



Καλημέρα. Good morning.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. It is such a pleasure to be in Athens. My first visit was in 2015 to talk to senior police border commanders about the importance of wildlife crime and the international connections with terrorism. Today, I will talk often about how crimes against animals and crimes against people interconnect and I know you heard much about this link and cycle of violence yesterday too.

When animals are protected, people are protected, too.

My presentations this year are called '45'. It is 45 years since I started my police training journey. At first, I was working with refugees displaced by conflict, and I then spent many weeks focused on helping severely disabled people, those made vulnerable through misfortune or through changing political landscapes. Both experiences left an impression with me, a closer understanding about why as those charged with public protection, we must care for those that rely upon us. Policing and criminal justice is about protecting the vulnerable in our society. That includes animals.

Over the last 45 years, I have held several roles in policing, from patrol officer to a senior detective responsible for serious crime and terrorism. I specialised in undercover work, criminal motivation, and international collaboration.

Since retirement, I have been able to combine my passion for animals and my policing skills across many countries. My favourite, of course, is Greece, and I have good friends here. I've visited cat colonies around the country and investigated the crossover between tourism expansion and loggerhead turtle conservation on the Ionian islands. I learned much talking to vets at the University of Thessaloniki.

I have seen great change since that first visit in 2015 and appreciate how critical the work of Zero Stray Pawject is in helping not just animals but all of Greek society. This project is being seen around the world as an example of best practice.

Naturewatch Foundation that I work with is a charity in the UK. They are responsible for reaching a global audience through World Animal Day on October 4 and it was an honour to include what is happening here in Greece on our website for others to see.

My international policing and travelling to train and investigate crimes as a retired officer show me the importance of learning from each other whilst understanding and recognising local needs, communities, and cultures. My presentation today will explain that when crimes against animals are taken seriously, people and communities are safer, too. I will talk about specific cases that include horrific cruelty, but there will be no graphic images on screen. I will mention shocking statistics and speak about some terrible crimes, but as Nathaniel Branden said, *"The first step towards change is awareness. The second step is acceptance."*

And we cannot be aware if we don't take part in exceptional conferences such as these.

So, I'd like to say a huge thank you to those that organised this event. It is an impressive amount of work and by bringing us all here, you have already made such a difference for animals. We now have a responsibility to work together to make animals, and therefore people, safer.

This book called *Defending Animals*, written by a friend of mine, Dr Kendra Coulter in Canada, is an excellent read. It is written in English and is available online. It is a comprehensive guide of animal protection systems around the world. The book opens with this quote from Archbishop Desmond Tutu from South Africa, *"There comes a point where we need to stop pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they are falling in."*

I'm often asked by those already busy with policing duties and overloaded work schedules how can I possibly deal with animal cases on top of everything else?

That isn't how crime prevention works. When effectively done crime prevention should create time and increase resource. We know that because animal cruelty is an indicator crime, we can use this knowledge to prevent violence offences happening in the first place and thereby make time for other work, for domestic abuse cases, for homicide investigation, for community safety.

It takes more effort saving people who have fallen in the river than preventing it happening in the first place.

Let me give you an example. At the end of my policing career, I was responsible for tracking and trying to intercept travelling terrorists as part of the 'Prevent' programme of the UK Government. When I started the project, we were having success with 1 in 4 of our operations. Using a combination of criminal analysis and understanding criminal motivation, in other words, asking ourselves, "What would the terrorist do to avoid law enforcement?" We altered our operations and had a success with 1 in 2.5 operations. That gave us extra policing resource to tackle crimes such as human trafficking.

The police in New Jersey were called to a report of a man who had stabbed the family dog. They asked the right question, 'Why?' and identified that Gregory Lepsky had done so through a misguided radicalisation to Islam. Investigating further, they uncovered a plot to explode a pressure cooker bomb in New York City. Crime prevention doesn't get much better than that.

In 1751, an artist in London called William Hogarth was a campaigner highlighting social issues in the city. One of his engraving works, 'The Four Stages of Cruelty' shows how a boy called Tom Nero grew up in London being cruel to animals.

