

## *I Am Jane Doe*

**Release Date:** February 10, 2017 (USA)

**Director:** Mary Mazzio

**Narrator:** Jessica Chastain

**Genre:** Documentary

**Length:** 1 hour and 38 minutes

**NR:** Contains disturbing scenes

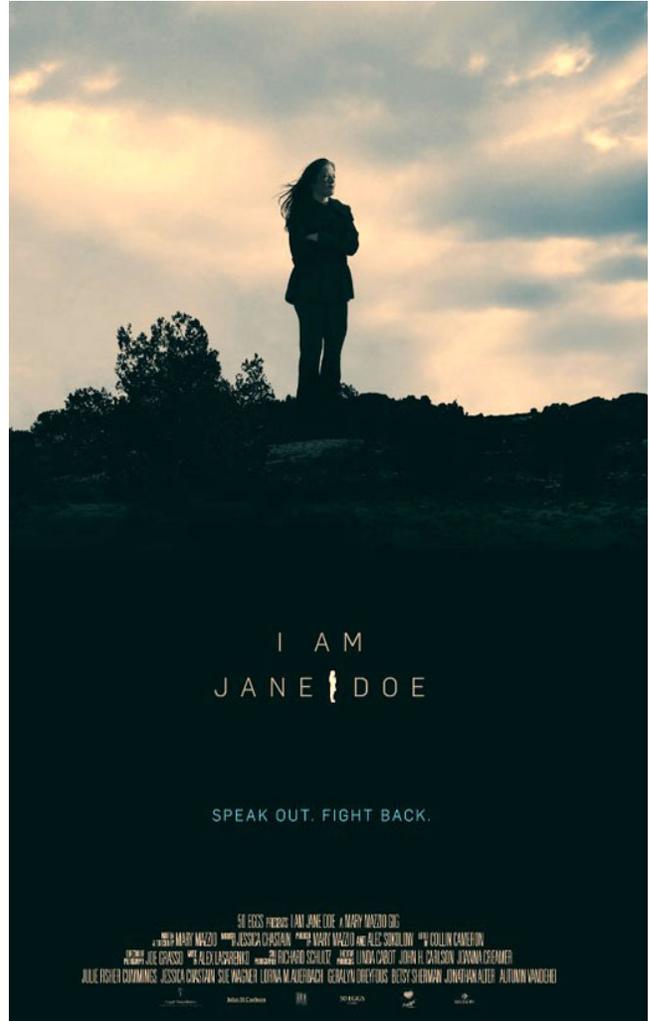
### SYNOPSIS

In the documentary, *I Am Jane Doe*, filmmaker Mary Mazzio discloses the hidden truth about Backpage.com, an online classified website that, along with information about bikes for sale and apartments for rent, runs a thriving internet-enabled site for trafficking in abducted or runaway girls duped into becoming sex workers.

The Jane Does featured in the film include middle-school girls from Boston, a 15-year-old violinist from Seattle, and a precocious 13-year-old girl from St. Louis. They speak truthfully to the camera about their ordeals, focusing on the psychological effects of their experiences rather than the appalling details of their abduction and the countless rapes they endured.

The film chronicles a handful of mothers and fathers who, after rescuing their daughters, begin an uphill battle to take down one pillar of the child sex industry—Internet sex ads. Their greatest obstacle is Section 230 of the 1996 Communications Decency Act that stipulates that online service providers cannot be held liable for third-party content: “No provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by another information content provider.” In short, if someone sells a 13-year-old, Backpage.com claimed, the website is not responsible. Court after court has ruled in favor of Backpage’s First Amendment rights.

The film exposes an ugly divide in American culture: defending First Amendment rights vs. protecting young girls from trafficking. *I Am Jane Doe* is a heart-wrenching film to watch; however, it is a necessary story about young girls sucked into the world of sex trafficking.



### CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT THEMES IN THE FILM

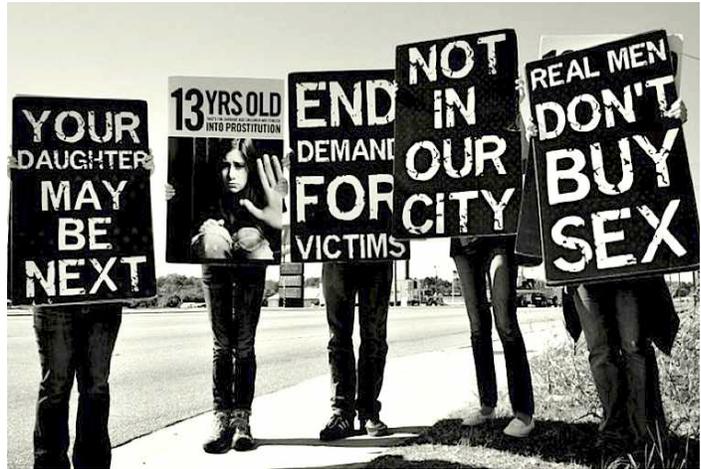
- Human Dignity
- Common Good
- Rights and Responsibilities
- Call to Community and Participation
- Solidarity

### OFFICIAL FILM TRAILER

<http://bit.ly/2ldGEGJ>

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- In what ways did the documentary change or challenge your assumptions about human trafficking? Can you think of three ways that abducted or runaway girls and boys are lured into human trafficking?
- What types of trafficking did you see in the film? Who were the victims? Did they match your perception of the victims before seeing the film? What are the physical, psychological, and spiritual health implications for young children who are trafficked?
- Who were the traffickers? Did they match your idea of them before seeing them? What are the profiles of men who buy children for sex online? What are the specific industries or settings in your community that might be vulnerable to human trafficking?
- The parents of the Jane Does respond to their daughters' disappearances with prayer, anger, alcohol, or advocacy. How can we be good allies to families in crisis?
- On January 10, 2017, a Senate panel released a report alleging that Backpage.com concealed criminal activity by removing words from ads that would have exposed child sex trafficking and prostitution. After the release of the report and relentless pressure from authorities and advocates, Backpage removed its "sex-for-sale" ads from its U.S. web pages, substituting messages alleging it was the "victim of unconstitutional government censorship." Do you agree with Backpage.com's allegations? Explain.
- Who are the likely beneficiaries of the recent decision by Backpage.com to take down its sex-for-sale web page? How will the shaming of websites like Backpage.com protect children from sex trafficking? How will it affect free speech for online innovators? At what point should publishers' protection under the Community Decency Act (CDA) end and criminal behavior begin? Where could you draw the line?
- More than 90 percent of Backpage.com's revenue (millions of dollars each month) comes from adult escort ads that use coded language and nearly nude photos to offer sex for money. Should it be legal for online companies to profit from human trafficking or from the suffering of their victims? Explain.
- Some claim that taking down sites like Backpage.com pushes sex workers onto the streets with no ability to screen their clients, limits choices for sex workers, and makes it more difficult for officials to investigate trafficking. Do you agree? Why or why not?
- Donna Hughes, an American researcher on trafficking of women and children, has studied how the Internet has facilitated the global trafficking industry since 1997. She notes how closely trafficking, especially sex trafficking, is intertwined with new technologies. In what ways does modern technology recruit or market victims and contribute to the rise of trafficking in human beings?



"The sexual exploitation of women and children  
is a global human rights crisis  
that is being escalated by the use of new technologies."

—Donna Hughes, *The Impact of the Use of New Communications  
and Information Technologies on Trafficking  
in Human Beings for Sexual Exploitation* - <http://bit.ly/2s5Nouc>

- How can technology be used to connect with and empower victims and vulnerable populations, while also addressing their economic, social, psychological, and physical needs?
- In what ways can crowdsourcing technologies (specific sourcing model in which individuals or organizations use contributions from Internet users to obtain needed services or ideas) enable the public to play an important role in anti-trafficking efforts?
- How can governments, civil society organizations, service providers, academia, activists, and faith leaders engage in cross-sector partnerships to confront human trafficking online?
- What is being done in your community to raise awareness about human trafficking? What youth-service systems in your community provide support to victims of human trafficking? What forms of immigration relief are available to victims of human trafficking?
- What services might survivors of human trafficking need once they are out of the exploitative situation? What are the specific needs of victims who are minors; male; female; individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer; foreign nationals; or U.S. citizens?
- Who in your community is currently serving victims of human trafficking? Does your community have a specific organization that works on this issue? Does your community, tribe, or state have a human trafficking task force or coalition?

United States Senate Report:  
*Backpage.com's Knowing Facilitation of Online Sex Trafficking*  
<http://bit.ly/2kVWGso>

