

Bradlaugh Lecture 2021: Nazir Afzal- 'Blind Spots'

More information: <https://www.secularism.org.uk/blind-spots.html>

0:00:04.637,0:00:10.080

(Stephen Evans, SE): Good Afternoon everyone. Welcome to this, the Bradlaugh lecture uh,

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our first in-person event since, when was it? March 2020 when lockdown kicked in. So thanks for

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coming out today. It's absolutely lovely to have everyone in a room together. I'm Stephen Evans,

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I'm the chief executive of the National Secular Society. Uh, so for the uninitiated, uh, Bradlaugh

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was the founder of the National Secular Society over 150 years ago. Uh, today the NSS champions a

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free, fair, tolerant, open, inclusive, secular state uh, where everyone's human rights are

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properly balanced so no one's either advantaged or disadvantaged on account of their beliefs or

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indeed other people's beliefs. Bradlaugh was very much disadvantaged on account of other people's beliefs

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and his own beliefs despite being elected not once but four times by the people of Northampton. Uh, Bradlaugh

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was refused permission to take the religious oath that was required of MPs

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uh, on account of his atheism and therefore he was denied his seat in Parliament. For more than five years

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he fought for the um, the right to take his seat. Eventually the speaker relented and when he was

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elected as a back bencher, it was his Oaths Act in 1888 which extended the right of non-religious MPs to

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affirm rather than swear a religious oath which is of course a right that's enjoyed by many MPs to this day.

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In case you missed it on the way in uh, there is a magnificent painting of Bradlaugh uh, outside

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the room in the atrium uh, of the gallery. Uh by, uh, it's Bradlaugh standing in the House of Commons,

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at the bar of the House of Commons and it's painted by Walter Sickert.

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Um, it hangs in the atrium as I say. It was gifted to the gallery by the Manchester branch

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of the National Secular Society back in 1911 so we were happy to work with the gallery

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some years ago. It was found in the basement - we dusted it down, we restored it and worked with

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the gallery to get it re-hung so if you haven't seen it yet, please do enjoy it on the way out.

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Now the biography of Charles Bradlaugh by Bryan Niblett is entitled Dare To Stand Alone, which

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is perhaps the title of the work for the biography of today's speaker, Nazir Afzal

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although I feel that would probably not do justice to the many brave individuals and the NGOs that have

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worked with Nazir over the years to bring justice to those who were once ignored but without

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doubt Nazir has dared to stand alone on many occasions and to put his head above the parapet

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not only to say but also to do the right thing. Um, he's always done what was right despite not

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always being popular um, with others and those around him. Indeed, Nazir's public announcements

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on the uh, Danish Muhammad cartoons controversy, earned him a place on the al Qaeda hit list.

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Nazir is a man who reassuringly makes all the right enemies..... um, I think.

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For those of you are unfamiliar with his work, I really would recommend his recently published

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memoir called Prosecutor, which details his pursuit of justice for the voiceless and the ignored. Uh,

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perhaps most notably the victims of the Rochdale grooming gangs who he brought to justice whilst

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servicing as eh, Chief Crown Prosecutor for the North West but I'll leave it to Nazir to uh introduce

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himself more fully - I'll just simply say it's an absolute honour to have such an outstanding public

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servant with us today to deliver the Bradlaugh lecture so please do give a warm welcome to Nazir Afzal.

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(Nazir Afzal, NA): I am uh, delighted to be here. I mean, in-person events are extremely rare - I've been to

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a couple in the last few weeks and months uh and uh they're exhausting actually because we've

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lost the ability to have them but nonetheless I'm absolutely delighted to be here to join

0:04:18.080,0:04:21.920

you Stephen and colleagues uh, to be able to deliver the Bradlaugh lecture. I didn't

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know anything about Bradlaugh until Stephen uh enlightened me and I am honoured

0:04:26.960,0:04:31.840

to be able to deliver this annual lecture and to you here in my now home town in Manchester.

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So firstly, thank you very much for coming out. Um absolutely, you said about my enemies and

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the New York Times started their profile on me by saying that my enemies were a diverse lot

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and yeah, there's a picture of me actually - it's on a dart board in Tommy Robinson's house.....

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You know, I don't think we're allowed to visit it. I don't think he's allowed to visit it.

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Um, but I am delighted uh, to be able to share a few thoughts with you. I didn't really know what

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to say but what I will do is talk a little bit about my journey okay, and some of the learning

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that I picked up during the course of the last few decades really working in justice. My family

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came from the North West frontier of Pakistan - Carry On up the Khyber - all that stuff. Um very relevant

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these days - it's right on the border with Afghanistan. More than two million refugees have been there

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the last 30 or, 40 years. When I hear the Taliban speaking Pashtun, I understand what they're

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saying and it hits me right here. Uh, I understand that, you know, my family took us away or took my

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elders away from that part of the world in order to come from the traditional and tribalistic parts

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of Northern Pakistan to the traditional and tribalistic parts of Birmingham where I was

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born and, you know, again, uh, I tried to describe in the book what it was like in the 60's and 70's

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as a, an immigrant or son of an immigrant uh and the realization that you - I was born in the

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or living within sight of St Andrew's football ground... you did not go out on a

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Saturday afternoon if you valued your life. Uh, and I didn't, it's clear because I would go out come

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back covered in spit uh, and being abused and God knows what else. Uh, I didn't have neighbours -

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I had witnesses. There was so much uh, crime and criminality uh, and much of it aimed at...., because

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I was different and my family were different. But my home was a very loving environment. It was the

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safe environment uh, which I've always valued and treasured but the moment you stepped out the

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door you realized that you were being treated very differently not because of

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anything other than the fact you were different and some some of the languages, the language I

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heard then uh, obviously resonates with me and continues to resonate with people from minority

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backgrounds uh, 50, 60 years later - there's my age for you. Um, when I uh, I left Birmingham after

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several brutal beatings uh to study at university in Birmingham and then I left, I want, I didn't

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know if I wanted to study law but those of us from the immigrant backgrounds probably remember

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uh how much pressure there was on us to study, become a doctor, uh, an engineer, a scientist and

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you know I remember my father saying to me that's because at some point they're going to kick us

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out and we've got plenty of lawyers back there - we need doctors, engineers, scientists, mechanics

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and so I totally understood why that pressure was on me but you know I've read um, To Kill A

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Mockingbird - if you listen to my Desert Island Discs, you know that's the book I chose - there's a spoiler,

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but, you know, lawyers can bring change. Uh, I look at people I mentioned in this room - you do deliver

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change and uh, law is just a tool to deliver change. So I really wanted to become a lawyer.

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I graduated in law and then initially started off as a defense lawyer in Birmingham and um, it wasn't

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for me and there's an experience again in the book about how I was representing a rape suspect

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uh, in the days when you didn't have video recording of, of, uh, the suspect, of the victims um,

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evidence so it was a written statement of what she had experienced and with him and I'm reading out

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the statement of the victim and I realized that he was getting off on it and I thought I can't do this.

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Uh, you know, tremendous respect for - we all need them - we all need somebody to represent us so

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tremendous respect for those who can but it wasn't for me and I decided then to move to what was then

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the fledgling Prosecution Service. Uh, it wasn't fledgling it was four years old, uh, hated and

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contested by everybody, uh, unfunded by the government of the day um and that wasn't part of the problem -

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the fact that we just did not have enough funding. Defense really hated us because

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we'd taken so many of their lawyers and some of their paralegal staff. Um, the judges and

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magistrates hated us because they were used to certain people - police, generally - prosecuting those

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cases and the um, uh politicians hated us because we lost files. I remember somebody called um, Keith Vaz -remember him?

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confronting me at some event and saying uh, when I told him I was from Crown Prosecution service,

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uh, "lost any files lately? ". Uh, when he lost his European Minister job, I met him again and I said "lost any jobs lately?"

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..... but nonetheless, you know, we had a really awful experience I think but, but for me it

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was phenomenal, you know, I was just talking about Stephen, Stephen about moving to London as I did uh

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in 1999 to join the Prosecution Service. London was a sea of opportunities and we didn't have

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something that is, that we need, but was um,
stifles progress in my view - that's key
performance

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indicators, uh, back then and so nothing was
being mentioned so go to court, do what you
want,

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learn, learn your trade - if it doesn't go
the way you want it to go or, you know, you
don't get the

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outcome you want - get better and we, I was
literally learning on the job and also being
trusted to

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do things that were way beyond my pay grade
so I was dealing with cases in the mid-90s as a
very junior prosecutor

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I used to say baby prosecutor but,
you know, I never prosecuted any babies was
dealing with all these cases

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that were way above my.... multiple murders,
uh, serial killers - I prosecuted the gay slayer
who... - he's known as the gay slayer he
murdered five gay men in London.....

