

Kate Sheedy - Impact Statement

I will deal first with my injuries and the treatment I have received. For the first couple of months after getting out of hospital it was basically regaining my strength and doing small exercises given to me by the hospital physiotherapist. Whilst in hospital I had been unable to walk so I had to retrain my body to do all the things it should do and rebuild the strength in my muscles. After the first couple of months I was still having big problems so I was referred back to a physiotherapist by my GP. I then started having regular physio on a weekly basis. This was to treat the injuries to my right shoulder, lower back, left leg and my overall fitness. I was still in a lot of pain in these areas. The sciatic nerve in my left leg had been badly bruised and this took a long time to fully recover. I would suffer shooting pains down my left and often it felt like I had pin and needles in my leg. If I stood for any period of time I would get the shooting pains. At first this would be after only about 5 minutes. This gradually got better but did not fully recover until about 1 year after I was run over. My right shoulder should have been operated on whilst I was in hospital - I had broken my collarbone very badly. However on the day of the operation I was anaemic and so it was not safe to go into the operating theatre. It was planned to do this a few weeks after I was released from hospital. However when I went back for an x-ray it showed that new bone had started to form around the large gap so it was decided not to operate. I was pleased I didn't have to have the operation because I was told it was quite dangerous because of its proximity to the nerves in the neck and I would have had a metal plate in my shoulder. The consultant was very surprised that the bone had started to grow around the gap, which was over 1" between the two bone sections. However the result is that my right shoulder is out of line and I have a lump about the size of a golf ball on my collarbone. This lump was originally about the size of a fist but has gradually reduced. The hospital told me that after 2 years that would be how it would remain and it has been almost 2 years now. I still get pain in my right shoulder and down the back of my shoulder blade. This is especially so after repetitive arm movements such as typing and if I've been carrying bags. I'm not able to play tennis or anything like that. Once when I went canoeing I was in a lot of pain and had to have several physio sessions. I still see the physiotherapist for my shoulder as and when the pain is bad. The last time I saw him was about 4 months ago, which is the longest period I've had without physio on my shoulder. I will always have problems with my shoulder. I still have a large visible scar on my lower back. The nerves in the area under the scar were completely severed and I have no feeling in the skin around this area. I suffered major muscle damage to my back and it took many months to rebuild these muscles and they are still not as strong as they were and may never get back to full strength. It still hurts to sit upright in a straight chair for any longer than an hour. This causes problems when I do things like going to the cinema. For the first 2 months after leaving hospital I had to carry a cushion with me because my back was so sore and uncomfortable when I sat. Even now I get spasms of pain in my back. The pain will be fairly quick and then I'll get pins and needles that may last a couple of minutes. These happen on average a couple of times a week, sometimes more, sometimes less. There is nothing I can do about this and will always suffer problems with my back. The regular physiotherapy continued weekly for about 2-3 months. It was then reduced to every other week for another couple of months. It then became as and when I needed it because of pain and that continues to this day. In the last 12 months

I have required 4 or 5 physio treatments. Since January 2005 I have had to pay for all the physio as it has not been available to me on the NHS. I have been able to obtain 2 sessions physiotherapy at University, which is free of charge.

As well as physiotherapy I also attended hydrotherapy sessions for about 4 months. This was to help with all of my injuries and was very helpful in getting me back to some sort of fitness.

When I was released from hospital I had to attend Kings College Hospital ever 2 weeks. This involved a car journey across London, which I found very uncomfortable. This was for about 2 months, then they became monthly appointments. These appointments were to check up, CT scans and x-ray and to see the consultants – I was seeing 2 consultants – an osteopathic consultant and liver consultant. In September 2004 I was re-admitted into hospital to have a ‘stent’ removed from my bile duct. My bile duct had been damaged and the ‘stent’ [a small plastic tube] had been put in to replace the bile duct while it repaired itself. The most serious injury I suffered was to my liver, which was crushed and split in half. Luckily my liver regenerated and the two parts came back together, I think this took about 6 months. It was in November 2004 that I was discharged from the care of the two consultants. However as I said I had to continue with physiotherapy and hydrotherapy.

I will now talk about the psychological injuries I suffered and what I have had to go through since the 28th May 2004, whilst I was in hospital. I was heavily sedated and was having horrible nightmares and hallucinations whilst I was awake. To this day I still suffer from nightmares. This is both reliving the incident itself and also the nightmares I had whilst I was in hospital. For a period of several months I suffered really bad panic attacks, flashbacks and nightmares. I couldn’t be alone at all even during the day. Even now I will not go out alone if it is dark, I’m too frightened to. If I’m out in the evening, even with lots of people I dread the journey home because of what happened. Now I am able to get out alone if it is daylight but for the first few months I couldn’t ever do that. I then started seeing a counsellor, this was around September 2004. I saw the counsellor for a period of six weeks. I was then sent to West Middlesex Hospital and tested for post traumatic stress disorder [PTSD]. I was found to be suffering from PTSD and mild depression, I was told that it could take up to 2 years on the NHS to see a suitable counsellor so I ended up seeing a private counsellor. This started around the beginning of 2005; I was initially seeing her every week, then every couple of weeks. This continued until September 2005 just before I went to University. The counselling was really good for me and without it I wouldn’t have been able to go to University. It helped me to be able to go out on my own. Before it I wouldn’t be able to walk down the road or get on a bus, which was a massive hurdle for me. Although I still have some anxiety and nightmares the counselling has greatly reduced these. At the time I was run over I was learning to drive and was about to sit my driving test. Obviously I didn’t sit my test because I was in hospital. Although after 1 year I was physically able to drive, mentally I couldn’t and I still haven’t resumed driving almost 2 years later. I think this is partly fear of being out on the road by myself and partly being all too aware of the power of the vehicle.

