

This is the personal witness statement of LOUIE DUFFY (son, aged 19) submitted as evidence to the West Sussex, Brighton and Hove Coroner for the Inquest on 6th June 2023, into the death of MARTIN DUFFY (died 18 December 2022, aged 55).

The statement, as given to the court of HM Coroner, Ms Penelope Schofield, is as follows:

My Dad, Martin Duffy, was born and grew up in Birmingham and although living in London and then Hove for most of his life, was a very proud Brummie. He was a passionate and life-long supporter of Aston Villa football club. Some of my earliest and happiest memories are going to matches together, which we did right up to his death.

Dad apparently answered an ad when he was 16 years old asking: "Do you want to be a Rock 'n Roll Star?" He was a star in the true sense of the word and not just because of his musical talent. He could play many instruments but he also had a brilliant mind and many interests. Dad never chased fame, it just came with the job, he was quite a private person. His good friend Tim Burgess of the band 'The Charlatans' described Dad in his tribute as "the only musical genius" he has ever met.

Reading the many tributes to Dad in the press it is also clear how loved he was as a person and this does not surprise me. He was down to earth, had time for everyone and you could not help but like him: he was approachable, humble, a kind and genuine person who was without ego. He also had the funniest, most absurd humour which gave so much joy to others, he made me laugh so much, this is what I will miss the most.

Despite his fame, Dad was never arrogant and always put everyone at ease, treating everyone with respect. He was a true gentleman. Rock 'n roll posturing never interested Dad - he didn't need it - he was the real deal, a total original.

Dad and I were very close. I knew him better than anyone and especially, as I got older, had many conversations with him. I am able to express exactly what he told me about how he felt.

Straight after Dad's funeral I left on a pre-planned 3 month trip abroad, so I have had a lot of time to reflect. I want to be my Dad's voice now because there were a series of circumstances leading up to his death which I, my family and Dad's close friends all believe contributed to his sudden and rapid decline in the last months of his life.

My Dad had been a professional musician from the age of 18, first playing keyboards with the band 'Felt' in the 1980s when his talent was quickly recognised and he then became a respected member of the band Primal Scream for more than 30 years. This might lead people to believe that he was a wealthy man but this is not the case at all. My Dad died in debt and I know how badly this affected him in the last year of his life.

After joining the band, Dad had started out as an equal member of Primal Scream but he was gradually cut out from getting any songwriting credits, then touring and merchandise profits, eventually just being paid per gig. My Dad was so much more to the band than just a session man, his keyboards were an integral part of their sound on every album and he had always been a spokesperson, doing countless press interviews for the band over the years.

When I say 'the band', I mean Bobby Gillespie and Andrew Innes; everyone else in the band joined years later, don't make the decisions and are also employed as session musicians.

Dad said the money only really started coming in when Primal Scream did the 20th anniversary tour of their most successful album 'Screamadelica' in 2011 but he didn't get to benefit from this as it was at this time that the band decided to demote him to only being paid as a session musician from then on.

Anyone who knew my Dad knew he was a drinker, in the band's heyday in the early 90s, Primal Scream were as famous for their excess as they were for their music. I would say that Dad was alcohol dependent for many years; it didn't help that alcohol is so freely available in the music industry.

But he had a complicated relationship with alcohol, I know you don't have to drink every day to still be an alcoholic - and Dad didn't - I know this because I lived with him half of the time (after Mum & Dad's divorce) and spoke to him most days when staying at my Mums. Dad was a 'binge drinker' when he would drink for two or three days in a row and then stop. He would also have long periods of sobriety. He had been a heavy smoker his whole life but managed to give up about five years ago, I would say that he took his health very seriously,

He would think nothing of regularly doing 10 mile walks over the Downs. Dad loved nature and photography and posted thousands of beautiful images on his private Instagram. Our fridge and kitchen cupboards at home looked like a health food shop with so many bottles of vitamins, he juiced every morning and cooked us really healthy meals. He loved his flat and especially enjoyed the garden. He kept our home clean and tidy and also took pride in his appearance, he was known for his large collection of hats.