0:10:21.474,0:10:27.440
you know, these are cases I should never have
had an opportunity - these days I would never
have the opportunity
to touch until I was 20 years trained

0:10:27.440,0:10:32.160
or something but I was given that
opportunity and it made me grow

0:10:32.880,0:10:38.560

very quickly to the point that when I, when I
in 2001 applied again as assistant chief for
London I was the

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youngest - youngest, can you believe? - I was
the youngest chief prosecutor possibly in the
country yeah

0:10:44.480,0:10:48.480
and I was the first Muslim Chief
Prosecutor grade in the country. I was the
first, you

0:10:48.480,0:10:52.560
know, there were lots of firsts, but it was
largely because of the opportunities I've been
given

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working in London, understanding..... um
working particularly with the police at that
time because,

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you know, I mentioned the people who hated
us - the people who hated us most were the
police

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because we'd taken something massive
away from them - the ability to charge cases,

0:11:07.040,0:11:12.400
the ability to run and investigate cases
without interference - the reason for the
service being

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set up in the first place was because uh
you'd have to deal with the Birmingham six,
the Guildford four - multiple

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miscarriages of justice where there was
nobody looking at the evidence before it went
to court

0:11:21.909,0:11:34.240

and so the idea of a prosecution service independent of police was absolutely key to our existence, the need for.....everybody saw..... the police just didn't work

0:11:34.240,0:11:40.720

and again, my good fortune, my office was in Victoria, my main court was uh just a mile or so away and it meant then that I walked past what

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was then New Scotland Yard every day and this is before more recent security measures. I was able to

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walk in, have a chat with them. I'd go up to the ninth floor, talk to uh, organized crime officers

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and I built a relationship because once they knew that we were actually on the same side which is

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delivering justice then they understand that. There was a real turning point um in about

0:12:03.520,0:12:08.880

98 when I was the first, I was what was called first contact for the work of the paedophile unit

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which was a national unit based in the yard and I remember beginning with a case of a yeah....

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...you're all over 18 I hope... Um, I was dealing with a case of two parents who sexually abused their children

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and on one occasion, several occasions probably, on one occasion the actual mother had videod the

0:12:25.280,0:12:32.560

father raping the 18 month old baby and so building my case.... and yeah, that's my evidence

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or a large part of my evidence. You can't go home in the evening and think I've left my work at home

0:12:38.880,0:12:43.040

you just can't. You go home and hug your 18 month old daughter more than you would have

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done otherwise, when you realize what others have done to children and so it became a mission.... I

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realized actually that my job wasn't a job any more - it was a mission and so when I got into the role, Assistant Chief role, it was actually important for me to do something different

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which was not simply to process cases which I think was largely what we were expected to do

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but actually to deliver justice means engagement. I remember we had the first knife crime epidemic

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in the early 2000s in London. I remember telling my staff - right, we need to go out and engage with

0:13:18.240,0:13:23.120

the people most impacted by these crimes and they said absolutely let's invite them to our offices.

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Guess what. Nobody came. No, I mean go and talk to them. I remember there's one incident I relay in the book

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where I'm actually, you know, above a bookmaker's in Harlesden in North London talking to all these

0:13:36.480,0:13:41.680

young men wearing masks down across their faces, you know, comparing knife sizes. You know, my little pen

0:13:41.680,0:13:47.520

knife on the end of my car keys and their machetes and..., but that two-hour conversation has never left

0:13:47.520,0:13:53.280

me. I learned how policing was impacting them, why they felt unsafe. The environment, their schooling

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everything that was impacting on them and I went back and spoke to the Home Office colleagues and

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said maybe we should be listening - leadership is about listening and perhaps the least valued skill.

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Actually listen. So there I am, I've come back, I've come back with all this information which is

0:14:10.240,0:14:16.080

more engagement and we developed or the Home Office developed the first serious violent crime strategy

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based on these conversations. I thought wow, I can, I've actually brought some change here,

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you know, and amazingly when we had a knife crime epidemic a couple of years ago - it began again a couple of years ago -

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you probably remember the Prime Minister, Theresa May had a cobra meeting to which I was invited and I said I'm not coming

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because do you know what happened? they just brushed off the serious

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crime strategy from 2003, repackaged it and said here you go. I thought, that's not change.

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That's not change. So, anyhow, um, so I realized that actually I have now some influence

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and the ability to go beyond just prosecuting that's in preventing crime happening in the first

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place and tackling behaviours perhaps that hadn't been addressed previously and that I think was

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key because, you know, again, good fortune that I had - we had money with the Blair government who decided to

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put money into public services uh, in the
in the 2000s and so I suddenly had budgets,
you

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know, which I never dreamed of. I was
bringing in really talented people and I was
also beginning

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to have national conferences on subjects that
um, perhaps we'd not touched before so I
organized

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a conference on airport crime because
Heathrow was in my catchment area in
London and that was

0:15:28.320,0:15:34.240

about, you know, did you know? I didn't know
- there were sex slave auctions taking place in
Costa Coffee

0:15:34.240,0:15:40.160

in the airports. Women were being flown over
and then there'll be an auction involving
certain

0:15:40.160,0:15:44.960

organized crime types. Yeah, these are the
things that we just would not have heard of
had we not

0:15:44.960,0:15:49.120

had that conversation and started listening.
And I organized a sports crime conference

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uh, again because I had an MP in
Twickenham, um I thought a really good
opportunity to talk

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about crimes and that might be impacting on
sports uh, including betting crimes, corruption
but also

0:16:00.240,0:16:04.800

the behaviours that might be happening and I
remember doing a lot of television interviews.
I

0:16:04.800,0:16:09.040

remember one in particular when I talked
about the behaviour of players on the pitch
impacting on

0:16:09.040,0:16:15.280

spectators impacting on wider society
which we all agree does happen or did
happen but

0:16:16.160,0:16:21.520

maybe because it was me delivering those
messages or saying those things, I got so
much hate mail. I remember

0:16:21.520,0:16:25.760

one in particular - "Dear Mr Afzal, we
English invented football please go back to
wogland".

0:16:26.320,0:16:33.680

Yes. I couldn't find wogland anywhere - but I
found his name and address on the letter -
very good of him to put it there -

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and he got a visit from the force but
the point is that um, I realized actually

0:16:40.160,0:16:45.280

one, when you speak up that there is
uh potentially going to be a downside

0:16:46.480,0:16:51.600

and you just reference the Danish
cartoon protest - I'll jump ahead slightly
because you mentioned

0:16:51.600,0:16:58.320

it, Stephen. So, you have, remember, the
Danish cartoon protest in 06 in London and
you had

0:16:59.440,0:17:04.480
men, invariably men, walking around with banners saying behead this and behead that. Do you remember that?

0:17:05.440,0:17:10.720
....and my then boss was uh, Ken McDonald and I remember saying to him look you've arrested

0:17:10.720,0:17:20.401
these guys or the police have, I want to charge some of them with soliciting murder...
.... not public - public order, slap them on a list, out, they don't even go to prison, fine...

0:17:20.880,0:17:26.080
I said what they're doing is soliciting murder and good for him, he agreed and we prosecuted, I think,

0:17:26.080,0:17:30.560
six men all in all for soliciting murder - they were convicted at the Old Bailey - they got six years in prison.

0:17:31.600,0:17:33.840
Do you see those banners anymore on the streets?

0:17:34.800,0:17:40.800
Do you see how you can bring about change by just simply a legal decision and of course, it was all done, all

0:17:40.800,0:17:48.160
fair trial, the courts do that all that stuff with proper disclosure, everything else, so , you know everyone gets a fair trial - its not about them not having a fair trial

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it's about selecting the right charge to reflect the level of criminality but as you said, I got a

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visit from special branch shortly after saying that Nazir, we're here to tell you that we found your

0:17:56.669,0:18:04.269
name on an al Qaeda death list. I said well, thanks. Um, what now?
Oh that's just our duty - we just have to tell you...

