

a documentary by

TELL  
STUDIO

# CUTSHORT

fighting against  
knives in the north

## Press Kit

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The images in this document  
can be downloaded [here](#).

# Middleton Park stabbing: 15-year-old arrested after schoolboy stabbed multiple times in Leeds knife attack

A 15-year-old boy has been arrested in connection with an incident in Leeds yesterday in which a teenager was stabbed.

# Teen arrested after 'shocking' double stabbing video in broad daylight in Huddersfield

Two victims were rushed to hospital with stab wounds on Wednesday

# Five youths arrested after 'knifepoint robbery' at Metrolink stop

Witnesses reported up to 14 police cars were called to the mugging at Dane Road in Sale

# Moment boy, 15, who 'stood up to two teenagers who were bullying his little brother' fights with his 'attacker' before he is stabbed five times in frenzied assault

- The teenager was stabbed in broad daylight in Middleton in Leeds, Yorkshire
- His injuries have been described as serious but not life threatening
- The 15-year-old has been arrested for the attack and remains in custody

# Two teenagers jailed following terrifying zombie knife robbery on Harrogate's Stray

Two teenagers carrying zombie knives robbed a youngster in broad daylight after he was told to empty his pockets or get "shanked".

# FIFTEEN arrests and seven knives seized in night of chaos between police and gang of 'armed' youths

The fifteen arrests were all juveniles, with 14 being arrested for violent disorder and

# Who are the 'Peaky Minors' in Leeds?

The gang of 'machete-armed kids' causing chaos in the city

All of these articles concern knife crime incidents involving young people in 2023.

# Brianna Ghey: Boy and girl charged with murder

15 February

# Boy hung on stolen motorbike has drugs and rambo knife seized

...id the weapon and drugs after searching the youth

# Man, 22, guilty of murdering Tyson Fury's cousin in brawl

Liam O'Pray used a lock-knife to stab Rico Burton, 31, in the neck

# Boy, 14, among four people charged after alleged Cottingham Road stabbing

...an allegedly sustained stab wounds at a property on Cottingham Road

# Tomasz Oleszak: Accused teen made up attack to justify stabbing

13 April

# Six youths appear in court charged with murder of 14-year-old Gordon Gault

The six male teenagers will appear at Newcastle Crown Court on Friday

# Teen in rehab after repeatedly stabbing Gainsborough man

It happened at an Ingoldmells caravan park

# Holly Newton: Boy in court charged with murder after Hexham stabbing

30th January

# Cleethorpes residents shocked by 'horrible' stabbing as men as young as 18 arrested

A man suffered life-threatening injuries after fight in Grant Street

# Horror as youths armed with a knife and baseball bats fight at a leisure complex as schoolkids make their way home

An eye-witness said pupils heading home from the nearby Parris Wood High had to flee

# Chorley teenager arrested after stabbing man on Chapel Street

A 17-year-old boy has been arrested after a man was slashed with a knife in Chorley.

# Khalfan Seif: Three charged with murder after Huddersfield stabbing

22 January

# 'Everyone's got a weapon - if you're in a fight there's no way out' ... Reality of Huddersfield knife crime exposed as community mourns boy stabbed as he left school

... as he left school. Terrified parents have been left asking

# Teen told police 'I'm not getting bailed' after stabbing delivery driver

Dickinson told the delivery driver: "Give me your bike or I'll stab you"

# Khayri Mclean: Huddersfield teens jailed for life over schoolboy stabbing

18 May

# Teenager appears in court after man stabbed on Huddersfield street

17-year-old has been charged with grievous bodily harm

# Production Details

## Official Title Logline

### **Cut Short: Fighting against Knives in the North**

In the north of England, a mother and a young man irreversibly changed by knives explore the causes and consequences of knife culture for today's youth.

