

**BJA Body Worn Camera Training & Technical Assistance**  
**Mr. Tom Ellis, Hampshire PD Study Lead Researcher, University of Portsmouth**

Lauren Gonzales: Hello, this is (Lauren Gonzales) from the Bureau of Justice Assistance Body Worn Camera Team. And today I am speaking with Mr. (Tom Ellis) about his role as lead researcher in the evaluation of the Hampshire Police Department's Body Worn Camera rollout.

In addition to his role on the Ministry of Justice's Race Statistics Advisory Board, (Mr. Ellis) is a principal lecturer at the Institute of Criminal Justice Studies at the University of Portsmouth in southeastern England. His expertise areas include criminal justice, youth justice, prison, prostitution, and rape as well as diversity and Japanese criminal justice. Until 1999 he worked for the Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directory. And also had a two-year spell at the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute based in Rome.

Quite a resume (Mr. Ellis), thank you for speaking with me today. I really appreciate it.

Tom Ellis: Thank you.

Lauren Gonzales: Just to begin, I have heard the abstract of your study but could you give our listeners an overview of the evaluation that you conducted with the University of Portsmouth and the Hampshire constabulary.

Tom Ellis: Well this study that we are doing now for the whole of Hampshire is falling on from a pilot study, which you already have on your website. We collaborated with Hampshire because they'll be able to carry out a piece of action research this time which focuses on the human camera interaction. Both in collecting the video on the street and also in the follow up investigations that are used in prosecution, trials, and sentencing.

Lauren Gonzales: OK. I know that the University was involved, can you explain why the University decided to get involved in this evaluation process with the Hampshire constabulary.

Tom Ellis: The constabulary came to speak to me about the introduction of cameras. And they had already decided in that pilot study to give every officer a camera. And they wanted, obviously, evaluate personal issues with the cameras. And this is early days really. We learned a lot from the operation policing perspective. The demands on the management information's, which we equated as rather similar to the evaluation information. And we quickly identified that the police prioritize the evaluation of operation of impact. And in Hampshire's case they decided body cameras was going to be an inevitable addition to police equipment. And I think time has proven them right.

So for us, we were most interested in evaluating what the front line officers did in practice and matching this against what was expected.

Lauren Gonzales: Absolutely. What were some of the results and recommendations that came out of that evaluation?

Tom Ellis: I think the evaluation has a number of different types of outcomes because we evaluated everything we could. One of the things that was very clear to us was that we needed this type of research to figure out where you expect the cameras to have the impact. So they're not going to have an impact, in most cases: murders, rapes, and arson. The big three in most countries. The impact is going to be on this low level high volume, nuisance, public safety kind of issue. And that was very much borne out by our analysis. But the major parts of an interest Hampshire police then had, was actually the process that we went through with the officers. Going out with them on the streets and looking at how they actually use the cameras.

So I think what's happening now, really, is that the whole nation is taking up cameras and the whole world is beginning to. And I think the question about whether cameras work or not has kind of switched and been superseded to questions about how to make them work best because there's no doubt everybody is going to have them. And perhaps the way we're going now and what we've discovered was that this is going to have to be converted with other technologies not just the cameras on their own.

Lauren Gonzales: Did your study notice any significant changes in the behavior of police when they were wearing the body-worn camera?

Tom Ellis: It's difficult to say because we didn't have a control group that looked at officers without the cameras. So in our case, anything - not many studies has managed to observe this. Although, this is what we are now looking at in our new study. So I'll be able to answer that question better at the end of this new study.

Certainly in other areas there is evidence that self-awareness of the officers and of the people their speaking too tends to go up. From our data analysis of incivilities and crime, what's also clear though is that if alcohol or drugs are involved then the public's behavior, if you like, does not change.

(Lauren). Right. Absolutely. Now what were some of the benefits to government officials partnering with researchers for an evaluation process like this?

Tom Ellis: I think in our conversations with them from the first project through to the second one and the reason that we got the funding, was that we're trying to in a way get rid of the distinction between management information and

evaluation information. So one of the big findings if you'd like, one of the big spin offs of this project, is that it questions the ability of existing data systems to keep pace with the questions that are being asked about cameras, and in fact, most other innovations. So the cameras themselves have led to a whole back office focus now. And we're going to have to trace the use of the video footage all the way through - right through to trial. And I think that's where management, police managers and also police operational - you know the guys on the street, are actually quite interested in how this camera evidence is going to play out.

Certainly it looks as though the evidence itself, if you know how to use the cameras and you know how to speak to the cameras, the evidence itself is much stronger if the cameras are used well. But they can be used not so well and that can weaken your case.

Lauren Gonzales: Absolutely. How is this new study that you're currently working on - how did that develop out of the previous study? And what will you be focusing on now that's different from the first initial study?

Tom Ellis: Well the first initial study was a very broad brush approach. It looked at complaints against the police, changes in reporting and recording of crime, and incivilities, amongst other things. But the one thing that impressed, really, Hampshire police from we did was of going out on the beat with officers and looking at the way that they use cameras. And then what we had to do was go through different data systems and trace those cases that we'd observed all the way through the data systems to see if a differential impact had been made.

And what we found was that where cameras were used you were more than likely to get early guilty pleas, you're more likely to get guilty pleas at trial, etcetera. So it made it a much more effective criminal justice process. And it was that factor that the police then said well can you do a bigger study in a larger part of Hampshire and we'll see if we can repeat that exercise.

Lauren Gonzales: Absolutely. Would you recommend government officials partnering with researchers in the future? And if so, why?

Tom Ellis: I think there is quite a change in terms of the blurring between those lines. And so the answer would be yes. The interaction between academic research approaches in policing and craft, as it's often known. And that includes not just on the street but the back office of the investigation and right their way through to prosecution, is that that area is developing very fast. And the technology that we are using now has a massive role to play in this and more and more technologies will come on line where that line will get increasingly blurred. And I think that's probably a good thing.

Lauren Gonzales: Absolutely. Well thank you so much (Mr. Ellis), we are very grateful you could speak to us on this topic.

We encourage law enforcement, justice, and public safety leaders whose agencies are interested in learning more about the implementation of body-worn camera programs to visit the body-worn camera toolkit at [www.bja.gov/bwc](http://www.bja.gov/bwc). This toolkit offers a variety of resources that agencies can use to help with adoption and use for community engagement, policy development, data collection, officer training, and educational purposes. We also encourage listeners to share and promote these resources with your colleagues and staff. Lastly all these resources, especially the body-worn camera toolkit, have been designed as a national resource, your resource. Please submit your ideas for new content through the BWC Support link at the bottom of the home page.

This is (Lauren Gonzales) with the Bureau of Justice Assistance Body-Worn Camera Team signing off.

Thank you to our listeners for joining us today.

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