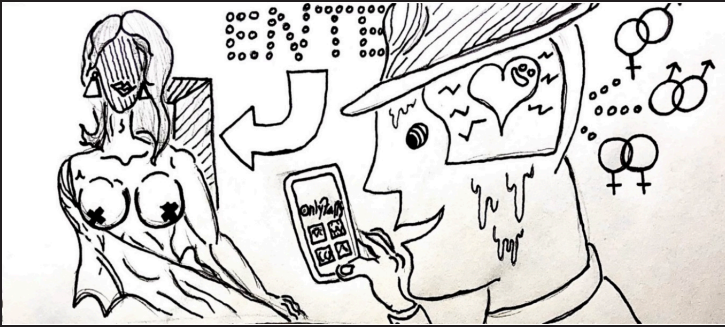


ETHICAL PORN

EROTIC ART

SEX WORK



Art by Oz Yngas

# THE DIGITAL DISAPPEARANCE OF ONLINE SEX WORKERS



By Layla Rudolph

# The Digital Disappearance of Sex Workers

Sex workers brought millions of users to OnlyFans. Now, the rich and famous are pushing them out.

23 year old Tracy began online sex work to subsidize her cost of living in New York City. Selling nudes throughout college, Tracy joined OnlyFans summer of 2019, spending the majority of her time creating content, engaging with fans, and marketing her profile on other platforms like Twitter, Instagram, Reddit, and TikTok. Four months in, she steadily made her way to the top 6% of OnlyFans creators. In August, Tracy's experience on OnlyFans changed. Many celebrities began joining OnlyFans, causing major disruption on the platform. As a result, Tracy started to lose subscribers and her ranking was pushed down.

In March and April of 2020, OnlyFans, a digital content subscription platform widely used to distribute adult content, reported a 75% increase in new users and creators. [NYTimes] Online sex work had gone mainstream as celebrities began to launch their own OnlyFans profiles.

Beyonce name-checked OnlyFans in a Megan Thee Stallion song "Savage Remix" in April, quickly hitting #1 on Billboard's Top 100 in May. [Trust, Billboard] On the track, Beyonce sings, "On that Demon Time, she might start an OnlyFans (OnlyFans)." When the song went viral, OnlyFans saw a 15% jump in visitors. [NewStatesmen]



**Isabella - 50th birthday January** @Isabelladel\_Rio · May 4, 2020 

Replying to @ZeeFlying3 @giveherthecash and 2 others

So true it hurts.



**Yall said \$2k, Stop the Gaslighting.**

@ZeeFlying3

And now that OF has been shouted out by Beyonce, sheet it. Watch us start being kicked out. Just watch. There will be new "restrictions" that target us and force us to find other platforms.

2:10 PM · May 4, 2020



## How OnlyFans Began

Timothy Stokely, the CEO of OnlyFans, was revered as a "revolutionary figure" in modern pornography. Others saw Stokely as a "digital pimp" taking a 20% cut from OnlyFans creators. [Dailymail] Stokely's first pornographic launch was a BDSM fetish site, Glamworship, in 2011. In past interviews, Stokely said he became interested in pornography after stumbling onto the "underrated world of BDSM" and the fetish scene while studying in college. [Dailymail]

Once seeing the high demand for fetish sites like Glamworship, Stokely created Customs4U in 2013, a website for users to commission personalized content from their favorite porn stars. Founding OnlyFans in 2016, Stokely enabled a way for creators and users interacted directly with one another. After OnlyFans began gaining popularity, Stokely sold Glamworship in 2019, seeing it was more cost-effective to cut costs on studio space and equipment with having creators making content at home on Onlyfans.

