

#36 (KATY BARROW-GRINT)

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Jerry Ratcliffe:

Reducing Crime is a podcast featuring influential thinkers in the police service and leading crime and policing researchers.

Katy Barrow-Grint is a superintendent with the UK Thames Valley Police. She is currently the Head of Specialist Operations for Thames Valley, running covert policing for the force. We talk about her work developing an internal evidence-based policing journal, becoming the inaugural Editor in Chief of the College of Policing's publication, "Going Equipped" and being a lead on #WeCops, a popular UK policing weekly Twitter debate forum.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Hi, I'm Jerry Ratcliffe. As usual, we start with a quick guest theme update. The one you just heard for this episode is pretty old school, being for a British television police drama that started in 1980 and ran for five years, encompassing 88 episodes across six seasons. Set up north in Lancashire like the US series Cagney and Lacey that started a year later, this series was innovative for starring a female lead in a police leadership role, tackling both crime and misogyny. By the way, the guest theme for the last episode was the US version of the Danish hit series, The Killing. And if you haven't figured out the guest theme for this episode, I'll tell you next month.

Secondly, as this is episode 36, that means the podcast is pretty much three years old. My thanks to all of my marvelous guests over that time. And most of all, to everyone for listening. The podcast is now getting more than 40,000 downloads a year. I'm not really sure why. Fortunately, I have smart guests. You just have to put up with my nonsense every now and again.

Tolerating my nonsense this month is Superintendent Katy Barrow-Grint. Superintendent Barrow-Grint has been with Thames Valley Police since 2000. During which time she has worked frontline response, CID, neighborhood policing, child abuse investigation, surveillance and strategic development. She is the forces Head of Specialist Operations and runs their covert policing activities. She has a degree in sociology from the London School of Economics and a master's in Police Leadership and Management from Warwick Business School. She specialized in the area of policing domestic abuse but is probably best known for managing Thames Valley's policing journal. Being Editor in Chief for the College of Policing's, "Going Equipped" publication and it's one of the leads for the popular Wednesday evening, #WeCops British policing Twitter debate - Don't forget the hashtag. We cover all of this in the following chat.

REDUCING CRIME PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

Katy is a marathon runner and black belt in karate. But when I caught up with her online, she was getting into a glass of wine. Which is frankly, a minimum prerequisite for talking to me. Just ask my girlfriend, ex-wife, family, colleagues, acquaintances, friends, random strangers....

Jerry Ratcliffe:

So, here we are 8:00 PM, your time. A couple of glasses of wine in.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Yes I dread to think what is going to happen. It's eight o'clock here. The kids have gone to bed. I've only just started drinking. Don't worry.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

What after COVID or just started drinking this evening?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Nothing else to spend your money on.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

So, I saw that you're also a black belt in karate. Aren't you?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

I am, yeah. I haven't practiced for a long time but I have got a black belt in Wado Ryu and I was English silver medalist for sparring.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Oh my goodness.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Fighting, once upon a time in my youth.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

That's fantastic. Though, I have to say the style of karate does sound like a small town in New South Wales.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Yeah, absolutely but good fun and I really loved it when I did it. I ought to go back and do it again.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

What I find interesting is when you meet so many people who are at the higher ranks in things like policing and academia. They're also quite driven to get there but they're also driven in other areas of their life. They don't just dabble in karate. You know they go right the way through to black belt. And that's what makes it so difficult, catching up with

them for podcasts, interviews and people like yourself is that, "Well, that's great, but I'm doing this and I'm doing that and I'm writing a book on domestic violence. We're running #WeCops."

Jerry Ratcliffe:

So, tell me a little bit about #WeCops for people who are not in the UK.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

#WeCops is a Twitter debate that we have every couple of weeks on a Wednesday evening at 9:00 PM.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

And exactly, how many seconds does it take before it deteriorates into you all shouting at each other? Because that what Twitter is all about, isn't it?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

It doesn't.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Did I just say, "Titter?" I think I meant, "Twitter."

