

#57 (KEN PEASE)

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Jerry Ratcliffe:

Reducing Crime features conversations with influential thinkers in the police service and leading crime and policing researchers.

Ken Pease OBE is a British crime prevention legend and the pioneer who directed the Kirkholt Repeat Burglary Prevention Project. We discussed not only that, but also his time teaching in Canada, having his class bombed by the provisional IRA, repeat victimization and misleading government graphics.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Welcome to Reducing Crime, I'm Jerry Ratcliffe.

25 years ago, Ken Pease was awarded an OBE, more formally named an Officer of the Order of the British Empire, for services to crime prevention, and he continues to contribute to the field. Now approaching his 80th year, Ken Pease has been an important voice in British crime prevention for half a century. He's the previous head of the Home Office Police Research Group, and currently a visiting professor at University College London, the University of Manchester, and Huddersfield University. In the 1980s, Ken directed the Kirkholt Repeat Burglary Prevention Project, later described as the most important crime prevention project ever undertaken. This pioneering research into repeat victimization produced what has been described as a paradigm shift in our understanding of crime and how to respond to it. In 2013, he received the Ronald Clark Eck Award for contributions to environmental criminology and a Festschrift, that's a collection of essays written by colleagues in his honor published in 2007.

His most recent book, *Self-Selection Policing*, was written with Jason Roach and published in 2016. As is obligatory around his way, I popped over to Ken's house in Stockport, just outside Manchester, for a cup of tea. We also moaned about the weather and Huddersfield, sorry Huddersfield, and in true British fashion, complained about the government.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

I try not to make the podcast about me. It's my chance to catch up with other people who've done a lot fucking more than I have, and when I say people have done a lot more than I have, you know I'm basically saying you're just older than I am, right?

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Ken Pease:

Yeah, exactly, absolutely. In which case, I've done more than almost everybody in the world.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

When did you start all this, Ken?

Ken Pease:

I started doing something entirely different, did my psychology and then did stuff on child pedestrian education and behavior, three years of that. I made more difference in those three years than I have in the 50 years since. Then I got recruited into the Home Office and then I went off to do forensic psychology stuff, and then the boring academic life after that. I mean, the max secure place in Saskatoon was the place that I got most of my forensic psychology practical stuff from.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

So it's funny. It was like yourself, Gloria Laycock, Ron Clarke all started in correctional institutions. It's got to be more than coincidence, right?

Ken Pease:

Absolutely. This psychology thing, it was the psychology then, that background.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

How did a northern lad like you end up in Saskatoon of all places, in Canada?

Ken Pease:

I got recruited into the Regional Psychiatric Center in Saskatoon, which is the Broadmoor of the Prairies.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Is that their advertising?

Ken Pease:

No, it's not. It's what people say they are though.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

The secure mental health facility of the Prairies, great.

Ken Pease:

I love Saskatchewan. It's where Kim Rossmo was born, by the way.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Really?

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Ken Pease:

Yeah. It's a lovely place. The people are fabulous, they are kind and gentle.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

If it wasn't for the fact that it's the windswept North and it's probably snow 90% of the year, you make it sound very attractive.

Ken Pease:

The accurate description of the Saskatoon climate was 11 months winter, one month for skiing, was the way they described it.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Very nice. And then how long were you there?

Ken Pease:

Six years. Manchester kept my job open for that period.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Six years?

Ken Pease:

Yeah, yeah.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

And so you came back to what?

Ken Pease:

Then went another two years in Belfast during the troubles. The IRA targeted my class and succeeded a month after I'd left.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

In what way?

Ken Pease:

Killed them, killed three guys. They bombed the class.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

What was your class?

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Ken Pease:

It was was cops. It was RUC cops. I mean, it was really sitting ducks on the campus. After the three guys died. One took almost a year to die, it was awful, awful situation.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Oh, God.

Ken Pease:

They then completely withdrew from the university and they were back completely at Garnerville.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Garnerville was the secure training facility, wasn't it?

Ken Pease:

That's right. The way it was done, it was a bomb behind... You know the thing in front of radiators?

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Mm-hmm.

Ken Pease:

The shield type, don't know what you call it. They undid that and put the bomb behind that.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

What was the class? What were they learning?

Ken Pease:

They were doing a certificate in police management or something like that. They were frontline cops.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

This must have been the 1970s?