Stokely said “Why not create a platform that allows these entertainers to conveniently and securely monetize their content? OnlyFans would be like a social media platform with a feed, similar to that of Instagram and Twitter, except that fans are required to pay a monthly subscription to view the content of these entertainers. And if they are willing to pay more, they could unlock paywalls for even more valuable services.” [Medium]

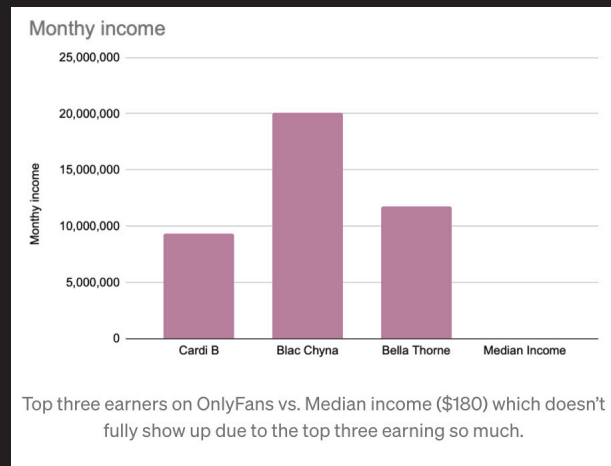


Art by- Talia Newton

## How much are creators making?

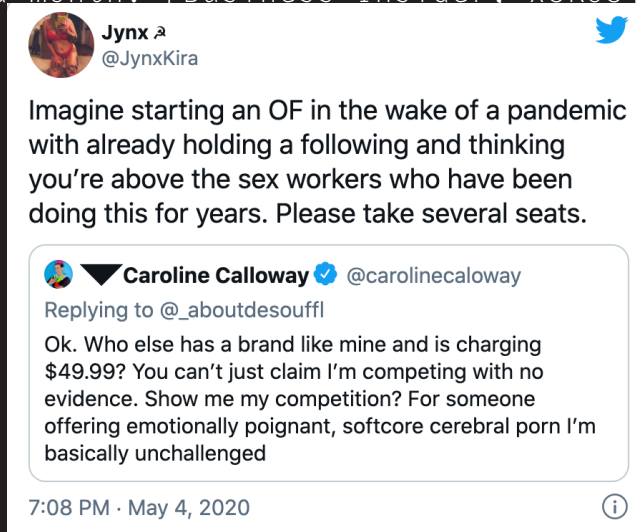
OnlyFans creators told Medium that online sex work wasn't as lucrative as many would believe. The top 10% of creators on OnlyFans take 73% of their earnings, with the highest paid making \$30,000 to \$50,000 per month. In the top 1% category, the top creators makes 33% of all the money made on OnlyFans. [XSRUS] In comparison, the average creator without a large social media following makes a few hundred dollars a month. [Medium]

OnlyFans creators are a one-person show; they handle their own expenses, editing, social media promotions, make-up, wardrobe, and content creation for the month, yet creators are only allowed to take home less than 80% of their profit.



## Celebrities on OnlyFans

Caroline Calloway, infamous self-styled 'scammer', made her OnlyFans account in March. On Twitter, Calloway posted screenshots of her projected annual earnings to the tune of \$223,800 in May.[Twitter] Actress and singer Bella Thorne joined OnlyFans in August and set the platform record for making \$2M in a 48 hours for content that consisted of photos of her eating a hotdog and numerous bikini shots, but no nudity. [The Cut] In contrast, the average OnlyFans creator charges \$9.99 for a monthly subscription, with median earnings of \$180 a month. [Business Insider, XSRUS].



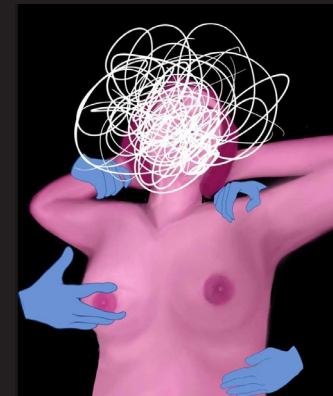
People immediately weighed in on OnlyFans, a space created for sex workers, being occupied by the rich and famous. Sex workers called Calloway and Thorne "tourists" and "gentrifiers" of the sex industry.

[Newsbreak, Vulture] Many pointed out celebrities reaped the most benefits without facing the stigmatization of being a sex worker.

In response to accusations of taking up space within a marginalized community, Calloway tweeted, "Who else has a brand like mine and is charging \$49.99?... For someone offering emotionally poignant, softcore cerebral porn I'm basically unchallenged," adding "I think I might be the only person on OnlyFans with a degree from Cambridge." [Twitter]

On August 25th, Thorne responded to her detractors, claiming her foray into the sex work arena was "research for a film role."

