GDN2300

02/25

Milo Levinson
Process Book

Socially Responsible and Future Oriented Design

What do I care about?
(workshop 1)

Option 1

ULEZ

1. I would like to change, the fact that ULEZ is so expensive and discourages car enthuasists wanting to commute into London.

2. I would either like to get rid of it completely, or make it cheaper.

3. I would like to prevent the government from making absurd amounts of money off of the cameras. I want control back in the regular person's hands.

4. I would like to inform people that ULEZ prices are absurd being "£15" a single purchase each time a vehicle which doesn't meet the restrictions drives into London. They also cost £30,000 for each camera, I think the price that they cost isn't worth the outcome the government would like.

5.I would want to completely get rid of ULEZ, as ask the government to put the money that they have spent into something we need more, as looking around Europe cities are alot more car friendly and to stop Sadiq Khan's pressure on cars and the daily commuter.

Option 2

KNIFE CRIME

1. I care about London's and the UK's Knife Crime Crisis

2. I would like to change certain governmental funding allocations. I would also change the mindset of young people, discouraging them from using a knife in crime. I would like to have new sets of rules, new laws and funding that benefit the community.

3. I would like to prevent young people from picking up a knife and changing the attitudes of the government and the community on the subject of knife crime.

4. I would inform people about the statistics on knife crime. Such as the fact that the problem is only getting worse, with a 4% increase from 2024 to 2023. Or the fact that London is the murder capital of the UK. Or the fact that 350 million has been spent on knife crime in the past 5 years and there hasn't been much statistical improvement.

5. I would want to refund community centres, more education in schools. Remove the currant labour government, and provide more young people with job opportunities.

Analysing pieces of Visual Communication

ULEZ

Learning about Levels of "*Denotation*" and levels of "*Connotation*".

Denotation in graphic design:

Denotative images are clear and direct representations of familiar objects or scenes. They are among the simplest forms of image-making in graphic design, conveying their subject without hidden or deeper meanings. A denotative image presents something exactly as it appears.

Connotation in graphic design:

In graphic design, connotation refers to the use of images that suggest multiple meanings or imply a deeper message. Connotative images are commonly used in advertising and media to evoke emotions and create a connection with the audience.

Me, Jerry and George had a look at a Fiat 509 poster from the 1930's for a 20 minute brief.



Points of Denotation in the artwork above:
There is a centaur, rising from the ashes and flames holding the car at the top of the picture. As if it holy. The centaur is a creature from Roman Mythology, harking back to the car's Italian origins. The factory is meant to symbolise ashes and it is bursting into flames, symbolising the hard working italian nature.
Points of Connotation in the artwork above:
As the artwork was made in the 1930's during Benito Mussolini's dictatorship in Italy. It shows themes of Italy's Fascism with the Red and black colours. As well as Imperialsm and Nationalism. The poster is very similar to propoganda posters of Facism in the current time.

Other peices of Visual Communication that I had a look at that have Denotative and Connotative meanings.



120 anos de Amistad



Lego Advertisement



Lord Kitchener Wants You! by Alfred Leete



Barack Obama "Hope" Poster by Shepard Fairey

Two Perspectives of the Same Image

The denotation of the LEGO advertisement would be: "A solid yellow background, a spoon, a fork, and a white plate filled with LEGO pieces in yellow, red, and green."

Second, when someone assigns meaning to the image, it gains a connotation. Using the same example, a possible connotation could be: "Playing with LEGO nurtures creativity and imagination."



American Airlines advertisement



Plasticeberg: National Geographic cover by Jorge Gamboa

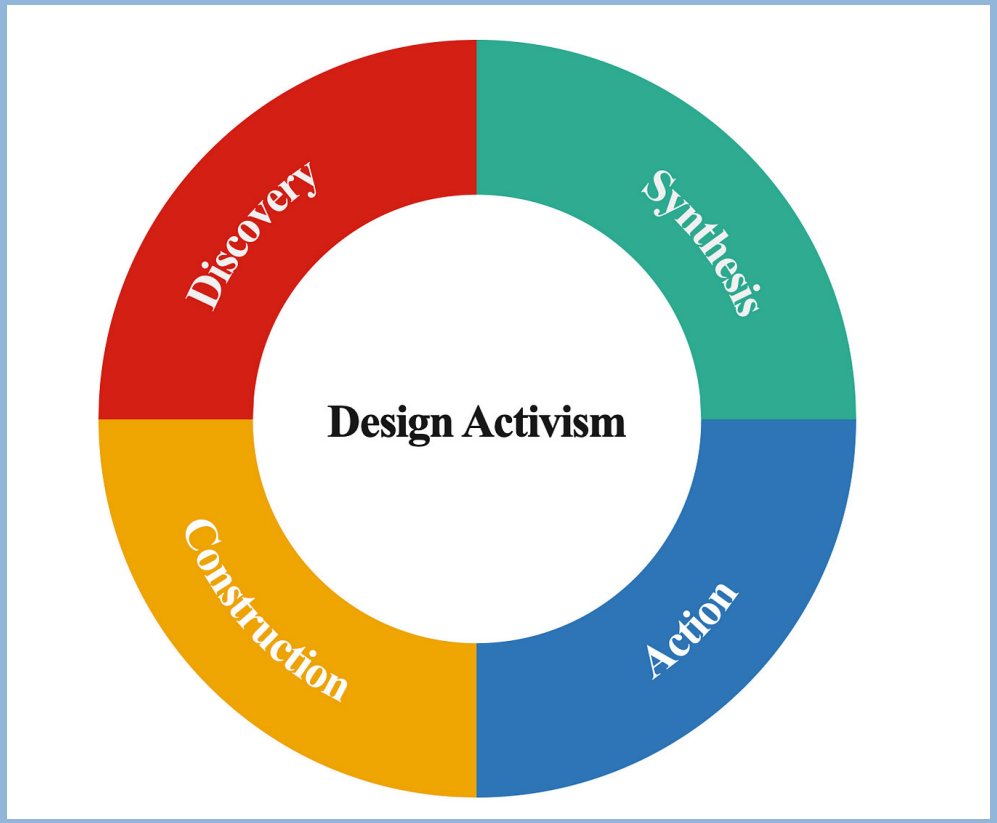


Freedom For Angela Davis by the International Union of Students

Learning about Design Activism and Social Conscience

What is Design Activism?

Design activism is the use of design to promote a cause, raise awareness of a social issue, or encourage collective action. It can involve graphic design, landscape architecture, and other design disciplines.





Instantly recognisable examples of powerful symbols used in graphics for social change



Distinctive logos of organisations that advocate for social justice, human rights and equality

"In truth, anyone can be a design activist. It just starts with a commitment to yourself and your values. A commitment to making conscious choices and realizing how all those decisions you make as a graphic designer affect other people and the planet." —The Design Activist's Handbook.

Visual Culture and the Climate Crisis

Our current geological epoch is identified as the "Anthropocene" which, was followed by the "Pleistocene" and the "Holocene"

Several companies will promote nature in their visual communication, even while their products are negatively impacting the evironment.



