

## Eulogy for a Player

By Richard J. Martin, Jr.

They say that prostitution is the world's oldest profession. Pimping then, is the second oldest. You are a pimp. I know that because you said you were a pimp and being a pimp is just like being an actor - once you say you are one, you are. You've made your choice and now you want the knowledge that will make you an elevated pimp, the kind that makes money.

In order to pimp hard and pimp right you have to understand that you are part of something larger than yourself - something that has gone on long before you and will continue long after. You also have to learn a little about the theory and concepts behind pimping. Most of the would-be players out there are long on practice but short on theory. You must understand that like the prostitute, the pimp provides a service. Today, I'm going to tell you how you can provide that service, but you have to keep this to yourself until it's time to pass it on to the right person. That's part of showing respect for the game.

One of the country's most famous pimps, Fillmore Slim, once said, "You pimp with your mind and not with your hands." He said this because people often confuse pimping with extortion and strong-arm robbery. Beating women and robbing them of their money is not pimping. If you want to make it by being an intimidator then go ahead on. It's easy. You just find somebody weaker than you and rob them. Just remember to victimize people that are outside the protection of the law. Don't just focus on prostitutes. Beat on weak drug dealers, dishonest store owners or dope fiends or anyone else that the police won't protect.

But being a pimp is harder - it requires a different mind-set and a different skill set. If you pimp right, you won't ever have to raise your hand to a woman and you'll always let her know that she is free to leave at any time. You will start to provide a service instead of standing around saying that you're a pimp, waiting to get paid - and things will go better for you. That's why we're here today.

I know you have a working knowledge of pimping practice; you've got game and Mack-ability, that's why you're here. You've got your pimp clothes, your pimp rap and you're working on a pimp car but you don't really need that until after you get started. You're familiar with terms like 'turn-out', 'catch' and 'knock', which describe the ways you might break into the game. You've looked at yourself in the mirror for a long time and you know that you can do this. You've practiced standing the right way, talking the right way and feigning disinterest. That's good. You'll need all that stuff, and you'll need that kind of confidence to make it once you get your first working girl. Those things are essential to the practice of pimping.

Now, let's talk about theory.

What most young players don't know is that the quickest way to make money as a pimp is to fall in love with a prostitute.

You think I'm crazy, but remember...the pimp provides a service. His service is to meet the needs of the prostitute. In return, the prostitute provides the pimp with all her money. This is the pimp equation.

To really be successful pimping you have to understand Maslow's Hierarchy of

Human Need - players call it The Pyramid.

See, the pyramid is a triangle; you know what a triangle is, right? To categorize human need you divide the triangle into five different parts, each of which represents a basic need that all human beings have, including prostitutes. The largest area of the pyramid - the part at the bottom - shows the most pressing of human needs: food, air and water, called 'physiological needs'.

Everyone needs these things to survive and everybody that is alive is getting them. You probably won't be able to find a prostitute that is not getting her needs met in this respect, at least not in America. However, at every other level of the pyramid, there exists an opportunity for you to be a pimp. Because the pimp assesses prostitute need and then finds a way for the prostitute to get her needs met.

At the second level of the pyramid is the need for safety and security. You might be able to find a way in here. The prostitute may not feel safe. She plays a dangerous game. She is unsafe from crazy tricks, from unscrupulous police, and from intimidators masquerading as 'pimps' (not like you), who might beat her or smear her make-up. To get in at this level you will say something along the lines of, "I want to protect you," but that is usually not enough. You need to combine this need with a need from one of the other levels of the pyramid.

At the third level of the pyramid are the human needs for Love and Belongingness, such as the love of family and friends. Usually, the prostitute is not getting these needs met. That's why the easiest way to get started pimping is to fall in love with a woman who is turning tricks. She probably has a need for love that is not getting met. The average guy on the street does not see her as a logical prospect for a love relationship and her family doesn't love her - they probably sexually abused her when she was a little girl and then lied about it. Her only friends are other prostitutes, who by and large are dishonest, confused and needy themselves.

This is where a good pimp can make a living - if he's got the right stuff to be a pimp. All of these women need love. A lot of them are good-looking, resourceful and funny. If you can find a way to 'have feelings' for them you will be rewarded financially. The problem is, once you fall in love, you have to watch the woman you love go out and have sex with different men each night and that is not easy. This is what separates elevated pimps from wanna-be's. It takes a man's man, a true player, a Mack, a pimp, to really love a woman who is having sex with other men every night.

If you think you can do this, you are ready to become an elevated pimp. If you could never love a working girl then you're better off calling yourself a pimp and looking for a puddle of water inside Walgreen's so you can fall down, injure yourself and then mount a lawsuit.

Of course, if you have good theatrical skills and knowledge of the Pyramid, you might be able to provide an illusion of love - that is, to make her think that you love her. But these women, through their work, become astute judges of human nature and they can spot a lie from down the street. They've heard pimp lines before, and although they may appreciate the attention, in the end they are going to support the man-pimp whom they believe is in their corner.