## Country of Production

United Kingdom

## Date of Completion

31st July 2023

## Shooting Format

ARRI Alexa Mini, ProRes 4444, UHD 3840x2160

## Screening Format

UHD 3840x2160, 16:9

## Sound

5.1 Surround

## Duration

00:28:49

## Genre

Documentary

## Language

English

## Director

Owen Seabrook, owen@tell.studio

## Producers

Lewis Mitchell, lewis@tell.studio  
Maizie Brown, maizie@tell.studio

## Production Company

Tell Studio  
Unit 3  
Aire Street Workshops  
30-34 Aire Street  
Leeds  
United Kingdom  
LS1 4HT



## Across the North of England, young people are stabbing and killing each other.

Increasingly prevalent, with perpetrators as young as six, it's an epidemic that isn't just confined to big cities or urban areas. FOI responses from Northern police forces report 3000+ recorded knife possessions for under 25s in 2022.

Girls and boys around the UK feel they need to carry a knife, and inevitably some choose to use them.

**Cut Short** follows Sarah, a bereaved mother, and Vilson, a young ex-offender, as they try to better understand why so many young people in the North are choosing to carry a knife, and the impacts knife related incidents have on victims, their families and the communities they live in.

**“The film is a really powerful way of showing the real impact of knife crime and exploitation on young people, families and communities.**

**Projects like this one play an important role in creating discussion and educating young people and communities on the realities of serious violence.”**

*Damien Dallimore  
Director of Greater Manchester's  
Violence Reduction Unit*





## Vilson

**Vilson Duarte-Dong moved countries twice, lost his mum to cancer, and had to give up his passion of gymnastics and his mentor and coach before he arrived in the UK as barely a teenager with no English capability.**

Before long, Vilson found companionship with other young men in his area and felt the only way to survive was to sell drugs. His group of friends became a gang, and in time he was selling class A drugs, committing burglaries, and stealing cars. Carrying a knife was just part of the lifestyle.

Eventually a gang altercation led to Vilson's arrest at the age of 16, where he was sentenced for three years with Aggravated Bodily Harm for catching a rival gang member with his knife. A moment of blind rage was inches away from a life sentence.

The incident became a moment of clarity for Vilson and now he visits schools and colleges to share his story with young people, as well as working in hospitality where he aspires towards owning his own restaurants and bars. He has completed a Bachelor's in Business Management from Leeds Beckett University.

## Sarah

**In 2013, while Sarah Lloyd was attending a computer course, her son Kieran Butterworth was stabbed through the back, shoulder and heart in broad daylight over a £100 drug debt.**

Sarah's coping mechanism has been education. In the ten years that has passed since Kieran's death, she has set up two support organisations, earned a Bachelor's in Professional Studies, written, produced and recorded an audiobook, spoken to thousands of young people in schools, community centres and prisons across West Yorkshire, and is currently completing a Master's degree in Social Research, all to put an end to youth violence once and for all.

Making this documentary is her way of removing herself as the bottleneck to the message young people need to hear. By committing her words and experiences to film and pairing that with a teaching plan that any teacher can confidently use to hold a session, her impact can be far wider spread than she can achieve in person.

# Secondary Contributors



**Matthew Norford**  
Ex-gang leader

Ex-leader of the Rusholme Crips gang, Matthew Norford was once able to manipulate teenage boys into his gang within two weeks using false affection and empowerment. He has dealt drugs, used guns to intimidate, been shot multiple times and has served time in prison, but it took the murder by stabbing of his brother Gary for Matthew to turn his back on the gang world and become a youth worker, setting up his youth organisation 1Message in 2016 to help young people make better choices.

In *Cut Short*, he reveals how gangs operate in the selfish interests of its leaders and mislead the young people who join looking for family.



**Lucie Milner**  
Eye witness

On 12th February 2013, Lucie Milner was disturbed by the shouting of teenagers the alleyway behind her home. Leaving to investigate, she found Sarah's son Kieran at the bottom of her street, stabbed through the heart and dying.

Her partner Raj was the first person to provide medical assistance, putting his towel-wrapped hand into Kieran's chest to stem the heavy bleeding. They were present through the arrival of the ambulance and served as witnesses for the subsequent police enquiry.

She recounts all of this for Sarah to highlight the graphic, irreparable damage that follows the decision to use a knife.