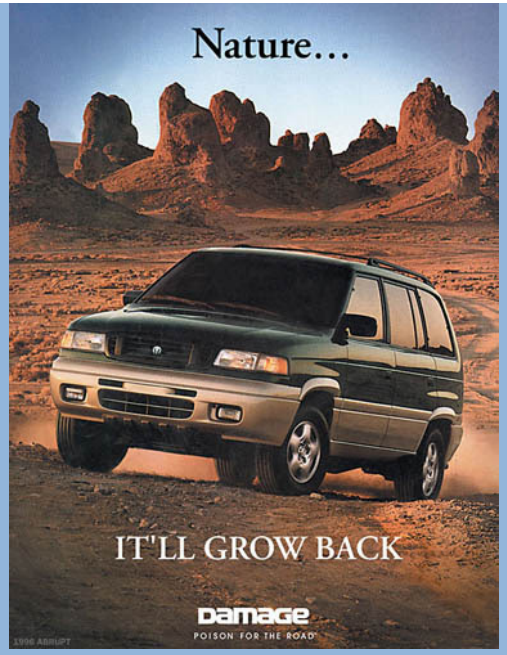
For example the Mcdonalds Fries advert.

SUV adverts are often depicted being surrounded by nature and lush scenery, considering the manufacturing damage they do to the environment.

"The continued global rise in sales of SUVs pushed their climate-heating emissions to almost 1bn tonnes of carbon dioxide in 2022."

"SUVs consume around 20% more oil than an average medium-size non-SUV car."





A poster pictured above made to mock the SUV car industry.

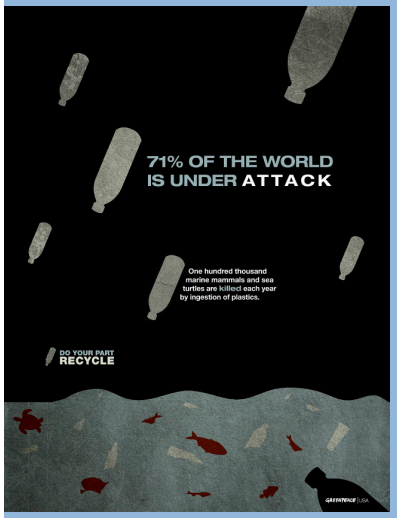


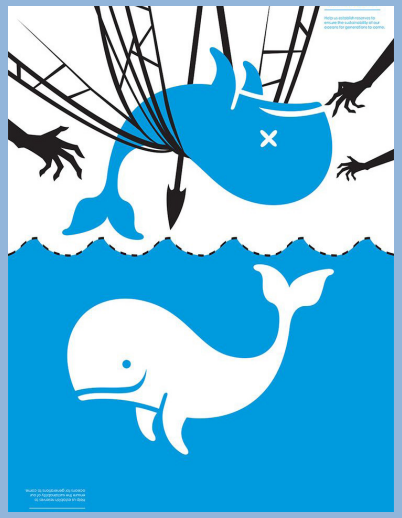
"Adfree Cities" were protesting an end to SUV ads.

Organisations that spread awareness for camapigns that advocate for a better environment.

"Greenpeace is a movement of people who are passionate about defending the natural world from destruction. Our vision is a greener, healthier and more peaceful planet, one that can sustain life for generations to come."

Just Stop Oil and Extinction Rebellion are two highly controversial UK-based organizations that actively campaign for climate action through direct action and protest.











They are using simple imagery to get their message across effectively. Some of the images, are even meant to seem disgusting and inhumane to attract a more global audience and get the viewer engaged and thinking.

As you can see the images pictured to the right show two dead animals, they are shocking but they show the shocking truth.

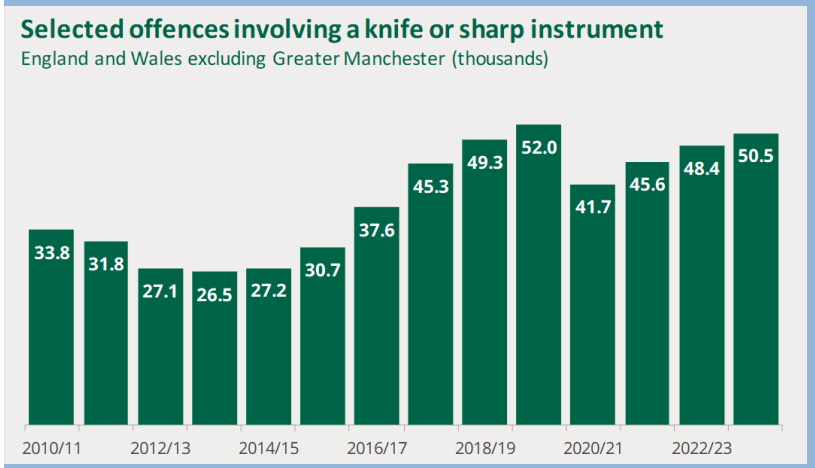


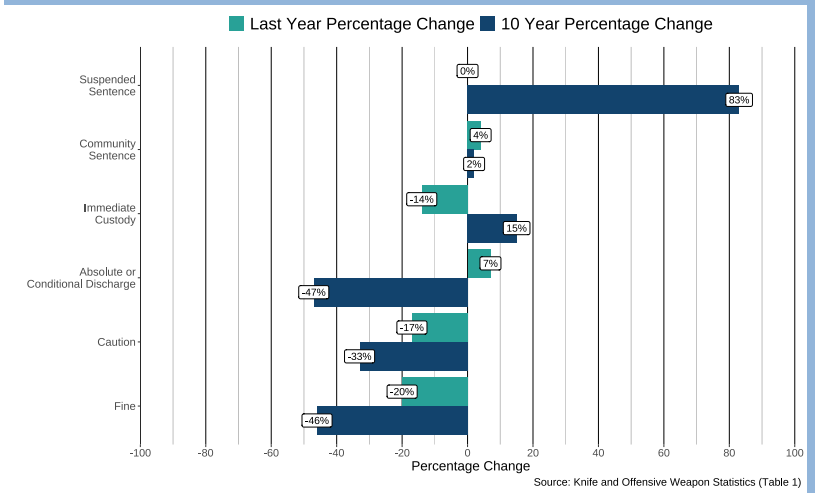


Researching my topic - Knife Crime In London (and around the UK)

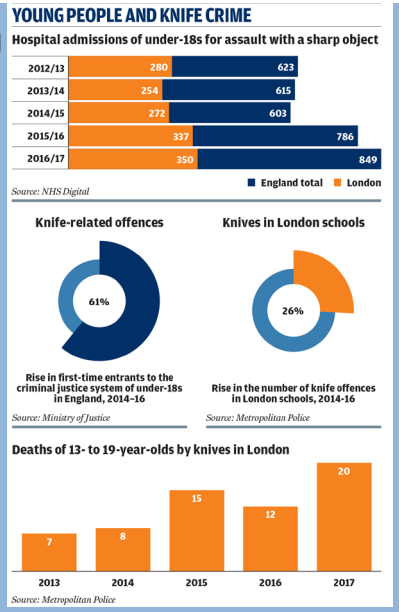
"Knife crime is a crime involving an object with a blade or sharp instrument. This briefing presents and analyses statistics on knife crime in England and Wales."

