

Institution: Sheffield Hallam University
Unit of Assessment: 34 Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory
Title of case study: My Dangerous Loverboy
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words) <i>My Dangerous Loverboy</i> (MDL) is a film and cross-platform media project about sex trafficking that continues to have significant and varied impact across domains of culture and society, public policy and health and welfare. Its most direct impacts have been to raise awareness among potential victims, change the attitudes of workers in frontline agencies and inform and shape public and political debate. Main beneficiaries: the UK Human Trafficking Centre, the Serious Organised Crime Agency (now the National Crime Agency), the National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Young People, the Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education Association (PSHE), Family Planning Association, and the UN Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words) This research began in February 2008, and was conducted by Senior Lecturers Virginia Heath (1995 -present), Steve Sprung (1997 -present). The research was commissioned by the UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC) (G1) to address the fact that although internal sex trafficking is a national problem it was, at the time, a virtually hidden issue. Sexually exploited teenagers were often stigmatised as runaways, truants, prostitutes and petty criminals rather than understood as victims of serious crime. The primary aim was to create a film as a key intervention to alert young people to the dangers of trafficking, to support victims in escape, and to prevent others being groomed by bogus 'boyfriends'. The secondary aim was to effect changes in attitude amongst frontline agency workers: teachers, social workers, police, child protection officers and those who determine public policy. The team initiated a process of engagement with marginalised victims, using creative filmmaking skills to bring their hidden stories into a wider public arena.</p> <p>Due to the nature of the issues involved, Heath, the female in the team, collected background material that was subsequently shared with Sprung. The unique privileged access granted to Heath allowed face to face interviews from February to April 2008 with frontline agency workers and victims from five key projects: Streetreach (Doncaster); Barnardos SECOS (Middlesbrough); Taking Stock (Sheffield); Safe and Sound (Derby); and the NSPCC (East London). Numerous visits were made with frontline agency workers to locations where 'on street grooming' was known to take place to investigate the kind of interaction and atmosphere that would lend authenticity to the film. The unprecedented insights made through this primary observational research were fundamental to the nature and content of the resulting film (Ref 1), and allowed victims to recognise themselves and their situation.</p> <p>Because of the vulnerable position of sexually exploited young women, it was decided to use the medium of fiction, rather than documentary, to protect identities. This involved fashioning a dramatic narrative from the primary research material that would powerfully reflect the realities of sexual exploitation. In order to gain the trust of the interviewees, Heath screened examples of films previously produced by the team to explain their collaborative approach to film making. Heath's field research was coded and assimilated, allowing various propositions to be made. The common themes and narratives drawn from the experiences of interviewees were woven into a screenplay that was then presented back to the girls for their feedback. This iterative research process continued throughout the pre, and postproduction phases. As a consequence, the trust and confidence of the sexually exploited girls and the agency workers was gained, which was crucial in giving the film an original and authentic voice.</p> <p>Further funding (G2, G3, G4) enabled interactive cross-media platforms including music video, websites and social media to be developed and used to raise awareness amongst a 'hard to reach', marginalised teenage audience. This resulted in the <i>My Dangerous Loverboy</i> website (Ref 2) and YouTube Channel, Music Video and Animation (Ref 3 & 4), enabling victims to creatively engage with the material, thus making their experience more visible to the public and to governing agencies in order to bring about change.</p>

Impact case study (REF3b)

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Key Outputs:

Ref 1. Heath, Virginia, *My Dangerous Loverboy*, (2009), Film. Available online at:
<http://vimeo.com/9155209> (Password: loverboy)

Also available in the 'Love or Lies' Education Resource pack developed around the film as part of the project. <http://eyesopencreative.wordpress.com/resources/>

Ref 2. The *My Dangerous Loverboy* Website: <http://www.mydangerousloverboy.com/>

Ref 3. *Set Me Free* Music Video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YEgBx6qJMyA&feature=context-chv>

Ref 4. *Me Jenny & Kate* Animation: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3xD58e6wA4&feature=plcp>

Evidence of Quality:

A1. Winner, National Film Board of Canada Cross Media Challenge Award: March 2008
(a body with international reputation for supporting research in the area of film and media)

A2. Nominated for Royal Television Society Award- best Cross Platform project: June 2010

A3. Selected for Atlantic International Film Festival, Canada: Sept 2009

A4. Selected for Sheffield International Doc / Fest: November 2008

Funding: (All funding awarded to Heath, V. via production company Vita Nova Films)

G1. Commission, United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre, Feb 2008, £60,000

G2. Cross Media Challenge Award, National Film Board of Canada, March 2008, £5,000

G3. One North East Award, Northern Film and Media, Feb 2008, £5,000

G4. Cross Platform Award, Quba Digital, March 2008, £5,000

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The original research carried out in the preparation for, and throughout the making of MDL was instrumental in the success of the film as an informative, powerful and persuasive narrative piece, and led directly to the significant impact the film has had since it was premiered at the Atlantic Film Festival, Canada on the 24th Sept 2009 (A3).

MDL has **raised awareness of the issues involved among potential victims** through the widespread adoption of the film and related cross-platform media by various frontline agencies. These agencies have been reached through the United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre (<http://www.ukhtc.org/>), which extensively piloted the film in schools across Sheffield in October 2009; the National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Young People (S1); and the Family Planning Association (S6) which improved social welfare and take up of services by promoting the material nationally in schools. The PSHE Association promotes the 'Love or Lies' Educational Resource Pack, which includes a DVD of MDL, the film's official music video *Set Me Free* and the associated animation *Me Jenny and Kate* for use by teachers with Secondary Key Stage 3 and 4 schoolchildren across the UK. The film is also promoted directly to beneficiaries through the MDL website (Ref 2), which encourages direct participation from young people and is directly linked through to a variety of social media fora including Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Flickr.

