



On September 15 model Kate Moss was pictured in a tabloid paper taking workers was found in the heart of Liverpool's red light district. **Max Da**

Who gets angry over Anne Marie?

THE media circus over the Kate Moss cocaine pictures was, as is often the case with drugs and tabloids, a spectacle of inaccuracy and hypocrisy. A witch-hunt led by the media and a gaggle of rent-a-quote politicians and campaigners demanded the head of a woman who only a week previously had been a national icon. Painted not only as a bad mother, but as someone who was morally corrupt, she was duly punished and dumped by a string of employers.

The *Daily Mirror* anguished over the damaging effect the images would have on impressionable teenage girls – forgetting it was the one exposing youngsters to this “debauchery”. However bogus the storm of outrage was – journalists were subsequently outed by singer Robbie Williams as being partial to the odd line – Miss Moss will ride it out. She has already appeared on the cover of American fashion magazine *W* and fresh contracts cannot be too far away.

But there was no such moral distress and no such reprieve for Anne Marie Foy. On the same day the Kate Moss story broke, the body of the 45-year-old heroin user, sex worker and grandmother was found in a bush. Police, who have arrested a man on suspicion of her

murder, said she had suffered a “prolonged and violent assault”.

Anne Marie is one of a steady stream of sex workers whose lives have ended violently. Research by Hilary Kinnell, former head of the UK Network of Sex Work Projects, found 83 sex workers – around one every nine weeks – have been reported as being murdered in Britain since 1990. But, after comparing her figures with a six month project monitoring deaths of sex workers undertaken by the Metropolitan Police – she says the true figure is likely to be double that. Unless there is a connection with a famous serial killer, murders of prostitutes rarely get a mention in the national press.

“Men are more likely to attack sex workers because their position as a hated element within society is perpetuated by the authorities,” says Kinnell. “So the carnage goes on. It is shocking and horrible.”

Like most of Britain's 30,000 street sex workers, Anne Marie lived her life within a dangerous and abusive cycle: she used drugs to cope with her job and used her job to buy her drugs. These are women who have had to cope with difficult and dark lives: research shows that the majority of sex workers have been mentally or physically abused as children, have grown up in care and suffer from a mix of mental and physical health problems.



Suffered profoundly all her life: Anne Marie Foy

A Home Office study of 228 female street sex workers in Hull, Manchester, London and Kirklees found nearly nine in ten had recently used heroin and two thirds had recently used crack. Sex and drug markets are intertwined: sex workers are significant customers of drug dealers, they buy drugs

for clients, sell sex for drugs and their pimps are often dealers. Street sex workers – more so than those working from brothels and parlours – report multiple experience of violence.

In a bid to reduce the level of brutality against sex workers, the Home Office is looking at radical proposals for licensed brothels and decriminalised red light areas. The English Collective of Prostitutes have called for a shift from the prosecution to the protection of sex workers. “We want an end to the criminalisation of prostitution which makes women vulnerable to murder and other violence. Decriminalisation would improve sex worker's safety – New Zealand has shown that.” It is the Victorian conditions of today's sex workers, not the Victorian morality towards drug use, that needs the oxygen of publicity.

Faces failed by society: some of the 83 sex workers reported as murdered since 1990



cocaine. The same day the strangled corpse of one of Britain's many drug-using street sex
and **Lyn Matthews** on a case of misdirected moral outrage

