

# JOHN CARNOCHAN

## HOW SCOTLAND REDUCED VIOLENT CRIME

DEFIANCE #027  
WITH PETER MCCORMACK



## DEF027 - JOHN CARNOCHAN INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION

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**Peter McCormack 00:02:28:**

Hi there John. Sorry to interrupt your retirement.

**John Carnochan 00:02:30:**

That's okay.

**Peter McCormack 00:02:31:**

Great to meet you. So just to give you a bit of a background, I'm a podcaster obviously, and I've been doing lots of different work, and recently I've decided to focus a bit more on the UK, and I've taken an interest in knife crime and gangs. Really what kicked it off for me is my son listening to drill music and hearing the lyrics and just trying to explain to him that there's something behind this that he needs to be aware of, and I've kind of gone down the rabbit hole.

**Peter McCormack 00:02:58:**

Yesterday I interviewed someone called Sheldon Thomas, who's an ex-gang member, tomorrow I'm interviewing Rudy Crawford.

**John Carnochan 00:03:03:**

Yeah, I know Rudy, yep.

**Peter McCormack 00:03:03:**

The surgeon, because I want to understand a bit more. But I was really desperate to talk to you because you kept coming up in some of the documentaries I was watching, and I really appreciated your both pragmatic approach, it felt like you were both firm but pragmatic. Rather than having archaic blame, blame the perpetrators and have real strict discipline, you wanted to understand the problems behind crime and knife crime, and just to add into that, when I was watching the documentary, what really sparked my interest in Scotland is that the documentary I watched at the time said that Scotland was the murder of capital of Europe at the time, and had five times the murder rate of London. That really shocked me.

**Peter McCormack 00:03:49:**

So yeah, I've got a lot to ask you, and I guess the main goal from this is wanting to find out a bit more about the successes you've had, but also I read your recent interview where you said, "Scotland isn't a success story yet."

**John Carnochan 00:04:04:**

Yeah.

**Peter McCormack 00:04:04:**

So I wanted to get some idea about the future, so ready for this?

**John Carnochan 00:04:08:**

Okay, yeah. Absolutely.

**Peter McCormack 00:04:09:**

Right, okay. Can I just start with something you said though, first. Because this really stood out to me. This really stood out to me, because I'm looking in London and the rest of the UK, and thinking, why is nobody doing anything? I read a statement from you, and tell me if this is correct. "The most corrosive gangs I've encountered are the gangs in politics, health, police and social work."

**John Carnochan 00:04:29:**

Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, they are. They act like gangs. We speak about gangs and everybody says, "Oh, we know what we mean by a gang. We mean ..."  
Now the truth of the matter is, you need to understand, and we seem to either

willfully or through ignorance, ignore it. We're all humans. That's the first thing that we forget, and humans are connected. We're born connected and we stay connected, and most humans get themselves into trouble when they're disconnected. There'll be something around that, being disconnected from people around them.

**John Carnochan 00:05:03:**

The old saying, there's nothing worse in the world than to be nothing to nobody. I remember quite recently reading something about a young boy who was 16 who had been stabbed and killed in London. Social work services had to arrange his funeral, because no one was there to arrange his funeral. So yeah. So I had said, people gather together in gangs, that's what we do. We're programmed to do that, that's why we're top of the food chain.

**John Carnochan 00:05:33:**

Now whether that gang happens to be the army gang, or whether it happens in these ... But the gangs that are social work and health, and they act in exactly the same way. They are collaborative towards each other, and supportive of each other. They have a language, they're highly territorial, they usually have an idea about themselves being better than any other gang, and it makes it very difficult to penetrate them.

**John Carnochan 00:06:00:**

It's exactly the same with young guys. But the young guys on the street are easier because you can connect them. When we started doing our gangs work in Glasgow which we had copied from ... because there's no such thing as an original thought, when we'd copied it from America-

**Peter McCormack 00:06:15:**

Was that Boston?

**John Carnochan 00:06:16:**

It actually came from Cincinnati.

**Peter McCormack 00:06:18:**

Ah, okay.

**John Carnochan 00:06:18:**

Focused deterrence it was called. David Kennedy was the professor at John Jay University. Still is, who had this idea of focused deterrence. So there was the moral voice of the community. There was the enforcement, and there was something else. So it was that we can do something else about this. When he came over he said, "Right, one of your measures needs to be how many gangs you break up," and I said, "Hmm, that's not going to be measured. I don't mind

these fellas being in gangs, it's what the gangs do that are the issue for me. So if the gangs are playing football or rugby, that's fine. If they're playing chess, if they're crocheting, I really don't care. It's when they're out on a Friday night stabbing each other, that becomes an issue for me. So it's what they're doing that's the issue."

**John Carnochan 00:06:59:**

So the idea of a gang, so when I said that at first everybody went, "Oh, really? You can't say that." Somebody said to me once who was editing the book, they said, "When you've done it you can say that." I said, "Well I think you'll find I've already said it in a public forum lots of times, and I've had people from these gangs say, 'You're absolutely right.'"

**Peter McCormack 00:07:17:**

Sometimes you have to make people feel uncomfortable.

**John Carnochan 00:07:19:**

You do. It's that idea of, I think we used to call it the critical friend speaking the uncomfortable truth, and it's there. It doesn't mean to say that I don't think social work do a great job, or that doctors don't do a great job, or health ... they do. But there are times when it can be ... if you think about the information sharing for instance, somebody today was talking about, we need new ICT to share information. The information, the thing that prevents the sharing information is never ICT, it's people.

**John Carnochan 00:07:52:**

There's legislation that says you can share information to protect life, you can share information to help detect or prevent crime. Of course you can do that data, well why don't we? We don't because it's people that we forget. It's systems we try to put together, and systems don't work together. But people work better together. So when we started to work collaboratively, we didn't work with health, we worked with Rudy Crawford.

**John Carnochan 00:08:19:**

We didn't work with education, with worked with John Butcher. We didn't work with social work, we worked with Anne-Marie Rafferty. We worked with individuals within these organisations, that's who we shared our ideas and our information with. With didn't share them, "I'm giving health this information." No, you say, "I'm telling Rudy about this."

**Peter McCormack 00:08:38:**

Well let's go back a step. So I haven't actually read your book, I only actually discovered the book existed on the train journey on the way up. So I found some excerpts and I also looked to some of the statistics, which are very

impressive. The murder rate in 2004, 2005, dropped from 142 down to 61 people. But the attempted murder also dropped from 828 to 317, and serious assaults pretty much halved.

**Peter McCormack 00:09:04:**

But can you take me back to the point where you were Deputy Head of CID, 2002, and as I believe it, it was really Willie Rae I read that he implored you to do something about this murder rate. So can you talk to me about the birth of this whole change.

**John Carnochan 00:09:24:**

Yeah, it's one of those things that it's sometimes lost in the midst of time, because I think one of the most ... when I tell people the most interesting things about it is that it wasn't a strategy. We didn't start off with a strategy, we didn't start off with a plan, we didn't start off with a destination. But we started off from a place that we didn't want to be, if that makes sense. We didn't know where we wanted to go, but we certainly knew we weren't comfortable where we were.

**John Carnochan 00:09:48:**

Willie Rae was the Chief Constable, very, very thoughtful guy. Very quiet, an astounding leader. If the definition of a leader is to create more leaders, he was the best leader I ever worked with. And as Deputy Head of the CID, one of the things that we were trying to develop was a homicide reduction strategy, because at that time, we had huge numbers of homicides. Three and a half times the number of murders committed by a knife than anywhere else in Europe, knife was the big issue. Gangs were a big issue.

**John Carnochan 00:10:19:**

Detecting these young guys and arresting them wasn't a problem. It wasn't. We were very good at that, we had a great detection rate. But in trying to develop that homicide reduction strategy, the normal thing is you would start looking at what other forces have done, and you just change the title. That's what we do. In Scotland we put a kilt on it, and then we called it Scottish, and that's normally what happens.

**John Carnochan 00:10:44:**

But we were lucky in Strathclyde, we had just started to started to set up our intelligence and analytical network. So we'd empowered lots of analysts. And the principle analyst was Karen McClusky. Now Karen was a forensic psychologist, she was an intelligence analyst, she's got a brain the size of Belgium, and Karen worked along the corridor from me. She'd worked with several police forces.

**John Carnochan 00:11:14:**

So at one of the meetings, I was talking about this homicide reduction strategy, she said, "I've been doing some work on the violence in Scotland, I'll let you see it." She'd had her analyst start to demonstrate their worth by saying, "Well, look at the violent stuff." So she came in with this report, and it was shocking. Shocking. And at that time, I had 29, 30 years service, and never, so busy working, never stepped back to think about it in any context at all.

