



Lancashire Telegraph 10 March 2017

'Clearly business was booming' - three men jailed after police raid Blackburn brothel.

Aban Quaynor, Crime Reporter

THREE Romanian men who trafficked women to Blackburn to work as prostitutes have been jailed for a total of 10 years.

Preston Crown Court heard how ringleader Cristian Vasile ran three brothels in the town where at least four women worked.

Brothers Ionut Stan, 31, and Cristian Stan, 32, managed the 'day-to-day running' of the business, taking bookings from punters and acted as bodyguards.

Judge Mark Brown, The Honorary Recorder of Preston, said the gang were running a 'profitable business' with the three men having sent around £70,000 back home to family and friends in the space of 21 months.

The court was told the case is thought to be one of the first in the country where police have managed to secure a conviction against human traffickers without the support of the victims.

The case, revolved around two women, who cannot be named for legal reasons.

Prosecutor Michael Mayer told the court how police raided the main brothel in the town's Accrington Road on May 1 after neighbours reported seeing men entering and leaving throughout the day in night.

Inside officers found the Stans, two women who said they were working as prostitutes, beds in every room of the house and other material associated with the sex trade, including 'menus' of the acts the women were willing to perform.

Mr Mayer said: "There were also large quantities of mobile phones in the house which were ringing constantly.

"Clearly business was booming."

Mr Mayer said Vasile advertised the women on various adult sites and their profiles included pictures of them dress in 'erotic clothing'.

They were also holding up cards advertising their services.

The court heard while officers were still at the house Vasile entered, claiming to be there to see a friend, whose full name he didn't know. He also said he lived in Preston, but could not remember where.

Mr Mayer said documents inside the house linked Vasile, 34, to the property as well as brothels in Fawcett Close and Sandon Street. He was also operating a fourth business from Preston.

When police examined his mobile phones they found photographs of ID cards of other women, pictures of women posing for the same adult website as the two found in the house in Accrington Road, and a contact stored under 'pregnancy termination'.

Mr Mayer said: "Plainly this was a occupational hazard for the line of work his girls were engaged in."

The court heard how cell siting evidence linked all three men to being in moving vehicles with the two main victims at the same time.

Mr Mayer said data also showed how one of the women was driven to Leeds and Harrogate to work as a prostitute in hotels.

The court heard how Vasile sent £39,500 back to Romania, with Cristian Stan also sending £16,500 and his brother sending or receiving £13,500 to or from the Eastern European country.

Defending Vasile, Mark Stuart said his client had come over to the UK because he was earning little money in IT and intended to get a legitimate job.

He said: "My client is of previous good character and came over here to work."

The defence barristers for the Stans said their clients were of previous good character and were looking forward to going back to Romania once there were released from prison.

Vasile, of no fixed address, pleaded guilty to human trafficking, brothel keeping and causing prostitution for gain.

Ionut Stan and Cristian Stan, both of Accrington Road in Blackburn, each admitted a single charge of facilitating the travel of a Romanian woman with a view to her being sexually exploited.

Jailing Vasile for five years, Cristian Stan for three years two months and Ionut Stan for two years and four months, Judge Brown, said: "This was a profitable business and during a period of 21 months you collectively were able to send to family and friends in Romania a total of nearly £70,000."

Speaking after the case, Det Sgt Tony Atkins, said: "These men are dangerous criminals who have no thought or consideration for their victims.

"These sentences send out a strong message to the criminals who are exploiting vulnerable people who are too afraid or have been conditioned to believe they are not victims.

"If you are committing this type of crime, we can and will gather the evidence of your criminality and successfully prosecute you even without a victim complaint."



Distributed in this printed form by:

THE FRIENDSHIP FOUNDATION (UK – Romania)

www.thefriendshipfoundation.co.uk

contact@thefriendshipfoundation.co.uk