Thorne told the LA Times her intention was to "remove the stigma behind sex, sex work, and the negativity that surrounds the word SEX itself by bringing a mainstream face to it." [Vulture, LA Times]



Art by- Tiffany Clara

Thorne was accused of defrauding her subscribers by falsely advertising nude photos for \$200. Following her \$1 million payday, users demanded refunds and initiated chargebacks.

[NYPost, Twitter] A week later, OnlyFans announced new restrictions that meant capping fees and holding cash withdrawals for all creators. [NYPost] Now, creators must wait 30 days instead of 7 days to receive payments and the max a creator is allowed to get tipped is \$100, and a maximum of \$50 on a post.

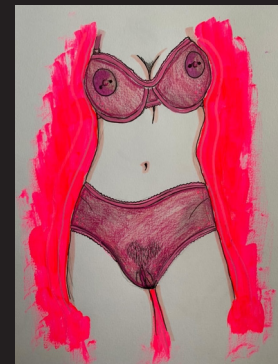
OnlyFans hasn't directly commented on the incident and insists that Bella Thorne was not the reason for the site change. Still, it is clear that within 48 hours, the actress forever changed OnlyFans for the majority of the sex work community that used the platform to pay bills and survive. Her invasive and unaccountable nature has not gone unchecked or unnoticed by the sex workers afflicted with the new rules in place.



Sex workers were deeply affected by Thorne's infiltration of OnlyFans. Tracy, a 24 year old sex worker, said, "They [Onlyfans] made it so that you can only be tipped fifty dollars at a time... it put a limit on that because OnlyFans was just panicking and didn't know how to control the traffic that they were getting... they [OnlyFans]

made it so that you can only get paid every thirty days when you used to get paid weekly." OnlyFans creators would often be tipped more. According to Tracy, she said it felt like celebrities, such as Bella Thorne, who already have a platform are "co-opting and gentrifying sex work." Unfortunately, Bella Thorne is not the only celebrity to be labeled a OnlyFans scammer. This was never more apparent with the inception and entry of Belle Delphine.

Belle Delphine is a 21 year old British internet celebrity known in the gamer and Youtube community. [TheGuardian] Delphine gained a massive following in the summer of 2019 after advertising she would be selling her used bathwater for \$30 a jar for anyone willing to purchase. What started as a joke from her followers, commenting on Delphine's videos and photos that they loved her so much they would "drink her bathwater," turned into a lucrative business venture. [Vice] Within 48 hours, her bathwater sold out.



Art by- Kelly Phillips



In June 2019, after seeing such success selling her bathwater, Delphine posted on Instagram advertising herself again. [Guardian] This time she asked her 3.2 million followers to help her latest Instagram post reach 1 million likes, and in exchange, she would create a Pornhub account. With such a large fanbase, that request was not difficult. Within 24 hours, Delphine's post had 1.8 million likes. [Mashable]

Reaching her goal Delphine followed through creating a Pornhub account. Posting 12 videos with promises of explicit content, each video had deceptive labels, like "Scissoring with Belle" when, in fact, it was a 2-minute clip of her cutting a white sheet with scissors. Followers expressed mixed feelings toward Delphine's "trolling" and mockery. The majority of her followers were angry, while others found it funny. Since Pornhub is a free website, there was no financial loss to her followers, unlike if you were subscribing to Delphine's OnlyFans. Reinforcing a toxic mantra replicated by Bella Thorne, that you need to 'fuel the fire' to be noticed and freely advertised by word of mouth.

Fast forward to June 17th, 2020, after a brief hiatus from social media, [Vice] Delphine resurfaced on YouTube with a lewd music video parody of 6ix9ine's song GOOBA titled "I'm back," [YouTube] promoting her OnlyFans and return to social media. With lyrics like "Buy my OnlyFans big Chad, I joined OnlyFans now to get a big bag." And "I trolled betas with my Pornhub."

Once word got out of Delphine's OF, followers were suspicious yet quick to subscribe. Belle Delphine's subscription is \$35 per month. In the description box, she has links to her social media and Amazon wishlist.

