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D6.1 Counter Videos and Micro-Content Interim Report

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Abstract	This interim report on the creation of counter-narratives for the SMIDGE project offers: an introduction, including context and background to the project and the use of narratives; how this work relates to the previous research carried out for SMIDGE and how the results from previous research inform this work; a delineation of the purpose, methodology and research conducted as part of the development process for counter-narrative video content; an analysis of the development process and counter-narrative video content; an overview of collaboration from Hamlett the film company working in partnership with DMU in the creation of video content; an overview of the micro-content creation; a summary of the evaluation of the content created and future use.
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Executive Summary

This interim report on the creation of counter-narratives for the SMIDGE project examines the research, processes and collaborations, that have been involved in and informed the making of this content. It gives insights into how SMIDGE research has informed the creation of the counter-narratives, and the methodologies utilized through this approach. The SMIDGE approach to the production of this content has focused on ensuring that they were human-centred and ethical and within the framework of responsible research and innovation. The work is informed by the findings of other work-packages, to ensure that the content is ethical, appropriate, effective and future-proof. For example, the work in WP3 and WP4 gave insight into the current conspiracy, misinformation landscape in which to contextualise the content. The digital database D3.5 provided examples of effective formats and delivery styles that could be utilised in designing the look and feel of our counter-narratives. The sentiment analysis D4.3 and the online survey D5.2 highlighted the importance of emotion in eliciting strong responses, and the importance of avoiding the appearance of being overly prescriptive or patronising, which informed the writing of the scripts. The initial focus groups in WP5 revealed that humour and familiar themes are more likely to induce people to watch and share.

The collaboration with Hamlett the film company working in partnership with DMU in the creation of video content is elaborated on in section 4 and provides insights into the film-making process. This deliverable also includes an overview of the micro-content creation in section 5. There is a summary of how the evaluation of the content created is to be examined and the future use and destination of the content in section 6, including the use of the content beyond the end of the project as resources for educators and policy makers. Several images from the filming processes are contained in this report, plus a short “sizzle” video in the Hamlett section which is unique content designed to entice the audience to want to know more. Examples of counter-narrative memes are also contained within this report. The Appendices contain versions of the scripts that were used in the making in the videos.

1 Introduction, context and background

Introduction

The aim of this element of SMIDGE research is to create counter-narratives to extremist views for people aged 45-65 in the UK, Italy, Belgium, Denmark, Kosovo, and Cyprus. The overall outputs of SMIDGE include developing counter-narratives, training resources, and policy briefs to promote reflexivity, alongside policy recommendations and evidence-based tools for journalists and security professionals, to counter “fake news”, misinformation and disinformation. We are producing engaging content for middle-aged audiences to foster reflection and critical thinking and reduce the spread of extremist narratives. Our video content is currently being edited and in post-production. This interim report traverses the context, development, content and planned use of counter-narratives for SMIDGE.

Extremist narratives have found an ever-expanding outlet online, with many willing participants who both produce and spread misinformation (spread without the intention to deceive), disinformation (deliberately created or disseminated to deceive) and conspiracy theories. Most research on counter-narratives and their creation has focused on tackling extremism, often in an Islamic context and without significant effect. Much of the current and previous research on the topic of extremism focuses on younger people and how to prevent them from getting involved in terrorism. For example, the UK Prevent scheme has predominantly involved young people (UK Home Office, Dec 2024) although growing numbers also include the middle-aged albeit in relatively small numbers. Further, as evidence from the UK government’s Office of Communications show, training and education opportunities are also largely focused on younger people (Ofcom 2023) to help them navigate the online sphere, with very few that aim at older generations, apart from introductory courses for those without basic computer skills. Compounding this issue is that there is an absence of previous research on middle aged people in the context of vulnerability to online extremism and misinformation, which means that there is little understanding of the motivations and nature of their involvement, or what kind of countermeasures would have a positive impact on the older demographic.

Therefore, the SMIDGE project has undertaken significant empirical research to find out what the tendencies are for people within this age group to believe in conspiracy theories, what their motivations are and what media they find attractive and compelling. The SMIDGE project therefore aims to tackle these issues before they “fall down the rabbit hole” and extremist views become entrenched. Through the survey and focus groups (WP5), we have gained insights into these

motivations and preferences so that we can create effective countermeasures, training and policy recommendations.

With regards to the counter-narratives and memes being created in WP6, it is recognised that they need to be multi-level, multidisciplinary and multi-sector, and the videos, memes and developing documentary produced by multidisciplinary teams within the SMIDGE project will inform these measures. Evaluative focus groups will be held once the first edit of the videos has been completed, and by using a co-creative approach to gain insights from the target demographic we aim to ensure that our content is appropriate to the demographic, whilst also being effective with its messaging.

Context & Background

The growing phenomenon of misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories is having a direct impact on perceptions of democratic institutions (Christodoulou and Iordanou, 2021), trust in science and democracy. It can lead to calls for direct action to overthrow or disrupt democratically elected governments (for example, the January 6th, 2021, incursion on the United States Capitol attack in Washington, D.C.). Our counter-narratives aim to instil trust in science and democracy and to challenge these narratives that promote spurious claims on social media.

In Europe, misinformation about Covid-19 has led to demands for stricter movement controls, protests against restrictions and vaccines, and the involvement of extremist and conspiracy groups. These protests, in turn, have influenced the development of our counter-narrative videos. While conspiracy theories often overlap, earlier SMIDGE research found that targeting specific areas is more effective as shown in D5.2. Building on this evidence, our work focuses on countering misinformation related to immigration, anti-vaccine narratives, and climate change conspiracies.

Extreme, frequently authoritarian and populist political discourse is increasingly mainstream (Lee, 2018a). Politicians, often middle-aged themselves, seek media attention and social media support by amplifying misleading messages. Extremism can be comprehended best as the pursuit for individual meaning (Cichocka et al., 2003). Supporters view such politicians as ‘strong leaders’ and ‘anti-woke,’ while they use fear-based messaging to portray themselves as protectors against perceived threats (Lee et al., 2024). A key example is Donald Trump, who, with the significant assistance of Elon Musk, owner of the social media platform X, won the 2024 U.S. presidential election and has positioned senior officials in his government who are known conspiracists in areas such as immigration, vaccine health, and climate change. Furthermore, Trump’s supporters have frequently engaged in violent acts, sometimes with fatal consequences (Lee, 2020). Clearly, the normalization of these narratives

needs challenging through counter-narratives that subvert this discourse, causing an audience to pause, to take a step back, and to not always believe what they see online.

A major theme of the SMIDGE project to date is that of the invisibility of the middle-aged demographic. This has significantly shaped our counter-narrative videos as outlined below. Middle-aged individuals often take different pathways to extremism than younger people, making them a unique focus of our work. Despite their financial influence, middle-aged people are often overlooked in media, marketing, and research. The focus on youth is evident across mainstream media and commerce (Aas, 2006; Brandtzæg, 2012; Buckingham, 2007; Hoadley et al., 2010; Skarpa and Garoufallou, 2021). Younger people dominate advertising, while older individuals are rarely featured unless promoting age-specific products like retirement homes or hearing aids (Eisend, 2022). This exclusion suggests that “in the visual market, it is as if getting older means being moved to the margins of visibility” (Fernandez-Ardevol and Grenier, 2022).

While this invisibility aspect concerning the middle-aged has been central in shaping our counter-narratives, earlier SMIDGE research as outlined in D5.2, identified Facebook as a key platform for middle-aged users yet in 2024 LADbible—a brand targeting youth—was Facebook’s leading video publisher (Chaves, 2024). This discrepancy highlights the lack of tailored content for middle-aged audiences. An increasingly recognised factor of invisibility is that of middle-aged women in particular, whose marginalisation starts earlier and may be more impactful on their personal development in areas such as career progression. For example, the BBC lost a case of unfair dismissal on the basis of age (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-12161045>). Further, in the last few years, the misogynist phenomena of calling women who complain ‘Karen’ serves to further silence or undermine any middle-aged woman who is annoyed or has a complaint. Even more recently, a misogynist ‘joke’ about the current UK Chancellor being referred to as ‘Rachel from accounts’ serves to make this group feel unheard, under-valued, diminished and frustrated. Addressing this gap, and recognising the frustrations felt by this group, our video “A Family Tea” explicitly explores this theme of invisibility in the middle-aged. The protagonist, Mary—a nurse who has joined online conspiracy groups—reflects this struggle, as do other characters in our phone-in videos, where invisibility is directly discussed and explored.

Side-lining or ignoring certain demographic groups has multiple consequences, one of which is reinforcing conspiracy thinking. If people believe they are invisible, and their concerns are not being addressed, then they can turn to non-verified sources and communities that boost their bias and sense of agency. Within this world those who feel marginalised then feel they are the empowered expert with a detailed knowledge of the field, regardless of its verifiable nature. Conspiracy believers

often feel controlled by unseen forces. While these “forces of evil” may seem tangible to them, the belief often takes on a metaphysical dimension (Lee, 1999). This mindset is a self-defeating manifestation of motivated social cognition, where theories subvert dominant hierarchies, create alternative realities, foster solidarity, and inspire collective action, sometimes even aligning with normative or official positions (Douglas et al., 2017: 539).

When people feel excluded, they may start to see themselves as unimportant or irrelevant in society, making extremist groups seem more welcoming. Social media and online communities provide spaces where people can feel useful, wanted, and valued—especially in closed groups on platforms like Facebook and other platforms where the deliberate spreading of false information has led to miscarriages of justice and even murder (Lee et al., 2024; Lee, 2021). This as noted highlights the seriousness and extreme nature of this phenomenon as a threat to life as well as democracy.

While many of these groups offer positive support and encouragement, others amplify feelings of exclusion, direct blame toward targets like asylum seekers and climate protesters and divert attention from the real causes of their distress. This can lead individuals to “circulate fake news with specific social goals in mind” (Brashier and Schacter, 2020: 217) or even as mere entertainment. Our counter-narrative video, “A Family Tea”, explicitly addresses these dynamics.

Some middle-aged individuals are not digital natives and still rely on traditional media, such as TV and newspapers, for information. This makes them vulnerable to online misinformation, disinformation, and conspiracy theories. They can lack the skills to distinguish truth from falsehood (Jiang, 2016). Many in this demographic are self-taught, using their lived experiences to assess the credibility of sources. Some may have even been involved in extremist activities in their youth (Lee, 2018a). At the same time, they often perceive themselves as tech-and life-savvy, believing they have no need for further education on these issues.

Our counter-narrative videos tackle these challenges directly, including the dangerous anti-science aspects of certain wellbeing movements that spread anti-vaccine myths (Lee, 2023) (see Appendix 3.). As this report outlines, we have carefully incorporated these themes into our character development and storytelling. Those who are susceptible to cults and conspiracy theories, such as QAnon, Anti-Vax, New World Order and so on, are generally more distrustful and cynical (Hughes and Machan, 2021) and may experience ‘high individual narcissism but low self-esteem’ (Cichocka et al., 2016), alongside low educational achievement (van Prooijen, 2017), although we posit that within the 45-65 age group there is also a subset of well-educated people with decision or policy-making power (Lee et al., 2024).

One important finding from SMIDGE, as outlined in D5.2, is that while narcissism was found to be a factor, educational background did not make a significant difference concerning conspiracy belief and susceptibility to fake news. For there to be no difference we therefore could assume that the education in this field of counter-narratives has not yet been suitable as evidenced by the availability (or lack thereof) of appropriate training and educational resources dedicated to this demographic. As indicated above, Ofcom media literacy initiatives library identifies 123 initiatives for media literacy education, tools and other resources of which only three are specifically aimed at older people, and 29 at the general public (Ofcom, 2023). The lack of dedicated learning resources for a huge section of society is undoubtedly contributing to the relatively poor digital literacy among middle-aged and older adults (van Deursen and van Dijk, 2014).

In constructing counter-narratives, we have incorporated these insights into character and plot development while respecting the intelligence of our audience. This approach acknowledges that middle-aged individuals do not always fit the typical profile of those considered vulnerable to extremism (Lee et al., 2024). As we will explain, our phone-in videos explore these themes in various ways, and throughout the creative process, we were careful not to reinforce existing myths and stereotypes about middle-aged people.

2 Purpose, Methodology and Research

Counter-narratives typically challenge dominant narratives. As noted, conspiracy theories and extremism are becoming more mainstream politically and socially, largely due to social media. In this sense, they are now part of the dominant narrative. These dominant narratives stem from various factors but are often rooted in power imbalances and cultural expectations. Our counter-narrative videos, particularly “*A Family Tea*”, highlight these dynamics.

The purpose of counter-narratives is to challenge conspiracy-driven narratives, provide alternative explanations, present objective scientific reality rather than fabricated misinformation, and amplify the voices of those who are often invisible. Central to this approach is encouraging critical thinking, as outlined in findings of D5.2. The longer videos aim to foster empathy and a deeper understanding of the complexities of the human condition which then in turn advances critical thinking and addresses bias.

A key innovation in our approach is the focus on middle-aged audiences and their involvement in a co-creative process to develop counter-content. This represents a new, Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI)-based methodology for countering extremism. The content creation remains politically neutral, with co-creation activities designed to prevent bias—an issue often raised against

mainstream media (Reich, 2021). This neutrality increases the likelihood that the target audience will engage positively with the messaging.

The videos serve multiple purposes, which are elaborated on later in this report. However, it is useful to outline their intended use here:

1. Encouraging Reflection – Focus groups exposed to alternative messaging will be prompted to reflect on and critically reconsider the media they consume, particularly those in middle age who may be vulnerable to extreme narratives.
2. Educational Resources & Training – The videos will be integrated into a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course), webinars, and training materials for security professionals, journalists, and educators, helping them develop a more reflexive approach and enhance their ability to counter online extremism among individuals aged 45-65.
3. Documentary Integration – Shorter counter-narratives may be included in a documentary to further engage audiences.

To maximize impact, these resources will be disseminated through a broad network of stakeholders, including RAN (Radicalisation Awareness Network), European Foundation for Democracy, ISD (Institute for Strategic Dialogue), Age Platform Europe, UK Police, AGICOM, European Press Association, Foundation Porticus, Danish Centre for Prevention of Extremism, the Italian Rete Nazionale per il Contrasto ai Discorsi e ai Fenomeni d'Odio, and the Council of Europe-supported No Hate Speech Campaign. Additionally, the tools developed will support policymakers in addressing the online grooming process that leads individuals toward extremism.

