Article:
Yar, M and Tzanelli, R orcid.org/0000-0002-5765-9856 (2019) Kidnapping for Fun and Profit? Voluntary Abduction, Extreme Consumption and Self-Making in a Risk Society. Hospitality and Society, 9 (2). 1. pp. 105-124. ISSN 2042-7913

https://doi.org/10.1386/hosp.9.2.105_1

Kidnapping for Fun and Profit?

Voluntary Abduction, Extreme Consumption and Self-Making in a Risk Society

Majid Yar and Rodanthi Tzanelli

Authors

Lead author (first name in article):
Majid Yar, Lancaster University.
Lancaster University Law School,
Bowland North,
Lancaster University,
Lancaster, LA1 4YN,
United Kingdom.
m.yar2@lancaster.ac.uk
Tel: 07855813033
Biographical note: Majid Yar is Professor of Criminology at Lancaster University. He has researched and published widely on sociology, criminology, culture, and media analysis.

Corresponding author:
Rodanthi Tzanelli, University of Leeds.
School of Sociology and Social Policy,
University of Leeds,
LEEDS,
LS2 9JT
United Kingdom.
r.tzanelli@leeds.ac.uk
rosetzanelli@gmail.com
Tel: 0113 343 8746
Fax: 0113 343 4415
Biographical note: Rodanthi Tzanelli is Associate Professor of Cultural Sociology at Leeds. Her research spans the sociology of culture and interdisciplinary study of mobilities (travel, tourism, technology and migration).

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Abstract

This paper explores the emerging phenomenon of 'staged kidnapping', a consumer-oriented experience in which individuals voluntarily subject themselves to abduction and associated experiences of detention, deprivation, interrogation and degradation. We explore the staging, presentation and consumption of voluntary abduction through an analysis of the online marketing and reporting of the phenomenon, to consider the ways new consumerist trends alter traditional notions of hospitality. We analyse the phenomenon's emergence within the twin theoretical frames of Beck's 'risk society' thesis and Lyng's account of 'voluntary risk-taking' as a form of 'edgework'. We argue that the framing and appeal of such experiences can be fruitfully located as an element in the reflexive production of the post-traditional self, a process that requires subjects to confront and manage (materially or symbolically) the conditions of risk and uncertainty that characterise contemporary inhospitable lifeworlds.

Key Words: consumption; edgework; hospitality; kidnapping; risk; simulation

Simulating kidnapping: consumerist transformations of crime in (in)hospitable contexts

In 1997, hot on the heels of massive success with the serial killer movie Se7en, director David Fincher released his follow-up, a thriller called The Game. It stars Michael Douglas as Nicholas van Orton, a successful investment banker who is mired in a life crisis – he is divorced, haunted by the suicide of his father, estranged from his family, and seemingly living a life as denuded of joy as it is replete with financial and material wealth. For his 48th birthday (the anniversary of his father's death), his younger brother Conrad (Sean Penn) gifts him a voucher for participation in an unspecified 'game', offered by a company called Consumer Recreation Services (CRS). Visiting the CRS offices, Nicholas is subjected to various physical and psychological assessments by staff to determine his suitability for participation, only to be rejected as a 'player'. However, as the days pass, he becomes convinced that CRS are in fact watching him, manipulating him, and that he is in real danger. As events turn ever more sinister, and his attempts to find official assistance fail, his life begins to disintegrate: he is betrayed by Christine (Deborah Kara Unger), a beautiful woman he has just met; his bank accounts are emptied; his possessions stolen; and he is finally drugged, kidnapped and abandoned in Mexico (entombed in a mausoleum, no less). When he makes his fraught way back to New York, seeking a final confrontation with those who have ruined him, we are given the big reveal – everything that has happened to him is in fact part-and-parcel of the game's elaborate staging. It is a fiction of which he has been the unknowing protagonist. All of those with whom he has interacted over recent days (including Christine) are in fact professional actors, hired to play their respective parts in a bespoke story. Conrad reveals that he chose the game for Nicholas as a means to compel him out of his depression, to remind him about what really matters, and to restore his interest in living life to the full. After his initial shock, Nicholas does indeed embrace the feelings of excitement and

possibility for the future that the game has awoken for him – including the prospect of a romantic relationship with Christine.

Films with such extreme plots are regarded as risk-free entertainment for cinematic consumers: obviously, the film's hero receives an unusual treat from people trained in hospitality catering with an inhospitable twist. But such an approach would fail to address three questions: first, what exactly constitutes 'risk' in the eyes of the story's protagonist and his family within the cinematic scenario? Second, how does the category of 'risk' enter the story's experiential consumption for viewers/consumers? By extension, thirdly, how is 'risk' discursively constructed/internalised, acted out and 'managed' in liminal contexts of leisure that challenge rules and regulations that make hospitality function? Therefore, fourthly, and as the key question we set out to answer, what might this novel consumption of risk reveal about the place of inhospitality within our understanding of "hospitable" practices? Such questions are central to this article, when one considers the film's actual impact, which comprises the focus for our analysis. Moving forward five years from the film, to 2002, Detroit rapper and businessman Adam Thick established a company called Extreme Kidnapping, reportedly inspired by the plot of Fincher's movie (PR Newswire 2002; Tungol 2013). Starting from $1000, he offers customers 'the experience of a realistic kidnapping without being in real danger', promising the discerning consumer that:

> The kidnappings are very realistic, and not for the faint of heart, as every nuance and detail of an actual kidnapping is replicated to provide the most intense experience possible. If you don't feel like you're really being kidnapped and your life is in danger, then we're not doing our job (quoted in PRNewswire 2002).

In a nod to the time-honoured tradition of holiday snaps, Thick further advertises that 'all kidnapping scenarios come complete with a videotape copy that you can watch and re-live whenever you want' (Ibid.). The venture took-off in the ensuing years, and other entrepreneurs have since entered the market, offering a range of abduction-related scenarios tailored for various clientele in a number of countries (including the UK and France). These developments inspired a wave of press reportage in 2013. GQ magazine, a prominent forum for the framing of lifestyle consumption, went so far as to dispatch a reporter, Drew Magary, to experience first-hand an 'extreme kidnapping', which he subsequently reported in a GQ feature in April of that year. Typically, this and other instances of popular press coverage have adopted a tone of incredulity towards such offerings; as Magary puts it, 'why on earth would someone pay hundreds of dollars to fly halfway across the country for the pleasure of being abducted by thugs, handcuffed in a basement for hours, and forced to pee in Gatorade bottle?' (Magary 2013). In other words, why would a consumer actively choose to experience such inhospitality as a form of leisure and pleasure? In this paper we offer a sociological and cultural analysis that could go some way toward answering that very question, and in doing so seek to reveal some salient dynamics of consumer aesthetics and the reflexive production of the self in a risk society. Instead of considering notions of 'personal risk' as a given, we examine how the consumption of kidnapping packages is designed by business, and then performed by consumers themselves as an experience of the in-hospitable, through aesthetic performances in extraordinary and transgressive contexts. We claim that simulated kidnapping present us with a phenomenon of borderline hospitality-with-hostility appealing to those who enjoy 'living on the edge' for a day, and we discuss this through the sociological concept of 'edgework'.