**John Carnochan 00:11:45:**

Anyway, Karen and I then got our heads together, and we were kindred spirits immediately. We said to Willie Rae, "Right, the first thing is, we can't have a homicide reduction strategy. Most of our homicides are a happenstance. The outcome of it is a happenstance. The violence is deliberate, but the outcome's a happenstance." So just to look at that is silly. We need to look at, right across the board, violence.

**Peter McCormack 00:12:15:**

Reduce violence and you will reduce murders.

**John Carnochan 00:12:16:**

Yes, absolutely. It seems obvious now, but the idea of, now when I look back on it, single issues are paper tigers. The idea the knife crime, "Let's tackle knife crime, on its own." It's absurd. You can't.

**Peter McCormack 00:12:30:**

Of course.

**John Carnochan 00:12:31:**

You just can't, and you can do certain things specific to it.

**Peter McCormack 00:12:36:**

Because you come at it with maybe some concepts or ideas that aren't workable. So I've been researching the UK knife crime, and I saw a company who had released a new knife which has a blunt end. I thought, what a great idea, it's not going to make any difference."

**John Carnochan 00:12:54:**

and it is a great idea, of course it is, because it's not penetrating, it's there, and it's fine. But 10 feet from where I'm sitting, there are 35 knives, all of which will kill you stone dead. So it's about who's on the end of it, it's that idea. So we said that to Willie Rae, and he said, "Right, carry on. Do what you need to do."

**John Carnochan 00:13:11:**

So we sat down and said, right, we pooled together a report that said we have to look at violence. It's not a policing issue, this is an issue for everyone, and

we need to get together with that. There are some key players in this we need to be involved in. So we put this report into Willie Rae, and basically when we spoke o him he said, "Right, what do we do now?" And we had said something, although Karen and I, we're not quite agreed on this.

**John Carnochan 00:13:36:**

But I think it was words to the effect, we had said to him, "You need to find three or four really smart people and lock them in a room and don't let them out until they've got a real plan for you." He said, "Okay, you two find another two people, and I'll find you the room, because you want you to do this. Just go away and do it." So that's how we started. So Karen brought in another analyst, I brought in a young detective sergeant that had worked for me in policy whose hobby was collecting university degrees, he had about four I think. He was just one of these really bright guys, and the reason I liked him is, he was challenging.

**John Carnochan 00:14:11:**

Even though I was three or four ranks above him, he would challenge you. He would go, "No, that's not right boss, you're wrong there." So you needed somebody like that. So we did that, and we just started by the head and said, "We need police. We need education, because the young guys that we're locking up will go to school, or they've just left school. So we need education. We need housing, because they'll live in this areas. We need to understand better what this is about."

**John Carnochan 00:14:36:**

When we started just, and Willie Rae never said do this by X amount, do this by that date, do this by that date, he never said that. So one of the things that we discovered quite quickly, and it was Allan Woods who was the young detective sergeant, he said, "Do you know that World Health Organisation stated that violence was a public health issue?" I said, "No." He said, "Yep, there it is there. 1990 something," he said it was there, there it is. It's a public health issue, and there's a violence prevention alliance, and there's someone who's head of a department of non-communicable diseases.

**John Carnochan 00:15:12:**

I said, "Right, get in touch with them. We need to speak to them." So we were the only police that had ever got in touch with them, so we became the only police members of that. So we looked at the public health model that said, "You need to first of all define what it is, and understand what it is. Once you've done that, you need to understand what the causes are, and if you did that, then you could start to understand how you might reduce the risk, or increase the protection. You need to do some testing, do things that are different. Measure to see if they work, and if they work, scale it up."

**John Carnochan 00:15:44:**

And that's the public health thing. So I said, "Right, okay. Let's start to think about this." That's all we did. We decided very early that you can do the things that are closest to you, and you've got control over. So we were police, so we could do certain things in policing terms. So one of the things that we did, is we process mapped, one of the really sexy things, we process mapped people who are stopped with a knife to see what happened to them, and how long it took.

**John Carnochan 00:16:14:**

So at this time, and it was the same across the UK, and it probably still is in lots of places. The notion of high visibility policing is very important, it's almost an ethos. It's a paradigm of policing. You want high-viz jackets on the streets so the public can see them and feel reassured. So that was what we were doing. So what happened in 2004, if you were stopped with a knife and sent to the city center, and we knew who you were, you weren't wanted on warrant, we were satisfied with your address, and we didn't think you were going to commit a crime if we let you go, we would caution and charge you at the locus and allow you to go, and we'd take the knife up to the office and put it in and leave it there.

**John Carnochan 00:16:58:**

They'd be back out on the street within 10 minutes. You see the alternative to that is if you arrested someone and took them in, you would be in the office for an hour and a bit, you wouldn't be on the street. You wouldn't be high visibility and it wouldn't be a good thing. So we started them to track what happened with that, because when someone's arrested, there's a form gets filled in, and that form will go with them through the court to the prison until they come back out, and it tracks exactly everything.

**John Carnochan 00:17:21:**

The dates, who was involved. What we found was if you were stopped with a knife in 2004, it was an average 14 months before you went to court, and in the interim you collected other cases. So the drama became a crisis. You went from one case that we could've dealt with quickly, justice has to be swift. Justice delayed is justice denied, all of that stuff. Well we didn't do that, we were doing things because we wanted police officers on the street.

**John Carnochan 00:17:53:**

So the first thing that we did is we changed that. We said, "If you're caught with a knife, you will be arrested, you will be taken to a police office and you will be fingerprinted, photographed, and you will be kept, your DNA will be taken and you will be kept in custody until the first lawful day at court. And when you go to court, we will oppose bail."



**John Carnochan 00:18:11:**

So what we were saying was, "We're taking this seriously, you better start behaving." Because whilst we had all these knife murders, there was nothing that said we took them seriously, except that we investigated them and detected the people who did them. We weren't serious about stopping them.

**Peter McCormack 00:18:28:**

How did you communicate this to people who might be carrying knives in advance?

**John Carnochan 00:18:32:**

Media.

**Peter McCormack 00:18:33:**

Okay.

**John Carnochan 00:18:33:**

Because one of the other things we did is, we invited every editor of a newspaper, all the media, and I had a police officer and a detective for nearly 30 years at that time. I knew lots of crime reporters all over the place. So we started to invite people in one at a time, and we would say to them, "Look, we know we've got problems, we're not looking for cheerleaders, but we're trying to do things differently, and this is the sort of stuff we're trying to do. We're trying to prevent it because we believe that all violence is important, from bullying through to suicide."

**John Carnochan 00:19:08:**

Suicide is self-directed violence, and it's huge. When I say Scotland hasn't solved it, there's one of the indicators where it hasn't solved it. We're still an angry team, an angry nation. So we had that changed. We went to the courts first of all and spoke to the Procurator Fiscals and said, "Look, you can no longer drop knife crime off when you're negotiating please. Knife crimes are one that stays on. You can't take the knife off."

**John Carnochan 00:19:35:**

So they did that. We spoke to sheriffs, and sheriffs said, "Yeah, we're with you." And it was really strange because everyone thought, oh no, people won't ... everybody realised that the fiscals who are marking the same cases every week, "Oh, there's John Carnochan back again with another knife. He's going to kill somebody some day, that boy." And everybody knew that. Teachers knew. That boy's going to get into trouble and do something really bad one day, but nobody ever did anything about it. So this was an attempt to try and do something about it.

**Peter McCormack 00:20:02:**

Were there any early guinea pigs who got arrested, ended up being stuck in jail, which actually relay the message to other people that may be living on the estates?

**John Carnochan 00:20:10:**

I don't know for certain.

**Peter McCormack 00:20:11:**

Okay.

**John Carnochan 00:20:12:**

But we certainly spoke to everybody. We spoke to housing officers and community cops. We spoke to everybody, "This is the message. Change is coming. We've had enough of this," and that's what we said in the press. "We've had enough of this, we need to do ... and we're going to do it." No, "This is our blitz on people who ..." but it was about saying, "This is going to be different."

**John Carnochan 00:20:30:**

One of the things that happened, because we had lots of cops who were, "Oh, I know John but he's obviously lost the plot if he's talking like that. What's he talking about, he needs to get back to his work." There was that notion.

**Peter McCormack 00:20:44:**

Because it was new.

**John Carnochan 00:20:45:**

It was new, and I used to say we've got people in three categories. We've got some people who see the light, some who are startled by the light, and some who are still in the dark. Our job was to try and do that, and what we had was, we had Karen, who was a fabulous analyst, and really smart, and a big thinker. Understood the strategy, how we could do things. Alongside her, I've got 29 years police service, I've been a detective a long time. I've locked up people who are in Barlinnie because of me, I'm telling you it's not working. We need to do it.

**John Carnochan 00:21:17:**

So there was some credibility that people would listen. At least at the start, they maybe have lost a bit of faith as time went on.

**Peter McCormack 00:21:26:**

Could you measure the change in stop and search?

