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blog post | 15 April 2019

## Hillsborough 30 years on

The Hillsborough football disaster was 30 years ago today. Do spare a thought today for the 96 football fans who lost their lives and their loved ones who battled for so long for the truth to come out and are still fighting today for justice and accountability for the events of that day.

The 15th of April 1989 was the worst day of my life and the luckiest day of my life. Lucky as I got out of the ground, got back to Liverpool on our coach - eventually - and called (from a pub pay phone near the Picton Clock) home. No mobile phones those days and the phone lines were down due to the volume of calls when some lovely people from Sheffield opened their doors to us. Five hours until my mum & dad & sister knew I was ok ? five hours with them knowing so many had died. Imagine that nowadays? I worry if my kids don't text straight back. Beyond horrific and we were the lucky ones.

I was 20 years old and in my Easter break of my second year at University. My son, who I now go to every Liverpool FC game with, is now exactly the same age and stage of his life. This symmetry has brought it home to me. I had no comprehension of what happened to me and those around me - I just thought I was lucky and got on with it. I thought I was all grown up. I was probably lost. I never spoke to anyone really.

I still haven't spoken to my mum and dad or sister about it or vice versa. We just can't. I only now as a parent appreciate how they must have felt that day and for all those hours and, again, we were the lucky ones. I have also never spoken about it to Jon who I travelled to and from Sheffield with on that day. After calling home from the pub we just walked off home like zombies never to speak again. Weird heh? It just changed people. So many people were affected across the city and beyond and that suffering for many goes on ? only two weeks ago a jury could not reach a verdict in a high profile case connected to that day. I can't find the words to describe my admiration for all those people who campaigned and raised money and have kept the fight alive. I did bits and pieces. I wish I had done more.

So what have I learned? I love my family and friends, my football club and my city. I understand what is important and what frankly isn't. It isn't mad to get home in the early hours after driving home from a midweek match. Or fly without a ticket to support the club overseas. I want to do these things and many like me need to do such things. Yesterday I went to the match with my son and my friend and we paid our respects at the ground. I am grateful for being able to do all of that. I have been going to the matches with this friend for years. Only last Tuesday did I know he was at Hillsborough too. I never knew him back then. Just shows how little he and I ever talk about it. I had no idea and he wasn't sure about me. Heh I might even show this piece of writing to my family and break the habit of a lifetime.

Lots of love to the families of the 96 who are at a private ceremony at Anfield today - may their loved ones never be forgotten.

Appreciate what you have and the people you love

#JFT96 YNWA

GJ

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