



## JOHNNY'S STORY

### IF ONLY I KNEW WHAT I KNOW NOW

This is my story, I hope you read this and learn something from it. If I read this before I wouldn't be in the position I am.

I lived with my mum and older sister, we had our problems but it was ok I guess. I went to school on a part time timetable as I struggled with education, my sister was in college and my mum didn't work and my dad was in and out of my life. I never had many friends in school I was around all the "cool" people but never really fit in, my sister was popular and had a cool boyfriend who worked and spent money on her I looked up to him, he was cool.

Mum didn't work so money was tight, everyone around me wore Stone Island, Nike, Gucci and went out a lot. I couldn't afford these things but noticed my sister's boyfriend had them things, I asked him how I could get them and he said work hard, I didn't understand what he meant but soon I did!

Mum struggled with her moods and social anxiety so going out with the family never happened, I never felt like a normal 14-year-old but really wanted to do what everyone else was doing. One day my sister's boyfriend gave me his Stone Island coat, I was so excited and wore it to school the next day. When I got to school people noticed I had a new coat on and started to talk to me, asking me where I got it from as they hadn't seen this one before, I was finally becoming known, what a feeling. I told my sister's boyfriend how cool it was and he gave me a whole new outfit, coat, jeans, trainers and a hat things my dad never did for me. I was becoming popular in school and I really enjoyed it, I took advantage of this as I finally felt part of something and popular, I couldn't believe how easy it was to become popular and it cost me nothing.

A couple months later my sister's boyfriend called me and asked me whether I want to work with him, earn some money and buy myself some more clothes. I was enjoying the attention and the fact my sister's boyfriend liked me so I said yes. We met at McDonalds and he had another young boy with him, he told me all I needed to do was drop a package to Clacton and I would get paid £50 each time. I was told the other young boy would come with me to make sure I was ok, he seemed ok so we arranged to go Saturday. I asked should I tell mum and my sister's boyfriend said he asked her first if he could take me to work with him delivering things (he was a delivery man). I dropped my first package to Clacton successfully with my partner and got £50, I did this three, four times and it was good. A month later I was told I needed to spend the day in Clacton to work with my partner and I would get £300, I agreed. When I got there, it was dirty, four people sleeping on a mattress who looked out cold, needles and takeaway boxes everywhere, I didn't think anything of it. I was then told I couldn't leave until I sold 100 wraps of crack and heroin, when I said my sister's boyfriend didn't say I needed to do this they called him and he said if I didn't he would hurt my mum and sister, I owe him for the clothes. I was TRAPPED, the

man put a knife on the table and told me to behave and not try run until my stash was finished. Drug addicts come to the house for their drugs and I gave it to them, some had no money so offered me "favours", I was so scared but felt trapped. I was given only £100 for my shift and did this for months, on one occasion the door knocked at 8am, it was a clean looking man he came in and more followed, it was the police! I was arrested and was too scared to tell the truth to protect mum and my sister, it was over, I was going home now. Unfortunately, it didn't end like that, I write this letter to you from my cell, I'm serving 5 years in prison.

Please think before you try fit in or impress people.

Thank you for reading.

Johnny