

Laura's Story

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Laura's house was burgled while she and her family were asleep in their beds. Meeting the perpetrator allowed her to get her feelings out and tell him the terrible impact of his actions.



"As my husband, Richard and I sat there listening to JK we got more and more incensed. He just didn't care how devastated he had made us feel. We were sitting in a Restorative Justice Conference, and he simply hadn't got a clue. He just wasn't bothered.

Feelings of anger

He actually said he really couldn't remember breaking into our flat, as he was high on drugs. It seemed to us he was almost trying to convince us to feel sympathy for him, like HE was a victim! When he'd finished giving his story, we were furious. And then it was our turn.

"The facilitators asked us what we remembered of that terrible night. I felt a sudden rush of emotion, and I just remember ranting and crying – I'm not sure I actually said anything. But I glimpsed JK's face – he looked truly horrified by my outburst.

The horror of being burgled

"It was in May the previous year, about 3 am. I was asleep, as was our new baby in his cot near our bed. Suddenly I woke up to hear my husband Richard whispering "we've been burgled ...".

"I simply couldn't believe it. The worst emotion of all was that we felt we'd been powerless, as new parents, to protect our little son.

"JK stole all Richard's hard-earned equipment, without which he simply could not work, and my beloved vintage bag from our little boy's push-chair, containing precious baby pictures, my diary, my phone with all my friends' details. We were simply devastated.

The aftermath

"That summer was just awful. Every day and night we were scared he might come back. Every time we went away we worried about what might face us on our return.



“In the autumn, the police arrested JK. My husband had played a key role in this capture, but not before he had gone through unbelievable stress. He was telephoned at work by someone claiming to be in possession of his lap-top, and offering to sell it back to him. Separately, he found some of his stolen items on E-Bay. The police were able to trace our equipment, and not only catch JK but also several accomplices. But of my lost ‘treasures’, there was sadly no further trace.”

One year on

“So here we were, one year later, facing him. As the carefully-facilitated dialogue continued, we asked JK about himself. He had lost his job in Merseyside 25 years ago, and had started couriering drugs, eventually becoming an addict himself. His life rapidly spiralled downhill.”

“An RJ Conference always culminates in an Outcome Agreement, and JK’s had seven commitments. One was that he’d keep us updated on his progress. We also suggested he tackle his drugs, get re-united with his now grown-up daughter. And of course, give up thieving.”

We left the prison feeling like a weight had come off our shoulders, I actually found myself smiling on the journey back, as the two of us held hands, going home to our son.”