

Melissa Roberts



FOUNDATION



## GOOD MORNING - FACING MY DEMONS

My name is Peter Cawley. I am 48 and I am from Sheffield. I have written this article to show people how paranoid beliefs can influence our thinking and how I made sense of my experiences and my ongoing recovery.

I became ill in 1996; this was due to overwork and no sleep. When I was admitted to hospital, I believed it was a Space Ship and I was being abducted, I tried to escape; smashing up the hospital in the process. I am sorry for that now.

They drugged me up and put me in a padded cell. They sectioned me under the Mental Health Act, Section 2 for 28 days.

I came home and continued to do strange things. I live opposite a newsagent and would go daily to cars parked outside my house where people were reading their papers. I would challenge them saying they were watching me.

I went to see the Psychiatrist at the hospital and I went in this office. I sat on the floor with my back to the wall facing the door. I was convinced someone was out to kill me. I ended up with another Section 2. This time when I came out of hospital, I was pointed in the direction of The Limbrick Day Centre in Hillsborough Sheffield. My biggest mistake was going on my own, I got there and sat in reception for 20 minutes, no one approached me and I went home thinking I had gone to the wrong place.

For the next 12 months I stayed in the house too frightened to venture out. A CPN would visit, talking to my partner asking how I had been. I had never had a CPN so I did not trust him and never said much to him.

My Paranoia escalated. my partner says that I could see a red laser dot when I was at the table or sat watching T.V. Convinced that I was going to be shot killed off by the SAS.

### Why?

I watched T.V. through the night and believed I knew how Camelot was fiddling the Lottery. I was filled with feelings of ecstasy to terror all compressed inside.

The first chance I got I ran away from home, living on the streets of Sheffield. No fun!

I decided to kill myself by jumping off a railway bridge but spotted some people from Green Peace scaling an incinerator chimney and went to join them. Arrested again!

I came home after three weeks of hell and was immediately sectioned again. The Psychiatrist came to see me on the ward and asked how I was doing. I told him it was the best hotel I had stopped in. The next day I was discharged after only 14 days. When I returned home my partner had had enough of my bad behavior so I left home again. I headed to the North Yorkshire coastline. I was soon in trouble with the police and was arrested and put back in hospital. I thought it was being run by The Freemasons [Masonic Lodge] and that the staff was working for the Secret Service. After 3 or 4 days they brought me back to Sheffield to a hospital I had never been in before, Section2 again. But still I was unable to tell anyone what was going on in my head.

One day the council came to rewire my house. They did this in just four hours whilst I was out. When I came home, I believed they had bugged the house installing cameras and microphones. I also thought the identification chip in my dog was a transmitter relaying all our conversations. The poor dog would be put outside or shut under the stairs. My elderly neighbour who was 84 thought this was strange behavior but encouraged me to talk rubbish to the dog.

## Next news - Sectioned again!

When I came out of hospital this time, I knew I could not repeat the past. My partner was at her wits end and my children were starting to suffer. I took my medication as prescribed. It did not matter how bad things were, I would not run away again.

At this point I returned to The Limbrick Centre in Sheffield and started attending most days. After a few months I met Peter Bullimore. He told me he ran a group for Voice Hearers and people who experience Paranoia. I went along six times and did not say anything. I thought the people attending were all actors and they were filming me. I had heard other people's stories and began to trust them. I had to tell someone what was going on in my head, and I'd been carrying a secret for seven years. I still believed someone was out to kill me but what was my life worth anyway, I was torturing myself. The next few months I started making new friends at the group talking openly about my own experiences. Since that time, I have attended regularly for the last five years. I've learned about voices which I was scared to admit to anyone that I heard, but I now facilitate the group, some workshops and speak at conferences.

I've learnt that Paranoia is, MISSTRUST, SUSPICION, FEAR and FEELINGS of GRANDEUR.

I had to make choices and decisions to keep me well but the two main things that helped me were The Hearing Voices Network & Paranoia Network and accepting I had a problem and not running away from it.

## Changes for keeping well

- Watch how much I drink and where I drink
- Travel five miles to shop or go to the bank
- Avoid crowded buses
- Lived in same village all my life, so avoid certain people and situations
- Stop going out at night
- Try to rationalise thoughts about daily events; e.g. Partner or children late home
- Try to think positively
- Don't focus on negatives
- Take responsibility for my own mental health, life and medication
- Talk about problems and check things out
- Ring people I trust if I need reassurance
- Create safety.