

Dave Sanders II - Episode 802

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SPEAKERS

James Geering, Dave Sanders

J James Geering 00:00

Welcome to the behind the shield podcast. As always, my name is James Geering. And this week, it is my absolute honor to welcome back onto the show, London armed response police officer Dave Sanders. Now in Episode 152, I sat down with Dave, but he was still working in uniform. We had an amazing conversation with obviously there was some areas that we couldn't discuss with Dave has since retired. So we came together again for a candid conversation and discussed a host of areas from guns and knife crime in the UK, police officer fitness, community policing, branding of law enforcement, leadership, his own perspective of COVID in London, and so much more. Now, before we get to this incredible conversation, as I say, every week, please just take a moment, go to whichever app you listen to this on, subscribe to the show, leave feedback and leave a rating. Every single five star rating truly does elevate this podcast, therefore making it easier for others to find. And this is a free library of over 800 episodes now. So all I ask in return is that you help share these incredible men and women's stories. So I can get them to every single person on planet earth who needs to hear them. So with that being said, I welcome back to the show, Dave Sanders enjoy. Well, Dave, I want to say Firstly, congratulations on your retirement. And secondly, thank you. Welcome back to the behind the shield podcast.

D Dave Sanders 01:52

Thank you so much. It's an honor to be back. I was waiting for you to work out that I'm actually a nobody. And

J James Geering 01:59

oh, wait. Okay, nevermind, interviews. So there's so much that we can talk about as we're both sitting here. Now I wore a uniform, your uniform, we transitioned out. There are some very important things to discuss to advocate for our brothers and sisters that are still wearing the uniform. It's not a negative competition, conversation, it's not three are talking shit, it's pulling some of these issues out of the shadows so that we can make sure that we address them. So

I'm very excited for us to have a slightly more candid conversation this time. So absolutely. Looking forward to it. Absolutely. So then, as the opening one, you know, I like to revisit this topic, because the last you know, three years, there was some great leaders and some good decisions made, there was definitely a lot of caution that was warranted at the beginning. But then there was some awful decisions made. And there are a lot of people affected by those decisions that no one wants to talk about anymore. You know, whether it's the complete discarding of the actual health of the nation conversation, obesity, mental health, etc. Or whether it's the mental health element, whether it's the loss of jobs, or whatever it is. So without loading the question, I'd love to hear your perspective, you're in London, you know, walk me through those last two or three years, the highs and the lows for you.



03:25

So, you know, when, when COVID hit, you know, I remember vividly, you know, people talking about, you know, this, the pandemics coming How is it going to affect us? And, you know, I was very much of the opinion of, oh, you know, you know, I can't see it being, you know, causing too many to problems, you know, step up, we'll just get through it and all that, you know, however, it was huge, it was huge everywhere, and it had a massive effect on us as a nation, but also certainly a personal effect on me and the job that I did, you know, I was in the police at that point working in London, as you know, and on a on a firearms unit. So on on response vehicles, so just, you know, responding to, to everyday calls, as well as on calls in London and knife calls and any terrorist attacks. And, you know, COVID hit, and I think one of the first things I remember when sort of locked down happened was the panic in our building of how we would get through how we would maintain minimum resourcing levels when people started to go off sick. You know, because it was undeniable. The minute you started to get a sniffle. Of course, back then at the start of the pandemic, there was no Testing, you know, we didn't have any of those testing early days, you know? So it was it was a case of, if you feel a bit grim, don't come into work? Well, you know, in all of us, I'm sure we're, you know, having a great deal of integrity, no one abused that. But But surprisingly, you know, there are always those people you work with in every industry who you think I guarantee you, they're going to be the first ones to go off with this. And of course, lo and behold, you know, it's the same, the same names come up again, and you're like, Oh, well, yes. So and so is found in that they feel a little bit funny. So that's them for the next 10 days, they're going to self isolate at home. And, and it's amazing. In those first days, how many people you like, what isolating again, but But I remember from an organizational point of view, you know, I was a, I was a sergeant, so just a team leader. You know, there are sort of two sergeants on the team at that, at that time, and a team of 20 odd people 18 to 20 people. So we aren't, you know, sort of 10 each that we're managing. And there was a real panic, because, you know, in London, we have to put out a minimum number of armed response vehicles, every single shift, just to deal with the day to day cases that that occur. So how are we going to maintain that? And if there was an awful lot of urgent meetings, and you know, and of course, we didn't want to then suddenly put everyone in the same room because everyone's going to, you know, if someone then feels ill, everyone else is isolating. So we then had very hasty there were some commercials on the TV at the time for Mike, is it Microsoft Teams, I think is Microsoft Teams. And there was a police officer being interviewed in one of these adverts, and we always used to joke about it, because he comes on it goes yeah, teams, teams without teams. The police couldn't operate. But it was quite funny. It was exactly like that, you know, everything went to teams meetings. overnight. But also overnight, other things that happened. handy, handy people how many people that's not the right word, is it? You know, I used to call it handyman. I can't say handyman anymore. I mean, people know, facilities department, the facilities department appeared like, you know, in

the middle of the night, with these plastic screens, I have no idea where they got them all from but these plastic screens appeared, bolted to all our desks. So that, you know, no one could breathe on anybody else. Boxes? Well, actually, I was about to say boxes, masks turned up. But actually they didn't. And this is one of the one of the minor gripes I have was that the police and I'm sure the fire service had exactly the same problem. But we were probably the last people to get any PPE. In relation to COVID. You know, we had a few boxes of gloves because we use latex gloves or nitrile gloves anyway for searching and stuff. So we have gloves, but they were gone very quickly. hand gel and stuff like that. We just didn't have it. We didn't have it for weeks and weeks and weeks and weeks. And because every police force I think was was pretty much left to their own devices to order it now. I'm, I'm sure there's someone in command listening to this going. No, no, it's very organized. But from my point of view on the ground level, we had nothing, you know, we had, you know, certainly no masks turned up, they were like, like hen's teeth, you know, we were raiding sort of CBRN stores and sort of begging and borrowing and singing to get to get the relevant equipment. So there was a big knee jerk reaction. Cleaning teams came in I remember in the early days, one of my colleagues not even on my unit, but working in the same building but on the floor above when went off with flu like symptoms and the team of people we hire when when somebody has a dirty protest in a in a cell

 James Geering 09:46

the five dirty for No, no, please paint the picture. Oh.

 09:51

Well, for some reason, people don't like being arrested sometimes and so they they smear fecal matter, or they shit in there. And then they smear it all over the cell. Right? That's

 James Geering 10:04

so fake fecal fluid artistry.

 10:07

Yes. A mural? Yeah, a personal product mural is all over the wall. So they often they do that all over the walls, and they put it on there. Yeah. So we have these teams of people, and I don't envy their job at all, you know, these companies we hire in these poor people who come in, in these paper suits and have to clean all this stuff off. And it's the same if if people are sick, or, you know, have problems in in the in the back of custody vans and things like that. So. But anyway, so normally, they're reserved for for, you know, custody and sales and prisoner vans and things like that. Well, I remember this one person is one officer went off sick with flu like symptoms, and this entire team of this company came in and fumigated the entire floor, you know, I accidentally walked in to the, to the floor, the second floor when it was happening. And there were like, people in guest type suits, it was like some, so it was like something out of a science fiction film, and there was spraying stuff and clearing the desks off. And if that didn't come in, you know, it was it was like a scene out of outbreak. And I was sort of stood there


going, is it safe for me to mean, should I go? So and that, that kind of paranoia that that was really difficult to deal with in the early days, because everyone was like, Well, I have to work, I have to work with people. You know, we, for us, it was business as usual. You can't, you can't say to the police or emergency services already, let's face it, there are so many industries and I take my hat off to them, there are so many industries that just cannot take the day off. You can't just shut these things down any, you know, anything that is related to critical national infrastructure, you just can't shut these things down. So all of those people have to keep going to work. And so for us, it was ironically, like business as usual. But with all of these extra things in place, to the point where, for example, you we try to pair people up all the time that you know, in the UK, I mean, I can only imagine what it's like in America, because I've seen it on TV, but I get the impression that you're partnered up with the same person a lot in the police in the States. I mean, because you know, I'm used to watching Hilson bleeds from my use and things like that,

 James Geering 12:44

to ever get happens, because I've watched a lot of television. So clearly, I understand law enforcement completely as you get a disgruntled alcoholic veteran, and then a starry eyed rookie, and they always put together

 12:56

they work they work together is that that's how

 James Geering 12:58

it works, it must be.

 13:01

Well, we don't commonly do that in the UK. You know, we commonly just, you know, we are a team of people, however large and you work with different people every day, quite often. There are some units where you work together all the time, but certainly on my team, you know, it's good to mix it about with who you're working with. So you get to work with everybody. But of course, that changed during COVID. So we're trying to put people together all the time, so there's less chance of any cross contamination. I used to teach Taser and personal safety training. So there's a real panic there about what are we going to do you know, because a lot of the skills for handcuffs, battens and sprays, and Taser and all of that kind of thing. They are yearly recertifications. And in the same in firearms, you know, you've got to maintain your qualification shoots and all these skills up. So how are we going to maintain the training? Because initially there was a blanket we're all training has to stop. And of course, that makes sense until you say, Well, what's going to happen if, if I take a shot and I miss? Because I haven't had any practice? You know, where I'm using my Taser and effectively because I haven't been prepped. So clearly we can't stop training. We've got to keep training. So we did. But then it's how do we maintain our safety and obviously at that point, officers were really concerned about not only themselves capturing COVID, but taking it home and giving it to their

families and, and a lot of officers, you know, have perhaps families who family members who are vulnerable, you know, maybe young children, maybe elderly members of a family, maybe family members who had illnesses underlying medical conditions. So there's a lot of concern about not just for ourselves but taking home and I know a colleague who actually bought a caravan and move moved into a caravan for the entire lock down period. So he didn't contaminate his wife who had underlying medical conditions. So people were making those kinds of sacrifices, you know, they were living in sheds in the garden or living in the spare room, so they wouldn't do it. As I say, training became quite comical, because, you know, you're trying to maintain a two meter distance between everybody. And so as a result of that, in classrooms, where I used to be able to take 20 people, I've got four, four people in the classroom, dotted in one in each corner, you know, we're all dressed up wearing face shields and masks and gloves, and it starts to, you know, become a bit untenable, but we managed, I think, in the, in the truest you know, traditions of, of being British, we managed.

 James Geering 15:57

So, just as we move forward, you know, it became clear that the middle, common sense ground was absolutely, there was a virus and opportunistic virus. And your outcome really relied on the underlying health of the individual. The conversation became very polarized, I always refer to World War One trenches, you know, you took pick one or the other, you can't be in the middle, or you both get shot shot by both sides. Yeah. You know, so God forbid, you talk about, you know, nutrition and exercise and sleep and things like that. So anyway, so we move forward, though, but there were, you know, our brothers and sisters were succumbing to this. And I did say at the very beginning that look, if you want, if we got an opportunistic virus, it's mirroring cancer and mental health and everything else, our professions, especially the ones that are working, the shifts at night, are actually very, very vulnerable. And they're the ones holding the line the doctors and nurses, etc. Law enforcement, fire police, excuse me, EMS. So we did see a lot of deaths in police, fire, etc. What about you guys in the uniform professions in London?

 17:03

So, I mean, it hit us quite hard when we had our first death from COVID in our organization, you know, and it's someone you know, and because we've, we're very lucky in the UK in, in that we don't have a lot of deaths in service from things like shootings, or from attacks on officers were very lucky. Partly because of the way we police and partly because of the threats we face, perhaps, but we are lucky we, most officers that die in the line of duty, as it were a bit road traffic incidents, it's a variety of other things, you know, or illnesses. And, and I remember, you know, that it wasn't in my building, but a building just around the corner, where someone we all knew when offset with COVID and, and then died. And they, they weren't that old. And they, you know, they weren't, they didn't have obvious, you know, medical conditions that we could all point to, and, and not feel better, but you know, just just try and find a reason. You know, because sometimes these things are so, so random. You know, so it does affect everybody, my my, my great aunt, who was a police officer. She was obviously long, long retired. And she, unfortunately, she got COVID And you know, it was an her and her husband been married for, you know, since since dot since the dot. And, of course, as soon as she got COVID and was taken to hospital, he wasn't allowed to see her. And she died. And he never got to see her again, from the point where she was taken away and younger. So you know, so that hit me quite hard and her family quite hard. And I think you know, without speaking out of turn and

getting anyone in trouble. I know that the only reason she had a family member holding her hand when she passed away was because one of my other relatives is a nurse in the same hospital. Now, that's more by luck than judgment and, and she managed to bully her way into the room and spent her last moments with her otherwise she would have been alone when she died. I'm sorry to digress a little bit but that's just a you know a personal experience of of it. People who died during COVID. And I know that, that hit me hard because I looked up to, to my auntie die because she was a police officer. And she's the only other one in the family, you know, other than my wife, you know, and, and so we shared lots of stories. And just prior to her going into hospital, she'd sent me all her old photographs from from the 60s when she was in the police. And I put them all into an album for and stuff like that. So anyway, I digress. But, so it did hit hard. And it hit hard when people in our organization started to die as well. And you it, you know, and you started thinking, Well, is this is this going to happen to me? You know, I'm, I've always tried to stay fit and healthy, but you know, you because of the, the media and, you know, the very scary death toll in the corner of the news, the screen that was just scrolling up? You know, I was like, what, what's going on here? You know, it is they are it, it got quite frightening, really for everybody? Because you think? Well, you know, I know, it's highly unlikely, you know, that, you know, I'm not, I'm not in a vulnerable category, I know, it's highly unlikely I'm gonna die. But you know, there is that chance, because they're telling me there's that chance, whether they're over egging it or not, you know, they're telling me, so we were all very, very cautious. We were all becoming ridiculously OCD and washing our hands a million times, and, and trying to be really careful with our interactions with the public, because we were then thinking, what am I going to either give this to a member of the public or get it from a member of the public. But there was a, you know, real concern, and even the people that I work with, we, you know, we all got it. I mean, that's, that's the other thing is, you know, pretty much all of us got it at one time or another, I got it quite early on, you know, long before there was a vaccine, and just after they brought in testing for it, but before you have. So I mean, one of the things we did early on was we didn't have the facility in our office to test ourselves. We didn't have the the test, so we have to go somewhere else to test. And because I was, I mean, a lot of us wouldn't be very responsible, but especially because I was a trainer, I was testing myself twice a week, on a Monday and Wednesday, making sure that I was safe to teach other officers. And one Monday morning, you know, I, I felt all right. You know, but I thought I better go and get tested. And the nearest Testing Center was a good sort of 15 minutes walk down the road. So like, Oh, we did our trip down there got tested, was walking back to the base, you know, and they said, are you here within a couple of hours or whatever, or 40, I can't buy me 45 minutes, but I'm walking back to the base, I just arrived back at the base, my phone pings going, you've got COVID Go home,

 James Geering 23:07

then a white van comes out of the guys with masks. Are you in there?

