

Roxie earned 10,000 euros per month with OnlyFans: "The biggest mistake of my life".

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Roxie Roots made money with OnlyFans for years.

FOCUS online interviewer: Anna Schmid

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Roxie Roots earned a lot of money with erotic pictures and porn from 2017 to 2021. She had been active on OnlyFans practically since the platform existed. Today she says: "It was the biggest mistake of my life."

FOCUS online: Roxie, you earned money with erotic pictures and porn for several years.

Roxie Roots: Exactly. From 2017 to 2021, so that's almost two years ago now.

How did it all start?

Roxie: Quite classically, actually, through modelling. I met a woman who was much younger than me. She told me that she did "glamour modelling", i.e. she had herself photographed naked or in lingerie. She made a lot of money doing that.

So I thought, why don't you take a look? The woman said that anyone can sell pictures of themselves on the internet. That people like me - I looked rather unusual and androgynous at the time - are well received and have a market. It all came in handy for me because, again, I had lost my normal job in some company.

Again?

Roxie: Yes, that's been going on throughout my life. I've cleaned, cooked, worked in customer service for big corporations. I lived first in Ireland and then in the UK for five years. But none of my jobs lasted longer than a year. I was a very volatile person.

Where does that come from?

Roxie: I always felt uncomfortable, different and not belonging. Today I know that this is a result of the child sexual abuse I experienced. I was traumatised and lived like an outcast of society.

When I was on the verge of needing help again and asking my parents for money, the offer to sell pictures of myself online came just in time. I wanted to avoid the humiliation of still not having something at almost 30 years old.

Were you informed how much you would earn with the pictures?

Roxie: Yes, they said 50 pounds an hour. That sounded good at first. But of course I didn't know how often I would be booked. Or what I was getting myself into in general.

"Sometimes the photographers had entire BDSM sets set up in garages."

What did your job look like precisely?

Roxie: From the beginning it was a mixture of offline and online prostitution. That means: I worked as a dominatrix, but also as a nude model.

For me, pornography is nothing more than filmed prostitution. Especially in the beginning, I had to be flexible to establish myself. I registered with a model portal that offers both normal and erotic pictures.

I took my first photos with a friend of the woman who had introduced me to the industry. That was my first meeting with one of the many men who profit from this industry. One of the men who pose as professionals to gain access to more and more models.

That sounds terrible.

Roxie: It is. Some of these men get assaultive and touch the models. Often these are not professional photographers, but simply tricks with a camera. The industries are blending. I started doing nude pictures in 2017, shortly after OnlyFans launched. I was there from the beginning.

Can you share something from that time?

Roxie: At that time, I was working with photographers who claimed to do it professionally for OnlyFans. In some cases they had entire BDSM sets set up in garages. They told me they had lots of toys to direct me and produce content.

And, that of course, I would get those pictures. However, many of them secured the copy rights to them. So it happened that my content appeared on several thousand pages. I had thought I could sell my images myself. But that was an illusion.

So suddenly you were in many corners of the internet.

Roxie: Exactly. Even before OnlyFans, there were platforms offering erotic images. But it was all much more impersonal. For example, you couldn't communicate with the model via direct message.

"OnlyFans has nothing to do with self-determination."

What makes OnlyFans special in your eyes?

Roxie: The idea behind OnlyFans is based on marketing a fetish called "financial domination". This means that a money-hungry, pretty woman takes advantage of a horny man. The idea is that men are walking wallets.

However, as more and more mainstream porn stars have joined OnlyFans, the original concept has changed. For them, OnlyFans was a salvation because they were barely making any money in the difficult American porn industry.

That means OnlyFans also has something to do with self-determination?

Roxie: No, not at all. On the contrary. In my opinion, the platform builds the illusion of self-determination. For women who have never learned to set sexual boundaries.

For me, self-determination does not mean that women do what men want - for fear of losing subscriptions. For me, self-determination does not mean that women ignore what men do with the content they created. It doesn't mean that we overlook the fact that we suddenly appear in Reddit threads that disrespect women.

And in my opinion, it has nothing to do with self-determination to simply ignore what kind of messages some men send to you - without asking you ... the way they bash their wives and write that they'd "rather talk to their little whore" than their spouse.

Is OnlyFans prostitution in your eyes?

Roxie: Absolutely. The only one who really makes a lot of money out of it is the owner of the platform. You can also see how little the company cares about the creators when you consider that OnlyFans doesn't even have a customer service. Nobody reacts when payments are missing.

And what is even worse: even minors could easily publish nude pictures of themselves, this was hardly controlled. It's all about the market.

"I know many women who bought a boob job with their first earnings".

Most people probably have a different impression of OnlyFans. Much of what circulates on the net about it seems casual, friendly and overall more like a nice, additional source of income.

