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#403: Copping it globally: The rise and reach of transnational policing

VOICEOVER

This is Up Close, the research talk show from The University of Melbourne, Australia.

PETER CLARKE

Welcome to Up Close, I'm Peter Clarke. Police have been active within societies in various forms and with differing functions for thousands of years. In the 21st century, police forces remain the key means of maintaining order within defined borders. They're able to use forceful and intrusive powers on behalf of local and national authorities, ostensibly within legal guidelines. Historically, policing sprang from local communities and built from there into regional and national systems. These days, policing is clearly transnational, responding to the impacts and imperatives of globalisation.

We all know about Interpol, but the dynamics of transnational policing go much further than that. Yes, terrorism and other organised crime have meant extensive cross-border cooperation and partnerships to combat those threats. But now we see such examples as police from mainland China on duty at Italian and French tourist hotspots to reassure Chinese visitors. A kind of globalised blending of policing techniques and cultures has emerged and is expanding.

So how is transnational policing shaping local policing? How does this affect local citizens and what does the future hold for transnational policing? Our guest on Up Close today is a veteran researcher of international policing and an adviser to various police forces. His research focus has included examination of policing of minorities, ethnic profiling and the controversial stop-and-search techniques of many police forces. Professor Ben Bowling is Deputy Dean of the Dickson Poon School of Law at King's College London and author of several books, including his most recent published in 2015, the four-volume *Global Policing and Transnational Law*. Professor Bowling is in Australia to deliver the 2017 John Barry Memorial Lecture in criminology, here at the University of Melbourne.

Ben Bowling, welcome to Up Close.

BEN BOWLING

Thank you Peter, I'm delighted to be here.

PETER CLARKE

I'd like to try to place contemporary global policing in an historical context first to give us a bit of ground to work with. You have research police in many jurisdictions, in the UK of course, the United States, the Caribbean and here in Australia. Where does the typical modern police force fit within that arc of history as police forces evolved?

BEN BOWLING

Well I think that we will look at the contemporary period as one in which we see a transition from policing based on local and national systems to one which is much more transnational, much more globally linked. When you look back at the 19th century and you see that policing has stemmed in many places from a colonial policing model where colonial territories linked back to the metropolis in various ways. In the 20th century, the post-colonial period, the evolution of national policing systems, with the police authority, it has been very much constrained by national boundaries.

I think what we're seeing now is a push towards and a transition towards a much more transnationally, much more globally linked policing system. Now that doesn't mean to say that local policing disappears or that national policing goes away. Those things will persist and indeed there's an imperative by many local police officers, to some extent, to resist the process of trans-nationalisation. But in various different ways, you can see that a global policing model is being developed by organisations as you've mentioned, Interpol, in the European context, Europol, by the development of technological means to share information. So what we're seeing is the police powers are migrating beyond the boundaries of the nation state to become much more transnationally linked.

PETER CLARKE

Ben in your observations of police, you've worked very closely with police as part of your role. Do you perceive an immeasurable sense of what police see as their role and their powers? Can you look right back into the 19th century and see something that's unchanged in contemporary police forces?

BEN BOWLING

Yes, I think that the essence of policing is about the capacity to use coercive and intrusive powers and although the focus today is on transnational organised crime and has historically been the police response to criminal behaviour, in actual fact most of what the police do is solve problems, solve various different kinds of social conflicts. The great police researcher, Egon Bittner, talked about the police as being

the body who would do something about something that is happening that shouldn't be happening right now. That could be a whole variety of different things from the person who falls ill on the street, or sudden death or accidents and emergencies or conflicts within the domestic setting or things out in the street.

So of course the control of crime is part of what the police do, but actually although the police are preoccupied with the crime fighting, they're actually occupied with peacekeeping. So that idea of the police role as being around maintaining order, using surveillant and coercive powers to solve a whole wide range of human conflicts as they appear in society, that I think is unchanged. I think that actually is quite important when you're thinking about policing the transnational context, because as society becomes more transnationally linked through the internet, through global travel, through the linkages in financial markets and so on, actually a lot of what policing is about is not only about crime control, it's also about order maintenance and peacekeeping.

