



TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDING

GREGORY WOODWORTH SUBMISSION

Transcript Produced by
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5 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** All right. So do you want to start by introducing yourself, telling us what your name and mob is?

10 **GREGORY WOODWORTH:** Yeah, all right. My name is Greg Woodworth. I'm a Ngaringu man and I have decided to tell my truth today because of the injustice it has caused me and the life-long illness that I suffered from until they found a cure four or five years ago, and it has left me with a damaged liver and some other health problems.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes.

15 **GREGORY WOODWORTH:** Do you want me to go on?

20 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Yeah. Thanks - thanks for starting with that. Also if you want to stop at any point that's totally fine as well. I know it's not easy to talk about these things.

GREGORY WOODWORTH: Yes.

25 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** But, yeah, do you want to tell us a little bit more about your story that you want to share?

30 **GREGORY WOODWORTH:** Yeah. Well, I was out with my other Indigenous friends after a hard day's work on a Friday night. We all decided to go and have a beer in Melbourne, the city. We came across some guys they were arguing and fighting and we sort of were talking with them and, I don't know, something sort of happened with all of them and we just decided to move on. And when we got near the Melbourne railway station the police - a number of large - huge, actually - police rolled up and started questioning us and accusing us of being involved in the incident further down the street and - but I said I didn't know what they were talking about. And they said, "You are coming with us" and I said, "No, I'm not. I'm going with my friends. We are going to St Kilda". And then by that, the next minute I'm on the ground with the police officer crushing my larynx and my instant reaction was - because it happened so quickly -

40 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Yes.

GREGORY WOODWORTH: - my instant reaction was to bite him on the wrist.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes.

45 **GREGORY WOODWORTH:** To get him - to stop him from crushing my larynx.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes.

GREGORY WOODWORTH: And, you know, I was dreadfully sorry for that. It was just a reaction, it wasn't deliberate. And anyway I didn't even realise I was on the ground until it happened. So I believe he kicked - must have kicked my feet from
5 underneath me and I have come to the ground and with his hand around my throat and then he just started crushing my throat. And after I bit him they then grabbed - several other officers grabbed me, threw me in the back of a paddy wagon and took me to the local police station. I believe it was St Kilda police station where detectives
10 - several detectives beat the crap out of me. Punching me, knocking me to the ground, calling me a dog. I kept getting up and saying, "I'm not a fucking dog".

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I'm so sorry that happened to you.

GREGORY WOODWORTH: "I'm no fucking dog you fucking bastards".
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UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yeah.

GREGORY WOODWORTH: And the last thing I remember was the police officer jumping on my chest with his knee until I passed out, it was around my heart where
20 he was kneeling me. I passed out and the next thing I remember is I gained consciousness again with my head banging down the concrete steps going to the cells. They had me by my feet and just dragging me down, my head - and, you know, my head was bouncing down the stairs. And then I lost consciousness again and I woke up in the cells and my arms and hands - I had chafed wrists because I was
25 handcuffed when I got the beating. My hands were handcuffed behind my back so I couldn't fight, I couldn't defend myself, and all I remember - the next thing I remember is I woke up with my chafed wrists in blood that was not mine. And I had been placed in such a way that my hands were under my belly in the blood. So my wrists and hands were in the blood. I had been placed, you know, with them
30 underneath me so as to hold my hands in the blood and my head was to one side. And when I woke up that morning I looked - you know, pulled my hands out and seen all the wrist damage and the blood on them and it was all stinging and just sweat, because it was those rubber mattresses with that - they have in the cells.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Are you in a cell? Yes.
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GREGORY WOODWORTH: Yeah, in the cell. There was nobody else in there. And to this day I always wondered who they beat up before me because it must have been somebody else that was bleeding as well. And then they - when I woke up they
40 let me go and I got my stuff, and then as I walked out the doors the sergeant was waiting there at the steps and he said to me, "You better get an AIDS test". And I didn't realise what he said at the time, so I - I thought he was calling me a fag. I thought he was saying I was a homosexual so I told him to go fuck himself.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes. Yes. Fair enough.
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GREGORY WOODWORTH: And then I got home. I went to the - I rang a doctor and the doctor came to the house and he took all evidence of it and sort of wrote everything down, and they charged me with assault police. And, anyway, I - I didn't front court, I just went - I ended up going to Darwin. And while I was in Darwin my
5 - about three-odd months later my liver swelled up and the doctors said they didn't know what it was because back in them days they didn't have a name for Hep C, and - and they -

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Take your time.
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GREGORY WOODWORTH: They just said that I should just take it easy on the grog and - and - and, you know, just - and I should be all right or something. It was in (indistinct) there is proof of this through the hospital.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes.
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GREGORY WOODWORTH: And it is in an archive apparently, I have checked.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Proof - proof that that was the advice they gave you?
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GREGORY WOODWORTH: Yeah. They just said don't drink so much.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes.

GREGORY WOODWORTH: Don't drink grog too much. They didn't know what it was because they didn't have a name for it back then.
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UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Sure.

GREGORY WOODWORTH: And AIDS was the big thing back then. This other thing to do with livers, Hep C didn't really have any sort of thing at the time.
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UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes.

GREGORY WOODWORTH: So in a way -
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UNIDENTIFIED MALE: And you keep saying "back then", sorry, I'm just checking when are we talking about?

GREGORY WOODWORTH: We would be talking back in the sort of '82, '84.
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UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yeah.

