

## **The World's Most Famous Exoneree: Amanda Knox**

*In this blog, Claire McGourlay, professor of legal education at the University of Manchester and executive producer of the [Manchester Innocence podcast](#), shares her reflections on the interview with the victim of one of the most notorious miscarriages of justice in recent times.*

20-year-old Amanda Knox found herself at the centre of a global media storm when she was convicted of the murder of British exchange student Meredith Kercher, who was stabbed to death in Perugia in 2007.

Handed a 26-year sentence, Amanda spent almost four years in an Italian prison before being finally freed in 2011.

Speaking to Amanda - now an activist fighting for those who have been wrongfully convicted - she describes the psychological torment of having her liberty taken away when she knew she was innocent.

She said: "The sheer isolation and loneliness – the existential crisis of your freedom and identity being stolen from you – would deeply impact anyone. It's still a big part of who I am."

And Amanda believes the intense media interest in her case was a factor in her wrongful conviction.

She said: "The media is a very powerful tool. It has the ability to impact justice outcomes way more than we would like to think that it does.

"Media storytelling isn't informed by the evidence or the public interest. Instead, it is the scandal that gets people riled up that ends up being reported at the expense of the truth."

She coped with her incarceration one day at a time, helping fellow prisoners write letters to their friends and family while working with her team on her case.

But she admits she lost faith in the justice system and had to shut down her real emotions in order to get through the ordeal.

Until one day she was told she had been acquitted and would be released immediately.

Amanda said: "I collapsed. All the pain and fear I'd been holding back washed over me.

"I couldn't sleep the first week after I got out. I was overwhelmed. Suddenly I was with everyone I loved!"

But she says she struggled to relate to the world, and it took a decade to fully process the experience.

And Amanda highlighted the lack of emotional and practical support for those who are eventually freed from prison, including mental health services.

She said: "A lot of people find themselves adrift and unsupported. You're just thrust into the world and expected to be a normal person again."

"We don't have enough societal recognition and support for people who have been through that experience.

"People on parole get help to reintegrate into society, like funding for housing and free mental health services. Maybe we should think about this for exonerees too."

You can listen to the podcast [here](#).

**ENDS**