**John Carnochan 00:21:29:**

Yeah, because we actually asked for an increase in stop and search, because stop and search does work. I know there are challenges just now in London to stop and search-

**Peter McCormack 00:21:38:**

Well that's mainly based around race.

**John Carnochan 00:21:41:**

And that's the issue. The issue I think in London, and this is an outside observer, I would never for a moment dream to tell the commissioner what to do. But what the police need do in London is reestablish a relationship with those young men who are at risk of dying from knife crime, and they don't have a relationship.

**Peter McCormack 00:22:01:**

So this having a relationship directly with people who are in gangs is quite an interesting one. I've just been out to El Salvador, and I'm only relaying something that was told to me by a local, but the new president has quite a significant impact on reducing gang violence and gang crime, and one of the ways he did that is he went to the gangs and said, "The first you need to do is stop killing each other. You need to stop killing each other, and if we catch you, we're going to put you in jail, it's going to be 60 years, and we're going to remove your ability to have a mobile phone to communicate with the outside world."

**Peter McCormack 00:22:32:**

And there's been a significant drop in the murder rate in El Salvador. That concept of talking directly to criminals and gangsters and coming to some kind of compromise around certain areas, seems alien to some people. Like the concept of compromise on drugs. But sometimes you maybe need more radical ideas.

**John Carnochan 00:22:49:**

Yeah, you need to meet people where they are if you want to convince them. You need to meet them where they are. You can't do things to people, you need to do things with them, and that makes a difference. But one of the things that was, not a tipping point but a key moment, there was a murder of a young Asian woman, a brutal murder, it was a horrible murder. All murder's brutal, but this was ... and it was on a canal bank. They they had no witnesses.

**John Carnochan 00:23:22:**

But they found DNA that matched it, and the person's DNA had been taken because he was carrying a knife. He had a couple of previous convictions, but

not for violence. The knife carrying was a pending case, so they had to go on their ways in order to get that. What had happened was, this was a man worked constant night shifts, and he fell asleep on the bus coming home, and he got off at the wrong stop, three or four stops from where he should be, and he decided to walk back the canal.

**John Carnochan 00:24:02:**

He walked back the canal and he met this young woman who was out jogging in the morning, and he murdered her. And then he walked home. So when I spoke to the SIO for that murder I said, "Tell me in terms of your parameters, how quickly would you have got to him?" And he said, "I'm not sure we ever would've got to him."

**Peter McCormack 00:24:25:**

So it's kind of fortuitous.

**John Carnochan 00:24:26:**

It was really fortuitous.

**Peter McCormack 00:24:27:**

What a senseless crime though.

**John Carnochan 00:24:29:**

Oh yeah, absolutely.

**Peter McCormack 00:24:30:**

Did you find out why, was it a robbery?

**John Carnochan 00:24:32:**

He was quite young. There was some discussion that it could've been one in a series, it was the first in a series, and when they checked back there was a few incidents around where he lived of indecent exposure, a few incidents of women saying there was a man that followed me down here, and they fitted the description, none of which were ever brought, but the DNA was the one for that.

**John Carnochan 00:24:53:**

So we were then able to say to the two cops, "You took that guy in, you did what you were asked to do, and as a result of that, we've arrested this man and nobody else is going to be killed by him, and he's there. And we've given some sense of justice to the family that were there," because that's the role of the SIO. We've done that, and all of a sudden we thought, well okay, there's something worthwhile in this, other than doing that. If you needed a reason, there's a reason. There's another reason for doing that.

**Peter McCormack 00:25:20:**

But a lot of the work seems to be about really understanding people, and having to hold a certain amount of empathy. So one thing that stood out through all of it, through everything I've read, is this empathy for children, and the adverse conditions they may be raised in. Abusive homes, alcoholic homes, drug addicted homes, maybe lack of a parent or lack of both parents, and there is a certain correlation between that involvement in gangs and violence.

**Peter McCormack 00:25:47:**

It also makes me want to ask you another question, because there was one thing you talked about, a young 15 year old lad, I think it was David.

**John Carnochan 00:25:54:**

David Storey, yeah.

**Peter McCormack 00:25:56:**

Yeah, yeah. He had an alcoholic mother, and an abusive home, terrible situation, and he ended up murdering someone. There are, of course he's going to be punished by this. But is there any part of you that just sees the pattern and has a certain amount of sympathy for somebody who finds themselves in that situation, or do you still have no sympathy whatever their upbringing, whatever the conditions they come through?

**John Carnochan 00:26:20:**

No. I think I'd basically say that on one level, the main reason is to understand why that happened, and if we understand it better, then perhaps we can prevent others from doing it. That's the main reason. I do have sympathy for children who are brought up, who have no control over where they're born, no control over what happens to them, traumatised throughout their childhood, and then they respond as traumatised adults, and we shouldn't be surprised at that.

**John Carnochan 00:26:56:**

There should be no surprise of the demand on mental health services right now, or police. The percentage of calls that police attend that's to do with mental health issues. If I told you that for instance, if you look at children in care, when we speak about adverse experiences and childhood experiences, the population of Scotland, 2% of the population of Scotland are care experienced. Almost 60% of the population of Barlinnie prison are care experienced.

**John Carnochan 00:27:23:**

Okay, well what does that tell us? What's that saying to us? What it's saying is

that the majority of children who go into care are there because of something that happened to them. So they suffer a trauma, and we begin to understand now a lot more about trauma and its impact on a life course, and what can happen throughout it is difficult. We understand it ... I started to make the link through the help of people like Suzanne Zeedyk, a developmental psychologist.

**John Carnochan 00:27:52:**

When we were talking about it, I used to use the expression about, "We don't learn how to be violent, we learn how not to be violent." So that's Richard Tremblay who's a professor at Ottawa University. He's done lots of work on that. But his conclusion is that single line, that we don't learn how to be violent, we learn how not to be violent.

**Peter McCormack 00:28:19:**

Because it's our animal instincts?

**John Carnochan 00:28:20:**

Every man in us has got instinct for survival that would take a life if we had to do it. Soldiers, look at the second world war and the amount of killing that went on there. We have that capacity in the right circumstances to do that, or in circumstances, whether they're right or not remains to be seen, to do that. So what happens then, the reason we all manage to live together is because we learn how to deal with things in a different way.

**John Carnochan 00:28:46:**

We learn to communicate, to negotiate, to compromise. We learn other skills that allow us to negotiate life so that we don't respond with anger and violence to everything that happens to us. We can negotiate our way around that.

**Peter McCormack 00:28:59:**

But also is love a part of that, love and care, and having that affection at home, and that love, means you have love out for other people? And does the lack of having that means you don't really understand about love and empathy for other people?

**John Carnochan 00:29:12:**

It's modeled, it has to be modeled for you. It's there. When babies are born, mom gets a spike in oxytocin, which is the cuddle hormone. The one that makes you feel good. That's biologically your body setting you up to love your baby. That's what they are, and that notion of attachment when Bowlby talks about the attachment theory, about how babies get attached to their moms.

**John Carnochan 00:29:34:**

Babies are programmed to connect to other adults, that's what they're programmed to do, that's how they survive, because human infants are completely helpless. They need to connect to others who look after them, they need to make sure they're securely attached to them, so that they can do that and then tune with them.

**Peter McCormack 00:29:51:**

That's interesting, because the narcissism is a lack of empathy, and sociopathy's a lack of empathy, and that comes usually from a lack of bond between mother and baby.

**John Carnochan 00:30:01:**

Yes, often.

**Peter McCormack 00:30:02:**

Wow.

**John Carnochan 00:30:02:**

So in those early years, because when that happened, and this is part of the VRU story, Sir Willie Rae, to get back to Willie, he didn't leave us with it. He was aware of what we were doing, and everywhere he went he spoke to people, and he would phone us up. I'd be coming home at night and I'd get a phone call from his PA, eight o'clock at night. It was before there was hands free, he pulled over to the side of the road. "John, I met so and so the other day, and he's an economist, you need to speak to him. I've told him you'll be in touch. Now I'll get Elizabeth to send you ..."

**John Carnochan 00:30:34:**

And one of the people I was put in touch was a guy called Allan Sinclair. Now Allan's an economist, and Allan had done some work looking at skills deficits. What was it that employers saw lacking in young people in particular, they were bringing into their employ. It was so they could design better training, and stuff. The cohort was huge, it was 180,000 or something, it was a huge cohort.

**John Carnochan 00:30:59:**

I would've thought, oh it's reading and writing. It wasn't, reading and writing wasn't the issue. Problem solving was the issue, communication was the issue. Working with others was the issue.

**Peter McCormack 00:31:09:**

Interesting.

**John Carnochan 00:31:10:**

Those are non-cognitive skills. When do you learn them? Early years. So not only are children who are born into difficult traumatic households, not only are they being traumatised, but they are not learning these other human skills that allow them. So young men don't think, I'm going to be angry and violent today. That's just how they are.