Ken Pease:

One of the things about Ulster is the incredible sort of cruel sense of humor that people have got. On the gable ends, you know the paintings that you have on gable ends...

Jerry Ratcliffe:

I've been around to West Belfast and all the murals. It's quite a thing.

Ken Pease:

That was the two years. And I came back to Manchester and then stupidly changed, I should have stayed at Manchester for the rest of me career really? But there you go.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

And then you went to?

Ken Pease:

I went to Huddersfield. Why did I go to Huddersfield? This is almost a therapy session because that was my stupid decision.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

I dated a lass in Huddersfield once, there was one decent pub, The Vulcan, did a nice lunch on a Sunday. That was about it really. There's not much else going on there.

Ken Pease:

Some good chips in Huddersfield.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

There you go. That's a selling point. So let me get the chronology of this right. So you were starting to work in kind of police leadership stuff way back in the eighties then?

Ken Pease:

Yeah.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

That's a strange transition from forensic psychology to police leadership.

Ken Pease:

Well, I'm not sure I'd characterize it as police leadership. It was certainly trying to do stuff. I've found frontline cops more congenial than police leaders, frankly.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Because they saw the relevance of it?

Ken Pease:

Absolutely, and you can actually have a conversation as well. And yes, I have more in common with them.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

It's strange to me that you've got more receptivity from the frontline cops.

Ken Pease:

What happens to police initiatives, particularly those introduced by frontline cops?

Jerry Ratcliffe:

You've got a phrase, haven't you?

Ken Pease:

The phrase is, "Killing the cubs," because the lioness takes up with a lion who is not the father of her cubs, the new boyfriend. The first action is to kill the cubs, and that is a common feature of what happens when you get a transition of authority in police divisions, BCUs or whatever.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Because in the lion world, you need to make sure that your offspring are the ones that are looked after and thrive and survive.

Ken Pease:

Exactly. You have no genetic investment in the cubs that your partner had before you came on the scene. Yeah. Whenever I introduce the topic or the phrase to police audiences, there is almost always laughter.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Oh, they all recognize that. It's the only way to get promoted, right? There's no way you can carry on with the same initiatives as the previous people. You got to bring your own bullshit in.

Ken Pease:

Exactly. Once upon a time, there was an excellent initiative based on optimal foraging ideas. That was an initiative with frontline cops involved, which was successful to the extent that it got a Goldstein award. These guys did a terrific job. Burglary went down substantially. They were revising the thing when management changed and the scheme was killed. And the guy who led it who was an inspector went and retired because he couldn't cope with it and his nearest collaborator who was an analyst, he went off and got a job with victim support because he couldn't cope with it either. In other words-

Jerry Ratcliffe:

They had this really great initiative absolutely just killed off by new management.

Ken Pease:

It was killed off by new management. And six months later, I happened to be in headquarters of that same force and got talking to two analysts and I said, "Oh, so you're taking on the work of John and Trevor and they said, "Who?" In other words, it took less than a year for the success to be essentially written out of the corporate memory of that organization.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

And how many years had it been running for and been success-

Ken Pease:

About three.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

And then it just got a erased from the memory.

Ken Pease:

Exactly. Honestly, I could have wept on that occasion. And it's that notion of the failure of continuity across changes of management that I think has seen more good ideas binned, good practices binned. Anyway, there you go. I'm going to start blobbing if we carry on like this.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

How do you stop that happening? Where have there been successes in terms of changing policy? I mean, your work for the last, it's got to be the last 40 years, has been involved in thinking about especially policy and policy around repeat victimization, there have been successes.

Ken Pease:

There have. How many fingers have you got?

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Well, I mean, you did some other pioneering work in repeat victimization. How did you get into that?

Ken Pease:

Actually, it's through Gloria Laycock. She was head of the crime prevention unit. We talked about burglary and I got some dosh from her to try and reduce burglary in what was then the most burgled area of Greater Manchester.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Was this like a proper grant or did she just give you a whole pile of money in an envelope?

Ken Pease:

No, the envelope wasn't brown. And when we looked at it, we found that the best predictor of victimization was victimization. And at the same time, slightly later, we did an analysis, which I think is probably the thing I'm proudest of, which was the demonstration that hotspots are hotspots more because of repeat victimization than they are because of prevalence of victimization. In the area that we were working in, in Greater Manchester, if you started in January and were totally successful, and if you just prevented repeats, by the time you got to December, you'd be down to less than half of the burglary.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

I mean, I think this is a point that's lost on so many people when they think about hotspots policing, they're just too quickly rushed to, "Oh, we're going to go out and do saturation patrol."

