



Whistle blower: Jayne Frangopulo, who revealed the sex scam

Summit that was hijacked by hookers

SCOTS council chiefs were offered free sex with call girls at two conferences on poverty.

The hookers were employed by the Rotherham-based Local Government Forum Against Poverty to organise a string of anti-poverty events across Behair. They were supposed to show

EXCLUSIVE
By **BRIAN LIRONI**

team is in there to find out exactly what happened at events in Scotland arranged by the forum.

Police have already spoken to a Fife councillor and a former Edinburgh councillor.

A council insider said: "These

SHERIFF'S

Sarah grieves for love who died in her arms



EXCLUSIVE

By **DONNA WHITE**
Chief Writer

THEIR worlds could not have been further apart.

Charles Palmer, an educated and well-respected sheriff, and Sarah Clarke, a former drug user lured into prostitution, were unlikely companions, to say the least.

Yet circumstances brought them together to form a friendship which ended in tragedy when he died in her arms after suffering a heart attack in the back of his car.

Now, after police have confirmed the pair were together at the time of his death, Sarah, 27, speaks exclusively of their special bond and of her desperate bid to save his life.

Sheriff Palmer had been one of her regular customers in the red-light district of Leith.

But in a seedy world of drugs and violence, she will always remember the man she knew

TOP SHERIFF FOUND DEAD IN RED LIGHT ZONE



First again: Last week's Sunday Mail

simply as "Charlie" for his warmth and kindness. Sarah said: "We met two years ago when he picked me up for the first time.

"He told me straight away that he was married and he loved his family dearly. I could tell that he meant it and now I can only express my deepest sympathies for his wife and children.

"I know they probably would have preferred things to have happened differently. But at least he wasn't alone and I'm sure his final thoughts would have been of them.

"I know I'm nothing like beautiful Julia Roberts, but I like to think Charlie thought of me as his Pretty Woman." Unlike most of her

other customers, the father-of-three showed a real interest in Sarah, asking about her children in the West Midlands and how she came to be selling herself on the streets on regular trips north of the Border.

"There are plenty of men who like to remind you of what you are, of what you've reduced yourself to," she said.

"They don't even bother with conversation - they just treat you like a piece of meat.

"But Charlie saw me as a real person. I could talk to him and he made me laugh."

Despite his honesty about his wife and family, 54-year-old Sheriff Palmer did not tell Sarah of his profession.

Smile

She said: "I asked him once what his job was and he just said, 'You wouldn't believe it if I told you'. I assumed that he was maybe a retired policeman or a prison officer. I never thought he would be a judge in a court of law."

From the day Charles Palmer first picked her up in his gleaming white estate family car, Sarah felt totally at ease in his company.

She recalls his silvery hair and beaming smile, his manner was always light and humorous.

In two years, Sarah met the sheriff about 20 times.

She said: "There's always an initial fear when you see a punter pull up his car in front of you, a knot in your stomach because you have no idea if the guy is safe or not.

"But I could always breathe a huge sigh of relief when I saw Charlie's car heading towards me.

"He'd smile and just call



They were supposed to show delegates to their seats and hand out information packs.

But the glamorous "conference organisers" stunned council bosses and charity workers when they offered them sex services.

Now police in Yorkshire have launched a major investigation into the call-girl scandal, after prostitute Jayne Frangopulo blew the whistle on the scam.

Detectives - who have already grilled dozens of English officials over claims the taxpayer funded £50,000 booze-and-sex sessions - have now travelled north to quiz Scots who attended conferences in Stirling and Fife.

South Yorkshire Police would only confirm that detectives were in Scotland as part of an ongoing investigation into the Local Government Forum Against Poverty.

But a police source said: "The

Hamilton courtroom.

A council insider said: "These girls were in uniform during the day, but at night it seems they couldn't wait to get their kit off."

"The girls have admitted they had sex with delegates. But police want to know if anyone in Scotland took them up on the offer."

"The Scottish Local Government Forum Against Poverty cut its links with the Rotherham group at the time."

"The police want to find out why this happened and just how much the Scots knew about it all."

"There is no suggestion that the Scottish group or any delegates have done anything wrong."

Fantasies

The South Yorkshire Police inquiry was launched a year ago after self-confessed prostitute Frangopulo claimed Forum chiefs Garvin Reed and Bob Bone, brother of Dundee FC coach Jimmy Bone, spent thousands of pounds on sex.

