

David Martindale, Justice Disrupted interview

SPEAKERS

Byron Vincent, David Martindale

Introduction 00:05

Before we get started we advise listener discretion for Justice Disrupted. This podcast discusses social justice, and will touch on many areas including but not exclusive to crime, trauma and abuse. Some listeners may find such content distressing. If you are affected by anything in this podcast, there's a list of websites on the Community Justice Scotland website, from which you can seek support, and or guidance. Thank you for joining us. Shall we get cracking?

Byron Vincent 00:44

Hello there, I'm Byron Vincent and in this series of podcasts, I'm lucky enough to talk to visionaries, reformers, people who want to make a change and people whose stories we might learn from. As kids, we were promised a future of hoverboards and clean energy. Well it's 2021, and instead, we've got pandemics, Toys R Us has closed down, and the scales of justice are far from balanced. More often than not, those involved in the justice system have landed there because of societal imbalances, lack of access to basic human needs such as a nurturing home or health care or education. Sounds bleak, doesn't it? So what can we do about it? Today I'll be talking to Livingston Football Club manager David Martindale, about his journey from the housing schemes of Glasgow and Livingston to prison, and now onto a prominent position in Scottish football.

Byron Vincent 01:39

Anyone who's ever dragged themselves out of a bad situation and pulled their lives together will tell you that personal responsibility is key. But we don't exist in a vacuum. All people, but especially young people, who exist in the forgotten margins, need to feel like they have worth and purpose, and if that sense of self isn't available from a healthy source, then it'll just be sought out elsewhere. Maybe if we had the foresight to teach people living in chaos, how to heal, and how to nurture, if we offered support in people's struggles before the point of crisis or criminality, then I reckon we'd be looking at a much brighter future. Look, today's episode isn't the greatest sound quality, we're dealing with pandemic technology here, so apologies about that look I'm doing my best alright? This is Justice Disrupted, if you like it, share it, tell your friends. If you don't, don't tell anyone. We're just trying to do something good. Welcome.

Byron Vincent 02:40

David, thank you so much for talking to me. We're roughly the same age, we both grew up on social housing schemes, where were the schemes that you grew up on, and what were they like?

David Martindale 02:52

There was a prominent one where I spent the majority of my childhood, teenage years, it was a scheme in Livingston called Craigshill.

Byron Vincent 03:00

How much influence do you think that environment has on behaviour?

David Martindale 03:04

Environment plays a massive part, like you kinda get caught in that social circle, but there's a lot of very, very good people from Craigshill that don't commit crime, but there was a lot of crime in Craigshill when I was growing up and I aspired to be that man that was driving about in the Range Rover or the BMW. I didn't know any other way and how to get that, I never thought like university would be an option for someone like myself. There is a lot of success stories also from Craigshill so I don't want to paint it as bleak. It's just I probably chose the wrong path within that social circle.

Byron Vincent 03:40

Well yeah, I think there's a very prejudicial and one-dimensional attitude towards a lot of what the press refer to as sink estates, or council states or schemes or whatever, and really like anywhere else the population in those places is diverse. Having said that, the pressures are very specific and much greater than they are in more affluent areas in terms of being pushed towards a criminal lifestyle, and that's something we've both experienced we'll get to that, before we do, so my scheme had this, like, classic setup of a pub that the locals nicknamed The Flying Bottle, laundrette, bookies, off licence, but really like nothing for kids, not much at all so say it's 1983, you're what, eight, nine years old, what's the young David Martindale doing with his afternoon?

David Martindale 04:30

Predominantly I was out from that age, 8 year old to 12, 13, something along they lines where football was the mainstay of my life it's all I done. Looking back on it, you're mixing wi' everybody within the scheme, and there's a lot of people within those footballing groups that probably went on to commit crime and that's probably where you first met one another, playing football in the scheme. 13, 14, people start experimenting wi' drugs, drink, and obviously girls. You probably venture further out your scheme into other schemes. I knew everybody when they went to high school because of playing football, so you had a pecking order, and I think you aspire to keep up appearance as you get older.

Byron Vincent 05:12

Before you went to secondary school, and things started to change a bit and things started to get a bit dodgy, which they always do at that age, for lads on council estates, they did for me at that age as well, that's when things shifted, who were your role models as a boy, and then how did that change as you got a little bit older?

David Martindale 05:27

Growing up, role models were football players. We used to look at Davie Cooper, Sir Alex Ferguson was at Aberdeen, so fae that point of view then football becomes less relevant in your life around 12, 13, and you start aspiring to be maybe somebody that's in your scheme at 22, 23, who look, in my eyes, as if they had success. And this is how they got success, and that was they way I seen, I would

get success. I think, looking back, I wish I had somebody that could probably have clipped me round the ear and took me more into the footballing environment if I'm honest 'cos I definitely could have played at a better level than I did play. But again you're stuck in that scheme, I don't think you listen to anyone, do you?

Byron Vincent 06:10

Were you aspirational, because you obviously had talent as a footballer, I mean we all dream of becoming the thing we want to become. As a boy, were you aspirational enough to think, oh yeah that's a realistic option?

David Martindale 06:20

Very ambitious, very aspirational, but never for one minute thought that David Martindale from the Craigshill housing scheme was going to be a professional footballer. I was hanging about in gangs, because actually we done it, we had a youth club that everybody would go to. But I think that's the breeding ground for it as well, the youth clubs are there for the right reasons, to get kids off the street, but what that does is then it congregates you all in one area and it's putting everybody with the kind of same mindset together, and then your aspirations and your ambitions, they don't change but how you achieve those ambitions change I think.