Ken Pease:

Exactly.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

They don't do enough thinking about the analysis which is, "Do you have a problem of lots and lots of places being targeted because they're all vulnerable or a few people being hit again and again and again?" Because the solutions are going to be completely different.

Ken Pease:

Exactly. I want to kiss your feet on the basis of saying that because it's absolutely true. The bulk of hotspot analyses are of the kind that you describe.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Well, I think people kind of go, "Oh, we've got a hotspot," and then they just immediately go to, "What are we going to do about it?" And I'm like, "Hold on a minute. We haven't finished the analysis. We've just started it. A map of crime hotspots isn't the end of analysis, it's the beginning."

Ken Pease:

Absolutely correct. The way I do it when I'm talking to cops is to say, "Okay, you've got a hotspot identified. Go stand in the middle of the hotspot, what are you going to do next?" The next, of course, is analytically driven to find out how predictable events are specifically within the hotspot area, if you actually were focusing on repeat victimization, repeats and near repeats of the kind that you produced a brilliant measure to quantify.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Oh, it was people like Mike Townsley and Shane Johnson, but I think, you know, you mentioned near repeats. I think it's something that people don't pay enough attention to, that increased likelihood that if your house gets burgled, it's not just that your house is at increased risk of being burgled, but now your neighbors are at an increased risk for the next few weeks or the next few days, your immediate neighbors, that kind of contagious risk. It's something that I don't think enough people appreciate the value of understanding that.

Ken Pease:

Excellent. Tell you what, you do the rest of this podcast because you said all the right things, honestly, you have. I think it's Shane and Kate, one of the things that they demonstrate was this notion of, in the semi-detached house, it's that if like the same side, so if you're on a left hand of a semi, then it's not the other half of the same building that is most at risk afterwards. It's the equivalent half of the pair of houses just next to you.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

And that's some of the work. I mean I think the work of Shane Johnson and Kate Bowers, one of the power couples of British criminology for sure, has really been interesting. And just to get down to this micro level of thinking about, and I think John Eck does this work too, about thinking about specific individual properties. I think people think far too

much about neighborhoods. It's like, "No, tell me about the homes, the individual homes, the homes on the street corner right on the intersection. I want to know about those individual places."

Ken Pease:

Yeah, yeah, that's absolutely true.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Tell me about this notion about successes. And we were talking about successes, the repeat victimization stuff became a key performance indicator for British police way back in the, I think the nineties, wasn't it? Late eighties?

Ken Pease:

We published a paper a few years ago, Dainis Ignatans and I, called *Whatever Happened to Repeat Victimization?* To give you an example, in the crime reduction toolkit of the College of Policing, there isn't a repeat victimization element in that, so it's disappeared.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Nowhere to be found?

Ken Pease:

Nowhere to be found on the crime reduction toolkit. So using the conventional mapping software, it does not major, if you like, on the very specific stuff we're talking about. And also, when it's dots on a map rather than bricks on a building, then you don't see things in the same way.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

I think the analysts need to get out of the office more and go and stare at the actual crime hotspots a bit more.

Ken Pease:

Yeah. In one of your books, what I take to be the message is that executives have more to change about the way they do things than do the analysts themselves.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Well, I'm glad you managed to read between the lines because that was the intent, but I didn't want to clearly say. And I think this is one of the reasons that I wanted to come and talk to you which is, what are the messages that executives need to be taking away to make the lasting change that you hope they signed up to do the job?

Ken Pease:

I'm a Bayesian in terms of the way of thinking. In other words, I'd adhere not to the conventional frequentist modes of analysis of things. It's common sense where you do something and then you have a look at what you've done and you change your mind slightly and carry on doing something. And if it gets better, then great you move towards it or move away from it. The Bayesian approach as reflected is, you have your feet held to the fire in terms of you've got to make a prediction about something. Then when you see how close the prediction is to what actually happens, then you revise

it and try and work out what happened. And the best predictors were the ones who were keen to make changes on the basis of the discrepancy between their predictions and what actually happened. In other words, it's a way of doing things which is completely different from the sort of conventional RCT type approach. It says people should predict something, see what happens, adjust what they do, change, change, change, change, change.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

There is a lot to be said for incremental change. But the piece that's missing with leadership side is, once they write a memo and they put an operation in the field, they don't want to tweak it and change it because that almost feels like an omission of failure that it's not working. So nobody does that, so you just leave it running even though everybody knows it's not really working as well as we intended, but there seems to be an unwillingness to make changes as they go.