She told detectives her job as a conference organiser was simply a cover for her to tour Britain with Reed and Bone and play out their sexual fantasies.

The prostitute claims the money came from the coffers of the Local Government Forum Against Poverty.

Forum convener Reed, and deputy leader of Rotherham Council Bone, who was seconded to the forum, have both been suspended from duties pending the outcome of the police probe.

Suspended Forum convener Garvin Reed



SHERIFF Charles Palmer was as much of a character in the courtroom as he was outside.

Last year, he scolded young solicitor Kirsty Dunlop, 27, after he spotted an inch of flesh showing at her midriff when she appeared at Dumfermline.

She later insisted that he had been right to reprimand her for revealing her belly-button in court.

He took an outspoken stance against drink driving and hit the headlines in 1996 at Perth Sheriff

By COLIN WILSON

Court when he freed a teacher who slapped a disruptive pupil.

Educated at Inverness Academy, he studied law at Edinburgh University and first sat as a sheriff at Dunoon and Dumbarton in 1986. He became a resident sheriff at Dumfermline in 1992.

Despite a history of heart attacks, he never let health concerns prevent him from living life to the full. He raised more than

£30,000 for the British Heart Foundation in a sponsored cycle ride from Land's End to John O'Groats.

In an interview with a local paper, Sheriff Palmer described himself as "outgoing, enthusiastic and decisive" with a definite intention to "enjoy the most out of life".

When asked what he would like to see on his headstone, he said: "The enjoyed life". Whether or not he gets his wish remains to be seen.

Female solicitor a hard time over bare midriff

"He'd smile and just say out, 'Hiya Sarah, hop in.'"

Sheriff Palmer was one of the few men for whom Sarah broke her personal safety rule by agreeing to have sex with him in the back of his car.

But during one of their regular trysts, he suffered his third and final heart attack, 11 days ago.

Sarah was unaware that Sheriff Palmer had previously suffered two heart attacks and underwent a triple heart by-pass operation in 1992.

Baronial

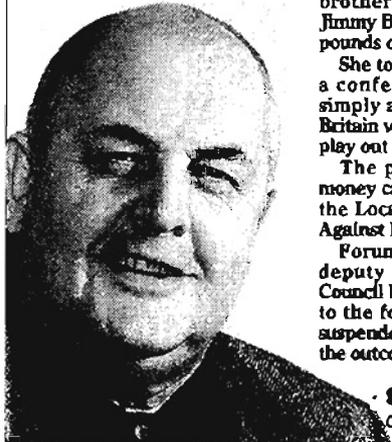
In the publicity that has surrounded his death, Sarah has learned more about the man she knew fondly as Charlie - and his career.

He had been happily married to Rosemary, 52, for 31 years and adored their three children, Richard, 29, Lavinia, 27, and Emily, 25.

