

How a British Virologist Blocked the Recognition That HIV Was the Cause of Aids While His Collaborator Delayed the Introduction of HIV Screening for Financial Gains

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Recently the UK Infected Blood Inquiry (IBI) headed by Sir Brian Langstaff, a distinguished judge, completed his extensive six-year investigation into the circumstances that unnecessarily caused many avoidable infections with the viruses HIV and HCV.

Being involved myself with HIV/AIDS research since 1983, I was invited by the Inquiry to testify in 2018. I then wrote and published in two papers what I told the Inquiry [1, 2]. Thereafter I was invited by the Inquiry to submit a statement which I did on 27-1-2020 Exhibit: **WITN0684002- WITN0684016** in which inter alia I pointed out that the seminal French manuscript on HIV sent to the editorial office of the journal *Nature*, was received and refereed by Dr R Weiss who provided the two reports that suggested rejections. The paper, by Klatzmann et al, provided conclusive evidence to show that their isolated and named LAV (now known as HIV) was the cause of AIDS and explained how the disease developed: the virus attaches to the CD4 surface marker on cells; thus CD4 cells which are T-cells are infected and are killed; this produces immune deficiency and develops into AIDS. Klazmann's paper eventually appeared in the *Science* [3] after Dr Gallo's laboratory succeeded in propagating the French virus (LAV/HIV). Dr Montagnier in whose laboratory the virus was isolated told me that he heard nothing from *Nature* editorial office for nearly 5 months. It has seemed very probable to me that during this time Weiss and his collaborator Dr R Tedder, the medical virologist of the first AIDS ward in London, were trying and failing to reproduce the French studies. Meanwhile Dr R Gallo's laboratory in the US continued promoting an earlier misleading claim that the cause of AIDS was another virus, HTLV which cause Adult T-cell leukemia (ATL), particularly in south west Japan. By that time the Japanese scientists estimated that approximately a million individuals were infected with HTLV in Japan but only 1% of the infected developed ATL many years after the infection They also established that HTLV belong to the Onco sub- groups of retroviruses which behave differently, namely remain latent in most infected individuals. In contrast HIV belong to the Lenti subgroup of retroviruses which are cytopathic [4]. However due to Dr Gallo's reputation and authority were such as to lead many scientists astray and effectively lost a year in AIDS/HIV research. The journal *New Scientist* (12 February 1987, issue No 1587) illustrated this with a cover photo of Dr. Gallo and **Robert Gallo and the lost year.**

I pointed out that had Weiss not blocked the seminal French paper from appearing in a timely manner the cause of AIDS would have been known early in 1983 and hundreds of thousands of HIV infections and deaths could have been avoided. This gives Weiss a uniquely reprehensible place in medical history. The background to my accusation is outlined in the publications **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 [1] and Infections, AIDS and Death Worldwide Resulted from Abuse of Refereeing in the Journal Nature [2]**. In relation to my statement to the Inquiry recounts that the chief editor of the journal Nature at the time, Dr. J. Maddox, told the author of the book **Science Fictions**, John Crewdson [5] that, in a blatant abuse of the refereeing system, Nature's biological sub-editor Peter Newmark had allowed Weiss to provide both of the two referees' reports that rejected the French manuscript. Dr Maddox then fired Peter Newmark.

The English IBI Inquiry, dealing with the introduction of HIV and HCV testing in the UK, came to the conclusion that there was a year delay in the introduction of the screening for HIV, pointing out that, while the first American commercial test became available in October 1984, formal HIV testing in the UK started only in October 1985. In my statement to the Inquiry, He echoed the complaint of Abbott Laboratories UK representative [6]. I claimed the delay was in order to allow Wellcome Diagnostics company time to complete the development of the so-called British Test which was also an Elisa test basically a copy of the Abbott test. Wellcome benefited from the fact that Dr Phillip Mortimer, head of the Public Health Laboratory Services (PHLS) of virology, had the unusual power to decide by himself when to introduce a new test as well as which test to approve. Since there was no medical reason to delay the approval of the Abbott screening test I blamed Dr Tedder using his friendship with Dr Mortimer for financial gain and Dr. Mortimer for being influenced by his friendship with Tedder. Weiss and Tedder probably received considerable fees for licensing 'their virus and cell line' to Wellcome; but it must have led to numerous avoidable infections which at that time led to over 95% deaths. It subsequently emerged that the HIV Weiss claimed to have isolated in his London laboratory was in fact the one he received in 1984 from the Institute Pasteur in Paris (and subject to the restriction that it would only be used for academic research), while the Weiss CEM cell line had been developed years earlier in the laboratory of Dr George E Foley at the Dana Farber Children's cancer research center in Boston USA when Weiss was a zoology student in London. In conclusion, the cause of AIDS was discovered over 40 years ago and only recently an extensive 6-year investigation by the UK Infected Blood Inquiry has been concluded and published. Nevertheless the roles of certain individuals, where unique circumstances gave them an influence on many deaths and suffering world wide, deserve not to be overlooked.

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