Knife Crime Statistics:





Source: Knife and Offensive Weapon Statistics (Table 1)



The victims and perpetrators are mainly young and male

Judging by the stats we can see that the problem is not getting better and it is only getting worse.



Confiscated Knives (below)

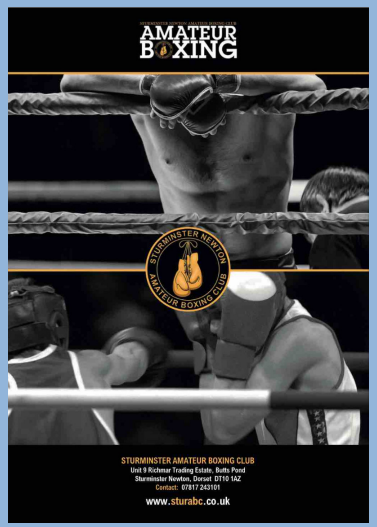


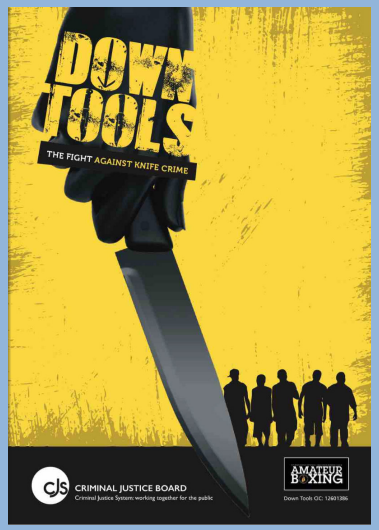
People attending a protest against knife crime at the location in south London where 15 year old Elianne Andam was stabbed to death in September 2023.

Primary Research - Looking at other media examples relating to knife crime.













Johnie Clayton's Knife Crime Posters

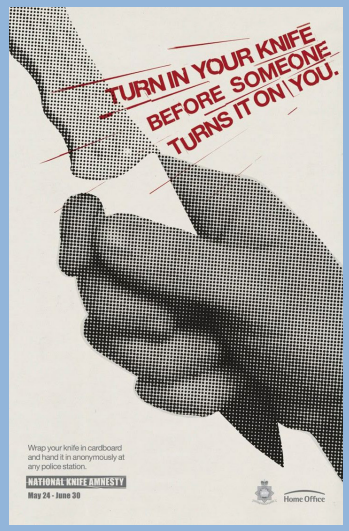


Down Tools Amateur Boxing Knife Crime Booklet

Visual Communication works I personally enjoyed the most and thought it would help me in my future projects.

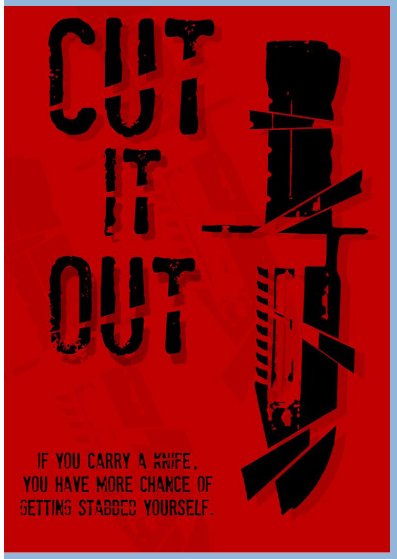
Other work I found on Pinterest and other image buoards for inspiration



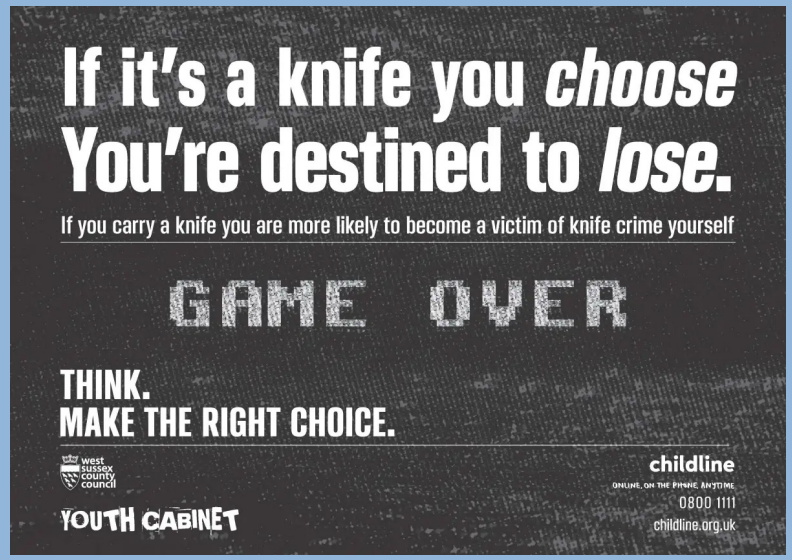












Planning my video - making a rough storyboard timeline

-Knife Crime Logo -Knives running through title sequence -scrunched paper -typewriter type effect -blood running down	-stats and information -statistics showing London's growing knife crime problem. -moving jittery type -hand made type style	-change in fonts? -introducting a case study in knife crime -showing those killed from knife crime	-go into more detail about the deaths of one of the victims, a mini story perhaps. -ariel shots of London, -3D images of London
-switch up the style -ask questions like what London HAS done to help reduce knife crime. -explain why	-show what the government HASN'T done -explain why	-show how the viewer can make a difference -calls to action -helplines	

Conscious Conscience campaign video.

