

CRIMINOLOGIST CORNER(ED)

The BSC's monthly interview with the great, the good and the...hoping for greatness

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Laura Sibret & Joanna Ashcroft

University of Portsmouth & BSC 2025 conference organisers



Where is home?

Laura: That's a bit complicated. I grew up in a small town in Italy so that's always going to feel like home but also the UK. I have moved a lot as an adult, so home is tied to wherever my partner and my dog are really.

Jo: Although I grew up in South East England, I have been living (in the middle of nowhere) in Scotland for nearly 30 years.

How did you become a Criminologist?

Laura: I had an interest in Psychology when I was deciding which degree to do for my undergraduate and randomly found out about Criminology. I became fascinated and knew it was the right path for me. Criminology allows for an exploration of so many fields and most importantly it allows us to be proactive and advocate for positive change. I wanted to be part of the difficult conversations.

Jo: A combination of a long career in IT and data science, an MSc in Behavioural Science, and a deep sense of social justice led me to take an MSc in Cybercrime which I completed in 2023. Following this, and with a desire to continue my research, I embarked on a PhD within the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Portsmouth.

Who/what inspires you?

Laura: People who speak up against injustices. People who go against the current and bring forward out-of-the-box ideas to prevent sexual offending, often facing potential backlash. People who aren't afraid to have the tough conversations and shine a light on hidden topics.

Jo: Anyone who is working toward improving fairness and justice, whether that is at a local community level or more globally. In terms of individuals - Diana Lamplugh, mother of the (assumed) murdered estate agent, Suzy Lamplugh. Following her daughter's disappearance in 1986, Diana campaigned tirelessly for women's safety, and her charity, the Suzy Lamplugh Trust became the leading resource for women being harassed in the UK. Sadly, Diana died in 2011, but her passion and determination to improve safety for women has never ceased to inspire me.

What advice would you give to your undergraduate self?

Laura: Be balanced. Studying and working are so important but making memories with friends also has a lot of value. Thankfully I took my advice during my masters.

Jo: That was a long, long time ago! I undertook my undergrad as a mature student, and part-time (while working full time), and I hated it. Although I don't think I had any real clue about what I wanted to do at the time, I think I would question myself as to why I was doing a subject I had zero passion for!

What are you most passionate about?

Laura: My family, my dog, friends and travel.

Jo: My pets, particularly my new puppy! And being out in nature - I am fortunate to live on the edge of a very large forest which is amazing for walks and cycling.

Which book that you haven't read do you most want to read?

Laura: *Crime and Punishment* by Dostoevsky, my father always tells me to read more classics. To his dismay, I have always been one to prefer the escapism of great fantasy novels.

Jo: *The Silmarillion* by J.R.R. Tolkien - I did start it many years ago, and never managed to get through it.

What would you have done if you hadn't become a criminologist?

Laura: I think I would have been a biologist. I always joke that later in life I will go back to university and do a degree in it for the fun of it.

Jo: I would still be working either in IT or data.

You are part of the BSC Conference team at Portsmouth, what will be your involvement in the conference?

Laura: Alongside Jo, I am responsible for the organization of the PGR day which starts off the conference. I will of course also present the following days but I am keeping myself free on the actual PGR day so it can run smoothly.

Jo: Laura, myself, and our enthusiastic sub-committee, have been busy organising the PGR day - liaising with speakers, processing abstracts, and arranging the evening drinks, it's all been happening! I will also be there on the day and I will be running one of the workshops in the morning. I am especially looking forward to meeting all the PGRs that will be coming along.

What can we expect at the Conference?

Laura: Thought provoking! We have so many great presenters and some really challenging topics which I think will generate some wonderful discussions!

Jo: The whole conference is shaping up to be a great week with some inspirational plenary speakers. Having attended the conference last year, I know the panel sessions will be full of interesting research and thoughtful

questions, plus of course, loads of networking and discussions taking place (sometimes over a G&T!)

What do you hope to do after the conference?

Laura: I really want to start publishing my research and hopefully embark on some interesting projects along the way.

Jo: Loads of data analysis and writing - I have amassed a massive stack of data over the last 18 months which I dearly want to get to grips with.

And finally, please share one criminological book, one album, and one luxury item you would take to your desert island...

Laura:
Criminological book - *A Long Dark Shadow* by Allyn Walker
Album - *Stick Season* by Noah Kahan
Luxury Item - a survival guide

Jo:
Criminological book - *The Women of the Far Right* by Eviane Leidig
Album - *Heroes* by David Bowie
Luxury Item - a decent pillow

Thank you Laura and Jo, we look forward to seeing you at the 2025 BSC conference in Portsmouth (ed).

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DO YOU enjoy being scrutinised by strangers? Are there pressing issues you would like to shout about? Or do you just have a new book or article you would like to plug? If so then please get in touch and you could be the next face of 'Criminologist Corner(ed)'. Email steven.rawlings@britsocrim.org

next month...

Dr Sarah Waite - Leeds Beckett University