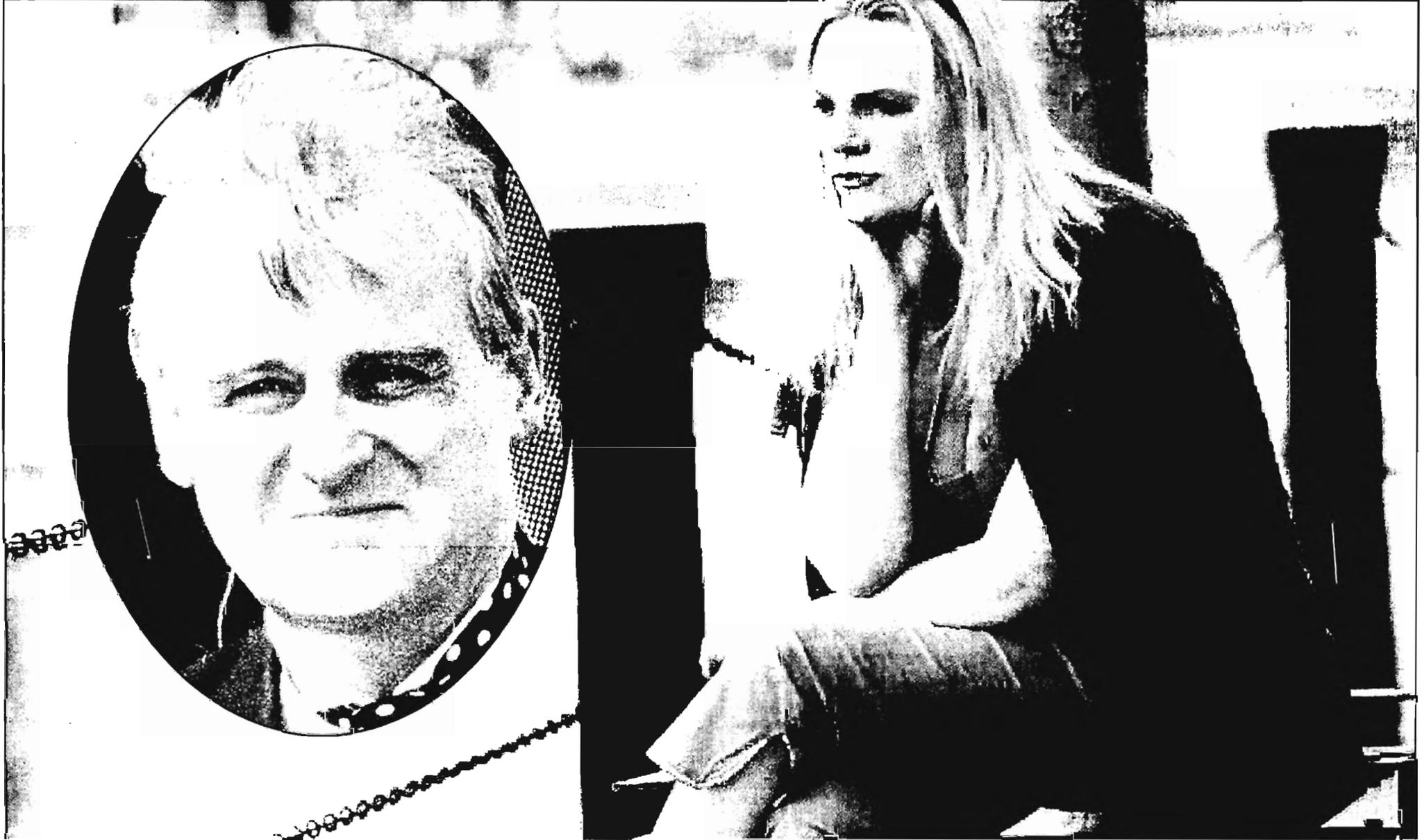
The family home was a wing of Logie House, a great baronial pile in the village of Crossford, near Dumfermline, rented from a local landowner named Colonel Hunt.