The SMIDGE project takes an RRI approach to the work informed by a variety of sources from the RRI discourse i.e., European Commission, 2012; (Stilgoe et al., 2013; Von Schomberg, 2011). It is acknowledged that there are ongoing debates around RRI (Owen et al., 2012), but we posit that this approach provides an open and pluralist perspective that aims to align science, research and innovation with a view to strengthening societal influence and thereby fostering scientific excellence. The concept of RRI as meta-responsibility (Stahl et al., 2017) provides the theoretical anchor point for our approach. First-order reflexivity enables the gathering, interpretation, critique and understanding of an issue or topic. First-order reflexivity is, in part, the reason why some people may be drawn into misinformation online. Misinformation or extremist material may be so convincing that the initial reaction is that; 1. the material is to be taken seriously; 2. an interpretation is made that the claims being made are true (this may be due, in part, to having prior beliefs and experiences confirmed, such as the belief that the government cannot be trusted to tell the truth), which then convinces the viewer

that; 3. the videos or content are providing the truth, leading to; 4. a belief that the videos reflect reality. This way of thinking may then lead to a desire to act in some way, to either raise others' awareness (sharing, commenting, etc.) or even to direct action, such as protesting and possibly acts of violence (Lee et al., 2024).

When second-order reflexivity is employed, each interaction and reflection is re-considered through an acknowledgement of the context in which it sits and is a key part of the RRI process (Gianni et al., 2019). Further, integrating a gender and intersectional perspective into this frame enables the gathering, interpretation, critique and understanding of the explored topics, by taking into consideration how the interaction between identity characteristics shapes individual experiences, representations and epistemologies, as well as how structures and discourses impact on these individuals in a 'qualitatively different way' (Crenshaw, 1991).

Through understanding the interactions of responses and characteristics, cultural influences and personal experience, SMIDGE will provide stakeholders with the tools to elicit a greater understanding of the drivers and triggers for being vulnerable to misinformation with a focus on those in middle-age. Regarding the content being viewed, second-order reflexivity provides a momentary pause before deep diving into extremist/conspiracy theory material. Our productions have been informed thoroughly by this approach. As will be explained, the purpose of our new narratives is not to preach or push a specific argument, but to follow the golden rule of creative writing: to clearly present a choice that challenges the idea of a predetermined path, or 'mediated fate' (Lee, 2014).

Aspects of the methodology, including the RRI approach and challenging 'mediated fate' have been elaborated on. This work has also built on other work packages' insights. As page 6 of D5.2's Executive Summary states: 635 middle-aged individuals took part in an online survey with 50% of these from the United Kingdom, 13% from Italy, 12% from Germany, 9% from Greece and the rest from other European countries. The findings did not show that gender significantly influenced discernment abilities; however, differences based on ethnicity did emerge. Additionally, political ideology was found to be a key factor, with individuals holding left-wing views demonstrating stronger skills in verifying information. A study of misinformation online (Törnberg & Chueri, 2025) found that populist, right-wing parties are far more likely to create and spread disinformation than those with other political ideologies, which may make conservative people more vulnerable to misinformation. This has been confirmed by SMIDGE's work (WP5).

Interestingly, educational background was not significant. Other findings included an increased use of social media indicated a negative ability to distinguish accurate from inaccurate content online. These

findings and others informed the development of this practice-based research in terms of developing story lines and characters. Furthermore, as D5.2's report on the survey notes (page 28) participants from the United Kingdom were primarily English speakers, followed by Slovak, German, Greek, Italian, and others. Most Italian participants were Italian speakers, and most participants in Germany spoke German. Interestingly, as noted in D5.2, most individuals in Poland spoke French. All of this informed the development of our screenplays and characters, as we were highly conscious of reaching the full range of the demographic of this research.

Contrary to myth, research has found that facts can help to encourage someone to pause and recognise they have a choice in what they believe. Research using a chatbot reduced conspiracy thinking by 20 percent (Costello, et al., 2024). This positive finding concerning the use of facts, fed into our use of specific graphs and data in the videos which we carefully balanced with dramatic conflict and engaging storylines, creating stories with narrative arcs, and this also fed into our climate change sketches. SMIDGE research as explained in D5.2 has found that in terms of belief in conspiracy theories, the highest area of concern is immigration, then anti-vaccine, and then climate change denial (Lee et al., 2024). Therefore, our videos focused on these three areas, taking all these findings into account, as they will be the primary focus of future target groups.

Right-wing ideology can both fuel and mask conspiracy theories and denial, but it is important to also recognize the role of personality traits. Research on the political correlates of conspiracy theory beliefs typically focuses on partisanship and ideology. However, personality traits, including psychopathy and antisocial tendencies, are also linked to these beliefs. For example, individuals with antisocial traits may be more likely to share false information online, support violence, and distrust the government (Uscinski et al., 2022, 2). While much attention has been given to psychological factors like cognitive bias or existential motives, such as feelings of powerlessness, large meta-studies suggest that personality traits play a significant role in shaping conspiratorial belief systems (Uscinski et al., 2022, 2). These findings again informed the development of our screenplays and the characters and built on the previous research in SMIDGE as outlined in D5.2.

Incorporating research from D5.2, as noted on page 17 of the report, ethnicity and cultural factors play a role in conspiracy thinking. European countries such as Sweden, Germany, Poland, Italy, the UK, and Hungary tend to show lower levels of endorsement for conspiracy theories compared to the United States, while Portugal and France are more similar to the U.S. Fortunately, there is evidence suggesting that climate change conspiracies are less prevalent in the U.S. (Lee, 2025c). However, it will be interesting to see if this trend changes with Trump's re-election in 2024 and Elon Musk's ownership of X. In SMIDGE's second UK focus group, it was noted that left-wing voices were being silenced on X,

which participants felt was directly linked to Musk's ideology. According to D5.2's findings, Central and Eastern Europe, as well as the Balkans (e.g., Bulgaria and North Macedonia), showed the highest levels of endorsement for conspiracy theories, in contrast to Northern European countries. These findings have directly influenced the development of our screenplays, personas, and characters, particularly in terms of integrating equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). This EDI approach guided both the storyline development and the selection of actors.

A finding from the first SMIDGE UK focus group revealed that people in this 45-65 age group do not typically consume news online, with YouTube being the primary platform used, and this used mainly for entertainment. This insight, along with factors such as editing for other platforms, use of studio space, and the evergreen nature of the counter-narratives, influenced our decision to use a 16:9 filming format, which is the standard for YouTube. The lack of engagement with news online in this demographic is further supported by evidence from D5.2, which notes on page 51 that 78 percent of participants rarely or never commented on news stories on social media. However, it's important to note that despite our own biases and the tendency for doom-scrolling, social media algorithms often filter out hard news anyway. As a result, individuals in this age group may share fake news and conspiracy theories online, even if they are aware of their inaccuracy.

The conclusions to D5.2 pages 60 to 61, reveal that argumentative reasoning, especially the ability to develop a two-sided approach makes people more able to discern "fake news" online and this has informed all of our counter-narratives, but especially our online phone in trilogy, as shall be explained further under content analysis. It is clear from D5.2 that the values, political beliefs, epistemic beliefs, and reasoning skills matter in this context. Importantly the findings in D5.2 also reveal that news discernment is topic-specific, and as mentioned immigration is the most 'challenging for discerning fake posts' (D5.2 page 61). Bearing this in mind, this is why we devoted the most time to developing our most complex storyline "*A Family Tea*" which tackles the subject of immigration (see Appendix 1). Putting ourselves in the shoes of a conspiracy believer, we can understand how the belief in a single, controlling power might be paradoxically comforting. In a world that often feels out of control, it may be reassuring to know who your enemy is and to feel a sense of purpose within your tribe. The essence of good drama is to allow the audience to empathize with the protagonist, the one who suffers the most. This is what we hope to have achieved with "*A Family Tea*".

As Lewandowsky et al. (2012) explain, "once exposed, people may be directionally motivated to seek out further misinformation in ways that confirm their social identity." This has led researchers to focus on preventing misinformation from influencing people in the first place, through methods like inoculation or pre-bunking—related but distinct concepts. Brashier et al. (2021) studied 2,683

participants to determine whether the timing of fact-checks influences their long-term impact. Participants read true and false headlines with tags indicating whether they were "true" or "false" before, during, or after reading. A week later, participants rated the accuracy of the same headlines. The study concluded that fact-checking after exposure (debunking) improved truth discernment more than labelling (during exposure) or prebunking (before exposure). This finding supports the cognitive science of belief revision and has practical implications for platform design as Brashier et al. note and is a positive finding in terms of the development of these and related counter-narratives.

The Center for Countering Digital Hate has found that climate change denial videos on YouTube promote ideas such as the ineffectiveness of climate solutions, the unreliability of climate science and the climate movement, and the notion that the effects of global warming are either beneficial or harmless (Horton, 2024). This research has informed the content of our climate change sketch 2.

Our methodology also follows the methodologies of theatre and film and media studies and is informed by practice research, which positions creativity at the fore and is underpinned by theoretical exploration. We see film as a form of radical pedagogy (O'Neill, 2024) and the process is experiential. We prioritise an experiential approach to knowledge which is embedded in creative practice (Candy et al., 2021) and requires 'attending differently' to the practice (Nelson 2022, 16). This informed both the scoping period of the research with Hamlett films, working with the director and screenwriter on persona ideas and storylines and honing the scripts informed by SMIDGE's previous research as outlined further in section 4.

Research was carried out by DMU and Hamlett on the videos collated by SMIDGE into a searchable database (D3.5), and those selected for the survey including discussion shows in Australia with a well-known British scientist, Brian Cox. This research inspired our counter-narratives both in terms of show format and content, where we wanted to enhance the information given. For example, in one video used in earlier SMIDGE research, Cox shows a graph on climate change, but it is ineffective due to the set and distance from camera and size of image. In our first show about vaccines, we go for a close-up on two graphs making this more effective. This is just one example of where we learnt from previously made videos, and we were extremely diligent in having the scientific evidence presented in our shows thoroughly checked and sourced. We also had to make certain nothing was libellous, removing names of companies and individuals throughout the development stage and paying attention to any issues of copyright.

3 Development Process and Counter-narrative Video Content

This section assesses the research and development process and the counter-narrative video content. From the outset, the development of the videos has been a significant continuous professional development opportunity for the researchers engaged in the activities. Three of the four members of the DMU team have no experience in film making, and so these activities have provided learning opportunities for the other members of the team beyond their usual expertise. This proved to be both challenging and enriching for all participants. For example, the challenges of writing a script that is believable, informative and entertaining enabled greater understanding, not only of the process, but also how the nuances of the content being delivered is developed. How one word or a pause can completely change the emphasis of what is being said, and how stage directions for actors can reveal a wide range of emotion and project empathy, understanding, frustration, sorrow etc., without words but through body language and facial expressions.

At the point of writing the counter-narrative videos are being edited and there are 12 videos planned, but the final outputs and their lengths depend on detailed post-production (a “sizzler” is accessible in this report from a link). One video emphasising the importance of fact checking has already been produced. As well as incorporating key components of stage one of the SMIDGE research, as outlined, audience and therefore genre were key factors for us to consider in the development of the screenplays. Normally, screenplays involve the emotional journey of a character and story structure involves dramatic shape, dramatic goal, inciting incident, conflict and climax (Batty and Waldeback 2008: 84). As we see in “*A Family Tea*” there is both external conflict – the lack of a job promotion – and internal conflict, the feelings of a lack of worth and invisibility. The genre chosen for this production was drama because the issue is migration, which is the one, as D5.2 confirmed, that is the most complex and sensitive and the one that is of most concern to people and which generates the most conspiracy belief. This is the most complex of our stories understandably given this context, but it is easily understood and relatable. As with all genres, this genre has a certain level of prescribed rules which enables an audience to immediately identify with the setting, story, and characters in a short piece, but through detailed development of the characters we incorporated roles that played against stereotypes. For example, Dad is not a working-class hater of migrants, but the reverse, as he challenges Mum. We shall return to this issue (see Appendix 1.).

IMAGE 1 Mum/Dad/Grandparents with Liam and Amal’s child from “*A Family Tea*”



Using comedy always carries some risk, especially in cross-cultural research, where sensitivity and avoiding offense are key concerns. However, good comedy can also deliver tragedy, emotional impact, and deeper meaning (as seen in the final caller of the climate TV sketch, see Appendix 6). Comedy has the unique ability to subvert and counter dominant narratives, prompting people to pause and think without feeling preached at. By nature, comedy can challenge the status quo and break established meanings (Lee, 2020). It can also be the best way to tackle difficult issues in an entertaining fashion. Further, during the focus groups, one of the key factors that emerged was that many people found that comic elements made it more likely that a video would be watched and/or shared.

Throughout the development of our screenplays, we prioritized not alienating or patronising those who might sympathize with conspiracy thinking. We did not want to condemn or talk down to people. Two of our climate change sketches, including the phone-in trilogy, use humour, but also incorporate visual and verbal facts to challenge misinformation and disinformation and challenge people. Comedy allows for multiple perspectives while still asserting the truth, encouraging critical thinking and non-binary thinking, thus helping viewers move beyond conspiracy thinking and this approach follows the concluding findings of D5.2.

1. We intentionally avoided mimicking real life or striving for verisimilitude, which often makes sets appear fake. Instead, for example, in "*A Family Tea*," we present a situation that feels believable. While people often complain about misinformation due to a lack of fact-checking, especially since Meta in 2025 moved away from independent fact-checking, addressing climate change denial requires more than that: "an antidote to media concentration, the hegemony of business values, and the complacency to which all professional groups are

prone" (Hargreaves, 2005, p. 137). Our main comedy sketch does this by challenging the traditional comedy quiz show format (see Appendix 6), with the presenter answering the questions, subverting power dynamics. Here, the audience, who are often talked down to in these context (e.g. such as on quiz shows *The Chase* and *The Weakest Link*) become the source of authority challenging the conspiracy belief narrative.

IMAGE 2. Quiz show presenter with producer, climate sketch 2



Throughout all of our video counter-narratives, we avoided being patronizing. In the second climate change sketch (see Appendix 6), we highlight the absurdity of climate change denial through comedy, but the format makes it clear that this is not a "real" TV show. This postmodern, original approach that is both futuristic but draws on some of the formats from earlier sketch shows creates a deeper more complex counter-narrative. The show's host is not trying to be "real" but instead satirizes classic television in the same manner as "Not the Nine O'Clock News." Traditional counter-narratives often lay out challenges in a pedagogic format that can be off-putting, especially to middle-aged viewers who do not want to feel lectured. By using a familiar yet unfamiliar format in the second climate change sketch, we build on cultural expectations and subvert them, making it more likely that the audience will engage with the content and absorb the clear messaging on climate change which is underscored through verbal and visual signification and a variety of graphics drawing on real footage and verified facts.

