

Dave Merritt

The father of Jack Merritt, who died on Friday at London Bridge, writes that the attack has been used to reinforce the worldview his son fought against

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‘If Jack could comment on his death – and the tragic incident on Friday 29 November – he would be livid.’ Photograph: Family handout

Jack was proud. Jack was absorbingly intelligent. Jack was fiercely loyal. Jack loved music, art, eating good food with his family, and having more than one pint with his mates. Oh, and in case you haven’t realised by now ... he was also devilishly handsome.

But Jack was also angry, frustrated, selfless, stubborn. He was angry because he saw our society failing those most in need. He was frustrated because the political elite have forgotten why it is important to be fair. He was selfless in his dedication to make things right in every second of his life. Jack devoted his energy to the purpose of Learning Together: a pioneering programme to bring students from university and prisons together to share their unique perspectives on justice. Unlike many of us, Jack did not just go to work. He lived and breathed fire in his pursuit of a better world for all humanity, particularly those most in need.

If Jack could comment on his death – and the tragic incident on Friday 29 November – he would be livid. We would see him ticking it over in his mind before a word was uttered between us. Jack would understand the political timing with visceral clarity.

He would be seething at his death, and his life, being used to perpetuate an agenda of hate that he gave his everything fighting against. We should never forget that. What Jack would want from this is for all of us to walk through the door he has booted down, in his black Doc Martens.

That door opens up a world where we do not lock up and throw away the key. Where we do not give indeterminate sentences, or convict people on joint enterprise. Where we do not slash prison budgets, and where we focus on rehabilitation not revenge. Where we do not consistently undermine our public services, the lifeline of our nation. Jack believed in the inherent goodness of humanity, and felt a deep social responsibility to protect that. Through us all, Jack marches on.