Henceforth, the article is split into four sections, excluding our conclusion: in the second section we elaborate on understandings of risk and edgework through the works of Beck and Lyng respectively, proceeding to consider how they fit into established hospitality norms in contemporary Western societies. A third section presents our blended discursive methodological framework and epistemology. In section four we expand, through online data, on contemporary aestheticisations of risk in simulated kidnapping situations.

'Risk and 'edgework': staged kidnapping and (in)hospitality

In his landmark book Risk Society (1992), Ulrich Beck explores what he claims to be a profound transformation in the ways that human societies understand and respond to dangers, harms and hazards. In premodern societies, he argues, harms (such as injury, disease and untimely death) were seen to ultimately emanate from outside the scope of collective human agency, being the responsibility of non-human forces such as a God or gods, malign demons and other spirits, nature or fate (Elliott 2002: 295). However, modernisation processes brought with them a revolution in such understanding. From a worldview in which calculation and rational action can be used to control and direct natural and social processes, harms and dangers become available for anticipation (they can be predicted) and management (they can be forestalled, or at least mitigated in their effects) (Jarvis 2007: 31-2). The implication of such practices is that human existence becomes cumulatively less vulnerable to the arrival of unwelcome and unforeseen harms, thereby rendering that existence more stable and certain. However, in Beck's account, the dynamics of modernisation have ultimately brought about quite the opposite outcomes, increasing, rather than decreasing, our vulnerabilities and the sense of doubt about our individual and collective futures.

Responsible for this inversion are two main material and cultural dynamics. Firstly, the interventions of modern techno-scientific rationality, aimed at reducing our vulnerabilities and improving our wellbeing, have unleashed a kind of 'boomerang effect' in which unanticipated and unpredictable consequences rebound upon society (Beck 1992: 37-8). Thus, for example, the exploitation of fossil fuels (a driving force behind industrialisation and the concomitant rise in living standards and longevity) results in an entirely unforeseen process of global climate change that threatens the very survival of the ecosystem; and the widespread use of broad-spectrum antibiotics (central to the fast and effective treatment of commonplace infections that once killed millions) has led to the unanticipated emergence of virulent drug-resistant bacteria that have life-threatening consequences. Secondly, the socio-cultural dynamic of modernisation has, for Beck, entailed a process of 'de-traditionalisation' (the declining force of received normative frameworks, institutional anchors, moral codes and life narratives) and a corresponding 'reflexive individualisation' (the opportunity and imperative that we become authors of our own social trajectories in a context of political, economic and cultural uncertainty, instability and constant change). Taken together, these dynamics underpin the 'new modernity' that Beck dubs the 'risk society'.

Although Beck does not explicitly discuss the ways individuals perform risk for pleasure or other reasons, he does note the centrality of different media apparatuses in the dissemination of what he calls 'manufactured uncertainties' (Beck 1992, 1999), scenarios of a future (human and/or nature-induced) breakdown in societal order through the realisation of risks immanent to the society that experiences them. Placing Beck's observations in the article's consumption context yields additional observations. We will delve deeper into this dynamic through an engagement with both sociologist Stephen Lyng's analysis of 'voluntary risk taking' in terms of 'edgework' (Lyng 1990), and Beck's and Giddens' accounts of 'the

reflexive project of the self'. Central to the analysis offered here is a determination to avoid psychological reductionism (reducing consumer participation to individual psycho-affective dispositions or 'personality types'), and a corresponding commitment to situating such practices in the wider social and cultural context of a 'late modern', 'reflexive modern' or 'risk' society. In other words, the aim of our account is to develop 'an account that would explain high-risk behaviour in terms of a socially-constructed self in a historically-specific social environment' (Lyng 1990: 853).

Lyng (1990) starts his analysis of voluntary risk taking by noting an apparent paradox: the coexistence in contemporary America of a public agenda that places significant emphasis upon the reduction of risk, alongside a private agenda in which individuals and groups actively seek to increase and embrace risks. In terms of the latter, he documents the rapid growth (not just in America but also elsewhere across the world) of participation in high-risk leisure and sporting activities such as skydiving, rock climbing, scuba diving, and motorcycle racing. To these we may add more recent innovations such as base-jumping (Laurendeau 2011), freerunning or parkour (Saville 2008), tram surfing (Yar 2012) and snowboarding (Donnelly 2006). Lyng develops the concept of 'edgework' so as to embrace a wide range of such voluntary risk-taking behaviours that negotiate 'the boundary between chaos and order' and which 'all involve a clearly observable threat to one's physical or mental well-being or of one's sense of an ordered existence' (1990: 855, 857). It is important to note that the edgework concept extends beyond (a) sports and outdoor activities and (b) activities whose risks are related to the risk of physical injury. Also included within its ambit are those voluntary activities whose risks may be more clearly associated with threats to the participants' psychological integrity, sense of self, or environment. Indeed, he borrows the terminology of 'edgework' from the 'Gonzo journalist' Hunter S. Thompson, who first

coined the term to denote risk-taking activities such as experimentation with drug taking (Thompson 1971). Lyng further elaborates upon both the 'specific individual characteristics and capacities that are relevant to the edgework experience' and 'the subjective sensations associated with participation in edgework' (1990: 857). In respect of the former, he identifies cognitive capacities that participants discuss in terms of 'mental toughness' and 'survival capacity' - the ability to maintain one's focus and attention and avoid paralysis in extreme situations (Ibid.: 859). In relation to the latter, he determines that participants experience fear, but 'having survived the challenge' this gives way to 'a sense of exhilaration and omnipotence' (Ibid.: 860). Edgeworkers report that their risk-taking endeavours generate a sense of 'self-realization', 'self-actualization' and 'self-determination'.

