries to be illegally, uh, to be illegal work legally, you know, to be undocumented, illegal immigrants, uh, sex workers there, right.

[01:11:25] Oftentimes they might be serving. Um, these, you know, second generation or, um, or, or first-generation, um, Koreans who are now rich or, you know, who get paid and, you know, uh, American currency or Japanese currency or Australian currency, which allows them to pay more, which gives these women incentive to do that.

[01:11:52] Or they might be catering to the, um, to the, uh, to the customer, to Western customers who are looking for something a, a bit cheaper and be a bit more exotic. Right. And, and we see how. Whereas in the past, it was, um, you know, nation state by nation state, you know, empire versus the colonized. It is now just these internal colonies everywhere, right?

[01:12:29] Internal empires and internal colonies, internal Imperial citizens, and internal, uh, called colonized citizens or, you know, non non citizens. Right. And one of the very important aspect of modern day Korean, uh, the sexual industry, which is just so painful to discuss. Is a throwback to the chosen dynasty.

[01:13:01] Remember how in the chosen dynasty, um, a man who is single, you know, you know, who's getting old. It was, it was single for too long, was seen as a threat to the social order to Confucian harmony. And the state went out of its way to, you know, find them, uh, a spouse. Well in modern day, Korean society, uh, rural, um, folk, rural men and poor men have a hard time finding, uh, spouses and, uh, these businesses.

[01:13:47] In cahoots with the government have created these special visas and these special passes for immigration, for mail order brides, and these an entire industry, a huge invisible industry exists for Korean men who marry, um, Vietnamese, Cambodian Filipino women who come from their countrysides, these rural Filipino women, rural Vietnamese and rural Cambodian women coming to Korea.

[01:14:25] Maybe they've seen their husband once because, you know, uh, you know, they, they traveled, uh, you know, on a, on a short V on a, on a travel visa, or maybe they've never seen them. Maybe they've seen pictures, but regardless, these are arranged marriages because their mail order brides says prostitution. Now, Because of the peculiarities and the brilliance of humanity, you know, love blooms everywhere.

[01:14:54] And I don't want to criticize all of these families as a prostitution, right? Because even in military based prostitutions, you had, um, American soldiers who married, um, Korean prostitutes maybe took them back to America and had a family. And, uh, maybe they raised their children, maybe whatever. Right? Like, but that does not change the overall pattern of exploitation, uh, going on.

[01:15:30] So that's one part of prostitution and the sex industry in Korea, these mail order brides who have very few. Recourse, uh, to, um, to defend themselves to protect their rights because they are perhaps not only economically, but also they have maybe their children, um, who, uh, maybe they, they wanted to, they, they, they hate their husbands, but they love their child.

[01:16:09] They have to get divorced, you know, uh, you know, the same economic system, uh, functions to enslave them to their husbands, as well as the fact that they're in a foreign country. Oftentimes they don't speak the language they're in rural environments where they are, uh, they're socially isolated as well.

[01:16:34] The need to send remittances back to their family in their home countries. So that's an awful and really studied, um, uh, issue in Korean society. And the other side is the fully financially sex industry of, uh, the modern Korean cities. Right? So this is something maybe you might call the upper caste of prostitutes, right?

[01:17:13] Just as in the 18th century, there were, you know, the upper cast, the prostitute, the middle cast, the prostitutes Dean, the, the lower caste, the prostitutes today, you have these women who are per, you know, I don't know, I bought ordered from a underdeveloped poor countries. And you have these middling prostitutes who are perhaps, uh, uh, shipped in from, uh, China, Russia, and Philippines.

[01:17:56] And then you have the upper caste of Korean women. Oftentimes maybe college educated, uh, oftentimes, um, um, plastic surgery, post plastic surgery, appearances to fully cater to a, to the sexual fantasies of the urban elite. And it, and there. Exploitation is a fully neoliberal, um, situation. And here a little bit of context is that, uh, because Korea is not America and the Korean one is not the U S dollar credit.

[01:18:48] It is a lot harder to come up now in Korea. So, uh, you know, as a freelancer in America, I was able to get like, I don't know, \$20,000, \$30,000 of credit, like easy, right? Like I didn't even have to ask for it. Right? Like these companies are, you know, um, spamming me with offers for credit. That is not the case in Korea.

