

A bunch of lawmen and women want to overturn the laws they've spent their lives enforcing. And they want your help to do it.

BUSTED



You have the right NOT to remain silent.

25-minute online documentary and global on-line campaign.

After 40 years of a war on drugs, the evidence is tragically plain: the War hasn't just failed, it's made things significantly worse - increasing the supply of drugs and setting up the conditions for a massive, violent criminal economy. Countries like Guatemala and Costa Rica which have been turned into war zones by drug trafficking are calling for a wholesale rethink of the laws; a handful of other countries are pioneering alternative systems of regulating drugs. But in countries like the US, the UK and Australia, governments remain reluctant to even consider whether they should shift ground, nervous about questioning the laws, lest they seem soft on crime.

It's an old truth of democracy that sometimes the people need to lead their leaders. This project is an exercise in that truth.

A documentary, made for the internet, to bring together some of the world's most compelling figures from law enforcement – police, prosecutors, judges and prison governors – to give a first hand account, from a perspective that's impossible to ignore, of why the world's drug laws need to be rethought.

The objective is simple: it is to galvanize popular demand for reconsideration of the current system by governments everywhere.

Why the Law Enforcers?

The target audience for this documentary is people who currently either don't yet have strong opinions about drug law reform or who actually oppose it. The intellectual argument about the need to rethink drug laws has long been won, and there's a growing awareness in ordinary people all over the world: this is an exercise in making that awareness now go viral, and create a new critical mass of people demanding change.

In short, this is *not* an exercise in preaching to the converted; it's about reaching out to the rest of the world, and giving them a blindingly good reason for shifting ground. And the best way to reach them is through the men and women who've spend their lives enforcing the laws against drugs – a confronting and uniquely authoritative perspective.

Their stories of long years spent fighting to suppress the drug trade, the personal epiphanies that overturned all their previous thinking and their current stand to bury the laws against drugs make for a perspective that's impossible to ignore.

Why a Documentary?

There are lots of brilliant small clips on the Internet. The LEAP Website, for example, is a massive library of outstanding first hand testimony by exactly the kind of individuals who'll star in this project.

But there's something different we can reach for by gathering a handful of accounts together, and telling a longer story. Over 25 to 30 minutes we can build in layers of ideas, and give them weight and impact through the personal stories of individuals we get to know and trust: we can convey some really complex and sophisticated thoughts to the audience. By the end of a documentary we can expect the audience that may not have been disposed towards drug law reform before, to be *changed* by what they've seen.

There's also something very powerful that happens when the first hand accounts of a cast of different individuals are woven together. In this documentary we'll hear from senior police, prosecutors, judges and prison governors. They'll each have a distinct tale to tell, and when they're told *together*, a kind of chemistry gets to work. Difficult ideas and confronting truths have a way of suddenly shining through: as the old phrase goes, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

For a good example of this, you might want to watch the documentary *Rampant* – it's the story of how the sex-workers, drug users and gays of Sydney took on HIV/AIDS. It speaks for itself about what kind of a complex, challenging story we can tell the audience, and how the sheer power of first hand testimony can get people to shift ground. You can view it at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rAH_auNWdpQ

Why the Internet?

1. Reach. The Internet doesn't just play in one country, or culture: it reaches the whole world and can create a global audience. This makes it a particularly powerful medium for

ideas about drug law reform. The web of international treaties and a whole host of other complex factors mean that reform really needs a worldwide push behind it.

2. Scale. The Internet offers an unprecedented audience. The 30-minute online documentary about Joseph Kony from early 2012 was watched by an audience of 150 million people. This figure utterly dwarfs the audiences achieved by even the most successful television documentaries.
3. It's Interactive. TV may be educational, but the audience watches in an essentially passive mode. But the activity of watching something online is inherently interactive: an internet audience watches assuming they will take some action, and at the same time they're viewing the documentary they're presented with concrete opportunities to get engaged. The Kony documentary is in itself emphatically NOT a model for us: its tone and content are a Swiss-cheese of problems. But its form and its audience, and the way the documentary immediately harnessed their energies, are absolutely relevant. It can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4MnpzG5Sqc>
4. It's the medium of young people. Overwhelmingly, around the world, people under the age of 25 are no longer watching broadcast television; their viewing is online. Young people are absolutely key to the struggle for drug law reform. They're the ones most sharply affected by the current laws, and they're the ones who'll ultimately have to deal with the consequences if the laws aren't rethought. Young people will also be great carriers of this documentary: hopefully many a dinner table argument will end in someone saying, come on Dad, you need to watch this ...

