

Interview Transcript

Interviewer: Good morning, Mr. Johnson. Thank you for being here today. Could you please state your full name for the record?

Witness: My name is Robert Johnson.

Interviewer: Thank you, Mr. Johnson. Let's start with your background. Can you tell us about your work history, particularly your time on construction sites?

Witness: Sure. I started working in construction back in 1980. I worked on various sites, but most notably, I was on the site for the Riverdale Towers project from 1982 to 1985.

Interviewer: Let's talk about the Riverdale Towers project. Can you describe your role there?

Witness: I was a general laborer. My duties included handling materials, assisting with installations, and general site maintenance.

Interviewer: Were you aware of any asbestos-containing materials being used on that site?

Witness: Yes, I was. We used a lot of insulation materials that contained asbestos. I remember specifically in March 1983, we were installing pipe insulation that was later confirmed to have asbestos.

Interviewer: Did you receive any training or warnings about the dangers of asbestos at that time?

Witness: No, we didn't. It wasn't until much later, around 1987, that I first heard about the health risks associated with asbestos.

Interviewer: Let's go back to your health. When did you first start experiencing lung issues?

Witness: I started having breathing problems in 1995. Initially, it was just shortness of breath, but it gradually got worse.

Interviewer: Did you seek medical attention at that time?

Witness: Yes, I did. I went to see Dr. Smith in April 1996. He conducted several tests and diagnosed me with asbestosis.

Interviewer: Can you describe the symptoms you were experiencing at that time?

Witness: I had a persistent cough, chest tightness, and severe shortness of breath. It was difficult to do any physical activity.

Interviewer: Did Dr. Smith provide any information on the cause of your condition?

Witness: Yes, he explained that it was due to prolonged exposure to asbestos fibers, which I had encountered during my years on construction sites.

Interviewer: Let's go back to the Riverdale Towers project. Can you recall any specific incidents where you were exposed to asbestos?

Witness: Yes, I remember in July 1984, we were demolishing some old walls, and there was a lot of dust. We later found out that the walls contained asbestos.

Interviewer: Were there any safety measures in place to protect you from asbestos exposure?

Witness: Not really. We didn't have any protective gear or proper ventilation. We were just told to get the job done as quickly as possible.

Interviewer: Did you ever raise concerns about the working conditions?

Witness: I did, but my supervisor at the time, Mr. Thompson, dismissed them. He said it was nothing to worry about.

Interviewer: When did you first become aware of the link between asbestos exposure and lung disease?

Witness: I read an article in a health magazine in 1989 that talked about the dangers of asbestos. That was the first time I realized the potential risks.

Interviewer: After your diagnosis in 1996, did you continue working in construction?

Witness: No, I had to stop working in 1997 because my condition worsened. I couldn't handle the physical demands anymore.

Interviewer: Have you been involved in any legal actions related to your asbestos exposure?

Witness: Yes, I joined the MDL involving asbestos litigation in 2001. I wanted to hold the companies accountable for not protecting us.

Interviewer: Can you tell us about any other projects where you might have been exposed to asbestos?

Witness: I worked on the Greenfield Plant project in 1988. We used a lot of asbestos-containing materials there as well.

Interviewer: Were there any safety protocols in place at the Greenfield Plant project?

Witness: By then, there were some basic measures, like masks, but they were not adequate. We were still heavily exposed.

Interviewer: How has your condition affected your daily life?

Witness: It's been very challenging. I need oxygen therapy and have limited mobility. Simple tasks are exhausting.

Interviewer: Have you received any compensation for your condition?

Witness: I received a settlement in 2005, but it doesn't cover all my medical expenses and the impact on my quality of life.

Interviewer: Thank you, Mr. Johnson. Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience?

Witness: I just hope that my story helps prevent others from going through the same ordeal. Companies need to take worker safety seriously.

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing your story, Mr. Johnson. We appreciate your time and courage in speaking out.

Witness: Thank you.