PETER CLARKE

I mentioned Interpol in the introduction and of course now we have Europol, which is part of the EU and those borders have broken down largely; with Brexit things may shift a little. Take us back. When did policing start to extend beyond national borders?

BEN BOWLING

I think we can say that policing has a transnational element since the very birth of policing. If you look back to the great exhibitions of the 19th century, you find that police officers from around the world and from across Europe, the USA, Russia and so on, would attend, but in very small numbers. This would be ad hoc, sporadic, incidental, responding to particular kinds of security and criminal threats, like the great anarchist problems of the late 19th century or the white slave trade and so on.

But it's really only in the post-war period that you see a real qualitative and quantitative shift in the degree of transnational policing. So Interpol, which was created in 1923, really begins to generate energy and to grow rapidly at the end of the 20th century. Interpol is now a very ambitious organisation with a very powerful communications network which links all the police forces in the world together and is nested within the national central bureau of every police force.

At the same time, you see the growth of policing within the UN mandate, so this really doesn't begin until the post-war period. The idea of an international police force goes back a long way, but it's really not until the 1960s with the United Nations having a role in peacekeeping around the world, where the military are involved in keeping peace in failed and failing states. Alongside the UN blue helmets came UN civilian police and that really begins in the 1960s in Congo and then in Cyprus and that's now grown so that the United Nations police units are now numbering as many as 17,000 police officers in what they call formed police units who are available to provide police support to UN missions around the world.

But in the latter part of the 20th century and into the 21st century, into the present century, when the ambitions of UN police and the ambitions of Interpol really begin to show themselves; just a few years ago the United Nations and Interpol announced the development of a global policing doctrine, the ambition of a global police force that will be able to use international databases, that will be able to use the sort of spread of both surveillant and coercive power in order to respond to the problems of crime and disorder that stretch beyond national boundaries. The argument is that since crime and disorder stretch beyond national boundaries, policing must do too and this, I think, is a real challenge to the 20th century policing model where policing is constrained by the nation state. That really is now shifting to a policing model which should be borderless, which allow police power to migrate well beyond the boundaries of the nation state.

Now the oil and glue that kind of lubricates and holds this transnational policing network together are the international liaison officers, the Australian Federal Police, there's a large number, I believe there are more than 200 Australian police officers serving overseas, the UK National Crime Agency has more than 140 liaison officers and there are many more other police officers working internationally. The United States of America through the Federal Marshall's Office, the Drugs Enforcement Administration, the FBI, have a huge network of legal attachés. The FBI's ambition is to have a legal attaché, an overseas police officer, in every country in the world.

So what we're now seeing is a kind of network of liaison officers working overseas, usually in their embassies, to solve problems that are of concern to their home nation. You see this network particularly amongst Western countries, developed countries of the world, but increasingly, almost nothing is known about this, is the emergence of these Asian nations actually having liaison officers of their own. So South Korea, for example, has a liaison officer in London and there's a growing network of Chinese liaison officers around the world. So in addition to Interpol, Europol and the United Nations Police, you also have national police agencies working overseas creating a kind of very interesting and rather seamless web of liaison officers collaborating with one another to kind of solve problems of mutual concern around the world.

[Music]

PETER CLARKE

That's our guest, criminologist Ben Bowling on vocals with his band Doc Bowling and His Blues Professors, singing "Wannabe Outlaw Blues". On Up Close today, we're talking with Ben about transnational policing. I'm Peter Clarke.

Ben, of course these days terrorism is front of mind for most citizens when they think about transnational crime, but what's the broader range of transnational crimes global police forces deal with? What are the most common ones, what are the most challenging ones?