The perceived freedom in conspiracy thinking is partly a reaction to the body remaining an object tied to the social milieu, burdened by the constant pressure of structural configurations over which it has no control (Schilling 2003: 204). In some sense a demand for freedom within liberal democracy is a false freedom in post-democratic society rooted in Friedrich Hayek’s philosophy of a self-automatic system and game theory, where data, devoid of humanity, becomes the new cage (Curtis 2007). In this paradigm, freedom exists without humanity, which brings us to a position similar to climate change denial. However, climate change denial is not just a world without humanity, but one without humans. This dynamic partly explains conspiracy theories as a backlash against scientism—the worship of science, rationality, and a limited literalism as the new "God" (Lee, 2023) despite the proliferation of “fake news” and misinformation and disinformation (Lee, 2025c). The playful, ludic elements in these counter-narrative videos, especially the phone-in focusing on vaccines and the sketch shows focusing on climate change, introduce a transrational paradigm (Lee, 2023) which becomes more engaging for those considering engaging with conspiracy theories more literally as it challenges.

IMAGE 3. Reporter climate sketch 1



Exposure to scientific evidence about climate change can polarise opinion, rather than informing it in the rational way that one might expect (Karen et al 2015). As Karen et al (2015) note, couching arguments in terms of conservative moral values, such as a concern for purity of the environment, could help neutralise the belief that liberal or left-leaning scientists are misrepresenting or fabricating their results for political purposes. Our climate change television sketches play with this, in some sense discombobulating the audience, in an attempt to make them think again and the radio phone in does

the same for vaccines. This research then fed into the development and content of our climate change sketches.

Hoffarth and Hodson (2016) argue that although much of the political rhetoric for not acting on climate change focuses on economic concerns, the political polarisation of climate change appears driven by perceptions that the primary advocates of climate change (environmentalists) are a threat to society leading to intergroup pushback. They argue effective mitigation of climate change requires participation from across the political spectrum which might seem naïve given that sometimes political parties gain votes by stressing their difference from other parties. They urge scientists and policymakers to consider communication strategies that are not reliant on overtly environmentalist concerns which in itself could be construed as climate change denial. Our TV quiz show includes elements of this research, by addressing multiple areas of concern in the questions from callers and the answer (see Appendix 6. and concerns from callers Appendix 2.-4.).

“A Family Tea” concerns a nurse Mary who believes she has not been promoted due to immigration which initially emotionally advances her conspiracy thinking and her family challenges this (see Appendix 1.). This drama began through developing the personas of each character and the family background. A great deal of thought and development went into the backgrounds of the family and the characters and working out where this should be situated. Despite this being set in what could be the South of England, our aim was for this to be interpreted as relevant to any European country. Mary works for the National Health Service and the title is a “A Family Tea” which may come across as English, but the point is in the backstory Mary’s family are migrants coming from Ireland which unlike England is politically in Europe. The son is living abroad.

IMAGE 4. Liam/son “A Family Tea”





IMAGE 5. Ray/Dad



IMAGE 6. Mary/Mum and Ray



IMAGE 7. Group shot



Initially we had the son and his partner who is pregnant both currently living in France, with the partner of mixed heritage (e.g. French Nigerian). A key line in the script occurs when the son challenges his mother on this, and we hope the audience will question why there is a difference between this immigrant and others whom they might not want to accept. Through this we have humanised this issue, moving it beyond the fearmongering that feeds populist political discourse. We took a decision to then change the name of the pregnant partner, giving her a Muslim name and imagining her from Kosovo. Another development in the characterisation which altered the script in a more advanced manner was the dad. Initially, he was more of a quiet figure, in the background, a stereotype if you will of a man who does not express emotion. We gave this character more lines, so he becomes an important character in this story with more emotional depth challenging stereotypes. Initially, we thought his backstory was that he was a freelance trades person who was now out of work, so Mary not getting promoted or even being made redundant could be high drama. We realised this was melodramatic and too much like a soap opera, and unrealistic, especially with regard to Mary, as there are currently thousands of vacancies in the NHS due to Brexit and other factors. We therefore toned down the melodrama to focus on Mary, the love of family and fears for the future, but we still believe this short drama is emotionally effective, indeed the more subtle nature of this creates more heightened and realistic emotions in the characters, story, and thus the audience, fostering a deeper understanding of these issues. In this fashion the audience is invited to take a breath and reconsider, before they too consider entering Mary's world of conspiracy communities.

A focus on a woman as the conspiracy theorist was an interesting approach. In part, the additional layer of invisibility experienced by middle-aged women made her the appropriate choice as the protagonist, even as the SMIDGE research as outlined in D5.2 suggests sex is not a factor in this context, but to make the lead a woman fitted the story and does challenge some stereotypes. Mary

initially hesitates to express what concerns her. The lead actor is often referred to as the protagonist; etymologically, this comes from the Greek word for the first actor, with “agon” meaning contest or struggle. Protagonists are those who face the greatest challenges, endure the most agony, and suffer the most. They are often the ones who have experienced the most trauma, so they have the most to overcome, giving them the potential to be the most heroic. We often follow characters because we know they are deep people through trauma, individuals whose day-to-day adjustment to life in general and relationships in particular are less than ideal but who nevertheless are uniquely interesting from a screenwriting point of view because they can draw on significant but unusual personal experiences of trauma that engender a particular view of the world and the human predicament (Lee, 2025a).

A central remit for this sensitive piece of drama was that everything was infused with love. We did not want Mary to be viewed by anyone as full of hate or a total racist who is beyond the pale. By doing this we sought to not condemn people who might be interested in conspiracy theories or who have joined a community online like Mary has that promotes these theories. This fits the SMIDGE remit overall of being non-judgemental, and the remit for impactful narratives that do not seek to preach or condemn. We know if they do, people switch off. This, positioning their concerns as out of love and not out of condemnation, is the spine of this piece and means the son’s comments are then useful and not robotic like many standard counter-narratives, that seek to point out all the facts in a dehumanised fashion. Good drama is about a cathartic emotional shift; from feedback so far, we believe this piece has achieved this and therefore it cannot be just dismissed as yet another video giving the counter argument.

Given the sensitivity of the issues addressed in "A Family Tea" and the research indicating that this issue of immigration is the one of primary concern, the chosen genre for this piece was effective. The family, it can be argued is mixed-European with Mary’s family originally from Ireland and the son’s partner from Kosovo. The contextual location was England but the issues they face can be understood in different countries.

In our development of the radio phone-in trilogy, we wanted to focus on a more continental European model, in terms of presenter, guests, and callers and we had more leeway in the scope, given the range of issues these types of shows cover. We scoped out different European nationalities in development of the scripts and working with the actors in terms of what they could deliver. At the same time, we were sticking to the three areas that we focused on in the initial survey questions, with the focus here on vaccination.

We initially thought of doing just one phone-in show but then realised that the format worked, and the characters were interesting. Therefore, we considered that a trilogy of these would work better,

covering different but connected themes, which could be edited together as a longer piece while each still works on its own. This again fitted existing SMIDGE research in terms of the variability in video length, audience reception, and consumption and enables us to target different platforms. It was also found that short videos closer to camera in the style of Facebook Reels and vertical filming would be a good way to create different videos for this format, and to further personalise our characters and their shows.

Research was carried out on how these radio hosts operate, the DMU team having had experience of being on them as commentators. It was discovered they have their own style, language, and mannerisms, and this was brought to the role of the host Anna who worked closely with the director, Sian Hamlett in formulating this character further.

IMAGE 8. Anna/Presenter in radio phone-in show



The role of the guest conspiracy theorist was a major one and we were very conscious of not wanting him to come across as too wild and irrational, but we did need him to be entertaining. Some last-minute tweaks to the script dialled this character down. The auditioning process for all but one of these roles was complex and detailed with decisions reached through a highly rigorous process; the actor playing the professor we knew immediately was the one. In the first radio phone in the character Xavier gets a chance to state his views on vaccines and so does the professor who shares graphs. Again, using emotional catharsis, the caller Hakeem has had a friend die from not being vaccinated and this

is a moving part of the piece. The intention is to give the audience the opportunity to think again, if they are adamant that all vaccination is wrong, and not to preach.

With the radio phone in, the second caller is a healer and does not believe in medicine and science, so the professor challenges this. With the third phone in, the caller lies about who they are (they actually work for the think tank they are quoting as “evidence”) and this gives the host of the show the opportunity to come into her own and challenge them. Our initial idea was to have the third caller as extremely right-wing and anti-immigrant but pro-compulsory vaccine for immigrants. We thought the trilogy could be about Xavier’s narrative arc, as he realises that what he believes may not be as true as he thought throughout the course of the collective show and as our callers become more extreme. While some aspects of this narrative remained in terms of his arc, showing that there is a potential to step out of conspiracy thinking which as noticed has been confirmed by cognitive science, it was thought that having the third caller do this implied that her racism changed his thinking, so we dropped this idea. We then developed the think tank caller instead.

IMAGE 9. Radio-show set



Regarding the set for the radio show, we wanted to subvert expectations again which fitted our overall aesthetic choices, by not having the usual low-fi set most commonly seen on social media of a high desk, and a presenter with headphones on with a guest which can be off-putting. We went for a more stylish approach of low chairs, and Japanese screen and no headphones, to give this more of a high-brow aesthetic, making it more aesthetically similar to a television discussion show with callers, and therefore more familiar to our target demographic who grew up on a diet of studio-based chat shows. The issue of vaccination was addressed by all the callers in this trilogy and so addresses a variety of conspiracies and related issues, such as herd immunity which is discussed in show two.

Having covered the two themes of immigration and vaccination with a drama format and a phone-in discussion show format for the reasons outlined, with climate change we went for a news reporting format and Europe-wide quiz show format. The first climate sketch shows the conspiracy fuelled reporter being confronted by the reality of climate change. Reality here cannot be ignored. The second, is a quiz show with the host being the same reporter and now with four questions from callers to the host with a television audience heard and a producer occasionally seen and heard. The host does not believe in climate change, but the facts are presented for each question, creating increasing drama through the level of prizes offered each time for the caller and through their sharing of their life. Each prize relates to environmental concerns. The intention is for this to be humorous, entertaining, and informative. It is popular for quiz shows to show some behind the scenes (such as shots of the camera person or autocue). During filming we decided to advance the studio format aesthetic in terms of beyond the scenes, so it will be interesting to see in the edit how this works and how much of this we incorporate.

4 Hamlett Films: the process of collaboration



Telling important stories, helping people learn

Hamlett Films

Hamlett Films is an award-winning education production company that tells important stories, and helps people learn. We produce content to engage, enthuse and accurately inform specific learners of all ages.

Making short form educational films and interactive content as part of a series that meets and expands learning points, is what we do. We create bespoke plug-ins to extend the effectiveness of interactive learning and a range of other virtual learning environments. Our content is clear, concise, factually correct and visually engaging and always user-centered.

We are creative and technical partners for broadcasters, universities, education providers and brands. Hamlett Films produces expert and specific content to engage specialist audiences; predominantly graduate and post graduate learning across a range of UK and international syllabuses. Along with specific training films for senior management and promotional marketing content.

Working to the highest production values, complex and tight schedules and budgets, we meet exact pedagogical expectations, by placing academic clients and senior educational consultants at the center of the Hamlett team.

Our mission

Hamlett Films is committed to equity, diversity and inclusion in all we do, on and off screen, as we believe film and storytelling have a significant impact on shaping societal norms, perceptions, and attitudes. As a company we are actively working to increase representation across all dimensions of



diversity in our workforce and are currently representative of the UK demographic in terms of gender and ethnicity.

Our commitment to diversity and inclusion on-screen includes working with institutes and organisations which shine a light on social injustice and give a voice to those who have been, or continue to be, silenced or marginalised.

Our work with The Open University created a powerful film that revealed some uncomfortable truths about the racial inequalities within health in the UK and in our documentary Grenfell Tower and Social Murder we expose the tragedy of Grenfell Tower and the role played by the state and private companies. We always approach films we make with scholarship and sensitivity, but the subject matter here requires an exceptional level of expertise and effort which is hugely valuable on the grounds of critical pedagogy.

Links to the Hamlett Films showreel and mentioned films.

- Hamlett Films showreel
 - <https://vimeo.com/1017119299>

- Racial Inequalities in Health
 - <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/health/a-matter-life-and-death-inequalities-healthcare-black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-communities>

- Grenfell Tower and Social Murder
 - <https://hamlettfilms.com/work/grenfell-tower-and-social-murder/>

SMIDGE

The SMIDGE research project, the first of its type explores conspiracy theories, misinformation and extremism online and various forms of extremist discourses and narratives across Europe with a focus on the middle age (45-65) who are susceptible to extremist narratives.

Hamlett Films were commissioned by De Montfort University to produce a series of counter-narrative films offering audiences an alternative perspective. The production of 12 counter-narrative short



dramas and a 50-minute documentary (to be produced later in 2025) is based on the analysis of the various forms of extremist discourses and narratives across Europe through social platforms.

The films are reactive to the project's research findings, focus groups and stakeholders' input across various stages of the production process. The dramas focused on the major themes of the project: climate change denial, anti-vax beliefs and anti-immigration and have created the most suitable approach to engage and resonate with the intended audience. Humour, kitchen sink drama and a pastiche of a radio phone was decided as some of the best creative scenarios to explore these themes and engage the audience.

Film Development

The creation of the films involved a very close working relationship between the commissioning Lead Academic and the broader De Montfort team. We are committed to more inclusive on-screen representation, which will guide all aspects of our editorial for this film project. Hamlett Films recognize the power in representing and celebrating differences and diversity, providing identification and perspectives traditionally not given a profile. We believe by doing this, the films will promote greater participation, interaction and engagement with the 45-65 audience age group who we aim to challenge.

Characters which are identifiable and relatable by the audience were a central concern and it was decided to develop a series of carefully considered *personas* for each of the 8 characters to enable this development. Their names, accents and jobs were important, along with their likes and dislikes. What they need and want, their fears and ambitions and how others may view them.



PERSONA: MOTHER

Name: Mary

Age: 55

Job: Nurse

Background: Of Italian descent, her parents immigrated to the UK in the 1960s, where her mother worked as a hospital cleaner and her father worked in the factories. Inspired by her mother's work, Giulia became a nurse. She grew up during the AIDS epidemic, which influences her views on healthcare, especially during COVID.

What do people who like her say?

Caring, motherly, with a big heart. She's family-oriented, always feeding and taking care of anyone in her home, and prioritizes her family's well-being.

What do people who dislike her say?

She's stubborn and hard to convince once she has made up her mind.

What does she want?

She longs for the NHS to return to how it was before, believing that illegal immigrants have stretched resources thin. She thinks they're unfairly taking services that long-time UK residents deserve, unlike her mother, who worked hard without asking for handouts.

What's stopping her?

She's convinced that illegal immigrants are overburdening the NHS, fueled by misinformation and her vulnerability during COVID austerity. She feels the "innocent" like her parents are being harmed by immigrants and a government that allows this.

What is she afraid of?

Giulia fears losing control, 'dangerous immigrants' and the ability to provide care like she used to. After her mother died of covid (even after receiving the vaccine), she felt betrayed despite doing everything right. This fear led her to explore online theories such as "Muslims using Covid 19 as "bioterrorism" during the Pandemic and the "Great Replacement," Theory, believing the government is replacing all political power, population and culture of the west migrant welcoming policies, leading to an unjust society.