Katy Barrow-Grint:

It's actually a very useful debating forum for officers and staff together with high-ranking officers, academics, members of the community and we don't get into trolling. It's about being creative.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

I think you've missed the entire point of Twitter then.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Maybe but it works and we have good fun and it's run by eight of us. Seven cops and one academic all doing it voluntarily on top of our day jobs. We're here just to try and make policing better and make improvements and make sure that the good stuff that goes on get shared because I think that's where sometimes we fall down.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

The times I've dipped into it, it's been quite fantastic and such a range of opinions and people. Do you have any sense of the kind of numbers that are engaging with it?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

We have about 12,000 followers, which it doesn't sound huge when you look at some people but-

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Not really. It's very good.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

We only go for an hour and we've had over 3 million reach in that hour for some of our debates. So, just as an example, we had a chat on diversity and recruitment in policing a few weeks ago and the policing minister here in the UK, Kit Malthouse, dived into that chat. And we reached 2.8 million that time.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

For a government minister at the national level to dive into that, that's one and rather brave on his part because I'm sure you have quite a few anonymous accounts who are quite happy to tell him what they thought.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

We do but I think that's the beauty of it. The fact that you can be a frontline officer, having that interaction with a government minister to make those kinds of improvements.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Yeah, that's incredible.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

During the main body of COVID last year, we had about 3.8 million reach. When we talked about mental health and policing officers, day in, day out dealing with the COVID issues on top of everything else. We're exhausted and they really wanted to use #WeCops as that way of discussing how to make things better for themselves but also improvements that we could do across policing.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

It strikes me that it's a great mechanism almost as a litmus test to see, "Is everybody else feeling the same thing that I'm feeling? Are they seeing the same things?" Because it can be quite an isolating profession in some regards.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Yeah. Absolutely. What we don't want it to be as an echo chamber but what we do want it to be is that ability to network, to make connections, to find out what's going on elsewhere, to make friends and to see where you can take good practice or good learning from others and introduce it into your own force. And we've had good examples of that over the years.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

You know that if you want to make friends on the internet, there are so much better websites for that, right?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

But #WeCops is brilliant for it. And I think you do meet a wide range of people and that's the beauty of it.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Good stuff. The mental health debate. It's got to be a recurring topic, hasn't it? I get the sense that it's winding its way through pretty much every topic that you're discussing now that we're in the COVID post George Floyd type of world. It's usually stressful for everybody out there.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

It is and I think what we're finding is that having a way of discussing those issues in a forum where people are experiencing the same kind of things, makes it almost normalized in the sense that you can chat, you can think through ways of dealing with your problems and you can actually understand that it's not just you. And I think that kind of community feel makes people realize that what they're feeling is not unusual.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Sounds an awful lot like counseling or therapy.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

I Wouldn't say #WeCops is counseling or therapy but it is good fun. And I would encourage people to dip in and have a look.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

The problem is when it's nine o'clock there, it's kind of end of the workday here.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

You're ready for your glass of wine now.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Oh, hell yeah. But that's generally about at lunchtime.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

I tell my students, "Whiskey is not just for breakfast." The nice thing about #WeCops is simply the range of topics that you guys address every week. What have been some of your favorites or all the things that you've found most enlightening?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

We had Professor Ian Loader from Oxford University on doing a chat around police legitimacy. And that was in the wake of the death of George Floyd. And I think that was really pertinent to allow British policing to think through the consequences of what had happened and allowed us to be really open and honest around how police officers were feeling here in the UK around what happened, but also to have a view on what we were seeing coming out of the States and how that might impact on the way would deal with the situations that arose. So, there was protest and there were lots of issues here.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