[01:19:17] Uh, credit is a lot harder to come by. Unless of course you're a young woman now in, after the. Advance of the actual, uh, act against prostitution. Uh, the, uh, the reform law in 2004 on entire industry of credit, specifically aimed at, um, at women at young women just, just, just comes into being right, because whereas, um, previously a lot of these women, because they were working in these red light districts, they were, you know, pros, right.

[01:20:06] They had a history, they had maybe their own, um, you know, localized form of credit. Maybe they had, you know, they had, you know, they had a system of underground, um, black market credit from their pimp. But because now it was no longer, uh, as visible and because they needed to get these women to participate in an industry that was much more policed and that was much more invisible and that was much more directly, um, prohibited.

[01:20:49] They needed, uh, debt. So these women were extended credit and the, and they were actively, um, the new pimps actively, uh, recommended that these women get plastic surgery, that these women buy expensive name, brand clothing, uh, and to. You know, maybe, Hey, why don't you, uh, you know, go, you know, go, uh, go, you know, go do a, a, you know, tour to Hawaii, you know, we'll find you a, uh, uh, you know, like this really handsome guy, um, to, or, you know, these, uh, these, these white guys to have sex with, or you don't even have to have sex with them.

[01:21:43] Maybe you can just, you know, have a date with them. If you don't want to have sex, you can just say no. Um, and you know, you don't have to pay for this. And, you know, it was very low interest for, uh, uh, maybe, you know, a couple of years and this system of financing was awesome. So in the perfectly, in a perfect marriage ring of wall street was reorganized into.

[01:22:15] These tranches of debt of, you know, of prime of prime debt, you know, of women who were young, well-educated, good looking and, uh, or had a family with some money, right? With subprime debt of women who are getting older women who, who, uh, perhaps had, um, you know, uh, no family or a poor family, or were from a, a rural province to, with sub sub frame that of women who were, who had a, you know, some venereal disease diseases at this point, uh, you know, maybe like, uh, oral hepatitis, uh, who were, uh, who were not college educated, uh, who, who, you know, who was past thirties?

[01:23:12] And, you know, or, you know, they had already taken on too much debt or maybe their plastic surgery had, uh, you know, had side effects and just, uh, you know, bunch them together and financial and created financial instruments to buy and sell on the credit markets and the fucked up man, it is so incredibly fucked up.

[01:23:40] And that is the world that is the present day. Uh, these women are still being marketed to, and that is really the story of why, uh, Korean. Uh, the plastic surgery industry is so, uh, advanced why it's technology is renowned worldwide. And, uh, and if you consider how important the plastic surgery industry is to K-pop, it truly is not, I think, a reach at all to see it's, uh, its um, its ramifications and, and how it's it's apparel industry and, and how wall street is the red light district.

[01:24:38] And the red light district is K-pop and K-pop is wall street and we live in it.

[01:24:46] **Drew Stegmaier:** Okay. Wow. I mean, wow. That was really big. Um, and I think there's probably some people who might listen and be like, oh, that's trash, that's hogwash. Um, so I guess to make an example, this is something I've, I've mentioned on the podcast before.

[01:25:04] And I think about it somewhat often, um, where people can be, what I would call out of touch, frankly. Um, there's a tweet from Paul Graham who created Y Combinator. He's done a lot to create economic value for the world. No knock on that. But, um, this may, this tone, deaf argument of like, oh, well, people are mad at Jeff Bezos and Jeff Bezos created AWS and look at how much good AWS has done for the world.

[01:25:30] So are you saying that, you know, he shouldn't have created AWS to know if he didn't look how much worse the world would be. And it was like, Jesus, you're, you're hopping through so many hoops and completely missing the point, which some people think it's just wrong. That a person could be that powerful while others are struggling.

[01:25:47] That's it? That's it. It feels wrong. And I think what people don't realize is that, you know, they say, oh, inequality, isn't that bad. Um, I like to say that Americans are built on many things, but America is built on the perception of social mobility and the keyword there is perception because often it's not the case, it's just not right.

[01:26:11] Or we have this epic survivorship bias. Right. Uh, LeBron, James is a great example. Oh, this kid who was from Akron, who was born super poor and struggled and look at him now. Yeah. He's also a genetic mutant. W w what if there was a kid he grew up with who was five, nine instead of six, nine? Where do you think that kid is?

[01:26:33] **Shawn Yoon:** A lot of those kids.