“A Family Tea” Persona example.

Focus was given to how characters may interact with each other, their language, dress and accents are all important markers for audience engagement and identification with the characters. In the film “A Family Tea” it was important for the family members, the mother, father and son to be credible and relatable. The mother’s radicalization toward an anti-immigration position gained from social media sites, the fathers shock and the son's dismay to his mother's thinking is especially powerful due to his marriage to a Muslim, however the family reaction always comes from a place of love. This is an attempt in the storyline to avoid stigmatization and offer audiences a *smidge* of alternative perspective and reflection.



“A Family Tea” still. Featuring the mother, father and son.

Scripting

There was no set way of working on creating the scripts for this project. Some scripts started from a discussion between the writer and the academics, then went to the first rough draft by the writer and then into re-writing with the writer and the academics working together. Other scripts began with a first draft created by the academics alongside the writer and then continued into the re-writing stage with either the academics editing, or the writer editing, or all editing together.

The scripting process was a true collaboration with four academics working alongside the writer. This process allowed not only dramatic consideration of every line of dialogue, but also for reflection from the perspective of each academic according to their individual discipline.

Strong consideration was given to the viewer and their potential journey towards radicalization. At every stage of the process the viewer’s thought process, reaction and motivation is considered as the films’ narratives are geared towards offering an alternative view of the radical path/outlook they may already be considering.

There was a constant weighing up of the need to provide balanced facts and science but also not wanting to come across as didactic. The use of drama, and humour, was used to fully engage the audience on a learning journey with story and character.

At the end of the scripting process six distinct films were developed to go forward into production with six cut down versions and distinct short character clips direct to camera, plus the radio-show



trilogy cut as whole. The films are to be distributed across social media platforms as well as shown in conferences and events.

Casting and rehearsals

The casting followed an extensive process of selecting from hundreds of applicants for eight roles across the films. The scripts required a variety of nationalities, ethnicities, ages and genders which posed an additional layer of complexity to the process. A small number of suitable actors were asked to submit a test tape reading from a section of the script or asked to provide an improvised scenario based on some pointers provided by Hamlett Films.

A further shortlist was drawn up and selected actors took part in recorded remote readings with the director and then shared with the academic team for final selection. This extensive process, whilst time consuming, provided the project with a perfect cast who were relatable to the intended audience and would work well together on set, balancing their levels of experience and acting approaches.

A naturalistic performance was required so the rehearsals were not extensive, and space was allowed for the actors to adjust lines of the script as they felt most naturalistic and suitable for their character.

All actors chosen shared a commitment to the SMIDGE aims and objectives and, in many cases, shared personal experiences of encountering extreme views and opinions from close friends and family relating to climate change, anti-vax thinking and climate denial.

Direction and design

The films were shot in a studio with subtle set design while mood and atmosphere were carefully designed through lighting design to enhance the performance.

The film's climate change sketch 1 and 2 required a green screen backdrop to allow for the insertion of graphical elements, illustration and archive materials at the edit stage.

“The Family Tea” location, while obviously a studio, had a simple kitchen table and with cake and tea on the table denoting a family living room while not detracting from the actor's performance being of paramount importance.

A series of 3 radio phone- in films replicated a stylish podcast studio with phone in callers being *patched* in live from another studio. In one instance the radio caller called in live from a professional

studio in Slovenia where she lives. The sound set up required a complex set up but provided the actors with an authentic scenario to work with during filming.



“Radio phone in 1”. Featuring the presenter Anna and guests, Xavier an influencer and Professor Van Der Graaf, a scientific expert

All films were shot as one take, in a linear order supporting a naturalist performance from the actors. Multiple cameras ran simultaneously and provided a variety of framings and angles.

Direction was low key with feedback given between each take whilst also allowing space to *play* with differing styles of delivery, spontaneity and for *moments of magic* to happen live on set.

“I had such a good time working with you on this. Thank you for allowing us to be free with it and letting us play and discover, it really makes all the difference. Look forward to seeing the end result”

“A Family Tea”, Jamie Kenna who played the Dad.

The Director had a live feed to each camera linked by a monitor and was able to feedback on camera composition ahead of each take. The recording of each film happened around eight times in total.

Pick-up shots of hands, feet and small details were recorded as required once the main filming for each film had been captured.

Costumes were chosen in collaboration with each actor allowing input from the director, actor and the SMIDGE team input. The slapstick drama films required a more comical dress while still being representative of what a presenter for a TV chat show or reporter on location would wear.





“Climate change sketch 2”. Featuring the presenter character, Courtenay Bishop Johnson and the show's producer.

Additional footage was captured in Spatial 3D and 2D via an iPhone, offering an immersive behind the scenes opportunity, should this be required by the SMIDGE team for promotional or research purposes.

Editing

Due to the close collaboration between the SMIDGE team and Hamlett Films the edit process will be straightforward. The film narratives along with shots, set design, performance and SFX have been carefully considered and agreed at an extensive preproduction stage. However, there will always be room for new and different approaches.

Using the latest editing software including Final Cut Pro Pro 11, Motion, After Effects, DaVinci Resolve 19 and Premiere Pro provides the ability to grade, and sound clean all the films to professional broadcast standards and avoids an expensive postproduction house.

The editing process will allow for two rounds of feedback ahead of the grade and final digital exports and delivery. The editing period extends across a 2.5-month period. A few edit days will be *banked* to allow for small tweaks, if required after wider project consultation with stakeholder and focus group participants.



“Radio Phone in 1” actors on set, behind the scenes with Editor, Director and Camera Operator.

Reflection

The development, scripting and shooting of the 12 counter-narrative videos were based on the importance of a close collaboration between De Montfort University and Hamlett Films. Considerable time was spent at the development stage which allowed a clear and precise vision to be developed on set meeting the client expectation.

The Director has a psychoanalytic background and was able to apply insights into characters development and interaction across the rehearsals and on set.

The Hamlett Films crew production team including writer and editor have considerable expertise in the creation of effective broadcast quality educational films. Having secured many of the highest film awards across the industry, they come from a range of backgrounds such as broadcast, education and academic.

Please see below a short sneak peek sizzle with excerpts from several of the films ahead of the edit starting in February 2025.

5 Micro-content for middle-aged social media users

Memetic content plays a significant role in the spread of misinformation, disinformation, and conspiracy theories across various social media platforms. This is clearly emphasized by state-of-the-art literature in security and extremism studies, media and communication studies, and various threat assessments and reports published by Western intelligence services and counter-extremism NGOs. In turn, our qualitative as well as quantitative findings from work packages 3 and 4 further support the observed emergence “of a new kind of anti-establishment sensibility expressing itself in the kind of DIY culture of memes and user-generated content” (Nagle 2017, p. 2-3).

As part of the counter narratives for the SMIDGE-project (D6.1 and Milestone 6), we have produced 28 pieces of micro-content, consisting of image memes and a gif. The micro-content is informed by knowledge established in previous work packages, including insight gained from the survey and focus groups conducted in WP5 and our observations of memetic practices on social media. Thus, when producing the content, our aim was to operationalize the theoretical and empirical knowledge produced in the SMIDGE project. The work included several challenges related, in particular, to tensions between the communicative affordances and vernacular style of memes, on the one hand, and the efficiency of counter messages on the other.

Ambiguity in memetic content

Results from the SMIDGE survey (T5.1) and focus groups (T5.2) indicate that social media users in the age of 45–65 prefer not to encounter content and narratives with a mocking or condescending tone. This poses a significant challenge because memetic communication often plays on ambiguity, sarcasm, and ridicule (Phillips and Milner, 2017). Memes are 'Simultaneously antagonistic and social, creative and disruptive, humorous and barbed (...) too unwieldy, too variable across specific cases, to be essentialized as *this* as opposed to *that*' (ibid., p. 10). The challenge, then, is to create counter content which both addresses this built-in ambiguity of memes, while also conveying an effective message.

The inherent playfulness of memes and their typical reliance on “us” vs. “them”-constructs contradicts the ambition to convey messages that are inclusive and not overly dependent on ridiculing its target audience. Memes often use “in-group lingo” as a means to “establish frontiers against a political ‘other’” (Mortensen & Neumayer, 2021, p. 2371). Thus, while staying as true as possible to the communicative logic and practice of memes, we were also aiming to create resonance rather than alienate the target audience.

Producing memes

One way of creating resonance is to recognize possible grievances and emotions among potential recipients, which may otherwise lead them to misinformation or conspiracy theories about certain topics. One such topic, climate change, is continuously subject to speculation, skepticism, and conspiracism. A highly political issue, discussions about climate change are interwoven with other issues of political prioritization. Hypothetically, if social media users disagree with (or are annoyed by) one issue associated with CO₂ reductions, it may in some cases lead them to disagree with the scientific consensus. Thus, contentious political issues surrounding the issue of climate change may lead to climate change skepticism, denial, or even to conspiracism.

Figure 1 recognizes the discontent some media users may feel when exposed to various cases of radical climate change activism. The meme features two images at the top: one of Greta Thunberg involved in pro-Palestinian protests, another of protesters throwing soup at the Mona Lisa. The two images are accompanied by the line, “You might get annoyed by this” signalling the recognition of the contentious character of radical activist practices. Below, the two images are juxtaposed with an image of rising temperatures on Earth alongside the line “But climate change is still real” to signal that the initial annoyance should not distract the recipients of the meme from caring about climate change or lead them to question the scientific consensus.

YOU MIGHT GET ANNOYED BY THIS



BUT CLIMATE CHANGE IS STILL REAL

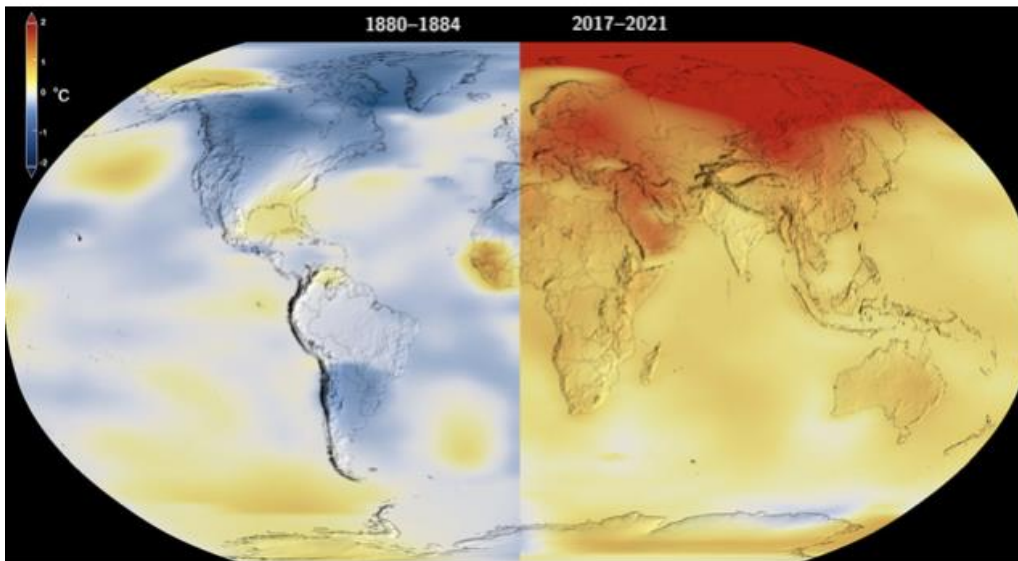


Figure 1: Climate change meme.

Focus group participants also emphasize the point that it is easy to get carried away on social media, i.e, one post leads to the next, sources are sometimes obscure, (mis)information is plenty, and the pace is fast. Thus, for part of our memes, we used the phrase “It’s easy to get carried away (online)”. The line focuses on subtlety and aims to convey a sense of community to indicate that falling for misinformation can happen to anyone.

Figure 2 shows a middle-aged woman in front of a computer screen. She looks frightened, indicating an intense emotional investment in whatever is shown to her onscreen. The image is generated with AI (Microsoft Copilot) to reflect a common memetic practice on social media. The text lists a number

of conspiratorial words and phrases related to COVID-19 (and possibly other health issues) followed by an ellipsis and the message “it’s easy to get carried away online”.

SECRET PLOTS, CORRUPT DOCTORS, MICROCHIPS,



IT’S EASY TO GET CARRIED AWAY ONLINE

Figure 2: Health/COVID-19 meme.

Finally, memes are typically based on well-known images from popular culture featuring recognizable public figures. A highly adaptable media format, memes are often created via templates, i.e., images

that clearly express an emotion but usually without context. Users may add text to these images to convey different messages. One such template is a picture of George W. Bush who receives the news of the 9/11 terrorist attack in 2001 (an event frequently subject to conspiracy theories online). The added text is a general commentary on the information environment online and a specific comment on the circulation of COVID-19 misinformation on YouTube. The implicit message is that social media users must remember to be critical of sources when searching for information online.

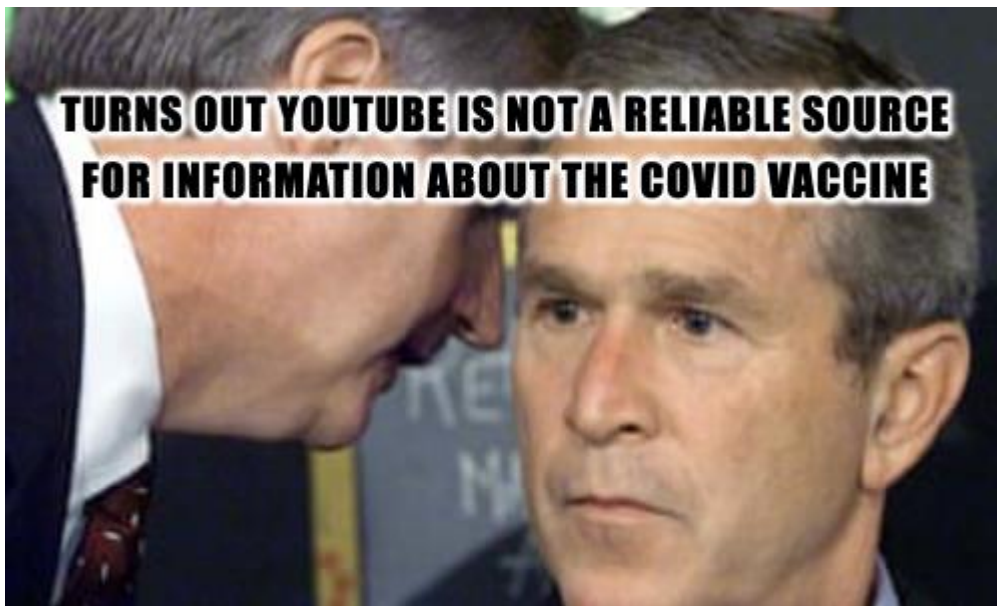


Figure 3: Meme about COVID-19 misinformation.