0:18:07.040,0:18:13.280
Thank you, but you know it didn't affect me - you know, it did for a while I was thinking you know

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what's gonna happen? and here I am 15 years later - I'm still here so, uh the point is

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that you know you sometimes need to speak up without thinking about the consequences maybe

0:18:21.040,0:18:26.720
for your own personal life because it doesn't feel real I guess. What felt real was the, the outcome

0:18:26.720,0:18:32.240
of the case and the impact it had on all of all of us in terms of how we demonstrate and protest,

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which is actually a key, key right that we all have to fight for and support. So back in 04

0:18:39.200,0:18:45.200
I organized, I've opened my door and said to victim's survivors groups just keep telling me

0:18:45.200,0:18:50.480
stuff that I don't know, you know, and then a group of women came to me and said forced marriages here....

0:18:51.360,0:18:55.360

Uh, nobody's talking about forced marriage. So I said fine, let's organise a conference on forced

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marriage, honour-based violence, honour-based abuse and um I invited a lot of Parliamentarians uh

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and they said I'm too busy. Here's another trick - organise a conference in a hotel across the road

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from the House of Commons and just give them the time and they can pop in for 10 minutes, 20 minutes

0:19:14.080,0:19:19.040

and it worked a treat. So yeah, lots of MPs turned up listening to the stories of these really great

0:19:19.040,0:19:24.080

women. Invariably women who were talking about either their own survival experience or what they've

0:19:24.080,0:19:28.880

dealt with, who they've supported and it had a massive impact because so much so....

0:19:28.880,0:19:35.040

I remember, first of all the impact of that day yeah, on that day I did, I did 31 interviews with national

0:19:35.040,0:19:39.360

and international television and radio because they were so intrigued by this subject

0:19:39.360,0:19:44.800

of forced marriage. It was, it never, you know, doesn't happen here, does it happen here? but there were certain

0:19:44.800,0:19:50.000

countries that had different views. The French told me that um they invented this concept of honour

0:19:50.000,0:19:55.200

you know, dueling at dawn they said. I said dueling at dawn is when you have a gun each - we're not talking

0:19:55.200,0:20:00.960

about the same thing. Uh, the Italians told me Romeo and Juliet - it's all about honour. Yeah maybe so

0:20:00.960,0:20:05.600

yeah but this is a different kettle of fish. This is about women invariably not being allowed to make

0:20:05.600,0:20:13.520

their choices, not their attitude who to marry, if to marry, leaving a marriage, um, you know, pursuing

0:20:13.520,0:20:19.040

an education - all of the things that, quite frankly, you and I must take for granted were being denied

0:20:19.040,0:20:24.800

a sizable chunk of British citizens at that time without any action or recognition even

0:20:24.800,0:20:31.280

that it was happening in this country. And so the other thing I learned was data is really important

0:20:32.560,0:20:38.320

we had none so I spoke to my police colleagues and I said to them can you do me a big favour, you know,

0:20:38.320,0:20:43.520

I've done a few for you, can you give me one
- uh, can you get some people to do a hand
sift

0:20:43.520,0:20:49.680

of all of the homicides that took place last
year, 630 or how ever many there were and
see whether or not any of them were on

0:20:49.680,0:20:54.960

honour-based related because we just didn't
know and they came back um, phenomenal
team that they were,

0:20:54.960,0:21:00.880

and said last year 2004/5 12 women were
killed in the name of honour in this country.
That we know of.

0:21:02.442,0:21:08.800

Based on the cases. I said thank you, well not
thank you but that gives me information,
data. I can then go to government and say do
you, do

0:21:08.800,0:21:12.880

you know how much it costs to investigate
and prosecute a murder? Now it's 1.5 million
each,

0:21:13.840,0:21:18.160

then it was a million pounds, say to them with
12 million pounds a year, never mind your
moral case,

0:21:18.160,0:21:24.560

your emotional case, your legal case uh,
here's your business case, you know, and so
um, it then meant

0:21:24.560,0:21:29.440

that we could have, as we did do, uh,
develop our first national strategy but it was

0:21:29.440,0:21:34.960

also about understanding what we were
dealing with and, you know, people made
another assumption

0:21:34.960,0:21:40.960

you know, I'm brown therefore brown people
do this kind of stuff - you must know all about,
you know.

0:21:40.960,0:21:48.605

No, I've been married three times - not one of
them was forced - perhaps they should have
been, I don't know

0:21:49.680,0:21:56.160

but again, and as a man, it wasn't something
that I came across at all but once I started
looking

0:21:56.160,0:21:59.440

at the cases that we were dealing with, I
had dealt with, I began to understand what
we were

0:21:59.440,0:22:05.040

dealing with. So when Rukhsana Naz was
murdered by her mother and her brother -
her mother held

0:22:05.040,0:22:11.120

her down whilst her brother strangled her
in Leicester and she was carrying the baby of
her

0:22:11.120,0:22:15.600

boyfriend - that was the reason why she was
killed - we dealt with it as a straightforward
homicide.

0:22:17.280,0:22:21.120

There was something else going on here
and when, when the mother - I looked at the

0:22:21.120,0:22:27.920

transcript of the court case this is, this is
ex post facto - after the case had happened
and her mother was asked

0:22:27.920,0:22:35.520

why did your daughter have to die? and she said it was her destiny. This is something odd. This is not,

0:22:36.080,0:22:42.400
this is not your normal homicide and so there were more of these. So um, and they're all with me, they're

0:22:42.400,0:22:48.560
all here you know every single name is here because they all uh, have left a mark. So when you've

0:22:48.560,0:22:54.080
got somebody murdered on her wedding day in Birmingham uh, by two men who just walked into

0:22:54.080,0:22:58.800
the place she was getting married and stabbed her and then got on a plane out this country within eight

0:22:58.800,0:23:05.120
hours, that's organized crime. That's not just your, you know, heat of the moment stuffand then when

0:23:05.120,0:23:10.400
I looked at the family three, they weren't even on the family tree. These men had felt slighted that

0:23:10.400,0:23:16.400
she had chosen or was marrying some other guy rather than their own relative. Enough to kill her.

0:23:18.480,0:23:25.200
It seems really irrational doesn't it? Bizarre, but you have to leave - another lesson - you have to leave rational

0:23:25.200,0:23:30.320
thought at the door because they're doing irrational things and if you come in with

0:23:30.320,0:23:36.480
your rational thought you're going to block off avenues of investigation, potentially. So there was

0:23:36.480,0:23:42.480
that and then Heshu was a 16 year old girl in West London who was murdered by her father uh, because

0:23:42.480,0:23:47.440
he discovered that she had a boyfriend. Now how did he discover she had a boyfriend? - the school rang him up

0:23:47.440,0:23:53.520
and said your daughter wasn't in school yesterday, was it anything to do with her boyfriend? I don't blame the school.

0:23:53.520,0:23:58.800
There was no training, there was no understanding, no recognition but they pulled, they executed her - the

0:23:58.800,0:24:04.160
execution took place because of the information that had been passed unknowingly by an authority

0:24:04.160,0:24:09.680
figure. So we have to do much more and so it was important not just simply to do a 'justicey'

0:24:09.680,0:24:16.480
response here, there had to be a response across agencies, uh, across public sector and others. I'm

0:24:16.480,0:24:23.040
really pleased that we were able to bring people together and it often takes a pivotal case I think

0:24:23.040,0:24:28.320

which uh, really resonates uh, and I think it was the case of Banaz Mahmood which -you may have heard

0:24:28.320,0:24:36.480

about - it was, it was a feature of 'Honour' the movie, film last year uh, with Keeley Hawes playing

0:24:36.480,0:24:42.640

um, DCI Caroline Goode - uh it's a documentary, if you go on you tube, Banaz A Love Story

0:24:42.640,0:24:46.720

uh won the Emmy. International Emmy a few years back and Banaz's case

0:24:46.720,0:24:52.400

uh is, I'll give you a few moments about Banaz.... She was 16 when she was forced into marriage from an

0:24:53.840,0:24:56.960

Iraqi Kurdish family based in South London.

