

English teachers private lessons sometimes a little too private

The tragic death last month of Briton Lindsay Ann Hawker has highlighted what a dangerous can of worms the English language private lesson caper can be, according to Shukan Post (4/20).

Wealthy doctor's son Tatsuya Ichihashi is on a nationwide wanted list for the murder of 22-year-old Hawker, who he is reported to have lured into his clutches with the promise of paying her a hefty hourly sum for private English instruction.

Private lessons are a lucrative option for struggling English teachers, the men's weekly says.

"Most of the teachers work for English conversation schools and do private lessons as a part-time job. Schools only pay about 200,000 yen to 250,000 yen a month and a lot of the time their rent is taken out of that, so they really feel the pinch," an English conversation school insider tells Shukan Post. "For a private lesson, a teacher can make anywhere from about 3,000 yen to 6,000 yen an hour. Many take the teaching materials out of their schools, so whatever they make out of the lesson is theirs in full."

But private lessons can also be perilous.

"If my student is a male, I always make sure I give the lesson at a coffee shop near the station closest to their home. There was one time, though, when I was running late, so I asked the student to come to a caf? near my closest station. After the lesson finished I was getting ready to go home when the student told me he wanted to see what my home looked like. I couldn't shake him off, so he ended up learning where I lived. I was so scared, I ended up moving," a 26-year-old British woman teaching English tells Shukan Post.

An American woman teaching English tells an even scarier tale of a creepy student she taught in a coffee shop.

"There was no trouble at first, but from about our third lesson on, he started patting my hair and rubbing my shoulders. If a student complains about me to my school, I'll get fired. The student knew that and took advantage of it by becoming more daring all the time, putting his hand down my skirt and kneading my breasts," the woman says. "I told the school I couldn't handle it any more, but they just fired me."

It's not always the teachers who fall foul of the system, though. A bank worker we'll call Fumi paid a Canadian man to give her private English lessons. He started by suggesting they watch a movie to get used to hearing English. Fumi agreed and they began watching "Superman Returns."

"As soon as we sat down he put one of his arms around my shoulders and thrust the other one between my thighs. When I tried to move his hands away, he grabbed hold of my hand, tried to force it toward his crotch and said to me, 'I'm a Superman too, you know,' " Fumi tells Shukan Post. "When we got out of the movie theater, he had the hide to tell me that our lesson had gone into overtime and he wanted to be paid more for it. I paid him 5,000 yen for the cost of a single hour's lesson and never contacted him again." (By Ryann Connell)

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