Byron Vincent 06:55

Things went very, very sideways for me, at certain points in my life when I was thrown together with a bunch of other boys who were in severely deprived economical and social situations, would my behaviour have been as severe and extreme, if I hadn't have been in that situation? No, it wouldn't, absolutely not. And so the problem that we have there is that people forced together in a pressure cooker, under difficult circumstances, like what can we do about that though?

David Martindale 07:21

I've thought about it many times but I don't think there's one variable that we can say, well if we do this everything's going to change, I don't believe that's there. You try and look back on your life. I didn't listen to my elders, I didn't listen to my mum and dad 'cos I was in the scheme and I thought I knew better and a lot of that stuff comes from poverty but I just remember, growing up, looking at people that maybe never stayed in a council house, that stayed in a bought house, and I felt so much lower than them. They went to school, they had the Nike trainers on and I maybe never had the Nike trainers, or I maybe had one pair of jeans but I always had to go home [and] wash, iron my jeans for the next day. Things like that. I had holes in my trainers. But I had a good mum and dad and a good upbringing, but I never had a lot. And I think, does it come from greed, from not having a lot when you were younger? We weren't fortunate enough [that] we could go in the fridge and take whatever we wanted, whenever we wanted. A chocolate biscuit wasn't something that I could just go and take whenever I wanted. A fizzy juice. But I was well catered for, I got three meals a day, that type of thing, I'm no' going to say, 'Oh I was on the streets' or stuff like that, I wasn't, but I think a lot of crime comes from poverty. Greed is bred from poverty. But I'm looking back on it now, and I just wanted to have a pair of trainers, I just wanted to have a nice pair of jeans, I wanted to have some money but how did I get those things? I never knew anybody that went to university in my social circle and there was a big gang culture and I got involved in that gang culture because I knew everybody in the scheme. Everybody knew me as

Davie Martindale, the good football player and then, as you continually grow and get that wee bit older, girls, drink, I wasn't involved in drugs, never took drugs, but females and drinking, I did. And that was... So how do you impress a female? You buy a nice shirt, you've got nice trousers, this type of thing, and it all comes to, I think, poverty, and greed.

Byron Vincent 09:12

Well this is the thing right, you say poverty and greed, that's an interesting way of phrasing it, but I reckon that it's status, do we want the trainers or do we want the status that the trainers provide?

David Martindale 09:21

A bit of both, yeah I get that.

Byron Vincent 09:22

All of the, all of those things are a projection of status. Now I think that the reason that they're so important to us when we grow up in poverty is because, we had nothing, it becomes way more pertinent to us to project to the world that we're making something of ourselves.

David Martindale 09:37

You feel successful when you get those new trainers, you've went out and done something, I would agree with that, the status, when you do say that it resonates with me.

Byron Vincent 09:45

Talking of school, what kind of pupil were you, as a young 'un and then how did that change as you got older?

David Martindale 09:52

I think I was an okay student, up until probably going to high school, so I had a bit of a status from being a good footballer which puts you in the wrong social circles as well, doesn't it?

Byron Vincent 10:04

This is just a theory, right, and see if you agree with this because it might be nonsense. I think the reason that there's so much violence in underprivileged areas is because what else have we got to express ourselves, other than our physical self? There's no morning knocking around, you know what I mean, nobody cares if you read Chaucer or whatever, you know you're not going to get academic respect.

David Martindale 10:23

I think it's the opposite in the estates wi' academia, sometimes the ones that were very respected at school, they actually, I wouldn't say bullied, but they got, they definitely got, how do you put it, it was a negative.

Byron Vincent 10:37

Recklessness is valued and physical prowess of some kind is valued, either being able to fight well, or sports, and so I think that that's why we end up trying to accrue status through violence. Sports are

always respected, with boys, and physical ability is always respected. Surely, the way to harness that energy, competitive energy, or that desire for physical status, surely a positive way to do that is sports? That's the field you work in, do you give a lot of thought to that and the power of it and what it can mean to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds?

David Martindale 11:10

I get a lot of players coming in to my football club. They can resonate with me because they come from similar backgrounds, so you'll probably know someone who's been into prison and football's been their escape.

Byron Vincent 11:22

You're obviously, an intelligent bloke, you end up at uni, but was that element of you nurtured, when you were younger, either at home or at school or anywhere?

David Martindale 11:32

School was secondary in my life, social status was probably the one that took relevance in my life and I think that high school in those days, it was, it was your status at high school wasn't it?

Byron Vincent 11:42

It's everything, for young blokes in social housing, I guess, our friends are everything, and we tend to reward each other in that environment for recklessness.

David Martindale 11:51

Yeah.

Byron Vincent 11:51

Do you think there's a way of counterbalancing that? Do you think there's a way of interrupting that cycle?

David Martindale 11:56

I think there's a lot more education at school now. Society is a lot more open-minded now than it ever was. We recognise there's a problem, like now, if someone had ADHD at school when I was at school, they were just put in a class theirself and called a bad egg that cause trouble. Now, you can recognise somebody's got learning difficulties. Society's a lot more open-minded now and there's a lot more thought goes on to how we deal with these types of problems i.e. you and I are sitting doing a podcast about this. 20 years ago, when we were growing up, this was unheard of. People weren't addressing the problems. It was just, problems just ran along didn't they, they were allowed to happen.