 23:13

The people in the white suit. And, and then of course, you know, I, I go home and I promptly give to my wife. So. So then both of us were off with it. But everybody had at one time or another, certainly within the base. And one of the other things that I found. Now, this is purely anecdotal. You know, there's no sort of science behind this. But it was the fitter guys that tended to get knocked for six, you know, more than everybody else. And I don't know whether

there's any science behind that, or it's just my perception of it. But, you know, a lot of the guys on my unit were really into their fitness and, you know, you have triathletes and people who you know, could run for years and all that kind of stuff. And, and they were the ones that were really knocked off their feet with it. And then, you know, came back and struggled and you know, I was I was off my I mean literally knocked off my feet for 10 days.

 James Geering 24:14

Now just to jump in your team and some of these fit guys. Were you working just daytime shifts in your bed every night getting a good night's sleep, or were you working shift work?

 24:25

Shifts? Of course. So I mean,

 James Geering 24:27

because oh, by the way, when we rest and recover is when we repair and this is what I've talked about a lot. You know they are they're always always the Fit guys to get her. Well, the guys that take their job seriously men and women, you know that do the actual operational training, do the extra fitness and strength conditioning, and then don't get the sleep. We are more vulnerable to get her to get that but what's the alternative? You know what I mean? This is why I talk so much about rest and recovery between shifts. But just to kind of put that in there. There's a physiological reason why the people that take their job seriously often They are in some ways more vulnerable in some areas.

 25:02

Well, to echo what you've just said, one of the I forgot to mention what one of the first things they did was shut the gym, in our bikes, they shut the gym. Now, you know, we're very lucky in that we, we had a really good gym downstairs, but they shut the gym, rather than saying, Well look, okay, your team works together anyway. And this was our argument we were like, and look, I understand why they did it. But if we were managing, working together, sitting in a car for eight to 10 hours a day, next to somebody else, all day long, if you're handling the same kit, and weapons and all that kind of stuff, and we're testing regularly, you know, why not let the team use the gym together. And then we clean it down after I mean, all of us were volunteering, because we were, you know, whilst we're not all, you know, we're not bodybuilders or anything like that, but you, you know, we want to stay fit, we want to stay healthy to do the job. There is a fitness test element to the job, but it's goes beyond that, you know, I'm, you know, I'm no spring chicken and I'm 50 and, and yet, there are people on my team older than me, there are people on my unit, way older than me, you know, up to 60s, still doing the job still running the fitness test. And as you well know, as you get older, maintaining fitness gets harder and harder. But the first thing they did, and I noticed they did this nationally, they closed all the gyms. So, you know, not only that, then you can't you can't get a set of kettlebells on Amazon for like no money, you know, you can't get you know, if you weren't prepared beforehand, I was really lucky that you know, and quite by accident, like a

year before I, I stopped, I cancelled my gym membership, and I had stuff at home. So you know, kettlebells, skipping rope, all that kind of stuff. And an exercise bike is a spinning bike that you can probably see sat on my shoulder here. But again, I was lucky and people were you know, there was always like a black market in skipping ropes and kettlebells and, and fitness bands. You know, someone in the locker room going, excuse me, you got you got a 16 kilogram kettlebell?

 James Geering 27:25

No, I've only I've only got steroid sorry.

 27:30


I can only I can only give you drugs. But, but that didn't have a big effect. And the and it is interesting you say about sleep and shifts, because that's one of the things that obviously can't change for emergency services and a lot of other industries. We have to work those shifts and you have to keep at it because once locked down, and I'll be honest with you, no crime. When I was a crime stopped that crime changed a lot during lockdown. You weren't getting drunk and violence in the street. Of course you weren't getting, you know, I mean, for us the terrorism threat. The threat picture changed massively because there was nobody in crowded spaces,

 James Geering 28:17

suicide bombers scared of COVID That's an interesting headline.

 28:22

I was gonna say, you know, if you want to, if you want to affect a crime statistics, have another pandemic, you know, is certain crime, certain crimes not so low. It's like, well, it's not worth even even recording it. But another crime of course, went through the roof. Domestic Violence, you know, all of those kinds of things go crazy when people are all cooped up in their houses, cybercrime undeniably, you know, all of that stuff. That's not my area of expertise. But you know, all the thing, all the horrible things that happen on the internet go through the roof, when all people can do is be stuck at home. But yeah, we're, we're not getting any time off, that sleep doesn't improve at all. Especially not when you've got, you've got these stresses as well of, well, I've just had to use public transport to get home and get to work. Have I picked it up? Am I bringing this back home? Am I infecting my household? You know, your sleep doesn't improve during a pandemic, because you've got all those same stresses and strains as everybody else. We're not we're not immune to that. But we're still having to go to work and and carry on as if nothing has happened, but trying to find balance all of that.

 James Geering 29:41

Now, what was what was the level of stress? I mean, I've always loved the BBC, for example, up until and I wasn't present in the UK when you guys went through the pandemic, I traveled at the very end and spent almost \$1,000 on tests for two weeks later for them to get rid of all tests. Co

the very end spent almost \$1,000 on tests for two weeks later for them to get rid of all tests. So that was shocking. COVID experience getting nasal swabs every time I got off a plane. However, the BBC I've always felt overall especially compared to frickin CNN and Fox over here is a very middle of the road this happened, these people died moving on, you know, and it's not normally opinion led by but overhear through my eyes, there was so much sensationalism, so much fear mongering that you had a virus that was killing people. And yet everything that was told to the American public was only going to make them sicker and more scared, therefore more vulnerable to the disease, a closed parks and beaches, in our closer gyms, and get alcohol and fast food delivered to your home stay at home, we'll tell you what to do, just don't don't do anything. So autonomy was stripped. And therefore yet, like you said, there was that kind of pervasive fear that was further breaking down the individual's immune system, what were you seeing as far as the message delivery in the UK.



31:03

So I'm gonna, I'm gonna say something fairly controversial. And, and I got a lot of stick for it at work. And I'm sure a lot of people thought it was a burying your head in the sand thing, but it wasn't. And I'll explain what happened. So it got so bad for me, I had to stop watching the news, I stopped watching TV, and my wife does the same. And because the message wasn't changing, nothing, there was no information that was that I could use. You know, because all that you were getting was, you know, contradiction after contradiction. Every five minutes, something else was coming out, you know, you couldn't get, you couldn't almost see the wood for the trees, really. And as you say, the messages that were coming out, were really frustrating. And I'm not, I'm not controversial kind of, personally, I've always been a good little soldier, you know, but I am, you know, several things frustrated me, you know, my mother lives alone in, in Wales. And she did everything by the book, and pretty much she wasn't allowed out of her house for the whole of for two years, pretty much, you know, Wales had a really draconian sort of system. You know, she used to go on long walks, you know, through the countryside, and you know, which is great for your health, and then was told she couldn't go more than whatever it was half a mile away from your house or whatever, in a crazy, you know, and yet, she lives in a rural part of the country where there was nobody around. But people were getting turned around from natural beauty spots and sent home. So, yeah, So lo and behold, what happened was, you know, I stopped watching the news, because what I was getting on a daily basis at work was briefings. And I suppose I was fortunate that I was getting, I'm not saying I was getting any information that the public weren't getting, but I think they were giving us you know, sort of bare statistics without any flavor. And it was like, like, here's some, here's the information. Now, this is the latest information. And if because they will briefing us what to say if we're being asked by the public. So I've got some really, I suppose quite good briefings that were put out by the, you know, the home office that were coming through to us via the mpcc, the National Police Chief's Council, and through our chief and so that was how I was getting the information and the the sensationalism of the TV I had to just stop watching because it was just getting I was just getting too much.



James Geering 34:07

What were you seeing as far as the impact so one of the things that was frustrating to me being a firefighter paramedic, so working in very, very busy inner city, poor areas, transporting to the hospitals that serve that areas, was this message of oh my god, there's patients in the hallway and all the paramedics in America that work in the urban setting going What the fuck

are you talking about? There's always patients in the hall we have to hold the wall we call it for hours sometimes just to offload what might be an absolute minor patient because they don't have the beds and they are short staffed. So but undeniably, like I had a firefighter from LA recently. That was a hot spot where they were truly stalking bodies and calling people literally in their homes, you know, calling their deaths. So there were those those hotspots but a lot of times as well. I've heard I think it was Tom beaver from Beaver fit was saying that they actually were supplying makeshift morgues. And ultimately, they broke them all down again. They were basically not us. So yeah, what you've got the sensationalism, there's absolutely real deaths happening. It was a real disease. But the magnitude is what a lot of us questions. So what were you seeing as far as that element,



35:23

so one of the jobs that we were tasked with doing on the firearms unit is, was was protecting the, the nightingale hospitals. So they set up these temporary, huge hospitals inside, you know, sort of large commercial spaces, and one of them was down at xL, huge, big, sort of arena that they turned into, into hospital space. And, you know, other people might have different experiences. So I can only speak from, from my experience, and you know, but from what I recall, and please, somebody listening, correct me if I'm wrong, but from what I recall, we were worried about those venues being a terrorist target, because there'll be have so many people in them, that we're going to be Packed to the Rafters with, you know, with people with COVID. And so it was a real terrorist threat. They were empty. The they were never used the extent I believe that, that we thought thankfully, because there wasn't the, the sort of the the mass, the mass number of casualties at any one time that I think we were expecting. And as a result of that, the the nightingales not long after they were set up, I think they started to be dismantled as well. So they, I mean, again, a fantastic idea and loads of people volunteered for those and, you know, people doing amazing work to, to set them up and, and volunteering to work there. But again, so I didn't see that play out. But I think from what I understand from, as I say, my cousin, who, who who's a nurse, and working in one of the hospitals, and she, well, I went to see her, when I went to my great aunt's funeral. It was, it was one of those really difficult things where I think it was, we had to wait ages before we were allowed to go to the funeral, it was one of those little gaps where they said, you can now go to a funeral. But you know, we all have to stand a million miles apart and all that kind of crazy stuff. And I saw her there. And she had pretty much permanent marks on her face, from the goggles, and the masks and the PPE. You know, that had embedded themselves in her foot, you know, she'd spent years whatever it is, you know, more than 1214 16 hours a day wearing this PPE. And, you know, even with a brief conversation with her, she was saying how manic and chaotic it was in those hospitals. So I think from my brief experience of that situation, it was just that they didn't use the those big backup places that they set up. But the actual hospitals were absolutely rammed and really stretched more than they ordinarily are.



James Geering 38:31

So when you spoke to your cousin, did she was she immensely grateful for all of the clapping? How much did that clapping help with the staffing and the number of beds and the PPE provision?





38:46

Yeah, I don't know. She didn't specifically sort of mentioned it. I, you know, I think I think it was a nice thing to do. But I, I just recall how we know how fickle the public are. And I just, I mean, obviously, we're going through, you probably know, we're going through a period at the moment, have lots of members of the NHS sort of out on strike and talking about pay and, you know, better conditions and stuff. And it's really interesting how supportive people were and how they were heroes during the pandemic, and everyone's standing in their gardens applauding until they say, well, actually, we don't earn enough to survive and pay our bills. So we're going to do a protest outside the hospital and people are going, oh, you know, and suddenly they're hated, you know, and it's this sort of fickle wheel of fate that sort of rotates around very quickly, isn't it you know, and one moment your flavor of the month and next minute you're down in the dumps so it's nice for people to understand that I and stand in a garden applauding but I do sometimes feel like I want to say to these people will put your money where your magnets, you know what, it is great in theory, but how does this help us?



