1	UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA	
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4	IN RE: VIOXX PRODUCTS LIABILITY LITIGATION	
5	MDL DOCKET NO. 1657 NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA	
6	WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2011, 9:20 A.M.	
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8	TO ANGCOTOT OF MONTHING CONFEDENCE DOCCEDINGS	
9	TRANSCRIPT OF MONTHLY STATUS CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS HEARD BEFORE THE HONORABLE ELDON E. FALLON UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE	
10	UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE	
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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2011 MORNING SESSION

(COURT CALLED TO ORDER)

THE DEPUTY CLERK: All rise.

THE COURT: Be seated, please. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

Call the case, please.

THE DEPUTY CLERK: MDL Number 1657, In re: Vioxx.

THE COURT: Would counsel make their appearances for the 09:20AM 13 record, please. Please use the microphone because we have a 09:20AM 14 | number of people on the phone.

MR. HERMAN: May it please the Court, good morning, 09:20AM 16 Judge Fallon, Russ Herman for plaintiffs.

MR. MARVIN: Good morning, Your Honor, Douglas Marvin 09:20AM 18 | for Merck.

THE COURT: We're here today for our monthly status 09:20AM 20 conference. I met with the lead liaison counsel in advance of 09:20AM 21 the conference to discuss the agenda. I'll take them in the 09:20AM 22 order in which they are listed. Settlement program first. 09:20AM 23 Anything on that?

> MR. HERMAN: Your Honor, a point of personal privilege: There is a young lady who is 45 years old, who has been working

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1 in this court for 40 years. Gaylyn, would you stand up. Stand up. I want to tell you, it's been a pleasure to be in this federal courthouse. You have made every lawyer and every litigant feel like it's their home. We can't thank you enough, and I would like everybody to stand while we give Gaylyn a hand. Gaylyn, we wish you well, and we hope retirement brings you all the happiness and all the pleasure in life.

THE DEPUTY CLERK: Thank you.

THE COURT: I'm sure she'll do well. We're going to 09:21AM 10 miss her around here. She's given us wise counsel and good 09:21AM 11 advice, as well as handled all the many, many cases that we've 09:21AM 12 | handled, both civil, criminal, multidistrict, class actions, 09:21AM 13 everything. She's really truly the expert, and we look forward 09:22AM 14 | to her retirement.

We've got a person who is going to take her shoes 09:22AM 16 or take her job. He's got big shoes to fill but I know he'll be 09:22AM 17 able to do it. He's been with us a while as a docket clerk, and 09:22AM 18 now he's moving up in the world. It's Dean Oser; he'll do a fine 09:22AM 19 job, I know.

Okay. Settlement program.

MR. HERMAN: Your Honor, there is nothing new under 09:22AM 22 Roman numeral I.

The Special Master is here, Roman numeral II. I do 09:22AM 24 not think that Mr. Juneau has anything new, but why don't you step forth.

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SPECIAL MASTER JUNEAU: Your Honor, for the record, Patrick Juneau, the Special Master. Just one short report I have for Your Honor. It has to do with the matter involving the attorney generals. There has been a constant communication, including on the electronic devices through the conference this morning. I can tell you, Your Honor, that of the litigating states, and I've talked to Mr. Patton, he may be on the phone, I've talked to everybody involved in the litigating states. know that Kentucky is -- will not be in the NAMFCU process. Louisiana is. New York, yes. Utah, no. Pennsylvania, no. Ι have not confirmed with Arkansas -- I mean with Alaska, so I don't want to confirm that yet, Your Honor. Montana is no. 09:23AM 13 Florida, I've talked to Mr. Young. He may be on the phone. Thev 09:23AM 14 | are dealing with that now and we'll instantly have that report from them. Mississippi and Oklahoma, I think Oklahoma is no, but 09:23AM 16 I do not have that confirmation.

I've spoken to Mr. Beisner and we're going to decide very, very quickly what process, if any, would be 09:24AM 19 beneficial with regard to those states that we're dealing with, the "No's" at this time. But I intend to address that within the next two or three days, and I'll report directly to the Court whether it will be fruitful to go forward with discussions or not in that regard. So that's precisely where we are.

> THE COURT: When you get to that point, let me know and then I'll convene a status conference with those who are in the

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"No" category and we'll talk about where we go from here.

SPECIAL MASTER JUNEAU: Thank you, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Anything on class actions?

MR. HERMAN: Nothing new, Your Honor.

On State-Federal Coordination, Roman numeral IV, Ms. Barrios has a report.

MS. BARRIOS: Thank you, Mr. Herman. Your Honor, just a side note before -- I'm sorry, Dawn Barrios for the State Liaison Committee. Oklahoma has definitely rejected the NAMFCU settlement. We have outstanding issues as to South Carolina as 09:25AM 11 well, and I hope to get that before our 11:30 conference. 09:25AM 12 anyone is listening, I'm reminding all of the attorneys general 09:25AM 13 we have a special conference and a call-in number at 11:30.

With regard to Roman numeral III on the class 09:25AM 15 actions, on the consumer classes, I've been working with 09:25AM 16 Ms. Cabraser and Mr. Beisner to try to make a complete list of those cases. And I honestly forgot it at my office, so we're 09:25AM 18 e-mailing it to Lexy, ask her to print it out for us so that we would have it and share with everyone to see if we collectively 09:25AM 20 have our arms around the exact number of consumer cases.

THE COURT: All right.

MS. BARRIOS: With regard to remands, we have one new 09:25AM 23 remand from the Southern District of Georgia, Pools versus 09:25AM 24 Eichholz Law Firm. We continue to update the database. We now have 88 cases with pending remands with 130 plaintiffs.