Byron Vincent 12:34

I think, a really effective way of dealing with this issue that we didn't have when we were growing up, is that now there are positive role models, who've been through the experiences that we've been through, and then gone back to the environments that we grew up in, with the wealth of that experience and have the gravitas and kind of presence and understanding of the environment, because when I was young, if a social worker or a youth worker or whatever came to my estate, they were just middle class

people to me like I was like, 'Who are you, what do you know, you know nothing about my life, you know nothing about what I'm experiencing' so I think that there's massive value in people like ourselves, or people who've lived a certain experience to go back and offer some education.

David Martindale 13:20

I'm going into Addiewell prison on Wednesday, to chat to some of the prisoners about my life experiences of being imprisoned and coming out in society, checking me back into society for want of a better word.

Byron Vincent 13:32

Speaking of going back to where you came from. It can be problematic for us, or at least it's something that I've struggled with, as we move away from our past, it can be difficult to maintain those old friendships, or the people we grew up with because lifestyles, you know, separate. Are you still in touch with any of your old mates and how have you managed that?

David Martindale 13:52

So when I grew up, there was an element of David Martindale, but there was also another element of friends, a handful of friends that probably went onto university, that were more educated, that came from the bought house, not the council house, so although they stayed in Craigshill they stayed in nicer areas of Craigshill. Their mum and dad had a car, they still had a mum and dad. Their mum and dad had a job whereas like my mum and dad split up when I was 16, we struggled for a car, and my mum had 2 or 3 jobs sometimes. So, I still speak to, now and again, an element of, probably the more positive influences in my life when I was younger, then do I speak to anybody from the criminality side? No' really to be honest, and that's something, probably when I came out of prison as well that, for the first couple of years of coming out of prison I kept in touch wi' everybody because you get real bonds wi' people, because it's like minded, similar people, going through the same environment with you. Like that's become less and less as, not just as I came into full-time football, into full-time employment and then education so, still speak to people but not on the same scale as what I maybe done 10, 20 years ago.

Byron Vincent 15:05

I think you raised an interesting point there about the difference between people who own their own property, and people who grow up in social housing, the disparity there in terms of outcome is vast, you can check it out yourself it's Google-able. If you're on a council state or a scheme, you're more likely to end up with a whole series of negative outcomes both criminal justice-wise, health-wise, and so, this raises this really interesting moral and philosophical question, right, which is that either you believe that people who were born into social housing are born bad, born with the criminal...

David Martindale 15:39

It's absolute nonsense because even if you take that into like racial abuse I don't think anybody's born a racist, it's the environment that you're brought up in.

Byron Vincent 15:48

Exactly we're socially, we're socially conditioned, so if we accept that it's environmental factors that lead to these negative outcomes. Then, it begs the question, are we criminalising the poor?

David Martindale 15:59

Probably, probably, but again, I would flip it I would always try and be pragmatic and be objective. There are the people that grew up in, probably council houses, in my estate that went on and done really well in their life. I found that difficult to see that happening for me, and then you go back to, a mortgage, or a council house if you've grew up with very, very little, you aspire to have a little bit more than what you had. And then that aspiration, that ambition, does turn into greed at some point. Your socially status plays a massive part in that as well.

Byron Vincent 16:32

So we've covered your childhood a bit, like you said, things change, when you're a young teenager. For me that was like characterised by tamazepam, shoplifting, watching pirated videos around at some middle aged drug dealers who's got like a pitbull called Satan, and A cap tatoos, you know, does that sound like a familiar experience to you?

David Martindale 16:53

For a lot of my friends, yes, like we all grew up. I never, I never took drugs, I never participated in drug taking, it was never my thing. The local chip shop was where we gathered, and within that you'd have people that wanted to go away and take magic mushrooms, take LSD, take amphetamines, and I never really done that, so we would drink, and then it would lead to gang violence wi' other people in the similar schemes. And then you had the other element of the guys who would then all go back to somebody's house, sit in the house, smoke hash and listen to Pink Floyd, so we had two different types. But I never fell into that, because I never took drugs. Every one of my friends took drugs, but that was a way for me to make money as well. They'd say, oh Davie, could you maybe go and help us get some cannabis, and because of my social status in the scheme, I knew someone who could get that. Football for me, I was never going to be a professional footballer, though everybody kept trying to tell me that, 'oh you could, you could, you could, you could'. I never seen that because the most important thing to me at 13, 14, was my friends, but I wasn't educated enough or experienced enough in life to understand that, my friends, and my loyalty to my friends, were the most important thing to my life. Not me trying to be a professional footballer, although I still played football.

Byron Vincent 18:10

Absolutely, and it's difficult to tell a 14 year old, that your friends aren't the most important things in your life, I don't I don't know how we go about changing.

David Martindale 18:17

Maybe guys like ourself, but I never had someone like us that could, that's been through that experience talking to me, it would be someone who's never been through that experience, trying to explain that to me. Again there's a lot of testosterone flying about in these years as well, it's growing up, it's maturing, it's education. Going to school was important, but not the education side of it. If you meet my friends and again we go back to the social status within the group.

Byron Vincent 18:42

Usually, when we're growing up, things happen incrementally and we don't even notice they're occurring but occasionally there are these step changes in our lives where, where we think, oh, you know what, things are getting a little bit darker now, things are getting a little bit sketchier, I think for me, you know, maybe the first time I did opiates and the first time I held a firearm or something like that, when did things get a bit dodgier for you? What age are we talking?