James Geering 40:06

Absolutely. That was one of my guests Akarma who it was now, but they put it perfectly. They said, You know what happens when you ask the British people to go outside and applaud the NHS doctors, the nurses and everyone else in the hospital, said you put the responsibility squarely back on the doctors and nurses shoulders. So you're not doing anything because you're like, Well, I just went outside and I slap my hands together. So you know, go you go team, her, I'm going back to watch Tiger King. So you see her tomorrow at five, you know, and it was ridiculous. And with that, with that amnesia element that that disposable dissolvable gratitude. I saw it here you had, you know, in the same in London, you had all these men and women on the frontline with no PPE, no vaccinations, initially, no tests, terrified that they were going to bring the seemingly deadly virus, and it was deadly and seemingly deadly to lots and lots and lots of people. And then it's not even a year before, they're talking about how selfish they are for not taking the vaccine. So you know what I mean? It's like, regardless of your stance, like I would never have had the vaccine had not traveled. But I went to see my 104 year old grandmother, and I'm like, Okay, if it helps 1% I'll have this just because I care more about my grandmother. And I'm not worried about this vaccine and my own health personally. But do I think that you know, someone that doesn't want to get it is a response to this was gone, basically raw dog debt for a fucking year, year and a half is a selfish murderer. Shame on you for if you were part of that fucking conversation, because these men or women had no support, and now you're taking their jobs, because now you think that the vaccine is the be all and end all. And now, regardless of your stance, we know that it wasn't the efficacy that we were told. So it was literally a 5050 shot if it was even going to help. So I was never, you know, against it. I didn't think it was necessary if you were fit and healthy. However, the fact that you had the audacity to take these jobs from people that wouldn't have it after they were completely exposed early on. People should be fucking ashamed of themselves. Yeah,



42:14

no, I agree. I was, I was appalled at that. And I think what people forgot was, you know, we were working. We were working, facing and, and, you know, facing the virus every single day, everybody we encountered were potential people who had the virus, were picking it up on public transport traveling to and from work, all that kind of thing, all with no protection, no PPE

at the start, you know, no tests easy, say no vaccine. And people were fine with that. Until there was a vaccine available. And then was like, Well, if you don't, if you don't have it instantly, then you know, you're some sort of social pariah. And I just think, and then it happened over here. And I'm, I mean, someone in the HF NHS would have to confirm this. But I know they were under a great deal of pressure. And they their jobs were threatened to I don't know whether it actually came to it. But But I know there were a number of people in the news, saying that they're going to lose their jobs if they don't, if they don't have the vaccine. And as you say, that kind of it treating people like that. You can't imagine it for anything else. Penny, you can't imagine if you said to somebody, you know, Oh, these are the new. These are the new uniforms. You know, you need to wear these new red trousers, if you don't wear them, we're gonna sack it, you know, just try example. But, you know, you can't imagine with anything else, someone's going to going to threaten to sack somebody over over something else. You know, it is a bizarre, a bizarre thing, really, especially when it comes down to someone's personal choice. And we are so so strong on supporting people's personal choice in everything else. Everything else. That's I think that's the thing that confused me really, was that, you know, we this is what we fight for, we're fighting for people's choice to, to live the way they want to live, except for this one thing that you can't choose that, you know,

 James Geering 44:28

that's crazy. Well, I want to kind of move out this conversation was a couple of things I want to hit before we do because this is important. Otherwise, this just goes away and we carry on getting fatter, and you know, mentally, more unwell. And then there's more violence and suicides and heart attacks on cancers and car accidents and everything else because we just shoved the last two or three years under the rug and we're like, well, this forget about let's move on. You talked about domestic violence. This is a reoccurring theme that I've heard. You know, you you take pretty much everything from people Well, like I said, the autonomy the very basal element that it is to be human being there, of course is going to be a mental health element. I've heard some horrendous things as far as increased abuse towards children, but decreased reporting, because a lot of times it's the teachers that were reporting abuse and kids, and now they're not seeing them. And then obviously, domestic violence I've heard a lot from from the US here. So you said about the decrease in you know, for example, COVID, scared, you know, suicide bombers and but talk to me about the domestic violence and what was that increased? What were you seeing with your own eyes, when people were kind of cooped up in these homes?

 45:44

I think we're where I became exposed to, I mean, one of the, one of the fortunate things about the role I was in was I didn't have to go out to too many houses anymore, and knock on the door when neighbors have complained. But certainly, anecdotally, from from colleagues, you know, there were multiple, multiple calls to houses because that's the only place where where people were, but where I, I particularly saw it start to happen. Was people's reaction to suddenly being let out? And I think this is the other thing that we weren't prepared for was this pressure cooker. idea of, right, you're all stuck in the house now. Right? Okay. But tomorrow, we're gonna let you go to the pubs again, and they suddenly open. And the chaos that ensued, you would have thought that it was the end of prohibition, that people hadn't been allowed to drink alcohol at home. You know, people were queuing up to get that first pint at 1201 in the

morning or whatever. And and then we saw, I mean, certainly, anecdotally, I can definitely say we saw a huge spike in violence, in in street violence and people fighting each other and because I think the other thing that that we underestimate is how much we are social animals we are, you know, we are in public used to dealing with other people, we are exposed to a variety of other people who when you say, well, now you're going to be become a hermit for two years. Now, we let you out, I think your tolerance level of people seem to change. I mean, I certainly I certainly experienced it myself, when all of a sudden, someone wants to sit next to me on the train. How very day. Yeah, I've had that CNC for two years, what are you doing? You know, in fact, more than I had the whole carriage empty for two years, and now there's people on my training. But I think that, that did affect a lot of people that the Not only were they at home rubbing each other the wrong way. Because let's face it, you know, one of the one of the great, I'm no psychologist, but one of the great causes of, of confrontation between, you know, families is stress, and stress, can you know, whether it's financially or health wise, you know, those are your two big stressors, aren't they? You know, have we got enough money to survive? And are we all fit and healthy? And, you know, COVID attacked both of those things, because people couldn't work. People weren't, I mean, don't even get me started on my friends who were self employed. They, you know, they, they were really stuck. You know, it wasn't like they were sort of at home earning, they were like, That's it, you weren't nothing, you know, and they were lucky if they had enough evidence to be able to prove that they needed funds from the government, you know, so. So you've got all of that financial worry. And the fact that you've then got this healthcare worry as well. And it's not surprising that everybody was was, you know, that's a powder keg, isn't it waiting to go. And then, what's one of the great, you know, relievers of stress and anxiety is exercise, and even even just going through a 20 minute, a half hour walk? Oh, we're certainly not allowed to do that. You know, going to the gym, lifting some weights doing anything to let off some steam. I'm very lucky. I've got a garden outside. immensely lucky considering where I live. I can't imagine having to go through COVID Living in a flat you know, a relative of mine was in Dubai for the entire lockdown in a flat and they had, you know, there was no, there was no lit up for their lockdown. It was you know, you leave your room you're getting arrested. It covers scenario, you know, they were very strict, I believe. So, you know, that was it that was him locked in or locked in a one bedroom flats in an incredibly hot environment for, you know, in a dry country as well, so that was tough

J James Geering 50:20

times, Yeah, boy, I'm just gonna jump in for a second. One of the ironic kind of awakenings, I think that a lot of people had is like, Oh, this is what it's like being in prison. Now, obviously, it's a more gentle version, don't get me wrong. I mean, you can't get you know, alcohol delivered to your house in prison, for example, you probably can get drugs a lot easier than people realize. But you know, but that idea that, Oh, if we lock someone in the cage, then when they get out, they're going to be so much better. This was a huge social experiment at the look at the Philadelphia model, which is what most people use, which is lock them up for X amount of, you know, hours a day. And I've had, as you know, guests on from, you know, the Norway prison system, for example, where they do it very differently, you know, and it's a community, they've lost their freedom, but they live in a house with several other prisoners, they cook, they clean, they go to school, they have a job. And so they leave a much better person than when they entered that facility. So have you had any discussions or perspectives of COVID? And a real realization for the average person who's never been inside? On the pros or cons of the way that we look at incarceration at the moment?



51:35

Yeah, I mean, you know, even just from your coming on, you know, I'll be honest, it's not, up until the point where you've just sort of mentioned it, a little bit of a light bulb sort of came on, and I hadn't really thought of it that way. But it, it is really indicative of how people do tend to react to anything to anything where you're restricting it, you know, it's like, I remember, as a kid, you know, you'd have to give up something for Lent, and then gorging yourself on Easter, it's like they were going out of fashion, making yourself ill. And but it's same with anything. It's why it's why diets don't work. You know, it's because the minute the minute the diets over your losses away, it's like, I think, you know, for what, because the unfortunately, unless you unless you have extreme self discipline, that is human nature, isn't it? You take something away? How long are you taking that away for? Because now I want it even more, I crave that thing that you tell me I can't have. And so now, you know, when when people came out and did see, I saw for myself, you know, the, the kind of violence, an activity that occurred when people suddenly let out after being locked up. And, and because of the crazy behavior that I have been bright, you know, by the sea by the coast. And, you know, that one weekend, do you recall that one, you might not, but one weekend, Boris Johnson let people out. And it was a, it was like, the hottest weekend of the year. And he said, you know, don't go to the beaches. You know, of course, don't go to the beaches, and, you know, cut to on the news, you know, knock heads, you know, lie loads as far as the eye can see. And, you know, ice creams and beaches never been so full. And I think, you know, that's human nature. And so as a result of that, it's a very interesting analogy that you draw with, with people going to prison, because I, I think you're right. I, I look, from a law enforcement point of view. I'm not convinced prison works, you know, I, I know it does. It does part of what it's supposed to do in that, you know, if somebody's not safe to be around other people, please take them away from other people, you know, for a period of time. You know, but does it cure criminality? Absolutely not, no. Because if it did, we wouldn't have all the recidivists that we have. I was determined to get the word recidivist in, by the way, because it's one of my favorite words. I, I only learned when we service when I was in the police, and I'm determined to use it as much as possible. But that whole idea of that repeat offender, you know, somebody just it's it's an old statistic that people troop out that you know, 80% of the crime is committed by 20% of the people. But in my experience that's kind of born out you know, it's always the same faces you see time and time again, committing the crime. was one of the first things that happened to me, you know, where I was when I first joined the police. And, you know, my tutor constable was Poppy walking around, as they call it, you know, field training officer, I think they call it in the States. And, you know, and I remember we dealt with somebody, and there wasn't quite enough to arrest them. So we knew they'd done, we knew they'd done it, but we couldn't prove it kind of scenario. So, you know, I sent them on their way. And my my tutor constable turned around and said, Don't worry, he'll come again. We'll come around again. And sure enough, you know, because that's, that's it, people just keep committing crime. And, you know, I mean, the other thing that always surprised me as well was that criminals weren't like, they were in the movies, you know, where you had someone who was a burden. And that's all they did. Oh, yes, I am. I'm Billy burglar. I walk around with my stripy Jersey in my bag marks swag. I'm a good, I'm a good honest burglar. And that's all I do. You know, it's like, Oh, you got me? on their hands. Yeah, exactly. But, you know, they'll turn their hands or anything. It's not just, you know, they'll do this. And that and the other thing and loads, you know that. So? Yeah, so does prison work? No. Does the criminal justice system work? Not really, I don't think you might, you know, I'm, I'm dissing entire institutions here right now, I don't mean that. Of course, there are really good people that work in these institutions. There are really good people that work in these industries, that are really doing their best to rehabilitate criminals, they're really doing their best to prosecute the right people for the right crimes. But time and time again, unfortunately, we see how much,

especially when you're on a sort of a user end of it, you know, I'm just at the practical end, you see how, how much court is a game, you know, a game played between very well paid barristers, you know, and, you know, it's not necessarily about justice and more about, you know, them getting them getting the result they want. And if they're very good at what they do, they will get people off, you know, and it's, it's that simple. It's not, it's not justice, I don't think and I think, in most justice systems, we see that in most countries. I think, you know, I think we're very good at dealing with serious offenses. You know, the serious things like murder and stuff like that we're very good at. But the criminality that affects most people, we're really bad at dealing with and low level criminality and low level criminals, sticking them in prison doesn't fix anything. Because when they come out there, their situation hasn't changed. In fact, if anything has probably got worse, they're gonna go back to living in the same place they were living before being surrounded by the same people that were surrounding them before they're gonna return to that life unless you create a new life form.

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James Geering 58:04

Yeah, that's what it seems, you know, the Norwegian model Bastow. If people look that up, just just off Oslo. You know, it's such, it just makes perfect sense. Because, you know, whether it's addiction, whether it's crime, whatever it is, usually you can reverse engineer to, you know, things that have happened when we were younger, or, you know, up to current day. And that's why people like, Oh, why don't just make good choices? Well, because if your whole world has kind of led you down bad choices, you don't just wake up one day and go, Oh, I'm gonna start meditating, and then take long walks with my dog and not be a criminal, you know, so, but you take someone who's found themselves or whatever path and some of these people are murderers, but it's a crime of passion. It's not someone that woke up, you know, a sociopath, they came home and their wife was banging someone, and you know, they beat his acid out or whatever happened, but it wasn't, you know, premeditated it was, it was, again, you know, violence manifested through, you know, mental ill health, and that moment, went way too far. But they take these people and like I said, they teach them how to live with other people, you have to cook, you have to clean you know, you go into school, you're educating yourself, you're learning a trade, you're doing hobbies, you know, music and art, and whatever it is. So by the time you serve your sentence, because this is a thing that a lot of the people in corrections and law enforcement told me, one day, it was something like 90 or 95% of the prison population will move back into your neighborhood. So what kind of person do you want moving back? You know, that's, that's what we have to ask ourselves. And as you said, there's a lot of great people in the system. There are so many good teachers in America that work in a fucking awful system that asks eight year olds to sit in front of a computer and take a three hour standardized test, just so they can justify their budget. Nothing about the education of the child. So great teachers horrible system, prohibition of drugs in my opinion, horrible fucking system asking, you know, police officers to chase down Someone with a fucking, you know, one spliff in their pocket, you know, one one toke of marijuana, and they go into prison for years until they started changing them. So this is what we need to do is take a step back, put our hands up and say, You're right, this isn't working, and then go back to the the origin, the route. So with that being said, were there. In your whole career, have you noticed any commonalities between the origin story, the root cause of why a lot of the men and women that you ended up interacting with had found themselves down this kind of path?



