



My First Drug was Coke

Pete speaks to Edges

I started doing drugs when I was 18, in Switzerland. Mum had just left and gone back to England. That was the second divorce in my life with my parents. I was pretty clean up until then even though I was into the punk scene. I didn't drink or smoke or anything.

With drugs I started right from the top. The first drug I ever took was coke. The good stuff. The second drug I took was heroin and the second time I took that I injected it. I got badly into it and I've been doing it 20 years now. I came back to England and got into speed and amphetamines. My family was still all over the place, my brother and dad were still in Switzerland, and I was just left really, I just crumbled. Drugs were covering up my feelings.

I was born in a council estate in Blackburn and lived there until I was nine before moving to Switzerland. I just survived. I went back to England when I was 21 I met a local girl and she got pregnant. We had a daughter who's 15 now, our families wanted us to get married so we did. I was still using speed, staying mostly off the heroin. But my use of speed increased as my relationship got worse. I turned to drugs more and more. And my wife started to use drugs when she was away at the weekends and she wanted me to score it for her. So then she had to feel that it was ok for me to use since she was too. But when she stopped using she wanted me to. But I was a different situation because I was an addict.

In 95 we split up. I met the mother of my second daughter. She was using heroin maybe once a month. We weren't letting heroin users in the house and I was trying to stay away from those circles. I got on a methadone script which I was on 11 years. The doctor was just throwing everything at me, wanted me to inject amps, but I didn't want that I wanted to stop. When I was young heroin got snorted but I've always injected, I've got bad sinuses but I haven't damaged my veins that much. It didn't show on me, I carried it and hid it well. I've messed up some things in life.

But things got bad, we'd had my second daughter Katie and my wife was getting aggressive. She was on a methadone script too. She was drinking and taking a baseball bat to me, across my head. She didn't want my other daughter to come and stay, the drugs got worse, I was taking everything. Trying to keep my family together, but she ran off with someone and I broke down. I was doing a lot of speed. Trying to keep off heroin and keep on my methadone script.

Eventually I went back to Switzerland, I was taking 80-90mg of methadone a day and taking coke, I've always wanted to go back to Switzerland, my kids are there. But when I went back trying to keep my job up and the drugs, I couldn't do it. I was falling asleep at work and stuff. I was just lost. I wanted to get a stable life but everything was against me. I kept injecting crack. I never used to smoke or snort or swallow drugs.

One of my friends suggested I make some money, "How about taking some cannabis to England?" My mate was top of the pyramid. I thought he was talking about a few ounces. But no, I was bringing fifty or sixty kilos in a month. A year later one of my friends had sixty kilos which went missing. Then someone stole it off me over here because they thought I was on my own. So I had two Russian big blokes on my back in Switzerland which was very intimidating. But I was that crazy on drugs I just didn't care. I just thought that they've stitched me up, they knew I was vulnerable and they didn't help me out. I made £1000 on every kilo though. I did make a lot of money.

Then one time I was in England, I overdosed pretty badly, I started to think I wanted to stop. So I went to Romania because I couldn't get hold of heroin. But I still did valium and I was still doing speed. I was up for days speeding, then taking heroin and then one day I overdosed and woke up with all the monitors on me. I had some brain damage after that, I was blacking out and taking rubbish. One time I had my feet up on an old woman's wheelchair in a café.

Then another time I overdosed on coke, my head was pounding and my lips went black. I was walking around the room praying, "not now, don't take me now." I had been injecting 25ml of coke every ten minutes. I developed a bit of a mental illness. My friends were worried about me and said I was losing it. I was rattling and trying to stay off but I couldn't. I started again, I was using it every half hour or couple of hours.

But I came into the new year clean, I was seven days clean when I came to THOMAS and I'm here now, my brain's waking up again slowly and I'm feeling good. This is the first time I've asked for help I always thought I could get clean myself but I never could. I've come too close to dying too many times. I saw someone last week who I knew from the early days and they couldn't believe I was still alive. I want my daughters to have a dad.