

Film looks at dangers and injustice within the sex trafficking industry

By Sara Gottardi

Everybody needs and deserves love and respect. On Monday, Aug. 31 at the Village Playhouse, Red Light Green Light showed for its one hundredth time. Incredibly insightful and intuitively depicting the very true stories and lives of young women and the men known as Johns around the world in the sex trafficking industry. The film helped in opening people to the truth about sex trafficking as well as how to go about helping people in the seemingly unyielding crisis circling and how to spot the clues to its occurring. Shot and directed by Michelle Brock and Jared Brock, trekking through over 40 different countries and having said that they've 'witnessed an incredible amount of beauty and brokenness' along the way, sometimes it's hard to believe what destruction lives in neighboring places we assume to call home. The film took a year and a half to make in funding, six months in travelling and the cherry on top with another eight months in editing the entire film completely from start to finish.

Together Michelle and Jared brought to fruition the social justice charity, Hope for the Sold, that 'is an abolitionist charity that fights exploitation one word at a time, through writing, speaking, and film.' Michelle taking to the front of the stage before the documentary began, recounted a story about a small leather bag she'd bought, holding it up, she spoke about how while she'd bartered for that bag [for ten dollars] at the local Mercato in Ethiopia, that there were men bartering for young girls around her age [10] for less than she'd bought her bag for. It would be 15 years later, that while in school at the University of Guelph for International Development and Political Science, she'd become engulfed with learning everything she could about the sex trafficking industry. Wanting to participate and make a change with doing something to take action to create a better and safer world, she was 'gripped by one cause that meant everything,' she said.

Mothers would sell one of their daughters for about \$5 just so that the rest of their children would be able to eat and so that the household would be spared and sustained for another week or so. Many other families that had been in this type of environment and industry, have been for as long as they can remember, where to fathers would have their young boys 'men' sell and use women just as their fathers did. Taking advantage and abusing women was something they'd been taught, many of the men entitled, had like the women suffered in both being exposed to abusive upbringings and mental instability states of being. Unable to cope with society, not understanding the world around themselves, oftentimes, a look for a way out was - any way - which is to where many got stuck. There are many reasons to how or why women get caught in this unyielding cycle, some women were unable to pay tuition fees, while others needed money for food and shelter, many times enough, it has been a posing boyfriend with an agenda. Many women as well as their perpetrators have not finished school, have been mistreated growing up, been abused or left to their own devices without any help, and in not being able to fend for their selves on either the lack of social judgment, lack of resources or on outside pressures and sometimes trickery, some say they'd thought it would be, 'just a job,' while another had said she'd felt 'powerful,' until it quickly escalated into a horrible nightmare.

Regular jobs would be incredibly subdued in chances, being greatly difficult as by having been in the industry of selling sex would lessen any opportunities. With a 40 per cent of women making up the mortality rate, only two per cent completely getting out, a vast majority do not make it out of the vicious circle and continually go back and forth within obtaining freedom, to then getting caught in - more times than not - even more severe situations for what seems like 'forever,' one woman had concluded.

'Not here by chance,' Mary's Mission, is a social awareness project carrying the belief and status that 'every human being is valuable, without exception.' Poverty coming in many forms: lack of food, shelter, being unaccepted, unloved, having a lack of identity, purpose or self-worth is something they work towards delving people into through presentations, art, music, film and volunteer opportunities.

Michelle commented that the focus of the film was not specifically to whether or not the legal or illegal way of prostitution was the way to go, but more of an opening question for the audience to absorb and answer for themselves: to really think about it. There is no law that is completely perfect, but to have safety and awareness is key to developing and growing as a society. Speaking on Bill C-36 [the Canada Prostitution law] that is kick starting, is the change for a more accurate acceleration on holding those purchasing sex accountable for their actions, and for bettering society as a whole.

For more information visit: www.hopeforthesold.com and www.redlightgreenlightfilm.com.