1:00:39

Yeah, you know, it's and this is not going to be sort of news, I don't think for it, it's the same stories come around time and time again. And, and, and those stories often involve not having good family units, you know, not not having, especially a father who's involved. I mean, I know that that's happened an awful lot. And I know, there's been a lot of research into that. But, you know, but not having both parents not have. And I'm not saying you can't have a great family with only one parent. That's not what I'm saying. But, you know, I've certainly noticed a variety of things, notice where people have come from areas where there aren't many opportunities. You know, I was immensely lucky. And I, I can't fathom what it must have been like, I mean, I know people, for example. I know people from certain parts of the UK, and I won't mention, you know, parts of the UK because I don't want to, you know, upset anyone, but certain parts of the UK where they said they had one of two options. Option one was join the army. Option two was become a criminal, you know, and that, for them. That's what it felt like they were the only two options, you know, get involved in local criminality. And it, I tell you, it surprised me how much whilst I worked in an inner city for my, for my whole career, when I had dealings outside, when I started working with some of the county lines, gang, gang related crime and stuff like that, you find out where the drug problems actually are. And what surprised me was, whilst the source of the drugs is one place, and whilst a lot dealing going on in places like London, the drug use was all happening in these rural places, you know, the swamp, and you were like, really, I wouldn't have thought this place had a drug problem. And of course, then you find out what else is there to do? You know, it's a, it's a poor environment. There's, there's no work available. There's not there's not many opportunities. So but there are drugs. And also, you know, youngsters, see and idolize people who make easy money selling drugs, maybe it's not that easy money, but you know, they, they see that as the only option. And so that's certainly one aspect of it is that are there other other options for these people, for people to do? Is there something else they can do? Or are they just getting caught up? Because, you know, the other thing is, it is what are the people around? You? Do? You know, so many, so many people far wiser than myself have said that, you know, you are a product of the people around you, you know, and and who do you spend your time with and who are your friends, and those are the people who do rub off on you. And I think it's absolutely true, certainly been my experience that, that, you know, if you're in a place and you're Surret, and all your friends are into something, you know, you end up going down that road is when it takes a lot of self determination not to go down that road. And, and so, as I say nothing really new here, but a lot of the a lot of the stories were very much the same, you know, it's like, I've come from, you know, a poor background, there wasn't, there weren't any opportunities and those now, you can get very cynical with it. And, you know, us police officers are very cynical, and you can start thinking oh, yeah, I've heard this. I've heard this tale before. And whilst I'm sure there's a healthy, you know, number of people who it's a nice it's a nice easy not excuse, but it's a it's a reason why I haven't succeeded. I haven't you know, because there is an element of effort and choice and decisions and you know, we do have a say in in that and a especially in this day and age, I think where, because I suppose the example I want to, I will always give is this that, you know, I remember vividly talking to a family, a youngster, young young man who was saying, you know, I've got nothing, I've come from nothing, you know, I'm so I've got no choice other than to, you know, these are my choices. And, and then you go and visit the house and there's a 50 inch TV screen, and, you know, all of it. And there's loads of really nice things in the house, and then you find out that the house is provided by, you know, the, the local council or local authority or, you know, so you think, well, actually, you've got, you've got a lot of support here, if you wanted to take it, and, you know, I've noticed this even since since leaving the police, you know, and looking at, you know, things to do and available things, you know, there's so many voluntary organizations, even in my areas, where people are offering free services, you know, free courses, free training free, all kinds of things, you know, to, to get people away from those

lives. So there are options, but it is, it seems to be the standard thing and look how I'm really, you know, I'm not a psychologist, I don't have I don't have real reasons. It's just just things you observed from being the coalface I

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James Geering 1:06:32

guess, well, I think, but that's an important perspective. You know, they have the academics, and then you have the boots on the ground? And the answer is, obviously, to get those two minds together and get a full overview of what we're seeing. And I think just to counter this proactivity this, this, you know, getting to the root cause changing the way we do it, one of the biggest opposition's is this bullshit victim mentality that's also pervasive at the moment, well, you're not seeing me, I'm a cat and I need a litter box in my school, or, you know, it's so hard being this color or this race, when it's 2023. And each individual has different experiences. But I would argue that, I mean, the Britain that I grew up in and loved has always been extremely diverse. And I hear you know, I mean, I've, I've literally been on walks where we've been, you know, me and a mixed group of racially mixed group of people did the think it was like a 13 mile ruck to the source of this massacre that we had that was absolutely a racist attack a long time ago. And one of the, the women that we were walking with a young black woman was just talking about how America was built on racism, and everyone's racist and I'm like, this was initiated by a white dude that were white well hiking with there's white dudes as Indian woman there's, there's always different ethnicities and we're pulled together by injustice of something that happened a long time ago, and never needs to be forgotten. But you know, look around your music stars, your you know, your sports stars, your politicians, your your your actors, everyone around you is diverse. So stop fucking trying to dredge up this. It's so hard. Yes, we did some horrible shit in our past some UK is like the perfect example of exploitation and, you know, just horrible, horrible things our ancestors did. But this is today we have an opportunity to change it in the now and we do not sweep it under the don't change the history books and you know, pull down statues if that was a guy who was a slave trader, fucking leave it up, but a big sign go and this wanker, let me tell you about him and leave it there. But this poor me bullshit is the actual opposition to moving forward, this defund the police is in opposition to hiring more police officers that are well trained and fit and you know, going to be a much more proactive force. So this, this whole victim thing to me is so toxic as well.

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1:08:54

Yeah. And just just picking up on what you said about the whole defunded police thing. Now, when I joined the police in sort of end of 2001, and my starting salary when I joined the police, and granted it was with London waiting to get a little bit more if you work in London, because the cost of living that I was on about 26,000 pounds, and that was sort of Yeah, 2001 right. If I joined the police today, some 22 years later, I'm on 19 and a half 1000 pounds. Really? Yeah. Now again, a little bit more if you work in London, and it goes up once you finish your training and all that kind of stuff. But can you explain how 22 years later, I'd be on less to do the same job with all the years of inflation that have gone between a new and you expect me to believe that they're gonna get The people as good. And this is not being derogatory to people who join the police now, but what I'm saying is, you know, if you're if you're offering less money, and I'm a really good candidate, but I've got two options, I can go into this career, which pays well, and it's something I'm interested in. And I've got this career, which doesn't pay as well. But I'm so interested in which one I got to go for, you know, which I am I going for unless you start

sacrificing so much to join a job and not get what you're paid. I mean, I don't know how they can survive on that, on that kind of money. So, so the whole defund the police thing is really going to affect us in that, you know, who is going to join surely, you know, I'm not saying you want to be paid a crazy amount of money, but when I joined, it was a decent wage. So you can afford to live in London, you know, no one can afford to live in London now, certainly not on that salary. So you're now making the whole thing worse, because now you have to live hours out of London. So now I'm getting less sleep. Because I have to, I mean, even when I was working in London, and Brighton is not very far away, I was up at half past four every morning, you know, to get to work. And that's two hours to work and two hours to get home. And then you do a 10 or 12 hour shift. And then you when you get home, you got to eat and sleep and decompress, then you get in this much sleep, you know, people don't realize the knock on effects of not paying people enough, because the other thing that's gone away that used to exist is, you know, there's no police accommodation anymore. They've got rid of all of the, you know, police housing and section houses and all those things have gone now you can't, you know, when I joined the police, there were section houses and you could live in London for not very much money at all, I think St. Luke was like 989 pounds a night or something like that, you could stay in any section house, you know, all of that gone. You know, free travel for police officers is now pretty much gone. You know, they the, if you're in the Metropolitan Police, now you have to pay for your travel, you don't have to pay the full amount, but you're paying your salary to get your free travel. Now, I realize that's a massive perk that you get a discount on your travel. But of course, you need officers working in central London, and we can't afford now with the pay to live in central London. So it's subsidized travel, but you're still paying for it when you know, not long ago, when I joined, the travel was free, so you can afford to live a little bit further out to get the best bang for your buck. So there's been so many things that have eroded the, for one of a better phrase, but they're not they weren't all perks, but the things that came along with being a police officer that made the job doable for the salary you are being paid that all of those have gone there. And so it's making it harder and harder to recruit the right people and get the best people for the job, in my opinion.

 James Geering 1:13:13

Staying with your opinion, because this will be an opinion but we all are a fully aware that all of the good arrests, for example, don't make social media, you know what I mean? Of all the, you know, the whatever 10s and 10s of 10s 10% of things cause ago well, you know, person just Yeah, okay, you know, put the cuffs around good. But there have been a lot of videos, especially from the UK, where, you know, you've got several police officers struggling with one individual and as a martial artist, and as someone who's been, you know, in strength conditioning my whole life, just with a Coach's Eye, you can say, okay, these people have not done strength conditioning, they do not have, you know, any sort of kind of grappling experience. This is an extremely dangerous situation. So, with your perspective, talk to me about what have you seen since you know, 2001 the uptick or downtrend of that element of policing in the UK.

 1:14:11

So you've opened the camera, how many of you over the kind of words you've opened the door? you've rolled the grenade in and close? Right? Clear? Yeah. The, in the last two years that I was in the police, I, my role changed significantly. Whilst I was still operational. I was put in

charge of use of force because of my role as an instructor for personal safety and taser, various things. So I ran monitoring all use of force. And so what I was asked to do was because one of the things that changed is we all had to wear body worn video so every police officer in the country body worn video that really was a game changer for us because in the world of defensive tactics officer safety, call it what you will safe arrest for the public and the police. We only really had anecdotal evidence of what was going on out there. Because what you're supposed to do every time you are involved in an incident that involves the use of force, however minor, you were supposed to fill out a form, right? And you just tick the box form and you'd send it in, and it would go into the black hole of nothing. And, you know, you'd never hear the rest of it. Now, what was supposed to happen with those forms is someone like me was supposed to look at them all and see what was working and what wasn't working? Well, of course, the forms only reflecting what the officer thought that they'd done, not what actually happened. So what we did on my own, and I can't take all the credit for it wasn't my idea, or I should say was, but what my role became, and my team was to watch every single piece of body worn video footage that involves the use of force. And look at it from the point of view of are there any lessons that can be learned here? Is there any training that's required from the officer? You know, is there anything that could have been done better not to, not to play the blame game, not to point fingers or anything like that, but to improve things? And also, yeah, to help with investigations to help with complaints against police to help with, you know, Coroner's inquests in the event of serious incidents and stuff like that. So I suppose what I'm saying is, myself or my colleagues have watched more body worn video of police officers rolling around on the floor with people in the last couple of years. And then probably most people. It's like, it's like, we used to joke is like world's world is police chases, and I get paid for it, you know. But as a result of that, I was quite shocked with what was happening. And, you know, several of my colleagues didn't last long doing that role. Because, you know, I used to bring in other instructors to, for a few months to help me watch the video. And they got quite despondent because it, you know, they were shrugging their shoulders. Doesn't anybody do what we teach them? Is? What's the point? What's the point in teaching this stuff? And there was a lot of argument of, is the stuff we're teaching all the techniques, everything we teach, is it fit for purpose? And my argument was, there's nothing wrong with what we teach isn't doing it. They're not doing what we teach. Yes, there are, we do need to change what we teach, potentially, you know, we've got a manual of me, the techniques are six inches thick, it's all online now. But you know, this huge, big tome of all these techniques. And really, it probably should be a handful of techniques that they can do well, but it's not, you know, so that, and I know, there's a lot of change going on at the moment at high levels, people looking at massively reducing or changing the training, but in my opinion, I think it needs to, they need to go back to the drawing board. further than that, but that's just, you know, again, my opinion, because we've had a massive degradation in our physical culture. You know, I, I played sport at school. I, you know, we ran around in the playground, we climb trees, we had a very physical upbringing. And that just, you know, speaking out doesn't seem to, people don't seem to have similar experiences now, coming into the police also coming into the police. Two things tended to happen. So I joined quite late, you know, I was in my late 20s, before I joined. And I was not the oldest in my intake. Young people, when they applied to join the police were quite often told, yeah, go away, get some life experience, then come back. Now the average age of new recruits? Well, it frightened me, were just before I left, I was speaking to a new group of recruits, doing some training with them. And it turns out that the boots I was wearing, were older than one of the students I was teaching. You know, and when you when you get to the point where you join the police before some of these people were born, that's when you think I am old. But but because, you know, they're joining the police now at 19 years old. And that's quite common as well, certainly in my force that was quite common. And over 50% of the force were probation. So in their first two years, and I think it was somewhere around 60 odd

percent. Yeah, sorry. 40%. Were in the probation and around 60% Less than five years. So you've got to really Experience workforce, you've had a massive degradation in our physical culture, where most people and and and now, you know, our, our for mild forces abolish the fitness test. So no fitness test requirements now, so you know that that blew my mind. So so now you, you know, people aren't as fit as they used to be because they're not don't have those physical lifestyles, people aren't playing sport, you've just come out of two years of COVID, where people haven't been able to train and go to gyms, you've got a different group of people as well, because what they're now certainly in my old organization, they because of work, and I want to speak out of turn. But this there was a very real move away from hiring anyone who was ex military. They didn't want ex military people. And I don't, I don't know why, you know, I can, I can make a few assumptions, but they didn't want ex military people they wanted academics they want. So obviously now, in the UK, you have to have a degree to join the police, or you have to go through a degree process to be in the police. So it all becomes very much an academic process. And they're very keen on their exams, they're very keen on being intellectually very capable. And unfortunately, I like I think, whilst there is a real place for, you know, academic learning and ability, and because at least 50% of the job is understanding the law and understanding procedure and being able to take good statements and be eloquence, and I'm out, but, you know, the eloquent and you know, be able to argue your your case in court, be able to, you know, articulate what occurred be able to present people to to custody sergeants and booked people into custody. So you need a good understanding of that you need to, you know, you need to have a certain intellectual capacity. However, the other 50% of the job is being a thug. That sounds wrong, but you're not. I mean, there is a

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James Geering 1:22:30

blue collar isn't it is this I'm thinking this just on my drive today, our professions, yours or mine. It's like we got one foot in the professional and one foot in blue collar and proudly so because there's times like as a firefighter, paramedic, you know, I'm doing basically surgeon stuff on the street. And there's other times where we're rolling hose and cleaning rigs, and we're absolutely doing grunt work. And that's a beautiful thing about what we do, but a degree alone of which I have one, you know, I've never I've never been on a fire where it's like, can I see your qualifications? Yes, I have a diploma in exercise science and fitness evaluation. Okay, I shall extinguish myself. You. Thank you. Good, sir.