Ken Pease:

Absolutely right, and that is reflected in when you see operations publicized. They are publicized at their outset. They are seldom publicized at the end of the project by which time, no doubt, management has changed and so it is not relevant anymore.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

But what is the mindset required of leadership? And I mean, you're the psychology chap. What's the mindset required to be upfront and honest about the fact that we're going to try this and it's probably going to fail? That's not exactly a good starting mindset.

Ken Pease:

No, but the internal one, before you actually need to go external on it, is to be required to make the predictions in the first place. There was one project, a PhD I supervised, what they did was to take plans of estates that had been built perhaps 10, 15 years ago-

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Public housing projects, yeah.

Ken Pease:

... ask them to say, "If built like that, where would the crime be and what kind of crime would it be?"

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Oh, that's a great way of doing it, because I've often felt that people who built public housing projects should be made to live in them for a year afterwards.

Ken Pease:

Absolutely. But the point is, the issue here is that the crime prevention officers were poor at predicting where the crime was actually going to happen on the basis of the plans. The important point for what we're talking about is not

that finding, but rather the reaction that came to the presentation by the student concerned to crime prevention officers. They hated it. They hated to be shown to be wrong. And I think that's the first thing, a mindset which says you predict, there's no shame in being wrong, but at least know that you're wrong and move in the direction which the wrongness suggests. And that is the essence of a Bayesian way of going about things, which is a characteristic of the people who are best at prediction.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

But in policing what you end up is, they will pursue a double down on failure, then change.

Ken Pease:

Yes, and that's the problem, isn't it?

Jerry Ratcliffe:

I think it's where the majority of places are. I think there is an unwillingness to embrace doubt. Doubt about whether this is going to work, whether it's going to succeed. Because I think once you embrace more doubt, you're willing to embrace the idea of, "Let's analyze it and see if it's actually working or not." I see too many plans launched that just have the charisma of the leader driving, "This will work," and there's a lot of affirmative hand gestures and stern looks and PR announcements. "This is going to be the thing that saves the day." And then you find that the analysis that shows it really wasn't as good as everybody hoped for gets buried.

Ken Pease:

Yeah. And that's why the PR tends to occur at the beginning rather at the end of projects. But doubt is the friend of humility, isn't it? Without doubt you can't have humility. Hallelujah, sister.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Thank you. Is humility an important quality for a police leader?

Ken Pease:

Humility is an absolutely essential component in terms of his or her own performance, I think.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

You've talked about the crackdown consolidation cycle. What's that?

Ken Pease:

Yeah, it's just something we tried a long time ago. One of the things we do know is if you do have a police operation of a conventional kind, it buys you a period of relative quietness and that period on average is about twice as long as the crackdown itself operated. And it seems to me that if you're going to do crackdowns ever, then you should use the period of quietness to consolidate community relations. I've not seen those things seen as sequential. What happens with crackdowns is, after the crackdown, you say, "Thank goodness for that. It's gone all quiet again. Yippee." I just think it's a wasted opportunity.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

I see a lot of initiatives where increasingly people are talking about defunding the police and putting more money into these long-term areas that have potential crime reduction value. I think a lot of them are untested, but we've got to try different things. But I do worry that what happens is, in the meantime, we often have policing solutions and those policing solutions make the problem go away in the short term and then we forget about the long term stuff. Now of course the problem is, we're investing in long term solutions, but that doesn't give much people respite for the next 10 years while being victimized by more crime than they've ever had before right now.

Ken Pease:

Which is why I think the hybrid solution of crackdown and consolidation as we termed it, is a way forward and it avoids the one which I think is really bad, which is crackdown complacency.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

And complacency in your book being?

Ken Pease:

Being the notion that the problem has gone away because we've cracked down on it.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

We've merely suppressed it. The suppression doesn't change the underlying conditions that are driving it.

Ken Pease:

Exactly. That, by the way, is the tragedy of Kirkholt.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Somebody once said to me that Kirkholt they thought was one of the most important crime prevention projects that they'd ever seen. Tell me the story of Kirkholt.

