

everybody

MAGAZINE

December 2010

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DISCOVER DREAMS
UNLIMITED™

NEW

OUTSIDE IN
INTERVIEWS WITH FRIENDS OF THE BODY SHOP

NEW

A DAY IN THE LIFE
MEETING EMPLOYEES FROM AROUND THE WORLD



OUTSIDE IN

THERE ARE SO MANY INTERESTING PEOPLE CONNECTED TO OUR BRAND THAT WE'VE DECIDED TO INTRODUCE A NEW FEATURE SO THAT WE CAN GET TO KNOW THEM A BIT BETTER.

In this first *Outside In*, we talk to an award-winning photojournalist who has worked on our 'STOP' campaign and describes herself as an 'explorer of the unknown'. Meet Hazel Thompson...

You travelled to South Africa before the World Cup to investigate a rise in trafficking and sex tourism as a result of this major sporting event and returned with really powerful photos that generated important publicity for our 'STOP' campaign. Why did working on our campaign appeal to you?

Christopher Davis, your International Campaigns Director explained the campaign to me and I said that I'd love to be a part of it. Most of my career, I've explored injustice against women and children and I really have a heart for these kinds of issues. The platform that you have at The Body Shop really excites me as well as the fact that you're talking to people about issues that most companies shy away from. And I'm loving working with you guys.

How did you first become interested in photography and when did you decide to make a career out of it?

This is my dream. I would say that I've been a photographer since I was about eight. My dad gave me an old 120 camera and I would carry it around absolutely everywhere with me. I'd even dress up our poor cats and dogs and take pictures of them! My father had a huge chest of *National Geographic* magazines and I would pore over them all the time. I remember thinking, "that's what I want to do." I didn't know at the time that the term for it was photojournalism – I just felt it.

I'm a bit of a rebel because I'm from a family where everyone goes off to university to study something like English Literature but it just wasn't for me. My family were against it but I left school and found myself some work experience with a local newspaper. When I showed up, the guy I was supposed to shadow had food poisoning so after a bit of a debate, they decided to send me off by myself. I loved it, I just felt like the shoes were made for my feet. Luckily, the paper saw something in me that week and I was offered a proper apprenticeship with them. From there, I moved to London and things took off for me.



How do you go about planning for a feature like the South Africa piece?

It's incredibly hard. I had a few contacts and I had a good knowledge of Cape Town. You literally have to chase leads, send emails, introduce yourself and build up trust. For this story, I bugged absolutely everyone I knew – and chased those I didn't.

A human rights contact I have in London received an email from an organisation in South Africa and the access to the vice squad came about through these relationships. Ultimately, the vice squad came on board because they trusted me and because we had a mutual trust.

I love this bit, the planning stage. It's a bit like a treasure hunt. You know what you need and you just have to go and find it.

Can you tell us a bit about what you witnessed in Cape Town and which of the photos from this story made the most lasting impression on you?

Having access to the vice squad meant that I could go out with them on raids. The first night we visited high class brothels that looked like respectable family homes from the outside. The following night we visited slum brothels - and the streets.

On an emotional level, I would say the girl in the number seven football shirt made the biggest impact on me. We found her in the only room in that house that had a light bulb and she was slumped at the end of the bed. The officers see girls like her all the time, a teenager from Pretoria who had been

offered work in Cape Town and was then tricked into working in a brothel. The hardest part is that unless the girl agrees to come with them voluntarily, the law doesn't give the vice squad the power to do anything. The gang running the brothel gathered outside and she became so scared that eventually, we had to leave her there. To see her body rocking back and forth at the end of that bed...I'm still wondering about where she is and if she's ok.



For me, this is the most powerful photograph. I used a slow shutter and you can really see the fear and the wildness in her eyes. She was drugged and out of it and that's why she reacted so badly when the vice squad tried to help her.



How do you think photography can help in exposing and raising awareness about the sex trafficking of children and young people?

The power of the image is that it captures a moment in time. Especially in a situation like this, when you are asking customers to get behind the issue by taking action and signing a petition to stop the sex trafficking of children and young people, they need to emotionally connect with the issue and sometimes they need to see the eyes of the victims. With a photograph, people have to look, they cannot look away.

What are your thoughts on the skills required for your kind of work?

Well I think you've got to love people! You also need to be aware of the amount of preparation that goes in. I'd say that 80% of the job involves research and planning. You need to be a strong communicator and be willing to step into situations, communities and cultures that might be totally unknown to you. I like to think of myself as an explorer of the unknown.

You've won many awards your work has been featured in top publications such like The New York Times and The Observer. What's the secret to your success as a photojournalist?

I'm living my passion so this is more than a job to me. It takes a lot of emotional and physical energy to do what I do and you need to be tough to run the stories that expose these issues. Knowing my purpose, knowing that I'm doing what I was born to do is what's with me through moments of doubt or elation. I'll always be a storyteller.