

CRIMINOLOGIST CORNER(ED)

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

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extraordinary. And some remarkable human rights lawyers who tirelessly work for individual justice.

Three books that have been an abiding influence are Foucault's *Madness and Civilisation* because it illuminated, and continues to resonate with, the experience of practicing psychiatry in a secure hospital; Judith Herman's *Trauma and Recovery* which expanded my understanding of traumatic experience; and Michael Ignatieff's *The Needs of Strangers*, whose summary of the welfare role of the state has been a touchstone: "It is this solidarity among strangers, this transformation through the division of labour of needs into rights and rights into care that gives us whatever fragile basis we have for saying that we live in a moral community."

What advice would you give to your undergraduate self?

I always doubted my academic ability, so probably it would be the same as I give some students now: have a bit more confidence in what you can do. (I wasn't one of the students to whom the opposite message needs to be given – always question whether you are wrong and whether what you are stating is really true).

What is your greatest fear?

The rational one is running out of time to finish the work I want to write up; the neurotic one is being hated.

What are you most passionate about?

I see suffering as being at the heart of criminology. It is there in the antecedents of offending, the experience of victims, and it is imposed by the criminal justice system. We should strive to

mitigate it, as far as is possible, in each of these domains.

Who would play you in the film of your life?

Portrayals of psychiatrists in films tend to be awful – melodramatic, sentimental or sinister. In a very different fictional world, the actor I most admired – for eschewing those qualities – was the late Alec Guinness playing George Smiley in the BBC adaptations of the Le Carré novels.

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

I have always wished I could read and understand Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. I bought it in 1974 but it is completely beyond me.

What criminological/academic work are you involved in at the moment?

My main interest has been in the psychological and social consequences of wrongful conviction and imprisonment and I want to write more substantively on the series of cases I have seen over the last forty years, and what they tell us about the experience of injustice and impacts on life histories. I also continue to teach at the Institute in courses on psychiatry and criminal justice, and victimology. I'm still (for another year) one of the Northern Ireland Sentence Review Commissioners. It has been a huge privilege to be involved in their work since the 1998 Good Friday Agreement.

What do you hope to do next?

To write more on wrongful convictions, and on issues in the ethics of forensic

psychiatry. And, whilst I can, to continue long distance walking.

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

When I was younger I had the (impossible) fantasy that I would like to have an academic post in philosophical theology. Had I not joined the Institute of Criminology as a University Lecturer in the 1980s I guess I would have aimed to become a clinical academic forensic psychiatrist in an NHS teaching hospital. I am glad I didn't have to. The Institute has been a wonderful environment and interdisciplinary home.

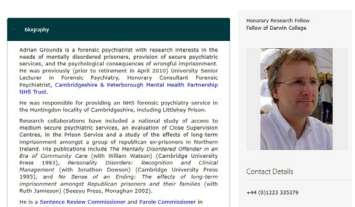
And finally, please share the one Criminological book, one album and one luxury item you would take to your desert island.....

Book – I would take the last edition of the *Oxford Handbook of Criminology*. It would remind me of good colleagues and friends who have contributed to it; and on the desert island I would at last have time properly to learn some criminology.

Album – If it had to be one it would probably be a recording of a sung Russian Orthodox liturgy.

Luxury Item – I'm learning line dancing, so I'd like a video feed to a good line dancing class if that is allowed.

Read more about Adrian's work here:



next issue...

Dr Ian Mahoney - Senior Lecturer in Criminology, NTU & BSC 2026 Conference organiser