

Witness Name: Abraham Karpas

Statement No.: WITN0684028

Exhibits: WITN0684029

Dated. 7-10-2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ABRAHAM KARPAS

I provide this statement, in response to First Written Statement of Professor Robin Anthony Weiss [WITN6868001] dated 23 June 2022.

I, Abraham Karpas, will say as follows: -

Section 1: Introduction

1. Professor Weiss' comments are supposed to rebut my accusation that he was the main reason for a lost year in AIDS research and diagnosis. My accusations with their supporting evidence have also appeared in two scientific journals: "How the 1983 seminal French manuscript with the evidence that their HIV was the cause of AIDS was deliberately blocked, resulting in hundreds of thousands of infections and deaths worldwide" (2019, Emerging Infectious Diseases and Diagnosis Journal) [WITN0684026] and "Infections, AIDS and deaths worldwide resulting from the abuse of the refereeing in the journal Nature " (2021, Immunology and Infections) [WITN0684029].
2. In this Statement I provide further evidence about my accusation that Weiss was responsible for the "lost year" also by enabling Dr Gallo to keep claiming until early 1984 that the leukaemogenic virus HTLV was the cause of AIDS.

Section 2: Discovery of HIV

3. I explained in my Statement and those articles [WITN0684001, WITN0684026] that I blamed Weiss, since he was allowed by Peter Newmark, the biological subeditor of *Nature* at the time, to keep both copies of the article by Klatzmann and Montagnier's research group for nearly 5 months as well as providing both referees' rejection reports [WITN0684003]. I first realised this after Montagnier gave me a copy of the two reports he received from the office of *Nature*, suspecting that both were due to Weiss and hoping I might be able to help expose Weiss' role. I pointed out and illustrated that both rejection comments were typed with the same typewriter.
4. When Dr John Maddox, the chief editor of *Nature*, discovered later that Peter Newmark, his biological sub-editor had allowed Weiss to provide both referee's reports, he fired him, as he subsequently confirmed to the Pulitzer prize journalist John Crewdson, author of *Science Fictions : A scientific Mystery, a Massive Cover-Up and the Dark Legacy of Robert Gallo* on the discovery of HIV [RLIT0000012].
5. I emailed Crewdson about the Infected Blood Inquiry and my opportunity to expose Weiss' role. His reply was the following email on 7 December 2019: "Regarding Klatzmann's email, it reminds me of what Robin did. Very bad behaviour on his part. He did finally confirm to me that he "might have been" one of the referees for that paper". Weiss' confession came after Crewdson told him that Maddox had confirmed he supplied both referee's reports.
6. The first paper from the French group was published in *Science* in May 1983; and in the same issue of that journal Gallo published two papers claiming that HTLV was the cause of AIDS. Gallo continued to claim that HTLV as the cause of AIDS until 1984. Since this first French paper did not provide conclusive evidence about the role of LAV (HIV) in AIDS, it was most important that the follow-up paper, by Klatzmann and Montagnier's group, submitted in May 1983 to *Nature's* office, should have been published without delay.

7. In 2019 I wrote to Professor Klatzmann about my involvement with the Infected Blood Inquiry and suggested he write to Mr Roger Milburn who, at the time Dr Bainbridge and I first met him, had expressed interest in hearing from the French. Klatzmann forwarded to me the email he sent to Mr Milburn: "I was the first author on a paper which was sent from Paris to the office of the journal *Nature* for publication [WITN0684024]. It contained compelling evidence that the virus isolated in 1982 in Luc Montagnier laboratory by Françoise Barre-Sinoussi from an AIDS patient was likely to be the cause of AIDS also because I was able to establish that it killed CD4+ T-cells thereby explaining why AIDS developed. It also contained excellent electron micrographs which revealed that the virus was different from any other known human virus but resembled lentiviruses which are distinct from onco viruses (HTLV). It was most important for our paper to be published without delay because Dr Gallo kept claiming that HTLV was the cause of AIDS. Unfortunately, we got no reply from the office of *Nature* for several months and it was rejected due to their referees reports which Abraham included in his letter to you. As a result a year was lost in AIDS research and the introduction of screening test for the virus. This led to untold numbers of HIV infections worldwide".

8. Klatzmann indicated that he was prepared to come to London to testify but never received an acknowledgement of his email from Mr Milburn. He wrote to me, "if this paper had been published in summer 1983 as it should have... this would have changed the way the scientific community would have looked at LAV as the causal agent of AIDS!"

9. He also wrote the following, "Weiss visited the Pasteur and Luc (Montagnier) told him about my results. Weiss wanted to see me and the result and claimed without showing anything that he had similar results and that we should consider sending the paper head to head to *Nature*. As he knew the editors well he would deliver the papers himself and we should thus send the paper to him. I (very) naively accepted and sent my article about two weeks thereafter. We had no news and asked for. Finally the articles were sent two or three months thereafter, likely enough time for Weiss to do a lot of his experiment... Yes these

are not correct behaviours (an understatement) " . When published in December both articles had the same date of submission - 18 October 1984 - indicating the day Weiss must have brought them to *Nature's* office. Klatzmann's paper was published without him ever submitting it to the journal, let alone formal refereeing, an example of the way Weiss was allowed by Peter Newmark a free hand in controlling what and when went into *Nature*. In sharp contrast was Klatzmann's most important 1983 paper which was formally sent and kept for over 4 months before being rejected due to Weiss' refereeing.

