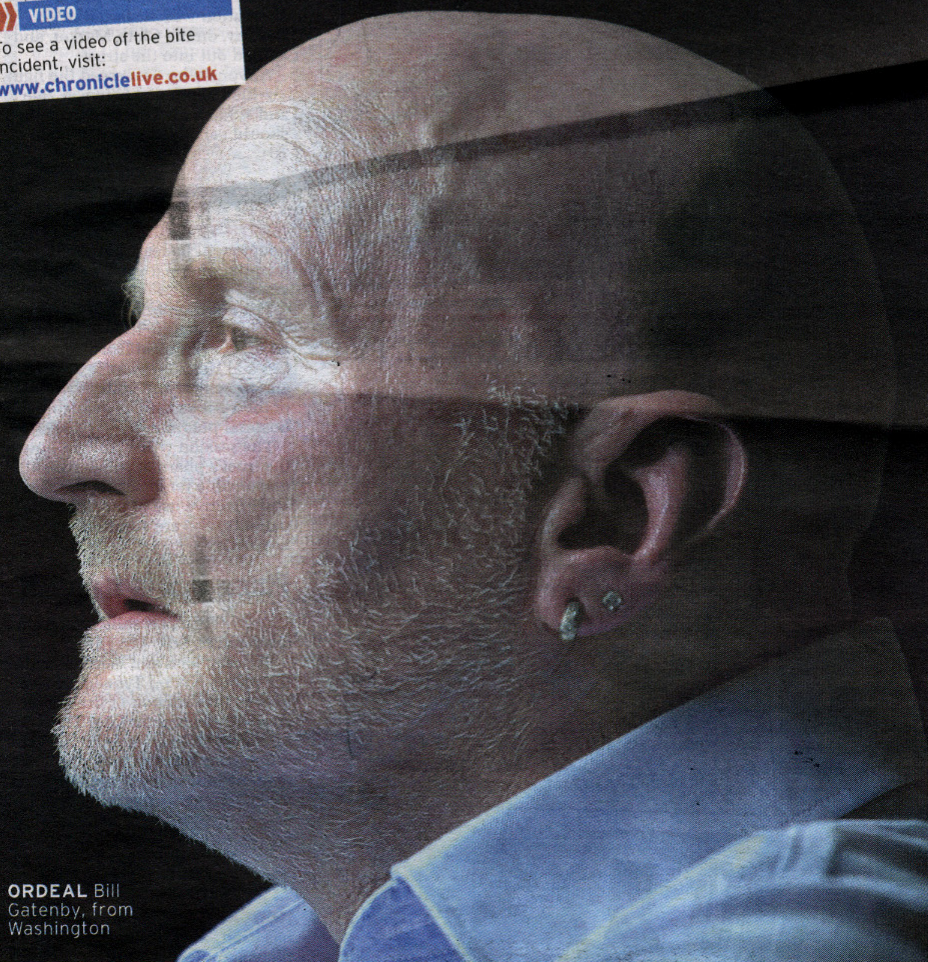


Five-figure payout for bite victim

» VIDEO

To see a video of the bite incident, visit:
www.chroniclelive.co.uk



ORDEAL Bill Gatenby, from Washington

Gatenby hadn't done anything wrong and never warranted the attack from the dog.

Clearing him at the trial, magistrates ruled: "Mr Gatenby did not provoke [officer's name] or PD Murphy [the dog]. The evidence from a number of witnesses present at the scene supports the account that he was merely a bystander in any trouble taking place outside the Bird Inn."

After the trial, Mr Gatenby sought legal advice and began legal proceedings against Northumbria Police. Through all of this, he suffered eight

mini-strokes and had to undergo surgery in his neck during the four years from his arrest to the final settlement.

But today he said: "It was such a huge relief when I was cleared. I knew I was innocent, but you just don't know what's going to happen in court."

"The police did make me a couple of offers, but I turned them down. It wasn't until June that I accepted an offer. It was never really about the money, it was the apology I wanted more than anything and for something to be done about the officers involved."

Apology from Chief Supt David Pryer

Dear Mr Gatenby,

I regret that you sustained an injury when you were bitten by a Northumbria Police dog on December 27, 2007. I accept that this should not have happened and your conduct did not warrant it.

I acknowledge that you did not receive an immediate level of care from Northumbria Police officers at the time, which is a matter of regret.

I appreciate the serious impact this has had on you and your family and can assure you that lessons have been learned from this case for the future.

Yours Sincerely,

David Pryer, Chief Superintendent

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