Hu Jie is from Hunan Province and is currently living with his family in Guangdong Province while working there.

In October 2010, Hu lost 18 thousand yuan due to gambling and was chased to pay back the debt within a month. Since Hu only earns 1000 yuan per month, out of desperation, Hu thought of selling his kidney.

He checked Baidu (a Chinese search engine) and found abundant information about buying and selling kidneys all with direct contact numbers.

He checked a few buyers and found one person who sounded quite convincing, and they settled on a price of 40 thousand yuan per kidney. It was 25th October.

On 28th October, Hu arrived by train in Shandong Province and met two men, Liu and Jie, who took him to a big two bedroom unit in Qihe county, Shandong province.

“There were more than 10 people around my age living there. The two main rooms in the house were the living area for the agents like Liu and Jie; the other room was a bedroom. The agents are for buyers, sellers, and hospitals, (I call them ‘the big brothers’) sleep in beds, while more than 10 young people in the same situation as me slept on the floor.”

An 18 year old young boy sleeping next to Hu, told Hu that he is an only child, his father is ill, and his mother has no job, he needs money to pay his father’s medical bill. The young men came from different provinces and the price they had settled for one kidney varied from 40 to 80 thousand yuan. “But Liu and Jie had warned me not to talk to other people. So we could not talk too much.” Hu says.

The next day, 29th Oct. Liu took Hu and a few other young men to the number two hospital in the county for medical checks (blood, urine and kidney sizes, etc.) Liu was very well known in the hospital, they all know what he is doing. From conversations between Liu and hospital staff, Hu also understood that Liu is some sort of committee member related to the hospital.

Hu’s urine did not pass the test, but when he got back to the house, everyone told him that is not a problem, he should drink a few more cups of water. Hu drank 4 big bowls of water the next day before the medical check, and passed the standard required. Liu then sent Hu’s medical record via internet to someone.

Scared

Hu was becoming frightened about having his kidney taken, so decided to run away. Hu tore his shirt quietly and told Liu that he needed to get his shirt fixed and will come back quickly. But Hu got into a taxi nearby and quickly got on the train and went back to Guangdong.
HU had stayed in that unit for 5 days and 4 nights, people coming and going, but always more than a dozen people like him living there,

Liu was very angry with Hu and asked Hu to pay back 18 hundred yuan for medical check up fees.

Hu did not stay in Guangdong, fearing debt collectors, so he went to Guangzhou and found work. But he still needed money to pay his gambling debt. So Hu was uncertain of what he could do. Liu kept calling Hu and telling him that he had found people that were waiting for his kidney and finally, Hu decided to go ahead, this time Liu asked Hu to go to Shanxi Province.

On New Year’s Day, 2011, Hu arrived at Shanxi train station in the morning, and was met by a ‘Xiao Wang’. Hu said that Xiao Wang never left his side from that time until he had had the operation and woken from the anesthetic.

About 11am, Wang took Hu to meet with the agent of the patient, the patient himself, and his family members. The patient introduced himself as a public servant who had toxuria and uraemia. He had an operation a year ago, but said he was cheated out of a hundred thousand yuan as it did not heal his illness, so he decided he would have another operation. The patient and his family members checked Hu’s ID and were happy with Hu’s condition. Hu saw that the patient had a police ID on the dash of his car.

Mr. Qiu, the agent for the patient, and Xiao Wang took Hu to Lingfen People’s Hospital for urine, blood, and heart checks, the next day. Hu asked Wang why they not go to Taiyuan Hospital for a check up as it is much closer, but Wang replied, that they had done many in ILingfen People’s Hospital, and they knew this hospital better.

They also went to Zhenzhou Police Hospital for a glandular check up.

The next day, in Hu and Wang’s hotel room, another agent appeared, from the hospital. So
seller, buyer, and hospital agents were all together to discuss the event, and Hu was told not to eat all day. But there was no operation that day.

Withdraws consent

In the evening, Hu again became scared of the operation and told Wang that he had decided not to do this. Wang was very angry and telephoned Liu. The next day Liu arrived and warned Hu, that he could not leave if he decided not to go ahead.

That day, more than 10 people from the three sides got together to discuss the situation. Hu tried to ran away but failed.

On 6th Jan, the agents for the hospital and the patient took Hu's mobile phone, ID and bank card away. About 3pm, Hu was taken to a very shabby, small county hospital, Changliang Hospital. Hu was very angry and swore, this is such a bad, dirty place, you want to take my life?! But nobody took any notice of his protests.

Hu met the patient face to face, and, in tears, said that he was really sorry but he did not want to go ahead with the operation. The patient also agreed not go ahead and would not force Hu to pay the costs of accommodation and tests. But the patient's agent, Mr. Qiu would not agree.

In the evening, agents of the 3 parties, and the doctor who was to perform the operation, 'Professor Li' discussed the situation inside the theater. Hu tried to run away, but had no chance as he was watched at all times.

About 9pm, Hu was taken into the theater by Doctor Li, and a senior nurse and an anesthetist, both female. The anesthetist gave Hu an injection, and when he woke up, found himself lying in another room of the hospital, with a dressing to the left side of his abdomen. He was on a drip. He had two layers of quilt but was shivering with cold. No agents were around, only his belongings were in the room.

The senior nurse (Qu-Xian) came to the room. Hu asked her about his payment. Shortly, his mobile signaled that there was 27 thousand yuan in his bank.
He had settled for 40 thousand yuan, but had no energy to pursue the issue at that stage. Hu knew that the patient had paid 300 thousand yuan for this operation.

Hu and the patient who received his kidney asked the senior nurse, QU-Xian to issue them a written contract of the success of the operation. Qu-Xian told them that the hospital never issued any written details.

Hu stayed 7 days in Changliang Hospital, then returned to Guangdong. He did not dare to tell his parents about the issue.

After the operation, Hu was experiencing pain from the wound site, could not urinate normally, and could not walk with a straight back.

A month later, on 13th Feb, Hu decided to tell Shanxi Province Health Bureau. On 16th of Feb, the Health Bureau informed Changliang Hospital that it would be investigated for “hiring non medical personnel, and conducting medical practice beyond the hospital accreditation” but did not mention the buying and selling of organs.

Lingfen Health Bureau said that related personnel had been investigated by police, but when asked by a journalist about organ trading in this case, the Lingfen Police Bureau said there was no such investigation.

On 17th Feb, Hu decided to reveal the case to the media.