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1:23:13

That's it. And so I mean, the story, I always tell him, forgive me if I've told you this one before. But years ago, I was on patrol at Leicester Square in central London. And there was a great loading disorder. I won't bore you with why, but just loads and loads of us fighting hundreds of views all turn up in the same place through a great big fight. And there were a couple of my colleagues from the Metropolitan Police stranded in the middle of Leicester Square, and they call urgent assistance. So they've been surrounded by this gang of us in turn, it is massive fight. They draw their buttons. That was pretty much all we had back then. And they were you know, literally sort of fighting, fighting the crowd off. They call the insistence. Unfortunately, I was just around the corner with my colleague in a car. So we were the first responding officers. You know, we drove into Leicester Square jumped up car ran into the middle of Leicester Square. And we were all four of us back to back and so totally surrounded. So battens were drawn. And we're just literally trying to you know, keep people back. So we're just swinging

battens around. Cut Long story short, you know, we were we were in big trouble. We were in big trouble. And just then, a van turned up from the TSG. The TSG is the Metropolitan Police territory support group. They used to joke and call them the thick and stupid group TSG but they're not at all. They're not not at all right. I've done probably go to policing. The TSG are absolutely. Well, they certainly were absolutely the top of their game. I'm sure they are still very good. But, you know, back then we were talking sort of the early, early 2000s. They were the biggest, scariest police officers you ever want to meet. And this van turned up. So it's called the commissioners reserve. And there is always a full PSU or full police Support Unit of the commissioners reserve available in London at any one time the commissioners reserve rolled up. And that's actually three public all events. And I remember that, and I'm probably exaggerating now, but you know, why let the truth get in the way of a good story. But so I just have this image in my head of this van pulling up the side door on this, the sliding doors slid open on the side of this, you know, white van and have jumped this enormous behemoth of a police officer. And in my head, I still remember he picked up a bloke and was holding him via his leg using him to cut through the eye. It was like Samson with the jawbone of an ox, you know that hacking is made, but I slay with swinging a bloke around so cutting his way through the crowd. And I was bodies flying left, right and center as they fought my way through to us and rescued us basically. And, and I thought, from that day on, I thought, you see you always need that. You can be as intellectual as you like. And be as good as you can be a really good investigator, you can be a top level detective. But you know, every now and then you need an in case of emergency break glass. You want to hit that break glass, and you want those beasts to come out and dig you out of the shit bucket. And I'm sorry to say, you know, you need those guys, you need those guys and girls, you need them to come and rescue sometimes. And it can't all be about academic smarts. It's half of the picture. But it's certainly not all of it.

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James Geering 1:27:18

So just before we transition, because I want to get to the knife crime issue next. But with that being said, so you're reviewing these body cams, there seems to be well, there's a an abolition of fitness standards, which by the way, is fucking insanity. And then you have this academic heavy that we see in the fire service, too. Oh, you want to promote to Chief well, you need to get your degree Well, again, you know, your degree in business management or whatever you chose is not going to help you when you're outside of school shooting, and you're the Fire Ice, for example. But anyway, that aside, bringing solutions to problems, you're king for a day now with British policing, what needs to be done on the fitness side and what needs to be done on the defensive tactics side?

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1:28:03

So first off, I believe there has to be a fitness standard to get into the police service. Why? Because the job is a physical job. Regardless of what roll you do, now, I grant you, you know, at some point, you might go into investigations. And you could argue, you know, why do detectives need to be able to run to fitness standards. But I think a base level of fitness standards is important for everything. Because we've had just as many stories of detectives being attacked in home addresses, when they've gone around to arrest somebody, they have no idea what's going to happen. And all of a sudden, it's gone wrong for them. So because at any time at any time, and we've all seen terrorist attacks, wherever the total house, the pumps that everyone's required to do a job, and I think the public expect a standard of us. So for me

100% You need to have a fitness standards have a fitness standard. That is a proper job related fitness test. When we joined, it was a proper job related fitness test. It wasn't just run backwards and forwards. It was grip strength, it was upper body strength. It was you know, running round and speed and agility was a variety of things much more related to the job you're being asked to do. And then being asked to maintain that it's not too much to ask, we asked them to maintain their academic standards with exams, we should ask them to maintain physical fitness standards. And if you're not there before you've joined the job, you shouldn't raise your game to get to that point. So the first thing is fitness standards without a doubt. I think the second thing is training that is very much fit for purpose. One of the things that has massively changed over the years is our over reliance on elearning packages. And the more you speak to people in a variety of industries, everything has become an elearning package. And why because it provides a tick in the box for the organization. Look, I can prove everyone in the organization has done their health and safety, manual handling training, because here's the tick of the box. Uh huh. But Do people really understand that have the, you know, and whilst elearning might be okay, for manual handling? Or how to use a computer screen without getting a headache? Can you do an E Learning package for defensive tactics or, or driving? Or you know, you can't? Obviously, you can't? And I know we don't currently, but But it's starting to get ridiculous, what they're asking you to do elearning packages for things where historically you need face to face instruction? And perhaps that, you know, the answer is a combination of the two. I don't know. But I think certainly, let's get back up because I'm a trainer. I'm quite passionate about that. Let's have a real person there who can explain it to you when you go. No, I don't understand that. Can you please explain how that works? Or can you show you this? Yes, I can. I can, I can explain it in a different way. So don't over rely on to arts training, trainee training, I think is the the military, the military train all the time, and deploy a fraction of that time. The police do it the wrong way around, we deploy all the time, then don't do any training. And the only training they're interested in is and this is the phrases bandied around in the police all the time. minimum standards, we have minimum standards of investigation, we have minimum standards of of trial, what's the minimum requirement here? What's the what's the minimum I need to do to pass or to achieve this? We shouldn't be striving for the best. And as a result of that, perhaps, you know, so we need? Oh, I mean, you know, I'm gonna sound like a broken record. So every industry wants this don't know, they all want more pay, they want more people. You know, I think it's just about, you know, getting the right people for the job. Because time and time again, I see people currently, I'm asking them, are you sure you're in the right job, you know, you do know what you signed up for doing this, there's an element of physicality in this, there's an element of this, there's an element of that. So it's getting the right people for the job paying them what they're worth, Holy, moly, you know, pay people what they're worth, pay people for the risks that they're asked to take. And the sacrifices that they make, you know, you know, I just before I retired, I got my long servicemen. And actually, my wife deserves the long service medal, not me for having to put up with, you know, because it's the family and the support structure that you need to get through all of that. And, you know, so therefore, I suppose the working environment needs to be better. So you've got to pay people what they're worth and support them, give if you're not going to pay people what they're worth, and at least give them a good working environment, good support structure. You know, for example, and I know this is gonna sound really bad, never, you know, with the greatest respect, we had some very good occupational health nurses. But they were never available. You know, the Occupational Health was an was a bottomless pit, you send emails, you never get anything back. Why? Because it was so snowed under. Because there were, you know, at one point, it dropped to like two people in the department for for a police force of three and a half 1000 officers. And then on top of that, other people, you know, it's crazy, you know, so, you, you need that support, and more and more people need good occupational health. And not because, you know, you're, you're calling

them up going, oh, yeah, I get vertigo in six socks, or, you know, I, you know, I heard something on the radio, I've been traumatized by it, you know, come on, you know, have a little bit of a, you know, backbone, you know, we need a little bit of that, and I'm sorry to say, you know, you're joining a job where you need a little bit of fortitude, do it. And so it's about picking the right people, give them the right training. We're quite lucky with equipment in the UK or be honest on the whole I have no real winch to that equipment, not in my organization anyway. And not in what I did, I was very lucky firearms gets the lion's share. So I, you know, I know my colleagues in other departments will go really nothing, you know, buying they're buying their own chairs.

 James Geering 1:34:33

I don't ever get thick socks to get

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I can't even get vertigo, my fix. So, so yeah, pick the right people, given what they're worth, look after them, and give them the training that they need. And, and, and here's the thing, the other thing is, understand that the most important people, I think in any organization that Certainly the police are the ones that are out there facing the public, and not necessarily the ones in command, not necessarily the ones, you know, sitting behind desks and, and doing all support stuff. And whilst that's really important work, I often got the impression that my job existed to support the support staff and not the other way around, you know, it, and I'm gonna get some hate mail for that. But I just mean that where all your money needs to go and all and all of your concentration needs to go is on the officer, the interaction with the public, because that's the one officer that can make or break that person's experience that can make or break that person's understanding or belief that the police are actually any good, or do what they want to do in the first place. You know, if so, those are the people you need to invest in. And sadly, who are those people that are the responders, the first responders in the police, they are your most experienced, and your youngest with the least service. Because the minute you've got a bit of experience in the police, in order to get away from the horrendous shifts, and horrendous workload of being on basic response duties, you leave and join a specialization. So you're going to fire on the public order or become a detective or whatever. Because being a basic patrol officer is horrendous. The workload is overwhelming, you have case files in your tray piling up, you can't keep on top of it all. You know, it's just it, they get no support. They don't get case building teams or anything like that, you know, there is so many things that you could do to improve their, their job and make their job better. And therefore maybe people would want to stay in a response role. Because they are the point the end, your basic patrol response officers do all the work. I used to keep saying this one, we would turn off a firearm as a firearms unit. Nicole, thanks for coming. In, you know, you've bailed sound like no, you do the hard work, we just turn up with the dangerous luggage. And you know, and then it will things were the cool ones. No. But all the cool work is done by the officers on the ground facing the initial threat. They're the ones that that solve the problems that save lives, all of us doing the support stuff, you know, we just get to wear the Gucci kit.

 James Geering 1:37:36

So I have a police officer from Massachusetts, Chuck D tiara and kind of mirroring what you

were saying with the capturing of the Boston bombers. It was He was giving credits like yeah, the SWAT was there, like we were all responding, he said, but it was the frontline, you know, police officers on the street that were really doing most of the legwork, and the ones that actually interacted with these people. So it's interesting, you know, obviously, all the way across the Atlantic, you're an armed response officer yourself and having the same thing, which again, underlines the importance of having the best people out there. I mean, there's a video floating around at the moment of a woman who was accused of not paying her fee on a bus. And there's a whole bunch of police officers trying to arrest her and her little boy is crying. And again, optics looks horrendous. I don't know, the full story. I wasn't there. I'm simply a dude looking at on a phone. But it appears and if I read it, right, it was actually incorrect. And she had paid a fair in the first place. But I mean, just absolutely horrible to watch. So again, you've got the acute, you know, trying to stop a terrorist on London Bridge, or you've got the interacting with a very, very mild, you know, case, either way, one point, you've got to be, you know, an operator. The other point other side, you've got to be kind, compassionate, take a step back and actually look at the whole story.



1:39:00

Yeah, 100% You know, I used to see it all the time, where, you know, you'd see a really minor job. And they'd be surrounded by police officers. And I used to go up to officers all the time and go, you know, and they weren't even on my unit. They must hate me for it. I go, sorry, what? What's this job? And they go, oh, yeah, for example, they've got bought a train ticket, or they, you know, or it's something really minor. And I'm like, what you're doing here then? Because this looks terrible. Can you all just go away? You know, do you need to have 50 people, you know, five offices surrounding this one person, regardless of what it is, you know, I'm not being funny. Unless this is a terrorist attack. Why do you need so many officers surrounding one person it's just It looks terrible. And also then it begs the question, well, why are they never a cops there when I need him. If, if, when a job happens that, you know, there's this five of year. I mean, it always used to have to know where, you know, when the radio would would spark up and some weary job would come out over the radio, you know, any unit, you know, to routine call to something really weary. They'd be like, silence, cricket. And no one wanted to go to that. And then all of a sudden, it was like, oh, yeah, any unit immediate, great call, you know, man with a knife? Or yes, we're all available, you know, all of a sudden, everyone's, everyone's available, because it sounds a bit more exciting. But yeah, it is. It's, it is a problem. It is a problem with how we're perceived. And I don't think people understand that quite so much in the job. You know, sometimes, especially people younger in service, and what without going on about the people younger in service, I used to talk to a lot of officers and say, bear in mind, you have only policed a pandemic. You know, so, we're talking about officers. Now, when you consider that 40 odd percent of officers are in their probation. You know, that means they've only policed the pandemic, you know, that I know, we were out of it now, for a little while, but, you know, so a lot of their service has been there, all their training, and all their initial years were during a pandemic, when there were no people on the streets. So they've got a very different view of, of, of what it is. And I certainly noticed, you know, issues with that, because people were overreacting to situations that that a lot of more extreme experienced colleagues would just go, that's nothing relaxed. You know, this is not this is not serious, you know, this, don't worry about it. You know, and I think I think it's one of the things that can happen when we the lack of exposure to stuff is you you think minor things are far more serious than they are?

