

Street workers tell of having their teeth knocked

Fear that stalks city prostitutes goes on as rapists are locked up

As three men begin custodial sentences for raping a Derby prostitute, the Evening Telegraph speaks to the victim and other women tell reporters Paul Bull and Lucy Rees about the terrifying levels of violence they endure while working the streets.

IT appeared to be business as usual when three men approached a young Derby prostitute during the early hours and agreed a price for her services.

For the 26-year-old street worker, it was another chance to earn some money to feed her drug addiction.

But, just a short while later, she was viciously gang-raped in the back of a car, on a country lane off the Stenson to Twyford road.

Like many of her fellow street workers, the woman – whose identity we are protecting – runs a daily gauntlet of danger.

Although she had been attacked several times before, the viciousness and terrifying nature of this latest attack prompted her to report it to the police.

Her three attackers – Iraqi asylum seekers who are in the country illegally – have each been sentenced to nine years in custody and she is urging her fellow workers to follow her example and report cases of abuse.

The slightly-built woman, who lives and plies her trade in the Normanton area, said: "The reason I reported them was purely to stop them doing it to someone else. If they had, I wouldn't have been able to live with myself."

The woman, who originally comes from one of the city's suburbs, started taking drugs six years ago following problems in her private life.

She spends up to £30 a day on heroin and is currently waiting to go on a drug rehabilitation programme.

In the meantime, she continues to work as a prostitute.

She said: "There's no other way of funding it for me. I'm not a thief and it's the only way I can fund my habit without hurting people."

The woman says that her ordeal at the hands of the Iraqis has given her a start-

ing point from which to rebuild her life.

In addition to enlisting for the drug rehabilitation programme, she has also re-established links with her family.

Attacks on Derby prostitutes are all too frequent and one woman we spoke to yesterday told how she had been raped at knife-point only last week.

Jackie, who has been working the streets for 10 years, said that the attack happened last Thursday night but she remains reluctant to report it to the police.

Jackie has had to deal with difficult men before. She had had her teeth knocked out in a previous attack.

"It was horrible. I really thought I was going to die on Thursday," she said. "I felt horrible, guilty and dirty."

"I'd been walking back from my daughter's house in Sinfyn and, to get to where I'm living now, I had to walk down



my old beat area."

She bumped into a man who asked her if she wanted work and she said yes, despite not needing the money.

"It was just greed I suppose," she said.

"He offered to give me £20 if I took him into Balfour recreation ground. I said yes, but it's always in my mind that something might happen."

The man grabbed Jackie round the neck in a headlock and held a knife to her throat before raping her.

After her ordeal, the man,

demanding that she got on her hands and knees to find a glove he had dropped. He then stole the £6 she had on her and her last cigarette.

"I didn't bother to report the attack because the police don't treat working girls the same as if another girl was raped," she said.

Jackie, who attends weekly drop-in centres at Derby's Women's Work centre, has managed to give up taking heroin and her next step is to kick crack cocaine.

She said she originally got into prostitution when her

husband died of cancer, leaving her to look after two children.

"To numb the pain of her loss, the former residential home carer began taking drugs."

She said: "My husband had died and I felt like I wanted to die too. When I was offered heroin in a pub, I thought I'd give it a go. Someone had to inject it into me."

"Because of my habit I ended up selling my car, getting the house repossessed and taking about £500 a day out of my bank account to pay

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Rapist had been kicked out of the country once, but slipped back in

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claiming to be an Iranian national.

Hasan was told to leave the UK in October 2003, while Karim's asylum application was refused in July 2004.

The Home Office will deport the three men, believed to be from Iraq, at the end of their sentences.

Speaking exclusively to the Evening Telegraph, the victim – whose identity is protected by law – said: "I'm pleased with the sentence. I wanted to stop them doing it to other

lieve they could go on and do it to someone else."

Investigating officer Detective Constable Rick Leighton said the three men picked up the woman in Portland Street, Pear Tree, during the early hours of April 30 last year.

After agreeing a price for sex, they took her to a remote lane between Stenson and Twyford and parked up in the entrance to a field.

But when the woman asked for payment in advance – the usual practice – they refused and launched a one-and-a-half-hour attack on her.

and repeatedly raped in the group's car before they took her back to Portland Street.

The victim reported the attack to the police.

One of the men was later identified through evidence at the scene, while the other two were arrested during police investigations into an unrelated incident.

All three denied the rape during the trial, which concluded last week.

Det Con Leighton said: "They just lied through all the police interviews and the court case."

going to happen to her.

"Prostitutes don't usually come to us but they are believed and we will investigate cases involving them as thoroughly as any other."

All three men will be placed on the sex offenders' register for life.

Hasan was sentenced to nine years in prison, while Ali and Karim were each given nine years in a young offenders' institute.

Derby City Council leader Councillor Chris Williamson said: "The Government has tried to tighten up, but I'm sure the Home Secretary will