**John Carnochan 00:31:38:**

So if we get back to what we were talking about, knife crime, young men who carry knives and are violent with knives, they'll be violent on their own, they'll be violent with or without knives, they'll be violent in pairs, they'll be violent towards each other, they're just violent, because they don't have any other mechanism to deal with it. What we've found, and there's other research around the world that lots of times they say, "Well the reason that there's violence between these drug gangs, is because they're protecting turf."

**John Carnochan 00:32:06:**

Sometimes it's not. Sometimes it's because somebody insulted their mom. Sometimes it's because somebody said something bad about their girlfriend. Then that epidemic begins, because there's a piece of violence, and then there's tit for tat, and then there's tit for tat, and then there's tit ... and then all of a sudden, one incident over the next 12 months can cause 40, 50, 60, and that's the work that they do in Boston with the Ceasefire project, the Interrupters, where Gary Slutkin treats it exactly like that, that epidemic wave that occurs after there's a gang fight. There's an epidemic wave of violence after that all over the place, so it's huge.

**Peter McCormack 00:32:42:**

Yeah, the common term here is violence, and it goes back to your point that your strategy did end up coming down to reducing violence, because that would lead on to everything else. Just before we get into a bit more of the detail, I've mainly been looking at London, and obviously I've started looking at Scotland because of your work and Rudy's work, and I understand some of the consistent problems with young people, with opportunity, home problems, abuse, alcoholism. All the various things like that. But what are the unique problems that Scotland has that maybe England doesn't, so I can just have some context around?

**John Carnochan 00:33:14:**

Some of the things that are an issue in Scotland, we're net exporters of violence.

**Peter McCormack 00:33:21:**

Right.



**John Carnochan 00:33:21:**

Scotland, we are throughout history, we have been quick to take offense and we can be very violent. David Stirling, when he established the Special Air Service said that the best trooper would be a Scotsman, because they're thravn, they don't give in, and they're pretty violent. The Thin Red Line, Scottish regiment. To lynch someone, lynch was a Scotsman who sorted out troublesome slaves by in front of other slaves, hanging them.

**John Carnochan 00:33:48:**

If you look at the southern states, I think two of the key founders of the Ku Klux Klan were Scots. Some of the feuding that goes on that's been lasting for generations, they call them the McKays, it's the Mackays, they're Scots. Jamaica, that's where most of the Jacobites went to after ... we are net exporters of violence. We are, and that's in our nature to be like that. Whether it's a Calvin thing, it's how we were brought up, I really don't know. I don't know enough about it.

**John Carnochan 00:34:19:**

But there is something around that. Alcohol, we have a very, very unhealthy association with alcohol. And whilst alcohol doesn't make you violent, it's a depressant, it does instigate and creates that opportunity for violence. So whilst we do have organised criminal groups that are involved in gangs and use violence in order to enforce what they do, they are really entirely different. Their violence is predicted on a purpose, this is, they're doing that for that.

**John Carnochan 00:34:50:**

We actually started using the phrase recreational violence, where it was used where, this is just what we do, and we use the excuse of territory. We use the excuse of a slight to do it. But it was just violence. But there's more common than not, when we brought the gangs project over from Cincinnati, people said, "Well that won't work here, because that's Black African American men who were drug dealing on three strikes and they're out, they were mostly in their mid 20s." And we were talking about young white indigenous Scots who were in their teens. Some younger than that, some early teens, and some early 20s.

**John Carnochan 00:35:32:**

But the truth of the matter is, when we stripped it all back, the only difference, the only difference was color. Often race has the impact on our response, not on their violence. They're not violent because they're from Jamaica, or violent because they're from here, or violent because ... but how we respond to them is sometimes we have to take account of their race, and the nuances of that.

**John Carnochan 00:35:58:**

So the drill music for instance, that we spoke of earlier, the type of music that's involved in that, that culture, that's not a Scottish culture, that's a culture that's unique to some young Black African Americans and across perhaps in London as well. In Scotland it was about drink, and it was about territorial, and that Scottish word thrawn, which is, you just never give up. You just never give up. So if your father was feuding with my father, you and I would be feuding. That's how it happens.

**Peter McCormack 00:36:34:**

How much pride was in the work as well? Obviously you had a job to do as you're a police officer, but how much was there some pride amongst you of, "We're Scottish people, and we have the highest murder rate in Europe, I don't want this in my country." Was that part driving you on as well?

**John Carnochan 00:36:48:**

Yeah, well I think one of the things, when we went along and said to people, "Look," we started remembering Strathclyde, predominantly in Glasgow and Lanarkshire. When we said to people, "Listen, here are the figures, would you like to make it less violent?" Who's going to say no to that?

**Peter McCormack 00:37:04:**

Of course.

**John Carnochan 00:37:05:**

So first of all it's difficult to say, because if you don't identify it as being yours, like if you went down to some parts of London and said, "Would you like to see the violence ...?" Yep, because it's really important. Well it doesn't really affect me, because I live over here and drive a Ferrari. So it doesn't affect me the same, where we were able to identify, this is everybody's issues. No one's safe until everyone's safe, that idea that is, everyone's responsibility.

**John Carnochan 00:37:30:**

When we started then to try and garner a coalition of the willing, rather than identify ... we did, identified a shared agenda. But to describe it sometimes, we didn't describe a shared outcome, because the shared outcome might be for health, fewer people turning up at A&E. For police, fewer calls and fewer victims. For social work, fewer stress and fewer caseloads. For education, fewer kids being excluded.

**John Carnochan 00:38:02:**

So those outcomes were all different. But if we brought it back to the source, the source of all these negative outcomes was the same thing. It was families and it was around that, and it was really tricky to speak about it. At the start,

we got some really bad press from some, one or two. But what come out of that was, people coming to our defense that we'd never met before. I had said about early years, hugely important.

**John Carnochan 00:38:33:**

If we don't value children and support parents to be as good as they can be, then we're going to have this problem going forward, and we need to think about that. Someone had, a journalist doing what he was doing, and he went along to get a negative comment about that, an opposing opinion to that, and of course he did. It was a psychologist who had something off the cuff and flippant, which I now know because I'm spoken to him. He regretted it.

**John Carnochan 00:38:57:**

"So we want detectives in the delivery rooms?" And so on. I thought, who the hell said that? But anyway, this was in the paper, and what happened as a response to that, several other psychologists got in touch. One in particular was Suzanne Zeedyk, who wrote to the paper, who wrote to her colleague, the other psychologist and said, "You are wrong, that police officer's right, you should be listening to him, and here's why."

**John Carnochan 00:39:20:**

She was an early years developmental psychologist, an expert on attachment and said, "Here are the issues." Of course, then it started then, we started to have a different discussion, because we were speaking about crime. We weren't the violent crime reduction unit, because if we put crime in it, it's a policing issue.

**Peter McCormack 00:39:42:**

Yes.

**John Carnochan 00:39:42:**

So we kept crime out of it. We were able then to speak in health terms, so about harm reduction, about reducing the risk, about increasing prevention. Those are not crime and criminological responses. So we could use that new lexicon of language to explain to people in words that they understood. We got to the stage where we were trying in a Scots way, to pick a fight.

**John Carnochan 00:40:10:**

We were trying to get these things discussed, get them out in the open, get them on the table and discuss them. It was before an election, and I was being interviewed by David Leask, he's just retired, who was the chief reporter of the Glasgow Herald. During the election campaign, parties were saying, "Well, we'll put another 1,000 police officers on the street," another one, "We'll put

1,100 on the street." That sort of stuff, and he said to me, that would be a good thing, how would that impact on the violence?"

**John Carnochan 00:40:41:**

I said, "Well 1,000 police officers, of course that would be a good thing. Do you know what would be a really clever thing, 1,000 extra health visitors. That would be really smart." He said, "Right, okay." And we carried on the interview, and he went away and I got a phone call later at night. He said, "John, I'm going through my notes, you actually said you'd rather have 1,000 extra health visitors than 1,000 extra police officers. Is that right, are you quite content that I print like that?" I said, "Absolutely. Go for it," and he did.

**John Carnochan 00:41:12:**

Nobody, nobody challenged me for being wrong. They would say, even the Police Federation said, "Look, I know what John means, but we really need to have police officers." Nobody's saying, "He's a maniac." Nobody said, "He's talking ... that." So people started it and we thought, we've crossed. If we haven't quite crossed it, we're up to our ankles in the Rubicon. We're almost there, where people are accepting that policing alone will not fix violence.

**Peter McCormack 00:41:38:**

What year was this?

**John Carnochan 00:41:39:**

That would be ... we'll need to work out the elections.

**Peter McCormack 00:41:42:**

But you were already having some success at that time?

