



Autism and Criminal Justice

Or possibly the lack of it.



Peregrine Gwillim

Married with three sons

One them has ASD

We are surviving

Police Officer for 19 years

Central and West London

Operations -280 cops.

“I don’t believe it.”



Structure

Operational Police Viewpoint

Suspects

Victims

Into the Court system

Safety and Risk



Perception
Weapons
Pressure
Mental Illness
Assumptions



Autism – first encounters

What was it like for me?

What was it like for him?

What did his parents think?



Ealing Police Training

Developed Awareness

Pressure from on high is on other areas.

Limited capacity to train.

The desire to make it happen is there.

Conflicting Priorities

Can it be made to go wider?



The Autistic Suspect.

Police Custody

Charging

CPS

The Courts



Police Contact

Right from wrong vs. Gullible

No excuses please

PACE

Appropriate adult

Social worker

Solicitor

Would a case go to court?

Intent

Recklessness

Dishonesty

Police not, in fact, all fascists



The CPS

Public interest criterion

Better than 50% chance of conviction

Integrated Prosecution Teams

How do autistic suspects fare?

Rights protected

No statutory defences

Prosecution must prove the case beyond reasonable doubt.

Sentencing would take account of needs.

Courts can provide help otherwise unavailable

Autistic Victims. The Legal System.

There is support

Legal Framework should protect

But it ends at the doors of the court room

Dependent on judges

What Happens at Court?

Testing the evidence or the person?

Autistic boy who had been abused sexually by an older relative. Endured nearly two hours of questioning. Most of it in double negatives.



The Legal Profession

“Test” the evidence against their client.
Their client entitled to the best possible
defence.

Result is a cataclysmic event for the
victim.

Is this really what we consider “Just”



The Judiciary

What is their attitude?

Thai judicial experience

How much protection do they extend to the special needs victim or witness?

What weight is given by the system to their evidence?

What guidance is given to a jury?



Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999

Special measures

Vulnerable and Intimidated

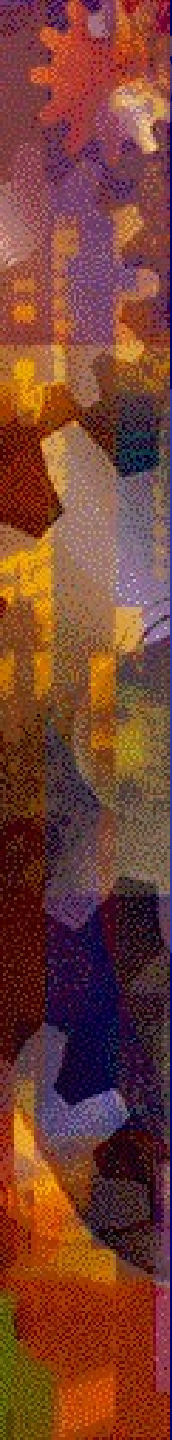
ABE interviews

Sexual Offences Act and CJ Act

Re-defined status

New legislation which specifically aims to protect those with special needs or disability.

Covers offences against those with mental disorder or learning disability.



What are the police doing nationally?

Growing awareness of diversity issues.

Encompasses much more than race.

Making strong commitments to promote the needs of the hard to reach communities.

What are we going to do?

Powerful lobby

Represent a lot of people

Can make change happen

Fertile ground?

My son is never going to be a witness
until we make it safe.