Beck's understanding of 'risk' as immanent to social structure and Lyng's concept of edgework, seem to equip sociological analysis with some useful analytical tools. Yet, both approaches were exposed for their limitations, prompting varied critiques that feed into our account. Beck's theory has been subject to significant criticism for its excessive rationalisation of risk, a neat epochal segmentation of modernity and postmodernity, and the total neglect of the cultural dimension in favour of socio-political analysis (see inter alia Alexander 1996; Wilkinson 2001; Elliot 2002; Mythen 2007). Lyng's Marxist-phenomenological elaboration on edgework was deemed insufficient in terms of application across class, race and gender lines (Walklate 1997; Chan and Rigakos 2002; Campbell 2005; Laurendeau 2008), making the concept narrowly useful in conceptualisations of 'the unique experience of white, middle class, adult males' (Lyng 2005: 11). More important for this article's analysis is the disconnection of 'risk' and 'edgework' from norms and rules of hospitality, which is central to the organisation of such diverse processes as those of leisure, tourism and political openness to strangers. We will focus on the peculiar and contradictory

'custom' of commercialised hospitality provision to consumers of kidnapping packages. Lashley (2000: 13) notes helpfully for our study that, 'commercial providers are often attempting to…provide hospitality, but not too much, in their operations' (emphasis in text). The clause ('not too much') already links Beck's emphasis on de-traditionalisation and rationalisation of conduct, and Lyng's edgework as a ritual of self-making, to contemporary 'leisure regimes' that simulate inhospitable situations. Paradoxically, we note that for kidnapping package customers the notion of performance-with-aesthetic-benefits (see definition of 'edgework' above), which encompasses some of the aforementioned gruesome tasks, also destroys connections between hospitality as the opening up of home to the world. As Di Domenico and Lynch (2007: 127) explain, when one's home caters for tourists/visitors, it is turned into a stage in which hospitality as the norm of giving to strangers acquires a pragmatic dimension as an essentially social performance through which individuals/hosts open up spaces of intimacy (i.e. family and dwelling spaces) to others. When this 'opening up' happens, certain conditions and regulations come into play to protect aspects of this intimacy, thus delimiting hospitality as an absolute norm (I give abundantly and unquestionably and you receive – see Derrida and Dufourmantelle 2000: 76–78) to a legal exchange (I give under certain conditions – and to some extent, expect to receive back). This is so because, legal conceptions of hospitality as conditional catering and/or care for strangers should place the host in control of their hearth, while imposing written or unwritten rules on the guest (i.e. which spaces to enter, or how to behave).. Kidnapping packages of the type we explore rewrite these behavioural and legal boundaries, turning clients into subjects without rights and kidnappers into hostes in the most original meaning of the term: terrifying fusions of hosts and enemies (O'Gorman 2007). Not only do staged client abductions encroach upon the 'victim's' privacy (i.e. the host/professional kidnapper violates their victim's/guest's rights by inflicting upon them various forms of physical and /or verbal

abuse), the victim/guest s supposed to celebrate the ordeal itself as a unique experience, which can set them apart from communal 'crowds' that obey normative and legal rules of hospitality – a perfect example of the ways ideologies of consumerism isolate human beings from society with the promise of recreational pleasures. We expand on these (con-)fusions of hospitality with inhospitality in the section that follows reflections on our methodological organisation.

Methodological organisation

Considerations of risk simulation (what kidnapping packages promise) and representation (what their website windows do) construct a digital ethnographic methodology, replete with ethical qualifications. Methodologically, we follow recent critical sociological calls (Uprichard 2012; Pink, Horst, Postill, Hjorth, Lewis and Tacchi 2015) to use digital data in research, focusing in particular on data-mining of the transactional data used in everyday online communications (Lupton 2012). The focus on 'everyday activity' is significant, because it suggests that our online search techniques de-centre media as the focus of media research, so as to acknowledge that the consumption of website content as indivisible from other embodied activities (e.g. off-line shopping), technologies (e.g. movie watching), materialities and feelings (e.g. experiencing fear and thrill in other non-simulated contexts with props such as lashes and gags) through which the media function (Alexander 2010; Couldry 2012). By asking certain questions, we produce relevant reflexive knowledge in this article (Pink, Horst, Postill, Hjorth, Lewis and Tacchi 2015: 11-12). Thus, we acknowledge here that, although there are multiple ways to engage with digital content (Ibid.: 9), our focus on the way in which digital business constructs realities and offers experiences to prospective edgeworkers addresses one of the many possible ways to interpret our data.

Yet, by recognising edgework in kidnapping simulations as a form of controlled transgression, allows our admittedly small-scale online sample to produce transferable, rather than generalisable knowledge (Denzin and Lincoln 1988: 22). That is to say, we do not strive here for 'representative' data along the lines of what Allport (1937) called the 'nomothetic' model of a science that strives to derive universally valid insights from individual cases. Rather, we favour the 'idiographic' approach to knowledge that seeks to look to the specificity of unique or distinctive social phenomena. In the initial research phase, online purposive sampling (Palys 2008) was utilised as the primary means of data collection. A targeted web search using both Google and Firefox engines was conducted, using a range of relevant search terms including: 'Kidnapping adventures', 'arrange your own kidnapping', 'kidnap simulation', and 'fake kidnapping services'. This search strategy yielded the websites of a number of businesses (n. 6) offering staged kidnapping and abduction scenarios as a consumer experience. Of these, three provided the primary focus for detailed exploration, as their offer was most clearly and unambiguously related to the kinds of kidnapping scenarios under consideration here (these were Extreme Kidnapping (EK), Kidnapme (KM), and Ultime Réalité (Ultimate Reality - UR)). The remaining three businesses offer role-play adventures that contain some elements of kidnap, abduction and held-in-captivity scenarios, but these are not the only - or central - elements of the offering (these were Secret Me (SM), which offers high-end corporate adventure, with espionage/spy themed packages that include 'surveillance, counter-surveillance, reaction under fire, escape and evasion, use of firearms, seduction, first-aid, hand-to-hand combat, quick battle assessments, evasive driving, resistance to interrogation and much more'; Portland Escape Rooms, which stages mystery, puzzle and problem-solving adventures, based upon the scenario that participants have been 'kidnapped and locked in a room by a serial killer' and must escape before his return; and

Chilli Sauce, which provides arrest, abduction and imprisonment-themed adventures, aimed at stag parties (bachelor parties)).

Textual and visual data from the three primary websites was saved for subsequent content analysis, primarily of a qualitative kind (Kohlbacher 2006). Such analysis differs from quantitative approaches in that it 'goes beyond merely counting words to examining language intensely for the purpose of classifying large amounts of text into an efficient number of categories that represent similar meanings' (Hsieh and Shannon 2005: 1277). Coding of data was undertaken in a 'directed' manner, meaning that our aforementioned conceptual categories and theoretical stance guided the initial coding on the basis of which aggregation and subsequent analysis was organised (Ibid. 1281-1283). Additionally, the search strategy yielded numerous press reports about the 'staged kidnapping' phenomenon, such as those already mentioned above. These reports also provided a valuable data source, as many included interviews with those involved in offering such services, alongside first-person recollections from their consumers, and commentary from law enforcement officials detailing their concerns about such staged incidents.

