

**JUSTICE:** Dominatrix Terry-Jean Bedford spared humiliation by court and fined \$3,000 for running Thornhill bawdy house

# Residents debate whether S&M a crime

BY DONALD MCARTHUR  
CORRESPONDENT

Dominatrix Terry-Jean Bedford, purveyor of pleasure, pain, or prostitution — depending on your perspective — was convicted last Friday in a Newmarket court.

Bedford was spared the humiliation of being handcuffed and thrown in jail Friday for running a common bawdy house in Thornhill.

But she was fined \$3,000 in a case that has given the public an unprecedented peek into the world of sadomasochistic fantasies.

Newmarket Judge Roy Bogusky decided jailing the 39-year-old S&M queen would only add to the high cost taxpayers have already paid to prosecute the minor charge.

But she has yet to be convicted in the court of public opinion.

While most people interviewed by *The Economist & Sun/Stouffville Tribune* said Bedford should not have operated her S&M club in a residential area, there was less consensus as to whether she committed a crime.

"I don't view it any differently than the local strip clubs. As long as it is out of the way and the decision to go there is an individual choice, then I don't have a problem with it," said Newmarket's Rob Geniole. "It's acceptable as long as it takes place in a business area and not in a residential neighbourhood."

Bedford was charged in 1994 with running a common bawdy house.

But Bedford maintained throughout her trial that clients never paid for sex. Instead, they paid punishing prices, ranging from \$150 to \$500, to engage in sadomasochistic acts.

When police raided Bedford's Thornhill home, advertised in *Now Magazine* as Madame de Sade's House of Erotica, they seized assorted tools of the S&M trade, including handcuffs, whips, chains, stocks, spanking paddles, a throne and a coffin.

In his ruling, Judge Roy Bogusky didn't decide, as was widely anticipated, whether sadomasochistic role-playing for money was tantamount to prostitution.

He didn't have to, he said, because sex took place for money in Bedford's House of Erotica.

But many residents have made up their mind on the contentious issue.

**"I don't view it any differently than the local strip clubs. As long as it is out of the way and the decision to go there is an individual choice, then I don't have a problem with it."**

"I don't think that sadomasochism constitutes a sexual act," said Newmarket's Archie McPhee. "It is not prostitution."

He argued further, as did Bedford's lawyer Alan Young, that Bedford performed a necessary social service.

"I think it serves as a control mechanism in that people can vent certain feelings," he said, "so people with desires and fetishes don't unleash them toward children and innocents."

Elana Zemel of Richmond Hill agreed that S&M acts do not constitute prostitution.

But Jay Barron of Aurora disagreed.

"It doesn't sound very different from prostitution," Barron said. "I agree with the court's decision completely."

And so does Kris Bell, also of Aurora.

"It's definitely prostitution. People went there and they gave her money. That's a business. That's prostitution," she said.

"And if we've only heard about this much, can you imagine what really went on in there?"

Though the people interviewed were split in condemning Bedford's actions, they were almost unanimous in condemning her choice of locale.

"I don't agree with prostitution but it is going to happen. If men and women are going to pay for it, then that's their call. But it shouldn't be allowed to exist in a residential neighbourhood," said Jen Plant of Newmarket.

Only Zemel said she wouldn't mind if Bedford set up shop in her neighbourhood.

"I don't want to see live-action shows on the street, but as long as it is indoors, then who cares," she said. "There's pedophiles and rapists and murderers out there running loose and we're worried about her spanking some guy's ass."

—With files from Rick Vanderlinde

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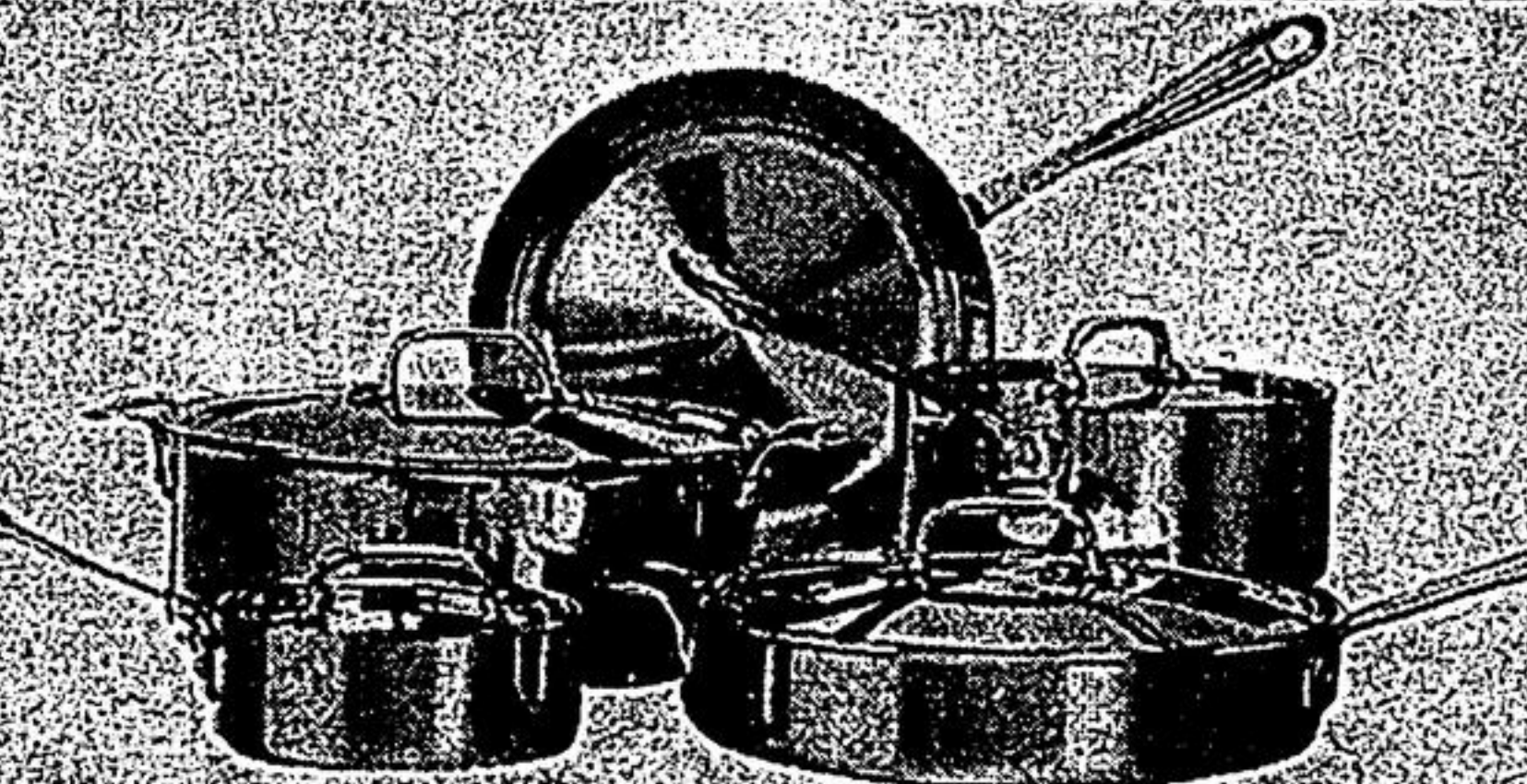
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