**Blessed**  
Ex-gang member, youth worker

Blessed (aka Matt Stevens) is an ex-gang member that has moved from feuding with rival postcodes to working with them to make music with young people. A rapper and music producer, he runs Music:Fusion, a charity in Havant, Portsmouth, that provides music production facilities that are free to use for the local young people.

In the film he speaks to Vilson about how hobbies and outlets can actually provide both the personal fulfilment and the escape from gang life that many gang-affiliated young people are searching for.



**Luke**  
Still in gang

Luke is an old friend of Vilson's, with similarities both in the Leeds gang scene and their shared interest in gymnastics. Luke is a constant supporter of Vilson's new life path and has himself grown disillusioned with the hypocrisy of gang life, although he is still linked and carefully managing his exit.

Luke has been on tag, served time in Young Offender's Institutions and has survived a vicious knife attack set up by a lifelong friend, and he speaks to Vilson almost as a whistleblower on gang life, sharing first-hand how it has failed him and isn't worth the commitment it demands.



# Director's Statement



*“It took a more than a year before we knew how to make Cut Short. In that time, we had come to understand the core of the message we needed to share. But even without that clarity, people were so forthcoming with their support - we couldn't have done it without them.”*

*Owen Seabrook*

## Where did the documentary idea come from?

Sarah. I had given a talk at the University of Leeds on creative freelancing that Sarah had attended, and she approached me afterwards to say she wanted to make an audiobook and a documentary about her experience with knife crime.

We spent about six months discussing what the documentary could be and what we were trying to achieve with it before we decided we had something feasible. In that time we realised we had no voice from the gang world who had been on the other side of the knife, and that's why we went on the search to find Vilson.

We contacted an organisation called In2Out that works with young offenders leaving prison and explained that we needed someone who had left that world and wanted to make a difference. Vilson was their first recommendation. Where did the documentary idea come from?

## What was the hardest part of making the film?

The Kickstarter was tough, but doable. We had calculated the lowest budget possible to make the film to our needs and we knew we could figure out

the money if it didn't all come from the Kickstarter (luckily it did, and then some thanks to a generous donation of £1,800 from Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit).

The hardest part really was the edit. The final film is designed to fit into an hour's teaching session, hence the 30 minute duration. I can't describe how much useful, insightful material our contributors provided that's sat on the cutting room floor, and figuring out what to keep and what to lose kept me stuck for about two months. I originally promised the Kickstarter backers that film would be shot in December and complete in February, but in the end we wrapped production on the 9th August!

## What impact would you like to see with the film?

For me, I'd love to see feedback from young at-risk people that shows that this film has made them feel empowered and knowledgeable enough that they feel confident to start taking positive steps.

A lot of young people are just looking for guidance and support, and gangs exploit that for their own aims. But that support is out there, and there's no reason anyone in this country should feel like it isn't accessible to them.

# Key Crew



**Lewis Mitchell**  
Producer

Lewis is pursues projects in sustainable development, social change and the third sector. He has participated on Screen Yorkshire's Flex Development Programme and the BFI & Film Hub North's Creative Producer Lab.

He co-produced the BFI funded short *The Witch's Daughter* – starring Burn Gorman (*Game of Thrones*, *Pinocchio*) and Jo Hartley (*This Is England*, *Dead Man's Shoes*). He's also worked across TV/SVOD as a key PA on Netflix/Boardwalk Pictures' *Encounters* (exec-produced by Steven Spielberg) and as a local PD for Wildbear Entertainment's *Secret Weapons of WW2*.



**Declan Creffield**  
Director of Photography

In Leeds' independent music scene, Declan Creffield's reputation as a filmmaker is highly regarded. As well as independently producing and self-shooting for many of the music acts in the city, Declan also has a firm body of commercial work for clients such as New Balance, Max Ski, Cardiff FC and Gloucester County Cricket Club, bringing his unique soft-pop aesthetic to each.

For *Cut Short*, he brings an attentive sensitivity that allows Sarah and Vilson's message to travel unhindered to the audience.



