

fack families against corporate killers

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FACK Statement International Workers' Memorial Day 28 April 2022

Time is a healer. Or so it is said. Because, so often for families who lose loved ones because of work, the extended periods of time spent waiting and fighting for action, searching and battling for answers, simply serves to exacerbate the trauma we have suffered and which we will continue to suffer for all time.

We say that families deserve justice.

In fact what we really deserved was for our child...parent...sibling...spouse...partner...to have got home from work that fateful day. We deserved for them to have been kept safe and healthy. We deserved for corners not to have been cut, for profit not to have been put before people. We deserved so much more time with our loved ones. Decades upon decades which we have been denied.

And to add insult to our injury, we continue to have to wait for healthy and safe work to be recognised as a fundamental right by the ILO. Here we are, a year on from having pleaded for it last year, to find this surely most basic of recognitions, has not been approved by employers groups though the tide of support from Unions, Governments and some employers is growing.

For families of those who lose loved ones because of work, the extent of any healing very much depends on how we are treated over time. The scar tissue can only grow to cover and protect our grievous, grieving wounds, when we receive care and understanding.

And we get that in spades from those in our Hazards and trade union movements, and from joining forces with fellow FACKers – people we wished we'd never had to meet, but are eternally grateful that we did.

Most often our wounds are re-opened or are left festering because of failures by our enforcement and prosecuting authorities, by politicians, and by the employers who caused the wounds in the first place.

That's not to say we never receive any care or understanding from those quarters. Because we sometimes do. But more often than not, the systems we should be able to rely on let us down so fundamentally, to the extent that we end up battling against a justice system which should work for us. And we have to do this when we are mired in shock and grief, our whole lives turned up-side down. We are all too frequently left feeling like we are the ones in the wrong, rather than the victims we in actual fact are.

More than anything, we want answers swiftly, so that those answers prompt action, and we can prevent others from having to become FACKers, to ensure others are saved from suffering the gut-wrenching heartache we are enduring.

Mick Collings, Chris Huxtable, Ken Cresswell and John Shaw are the 4 partners, husbands, dads, sons, uncles, who died in the Didcot collapse. It's now more than 6 years since that fateful day.

These families have endured many agonising waits. Not least the more than 6 months it took for the bodies of three of **all** their loved ones to be recovered.

And then, as Ken Cresswell's wife Gail, has said recently: "Six years without answers for our men who just went to work, and also for all those still working in this industry that need answers too, so no other families go through this dreadful nightmare like us."

How much longer must these families wait?

And when so much time is spent waiting for what passes for justice to be delivered, it is all too often justice denied.

Jane Midgley is the mum of Simon. He and his partner Richard Dyson died in a fire at Cameron House Hotel in December 2017. Guilty pleas were submitted by the hotel's operating company, and by an individual worker and sentences handed down in January 2021. No evidence was heard. And then it was decided no Fatal Accident Inquiry should be held. But Jane desperately needed answers. She needed to know change was going to happen. So she appealed. And the Crown relented. A Fatal Accident Inquiry will now be held.

But as she says "no-one should need to beg for an FAI...it's not going to bring Simon and Richard back, but I'm doing this to get answers so this doesn't happen again. I need to know everything that happened, from the thread to the needle. It gets harder and harder with each year that passes. I can't move forward without knowing all the facts.". By the time a Sheriff issues a determination, it will be around 5 years since the deaths of Jane's beloved boys.

How much longer must we expect to be unable to move forward, time in many ways standing still during our waiting, fighting, searching and battling? Until we emerge changed. And all the more determined to use what time we have left on this earth to continue to effect change.

Time is a healer. Or so it is said. But far better to never have to experience the process of trying to heal. Far better that the fatal injury or illness were prevented from ever occurring. Far better that healthy and safe work is not just finally recognised as a fundamental right, but is a fundamental reality..

Because we remember all of our dead each and every day. And to ensure none of your families have their time cut so tragically short as ours, we pledge to continue fighting like hell for the living!

By Louise Adamson on behalf of FACK
Michaels Story: <https://michaels-story.net/>;

FACK was established in July 2006, by and for families of people killed by the gross negligence of business employers, see www.fack.org.uk .

Founder Members of FACK:

Dawn and Paul Adams – son Samuel Adams aged 6 killed at Trafford Centre, 10th October 1998

Linzi Herbertson -husband Andrew Herbertson 29, killed at work on 30th January 1998

Mike and Lynne Hutin – son Andrew Hutin 20, killed at work on 8th Nov 2001

Mick & Bet Murphy – son Lewis Murphy 18, killed at work on 21st February 2004

Louise Adamson – brother Michael Adamson 26, killed at work on 4th August 2005

Linda Whelan – son Craig Whelan 23, (and **Paul Wakefield**) killed at work on 23rd May 2004

Dorothy & Douglas Wright – son Mark Wright 37, killed at work on 13th April 2005

For more information and to support FACK, contact Hilda Palmer, Facilitator for FACK: Tel 0161 792 1044