

**IN THE CROWN COURT**  
**AT CARLISLE**

Case No: **T20117138**  
CAO No (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Courts of Justice  
Earl Street, Carlisle  
Cumbria CA1 1DJ

Date(s) of hearing: **Tuesday, 15th May, 2012**  
Start Time: **12:30** Finish Time: **12:45**

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**Before:**

**HIS HONOUR JUDGE HUGHES QC**

**R E G I N A**

**- v -**

**AZAD MIAH**

**MR T EVANS** appeared on behalf of the prosecution  
**MR. D. J. LENNON & MR. S.C. MEADOWCROFT** appeared on behalf of the defendant

**SENTENCING REMARKS**  
**Section 39 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933**

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Tuesday, 15th May, 2012

JUDGE HUGHES: Azad Miah, you have been convicted following a three week trial and after careful consideration of all the evidence by the jury of corrupting and degrading sexual exploitation. Over a number of years behind the veil of a seemingly respectable business you preyed on the immaturity and vulnerability of young girls. Girls as young as 12. Girls from troubled and chaotic home backgrounds. You sought to draw them into a life of drug dependency and sleazy sex for money. You pestered them. You bombarded them with text messages and you sought to lure them into prostitution by offers of cash. You knew where the money was likely to be spent -- that it would go on drugs, thereby destroying their lives further and increasing their dependency on you. You also used them to find other girls for you, and paid them to do so. When you did not desire the sexual services for yourself you made them available to others and you provided a brothel above your shop for that purpose. Contrary to the way you tried to portray yourself before the jury you showed a total and selfish disregard for their welfare. Azad Miah, your conduct corrodes the foundations of decency and respect by which all right thinking people live their lives, whatever their ethnic or religious background. Carlisle is a close knit city with a strong sense of community. This case has aroused considerable local interest and concern and shock that this sort of thing could have happened here in Carlisle. For those who came forward and were prepared to give evidence in this trial doing so was an act of courage. They were prepared to pay the price of personal embarrassment and shame. They had to speak of intimate matters which they would have preferred to keep in the dark. They had to endure being branded as liars and colluders in a conspiracy against you to provide false evidence. It was obvious for some of them that the whole experience was a traumatic one and one which they will always remember. You tried to portray yourself before the jury as the wronged party and as your counsel put it on your behalf in his closing speech the victim of a witch hunt.

Counts 6 to 9 on the indictment concern a girl who was already deeply damaged. She had been the victim of sexual abuse within her own family as a small child and was highly vulnerable. She was introduced to you by an older woman, whom I have no doubt you financially rewarded. The jury prudently decided that they were not sure that the abuse started when she was as young as 14, but they convicted you of paying for her sexual services from the age of 15 onwards. You paid her in cash to have sex with you. You paid her more because you knew that she was young. You knew she was becoming

increasingly addicted to heroin and dependent on the money you gave her. You tried to pretend that your relationship was genuine and loving. You claimed in interview that when you realised that she was a drug addict you distanced yourself from her. But before the jury you tried to claim that you had been misunderstood and that you were in truth concerned for her welfare and trying to help and support her financially. As she got older you paid her to find other girls and young women for you, and she graphically described how the rooms at the [Indian Restaurant] were used as a brothel. In summary, you cruelly exploited that girl and the long term emotional harm that you did her must be incalculable.

Counts 13 and 18 concern another girl who was only 15 years of age. She came forward as a witness to say that you had offered her £80 to have sex with her, but she was so ashamed that she did not divulge the fact that there had been an occasion when she had agreed to meet you and you had paid her for sex. She only revealed what happened when she was faced with the prospect of having to give evidence in court on oath. She told the jury: "I felt I could not stand up in court and not tell the truth. I was thinking of my own daughter. I can't cope with it. I didn't mention it before as I was scared. It is a letdown for oneself. I did not want people to know my business." It took real courage to do what she did. You accused her of being a liar and made insulting and disparaging remarks about her appearance in interview. The jury was satisfied that it was you who was the liar and the hypocrite, though.