David Martindale 19:04

I think a little bit older to be honest, probably from 15, 16 upwards. You're leaving school, you've not got a job to go to, and I never, I think I turned up to 2 exams, it wasn't important. I was intelligent enough to go and do that if I applied myself properly, but I never applied myself properly, 'cos I was too interested in my friends and my social status.

Byron Vincent 19:25

What is the journey from relatively harmless, teenage shenanigans, to your arrest in 2004?

David Martindale 19:33

I'd always aspired to work, be an apprentice, get a job, I was in and out of jobs for one reason or another, tried various jobs just trying to find my feet. When you weren't working maybe minor crime. And it was really, really minor, but it was soft drugs, cannabis at that point. Every single person that I knew smoked cannabis, and they probably used harder drugs at the weekend. And I'm a great believer that the soft drugs led to the harder drugs, and I still meet people, maybe not to this day, but maybe 10 years ago my son growing up who would say, oh it's only a bit of cannabis, I do believe cannabis leads to trying all of other drugs, so the softer drugs to the harder drugs, and I do get the arguments on the other side of it, there is some people say no, but then I'm not too sure on that to be honest. But in and out of work, I went and actually got a job and had a mortgage when I was 18 year old, still people would come to me and say because of the social circle within the council estate can you help me Davie, do you know anybody Davie, do you know anybody, I knew a lot of people. And I knew a lot of people from different council estates as well, so I got involved in businesses in late 20s, early 30s, and that's probably where it started getting at that point in time serious in terms of finances. My businesses weren't doing well, I was always very aspirational and very ambitious. I was driven by having a better financial life, so my morals were very, very flexible at that point in my life. I didn't look at the consequence of my actions, and that's the big one since coming out of prison, is a big part of my life, now, that actions have consequences. And em, my businesses ran into a bit of trouble, and I got involved in someone saying, well if you can give me X amount of money Davie, I'll give you X amount of money back at the end of the month, end of the week, and I knew what the money was for, to purchase cocaine. So that's how I got involved in, let's be honest, it's serious organised crime now, but that jump, it didn't feel like a big jump for me, it was just an evolution of the food chain, it was a way for me to make a wee bit more money a wee bit quicker, like David Martindale the drug dealer. I never sold cocaine, but I was involved in it and I knew why the money was there and it's very, very easy to see that now, but when you're in that council estate, or you're on that scheme with your friends, that was just evolution for me.

Byron Vincent 22:00

I think that's a difficult thing for people to wrap their heads around is that how normalised this kind of stuff is for us when we grew up in that kind of context, it is in a normal, natural progression because it's what everybody we know is doing, or the majority of the people that we know are doing.

David Martindale 22:16

I know people that'll go into prison from the bigger cities in Scotland and when they come out, people throw them a party, because they've been to prison. I was staying in Livingston at that point, I'd moved house, I was out the scheme, obviously I'd been semi-successful, I'd now got that BMW, but when I came out it was difficult for people to accept me. He's been to prison, I was stigmatised whereas with a lot of people going back to Glasgow, maybe Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and they were actually getting patted on the back because they'd been to jail and done some prison time.

Byron Vincent 22:47

You got arrested, and you were on bail for a long time, right, when I was 19, 20 I got arrested by an armed response team, and I remember, pretty much every second of what went down because it was like, just like being punched in the face by the reality of my own behaviour, do you remember being arrested because you were on bail for ages, weren't you after...

David Martindale 23:06

It was April 2004 and it was Easter weekend and it was the Friday morning. Now I remember it was about 6 o'clock in the morning, and I looked out the window 'cos the doorbell went, I looked out of the window and my back garden and my front part, like driveway, was just surrounded wi' plain-clothes police, black cars everywhere, 7-seater people carriers all this type of thing, it wasn't your normal police. And I went down and let them in and that was it, 2004. And I can remember it vividly to this day, and it was, eh, looking back, the worst day of my life. Do you know, you knew it was coming. That was the day it happened, that was the day you'd been telling yourself you were too clever, you'll not get caught, that'll not happen to you because you're different, you're doing it differently. And that was the day it all came crashing down, and I wouldny say it was a punch in the face, I'd say it was a punch a wee bit further down to be honest because that's how sore it was. I can remember it to this day, and I can remember lying in the police station, April 2004. Friday the courts were shut, Saturday they were shut, Sunday they were shut, Monday they were shut. And I can remember lying in they prison cells for four days. And I can remember thinking how do I change my life. I can't keep going on like this, because there is a point in your life when you're involved in crime that you are intelligent enough to know that you will probably go to prison, but you, your subconscious talks you out of that happening. That'll no' happen to me, but we really, really, really deep down, you know it's going to happen to you

Byron Vincent 23:40

Yeah I think deep down everybody does and I think, you know, we're just conditioned to appreciate the instant gratification of the rewards we're getting in a moment and bury that that anxiety, we probably can't bury it completely it's always there.

David Martindale 24:47

No but that, I remember a social worker, saying to me, she said, you stay, go to your work in the morning and you dealt with the people you dealt with and when you pick your son off fae school, or you

go home and make your wife's dinner, it was two different personas, I had, so what I done from 8 o'clock to 4, 5 o'clock during the day was very, very different from the family man I was at night, and she said you've got flexible moral standards. And I can always remember thinking about it, going, I don't really know what she means by that. So to sell cocaine, to being involved in cocaine was ok because you see successful people on the television doing it, it's okay because everybody does it, I'm not forcing that product on somebody, so you talked yourself into what you're doing as being okay, 'cos you see it on the television. The Godfather, The Sopranos. And as you know, this all goes back to social status.