[01:26:35] **Drew Stegmaier:** And we make this mistake of saying, oh, see this one person did it. You know, this one kid was from the slums and now is rich. Yeah, we can all do that. No, we can't. We take exceptions and think of them as the rule and they are not, they are exceptions.

[01:26:51] **Shawn Yoon:** No, you see if we all believe in capitalism hard enough that we can go to Mars and we can all be a million basis, a million Elon Musks, and a billion Zuckerbergs will bloom and, and we'll all be happier.

[01:27:10] You see, we can create another earth. We can, we look as long as we have amazon.com, do we really need the Amazon rain forest?

[01:27:21] **Drew Stegmaier:** Right. Well, and I think we're where people again make a misstep. Uh, I don't know your personal thoughts, but I would say we're not calling for Jeff Bezos to be put in a guillotine.

[01:27:33] Right? Jeff Bezos is a product of his environment.

[01:27:36] **Shawn Yoon:** I mean, speak for yourself there, brother.

[01:27:39] **Drew Stegmaier:** I mean, that's why I was trying to say that, but yeah, you said it better. Um, I think about what often happens and I would call it these sorts of discussions where it's really important to tread lightly. Right.

[01:27:53] And make explicit. Um, if you say, oh, I'm, anti capitalist so many people make the leap that you must be a socialist, you must be. But no, that's not true. I just know this isn't working. We have to have conversations, right?

[01:28:11] **Shawn Yoon:** I absolutely don't think, I mean, Stalin is like, I don't think going back to like the, the, the arguments of the 20 century is going to solve anything.

[01:28:23] Because if, if you know a lot of where, uh, you know, like, like I'm going to refer to two waves of sex work, um, then I think specifically proves me. Um, so the Bolshevik revolution apparently created a whole, uh, boom, in these Russian prostitutes in Shanghai because Shanghai at the time was a boom town. And, um, these four white Russians, right.

[01:28:58] And not white as in race, but white, as in, you know, not red bullshit, fake Russians, right? These, uh, white Russians, right. These former, you know, these impoverished children of these, um, you know, SAR, uh, theorist loyalists, these, uh, you know, you know, God fearing, uh, Thora worshipping peasants who fled the Bolsheviks.

[01:29:25] Their daughters had to come to Shanghai and sell their bodies. Right. And, uh, another way. Happened after the fall of the Soviet union, right? Like, because, uh, D follow the Soviet union was such a free for all, for like these, you know, the worst people on the planet to just take a bite out of that country.

[01:29:51] Um, a lot of women near, you know, at the end of the Soviet union, apparently there were women on, in the Moscow subway who would have sex with you for a pair of jeans, because a pair of jeans could be sold in the black market and it could get a proper currency. And that could be the difference between life and death for their family.

[01:30:20] There is something wrong with our civilization and I. And not smart enough. And I don't even think it's about smarts. I am not enough of a like multitude. I'm just one person. So I don't know why, but it is, I don't know how we can be free, but I do know that we are slaves. We're where we are. We are all very unhappy and our civilization is headed to.

[01:31:03] Barry unhappier place. And I feel like dude, I'm already unhappy. I, and I, and apparently all of this is getting worse.

[01:31:14] **Drew Stegmaier:** We are back from a bio break, ladies and gentlemen, if you notice any peculiar movements on the video version, it was because I was, I was doing the pee pee dance, but we're good. Now we have met our needs.

[01:31:26] So that's how our world is.

[01:31:29] **Shawn Yoon:** Yeah. I would like to end on, um, two points. One is that, um, you know, I was reading, you know, I was reading some papers about this and there were, there was a very interesting paper that looked at how, um, actual sex workers working in the Korean industry today responded to the laws on the books today.

[01:31:58] And. Um, there is there's two, two trends of sort of criticism about, uh, about the sex industry today. One is sort of the feminist sort of the radical feminist stance, which is, um, you know, maybe like maybe it could be, uh, sort of capsulated in the term that, you know, all penis and vagina sex is, you know, sexual violence.

[01:32:27] Now of course that's say very, um, you know, it's, it's probably doing the radical feminist as the service, but you know, it is, it is a, you know, as a shorthand for how it sees, you know, marriage as sexual violence, prostitution as sexual violence and, you know, And, and, you know, all, all that, that entails. And another apparently, uh, his school of thought and, you know, the, the former school of thought are the ones that are strongly prohibitionist, right?