Ken Pease:

The Kirkholt estate was the highest burglary area in Greater Manchester. We didn't have enough money to do lots of things, so we said, "What's the group that we should start with?" So we looked at people who'd been previously victimized, particularly in the recent past.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

So it really was just trying to reduce the amount of repeat victimization?

Ken Pease:

Yeah. So what we did was to do a sort of security hardware plus attention program on those who had just been victimized. And it included what we called Cocoon Watch, which was taking the six immediate neighbors and engaging them and also offering them some of the security hardware that we provided.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Going to people and saying, "You've not been the victim of burglary, but one of your neighbors has, and so here's some additional help for you."

Ken Pease:

Six such households for each burglary, yeah.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

What was the reception of people for that?

Ken Pease:

It was terrific. We got seconded police officer, fabulous bloke, you would love him, called Dave Forrester. And the police in that area had vilified the Kirkholt estate as being... One of the things that was said, "They just nick things off each other." And Dave went up there and talked to [them] and he'd come back after and he said, "There's great people up there. They're essentially really nice people up there. This is all bullshit."

Jerry Ratcliffe:

When I was a young cop at Hendon, the police college in London, and I got sent to H District in the East End, used to be districts back then. And people were going, "Oh, bloody hell, H district." But after spending a bit of time in there, tucked away in amongst all the thugs and the hoods and the criminals, there's a bunch of decent people just trying to get by. And I think one of the issues is that once you start getting into response policing, you're only ever seeing two types of people. You're either seeing offenders who are obviously stressed or you're seeing victims of crime, obviously stressed. And it can leave you with this warped view that everybody's either a victim or a criminal. But most of the people in those places are just trying to get by, make a living, get the kids to school.

Ken Pease:

Absolutely so. So anyway, so Kirkholt watch. We got the rate of domestic burglary down to a third of its previous level.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Pause for a moment there. That's not reducing it by a third, that's reducing it to a third. I mean, that's incredible, a 66% reduction in burglary. It is almost unheard of in most places.

Ken Pease:

The skepticism of many people led the home office to ask for a re-analysis of the results by Dave Frankton, actually.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

I've heard of him.

Ken Pease:

Well, he's some obscure figure, lovely bloke.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

I know if he works a bit harder, publishes a couple more things, he might start to come to prominence.

Ken Pease:

He sends you his monthly publication list, does he?

Jerry Ratcliffe:

I've seen it, yeah.

Ken Pease:

He sends it every month and it's, as you imply, massive, massive, massive.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

He probably last slept in about 1986.

Ken Pease:

I said to him, "Have you got a clone in the attic, helping out with stuff with you?" So he did the re-analysis and it was the things that we had changed that actually made the difference.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

The Kirkholt project became famous.

Ken Pease:

The guy who took over after, and he was in charge of the continuation of the Kirkholt project, and I went up there and there were things not being done. For example, Cocoon Watch had fallen apart. And he said, "Oh, we've moved a long way past that." I thought, "God, will you prefer complicated things that fail to simple things that don't."

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Right. What was the response of people in British academia to all of this? Because it seems horribly practical from most of their perspectives.

Ken Pease:

Yeah. Well, you remember what the criminology texts were at that time?

Jerry Ratcliffe:

No, because I did geography.

Ken Pease:

Okay. The new criminology, Taylor Walton and Young, Critical Criminology, as it would be called now. That was by far, I think, the most common textbook. Nothing against Marxism in a political sense, but it was a Marxist criminology exclusively and inverted, if you like, the heroes and villains of criminal justice.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Nothing changing about that then really, right now it seems to be where we are still.

Ken Pease:

You think so?

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Yeah. I mean, critical criminology still reverberates with this notion of the cops are the bad guys and the villains are the unsung heroes.

Ken Pease:

Exactly, precisely so. I don't mind a discipline which says the limits and scope of state power is a thing that ought to be examined, but I find it uncongenial. What you need is something like environmental criminology now.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

It's great to talk about these abstract concepts, often using language that I find frankly impenetrable. I try to understand what it's all about, but honestly, it seems to be more exercises in linguistics than any practical value. But at some point, it's just nice for people not to be shot as often.

Ken Pease:

That's what one feels, yeah.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

What are the lessons that we really still have to learn in policing about implementing initiatives?