I think what may surprise a lot of people listening is that the death of George Floyd impacted policing internationally. It wasn't just here within the United States but you also had issues in London. You had issues in your force, Thames valley Police. It really became an international challenge.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Yeah, absolutely. And I think together with COVID on top of that, it was tricky for policing. And then I think every force in the country probably had some sort of protest or some sort of march in relation to what had happened. And I think having that ability to talk about that through Twitter through #WeCops was really valuable for our officers and staff.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

One of my favorite #WeCops was when you had a whole evening talking about, "What do people actually enjoy about response policing?" And I thought it was just so nice to come and dip into a topic that was positive. I was reading through the answers and a few said, "I like to do good things," and, "I like to help the community." There were a few answers that look straight out of a job interview but at least a quarter of them, people were talking about how they just enjoy coming to work and hanging around with colleagues and the banter. The banter that is central to emotional survival in policing. And I thought that was just me that really enjoyed that. But it was great to see that other people enjoy that informal social interaction side of just working with a great bunch of colleagues.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Yeah, absolutely. And I think the beauty of that chat was it coincided with the national celebration week around response policing here in the UK and gave a really good vessel for our officers and staff to really talk about what they loved. And it was quite emotional to read through people's responses and just remember why you love policing and why we all come to work to do what we do. Police officers are the worst for whinging. Talking about the amount of work and the issues that they have to face day in, day out. But to actually go through and talk through the best bits about your job, I think it was really uplifting and it was a really nice way to round that response week up.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Yeah and when you talk about cops whinging, I have to laugh because I remember many years ago, you used to get stickers everywhere that said, "I've Met the Met."

Katy Barrow-Grint:

I think they still have them. Yeah.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Oh good grief. Really?

Jerry Ratcliffe:

I often thought that should be replaced by the more honest thing. It's just the badge that says, "The job's fucked," which seems to be the mantra of British policing, generally.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

I'm pretty sure the G7 is coming to the UK next month. They're going to Cornwall and I'm pretty sure there's a lot of banter already on Twitter and various other social media sites around Met stickers and how they might drive through the very small streets of Cornwall.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

I was in a building in Malaysia when I saw an, "I've Met the Met," sticker and I thought, "Okay, this is just off the charts. This has gone crazy."

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Oh, we don't have those in Thames Valley.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

You eradicate them onsite like graffiti. You've now been with Thames Valley Police for how long?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Just over 20 years. Feels like five minutes, but yeah, nearly 20 years.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Just for a couple of seconds, tell us a little bit about Thames Valley for people that aren't familiar with Thames Valley Police outside of the country.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

So, Thames Valley is one of the 43 forces in England and Wales and we cover three counties, Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire. About 4,000 cops, about 4,000 police staff and a really busy mix of rural and city policing. So, we're next to The Met. So, we take a lot of their county drug lines, a lot of their problems that come over the borders but we're also surrounded by lots of the other rural forces, Gloucestershire, Bedfordshire, et cetera.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

So, when The Met is successful in causing displacement to reduce their crime, you're the recipients.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Unfortunately, yes. Quite often.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Probably just passing the wealth around, right?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

You could call it that. I'm not sure that's quite what it is.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

One of the areas that I know that you've been fascinated with and I wanted to talk to you about is the policing of domestic abuse. And thinking about this, I knew I was going to be talking to you, it just struck me that, what a pernicious problem this is that seems to be endemic to every single... There isn't a police department that doesn't have to deal with this on a regular basis. We seem solely unable to figure out what to do about it. And we seem to lack the tools to really have an impact on reducing domestic violence. It seems this incredibly pernicious problem. Do I have that wrong?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

No. I think you've got absolutely right. It's what my dad, Professor Grint, would call it a wicked problem. There is no answer to domestic abuse and we've got to just try and think through how we can reduce it, protect and I do think it is a public health issue. It's not just for the police to sort out but it affects every day that every officer comes into work. They will be going to a domestic abuse case when they're on the response teams. And the amount of children that are affected really worries me. The amount of victims that we have that just don't come to the police in the first instance. We don't know half of what's going on, would be my view, is a real worry.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

