

# THIS IS ABUSE... OR IS IT? DOMESTIC ABUSE PERPETRATORS' RESPONSES TO ANTI-DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PUBLICITY

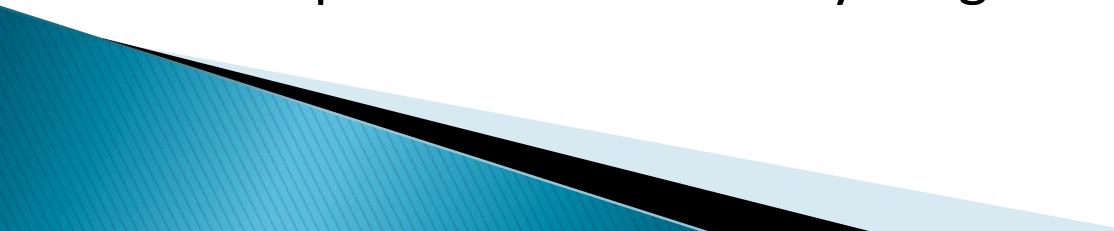
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# The Boys to Men Project

To examine:

- ▶ The range of attitudes towards domestic abuse.
- ▶ The experiences – of victimization, witnessing and perpetrating violence – that impinge upon young men's receptivity to anti-violence messages.
- ▶ The situational and biographical contingencies through which violence is defined by young men as acceptable.
- ▶ Young men's perceptions of domestic abuse interventions.

## 3 Stages:

1. Survey of 1200 13-14 year old school children.
  2. 13 x focus groups with young people aged 13-19.
  3. In-depth interviews with young men aged 16-20.
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# Stage 2: Focus Groups

- ▶ Commenced with a viewing of anti-domestic violence video: 'Bedroom scene'
- ▶ Followed by hypothetical vignettes and examination of general attitudes.
- ▶ Focus group with DV perpetrators: all under Youth Offending Supervision for assault, and had disclosed acts of violence against women

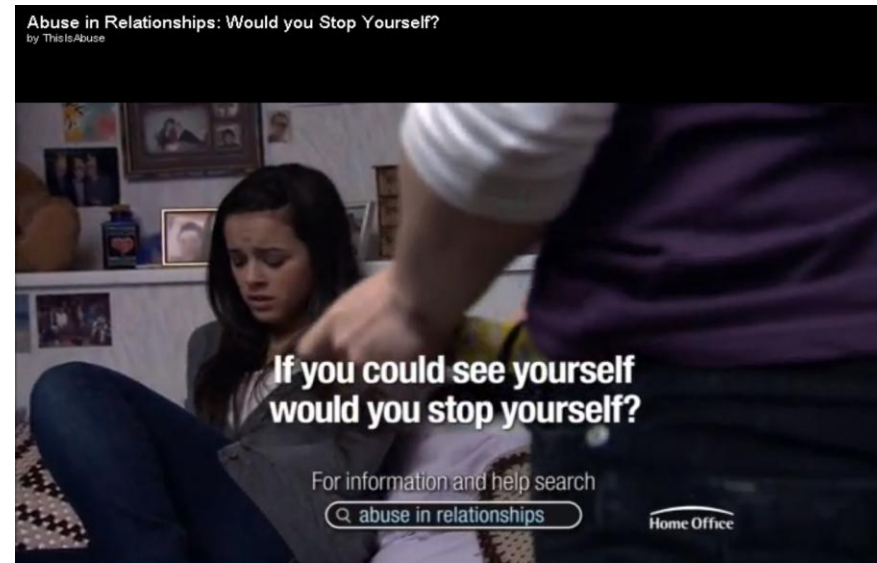
*'a bit of fun'*

*'tell everyone you're frigid'*

*'pathetic'*

*'show me something'*

*'get off her'*



# Recognition: This *is* Abuse...

**Danny:** It's grim ... Just fuckin' you don't hit birds ... Just think... that could be your own kid or anything, just scag like isn't it?

**Robert:** Harsh...

**MLC:** How would you feel if it was your kid or?

**Mike:** I'd kill them me. Some lads just think they can take advantage of other people... Just they're stronger aren't they so they feel like that they can do stuff like that... If you seen a girl being battered by a man...wouldn't you go over?.... You'd have to.



## ... Power & Control

**Robert:** ...he done that because he wanted to smash her but she were having none of it. So he got his own way...

**Mike:** Put the shits up her basically...So he can get what he wants.



# This *is* Incriminating...

## The Rape was 'Just a Shag'

**Robert:** You'd be fucked if she rang the plod.

**Danny:** Get nicked for raping her and that.

**Robert:** Or a sex offenders list [laughing]...

**DG:** You think he's going to rape her?

**Danny:** No he's not going to rape her, but basically that's what you [get] nicked for isn't it if she phoned the plod...

