

## TEXT 1

The podcast appeared on the *BBC* website in February 2020.

Paul Connolly for *BBC Radio 4*

### Becky and Ben's Story

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Becky and Ben. Ben was jailed for three years for stealing £374,000 to fund his secret addiction.

#### Transcript:

**Becky Jones:** My heart was just racing, and I just felt physically sick, and I knew that Ben would be feeling the same way. He is *not* cut out for prison. He is *not* prison material. I just sort of left the court and just cried. I was just completely heartbroken.

**Paul Connolly:** Was he scared to go to prison?

5 **Becky Jones:** I think definitely inside he was certainly scared and sort of worried about it.

**Paul Connolly:** Becky Jones is twenty-nine, a midwife and the mother of two little girls, a twelve-month-old baby and an eight-year-old. Here she's talking about their dad, her husband, Ben. They have been together for fifteen years and married for almost three, and before their lives unravelled<sup>1</sup>, they lived a quiet, comfortable life in a leafy<sup>2</sup> suburb of Nottingham.

10 When did you first hear, Becky, that there was an issue with Ben's gambling?

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<sup>1</sup> faldt fra hinanden

<sup>2</sup> grøn

**Becky Jones:** So, that would go back to July 2018. I was about five months pregnant and just plodding along<sup>3</sup> as you do normally, and he said, “I need to talk to you”. I could see in his face that there was something going on, and he said, “Can we go for a drive?”. And then we got in the car, and he just told me that he has a gambling problem and it’s escalated to the point  
15 where he can’t control it anymore. And it had come from the rugby club noticing money going missing because he played for a rugby club local to here.

**Paul Connolly:** Becky is petite, primly attired<sup>4</sup> in a floral dress, and wears a sincere<sup>5</sup> smile. This is the only broadcast interview she has done, and when she speaks, her expression is a patchwork of all she’s endured. The shock, the hurt, the crushing disappointment, the utter confusion.

20 **Becky Jones:** Unfortunately he had also used their funds to fund his gambling addiction, and they had approached him and said, you know, “Can you explain this?”.

**Paul Connolly:** Can I ask you how much that was?

**Becky Jones:** About 20,000<sup>6</sup>, I think.

**Paul Connolly:** How did you feel here in this?

25 **Becky Jones:** To be honest, it’s one of those situations where it’s all such a blur because there was so much happening, it was so intense. The emotions were so high, I was quite upset, I was angry.

**Paul Connolly:** The rugby club chose *not* to press charges against Ben for stealing the cash, and with the help of family and friends the pair managed to pay the money back. Together, as a  
30 couple, they also took steps to treat Ben’s now spiralling<sup>7</sup> addiction, including attending *Gamblers Anonymous*<sup>8</sup> meetings on a weekly basis.

But just four months later, in November of 2018, Ben was forced to reveal another secret.

35 **Becky Jones:** I had a phone call from him to say, “Could I go and get him because he had been suspended from work?”, and I just collected him from work and he just told me everything from there, really, as to what had been going on and how long it had been going on for, and he didn’t know how much and – that was the first [time] I had known that it had escalated to his work place.

40 **Paul Connolly:** Ben revealed that over a three-year period he had stolen 374,000 pounds to fund his secret addiction to gambling. He had worked as a wholesale manager<sup>9</sup> for a company that supplies cake decorations. His was a position of responsibility, and as a trusted employee, he had access to company funds.

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<sup>3</sup> *plodding along*: alt gik stille og roligt

<sup>4</sup> *primly attired*: nydeligt klædt

<sup>5</sup> ærligt

<sup>6</sup> pounds

<sup>7</sup> hastigt voksende

<sup>8</sup> *Gamblers Anonymous*: internationalt fællesskab af ludomaner til bekæmpelse af ludomani

<sup>9</sup> *wholesale manager*: indkøbschef

**Becky Jones:** I remember ringing my mum and just in absolute hysterics. I couldn't believe what [had] happened, I couldn't breathe on the phone, and she was trying to calm me down. I was just absolutely distraught<sup>10</sup>. And then I told him that I didn't want to see him and he left.

45 By the evening I think I had calmed down a lot, and I couldn't find Ben and I didn't know where he was, ended up driving around.

After the first one with the rugby club, in the... July, he had planned to take his own life. Just sort of panic takes over and my heart was racing after hearing it and my heart beat in my ears and shaking, and I kept ringing him and ringing him... and it just kept going straight through to  
50 answer machine all the time like it wasn't even ringing. And I was just trying time and time and time, and then just one time it *did* ring and he *did* pick up.

**Paul Connolly:** Three months ago, Ben was jailed for three years. Becky had lost everything. She and her daughters were forced to move in with her dad. After Ben confessed, she learned more and more about her husband's all-consuming addiction to sports betting and to the endless  
55 temptations to gamble on matches in all four corners of the world, day and night.

(2020)

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<sup>10</sup> fortvivlet