Roxie: I'm not surprised. Often, only privileged OnlyFans creators get the chance to speak. There is a lack of focus on the 90 percent of women who sell content on OnlyFans out of poverty, mental health crises or lack of options. The ones who earn maybe 150 euros a month.

I speak for these creators. I worked on this platform for four years, I didn't take a holiday for four years. Every day I got up with a lump in my throat.

No matter how bad I felt, I had to put on makeup and pretend to have fun. This also causes physical stress. Our sexual organs don't work on cue.

So it was a stressful time for you?

Roxie: Yes. When you sell too few subscriptions, you worry. Am I too ugly? Am I unappealing? I know a lot of women who bought a boob job or a labiaplasty with their first earnings. There is an incredible pressure.

Some creators share their earnings, then the others see how the curve shoots upwards. Some start wearing brand-name shoes or wickedly expensive clothes. OnlyFans models are responsible for being seen. They basically have to be active on Twitter and other networks every day. That's how it was for me too.

On Instagram, there are some influencers who also run OnlyFans. Why do so many do that?

Roxie: I think it was this one Twitch influencer who was the deciding factor. She signed up for OnlyFans and said she made a million dollars in 48 hours. But she basically only sold her Instagram content.

The example shows: The more famous someone is, the less skin they have to show. At some point, singers or actors also started using OnlyFans. Also because OnlyFans tried to sell itself as a content creator and not as a porn platform.

But it is a porn platform?

Roxie: Of course it is. It's clear to me that influencers tell lies. They want to sell their content. I don't understand why a lot of people don't see that. OnlyFans isn't as harmless as they pretend. Influencers who really make money on the platform are usually known by their looks and have sold themselves that way before.

They often show only pictures that they would also upload on Instagram. Privileged female influencers can do that. But women who are not well known and use OnlyFans out of desperation get even more pressure this way. Some have their subscription fee down to three euros. They have to degrade themselves so that people still want to see something of them at all.

The Day Roxy Decided to Leave OnlyFans

It sounds like you know what it's like to be degraded.

Roxie: I was in a bad relationship with a loverboy, a man who manipulated me. This was a Jamaican man with whom I produced content - for a porn niche called "interracial". The black man is staged as an animalistic, wild alpha type. I would like to say that the entire sex industry is based on such conservative, racist, outdated, misogynistic stereotypes.

Anyway, I didn't make much money on OnlyFans back then. But that changed at some point. During Corona, I was able to sell the sex tapes for a lot of money through direct messages.

I also worked as a dominatrix. The porn with my ex-partner helped me get rid of the mostly white men who contacted me to "flirt". They knew I wasn't into them.

In hindsight, however, I see that I failed to say no. At some point I realised how badly my ex-partner was treating me. He hit me and yet it was me who wondered if I was good enough. I made excuses, lied to myself. But at some point I knew I didn't want that anymore.

What was that day when you decided to quit?

Roxie: I was also collaborating on mainstream pornography that was on huge platforms. One day old school friends wrote to me, but in a disgusting way. They said a rape scene was their favourite scene with me. That's when I realised that I had made the biggest mistake of my life.

That I hadn't admitted to myself that the abuse in my past had affected me greatly. That I never had real sex, that it was always porn-based. It took me 31 years to understand all that and to process what I saw from fellow women.

That they talk themselves into self-determination by saying: I've been treated like shit all my life, so I might as well make money out of it. For me, that was the end of it.

What happened next?

Roxie: I fled London straight away because my ex-partner was stalking me and wouldn't accept a NO as an answer. I deleted everything I could from the internet. For example, pictures I had saved in my Google account.

"At some point I earned 10,000 euros a month".

That probably didn't work for every content. The internet doesn't forget anything.

Roxie: That's how it is. And that makes the whole situation even more difficult for me. I know a lot of men have pictures and videos of me, some of which I don't even remember. Some of the pictures were taken while I was stoned out of my mind.

I could afford the drugs because at some point I earned 10,000 euros a month. It was also the money that kept me in the industry for so long. When my mother asked me, "Are you sure?", I lied and said, "Of course I'm sure".

I'm glad those days are over, that I could escape. But scars remain. I still can't google myself today. I never mention my porn name because I know what men are like. Many would then look at my content separately.

Anyway, now you live in Germany again.

Roxie: Exactly. I've been thinking that I want to do therapy. I realised that I am traumatised, not only by the early childhood abuse, but also by my life in the erotic industry.

What helps you in the time you are still waiting for a therapy place?

Roxie: The activism. All the things I'm saying now I wish I'd heard before I started OnlyFans. It's a kind of apology to myself. And a message to others who might be slipping into this industry. I think there are too few women who speak honestly about the conditions in the industry.