So the essential idea is to use the first hand testimony of the law enforcers to produce a documentary that is surprising, confronting and absolutely compelling, and that creates a new critical mass of awareness around the need to rethink drug laws.

This documentary will be backed up by a major website with platforms for connecting with the great network of major drug law reform organizations around the world – to share stories, information and ideas, to raise debate globally, and to move for formal reconsideration of drug laws by parliaments everywhere.

THE OBJECTIVE IS ENORMOUS, AND SIMPLE: IT IS TO GALVANISE POPULAR DEMAND FOR SERIOUS RECONSIDERATION OF THE CURRENT SYSTEM, BY GOVERNMENTS ALL OVER THE WORLD.

How Do We Fund It?

I'm fortunate to live in a part of Australia that has a strong film making industry, which is carefully supported by the State government. Very recently the local film funding body, Screenwest announced a visionary experiment to support film making for the Internet. It's a two stage funding model:

1. An approved project sets itself an initial funding target that it will attempt to raise through the Australian crowdfunding website Pozible.

2. If the project raises its target in time, Screenwest will match it on a 3 for 1 basis.

The upper ceiling for the Pozible target is \$50,000, which is what I propose we attempt to raise. And if we're approved to take part, we'll be competing against other projects, all of who will launch on Pozible simultaneously. Screenwest has a total pool of \$200,000 to allocate, and it's on a first past the post basis.

A copy of the Screenwest Guidelines is attached. You'll see there are a number of conditions attached to how we can raise that initial Pozible target.

Applications for Screenwest's 3-for-1 programme close on 12 November. The Pozible Campaign then launches a month later.

We're seeking the active involvement of major networks of people committed to drug law reform support.

The key to tapping the great potential of the Internet is a strategy that will make our documentary "go viral". The most important element of that strategy is a big, committed nucleus of people who will support the production of the documentary, watch it as soon as it launches on the net, and care enough about its message to send it on to their friends and family.

We're keen to build partnerships with major organizations around the world who can tell their member base about the documentary, and invite them to get involved.

That involvement would be twofold:

1. We'd hope that people all over the world would contribute to our crowd-funding campaign. If we can achieve our target in time, we'll qualify for matched 3 for 1 public support that should provide the great bulk of the budget to actually produce the film.
2. These people will in effect, be the carriers of the documentary – spreading the word about it, and getting their friends and family to watch.

Ultimately we're also keen to direct the energies of the global audience who watch the film, back towards that network of drug law reform organisations.

The documentary is not an end in itself: it's part of larger project to build a global online community of people who want to see the drug laws changed.

We're not attempting to become a new drug law reform organization – we're planning to raise debate and awareness, and link a new mass of people to the organizations in their country or region that are fighting to change the laws.

What next?

Victoria Pitt and Anna Flanders would hope to talk to you directly, as soon as possible to discuss the project.

The immediate priority is to demonstrate to Screenwest that we have the interest and engagement of major networks of people committed to drug law reform. An email setting out interest in the project and a willingness to communicate about it with your membership base would be critical support.

Anna will also be keen to discuss how best to communicate with your members about the project.

A brief introduction to the film-maker

Documentary film-maker Victoria Midwinter Pitt studied Law and International Politics before joining the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's documentary unit. She later took a Masters in directing at London's Central School of Speech and Drama.

Her work has screened on major television networks all over the world and at Cannes and the UN, won Australia's premier awards – Walkley and AFI's – and been nominated for Emmys and UN Media Peace Prizes.

Previous films can be viewed online:

Rampant: How A City Stopped A Plague http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rAH_auNWdpQ

Surviving Mumbai/Mumbai Massacre
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sCHAMYfuMpg>

Leaky Boat
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3c_phJsx1NE

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