Delphine's OnlyFans is described as a "cheap peep show" [Medium] content consisting of her dressed in cosplay playing with food. Not the offensive content, which is what one expects from an OF creator. Instead, Belle Delphine posted a 5-minute video of her dressed in frog ears, a mini skirt, and a striped tee-shirt playing with broccoli. [Medium] Another video is Delphine dressed in a bikini sitting in a bathtub filled with Doritos and holding a mountain dew bottle. For \$35 a month, subscribers expected actual OnlyFans content. Again, the public has been scammed by another celebrity who finds Onlyfans as entertainment instead of a livelihood like the 99% of Only-Fan creators do.

Rubi Rose, an up and coming Atlanta rapper, created an OnlyFans account on July 19th 2020, announcing via Twitter that she would be joining OF and charging subscribers \$49.49 to see "exclusive" content. In two days, [Newsweek] Rubi Rose posted a photo on Instagram of her OF account, which accumulated \$106,784, putting her at the top .32% percent of creators.

OnlyFans users started criticizing her for posting photos she already had on Instagram that can be seen for free, average bikini pictures, and videos of her doing daily

household chores such as folding clothes. Rubi Rose defended her content by saying [Twitter] “OnlyFans isn’t just for porn and sex shit. That’s what y’all made it out to be. Just like how people thought Snapchat was for sending ‘nudes’. You can post whatever exclusive content you want for your fans to see.”[Newsweek]

Remarks like that diminish and erase all of the hard work sex workers put into their daily content. The men and women who work tirelessly to build a platform for themselves to have a continuous steady revenue have become overshadowed by celebrities. Not only must they compete with the 1% but deal with the financial struggles of cutbacks due to Covid-19. Sex workers are being forced to compete with famous celebrities who do not use this platform for what it was initially intended. Celebrities have become the generation of digital gentrifiers of this already marginalized community. The outrage, criticism, and pleas from actual sex workers have been blatantly ignored. Sex workers are once again being pushed off another platform, but now due to the reckless actions of these OF celeb scammers.

This even gets worse when confronted with another rapper who used to be a sex worker herself and is now a billboard breaking, Internet shattering celebrity. On August 7th Cardi B launched her shocking raunchy single “WAP”. Putting sex and sexual acts further on the conscious minds of people everywhere and boosting the popularity of OnlyFans even further when she decides to join the platform right after the song. She makes \$100,000 on OnlyFans in just two days. Posting photos already available on her Instagram. Disenfranchising and ripping off her fanbase along with disenfranchising the sex workers of which she used to be one. Making a hustle off of everyone else’s expense except hers. [Entertainment Weekly]

When it comes to OnlyFans, the gentrification of the platform almost seems Darwinian and inevitable. People have paid to see celebrities post explicit imagery, forcing 99% of other content creators and sex workers on OnlyFans to pay the price. Celebrity tourists overpowering and overstaying their welcome on the platform overshadow the many sex workers who make their income on the site. In the world of online sex work, it’s time to hold the powerful accountable.

By Layla Rudolph, Zen Mena-Rodriguez, Oz Yangas

# WHAT IS EHTICAL PORN?

“Ethical porn can be defined as that which is made legally, respects the rights of performers, has good working conditions, shows both fantasy and real-world sex and celebrates sexual diversity”

(Scott, Is the porn you are watching ethical?)



Art By Tiffany Clara

## Where to find ethical porn?

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### 1. Literotica

A literary erotica website. Also includes live cams.

### 2. Onlyfans

A platform for people to self produce their own sex work (and other things like art) It is subscription based and in web site purchases.

### 3. Bellesa

A porn website with video porn, erotica, sex toy shop, and sexual health articles.

### 4. Sssh

A porn website that uses virtual reality and narrative.



## How To Make Sure That The Porn You Are Watching Is Ethically Made

There are many ways to make sure you are watching porn ethically. Here are a few tips...

### 1. Pay the sex worker directly.

Example: Onlyfans

### 2. Most likely you will have to pay.

If you're not paying for it you should question whether it's ethical or not.

### 3. Find the platforms consent policy.

### 4. Support the sex workers in other ways.

Example: Through social media.

### 5. Be aware of sex workers age if possible.

Thank you to the artists who submitted their art to this zine.

Special thanks to...

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Tiffany Clara

Talia Newton

Oz Yangas

And thank you to my collaborators on the article.

Special thanks to...

Oz Yangas

Zen Mena-Rodriguez

Thank You So Much For Reading.

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Journalism and Design Toolkit  
By Layla Rudolph