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James Geering 1:41:55

Absolutely. Well, you talked about shoring up, you know, with your very dangerous luggage, as you said, when I went home the end of last year to do the Reki. For 7x, we met up and I got to see the armory, which is an Englishman, I mean, now it was no big deal, because I'm surrounded by guns as America. But before it would have blown my mind to go into this little locker in the middle of London and see all the weapons that you guys carry. And you know, we've got to see some of the shift change going on. And like you said, some of the very physically intimidating men and women that you work alongside. So talk to me about guns in general, where there was a high profile case a little while ago, matchyou retana, for example, you know, when you think of the UK, there's almost a danger of being too complacent. Because we hardly ever see a gun. I grew up around guns on a farm, we had shotguns, and my dad had a rifle when we went hunting up in Scotland. But aside from that, you know, you don't and I think maybe we spoke about this last time, the only time I ever saw a pistol was some dude walking into a pub, and in Hampstead of all places, and kind of, you know, it was sticking out of his wrist, wrist waistband, you know, obviously, trying to try to project that's kind of tough guy image. But, you know, Matthew was in a jail, they had someone in custody. And, you know, the search wasn't done correctly, and they ended up getting shot by an antique pistol. So you, you know, you are the men and women that are called when, you know, this kind of incident happens. Talk to me about just the firearm issue in the UK. Is it getting worse? And then the uptick of armed police in the UK? We'll just leave it at that. Yeah, I



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I didn't I didn't know. Matt retana. He was a for those of you don't know. I mean, he's in the press a lot. He was a custody sergeant in Croydon. I've been into that custody. And I have no doubt I, I'd sort of interacted with him at some point. But I didn't know him personally. And I wasn't there when the incident happened or there was a duty and there was a huge



1:44:10

ripples went across London instantly, pretty much. And because that hit us all really, really hard. Because that doesn't happen. Officers getting shot is very, very rare. custody sergeant being killed in custody. Wow.



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You know, he raised a number of questions and I you know, I'm not here to criticize people at all, you know, because as I say, I wasn't there. And I don't know what happened prior to that person getting into custody. But what I can say is that obviously, the the norm is that people are searched before they are taken into custody and they usually searched if they've if they've been in interaction in the streets by time they get to custody, they've probably been searched multiple times, perhaps in the initial interaction, perhaps when they're put into the police vehicle, ordinarily, and then prior to coming into custody, you know, and so it was a real shock when that happened, but I think, for me, one of the things that made it understandable is the wrong word. But I was not surprised, was because all the time, people are smuggling things into into custody. You know, we've, we always used to show a piece of footage of someone with

a huge machete that had it down their trousers, and they got all the way into custody. And they're standing opposite the custody side, and they pull out this huge, huge machete, you know, an attack with custody sergeant with it. And you thought, how can this be, and I think, certainly with firearms, I think one thing is true is that we don't have a gun culture in the UK. As a result of that, you know, there are very few cases in the UK where you are going to even in London, where you as a random a regular police officer are going to come in into contact with someone with a gun. And nine times out of 10, if a gun is seen, or a firearm is seen, and we believe we you know, we always assume it's a viable firearm until we can prove otherwise, it will be a dedicated firearms unit that will go to that. So that tells you something about the frequency of firearms crime in the UK, is that we have specialist units that responsible you know, you couldn't do that in America at all, you know, and I take my hat off to American police officers, because every single call you go to is a firearms job. Because everyone could have a gun. And I think the problem we have in the UK is that we don't assume that everyone could have a gun. Because it's so rare. So the default is, well, I've never seen a gun in my career. So therefore the chances of this person having gone very low, so you default to that it's more likely that they haven't got a gun, that complacency kicks in. Because it's not common. It's very, very fortunately very rare. So as a result of that, you're not expecting it. And I used to hammer this all the time to police officers hammering I got sick to death of it. Because I used to say, you must work to the 100% rule. That is that 100% of people are carrying a concealed weapon until you prove otherwise. Now it doesn't mean you're going to use force on them. It doesn't mean you've got an excuse to go and hit someone with a baton and say, Well, you know, Sergeant Dave said everyone's got it. No, that's not what I mean. What I mean is, treat them as if they have got one. So therefore you're using caution, you're being careful, you're maintaining a good reactionary gap, you're keeping an eye on their hands, you're checking properly for places where they could have a concealed weapon, and when you are, have searched them thoroughly and you're satisfied, then still bear in mind, they can hit you or head but you will need you in the groin, you know. So you still want to be mindful of that. And I think unfortunately, that mindset does not provide. And it certainly doesn't pervade people's people's minds. And there was there was a story from the United States, excuse me that I always used to quote and i wish i I wish I knew the validity of it or the source of it. But I'm going to tell you anyway, because I still tell the tale. You know, and that is a story from the United States where a police officer Well, a suspect went out to kill a police officer, right. And sadly, they managed to kill a police officer and then they handed themselves in. And when they handed themselves into the police having killed a police officer. They were searched. And when they were searched, they were found to have a speeding ticket from that day. And they said to the suspect, why didn't you kill the police officer? If you set out today to kill a police officer? Why didn't you kill a police officer who gave you the speeding ticket? And he said because I didn't get the chance to. So for me, that shows a really important mindset of that original officer who stopped him for speeding. He didn't give him the opportunity to kill him even though he had the intent. So all the evil intent in the world doesn't matter if you don't give them the opportunity. And I think unfortunately, we forget that sometimes we give people the opportunity because most of our interactions in the UK are benign interactions, we're quite safe. We interact with people, we're polite to them, they're polite to us. It's a fair cop, you know, we don't have too many problems with a lot of people. If we have problems with people, it tends to be what are referred to as or what what we in the police in UK call active resistance, someone goes, No, you're not arresting me. And it's then pulling away and trying to resist an arrest. Yes, we do get people attacking police officers, but nine times out of 10, it's at the point of arrest, and they're trying to prevent themselves getting arrested, or they're having a bit of a fight. You know, the the instances where police officers are stabbed or shot are very few and far between, I'm glad to say but of course, that breeds complacency. And that I believe is why we miss all the time we miss these weapons, we miss them in searches. Because, you know,

officers don't clearly, well, clearly we don't search properly, because if we searched properly with we'd find them before they got anywhere near anybody. And that doesn't happen. So you know, and it only takes them to be lucky once doesn't even get into custody, we we've got to be consistently good. And we're all human beings. And we all have an off day. We all know that. That's why you need to have multi tiered approaches to these things and have lots of searches, not just make do with one officer searching. And I've been there and I'm sure any colleagues out there listening have been there. When you you know, you turn up to provide prisoner transport, you say is it being searched? And they often goes, yeah, she's fine. And you go all right, and you stick him in the back of the van. And you get to custody, you know, and and everyone's working on that. Obviously, Ben said, oh, yeah, yeah, it's all it's all fine. So you know, some someone's done it? Oh, really? Who did it? And how good was it? You know, was it thorough? So I think this is the problem is that we get complacent. Because whilst knives are very, very common, we don't get many officers stabbed. Thankfully, guns are very uncommon. And we have even fewer officers shot, thankfully. So we don't expect to see it. And because we don't expect to see it, we're not looking for it. Whereas in the States, and I know, unfortunately, there have been cases in the states where because you are expecting it. Perhaps when someone is reaching for something that is not a gun, they get a bad response, because the officer is expecting it. So it is that expectation dictating outcome. And it's one of my favorite phrases, expectation dictates outcome, you if you could fill your mind with this is definitely going to happen, then lo and behold, you can make that happen. So you've got to be really careful of that. And once you've got to be prepared for there to be a weapon, you know, you've got to you can't act as if it's there, when it's not, you just need to be cautious and be prepared for the fact that one might be there and keep yourself safe.

J

James Geering 1:53:17

So it's a scary thing for fire and EMS and we just had a New York thing, she was a paramedic, stabbed in the back of the ambulance and multiple times it's a harrowing video, she kind of steps out the side door and then lays on the ground, just screaming and then she's just been stabbed. But you know, because we can't just pat someone down a lot of times, you know, it's, you know, you're gonna do a primary secondary assessment, hopefully, you can just kind of make sure that you're being safe them. But even when we approach a home, you know, I mean, we always knock from the side of the door, because you never know here, there have been paramedics shot on the doorstep, sometimes by accident by someone freaking out thinking, you know, they're paranoid schizophrenic, and I think the aliens are coming to get them. Other times. They're just horrible, horrible anti establishment people that lower medics or firefighters to their homes with a fire or whatever it is, and then shoot them. So it's a really, it's a gray area for us because we don't have the ability to restrain someone while we pat him down and make sure they're safe before you know the jump in the back of our ambulance and 99 times out of 100 It's gonna be fine. But occasionally, we don't know if that person's got a knife or a gun or no. And again, this this particular one when when Matt was murdered, it was a shoulder holster. So under the arm, yeah. So for us to be able to find that as a paramedic. If someone's going to sit in there with their arms crossed or whatever, we're not even going to see it. So I think you know, the expectation expect the worse, you know, train for the worst expect the best kind of thing when you first interact with someone, especially fire and EMS. We have to remind ourselves because we're not going into that scene thinking this person is trying to kill us, but sometimes they might be.

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Yeah, I agree. I've been to an awful lot of ambulance calls for assistance. And it's a worrying trend. Because I don't know whether you do in the States, but ambulance crews in London wear body armor? You know, it's I mean, not all of them do. But you know, and I don't know how available it is. But I see a lot of a lot of Las paramedic crews wearing wearing body armor. But it is a real a real problem, you know, with with people attacking him in the back of ambulances when because what can you do? You know, you can't, you can't search, you can't search people. And people are very, very unpredictable and bother, you know, calling for police assistance is too late. By the time we get there. You know, it's it. It's a worrying, it's a worrying trend. And we had a couple of just before the pandemic, we had a really bad summer where a lot of ambulance paramedics had been targeted with acid attacks, parked up in an ambulance with a window wound down because it was hot in summer. And people with you know, plastic water bottles filled with acid squirting in their face can explain that, you know, I mean, police officers were attacked in the same way. But I I get that people don't like police. I don't understand why people would hate paramedics and want to throw acid in the face of a paramedic, it makes no sense to me at all.



James Geering 1:56:22

Well, with the disturbing trends, again another thing that seems to be growing and there's one Instagram page, I follow them so far annex Paul, and he shows all of these knife attacks that we've seen in the UK, so talk to me about that.



1:56:36

So that's, that's the one thing we do have, unfortunately, more than our fair share of so our knives that America's firearms, I think in that knives are available anywhere, you know, you can go into any pawn shop, and Buy and buy a knife you can order tonight and all the legislation in the world doesn't stop that you can you can put as much legislation as you'd like to say, you know, it's an offensive weapon, you can't own it, you can't carry one in the street doesn't stop people what it stops, it stops law abiding people doing things like most laws do. But it doesn't stop criminals doing. As and also, you know, I think the other thing is a lot of a lot of people, especially youngsters, who who carry, let's face it, you know, my experience has been a lot of young people carry knives. And they don't have any understanding of the damage they cause by stabbing somebody in the locations where they stand, you know, they think, Oh, it's okay. You know, I'll scare him by stabbing him in the in the buttocks or in the groin or in the leg. You know, that will be that will be scary, but it won't kill them. Because they've watched too much TV. Or, you know, I'll just smash them or I won't stab them very deeply, or whatever it might, you know, the number of horrendous injuries we're seeing of people having, you know, arteries settled and bleeding out before we can even get to them. You know, I've been to several jobs, again, because we have people on our unit and firearms officers tend to have a slightly higher level of police, Medic training and better trauma kits in our, in our vehicles to deal with bleeds, especially, you know, I've been to several, you know, stabbings where it was you know, young young lad on young lads stab stab each other and catastrophic, catastrophic injuries and total disregard for the consequences. And I think that and that's one of the problems of youth, isn't it? That you know, you don't understand the consequences of what you're doing. And, and over nothing, you know, stabbing somebody over some grudge or over some postcode or, or, you know, you're in the wrong postcode, you're gonna get stabbed. So horrific, horrific injuries. And,

you know, I did some work with some of the trauma centers in London, you know, speaking some to some of the doctors there when I did some research, because we had, we had a lot of problem with, you know, threats to knives, threats from knives to police officers. And they were talking about the number of the average number of stab wounds going from, you know, 10 years ago where people were presenting in a&e with one or two stab wounds, to now it's a dozen it's 10 or a dozen stab wounds. It's, you know, all over the body. It's, you know, it's frenzied attacks rather than just, you know, stabbing somebody and running away it's these frenzied multiple stab wound attacks all over, you know, and it's it's pretty bad because, you know, it takes it whilst it takes a certain visceral have anger to stab somebody because it's a real up close and personal weapon, isn't it, you've got to, you've got to really want to hurt somebody to stand that close and stab them. But it doesn't require any skill whatsoever to do that. And knives are readily available, and they, they never run out of ammunition. You know, and then after you've done it, you can drop it down a drain, or chuck it in a bin. And in somewhere like London, the chances of that being found are quite slim. And if you're searched in the street, and they find you with a knife on on you, what are the chances of you getting a significant sentence, nothing really, you're probably going to get, if it's the first time, you might just get a caution for possession of an offensive weapon. I don't know, you know, it's the consequences are not there. The penalties are not there. And, you know, people are not afraid to do it. I think that's the, the other key thing is people are not afraid to stab each other.

J

James Geering 2:01:04

So again, reverse engineering, what is the root cause you think of a kid who should be focusing on sports that they love friends and girlfriends or boyfriends, you know, their journey through an apprenticeship or to college, instead deciding that they're going to find a puffer with a hood, so they can cover their face from security cameras, and buy a machete from somewhere and start hacking people up?