Byron Vincent 25:38

Talking about The Godfather and Sopranos, we glamourise violence we glamourise all kinds of criminal activity, there's a whole industry based on glamourising that or wanting to emulate this fictional thing.

David Martindale 25:50

I had loads of friends like that. Loads of friends that would do pretty much anything, because you know what that's what they seen as success. That's how they gain success through social status.

Byron Vincent 26:00

This is what we were talking about before, when your opportunities are vastly reduced, you know, all you can get respect for, is your physical self, then you know the more extreme things you can do with your physical self, the more respect you get in a certain mindset if you know.

David Martindale 26:14

Agree with that 100%.

Byron Vincent 26:15

So, you're let out on bail, and you go to uni right you sign up for uni.

David Martindale 26:20

I got out on bail in April 2004 and as I said earlier, I was involved in cocaine, I knew what I was doing, I wasn't pushy I wasn't a drug dealer, I must have been a drug dealer, I was a drug dealer. But that flexible moral standards tells you your law, I wasn't physically selling cocaine to people, and I knew I had to change my life, I knew it. I enrolled at Heriot-Watt University on August 2004. And my case was pretty complex because I'd never been caught with drugs, it was all circumstantial evidence. I was on bail for two and a half years before it physically went to court and I got advised, listen, it's a circumstantial case, and it was pretty new money laundering and all this had just came in to it, people listening maybe don't know but when you get charged wi' a crime, they charge you wi' probably another 4, 5 offences that are not really that relevant or they're not going to be proven so that it kinda gives them a lot of leverage, when you go to court. And I eventually got charged with being concerned in supply of drugs for a 6 month period and specifically it was 3 separate occasions 2kg each occasion, so 6kg of cocaine wi' a quite high purity that I had obviously put money in too, so I had met yourself in a car park, you came to my house and I gave you money and you had went away and done what you'd done, that was the circumstantial evidence that was on me. I was guilty, 100% guilty, but the case was quite complex and that it took 2 and a half years to get to court. And when it went to court, I knew I was

pleading guilty, I knew I was going to prison. I think, the August of that year if you, if I had the chance to plea bargain, I would have took it and just, I needed closure on my life, I needed closure so I could move forward wi' my life. So I enrolled in Herriot-Watt University in August 2004, and I was at Heriot-Watt University until October 2006 when I got sentenced to two and a half years nearly, at University rebuilding my life.

Byron Vincent 28:27

That must have been difficult on your mental health. When something's actually happening, you just deal with it but when you're waiting for something to happen... yeah...

David Martindale 28:35

Horrible, horrible like go to bed every night it's the last thing you think of and when you wake up in the morning, it's the first thing you think of. I can see why there's a lot of mental health issues with people, maybe suicide and drug addiction, and drink through, maybe people waiting to go to court as well. I was fortunate that by going to university, took me into a different social circle as well. I met new people, new people that were educated, they came from different backgrounds, and I got back into football, I played for the Herriot-Watt University football team. I knew at that point, I think I was 32, I got away from the scheme football teams, the pub football teams, came away fae it all. And I went into junior football, where I was playing wi' people that came from a different social background.

Byron Vincent 29:23

Were you expecting to get the sentence that you got?

David Martindale 29:26

No I was shocked. It was a wee bit of a shock to be honest. You've also got a QC because it's a high court. First offence, never been charged with anything like that before ever, but my co-accused had been in prison before and he was quite a high profile, I'm going to say a career criminal, but I don't think that's the case for him either to be honest. He was a successful businessman, but he'd been to prison before, I was looking, I remember going into prison and thinking if you get four years you've done quite well here, maybe four and a half maybe five at a push, roughly what I was looking at. And I got sentenced to 6 and a half years in prison and I had obviously done a bit of time on remand also, not a lot of time before sentencing, so roughly it was like a 7 year prison sentence for a first offender and it was really, really difficult to take at that point. My co-accused got a 10 year prison sentence, so I think I got sentenced largely on where I was on the food chain and basically my co-accused being in prison previously. But again, who am I to say if it's a large sentence, you go with the criminal justice system, you take what you take. I was guilty a million percent I was guilty, and I was willing to deal wi' that.

Byron Vincent 30:32

You've spoken a lot about personal responsibility and remorse. What are your thoughts about prison? Where do you think it's working and where do you think it's failing?

David Martindale 30:41

Did prison change my outlook on life, I don't think so because my life changed in April 2004. Getting arrested my life changed. I can remember the moment, I can remember sitting in the prison cell thinking

about these things. Did prison change me, no. But I think it made me a lot more humble, and it showed me that money and materialistic things were not as, as important as they were when I went into prison. I think I came out of prison a lot more open-minded as well, I seen people that sold heroin as scum because it was an addiction. I didn't see myself as scum, because of the glamourisation of cocaine. It opened my mind to, 'a drug dealer's a drug dealer' at the end of the day, it doesn't matter what you're selling, we're all selling it for financial gain or for financial addiction, whatever it is or your drug addiction, we're all the same and it opened my eyes to that I was no better than someone else. And whereas you probably yourself into feeling a wee bit better because you weren't involved in heroin but when you do, and there was a lot of decent people in prison, which I would never have thought similar people to myself. But probably a lot less fortunate, because what was going to happen to me was, I deserved, but there was a lot of less fortunate people than me in prison and it opened my eyes to how quick life can change and money isn't everything in life. Having that BMW, isn't the be all and end all. Family became much more important at that point in my life. They were now the primary reason I wanted out of prison, for my family. And everything I do going forward now, I make decisions based on, what's the impact of that on my family?