0:24:58.080,0:25:03.280

She had been beaten black and blue by her husband. At the age of 18, her family, parents

0:25:03.280,0:25:10.640

reluctantly allowed her home. I mean reluctantly uh, because, you know, if they hadn't she'd have been dead at

0:25:10.640,0:25:17.520

the hands of her husband - and then she's noted and spotted um, kissing her boyfriend - her first love,

0:25:17.520,0:25:23.200

ever at the age of nineteen outside the Morden tube station in South London by some busy-body

0:25:23.200,0:25:28.880

in the community. That busy body goes back to father and uncle and says how dare your daughter

0:25:28.880,0:25:33.840

kiss somebody in public? Now I'm pretty sure, most of us, our reaction would be, you know, he'd

0:25:33.840,0:25:54.204

be in a grave somewhere you know but the point is that this family decided um that she had dishonoured them. She had shamed their family. And they then, a group of men sat, including the father and uncle, sat around a table, not unlike this one, eight of them in all, and decided that Banaz must die

0:25:54.640,0:26:00.960

for what she did and she was abducted off the streets of London, uh, she was taken 100 miles... well, she

0:26:00.960,0:26:05.920

was murdered first. She was raped before she was murdered - we know that because we have listening

0:26:05.920,0:26:12.640

devices in prison and they talked about, one of the murderers talked about having raped her and saying we

0:26:12.640,0:26:18.800

raped her because we wanted her to know who was in charge before she died. Not your usual murder.

0:26:20.400,0:26:24.240

And they buried her in a suitcase 100 miles north and Caroline Goode and her

0:26:24.240,0:26:30.160

police team did a phenomenal job in identifying um, the body first off uh but

0:26:30.160,0:26:35.120

also all the perpetrators and we ultimately...
two of the men who were responsible for the
murder

0:26:35.120,0:26:37.840
fled this country and went to
Iraq - this is post Sadam

0:26:38.720,0:26:44.720
and we in 80 years of Iraq's history we have
never ever extradited anybody for anything
but, this is

0:26:44.720,0:26:49.440
the important thing, we made it very clear
to the Iraqi authorities this is important to
us -

0:26:50.640,0:26:55.040
these two men are celebrating the fact that
they have somehow restored the honour of
their family -

0:26:55.680,0:26:59.200
bring them back. And to their credit they
allowed them back and they were brought

0:26:59.200,0:27:04.640
back and they were convicted. There are
six men now in prison for life for the murder

0:27:05.200,0:27:11.120
of a nineteen-year-old girl for kissing her
boyfriend outside the tube station. Irrational.

0:27:11.920,0:27:16.000
Bizarre but it could have all been
avoided if people had done their job.

0:27:16.880,0:27:23.280
On one occasion before, she was um, sitting in
her living room her father walks in wearing
marigold

0:27:23.280,0:27:31.120
gloves carrying a bottle of whiskey or
something - an alcoholic drink - she never
drank and he tries to feed her

0:27:31.120,0:27:36.880
the alcohol. What do you think he's up to?
She managed to break out the window,
smashes the window, running down

0:27:36.880,0:27:41.120
the street approaches the woman police
officer, woman police officer smelling alcohol
on her breath,

0:27:41.120,0:27:45.200
seeing blood on her hands, threatens to
arrest her for drunk and disorderly
behaviour.

0:27:47.120,0:27:52.800
On another occasion, this is in the um,
documentary, um, she's in the police station
giving her interview

0:27:52.800,0:27:57.360
about what might happen to her and
presents a list of the five men she says will kill
her

0:27:58.080,0:28:03.600
and the officer, and then says to the officer
"what now?" and the officer says we'll get
back to you.

0:28:03.600,0:28:10.160
This is what I mean about not understanding
what happens and what might happen. The
risk level, you

0:28:10.160,0:28:16.240
know, escalates when somebody seeks help
and I often use... we have something now
called first

0:28:16.240,0:28:23.040
contact - that very often um, victims
from these communities or people who are
likely to be

0:28:23.040,0:28:27.600
at risk from this type of crime will go to

the first building that they see as being

0:28:28.560,0:28:34.320

potentially going to help them - the town hall or you know, you know, a very large building and they'll

0:28:34.320,0:28:38.640

go to the person on reception - does that person? and they go and say I'm going to be killed because

0:28:38.640,0:28:43.840

they want to marry me off, whatever, does that person actually know what to do? Because if you don't,

0:28:45.360,0:28:53.680

she's gonna die. I remember a young woman um, shares my, my first name Samaira Nazir. She - again,

0:28:53.680,0:28:59.120

people make assumptions about this being a wealth of ignorant, poor people doing this - Samaira's family

0:28:59.120,0:29:02.880

were really wealthy - they owned a large number of properties in West London including

0:29:02.880,0:29:07.920

a cash and carry and she'd been to university at Kingston, she had set up her own recruitment business.

0:29:07.920,0:29:12.720

You'd think that she was immune from any of this type of behavior. She fell in love with a refugee

0:29:14.160,0:29:19.120

and uh, her mother took her to that person and said to that person would you please,

0:29:19.120,0:29:24.320

this is 10 am on that April morning, said to her would you please wash your hands off

0:29:24.320,0:29:30.560

her and tell you don't love her? He said why? I can't do that - I love her. Two hours later,

0:29:30.560,0:29:37.920

she was stabbed 18 times in the presence of two infant nieces who were splattered with her blood. Two hours later....

0:29:39.520,0:29:46.800

You can't say "come back tomorrow" for somebody at that type of risk. If we apply our own mindset

0:29:46.800,0:29:50.720

to our sort of western way of thinking whatever, however you want to describe it

0:29:50.720,0:29:56.389

then all you're doing is you putting that person at greater risk by not responding appropriately and

0:29:56.389,0:30:01.989

so Banaz's case really brought about a sea change - it led to first ever national police guidelines

0:30:02.645,0:30:07.605

uh for tackling honour-based abuse, it led to I remember, do you know those t-shirts you have when you

0:30:07.906,0:30:12.720

go to a band and you have the tour up on the back? Mine would say the Royal College of GPs, the Royal College of Midwives,

0:30:12.720,0:30:18.160

Royal College of Midwives, uh, you know the Coroner Society - I went everywhere telling people and do you know what

0:30:18.160,0:30:22.880

I did? One, you tell stories like the ones I've just told you, so people know what they're talking about

0:30:22.880,0:30:29.680

and you scare the living daylights out of them..... Do you want your organization to have to deal with this

0:30:29.680,0:30:34.560

because every serious case review is failure, failure, failure you know literally.... you know,

0:30:34.560,0:30:40.160

this first recommendation in every serious case review about everything is information wasn't

0:30:40.160,0:30:45.200

shared - it should have been shared and you have to, you hear this thing saying lessons will be learnt

0:30:46.560,0:30:51.440

which always makes me, I don't know what makes you but I know it makes me yeah because you ,

0:30:51.440,0:30:57.680

don't because if you did, that wouldn't happen yeah, and you don't share information because you

0:30:57.680,0:31:02.880

hide behind GDPR or data protection or whatever and you think that confidentiality prevents you from

0:31:02.880,0:31:07.600

sharing information. Actually the whole principle of information sharing in this safeguarding

0:31:07.600,0:31:14.240

scenario is to protect the person about whom you have the information not you the organization

0:31:14.240,0:31:20.480

that holds the information but that misunderstanding puts so many, so many people at great risk. It was

0:31:20.480,0:31:25.680

also necessary, wasn't it? to change the rules so I remember back in 07, um, a private member's

0:31:25.680,0:31:29.920

bill was going through Parliament to legislate about creating forced marriage protection laws

0:31:29.920,0:31:36.320

but the government of the day um, don't like, didn't like private members' bills they carry a cost and

0:31:36.320,0:31:40.480

I learned again about something I learned was that the cost of bringing in forced marriage

0:31:40.480,0:31:45.360

protection laws was about two million pounds a year. So I sat down with the then Attorney General

0:31:46.160,0:31:50.960

- Goldsmith - and I said to him if we reduce the number of homicides by two

0:31:50.960,0:31:56.480

that pays for it, doesn't it? And to his credit, he went back and told the Prime Minister, Mr Blair um that's what we should do

0:31:56.480,0:32:02.400

and the Government adopted the bill and it became law. And since 08 that that bill has been in place,

0:32:02.400,0:32:09.520

more than 3 000 victims have received protection. More than 3 000 lives have been saved. You can't

0:32:09.520,0:32:14.320
say that about many laws that more than
3,000 lives.... and that model of protection
laws that

0:32:14.320,0:32:20.800
now exists for domestic violence, uh FGM, it
exists for so many other spheres of harmful
practices