You're in the process of writing a book right now about it, that's going to be published by Routledge at some point in the future after this podcast. Do you have a sense of what the kind of key takeaway points are around this area?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

So, the book I am writing is with a couple of other academics and another police officer. And it's a domestic abuse book, which links into the fact that in UK policing, you're now going to require a degree on Entry or a degree when you join policing. So, you'll do a degree as you join. And there is a requirement for some good academic review and research around various areas. And we're writing one on domestic abuse, which should come out end of 2021, beginning of 2022. So, it covers everything from the reasons behind domestic abuse, the history of it, criminal justice processes, court proceedings and looking at the new legislation that's coming out around it. So, it's really wide and varied. And what we hope it will do is give students and those interested in looking at domestic abuse more generally, a really good overview of the theory but also the practical piece around policing domestic abuse.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Some of the interesting work was done by people like Larry Sherman from the University of Cambridge. Much love to Larry, but that's now decades old. I just don't get the sense that we are investing enough in terms of trying different approaches and finding new ways of dealing with domestic abuse. It seems to have fallen by the wayside while we become more fixated on violent crime as that's creeping up in many places.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Yeah. I think you've got a point there. And I think when I've been researching pieces that I'm writing, it's quite clear that there are huge academic gaps around domestic abuse. I do think that there is a real value in testing different areas of DA when we're trying to concentrate our resources because we've got so few. We really do need to know what works and I think there is a lack of research into domestic abuse.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Is this an area where we can start legitimately thinking about moving some of the responsibilities to other groups outside of policing? Do you think there's value in that? I have my concerns around this because I'm not entirely convinced that when we hand things to other groups, they do any better than police do but certainly, it's in the zeitgeists to be talking about that right now.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Yeah. Well, I don't think it is just a policing problem and you see real value when you look at independent domestic violence advisors working in hospitals with medics around trying to talk to domestic abuse victims when they come in and they've been assaulted. And the value that they get in terms of disclosure, which is quite often much better than a disclosure that would be given to the police. And I think we've got to do everything we can at each point in a victim's cycle of domestic abuse to think through, who is best to deal with them and the problem at that point in time.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Does the criminal justice system have any contribution to make to the mitigation of domestic violence?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Yeah, it absolutely does. And I think there's a lot of work going on at the moment around not taking perpetrators through the court process necessarily. So, the use of, out of court disposals, which is quite new and innovative and some risk around that. So, lots of debate around that at the moment but I think there's also quite a lot of work that could be done within the court processes. So, some of the work I've done in Thames Valley is working with one of our resident judges, Aylesbury Crown Court, Judge Sheridan, around fast-tracking domestic abuse into the Crown Court. And the work that that has done has led to significant increases in perpetrators pleading guilty because the speed at which we're getting into court means that quite often, the victim is being prepared to come to court to speak to the jury about what's happened. And still in some circumstances, having the bruises from the offense and being able to show the jury what's happened. The faster you get cases through the process, the better.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

That's quite impressive. If you can get cases all the way to the major court in the land, quickly enough that bruises are still showing is phenomenal. I've never heard any court processes move that quickly.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

No, it is very innovative and it's still a trial in Thames Valley. We would really like to push it out across the country if we can. But basically, we have two court systems in the UK. So, you have Magistrates' Court, which deal with a lower level of offending and you have a Crown Court that would deal with more serious offending. So, whether it is significant injury, when you get into the rapes or the murders. We're not talking about that more serious offense but those cases of the grievous bodily harm type cases.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Okay. And so, in the United States, those would be the more serious aggravated assaults.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Right. So, what we're trying to do is get those into court within a two week period, which is unheard of in the Crown Court process. Normally it takes six months to get into a Crown Court.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Yes. They don't normally work in the area of weeks. I don't know any court systems that work in the area of weeks. You start with months and then have ended up talking about years ... and occasionally decades.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

