

Sacha Marsh

Commemorative Account of Ann Marsh

My husband, Sacha was born in Brentwood. His parents separated fairly early in his life, resulting in him living with his mum. He had a half-brother and half-sister from his father. He remained in contact with his father throughout his life. Sacha's mum was and still is a hairdresser. She was a working mum and so Sacha spent a lot of his time with his grandparents, Peggy and Bernard, also his Auntie and cousin. As Sacha was an only child he enjoyed doing things solo, such as making air craft models, doing Lego. He was into very creative things.

Sacha was never diagnosed as neurodiverse but during this process of creating this commemorative statement, I could see in his school records that this was glaringly obvious. Sacha attended secondary school less and less, despite having the intelligence to achieve, one teacher wrote in his report that he was the most gifted physics pupil he had taught.

After school, he went off to become a mechanic. He completed the course and became a qualified mechanic, he also worked at a couple of other local companies. We met, in 1995, I had a computer and Sacha gravitated towards it and from that moment he attended evening school, 3-6 hours a week and received his computer certificates. From then on, he continued to complete computer courses over many years and ended up becoming an IT manager in the City for a finance company.

One of his most challenging courses he passed was to become a Qualified Cisco professional. The books he had to plough through to achieve this was amazing, especially with the fact he was neurodiverse. He enjoyed his career and travelled to Ireland, Canada and Malaysia. I believed that due to Sacha's difficult school life, most likely due to the lack of proper support, he was always concerned about losing his job. He would have imposter syndrome and didn't always feel confident about his abilities, but he was so capable. Sacha's work ethic continued throughout his illness, and he showed sheer motivation and determination to get better. He wished to overcome what was happening to him.

Sacha and I met in 1995. I was working in the city and would work in a bar in the evenings. Generally when people would come up to me at the bar and ask me on a date, I would say no. With Sacha this was no different. I said no the first time he asked me out. He came to the bar again and he asked me out again, but I was not paying attention and so said no again. After I said no, I couldn't believe I had rejected him because I actually did want to go on a date with him. He had a mutual friend who told him to ask me out again, he asked and I said yes. 3rd time was a charm and we went on a date. I was working in the city at the time and had my own flat. Sacha moved in with me and we discussed out 5 year plan.

I fell pregnant in 1997 with my eldest son which sped things up a bit. We bought a house, which was run down at the time and we moved in a month before [our first son] was born in September 1997. I went back to work 3-4 months after giving birth [personal/sensitive] but reduced my working days to 3 days. Sacha at the time was working 5 days in IT. He wasn't a manager at that point. We got engaged on Christmas day and we married in March 1999. We got married in Las Vegas at Graceland Chapel. In August 2000, our [second son] was born and then in April 2004, [our third son] came along. Sacha had a previous relationship, [personal/sensitive] He had a daughter

[from that relationship]

Sacha was an amazing husband and father. He was always doing what he could. He was very much a family man. We did a lot together as a family.. On my 40th, he surprised me with a meal and then we also went on a surprise weekend away. He was always so thoughtful with getting gifts; he bought me earrings & put them on a teddy bear for me, and there was one time where he created this amazing pyramid where I had to pull two cotton strings for it to open and then gift was then inside.

When he was on a business trip to Canada near Christmas time he asked me what I wanted so I asked for some trainers, he got them but also put a diamond necklace and earrings hidden inside the trainers. He was so creative and always building things. He promised the boys that he would build them a den. So when he built out summer house, he built an upstairs den on top for them to play in.

Sacha had a wide circle of friends. He was so funny and a crazy dancer. When Sacha was younger he was good at swimming and gymnastics. He was also into motor-cross and cars. There was a time where we bought the kids a trampoline, he built it the night before so as to surprise the boys the next morning, and then to test it he bounced and did somersaults. Sacha was also into weight training when that was a big thing.

We travelled a fair bit. We went to Menorca as a family and stayed in a villa there. For a couple of years, my parents came with us to help with the boys. We also went to Rhodes. When the family grew more, we drove to France. We would load up the car with all the gear. Sacha being the IT person, we would get there and he would have laptops set up, films set up, internet and everything despite camping.

It was in France where Sacha first became ill. As I have been going through the documents to prepare this commemorative statement, I have realised again how badly Sacha was failed. It is the exact same things that Sacha was suffering from, that other people now are also suffering from, [details to be considered during the substantive stages of the Inquiry's investigations]

I have been suffering from trauma and shock since Sacha passed. The lack of care and lack of service from the health department combined with the willing of Sacha wanting to get better stays with me. Sacha would plead to me to get help, we were on waiting lists. [details to be considered during the substantive stages of the Inquiry's investigations]

Sacha was treated as if his illness wasn't important or requiring emergency treatment.

When Sacha died, the immediate impact was a horrendous practical one as we were completely without income. At the time, I was a registered childminder and so I couldn't take care of other children because I needed to look after my own children, they were obviously in shock too, one of my sons was so traumatised he was unable to stay in the house and thereafter could not hear anyone even speak of his dad.

I had to claim a sick a benefit for a while but was told I would have to go to London for an in person assessment, I was still too traumatised to travel to London or go on a train, despite requesting an assessment elsewhere and explaining why this was refused so the benefit was stopped. This experience is typical of large organisations, be it government or health service that show a lack of understanding and empathy or seeing people as individuals, with individual

circumstances and happened while Sacha was ill. It also happened a couple of years ago. I requested the recording from Sacha's inquest, the Coroner had ordered them kept for 15 years, until the children were older. At first, the Coroner's office denied the existence of the recording until I provided email proof, then they said they are lost. The reason, they have moved offices and it happens. Another lack of care and empathy, it is as if Sacha was not important to them even after his death.

The process of trying to get Sacha help and get support was so traumatic and stressful for him and all the family. I've had some counselling after Sacha passed away, but after a while it got too much as it is traumatic speaking about it again and again. One thing that stays with me is that the medication Sacha was put on, took the essence and soul out of him. His spark was removed and no one cared to listen. Sacha battled his illness with determination and to the best of his ability.

For our children, it was horrendous losing their father. They were extremely upset. The impact is still ongoing for them to this day. ^[one of our sons] has been traumatised and doesn't attend family events very well.

The children wrote Sacha letters to put in his coffin. ^[our oldest son's] letter said "At least you won't be suffering anymore". ^[our oldest son] had to take on a lot of responsibility. He would sit with Sacha when he was hearing things. ^[one of his brothers] said "I love you" and ^[our youngest son] drew a bottle of milk on his.

Everything happened so quickly, all within a 6 month period. Whilst all family events are difficult for us, Christmas is particularly hard time of year. The impact is forever. We will continue to miss Sacha and his loving, caring personality. He was the most amazing soul and has left a deep void in our family.