BEN BOWLING

Well I think there's a kind of precursor question here, which is about, in a sense, what should the police be focusing on, what are the things in society which are making us most unsafe. So I'll come back to that in a second, but the paradigm example of transnational police cooperation is the war on drugs. This really developed from the 1970s onwards, with a huge investment on the part of the USA in particular, but then increasingly other countries in posting liaison officers around the world, through the UN drugs and crime program. So I would say that the trafficking in psychotropic and narcotic drugs is the kind of the big area. Debates around regulation and management of the global drugs problem is beginning to shift, but I would say drugs is a key example.

Organised crime, much of which just kind of grew out of the profits made from the drugs trade has led to the posting of liaison officers and I would say probably the thing which is most exercising police officers at the moment is cybercrime. We've seen the use of malware and ransomware that have affected very many countries in the world simultaneously, so coordinated attacks of the spreading of computer viruses, the use of various different kinds of hacking, dark web, where all kinds of deeply disturbing and unpleasant things happen to do with child exploitation online, for example, the distribution of drugs and weapons. Then I think a form of crime which has the most kind of human impact relates to modern slavery and the trafficking of human beings. So there are certainly very serious threats to human life and safety that are happening in the transnational space.

In terms of prioritisation, it tends to be the case that wider society will leave the questions of prioritisation to the police service itself. They're the experts, they're the technocratic experts, now let them get on with it. One of the things that I would like to see is a much more open, public debate around the security threats facing the wider world. I think the things which are really most likely to make us unwell as societies and as human beings in the future, will probably be things like environmental destruction, the pollution and the dumping of toxic waste, the dumping of plastics into the oceans, which will eventually come back through the fish into our diets.

So I think that what we really need to be doing is having very wide debate around what are the things that are making us most unsafe in the world and I suspect that rather than it being narcotic and psychotropic drugs, it's probably more likely to be the destruction of the environment and the dumping of dangerous chemicals at sea.

PETER CLARKE

All those things you describe still come under the rubric of maintaining order?

BEN BOWLING

Absolutely. If we think about policing for a moment in terms of its goals, the maintenance of safety, order, essentially keeping society safe, we in a globalised

world, as individuals, have a very limited capacity to change those things for ourselves. In the same way that the justification for police is to have a kind of neutral state-sanctioned organisation with a monopoly on the use of coercive force to provide good order, safety in the community, we also need to have that in relation to the global community. So we really need to have, I think, a kind of global discussion about the threats to our life and limb, to our security and to our wellbeing and to our order and to think about how best can we achieve those things.

Some of those mechanisms to maintain peaceful societies and safe societies will happen in neighbourhoods, but other kinds of problems, such as the trafficking in firearms, terrorism, environmental harms, those are things which can only really be tackled on a global scale and I think scaling up this discussion so we have a global debate involving the entire world actually and thinking about our own responsibilities and engaging with that debate, how we would wish to task the police services of the world to respond on our behalf, that I think is a debate that really needs to be had.

PETER CLARKE

You talked about technology and obviously the digital revolution has provided both the opportunity for increased amount of crime and great tools for combating that crime, but it also has brought about an incredible increase in tempo generally in our social and economic and political lives. Speed lies at the heart of some of these problems?

BEN BOWLING

Absolutely. I think the evidence is beginning to emerge that cyber-enabled crime, whether predatory financial crime, such as online fraud, hacking into bank accounts, hacking into social media to access personal details, those kinds of problems I think are going to be growing year on year. Questions on cybersecurity, the way in which the systems that we rely on, hospitals, industry, transport systems, are now clearly vulnerable to attacks by cybercriminals. Police work, of course, is also enabled by technology. If you look at the technological systems that hold together the European policing system, the Schengen Information System, which provides a way to communicate amongst the police forces of Europe, the Interpol's I-24/7 communication system and their databases, these are mechanisms that enable police forces to share intelligence in real time.

But it's not just the structured institutionalised networks that are important here. It's also the horizontal, officer-to-officer contact, which is very important. So my work in the West Indies, one of the things that I came away from that research in 2010 with in the book, *Policing the Caribbean*, was that the invention of the mobile phone had probably done more than anything else to increase the extent, the nature and the depth of police cooperation. So whereas up until the end of the 1980s, early 1990s, police officers in the West Indies who wished to communicate with one another would have to go to police headquarters where there was probably the only international line. Now if you're the drugs commander in the Jamaica Constabulary

Force and you want to speak to your contact in the FBI, you pick up your mobile phone and you speak to them and this is entirely outside of the purview of the senior management in the police organisation and this is happening across Europe, across the world. The police officers are linked to one another through the device which is held in every police officer's pocket.