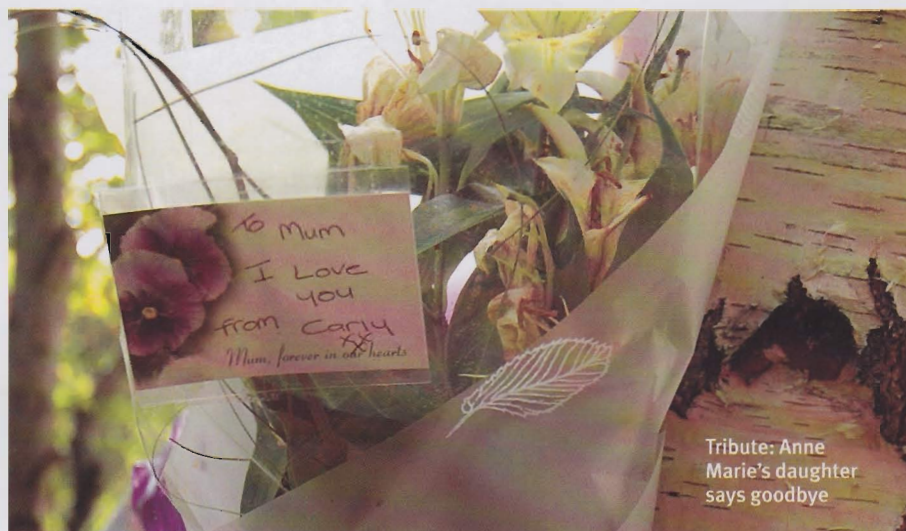
WHEN the local paper came, the headlines reported that the body of a woman had been found in the area where Liverpool's sex workers operate. I silently hoped it would not be somebody I knew. It's bad enough when a victim is a stranger, but when you know someone it is so much harder to be detached and left unaffected.

By early evening I had discovered that it was Anne Marie, a woman I knew very well. She was someone whose hand I had held when she gave birth to her last child, who had cried in my arms many times and who had shared the most intimate details of her life with me. She was a woman who had suffered profoundly all her life, a woman who would never have hurt anyone, only herself.

She had been left in bushes, discarded like an old tin can or bit of litter. She was left naked, leaving her with nothing – not even her dignity. Ann Marie was thrown aside like chip paper with yesterday's news, to become tomorrow's news, a fleeting recognition of an invisible life.

She had cheated the grim reaper many times. Once she had been kidnapped and lay on the floor of a van, naked and trussed up. Only by kicking open the doors and with the aid of a passing motorist, did she escape possible death. She had been dragged out of a burning house and sometimes had too big a heroin hit. Escaping death was nothing new and sometimes not surviving would have even been welcome.

She had enjoyed several years of being drug free. But things turned bad again and she reverted to the only friend she knew,



Tribute: Anne Marie's daughter says goodbye

heroin. Soon she was back on the streets, homeless and selling her body to get money for drugs and a bed for the night: somewhere warm to stay, somewhere safe. She basically sold the only thing she had left that was any value – herself. Anne Marie was a meal ticket to some, a nuisance to others, a statistic on a database – a thing whose life could be taken. A grandmother, mother, daughter, sister, aunt and a friend: a human being. Who killed her? A punter, a dealer, a lunatic or society itself? It doesn't matter. It is a sad end to a sad life.

I wish, just for once, that policy makers, service providers and those that work with these women on a regular basis would consider what their bright ideas and punitive measures actually achieve? While everyone talks and decides what needs to be done, women die. While the government fails to provide shelter and leaves women vulnerable on the streets, they die. While women continue to have to sell their bodies for drug money, they die. Their need for drugs overrides their fear of

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While women continue to have to sell their bodies for money for drugs, they die. Their need for drugs overrides their fear of becoming the next victim.”

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Lyn Matthews has worked in the drug field for 18 years

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How have we reached this sorry state? Why do we let women suffer in this way? Most of these women have suffered terrible abuse throughout their lives, and yet we continually punish them for being victims. The law that should be there to protect them forces them further into the shadows, providing fertile ground for those who want to hurt them and snatch their lives away.

If anyone wonders where my passion comes from and why I will continue to go on fighting for justice for these women, it is because it is not only the murderers who have blood on their hands. While people ignore the dangers these women face and allow them to sell their bodies to get drugs, we all have blood on our hands.

For Anne Marie the fight is over, may she rest in peace. No one else can hurt her now. But what of the others? All those women, out there, right now, standing alone on the streets at the mercy of who knows what, to get a bag and a rock. Who is going to help them and how many more must die? ■

