



Freedom Network USA

Introduction to Drugs

1. When I turned seventeen, I was working part time at a video rental store and struggling to make ends meet living on my own. I became friends with a co-worker who often had the same shift as me. At first we would just hang out at the store, but after about a month she asked me if I wanted to come back to her apartment after work. On our way to her place, she told me she needed to stop by a club to pick up her paycheck. I didn't know until then that she had another job.
2. The club turned out to be a strip club. Angel told me she worked there and said, if I was interested, I could probably get a job too. I told her I was not interested in stripping, but she said I could get a job behind the bar. She introduced me to the owner, who offered me a barmaid position on the spot. I tried not to appear excited, but I was looking forward to making more money.
3. That night, I met a regular named Kevin. Kevin was in his 30s and I thought he was very good looking. The whole night Kevin paid attention to me. He complimented everything that I did and asked me about myself and my life. I felt appreciated and comfortable with him. At the end of my shift, Angel asked if I wanted to come back to her apartment with her and Kevin. I did not want the attention to end, so I did.
4. When we got to the apartment, Tiny told me that I could stay with her for free if I wanted. Kevin told me it was a good idea. He also said since I worked at the club, I could catch rides with him when he picked Angel up for a shift. I felt lucky to have Angel and Kevin suddenly in my life.



Freedom Network USA

5. I worked at the club and lived with Angel for about two weeks before things changed. If Kevin wasn't tipping me with cash, he'd tip me with drugs. I had only smoked weed before I met him, and didn't even drink that much. He introduced me to cocaine – and gave it to me for free. I started relying on cocaine and relying on Kevin because he would give me the cocaine. That's really how it began. Everything started with the drugs.
6. Angel always gave her paychecks to Kevin. She told me that he was better at money stuff, and would use it to pay her rent and other bills. She kept her tip money to maintain her lifestyle – doing her nails and buying nice clothing. Angel was beautiful, and I wanted to be like her.
7. The next month or so was a drug-fueled blur. If I wasn't working at the club, Kevin, Angel, and I would be at the house getting high. I lost my job at the video rental store. I never left the house and rarely saw anyone outside of club patrons.

Forced to Engage in Prostitution

8. On my eighteenth birthday, Kevin took me out for dinner. In the car, I did the cocaine he gave me. He told me how he had plans for me now that I was a woman. Since he helped me out of my bad living situation and took his drugs, he explained, it was time for me to help him. By help, Kevin said I was going to have sex with club patrons for money. He said it was only going to be a temporary thing until he was repaid for the rent. I was high and in shock. Then he pulled the car over and we had sex.
9. The next day at the club Angel told me how much to charge for different services. She said at the end of every date to give Kevin what I made. It sounded simple. I thought we would get money, hang out and get high. But Kevin no longer gave me cash and I had to



Freedom Network USA

bring home money each night in order for him to give me drugs. I was scared but I didn't want to go back to the projects and I didn't want to stop using cocaine.

10. Every night, I had to make at least \$200 or Kevin would not give me a bump. Kevin kept me completely dependent on him. I felt brainwashed.
11. At some point, I told Angel that I couldn't live under Kevin's thumb any longer. I told her in confidence that we needed to get away from him. The next day at the club, Kevin brought me into the back room and beat me for what I said to Angel. He told me I should be grateful, but instead I was a whiny bitch who needed to learn a lesson.
12. After that beating, Kevin dragged me to his car and drove me around. He said, "You'll see how hard life is without me," and pushed me out of the car door. In that moment, I realized how alone I was. I had no idea where I was or what to do. I wanted to get high and forget.
13. Kevin dropped me where other girls were engaging in prostitution. I knew this because cars slowed down and the drivers asked to talk to me. I let one pass. But the next car that slowed down, I took. I got into the passenger seat and asked what he wanted. Turned out, he was an undercover. I got arrested my first night outside of the club.
14. Getting arrested was the lowest point of my life. I was exhausted. I was bruised from Kevin's beating. I was embarrassed, scared, and completely alone. My arrest made me actually believe what Kevin said – that life would be harder without home. I didn't know what else to do, so I called him to pick me up from the courthouse.



Freedom Network USA

15. When Kevin picked me up, he laughed at me. I felt awful. He told me that I would have to make up this night as soon as we got back to the club. With my drug habit and Kevin's control, going back to court was not an option. A warrant went out for my arrest.

Escaping Kevin

16. For about five months, Kevin prostituted me at the club. He doubled my quota. When enough men did not come to the club, he made me get the rest on the street. I was arrested two other times during these five months – once for loitering for prostitution and once for drug possession.

17. After my third arrest, Kevin got picked up by the police for stealing a car. He went to jail and I never saw him again.

18. After Kevin went to jail, I started living on the street. I was sleeping on roofs or in hotels, occasionally, if I had some money. I remember having to pick food out of garbage cans. I did the only thing I knew how to do in order to support myself. I was arrested and convicted of prostitution that summer.

19. After that arrest, I finally decided I had to get clean. My public defender connected me with an out-patient treatment facility where I got treatment for ten months. Afterwards I regularly attended Narcotics Anonymous meetings. I have now been clean for over four years.