Byron Vincent 32:18

Yeah. Under what circumstances do you think prison is necessary, and when is it not?

David Martindale 32:25

I don't know, I think everybody's different to be honest, but I seen someone who's took heroin, so someone who is a heroin addict, you see them as not nice people.

Byron Vincent 32:35

Yeah

David Martindale 32:36

I ended up sharing a prison cell with somebody who was addicted to heroin. And you know the relationship I got with him, I understood his background, I understood why he took heroin. He came fae being physically abused and heroin was his get out. His way to get away from the demons in his head. So I do think prison is a necessary evil. It made me a lot more open minded than what I was when I went into prison. And again I'm sitting speaking to you and I can relate to a lot of the stuff I speak to you about.

Byron Vincent 33:06

Have you heard anything about ACEs or adverse childhood experiences?

David Martindale 33:11

Not really to be honest, no.

Byron Vincent 33:12

It's formative trauma that leads to negative outcomes. An adverse childhood experience can be something like living with a parent with alcoholism or addiction issues, experiencing physical or sexual abuse, way more likely to be a victim or offender in terms of violent crime, way more likely to end up in

prison, way more likely to end up with addiction issues, way more likely to end up homeless. All these negative outcomes with, with diabetes with all kinds of illnesses. My issue with the criminal justice system is that I think there should be a lot more attention focused on very early prevention, because, as you know, and as we both know prison, and the criminal justice system is full of traumatised people, people who've learned negative behaviours because of their life experience. How do you think we can alter that system, so the balance focuses on this preventative thing that which would save people a lot of trouble and money rather than on the punitive element, which is necessary in some cases, as we both discussed but is not as important in my mind, as this other preventative element.

David Martindale 34:20

I agree with that, but like I do believe poverty and education at a younger age plays a massive... if you maybe use, physical abuse. When I was growing up, and your friends were getting battered with their mums or dads, or dads were beating them, it was, it was half-seen as normal and I don't think teachers were trained to recognise the signals. But now, I think society has changed, and the education system. I'm just using that one small variable within this we're talking about. But schools an' that are a lot different now and I think they're catching things like that a lot earlier but it's probably not changing the environment that they're growing up in - drug abuse, gambling abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, I think a lot of it stems from poverty and a lot of it stems from education and actually educating people that there is another path you can take. There is a way out of all this and there is a lot more help nowadays, do you not agree? I remember telling Pat, was it Chick, do you remember Esther Rantzen...

David Martindale 35:18

...There was a number that you phoned, one phone number that you phoned, Childline, like, but nobody would ever phone it 'cos they're that scared that it would happen again. There is a lot more avenues now open to the younger generation, to get help but, again it's the environment they're growing up in it's coming from poverty. Their mums and dads are maybe feeding their kids through food banks. Come on, food banks, in this day and age in Britain. If you're a mum and a dad and you're forced to go and feed your kids at a food bank, I'm going to pretty much guarantee, you're doing something at night to escape fae that reality, whether you're taking that out on your children through physical abuse, or whether you're maybe taking drugs and drink to escape that reality I don't know, maybe you're shoplifting the drink 'cos you can't afford it 'cos you're going to a foodbank for your kids. In this day and age, should we really be feeding kids through a foodbank? I don't think we should be, I really, really don't think we should be. We're a wealthy nation, but it seems to be a massive gap between the wealth and the poor.

Byron Vincent 35:21

Childline

Byron Vincent 36:27

Well that's it, poverty causes stress, and stress causes negative behaviour and that negative behaviour can manifest in all kinds of things all the things we've just been talking about. I know it can be unhelpful to talk in, like, generalities, but what do you think the biggest issue people face is when they leave prison these days?

David Martindale 36:44

I think you get stigmatised, very easy, although there is a lot of groups out there trying to change that opinion. There's a lot of businesses out there, there's a lot more open-minded, but the stigma attached to someone being in prison, I found that really difficult. I moved away from Livingston, after spending the first 8 months out of prison, like, you're in the local shopping centre, people staring at you, 'there's David Martindale the drug dealer', do you know what I mean? Taking your kids to school, 'There's David Martindale the drug dealer'. I found that difficult. I went back into full time education at Heriot-Watt University. And again, university's got a different type of person within it. And they were a lot more socially acceptable for me to maybe other housing schemes within Livingston, or other people within Livingston. So I found that difficult. I moved to Edinburgh, and it allowed me to grow as a person as well, because I wasn't getting judged, 'cos nobody knew me, and it allowed me to complete my Honours degree in my chosen subject. And then, that education then opened some doors for me as well.

Byron Vincent 37:50

We need space for redemption, you know, we need space for rehabilitation. Because without that, what's the alternative?

David Martindale 37:57

You're in that circle, you're in that vicious circle where 100% if you, if there's not a pathway for people coming out of prison, they're going to go back into prison. The amount of people that I know that returned to prison within my 3 and a half years in prison, is incredible. I knew lifers that were getting out that didn't want to get out of prison 'cos they were going out to nothing, so they'd maybe go out, smash a car windscreen and they were back in: three meals a day, a roof over their head. They never had a lot of worry other than keeping themselves safe in prison. Prison was a safe, secure environment for, I would probably say 33, 40% of the population in prison are quite happy being in prison 'cos they've got absolutely nothing outside. Or they're maybe going back into an environment where they were socially abused or physically abused or sexually abused previously, so, it's extremely difficult.

