The truth behind TV

Even though television is populated with programmes about crime and police detectives, Natalie Conway believes that they don’t really show all those who work to make up a modern police department, such as Hertfordshire Constabulary.

In her role as a Crime Analyst within the Safeguarding Command at Hertfordshire Constabulary, Natalie is the support analyst for six separate departments. She covers a broad range of crimes, including child sexual exploitation/ grooming, rape/ sexual assault, child abuse, paedophile investigation, public protection (the management of Registered Sex Offenders) and safeguarding vulnerable adults from abuse.

‘I have always wanted to work on this type of crime due to the psychology behind it all, as the majority of offences I work on and analyse don’t have a financial motive, unlike most other crimes. My role is very varied and focuses a lot on the crimes you now see frequently in the press (especially that of child sexual exploitation/ paedophile investigation, like that of Operation Yew Tree). As much as it is very stressful, emotional, occasionally hard to stomach, and involves working a lot of extra hours, I love it, and can really see the difference I make doing this job.’

A path to the Police

Even though her career is far from usual, Natalie’s route after graduation will be a familiar story to many. Natalie graduated with a First in 2005 and found herself unsure about where to head next. After spending some time as a research assistant within the University, she took a business support role in the Police, before travelling.

Upon her return she temped in London for a couple of years, before deciding to move into criminal investigations and work for the Police. ‘Even though I had worked for the Police in the past, it is notoriously difficult to get a job with them and so I took a temporary PA role within the Hertfordshire Constabulary’s headquarters. This allowed me to apply for an internal vacancy later in the year as a Crime Analyst. I was then seconded as an Olympics Analyst for the 2012 London Olympics Games and then progressed to become a Regional Intelligence Analyst, before getting my current role.’

Future plans

In the past, Natalie has worked on cross-border and organised crimes, including supporting the London riots in 2011 – work that she won a nationwide award for. Her role involved analysing social media to gain intelligence, although her work is far from number-crunching. ‘I use my degree every day, although no two days are the same and it’s never dull. Working in the Police is less about job specifics and more around being flexible – there are huge opportunities to broaden your experience and get involved in some really interesting projects and operations.’

Outside of work, Natalie is a competitive swimmer for Broxbourne Swimming Club and the Hertfordshire Police Swimming team taking part in national events. Natalie also has her own business within the tanning industry.