As you get near the top of the pyramid, the area of need is less, but it still exists and may provide a way for you to be a pimp. At the fourth level, right underneath the top, is the need for 'Ego-self-esteem'. Everybody wants to feel good about themselves

and that is a hard thing for prostitutes to do. They need to feel respected - it's not as pressing a need as the need for food and water, warmth or love, but it is the kind of thing that can ruin a person's life if they don't get it. That is why so many working girls are addicted to drugs. They feel bad about themselves so they shoot heroin everyday to forget about it. A lot of them were abused as children, most of them, in fact, and they have been feeling bad for a long time. You, as a pimp, will understand the pathway that brought her to be a prostitute and you'll show some understanding and sympathy. You'll respect her and show her that she should respect herself.

At the top of the Pyramid is the need for self-actualization - the need to *be all that you can be*. It's hard to find a way in at this level but it is possible if you provide a dream for the future - a way out. You explain that what she is doing now represents something temporary; that you know she is better than this so she is just doing it until you 'get your insurance settlement', inherit some money or make it as a rapper or a rock star.

If you meet the prostitute's needs at different levels of the Pyramid, simultaneously, you will make money. You've got to meet needs at the third and second levels while you are trying to find a way in at the fifth level. Then you will have a devoted woman pulling for you. You will call her your "baby girl" or "hope-to-die-woman." Once you have that, you will enjoy the benefits of being an elevated pimp and know that it is time to expand your empire. Your hope-to-die-woman will help you to recruit new women. She will think she is your business partner.

The only other way to become a pimp fast is to provide a business opportunity for a prostitute - to show her she can make more money in an easier way than what she is doing right now. See, it's all about relationships. If you have a relationship with someone who sets up dates for girls, a massage parlor, acupuncture studio or the tricks themselves, you can go up to a girl who already has a pimp and offer her something better. A bigger cut of the money, a safer work environment or maybe even a fun group of people to hang out with between dates. If you can connect with a pimp who is running a business - a house of prostitution or an outcall service - and then see what their needs are, you might be able to be a liaison between working prostitutes who might take advantage of good business opportunities and the people offering those opportunities.

It's important to behave like a businessman. Go to a massage parlor and ask if they need help. Make it clear that you have a 'girlfriend' who is looking for work and that she does the kind of work that this business offers. Be friendly and ask them if there is some kind of bonus that you might receive if you bring them good earners. In these arrangements the house gets half and the girl gets half plus tips. It doesn't leave much for you.

You make these choices and then you have to live with them. The time will come when you want security and the Life will not have as much appeal for you as it does now. After you've learned that pimping is a job, you'll want a vacation. You can't put yourself on Front Street after you reach a certain point in your career.

You won't want to be 'high-siding'. Showing your car and your women around the track won't have any appeal because you will realize that the people out there are really crumb-bums and the only thing that separates you from them is your respect for the game. By that time you will want to move in different circles and get respect from a different kind of person. You will have become accustomed to a certain quality of life and may be unwilling to compromise that lifestyle. Your business may flounder and you

will start to run Murphy schemes or blackmail or you may look at opportunities outside of pimping, like selling dope or doing robberies. Then you will make mistakes, you'll take chances you wouldn't otherwise take and you may wind up in the penitentiary. When you get out it's harder to come up. Maybe your hope-to-die-lady will send you some money for the prison commissary at first, but in time, she'll find someone new. You may end up walking around the Tenderloin asking people for beer money and eating at St. Anthony's like so many retired pimps do. But you will have your memories. These are the choices we make.

So, that's what you need to know. You've got all the Mack-ability now. You are the real thing, baby. Remember your responsibility to all the players that came before you. Work on having a name that people will remember. Pair-a-dice is already taken. So is Iceberg Slim. Don't put yourself on Front Street and always show respect for the game that puts food in your mouth, gas in your engine and respect into the eyes of the young players looking to come up. Skip the light fandango for me, Fast Ricky. You are my piece of the rock.

*Richard J. Martin Jr. was born in 1956 in Bossier City Louisiana and came to the San Francisco Bay Area in 1962 at age of six. He is a graduate of San Francisco State University's Creative Writing Program and works a grant writer for non-profit human service agencies and as a musician for the San Francisco – based Myriad Talent Company. His stories, poems, and articles have appeared in the San Francisco Herald, Seattle Weekly, Working Magazine, Bay Area Reporter, In the Fray, the Noe Valley Voice, Tea Party, the Red Hills Review and Frisko Magazine, as well as trade publications like the Walden House Journal and Successful Fundraising. He's a member of San Francisco Musicians Union Local 6, and currently divides his time between San Francisco and Lakeport, California. [rmartin@rchdc.org](mailto:rmartin@rchdc.org)*