

Combating Human Trafficking

Case Study Two

Victim: Abigail, 13- year old female 'child'

Type of Trafficking: child sexual exploitation



Abigail's Story:

I didn't have a very happy time of things before it all began. Things went wrong at home and after social services discovered I had been abused I was put into 'care'. It was a pretty miserable experience and I often ran away with others from the home to go out drinking. It seemed the best way to escape from things, at least for a while. I can't remember exactly how I met Jake. He seemed so nice at first; he paid attention to me, paid me compliments and bought me alcohol. After a while, the drinks turned to drugs. Nothing hard at first, only cannabis, but then later crack cocaine. Before too long I was addicted and when I wanted more drugs I was told I had to do favours in return. I didn't really think too much about it, I wanted the drugs.

We first went to a local guest house. Jake signed in for both of us. Soon after we were in the room, I discovered my first favour was sex with a strange man. It wasn't long before I was giving favours to many men in a day in this guest house. I never know how long I was going to be there and was never allowed to bring luggage. Not even a change of clothes. Jake always checked in, paying cash up front. After a while, I was taken to other guest houses in other cities by Jake. I never knew where I was going to be taken and for how long. I only knew that if I kept providing these favours to strange men I would get what I wanted: the drugs. The drugs helped me to get through the favours. Sometimes I was so out of it, I don't know which city or guest house we were in, how many men I was with or exactly what they did to me. I realised I was paying for my drugs with my body but I didn't feel I had a choice. Drugs and sex with strangers became my existence, day after day, in one of Jake's chosen guesthouses. I felt trapped.

Before too long, Jake stopped being nice to me but I was afraid to run away. He started to beat me and threatened to kill me if didn't keep providing favours on demand. One night I was beaten so badly that someone else staying in the guesthouse heard the noise and called the police. I thought that would be my chance to escape but to them, I was just another wayward teenager.

It was another two years before I managed to escape. By then I was probably too old for Jake and his customers so maybe he let me get away. This was long before Jake got caught. When the case finally came to court, I was made to relive all of those horrible memories. I was made to feel that I was the criminal. I was made to feel worthless. Even though I know that Jake is in jail, I still worry I am in danger; that one day he will come and find me. I don't trust any men these days.