**John Carnochan 00:41:44:**

Oh, yes, yes. Oh yeah, we were three or four years into it, and it was already coming out. Of course that made me a hero with health visitors for goodness sakes. They thought oh, there's the guy. But it's true. If we understand that, we're now speaking about adverse childhood experiences. In 2008, we ran a conference with the World Health Organisation at Tullyallen, and we brought over Vincent Felitti, who's the guy who did the first ACE research.

**John Carnochan 00:42:11:**

We were speaking about ACEs 12 years ago, and now people are starting to catch on. When Sir Harry Burns became Chief Medical Officer, we wrote a chapter for his first annual report on violence prevention. That was the first time anywhere, anybody had done that, because we'd already established relationships with Harry, and he understood exactly what we were saying, could see that connection.

**Peter McCormack 00:42:38:**

So you identified these adverse childhood experiences as a key pattern. Once you identified it, what do you actually do with that? Because you can't make parents be better parents.

**John Carnochan 00:42:47:**

No.

**Peter McCormack 00:42:48:**

And you can't stop people who probably aren't in the right position to be having children having children at times.

**John Carnochan 00:42:55:**

Yes.

**Peter McCormack 00:42:55:**

So how did you use the data, and what did you build around that?

**John Carnochan 00:42:59:**

Well, we used the data to try and explain better, and first of all to create the debate and the discussion, and try to explain better why people behave the way people behave. Why for instance, some politicians who go to private school behave the way they behave, because they've suffered some adverse childhood experiences when they've been separated from parents who ... obviously from their perspective as a child.

**John Carnochan 00:43:24:**

So we started then to listen, one guy who's still a great friend, James Docherty. James is a recovering addict, had served time in prison and James says when kids are acting out in school, they're not seeking attention, they're seeking connection. All behavior is communication. So once we start to speak to professionals to understand better why that's happening ... so rather than say, "Why are you behaving like that?" The question somebody should be asking themselves is, "What happened to you that's making you behave like that?"

**John Carnochan 00:44:01:**

And that's an entirely different question. So we're shifting away from that narrow dogmatic ideology that says every person is totally responsible for their actions, and moving into saying, well yeah, that's true. But let's tease that out a bit. We're also the victim of our circumstances, about what happened to us. Right now what's in the press? You have a royal prince who was absolutely devastated by the loss of his mother, who was walking down amongst thousands of people who were weeping, and he wasn't allowed to weep.

**John Carnochan 00:44:35:**

And we're surprised that this guy's protecting his family the way he is, when now he's got a child, we're surprised at that? I'd be surprised if he didn't.

**Peter McCormack 00:44:42:**

I think everyone needs to stop having an opinion on it.

**John Carnochan 00:44:45:**

Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, you're probably right, yeah. You're probably right.

**Peter McCormack 00:44:49:**

Let him do what he wants to do. I'm with you, just his mother was harassed by the press, most likely contributed towards her death in one way or another, and yeah. He's always seemed like a good guy, wants to look after his family, leave him alone.

**John Carnochan 00:45:03:**

Yeah, so it's about trying to understand these things, and the more we understand, the more we can do. So when value children we have to value parents, and we haven't done that. If we valued that, we would be paying moms to stay at home and look after them, or dads, moms and dads, same as Sweden where they share it around.

**Peter McCormack 00:45:25:**

Or sending them to school at seven rather than five, letting them play.

**John Carnochan 00:45:28:**

Yes, absolutely. Fall out trees, because that's what they're meant to be doing, taking risks. They're meant to be taking risks and learning, and when we look at the Nordic arc that we say, "Oh, this is fabulous." Finland and Sweden and Norway, who do wonderfully well in all the educational outcomes. Finland don't send their kids to school until they're seven. They don't sit an examination until they're about 15 or 16. They're one of the most well-educated nations in the world.

**Peter McCormack 00:45:53:**

Well our politicians want lead tables to measure kids on so they can say we've done a better job. My son's just done his mocks, my daughter does exams, it stresses her out, and they're memorising facts when they've got phone, it's just ridiculous.

**John Carnochan 00:46:10:**

It's that value frame. What is it we value? I think it was Schopenhauer who said, "The talent hits the target no one else can hit. But genius hits the target no one else can see." It's that idea of saying, "Look, what do we value here, really?"

What are we looking for?" So the notion of wellbeing. That allows us to speak about wellbeing. Allows us to speak about resilience, allows us to speak ... because there's a danger in speaking about adverse childhood experiences that we think they're a predictor of outcome, and they're not. They're an indicator of risk.

**John Carnochan 00:46:44:**

If I'm speaking to an audience, doesn't matter who they are, I'll say, "Look, just take a second and think about how many adverse childhood experiences you've had in your life, and I'd be surprised if you all, 'I haven't had at least one or two.'" Now I know people who've had nine or 10 and are absolutely fabulous human beings because they had somebody there when they were young to help them buffer it and look after them. I know others who have had one and they're absolutely destroyed.

**Peter McCormack 00:47:08:**

So is it also then a longterm strategy about a change in the construction of society so we have less problems. So for example, if alcohol is a contributing problem to have those childhood experiences, I know you campaigned for the minimum pricing, and actually tell me about your views on the ... I'll have to find out where I read about it, but it's essentially people campaigning against you, against minimum prices. Is it the Scottish-

**John Carnochan 00:47:37:**

Scottish Whisky Trading Association, yes.

**Peter McCormack 00:47:40:**

You were scathing about that.

**John Carnochan 00:47:43:**

Oh yeah. But what the minimum unit pricing was saying was, sell less product and make more money, because it wasn't taxed. It wasn't tax that was going on. So sell less of what you make, but sell it for more. All right, okay. That seems a pretty good, that's all right. Scottish Whisky Trading Association, it doesn't affect them. It doesn't affect whisky. Most of the whiskies they're selling start at 25, 30 quid.

**Peter McCormack 00:48:09:**

So why do they care?

**John Carnochan 00:48:10:**

They cared because they've got emerging markets in South America, in Africa, in China, where if public health is used as a reason for not doing it, they will be affected in the public markets.

**Peter McCormack 00:48:23:**

Right.

**John Carnochan 00:48:24:**

So it's an international argument they're making, they're making a global argument, not for Scotland, because what Scotland has done is set the precedent that says there is a link between alcohol and our health, and we as a government can do something about it using public health measures, which is minimum unit pricing.

**John Carnochan 00:48:41:**

Now once that precedent set, they can do that in Nicaragua. They can do that in Bolivia, they can do that in Peru, they can do it in South Africa.

**Peter McCormack 00:48:48:**

Right, so it's a message they didn't want out.

**John Carnochan 00:48:52:**

They didn't want the message out there.

**Peter McCormack 00:48:52:**

Has this been entirely a male problem, or what was the gender split?

**John Carnochan 00:48:56:**

Well I always ... violence is a man thing, and I think if we don't fix violence against women, which is a huge issue, we'll never fix violence.

**Peter McCormack 00:49:06:**

The reason I ask is because only twice in my research, and I must've watched 20 documentaries, debates, has twice the term masculinity has come up. It came up with you and it came up in the debate in London that I watched, that people seem to be avoiding the fact that there's a lot of just male bravado and ego. The documentary I watched about, there was lads talking about crossing the wrong side of the road into the wrong area, they could get chased, stabbed, attacked. That to me is just some weird male bravado masculinity.

**Peter McCormack 00:49:35:**

Also lads being quite proud they'd been stabbed, again it seems to come down to that. We seem to be trying to avoid having the issue of how masculinity, and it can be a bit of a problem.

**John Carnochan 00:49:47:**

Yeah, I think it can, and I don't think today young men have a notion about what it is to be a man. In modern society there's no initiation, there's no process, there's no moment. There are some and some religious, at a



particular age something happens to you, you could get a bar mitzvah, but there is nothing that says, "You now become a man." Humans, it doesn't matter who we are, back to the human thing, when we get to an adolescence, that's when we do take risks.

**John Carnochan 00:50:23:**

We are risk takers, that's how we're out of the cave, that's how we climbed Everest, and went to the ... That's how we did all these things. That's still there, that's a human thing, that's what keeps us rolling forward. It's fine if the risk that you're taking you can judge. But for some of these young guys, they can't, and it's very difficult. The masculinity thing is about understanding the responsibility of what it is to be a man.

**John Carnochan 00:50:46:**

Now it's a difficult subject to have, if you look at what's happened in relation in terms of gender over the years, now there's still too much gender inequality in terms of, we talk about the glass ceiling and how much women are earning at the BBC. That's only one measure of bloody women's equality. When women don't get battered by husbands on a Friday night, or if it does happen, somebody next door thinks it's wrong and does something about it, then that's equality when we stop that nonsense.

**John Carnochan 00:51:17:**

When we don't think, when I take my daughter to the nursery they don't say, "Oh, are you babysitting?" They don't think of me as a father, they think, well if dad's looking after them, there must be something wrong with mom. So we all have to change our attitudes about that, and once we do that, we'll start to think a bit more about what masculinity is. But right now young men don't know.