Last but not least, we must draw some attention to the visualisation of these extreme scenarios online: much like a Hollywood movie, and occasionally complete with sadomasochist overtones, they trigger all the right adrenaline responses for viewers (fear, panic or even disdain), but couple them with anticipation and excitement. Both methodologically and ethically, images such as photos of kidnapped subjects in distress and/or disciplinary abductors, invite different interpretations only up to a point, given that they all converge upon a the following key elements: the exertion of power over helpless 'victims'; the knowledge that everything will be well in the end; and the promise of spiritual

and often bodily education and betterment for the 'victim'. All these tropes suggests the employment of discourse analysis with the use of intertextual technique to uncover how 'meanings are sustained through mutually elated verbal, written, and visual texts' (Waitt 2005: 168). In the data analysis section below we contend that, regardless of the actual gender of the client (who, notably, tends to be male), all three aforementioned 'pressure points' suggest a valorisation of the contemporary self in inhospitable environment.

The commodification of danger in a risk society: from rational planning to consumer aesthetics

It is worth highlighting again that Beck's thesis has served from the 1990s onwards to help give birth to a new 'risk-consciousness'. This amounts to a widespread sensibility, evident across numerous discursive fields, that embraces and seeks to operationalise the concept of risk, with the aim of better adapting to what is perceived as a world of increasing uncertainty and proliferating dangers (in addition to climate change, we must note here the threats associated with terrorism, economic instability and financial crisis, infectious diseases like the Ebola virus, and geopolitical instability and conflict in a post-cold war world). Borrowing from Cohen's (1972) classic account of the production of social problems and threats to the social order, we might note in this conjuncture the rise of a concomitant cadre of what might be called 'risk entrepreneurs', those who seek to translate their fluency in the 'language of risk' into market-driven opportunities for the accumulation of capital (be it economic, social, or political). Amongst such risk specialists we find those engaging in 'risk management' across fields as diverse as business and finance, engineering, corporate governance, insurance, transport, energy supply and health and safety (Power 2004). With specific reference to the present topic of discussion – kidnapping – there now exist a plethora of organisations and consultants whose role is to advise and prepare clients as to how best avoid

abduction (especially in unstable regions of the world), or how best to handle the situation should such an incident take place (Conley 2002; Tzanelli 2006). For example, the Virginia-based Center for Personal Protection and Safety (CPPS) runs training seminars for 'high-risk travel', involving 'direct role-play participation' or 'experiential role-play scenarios' (CPPS 2017) – what one journalist attending the training dubbed 'a kidnapping survival camp for business executives' (Higgins 2015). Simulated kidnappings of this kind can be located firmly within the logic of rational calculation or planning so as to effect risk reduction. They are in fact but an instance of a far broader development in the domain of crime prevention and control (Ericson and Haggerty 1997); in what Zedner (2007: 261) calls the logic of 'pre-crime', we see 'ordering practices [that] are pre-emptive and security is a commodity sold for profit'. In such cases, risk entrepreneurs commodify the risks of abduction and then sell 'security solutions' to those sufficiently able to pay to inhabit hospitable environments. However, with regard to the kinds of staged kidnappings, we focus upon a rather different logic of commodification is at work, one in which risk and danger are aestheticised and sold for pleasure as perverted 'customer welfare' (see O'Dell 2007: 108-109 on 'narrow' definitions of hospitality focusing on profit-making); here, the risk of abduction and the violence it implies are not something to be avoided but something to experience and welcome, albeit in a controlled and carefully crafted way, akin to the scenario unfolding in The Game. Much like the proliferation of terrorist kidnapping, which can be informed by emotionally rich and value-driven reason for the perpetrators (Tzanelli 2006: 938), but carries unwelcome consequences for victims, the consumerist simulation of such risk scenarios thrives on the capitalisation of non-consequential 'adventure'.

Firstly, we must note that the commodification of risk and hazard as an aesthetic experience is not, in and of itself, a new phenomenon. For example, Mohun (2001) explores the growth

in popularity of amusement park 'thrill rides' in the early 20th century as an exemplar of how 'the sensation of being at risk can become commodified' (Ibid.: 291). Indeed, we can suggest, pace the rise of Romanticism in the 19th century, that modernity's emphasis upon the production of rational order and predictability incited a yearning for precisely their opposite: the thrill of the sublime, the experience of an excess of affect based upon uncertainty and the scent of danger (Löwy and Sayre 2001; Yar 2015). However, in risk societies, we see not a perceived excess of constrictive order and rationally-engineered predictability (Weber's famous 'iron cage' of bureaucratic organisation), but their antithesis – a world replete with globally mobile dangers that appear to multiply apace (the aforementioned impacts of climate change, terrorism, mass movements of refugees, the spread of infectious contagions and financial instabilities). In a risk society, the commodification of harms may serve to domesticate what would otherwise present a paralyzing inhibition upon human experience and agency, a sense of existential dread in the face of proliferating uncertainty.

The philosopher and theoretician Jean Baudrillard's has reflected on how violence is 'staged' as a mediated spectacle, such that we as viewers never experience the 'real event' so much as a simulacrum which is typically sanitised and cleansed of its most troubling moments, the actual suffering and death visited upon the victims. In his provocative reflection on the first Gulf War, he argues that the media fed us pre-programmed events or 'scripts' whose propaganda came to constitute for audiences the "reality" of that conflict (a peculiar realist method of propagandism) (1993: 207). Much like Baudrillard's 'war exchanged for the signs of war', the suggestion of kidnapping as 'an orgy of simulation' (ibid.) merely allows violence 'technicians' to strip an inherently unwelcome situation 'of its passions and its violence […] and then [re-clothe] them with all the artifices of electronics' (1991: 64). In this regard, the phenomenon of staged kidnapping may enjoy some similarities 'to other forms of

commercially available 'voluntary inhospitality" in which consumers partake of a simulated staging of the 'scene of violence', but stripped of its actual trauma and suffering. For example, there are on offer experiences of 'prison tourism' in which visitors get to savour the ambience of deprivation at notorious ex-prisons such as Alcatraz, and even spend some time locked in a cell that once housed its inmates. Strange and Kempa (2003: 401) note how 'in spite of rangers' best efforts to encourage tourists to see Alcatraz in all its complexity, many continue to pose comically inside open cells'; this is inhospitality and pain transformed into playful commemoration for the purpose of 'holiday snaps'. Pushing this logic further, a number of former prisons, like the Carlton County Gaol in Ottawa and Oxford Prison, have been converted into luxurious hotels, allowing guests to stay in converted cells and enjoy 'clever allusions to the prison's past' (Daily Telegraph 2017; see also discussion of prison hotels in Tzanelli and Yar 2016). In a macabre transmutation of suffering into romance, Oxford's former prison (now named 'Malmaison' – literally the 'bad house') has apparently become a popular wedding venue – 'It's the perfect setting to get closer to the person you're about to "do life" with', 'After a criminally good wedding breakfast […] your guests may need a little outdoor exercise. Our beautiful hidden courtyard is the perfect setting to mingle with fellow inmates.' (Malmaison 2018: 7).