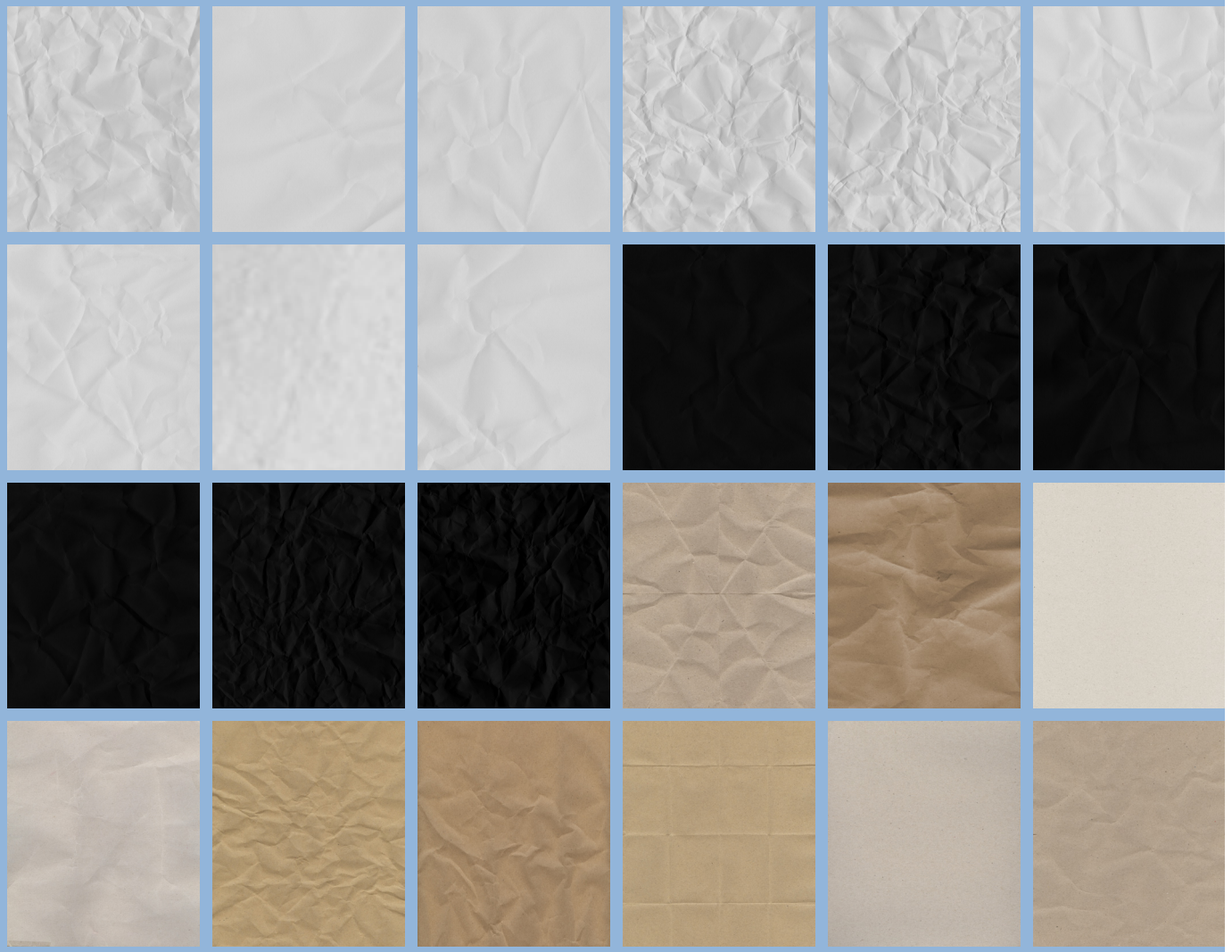
-Softwhere I will be using:
-Adobe After Effects
-Photoshop

Chosen type face:

P22 Typewriter

abcdefghijkl
mnopqrstuvwxyz
123456789!”£
^&*():@<>?/.,#

Scanning my own paper for textures in after effects



Victims of Knife Crime

Compiling faces of victims of knife crime to use for a couple of slides in the video.







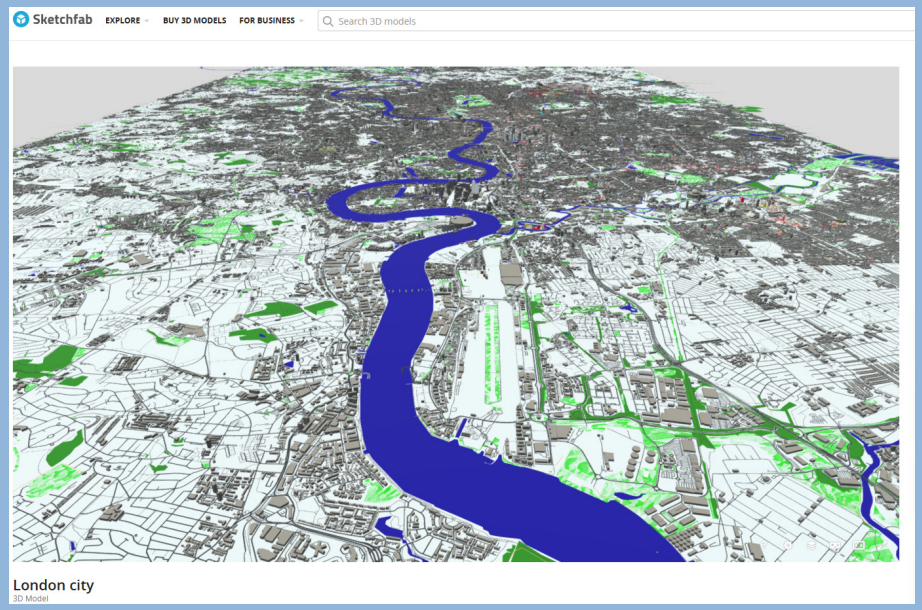


I wanted to make a sort of visual impact to stun the viewer on the sheer scale of the knife crime crisis.

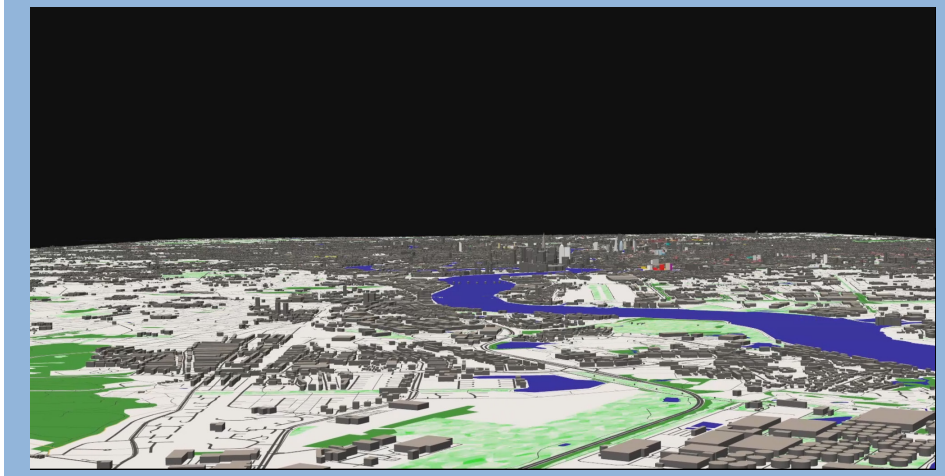
I used photoshop to compile the faces.

3D model of London

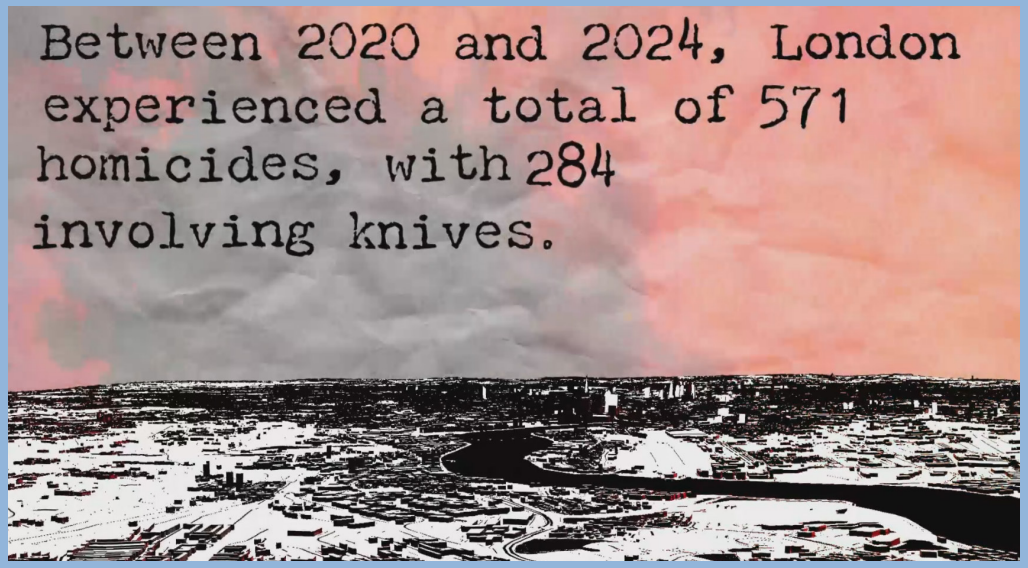
I downloaded A 3D model of London, city to try and do some birds eye shots to accompany some of the text.



