



MELISSA RENWICK/TORONTO STAR

Matthew Deiacio, seen here at the Toronto East Detention Centre, has been told that, if convicted, he could face a possible prison sentence of "double digits."

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The day Matthew Deiacio first pimped out a woman is the day he "grew up and turned into a man."

"That's when I learned women. Like, you know, learned how they work, learned what they want, everything, from doing boy things to a grown-up man."

The 29-year-old career criminal is sitting behind bars dressed in an orange jumpsuit.

His fingernails are long, his gaze steady.

He has "pimpin'" tattooed across his knuckles, two teardrops on his cheek and "f--- all bitches" on his chest.

He doesn't flinch when he describes how in the past he "back-handed" a sex worker for "causing too much drama" or how pimps prey on young girls who just "need that daddy figure."

Deiacio is facing 19 charges, including human trafficking, assault causing bodily harm, unlawful confinement and kidnapping. He awaits trial.

In a jailhouse interview at the Toronto East Detention Centre, Deiacio told the Star he could not talk about his case that is before the courts, except to say that police have their facts wrong.

For example, he says he did not, as police allege, repeatedly punch the victim in the face or throw her in the trunk of a car or hold a gun against her head and say, "I'm going to shoot you. Did you think you could leave me?"

He refused to say what he did do, but instead gave the Star an insider's perspective of how pimps lure women into the sex trade, which on the streets is known as The Game.

Deiacio has played The Game and he knows it well.

It begins with the boyfriend stage, he says, where pimps prey on

## THE ACCUSED

# 'People see me and they see a monster'

29-year-old Matthew Deiacio faces 19 charges, including human trafficking and assault causing bodily harm.

The Star spoke to him in jail, where he awaits trial

vulnerable girls and pretend to be in love.

"Most of these girls, like I said, they're broken. It's not hard; you just gotta answer their call," Deiacio says.

"You get in there, you find the crack; like some are drugs, some are just, they need to hear 'I love you.'"

But, he added, it's all an illusion because "there is no love in the sex trade."

The next stage is the "sale," where the pimp starts to manipulate the girl into thinking prostitution is an easy way for them to make fast money so they can start to build a future together.

"We need to start a life. . . You tell em', well, we need to put money away. I'm going to do what I do. See, I'm putting my 50 in, you have to do your 50. So there's another way, you can have sex with guys, but don't worry, I'm going to love you. . . At the end of the night you're home with me," he says.

"And, she'll do it." Why?

"Cause you just sold her a dream."

He was only 16 when an older pimp "gave" him two prostitutes in Toronto, a deal known as "changing ownership" in Deiacio's world.

That was the day he "went from chump change to house money."

From making \$1,000 from every car he stole "to taking \$1,000 off of one person a day."

Over the past 13 years, Deiacio says he has had more than a dozen women working in the sex trade — at one point up to four at a time — from hotels, motels and condos in Toronto.

"Sometimes in a month, if you have four women, you could make \$70,000," he says.

When he was younger, Deiacio says he sold the dream to sex workers and took their money because it's what he was taught.

"I'm not going to say I've never done it. You grow up, right? Change your ways," he says.

He no longer uses love to lure women into the sex trade. "I'm not going

to sit here and lie to them and say, 'Oh, I love you.' I don't. I love my money."

The engaged father of two no longer sees himself as a pimp, but rather a "manager" of escorts.

He said he offers them protection and security, helps them upload their online sex advertisements, drives them to johns' houses, pays their rent and buys them "anything they need," from food, tampons and hair dye to condoms and sex toys like dildos or nipple clamps. The deal between Deiacio and his sex workers is usually 60:40 or 70:30, with him pocketing the majority of the cash.

Even though he's engaged, Deiacio told the Star he still has sex with some of the women he "manages" and when he tells his fiancée, he says, "the first 24 hours are rough."

But, to Deiacio, sex is business.

"A woman, if she wants to make money off it, she shouldn't have to go to jail, or somebody that's helping her. It's her life. It's her body. . . Why should anybody be getting into trouble?"

"Some people don't want a relationship. . . They just want to get what they want and go home, no strings attached. No relationship, no feelings, no fighting — a quick business deal."

One of Deiacio's sex workers had a client she would see twice a week who said he was a judge in Toronto, but never disclosed his real name. One night, he picked her up with his robes in the back seat of the car, Deiacio says. Another sex worker was seeing a john regularly who one day called her, said he was a police officer and warned her of a raid on the hotel she was prostituting out of.

"It's all kinds of people — coppers, newscasters, everything. . . There are

even women that call," he says.

When the Star asked Deiacio if he would ever want his fiancée or daughter to work in the sex trade, he laughed and shook his head.

"I wish I was never introduced to it," he says.

He has seen pimps lock girls in hotel rooms, beat them, take phone cords out of the wall and disable their Facebook and email accounts.

They do this to "cut them off from the world so that all they have is that person to rely on. . . so they're dependent on them," he says.

The girls don't run because "they have nothing, nobody."

Deiacio, who grew up in Toronto living with his mother, says his "f--- all bitches" tattoo was targeted at a woman who molested him when he was younger.

"I don't hate women. That's not why I do this," he says.

"I have a mother, I have a sister, I have a daughter. . . I've been doing this my whole life. . . It's hard for me to turn away. We always go back to what we know, right?"

His mom didn't know he was working in the sex trade until he was charged with human trafficking last year, he says.

"My mom, she doesn't know that side of life. She's a good person. . . For sure, I've let her down 100 per cent. . . People see me and they see a monster."

"I can't sit here and cry and be depressed because this is the life I live. I can't sit here and blame anyone else."

He has been told that, if convicted, he could face a possible prison sentence of "double digits."

"I don't want to do it, but it's the price of The Game," Deiacio says.

"You play with fire, you get burnt."

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