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2:01:32

Um, I think, you know, my experiences with gangs have been with sort of thefts and things like that or gangs involved in, in, in criminality, you know, armed robbery type type things or, you know, moped gangs, people with knives, that kind of stuff, using the knife to facilitate robberies, as well as, you know, sort of random gang attacks. So I think, you know, in my limited experiences, it's twofold. One is the gang culture, which we have really nicely learnt from the United States, you know, we've worked as one of the great imports, thank you. We've, for some reason, that's one of the things we've embraced. Is, is gang culture. And I don't know, what is attractive about that other than, you know, a sense of, you know, a sense of belonging, a sense of, of what else is there a safety, you know, safety in numbers, I can imagine, you know, I know, I know, certain parts of the country are quite dangerous places to live, if you're not a member of a gang, I can, I can appreciate that. And I also know that, you know, one of the, you know, if you're in a gang, you often have to use violence, to prove yourself in within these gangs, let alone having gangs that have, you know, sort of ritualistic sort of things that you have to do in order to get him in first place. But I think on the flip, so apart from the sort of gang gang related violence that is purely, you're in my area, or it's a tit for tat, retaliation, because what are your gang members stabbed one of my gang members, so we're now going to start stabbing your gang members, the the never ending tit for tat thing seems to go on. I've also seen a lot of street violence, where people have used excessive violence to achieve the

street robbery and door violence. I mean, I dealt with one case, and I can't give too many specifics, but the but all I will say is this. A person literally hate that word. Literally. I hate when people overuse the word literature, but somebody made a comment, somebody walked past somebody. And they were sitting in their way. And so a derogatory comment was made. And because a derogatory comment was made, the two people faced off against each other. And it was just a little bit of a use, what do you you know, don't talk to me like that. We'll I'll talk to you, you know, it started it was just words, it was words, it was nothing else but words. And one of them pulled a knife and stabbed the other one to death, multiple times, something like 19 times, but the first stab wound was right in the throat, instant death, and apparently the person was, you know, instantly killed. You know, so you're now prepared to murder somebody because they've that they've, I don't know that they've been disrespectful in your in your weird world. They've disrespected you, and so you've murdered them. Ah, so for me that I'm at now, I don't understand that that's the that's the bit on the psyche. I don't understand. I don't understand. You know, I talked to people who've been victims of street robberies. And, you know, after the robbery, after the robbery, after the fact that they've taken their wallet or their, their bag or their phone, the violence that occurred, they then hit them, they then beat them, they then stabbed them. And, and the victim will say, Well, why did they do that? I don't know. It doesn't make any sense to me. There's no rhyme or reason for that, you know, in some respects, you can understand or be it's terrible, you can understand why people use violence or the threat of violence to steal something, you know, give me your wallet, or I'm going to hit you with this hammer. But what I don't understand is they've got the wallet, and now they hit you with a hammer. And there are just as many examples of that as whether examples on you know, violence coming first. I don't understand the psyche of people. That's what seems to have changed the the attraction of violence, I suppose. The proving themselves proving that there are there are a big advantage dude than you are.

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James Geering 2:06:21

Yeah, well, I think like you said, there is that kind of importation of gang culture from the US was a minute, I'll put my hands up when I was late teens. I loved hip hop. So as a little, you know, Wiltshire farm boy that grew up around sheep and ducks. I was like, straight out of Corsham. You know what I mean? It was all about that gang life, even though I had no idea. But then as you get older, you know, like, Well, no, I don't want to actually shoot anyone. I don't want to sell drugs. I just thought it was a good song, you know, but this is the problem. That's maturity that says, you go. So now it's like, oh, you know, you watch the movie Juice, for example, which is a great, great film on the ridiculous nature of that whole concept, which leads to a lot of death and misery and loss of life, which is also death. That was a redundant thing. But you know, but it is it's buying into that the reality is, two young people interact. One dies, the other one spends the rest of their life in prison. Where's the fucking conversation in reverse engineering, again, arguably, the mental health crisis that we have in our countries, a gun truly is a gun that sits in a gun safe, or in a range and you fight you know, you go paper targets, or you do competitions, where you do clay pigeon shooting, or maybe you hunt and up? No, you eat venison. That's what a gun is for a knife carves, you know, makes dinner or carves a beautiful sculpture out of out of wood. That's what a knife is. It's only when there's mental ill health, you know that these become weapons. It's only when some shitbag decides to start a war with another country that a whole bunch of people pick up guns and murder each other for seemingly almost nothing. So you know, this is this is what what's so frustrating with the average, let's say European, because so many of our, you know, fellow countries also don't walk around carrying guns like we do here in America. And we're just stuck in this vicious circle

at the moment here. What do you advise the average person there? Are people walking around with Edge weapons looking to do harm? What can a member of the UK carry on them to at least level the playing field? If God forbid they get attacked?



2:08:33

The honest answer is nothing. And because it's all because we are the law abiding people, we are not allowed to carry anything. Because the letter of the law says anything made adapted or intended to cause injury to a person is an offensive weapon, and therefore I can't have it in a public place, made adapted or intended intended. So if I have a, a rolled up piece of cardboard in my pocket, that, you know, I roll up a magazine, right? So I think, right, oh, I'm walking through a dangerous area. I'm going to roll up this magazine, and I'm going to hold it. So if I get attacked, I'm going to hit someone with this rolled up magazine. It's now an offensive weapon, because my intent is to hurt someone with it. That has now I could get arrested for walking around with a rolled up magazine. It's insane. I mean, obviously, it's, that's that's an unlikely scenario. But if you're going by the letter of the law, if I intend to do something with it, so even if I was to, you know, so you can't do anything, you can't own anything with the intent to hurt someone else with it, but the bad guys can because they don't care. So all you can do, all you can do is use situational awareness. And the reason why I don't say, Go and learn martial art, as great as martial arts are and as great as I mean, I'm a massive fan of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and, you know, all kinds of martial arts, you know, do I used to love doing judo on a big fan of a, you name it, I love it, right? It's, it's fantastic. But in my experience, if anybody tells you, they've got techniques that can successfully defend against a knife, in my experience, they're wrong. Because if you go up against somebody with a knife, and you don't have one, and you don't have anything to defend yourself, and you're gonna go empty handed against the knife, then you are going to be lucky to walk away alive, if that person has the intent to kill you. So, situational awareness is the only way to prevent yourself getting hurt by someone with a knife. Stay away from them. If somebody has got a knife, you want to make really massive, reactionary, get massive space. Now I realize it's easy to say it because there's going to be times when you can't get away. Yes, so maybe some training is better than none. Yeah, I, you know, I get all of this. And I'm not saying nothing works at all. But what I'm saying is, given the choice, use situational awareness. Listen to the hairs on the back of your neck and say, I shouldn't everyone I've spoken to who's been the victim of a knife, knife point, robbery has gone. You know, I knew there was something right, I knew I shouldn't have gone down there. I knew I should have taken the shortcut. I knew I knew I shouldn't have parked my car, on the top of the car parking, you know, the, the NAACP car park i i knew i felt like someone was following me. I thought he was following me I didn't, you know, I just ignored it. It's listened to that inner voice that says, This is not safe thing for me to do. And don't do it, you know, there's going to be, you're going to be unlucky, at some point potentially.



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For me, the advice I give to lots of people is, it's the same if I was going, if I'm going on holiday,



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to somewhere I know is potentially dangerous. Like when I come on holiday to the States, I have a throwaway wallet. I have a wallet, that I don't mind giving somebody it's got a Scott on

it. 20 bucks. And so it's got some cash in it, but nothing else. And so if somebody comes up to me at six, and guy in my face and says give me a while ago, there you go. Take the thing, because it's instant giveaway, you know, I'll chuck it, I'll let them take it, you know, because I'm not going to die over some property. Right? If they then go, I know what you're watching. I'm sorry, I'm gonna give it to, you know, unless I believe because I've got nothing on me. I'm not allowed to conceal carry, you know, I can't defend myself, I've got no equipment. So I'm afraid to an extent I'm going to capitulate. Especially if that's all I believe they want. But, you know, it's a different story. If you've got family there, and you've been attacked, and all that kind of thing. You know, let's keep it simple here. But you know, the only way to stop yourself getting stabbed in the UK is to stay as far away from the pointy end of the life as you can. That's it. You know?

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James Geering 2:13:36

Yeah, it's such a hard thing to do. Because when I first came here, I was very anti gun isn't the word because like I said, I grew up around guns, but I didn't own a gun because I'm like, Oh, you're part of the problem then. But then I had a near miss with my son in his school where I brought him back for a medical appointment. And we had a code red, and we genuinely thought someone was coming into the school. I remember in I think I wrote about this in my book, you know, looking at the paper guillotine, where we were in this kind of office area, office supply area, waiting for whatever was going to come through the door and I'm like, alright, well, we have to cut this blade off. And, you know, the guillotine blade against a god knows what weapon it's probably not going to end well. But I mean, what choice do you have? But then you realize, okay, you know, just how vulnerable these children are. And the schools, these teachers, everyone else. Now it becomes my toolbox. All right, I've got tourniquets, I've got medical supplies, I've got a fire extinguisher, I've got all these other things. Now I have a gun, because God forbid I see someone walking towards a school with the intent to do harm. Do I want to throw a tourniquet on him? Or do I want to send around downrange and maybe stop that before it ever happens? So this becomes a tool in the toolbox? Well, in the UK that tool isn't an option. And I've heard a lot of people say like in a knife fight one of one of my friends is coming on as a prison guard. I just heard him talk on another interview and he was saying like understand that there's a knife fight you are gonna get cut. So if you're in that, so situation is really just how can you minimize the injury whilst you in turn, you know, hopefully can isolate that that limb that has a knife in it and fight for your life. But, you know, when you?

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Yeah, so I was gonna say that he's absolutely right. What I would add to that is the level of training you need to have to successfully do that is quite a lot. So people, what I meant earlier was, you know, people who force themselves by thing and then go to a weekend seminar of Krav Maga and be able to defend against the knife, you know, that day, that ain't going to happen. If you want to dedicate your life to, you know, martial arts and, and getting and do nothing but edge weapons stuff, you know, I wish you luck, you're still going to get cut, but you're probably going to be able to reduce the severity of your injuries. But for the most of us mortals who haven't got the time or the inclination to do that, you are in in big, big trouble. But he is absolutely right. And just to echo what you said, I'll be completely honest with you. If if they let me carry a gun in the UK, I would. Because I have some training, I believe, even though I'm not in the police anymore, my moral compass is pointing in the right direction. And, you

know, I believe that there are a norm, there are enough situations that occur in the UK where if someone had been there with a knife, they could have stopped it an awful lot with a gun, they could have stopped it an awful lot quicker. I'm not saying we should all carry guns. But you know, I'm thinking of, you know, London Bridge, you know, I know I, I went to both London Bridge attacks in London, I know, personally, officers who were really badly stabbed. You know, I debriefed one of the officers who got really badly injured, he was stabbed multiple times. And when he arrived on scene, the suspects weren't facing in his direction. So he managed to draw his bat and hit them with his bat when they were looking the other way. So the first hit, you know, and if he'd have been there with a firearm, that's it, he would have potentially ended that situation there, then and then and saved multiple lives. You know, so, like a number of things like you, you know, I'm not into gun culture. But I think the reality is, there's a time and a place for these things. And in the hands of trained, responsible people, I think they are a tool that sometimes are required.

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James Geering 2:17:50

I was just speaking to one of your fellow met on police officers. And I'll I'll bring on names once he comes on here but he was present at the London Bridge attacks and was it was saying even though the severity and the grotesque and nature of the the attacks was underreported, you know, it can almost I don't know if it's deliberately downplayed so much as just probably saving the minds of most the average person but, you know, sounded absolutely horrific. So, as we transition obviously, there's the kind of, you know, the narwhal horn story, which I think you told this on the show, maybe the first time that it wasn't even the first horn like he went back and got another one. It was my first one. So yeah, so we have this domestic terrorism, which you know, more often than not recently has been fundamentalist Islam. And I'm gonna be very clear, extremist mentally ill people that cling to that particular religion. But you and I spoke more recently about the threat being as much domestic as far as you know, not just that that one specific fundamentalist element. So you know, we have the seven seven bombings, you had some the London Bridge attacks. You know, the I'm embarrassed I'm forgetting his last name Lee, who was it that was attacked with the machete leaving big bank you legally rugby's attack. So, you know, we've had some horrendous things with the eyes that you have now, you know, 911, very much focused on one particular group. And we've seen, obviously, some extremism come out of that. Talk to me about the spectrum of threats that the American and certainly the British people, you know, are susceptible so we can educate and maybe make people a little bit more aware of situational awareness.