And it's good work by policing, by the Crown Prosecution Service and by the courts and the judge to be able to do this. And we've had it reviewed and evaluated academically. We need to test it more but I do think there's real value in reducing that attrition because what we've seen significantly through previous academic work around attrition rates is that the victims don't bother because they can't wait that long.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Right. It becomes a torturous process where you become victimized the second time, simply by fighting your way through an impenetrable criminal justice system.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Yeah, absolutely. And we know from domestic abuse that the kind of coercive control piece. The longer you are waiting, the more likely you are to get back together with the perpetrator simply because that is life. And that's what happens.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

It is human nature.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

As this is ongoing work, I'm sure it's too early to tell from a quantitative sense, but are you getting any kind of feeling about whether the increase in pleas, the speed of this process is actually having beneficial outcomes for victims of domestic violence?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Absolutely. And Judge Sheridan tells a really good story about one victim who wrote to him the day after the trial to say that the fact that you did this so quickly has had such an impact on the small child that she had. It was the first time in five years that they had not wet the bed. And that was after the trial, which put the perpetrator in prison. And it was only because she had stayed with it that time because it was happening so quickly that actually we got that result. So, a really valuable insight into that kind of victim impact and how it reduces impact. Not just on the victim but the whole family.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

That is obviously devastating for the family and marvelous. But now it leads you to think, "Okay, so we need to back that up with probably more quantitative evidence to support that." But I think you're potentially onto something really important there because the celerity of cases is a huge factor and especially when we have to move quickly to protect children.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

And it's really interesting actually that the new government legislation around domestic abuse that has literally come in, in the UK in the last couple of weeks, focuses on how children are vicarious victims as well. So, we're now nationally getting to grips with the impact that they have and what we need to do around that.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Have things got worse during COVID?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

So, I think that's a really interesting question and there is loads of really good academics doing a lot of work around that at the moment, around domestic abuse.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Yeah. But that stuff's going to be published in about three years' time in the Bangladeshi Journal of Sheep Stealing and Criminology. So, it's never going to appear in any timely fashion in any mechanism that's useful. And when it does come out, it's going to be buried behind a paywall. So, do you have an answer that human beings can use?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

So, I think our worry from a policing perspective - and it's the Royal 'we' when I talk about this, is that we just don't know. I think there is a lot of hidden domestic abuse that hasn't and perhaps will never come out during COVID. What we did see was a reduction in the amount of domestic abuse that was occurring between partners that split up. So, where people didn't live together because they couldn't travel. There was a reduction in that type of domestic abuse but there were increases in domestic abuse where partners were still living together. I think there were limited calls, particularly in the first lockdown in the UK. And that was a real worry for policing about why people were not calling us.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Yeah. If the partner's not out of the house, there's no opportunity to call. And I also wonder if this is one of the limits of police data, which is that we can count the number of calls but it doesn't tell us anything about the severity.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Absolutely and I do worry that we will probably never know the full amount of domestic abuse that's occurred over this time period. And it's one of those things that will come back over coming months and even years, around the impact of that. Particularly, when you look at adverse childhood experiences and what's happened to children and what they've seen, what they've heard and what the future holds.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

And we may not know the impacts of that for a decade.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Absolutely. Yeah.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

You've been working with colleagues to also increase the exposure to evidence-based policing within Thames Valley Police. So, you took on creating, I believe the Thames Valley Police Journal and sounds like an incredible amount of work. Can you tell me a bit about that?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

So, the TVP Journal is in my view, brilliant. And I say that because I run it and edit it.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

When you know a bit about evidence-based policing, it's important to know where your biases are.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Absolutely. But it came about because I was doing my master's degree Ort University and I was reviewing domestic abuse and I wrote my dissertation on domestic abuse, which got published in a journal formally.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Can you be published in a journal informally? Asking for a friend.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

You can come and publish in TVP Journal. That's an informal journal. But having done that, I thought, "You know what? I'm not actually sure that my force knows what I've done." I've written this academic-