**DG:** Do you think that's what was going to happen?

**Danny:** No. He was just going to shag her or something.



# It's not really abuse: 'It could've been worse'

**MLC:** Do you think it's a typical example of domestic abuse?

**Robert:** No there's usually loads.

**Mike:** There's cheating...like loads.

**Robert:** Or... they'd start punching them in the face...

**Mike:** It could have been worse though.

**Robert:** It weren't extreme but it was bad like...

**Mike:** He could have raped her or something couldn't he?  
Scared her or something. So it could have been a lot worse.



# Real DV: The Woman Scorned

**Robert:** Birds start throwing plates at you...

**Mike:** When you cheat, girls just slap you... don't they? ...  
You just expect that though from girls.

**Robert:** If she slaps you, you just leave it, don't you?...Birds  
can't do that much damage to you. I'd just laugh at  
them.

**Danny:** Feed her major weed and watch her go to sleep. When  
she wakes up in the morning... she will have forgotten  
about it.





# ... & The Paranoid Freak

**Danny:** No he's paranoid... Just a paranoid little freak... He's got her on lockdown hasn't he?

**Robert:** Lockers.

**DG:** What does that mean?

**Mike:** Can't do nothing like...

**Robert:** She can't do nothing unless he says....

**Mike:** There's no trust then, is there? ...It's not really a relationship that though is it?

**Robert:** I bet you he's got more birds... Cos he's got her on lockdown and he's eighteen, she's only 16.

**Danny:** He's fucking her about, he's 18...

**DG:** So you think he's got more girlfriends but he doesn't trust her?

**Mike:** Yeah. That's the way it normally goes doesn't it?

**Danny:** He's just bullying her basically.



# 'Don't Get Me Wrong': Messing is Just Messing...

**Danny:** I just think hitting a bird is wrong. I never hit my bird me. Never hit a bird in me life. Don't get me wrong I have hit her like but not like proper. Only messing around like banter... Never hit her to hurt her.

**DG:** So hitting is just sometimes messing around in a relationship.

**Danny:** Yeah you have to... It would just be boring otherwise.

**Mike:** It's what happens isn't it.

**Danny:** Yeah just a bit of banter isn't it.

**DG:** So you think sometimes it happens to make it more exciting?

**Robert:** More exciting?...

**Danny:** Yeah you're just messing around aren't you? Just give her like a light little jig... She slaps you ... Just like messing around just fuckin' ... hitting each other with the pillows ... it's proper kinky, isn't it? [all laughing]





# Untrustworthy Women and Predatory Scumbags



**Mike:** If you're dressed like a slag you just attract...

**Robert:** Like a slag: little skirt, boobs out and all that

...

**Danny:** I've never hit a bird me.

**Mike:** Some people are scumbags though aren't they?

**Robert:** ...But there's some proper mad men.

**Danny:** .... Think they're mad... go and hit a bird.

**Robert:** ... It was in the newspaper... Some man shot his wife and his kids.

...

**Danny:** Them Somalians and all.

**Mike:** Them type of religions that just terrorise women...

**Danny:** Yeah they look down on them and all...

**Robert:** Isn't it like in their religion that they can tell their wives what to do... And if they cheat they're allowed to batter them ...

**Mike:** East is East, that type of thing.

# Looked after kids in trouble... looking after themselves



**Robert:** No that's not really a big deal though...

**MLC:** So what do you think a headteacher would do?

**Robert:** Fuckin' exclude him.

**Mike:** He'd exclude him for about a day or two...

**Robert:** We're not allowed girls in our school ... in case we smash them.

...

**Danny:** ... it doesn't matter if he's gonna miss his parents... He's going to be safe. He might not even be getting looked after properly...

**Mike:** It depends on where he goes like, if he goes into a care home or ...gets adopted ...

**Robert:** No, care homes are all right ... [But] you don't want the social services involved, they're scum...

**Danny:** ... fuckin' fend for yourself. Just go and move out and go to the job [centre] and ...get a house off them...Get a job, get your fuckin bird... you've smashed it then like...



# Conclusions

- ▶ Reactions: condemnation, sympathy, denial, confession, protective paternalism, misogynistic woman-blaming.
  - ▶ Raw nerves: touched through identification with *both* male and female characters.
  - ▶ Message of anti-domestic abuse campaigning is easily distorted by those most uncomfortable about seeing themselves in it.
  - ▶ Need to supplement the central media message with an enduring dialogue?
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