GREGORY WOODWORTH: Something like that.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Definitely early 80s.
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GREGORY WOODWORTH: '84, there. And, yeah, something around that era. I haven't got the exact -

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: No, that's fine, I'm just wondering.

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GREGORY WOODWORTH: Yeah. After that I - I just went mad and went fit, muscle on muscle, running every day.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yeah, right.

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GREGORY WOODWORTH: And I - I managed to sort of heal myself.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes.

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GREGORY WOODWORTH: The swelling went down, I started feeling better and I got on with my life until I got married and then I got ill again and they gave me a blood test and they said, "you've got Hep C".

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Right.

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GREGORY WOODWORTH: And I had already had two children by that stage, so -

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yeah.

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GREGORY WOODWORTH: - so, yeah. And it has been a lifelong thing.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: And did you know - did you to know when they told you you had Hep C, did you connect the dots straight away?

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GREGORY WOODWORTH: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, I connected the dots.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yeah.

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GREGORY WOODWORTH: Because there wasn't any other reason. I'm no drug addict.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes.

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GREGORY WOODWORTH: I don't use intravenous drugs. I do have tattoos but -

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yeah, yeah.

GREGORY WOODWORTH: I just put it to that, because -

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UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes, yes.

GREGORY WOODWORTH: - of the - my wrists being in somebody else's blood.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes, that's right. And the sore liver not long after, or the swollen liver.

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GREGORY WOODWORTH: That's right. Because the incubation period apparently is three to six months. So it was in that incubation period time. And, yeah, so it has left me with a life-long, you know, mental issue - not mental, what do they call it, mental anguish, I guess, in a way.

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UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes. Stress, yes.

GREGORY WOODWORTH: Yeah. And, you know, worrying about my children.

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UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes.

GREGORY WOODWORTH: And whether they had it or got it or whatever.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes.

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GREGORY WOODWORTH: Luckily they didn't.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes.

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GREGORY WOODWORTH: But anyway, that's another story. And - and, yes, two - two liver ablations and a bout of chemotherapy and here I am.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Mmm.

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GREGORY WOODWORTH: So what do I want done about it?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes.

GREGORY WOODWORTH: I would love to see these officers disgraced.

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UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes.

GREGORY WOODWORTH: If they have got any sort of medals or whatever, take it off them. Showing them to the public how police brutality is the worst kind, and Victoria Police, and they should be embarrassed and shamed for what they did to me and whoever else they beat up that fucking night.

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UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Absolutely. Absolutely.

GREGORY WOODWORTH: And sort of that's - that's my truth.

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UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Thanks so much for sharing. I know that - I'm sorry that you have had to experience that horrible, you know, night and then ongoing the

suffering that you have had to have from then. I'm sorry and thanks for having the courage to share it.

5 **GREGORY WOODWORTH:** That's fine. Thank you. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Thank you. And you have said kind of what you hoped to change. Was there ever any process you were able to go through to call for accountability for the wrongs that you experienced?

10 **GREGORY WOODWORTH:** Well, back in them days - when I finally went to court they tried to bring up other incidents like a stabbing earlier on, but I - I wasn't involved in that and I said I didn't know what they were talking about.

15 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Yeah.

GREGORY WOODWORTH: And then I produced the medical evidence and they dropped several charges and left the one assault police.

20 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Yes. But they never - there was never any accountability, I mean, for the crime against you?

GREGORY WOODWORTH: No. No. And back in them days they are were shooting people on the street.

25 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Yeah.

GREGORY WOODWORTH: And other stuff like that. So I soon got out of Victoria and I never returned.

30 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Yeah.

GREGORY WOODWORTH: Yes. Yeah, and I did return once but I thought the police were following me. But I often wondered how did they know I was in the state. But, yeah, that was something different.

35 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Yeah.

GREGORY WOODWORTH: I never returned after that and I have never been back since.

40 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Yes.

GREGORY WOODWORTH: Simply because I felt like they would be gunning for me.

45 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Yes. Yes.

GREGORY WOODWORTH: Yeah. They had shot several people back in them days and there was some nasty stuff going on, but yeah, some armed robberies, some armed robbers got shot. They blew up the police station, you know, all of that sort of stuff was going on.

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UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes. Yes. A little bit more volatile back then.

GREGORY WOODWORTH: Yes it was, yeah. It was very - those two police officers got shot, you know, all that sort of stuff was going on and I guess they were just taking it out on anybody they could. That's why I never returned and, yeah, just worried about, you know, their retribution I guess, would you call it?

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UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes, yes. So you never felt safe or comfortable to return and live back in Victoria again?

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GREGORY WOODWORTH: No; that's right. Yeah. Yeah. My friends, they didn't get involved, they ran off.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yeah.

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GREGORY WOODWORTH: And luckily they got away.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yeah.

GREGORY WOODWORTH: And, yeah. So -

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UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Is there anything else you want to share?

GREGORY WOODWORTH: No, that's possibly - that's about it. I still feel these days that something follows me wherever I go. A police officer in Western Australia said something about murderers are followed all over this country, or something to that effect, but I don't know what he was talking about. And since then it felt like I was being followed. So maybe he has pulled my record or something in Victoria, or something down there about the assault, and, you know, maybe there is something hanging over myself that's visible to the naked eye or to anybody else. Do you know what I mean? If you know what I mean.

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UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes.

GREGORY WOODWORTH: So, but, yeah, that's basically it about it, mate. That's it.

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UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Well, thank you. I'm going to end the recording there and just say thank you for sharing your truth.

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GREGORY WOODWORTH: Okay. Thank you.

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