Byron Vincent 38:51

I heard you say in another interview that being around such a broad range of issues in prison has helped you in terms of being able to help players who might be struggling, it's given you a sort of wider life experience and a wider experience of issues. Do you think people with difficult pasts or whatever, however you want to phrase it. Do you think our transferable skills are appreciated?

David Martindale 39:13

I think, and I'll be really honest with you, I think my social skills, from growing up in the scheme, from the different jobs I've had, from being to prison, I've got a lot of transferable skills that I've learned over the last 15-20 years. You maybe see you're a successful football player and you've had a privileged upbringing because you've been in, let's say, Man United's Academy since you've been 12 and you come all the way through that, and all of a sudden you're asked to be a football manager, there's not a lot of transferable skills there. Everything's been done for you. What I would say is, at Livingston, previously like you've found that you don't find out about a problem until it's too late. It's never too late, let's be honest, it's never too late. But someone will come to me and say, I've got a gambling problem,

but at that point they've hit rock bottom whereas I've found that because of my background you sometimes notice the tell-tale signs before they absolutely hit rock bottom. You can see something's not right. And it's from their behaviours around the football club, through their stresses around other players, that they can become quite aggressive, their behavioural issues change and I can recognise there's a problem, which is probably no' always true with other people that have maybe not had the background I had, but I think there is a lot of transferrable skills, and a man-management point of view.

Byron Vincent 40:35

I think, yeah, I think you're right. Yeah, I think there's a lot of transferable skills from people from our environment, you've got to be a bit adaptable, you know, we've got, we've got to be quick thinkers, we've got to be lateral thinkers, we've got to read the room really well.

David Martindale 40:47

You've got to be really intuitive. What prison does to you, you live on your intuition. And I think that's really, really helped me coming into a footballing environment, dealing with, let's say 40 players and 30 members of staff, very, very similar to being stuck in a prison for 24 hours a day. There's a lot of male egos thrown about, there's a lot of testosterone. There's a lot of different types of characters that you've got to try and adapt to and understand and manage. And it's very much like being on a prison wing, unless you want to go in prison and shut the door behind you every day, which I never did. I worked in the prison gymnasium so I dealt with every single prisoner that was within the prison, the Hall Passman in D wing only deals with D wing, you know what I mean, so I definitely agree with that.

Byron Vincent 41:30

We spoke about role models a bit earlier before. Do you think a positive role model could have intervened in your journey at any point?

David Martindale 41:38

I think there probably was positive role models, tried to intervene but I just never recognised that at the time. I was too loyal to my friends. Honestly, there was a big gang culture where we were. That's what we done at the weekends. If you never got drunk, smoked hash and went fighting. That's what we done. And that loyalty, it gives you a really close bond with people you grew up wi'. I know if I bumped into any one of these people today, you wouldn't think we hadn't seen each other for 30 years. There is still that loyalty bond. And I don't mean that from a criminality point of view. You went through a really tough period in your life with other people and you shared memories. I remember watching these reality TV shows. Big Brother, Big Brother, that was it. And after about 2 days, you're like that, they're best friends, they're sharing life secrets, and I used to go 'No way, you've been in there 2 days!' But I remember going into prison and having these feelings with people. They were your family, and I can remember to this day, you adapt don't you, you adapt, and it's the same wi' these boys that I grew up wi' and went through, let's be honest, it was negative and it was adverse experiences. It doesn't feel like that at the time, it felt normal that you went through massive adverse experiences with people: your friends getting shot, your friends committing suicide, your friends getting stabbed, I've been stabbed, I've been slashed. Like all these experiences, and I know if I ever bumped into any of these people that you would still have a bond, that's difficult to explain. Do you understand what I mean by that?

Byron Vincent 43:11

I know exactly what you mean by it, and the thing is it's like you say at the time it's normal. I've been stabbed as well and punched and, you know like, everybody I grew up with has been in a similar incident. A funny thing, I just want to tell you this highlights what you were, what you were talking about just then, a lad I hadn't seen in 25 years. And you know when you're younger, we're all swag aren't we? We're all like bravado, and I bumped into him, and I was thinking about an incident, a pretty traumatic incident that we both went through together, and I spoke to him about it and I expected him to have the same response that he would have had when he was 16, which was like, 'Ah man that was nothing'. But what he actually did was he got, he got watery eyed, and he said, 'You know what mate? Nobody should ever have to go through that. Nobody should ever', and, and he just broke my heart man, because, as we get older we see the weight of what we went through as we were younger.

David Martindale 44:03

I get that 100% and that's why we probably try to take our kids away from social housing schemes, because we know there's a larger chance of negative experience or manifestation with your kids growing up in a social housing scheme. And I've been through similar experiences, when I got the job here, and it was all over the national media, like I got Twitter messages, I got text messages, people I hadn't heard fae for 20 years and do you know what, I gave them the time of day because we shared so many traumatic experiences. Now these people are no' involved, I don't know if they're involved in criminality, I don't think they are. They're all working, they've got kids of their own. But just that message, I gave them the time of day because it brought back, it brought back negative experiences and adverse experiences. But it also brought back a sense of loyalty, that you can't describe, I can't describe it.

Byron Vincent 45:04

It's a bond of shared experience and shared understanding, innit, that's what it is.

