

Beat: News

Modelling Site Linked to Human Trafficking

CJW Report on Model Mayhem

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USPA NEWS - Human trafficking: the illegal movement of people, typically for the purpose of forced labour or commercial sexual exploitation. Most young people in the world have a desire to become rich and famous when they grow up but predators prey on this desire.

When a site for aspiring model encourages them to get “connections” into one of the highest paying industries (modelling), for free becomes available to them, what do you think they’re going to do? Model Mayhem is one of these sites that will allow aspiring photographers and models to communicate and organise collaborations with just a few photos on their profile and an ability to persuade others of their capability with little to know experience. Many serious industry professionals would call these girls “One Shoot Models”. Someone with a camera takes their photos and immediately they think they are a professional models.

With just under one million members to the site, there is plenty of opportunity for people to mislead or lie about who they are. There have been multiple cases of disappearances, rapes and human trafficking linked to this site in particular (simply Google it yourself). It is as easy as someone behind a computer telling a vulnerable and uneducated girl that he will do a free photo shoot with her to launch her modelling career.

Safety is number one when dealing with anything or anyone on the Internet but Model Mayhem creates a perfect platform for predators and human traffickers to lure young women into dangerous situations with false hope of being a professional model. You need to be smart about it. There are some simple steps I personally ensure I have checked off before I even consider doing a shoot with an upcoming photographer or an established one. I have listed them below to hopefully inform you of the things you need to ask or do before meeting up with a stranger.

“¢ Always ask to see a website (not Facebook but a real website)

“¢ If possible, contact a model who they have previously worked with and ask about their experience with the photographer

“¢ Does the photographer work full time in the industry or is it simply a hobby?

“¢ Ask a friend or family member to accompany you for safety

“¢ And always ask what the photos are being used for as many models are now finding images taken for free being sold without knowledge by the photographer.

Although the website states you are required to have 3 professional photographs before your account can be live, I do not believe someone reviews everyone’s profile before the public eye can see them. If you do a search on the page, there is no doubt, whether you search for photographer or models, 100+ profiles will come up within 5 miles of your area.

Recently I personally experienced a flood of friend requests after an amazing photo-shoot at the Gold Coast by Australia.USPA24 Photographer Robbie Merritt. One photographers asking me to work for free or Time for Prints (TFP) others asked me to connect with them on Facebook , One even referring me to websites like 500px.com where I could clearly see many young girls in various forms of undress on show for anyone to purchase from the site directly.

I contacted one of the models on the site “Bec Cook” who was less than impress stating, “I had no idea my “Collaboration” shoot images were being posted for sale by the photographer without my knowledge.” [?] Another image in the photographers site sent me to an “Adult Only” picture (which anyone can access) showing a young girl with one breast exposed on an image poorly exposed and far from a portfolio agency standard shoot.

When you Google Model Mayhem and Human Trafficking you will find one woman claiming two men drugged, raped and filmed her. She is now suing the L.A.-based parent company of a website called “Model Mayhem” where the woman claims she met the pair.

Ironically a Facebook page titled AA Model Mayhem (totally unrelated) faces its own credibility and safety issues with former admin to

the site photographer “Dean Tapper” a former West Australian police officer who was sentenced to two years in prison for having sex with an underage girl. Dean Tapper, 46, pleaded guilty earlier last year to three charges of having sex with a 15 year old in 2012. This generation doesn't seem to understand the dangers of social media so I suggest if you want to take modelling as a serious option for your career, find a reputable agency and do things the right way.

Mike Fitzpatrick once said, "The freedom to connect to the world anywhere at anytime brings with it the threat of unscrupulous predators and criminals who mask their activities with the anonymity the Internet provides to its users."

This investigative report was researched by myself - Candice J Whiting . I am a professional model , film extra and advocate for model safety and awareness. If you have any stories you want to share please email submission@robbiemerritt.com. Robert D. Hare once said, "Psychopaths are social predators, and like all predators, they are looking for feeding grounds. Wherever you get power, prestige and money, you will find them." This is the CJW Report , be safe , do your research.

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