I was run over only a few weeks before I was due to sit my ‘A’ levels and was in fact in hospital when I should have been sitting my exams. I was studying chemistry, history and drama. I had provisional offers to start university in September 2004 from several universities. My first choice was York for which I required 2 ‘A’s and 1 ‘B’. I was predicted to achieve these grades. The exam board agreed to award my

'A' levels without me sitting them. ~This was because of my 'AS' results and my course work. I received my results like everybody else in August 2004. However due to an administrative error I was given 2'A's and 1'C'. This was rectified within a couple of days but meant I was too late to be accepted for my place at York, even for a deferred entry the following year as I was physically and mentally unfit to start that September. I had to go through the whole application procedure again which was stressful and the last thing I needed. It wasn't until the early part of 2005 that I knew I could get my place at York. A lot of my friends went off to University in September 2004 when I should also have been going. I found this very hard to deal with as all my friends had moved away and I was at home almost unable to do anything for myself. I started University in York in October 2005 and have settled in well. It is a very secure and safe campus which is vital to me as I did wonder after what happened to me whether going away from home was the right thing to do. I still feel I have lost a year because I'm a year behind my friends; it was a year of nothing - just recovering.

As well as all of the above physical and mental things I have talked about which are a direct result of my being run over there has also been the additional trauma and stress from the police investigation. I have been aware of the possibility of my attack being linked to others. This has been hard to deal with and come to terms with especially given the press interest. This was particularly, initially after my attack and towards my family.

Obviously I'm aware that there is a long way to go, not only in terms of my physical and mental recovery but in terms of the criminal justice system and all that that entails.

Marsha McDonnell Family - Impact Statement compiled by Shane McDonnell (uncle)

I was asked by Phil and Ute to write this statement on their behalf, as, five years on, they still find it painful to talk about Marsha's death.

Marsha was a generous, loving, thoughtful girl. Her goodness, her sense of fun, her spirit and her zest for life is as fresh in our minds today as it was then. Since the night five years ago when she was cruelly and unexpectedly taken away from this world, they as her family have had to endure a suffering that can only truly be known to those that have been through it

Losing a child in any circumstances is always an extremely hard loss to bear. To lose a child to such a barbaric act of violence that has no reason or explanation just compounds that grief further. The psychological and physical effects on us as a result of the manner of Marsha's death, compromise their lives to this day.

Marsha was enjoying a gap year after finishing school, deciding what career path to take. Like any teenager about to embark on the next stage of her life she had many dreams and aspirations which one man shattered on the 4th February 2003. She was an artistic girl and her next step was to have fulfilled one of her passions by going to college to study photography. However, her other passion being music there was a strong likelihood that she would have ended up following in her father's footsteps and embarked on a career working alongside him in his music industry business.

Whatever Marsha chose to do there is no doubt she would have achieved great success.

Marsha's siblings, Nathalie, Maya and Jack will never know what it means to walk carefree down a street again. For the rest of their young lives this will remain a shadow over their happiness. At the time of Marsha's death, Nathalie was 21, Maya was 15 and Jack was 5. Formative years for all of them in different ways. One can only speculate on the damage this event has had on their education and careers. What are for certain though, are the nightmares, the panic attacks, the hurt and sadness that is an ongoing fact of life for the three of them.

On the day Marsha died, a part of Phil and Ute died with her. On his way to the hospital the night of her attack, Phil had to pass the blood soaked scene sixty yards from his home. The street where they have lived for over twenty years and raised all their children is forever tainted and every day provides a grim reminder of that fateful night. Despite this, the fact that the family home holds so many happy memories of Marsha means they could never consider moving.

Even what should be happy times; Christmas, birthdays, holidays, are tinged with the sadness that she is not with us and the thought of how much happier these moments would be if she were here. She was a person who truly made this world a better place for everyone - without her now our world is not complete anymore. A missing colour in a rainbow.

Only through our faith and the everlasting love for Marsha have we managed to be able to stay a close family. The effects on our business were very serious and we almost became victims of losing our livelihoods as well.

We have had to wait five long years to find some sort of answer as to what happened on that night Marsha was killed. A fact that has made it impossible to put closure on the gruesome nature of her death. Even the ordeal of this trial could have been lessened by an admission of guilt rather than the cowardly charade of innocence put forward.

The pain and hurt that we as a family carry, will be with us for life. It is a sentence that has no remission. As the years go on, we will hopefully tolerate it better, but it will always be with us.

Marsha's murder was an act of pure evil, an innocent girl attacked from behind with no motive, no reason and no justification. If our children ever have to face the fact that the man who impacted their lives in such a way is allowed to walk free in the world, then that is a day when they would have to question whose life is more important in the eyes of the law, 'the victims' or 'the perpetrator'; 'the murdered' or 'the murderer'.