David Martindale 45:07

[Faded up microphone] ... how negativity, but, but you don't know that at the time. What youse went through together, you shouldny be going through. The decisions you had to make at that choice in your life at that age in your life - terrible. But I always then go back to myself and say, 'Well I done it so that's my fault, that's my fault, I did have a choice, but I honestly, truthfully never thought I had a choice. I did have a choice, but I promise you I did not think I had a choice at that point in my life.

Byron Vincent 45:36

Yeah, yeah, I understand that completely. Do you think it's possible to teach someone how to make good decisions?

David Martindale 45:43

I think you make good decisions through sometimes adversity also, but not everybody should be going through what I went through. They shouldny need to go to prison to make good decisions. And that's how I always try, and it's a very simple message - actions have consequences. But again you learn that as you grow up and you get a wee bit older and a wee bit maturer and a wee bit more experienced in life.

Byron Vincent 46:05

Post prison, are there any organisations or individuals that were instrumental in making you the man you are today?

David Martindale 46:12

So I remember getting my first home leave from open prison, two years, two and a half years I had been in prison. So I went back to my course tutor, sent an email saying, 'Hi there, I don't know if you remember me, David Martindale, I was on your course xxx. I would just love to get back in and try and finish my degree.' Emailed me back. And we arranged to go down and sit in and go through my next home leaves. You get out on a Wednesday and go back on the Wednesday morning. And I was out for the week, so sent the email, and we arranged to go back to prison for three weeks and then you're back out for a week all going well. And I got back out, and I went into prison and had a meeting with him. And a couple of days of my second home leave, he'd organised me to, on my home leaves, to go into prison, he would give me a USB stick of the coursework. I'd pick my USB stick up, go back to prison, they would check the USB stick never had any pornographic material and stuff like that on it. And I would then be allowed to go to the education suite. Now, the education suite never had any internet. It had one prison guard and about 6 computers and I used to just go and sit through that at night. I went out to work during the day and at night I would just go and sit through this USB. I'd maybe get a couple of modules done. It was open learning but I guess I was probably one of the first that had to do it in this type of way. It took me a long time because I never had a course tutor that I could email. I never had a professor, of that environment that I could go to get information from. Do you know what, it was the start of the new David Martindale. And without that professor opening doors for me to get back into University, in the way that he did, while I was still in prison, I don't know if I'd, when I left prison, if I would have went to finish my degree. So when I got out of prison, they allowed back into Herriot-Watt University. I got out on the Monday and I think it was the following Monday they allowed me back into being a full time student. And I thought I'd get judged and I thought there'd be a big stigma against me. Still a lot of tutors that were there, and there was still a lot of people from university still at university doing their master's degree, that for when I go in prison, it was brilliant and it just let me see that I could get on with my life because these people accepted me. If it wasn't for that tutor, he's probably had the biggest impact on my life post-university, allowing me back into full-time education.

Byron Vincent 48:40

To me, it looks like you've never been I saw a small time guy in whatever you whatever you focused your attention to in life. Where does that drive and ambition come from, and is it something you can teach to other people in like your players for example?

David Martindale 48:56

Yeah, I think that drive and ambition comes from having absolutely nothing growing up or feeling like you had absolutely nothing. I've always aspired to do better for, first and foremost myself but now, I've got a family, I've got a wife, I've got a young daughter, I've got an older son. So everything you do when you have a kid you gear towards trying to give them a better future. But I've always had that drive, and I think it comes from having absolutely nothing and knowing you absolutely every day you've got to work extremely hard. I just go about it a different way now, because I've been to university and I've got my

Honours degree. I know, if I come out of the football environment I know I can go and get a job in full time construction because of my background. I know I can. I know that I might be able to get another job outside Livingston Football Club at another football club. So I know there's progression in my life, I know that I've got a positive future as long as I always make decisions based on actions and consequences, but I've always been highly driven, and I think it comes from having very little growing up.

Byron Vincent 50:02

So, finally, what advice, or life lessons, could you impart on young people that grew up in similar circumstances to us. Have you learned anything over the years that you think, yeah, that did me well?

David Martindale 50:18

There's obviously a few messages. The one I go back to is actions and consequences. For me that's the big one. If you can get that ingrained in your head, you're going to make more correct decisions and you make the wrong decisions more positive than negative but do you know what there is a way to get out the scheme other than criminality. Education's massive, I think, I never realised somebody like me could go to university, I always thought it was just rich people that went to university, so education is a way out. Hard work and honesty will take you a long way in life. It might take you a wee bit longer to get to where you want to be than maybe jumping on the bandwagon and getting involved in drugs, or theft or whatever criminality is, but there is a way out the scheme other than criminality. For me, I was quite intelligent. So I knew I could go to university later on in life when I made that decision at 32. I was still nervous but if you're academic and you're quite intelligent I would use education. Education is a way to change your life. And sticking to the right side of the law because it only makes one wrong decision one day and you've got a criminal record, that then has an impact on the rest of your life, or maybe not the rest of your life but it will the next 5, 10 years of your life that maybe then makes, you make bad decisions, again, because you can't go and get that job in a supermarket or a building site because of a criminal conviction. So, try and stay the right side of the law obviously.

Byron Vincent 51:47

Well David, it's been an absolute pleasure talking to you. Thanks for spending the time to do this with me today. Cheers.

David Martindale 51:54

Naw no bother, thanks very much and listen. I've learned a wee bit myself to be honest on the social status, I'd never really seen it fae that point of view but when you said that it resonated so much, and kind of generalised it and put it into a picture that I could actually understand as well. So thanks very much for your, your input as well.

Byron Vincent 52:11

Cheers, man. Thanks for your time.