

## Transcript of video 'Shahina's Story - an account of Honour-Based Abuse'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ChfWjMZbYa8&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR1bo-miEpgsBkSuG1cMbUUMzRZtZiH5zGVJXDTZupfyuXjWJHbLnOI0LX4>

### **Meet Shahina. Shahina was a victim of Honour-Based Abuse when she was 17. This is her story.**

My name is Shahina. I am in my early 30s. My childhood was a very happy one, up until 17. I felt that my parents and my family had given me a really good upbringing - very normal, went to school, had a really good set of friends at school, and felt that my family instilled really good morals and teaching from right and wrong - very happy! There were specific rules, but they were done in a loving way. They weren't done in a way that was almost like a dictatorship.

### **When Shahina was 17, her family took her to Bangladesh.**

So I was 17, I was studying for my A levels [university entrance exams]. I remember my mum knocking on my bedroom door. She came in and she said, 'We're going on holiday.' And I was like, 'Where are we going to go?' I was so super excited. She said, 'You're going to go to Bangladesh.' And I just couldn't wait, I was so excited - beyond excited.

### **Shahina spent 10 days in Bangladesh, it was a fantastic adventure.**

On the sort of, 11th day, my mother took me into a really small room, and in that small room there was a really small window with like, bars at the end of it. I'd noticed that the bed and the bedside table had the most beautiful red bridal gown - very intricate, lots and lots of gold detailing. She asked me to sit down and I did, and I was looking at everything within my surroundings and then she handed me a card. And she said, 'Go on - open the card,' and I did. And I remember the sort of, gold and red embossing that went along the card. It wasn't anything fancy, and I just read it and it basically was an invitation to my own wedding. And the only information I was given was that the wedding had been booked, everybody had been invited, the cake had been baked, and that all I needed to do was just to turn up [show up]. She walked out of the room, she bolted the door so I couldn't get out and the wedding card said that I would be getting married in two days - and my whole body just started to panic and shake, and my legs were just knocking, the knees were just knocking together. I thought, *What am I going to do? I am stuck.* I didn't know where the nearest police station was. I didn't even know where the local shop was. I had no friends or teachers, or social workers. There was no Facebook. There certainly was no mobile phone that I could pull up. Just sheer shock and panic went through my body.

### **Whilst Shahina was trapped, a friend had heard about what was about to happen.**

Fortunately for me, someone who I love very, very dearly had heard what was going to happen to me, and within those two days he had travelled from the UK to Bangladesh to come and rescue me.

He persuaded my family that if they had not released me that he would have to go to the authorities – and ultimately that’s what worked for them to let me go.

**Following a period apart, Shahina returned to her family to get through her A levels and to go to university. However she was still bound by the promise of marriage after university.**

I was – I had lots of issues with sleepless nights, with feeling low in my mood, with paranoia, looking over my shoulder, ‘Would I be sent back?’ I’d wake up in the middle of the night, with sort of cold sweats, thinking, *Well they’ve done this to me once – they’re going to do it to me again. And, What am I going to do because I’ve got nobody to go to?* And I had no idea that I could go to the police. I had no idea that I could go to my teacher. I had no idea that I could talk to someone.

**At university Shahina fell in love. She was cut off from her family. However the abuse continued and she was often followed.**

The choices seemed even smaller. Now, I was without a family. Now there was no ‘Mum’ for me to go back to, because Mum had hurt me so much, she had betrayed me. The trust was no longer there. She was my best friend. This woman had put me into a life of domesticity with someone who was ultimately going to rape me, was going to abuse me physically, sexually, mentally, probably financially. How could I trust these people?

**Shahina is now happily married to the boy she met at university. She now works with victims of HBA [Honour-Based Abuse]  
Her message to other HBA victims is simple.**

Please talk to somebody. That could be anybody. Speak to somebody, whether that is a teacher, whether that is you calling up 999 or 101 [emergency police number in the UK].

**If you are suffering from Honour-Based Abuse or if you know someone who is, please call 999 or 101. You will be heard. All information will be treated confidentially. Your safety is our top priority.**

What can you do in your country if you hear of someone who is going to be forced to marry or who wants to leave a marriage they have been forced into?

What number can you call?

What organisations in your country educate the public about this crime? What organisations exist that look after survivors?