UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA

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IN RE: VIOXX PRODUCTS
LIABILITY LITIGATION

MDL DOCKET NO. 1657
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2011, 9:20 A.M.

TRANSCRIPT OF MONTHLY STATUS CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS HEARD BEFORE THE HONORABLE ELDON E. FALLON UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

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PROCEEDINGS RECORDED BY MECHANICAL STENOGRAPHY. TRANSCRIPT PRODUCED BY COMPUTER.
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## P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2011 M O R N I N G S E S S I O N (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 record, please. Please use the microphone because we have a number of people on the phone.

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

MR. MARVIN: Good morning, Your Honor, Douglas Marvin for Merck.

THE COURT: We're here today for our monthly status conference. I met with the lead liaison counsel in advance of the conference to discuss the agenda. I'll take them in the order in which they are listed. Settlement program first. 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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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 miss her around here. She's given us wise counsel and good advice, as well as handled all the many, many cases that we've handled, both civil, criminal, multidistrict, class actions, everything. She's really truly the expert, and we look forward to her retirement.

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

Okay. Settlement program.
MR. HERMAN: Your Honor, there is nothing new under Roman numeral I.

The Special Master is here, Roman numeral II. I do 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. We know that Kentucky is -- will not be in the NAMFCU process. Louisiana is. New York, yes. Utah, no. Pennsylvania, no. I have not confirmed with Arkansas -- I mean with Alaska, so I don't want to confirm that yet, Your Honor. Montana is no. Florida, I've talked to Mr. Young. He may be on the phone. They are dealing with that now and we'll instantly have that report from them. Mississippi and Oklahoma, I think Oklahoma is no, but 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 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 well, and I hope to get that before our 11:30 conference. If anyone is listening, I'm reminding all of the attorneys general we have a special conference and a call-in number at 11:30. With regard to Roman numeral III on the class actions, on the consumer classes, I've been working with 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 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 have our arms around the exact number of consumer cases.

THE COURT: All right.
MS. BARRIOS: With regard to remands, we have one new remand from the Southern District of Georgia, Pools versus Eichholz Law Firm. We continue to update the database. We now have 88 cases with pending remands with 130 plaintiffs. And
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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 we have in the registry of the Court. So it's going to be either dismissed or sent over here.

MS. BARRIOS: Yes, Your Honor. Thank you, Your Honor.
THE COURT: Thank you. Anything on the pro se claimants?

MS. REZNIK: Good morning, Your Honor, Heather Reznik 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
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covered current status.
THE COURT: All right. Pending personal injury cases, PTOs 28, 29 and 43.

MR. HERMAN: Yes, Your Honor. Ms. Oldfather, Mr. Marvin and Mr. Birchfield have issues that will be addressed, as I understand it, following a conference.

THE COURT: Yes, I have some motions. I'll take the motions and then following the motions I'll do the hearing that we have set for today on the question of common benefit fees. Fee allocation committee, anything on that?

MR. HERMAN: All briefing is now complete. Your Honor now has those matters under advisement.

THE COURT: Yes, I have some pending motions, as I mentioned.

What about the appeals? Anything on appeals?
MR. HERMAN: No, Your Honor.
THE COURT: All right. That's in connection with the fee allocation. We'll deal with that.

Any other matters?
MR. HERMAN: Not at this time.
THE COURT: Ann, do you --
MS. OLDFATHER: Your Honor, may I just say a little something on the personal injury for the benefit of the persons who are auditing the status conference?

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 me, the Oldfather Law Firm, and we have provided those consents 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 Court is going to address that as part of the Motion to Dismiss 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 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 attacks, maybe a couple from strokes, a couple from other vascular problems, and there are a host of others. So they are in the process now of doing that.

They are going to be taking depositions in all of 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 resolve it in that way.

In short, we'll try some bellwether cases,






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