Ken Pease:

The degree of inertia is huge and the notion of growing ideas rather than having new ideas for each new management is a real problem. Killing the cubs strikes me as an absolutely major thing because lots of cops have lots of ideas. There are lots of demotivated cops whose ideas are either ignored or discarded. What the Bayesian approach does, is to allow a growth mentality to say, "Okay, if it seems to be working, let's improve it rather than throw it away." And that should not be affected by changes in management, which it currently is.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

But that kind of incremental improvement is tricky in a situation where people are all vying for promotion and rank and coming to notice over and above their peers.

Ken Pease:

There is a huge amount of talent in frontline policing. That talent is not nurtured as it should be. If you take the role of police management to express a direction of travel for the force and the elements in it, the direction of travel is what should be defined by police management and consistent with that direction of travel, there's enough, if you like, talent and initiative in the front line of policing to actually make it happen. To say, "That sounds really unfeasible," but it's not

unfeasible because there's so many cops who enter the profession with good ideas and thoughts about it. And this question is harnessing that really, I think it's the most important thing.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

I wonder about this, I wonder where the middle ground is though because, and I'm not thinking of a particular department, in many police departments, what you often get is, you bring the outsider in to bring you all these initiatives, new ideas, and they kind of kill the cubs and start some stuff, and that has flaws to it. And then you go, "Well, let's go with an insider who's come up through the department to bring some continuity." But what often happens with them also comes stagnation. So it seems that neither provides really what's looking for, which is a level of innovation, but also support for the existing strategies that are most likely to be effective. And I don't know how you find that.

Ken Pease:

I think part of that is, who are the outsiders you're bringing in? The incentive structure currently for senior police management is not what you'd want it to be. Your stagnation may be a result of the incentive structure, which led people to their positions of authority or potential positions of authority and promotion.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Right. You weren't promoted because you innovate. You were promoted because you were seen as a stable pair of hands who didn't really rock the boat.

Ken Pease:

I wish I'd said it that way. Yeah, absolutely right. Stagnation will come with the second kind of promotion, but there's plenty of people, I'm really impressed by lots of people. I'm also seeing them squashed, leave the job or whatever, or say, "Okay, I'm not going to do anything proactive again."

Jerry Ratcliffe:

There's a double whammy with that level of promotion system. One, it promotes not necessarily the right kind of people, but two, it forces the right kind of people out of the job. We lose them.

Ken Pease:

Either actually or motivationally, because you can be a uniform carrier for the next 20 years if you give up on the things that you think really would be a good idea.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Cheery place to get to in this conversation.

Ken Pease:

That's the cross that I've got to bear. I made more difference in the three years looking at pedestrian behavior than I've done in the period since. That's the way it feels, definitely.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

It can't really feel that way. You are one of the most well known scholars in crime prevention in the country, people know your name all over the place.

Ken Pease:

Yeah, tell you what. You meet new cops, yeah? Do they say, "Yeah, you did that stuff on repeated victimization. I've done it. I've thought about that way and in this...", whatever. Know what they say is, "I've heard of you," and that's it. I don't want them to hear a bit. I want them to have the ideas that me or other people are involved with.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

I was doing some field work at a homicide scene in Philadelphia some years ago and had a sergeant looked me up and recognized who I was and said, "I had to read your fucking book." At least it's not for that, right?

Ken Pease:

Oh, dear. Well, that's one advance on, "I've heard of you," I think.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

I was late to the conference that brought me over here and I know that you and Scott Key who we both know gave a paper. So what was the paper, because I missed it. I was late. I had tickets for Tears for Fears. I mean, you can't blame me for that, right?

Ken Pease:

Absolutely. Yeah. Yeah. Was it good? Where was it?

Jerry Ratcliffe:

It was flipping excellent, yeah. They were great. So the paper...

Ken Pease:

The first part of it is this document, which is the crime prevention strategy called Beating Crime.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

You a part of this?

Ken Pease:

No.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Oh, okay.

Ken Pease:

Writing a strategy document?

Jerry Ratcliffe:

I never knew that.

Ken Pease:

It was bullocks. That's the point.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

This is a strategy document that Boris Johnson's been talking about?

Ken Pease:

Yeah, yeah. I'll send you a copy of it, with pleasure. Beating Crime, strategy document, 50 pages long, no mention of repeat victimization obviously. And two things got my goat to such an extent that I thought, "I'm going to do a bigger job on this." They showed the graph of crime decline. Yeah?