Co-creation session

As part of the process of producing micro-content, we held a co-creation session on February 14, 2025, with 33 undergraduate and postgraduate students as part of a course on 'The New Extremism on Social Media' at UCPH. The students were tasked with making counter narrative memes that would aid in convincing a parent or family member in the SMIDGE target group who had been caught up by conspiracy theories or extreme ideologies on social media. The students were divided into groups, focusing on either health, immigration or the environment. In addition, the students based their work on the literature on memes and counter content assigned to the course (i.e. Donovan et al, 2022; Philips and Milner, 2017; Bjola and Pamment, 2018). The co-creation session resulted in approximately thirty memes and 12 have been selected to be part of the final SMIDGE micro-content.

In the discussions with the group several observations informed the production of memetic content. First, it became clear that memes addressing the issue *as if made by* the person being addressed

offered an opportunity to avoid being condescending or mean-spirited. Instead, it allows the recipient to feel part of an in-group dealing with issues of doubt and reassessment of previously held beliefs. Several groups developed addressing the SMIDGE target group in this way demonstrated in a few examples here:

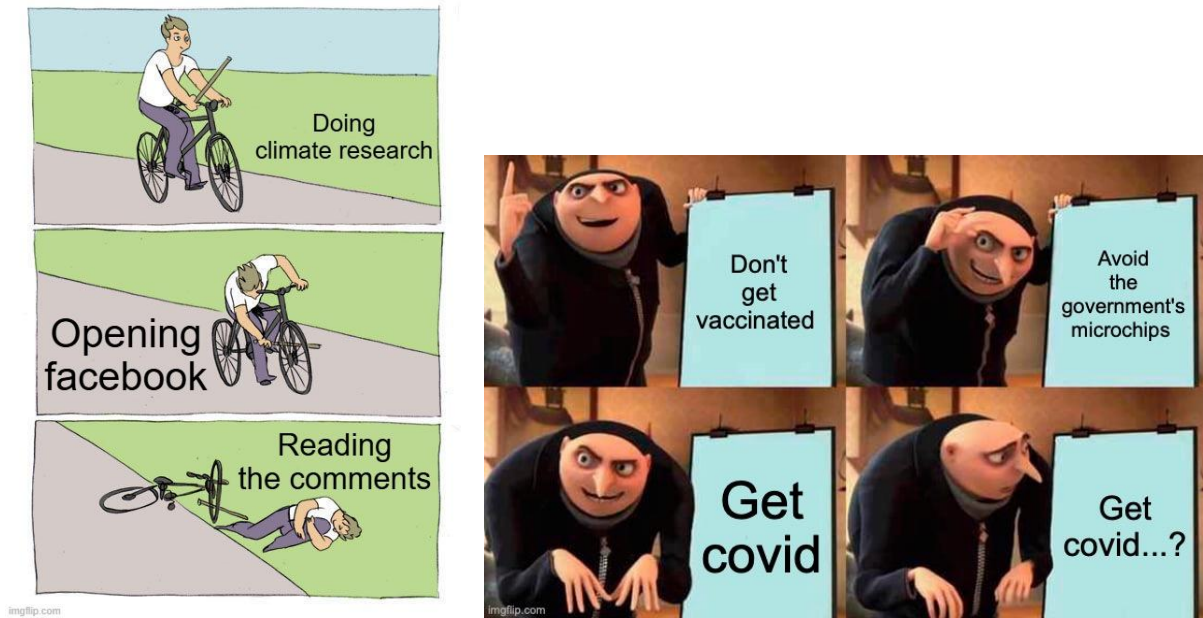


Figure 4. Memes positioning the SMIDGE target audience as the 'sender'

Second, several people noted that people engaged in online discussions about topics such as climate change, health and immigration typically display enormous amounts of resources and a deep engagement with the topics. Therefore, an aim might be to direct their engagement to other social spheres in which their resources could be more productive and pro-social. Here is a meme attempting to address this perspective:



Fig. 5. Meme suggesting alternative paths of engagement such as working for an NGO

Finally, the groups discussed how these memes might be distributed in order to be the most effective. Existing online sources and profiles engaged in promoting counter narratives are not likely to reach the desired audience but will instead reach people who are already engaged in anti-polarization efforts and anti-extremism. Based on these discussions, a recommendation from the co-creation session is that the SMIDGE website and social media profiles functions as a resource platform where interested people can download and share the micro-content to use as ready-made replies in comment sections where issues such as health, climate and immigration are addressed.

6 Conclusions - Use of Counter-narratives and Evaluation

As with all creative projects there were some challenges and risks worth noting beyond those outlined already. One challenge for the videos and the developing documentary has been budget, especially with the steep rise in inflation since the grant was awarded. DMU SMIDGE made a strategic decision to invest more in getting the first set of videos right which could have impacted the documentary, but we believe the risk has been mitigated through careful budget management and planning by the DMU team and Hamlett, without cutting corners.

Following the detailed work in research, development, writing scripts, auditioning and complex planning through Hamlett, there is now an immense amount of work that is taking place in terms of editing and post-production, including work on animation and selecting real global footage that will provide the verified facts and data as part of the de-bunking and pre-bunking process. While the risk

of using comedy has been highlighted across all forms of content, no creative project worth pursuing is without its risks and the reasons for the use of this genre have been detailed along with the other genre used.

The next stage, following post-production as outlined, is using these counter-narrative videos and memes in focus group settings across Europe in Spring 2025. In March 2025, consortium teams meet to refine focus group questions related to all these materials we have produced and in terms of previous quantitative and qualitative research. The focus groups research will be evaluated using a similar coding scheme and methodology as detailed in D5.2 (pages 34 to 36). During the second co-creation focus groups, participants will be shown first edit examples of a selection of the videos. The intention is that we will gain insights that can be used in the second phase of the post-production/editing process. For example, the music, graphics and overall look and feel of the videos can be refined to be more attractive to the target audience, with elements from those videos potentially being included in the documentary.

As mentioned, these counter-narratives are intended to be long-lasting and relevant. For instance, when addressing vaccines in the context of Covid-19, we also cover measles, which is currently on the rise, showing that anti-vaccine narratives are having a broader impact which is also historically the case. It is also worth reiterating how micro-content plays with the legacy of conspiracy theory and subverts it. As noted, in the SMIDGE research outlined in D5.2, topic-specific content is effective, and we have followed this approach with the thematic focus in our video work. By focusing on three main areas (anti-vax, climate change and immigration) SMIDGE provides counter-narratives that address some of the most important issues of our time. It should be emphasized that these issues are particular targets for disinformation from a range of actors, from conspiracy theorists to far-right political activists. As this report has delineated, multiple studies have scientifically evidenced that those who hold a right-wing political position are more susceptible to conspiracy theories and more likely to spread them.

Counter-measures such as those developed by the SMIDGE project aim to provide people with an understanding of the facts. However, we were also acutely sensitive to our research findings in D5.1 that indicate that middle-aged people may not be receptive to overt educational initiatives. Therefore, the videos and micro-content have been carefully designed to appeal to this group and to avoid alienation through being preachy or patronising. The aim therefore is not to provide educational videos per se, but to elicit a momentary pause, a 'smidge' of reflexion, that subtly reminds people that not everything online can be trusted, and that sources may be motivated by other drivers than to inform or to reveal hidden truths. The overall messaging being to recognise that there are people

online who are motivated by political or personal ambition, and it is always a good idea to check the validity of the 'facts' being presented.

Research and development activities are happening for the documentary with Hamlett with experts from across Europe, as suggested by the consortium, being contacted for interviews. The documentary will be shot throughout 2025, finalised in December 2025, and be in post-production early 2026, for screening at the final SMIDGE symposium in Brussels in 2026. Work is currently taking place on the MOOCs, and once these videos have been completed via post-production, and edited with input from focus groups, these will then be utilized in this format along with the memes. Including these videos and memes into the MOOCs will provide greater depth and nuance to the training, to enable a greater understanding of the ease by which misinformation can be taken to be true. For journalists and policy makers, the videos and memes will help them to appreciate their own vulnerabilities to misinformation so that they too can reflect and pause before writing sensational articles or promote policies that are based on that misinformation.

The videos and memes will be disseminated through the SMIDGE website, social media channels and across all our distributed network of contacts, partners, associates and relevant organisations, who are trying to address the problems of misinformation and disinformation online. In addition, they will also be disseminated through presentation at workshops, seminars and as learning tools for undergraduate and post-graduate students.

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Appendix 1. Family Tea

Shooting script

Script Notes

- **Datamoshing idea - the visuals of a darker colour and powerful and appear in an informative and montage.** Music may accompany this/audio. Only to appear at the front of the film.
- The house interior is that of an everyday familiar house interior and to be shot in a studio. Simple furniture and no full set build.
- Set in an undisclosed part of the UK - no particular strong accents for actors. Perhaps slightly South of England. The son will have a slightly more RP accent.
- A family living room with a dining table placed near the kitchen which is off screen and not seen.
- This script responds to the edit comments from the meeting on the 11th November with DMU and Hamlett Films. To bring in a 'place of love' that motivates the family scenario and edits made live with the DMU team.
- Camera work - handheld as well as on tripod so that we have a realistic, documentary look and feel.
- Naturalist lighting - avoidance of flat studio lighting.
- The actors on the day may slightly vary from the script and not perform word for word to encourage a more naturalist performance.

“A Family Tea”

Running time: 5 mins approx



Visuals	Dialogue / Sound	Time
<p>(Video corrupts/ datamoshing)</p> <p>Fade up from black</p> <p>Development of a montage with suitable archive elements such as:</p> <p>(Middle age group to feature in the montage)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● selected newspaper headings ● screenshots from social media sites about ● immigration control showing people entering the country of all ages ● Variety of people from different global majority backgrounds. ● People on boats ● Windrush photos. <p>Graphical on-screen distortion appears across the images and across some of the additional headlines.</p> <p>Final look and feel to be created in the edit.</p>	<p>Music as is suitable</p> <p>Sound to accompany the on-screen distortion</p> <p>We start to hear sounds from the house interior. Everyday kitchen sounds, crockery being moved and a distant selection of voices speaking but we are unable to work out what is being said.</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>PULL BACK TO SEE: MUM alone in kitchen studying flickering screen and scrolling on a tablet. Header of mock-up dodgy site e.g ‘immigration watch’ or similar. standard/normal into more mad conspiracy stories online. A darkness around her, living in the shadows, secretive, furtive.</p> <p>FADE TO BLACK</p>	<p>Above family sounds continue</p>	

<p>CUT TO INT. KITCHEN, DAY: Mum stands up and takes Liam’s plate and opens the bin and flips the slices of uneaten barmbrack in.</p> <p>Sitting at the dinner table</p>	<p>Sound of the bin closing and slamming shut. Background sounds of family life continue. The tea has been had and is over. There are just cups on the table and a few plates.</p> <p>DAD: Are you okay love?</p> <p>MUM: (Tense) Liam isn’t hungry, okay?</p>	<p>8.0</p>
<p>TITLE OVER BLACK/ family living room wall. Family members walk past the title of the film to bring it in and out of shot by obscuring it. The film title is part of the set and is not on a separate card.</p> <p>“A FAMILY TEA” (working title)</p>	<p>Family sounds/dishes/plates/the bin continue</p>	<p>10.0</p>
<p>Liam looks up at Mum quizzically. Mum is looking at her laptop.</p> <p>Depressed, irritated delivery</p> <p>STARTING TO BE MORE INSISTANT</p> <p>GETTING ANNOYED/UPSET</p> <p>TRYING TO WORK IT OUT</p>	<p>DAD: What’s up love?</p> <p>MUM: Nothing ok.</p> <p>DAD: Well, I can see there’s something wrong</p> <p>MUM: Didn’t you hear me Ray? I told you, nothing’s wrong. People like me are always fine. People like me always have to be quiet...</p> <p>LIAM: Hang on...mum? Are you ok?</p> <p>MUM: Nothing’s wrong at all Liam..... Actually, nobody really wants to know what I’ve got to say... I’m always fine, I’m invisible.</p> <p>LIAM: Mum, it’s obvious you’re not fine. I want to hear what's wrong.</p> <p>(Beat)</p> <p>MUM: I am not important and my opinion isn’t important. So I’ll just keep my mouth shut...(mutters)...I don’t want to feel any worse...</p> <p>DAD: It’s because you didn’t get that promotion? Isn’t it?</p> <p>LIAM: I am so sorry Mum...</p>	

<p>LIAM gets up and tries to hug MUM but she brushes him off.</p> <p>SHE GOES TO LEAVE BUT REMAINS IN THE ROOM AND SITS DOWN</p> <p>AWKWARD GLANCES BETWEEN FATHER AND SON</p>	<p>MUM: Don't..... I'm getting the ...MUMBLES</p> <p>(Beat)</p>	<p>52.</p>
<p>Mum looks up and speaks to Dad and Liam. BIG LINE</p> <p>Upset look on his face</p> <p>Mum gestures towards the screen. ANNOYED</p> <p>The LinkedIn profile of the male nurse is seen on Mum's laptop screen.</p>	<p>MUM: It's so unfair. I try <i>so</i> hard and they just bring them <i>all</i> in from abroad...</p> <p>DAD: Come on now, love. You said, we need more nurses don't we? (changed from: you said we have a shortage of nurses)</p> <p>LIAM: Yeah, and what about your friend from work, she's from Nigeria isn't she?</p> <p>MUM: That's different. She worked damned hard for it. More than he's done (gesturing towards the screen). People like me are out of fashion.</p> <p>LIAM: What are you talking about? He's got a PhD in nursing and over ten years' senior experience. There's no shame in losing out to someone like him.</p>	<p>1.21</p>
<p>Visibly upset and confused (START OF 2 MIN VERSION)</p>	<p>MUM: I did not lose out, I was just ignored . (changed from I am just ignored)</p> <p>I feel invisible and belittled. Every week I train them. I've done what they wanted (beat) and look how they repay me.</p> <p>LIAM: (Under his breath) Oh Mum.</p> <p>DAD: Hang on Mary....These people bring their skills and experience. And let's face it, you said how short staffed you are on your ward since Brexit.....we need these people to fill these jobs.</p> <p>(changed from we need more medical professionals to fill these jobs).</p>	<p>1.22</p>