I exported it as a mp4 because it was very laggy in After Effects.



End result, I changed the layer to a threshold. To give it a black and white theme. I also distorted using the effects and presets by making a handwritten type style.



AE timeline



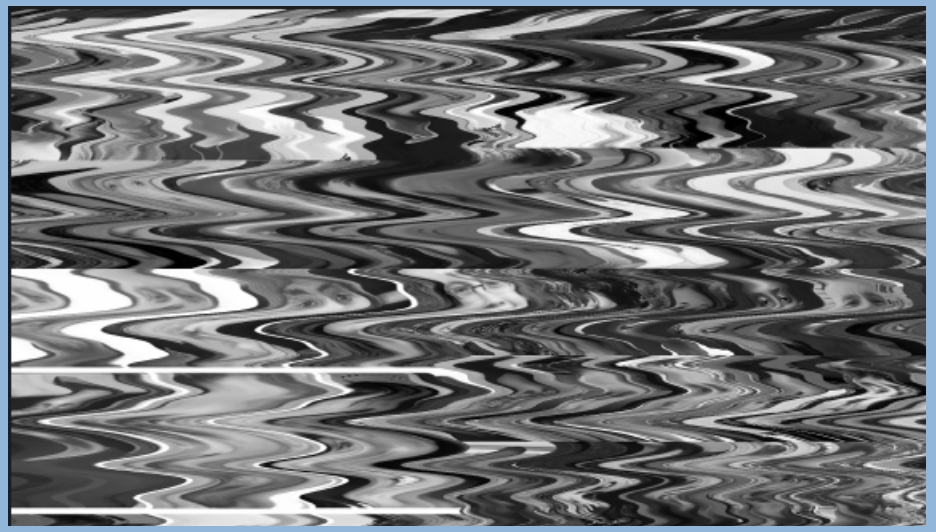
My whole after effects timeline.

- Precomps help reduce the lag.
- Effects and Presets panel to add cool effects to the work.
- As you can see there were lots of steps involved, with lots of layers. Making the document as a whole quite slow to run.
- Images and precomps are stored on the top left.

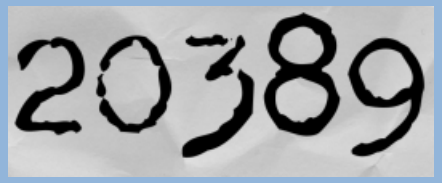
Examples of effects and presets

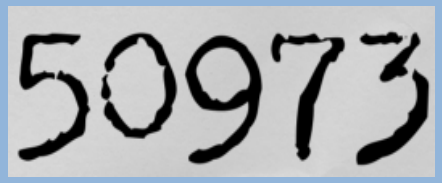


Paper unfold green screen to introduce each new sequence



TV distort transition warp to exit a sequence





Number counter effect (to go from 0 to 1234)



Playing around with keyframes in position and scale, then adding easy ease for a more smooth effect

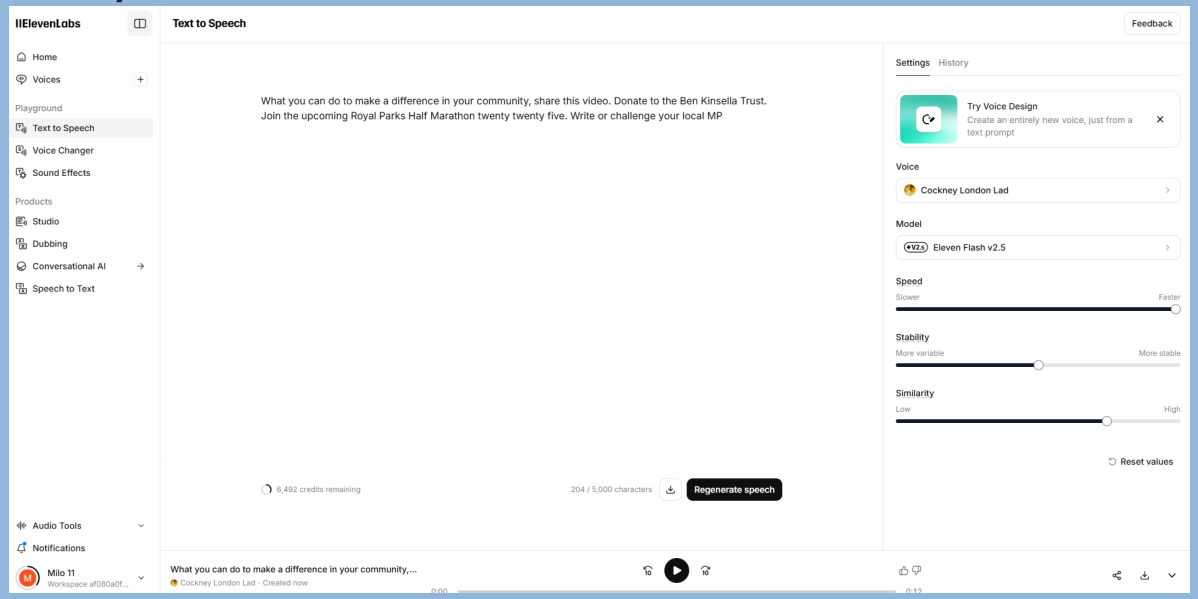


Keyframes helped with creating the moving graph.



Transition to black paper using blend modes styles with a black outline of London.

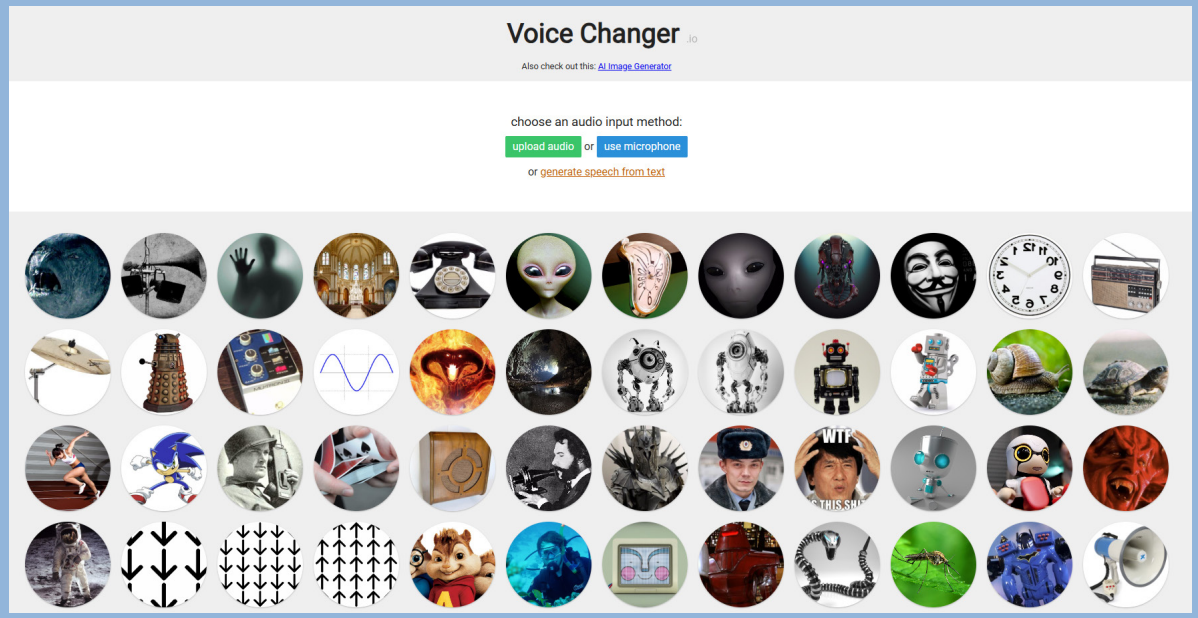
Using an AI text to speech program to overlay for the voice narration