0:32:20.800,0:32:26.000
but it was the first we ever did. And then
of course when Theresa May was Home
Secretary

0:32:26.000,0:32:31.600
we persuaded her to criminalize - well she
didn't need much persuading -
to criminalize

0:32:31.600,0:32:37.360
forced marriage itself and, you know, people
uh misunderstood that. People
misunderstand what

0:32:37.360,0:32:42.640
force, forced marriage not arranged marriage.
My mother and father, bless them, were
blessed - they were married 50 odd years

0:32:42.640,0:32:48.320
um and it was an arranged marriage, you
know. Um, forced marriage is when you just
don't consent,

0:32:48.320,0:32:57.582
you know, again people don't understand
that. I have even heard the phrase a forced
arranged marriage - you know, you're making
it up as you go along

0:32:57.582,0:33:06.240
and when the answers come from inside the
community - the victims groups, the NGOs
who worked in this field tirelessly for a
pittance - they're your experts

0:33:07.040,0:33:12.880
go and talk to them and they will tell you
what you need to do differently and that was
a really

0:33:12.880,0:33:17.760
critical point we, I think we got to the stage
when I was also you know, the US state
department

0:33:17.760,0:33:20.720
regularly contacted me and said can you
tell us what you've done, what are you doing?
you

0:33:20.720,0:33:25.120
know, how have you got in a where you
have twelve homicides down to half as many?
how? you

0:33:25.120,0:33:29.600
saved all these lives..... I said - I shared
that experience with them and for the
Americans to

0:33:29.600,0:33:36.400
think that we're better than them at
something, tells you something.
Strangely, that liaison with me stopped

0:33:36.400,0:33:42.960
in November 2016. I don't know who it was
that was elected back then - didn't want to
hear from me - but

0:33:42.960,0:33:48.320
nonetheless the point is that the Americans
were leading, the world was looking at us in
terms

0:33:48.320,0:33:52.480
of what best practice was and that's
phenomenal but we've lost a lot of that in the
last few years

0:33:53.040,0:33:57.920

through resources - conversation you can have some other day if you want but, you know, we lost

0:33:57.920,0:34:04.080

experience, we lost specialisms, we lost the ability to provide that level of support. The NGOs who are

0:34:04.080,0:34:10.160

my heroes, you know, they work for nothing. Uh, they spend 50 per cent of their lives fundraising. Why ?

0:34:11.200,0:34:14.720

When we rely upon them so much, why should they have to spend 50 percent of their day

0:34:14.720,0:34:26.890

fundraising when they could spend 50 percent of the day - an additional 50 percent helping people? We're so topsy-turvy in this country in terms of what we recognise and value. I mean we value merchant bankers

0:34:26.890,0:34:36.640

- hope there aren't any in the room.... we give them multi-millions we tell somebody who works in an NGO to survive on a 25 grand grant for this year and come back next year

0:34:36.640,0:34:42.160

and fill in the same forms for the same grant. Nonsense, absolute nonsense. They're the experts

0:34:42.160,0:34:47.200

and they always will be the experts and you've got to provide them whatever support you can. So

0:34:47.200,0:34:51.360

once I felt that we're in a position now to deal with honour-based abuse and forced marriage

0:34:51.360,0:34:58.880

in a much better way, it's time for me to move on and child sexual abuse.... I pick them - I hold all the best gigs.

0:35:01.040,0:35:04.960

Child sexual abuse reared its ugly head and I dealt with the Baby P prosecution which you may be

0:35:04.960,0:35:09.840

familiar with but that was only because the prosecution itself was relatively straightforward - the

0:35:09.840,0:35:14.560

family were responsible for the death of Baby P - what was more important to me, more interesting to me was

0:35:14.560,0:35:21.040

how we as a State, as people respond to something like that. We do a number of things - four things -

0:35:21.920,0:35:25.680

first thing, when something terrible like that happens is we want a head to roll.

0:35:26.320,0:35:31.920

We have such an inherent blame culture. Remember? somebody called Ed Balls, whoever he was, told the

0:35:31.920,0:35:38.720

head of social services she had to resign, and she resigned. The second thing that happens is that we then feel

0:35:38.720,0:35:44.240

we need to re-engineer the whole process, the risk assessments and so we now introduced a

0:35:44.240,0:35:50.880

brand new checkbox risk assessment tool for social workers to apply and guess what, no tick box saves

0:35:50.880,0:35:55.920
anybody's life but we've got this brand
spanking new process. The third thing that
happens and

0:35:55.920,0:36:01.120
happened was hundreds of social workers -
they have a profession -
they didn't want to...., you know, what's my

0:36:01.120,0:36:06.480
experience for if all I have to do is check
boxes? and the fourth thing that happens,
perhaps the

0:36:06.480,0:36:11.600
least understood, is in the year after we had
the brand spanking new process we had new
leadership,

0:36:11.600,0:36:19.120
we had more killings of children than
ever before. So it worked - that's what we do -
knee-jerk, knee-jerk, knee-jerk

0:36:19.120,0:36:25.840
rather than listening to
the experts who might tell you that this is
what you should be doing differently.

0:36:26.560,0:36:31.280
So I moved to the North - I moved here to
Manchester in 2011 and I became Chief
Prosecutor

0:36:31.280,0:36:36.800
for the, what was the new Northwest region
and as I said to Stephen and part of my
thinking was around

0:36:36.800,0:36:42.000
quality of life - my children were at that time
in their early teens. I was leaving for work
before

0:36:42.000,0:36:46.000

they got up. I was coming back after they'd
gone to bed. I didn't think that was quality of
life.

0:36:46.000,0:36:50.800
The Northwest region presented itself as
an opportunity, brand spanking new and I
decided I

0:36:50.800,0:36:55.920
would take on the responsibilities of the big
chief up here. And almost immediately, well,
immediately.....

0:36:57.120,0:37:01.200
that summer of 2011 will never
leave me because we had the riots to sort
out,

0:37:02.640,0:37:07.120
dealing with that. We had three
homicides, domestic homicides where the
burglars

0:37:07.120,0:37:12.640
were killed by the owners. Remember those? I
dealt with those. Uh, Stepping Hill happened, I
was

0:37:12.640,0:37:18.320
dealing with the Stepping Hill uh, incident,
murders. 100 000 other cases by the way and
um,, and then

0:37:18.320,0:37:24.480
something called group grooming cases. Uh,
The Times had been carrying out an
investigation um

0:37:25.040,0:37:28.640
where they've been looking at some
trials around the country and said
something's amiss here

0:37:29.200,0:37:34.000
but we're not, nobody's doing anything about
it and so I asked my team do you have
anything at

0:37:34.000,0:37:38.800
your disposal, uh, something you've dealt with that perhaps might, you know, mirror them as

0:37:38.800,0:37:45.200
this model that seems to be happening? Let's, let's contextualize - two-thirds of all sexual abuse takes,

0:37:45.200,0:37:51.200
of children, takes place in their family - people you know. The second largest group of victims are

0:37:51.200,0:37:55.920
online - something we've barely scratched the surface of, you know. Right now, for pennies, you

0:37:55.920,0:38:00.960
can watch a child being sexually abused in real time somewhere in the world. The third largest

0:38:00.960,0:38:08.880
group are institutional failings - uh, you know, well you know, places of worship, um education, uh BBC

0:38:09.440,0:38:15.840
uh and the fourth, smallest but still tens of thousands of victims are group grooming of the

0:38:15.840,0:38:21.920
type, street grooming that we've had some experience of more recently and so they brought to me this

0:38:21.920,0:38:27.200
case in Rochdale where a group of men.... Let me rewind... those of you who've seen the BBC film 'Three Girls'

0:38:27.200,0:38:31.280

You've seen it? I think it's still on the Iplayer - the actor who plays me is much more handsome than I am -

0:38:34.160,0:38:40.240
I'm always happy with that but that's based on this particular case - the young girl goes into

0:38:40.240,0:38:46.480
a takeaway restaurant in 2008, she starts having a row, she starts bringing things up, police come and

0:38:46.480,0:38:51.040
arrest her. Uh at the police station she discloses that she's been sexually abused by these

0:38:51.040,0:38:56.800
men. The officers, police carry out a very cursory 11-month investigation, really cursory um, they

0:38:56.800,0:39:02.240
then go to two prosecutors who say well - this is the landscape of 08 - nobody's gonna

