

Safe in the City, Brighton & Hove Community Safety Partnership

Restoring the harm - video transcript.

This video and transcript are available at <http://www.safeinthecity.info/restorative-practice>

The video opens with white text on a black screen.

The text says “Zoe and Andrew were burgled when they were asleep in their bed. Two years on they still have nightmares.”

Andrew and Zoe are sitting together on a sofa. Zoe is speaking, talking about the night when the burglary took place. Zoe says the police rang the doorbell at 5am, as their front door was wide open. Police used their radio to confirm that there was a burglary and the family car was taken.

Text appears on the screen “One of the burglars was Ollie”.

Ollie is shown sitting in a room. He says that the group he was involved in used to commit many crimes, including shop lifting, swearing and anti-social behaviour.

We go back to Zoe and Andrew. Zoe says that the burglars were caught because they had stolen her car and it was found at the scene of another burglary. Andrew starts to talk about the emotional impact of the burglary. A lot of personal items were lost and there was a lot of work to get personal documents replaced.

Zoe says that her young daughter Lily was in the house at the time of the burglary. It took a long time after the burglary for Lily to stop being upset and worried about someone coming into the house while she was sleep. Zoe says it was terrifying to think that anyone in the house, including the children, may have woken up during the burglary. She often thought “what might have happened”.

The screen says “Through Restorative Justice those unexpected consequences can be communicated to the offender”.

We see two people, Chris and Nicola. Chris Everest is from the Integrated Offender Management Team at Sussex Police. Nicola Fenner is a Restorative Justice Delivery Officer. Chris and Nicola describe the process of restorative justice and that it is to ‘give the victim a voice’ allowing people to ask questions like what is it, why is it and hopefully to move on from the crime.

We go back to Ollie again. Ollie says that it was upsetting to hear that the family were still affected by the burglary two years later. He says that he didn’t know that there were kids in the house. He acknowledges that it obviously doesn’t make a difference now, but if he had known at the time that there were kids in the house he wouldn’t have done the burglary.

Andrew says that he was very pleased to hear that Ollie felt bad about what happened. And that he expressed concern about the children.

Text on the screen “If both sides agree to take part in a restorative justice process, a facilitated meeting can be set up between victims and offender.”

Nicola, the restorative justice worker, says that there are two sides to every story. How the victim sees what happens and how the offender does. Hearing can have a “wow” effect and help both sides have a sense of closure.

Zoe explains that she wants to know why their house was chosen. what questions she would like to ask Ollie in the conference; “was Ollie and his friends watching the house?” Andrew says he wants to acknowledge Ollie’s side of the story, if he feels sorry and if he still wants to be involved with crime. Andrew says it won’t change what happened, but help them move forward in the right direct.

When thinking about the conference, Ollie says his “stomach will go”. He is nervous about seeing Zoe and Andrew.

We’re shown the restorative justice conference. There is a room with a group of chairs in the middle. Zoe and Andrew are in the room with Nicola acting as a facilitator. Ollie walks in with two other trained restorative justice workers. Nicola asks Ollie to say what happened on the night of the burglary in his own words.

Ollie describes that he wanted money to go out. Ollie says that he was round the corner at a friend’s house close by to where Zoe and Andrew live. He walked up to their door, and their door opened when he pushed the door handle. He found car keys and gave them to his friend as he couldn’t drive. Someone else took the television and other items. The group then went on to try another burglary. This is where the car was found and he was arrested. Ollie says he confessed at the police station and was sentenced to two and a half years in prison.

Zoe said the first thing that she was worried about was her children sleeping upstairs. She asks Ollie if they stayed downstairs. Ollie says that the burglary was only about getting a car and they were not interested in going through the house for other valuables. Zoe says again how unsafe she and the children felt after the burglary.

Andrew talks about his experience. He says he thought that Ollie had jumped over the fence and come through the back door. Ollie confirms that he opened the front door. Andrew said that he felt unsettled since the burglary and the local area felt more hostile now.

Ollie describe that after the incident he has gone through a change, Ollie says that his Dad has been a reason for this. Ollie’s Dad has been with him for his whole life and raised him on his own. Ollie says he knows now that if he doesn’t change his

ways now then he never will. Ollie says he is sorry. Zoe says that she is not there for an apology, but to hear that Ollie wants to say sorry and change his life.

Ollie says he is now not friends with the people he was with when the burglary happened; he says that this is a good thing. Ollie says that he always knew what the right choice was it was just that he never chose. On closing the conference, Ollie says that he is sorry again. He reiterates that he would not have gone in if he'd know that there were children in the house, but he cannot speak for the people that were with him. He says that it was a random act of stupidity that has affected Zoe and Andrew's whole lives. And he regrets it.

Andrew says it is good to meet Ollie, hear his story and recognise that Ollie is a real person.

Ollie then apologises again and says that although "sorry" doesn't mean or do anything, if there is anything that he would do whatever it takes to make them feel better. Ollie then offers to wash Zoe and Andrew's car. Andrew says that he would go for a pint with Ollie if he had time. All the people in the room laugh and shake hands.

After the conference, we see everyone interviewed separately again talking about how it went for them.

Zoe says it was emotional meeting. She says it was good to hear what happened from Ollie himself, understand the impact (especially the impact on the children) and hear him apologise.

The facilitators say that they saw Ollie was nervous but he was genuinely remorseful.

Ollie says that he wanted to give Zoe and Andrew closure and answer any questions they may have. Ollie hopes he has helped them.

Zoe says it was really positive to hear about Ollie's situation and what led him to that night when the burglary happened. She is pleased to see how much he has changed and understood what he has done.