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Oh, isn't that always the story, right?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

I've shared it. I've published it but we haven't discussed it internally. And I haven't thought about or been able to put my findings into practice in terms of what that means for policing.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Trying to get police officers to read academic journals, like asking them to run a marathon and stab vest.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

And that's the whole point. But I thought, "Actually, there's a lot of people in policing that are doing degrees or masters and PhDs. But I'm not quite sure how many or who or what they're studying. Wouldn't it be valuable if just in our force,

we had a look at that and asked and saw what kind of content people were writing about because we might be able to make some improvements or change what we're doing as a result of people's recommendations." So, started to kind of ask, and we're really lucky in Thames Valley that the force we'll pay 50% towards your academic study.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Is that for any tertiary level undergraduate or graduate degree?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Yeah, absolutely. As long as it's linked to policing in some form, your professional development.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

That's fantastic.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Yeah. Very few forces do it and we're really lucky that's one of the things that hasn't disappeared with austerity. But it just means we are putting people through the Cambridge course, that I know you teach on sometimes. We have people on what was the high potential development scheme doing master's degrees but we're not taking the learning and we're not doing anything with it. So, started the journal and just collated five or six articles to start with a couple of colleagues.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

And were these colleagues just from within Thames Valley police?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Yeah. So, it's just Thames Valley. It's all just Thames Valley officers and staff. And we said, "If you are doing a degree or a master's and you want to give us a shortened version of your dissertation or a really good essay, we'll have a look at it." And we set up a formal journal. We asked for peer reviewers and I was absolutely amazed at the amount of people that wanted to get involved and be peer reviewers. And they're really harsh. Probably harsher than formal reviewers.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

But they do a really good job, our peer reviewers. And will look through people's articles and give them really good feedback. And then we collate the journal and I say, it's the Royal 'we'. It's a couple of colleagues of mine, Lee Barnum and Rob France. We put it together. We put it through our comms team to make sure that we're not saying anything that's unethical that we're not-

Jerry Ratcliffe:

So, you don't get sued, right?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Yeah, absolutely. And we published it. So, we published it internally to start with. Just for Thames Valley, a private journal and the feedback was phenomenal. And officers and staff were just giving us so much good feedback about

how valued they felt that their work was being shared, how great it was that they could read something that they didn't have to pay for access and that it was relevant to their own force. It was about people doing work in their own area of business. I get excited about this.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Yeah I can tell.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

What I love about this is that in so many places I go into, there seems to be a streak of anti-intellectualism running through policing. And I'm sure you run into that as well. But this seems to be an outlet for Thames Valley Police nerd central, to really find their space, right?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Yeah and the more we do it, the more we find in the sense that there are people doing all sorts. And what we also have is a lot of academics coming to TVP like that. They will probably get to a number of forces asking to do research in force. And we now have a vessel where we can collate that research as well. So, it's not only what our own staff are doing in their own time. It's what we have either commissioned or what academics have come to us asking to do as well.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

One of the things that I started doing many years ago when I started working with police departments here in the US and having graduate students, especially working with Philadelphia, was that every time they did a piece of work and we would send it away to the journal of, We'll Publish Eventually. I also asked them to write one or two pages in English that we would send to the police department because they collaborated with us. They'd taken the risk and they had given us data.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

The very least we could do was to give them something back that was meaningful and useful that was written in English. And what was interesting from an academic perspective was it was often harder for the students to write that concise two pages in English without resorting to academic language or statistical talk and say, "No, you've got to pitch this at people who actually are driving a police car around North Philadelphia, right now. And that makes it interesting and readable to them that will actually engage with their professional sense of value." And that's incredibly difficult writing for academics to do. So, it sounds to me like you're really also driving a translation piece as well as just replicating research. Yes?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Yes we are. And we accept full academic articles like you would see in a formal journal. But we also say to our officers and staff, "If you're just doing a literature review and you want to share what you've read, then write something around that. And also, if you just want to write a practice note. So, if you've done a little bit of a project on patrol that you want

to write about and share. Write that in as well because that's how we can then pick it up and people might want to do a bit more research around it." So, we're catering for all levels, really, to make sure that everybody can engage.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

