

BLOOD BUSINESS: FOUR CORNERS

Airs Monday 28TH August 2017

Blood Business: the lucrative international trade in blood and plasma.

Giving blood is a simple and selfless act that saves lives. For many, it's a way of giving back to the community, expecting nothing in return. In Australia, blood donors receive a drink, a biscuit and heartfelt thanks.

Overseas, it's a different story.

"It's work. I'm providing a product. You know, I'm like a cow. I'm giving milk." Plasma donor

In other countries, blood has become a lucrative commodity fuelling a global trade worth billions of dollars.

"Healthcare is the perfect money-making industry. Our willingness to pay for available therapies basically, especially for our loved ones knows no bounds." WHO spokesperson

Plasma, the vital blood component used by pharmaceutical companies to create expensive therapeutic drugs, is like liquid gold.

"This is America. Everything is a big corporation out here. Without money nothing moves." Plasma donor

Plasma donation centres operate across America, where they pay, or "compensate" those who provide their blood. Many of these centres operate in the poorest neighbourhoods, where would-be "donors" queue to provide their blood and receive their payment.

"First it was this kind of extra money thing, just to get a little money on the side to help me with bills and stuff. And then I became a regular." Plasma donor

For some, their blood has become a vital source of income.

"This is a plasma blood bank card, It's almost like a regular Visa card. They put the money on your card immediately after you get done." Plasma donor

This joint Swiss/French film investigates the impact of the plasma trade and the toll it's taking on those giving up their blood for money.

"Tap this arm, real good. Let's give them what they want so we go what we want." Plasma donor

Blood Business, from Point Productions reported by Marie Maurisse & François Pilet and presented by Sarah Ferguson, goes to air on Monday 28th August at 8.30pm. It is replayed on Tuesday 29th August at 10.00am and Wednesday 30th at 11pm. It can also be seen on ABC NEWS channel on Saturday at 8.10pm AEST, [ABC iview](#) and at abc.net.au/4corners.