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WINNIPEG **SUN**



Wednesday
August 29
2007

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NEWS PICKTON TRIAL

Sun, January 21, 2007

She's seen it all

By SUN MEDIA



When Pauline VanKoll takes her seat in a crowded New Westminster courtroom, she'll know something some 300 other accredited journalists likely do not - what it's like to walk the streets as a sex-trade worker.

VanKoll is one of two former prostitutes who will be covering the trial of accused serial killer Robert Pickton for Orato.com, a Vancouver-based website that promotes "citizen journalism."

VanKoll says she'll have a perspective traditional media won't.

"I've been there," VanKoll says. "I've had pretty bad dates where I didn't think I was coming home."

VanKoll, 42, worked the Downtown Eastside strolls for two decades. They're the same streets from which women have been disappearing since the early '80s.

Pickton is accused of killing 26 of the missing women. Testimony in the pending trial is expected to be explicit and gruelling, but VanKoll says she won't be fazed.

She's most interested in giving sex-trade workers a voice.

"There's so many people out there that judge us and stereotype us," says VanKoll, who has been off the streets for six years.

"They figure that we're good for nothing, that we're not people. We don't feel things."

"We're just objects."

Previous story: Sex and the city

Next story: Down on the farm

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