How does it feel to be a journal editor and to be publishing when your dad is a professor as well? Are you having some degree of oversight and critique from above coming to you?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

He's not allowed to mark my work.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

My dad has been involved in police leadership work. So, it has been tricky on occasion but he's a very good supporter of mine.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

So, he's a professor of leadership. Just retired actually from Warrick University, Warrick Business School.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

What's his first name?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Keith Grint.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Good stuff. How many issues of the journals do you have now?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

So, we've got six volumes. We publish twice a year. They have about five or six articles in each. It's a lot of work in the sense that you are having to first, encourage people to write. And secondly, then collate that, get it edited, get it peer-reviewed, put it together, get it checked and then share it and sell it. So, we share it on Twitter. We share it on LinkedIn. It's in the International Association of Chief Polices library. So, we're spread out across the world.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

They're never going to read it.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Oh, they promise me they are. But it's open access.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

And when you say, "Sell it," you mean, "Advertise," because it's free and it's available to everybody online.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Absolutely and that's exactly what I wanted it to be.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

You've also been involved with the College of Policing and getting involved in one of their national publications, Going Equipped.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Yes. Going Equipped came about because of the TVP Journal. So, the college saw what Thames Valley was doing and liked it and thought, "We ought to have a national version of this. We need to have a mechanism to share what people are studying and what people are learning." So, they asked me to be Editor in Chief, which sounds like a very grand title for what I actually do. But we've just started that. So, there was an addition last year in August and we've just published edition two in April, 2021. It's called, Going Equipped. It's a magazine, a publication written by policing for policing.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

And again, it's pulling the long academic reads but also really short practice notes around all sorts of areas of business from across policing nationally.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

How often do those come out?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

So again, they're likely to come out twice a year. Spring and autumn. And if you are working in policing in the UK, then you can absolutely write for, Going Equipped.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Do you think they're going to be useful for people internationally as well?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Yeah, absolutely. And again, it's open access. So, you can just go online to have a look at it. But what it's doing is sharing some of the academic work that's going on. Some of the experiments, some of the policing pilots and also some of the day-to-day business. So, what's it like to be a forensic practitioner in the UK? What's it like to deal with a romance fraud investigation? How do you deal with somebody that goes, no comment in interview. Those kinds of things.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Good stuff. The journals that you're editing and what's nice about them is they come out twice a year. You have quite a degree of currency. People are writing for them and then it's appearing in the next issue. It's going to be more topical than what you get with many academic journals, which is that an article takes three years to do the research, six months to do the writing and two years to get approval. And then is a queue for two years.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Yours is much more current. So, it's going to reflect what's happening in policing. Where do you think policing is going in the next year or two? And for example, I know that British numbers are down significantly. But as we emerge from COVID, if enough people get their arses vaccinated, we're going to start seeing more emergence and return to business as usual. But British policing numbers are really down, aren't they?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

They are. There is a uplift program, currently. So, an introduction of around 10,000 new officers coming along. But what that means is you get significant numbers of brand new officers who don't have the experience, who need to be trained, who need the care and all of the other things that go with a brand new officer. And what we are seeing is that crime is getting more complex and more complicated. The crime types are changing significantly. So, just in Thames Valley, I've just introduced a new digital investigation intelligence team, because every investigation has a digital feed to it now. Whether that's on social media, whether that's through activity that the criminal, the perpetrator, has used. And what we don't have is the knowledge or experience to deal with that.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

So, I do think the next few years are going to be tricky in terms of trying to ensure our staff has the right knowledge and experience to deal with the crimes as they change.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Does any force have enough puppy walkers to actually be able to take all these new shiny recruits out and look after them?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Well, that's it. You've got to have a Tutor Constable here in the UK.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Field training officer here in the US.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