PETER CLARKE

Ben, you argue that globalisation, that broad tag we use to describe all that we're experiencing now, is essentially neoliberal in character. How does it modulate policing practises and policies today?

BEN BOWLING

The idea of neoliberalism really is an ideological position which says let the market rule, very much withdrawing the involvement of the state in the management of the economy and in social life more generally. Now a consequence of that is that the ultimate free market capitalists, so the gangster capitalists, those who have seen opportunities that have emerged from free markets and for the free movement of goods and to some extent of labour, have exploited those opportunities. So that has created really enormous problems for governments in attempting to regulate their borders, to regulate their financial systems and I think that perhaps the epitome of this is the internet where the capacity to regulate that as a market, as an economic system, as a financial system, increasingly blockchain and bitcoin and the emergence of the dark web, these are the kind of far reaches of a neoliberal system which lie outside of the control of any government, certainly outside the control of the nation state.

So when you've got a human activity which extends well beyond national borders, the challenge then is how do policing systems that are bounded by nation states, which are supposed to be accountable to some extent to some local or national political authority, how can they respond to those problems and the answer, I think, we're seeing from Interpol and from the United Nations and from other organisations is the emergence of a much more borderless form of policing.

PETER CLARKE

If I'm living in a street where there's a big problem with thievery, with vandalism, with tyres being slashed on our cars, etcetera, I think the last thing on our mind might be bitcoin. Is there a real tension between allocating resources, policing resources, for local policing and what we're describing now, globalised transnational policing? What are those tensions, I guess I'm asking and how are they resolved?

BEN BOWLING

Well I would say that the first time that the issue of transnational policing really confronted me personally was when I was approached by a divisional commander in

the West End of London. This officer came to speak to me and said, I have a problem in my neighbourhood around the theatres of the West End. There's a large amount of crack, crack cocaine, rock cocaine being sold on the streets, this is being distributed to sex workers and it's generating large amounts of disorder and crime in the neighbourhood, the theft of the clients of prostitutes, for example, various different kinds of pickpocketing and robbery. He said, but you know, we don't grow coca here in London. He said, I suspect that this crack cocaine is coming from specific routes, via West Indies, from the Andes originally, but via the West Indies, through neighbourhood based, through family based networks of organised crime.

So here was a local crime problem that was not local in origin. It's origins, in terms of the drugs themselves and the highly disordered and disorderly markets and the crime problems with which it was associated, were transnationally linked. So although you're of course absolutely right, local communities may well not be interested in bitcoin, but they might be interested in the designer drugs and the new pharmaceuticals which are being purchased using bitcoin from the dark web which may well be creating particular kinds of harms within their local communities. So the idea that no man is an island, no community is an island which can cut itself off from the tides of serious organised crime which are coming from elsewhere. So the challenges for people with their local communities, including the police, see the problems of crime and disorder not just as local problems, but as local problems that are transnationally connected.

PETER CLARKE

Sitting here all the time as we're having this discussion is the notion and the experience of accountability and when we move on in a moment to talk about stop and search, that's really at the heart of that. But is police practice, transnational police practice, outpacing political and policy control and guidance within democracies?

BEN BOWLING

The short answer is, yes, it is very much so. So the colonial model was designed to be the policing of strangers by strangers. The British colonial model tended to import police officers from elsewhere, managed and led by police officers from the United Kingdom and from Ireland, but the posting of police officers from one part of the world to another. Now when that model came to the end in the mid part of the 20th century, the shift was very much towards local accountability where police would be accountable to some kind of local political authority and also regulated and governed at a national level too.

