
Justice for Ben: Exposing the Lies Behind a Deadly Workplace Accident

Description

Three company bosses have been jailed following the tragic death of Benjamin Edge, a 25-year-old father, who fell from a roof without safety equipment in perilous conditions. This incident not only exposed serious safety failings but also led to an attempted cover-up that unravelled in court.

The Fatal Incident

On December 10, 2014, Benjamin Edge was working on dismantling a metal structure in Ramsbottom, Bury. He fell from the roof, suffering catastrophic head injuries, and died hours later at Salford Royal Hospital. The job site was run by Marshalls Mono, and Mr. Edge was employed by SR and RJ Brown.

Investigation Unfolds

A joint investigation by Greater Manchester Police and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) delved into the circumstances of Mr. Edge's death. It was revealed that MA Excavations Ltd had subcontracted the work to brothers Christopher and Robert "James" Brown, directors at SR and RJ Brown Limited. Mark Aspin, director at MA Excavations Ltd, had assumed the Browns were competent but failed to verify their qualifications.

The court heard how Robert "James" Brown created a grossly inadequate risk assessment before the job, which he did not share with anyone. Following the incident, he hastily typed up another risk assessment to cover up the safety failings. Peter Heap, who worked alongside Mr. Edge, was instructed by Christopher Brown to collect harnesses from home, falsely suggesting Mr. Edge's negligence.

The Courtroom Drama

In court, Mr. Justice Openshaw condemned the actions of those involved. He noted that Peter Heap, despite realizing the criminality of his actions, complied with the orders given. The Browns insisted the harnesses had been on-site before the incident but admitted to falsifying the risk assessment.

Sentencing

During sentencing, Mr. Edge's mother expressed her profound grief and anger. She described the irreplaceable loss of her son, who had a bright future ahead. "Ben's death was totally avoidable. He had everything to live for, but his future was stolen from him," she said. Her words underscored the gravity of the situation and the senselessness of the loss.

The court handed down significant penalties. SR and RJ Brown Limited was fined £300,000 after

admitting corporate manslaughter. Christopher and Robert Brown were jailed for 20 months each for perverting the course of justice and health and safety breaches, though manslaughter charges were set aside. Mark Aspin received a one-year jail sentence for health and safety offenses. MA Excavations Ltd was fined £75,000. Peter Heap was given a four-month suspended sentence for two years for his role in the cover-up.

Remembering Ben

Ben's family issued a heartfelt tribute, expressing their deep sorrow. They highlighted his loving nature and the immense void his passing left. "Ben was taken from us in tragic circumstances aged only 25, and our family and all of his friends are totally grief-stricken by his loss," they said. "He was a loving, caring son, twin brother, and family man. Ben was a much-loved partner and father and will always remain a huge part of everyone's lives."

Justice and Consequences

This case illustrates the devastating consequences of neglecting workplace safety and attempting to conceal such failures. It also serves as a stark reminder of the importance of stringent safety measures and the ethical responsibilities of employers. The sentencing of those responsible brings a measure of justice, though it cannot undo the tragedy that befell Benjamin Edge and his family.

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