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Sister of Liverpool Stabbing Victim Reflects on Brother's Death and Ongoing Trauma Work

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A woman whose brother was fatally stabbed in Liverpool city centre over two decades ago has spoken out about her ongoing mission to raise awareness around knife crime and teenage trauma.

Stephen Cuddy, a 24-year-old drama student from Aigburth, was killed during the Christmas season in December 1994 while out shopping with his girlfriend.

His sister, Alison, who was just 15 at the time, described the moment she and her mother were informed of his death. Speaking to the *Liverpool Echo*, she recalled how they had celebrated Stephen's birthday just a day before the attack.

She said: "I identified him with my mum. It's something you never get out your head. The day before, we'd had a dinner at home, and he was going off with his girlfriend to play pool. I'd had a dance competition in school and he was so made up we'd won."

Alison went on to describe the surreal moment a police officer arrived at their home shortly after a television programme had ended. "He didn't say anything, he asked to come in, and we sat in the living room. He said there had been an incident at St Luke's Church and said my brother had been fatally stabbed. My God, in that moment, you just go deaf, I can't explain it."

Stephen was attacked outside St Luke's Church on Berry Street by Keith Pinney, a Canadian national, later diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. Cuddy died from a single stab wound to the heart.

Pinney admitted to the killing but denied murder, instead pleading guilty to manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility. He was subsequently detained indefinitely at Ashworth Hospital under the Mental Health Act.

Closed-circuit television (CCTV) CCTV footage from the time showed Pinney casually walking away from the scene, passing unaware shoppers on Bold Street. The weapon used was a 12-inch butcher's knife, which pierced Stephen's heart. Despite efforts from medical professionals who happened to be nearby, he could not be saved.

Pinney's mental health history raised serious questions following Stephen's death. He had been diagnosed as psychotic in Canada in 1985 before being deported to the United Kingdom. Over the years, he was arrested several times and detained in both Wales and London under the Mental Health Act. Just months before the fatal stabbing, he had been sectioned again, but this time at St Luke's Hospital in London.

Stephen's mother, Valerie, spent years pushing for a public inquiry into the circumstances that led to her son's death, particularly the failings in monitoring Pinney's condition and movements. In 2009, following a 15-year legal battle, the High Court ordered the government to decide on whether to proceed with an inquiry. Then, Health Secretary Andy

Burnham eventually ruled against it, citing that too much time had passed and that it was no longer in the public interest.

Valerie passed away last year. Alison reflected on how the trauma and prolonged legal battle affected their relationship over the years.

Now, more than two decades on from the tragedy, Alison has launched an Instagram initiative, Mindful Teen World, aimed at helping young people process trauma and understand the long-term impact of knife crime. She hopes to provide tools and support that empower teenagers to move forward with their lives, even in the face of loss.

“This has been on the backburner for some time, and I really want to build up the awareness around trauma,” she said. “I want teens to see the other side of knife crime, the victim’s family, and what it does to them. Their life is over the second they pick up that knife, and I just want to raise awareness around that.”

Alison also hopes to expand her initiative further, including developing a course and writing a book based on her experiences and what she’s learned since Stephen’s death. She continues to stress that although trauma can shape a person’s life, it doesn’t define the future.

“I also want people to know that just because they’re the victim of this, it’s not the tapestry of their future, the future’s unwritten,” she added.

Stephen had recently been offered a part in the musical Blood Brothers and was known among his peers for his intelligence and generosity. His sister described how, at just 21, he once gave away the last of his money to help a stranger get home by bus, choosing instead to walk.