Likewise in the case of staged kidnappings, the aestheticisation of risk into a pre-packaged commodity form serves, in the first instance, to transmute fear and suffering into a pleasure, wherein the prospect of harm and victimisation can be experienced in a managed way, and thereby tamed (at least in a symbolic sense). Descriptions of the consumer experience on offer include, on the one hand:

> 'The psychological shock, the adrenaline rush, Fear, Anxiety' (UR)

‘real-life psychological shock, fear, adrenaline rushes of an authentic kidnapping’ (UR)

‘Violence, terror and fear’ (UR)

‘Tortured, abused or just…scared shitless’ (KM)

‘The risks’ (EK)

‘Verbal, sexual or physical abuse’ (KM)

‘Physical and psychological abuse’ (UR)

‘Torture’ (EK, KM)

‘Endure’ (KM, UR)

‘Forced’ (EK, KM)

These risk- and harm-related descriptions are further reinforced by the images used in the websites. All include a range of illustrative photographs that serve to cement the associations between the experience on offer and menace, danger and the threat of incipient violence. For example, Extreme Kidnapping’s website includes the following pictorial representations: (1) a man tied to a chair in a bare concrete room, under harsh lighting, with the silhouette of an armed figure standing over him; (2) a man, hands tied and mouth duct-taped, gazing frantically toward the viewer from the open trunk of a car; (3) dark-clothed men in a van, their faces hidden by balaclavas. The simulatory overtones of such scenarios are betrayed in a recent post on the business’ ‘revamping’ into a cultural (film-like) industrial enterprise. ‘We still offer realistic kidnapping adventures, but only to corp clients and production companies (TV), as well as expert consultation on TV and films’, it announces (Thick, 27 February 2017). The post stands at the top of other blogposts, from which we can single out images stating that we deal with ‘Reality TV’ (Thick, 7 April 2015) as well as a neo-noir New Orleans long shot of an array of clubs and human characters in a setting crying out about the

dangers of night-time economy (Thick, 30 May 2014). Kidnapme's online offering is accompanied by a sequence of images, most featuring shaven-headed men wielding firearms; in some they sport attire associated with the military or paramilitary groups, or with British skinheads. Every page of Ultime Réalité's website features the same large banner image: a headshot of a women, presented in a dramatic form, her mouth duct-taped and what might be either tears or blood running down her face from one of her eyes. Taken together, these images of tortured and terrified victims, and sinister and threatening victimisers, communicate the prospect of an experience rife with jeopardy and the possibility of suffering.

On the other hand, however, the aforementioned harm- and risk-related terms are coupled with those connoting positive affect:

'Adventure' (n = 29)

'Thrill' (n = 8)

'Adrenaline' (n = 8)

'Fantasy' (n = 7)

'Game' (n = 5)

'Enjoy' (n = 3)

It is also instructive to consider how providers of staged kidnap experiences repeatedly present their offer as an experience of duality, simultaneously falling within and without the consumer's control. For example, Ultime Réalité, the French purveyor of 'extreme activities' on the 'Borderlines', promises an experience of kidnapping that is 'real life' and 'authentic', subjecting the 'prey' to 'the real sensations of violence, terror and fear'. Those who are 'locked up', 'handcuffed', 'gagged', and 'tied up' will be forced to their 'true physical and

psychological limits'. All of this is predicated upon the notion that the participant is not in control of events and is subject to the will of others. Yet, simultaneously, Ultime Réalité offer lengthy reassurance about precisely the opposite: all that will unfold is finely calibrated and carefully monitored so as to ensure that nothing transpires that is unwanted by the client:

> Ultime Réalité has decided to commit itself in terms of training, follow-up and reliability of its teams realizing and/or appearing in our adventures, Borderlines and our extreme activities.
>
> All our teams, without exception, are subject to strict selection and mandatory training. Most of them have come from the acting profession…in order to ensure a complete match between the character, the role and the mission. Our teams have been scrupulously checked in order to avoid any overflow and loss of control. Self-control, seriousness and stability are some of the essential criteria when selecting actors and teams.
>
> Furthermore, provided that the mission allows it, our teams are filmed during the entire adventure in order to ensure greater security and to overcome any excesses.

In a similar vein, journalist Drew Magary (2013) recounts how, prior to his own 'kidnapping', he was asked by his prospective abductor (Adam Thick of Extreme Kidnapping) to select from a menu of options for the abuse and violence that could be used in the scenario:

> AT: Could you be slapped if it came to that?
>
> DM: Oh sure. Count me in on slapping.
>
> AT: Verbal abuse?

DM: You bet.

AT: Waterboarding? Stress positions? Stun gun? Fire?

DM: I've never been waterboarded, but it sounds horrible. I guess we could maybe explore it. I dunno about a stun gun. Probably not.

AT: Duct-taped to a wall off the ground?

DM: Probably not.

AT: Suspended from the ceiling? Are you flexible enough that you could be stuffed into a closet or a confined space for a while?

DM: Please don't stuff me into small spaces.

When his abduction was subsequently staged, he was 'duct-taped to a chair in three separate places'; blindfolded, and then subjected to the glare of floodlights; 'slapped…hard across the face' and 'doused…with cold water'. However, in a departure from the pre-agreed selection of torments, Magary's earlier 'probably not' was now ignored and he was 'shocked…with a stun gun'. Then one of his abductors chimed-in ominously that: 'I know this was originally meant to be a fake kidnapping…' Such stratagems serve to sufficiently gloss the idea of control so as to incite in the consumer the required emotional reactions; as Magary puts it, 'That was the moment it felt real. That was the moment I was paying for'.

The above-noted reaction brings us to a pivotal question that we set-out to explore at the beginning this project, namely 'why on earth would someone pay hundreds of dollars to fly halfway across the country for the pleasure of being abducted by thugs, handcuffed in a basement for hours, and forced to pee in Gatorade bottle?'. Why, by extension, would one merge two traditionally antithetical motivations in hospitality purchase and provision: reducing anxiety, stress and 'sickness' (see O'Dell 2007: 115) on the one hand, and actively

seeking for opportunities to activate those in human subjects (and consumers)? We have already alluded to the potential appeal of such experiences from the experiential standpoint of the consumer, relating to the domestication and taming of risk through its controlled staging. Examining the presentation of staged kidnappings, we can discern a clear affinity with the kinds of characteristics and sensations that Lyng associates with edgework. Firstly, such discursive framings make an appeal to exactly the kinds of risk-taking enthusiasts that have been identified by Lyng and others as exemplary edgeworkers. For example:

> Thrill-seekers in France unimpressed by skydiving, rock-climbing and other extreme sports are turning to a controversial new way of testing their limits – designer kidnapping (Samuel 2010)

> Thrill-seekers in France tired of the usual array of white-knuckle sports are turning to a bizarre new service to get their adrenaline rush -- designer abduction (Buffery 2010)