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I think. I mean, the first thing I would say is that, you know, you're you're far more likely to be involved in a car crash than you are involved in any terrorism, you know, it we are, we are very good in the UK. Intelligence services are very good. Police are very good At investigating, you know, terrorist terrorists and acts of terrorism, and we're pretty good. Yeah, I mean, people slipped through the net. But then again, I'm sure, you are probably aware of how many people it takes to do proper surveillance. And so it's undeniable that that we don't have enough resources to keep everybody on watch lists that we would like to keep on watch lists and, and, and put everyone under surveillance that we will want to put under surveillance. But I think also, it's very, it's naive to think that the only source of terrorism is, is fundamental Islamic terrorism, because of course it isn't. And, and also, the other thing to bear in mind is that a lot

of the time, when you hear about acts of terrorism, and you look into the person who's perpetrated it, whilst they are inspired by, I don't know, religious extremism, they usually, or quite often have got some fundamental mental health issue going on there as well. So, you know, in some respects, they're not part of I think the public tend to think of think of it as like this some sort of, you know, big organization, you know, like, like specter from James Bond, you know, that, that is organizing all these. And there's that, ahead of the terrorist organization is sitting there in his leather swivel chair, stroking his cats, you know, organizing all of these terrorist attacks, when of course, it's, it's not like that at all on on the half. I'm sure there might be, there might be a Blofeld somewhere, but I've never met him. I've never met a criminal mastermind, I'll be honest. I think what happens more often, is that people are suffering from mental health illness, or they're looking for things to latch on to, and they are easily susceptible. And so they end up, you know, end up getting involved in acts of terrorism. But I think we also forget that there's a lot of domestic threats, and I don't, I don't mean, that we should be, you know, worried about our next door neighbor. But I think there are just as many sort of fundamentalists from a variety of different backgrounds and beliefs that, that are just as dangerous. You know, I'm thinking of people like Hans Brevik. You know, who shot alone, people, you know, you've got neo Nazi fundamentalists, you've got, you know, anti capitalist fundamentalists, you've got people who are, you know, any sort of institution, there'll be people who are anti that, and they'll people who work would happily use at the lowest level, you know, disruption tactics and at the highest level of violence to, to achieve their ideological aim, which, you know, depending on which definition of terrorism you want to you want to adhere to? It is that idea of trying to use fear to achieve your ideological aim, isn't it? So? And that, that can happen anywhere. And I think we'd be really naive just to look at one group of people and go, Well, they're toast, well, no, you know, that they can come from anywhere. And any organization, you know, can have individuals in it, who are prepared to use violence.

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James Geering 2:24:01

One thing that I've seen, and I've, it's funny, it's kind of reared its head in Portugal a little bit recently, and that's where some of my family are. I certainly saw I've just seen it pervasive here in the US the last two administrations so there's a lot of very, very diehard Trump supporters in this country but from you know, taking a step back from a very objective view I there was no question that you know, a lot of the division and you could argue almost kind of some of the racial intolerance there was there was fuel thrown on that and that don't get me wrong, this current administration equally as divisive. And then I almost feel like again, even me, I think it was almost like Brexit where it was surfacing is nasty fucking head in in the UK as well. With this division that we saw in COVID. I can't help but feel but some groups, you know, that There's a there's an upside to division divide and conquer. And by labeling other people, the boogeyman, whether it's pro or anti mask, whether it's skin color, whether it's religion, whatever. You know, there was some comparisons to fascism and Hitler and some of these things and some of these, these quote unquote, leaders, and I'm using that term very fucking loosely with that, but it's not like, oh, no, we're not talking like, you know, Auschwitz, but we're talking warning signs early on in some of the journeys of some of these people that ended up being horrible fucking tyrants in our history. What have you seen as far as that division? And you know, are there any elements like National Front that are starting to gain strength again, after being, you know, extinguished for a long, long time? It doesn't have to be extreme isms like that. I mean, just a general feeling.

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I'll, I'll talk about something that sort of links to this, and and it was something that made me feel distinctly uneasy about being in the police, for the first time ever really was, and it was when I saw families who were protesting in Hyde Park. Over COVID, and there were, you know, there were there were some protests there. And and I'll be honest, I can't even remember whether it was over what what elements of it COVID, they were arguing they were protesting about that, that part of it hasn't stuck in my memory, ironically. But the thing that stuck in my mind was that you had families in a public park in London, and you had police officers using force and battens to clear them out of the park. Because obviously, gatherings weren't allowed. And I'll be honest, that that day, I felt very happy that I was no longer in public order policing. Because that was an order I would not have felt comfortable following. And that's a weird I suppose how this links in to your question is that there's a there's a comedy sketch. And I can't quite remember who it was. But I think it might be Armstrong and Miller, but someone will correct me if I'm wrong. But basically, there's these two comedians that dressed up in Nazi uniform. And one of them sort of says to the other because hunts and he says, ya, this is I've noticed we have a skull and crossbones on the cap. And he goes, Yeah, our uniforms are all black. And he goes, Yeah, and he goes haunts of these bad guys. And I, I kind of thought, isn't it interesting? It's all about perspective, isn't it? You know, how I wonder if they realized that they were the bad guys. And how was your first and my recent stories that, that I thought for the, for the first time ever, I was like, I'm not sure I'm morally on the right side of this argument. And that was a really weird place to be. Because, you know, there's, for me, there's always been a, there's always a difference between, okay, is that technically an offense? You know, I've always been a big believer in my discretion as a police officer, it's one of the things that sets us apart from a machine is that I have discretion and I can actually look at the situation and decide, and, and, you know, yes, there is the letter of the law. And there is common sense. And there is time and time again, where offenses get ignored times. And even things like football matches, the kind of chanting and some of the behavior that goes on and drunkenness that goes on on a Saturday night, you wouldn't tolerate that. And other times, you know, but you tolerate it on New Year's Eve, or you're tolerated in a football match. So there are times there's loads of examples of where you kind of let things slide a little bit. And this was one of those examples where I thought, you know, am I on the wrong side of the Moral Viewpoint here? You know, hang on is this is should we be doing this? You know, it's one of the questions I always used to ask officers who use force I would say, Yeah, I know you've got a power to use force, but do you need to did you absolutely it was or another option. And I suppose how this links into all of the the whole Question of have I seen a sort of a rise in, in in groups? And I've certainly seen a rise in people who I would not expect. Saying things like, I'm not sure I agree with that. Because there's been a lot of very decisive stuff that's gone on and a lot of people, a lot of friends have fallen out over recent events, you know, because opinions have been very divided on a number of things. And I think that's the first time I've ever seen that in my lifetime, where people have been so divided over things like mask wearing vaccines, politics, lockdowns, oil or climate change, you know, all of these things at the moment, are things where people are becoming so divisive. I think that the all it seems to be doing and I don't think the media is helping here is that we're not being brought together as a as a, as a nation, or even as a species we're being people are encouraging the divisions, and people are making more of a more of a thing about oh, no, if you need to sit in this camp, and you sit in that camp, and I think that divisive attitude is really problematic. And I think that's going to make things worse, and it is going to encourage, and I couldn't tell you if if the the the membership of the EDL has gone up, or the membership of you know, the BNP or, you know, I don't know the statistics on those things, but But you certainly hear more and more people being vocal about a number of things that historically they didn't seem to care so much about. And that I find a bit disturbing.

 James Geering 2:31:54

Well, I mean, I appreciate your perspective, I think this is it. This is, you know, I think we are early days, and this is when the big, you know, the red flags are going up. And it's time for us to kind of take a step back and go wait a second, you know, because I, I did a post the other day, I think it was a George Orwell clip, and he was talking about 1984. And could this happen in the future, and we're talking about, I think it was like the 60s or 50s, he was talking, and he was basically underlying everything that's going on. Now. It was it was you know, haunting. But, to me, the opposite of tyranny is community. You know, and we're like you said, if you're locked alone in a flat, you know, surrounded by millions of people, but, you know, just painfully alone, painfully. Lonely. That is the opposite of the tribes that we all came from all over the world, we're all part of tribes, you know, the hermit is an anomaly in the human experience. So the moment we're divided, the weaker we get, and we've got to have this awakening that this is, in some groups being manufactured is very deliberate. And you look at Ukraine, the way that it's presented, or Ukrainians or angels, or Russians are the devil. Now, you know, I say so, Ivan, the Russian farmer, way away from the Ukraine border, do you think he gives a shit about going into the Ukraine? You know what I mean? So, you know, in the child, the Chinese, the Chinese, Chinese, you know, most Chinese are beautiful people, but are they being oppressed by a tyrant? You know, absolutely. North Korea, you know, there's, there's people that are, you know, they don't have a choice in some of these countries. But if we paint the whole country, then Oh, okay. That's our next war. Now, the, you know, industrial, military industrial complex goes and makes trillions of dollars again, meanwhile, our police officers getting paid 19,000 pounds a year, you know what I mean? So that we have to fucking open our eyes and realize that some of this division is deliberate, that we are the British people, we are the American people. More importantly, we are global species. And look back in time and go, Dude, there's a fucking history book that goes back 1000s of years that shows a few nasty, hateful, greedy people have controlled the masses, but we forget to look at that pyramid. Like we're the base. You know, we can flick that little fucker off the top, you know, barium and put some good people up there. But I can't help but feel like, this is why I like these COVID conversations, because if we just move on, we ignore so many warning signs. And I've said this many, many times. A leader unites people in crisis. A tyrant divides them. And you look at the UK, Australia, New Zealand, America. There's a lot of examples where someone had an opportunity to do so much good to unify the people to really pull into the front the obesity epidemic, the mental health crisis, gangs, you know, all these things, and the opposite was done. And there's countries all over the world that did it. So well. Scandinavia always, you know, seems to come up. So, you know, your perspective on this, I think is so important because we we need an awakening will reclaim our nations in a positive way, you know tribalism in a positive way not stabbing other football members, you know, but actually coming together, for example, the World Cup, beautiful analogy, no matter where you're from, it's the love of the game.

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Yeah, certainly, I'm sure other people share my opinion, this but, you know, I was so disappointed in leadership or lack thereof, in a crisis. You know, I wasn't alive, obviously, during I know, I look old, but I wasn't alive during the Second World War. But, you know, I longed for Winston Churchill. And and I'm sure there were lots of things bad about Winston Churchill, I'm, I'm looking through rose tinted spectacles, I'm sure someone wants to call me. But I just wanted somebody like that to stand up and go, we're gonna get some Come on, folks. You know, and I'll be honest, you know, I, okay, you know, I'm a massive fan of the Queen. You

know, I can't I can't deny, you know, I, you know, I had the queen's crown on my cat badge my whole career. And, you know, and I felt, for me, it was, anytime she appeared during the pandemic, and spoke. That was what was stirring. That was what was moving. For me, that was, that was leadership. Not not Boris with his hair all over looking like he just woken up. And, and, you know, stay well, you know, or forgot my speech, you know. So, it was disappointing. Somebody actually told me, I don't know how true this is. But I obviously know a few people who've done protection for Boris Johnson, somebody suggested to me that he actually does that on purpose, just before, you know, he makes a public appearance, he messes his hair up, you know, it makes it look even more messy. And then what, what, whether that's true or not, or whether he's trying to give an impression that he's, you know, too busy to comb his hair. But I was just so disappointed that we people have an opportunity there to, to stand up and be great leaders. And, and we so needed that. And that, because we didn't have that, or that proves to me is we've now got to have our own community leaders, I think those are the people who stood out through the pandemic and continue to stand out these people in our local communities, who we go, that's the person who will look to the person who's doing things for that the person who's setting up these, you know, help groups and the person who's taking you know, groceries, right. So there's a, just around the corner from where I live, there's a little, a little food shop, sells a variety of groceries and all kinds of proper old fashioned, you know, shop. And Paul, the guy who runs it. Throughout COVID, he was off his own back, just throwing stuff in the back of his car and delivering it to people who couldn't get out. You know, and, and when me and my wife had COVID, you know, he brought, he brought food brands he brought, and he didn't even ask for money. He said, pay me pay me like a payment other time. You know, and I know we did that for loads of other people. And that kind of behavior for me is what? What stood out, and that's leadership, and those are the people we need to applaud. And those are the stories we need to hear of people in the local community have just done something to make a difference, rather than, you know, looking to leadership that's sadly lacking.

J

James Geering 2:38:54

I think one of the best analogies and I urge everyone who hasn't seen it to go watch the documentary on the Grenfell fire. You watch what that community did, which, you know, the towers kind of look over Kensington, but they were they are is a poor community, a lot of immigrants in there. When that happened, and you know, I always give kudos to the London fire brigade. I mean, as a firefighter understanding the challenges of that fire and I had the rookie nozzle on was one of the guys that went, you know, made it all the way up to the top with his partner, and was unable to make a rescue because they were out of air and had to come back down, even though it was probably untenable, and everyone was dead anyway. Yeah. But you know, so I've heard stories that Danny Cotton who was the chief at the time, but you you watch the documentary, and the community came together, there were mosques and synagogues and churches and temples that all came together and, you know, housed all the victims and that you said people that had food, bring in food and everyone was donating clothes. That is community that is leadership. And then what happened after that, you know, Again, oh, let's blame the fire service for the ground fell fire and the people that actually were responsible, have eluded capture to this point, you know, so this is what we've got to understand leadership is, you know, New York on 911 When, when everyone together it is Grenfell, you know, it's these seven, seven, you know, these, these, and it's sad that it takes tragedy, but that is our true humanity. And like you said, when our responders are out there on the frontline and COVID, you know, and in our people in NHS, and obviously, everyone else that was was, you know, working in the water plants and picking up our rubbish and all these people

that were truly out there, the admiration for that, the moment that that admiration was lost, we got to ask yourself, why, why am I angry that nurse or firefighter now for not having a vaccine? You know, why am I unwilling to give that doctor or nurse a pay raise after they basically saved our country, you know, for for months and months. So taking a step back refining examples of true community and leadership, looking at what you're being told on your screen and questioning and like you said, and I agree, 100% you want to change the world? Start at home and then once you know, you're, you're you've got that somewhat in order, step outside your front door, and be part of the solution in your own community. That is how you change your country and ultimately the planet. Like drop. Well, Dave, it's been it's been an amazing conversation. I normally have some closing questions, but obviously, we've been talking for close to three hours now. So I want to be mindful of your time. Is there anything else you want to want to add before we wrap this up?



2:41:42

No. Other than that, this has been a fantastic honor to talk to you again, and I hope I haven't bored your listeners too much. But you know, it's just an ordinary guys experience of what I've done and there's loads of people doing way more impressive stuff than me, you know, but, you know, my God, just representing every man, we're all out here still doing the job.