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Skyrme v CICA

Quantum: strained back, concussion, injury to ribs

In 2006, the claimant, former RAF Regt Flight Sergeant Ron 'Taff' Skyrme, then aged 52, was at his home in Cardiff when his neighbour knocked at his front door begging him to save her husband who was being beaten severely by two men in the car park area outside their home with a metal telescopic baton, similar to those used by the police.

On going to the aid of his neighbour, the claimant was himself attacked by one of the assailants, who beat him with the baton, and also bit him and stamped on him. The claimant had recently undergone major surgery, with metal plates and screws inserted into his back due to injuries sustained while in the RAF.

As a result of the attack, the claimant sustained further injuries to his back, concussion, broken ribs and a human bite

mark on his arm, needing immediate and long-term hospital treatment. His injuries prevented his voluntary work with the Autistic Society and hindered his rehabilitation following his back surgery, and saw his medical discharge from the RAF earlier than expected.

The claimant's actions saved his neighbour's life. The assailants, who were known drug users and feared in the community, fled the scene before the police arrived, but the claimant assisted the police with their investigation, co-operating fully with the police and Crown Prosecution Service despite the risks and potential witness intimidation. The two assailants were subsequently arrested and convicted.

As a result of his significant injuries, the claimant instructed solicitors to submit a claim to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority. Despite submitting his claim in early 2007, the claim was delayed until 2009, when he was at first turned down by the

CICA due to his own actions during the incident. On review by the CICA, his claim was again turned down, this time because the CICA claimed his injuries did not justify an award at the lowest level in the tariff of injuries (£1,000). At an appeal hearing before an independent Tribunals Service panel, the claimant was finally awarded £3,175 in compensation, under the 2001 scheme.

The final award comprised of compensation for the claimant's top three injuries, which the tribunal found to be strained back, concussion and an injury to the ribs. The panel's decision allowed the maximum compensation that could be awarded to him based on the evidence available. No deduction was made for the £1,000 awarded to him at the previous criminal trial in this matter.

The claimant donated all of his award to the charity Help for Heros. Hilary Meredith Solicitors acted for the claimant on a pro bono basis.

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