

Stephen Mallen's Injured Worker Horror Story



“I fractured my back when a stage fell on me during the take down of a Madonna concert. The company doctor gave me pain pills and told me to ‘move on.’ I’m in pain constantly; I feel as if an ice pick is stuck in my back. I’ve lost everything I had.”

About Me: My name is Stephen Mallen, a.k.a. “StagehandSteve.” I live in Costa Mesa, or wherever my home on wheels can park.

My Family: I am 55 years old, a Vietnam Veteran and married to Karla. I have two children, Andrew, 15, and Ashley, 16.

My Job and What Happened: I worked as a Stage Hand, doing what’s called “grip” work. I specialize in rigging and lighting. I set up and take down sets and stages and work live shows. On June 3, 2006, I was under a stage after a Madonna concert, coiling up cables. One of the jacks holding up the stage suddenly failed, and the stage collapsed - with me under it. I was lucky to get my head out of the way, but fractured my back. I was wheel chaired into the emergency room. The company’s doctor just sent me home with some medications and told me to take it easy for a few days. The pain got worse and worse. I couldn’t work due to the pain. The company’s doctor sends me to physical therapy, which doesn’t help. The doctor tells me to “move on.” I’ve asked for a referral to see a psychological counselor and other specialists, but AIG refuses to respond. The neutral doctor states that surgery in the future may be needed.

What this has meant to my life: I’ve lost my only source of income. My wife and I had moved back to California from Utah to make a new start for ourselves. Then I was injured on the job and everything has gone downhill since. My pregnant wife and I had to live on the streets for months after this happened and my wife had a miscarriage. I had our belongings in a storage shed, but lost it all when I was unable to pay the rent. I am unable to sit or stand for any length of time. I can’t sleep. I’ve tried to deal with the pain and return to work, but it’s excruciating. I can barely make it through one day at work. I struggle to get through each day. The pain is constant. I have stomach problems and I’m extremely depressed.

How the Governor's Workers' Comp Law Affects Me

How Workers’ Comp was supposed to help me: Workers compensation insurance is supposed to be there to help me heal and get back to work. Workers Comp has done little to heal me. I would really like to return to work. The insurer hasn’t provided medical care to heal my injuries, and now I’ve lost Temporary Disability support due to the 24-month cap. What am I supposed to do now?

www.VotersInjuredatWork.org

For more information, please contact Steve Hopcraft at 916/457-5546 or email to steve@hopcraft.com