

Meet the man behind “Cashier number three, please”

For years, millions of shoppers in single line queues across the UK heard a familiar announcement, “Cashier Number Three, Please”, but no one knew the man behind it. This was the voice of a successful businessman, communicator, and mentor whose career took him across trades and around the world. Today, **Terry Green** is writing a different story.

After a diagnosis of CANVAS, a rare form of ataxia, he is chasing a lifelong ambition of becoming an accomplished crime novelist while facing the challenges of the condition with determination, humour, and the support of his lovely wife, Sharon. Like many others living with ataxia, Terry's diagnosis wasn't straightforward.

“Although I didn't realise it at the time, it all started with a cough. I was in my early forties, and I was about to present to a group of 70 people when the mad cough started. I darted off to find water. On that occasion, I was able to calm the cough in time, but it became a regular, annoying occurrence. Despite consulting many doctors, having tests, trying different medications and following advice, nothing touched it.”

Despite the cough, which remained unexplained, life went on for Terry. He had built a successful international career and his was one of the most recognisable voices in the country. *“I've enjoyed a varied and successful career, starting in the motor industry; I moved from cars to cellular phones, tyres to Tensabarriers – yes those posts in the airport that you have to queue through to check in, before my voice became famous and was heard by 25 million people every month saying ‘Cashier Number Three, Please’ (and all the other numbers too).”*

Years after the first unexplained symptom, another arrived while Terry was already recovering from a major health challenge. *“Moving forward sixteen years, I was recovering from prostate cancer when, walking down the street, I suddenly felt very tired and decidedly wobbly. My GP thought it must be fluid in my ear and tried a procedure to relieve it. Nothing doing. He sent me to a neuro-physiotherapist. Scans were organised, following which, a neurologist announced Cerebellar ataxia and the hard words, no cure, degenerative condition. I was shattered, although by now I realised that something was fundamentally wrong.”*

It was naturally shocking news, but rather than allowing the diagnosis to define him, Terry decided to adapt and keep on moving ahead with life. *“I determined to fight the condition for as long as I could, whilst gradually scaling back on my work and life commitments. I stayed in touch with my consultant, I started a regular programme of neuro-physiotherapy, continued to attend the gym at least twice a week, and I joined Ataxia UK so I could keep abreast of the latest developments.”*

Following specialist assessment and genetic testing in London years later, Terry finally received confirmation that he has CANVAS.



“After careful and patient assessment of my case at the National Neurological Hospital in London, I received my diagnosis, and it's good to be able to give this villain a name.”

As the condition has worsened, Terry has needed to make some adjustments to his way of life. Long countryside walks have become shorter outings just around the corner, and daily activities need more planning. Yet he remained remarkably positive. *“As things have progressed, my horizons have condensed. We've moved to a lovely market town in Devon, Tavistock, on the Western edge of Dartmoor. A brief walk or car journey will take me to the doctors or on to the shops. My walks are shorter now and typically on flat, even surfaces. Going out in the evenings is more complicated and involves head torches, able-bodied friends, and an excellent sense of humour. There are many things I miss, but a host of things I still enjoy. People, talking, beautiful scenery, the love of my beautiful wife, friends, our small mad dog, Gracie, and of course writing.”*

One thing that Terry's diagnosis did was prompt for him to stop waiting and pursue his lifelong ambition of writing. Since then, he has got his novels **Redline** and **Dangerous Art** published while another crime thriller in his **Jake Elderfield** series is in the making. *“Arguably, if it wasn't for ataxia, I might never have given myself the opportunity to see what I could achieve with this. A chance for which I am truly grateful.”*

While writing is a solitary occupation, and despite his condition, Terry continues speaking at libraries, to u3a (University of the Third Age) and other groups and at literary festivals, sharing his life experiences and encouraging others. *“I'm a communicator. I need people. I like to share ideas and opinions, help potential writers to take their first steps. It's exhausting, and I have to pace myself, but it's great fun and gives me a reason to get up in the morning.”*

Terry, throughout his journey, has valued the expertise and support available through Ataxia UK and, more recently, the South West Specialist Ataxia Nurse Service. *“Throughout my journey, from the time of my diagnosis, it has been wonderful to know that Ataxia UK is there, championing the cause of sufferers like me and providing a conduit through which we can continually seek the truth about this condition as it emerges. It was great to speak with Camilla (Specialist Nurse) and to have that friendly, sensible, and knowledgeable voice at the end of the phone. I travel to London once or twice a year to see my consultant, but to be able to reach out and seek Camilla's advice is priceless.”*

Terry's personal philosophy is reflected in the words engraved on his wedding ring. *“One of my dad's favourite expressions was ‘never let anyone say your father made a quitter.’ On my 60th birthday, my wife commissioned a signet ring for me, now my wedding ring. It features the Bear and Ragged Staff of Warwickshire, where I was born, and a legend, ‘Numquam Dedite,’ which translates as Never Surrender.”*

For those living with late-onset ataxia, Terry leaves one final thought: *“Don't focus on what you can't do – think about what's possible. Try to view this as an opportunity to change your life and enjoy new experiences. And above all, remember, Numquam Dedite!”*

For more information about Terry and his books, follow [@terrygreenauthor](https://twitter.com/terrygreenauthor) on Facebook and Instagram or visit www.terry-green.co.uk

Disclaimer: The views, opinions, and recommendations expressed are those of Terry Green and are shared for community support and information purposes. They do not necessarily reflect the views of Ataxia UK, nor do they imply endorsement or approval by Ataxia UK.