

## **Prostitution: Is there anything wrong with selling sex?**

**Video transcript for 'Selling talent', with Anita Rani**

**Throughout history, prostitution has been seen as a pretty dishonourable business.**

**Women have been imprisoned, whipped and even tortured for selling their bodies.**

**Now, in 1161 Henry II decided to grant brothels official status by allowing them to operate here in Southwark, on the south bank of the Thames.**

**Which means I'm standing in what would have been Britain's very first red-light district.**

**Then, just under 400 years later in 1546, Henry VIII came along and decided to clean up his country by getting rid of all the Bankside whorehouses, and punishing not only prostitutes, but also brothel keepers, by branding them with a hot iron to their forehead.**

**Under the reign of Queen Victoria, prostitution was branded 'The Great Social Evil'. Respectable women didn't have sex!**

**Poor social and economic conditions meant that for some women the only way they could make enough money was by selling sex.**

**By the 1850's there were 50,000 prostitutes working legally on the streets of London. Prostitution became a major concern.**

**You'll probably be surprised to hear, that, today, selling your body isn't a crime. But we're still punishing brothel keepers and trying to suppress prostitution.**