I chose a cockney accent AI to help add an interesting element to my video to keep it entertaining.

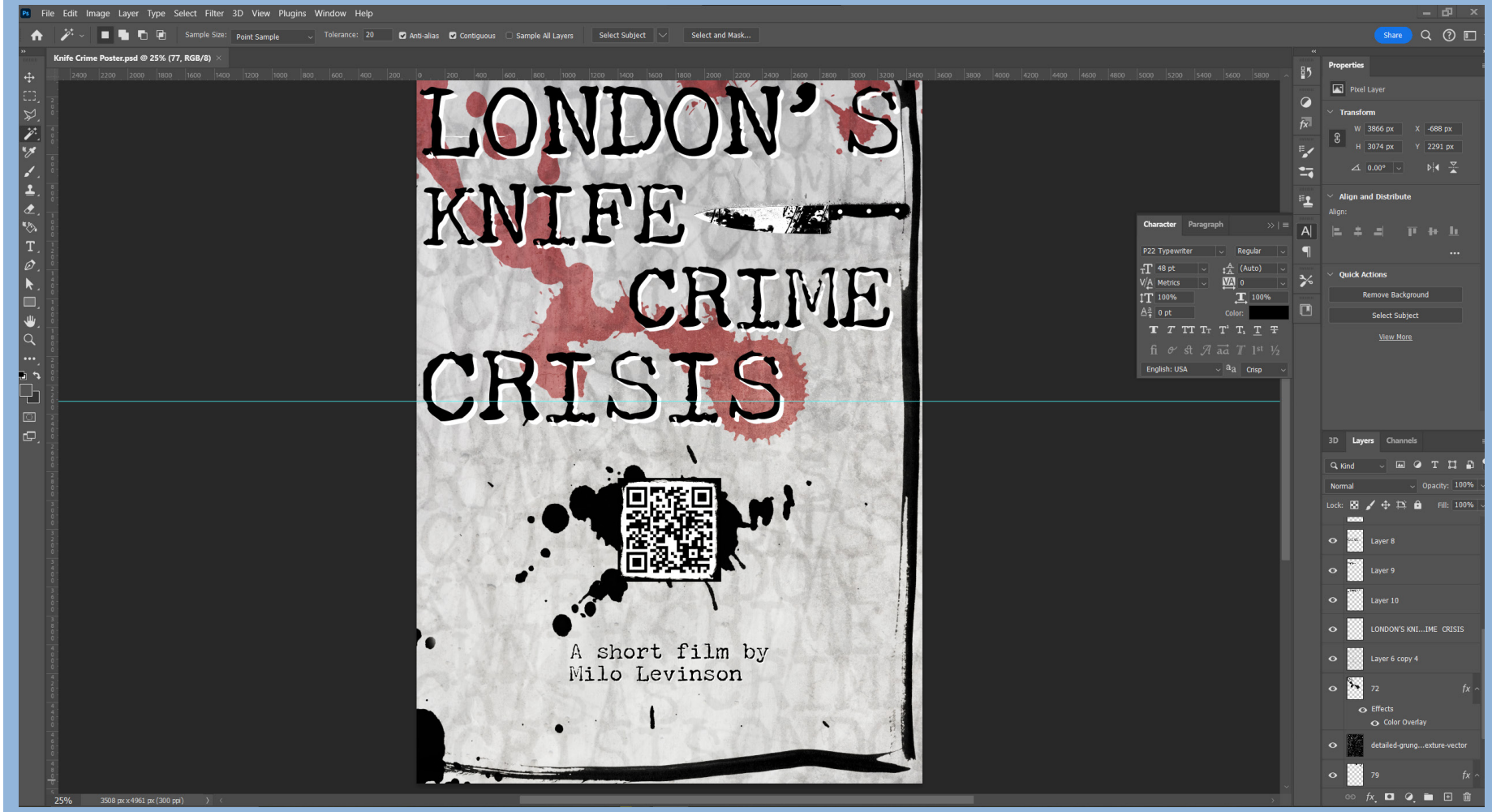
The cockney accent was a nod to Idris Elba's knife crime documentary I watched recently.