Now once police power begins to move beyond national boundaries where police power is being exercised in one place on the authority of police from elsewhere, the questions of accountability become massively problematic. If you look at the case, Mr Derek Bond, who is a British pensioner on holiday in South Africa, unfortunately a man by the name of Derek Lloyd Sykes used the name Derek Bond as an alias. So

when Derek Bond arrived in South Africa, this is in 2003, an Interpol red notice, which is a notice that a person is wanted elsewhere, it's not quite an international arrest warrant, but has something of that effect, Derek Bond was questioned at the airport and then when he was on holiday in a game park in KwaZulu-Natal, was arrested by the South Africa Police, who were advised by the FBI that he was in fact Derek Lloyd Sykes.

Derek Bond was held in Durban Police Station for 20 days, a 73-year-old man, unblemished record, a Rotarian, a grandfather, a retired engineer and found that he was in a kind of hall of mirrors and unable to show that he was in fact the real Derek Bond. So this is a case of an arrest warrant issued by the US FBI in the USA, conveyed via Interpol to the South Africa Police, with the encouragement and the exaltation of the FBI legal attaché in Pretoria, Mr Bond is held in a concrete cell in Durban police station and finds himself, if you like the victim of transnational policing. But the pursuit of global justice actually has created massive injustice for this elderly man.

So the challenge then is, where does accountability lie? Does the error and it was an error, case of mistaken identity, lie with the US authorities? Well they were exempt from accountability through US legislation. Was it the fault of Interpol for conveying information which turned out to be false? Well very little that can be done about that. South Africa Police Service would say that they were acting on good faith with the exaltation and encouragement of the USA. Now this is not a solitary case. There are many other cases and probably the extraordinary rendition cases are the ones that are most evident in this context. But now what we're seeing is that police power authorised from one place is being executed in another place and the question of where exactly does accountability lie in that context is highly problematic.

In the same way that you might find that most countries have an independent police complaints authority or some kind of police authority to whom you can complain or courts where you can take civil action, in cases of transnational policing, the police can be on boundaries what the correct legal forum would be to take action, what authority you might wish to complain to, how you might ensure that your life and liberty is protected in that context, is highly problematic. So there's this kind of push towards transnational, towards global policing, without any system yet in place to ensure transnational or global accountability.

PETER CLARKE

I'm Peter Clarke. This is Up Close from The University of Melbourne in Australia. In this episode, Ben Bowling, Professor of Criminology at King's College London. He's exploring with us the fraught area of transnational policing. Ben, I'm old enough to remember when the British bobby, 'allo, 'allo, 'allo, wasn't armed and was a rather pseudo friendly sort of character. These days the average policeman is more at the Darth Vader end of things, isn't it? Militarisation of police, is that part of transnational policing and what's the cause?

BEN BOWLING

Yes, starting in the 1980s really in the UK, police began to militarise. I mean it's both the acquisition of arms of specialist equipment, flameproof overalls, visors, firearms, militarised vehicles, but also the militarisation of policing as an ideology of the use of commander control of technological systems. I think that when you compare police forces around the world today, particularly in the paramilitary or public order guise, rather than seeing a group of idiosyncratic and unique police forces, what you see is a para-militarised police force which looks rather similar around the world. That is partly a response to particular kinds of criminal activity, notions like officer safety.

There is no doubt and I think certainly the police officers would say this, that certain forms of organised crime and of terrorism require them to be militarised. But I think that there's also pressures coming from other sources and they're transnational forces that are actually leading the police to militarise in ways that are not necessarily appropriate for the ways in which police should be able to police communities and certainly this is a form of policing which is likely to be against the community, rather than policing for the community.

PETER CLARKE

Ben, especially in the United States, the United Kingdom and even here in Australia, notably with indigenous citizens, ethnic and racial profiling allied to stop and search police practises has become pervasive, controversial and of course deeply resented. When did racial ethnic profiling really emerge as the sort of problem we have today?

