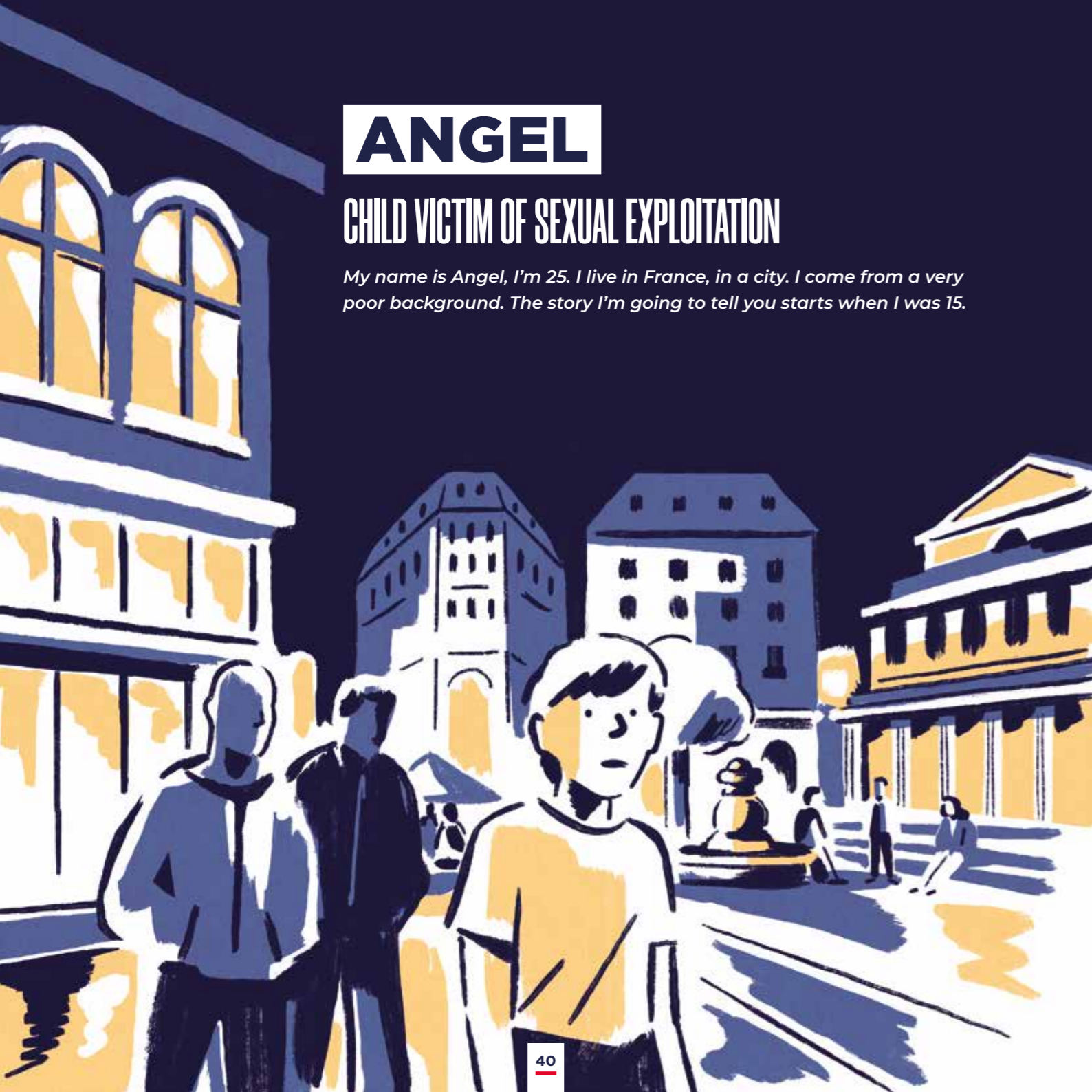


ANGEL

CHILD VICTIM OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

My name is Angel, I'm 25. I live in France, in a city. I come from a very poor background. The story I'm going to tell you starts when I was 15.



