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In the Spring of 1983, I was the victim of a workplace accident. I was only 24 years old and had worked approximately 1 and ½ years for my employer. A claim was filed with the Workers Compensation Board, as to the nature of my injuries I had sustained.

After approximately 3 years of modified work with my employer, I was forced to make good on my claim, due to the restrictions the doctor placed on me, there was no work available for me. There I was, no job; no income and I still had bills to pay.

When talking with an adjudicator, 500 miles away in Winnipeg, over the telephone, they were oblivious to the pain and suffering I was going through. They, the adjudicators, and there was more than one, would harass me and make me feel I was to blame for filing a claim. The only information I obtained after 6 months of talking on the telephone was “they were looking at my claim.” After repeated trips to Winnipeg to see numerous doctors, I had no answers.

It was not until the Workers Compensation Board cut off of my claim about 2 months later that I was forced to go back to my family doctor to get him to lift the restrictions he had placed on me. I took my chances with my employer because I was tired of fighting for my rights for 11 months. As a worker, it was sheer frustration, given the number of hoops the WCB made me jump through each and every time, without ever seeing me. To make matters worse, I lived 500 miles away. I still live with the chronic pain every day.

As a victim of a workplace accident, it was exasperating the way I was treated by the Workers Compensation Board. I was made out to be the bad guy, simply because I filed a claim. In conclusion, I believe the following should be addressed:

1. Everyone should be treated with dignity and respect. The Workers Compensation Board works for injured workers, not big companies.
2. The worker should be able to talk to adjudicators – “one on one” - about their claim.
3. The adjudicators should confer with doctors and the claimant on matters about the claim.
4. Rehabilitation should be part of the infrastructure to get the worker back on his/her feet to re-enter the workforce.
5. Workers should be paid a decent wage and loss of benefits, while trying to recover from an injury.
6. Claims should not take months before they are looked at. We all have monthly bills to pay. If adjudicators are not already aware of this, they should be. I am certain, even they have bills to pay.

Thank you.