BEN BOWLING

Well the use of police power in a pre-emptive and intended to be in a preventative way goes back a very long way, it goes back to the 19th century origins of policing: the sus laws and the Vagrancy Acts of the 19th century where a person could be arrested, charged and convicted of being a suspicious person. So the idea that particular kinds of communities, the poor, the vagrant?

PETER CLARKE

Romani.

BEN BOWLING

Romani, the darker skins, the Irish, those who were thought of as other, looked in some way foreign, goes back a very long way. Now the idea that people should be stopped and searched and questioned because of how they look is an archaic thing, but it really becomes controversial in the United Kingdom in the 1980s when the use of police stop-and-search powers led to the triggering of the Brixton Riots in 1981. Operation Swamp, which was a police operation against street crime, led to hundreds of people being stopped and searched, disproportionately people of

African and Caribbean origin and that triggered the most serious form of riot that had been seen on mainland Britain up to that point.

Whenever you look at riots in the UK, in many instances, the 2011 riots in the UK being the most recent ones, the background of the toxic relationship between police and communities created by the ill-judged, persistent, often discriminatory, often unlawful use of stop-and-search powers, lies behind that resentment. That is still a pressing issue in the United Kingdom today. It's clearly present here in Victoria, in Melbourne, Australia, where members of local communities, the Indigenous communities, but also in new communities of colour.

PETER CLARKE

Particularly from Africa.

BEN BOWLING

Particularly from Africa, here in Australia, deeply resent the use of police powers exercised against them without good reason. Now, my own view on this is that to stop somebody, to ask them questions and to search them where there are good reasons for doing so, seem to me to be reasonable. In the United Kingdom, the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 regularised the power to stop and search as being a power to investigate short of arrest. So the idea was that rather than arresting somebody on suspicion, putting them in handcuffs, into a police car, taken to a police station and carrying out an investigation in the police station, the power to stop somebody and search them was an investigative power to confirm or allay well-founded suspicions.

Now to me, the letter of the law is perfectly reasonable. If somebody accuses me of stealing a purse and a police officer asks me to turn out my pockets because they suspect that I've stolen someone's purse and I'm accused of it, well I would rather do that on the street than be taken to a police station under arrest. The problem is that the reasonable grounds for suspicion are often absent. In the United Kingdom, the government inspector of constabulary discovered that in one in every four records of stop and search that they looked at, there were no grounds present. In other words, people were being stopped groundlessly and unlawfully and the consequence of that is not only that the stop is useless, because it will inevitably fail to find anything, only about one in 10 stops and searches result in an arrest, so nine times out of 10, in any case, people are innocent of any crime, but when there are no reasonable grounds for suspicion, the most likely outcome is that nothing will be found.

In my view, that is worse than useless. It's not only a waste of police time and an inconvenience and an embarrassment and irritation to the member of the public, but it also breaks the bond of legitimacy between police and the person that's been stopped. Trust arrives on foot and leaves on horseback. The unfortunate, ill-judged police encounter where somebody is being stopped and having their belongings or their vehicle searched without good reason undermines trust in the community and

is, as I said, worse than useless.

What we found in the UK is very interesting over the last seven or eight years, is that this message has got home to Theresa May, who was at the time the home secretary, who realised that not only was the unlawful use of stop and search a waste of police time, but was damaging to communities and as home secretary, she actually interestingly pioneered the scaling back of suspicion-less searches. So whereas in 2010 about 400,000 people in the United Kingdom were stopped and searched without suspicion, by 2017 that number had dropped to below 1000 every year. So what's happened in the United Kingdom actually is almost the complete abolition of suspicion-less stop-and-search powers.

Now there are some challenges at the moment because there are some police chiefs who want to see them come back, but I think that it is possible for governments to work with the police and local communities to actually find ways of keeping communities safe without having to use a blunt instrument which can be damaging to community and can use police time unnecessarily, such as the power to stop and search.

PETER CLARKE

As you've read, there are various ethnic communities here in Victoria talking about keeping a very strict and accurate record of the ethnicities of people that are stopped and inquiries made. I think you've talked about receipts, having a receipt system. Do you see that as a reasonable and effective way of lowering the problem within this area?

