

Synopsis:

## **QUICK MONEY** **The trade of Nigerian women** **on the roads of Naples**

by  
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A bleak country road near Naples. Summer and winter, fourteen hours a day, sheltered under an umbrella, or with hands over an old paint can converted into a brasero, forty women are at work here from eight in the morning.

The dust thrown up by passing trucks burns their eyes and throats. The traffic is heavy on these desolate roads in the Italian Far West. Truckers, seasonal workers, businessmen, pensioners, lost teenagers, all come here for a few minutes of sexual thrill with an exotic touch. Here, the wares on offer are many and varied. At each crossroads, amongst illegal dumps and cultivated fields, these women show and sell their ebony bodies for between ten and twenty-five €.

Most of these faces and bodies who have long since lost their identities are from Lagos or Benin City, in Nigeria. Here they are all called Gioa, Beauty, Valentina, Sofia or Pamela. Those who have just arrived find themselves managed by older prostitutes who have risen to the grade of "Madame", who find them a stretch of footpath, rented from the local Camorra mafia.

Some believed that they were coming to work as waitresses or dancers; others knew that they were to be prostitutes. But all are trapped. New recruits understand quickly that they have to earn colossal amounts of money very quickly to pay off debts owed by their families to the travel agents – debts which can grow, as if by magic, to 50.000 € on their arrival. The debt is contracted before departure in voodoo rituals: without pity, the young woman has no choice but to pay off the debt to save her soul.

Once arrived, these Nigerian women – 20.000 of them in Italy according to estimates – are caught in an infernal routine where every small detail of their lives is managed by those who run the scheme. Should any prostitute still in debt try to escape, her family back home – whose survival depends on the money she sends – will suffer violent reprisals. As for the runaway, she knows what awaits should ever she be caught. There is no other choice but to try to pay off the debt as quickly as possible, with a slim hope of one day escaping from this hell on earth.