**John Carnochan 00:51:37:**

I think something like, when we did some work, it would be 2009 or '10. Something, I think it's 29%, the figures won't be exactly right, but let's say it was 29% of households in the UK were single parent households, and of those, overwhelming majority of single parents were moms. So it was absent fathers. When we we looked in our poorest areas, where all our stuff was, single parent households, they accounted for something like 65-70%.

**Peter McCormack 00:52:08:**

Wow.

**John Carnochan 00:52:08:**

Huge, and absent fathers. Now some fathers are better absent because they're toxic.

**Peter McCormack 00:52:13:**

Of course.

**John Carnochan 00:52:14:**

But the truth of the matter is that there's a reason why they should be there, and it's always interesting for me, that notion of absent fathers.

**Peter McCormack 00:52:22:**

But that's a global problem.

**John Carnochan 00:52:23:**

Oh yes, absolutely.

**Peter McCormack 00:52:25:**

Everywhere I've been whether it's here, London, El Salvador, America, the lack of the father's a problem, because masculinity itself isn't a problem, it's how it's defined. How I guide my son is not to have fights, is not to beat people up. It's to be a gentleman, a proud young man, to work hard. But without any guidance, it might be, "Well it's going to be tough, I've got to fight."

**John Carnochan 00:52:49:**

Yeah, yeah, and what did my dad do? Well he left as soon as I arrived. He's away, I've never seen him, he comes back every four or five years, and I know how my mom struggles.

**Peter McCormack 00:52:59:**

Well I saw my dad abuse my mother, and that's how I treat women.

**John Carnochan 00:53:02:**

Yes, and it's that, if you bring a child up in a war zone, you create a warrior. When I use the expression, first of all, people would talk about PTSD. So we recognise as being absolutely a horrible thing, and many men and women returning from theaters of conflict suffer from PTSD. The impact that has on their life is absolutely horrific. On relationships, on every day life, it's dreadful.

**John Carnochan 00:53:28:**

Yet, we don't seem to realise that if you're a child who's brought up in a house where every other night your dad batters your mom, or is just constantly aggressive and constantly coercive, and undermining and negative about her, we don't think that has an effect on a child. Of course it does. Of course it does.

**Peter McCormack 00:53:46:**

What's the escape though? If somebody recognises that they're in a difficult situation, and there's violence and there's gangs, and they want an escape but

they feel like there's no hope or opportunity, where can they go? I know there was a relocation program, which is super interesting, because I imagine even especially in London, we've got these tough gangs, I reckon there's a lot of people in there that are scared. They don't want to be in there.

**John Carnochan 00:54:12:**

Oh yeah. I think you're absolutely right about the scared. I used to say if you think, when young guys are 15 and 16, they want to be out chasing young women who are 15 one 16. That's what they want to be doing, that's what they've been driven to do. I said, so every time they step out the front door, they don't know if they're going to be chased. They don't know if they're going to get stabbed, so they take a knife and they do it. Do you think they enjoy doing that?

**John Carnochan 00:54:32:**

I think the other thing too is the perspective of the numbers. It's a single issue thing, and so we start to think that's an issue. The overwhelming majority of young men in London, Nottingham, Birmingham, Glasgow, are absolutely fine. They're not out carrying knives, they're not in gangs, they're not threatened by gangs, they're absolutely fine. Great young men and women going out and about, doing their business.

**John Carnochan 00:54:54:**

But we focus in on, and I don't know what the percentage will be, but I'll bet you it's not in double figures.

**Peter McCormack 00:54:59:**

Of course.

**John Carnochan 00:55:00:**

Because that's the thing that's, we need to sort this out because it's there. It's the nature of things, that's a threat. We see that as a threat, so that's the one we heighten in on. So in health they speak about primary, secondary and tertiary. The primary is that notion of let's help their parents, let's help it. So one of the things that we did in Polmont prison which is our young offenders, 70% of the young men who were there were there for non-sexual violent crime.

**John Carnochan 00:55:25:**

Great young guys, absolutely great young guys, but violent, violent. That's just the way they were. Most of them were dads, and if you said to them, "What do you want for your kids?" "Oh, I don't want this." So that's a teachable moment, that's a reachable moment. So we said well, when they're in prison, what are we doing about parenting, what are we doing about showing them what it is to

be a dad, the responsibilities of a father? We're doing nothing. So we need to start thinking about that, we need to start thinking about these things.

**John Carnochan 00:55:53:**

Because we define people by the service we deliver them. So prison service sees them as prisoners. Well, he's also a dad and a brother and a son, and an uncle, and a friend. There's a whole range of other things that he is. Why are we not dealing with that when we've got them there? So we need to start doing that, which is difficult, but we need to start doing it.

**John Carnochan 00:56:10:**

In terms of that secondary thing, there's some good programs we've introduced in Scotland in the secondary schools, one's called MVP, Mentors and Violence Prevention.

**Peter McCormack 00:56:20:**

Yeah, I read about that.

**John Carnochan 00:56:22:**

That's about how we challenge things that we know are unhealthy. The point that you made, where young guys don't want to do that, but everybody else is doing it. Often as humans, we conform to expectation. So if you're the young guy who lives in this street, everybody does that. If you're a young guy who lives in Bearsden, which is a really nice area of Glasgow, well it's not actually Glasgow, it's in Northern Glasgow, you'll join the rugby club, because all your pals are in the rugby.

**John Carnochan 00:56:50:**

You'll do different stuff. If you're in the East End of Glasgow in Barrowfield, well what do you do there? You play football or you join a gang, or you do both, because that's what's there. You conform to the expectation that's there, that's what your dad did, that's what your Uncle Billy did. That's what your mammy's brother did. So we need to break that cycle and say, "Look, we need to give alternatives."

**John Carnochan 00:57:15:**

There's not a single solution or a lever to pull, but there are certain things we know will make it better. It'll make it better if we exclude fewer people from school and we give them the education they need, no matter how difficult that is for some of these kids, you need to do that. We get them a job, and we give them some hope, which is a huge thing, then they're less likely to be that. Somebody with a job, nobody with a job ever joined gang. Nobody with hope and aspiration ever joined a gang.

**Peter McCormack 00:57:41:**

Well that might be one thing that's different from in London. So one of the things in London, the guy I was talking about is that, it's difficult to get a job, and if it's a job that's low paid, you join a gang, you can start selling drugs, go to a trap house, you can be earning £100, £200 a day. I'm not sure I reached when I was able to earn that kind of money. But that's a significant salary.

**Peter McCormack 00:58:06:**

But it felt like me in Scotland, a lot of the gangs were more territorial and less criminally based. Is that true or have I got that wrong?

**John Carnochan 00:58:15:**

Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, no. They were, the majority of them were territorial, recreational violence. That's what they did.

**Peter McCormack 00:58:18:**

But that's better though, because in some ways, therefore you can create an opportunity which is more aspirational than trying to get someone who's earning £200 a day selling drugs.

**John Carnochan 00:58:29:**

Absolutely. But we also still have the highest drugs death in Europe. We still have a huge drug problem, we still have lots of organised criminal groups, and they recruited from these young men, they recruited these violent young men who would just do what they had to do. So it was still there, not as distinct. But you're right, there are nuances around it, but it needs to be about hope, it need to be about connection, people need to feel connected to what they're doing. They need some aspiration about where they're going.

**John Carnochan 00:58:57:**

As a society we can respond to that by the services that are there are provided, the culture that's there. You're asking about, how do we take these things forward? This is about changing the way we think about things. We always said, "Look, this is not an initiative. We're changing the way we're doing our business forever. This is not an initiative. This is not let's do it for three weeks or three years, and then we'll do something else."

**John Carnochan 00:59:19:**

That's not what it's about. We're changing the way we think about things. And when we did the gangs project in the East End of Glasgow, which was hugely successful, we brought it in from the states, one of the reasons it was successful was, Glasgow education reduced exclusions by 80%. They increased nurturers, and nurturing schools. John Butcher was head of secondary schools, Maureen McKenna's now the director, or was at the time as

well, director of education. They wanted nurturing in the schools, they kept these young guys, they dealt with them, they didn't throw them out, they kept them.

**John Carnochan 00:59:50:**

That was of the reasons. We had other stuff, and when you were talking earlier on about speaking to them. I remember the very first time we had a call in, which was bringing the guys in in the gangs, and saying we've had enough. We brought along a fella called Jack Black from Mindstore. Now Jack Black was a social worker in Easterhouse.

**John Carnochan 01:00:12:**

So he came along and all the detectives in Strathclyde had met him, because he gave us the course. So I'd met him before, and we contacted him. "This is what we're doing, we'd like you to come along to speak to them." No problem, he came along. Gave us his time for nothing, and he was outstanding. What he did, he took 85 of these young guys away for two days, we went to Celtic Park and we had a Mindstore conference with them, the same that you and I would pay two and a half grand or whatever it was.