<p>sitting here. DESPERATE DELIVERY</p> <p>INDIGNANT</p> <p>DEFENSIVE</p> <p>Dad shakes his head. Liam shoots him a look, understanding Dad is tense.</p> <p>Mary has not come back to this - she looks confused</p>	<p>MUM: Well, there are loads of us who agree immigration is not just about taking our jobs, this is about changing the face of Britain. They are replacing us. I've listened to podcasts and seen the proof on Youtube. This is all being hidden from us.</p> <p>LIAM: Who's us Mum?</p> <p>MUM: My friends online.</p> <p>LIAM: Who are these 'friends' of yours? Do you believe <i>everything</i> you read online? Don't you realise they could be <i>anyone</i> using a fake profile, even a bot!</p> <p>MUM: These are honest people Liam, patriots. (beat) We just want the best for our country, and I know who I would rather trust.</p> <p>We are just concerned about all these people coming in. Mainstream media can't be trusted, we know who owns it; the elites have an agenda!</p> <p>DAD: Now its the BBC's fault, come on Mary</p> <p>(original)You always used to love the BBC, what's changed?</p>	<p>2.33</p>
<p>EXPLAINING WITH KNOWLEDGE</p> <p>JUSTIFYING</p> <p>(END OF TWO MINUTE VERSION)</p>	<p>LIAM: Mum, listen, journalists fact check; the press association has a set of regulations on truth and accuracy, they have lawyers. There are even <i>laws</i> to ensure accuracy. They will get sued if they publish fake news.</p> <p>MUM: It's those elites who have the lawyers. They've got it all sewn up to keep us quiet.</p> <p>LIAM: But those websites you go on...<i>who are these people?</i> In these online sites, there's no fact checking, no accountability, no regulation... Anyone can say anything and you just swallow it whole?</p> <p>Don't you think you should at least check that the things they say are actually true?</p>	<p>3.10</p>
<p>BRUSH OFF</p>	<p>MUM: I haven't got time for fact checking Liam...</p>	



<p>CHANGE OF MOOD HAPPENS HERE</p> <p>Mum mops her moist eyes.</p> <p>(Under his breath, rolling his eyes.)</p> <p>(START OF ONE MINUTE VERSION)</p> <p>BIG LINE</p> <p>LIAM gets up and walks up and down. DAD watches, understanding he is upset.</p> <p>UPSET AND DEFENSIVE</p> <p>QUESTIONING</p> <p>ANNOYED AND UPSET</p> <p>The pace of delivery increases and agitation. (still pissed off)</p> <p>(END OF ONE MINUTE VERSION)</p> <p>DAD is visibly upset. His eyes moisten. GETS UP FROM THE TABLE AND TAKES A BREATHER</p>	<p>LIAM: If you've got time to read this online stuff, then surely you've got time to check to see if it's true.</p> <p>MUM: My friends show me the truth.</p> <p>DAD: But have you ever met any of them?</p> <p>MUM: We chat online, they do their research, that's why we know the truth.</p> <p>DAD: (Under his breath, rolling his eyes.) Truth? These people wouldn't know the truth if it smacked them in the face.</p> <p>MUM: There are too many immigrants.</p> <p>LIAM: What about Amal? That would make my wife and child immigrants too.</p> <p>(changed from)What about Amal? That would make Amal and our child immigrants too.</p> <p>MUM: I love Amal, she's great. You know that. She's different, she's family.</p> <p>LIAM: OK, well <i>that's</i> good to know! (said with a touch of sarcasm)</p> <p>(pause)...so what are you actually saying, Mum?</p> <p>MUM: (Tapping the table) I'm saying that I think there's something bigger going on here. <i>It's called the Great Replacement</i>, bringing people in from <i>alien cultures</i>. They have no history or attachment to Britain...it's scary .</p> <p>DAD: Come on now Mary, can you hear what you are saying, I mean...</p>	<p>3.31</p> <p>4.07</p>
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<p>BIG Pause</p> <p>VERY UPSET</p> <p>HE IS MEASURED AND MAKING IT CLEAR THE POSSIBLE IMPACT OF HER IDEAS AND OPINIONS</p> <p>REACHES OUT TO HOLD HER HAND. FROM A PLACE OF LOVE</p>	<p>LIAM: Mum, are you sure you're okay with me and Amal moving back to the UK from Kosovo to start a family? I mean, according to you and your online mates, we shouldn't be allowed to come here at all.</p> <p>MUM: I told you; that's different.</p> <p>DAD: I can't understand how you'd prefer to believe people you have never met, rather than your own family... If you go on like this, we might not be able to see our grandchildren grow up.</p> <p>Do you really think you can trust everything you read online?</p> <p>(Long pause)</p>	<p>4.38</p>
<p>Ray and Mary at the kitchen table, looking online together at a fact check site. There is a picture of Amal, Liam and baby on the side. (could be a mock up pic of them outside buckingham palace - easter egg to the climate change sketch) There is sunlight coming in the room. Everyone is smiling.</p>	<p>DIFFERENT ACTORS CLOTHES</p>	<p>4.42</p>
<p>CUT TO: Photo of Amal and Liam from the sideboard. Close up photo of them smiling.</p>	<p>There is a hint of the sound distortion but it quickly clears.</p>	<p>4.44</p>
<p>CUT TO: Montage of stills / short video clips. Amal and the baby; baby's first birthday party; mum holding the baby and looking thrilled; photo or montage of the birthday party or a more informal get together.</p> <p>FADE TO BLACK</p>	<p>music as is suitable</p> <p>(for gaps and pauses and on screen action)</p>	<p>4.50</p>



		5.00
	THE END	

Appendix 2. Radio phone in 1.

Shooting script Radio chat show 1 x 6 minutes

Script Notes

- A radio health chat show also streamed on-line with basic video coverage
- Fixed camera in the studio for streaming platforms - three cameras
- Experts are Professor Van Der Graaf
- Influencer - Xavier
- Caller - Hakeem
- The following are dialogue pointers for an improvised conversation between the actors.
- In the edit this channel hop to cookery programme might come in the beginning of the following scene - this could be adjusted in the edit.
- Improvisation of the script below - a strong guide script
- Guests speak in to microphone on stands
- Guests do not wear headphones
- No branding in the studio
- The prof holds up the graphics on a paper print out in front of her - picks up from the coffee table. Printed polly board and points to it and rest it on her lap.
- The caller is never seen in vision only heard in audio

Props

- (2nd graph on covid vaccine roll out)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-59569026>

[She's pointing to a specific line on the graph - Third figure from the top]

- Chart 1 (60s roll out of vaccines) to go in here:

<https://ourworldindata.org/polio>

Ear piece for Anna

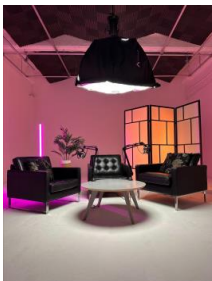
Microphones on stands

Speaker - bluetooth on the table

laptop

charts on mounted poly board

Studio look and feel



“Radio Call-In - Anti-Vax”

Running time: 5.53 mins approx



Visuals	Dialogue / Sound	Time
<p>Fade from black</p>		
<p>We see channel hopping on screen - we get a second or two glimpse of the following. The above is full screen. CUT TO: the weather CUT TO: a sports match with German commentator CUT TO: a music video with song in Danish CUT TO: a black and white film. CUT TO: a history documentary</p>	<p>Dialogue from the different channels cutting and distorting - talking, music, drama, sport, history etc. NOTES: need some product placement / advertising</p>	<p>6</p>
<p>CUT TO: a cookery programme. very calm delivery in contrast to the frantic channel hopping and speed of the earlier programmes snippets.</p>	<p>COOK: ...two tablespoons of sugar</p>	<p>10</p>
<p>CUT TO INT STUDIO:</p> <p>Two/three cameras</p> <p>A presenter, ANNA sits behind a radio microphone with two guests</p> <p>PROF. VAN DER GRAAF (German, 52 years, very calm and in control, small stature, tight bob, easy smile but</p>		




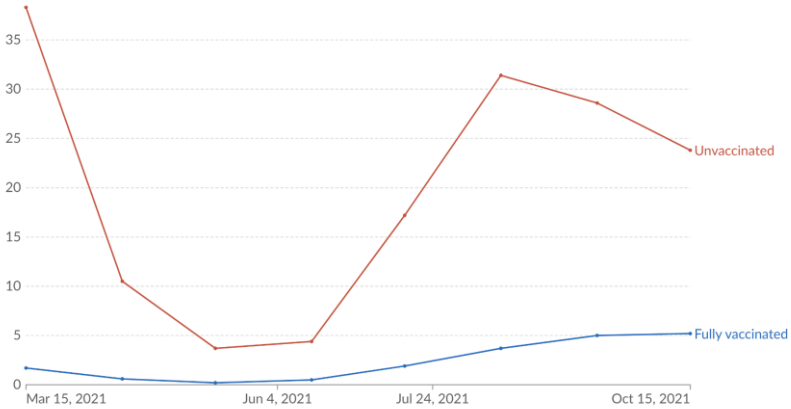
<p>doesn't take prisoners, wholesome looking)</p> <p>ANNA (40s/ 50s, Vanessa Feltz lookalike, smartly dressed, stacks of jewellery, blonde, not to be messed with)</p> <p>XAVIER (French, 50 years old) We join the radio chat part way through. XAVIER is enraged and gets up, starts to leave the studio. Two takes: one swearing "for fuck's sake" and the other so it's not heard and is under his breath.</p> <p>We join the show mid way through.</p> <p>Strong assertive delivery</p> <p>Take a version with no swearing</p>	<p>ANNA: Please calm down Xavier.</p> <p>XAVIER: You people calm down. For for fuck's sake (/mutters under breath).</p>	<p>16</p>
<p>INT STUDIO: chat show</p> <p>XAVIER glares at ANNA and sits back down</p> <p>CALM DELIVERY, CREDIBLE He takes his seat again and sits by the microphone. He continues, tries to gain control and then loses it again.</p> <p>Close up on ANNA and PROFESSOR look at each other while he is in the middle of his rant. Xavier is</p>	<p>ANNA: Please sit down Xavier, This is your chance to have your say, please go on...</p> <p>XAVIER: Ok, (deep breath, deflating, calmer and then a little patronisingly) let me explain...The deep state is pulling the strings, big pharma is out to kill us all. (getting more wound up again or deflated?) Those vaccines were rolled out far too fast, how can anyone trust that they are safe? The vaccine changes our DNA so we won't even be human any more.</p>	

<p>waving his arms and getting into it.</p>		
<p>SOBER DELIVERY BUT SHOCKED</p>	<p>PROF. VAN DER GRAAF (quietly under her breath..."seriously?"...But the response we hear is sober in its delivery.) Are we meant to believe this? DNA and vaccines do not work like that, and it just shows the lack of knowledge and evidence from Xavier.</p>	<p>41</p>
<p>SOBER DELIVERY - CLEAR FACTS ARE STATED</p>	<p>XAVIER: (Getting wound up again) What do you mean evidence Professor?...You can see the evidence with politicians. Cold, unblinking eyes, strange body language, lack of empathy they are not fully human. Their DNA has been altered by the vaccine!</p> <p>(Pause. XAVIER is waving his arms about.)</p>	
<p>ASSERTIVE AND MEASURED</p>	<p>PROF. VAN DER GRAAF: Erm... hang on.... you cannot alter DNA this is just wrong</p>	<p>1.04</p>
<p>HE STARTS TO NOW LOSE HIS COOL</p>	<p>XAVIER: It's biowarfare through vaccines! They spread these bio-agents using the vaccines by inserting microchips to track and control us. They've got us right where they want us. Power, control, domination. It's clear for all to see if we only open our eyes! You all need to wake up!</p>	
<p>CALM AND ASSERTIVE DELIVERY</p>	<p>ANNA: Thank you Xavier... Now, Professor Van der Graaf, what are your thoughts on this?</p>	<p>1.15</p>
<p>Looking around at the guests in the studio. SHOCKED BUT MEASURED. CLEAR AND CREDIBLE DELIVERING THE FACTS</p>	<p>PROF. VAN DER GRAAF: Xavier has provided not one shred of evidence to back up his claims. There is no substantiated evidence that vaccines are used for population control, or mind control, or to change our DNA, or whatever else. All this is nonsense and fear mongering and is really dangerous.</p>	
<p>ASSERTIVE</p>	<p>ANNA: If it's not mind control, what effect do vaccines have?</p>	<p>1.56</p>
<p>Calm tone, trying to retain order between the guests</p>	<p>PROF VAN DER GRAAF: Vaccines have had a pivotal role in eradicating diseases like smallpox and reducing death from many others like measles. It's estimated that 154 million deaths have been prevented since the 70s due to vaccines.</p>	
<p>Addressing all the guests clearly so the facts sink in with them.</p>	<p>Vaccines are cost effective and they are vital to keep us all safe.</p>	

<p>ANNA, gestures toward her ear piece - puts her hand to her ear.</p> <p>(START OF 90 SEC VERSION) HAKEEM (62 years old and living in Austria but his heritage is from a country in the Middle East. His accent is fully German/Austrian)</p> <p>Friendly. Kind and supportive</p> <p>NERVOUS</p> <p>Friendly. Kind and supportive</p> <p>RESURRENCE IN HER VOICE AND SENSITIVITY</p> <p>END OF 90 SECOND VERSION</p> <p>START OF 3 MINUTE VERSION</p> <p>CLEAR DELIVERY</p>	<p>ANNA: Thank you Professor, that's very helpful. Let's have our first caller, Hakeem. Hakeem, what do you think about vaccines?</p> <p>HAKEEM: (OS) Hi Anna.</p> <p>ANNA: Have we spoken before Hakeem?</p> <p>HAKEEM: (OS) No, I'm a first time caller that's why I'm a bit nervous.</p> <p>ANNA: No need to be nervous. We are all friends here Hakeem. So how are you feeling about what we've been discussing?</p> <p>HAKEEM: (OS) I agree with the Professor. I just had to call to say she is completely correct. That other guy he's, he's on another planet....</p> <p>I had a friend at school who died because she got measles. That doesn't happen these days because of vaccines. People like that guy have forgotten how those diseases affected our lives.</p> <p>BEAT - the callers story sinks in with the guests</p> <p>PROF. VAN DER GRAAF: Thank you Hakeem. Yes, vaccines are a really safe and effective means of preventing diseases.</p> <p>XAVIER: (trying to butt in) but but</p> <p>HAKEEM: (OS) I wish we had the opportunity to be vaccinated as kids; Sarah wouldn't have died. We didn't have a choice.</p> <p>ANNA: Thank you for your insights Hakeem, really tragic. I hear you; a friend of mine at school died because they didn't have the Meningitis vaccine. Professor Van Der Graaf, what are your thoughts on immunisation?</p> <p>PROF. VAN DER GRAAF: All over the world there are immunisation programmes saving lives from diseases like measles.</p>	<p>2.49</p> <p>3.27</p>
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<p>ANNOYANCE IN HERE VOICE</p> <p>(Emotionally wound up in an incoherent, exasperated rant) play with the level of exasperation - several versions. Needs to be believable.</p> <p>PROF. VAN DER GRAAF holds up a graph showing a big drop. She places it in front of herself. CALM DELIVERY IN CONTRAST TO XAVIER</p> <p>The camera zooms in on the professor. Direct delivery - on higher ground...</p> <p>To be filmed in wide shot plus close-up detail is required to appear on screen for approx 2 seconds.</p> <p>Reference only: [Do Not include on screen: Source: How Anti-Vaccination Trends Vex Herd Immunity - WSJ]</p>	<p>PROF. VAN DER GRAAF: But, according to <i>Xavier</i> and his anti-vax friends, they suggest that we let people suffer and die because of wild stories and zero evidence?</p> <p>XAVIER: (Offended, getting a bit annoyed again) It's totally outrageous! I don't want people to die. (Emotionally wound up in an incoherent, exasperated rant) You're the ones in denial, the Covid vaccine killed over 17 million people. I saw the proof on social media.</p> <p>PROF. VAN DER GRAAF: Look at this. (Pointing to the slump on chart) A huge drop in measles cases in the US after the introduction of its vaccine in 1963. Clear evidence that vaccines are effective.</p> <div> <p>Shot in the Arm The number of U.S. measles cases declined dramatically after a vaccine was introduced in 1963, preventing an estimated 35 million measles cases.</p> <p>Measles vaccine introduced</p> <p>2014: 644 cases</p> <p>Note: Data after 2012 are from provisional reports. Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, via Project Tycho The Wall Street Journal</p> </div>	<p>4.00</p> <p>4.23</p>
<p>https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-59569026</p> <p>Third figure from the top.</p> <p>https://ourworldindata.org/polio</p>		