Everything began one evening, in one of the streets of my town. As I was going home, an older man came up to me. He seemed nice, took an interest in me, and we started talking. His name was Stéphane. After a little while, he invited me back to his house. I hesitated a bit. Then, he told me he could have me make lots of money. On condition that I agreed to certain sexual acts with him. I knew that other children did this in my neighbourhood. At the time, I was a bit anxious but I needed this money and I told myself it would be a good way of helping my family. So I agreed.

After a while, Stéphane introduced me to some of his acquaintances. They were all French, aged between 40 and 60. They all wanted the same thing. They knew very well that such acts were illegal, but that didn't bother them.

Some of them went as far as to help my parents financially, taking me to the swimming pool or the beach. They considered themselves to be benefactors, despite the horrific things they put me through, just because they gave us money.

This system was now our main means of survival. It was impossible for us to get by without this money.

“At the time, I was a bit anxious but I needed this money.”

The police got involved in the case after arresting the clients for sexual violence against minors. They arrested my parents and accused them of acting as pimps. At that point, I was very scared that they would go to prison. At the hearing, when I was questioned as a victim, I tried above all to protect them! I told the police officers that my parents had no idea what was going on!

Today, I see this period of my life differently. Some people took advantage of me because I was only a child. They created and exercised real financial control over our family in order to get what they wanted.

It was difficult to get out of this system. A lot of people helped me do this, helped me rebuild my life and put an end to my suffering. But this took years.



KEY POINTS

The sexual exploitation of minors is a form of human trafficking. It corresponds to a situation in which an underage victim is forced either directly or indirectly to satisfy the sexual desires of a third party. "Human trafficking" has occurred if the victim being exploited is underage, his or her age being sufficient to establish the existence of constraint.



WHO ARE THE VICTIMS?

Victims of sexual exploitation helped by associations are young people aged under 18 and who can on occasion even be very young children. They are often young girls who for whatever reason have lost total or partial contact with their families, but these victims can be of any nationality and come from all socio-economic backgrounds. However, most of them have experienced a period of trauma which has made them particularly vulnerable to predators, such as harassment at school or an initial trauma of a sexual nature of some kind... making her or him an ideal prey for sexual predators.



HOW CAN THEY BE IDENTIFIED?

It is difficult to identify these victims whose exploitation most often uses digital interfaces. These enable rapid exploitation which can be multiplied and make the identification of the victims complicated.

In addition, underage victims of sexual exploitation are distinguished by the fact that they are frequently in denial of their exploitation situation. If a potential victim is identified, an attempt should be made to provide support even if it has not been possible to put the situation into words.

In the event of a meeting with a potential victim, each individual can try to identify a bundle of evidence raising suspicions regarding a situation of sexual exploitation (hyper-sexualisation, concerning physical condition, repeated running away, drug and digital addiction, etc.) In all cases, it is important to turn to specialist associations who will be able to advise you on how to steer or accompany the young person or people without putting yourself in danger, the child being most certainly linked to a trafficking networks.

WHY DOES THIS SITUATION OCCUR ON THE SIDELINES OF MAJOR SPORTING EVENTS?



On the sidelines of major sporting events, the significant influx of tourists increases the risk of the sexual exploitation of minors. The larger number of potential "clients" is an opportunity for perpetrators of exploitation, acting in organised groups or in isolation, and attracts new criminal groups. For children, who are particularly vulnerable, the risk of becoming a victim of trafficking is higher as a result.



The perpetrators of trafficking will take advantage of the sharp increase in searches for sexual favours to considerably increase their income.

This increase is linked to the massive influx of people in a particularly celebratory context, sometimes having a sense of impunity linked to being away from home, to the exaltation generated by the results of the competition or to the presence of an "offer" in terms of "prostitution".

Criminal organisations will be tempted to recruit massive numbers of new victims from among vulnerable minors in order to seize this opportunity.