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Since the 1990s, yeah.

Ken Pease:

Yeah. Wow, there's a point. The heading of it was, crime has been dropping for a long time now. Since between 2010 and 2020, it has fallen X %, whatever. Why 2010 rather than 1995?

Jerry Ratcliffe:

That's when the conservative government came in.

Ken Pease:

Exactly.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Politics creeping in right then.

Ken Pease:

The other thing about it, was they changed the scale on the graph. So the first data points were three years apart and then the rest were one year apart.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Lying with figures.

Ken Pease:

Lying with figures. In fact, one of my slides was Darrell Huff's, How to Lie with Statistics.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

That's what I meant, Lying with Statistics.

Ken Pease:

And the effect of rescaling the thing was to make the decline after the 1995 peak sharper and to increase the proportion of the whole axis that was under conservative control, so two mendacious manipulations of the first graph.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Isn't this why we have things like tenure so that people in academia can hold politicians more accountable for this country?

Ken Pease:

Well, I'd like to think so.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

What is the challenge for academics to get out of, can go with the classic trope and the traditional cliché, to get out of the Ivory Tower and how do we encourage people to try and stick their nose in and have more hand over policy? And maybe it's the career stage I'm at. I've published a few papers and a couple of books and stuff like that and I think, "Does the world need another peer reviewed journal article in the *Bangladeshi Journal of Sheep-Stealing and Criminology* from Jerry Ratcliffe?"

Ken Pease:

High impact journal?

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Oh, great editorial board. Or is there a need to start being just a little bit more pernicious and sticking my nose into having more policy influence? But I think the challenge is, most academics don't know where to start. So what they tend to do... I mean, I'm trying to write some op-ed pieces and maybe use the podcast, but I think most people just stay with what's safe which is, "Let's write another journal article?"

Ken Pease:

And that's the incentive system that academics get, isn't it really? I mean, like I said, the things I review now are so often done for gee whiz stats and whatever. They don't align with policing purposes, I don't think. My example is, you know the stuff on power outages?

Jerry Ratcliffe:

No.

Ken Pease:

There's some South African stuff and there's some American stuff. Power outages in an area increase robbery, right? And that's essentially the way they write it. The question is, if it does, how quickly does it in what kind of areas relative to the outage, which actually gives you a scheduling of how to restore power by type of area.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Well, what a great idea, where and when you should prioritize returning power because it'll reduce crime.

Ken Pease:

Exactly. But in fact, they don't even think about what the decision could be that is contingent upon their decision to restore power in a particular schedule.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

So while everybody's happy writing introductions and lit reviews, we should really have mandatory so-what sections at the end of journal articles.

Ken Pease:

Absolutely.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Or at the beginning of them, even better.

Ken Pease:

Or both, yeah.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

So maybe that's the role of where we should be, which as soon as we all hit retirement, become the grumpy old bastards who put the will to rights.

Ken Pease:

Well, I've got to the grumpy old bastard stage. But the question is, but yeah, why not?

Jerry Ratcliffe:

And maybe universities should be spending more time rewarding people who actually take more of a policy focus and get stuck in.

Ken Pease:

And maybe we should also get more involved with fact checking organizations as well.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Yeah.

Well, on that cheery note, Ken, it's been delightful to come and sit in your living room here and have a chat.

Ken Pease:

And be depressed, but anyway.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

It matches the weather because it's been bloody awful since I got here. There was a part of me that came back to the country going, "Aw," there are so many things I miss: decent pub, good humor on the radio, but this weather has just done it in for me. If this counts as summer, to hell with this.

Ken Pease:

It's going to start raining later on today, you know.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Thanks for that.

Ken Pease:

My pleasure. Lovely to see you as ever.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

Likewise, mate.

Jerry Ratcliffe:

That was Episode 57 of Reducing Crime recorded in Stockport UK in June, 2022. A link to the Beating Crime report Ken roundly and rightly disparaged is at reducingcrime.com/podcast where you can also find transcripts of every episode. New episodes are announced on Twitter at [@_reducingcrime](https://twitter.com/_reducingcrime), and my personal random ramblings can be found at [Jerry_Ratcliffe](https://twitter.com/Jerry_Ratcliffe). If you want new episodes handy whenever you need them, subscribe at Spotify, SoundCloud, Apple, or wherever you pod.

Be safe and best of luck.