0:39:02.240,0:39:08.000
believe her. She comes from a very troubled, chaotic background uh, no jury's gonna believe her and so

0:39:08.000,0:39:14.480
the case wasn't pursued. And now a much better, much better police team and prosecution team have

0:39:14.480,0:39:19.600
been working on this case but they have a problem. The problem is a big one - namely, how do we prosecute

0:39:19.600,0:39:24.800
this case now, three years on, when I'm now here uh given that we said that there was no case

0:39:24.800,0:39:29.520

to answer. How can we turn around to a jury and say members of the jury we want you to believe her but we

0:39:29.520,0:39:35.120

didn't believe her? Quite a big problem but I said, hang on, there's two things you can do here - one,

0:39:35.840,0:39:43.840

hands up, we got it wrong. She didn't get it wrong, we got it wrong and they'll go ooooooh - you find a public authority

0:39:43.840,0:39:49.120

that says we got it wrong, it's quite a challenging thing but anyway I said we will say that and then

0:39:49.120,0:39:55.600

we can go to the jury and the court and say we got it wrong - it's not her, do not blame her or them,

0:39:55.600,0:40:01.920

the victims. We got it wrong. And that was how we get the case over the line, by simply

0:40:02.720,0:40:07.040

accepting we got it wrong. You know, the lawyers in this room will recognize at that time we have

0:40:07.040,0:40:12.480

a 'when's it unreasonable principle' - if it's too unreasonable, that's a reason why you might want

0:40:12.480,0:40:17.920

to reverse the decision or change it and to his credit uh, my then boss Kier Starmer - What happened to him? He

0:40:20.960,0:40:28.720

said absolutely Nazir, wrong is the word we should be using and so we were able to reverse that decision - first

0:40:28.720,0:40:32.720

time I'd done it, we were able to prosecute the case. We had to provide an immense amount of support - the

0:40:32.720,0:40:37.280

far right were outside of Liverpool Crown Court on a daily basis as they were exploiting the situation

0:40:37.280,0:40:42.880

as they always do, uh you know, the men, the perpetrators were British Asians, Pakistani

0:40:42.880,0:40:47.600

um, the girls that they were aware of were from uh British white backgrounds - actually, not true

0:40:47.600,0:40:53.600

but that's what they believed, and they were taking advantage of that whole scenario uh, exploiting it.

0:40:53.600,0:41:00.400

And we got the conviction in May 2012 and then suddenly um, this is another reason why, oh my god,

0:41:01.040,0:41:06.400

you know, Nazir, you're the world's expert now, you've done one of these and everybody was knocking

0:41:06.400,0:41:11.200

on my door. Go on, look at May 2012 - little articles I'm writing for the Guardian, The Times

0:41:11.200,0:41:15.840

trying to explain to people what's going on. Uh, David Cameron who was then Prime Minister

0:41:15.840,0:41:20.720

um rang me up and said hey, what's going on? I said how do you know about this, anyway?

0:41:21.600,0:41:27.440

But the point was, it wasn't about the ethnicity of the perpetrators -

0:41:27.440,0:41:33.120

that it was AN issue - THE issue was the fact that these vulnerable young girls had been not listened

0:41:33.120,0:41:39.920

to, that we've left them behind and then up and down the country, all over the country they are simply

0:41:40.560,0:41:46.400

allowed to suffer with impunity and the perpetrators, with impunity, are able to harm them because the

0:41:46.400,0:41:53.600

authorities have said you don't matter. THAT was the issue and that is where we needed to

0:41:53.600,0:41:59.040

bring the change and so I was doing all of this and trying to explain it and doing interviews

0:41:59.040,0:42:03.920

on the basis of one case, trying to explain what was going on and then something happened, something even

0:42:03.920,0:42:09.280

even I wasn't ready for and that was the far right realizing that I damaged their narrative.

0:42:10.080,0:42:15.840

Their narrative was very straightforward - all British Pakistani men are all the same.

0:42:17.200,0:42:23.520

.... but there's a British Pakistani involved in the prosecution... Okay, let's deal with that. So they then put stuff on Facebook uh,

0:42:23.520,0:42:27.600

the first examples of fake news I would have been part of, been involved in and said Nazir Afzal

0:42:27.600,0:42:31.600

was the guy that didn't prosecute these guys three years previously when I was nowhere

0:42:31.600,0:42:37.600

near the North of England but their followers believed that and so, you know, I'd prosecuted the most serious

0:42:37.600,0:42:43.280

organized criminals, multiple homicides, really horrible people over these years and I've never, ever

0:42:43.280,0:42:50.000

had a demonstration outside of my home. Suddenly I had these thugs outside of my home - far right thugs

0:42:50.000,0:42:54.640

- I had to have a panic alarm placed in my house. The police officers had to teach me and my

0:42:54.640,0:43:02.160

children how to use the panic alarm. I had 17,000 emails sent to my teams in the course of a few

0:43:02.160,0:43:07.440

days calling for me to be sacked and deported. I was born in Birmingham, I don't want to go back there.

0:43:10.560,0:43:14.480

And they were determined to destroy me. I remember

0:43:15.120,0:43:18.560
my, one of my colleagues, my P.A. at the time running down the corridor with a letter in her hand

0:43:18.560,0:43:28.692
- don't show it to him, don't show it to him
- absolutely, I cannot tell you how uh proud I am of the people I work with

0:43:28.692,0:43:34.160
but they protected me from the harm and yes, let me remind you, I got every decision right in this

0:43:34.160,0:43:39.760
case and that's what happens to you because I damaged the narrative of those in the far right

0:43:39.760,0:43:44.080
and it remains to this day, I'm not joking, but I tell you my jokes earlier on....

0:43:45.040,0:43:51.280
go on Youtube. They said some nasty stuff about me, based on the lies that they've told and continue to

0:43:51.280,0:43:56.960
tell. Just one point where my office used to be I had, I was doorstepped by the British National Party on television.

0:43:56.960,0:44:02.560
You know that one? I think it's still there on Youtube - BNP TV. Nick Griffin was there -

0:44:02.560,0:44:20.693
door steps me outside to talk to me about why I'd, whatever it was and do you know? I was, I went out to have a fag - I was more concerned about the fact I didn't want my mum to see that I still had a cigarette in my hand

0:44:21.360,0:44:27.600
but , you know, this was them trying and destroy me for something I'd done which was the right thing, but then

0:44:27.600,0:44:30.640
it was important to do something different going forward. You know, it's not enough to

0:44:30.640,0:44:35.120
simply um this happens a lot actually is that you do something good and the circus leaves town and

0:44:35.120,0:44:41.360
everyone moves on. I wasn't going to let that happen - we had made mistakes as we recognized. What about all the other

0:44:41.360,0:44:47.600
mistakes we made? So uh, with uh, with my then boss we set up a national panel, inviting police

0:44:47.600,0:44:52.400
and prosecutors around the country - cases where we got stuff wrong or they thought we had

0:44:52.400,0:44:58.160
and so.... Barry Bennell was a case um, football coach, yeah? So there were plenty of cases that we

0:44:58.160,0:45:04.320
were reinstated uh resurrected in effect because of that panel and the panel work they did

0:45:04.320,0:45:10.400
and we then began putting national teams and prosecutors who were specialists in this field

0:45:10.400,0:45:16.080

um, we worked with national police chiefs uh to develop some guidelines - there were 43 sets of guidelines

0:45:16.080,0:45:21.920

uh so there are now one for all the police in the country. We, we completely re-engineered our process

0:45:22.560,0:45:28.880

and then operation Youtree was set up - Saville - people forget, Saville was after Rochdale -

0:45:30.160,0:45:36.080

People felt confident coming forward now about their, what had happened to them we had

0:45:36.080,0:45:42.000

a responsibility to respond to, to act upon. It's not enough to listen, you've got to do something

0:45:42.000,0:45:50.320

about it, you know, and I, literally, we changed the way we did everything

0:45:50.320,0:45:54.560

and also it's not just the criminal justice outcome - I remember when I prosecuted Stuart Hall - BBC presenter,

0:45:54.560,0:45:59.440

he was found guilty of the abuse of 12 girls and not guilty of one. I went to the one

0:45:59.440,0:46:03.600

uh, he was found not guilty of and I said to her I'm really sorry that I couldn't give you closure and

0:46:03.600,0:46:07.600

she looked me in the eye and said Nazir, you gave me closure at the moment you believed me -

0:46:08.560,0:46:15.040

my recovery began the moment you believed me. Never left me. Those words never left me. You don't

0:46:15.040,0:46:20.480

have to think about the outcome - it starts with how you respond to the person in front of you

0:46:21.200,0:46:25.360

and what you are listening to and what, whether you're going to act upon what it is you listen to.....