		4.24															
<p>CUT TO INT STUDIO:</p> <p>She speaks in a measured way, very clearly.</p> <p>[REFERENCE ONLY: Do not include on screen: Source: England: COVID-19 monthly death rate by vaccination status, All ages (2nd graph on covid vaccine roll out)]</p> <p>VERY ANNOYED AND ALSO TRY A TAKE AS DEFLATED</p> <p>VERY ASSERTIVE AND ANNOYED</p> <p>Fade to black with the impression the conversation</p>	<p>She holds up the next chart</p> <p>England: COVID-19 monthly death rate by vaccination status, All ages </p> <p>Death rates are calculated as the number of deaths in each group, divided by the total number of people in this group. This is given per 100,000 people.</p>  <table border="1"> <caption>Estimated data from the graph</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Date</th> <th>Unvaccinated (per 100,000)</th> <th>Fully vaccinated (per 100,000)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Mar 15, 2021</td> <td>38</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jun 4, 2021</td> <td>10</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jul 24, 2021</td> <td>32</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Oct 15, 2021</td> <td>24</td> <td>5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Data source: Office for National Statistics (2023) OurWorldinData.org/coronavirus CC BY</p> <p>Note: Unvaccinated people have not received any dose. Partially-vaccinated people are excluded. Fully-vaccinated people have received all doses prescribed by the initial vaccination protocol. The mortality rate is age-standardized to account for the different vaccination rates of older and younger people.</p> <p>PROF. VAN DER GRAAF: And look here The death rates among the unvaccinated are much higher than among those fully vaccinated. As you can see here (POINTING AT THE GRAPH), the evidence supports a really obvious choice.</p> <p>XAVIER: You are delusional or corrupt! The evidence about the dangers of vaccines is clear to everyone. <i>You</i> scientists are only doing the research for your Big Pharma pay masters. (forcefully)</p> <p>PROF. VAN DER GRAAF: (exasperated) Actually, my colleagues are <i>not</i> paid or controlled by Big Pharma. These conspiracy theories are pure fiction.</p> <p>Anyone can examine our research unlike social media ‘evidence’ which is often nothing but magical thinking and dangerous information.</p> <p>ANNA: The dangers of misinformation on social media and the importance of vaccines are clear to me. But, in a free society we all have the right to choose. (Pause and fade)</p>	Date	Unvaccinated (per 100,000)	Fully vaccinated (per 100,000)	Mar 15, 2021	38	2	Jun 4, 2021	10	1	Jul 24, 2021	32	3	Oct 15, 2021	24	5	<p>4.57</p> <p>5.53</p>
Date	Unvaccinated (per 100,000)	Fully vaccinated (per 100,000)															
Mar 15, 2021	38	2															
Jun 4, 2021	10	1															
Jul 24, 2021	32	3															
Oct 15, 2021	24	5															



<p>is coming to a conclusion and the main points have been made by all speakers and to some extent they have heard each other. Leading into the next video... we see the guest informally chatting to each other</p> <p>Repetition of the montage at the start The spoon fed imagery seen at the start of the film is seen again.</p> <p>END OF 3 MIN SECTION</p>		
	<p>THE END</p>	

Appendix 3. Radio phone in 2.

Shooting script

Radio chat show 1 x 2 minutes

Script Notes

- A radio health chat show also streamed on-line with basic video coverage
- Fixed camera in the studio for streaming platforms - three cameras
- Experts are Prof Van Der Graaf
- Influencer - Xavier
- Caller - Holistic healer
- The following are dialogue pointers for an improvised conversation between the actors.
- Improvisation of the script below - a strong guide script
- Guests speak into microphones on stands
- Guests do not wear headphones
- No branding in the studio
- The caller is never seen in vision only heard in audio

Props

Ear piece for Anna

Microphones on stands

Speaker - bluetooth on the table

Laptop on the table

Studio look and feel



“Radio Call in - Herd Immunity”

Running time: 2.46 mins approx



Visuals	Dialogue / Sound	Time
<p>PROF. VAN DER GRAAF (German, 52 years, very calm and in control, small stature, tight bob, easy smile but doesn't take prisoners, wholesome looking, measured.)</p> <p>ANNA (40s/ 50s, Vanessa Feltz lookalike, smartly dressed, stacks of jewellery, blonde, not to be messed with)</p> <p>XAVIER (French, 50 years old)</p> <p>Holistic healer (in his 30 years, very new age and anti science. 100% believes in these theories and ideas. He is not a drifter).</p> <p>Fade up from black</p> <p>Starting off the next section of the show. ANNA checks her notes and lap top before starting to speak.</p> <p>UP BEAT AND ASSERTIVE DELIVERY</p> <p>VERY CONFIDENT DELIVERY</p> <p>STRESS ON LAST LINES AND SPELLS IT OUT</p>	<p>ANNA: Okay. I'm here with immunologist Professor Van Der Graaf and political commentator Xavier Lestrage.</p> <p>Let's speak to our next caller who is a holistic healer, but doesn't seem to have a name. Can you tell us where you are from?</p> <p>HEALER: (O.S.) I'm a sovereign citizen of the world. Thanks, Anna. I just want to say vaccines are filled with chemicals and preservatives that are harmful to the body. Keeping our Chakras in balance is the best way to keep ourselves healthy and <u>naturally achieve herd immunity</u>.</p>	<p>16</p>

<p>PROF is becoming frustrated.</p> <p>STRESS ON LAST LINES AND SPELLS IT OUT CHARMING TO XAVIER</p> <p>XAVIER IS HAPPY</p> <p>Cool, clear scientific delivery, measured.</p> <p>(START 1 MINUTE VERSION)</p> <p>XAVIER waves his hands either side of his head when he says “woo” - being very sarcastic</p> <p>VERY SERIOUS</p> <p>DEFENSIVE</p> <p>XAVIER rolls his eyes / shakes head from side to side.</p> <p>STILL DEFENSIVE AND SLIGHT ANNOYED</p> <p>Strong delivery and passionate</p> <p>ALOOF</p> <p>ANNOYED</p>	<p>PROF. VAN DER GRAAF: (Sharp, with a look to ANNA) Herd immunity without vaccines is <i>not</i> recommended because the death toll would be devastating.</p> <p>HEALER: (O.S.) Xavier would agree with me - Big Pharma kills far more with their evil vaccines.</p> <p>XAVIER: Of course it’s Big Pharma! It's just a form of population control.</p> <p>PROF. VAN DE GRAAF: With some diseases, to attain herd immunity we need a high percentage of the population to be vaccinated. It’s not just about protecting individuals—it’s about safeguarding entire communities, especially those who can’t be vaccinated due to medical conditions.</p> <p>HEALER: (O.S.) I’ve dedicated my life to helping people find natural ways to stay healthy.</p> <p>XAVIER: Woooo (/oh right)</p> <p>PROF. VAN DE GRAAF: What? No blood transfusions, no medical treatment?</p> <p>HEALER: (O.S. + level) That’s not what I meant.</p> <p>XAVIER: So what are <i>you</i> gonna use? Crystals? It’s the elites and Big Pharma you need to worry about. They are real, not some kind of bullshit.</p> <p>HEALER: (getting a bit annoyed) I don’t appreciate your mocking (/that.). I thought this was a safe space, you know, a debate from all sides?</p> <p>PROF. VAN DER GRAAF: Expecting a large number of people to just get infected and hope they survive is reckless and would lead to huge loss of life. Vaccines are the only safe way to attain herd immunity.</p> <p>HEALER: Yes but as Xavier said, you’re trying to control us.</p> <p>PROF. VAN DER GRAAF: Look, whatever your name is, I’m not here to control anyone. I’m here to stop needless suffering. We all have a responsibility to protect the vulnerable in our society. That’s what it means to be human.</p>	
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<p>The ego is big and cheeky</p> <p>Sarcastically</p> <p>Two takes - one with swearing and one muttering under breath.</p> <p>Jokey and winks to the camera - hold and then chats to guests and fade to black</p> <p>(END OF THE ONE MINUTE VERSION)</p>	<p>HEALER: (cheeky) Well I think everyone needs to check out my website. I have great reviews and offers currently. (Anna starts talking over his last word)</p> <p>ANNA: I'm cutting you off there, sovereign citizen.</p> <p>So science says vaccines save lives. Professor Graaf's numbers don't lie. Xavier, do you agree with our caller's alternative approach to vaccines for herd immunity?</p> <p>XAVIER: I already said, it's all about big Pharma and silencing dissent not crystal healing for fuck's sake! (/mumbling under his breath)....</p> <p>ANNA: When it comes to my husband's viagra, I'll give Big Pharma all the encouragement (with a wink) it wants.</p>	<p>2.16</p>
	<p>THE END</p>	



Appendix 4. Radio phone in 3.

Shooting script

Radio chat show 1x2 mins

Script Notes

- A radio health chat show also streamed on-line with basic video coverage
- Fixed camera in the studio for streaming platforms - three cameras
- Experts are Prof Van Der Graaf
- Influencer - Xavier
- Caller - Iva
- The following are dialogue pointers for an improvised conversation between the actors.
- Improvisation of the script below - a strong guide script
- Guests speak into microphones on stands
- Guests do not wear headphones
- No branding in the studio
- The caller is never seen in vision only heard in audio

Props

Ear piece for Anna

Microphones on stands

Speaker - bluetooth on the table

Laptop on the table

Studio look and feel



“Freedom of Speech”

Running time: 2.36 mins approx

Visuals	Dialogue / Sound	Time
<p>CUT TO INT STUDIO: Radio/tv chat show.</p> <p>Two/three cameras</p> <p>Fade up from black</p> <p>A presenter, ANNA sits in the studio with her two guests</p> <p>She gestures to her ear piece</p> <p>PROF. VAN DER GRAAF (German, 52 years, very calm and in control, small stature, tight bob, easy smile but doesn't take prisoners, wholesome looking)</p>		



<p>ANNA (40s/ 50s, Vanessa Feltz lookalike, smartly dressed, stacks of jewellery, blonde, not to be messed with)</p> <p>XAVIER (French, 50 years old)</p> <p>IVA (caller from Slovenia. She is well educated)</p> <p>Anna looks at her laptop and around at the guests and gestures to her ear piece</p> <p>Very aloof and measured</p> <p>[Whilst the Professor is challenging the caller about the institute ... (ANNA touches the earpiece and says something to the producer... we don't hear it but she looks slightly concerned. She is asking them to do a quick Google on the institute)]</p>	<p>ANNA: Okay. Let's have our next caller. We've got Iva on the line. Iva you're live on air with Professor Van Der Graaf, a Professor of Immunology and political activist Xavier.</p> <p>IVA: (O.S.) Hi all and my name is actually pronounced IVA.</p> <p>I'm loving this debate. Thank you for having me on because women of my age tend to be invisible. I heard, during the pandemic, governments were hiding the truth about vaccines from us.</p> <p>XAVIER: That's right, Iva, it's all Big Pharma and the Global Elites.</p> <p>IVA: (O.S.) I also heard that the Truth and Lies Institute found strong evidence that vaccines cause untold death and harm.</p> <p>PROF: Truth and Lies institute?</p>	
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<p>Delivered fast. Touches ear piece / gestures. clear, assertive and annoyed</p> <p>(START OF ONE MINUTE VERSION)</p> <p>(END OF ONE MINUTE VERSION)</p> <p>SCATHING AND LOOK TO CAMERA AND THEN TALKS TO HER GUESTES</p> <p>(Try 2 takes with and without laughs)</p>	<p>ANNA: Hang on...my producer has told me you have a leading role in the Truth and Lies Institute, yet you come on my show misrepresenting yourself as a member of the public. How can anyone trust you,...your institute? We can't even see who funds you on your website.</p> <p>XAVIER: All this vaccine research is funded by who knows who? - the global elite (waving arms about)!</p> <p>PROF: Xavier's got a good point. We don't always know who funds research, but in academia you can see where the money comes from.</p> <p>ANNA: Are there any other differences in academia?</p> <p>PROF: Unlike your caller, you can't hide your source of funding and you have to declare conflict of interest.</p> <p>IVA: (O.S.) (Strident and slightly aggressive) We are freedom of speech, freedom of information and freedom of assembly.</p> <p>ANNA: (Not amused by IVA, she rolls her eyes) Well, I'm all for freedom, Iva, but Professor are you saying that these think tanks and institutes of Iva's are sowing disinformation?...</p> <p>PROF: Absolutely. Many of them benefit their funders, not the public.</p> <p>ANNA: - . (ha ha) Well, it seems to me that if social media doesn't have fact checking, these lies travel around the world before the truth has even got its boots on. (ha ha) So listeners... do your research! I know I will.</p> <p>Fade to black</p>
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		2.36 mins
	THE END	



Appendix 5. Climate Change 1.