To look after individual officers as they come through. And you've got to train those people as well. So, they know how to be a tutor. So, it all has consequences. It's not just simply about getting new numbers and getting new bobbies on the beat. It's actually much more complicated than that.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

And it's going to have other implications, right? The way through personnel and promotions and a whole bunch of other areas that I'm sure haven't been anticipated yet.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Yeah. And there is huge programs of work, both through the College of Policing, but individual forces thinking through those consequences. And like I said earlier on, the new officers all have to have a degree or will be doing a degree as they join policing. And part of that degree is to understand evidence-based practice. So, they will be doing research as well. And the complications around that. The consequences of trying to find the data within policing will be tricky to understand. But also, I think could potentially bring us some real value, when you look at the work we've done with the journal.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

I'm guessing I know the answer considering that you've published academically, professionally or writing a book and you're editing two journals. So, I suspect that I know the answer to this question before it's coming, but do you see value in this push for higher educational standards within policing?

Katy Barrow-Grint:

I do and there's been lots of debates around that. There's always value in increasing education. And for policing, I think that actually what it will bring is a real breadth of knowledge and understanding and also for our officers and staff, as they come into policing to really see how you understand what works and what doesn't and that actually everything's not necessarily doomed to succeed. And if things don't work, then you ought to stop what you're doing, rethink it and try something different. And actually, the best practice piece might only be best practice for a very short period of time because the culture or the society changes and therefore, the evidence changes and you might need to change what you're doing.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

I interviewed Sir Dennis O'Connor, who joined policing about three weeks after Robert Peel created it. I love Dennis. But what's been interesting about the last decade or two is the pace with which research has picked up in policing. I think if you joined when he did in the sixties, you could have pretty much stuck with doing the same thing for 20 years. Not because it was right or wrong but because there was nothing to suggest replacing it or doing it better. I think there's times are gone now.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

It seems like we need a continual professional practice like you find in nursing and like you find in medicine. And this idea that what you pick up in the academy is going to see you through or the police college is going to send you through the next 20 or 30 years, I think is now long gone.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

The world changes so quickly. We have moved on from that position. And I do think that in order to be a really good officer, you have to make time to understand what's changing and why it's changing and what impact you're having. And to understand what impact you're having, you've got to understand why you're doing it.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

So, here's the \$64,000 question. Except for it's not. One of the things I've noticed is that there's an increase in the numbers of new police officers coming in with higher education. But looking at the United States to the UK, it seems like there's an increasing pay disparity. I used to be a little hesitant about the pay standards here in the United States but they still keep creeping up. And I just don't see that in the UK at the moment. So, what I'm worried about is hiring a lot of recruits who are going to leave after a year or two because we simply can't pay them enough.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

I can see that. And I think that we do have to think carefully. The Royal we, policing about how we encourage people to stay, how we make the best use of their knowledge and their practice and what they've done previously and how we look after them. Because that's what is key here.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

I will say this. You're writing a book. You're editing two journals, full-time work as a superintendent, black belt karate. You've got a gazillion things going on. I'm sure your kids have no idea what you look like. So, I'm reluctant to take you away for any more time than this but for spending your time with me this evening and sharing a glass of wine with me, thanks ever so much. And it's nice to see you, Katy.

Katy Barrow-Grint:

Thanks, Jerry. Appreciate it.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

That was episode 36 of Reducing Crime, recorded online in May, 2021.

New episodes are announced on Twitter @_ReducingCrime. The transcript of this and every episode can be found at www.reducingcrime.com/podcast. There, you can also find links to the two publications that Katy mentions in the episode.

If you're an instructor, planning a class or two around any of the podcasts, DM me @Jerry_Ratcliffe for a free spreadsheet of multiple-choice questions.

Be safe and best of luck.