> Designer Kidnapping: Game, Adventure or Strange New Sport? (Saw Pan 2009)

The participants in such scenarios similarly draw a clear affinity or experiential equivalence with the kinds of 'extreme sports' that comprise many frequently-discussed instances of edgework:

> This is my bungee-jumping - which is something I would never do […] It's a very personal experience, very personal […] I like the fear. I like rollercoasters and this was like a rollercoaster. (quoted in Logan 2005)

Both organisers and participants allude to the activation of the 'capacities' 'that are relevant to the edgework experience', especially those of 'mental toughness' and 'survival capacity':

> …the adrenaline, the thrill, the fear felt will call into question the knowledge of your own physical and psychological limits (UR)

> …puts you in the hot seat and going face to face with a professional interrogator. How long can you last? (EK)

> …to push you to your limits and truly test you (SM)

> I wanted to see what I could do […] I just wanted to see if it was possible for me to be in a situation like that (quoted in Wells 2002)

Likewise, the kidnapped 'victims' report various sensations and emotions associated with edgework. The most obvious of these is, of course, fear. Other, less immediately obvious, sensations include a distortion of the normal sense of time. As Lyng (1990: 861) puts, 'they […] lose their ability to gauge the passage of time in the usual fashion. Time may pass either much faster or slower than usual.' Magary (2013), recounting his own experience of 'extreme kidnapping', observes that:

> Time became elastic […] It felt like someone had torn open the minutes between 3 a.m. and 4 a.m. and stuffed ten more hours inside. I was not on regular time. I was on Being Kidnapped time, which lasts far longer.

If staged kidnapping is indeed experientially akin to the voluntary risk-taking of Lyng's edgeworkers, the next step must be to situate engagement in these practices within a broader social-cultural context and framework. For Lyng, the conspicuous popularity of edgework is explained, at a macro-level, through recourse to Marx's analysis of the social world's increasing reification: 'The predominant sensation for the individual is one of being pushed through daily life by unidentifiable forces that rob one of true individual choice' (Lyng 1990: 870). This 'oversocialization' and 'alienation' wrought by conformity to institutionally-dictated roles (including those of the capitalist workplace and market) create a 'dearth of possibilities for spontaneous and self-realizing action' (Ibid.). However, 'people do not always remain passive in the face of alienation and oversocialization', but instead attempt to 'compensate […] in the leisure-time pursuit of play, particularly those forms of play that involve both risk and skill' (Ibid: 870-871). The practices of edgework, as a response to reification, appeal both because they promise to realize possibilities for impulsive and spontaneous action (inhabiting the 'edge of chaos'), and because they give otherwise alienated subjects a temporary 'illusion of control' and empowerment over the conditions of their own existence (Ibid.: 872). Hence, for Lyng, there is in edgework a paradoxical balancing act between the imperatives of freedom and constraint; the disordered and the ordered; the surrender of the self to forces it cannot control and an assertion of the self's capacities over those forces through the act and experience of survival. This paradoxical duality is, arguably, especially prominent in the experience of staged kidnapping, given that its participants appear to surrender all control over their circumstances and are made subject to the will of others; their situation is seemingly outside of their control, and they may be subjected to harms (both physical and psychological) at the will and whim of their captors. However, counterbalancing this surrender to chaos, is a finely-tuned attempt to retain control

over the unfolding events. We have already noted how a typical staging involves beforehand an agreement between abductor and abductee about the kinds of tortures, deprivations and humiliations that will (and will not) be used. There are likewise extensive reassurances as regard the care and professionalism exercised by the abductors, who use knowledge, skill and experience to deliver a carefully measured level of distress:

> We are experts in C.P. [corporal punishment] and verbal abuse (KM)
> …our highly skilled team of former UK Special Forces and Intelligence instructors and trainers will help you bring your vision to life (SM)
> …leave the kidnapping to the professionals! (EK)
> …the people who run the service are either ex-army or ex-government officials who have 'certain' knowledge in types of interrogation (KM)

Borrowing from the norms and codes of consensual BDSM, providers instigate 'safewords' which, in extremis, the 'victim' can activate to stop the scenario, thereby re-inscribing the experience of chaos, unpredictability and powerlessness within the scope of the subject's control. Thus, in a paradox parallel to that noted by Lyng, the experience becomes one of a 'controlled loss of control' (Hayward 2002: 85).

At this point, we wish to delve further into precisely what this paradoxical attempt to assert control comprises, and the broader social and cultural dynamics that underpin its rise. In an important revision to Lyng's 'reification thesis', we suggest that the underlying impetus for such practices is not to be found in any straightforward 'oversocialization' or web of social constraints imposed upon subjects. Rather, in the context of the risk society, it is precisely the loss of heretofore institutionalised rules, roles, norms and life narratives that creates for

subjects a sense of 'ontological insecurity' in the face of an absence of order (Giddens 1991; Hayward 2002: 84-86). In Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's (1995) phrase, contemporary life becomes a 'normal chaos' in which neither individuals nor social institutions appear to be 'in control'. This profound sense of instability, and the daily exposure to risk and uncertainty it entails, gives rise to efforts in which the prospect of subjection to harms is staged and hopefully transcended, thereby reactivating feelings of agency and a resilience of the self (its ability to confront and survive life in a risk society). Moreover, it is notable that staged kidnappings are frequently presented not just as aesthetic experiences (fun, adventure, thrills, kicks, excitement) but also as means for participants to equip themselves with the knowledge and skills that reflexive subjects increasingly need to possess if they are to survive and thrive in contemporary conditions of friability. The kidnapping experience becomes a calculated strategy for re-making the self into one that is better suited for forging a successful post-traditional life narrative. For example, Extreme Kidnapping offer their services as a means to achieve weight loss, thereby reshaping to body into a more pleasing and socially-valued form:

> You can now get kidnapped and forced to lose weight! Diets […] hinge on your own personal willpower, and fickle momentary desires to indulge or abstain, but […] we take the choice out of your hands! You've been kidnapped, so you eat when we feed you. Forget late night snacking, hard to eat when your [sic] chained to a cot. Worried about exercise? No problem. We've got certified expert trainers on staff to whip your fluffy ass into shape. Kidnap-style.

Similarly, New York staged kidnapping purveyors Brock Enright and Felix Paus of VAS (Video and Adventure Services) recall that 'There was a woman who wanted to lose weight', so they 'incarcerated her in a basement for four weeks, with only an exercise bike for

company' (Logan 2005). Such services can be seen as part of a continuum of offerings such as cosmetic surgery and intensive fitness regimes that promise to help individuals remake themselves so that they can better succeed in the competitive marketplace of work and relationships (Elliot 2008). Thus we can again draw parallels here with other practices of voluntary confinement and (literally) 'hospitalization' – individuals' self-subjection to the kinds of 'medical tourism' that entails radical (and painful) surgical procedures as an exercise in self-improvement or self-optimization (Ackerman 2010).