Impact case study (REF3b)

My Dangerous Loverboy engages vulnerable and marginalized young women, many of them in denial, making them more self-aware and visible to the public and governing agencies in order to bring about changes in attitude and policy. *“Significantly young people themselves who are the victims of sexual exploitation do not believe they are being exploited and consider their relationship to be one of ‘love’. However, when I have showed the film to the young people I have worked with their response is. ‘That’s me isn’t it?’”* Key Official, National Working Group For Sexually Exploited Young People. (S1)

The film has also been instrumental in **raising awareness and changing the attitudes of workers forming part of those frontline agencies** towards the victims of sex trafficking through its promotion and inclusion in training materials, by for example, Doncaster Safeguarding Children’s Board, the Lothian and Borders Child Protection Office and the UN Global Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking (S5) The practitioners and professional services benefiting from the film include the United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre, which screens the film to social workers, police, teachers and youth workers; the Home Office, which uses the film as a training resource for police, schoolteachers and practitioners; the Serious Organised Crime Agency (now National Crime Agency) (S3), which reported in 2010 on its launch of *My Dangerous Loverboy* and its adoption by various agencies, including the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP). *“The UK Human Trafficking Centre and its partners, which commissioned the film, hope that in addition to encouraging early intervention, it will give victims confidence to come forward and help bring their abusers to justice”* (Head of Legal Services, UKHTC). The National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Young People said: *“The My Dangerous Loverboy film and Love or Lies training pack are by far the most effective means of getting the message across to professionals and non-professionals”* (S1). Other beneficiaries include the Office of Criminal Justice Reform, the Association of Chief Police Officers, The Family Planning Association, which reach schoolteachers and public health professionals (S6) and The Serious Organized Crimes Task Force in Scotland, which improved standards of training by showing the film to every new recruit as well as Senior Officers; *“I have had people say they really want to do more to help victims of human trafficking once they have seen the film. I can see in people’s faces the reaction to the shocking reality of what is happening...and there is always a stunned silence at the end.”* (Head Lead for Human Trafficking, The Serious Organized Crimes Task Force in Scotland).

Further afield, the work is promoted by The United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT) (S7) and COMBAT, an EU funded anti-trafficking project including Bulgaria, Lithuania and the UK (S8). It was also screened by the Head of Legal Services, UKHTC to European government representatives in Brussels as part of an International Conference on Human Trafficking in 2009.

My Dangerous Loverboy has **informed and shaped public and political debate** about the sex trafficking of young people and improved public understanding of social issues. A report on the BBC News website (S9), and reportage in national newspapers including *The Times* (S10) indicates the *My Dangerous Loverboy* film research has had an impact in raising public debate on the issue of sexual exploitation and trafficking of young people in the UK. One of the original UKHTC commissioners of the film is currently an advisor to the UN Global Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking and has used *My Dangerous Loverboy* as part of an international awareness raising campaign (S5). Moreover, a key human rights lawyer used *My Dangerous Loverboy* to raise awareness with the panel of an inquiry into human trafficking in Scotland by The Equality and Human Rights Commission *“I thought it was a very engaging and challenging film...the perfect tool for raising awareness of the ways people can be drawn into abusive relationships.”* (S2).

The United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking cites the film and the project’s innovative use of online, global media. *“Targeting a teenage audience where tweets, blogs and posts are the communication medium, the My Dangerous Loverboy campaign (Ref 2) uses a cross-platform approach to raise awareness about the internal trafficking of teenage girls into the sex trade. The campaign intends to create content that will engage and challenge teenagers wherever they are consuming media.”* (S7)

The film is regularly cited on numerous online blogs (see below) and has its own online presence

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on Facebook, YouTube (where it had been watched 44,768 times between January 2010 and June 2013), Twitter and Flickr. The 'Love or Lies' Educational Resource pack is estimated to have reached 25, 832 young people, and used to train 860 Practitioners (figures from Eyes Open Social Impact Report 2013).

<http://passiontounderstand.blogspot.co.uk/2010/10/my-dangerous-loverboy-stop-sex.html>

<http://ruthjacobs.co.uk/2013/01/27/virginia-heath-anti-human-trafficking-advocate-filmmaker-interview/>

<http://www.avaproject.org.uk/sector-news/notice-board/my-dangerous-loverboy---forum-for-victims-of-child-sexual-abuse.aspx>

<http://www.policeoracle.com/news/UKHTC-Launch-My-Dangerous-Loverboy-Film- 26707.html>

<http://www.champspublichealth.com/sites/default/files/RU3%20dangerous%20loverboy.pdf>

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/davawp/index.aspx?articleid=10670>

<http://judecalverttoulmin.blogspot.co.uk/2009/04/premiere-of-my-dangerous-loverboy.html>

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)**Contactable Sources:**

- S1. Key Advisor, National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Young People
- S2. Human Rights QC and Chair of Inquiry into Human Trafficking by the Equality and Human Rights Commission UK
- S3. International Liaison Officer, National Crime Agency
- S4. BBC Crime Correspondent
- S5. Consultant and Advisor, UN Global Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking

Online Sources:

- S6. Family Planning Association:
<http://www.fpa.org.uk/product/love-or-lies-educational-resource-pack>
- S7. The United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT):
<http://www.ungift.org/knowledgehub/en/stories/november2010/my-dangerous-loverboy.html>
- S8. COMBAT, an EU funded anti-trafficking project including Bulgaria, Lithuania and the UK:
<http://combattrafficking.eu/content/my-dangerous-loverboy-stop-sex-trafficking>
- S9. BBC News report:
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7383565.stm>
- S10. Article in *The Times*, 21 January 2011:
<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/article2883096.ece>