Section 3: Weiss and Gallo – miscellaneous

10. In 1975 Weiss and Gallo had published a major article in *Nature* about the discovery of a new human leukaemia virus named HL23 virus that was supposed to propagate in human myeloid cells [WITN0684005]. Several months earlier, he presented the data during a national meeting in London. At the end of the presentation I suggested that the evidence did not exclude the possibility of the HTL23 virus being of primate origin. He dismissed this; but later two important American research groups found the newly discovered human retrovirus to be a laboratory contamination with three distinct monkey viruses, published in *Nature* (1976, 260, pages 260 and 264). Notwithstanding, he went on to publish another paper in *PNAS USA* (1977, 74, page 1237) the following year that human serum contained antibodies to HL23 virus, which had to be proved by other American scientists - at a considerable waste of time - to be based on uncontrolled artefacts (*PNAS USA* 1980, 77, pages 1617 and 1622).

Section 4: Weiss and collaborative behaviour

11. The Middlesex Hospital was the first in the UK to open an AIDS ward in 1981. In May 1983 I called Dr R Tedder asking him for blood samples from AIDS patients since no one had been diagnosed with AIDS in Cambridge. When eventually I received a reply on 20 June 1983 it was to say that Weiss objected because they were doing the research themselves. Nevertheless in August 1983 my contacts at the haematology department of UCH put me in touch with

Dr John Davies, who was going to the Whittington Hospital to remove a spleen from an AIDS patient. Dr Davies informed me of the date and time; I drove from Cambridge. While I was waiting for the spleen, Tedder rang to ask for a sample, instead of making him come to Cambridge I took the spleen to the Middlesex Hospital in order that he could have part as a sample. He subsequently published a letter in the *New Scientist* (9 April 1987 page 61) claiming ungraciously that it had been he who gave me the spleen: a nice example of scientific collaboration!

12. The Weiss dog-in-the manger attitude was experienced by others, as confirmed in the letter I received and exhibited from Dr Nigel Byrom of the Charing Cross and Westminster Hospitals, but it did not help him and Tedder to get a single isolate of the virus [WITN0684016]. Weiss repeatedly writes in his Statement about their HIV (CBL-1) isolation, but he had none and was obliged to admit in a letter published in *Nature* in 1991 (349, page 374) that his CBL-1 virus was French. According to a letter I received from Montagnier in 1984 Weiss sent Mrs Popov from his laboratory to the Institute Pasteur for the virus and he told me that she signed on behalf of Weiss that it would be used only for academic research. Molecular sequencing which came into use some years later made it unquestionable that Gallo's HTLV-3 and Weiss' CBL-1 had both come from Paris. Weiss tries to claim that he had developed the CEM T-cell line he used to propagate the virus; but this was in fact developed by Dr George Foley at the Children's Hospital of Boston in 1965, when Weiss was still a Zoology student at UCL. Montagnier, who was not familiar with in vitro growing human leukaemia cell lines, told me that Weiss assured him that he had developed the CEM cells. According to Weiss' Statement he had Montagnier sign an agreement regarding its potential commercial use. Montagnier told me that when he took the cells to his Paris lab he found them contaminated with mycoplasma – and so useless for research. Having discovered that CEM cells had not been developed by Weiss, he obtained a clean culture of CEM cells from which many ELISA tests were developed.

13. Weiss states that he has "no recollection of meeting Dr Nigel Byrom". I originally called Dr Byrom in 1991 at the suggestion of Dr Carol O'Toole, when she was

returning from Cambridge to The Royal London Hospital. She wished to apply with me for an AIDS research grant and knew Nigel Byrom. Dr Byrom told her of his experience with Weiss and as a result she gave up the idea of applying for the grant. I therefore called Dr. Byrom, who told me of his visit with Weiss and agreed to put it in writing, although he did not remember the exact date on which he and Dr Farthing had been to meet Weiss [WITN0684016]. This was the only time I spoke to Dr Byrom. Contrary to Weiss' assertion, I have never published any article with him: the references listed are for Dr Byron who, as indicated in the manuscript was at the time in St Stephen's Hospital, namely an entirely different person. *Dr. Nigel A Byrom was a lecturer at the Haematology Department of the Charing Cross and Westminster Medical School.*

Section 5: British HIV testing

14. I accept Weiss' claim that he is not a personal friend of Dr P Mortimer but since I know that Tedder is a personal friend I am convinced that he influenced Dr P Mortimer to delay the approval of the Abbott test, FDA-approved and introduced for use in the USA and elsewhere in March 1985. The journal *New Scientist* published an article entitled "Ministers Delayed Launch of AIDS Test" (8 August 1985, page 16) in which "Abbott Laboratory accuses Britain's Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS) of delaying official approval until a British test was available", namely the Wellcome Diagnostic test [WITN0684014]. Only after this was completed some 6 months later did the DHSS (Mortimer) approve the Abbott test. In fact all first generation tests for antibodies to HIV were made of virus harvested from infected CD4+ T-cells and were therefore similar in sensitivity and specificity.

The licensing of Weiss' CBL-1 virus (French) and 'his' CEM cells (American) to Wellcome can hardly have failed to bring Tedder and Weiss financial benefit while many more individuals became infected during the 6 months delay. Weiss claims that he did not receive royalties but he does not tell us whether he and Tedder received other forms of payments for the licensing of the virus and cells. If the French paper had been published shortly after submission, as it should have, it would have been already possible in the summer of 1983 to determine that the pooled plasma that was used to treat haemophiliacs in the UK was also

contaminated with HIV by a simple laboratory immunofluorescence test (IF) - that is to say, before the development of a commercial test for large scale testing. In fact Montagnier told me that their laboratory IF test enabled them to discover that the pooled plasma in Paris was contaminated with HIV early in 1983.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed

GRO-C

Dated

7-10-2022