Each print depicts a different stage in the life of the fictional Tom Nero. Beginning with the torture of a street dog as a child in the 'First Stage of Cruelty', Nero progresses to beating his horse as a man in the 'Second Stage of Cruelty', and then to robbery and murder in the third stage called 'Cruelty in Perfection'. Finally, in the 'Reward of Cruelty', he receives what Hogarth warns is the inevitable fate of those who start down the path Nero has followed: his body is taken after his execution as a murderer. The prints were intended as a form of campaign; Hogarth was dismayed by the routine acts of cruelty he witnessed on the streets of London.

What Hogarth did, we now call 'Crime Pattern Analysis'.

For over 250 years, as a society we have known that those harm animals, can harm people too.

In 1824, exactly 200 years ago, the RSPCA was launched in the UK as a charity that would care for the nation's animals. A small group of people met in a London coffee shop, determined to change animals' lives. They created the society that became the RSPCA, sparking a movement that spread around the world. Before that time, cruelty to animals was widely accepted. Animals were used for working, food, or entertainment. Setting dogs on chained bulls or bears was considered a sport. Things had to change.

The first-ever law protecting animals was the Cruel Treatment of Cattle Act of 1822, often called Martin's Act, after Richard Martin who helped get the law passed. He was one of 22 people who went on to meet on 16 June 1824. By forming what became the RSPCA, they prompted a vital social shift in how people thought about animals.

In 1829 the Metropolitan Police was formed as a need to begin preventative policing. Before the passing of the Metropolitan Police Act 1829, law enforcement among the general population in England was carried out by unpaid parish constables who were elected, and later appointed by the local justice of the peace. In certain circumstances, such as serious public disorder, the army would intervene to support the local authorities.

To put some context on the dates, fictional Sherlock Holmes was believed to be born in 1854 and Jack the Ripper prowled Whitechapel from 1888 to 1891.

The UK is privileged to have both the RSPCA and the Metropolitan Police, one caring for animals and one for people. What is important though is that there must be multi-agency working at all levels because gaps in information sharing can cause safeguarding issues, often with a tragic consequence.

The history of the Metropolitan Police for me is personally important as my Great Great Grandfather was a Detective in London 180 years ago, followed by my Great Grandfather. I have been fortunate to assist the force recently help shape some training and communications around animals harmed within domestic abuse cases. We have a recently updated DARA (Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment) process that recognises the seriousness of when a perpetrator uses a pet to coercively control the victim. Officers complete a questionnaire each time they visit a domestic abuse case, and the first question is about harm to pets. Last week I was again in Scotland Yard launching this document and meeting the police officers of today. It contains reports of 50 recent cases where an animal was harmed as part of the process hurting people.

We have changed police training to include how animals can be part of domestic abuse and external police communication has been updated too.

Discussed some cases.

Yesterday we heard about the seriousness of animal sexual abuse. It's a horrific subject and one that must be spoken about if we are to understand the importance of it in society. An investigation in the UK last month showed that children as young as 3 were being manipulated online into bestiality.

We have insufficient laws in the UK on this subject as there are gaps that are exploited by abusers, but we do have a piece of legislation that outlaws online 'extreme pornography', mainly used for child exploitation. The law came about because of a homicide case in my policing area and time where the defendant was found to be using non-fatal strangulation borne from an obsession with extreme pornography, and this ultimately led to the murder of Jane Longhurst. When I looked at over 1000 cases under this law over a 12-month period, I saw that 73% also had connections to animal sexual abuse. In one area of England alone almost all the sex offenders convicted under this legislation had possessed animal sexual abuse images.

I'll now talk over some recent cases.

The first was someone in the UK who was having a sexual online relationship with someone in the USA. This relationship often centred about harming animals and on one occasion the perpetrator live-streamed the sickening killing of a neighbour's cat for their mutual gratification.

In the location where the individual lived, there was a brutal murder, they were led to this suspect, identified the previous animal abuse and that the perpetrator had assembled a 'murder kit' in preparation for the killing.

