

Introducing The Innocence Podcast: The Last Resort

The ruthlessness of the criminal justice system is well documented – and for those without access to suitable legal support, it can often yield unfair results and wrongful convictions.

Wrongful convictions are a global problem, and they have the potential to foster inequality and ruin lives. At the Manchester Innocence Project, our aim has always been to support those who need it most. Our team of dedicated volunteers all share the same goal, underpinned by a common determination to stand up for people with nowhere else to turn.

Since our launch in 2020, the feedback we have received has been phenomenal. We have received hundreds of letters from people in need of support and we have helped numerous clients through every stage of the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) application process. It's our goal to help those who have been wrongfully convicted prove when a miscarriage of justice has occurred.

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Alongside this, as a pro-bono organisation led entirely by staff and students, we rely on word of mouth to sustain our operations and keep our work alive, so when the opportunity arose to launch a podcast, we knew we had to take it.

I met Kylie Pentelow when we were both contestants on the Christmas University Challenge in 2020. We started talking about our careers in the green room, and it became evident that our morals and ambitions were aligned. We left the TV studios in Manchester with an ambition to work together, and after a year of preparation, research and late-night emails, we launched the Innocence Podcast with our first episode: *The Last Resort*.

The Last Resort

I have worked in this field for the entirety of my professional career, and when I heard the music at the start of the podcast it raised hairs on my arms. We chose this name for our first episode, because it is exactly what we are. People write to us, and the desperation jumps off the page. We do all we can to ensure they're treated as they should be by a system which so often fails those it aims to protect.

In *The Last Resort*, you will hear from the students and staff that make up the Manchester Innocence Project as they outline their motives and inspiration for taking part. We want to introduce those at the forefront of the rapidly growing movement to overturn false convictions, and throughout the rest of the series we then delve

deeper into some of the world's most remarkable and well-known innocence cases, exploring why false convictions happen in the first place.

We couldn't be prouder of how it has turned out – the podcast embodies the values Kylie and I have sought to champion over the last 20 years. But aside from this, it provides a platform to voice concerns about the criminal justice system, expose flaws and propose possible areas for reform; it is in this context that the Innocence Project work demonstrates its ability to be a vessel for long-term change and development.

The first episode can be found [here](#) - we hope you enjoy listening.

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