

Rochdale grooming: How another gang went under the radar

The [BBC](#) could have done more to expose these gangs back in the day, but at least this report is pertinent now.

Rochdale is “synonymous” with grooming – that was what one of the defence lawyers told a jury that has just convicted five people of committing 22 sexual offences against two girls as young as 12.

They were worried the [Greater Manchester town](#) had become so linked with the serial sexual exploitation of young girls that they felt they had to warn jurors to “rid yourselves of preconceptions”.

That warning came more than a decade after the conviction of the notorious [Rochdale grooming ring in 2012](#) – a story the whole country became acquainted with five years later in the BBC series *Three Girls*.

This latest trial has revealed there was another grooming gang operating in Rochdale, also made up of mostly south Asian men. *Muslims: say it like it is. These are not Hindu, Jain or Sikh names.*

Warning: This article contains details some readers may find upsetting

I'm upset it took them so long to investigate and convict!

The prosecutions came “better late than never”, according to Maggie Oliver, one of the women who blew the whistle on grooming in the Greater Manchester town. The former detective resigned from Greater Manchester Police (GMP) after she tried to get the force to take evidence of grooming gangs in

Rochdale more seriously. She said that, at the time, “hundreds of victims” were turned away by the force while the perpetrators were “allowed to continue and abuse other children”.

Two of those victims, we now know, were the girls whose evidence was heard in this latest trial. Disturbingly, Girl A said that, for many years, she did not even realise she had been a victim, telling the court: “I thought these men were my friends.” It was only in 2014, when she read a book which told the story of one of the women featured in *Three Girls*, that she realised the truth. She turned to her sister and told her: “This happened to me.”

The following year, as a young mother, she went to a parenting course in Rochdale where she prepared a written presentation that shocked the course leaders so much that they called the police.

In her presentation, she wrote: “I was abused daily for six years. I was 12 when they began to abuse me, feeding me alcohol and drugs, abuse me and pass me on to their friends. I had no choice but to do what they say or I would be beaten and raped. They did as they pleased, they made videos of me to use as blackmail. If I told anyone they would share the videos. They sent the video around Rochdale anyway and I was branded a slag for it.”

Later that year, she agreed to be interviewed by police. She told them how her life between 2002 and 2006 had been dominated by the sickening abuse, which took place mostly in a flat above a shop on the edge of Rochdale.

She described to the jury how her ordeal began.