Website:
https://elevenlabs.io/



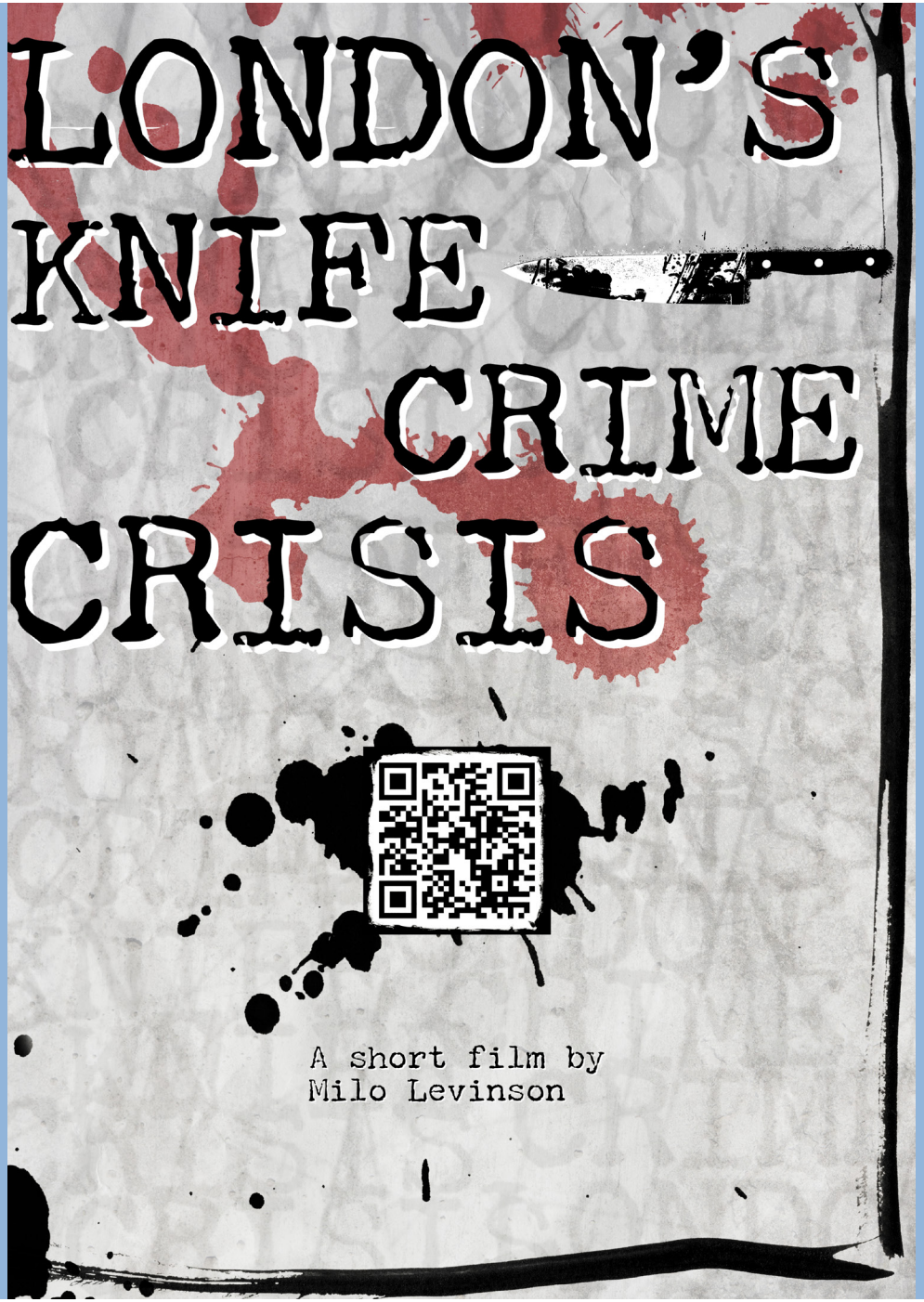
I put the AI voice in voicechanger.io and added a phone effect to the audio to give it a more gritty feeling.

Website:
https://voicechanger.io/



I decided to make the poster on photoshop I wanted to make a sort of grunge type effect as the background and then a qr code in the middle to send the viewer to my video.
I added some blood and ink splatters to give it more of that authentic feel.

Final Outcome for the poster



Slides with Text and Images for the Video Essay



I started my project after watching "Idris Elba: Our Knife Crime Crisis"—a powerful 58-minute documentary about the growing issue of knife crime in the UK. The film gave me a strong emotional insight into the topic, but what stood out most were the visual choices used to tell the story.

Elba is often filmed walking through estates, with low lighting and handheld camera movement, which makes everything feel real and urgent. These shots aren't polished or glamorous—they reflect the harshness of everyday life in affected areas. Interviews with victims and families use close-up shots against simple backgrounds, helping us focus on their emotions.

When Elba meets people in power, like King Charles or Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer, the filming style becomes more formal and controlled. This shows the gap between those who experience knife crime first-hand and those who create the policies.

The visuals match the aim of the documentary: to highlight causes like poverty, lack of opportunity, and social problems, and to push for change. It seems aimed at the general public, politicians, and anyone who might not fully understand the scale of the problem.

To take this further, I could include stills from the documentary to show these visual techniques in action, and refer to books or texts on how documentaries are made, such as work by Bill Nichols.

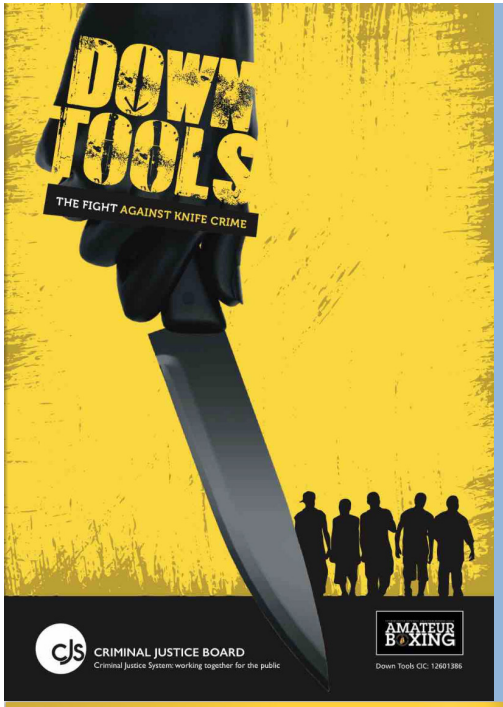


Example 2, Video Essay

I also looked at Johnie Clayton's anti-knife crime posters. These posters are eye-catching, with bold slogans like "Give me an inch, and I can take a life" and "Carry me, and I possess you." The words are built into the knife handles, which turns the knife into a character with a voice.

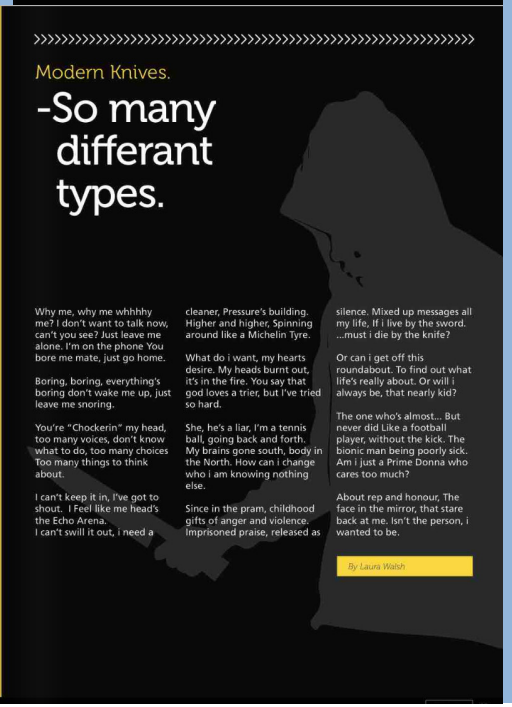
The typography is sharp and strong, reflecting the danger of a knife, while the pastel colours are soft, which creates a strange and uncomfortable contrast. This design choice makes the message more memorable, but it can also be misunderstood. Without context, the posters might even seem to glorify knives.

Compared to Elba's film, which tells personal stories over time, Clayton's posters give you a quick emotional message in just one image. They're different, but both approaches are effective in their own way.







