



An Overview of the “Red Zone” Program, Marion County & Indianapolis

**Summary Based Upon
Research from the Study,
“A National Assessment
of Prostitution and Sex
Trafficking Demand
Reduction Efforts”**

**Supported by
National Institute of Justice
Grant # 2008-IJ-CX-0010**

June 25, 2012

Prepared for:
**The National Institute of
Justice**

Office of Justice Programs,
U.S. Department of Justice
810 Seventh Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20531

Prepared by:
Michael Shively, Ph.D.
Abt Associates Inc.
55 Wheeler St.
Cambridge, MA 02138

An Overview of the Red Zone John School Program, Indianapolis

Residents, businesses, police, and others have recognized that Indianapolis had a substantial prostitution problem for decades, and that solving it requires addressing the demand component of the commercial sex market. The first known reverse sting operation in the city occurred in 1975, and police operations have been conducted periodically since then.

In 1999, community and business leaders approached prosecutors and appealed for more effective responses to prostitution, complaining of the wide range of crimes and community disorders that are attracted to, and generated by, prostitution. The idea for a program for men who solicit prostituted persons came from a community resident. Although men had been arrested in the city for soliciting via reverse stings for over 20 years at that point, penalties were minimal. The concerned citizens, the Marion County Prosecutor's Office, and others collaborated to develop the Red Zone program.

The Red Zone Program

Men who are arrested for patronizing a woman engaged in prostitution in a specific geographic area, and who have no prior criminal history, are eligible for the diversion program. Among the unique features of the Red Zone program, when compared to other programs with a "john school" educational component, is its emphasis on the community. The one-day program is divided equally into a four-hour "john school" educational component, and a four-hour community service component. The main emphasis of the educational component is on the community: residents from the neighborhoods affected by street prostitution engage in a moderated discussion with arrested sex buyers, in which they have a chance to convey to the johns the negative impact of prostitution, how the buyer of sex drives all of those problems, and can challenge the johns with questions about their behavior. Among the crimes and problems discussed are assault, rape, drug abuse, health risks, syringes and used condoms in private yards and public ways, johns mistaking residents for women engaged in prostitution, loud rights among pimps, survivors, and/or johns, and others.

- **Health Presentation and Screening:** The john school component of Red Zone begins with a health department employee providing a presentation on health risks. Among the topics covered are discussion of local outbreaks and symptoms of chlamydia and syphilis, and gonorrhea. Brochures about sexually transmitted infections are provided in English and Spanish, and call-back cards are distributed. After the presentations, men individually have their blood drawn for a required syphilis test administered by the health department.

- **Community Impact Panel:** This component of the program involves more than having residents describe how prostitution negatively affects their community.
 - *Legal consequences:* It begins with a brief (5 to 10 minute) presentation by a prosecutor about the legal consequences men face if they continue to buy sex and are caught by police. Included in the discussion is an explanation about the issue of entrapment, which many men raise an objection to their being arrested. The prosecutor discusses how the decoys mimic the behavior of actual prostitutes, and do not initiate the discussion of sex; they are merely present and available, and let men broach the subject of money in exchange for sex.
 - *Facilitated discussion:* A facilitator begins the discussion by introducing several individuals as residents or employees in areas affected by prostitution. The facilitator then provides ground rules for the upcoming discussion, such as being constructive, honest, and respectful. The arrestees are asked to say (a) who they are, (b) their occupation, (c) whether they have children, and (d) where they live. The community members then describe their views of prostitution and how it negatively impacts them and others, e.g., the women are usually desperate addicts; men who buy sex drive finding a supply of people to provide prostitution; prostituted people provide revenue for drug dealers and traffickers; neighborhoods are harmed by vandalism, sex occurring in plain sight; dead women who had been prostituted have been thrown out of moving cars in neighborhoods; children have been propositioned by johns on their way to school. One of the key messages they convey is that the men who buy sex seldom buy in the neighborhood in which they live. The men are given the chance to respond to the comments. Many of them say they did not realize how it impacted others.
- **Community Service:** In the community service piece, the men form a work crew that is sent to clean up trash off the streets and sidewalks in areas known for abundant street prostitution. Members of the community, usually ones who have participated in the community impact panel, supervise the work crew.
- **Total Requirements for Completion:** The men must pay a fee of \$150 prior to attending Red Zone. Men who pay the fee, attend and participate in the educational session, participate in the work detail, submit to the health screening, and adhere to the SOAP order have successfully completed the program, and have their cases dismissed.

The key goals of the program are (a) educating offenders so that they are prevented or deterred from buying sex, and (2) providing a form of restitution to the community, through the service details. Through 2011, over 400 men have completed the Red Zone program; eight have been rearrested, for a 2% recidivism rate.

The john school that is most similar to Red Zone is in San Diego. The San Diego program has a similar classroom emphasis - most of the instruction is about

neighborhood impact, in the form of a community impact panel. However, San Diego's Prostitution Impact Panel (PIP) does not have a community service element.

Reverse Stings

The first reverse sting occurred in Indianapolis in 1975. From 2008 through 2011, there has been an average of about 5 reverse stings per year. Each operation lasts between 4 and 8 hours, and results in roughly 10 arrests. For each woman police officer serving as a decoy, there is a support team of at least 5 undercover and uniformed officers.

Key References

- National Assessment survey, interviews, site visit
- [Red Zone Program Instructions](#)
- [Red Zone Prosecution Agreement](#)
- [Red.Zone Coupon with Call-Back Number](#)
- [Red Zone Class Evaluation Survey](#)
- Report by the American Prosecutors Research Institute (summary of Red Zone program begins on page 11): [APRI Report - Unwelcome Guests](#)
- Reverse sting news:
 - 2012: <http://www.theindychannel.com/news/30619477/detail.html>
 - 2007: <http://www.indystar.com/article/20070829/LOCAL1803/708290481/Prostitution-sting-nabs-dozens>