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1 nothing has changed with regard to those since the last status conference, but most of those cases are the government action TPP, private TPP cases.

And lastly, Your Honor, there were some cases that we noted last status conference that are open only because the derivative claimant is still a plaintiff. And I'm going to provide to Joe that list to see if we could administratively close those because the whole case has been settled.

THE COURT: Yes, I think that's what we're going to have to do. I have some that are working through the succession proceedings in the various states. And now I have the money. It's a little over a million or maybe \$2 million, I think, that 09:26AM 13 we have in the registry of the Court. So it's going to be either 09:26AM 14 dismissed or sent over here.

MS. BARRIOS: Yes, Your Honor. Thank you, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Thank you. Anything on the pro se 09:26AM 17 | claimants?

MS. REZNIK: Good morning, Your Honor, Heather Reznik 09:27AM 19 for the pro se claimants office. We continue to receive several calls a week; it's remained pretty consistent throughout the last few months and we help them as best we can.

> THE COURT: Good. Thank you very much. Governmental actions, anything on that that we haven't covered? Anything, John?

> > MR. BEISNER: No, Your Honor. I think Mr. Juneau

1 covered current status. 09:27AM THE COURT: All right. Pending personal injury cases, 09:27AM 3 PTOs 28, 29 and 43. 09:27AM 4 MR. HERMAN: Yes, Your Honor. Ms. Oldfather, Mr. Marvin 09:27AM and Mr. Birchfield have issues that will be addressed, as I 09:27AM understand it, following a conference. 09:27AM THE COURT: Yes, I have some motions. I'll take the 09:27AM motions and then following the motions I'll do the hearing that 09:27AM 9 we have set for today on the question of common benefit fees. 09:27AM Fee allocation committee, anything on that? 09:27AM 10 09:28AM 11 MR. HERMAN: All briefing is now complete. Your Honor 09:28AM 12 now has those matters under advisement. THE COURT: Yes, I have some pending motions, as I 09:28AM 13 09:28AM 14 mentioned. 09:28AM 15 What about the appeals? Anything on appeals? 09:28AM 16 MR. HERMAN: No, Your Honor. THE COURT: All right. That's in connection with the 09:28AM 17 09:28AM 18 fee allocation. We'll deal with that. 09:28AM 19 Any other matters? 09:28AM 20 MR. HERMAN: Not at this time. 09:28AM 21 THE COURT: Ann, do you --09:28AM 22 MS. OLDFATHER: Your Honor, may I just say a little 09:28AM 23 something on the personal injury for the benefit of the persons who are auditing the status conference? 09:28AM 24

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THE COURT:

Right.

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MS. OLDFATHER: The parties have discussed methods of bringing the remaining personal injury cases through preparation and to a conclusion, and I believe the Court is going to schedule a specific time for liaison counsel to get together with Merck to do that. I believe the Court may want to announce that at some point.

Merck has, at this point, taken 74 depositions in the various personal injury cases. We are in the process of identifying cases that we would like to focus on for trial preparation.

We also have asked all of the remaining personal injury claimants to provide us with written consents, us meaning 09:29AM 13 me, the Oldfather Law Firm, and we have provided those consents 09:29AM 14 | to Merck. And Merck has provided us with the medical records and the Lone Pine reports on those cases.

There are about four people, and that will come up later, that have not provided their consents. And I believe the 09:29AM 18 Court is going to address that as part of the Motion to Dismiss 09:29AM 19 for failure to prosecute.

THE COURT: We really need those consents because Merck can't give the material without the consent because of some federal regulations and laws. But Ms. Oldfather needs the 09:29AM 23 material in order to pursue the claims.

> So if anybody is on the phone that hasn't submitted that consent, please do so. Because if not, I then assume that

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you're not interested in pursuing your claim and we have to dismiss it.

She's got her hands full with the claims that she's pursuing, and she needs everybody to cooperate with her in that regard.

MS. OLDFATHER: Thank you, Your Honor.

THE COURT: With regard to those cases, I've asked counsel to get the census together. We have between 100 and 102, or thereabouts, of those cases.

I've asked them to group the cases in accordance with some logical grouping. And there are a couple from heart 09:30AM 12 attacks, maybe a couple from strokes, a couple from other 09:30AM 13 vascular problems, and there are a host of others. So they are 09:30AM 14 in the process now of doing that.

They are going to be taking depositions in all of 09:30AM 16 the cases to get a feel for what's out there, both from the standpoint of paper discovery as well as perhaps a disposition or so.

And then they will be able to hone in on some cases from each of those groups and then recommend to me which cases are ready for trial. And I'll try those cases in that specific group to see whether or not the case that is tried can inform some of the other cases in that particular group and be able to 09:31AM 24 resolve it in that way.

In short, we'll try some bellwether cases,

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bellwether that process to see how it goes, rather than just do 110 trials. We might wind up doing that 110, but hopefully the first couple of cases will inform us about the other cases in that group. At least that's my current thinking.

MS. OLDFATHER: We look forward to suggesting to the Court perhaps some alternate avenues when we have our conference on November 4th. Thank you, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Thank you. The next formal status conference is when? Friday November 4th. That seems to be the best time for everyone.

(WHEREUPON, at 9:32 a.m., the proceedings were concluded.)

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## REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, Cathy Pepper, Certified Realtime Reporter, Registered Merit Reporter, Certified Court Reporter of the State of Louisiana, Official Court Reporter for the United States District Court, Eastern District of Louisiana, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript, to the best of my ability and understanding, from the record of the proceedings in the above-entitled and numbered matter.

> s/Cathy Pepper Cathy Pepper, CRR, RMR, CCR Certified Realtime Reporter Official Court Reporter United States District Court Cathy Pepper@laed.uscourts.gov

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