**John Carnochan 01:00:41:**

I remember the first day all these guys are sitting there, and they're all in different gangs. Anyway, Jack Black was doing his thing, and he said, "What do you want to get out of today, what do you want to get out of being here, what is it you want to be, what is it?" These guys weren't used to these things, these weren't young professionals ready for ... and one guy at the back put his hand up and Jack says, "Right, on you go."

**John Carnochan 01:01:07:**

The boy stood up and he had a scar on the side of his face, which meant he was a victim. But he pointed to another table and said, "See they guys over there, I've been fighting them since I was 11. I want to know why." I thought-

**Peter McCormack 01:01:24:**

I bet they didn't know why.

**John Carnochan 01:01:25:**

Bang, there you go. That's exactly it. Why are you fighting each other, why are you doing that? Because they've always done it.

**Peter McCormack 01:01:30:**

Could anyone actually answer it with a rational-

**John Carnochan 01:01:32:**

No, there was no reason, there was no reason, because your great granny

punched my great grandmother. It's because they came from there and we'd come from here.

**Peter McCormack 01:01:43:**

That's incredible.

**John Carnochan 01:01:45:**

So when you speak to folk and listen to them and say, "Right, you tell me what it is." We would say to them, "You're in the gang." "No I'm no, I'm no in a gang." "Aye, but you run about with these five?" "Aye, but that's because we come from the same place." They didn't even recognise themselves sometimes as being in gangs. There was others who definitely identified being in a gang, and had gang tags, and knew exactly what they were doing, organise their fights with the phone, "We'll get you at the usual place," and such and such.

**John Carnochan 01:02:14:**

They did all that stuff, but they don't know why they were doing it, it was about risk. It was about masculinity, it was about conforming. I'm sure when you had five of them, they're ready to go gang fighting, I bet you at least four of them are thinking, shit, I don't want to go. I'm terrified, I don't want to go here, but didn't want to say. Didn't want to speak out. I've been at meets where somebody's said something outrageous, and others don't say anything.

**John Carnochan 01:02:40:**

It's the same thing, we just conform to the easiest road to go.

**Peter McCormack 01:02:47:**

Yeah, I obviously have a passionate interest about, back near home, like London, barely a day goes by John, where there isn't a news article with someone being killed, and we had three the other day, three Sikh lads.

**John Carnochan 01:02:57:**

Yes, I saw that.

**Peter McCormack 01:02:58:**

But it's just relentless, it's almost the the point it's like, "Oh, okay. Another one." Which is really sad, and I struggle to understand where is the will to change this? I see ex-gang members talk, and I see a mayoral candidate speak, and I see people speak. But there doesn't seem to be a direct will to fix this, like some momentum.

**Peter McCormack 01:03:16:**

I look at what you've done up here, and you might be too modest to answer this, however I want you to, but what if you hadn't come along, or let just say the people that were involved hadn't come at the same time, could this

completely have not happened? Is this down coincidence or people at the time?

**John Carnochan 01:03:42:**

I think there's serendipity. I don't think there's any doubt about that. There's a real serendipity. But the guy who knocked the first domino over was Willie Rae. He was the guy who had the view, and funnily enough he was the guy-

**Peter McCormack 01:03:48:**

But was he under pressure?

**John Carnochan 01:03:49:**

Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. But there was a headline in one of the papers that said, "Get out of your bunker Willie, what's happening in Glasgow?" That was the pressure. But he never responded to media stuff like that, that wasn't how he dealt with things. He was the back office guy. He was the guy that made sure everything was there.

**John Carnochan 01:04:06:**

Our previous chief constable was Sir John Orr, big flash guy. He was the guy who was the investigator for Lockerbie. Big flash guy. But when Willie Rae took over, 2003, we didn't have emails. We had no personal emails. So Willie Rae was far more thoughtful, inclusive, connected guy. He was the guy that understood the notion of collaboration and what the role of policing was in these things, and not that masculine.

**John Carnochan 01:04:35:**

Police and fire service they're, "Yes, we're the men, we'll fix it out." Yeah, no we won't. We just won't. I think first of all in London, the differences, there's political with a capital P. There's an issue, home secretary, that's wrong. That shouldn't be, but anyway, that's what's there. You have the mayor, I don't know how that works.

**John Carnochan 01:04:57:**

Whether they're from the same party or not, I don't know how it works. It's huge. Everyone wants to fix everything, politicians want to fix everything. They want to do it today, they want to do something that's new that no one else has thought of that's there, and that's a masculine thing as well I think, although some women leaders are taking that on as well.

**John Carnochan 01:05:18:**

Somebody needs to sit down and take a breath, I'll bet you there's some fabulous youth work going on in London. Outstanding youth work, heroic youth work.



**Peter McCormack 01:05:27:**

There is.

**John Carnochan 01:05:27:**

Every day, people doing it, imagine if they weren't there, what the scale would be, and that's the thing to look at, because we keep saying, "Ah, but it can't be working because we're still having this." Well okay, let's be a wee bit negative for a minute, imagine that wasn't there. That that you've got would be worse. So what we need to do is, I think find out where it's working and where it's working well, and do more of it. Get out their way. Give them what they need to do what they need to do.

**John Carnochan 01:05:55:**

And in relation to policing, community cops back on the street tomorrow, and leave them where they are for five years to establish relationships, to understand their communities and stop parachuting in with armored vehicles and searching the first group of 25 people they bump into. They need to start doing that.

**Peter McCormack 01:06:12:**

Well yeah, my assumption is that there's two police officers walking the beat, in high-viz jackets, is a deterrent on that estate, or the roads surrounding that, and I cannot understand apart from a lack of funding, or some bureaucracy, why that isn't happening. We are talking about the lives of children here. Innocent children, most deaths seem to be certainly under 20, but under 18, and it boggles my mind, John.

**John Carnochan 01:06:40:**

Well to be clear, I don't necessarily mean just the idea of a beat man, because I walked the beat for a long time, and never come across a crime, I mean I would've I would expect maybe I prevented some.

**Peter McCormack 01:06:49:**

But is that because it is a deterrent?

**John Carnochan 01:06:51:**

But community officers. Community officers working in the same area establish relationships. They meet the shopkeepers, they meet the kids. One of the things that we started in Scotland, and it was happening in Aberdeen and we found it and brought it down and introduced it throughout Scotland, campus police officers. Cops who are in schools, that's their job.

**John Carnochan 01:07:15:**

That's where they start in the morning, that's where they finish at night. They

work in the high school, they work with the headteacher, they're not there for security and to enforce the rules, although that will be part of it. But they don't enforce the school rules, that's another job for the teacher. Most young people, the only time they bump into a cop is when the cop's getting them to do something.

**John Carnochan 01:07:37:**

So they're already in a conflict situation, these young guys. They've never met a cop other than he's wanted to search them, or ask them where they're going, or treated them as if they were up to no good. These cops in these schools are the positive role model. These are the places where these ... a good community cop will bump into maybe 30 or 40 young people in a day. Campus police officer, bumps into hundreds of children every day.

**John Carnochan 01:08:06:**

They are campus officers plus. They're the Jesuits of the campus regime. They're the guys and women who go in there. They work with headteachers, they share information, they know folk, they make people feel safe. They link in with the primary schools and the nursery schools. So when the kids walk through that playground, there's a face they know. They organise things for them, they know what happens, they can solve crimes that happened on a Saturday and Sunday by lunchtime on a Monday.

**John Carnochan 01:08:33:**

They make sure they get on the buses right, they make sure there's no litter outside, they make sure nobody's exploiting the kids who are there. That's the stuff, but it's not flash bang. It's something that's quiet and it's there. When we introduced it and saw it, one of the schools we put them in, put into the East End of Glasgow, the headteacher was against it but did it because Maureen McKenna wanted it to happen, so we did it.

**John Carnochan 01:08:54:**

We put in the very best guy we've ever had, Jeff, and he was outstanding. He started kids going on the Duke of Edinburgh award stuff, he started getting them bikes, a whole range of things. After three years, we had four kids apply to join the police from that school. Out of 14,000 employees in Strathclyde police, we had nobody from that school until he was in there. Now that wasn't why we were doing it, it's not about recruiting.

**Peter McCormack 01:09:19:**

But it's bias, yeah.

**John Carnochan 01:09:21:**

But it changes the way kids think about it. If you speak to them now, it was silly

little things. They would do joint visits. So John didn't turn up on Monday morning to sit his exam, the cop would be able to check. John's dad assaulted his mom last night, he was hospital until two in the morning, that's why he's not in. Right, okay. So they'd quietly go and say to him and say, "Okay kid, there's what you need to do. Bring him back in."

**John Carnochan 01:09:43:**

On parents nights, the cop would have a room, and he'd have a room. He'd be sitting there, "You want to come and speak to me, come and speak to me." Huge difference it makes, huge difference. I keep saying, the one thing I know for certain, somebody had said that life's a sexually transmitted disease with a 100% fatality rate.

