



Tricked Discussion Guide

Directors: Jane Wells and John-Keith Wasson

Year: 2013

Time: 80 min

You might know this director from:

Native Silence (Jane Wells, 2013)

Lost Hope (Jane Wells, 2012)

Surviving Hitler: A Love Story (John Wasson, 2010)

FILM SUMMARY

The Internet has created the golden age of the sex industry, as the lure of pleasure is only one click away. But what surprises most people is how alive and well this business is in the United States. In fact, it is a \$9.8 billion industry. Thousands of victims are trafficked throughout the country each day, including 300,000 children each year. They are being trafficked from urban, suburban and rural communities across the country, right in our own backyards, to our neighbors, friends and daughters.

TRICKED is an intimate and definitive portrait of human trafficking in America today. Meet the pimps, the johns, the police, the parents and the victims of the America's thriving sex trade. Director Jane Wells spent three years filming in cities across the country. In Denver, police Sergeant Dan Steele and his colleagues doggedly pursue traffickers and are devoted to resuing victims. In Las Vegas, police detectives work to hit traffickers where it hurts them most, by seizing their financial assets. In New York, Colorado and Las Vegas, brash and unrepentant johns reveal the how, why, when and where of what they call "a hobby."

The devastating impact of pimps and johns is painfully clear in the intimate stories of survivors and girls currently caught up in the sex trade. TRICKED weaves together dramatic, disparate, interdependent characters and provides an unflinching view of the world of sex trafficking, the almost incomprehensible and disturbing bonds between the traffickers and victims, and the enormous challenges faced by law enforcement nationwide.

FILM THEMES

TRICKED exposes the frightening scale of the exploitation of American girls and women by considering the issue through four different players: the buyers, the sellers, the victims, and the law enforcement who fights an uphill battle against the booming business of sex trafficking. The mosaic of characters present a portrait that reflects the complexity of trafficking here in the United States.

EMPOWERMENT OR SLAVERY?

In one interview, New York Times journalist Nick Kristof slams the feminist notion that a female's right to sell her body represents female empowerment. Kristof says that we have a 'gilded' notion of what prostitution involves, that we don't understand the abusive dynamic between pimps and their women. Survivors go into great detail about how they were lured into the life, beaten, threatened and sold many times a day. The film reiterates time and again that these girls and women are under the control of their pimp, be it by violence or manipulation, and that they are bought and sold against their will. Is it female empowerment, or is it modern day slavery in its ugliest form?

LEGALIZATION

One of the film's central characters, Detective Chris Baughman relays a chilling message from pimps: If Las Vegas legalizes prostitution, they will not hesitate to bring as many girls as they can and "set up shop". He believes that legalization protects everyone but the girls who are trafficked. Johns are free from fear of prosecution, and pimps can operate with impunity, but girls will still be victimized by the system, and perhaps at a higher rate.

VICTIMS OR CRIMINALS?

Laws in the U.S. focus heavily on the sellers of sex rather than the traffickers. Far more women are convicted than pimps or johns. Slim, a Chicago pimp, admits that he operates without fear, that selling women is much safer than selling drugs. It's difficult to prosecute pimps because the women who testify against them are viewed as criminals, prostitutes, and untrustworthy. Victims often express fear of speaking out, worried they'll be shamed or worse, disbelieved and left without justice. Cops like Dan Steele view these girls as victims, but the system still does not.

DECEPTION AND DELUSIONS

The title, TRICKED, reflects the duplicity of pimps, the delusions of johns, and how the American public is taken in by the lies perpetrated by the sex trafficking industry. Pimps claim they have nothing to do with prostitution. They trick Johns into believing that girls enter the industry by choice, and many of the johns seem to think the girls enjoy their work. According to detective Chris Baughman, many johns believe prostitution is legal in Las Vegas, a myth perpetuated by pimps and the atmosphere of "What Happens in Vegas, Stays in Vegas."

“This is not just an international problem. There are people being exploited through the commercial sex industry in your community right now. The exploited person may be your neighbor, your sister, nephew, peer, or your classmate.”

Sgt. Dan Steele

“We’re treating the victims as criminals, and it’s profoundly unjust.”

Nick Kristof, New York Times

FILM FACTS:

- Director Jane Wells became interested in the topic of sex trafficking when she learned that the Super Bowl is considered one of the largest trafficking events in the United States. Pimps bring girls from all over the country to service fans.
- The TRICKD directors met while filming the award-winning documentary, "The Devil Came on Horseback."
- When the TRICKED team went to Chicago to film, Sgt. Dan Steele came along, pretending to be a "production assistant" during the interviews with Robert Money and other pimps.
- One john in New York City volunteered to use a hidden camera to capture the footage of himself being serviced in the massage parlor.
- While filming the raids in Denver, the cops wore bulletproof vests and the TRICKED filmmakers did not.
- Danielle escaped pimp control when he allowed her to visit her family. Her flight back was delayed by a snowstorm, allowing her family time to intervene. He stalked her and repeatedly tried to trick her into coming back.
- The film underwent an entire re-edit and was previously called 10,000 MEN. The name referred to the statistic that an average woman will have performed around 10,000 sexual acts in just 2 years of prostitution.
- The filmmakers have made over 10 video extras from the outtakes and launched an educational initiative called Criminal Justice Initiative (CJI) for district attorneys and law enforcement across the country.
- One storyline that was cut from the final film has become its own award-winning short about the victimization of Native American girls in the foster care system, titled Native Silence.
- President Barack Obama stated in a 2012 address to the Clinton Global Initiative, "We're turning the tables on the traffickers. Just as they are now using technology and the Internet to exploit their victims, we're going to harness technology to stop them."
- Average entry age of girls into the sex trafficking industry in America is 12 to 14.
- One-third of teens living on the street will be lured toward prostitution within 48 hours of leaving home.

WAYS TO INFLUENCE

1. Share this film. Give others a chance to become informed about the sex trafficking industry.
2. Make a donation to [3 Generations](#), a non-profit organization created by Director Jane Wells to share stories of survivors of human rights abuses around the world. The stories addresses a topic that not enough people want to hear, one that is very difficult to finance. Meanwhile, the pro-prostitution lobby is active, articulate, and well-financed.
3. Become involved. You can join crowd-sourcing initiatives that help bust sex traffickers. Or you can participate in rescue efforts for young women and girls who long for freedom and recovery.

We believe a good documentary is just the beginning...

In a world of sound-bites, documentaries provide an opportunity to think, understand, share, and connect with the world.

They are controversial, divisive, fascinating, unexpected, and surprising. They can be thrillers, dramas, comedies, romance, tear-jerkers, and horror films.

Documentaries provide the perfect topic for meaningful conversations. If you want to talk about the things that matter with people that matter then pick a film, invite your friends, and watch & discuss together. It's as easy as that.

Influence Film Club – We are the conversation after the film.