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VIRTUAL REALITY EXPERIENCE EDUCATES ABOUT HUMAN TRAFFICKING  
Experience *TRAPPED: A VR Detective Story* at SXSW 2018

Austin, Texas, Feb. 26, 2018 - Virtual Reality can make you feel empathy. That's the premise of *TRAPPED: A VR Detective Story*, an interactive virtual reality experience that puts you in the shoes of a victim, Lisa, as she shares what it's like to be victimized by the horrible travesty that is sex trafficking. *TRAPPED* is demoing at the SXSW Gaming Exhibition in the Austin Convention Center from March 15-17 and the Capital Factory's Future of Tech Lounge from March 10-13.

"Human trafficking is a huge issue around the world, but many people don't realize it's happening in their neighborhood," says Billy Joe Cain, President of the Austin-based Radical Empathy Education Foundation (REEF), a Texas non-profit dedicated to the eradication of human trafficking. "The numbers are staggering, but instead of shocking people with them, we are focusing on creating empathy and compassion for victims, because we want to show that this happens to real people. Everywhere."

REEF worked with experts in the anti-trafficking field with the prevention of child exploitation in mind. During the story of *TRAPPED*, users learn how Lisa was manipulated into becoming a victim by a boy she met online, which is a very common way children begin being groomed. Facts of the story relate to the "Recognize the Signs" campaign by the Polaris Project, a leader in human trafficking issues in the United States. Users learn these signs from Lisa's experience instead of a sheet of paper, and the personal connection increases retention of the material.



### **TRAPPED: A VR Detective Story for HTC Vive**

“Virtual Reality can be described as being in an interactive movie,” says Cain. “Once you put on the headset and headphones, you are transported to Lisa’s apartment that she cannot leave.” The experience takes you back to her childhood home, before she was trafficked, and she describes how she met and left home with her boyfriend that became her pimp.

While there are strong topics in the dialogue, there is no graphic violence that would shock viewers.

Educators are invited to come experience *TRAPPED* in person and look over the additional materials provided to teachers that allow the conversation to continue beyond the VR experience.

#### **ABOUT RADICAL EMPATHY EDUCATION FOUNDATION**

Radical Empathy Education Foundation (REEF) is an Austin-based nonprofit currently developing immersive Virtual Reality (VR) experiences dedicated to the eradication of one of the 21st century’s greatest injustices: Human Trafficking. To support REEF’s work, please visit [www.radicalempathyfoundation.org/donate](http://www.radicalempathyfoundation.org/donate)

Press materials: <https://www.radicalempathyfoundation.org/press-materials>

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