Participation in kidnapping scenarios promises not only to help reshape the body, but also the mind. For example, they are offered as a form of extreme aversion therapy, a means to overcome phobias that clients find limit their capacity to live life as they would ideally wish:

> Enright compares his service as an alternative form of psychotherapy, a passive-aggressive approach to overcoming phobias. Since September 11, New York has been overwhelmed with emotional static. As his clients pickle themselves in adrenaline, they find a level of controlling their fear (Chappell n.d.).

> Some clients have expressed a desire to try and tackle deep-rooted phobias, including in one case being buried alive (Samuel 2010).

The pitch made to their wealthy corporate clients by Secret Me is explicitly oriented to the development of personal capacities and competences that can be put to effective use in the competitive world of work:

> The experience is for private groups and corporate clients […] in order to build your own inner self-confidence and leadership abilities.
>
> Secret Me works with clients from a broad range of professional and personal backgrounds to better understand their limits and help clients build the emotional and mental resilience required to extend them.
>
> You are taught skills that can transfer directly into your everyday life […] and businesses
>
> The kidnap and escapology training where clients are taught psychological tools helping them to identify key influencers, potential allies and negative actors, and how to manipulate group dynamics from this; whether in a kidnap situation or in a boardroom.

In this scenario, the edgework experience of being kidnapped becomes part of a 'pedagogy of the self' that reflexive, self-directing late-modern subjects utilize in order to manage the vicissitudes and challenges of a shifting and unpredictable lifeworld. This pedagogy 'trains' clients to respond creatively and with resilience to the absence of hospitable provisions, whether these are commercialised or informal. The very removal of rules and regulations that define social interaction in hospitality contexts (friendliness, care and catering for basic needs alike) simulates the 'risk scenarios' that constantly proliferate in our contemporary world. And there is more: if voluntary kidnapping reconstructs the 'edge' as the boundary between life and death (Newmahr 2011: 691), digitally constructed discourses of edgework as an isolated experience hinge on a peculiar romantic individualisation of the 'suffering subject' that does not allow for collective transgression or indeed construction of the edge itself (on community-building risk see Rickly-Boyd 2013).

Conclusion

This study has sought to shed light on the emerging phenomenon of 'staged kidnapping', a consumer-oriented experience in which individuals voluntarily subject themselves to abduction and associated experiences of detention, deprivation, interrogation and degradation. In the first instance, we situate this simulatory commodification of crime within a broader dynamic of consumerist packaging and selling of transgression, one that has emerged at the confluence of popular cultural representation and participatory 'adventuring'. We explore in depth the staging, presentation and consumption of voluntary abduction through the methods of 'digital sociology', engaging with the online marketing and reporting of the phenomenon. Sociologically, we analyse its emergence within the twin theoretical frames of Beck's 'risk society' thesis and Lyng's account of 'voluntary risk-taking' as a form of 'edgework'. We argue that the framing and appeal of such experiences can be fruitfully located as an element in the reflexive production of the post-traditional self, a process that requires subjects to confront and manage (materially or symbolically) the conditions of risk and uncertainty that characterise contemporary social lifeworlds. This analytical basis serves to revise one-sided understandings of hospitality as an ordered, community-building 'industry' in the commercial domain, obeying to unambiguous norms and regulations in host-guest interactions. As the rules of self-making in contemporary risk societies seem to invite relevant 'rule-breaking', and notions of the self as part of a communal whole are replaced by individualised agency, such oxymora may proliferate, inviting scholarly re-examinations of what is 'hospitable'.

References

Ackerman, S. L. (2010), 'Plastic paradise: transforming bodies and selves in Costa Rica's cosmetic surgery tourism industry', Medical Anthropology, 29:4, pp.403-423.

Alexander, J. C. (1996), 'Critical reflections on reflexive modernization', Theory, Culture & Society, 13:4, pp.133-138.

Alexander, J.C. (2010), 'Iconic consciousness and the material feeling of meaning', Thesis Eleven, 103:1, pp.10-25.

Allport, G. W. (1937), 'Personality: A psychological interpretation', Ethics, 49:1, pp.105-107

Baudrillard, J. (1991), The War in the Gulf Did Not Take Place, Bloomington: University of Indiana Press.

Baudrillard, J. (1993), Baudrillard Live: Selected Interviews, edited by M. Gane, London: Routledge.

Beck, U. (1992), Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity. London: Sage.

Beck, U. (1999), World Risk Society, Cambridge: Polity.

Beck, U., and Beck-Gernsheim, E. (1995), The Normal Chaos of Love, Cambridge: Polity.

Buffery, V. (2010, February 22), ‘Adrenaline addicts seek designer thrills’. Retrieved from http://www.reuters.com/article/us-france-thrills-idUSTRE61L4BI20100222.

Campbell, A. (2005), ‘Keeping the ‘Lady’ safe: The regulation of femininity through crime prevention’, Critical Criminology, 13:2, pp.119-140.

Chan, W. and Rigakos, G. (2002), ‘Risk, crime and gender’, British Journal of Criminology, 42:4, 743-761.

Chappell, C-J. (n.d.), Designer Kidnappings. Retrieved from https://www.themorningnews.org/article/designer-kidnappings.

Conley, J. (2002), ‘Kidnapped: Protecting executives abroad’, Risk Management, 49:9, p.46.

Couldry, N. (2012), Media, Society, World, Cambridge, MA: Polity.

CPPS (2017), ‘Advanced high-risk travel safety and security’. Retrieved from https://www.cpps.com/training/7.

Daily Telegraph (2017, October 12) ‘19 former prisons where you can now spend the night’, retrieved from: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/galleries/best-prison-hotels-in-the-world/

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1998), Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Material, London: Sage.

Derrida, J., and Dufourmantelle, A. (2000), Of Hospitality, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Di Domenico, M. and Lynch, P.A. (2007), 'Host/Guest encounters in the commercial home', Leisure Studies, 26:3, pp.321-338.

Donnelly, M. (2006), 'Studying extreme sports: Beyond the core participants', Journal of Sport and Social Issues, 30:2, pp.219-224.

Elliott, A. (2002), 'Beck's sociology of risk: a critical assessment', Sociology, 36:2, pp.293-315.

Elliot, A. (2008), Making the Cut: How Cosmetic Surgery is Transforming our Lives, London: Reaktion Books.

Ericson, R.V. and Haggerty, K.D. (1997), Policing the Risk Society, Oxford: OUP.

Giddens, A. (1991), The Consequences of Modernity, Cambridge: Polity.

Hayward, K.J. (2002), 'The vilification and pleasures of youthful transgression', in J. Muncie, G. Hughes and J. McLaughlin (eds), Youth Justice: Critical Readings, London: Sage, pp.80-94.