0:46:25.360,0:46:29.920

and, you know, people say why are you doing these cases - Richard would have heard of this - from 30 years

0:46:29.920,0:46:37.200

ago, 40 years ago. Well I'll tell you why and her name is Frances Andrade. Frances was a student

0:46:37.200,0:46:41.440

at Chethams music school here in Manchester in the early 80s and she was being sexually abused

0:46:41.440,0:46:49.600

by her teacher Michael Brewer OBE, he was then, and Frances had given her story to a

0:46:49.600,0:46:54.160

friend, a friend of the police who brought this prosecution and during the course of the trial,

0:46:54.160,0:46:58.560

a week after giving evidence before the jury had returned, Frances took her own life

0:46:59.840,0:47:04.240

and I remember the first thing I did was tell the Attorney General please send out a message

0:47:04.240,0:47:09.600

to the press - do not report that Frances has passed away because the jury would have to be discharged

0:47:09.600,0:47:15.520

and um, we would never get this case over the line and so..... a media ban

0:47:16.160,0:47:21.760

uh, nobody reported it until the jury came back and convicted him and then, then the next thing

0:47:21.760,0:47:30.000

is that I was being lambasted for causing Frances's death. Michael Brewer was responsible for Frances's death

0:47:30.000,0:47:37.840

it just took 30 years. People tell you that that is murder in slow motion, you know. She

0:47:37.840,0:47:47.520

was self-harming all her life. It doesn't end with, after, you know, you know, time is a healer. Heard that one? It does not

0:47:47.520,0:47:55.760

work. It's not true. Some people can, yes. Most people need support and some people never, ever heal and so

0:47:55.760,0:48:00.320

you've got to recognize that time shouldn't be a barrier to these kinds of, types of crime.

0:48:00.880,0:48:05.360

And people again used to beat me up - the Daily Mail called me the Witch Finder General for running all these

0:48:05.360,0:48:11.520

witch hunts. Witch hunts? Rolf Harris guilty, Stuart Hall guilty. They're not

0:48:11.520,0:48:17.520

witch hunts if they're convicted on the evidence in a full trial are they? but nonetheless yeah, I

0:48:17.520,0:48:23.440

don't know - somebody bought me a witch's hat which I think is probably not right, which is fine. Anyway.

0:48:25.920,0:48:29.120

but we were able to bring to justice and 2015 when I left, the Crown Prosecution service

0:48:29.760,0:48:32.880

we had the highest conviction rate for the abuse of children in our history.

0:48:33.760,0:48:38.640

It's gone backwards and some of you will know, again, just on resources -

0:48:38.640,0:48:43.040

if you lose 21,000 police officers, you lose half a million years of policing experience,

0:48:43.840,0:48:48.400

you lose prosecutors who know what they're talking about. The defense community have been starved of

0:48:48.400,0:48:54.480

funding, you know, the whole system has been starved. Is it no wonder that we are now suffering the

0:48:54.480,0:49:02.400

benefits of that? the consequence, consequences of that. So, I think we've got to, we know what needs

0:49:02.400,0:49:07.280

to work and we know we need to make it happen. We know what we can do and I was really proud, I

0:49:07.280,0:49:12.240

am pleased and delighted and honoured to be part of the massive progress that we brought back then

0:49:13.120,0:49:18.480

and it really pains me that I still have to scream and shout about it now because they're still being

0:49:18.480,0:49:23.280

abused. Some of you know I'm now the chair of the Catholic church's new safeguarding agency.

0:49:24.320,0:49:31.840

First independent chair um, yeah, there you go, um, and you know, there's only two Catholics on a board of nine

0:49:32.400,0:49:38.080

which is a credit - you know, you don't often credit the organization - I'm sure you probably don't um but

0:49:38.080,0:49:45.280

I will credit them for the fact they put a board in place where, led by a Muslim and with uh,

0:49:45.280,0:49:50.560

hardly any Catholics on it to monitor and regulate safeguarding in the Catholic

0:49:50.560,0:49:55.840

church. I wish others had thought about that. Can you? I can't imagine frankly given what Richard's

0:49:55.840,0:50:00.320

been talking about this last couple of days with the ... report that any other faith would do that ?

0:50:01.520,0:50:21.471

You know, put some experts in charge of safeguarding, makes absolutely..... How long have I got? Ten minutes, Ok....

0:50:22.774,0:50:28.400

So, I've let the service, I've now become the chief executive of the police and crime commission of the country uh so I'm trying

0:50:28.400,0:50:33.840

to bring best practice across all policing uh, and about a year in something terrible happened here

0:50:33.840,0:50:41.120

in Manchester - the arena bombing took place and um, I was approached by media saying can you talk

0:50:41.120,0:50:45.840

about this subject um, because, you know, you are firstly, you're Muslim, secondly you're

0:50:45.840,0:50:50.320

well regarded within the Muslim communities uh, you have some understanding of tactical terrorism

0:50:50.320,0:50:55.760

uh, radicalization - can you talk about this? I said, went to my board of police and crime commissioners and I said

0:50:55.760,0:50:59.840

look I'm going to talk about this - somebody needs to provide some reassurance or understanding or

0:50:59.840,0:51:07.680

whatever it is and my board uh, by majority said no and so I quit. I walked out the door and decided

0:51:07.680,0:51:14.080

that I would, what was more important was trying to provide some context and understanding about

0:51:14.080,0:51:18.480

what was happening. And then it was necessary for me to work on the... radicalisation uh to

0:51:18.480,0:51:25.040
the point where um I became a commissioner for Google. Google started funding um, small projects - they

0:51:25.040,0:51:30.320
were tackling radicalization um, you know, everything from a boxing club to the Oxford uh,

0:51:30.320,0:51:37.600
Open University doing some major work. I was doing some of that and also uh, bringing a challenge um,

0:51:38.160,0:51:43.840
it's not enough for me to simply change the law or change practice, you've got to change cultures

0:51:44.880,0:51:50.320
and, you know, I often say this about, you know, I'm a very strong believer in, in multiculturalism -

0:51:50.320,0:51:55.840
whatever that means - but I think what it means for me isn't just having diversity and diverse

0:51:55.840,0:52:00.480
thinking and diverse minds - that's what it means. Now, do you really think? hands on heart,

0:52:00.480,0:52:04.080
that Grenfell would have happened if the people who lived in Grenfell were part of

0:52:04.080,0:52:10.400
the decision-making about what cladding should go on the building? Yeah? Ignore them - we know best.

0:52:11.200,0:52:16.880
You know, that's why you have diversity of thinking, you have people in the room who have a variety of

0:52:16.880,0:52:21.040
views, some you agree with, some you don't agree with. I have tried to ensure that in every

0:52:21.040,0:52:26.320
conversation I have. It's also about challenge, you know, nobody ever called me a wallflower.

0:52:28.240,0:52:33.360
You know, there were so many occasions.... I remember one in particular in a northern town, I'm in a room with

0:52:33.360,0:52:37.840
300 men uh, it's a white ribbon day. Those of you who are unfamiliar with white ribbon day -

0:52:37.840,0:52:42.240
it's a day where male allies stand up against violence against women and girls and there were 300 men in the room

0:52:42.240,0:52:47.200
and I was there, the chief constable was there and the chief executive of the local authority was there and

0:52:47.200,0:52:52.080
before I spoke I noticed it was a tea break and I noticed that people there, the bulk of them, wanted selfies

0:52:53.440,0:52:56.320
and what struck me was that they were there because they wanted to be seen to be there.

0:52:57.440,0:53:02.800

So when I stood up and I said to them one in four of you have beaten your wives. Please stand up.

0:53:05.520,0:53:11.200

Um, they realized actually this is what you talk about - one in four women suffer domestic abuse,

0:53:11.200,0:53:16.240

one in five suffer sexual assault. 97 percent of women in the most recent survey said they

0:53:16.240,0:53:19.760

were sexually harassed - I think the other three percent didn't know that it was happening....