**John Carnochan 01:10:00:**

But we're all humans, and at the end of the day no matter the question, the answer is relationships. That's it. That's it, and so how it happens when Willie Rae and us and Karen and I, and how we went out and met folk, Willie Rae empowered us, and we paid it forward. We empowered other people, we let them get on with it, go and do it. What do you think we should be doing? And we did it.

**Peter McCormack 01:10:24:**

Is there anything you got wrong during the time, is there anything that you thought would work totally different, any you look back?

**John Carnochan 01:10:30:**

We used to have 10 in there violence reduction, 12, that was it. Never was anymore than 12, and we used to have weekly meetings, and we had a standing agenda item called half-baked ideas, and he used to have outrageous ideas about cannabis and providing cannabis to calm people down, anyway. All sorts of stuff. We had some ideas that weren't of there time. One of Cam's great ideas was alcohol bracelets which measured how much alcohol you took.

**John Carnochan 01:10:59:**

So a sheriff could send somebody to sobriety if he knew alcohol was it, "We'll send you to sobriety," so you go and do that. That wasn't of it time, it didn't go. People went, "Oh no, we can't do that." That was seven or eight years ago, they're now introducing it.

**Peter McCormack 01:11:13:**

Well I tell you what I found most interesting, and this is would probably be a good point to ... we've done very well, but to close out, because I mentioned to you my background before we started, and you talked about the safe injecting

rooms in Glasgow. Something that Theresa May completely rejected, and I'm not surprised because I think we're a generation away from people really being a lot more comfortable with drugs.

**Peter McCormack 01:11:36:**

In that my generation, most people have done one thing or another at some point, but I've witnessed it in Vancouver, and I'm also, I don't personally think drug prohibition works, but I don't know the balance. I've spent a lot of times in the states now, marijuana is legal or decriminalised in most states, and society hasn't collapsed.

**Peter McCormack 01:11:57:**

I visited one of the stores in Boulder, and it's very professional, and the customers are buying, they're going home and they're watching TV. How far you take that again depends on who you are and what your views are. But I feel like we need a more radical approach to drugs, and how we deal with drugs. This seemed like an interesting policy.

**John Carnochan 01:12:18:**

Yeah. Well I remember the Scottish Crime and Drugs Enforcement Agency had 360 officers. Two of them were involved in prevention. The rest were interdiction.

**Peter McCormack 01:12:32:**

Wow.

**John Carnochan 01:12:32:**

We're an island. I used to work on a drugs squad, I worked on the Scottish Crime Squad. We're an island, drugs are as cheap now as they were 25 years ago. So yeah, we need to stop it. We need to just say, "This is not working." Now I don't know the solution to it. The idea of the drug treatment, that seems to me a good health intervention to that.

**John Carnochan 01:12:51:**

That seems to me a sensible thing to do, and it's where we are. Perhaps again Scotland, like the violence thing, we'll be at that crossroads before anybody else because we've got the highest levels of drugs related deaths in Europe. So this is a crisis, and we shouldn't be wasting a good crisis, we should be thinking about what we're going to do with this, and maybe that's the time to actually have a real discussion about it. A public discussion about it, to change the way we think about things.

**John Carnochan 01:13:22:**

I've always naively, because I'm a proud Scot, Scots gave the world the

enlightenment, and the enlightenment's about that notion of understanding our world, and understanding what's around us and what's best for each other. We have this reputation for being egalitarian. That we help, if I'm your friend, I'll be your friend forever, we make fabulous allies.

**John Carnochan 01:13:44:**

I already told you earlier on, we make very dangerous enemies, but we make wonderful allies, we will never desert you, we'll always be there. So I think in Scotland, maybe that's the opportunity to have that really difficult discussion, and I'm not saying it's easy. Even with decriminalisation. What worries me about the legalisation stuff is, if we legalise it, who's going to sell it for us? Amazon? Where are we going to do it, because the big companies that do it, big companies are a big issue.

**John Carnochan 01:14:13:**

That notion, that globalisation of these things, that worries me. Who's going to do it? The principle of it, I think we need to be relaxed about it and think about it.

**Peter McCormack 01:14:21:**

Yeah, I have that similar view that sex workers, I have probably more a libertarian view that certainly I think the debate of all drugs are evil, if you do them you should be arrested, and the way we look down on people who take drugs, I just don't think it's effective. Prohibition hasn't worked.

**John Carnochan 01:14:41:**

If you circle it right back to the idea of violence, and the way we learn how not to be violent, if you circle that right back and say, "Right, okay, what we've challenged over the years is the supply." We've challenged the supply. Let's deal with the demand. Let's ask ourself the question, because James I was speaking about, he's a recovering ... James says, "John, when I was taking drugs, drugs weren't the problem, drugs were the answer."

**Peter McCormack 01:15:07:**

Yep.

**John Carnochan 01:15:08:**

So if we make sure that drugs are not the answer because we take away the problem, then perhaps the demand will decrease. Maybe I'm being incredibly naïve, but I do think there's a human part of that that will make a difference to some people.

**Peter McCormack 01:15:19:**

I don't think anyone struggles to get drugs if they want it now. Certainly not in

the modern era with WhatsApp and such, and I don't think anyone has any fear of being arrested, it's not a deterrent either.

**John Carnochan 01:15:33:**

It's not a deterrent, of course it's not.

**Peter McCormack 01:15:34:**

So if it's not a deterrent and it's easy to access, markets dictate supply and demand. If people want it, why are we punishing them for it, when that ultimately probably makes it worse for society?

**John Carnochan 01:15:47:**

Yeah, you might find that the Scottish Whisky Trade Association will have a case against it as well.

**Peter McCormack 01:15:51:**

Well of course they will.

**John Carnochan 01:15:52:**

So there you go. So we get criminality involved with commercialisation and stuff, and you think, wonder how that would be?

**Peter McCormack 01:16:02:**

Yeah. Well listen look, I just want to fish out, obviously you retired a few years ago. I assume you're still keeping an eye on what people are doing, and you've got an interest in it.

**John Carnochan 01:16:11:**

Yes.

**Peter McCormack 01:16:11:**

But how have things been since you've left?

**John Carnochan 01:16:13:**

I think the VRU's still there, I still think don't move quick enough, but they never did for me, we need to move a bit quicker. We still have far too many suicides, we need to think about that. Our notion of collaboration needs to get itself sorted. How we support parents, we need to get fixed. We've just had a written branch review of the care system, I've been part of that, that report's back on the 5th.

**John Carnochan 01:16:39:**

I'm really, really optimistic and hopeful about that, that's going to make a huge difference and make us think again, and demonstrate to other Scots that we do care about everybody, and it's important we fix that. So aye, there's still

good stuff. But I remember somebody saying, it's not there to be fixed, it's our job to make it better, and it's just our turn. Others have tried and done before, it's just our turn to shift it on a bit.

**Peter McCormack 01:17:07:**

Well you took your turn, I think you did a great job. The stats don't lie, I commend you for it.

**John Carnochan 01:17:12:**

Thank you.

**Peter McCormack 01:17:12:**

And I commend everyone who worked with you and behind and, it certainly has saved lives, it's certainly made Scotland a better place. And thank you for your time, this is my first time in Scotland. You were a draw for me to come up here, but I appreciate you making some time, and I hope some people down south here this, and here about some of the work and they're inspired to look at the case study, and maybe that'll inspire something down the line.

**John Carnochan 01:17:36:**

Yeah, I know you're going to speak to Rudy Crawford. When you speak to Rudy, you'll realise how easy it was to establish relationships and get things.

**Peter McCormack 01:17:43:**

So the reason I want to speak to Rudy is, I want to be scared. I want to be even more scared about what the potential dangers are. So that's one I will be playing to my son who wants to listen to songs about people talking about scoring systems for stabbing each other, I want him to hear about what the impact is on people's lives.

**John Carnochan 01:18:01:**

Oh, Rudy will do that.

**Peter McCormack 01:18:02:**

Yeah, sorry, I'm just going back in. But part of one one the strategies I read about was that you actually had a video that you would take into schools to show people so you can incentivise people and you can shock people out.

**John Carnochan 01:18:15:**

Yeah, yeah. It's all of those things. It's different things work for different folks, and I think it's just identifying the teachable moment and being nimble enough to do the right thing about the right time, that's what it has to be, and our original aspiration was not to make it worse, which is hardly huge and ambitious, but it changed very quickly, and now ... But you need to start somewhere.

**Peter McCormack 01:18:40:**

Yeah, well listen, enjoy your retirement, sorry to interrupt it now, and take care.

**John Carnochan 01:18:42:**

Thank you, not at all. Good to meet you

**Peter McCormack 01:18:42**

Thank you.

**John Carnochan 01:18:42:**

Thanks for that.