BEN BOWLING

Absolutely. It comes back to the question of accountability, so I think accountability can be thought of in two ways. It can be thought of as explanatory and cooperative, that is, the police officers should be able to account for themselves, they should be able to explain what they're doing. But I also think the police should be cooperative and obedient, that is, the police officer is the servant of community, the police officer is there to make community safe. So not only should they be able to explain what they're doing and why, but also to come under some kind of form of control. Now the unfettered power to stop somebody, to interrogate them, to search their belongings, is a coercive and intrusive power. There can scarcely any meaning to the word stop if it isn't to coerce, to get someone to do something they wouldn't otherwise do.

PETER CLARKE

Automatic loss of liberty.

BEN BOWLING

Absolutely and also an intrusion into privacy, as your pockets or the trunk of your car

or your bag are being rifled through by a police officer. That should only ever happen when a police officer has reasonable grounds to suspect that a person is in possession of some kind of contraband, some kind of unlawful articles. If they don't have that suspicion, it shouldn't occur. So I think it is perfectly reasonable to ask a police officer to give an account of who they've stopped, why they've stopped them, what kind of person they've stopped and what the result of it was. The recording of stop-and-search encounters either through the issuing of a receipt or some kind of ticket so that the person who's been stopped has a record, the organisation has a record, it's available for public scrutiny, to me it's a no-brainer. I cannot understand why a police service would wish to resist the issuing of receipts for the exercise of their stop-and-search powers.

PETER CLARKE

Talking about you personally, I'm intrigued to know what it's like for you in the corridors of, say, Scotland Yard, whether you're involved in a training program with police leadership or just dealing with rank and file police, how do they see you? Because some of the things you're saying are very challenging, because you're asking police to peel back their assumptions and to go to the core of their role. How are you perceived?

BEN BOWLING

Well sometimes I disarm the police by talking about my family history of policing. My paternal grandfather was a relatively senior police officer in Guyana.

PETER CLARKE

So that means you're part of the family.

BEN BOWLING

To some extent. I think that when I first started working with the police, I think that there was a real sense of challenge and a certain amount of hostility. I had a position as a lecturer in criminology and the University of Cambridge and did my teaching at the Police Staff College in Bramshill working with senior police officers. There was me, a black man from England and a five-foot-two woman and I think the police thought that we were a kind Punch and Judy act, sent in to test their political correctness. That was 1996 and we got a bit of a rough ride, I must say.

But I've been referred to by the police service in recent years as a critical friend. I think that academics, researchers like me, we recognise that the police play a valuable role in society when policing is done properly and that we have the shared interests in safe and peaceful communities where there's a real need to respond to major threats to our safety. So I'm not anti-police, I am for good policing, for good enough policing and I think that there's now a clear accommodation by the police to well-founded criticism. Senior police officers and even the rank and file now, I think,

understand the value of good research evidence. They value the questioning and searching questions which are raised by academics and I think that high quality research, based on interviews and observation and a real engagement with the data and bringing the findings of research and explaining the findings of research to the police and actually working together within and out with the police service, to come up with the solutions to pressing new problems, really must be the way forward.

PETER CLARKE

It's a remarkably fascinating area and of course impinges on us all at some stage in our lives. Ben, thanks so much for being with us, for this episode of Up Close.

BEN BOWLING

Thank you very much.

PETER CLARKE

We've been speaking with Professor Ben Bowling, Deputy Dean of the Dickson Poon School of Law at King's College London. His four-volume Global Policing and Transnational Law was published in 2015. You can find links to Ben's other publications and research, along with a full transcript and more information on this and all our other episodes on the Up Close website. By the way, you may want to check out another of our podcasts, The Policy Shop, which examines emerging public policy questions in conversation with experts in the field.

Up Close is a production of The University of Melbourne, Australia. This episode was recorded on 7 September 2017. It was produced by Eric van Bommel, with audio engineering by Gavin Nebauer. I'm Peter Clarke, thanks for listening. Until next time, bye for now.

VOICEOVER

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