0:53:21.520,0:53:27.360

The point is that's the pandemic level of this pandemic and so you have to have those

0:53:27.360,0:53:30.880

difficult conversations with people who don't want to have those conversations. I remember

0:53:30.880,0:53:35.520

talking to another local authority again, up north, there was a table up front who were literally

0:53:35.520,0:53:40.000

hissing when I was challenging some of the practices that were happening in the community

0:53:40.000,0:53:46.320

around FGM or forced marriage and I realised.... afterwards, you know, afterwards, 290 great people -

0:53:46.880,0:53:50.080

table of ten in front - afterwards I was told that was the local council.

0:53:52.480,0:53:59.200

That's what we're up against, is that , you know, people with all the wrong reasons take on

0:53:59.200,0:54:04.560

these positions of power. Lesson received. positions of power, they feel that they're now

0:54:04.560,0:54:10.000

something important, special and then then last thing they want to do is to rock the boat uh, or

0:54:10.000,0:54:15.520

to say something that might 'offend' quote, unquote uh, people within their communities but actually

0:54:16.160,0:54:21.680

you know, what, when people said to me... in The Times it was reported, Nazir Afzal, why do you have a stick

0:54:21.680,0:54:26.480

to beat your own communities with for the things, for the things they do? I said, if we didn't do that,

0:54:26.480,0:54:31.040

we should have our own stick, we should beat our own communities up to solve these problems

0:54:31.040,0:54:37.440

ourselves so we don't have the State doing it for us, you know. We need to ensure that we challenge

0:54:37.440,0:54:44.560

in any, in any and every environment and it might mean that you end up on a death list or, or just simply be

0:54:44.560,0:54:49.920

ignored um, but I'm big enough to take that and it's important that we..... and it's also something

0:54:49.920,0:54:55.360

about networks - their resilience comes from the people around you providing you with support when

0:54:55.360,0:55:01.120

you have those difficult conversations which, they shouldn't be difficult but they are. When I was

0:55:01.120,0:55:06.640

in a position before currently I was doing some international work in Pakistan. So I was there

0:55:06.640,0:55:12.240

pretty much every month for a week - I'd go for a week - I don't know how I did it - and come back and I

0:55:12.240,0:55:17.680

was training judges and politicians and others in the human rights because every culture should be

0:55:17.680,0:55:22.640

based on human rights first and foremost and so I'm having this conversation and they were listening and I was

0:55:22.640,0:55:29.040

thinking actually there are more open here than back there, back here. They're more open in Pakistan, Islamabad, Lahore

0:55:31.360,0:55:34.320

than they were in certain parts of this country - I mean, what's going on?

0:55:35.040,0:55:40.000

I found this picture of the members of my family in the 70's or community in the 70's

0:55:40.000,0:55:42.080

looking like they were from a Starsky and Hutch or something

0:55:43.760,0:55:48.880

and not one of them would look like that anymore. Something has changed in the way that they

0:55:48.880,0:55:54.800

have approached life and how they've literally become something that I don't recognize anymore

0:55:55.760,0:55:59.360

and, you know, you're going to hear it from me - they will hear it from me though -

0:55:59.360,0:56:03.680

I'm glad that they invite me to come and talk to them and tell them what I don't like and I'll

0:56:03.680,0:56:08.000

stand..... you know, somebody said to me I feel very strong because you're with me. I

0:56:08.000,0:56:13.200

feel, a chief constable invited me, said to me come along and talk to, I need to talk to this uh,

0:56:13.200,0:56:17.440

place of worship uh, will you come with me? I said do you want me to talk about...? No, just hold my hand.

0:56:19.440,0:56:22.800

And then yeah, it's crazy but people don't have confidence.

0:56:23.680,0:56:29.200

They lack the ability to engage perhaps beyond the usual suspects and that's where

0:56:29.200,0:56:34.880

I have a problem as well - in community leaders. Anybody in this room know who their community leader is ?

0:56:36.160,0:56:39.840

Why then does every agency and authority want to meet the community leaders?

0:56:40.800,0:56:46.640

Because they're lazy. Because the alternative would be to go to a school uh, a wedding, a

0:56:46.640,0:56:52.442

funeral - anywhere people, where people congregate and have proper conversations with proper people talking

0:56:52.442,0:56:56.542

about the real issues that are impacting the problem. The things that really matter - our education

0:56:56.542,0:57:04.864

uh, work, the things that matter to all of us are our shared values, you know, our basic shared values

0:57:04.864,0:57:09.920

but no, I will invite the community leader to talk to me about this subject and I've wasted plenty of time

0:57:09.920,0:57:16.240

in my life talking to community leaders who lead nobody. So, we've got to be cleverer. We've got

0:57:16.240,0:57:21.280

to be uh, more, we've got to support each other when we go to those environments where perhaps its

0:57:21.280,0:57:28.400

you know, out of the ordinary. We've got to listen to the experts which, as I said, are the victims,

0:57:28.400,0:57:33.600

survivors. You know, back in, some of you know, in April last year I lost my brother to covid and

0:57:33.600,0:57:39.840

he died at home. He died at home three weeks after the government stopped testing in the community.

0:57:41.040,0:57:48.320

There was no place for him in hospital and he must have died alone and um, well, really, really

0:57:48.320,0:57:55.120

I can't even begin to tell you what it must have felt like. But then we couldn't bury him for nine days, you know, because

0:57:55.120,0:58:01.760

uh the coroners were, were drowning in it and so, again, when somebody else is going up and down

0:58:01.760,0:58:07.840

the country - Durham - um, uh, checking his eyesight, it was really important for me to challenge that

0:58:09.200,0:58:14.560

because I wasn't the only person that lost somebody. I wasn't the only person that couldn't

0:58:14.560,0:58:19.520

bury or mourn. Most of us who've lost somebody haven't been able to mourn that person that we've

0:58:19.520,0:58:24.480

lost over the last 18 months therefore we need to challenge those people who somehow

0:58:24.480,0:58:30.320

feel that's not important and that goes back to my main point about um, what's our shared values.

0:58:31.280,0:58:37.600

Tolerance is a shared value but not to the point where you harm someone - allow people to

0:58:37.600,0:58:45.120

harm someone. Too often people in agencies have said um, said to me "it's too difficult Nazir" .

0:58:46.320,0:58:50.400

It's only too difficult because you haven't tried. It's only too difficult because you're quite lazy,

0:58:51.120,0:58:56.080

you know. Go and engage. Go and listen to the people most impacted by these types of behaviours

0:58:56.080,0:59:00.400

and tell me that you don't feel energized to do something about it. And then, if you want to

0:59:00.400,0:59:05.360

do something about it, go and seek some help from others who will work with you to do this and

0:59:06.160,0:59:08.480

it doesn't matter to me quite frankly what people think of me.

0:59:09.280,0:59:17.600

Uh, I don't care. Um, I will stand by anybody that stands up against the voices of intolerance

0:59:17.600,0:59:22.640

and hate. You know, I think it's really important that we recognize we're in a bad place right now.

0:59:23.280,0:59:28.880

Honestly, I was brought up on the, what we now call, the Nolan principles - the principles of

0:59:28.880,0:59:34.800

integrity and honesty and transparency - it's a legal phrase but what the *uck happened to them? You know.

0:59:37.120,0:59:41.920

This is my, my basic point is I don't care what people do as long as they're honest

0:59:41.920,0:59:46.000

and tell us what they've done and they'll be challenged.....

0:59:46.000,0:59:52.800

We are owed that. We're owed that. I started my journey 25, 30 years - or my justice journey -

0:59:52.800,0:59:57.520

25, 30 years ago when I was at an event and I noticed this woman um - it was a forced marriage event -

0:59:57.520,1:00:01.280

I noticed this woman had her wedding ring not on this finger but on the opposite

1:00:01.280,1:00:05.200

finger of her hand and I said to her why are you wearing your wedding ring on the wrong finger?

1:00:05.760,1:00:09.600

and she said, because they beat me and forced me to marry the wrong man.

1:00:10.400,1:00:16.240

And I said... and she... I looked at her - she has a life of hopelessness, of despair, of daily rape, of

1:00:16.880,1:00:21.520

everything, all potential extinguished and yet that was the only way that she could protest.

1:00:23.200,1:00:41.840

So I made it my responsibility, as it is
your responsibility, to be her voice. Thank you
very much.

1:00:46.480,1:00:46.980

you