

Laura Whitmore Investigates

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All three episodes of Laura Whitmore Investigates will drop on ITVX in 27 July.

Laura Whitmore takes on a series of highly-charged, controversial issues in immersive, investigative films for ITVX, which will see her using her journalism skills to reveal new insights on each.

In this brand new series, Laura travels within the UK, Europe and the US aiming to illuminate often dark and troubling subjects: the culture of “incels”, rough sex and cyber stalkers.

Laura meets people whose lives are consumed by these issues and the cultures that have evolved around them, their victims and those who are attempting to understand and address how they impact on our lives.

One episode sees Laura plunge into “toxic masculinity” within society with a focus on the dark sub-culture of “involuntary celibates”, or “incels”, a male-dominated, misogynistic online world where alienated males who struggle to engage with women share their anti-female mindsets, developing disturbing communities around their resentment. This culture has broken into the real world with a number of high profile atrocities including mass shootings both in the US and UK when disaffected men have taken out their feelings of rejection in the ultimate act of “vengeance”. In a series of revealing interviews, Laura travels to the US and within the UK to meet young men immersed in this culture as well as professionals determined to identify underlying causes and ask how dangerous incels are.

Another episode highlights how changing attitudes to sex in Britain have seen BDSM become a multi-billion pound industry with more and more people experimenting, particularly with the act of choking during sex. Laura sets out to discover more about the dark side of what for many is seen as adventurous sex or even harmless fun, exploring the influence of pornography as well as looking into the rise of the so-called “50 Shades” defence, whereby men accused of murdering their sexual partner claim the death was caused by rough sex that went wrong. With low conviction rates for crimes of sexual violence and anecdotal evidence that many more assaults go unreported, Laura meets victims and their relatives in often deeply emotional interviews, as well as experts who provide insight into the dangers of so-called rough sex.

Cyber stalking is on the rise, with an increase of 300% in cases being reported to the police and in another episode Laura sets out to understand how and why it actually happens - the motivations of the stalker and how they operate - and, crucially, how we can protect ourselves. Laura meets victims who open up about the profound impact being stalked and harassed online has had on their lives, as well as a specialist police unit at the forefront of tackling the crime. Laura also travels to Europe to see first-hand a business at the cutting edge of the technological fightback against the stalkers.

Laura said:

“This series shines a light on a range of issues, which along with the contributors, victims and experts involved, we hope will resonate with viewers and help us to understand their dangers, complexities and consider possible resolutions. It’s been a an intense, eye-opening and at times emotional experience and one that I’m incredibly proud of. Thank you to Rumpus, Zig Zag productions and ITV Factual for working with me on it.”

Laura Whitmore Investigates is commissioned for ITV by Jo Clinton-Davis, Controller of Factual and Sue Murphy, Head of Factual Entertainment.

Jo said:

“Each of these issues is uniquely disturbing and dark, particularly because they feel like peculiarly 21st century threats emerging from or aggravated by our online world. Laura Whitmore’s willingness to delve into these areas and meet people at all levels whose lives are caught up in or have been devastatingly impacted by incel culture, rough sex and cyber stalking allows us to gain an insight into how each operates, how they affect us and what we can do to combat them.”

The episodes focusing on “incels” and cyber stalking are produced by Rumpus Media. Executive Producer is Fintan Maguire. The episode on rough sex is produced by Zig Zag and Matt Graff, Danny Fenton and Andy Scott are Executive Producers. Laura Whitmore is an Associate Producer on the series.

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Viewer enquiries

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