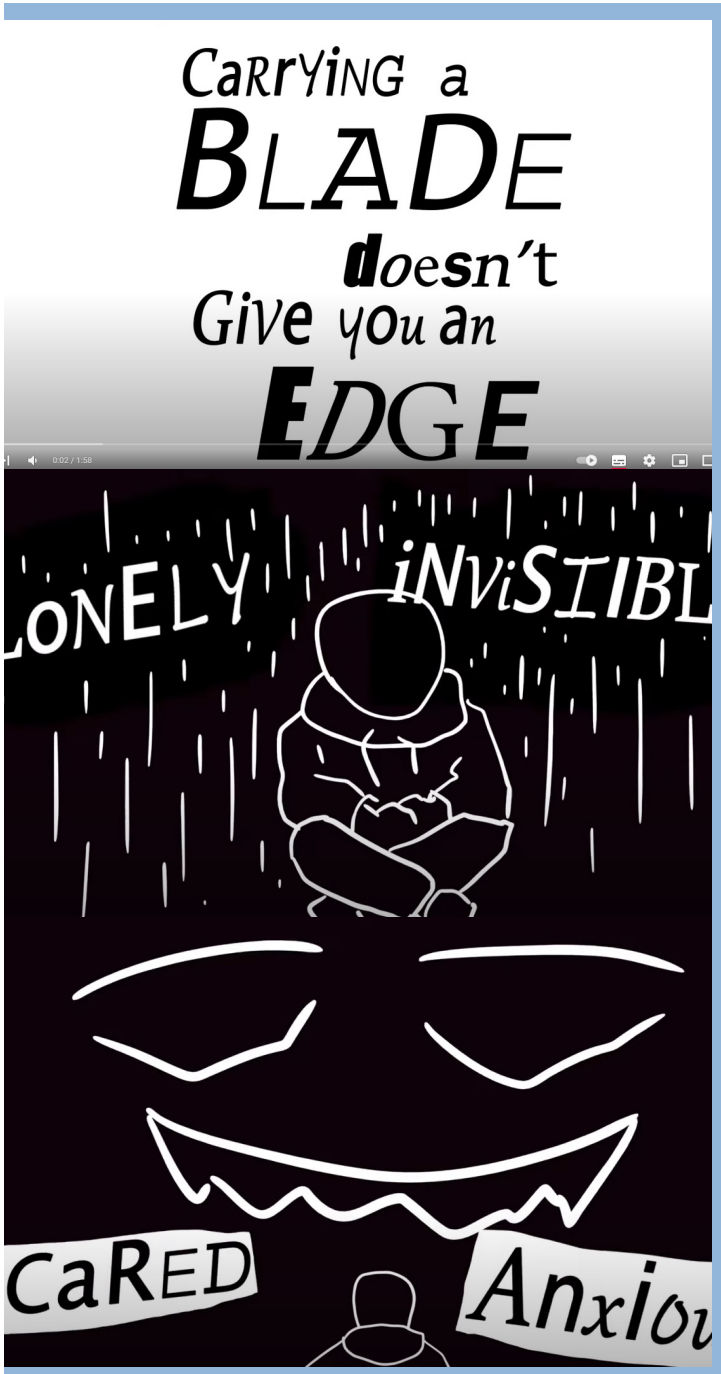


Example 3, Video Essay

The "Down Tools" booklet takes a different approach. Its design is more like an educational resource, using black and yellow colours that feel like a warning sign. The clean, simple font makes it easy to read, although the amount of text might be hard for some people.

It shares real-life stories, facts, and statistics to explain why knife crime is dangerous and promotes boxing as a positive alternative. It encourages young people to use their energy in a healthy, safe way while building discipline and friendship.

Unlike Clayton's posters, this booklet is more direct and focused on educating its audience. It also uses serious visuals and rough textures to show the tough environment it's trying to change. While the target audience is mainly young people at risk, some may not relate to boxing, or might find the booklet too long.



Example 4, Video Essay

The Cleveland Police animation, "Carrying a Blade Doesn't Give You an Edge," uses stop-motion to tell the story of a boy named Callum, who gets caught up in knife crime. The animation is mostly in black and white, with a rough, hand-drawn style. This makes the story feel serious but still suitable for a younger audience.

At the end, colour returns when Callum changes his path, which shows hope and a chance for a better future. The fonts look like handwriting, making it feel more personal and aimed at school children.

The animation is simple, but very effective. It delivers a clear message through visuals, making it easy to understand and hard to forget.



Example 5, Video Essay

The Knife Angel, made by the British Ironworks Centre in 2018, is a large sculpture made from over 100,000 surrendered knives. It's both beautiful and disturbing at the same time. The shining metal gives a sharp, dangerous look, but the angel shape suggests peace, safety, and hope.

Some of the knives include messages from victims' families, which makes the sculpture deeply personal. It has travelled to cities across the UK, bringing its message directly to people and raising awareness in a public, powerful way.

Unlike the other examples, the Knife Angel doesn't use words or stories. Its message comes from its presence and materials. It makes you stop, think, and feel the weight of the issue in a very visual way.



Example 6, Video Essay

Lastly, I looked at Arsenal Football Club's "No More Red" campaign, launched in 2022. The club released an all-white kit to symbolise peace and call for an end to bloodshed. What made this campaign stand out is that the shirts weren't sold—they were given to volunteers making a positive difference in the community.

In 2024, Arsenal built on the project by opening more safe football spaces, including a new community pitch at Mayville Estate in Islington.

The visual message is simple but powerful. By removing the usual red from their kit—often linked to blood—they made a quiet but strong statement. It's aimed at young people and football fans, especially in local areas, but it also reached a wider audience through media coverage.

Conclusion, Video Essay

Each of these examples tackles knife crime in a unique way. Idris Elba's documentary uses real-life stories and emotional filming to inform and create empathy. Johnie Clayton's posters use bold design to shock and make people think. The "Down Tools" booklet educates through facts and real stories. The Cleveland Police animation speaks directly to young people using simple drawings and symbolism. The Knife Angel delivers its message through powerful, physical presence. Arsenal's campaign uses minimal design and football culture to connect with local communities.

Even though they use different styles, colours, and messages, they all work towards the same goal: reducing knife crime and creating safer communities. Together, they show how powerful visual communication can be when used with purpose and care.

Referances for the Video Essay (Harvard Style)

Latif, L. (2025). Idris Elba: Our Knife Crime Crisis review – vital viewing from Hackney's A-list crusader. [online] the Guardian. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2025/jan/29/idris-elba-our-knife-crisis-review-vital-viewing-from-hackneys-a-list-crusader.

BBC. (2025). Idris Elba: Our Knife Crime Crisis. [online] Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0027ffx.

johnieclayton.com. (n.d.). Johnie Clayton - Knife Crime - Visual expression. [online] Available at: https://johnieclayton.com/knife-crime-visual-expression.

Down Tools: The Stuff on Knife Crime. (2011). Down Tools: The Booklet. [online] Available at: https://downtools.wordpress.com/down-tools-the-booklet/ [Accessed 8 Apr. 2025].

Flipbuilder.com. (2025). DOWN TOOLS A5 Booklet WCoBM. [online] Available at: https://online.flipbuilder.com/akzc/nevw/index.html [Accessed 8 Apr. 2025].

Cleveland Police HQ (2024). Carrying a Blade Doesn't Give You an Edge. [online] YouTube. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VJx48wbgxXI [Accessed 14 Jan. 2025].

British ironwork centre (n.d.). Official Knife Angel Page | The British Ironwork Centre. [online] British Ironwork Centre & Shropshire Sculpture Park. Available at: https://www.britishironworkcentre.co.uk/the-knife-angel-official/.

Why are Arsenal wearing an all white kit? (2025). Why are Arsenal wearing an all white kit? [online] Available at: https://www.arsenal.com/news/why-are-arsenal-wearing-all-white-kit.