Shooting script

FILM 1 x 2/3 mins

Script Notes

- This script responds to the edit comments from the 4th November meeting with DMU and Hamlett Films and additional discussion on 25th November 2024
- PRESENTER based on black female or Asian presenter on GB News.
- Shot on green screen - with archive insert behind in post production
- Shot multiple camera in a studio
- Use of on screen graphics and illustrations applied in the edit
- TRUE OR FALSE questions have been removed from this script as requested to ensure reporter sketch works better.
- Due to production implications we would consider the reporter standing in the rain holding a brolly and not sitting in an illustrated car.
- Ducks, rain and water levels are represented as per illustrations on live action and can rise to ankles/knees/waist and to their shoulders and over head.
- The backdrop is a deserted Horse Guards Parade and St.James’s Parade or another suitable backdrop.(could be a generic backdrop if any issue with archive)
- The rain is shown as comical illustrated drawings on top of live action. for example as white illustrated ‘dashes’ animating across the screen.
- Illustration example of rain and rising water and creative - as per Captain pug wash style
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gR3ZUCGhA>



Working title

“Climate Change Reporter Sketch”

Running time: 1.40 mins approx

Visuals	Dialogue / Sound	Time
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<p>TITLE OVER BLACK:</p> <p>Branding as per suitable style TV chat shows such as GB News etc.</p> <p>Animated title for the start of a news show as per standard news show.</p> <p>Will work on a title for this in the edit.</p> <p>English style news animation.</p>	<p>Suitable jingle music</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>Reporter (glamour puss with loads of make up) wearing mackintosh standing in the rain, holding an umbrella and a microphone on the other hand. It's pouring with rain. She is preparing to be on camera but the camera is already rolling.</p> <p>The backdrop is a deserted Horse Guards Parade and St.James's Parade or another suitable backdrop.</p> <p>The rain is shown as comical illustrated drawings on top of live action. for example as white illustrated 'dashes' animating across the screen.</p>	<p>There is the sound of rain falling. This gets louder during the sketch.</p>	<p>7</p>
<p>To camera</p> <p>ARMS GESTURE TO THE RAIN. HAIR GETTING WET IN THE RAIN</p> <p>SHOCKING</p> <p>STRESS ON NAMING THE EVENT FOR</p>	<p>REPORTER:</p> <p>Good morning, I'm Courtney Bishop-Johnson reporting live from Horse Guards Parade, London, where, due to an unexpected and relentless downpour, today's Trooping the Colour ceremony has been officially cancelled.</p>	



<p>NON UK AUDIENCE</p>	<p>Trooping the Colour is normally one of the most iconic and grandiose events in London, steeped in centuries of history and royal tradition.</p>	<p>30</p>
<p>CUT TO: Stills (ideally live action video footage) of Horse Guards Parade and Trooping of the Colour on sunny days. (archive)</p> <p>The reporter is heard in voice over and the archive is full screen.</p> <p>DESMISSIVE OF MILITARY REVIEW Body language number to stress high levels - 14,000 and 200</p>	<p>V/O: REPORTER: What should have begun with a formal parade with the King and more than fourteen hundred soldiers, 200 horses is essentially..... a military review.</p>	<p>35</p>
<p>CUT TO: Reporter wearing mackintosh standing in the rain speaking to camera - WS.</p> <p>A TAKE WITH AND WITHOUT COAT?</p> <p>Outside it's pouring with rain. The backdrop is a deserted Horse Guards Parade and St.James's Parade.</p> <p>We begin to see the water level rise and puddles appear illustrated in a comical fashion on top of live action.</p> <p>A duck floats past comically floating on raising water levels at the bottom of the screen. Ducks swim in small puddle on top of live action behind the presenter</p>		<p>57</p>



<p>LOOKS DOWN TOWARD HER KNEES AT RAISING WATER LEVELS AND DUCKS ON TOP - FOLLOW WITH EYES ALONG SCREEN</p>	<p>REPORTER: But the local duck population from neighbouring St.James’s Park, has made the most of the soggy weather and are making their presence known.</p>	
<p>CUT TO: Close Up of ducks swimming in water pools forming due to the rain. (illustration)</p> <p>GESTURES TO DUCKS BEHINDS HER LEFT AND RIGHT - MAIN FOCUS DOWN THE LENS</p>	<p>V/O REPORTER: The ducks are revelling in the conditions, almost as if they know it is their moment.</p>	<p>1.08</p>
<p>CUT TO: Reporter wearing mackintosh standing in the rain.</p> <p>Outside it’s pouring with rain. The backdrop is a deserted Horse Guards Parade and St.James’s Parade. The water level outside continues to rise from the bottom of the screen upwards and is now at knee level to the report.</p> <p>SHRUGS SHOULDERS AND SHAKES HEAD</p> <p>THUMBS UP SIGN. LOOKS DOWN AT DUCKS FLAATING PAST HER NOW AT CHEST LEVELS - FOLLOWS FROM LEFT TO RIGHT</p> <p>LOOKS CAM RIGHT AND OFF SCREEN - LOOKS OF FEAR AT WAVES OFF SCREEN</p> <p>RAISES CHIN AS WATER LEVELS RISE AND SCREAMS</p>	<p>REPORTER: Climate change 'experts' (sarcastic) are up in arms over the bad weather. However, the recent snowfall in the Arctic certainly proves that the Earth is not warming up!</p> <p>So from me, and the ducks, on just another typical rainy day in London, despite all the hysteria, back to the studio. (Presenter makes a thumbs up sign.)</p> <p>[Presenter looks round with a look of fear to see a wave of flood water coming towards her.]</p> <p>REPORTER OS: Shit! [Sound of glugging / bubbles / water. Presenter screaming OS.]</p>	<p>01.34</p>



<p>Focus on the face of mad / pissed off squirrels/cows standing in water logged fields with illustrated high water levels around them/birds on top of semi submerged roof tops of garden sheds. (news insert of archive)</p> <p>A family of ducks float alongside the reporter's head and the water is shown at wait level now.</p> <p>Picture jiggles and POV descends as there is a sound of water/ bubbles/ glugging and the cameraperson sinks.</p> <p>Shown by illustration raising above her head</p>		<p>1:40s ecs</p>
	<p>END</p>	

Appendix 6. Climate Change 2.

Shooting script

FILM 1 x 2/3 mins

Script Notes

- The audience are climate aware and this is unexpected for the presenter
- The show is trying to undermine the climate argument
- The audience are the voice of reason and push back on the presenter
- The audience says, so we get the answer from the audience which she does not expect
- Defending the indefensible, but where does she go from here
- Irrational beliefs
- The message is not hers, the presenter
- People on screen are not always right and give credit to the people.
- Client has suggested shortened versions may come from cutting out the question and answers alone.
- Box / cup / black bag - bits of papers with names on
- Archive of - high winds and very dry countryside in California, wild fires etc as is suitable and will be found for the edit. graphics or news headlines - several can flash up.
- Globe - from the project in Japan - spinning used in BBC climate change film, Image of industrial revolution - a chart, showing pollution from industrial revolution to 2025

Additional graphics options

- Prizes:
- Reusable coffee cup
- Loft insulation
- Household windmill
- Electric car... star prize!

“Climate Change #2”

Visuals	Dialogue / Sound	Time
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<p>Animated intro for the show - graphics and title of the show appears. Created in the edit.</p> <p>Presenter is perky and strident WALK OFF CAM LEFT ARMS OPEN WIDE</p> <p>Producer: facial expression looking slightly pensive. Off set by the cameras</p> <p>GESTURES TO THE AUDIENCE - OVER TOP OF CAMERA</p> <p>GESTURE TO IMAGE OF COFFEE CUP Big graphic of a reusable coffee mug flashes up on screen. (The coffee mug has the logo "Brain Box" - the 'a' of the brain is made up of a brain and 'o' of box is a square box). (or Logo Brain + Boxing Glove).</p> <p>HAND IN BAG AND PULLS OUT CARD WITH BRUNO WRITTEN ON IT</p> <p>LOOKS TO THE AUDIENCE AND POINT BRUNO</p>	<p><i>[Theme music for the show - jingle and sounds of clapping]</i></p> <p>Presenter:</p> <p>Welcome to Brain Box where we answer your questions on the tough topics of the day.</p> <p>This week climate change is in the hot seat. I'm Courtenay Bishop Johnson and I'm so excited to be with you tonight.</p> <p>no dialogue</p> <p>Okay, our fabulous potential prize winners asking the questions tonight are: Bruno, Birgit, Hakeem, and LUIGI</p> <p>... So, for a reusable coffee cup.</p> <p><i>(The presenter dips hand in a brain or boxing glove - possible graphic)</i></p> <p>Presenter: Okay Bruno, please ask your question.</p> <p>BRUNO: (O.S.) (strong, flat Dutch accent) Hi, this is Bruno from Ghent. I'm normally a DJ but it's great to be asking a</p>	



<p>LOOKS OFF CAMERA TO BRUNO</p> <p>TO CAM</p> <p>FIRM AND IN LOW VOICE</p> <p>SLIGHT GESTURE TO THE EAR PIECE</p> <p>VOICE OF GOD - SLOW BUILD</p> <p>The producer is looking worried. Close up of him speaking in his earpiece and being picked up by the presenter on screen. He's getting worked up (like Basil Fawltly).</p> <p>Graphic : "TRUE" on screen</p> <p>LOOKS AT GRAPHICS ON SCREEN</p> <p>Text of answer appears on screen: "Climate change has caused extreme temperatures. This is causing fires across the world to be more intense and more frequent." (with BRAIN BOX logo in the corner.)</p> <p>PULLS NEXT NAME OUT OF HAT AND LOOKS TOWARD AUDIENCE</p> <p>Graphic of loft insulation.</p> <p>SARCASTICALLY</p>	<p>question here. Okay Courtenay, is climate change the reason for the spread of fires in California?</p> <p>Presenter: Clearly that's <i>false</i> because the fires were caused by people...</p> <p><i>I saw on social media</i> someone's even been arrested!</p> <p>Producer VO: (through earpiece) No opinions Courtenay.</p> <p>Presenter:</p> <p>Answer Voice: The answer is TRUE.</p> <p>Climate change has caused extreme temperatures. This is causing fires across the world to be more intense and more frequent.</p> <p>Presenter: Okay, sorry Bruno. Coffee's bad for you anyway.</p> <p>Producer: Right Birgit, this is for the loft insulation.</p> <p>BIRGIT: (O.S.) Hi everyone, this is Birgit. I just have to say, I'm so proud of my hometown Oslo, the most beautiful city in the world. Have you seen our forests? Have you seen our river?</p> <p>Presenter: Great Birgit, we need the question.</p>	
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<p>QUICK GLARE AT THE PRODUCER</p> <p>PRESENTER DOES NOT BELIEVE THE RESULT AND LOOKS DISMISSIVE</p> <p>GESTURE TO BIRGIT IN THE AUDIENCE</p> <p>DIPS HAND IN THE BAG AND PULLS OUT CARD</p> <p>LOOKS IN TO AUDIENCE GESTURES TO THE ARCHIVE BEHIND OF THE WINDMILL</p> <p>Graphic on screen: "TRUE" Text of answer appears on screen: "Marine life is already set for extinction which will lead to the breakdown of the human food supply chain." Graphic of household windmill.</p> <p>LOOK OFF SCREEN AT PRODUCER</p> <p>CONFIDENT AND VERY FIRM His body language could be like Basil Fawltly.</p> <p>Graphics - "TRUE" on screen graphics</p>	<p>BIRGIT: (O.S.) If the average temperature of the earth increases beyond the 2 percent tipping point, could this be the end of civilization as we know it?</p> <p>Presenter: I think it's false. Seriously! A couple of degrees warmer would be welcome!</p> <p>Producer VO: (Through earpiece): I'm warning you, Courtney. Stop!</p> <p>Presenter</p> <p>Answer Voice: The answer is TRUE. Marine life is already set for extinction which will lead to the breakdown of the human food supply chain.</p> <p>Presenter: (Disappointed at getting the answer wrong) Oh. Sorry Birgit. Sorry I couldn't help cut your heating bills.</p> <p>Producer: action</p> <p>Next question. Okay, this is Hakeem for a household windmill, so you'll be able to watch me on your tv, for free!</p> <p>Hakeem: (O.S.) Hi, Hakeem here in Linz. Is it pollution from industry that is exacerbating climate change?</p> <p>Presenter: False. (Sharp look at producer) Oh come on! Without industry we would all be poor and I wouldn't have an ipad!</p> <p>Producer: (Through earpiece) You're coming across unhinged!</p>	
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<p>IS LOOKING IN SPACE LISTENING TO THE VOICE OF GOD</p> <p>PULLS CARD FROM THE BAG</p> <p>LOOKS AT AUDIENCE</p> <p>DOWN THE LENS</p> <p>Graphic on screen: "TRUE" Graphic of the answer appears on screen with Brain Box logo in corner: "Industrial pollution contributes to climate change by releasing greenhouse gases which trap heat and lead to global warming."</p> <p>PRODUCER GESTURES TO IT - Graphic of electric car.</p> <p>SHE IGNIRES HIM AND RAISES CHIN IN THE AIR</p> <p>Shot of the producer speaking into his ear piece again. The producer is looking really angry now. Graphics - "TRUE" on screen graphics</p> <p>PRODUCER LOOKS SHOCKED - SHRUGS AND SMILES TO CAMERA</p> <p>Archive; picture other countries vanishing underwater polar bears thin</p> <p>Graphic appears on screen: "TRUE"</p> <p>Graphic of answer on screen: "Rising sea levels and extreme weather mean people are forced to migrate."</p>	<p>Answer voice: The answer is True. Industrial pollution contributes to climate change by releasing greenhouse gases which trap heat and lead to global warming.</p> <p>[Music ups the ante.]</p> <p>Producer: action</p> <p>Presenter: Lucky LUIGI! Yours is the final question for a brand.</p> <p>New. Electric. Car.</p> <p>LUIGI:(O.S.) Hi, LUIGI from Sorrento here, I'm a carer and so this car would be a real bonus for me and my family. My question Courtney: does climate change increase migration?</p> <p>[Short burst of music.]</p> <p>Presenter: No way! It's to do with war and woke governments letting them all in!</p> <p>Producer: (Warning through earpiece) Courtney stop this now! (screaming)!</p> <p>Answer Voice: The answer is TRUE. Rising sea levels and extreme weather mean people are forced to migrate.</p>	
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<p>PRESENTER LOOKS WORRIED BUT PUTS ON A BRAVE FACE</p> <p>PRODUCER IS FURIOUS</p> <p>Fade to black</p> <p>Final end graphics for the show (suggested alternative ending: we have a graphic about the real impact of climate change)</p> <p>Like rolling credits over black:</p> <p>Answer 1 Climate change has caused extreme temperatures. This is causing fires across the world to be more intense and more frequent. Graphic to be provided by DMU</p> <p>Answer 2 Marine life is already set for extinction which will lead to the breakdown of the human food supply chain. Graphic to be provided by DMU</p> <p>Answer 3 Industrial pollution contributes to climate change by releasing greenhouse gases which trap heat and lead to global warming. Graphic to be provided by DMU</p> <p>Answer 4 Rising sea levels and extreme weather mean people are forced to migrate. Graphic to be provided by DMU</p> <p>Fade to black.</p>	<p>LUIGI: (O.S.) Oh no...sniffle, I wanted to sell that car so I can insulate my house, and buy a windmill to power my mother's life support machine! (sniffles) How could you! (Funny and tragic and confusing.) [The audience begins to jeer. Sounds of booing, heckling, "give him the car" chanted with booing on top.]</p> <p>Audience chants: Give him the car! Give him the car!</p> <p>Producer OS: Take her off. Cut, cut (overlapping with jeers)</p> <p>"Give him a car!"</p>	
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	T H E E N D	4.00 mins
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