Dad was a functioning alcoholic who had a professional attitude to his work, in more recent years, not drinking before gigs, not letting it affect his performances. He was very reliable, as far as I know, he never once missed a gig.

It was during lockdown when things started going wrong for Dad. No gigs meant no income and he got into debt. He was also diagnosed with prostate cancer during lockdown and despite the band knowing this, they hardly made any contact with him during this very difficult time. I remember Dad telling Bobby Gillespie on the phone that he was having to sign on for benefits to get by as he had no savings but the band offered no support either emotional or financial. I saw how much this upset him.

After months of not working, the first gig after lockdown was the Bigfoot Festival in Warwickshire in June 2021. I remember it because Dad had just had the surgery for his cancer and still had a catheter and bag fitted. He insisted that he was fit to play but should never have attempted to do the gig, but by this time he was desperate for money. Dad was really nervous leading up to that gig, which he never normally was. He had post-op complications and was in constant pain, I will never forget how distressed he was by this.

There was a problem with the fitting of his catheter which meant it wasn't working and he had to visit the A&E department at Hammersmith hospital during rehearsals in London, just a couple of days before the gig. Dad said he was in agony - but he would never have let the band down - and continued to do the gig but was so preoccupied trying to cope with his discomfort that it led to him messing up on stage. Dad admitted that he had drunk alcohol before the gig but only to help him deal with the pain, he ended up having what he described as a 'brain freeze' on stage - a panic attack - and had struggled to play, something that had never happened to him before.

This led to the band suggesting that he go into 'rehab' but Dad was adamant that this was unnecessary as his issues were to do with his medical problems that day, but he did agree to go to alcohol counseling for a few months afterwards and was able to perform without incident at all subsequent gigs, a fact which has been confirmed by several people who worked with him.

Last year in spring 2022, Dad finally got the all clear for his cancer and he was very happy - we all were - it was such a relief after so many months of worry. But then, shortly after this, at the end of April, he read in the press that the band had sold half of their back catalogue to BMG - for what turned out to be five million pounds - and he didn't receive a penny. He wasn't consulted or even told about it. Dad had played on every Primal Scream album - had songwriting on at least two - but still the band chose not to offer him the opportunity to get his share, at a time they knew he really needed financial help.

Although he only had a comparatively small amount of publishing, if he had been included in this sale it would have been life-changing for Dad. He could have cleared the debt he had built up during lockdown and been able to pay off some of the mortgage, relieving him of all of his money worries. When he asked about it, he was told by his manager - who is also the band's manager - that "it wouldn't be worth his solicitor's fees pursuing it". It is clear that Dad's interests were never properly managed on his behalf.

Dad was understandably really shocked that he had been sidelined in this way, he did not live an extravagant life, as long as he could pay his monthly bills he was happy. But after this, I witnessed him really start to go downhill. He became depressed - he started smoking again - and started drinking more. He knew then that he was never going to get his pay day, a time when he didn't have to worry so much about paying the bills. All of our family and Dad's friends noticed this change in him and tried to support him but felt helpless. I can say without any doubt that the band's total disregard of Dad's circumstances directly impacted on his mental health.

The last time I saw Dad play was at Glastonbury in June last year. It was the 50th anniversary of the festival and he had a felt trilby hat made especially for the occasion - in claret and blue - Aston Villa's colours. I watched the gig from the side of the stage, Dad looked great and was on top form. But just a week later, when the band played in Glasgow, he apparently drank too much and messed up. The next morning, the band (Gillespie and Innes) and the tour manager had a meeting with him and made him leave the tour, telling him to get help. The band had great reviews for that gig - I doubt fans would have even noticed the mistakes he made that night - Dad told me there had been times when other members of the band occasionally made mistakes without any consequences.