**Maizie Brown**  
Producer

*Cut Short: Fighting Against Knives in the North* marks Maizie's trailblazing entry into the film industry, where she was responsible for the project's development from concept production. She and Sarah together led the research efforts that give the documentary a thorough foundation in contemporary data.

Beyond *Cut Short*, she has produced commercial work for the Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust and for national charity Youth Music, and is a researcher for podcasts. She also supported the Indielab Accelerator Programme as a facilitator.



**George Bloomfield**  
Composer

George is a producer and multi-instrumentalist, producing music as an artist and for TV and film. He has widespread involvement in music projects, including half of the jazz and blues duo *Tangerine Swing*, a big band, and as musical director for a 9-piece funk neo-soul band that has aired over BBC Introducing.

His compositions have featured on numerous platforms as BBC, Channel 4, BT Sport, CBS and NBC for productions such as *The Drew Barrymore Show*, *The Late Late Show with James Corden*, *Match of the Day*, *Celebrity Coach Trip*, *Chelsea Flower Show* and *A Place in the Sun*.

# Full Production Credits



<b>Cast</b>	<b>Sarah Lloyd</b> <b>Vilson Duarte-Dong</b>		
	<b>Blessed (Matt Stevens)</b> <b>Luke</b> <b>Lucie Milner</b> <b>Matthew Norford</b>		
<b>Director/Editor</b> <b>Producers</b>	Owen Seabrook Lewis Mitchell Maizie Brown	<b>Colourist</b> <b>Second Colourist</b>	Paul Handley Summer Vasare Piscikaite
<b>Director of Photography</b> <b>1st AC</b> <b>Runner</b>	Declan Creffield Laura Clark Olivia Gray	<b>Graphic Designer</b>	Hattie Barnes
<b>Sound Recordists</b>	Chris Lipscombe Joe Allies Philip Shacklady	<b>Composer</b> <b>Sound Designer</b> <b>Dubbing Engineer</b>	George Bloomfield Philip Shacklady Will Cart
<b>Unit Stills Photographer</b> <b>BTS Photographers</b>	Lisa Stonehouse Owais Manzoor James Ivanov	<b>Work of Art</b> <b>Music composed by</b> <b>Lyrics written by</b>	Mike James Sydney Dejoyrey, Kieran 'Kizz' Cheshire Matt 'Blessed' Stevens Sydney Dejoyrey and Kizz
<b>BTS Videographer</b>	Daniel Tremble	<b>Performed by</b> <b>Mixed and engineered by</b> <b>Courtesy of</b>	Matt 'Blessed' Stevens Music:Fusion



# Approach



Cut Short doesn't tell young people to stop using knives. Instead, it allows those who have undeniable authority to speak on knives to share their own experiences.

It's consciously non-judgmental, and entirely first-hand. Lecturing our young people is a quick way to get them to dismiss our authority - *'They don't know what it's like.'*

Instead, through the bereaved Sarah, the once knife-wielding Vilson, and our other experienced contributors, young people will ask a different question:

*'What was it like for them?'*

With that knowledge, young people are empowered to make up their own minds, and as a result are willingly educated on the subject matter.

Knife crime won't stop any time soon, but conversations linger. For some at-risk individuals like Vilson, it's only a matter of time before they begin to make sense.

## Leeds indie crowdfunds knife crime doc

### Director creating film Cut Short to highlight knife crime

15th October 2022

CRIME EDUCATION PEOPLE

#### Sarah's film hits home the dangers of carrying knives

University news  
22 August 2023



The mother of a teenager murdered in a knife attack is launching a film to warn young people about the tragic consequences of carrying knives.



Crime

#### Mum of murdered Leeds teenager teams up with former gang member for anti-knife film

The mum of a murdered Leeds teenager has teamed up with filmmakers to educate young people on the dangers of carrying knives and the city's gang culture.



# CUT SHORT

fighting against  
knives in the north

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TELL  
STUDIO

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Cut Short: Fighting Against Knives in the North  
would not exist without the support of:

PROVISION

STICKS  GLASS

 LEEDS GYMNASTICS CLUB

Spark  
University of Leeds  
Business Start-up Support

  
The Leeds  
Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Trust

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