[01:33:01] They're the ones that are okay. You've got to punish the Johns heavily. You got to punish the pimps, even war, even heavier. Uh, these women should all be, uh, taught skills. They should be given, um, you know, stipends so that they can find their own, um, non-sex work work, or, you know, so on the other, uh, strain of thought that, you know, informs these, uh, you know, movements is the post-feminist idea.

[01:33:35] Apparently. Um, and that is the idea that, well, you know, it's really the system. It's really the, the, uh, the idea that institution is bad. That actually hurts also it's DZ conomic systems, you know, maybe we should be, we should respect it as sex work. Uh, and so on. So these are the, apparently the two schools of thought that inform the laws today.

[01:34:07] Right. And when you ask, uh, actuals prostitutes, actual sex workers, uh, how they feel they do stand in between these lines. Right? A lot of them feel like, well, it is my body. Uh, why shouldn't I be allowed to do whatever I want with it, my body. And they, they, they see their body as capital, you know, I'm young, I'm good looking.

[01:34:37] I can be better looking through plastic surgery and what else do I have? Right. How else, what, what other way, what other capital do I have that, you know, that gives me a better, um, uh, you know, a better, a better interest for, for, uh, for renting out my capital. But, uh, but they also feel the same thing as they do constantly try to get out right there on the other side of the picture as well.

[01:35:06] They see a lot of them want to save up money so that they can, um, uh, they can quit soon. Uh, some of them try to go to church and, you know, uh, attend these, um, sex worker groups to find some solidarity and some, uh, spiritual, um, peace. And it really seems to be that no one has a good answer. And it really seems to be that I, and the rest of the team critics can only criticize, we can not provide alternatives.

[01:35:53] Right. We do. We can certainly criticize the financialization, the stratification, the cast stylization of women's bodies and sexuality, but what do we do? And then the second point, uh, I would like to. Um, Rita a little bit of a poem written by a, uh, a Korean poet who is, uh, who used to be, uh, who is, you know, we used to fight in the eighties against the military dictatorship.

[01:36:33] Uh, he says, and it's in Korean. So. Uh, uh, translate as I go. It's not going to be direct, but what he's saying is when D eval was concentrated in one person, it was painful, but there was happiness. When the evil was concentrated in one class, it was difficult, but we were lucky when the roots of pain was visible and the gap between good and evil seemed obvious how sad but fulfilling where our alive.

[01:37:16] Today, when the evil of the world floats like air when the border between good and evil has evaporate when worse, evil competes with less worse evil in this liberalized democratized age, how meaningless our struggle when the structures of pain is worldwide, a perfect system connect to our everyday lives in this age of plenty full poverty, how painful it is and difficult it is to struggle, to defend, to protect oneself alone in our age where good and evil.

[01:38:14] Is decided by vote when every human speaks the truth, but no one lives it, no one acts upon it when even the Vanguard of the revolution is dying. How lonely is our struggle? That is a poem by, uh, park, no hair. And, uh, that is where, uh, I will end it.

[01:38:42] **Drew Stegmaier:** Wow. Thank you. Um, yeah, poems often do things. Um, they structured the language in such a way that I can only hope to replicate. So as we close, um, our folks, welcome to ask you more questions about that.

[01:39:00] **Shawn Yoon:** Yeah, absolutely. I would, um, I would love to, um, respond to any questions that you receive. I would, um, I would be willing to make a Twitter handle to respond to those questions. And, um, they showed, um, at S T E G D R E W. @STEGDREW.

[01:39:25] And, um, if there are questions I will be there to respond and, and any really, I would love for people to correct me, to argue with me, to cancel me because I, I don't know. I mean, this is a meaningful topic and I would love to learn from more people.

[01:39:50] **Drew Stegmaier:** Oh, well, thank you for coming on. Um, for being willing to do a part two, because I think despite going for not quite four hours now, um, there's no real way that words do this talk.

[01:40:06] Justice, but I think it is through continued discourse and conversation that we will acknowledge such inconvenient truths as these and collaborate and find a newer co-creative different way to be. And I'm going to amen. Amen.

I hope you all enjoy that one quick thing and closing stegdrew.com/juicy. Steg Drew just like the show.com/juicy. You can sign up for my weekly musings there on all things like we spoke about in this episode and other assorted weirdness just drop in your email stegdrew.com/juicy.