Dad admitted that he had drunk alcohol before the gig, he made no excuses, he was embarrassed about it but couldn't believe that after one mistake, the band hadn't even given him a warning. He told me that he begged them to give him a chance, told them it wouldn't happen again but they refused - I know Dad - just a reprimand would have been enough to get him back on track. After he died, Andrew Innes told my Mum that the reason they got Dad to leave the tour was because "No one wants to pay to see a 60 year old man fall over on stage". My Dad was only 55 and as far as the family have been told by people who know, he never once fell over on stage.

After being forced off the tour, I literally saw Dad age 10 years in a matter of weeks. The band continued to pay him his session fees for the tour but by then I don't think it was just about money worries for Dad, he had been a member of Primal Scream for the majority of his life, he had lost his identity.

Last summer Dad was in a panic about the possibility of losing our home, which the band were fully aware of. Rather than offer him a small loan to clear his debts - so he could concentrate on getting well - when he contacted the manager, was just advised to either try and get equity released from his flat or to sell it if he couldn't afford to pay his mortgage in the future. Dad did go ahead and put his flat on the market but this only added to his stress. So, not a good time for him to try and get sober with that kind of pressure, I don't really know what they expected.

At the same time Dad was also stressing about not being able to pay his previous year's tax bill of £8,000. Friends did offer to lend him the money but he was too proud to accept this help. He was very angry to be in this position because he said Bobby Gillespie still owed him money - having never paid Dad for playing on his solo album "Utopian Ashes" the previous year - I remember Dad going up on the train to London many times to work on that album.

After having to leave the tour it was on the understanding that he would be able to return. The band offered for Dad go into rehab but he opted to go to AA instead and was doing really well. The 12 step programme in AA is a process, it takes time and requires total honesty. A few weeks before his death, when the band asked Dad whether he was still drinking, he told them the truth, that he was attending AA, had cut down a lot but was still drinking occasionally. When I called Bobby Gillespie to tell him of Dad's death, he explained to me how they had used the 'tough love' approach with Dad. I know this because I heard it, I saw it for myself. It amounted

to him and Andrew Innes phoning Dad and threatening him that he wouldn't be allowed back to play the festivals this Spring. They told him he wouldn't be getting his job back unless he stopped drinking completely. Bobby Gillespie actually told Dad that he "was finished".

What Dad needed was encouragement and hope. The band's belief in the 'tough love' they thought they were qualified to dish out to Dad when he was at his most vulnerable, only made things worse. I understand they thought they were helping him but this method backfired, it made Dad become completely overwhelmed.

Immediately after these two conversations, with the threat of losing his livelihood, I think Dad just gave up, which is why, despite having gone to a lot of AA meetings, he went on his final bender instead. He was a sensitive soul, the band had been his life for over 30 years and I saw that he was simply not able to cope anymore. During this time he became very emotional, Dad told me he felt totally unsupported by the band, he seemed completely devastated.

After this he started drinking really heavily, every day, I couldn't stop him. It was frightening, I had never seen him like this before. He stopped contacting people and I was really worried about him. This is why out of the blue I decided to go round to see him on the 15th December 2022 - the night of his accident - even though I wasn't supposed to be staying with him that night.

I got there at around midnight and found Dad lying on the kitchen floor, there was blood from an injury to the back of his head. There are steps down into our kitchen and it is clear from where he was lying that he had tripped on the steps and fallen backwards, hitting his head.

Luckily Dad was conscious when I found him and knew I was there to help him, I don't know how long he had been on the floor. I was able to talk with him and comfort him. I helped him onto the sofa and called the ambulance but was told there would be a long wait as there was a backlog of calls. I knew Dad's injury was serious because he wouldn't stay still and kept getting up and falling over, I struggled to keep him calm, he was behaving very erratically and was confused. Over a period of 2 to 3 hours he deteriorated further, losing the use of his legs completely.

