





Club Culture : deception, lies and rape

I was fourteen years old when I found the club scene, and a musical style that overtook my life. Club Soda took me gave me a love for house music, but also an insider's perspective on the dark side of glitz and glamour.

My best friend Vikki Stompson and I felt the heart-pounding rhythm on that first night. We were entranced. Afterward, I routinely went to the club every weekend without my parents' knowledge.

Sneaking out to meet friends who could drive to the club on Friday nights gave me an adrenaline rush. By the time I had outgrown Club Soda two year later, I had made friends all over the club world.

By day, I lived a normal teen's life – food, sports, school and friendships.

By night, I went to clubs Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. I slept whenever I could, which looked like most teens. I did homework in my room as soon as I got home, and then I slept so I could stay up all night.

My parents thought that I was sleeping over at a friend's house after cheerleading or gymnastics. They never suspected my secret life.

By age sixteen, I had made enough connections to work my way around different social circles. I could get into most of the clubs where the minimum age was seventeen.

Club glamour required girls to wear bra-like tops, booty shorts with high heels and fishnet stockings to walk with the confidence and beauty as if they were movie stars.

I wanted to have that feeling, but I needed a top guy just as they had. Top guys wore expensive clothes and looked like they worked out everyday. They also spent a lot of cash to buy drinks for their girls. I desperately wanted to be exactly like these girls and would do whatever it took for that lifestyle.

At seventeen, I wanted to be in the business of the club to promote it and get in free. I knew that I had to get higher up in the business so I became a go go dancer.

I loved every minute of it, especially the attention I got from all the guys, and becoming close with the girls. Over time, I bought clothes to fit in and completely changed my look to imitate club girls.

Although I had become one of them, I always wanted more. That's when I started getting closer with the guys. The nice and normal guys didn't seem to help me get what I wanted.

I became very close with one of the Energy (a well known suburban club) promoters, going everywhere

with him as my ambition grew. I began to see more of the bad.

Drugs were around me left and right – and everywhere I turned. I saw lots of cocaine and ecstasy. Many people tried to force me into them, but I refused.

However, I was not so lucky regarding the drinking. After being bombarded with constant offers, I eventually caved in. It was part of the culture, and I was so deep in the club world by now.

One night after a few too many drinks, and a CD promotion, the promoter convinced me to go back to his house.

He invited a friend over and they both took sexual advantage of me, saying it was the only way to get ahead in the industry. I remember waking up it some-time around three in the morning alone in a basement. Black duct tape covered my wrists, and a paper bag lay next to me.

I was not sure where I was because my phone was dead and I was alone. I began to walk the four and one-half miles home from Glen Ellyn to Lombard. At that time, I did not fully understand what had happened to me.

The next few times I went to the club and spoke to some girls about the incident they seemed to shrug it off as a normal thing. Not until much later did I realize how damaging the events of that night were.

I kept in touch with the guy for a while, although I never was alone with him again after the incident. I found out that the promoter that I was seeing was with seventeen other girls. I was so disgusted when I found that out.

I finally figured that enough was enough. I wanted to be done with the clubs so I developed my interest in the school newspaper and soon became an editor.

It was a great excuse for not going to the clubs. As more time passed, I began to lose contact with the club world.

I later met a more stable guy who treated me right for a while but he was attached to the club world. In time, I realized how the club life in general was not what it seemed to me at first. My current boyfriend helped me a great deal in getting though it all.

Club life can be fun once in awhile, but not not four times a week. There is the same drama; it's like high school all over again. Club life is expensive and drinks are, too!

But the music is still a big draw, and I'll always love it.