Counts 9 and 10 relate to a girl who was still only 16 when she gave evidence. When she was only 12 you bombarded her with text messages, seeking to groom her and trying to induce her to have sex with you for money. You followed her home and sent her a picture message you had taken whilst you walked past your shop. She said that that message "freaked her out". You knew of that girl through her older sister with whom you had had regular sex. The attraction to you was that she so young. Encouraging a child of that age to engage in sexual activity for money is a grave offence, even though you did not succeed in persuading her to have sex. Counts 14 and 15 relate to two 16 year old girls. One answered a job advert and came to work in your takeaway. You offered her money for sex and on the very first night she worked for you, you followed her home. The other girl used to hang around your shop. You tried to groom her by explicit text messages and by sexual overtures in getting her to massage your head.

Count 17 relates to the use of the rooms above [Indian Restaurant] for sexual purposes, as to which a number of witnesses gave graphic evidence. You organised that Staff from the takeaway, and other men, took advantage of the facilities. One prostitute

of mature years gave evidence of what went on one night when a group of you gathered together to play cards and engage in casual sex. She ended up having to dial 999 to get out of the building.

Parallels are bound to be drawn between this case and the case that concluded in Liverpool last week. But I want to make it clear that I deal with this case entirely on its own facts. In deciding on the length of sentence you must serve I have had regard to the Sentencing Guideline Council guidelines. They provide, though, only a degree of assistance as I have to sentence you for a persistent course of conduct over a number of years and involving a number of victims.

I have also had regard to the totality of the sentence that it is appropriate for you to serve. Certain aspects of your conduct, in my judgment, call for consecutive sentences, and I have adjusted the individual sentences to arrive at what I consider to be the appropriate sentence overall, and then to apportion it between the counts on the indictment by a combination of consecutive and concurrent sentences. Inevitably that means that some of the sentences on individual counts are lower than they would have been if they stood alone.

I tell you immediately that the total sentence will be one of 15 years' imprisonment. That sentence is made up as follows.

On count 6, when the girl in question was 15 years of age, there will be a sentence of 6 years' imprisonment. In relation to the same girl, counts 7 and 8, when she was 16 and 17, there will be concurrent sentences of 4 years' imprisonment. Count 18 relates to the girl who also was paid for sexual services and gave evidence about it in the trial. In relation to that there will be a sentence of 3 years' imprisonment, but that will run consecutively. Counts 9 and 10 concern the girl who was only 12 years of age at the time and you encouraged to have sex for money. That is a very serious offence having regard to her age, and the sentence there will be one of 5 years' imprisonment. That also will be consecutive. In relation to counts 13, 14 and 15 there will be concurrent sentences of 2 years' imprisonment. On count 17, the count of keeping a brothel, there will be a consecutive sentence of one year imprisonment. That makes the total of 15 years. The period of 224 days that you have spent on remand will count towards that sentence. Once you have served half of that sentence you will be eligible for release on licence and under supervision. You will be required additionally to sign the sex offenders register and that register will be maintained for life. You will also be barred from working with children and vulnerable adults, and I make an order under section 28 for the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000. Mr. Miah, you may now go

downstairs.

Before leaving this case there are one or two final remarks that I would wish to make. This case reveals the seedier side of life in our town and city centres and what can happen to vulnerable and immature girls. There are, it seems to me, lessons from this case for us all to learn. There are lessons for parents to learn whose responsibility it is to protect their children. There are lessons for those responsible for safeguarding vulnerable teenagers from deprived backgrounds and without appropriate parental care and guidance. There are lessons to be learnt by the police to be ever vigilant to detect signs of the possible exploitation and abuse of vulnerable young people, and to take seriously what they say however chaotic and difficult their lives may be. A sad feature of this case is that there were a number of occasions when witnesses complained to police or community support officers about the defendant pestering them. But their complaints were not investigated further. As a result of that, opportunities were missed. There are lessons for us all as individuals and members of charities and voluntary groups to take the problem seriously. It was eventually because of things said by one of the girls who was attending a centre in Carlisle for young people with drug and alcohol problems that a strategy meeting was convened and the investigation resulting in this prosecution began. The investigation of the case owes much to the dedication and determination of one officer to trace the witnesses and make it possible for them to feel that they could come forward. That officer was DC Christy Robertson. I commend her for her hard work on the case and ask that my remarks may be conveyed to the Chief Constable.

Members of the jury, I thank you also for coming back today. I hope you found it appropriate to consider the remainder of this case. Thank you. I will rise.

**(12:45)**

**Marten Walsh Cherer hereby certifies that the above is an accurate and complete record of the proceedings or part thereof.**

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