

Kiara Tinch

## Personal Essay

Human Trafficking is a topic that I have not personally encountered, but an issue that affects my fellow females throughout the world. In order to widen my lens of focus I wanted to engage in research that would allow me to delve into a world I did not inhabit. I craved to see it face to face, without having to be a victim myself.

In specifying the method I would use to accomplish this goal I thought of film as the best medium to employ to conduct my research. Films, bring people to life leaving only glass to separate the viewer and the victim. My query quickly began to revolve around, "What can we learn about human trafficking from film, and does it accurately portray the struggles of thousands of women?"

I was able to discover my sources through multiple library catalog searches and time at Hornbake library with the help of the Hornbake librarians. Each librarian was a wealth of information, so much so that their searches often resulted in finding additional sources of film immediately after I was finished consuming one. I also used McKeldin Library for more researched based articles and books. I found the best research method to actually be speaking to librarians and allowing their experience guide me. I additionally used Javiera as a resource. Collectively we worked on outlines and new approaches to look at the material in an informative, but engaging way.

This interpersonal interaction impacted my research in many ways. The first was that I was able to share the stories of my research with each of these parties, allowing the research to be active in life, and not completely on the page. As I retold narratives that I had recently heard through the films I was raising awareness, in a small way, for these women. Through my learning I was able to teach. In my opinion, being able to teach is the mark of true mastery of material, a skill I was only able to acquire through the interpersonal connections with the librarians and my advisor.

Another gift from sharing research was the infusion of new ideas to my personal research. One of the difficult aspects of individual research is tunnel vision. One can usually only see the end goal and one way to arrive at that destination. Through active research and discussion, my tunnel broke down and new tracks are laid, creating a well-rounded product and level of research. Javiera was instrumental in encouraging me to funnel the topic down into a more personal accounts rather than taking on the entire issue. By taking this approach I was able to highlight individuals, allowing their voices to be heard over the issue itself.

In the selection process I consumed multiple documentaries. For the most part I took in all that the library had to offer on human trafficking through film.

Once I had viewed all the films I narrowed down what I would use in my research to fit the more personal narratives, any films that were speaking broadly about the issue were used as background information. I used the same approach for books. Books containing personal stories were preferred, but peer-reviewed articles on the topic were vital to creating depth to the research component of the paper. I only used films that were supported through the library catalog or endorsed by librarians and restricted my use of articles to through that were peer-reviewed.

This project greatly strengthened my research skills, in many ways. One of my favorite aspects of this project was that so much of my material came from film, a more unconventional way to accrue information on a topic. Through this stimulating research I was encouraged to share my findings with others. Stimulating research spurs discussion, and that is the most important lesson that I have learned through this research project and the one that I will carry with me through the rest of my education. #