Higgins, H. (2015, June 26), 'I went to a kidnapping survival camp for business executives', Quartz Media. Retrieved from https://qz.com/436599/i-went-to-a-kidnapping-survival-camp-for-business-executives/.

Hsieh, H-F. and Shannon, S.E. (2005), 'Three approaches to qualitative content analysis', Qualitative Health Research, 15:9, pp.1277-1288

Jarvis, D.S. (2007), 'Risk, globalisation and the state: A critical appraisal of Ulrich Beck and the world risk society thesis', Global Society, 21:1, pp.23-46.

Kohlbacher, F. (2006, January), 'The use of qualitative content analysis in case study research', Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 7:1: unpaginated.

Lashley, C. (2000), 'Towards a theoretical understanding', in C. Lashley and A. Morrison (eds), In Search of Hospitality, Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann/Elsevier, pp. 1-17.

Laurendeau, J. (2008), 'Gendered risk regimes', Sociology of Sport Journal, 25:3, pp.293-309.

Laurendeau, J. (2011), '"If you're reading this, it's because I've died": Masculinity and relational risk in BASE jumping', Sociology of Sport Journal, 28:4, pp.404-420.

Logan, B. (2005, September 20), 'Kidnapped. Then charged for the privilege', The Guardian. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2005/sep/20/art.

Löwy, M. and Sayre, R. (2001), Romanticism against the Tide of Modernity, Durham, NC/London: Duke University Press.

Lyng, S. (1990), 'Edgework: A social psychological analysis of voluntary risk taking', American Journal of Sociology, 95:4, pp.851-886.

Lyng, S. (2005), Edgework, New York: Routledge.

Magary, D (2013, April 2), 'Kidnapped (Just kidding!)', GQ. Retrieved from http://www.gq.com/story/how-to-be-kidnapped-abducted.

Malmaison (2018), 'Make your big day different: Malmaison', retrieved from https://www.malmaison.com/media/3236272/mal-weddings-oxford.pdf

Mohun, A. P. (2001), 'Designed for thrills and safety: Amusement parks and the commodification of risk, 1880-1929', Journal of Design History, 14:1, pp.291-306.

Mythen, G. (2007), 'Reappraising the risk society thesis: Telescopic sight or myopic vision?', Current Sociology, 55:6, pp.793-813.

O'Dell, T. (2007), 'Hospitality, kinesthesis and health', in J. Germann Molz and S. Gibson (eds), Mobilizing Hospitality. Aldershot: Ashgate, pp. 103-118.

O'Gorman, K. (2007), 'Dimensions of hospitality: Exploring ancient and classical origins', in C. Lashley, P. Lynch, and A. Morrison (eds), Hospitality. Oxford: Elsevier, pp.17–32.

Palys, T. (2008), 'Purposive sampling', in L. Given (ed.), The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods, Volume 2 (8), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp.697-69.

Pink, S., Horst, H., Postill, J., Hjorth, L., Lewis, T. and Tacchi, J. (2015), Digital Ethnography, London: Sage.

Power, M. (2004), The Risk Management of Everything: Rethinking the Politics of Uncertainty, London: Demos.

PRNewswire (2002, October 21), 'Controversial Detroit rapper now offering extreme kidnapping adventure to hardcore thrill seekers'. Retrieved from http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/controversial-detroit-rapper-now-offering-extreme-kidnapping-adventure-to-hardcore-thrill-seekers-76380192.html.

Rickly-Boyd, J.M. (2013), '"Dirtbags": Mobility, community and rock climbing as performative of identity', in T. Duncan, S.A. Cohen and M. Thulemark (eds), Lifestyle Mobilities: Intersections of Travel, Leisure and Migration, Aldershot: Ashgate, pp.51-64.

Samuel, H. (2010, March 27), 'French firm offers to kidnap paying thrill-seekers', The Telegraph. Retrieved from http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/7528428/French-firm-offers-to-kidnap-paying-thrill-seekers.html.

Saville, S. J. (2008), 'Playing with fear: Parkour and the mobility of emotion', Social & Cultural Geography, 9:8, pp.891-914.

Saw Pan (2009, September 14), 'Designer kidnapping: Game, adventure or strange new sport?' Retrieved from http://sawpan.com/designer-kidnapping-game-adventure-or-strange-new-sport/.

Strange, C. and Kempa, M. (2003), 'Shades of dark tourism: Alcatraz and Robben Island', Annals of Tourism Research, 30:2, pp.306-405.

Thick, A. (2014, May 30), 'Extreme kidnapping does the big easy!', Extreme Kidnapping. Retrieved from http://extremekidnapping.com/.

Thick, A. (2015, April 7), 'EK for sale, new owner could get reality TV show', Extreme Kidnapping. Retrieved from http://extremekidnapping.com/.

Thick, A. (2017, February 27), 'Extreme Kidnapping'. Retrieved from http://extremekidnapping.com/.

Thompson, H. S. (1971), Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas: A Savage Journey to the Heart of the American Dream. London: Vintage.

Tungol, J.R. (2013, October 4) '"Extreme Kidnapping" thrill-seekers simulated carjack experience', International Business Times. Retrieved from http://www.ibtimes.com/extreme-kidnapping-offers-thrill-seekers-simulated-carjack-experience-video-1184671.

Tzanelli, R. (2006), 'Capitalising on value: Towards a sociological understanding of kidnapping', Sociology, 40:5, pp.929-947.

Tzanelli, R., and Yar, M. (2016), 'Breaking Bad, making good: Notes on a televisual tourist industry', Mobilities, 11:2, pp.188-206.

Ultime Réalité (Ultimate Reality) (n.d.), 'Kidnapping'. Retrieved from http://www.ultimerealite.fr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6&Itemid=7.

Uprichard, E. (2012), 'Being stuck in (live) time: The sticky sociological imagination', in L. Back and N. Puwar (eds), Live Research Methods, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell/The Sociological Review, pp.124–138.

Waitt, G. (2005), 'Doing discourse analysis', in I. Hay (ed.), Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.163-191

Walklate, S. (1997), 'Risk and criminal victimization: A modernist dilemma?', British Journal of Criminology, 37:1, pp.35-45.

Wells, M. (2002, August 1), 'Kidnapping for kicks in New York'. Retrieved from http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/2163666.stm.

Wilkinson, I. (2001), ‘Social theories of risk perception: At once indispensable and insufficient’, Current Sociology, 49:1, pp.1-22.

Yar, M. (2012), ‘Crime, media and the will-to-representation: Reconsidering relationships in the new media age’, Crime, Media & Culture, 8:3, pp.245-260.

Yar, M. (2015), Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster: Post-apocalyptic Fictions and the Crisis of Social Order, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Zedner, L. (2007), ‘Pre-crime and post-criminology?’, Theoretical Criminology, 11:2, pp.261-281.