In court, the prosecution wanted to show the suspect had a propensity for violence and, therefore, disclosed the horrific cat killing. However, the suspect had only been charged with Criminal Damage for the killing of the cat because, at the time of the offence, that specific crime carried a longer maximum jail term. The perpetrator was convicted of murder but had that failed, what would be the problems of charging a clearly dangerous individual with criminal damage?

Kayla Bourque was born in Romania and adopted with her younger brother to Canada. She was identified as having psychological issues when she wrote a violent story at school. She was sent to a psychiatric hospital she tried to strangle a 12-year-old. Her attempted murder charge was lowered to simple assault, and she was given probation only. Her psychiatrist stated she was a 'Sexual sadist extremely aroused at aggression and torture to children'.

She then admits to friends about killing her family cat and dog and is sent to jail for 2 months. When arrested, she also had a 'kill kit' or a 'murder kit' with her.

Her story continues. She tells others she has a wish to kill a homeless person. She starts to study forensics. Police investigation identifies she is part of 'like-minded' online groups. Within these groups, she is known to be committing sexual acts around animals. She finally commits a murder of a homeless person.

The tragic story lives on, she serves more jail time and is now released on probation with conditions not to be near weapons, animals or any internet enable phones. She cannot associate with Under 18s or have any intimate relationships. Are your current processes and systems robust enough to manage something like this?

In 2018, I had the opportunity to start working with the patrol police of Ukraine as part of an ongoing Naturewatch Foundation project. There was already compassion for animals in the country and my role was to explain to police officers why taking animal crimes seriously mattered. These images that are across the media have been iconic since the war started. Animals are an integral part of communities.

But it hasn't always been this way. In 2007, three youths killed street animals and then committed 21 murders and eight attempted murders using the same modus operandi. The case led to further copycat killings in Irkutsk.

New laws now recognise the seriousness of animal abuse, felony crimes carry 8 year jail terms, years 5-8 of which are reserved for those that harm animals intentionally when children are present. Article 300 of the criminal code also covers an incitement to encourage others to be cruel.

Recently, we've been able to lower the age of criminal responsibility and introduce laws to prevent the boarding up of buildings where there are resident cat populations and to outlaw euthanasia as a means of roaming animal population control.

One officer from Ivano-Frankivsk explains about the direct correlation between animal and human abuse and what they see with children who witness either. She highlights why it is critical to investigate animal crimes correctly from the outset in order to prevent other crimes.

Now, the police work alongside children showing them compassion and responsibilities towards animals. They post daily about this on social media and trust in the police service increases consequently. This in turn reduces other crimes.

For several years, I investigated dog fighting around the world, including here in Greece. This led to documentaries on the BBC and Vice. In 2017, we saw at least 35 suspect dog fighting in Greece and briefed the police.

Since then, there have been over 150 arrests in various countries and many crimes detected, guns, cash and drugs recovered.

Briefly, I want to mention puppy farms across Europe, organised crime built around the desire for designer dogs. A law known as Lucy's Law that banned the sale of dogs and cats through pet shops was assisted because we managed to show through surveillance small puppies being brought into the country from Ireland and Romania through the back door of pet stores and sold without mothers being present.

The law in Africa has been a challenge to change around animal welfare, but in Namibia the Ministry of Justice made a speech after hearing about the animal human violence link in anticipation of what critics may say about wasting time on animals when there is human abuse, murder, and torture. The Minister explains that all the evidence shows that by focusing on animal welfare it is also possible to focus on the welfare of women and child who are abused in secret.

Lastly, there are two recent events that may be of interest.

- EU guidance A9-0234/2023 is a directive about domestic abuse. Paragraph 39 now includes references to animals harmed within coercive control cases.
- UN General Comment 26 now requires all countries signed up to the treaty on child protection to ensure legally they are protected from exposure to animal and domestic abuse.

All domestic homicides in the UK are subject to strict reviews. In 90% of these murders, the victim had some previous contact with the police about the abuse. Understanding coercive control and getting the initial response right can save lives. That first call for help could be a case of animal cruelty.

Thank you for listening. My contact details are here. This dog I'm with is Adele. She was left at a rescue in Ukraine because her family was in the military.

Go upstream and find out why people are falling in the river.

Thank you. Ευχαριστώ

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