WGST 222

April 11

Documentary + Engaged Learning Questions

1. In the documentary film I AM JANE DOE, trafficking, prostitution, and slavery are talked

about interchangeably and the experiences and victimization of child sex trafficking

survivors are discussed alongside adults involved in the sex trade (e.g. escorts). How

does this framing of exploitation complicate insights gleaned from the assigned

readings?

2. Why is the Communication Decency Act, Section 230 such an important part of the

court cases discussed in the film and the debate surrounding Backpage more generally?

3. Since the documentary aired, Backpage has been shut down and anti-trafficking federal

legislation FOSTA/SESTA have passed. Here are a few articles and websites that discuss

both developments:

https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2018/04/06/us/06reuters-usa-backpage-justice.html

https://www.thedailybeast.com/sex-workers-fear-for-their-future-how-sesta-is-puttingmany-prostitutes-in-peril

https://theslot.jezebel.com/house-passes-online-sex-trafficking-bill-that-critics-s1823374389

https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/apr/10/sex-workers-fear-violence-as-uscracks-down-on-online-ads-girls-will-die?CMP=Share\_iOSApp\_Other

https://survivorsagainstsesta.org/

Conduct your own online search focused on either the closure of Backpage and/or

FOSTA/SESTA. How are survivors of sex trafficking and adult sex workers discussed in

the new stories, blog posts, or op-eds you find? Do these stories present a different

perspective about the benefits or liabilities of closing Backpage than the views

presented in the documentary? What do the stories you find reveal about the particular

point of view of individuals represented in the film? The perspective of groups that are

not represented in the film?

Based on your screening of the documentary and review of these links and course

readings, do you think the shutdown of Backpage and/or changes to CDA, Section 230

will help to prevent sex trafficking and protect survivors of sex trafficking? Why or why

not?

4. What other questions remain for you?

à Please bring your questions to class on Wednesday, April 18.