

COLORIBUS

Human trafficking: Closer than you think



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Released: April 2009

Advertiser: ANTI-SLAVERY INTERNATIONAL 

Brand name: ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING 

Country: United Kingdom 

Category: Public awareness messages 

Credits:

In his new PSA, titled "Closer," director Jorn Threlfall of Outsider juxtaposes two domestic scenes: one in which a middle class British high school girl of about 14 prepares for her day, and another in which an Eastern-European girl of a similar age, confined to her stark bedroom, dresses after being forced into sex with one of many men who will pay for that privilege this day.

As the scenes are intercut, we learn that the first girl has healthy relationships with friends and family, and is looking forward to an upcoming party. The second girl is being victimized, exploited, and abused on a daily basis. More affecting than the sad disparity is the shocking revelation that these girls have more in common than their age. In fact, they live on the same suburban street in London.

"This project was incredibly important to me," says Threlfall, who wrote and directed the piece on spec. "In our work as advertisers, we often comment on the lighter side or the more aesthetic side of life. The notion that sex trafficking is closer than we think, and the horror of what is going on in this civilized country we think we live in, this was a message worth disseminating."

To produce the spot, Threlfall called on crew members with whom he'd been working on several recent commercial projects. "We had a production shorthand, and beyond that, there was a united ethical commitment, for which I'm so grateful," the writer-director says.

The toughest challenge, Threlfall notes, was casting the Eastern-European girl. "To capture the vulnerability of this young person, we had to communicate the difference between a 14 year-old and 16 year-old," he explains. "We saw a lot of really good people, but this is one of those situations in which an older actress might cost the spot its impact." Threlfall chose to cast a younger actress, using a body double for a shot of her undressing. He sought out not only a young actress mature enough to handle the role, but one whose parents could be heavily involved. "We worked with a family that was sympathetic to the piece, to what I was doing and why," he says.

While researching his spot, Threlfall approached Amnesty International, and was directed to Anti-Slavery International, a smaller organization more closely associated with the struggle to liberate victims of modern slavery and human trafficking. Anti-Slavery will now serve as the sponsor of "Closer" and is pursuing theatrical and broadcast distribution for the ad.

The experience creating "Closer" has inspired Threlfall to make efforts such as this an ongoing pursuit. In addition to his commissioned current projects, the director is prepping his next PSA, which will address forced repatriation.

Client: Anti-Slavery
Title: "Closer"

Writer/Director: Jorn Threlfall
Production Company: Outsider
Executive Producer: Robert Campbell
Producer: Benji Howell
DP: Richard Mott
Editorial: Final Cut, London
Editor: Adam Rudd
Telecine/Post: MPC, London

Music/Sound Design: Grand Central, London
Sound Designer: Raja Seghal, Miles