

PART 2 - ANONYMOUS**██████'S STORY, AS TOLD THROUGH ██████ AT PROJECT RESPECT**

Please treat this story as anonymous. ██████ is happy to be quoted from, but no identifying feature of this story are to be used (ie nationality of abuser, length of time she was working in the industry)

I've been working with her ██████ for probably a year, ██████'s been working with her for longer. She's been involved with Project Respect on and off for ██████ years.

Tanya has said to me that her first instance of violence were probably verbal and emotional by her mum growing up. She has a brother who was closer to their mum than she was. Her brother did everything by the book and she was more of a free thinker and her mum didn't like that.

Her mum tried to keep them in the family – it was really controlling behaviour. Her brother ended up staying with the mother until the very end, until she died. Tanya left ██████ and came to ██████.

She started a few courses, she did hospitality and then she met her partner. Let's call him ██████. He was from ██████. She fell in love with him. He was really charming - as all violent men are.

She said it wasn't long before it started. They were together for ██████ years and the whole time he forced her to work in the sex industry and beat the shit out of her, basically. Took all her money. Extreme violence. He's stabbed her in the leg, broken her ribs. Put her in hospital.

Written quote from ██████:

"I can't really remember how it started, but I remember he said I had to do something in the adult industry like stripping etc. I started with massage but moved onto full service. He was a good manipulator. Promised me the world, he knew I had low self-esteem."

He gave her between \$5 and \$10 a day to live on but expected her to bring back \$400-\$500 each day for him. He forced her to work 7 days a week and long days. Very long days. If she didn't make the \$400 to \$500 she wasn't allowed to come home.

Written quote from ██████:

"I was psychologically and emotionally abused on a daily basis. I had stab wounds, I had broken ribs – and now I have PTSD."

She supported his ██████ too. At one point it was up to \$1000 a day she was bringing home for him.

She was ██████, ██████ at the time. There's no way she could keep up this kind of cash as she got older. Only ██████ months ago she was still doing it – she was too scared to go home some nights because she didn't have the money. She was sleeping at the brothel, and they take advantage of you when you do that. They wake you up and get you to work all night if a girl doesn't come in.

From the beginning I've been putting ideas in her head about leaving him, and to get it through to her that it is violence – she did realise it was violence but she loved him. She wanted to have children with him. He'd just broken her down psychologically.

About [REDACTED] ago she decided she was going to leave him. I rang a DV service from the south east – I can't remember their name – and explained the story. I said "This is the first time she's ever thought about leaving him". They said "Leave it with me, I'll call you back". They never called back. I was furious – she'd finally decided to make that step and they never even bothered to call me back. She had a house in her name – she was paying rent on a house for him. He was taking all the money, going on overseas trips. This DV service never called back and she changed her mind. I left a voicemail message at the DV service, I was trying to be calm but I was so angry that this woman has finally made the decision and you don't even respond. Nothing – I never heard back from them.

I kept working to get her to make that decision to leave. Reminding her of the things he'd done. A couple of months later she moved in with a friend she'd met through work – she just left the house. So now she's blacklisted with the rental because she never told them, and she never told them about the DV or the reasons for leaving. She was always in rental arrears because he kept taking the money.

He continually sent her messages upon messages, first of all saying 'come back, I love you'. This was at the point I kept reminding her - remember last time he said that, remember when he did this.

She went into hospital because of a problem with her [REDACTED] I think, and he didn't give a shit. He said "what are you doing in hospital – go out and make me money". That, I think was her trigger point that he didn't give a shit about her.

When she got out, she couldn't make a decisions. For [REDACTED] years every decision had been made for her. We were at the shopping centre and she couldn't decide what to eat. She'd never been out for breakfast, out for a coffee – she was so excited to be out having a coffee.

The messages he was sending her changed from charming to aggressive – "get back here, you're never going to be anything except a whore".

He told her mother, somehow, and her mother and brother disowned her. When her mum died she had to go to court to fight for money in the will.

There's been no service except from us that she's been involved in. At the start we didn't have many resources and she didn't really engage that well back then. [REDACTED] started going to outreach a bit more often but she didn't really engage. And then she moved brothels, [REDACTED] didn't see her again until a few years ago.

She's never touched drugs – which is amazing. Her difficulties in getting out – she's also left the sex industry now. She hated it. The whole time she was in it she's hated it. The first time I saw her she was bawling her eyes out because she had to go to work. The first thing she did when she left him was get out. She told me she felt guilty about not doing anything except sleeping when she first left him. I told her that her body needed to recover for the [REDACTED] years, 7 days a week she was at a brothel having sex with men.

She's never spent money on herself. The other day she was really excited – she called me and said "I bought something! I bought a computer for myself! It cost \$200!" She hadn't even bought clothes for herself all those years. Nothing was for her.

She's been doing really well – coming along to Project Respect for lunches, engaging with other women. She couldn't make a decision – I had to make the decisions, deciding what she wanted to drink for her. Slowly, slowly – I've been making some decisions for her but making her make some too. [REDACTED]

She's seeing a counsellor now, who'd really good – it's the only other service she's been engaged in. The counsellor has had experience working with women in the sex industry (though overseas) – this was the only reason [REDACTED] would see her.

Any interaction she's had with police has been from neighbours calling them, and she's always been in the position where she had to stick up for the bloke in front of him. As far as I'm aware the police have never taken her away from him to talk to her. Always in front of the bloke.

I see it as trafficking – internal trafficking, not overseas.

She's staying with a friend, paying rent. She's also saving up to get a house of her own. She's so in control of money – she doesn't touch it because she's not used to having it. Every single dollar was controlled. I saw his text messages to her, and they were nasty – so nasty – “you're a stupid whore, you're never going to be anything”. And she believed it. And he was so charming. So charming – violent men always are.

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