During this time I think I called the ambulance back around three times but each time they said they couldn't come any quicker and suggested that I take Dad in to hospital myself but after he had lost the ability to walk, I knew this would be very difficult without a stretcher or wheelchair and I was scared of moving him without medical help.

I called my Mum as I didn't know what to do and my Stepdad Neil came straight over but by the time he arrived, Dad had had a seizure and although still fully conscious, was mostly unresponsive. It was only after the seizure, when I called again, did they then blue light it and the ambulance came about half an hour later. When the paramedics were trying to move Dad, his legs gave way and he fell to the floor. He reached up his arms and the last words he spoke were "Help me up". He fought to live, I know he didn't want to die. I went with Dad in the

ambulance where he had another seizure, it was only when this happened that I just knew that he wasn't coming back. I am so grateful I was there with Dad in his final hours and he wasn't alone.

At the hospital Dad was put into an induced coma and was on a ventilator. The neurologist explained the results of his brain scans, he said his deterioration was due to the brain swelling, something that could not be stopped. He said the brain injury from the fall had been so catastrophic that Dad could not survive it - even if the ambulance had arrived straight away - it would have made no difference. This made me feel better as it took hours for help to arrive and I had worried about whether there was more I could have done rather than just waiting for the ambulance.

We had a small and private cremation with just close family, which is what I wanted. The band did pay for the funeral - which I was grateful for as Dad left no money - but it's so sad to know that this generosity wasn't offered to Dad when he really needed it. His fellow musician and friend Steve Mason organised a gathering for friends to attend on the day. Only Dad's good friend Darren, the drummer in Primal Scream and crew members - past and present - from the group came to pay their respects.

Straight after Dad's death, I had a couple of phone calls with Bobby Gillespie and Andrew Innes and was sent some photos of Dad on WhatsApp. I haven't heard from them since.

In the publicity after Dad's death, Bobby Gillespie was congratulated by many for his 'beautiful' tribute, in which he stated that Dad was "the most talented musician of all of us" which is high praise for a session musician. Dad had a very unique talent, the band described him as their "Soul Brother" but I think Dad actually was 'the soul' in Primal Scream. It took his death for his contribution to be acknowledged and for him to be given the respect he deserved.

I've seen on Instagram how Bobby Gillespie is always urging everyone to support the strikers - fair pay for the workers - and there is nothing wrong with that, Dad supported the strikers too, but not if at the same time you aren't paying your own bandmate of over 30 years even a small share of the tour profits to make his life easier. As the band got older they did less touring and more one-off gigs which meant Dad was getting paid less and less, only earning around £40k a year for playing with Primal Scream, not a lot for someone with his talent and experience.

My Dad came from humble roots too, my Granddad - who died when Dad was 12 - worked in the British Leyland car factory in Birmingham and was a Shop Steward for the workers. Many bands start from humble beginnings but it seems to me that success and money can make some people lose touch with their roots - with reality - and when the greed kicks in, they lose their humanity. They end up caring more about their expensive designer clothes and buying holiday homes than for the welfare and mental health of the people who helped them achieve their success.

I am well aware that financial reward may not have saved Dad from himself - we will never know - but I do know that while the band were reaping the rewards from touring 'Screamadelica', a classic British album, he was having to live month to month - just being paid session fees to perform it - when in fact he had played such an important part in creating it. I know Dad found this really insulting and not right. His 30 years of loyalty to Primal Scream was never repaid.

I lost my Dad too soon, I know his death was an accident but I just wish he hadn't died feeling so unappreciated and distraught about having to sell our home, he didn't deserve that. I am so proud of Dad - and who he was - an authentic and good person. He was truly loved by so many people and along with his music, this love is his legacy.

He lived an incredible life and didn't die in vain, his kidneys were successfully donated to two very sick recipients on long-term dialysis, giving them a chance to live healthy lives. I know Dad would have wanted this as his own Dad died from cancer of the kidneys and his uncle died on dialysis, waiting for a kidney transplant. This has brought comfort to me and my family.