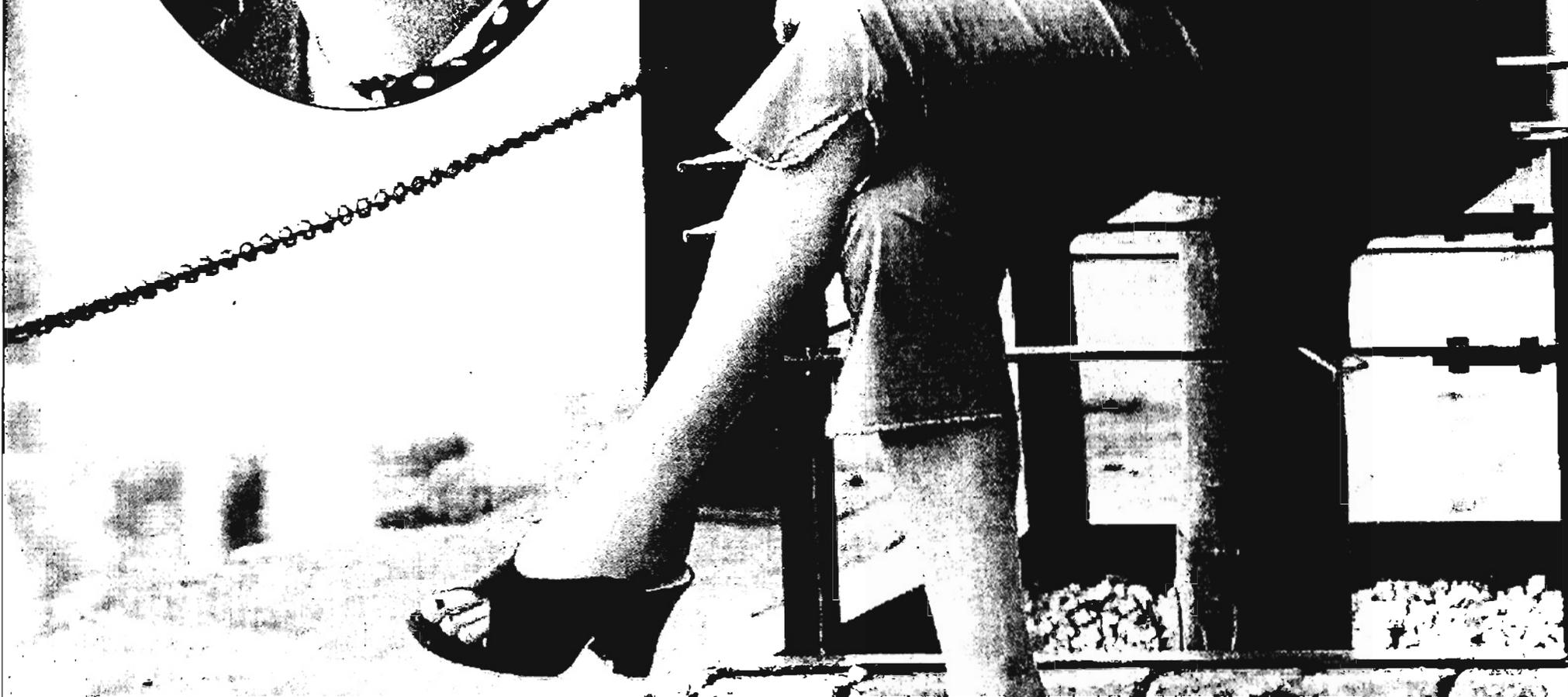
His £90,000-a-year career afforded a comfortable lifestyle, and locals nicknamed him "Biggles" because he drove around town in his prized blue 1984 Panther Kallista open-top sports car, wearing an old flying helmet.

It was a very different domestic scene to that of Sarah, whose daughters, aged seven and one, are being raised by her parents, with regular financial contributions



PRETTY WOMAN





Fond memories: Prostitute Sarah thinks Charles Palmer, inset, thought of her as his 'Pretty Woman' and was shocked to discover one of her favourite customers was a top sheriff

from her. Her mother suffers nightmares about the dangers on the streets and the murders of prostitutes.

Sarah was lured into the profession by big money at 17 and admits that she dabbled in drugs before cleaning up her act.

She has been beaten and robbed several times and needed 40 stitches to her head when a customer threw her out of his moving car.

She feels safe on the streets of Leith where, she says, there is better policing, but she has been unable to return to work-

ing since the sheriff died.

She fiddled nervously with the collar of her jacket as she recalled the fateful night.

"It had been the usual routine," she said. "He'd picked me up at around 9.30pm and parked in Tower Street, a dead end alleyway where we'd have plenty of privacy.

"Our meeting was over and we were preparing to go our separate ways when he just slumped, face-down in the back of the car.

"I thought he was just joking and told him to stop messing around. When he

didn't move, I knew it was serious."

Sarah ran to a main street where she asked a lorry driver if she could use his mobile phone but he refused.

Forced

She was forced to run frantically until a young man was kind enough to go back to the car with her, where he told her to stay while he brought help.

She said: "He must have called an ambulance and he came back with another woman, who tried to resuscitate Charlie, but he was so

pale and cold I knew he was gone."

Sarah told the police and ambulancemen everything, and they informed her that the sheriff had suffered a heart attack.

He was taken to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, but doctors were unable to save him.

Sarah has been staying with friends in the capital since then. She said: "All the hookers have asked me if I took Charlie's wallet that night. That's what most of them would have done.

"But he was a decent man

who deserved more than that. Robbing him would have been a terrible act of disrespect.

"I can't give him back to his family. I only wish I could. And I feel terrible for them, thinking of the circumstances in which he died.

"But what can I say? Charlie found me, not the other way round.

"I came to know him as a friend - one of the few friendly faces I got to see.

"I'm sure his family will remember him for exactly what he was - a decent, loving, family man. I know I will."



Fatal encounter: The street where tragedy struck