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TO THE AFFIDAVIT OF JONATHAN VAUGHTERS

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2 Ex-Teammates of Cycling Star Admit Drug Use

By [JULIET MACUR](#)

Two of [Lance Armstrong](#)'s eight teammates from the 1999 Tour de France have admitted for the first time that they used the banned endurance-boosting drug EPO in preparing for the race that year, when they helped Armstrong capture the first of his record seven titles.

Their disclosures, in interviews with The New York Times, are rare examples of candor in a sport protected by a powerful code of silence. The confessions come as cycling is reeling from doping scandals, including [Floyd Landis](#)'s fall in July from Tour champion to suspected cheat.

One of the two teammates who admitted using EPO while on Armstrong's United States Postal Service team is Frankie Andreu, a 39-year-old retired team captain who had been part of Armstrong's inner circle for more than a decade. In an interview at his home in Dearborn, Mich., Andreu said that he took EPO for only a few races and that he was acknowledging his use now because he thought doping was damaging his sport. Continued doping and denial by riders may scare away fans and sponsors for good, he said.

"There are two levels of guys," Andreu said. "You got the guys that cheat and guys that are just trying to survive."

The other rider who said he used EPO spoke on condition of anonymity because he said he did not want to jeopardize his job in cycling.

"The environment was certainly one of, to be accepted, you had to use doping products," he said. "There was very high pressure to be one of the cool kids."

Neither rider ever tested positive for performance-enhancing drugs, but both said they felt as if they had to take EPO to make the Tour team in 1999. Andreu would not

say specifically when he took the drug, and the second rider said he did not use EPO during the Tour. Anti-doping experts say the benefits of taking EPO, the synthetic hormone erythropoietin, which boosts stamina by bolstering the body's production of oxygen-rich red blood cells, can last several weeks or more.

Both of Armstrong's former teammates also said they never saw Armstrong take any banned substances.

Armstrong, who turns 35 next week, has long been dogged by accusations that he doped before and after his remarkable recovery from cancer, a comeback that made him a transcendent cultural figure and a symbol to cancer patients and survivors worldwide. He has repeatedly denied using performance-enhancing drugs and has aggressively defended himself in interviews and through lawsuits, even more than a year into his retirement.

Multiple attempts to interview Armstrong for this article — through his lawyers, his agent and a spokesman — were unsuccessful. His agent, Bill Stapleton, wrote in an e-mail message yesterday that Armstrong would not comment because he was attending a meeting of the President's Cancer Panel in Minneapolis.

Armstrong once said that cycling had no secrets and that hard work was the key to winning. Recent events and disclosures, however, demonstrate that cycling does, indeed, have secrets.

Dozens of interviews with people in the sport as well as court documents in a contract dispute between Armstrong and a company called SCA Promotions reveal the protective silence shared by those in professional cycling. A new picture of the sport emerges: a murky world of clandestine meetings, mysterious pills and thermoses that clink with the sound of drug vials rattling inside them.

This year's Tour began with a doping investigation that implicated nearly 60 riders and ended with Landis's testing positive for synthetic testosterone. He became the third of Armstrong's former lieutenants to fail a drug test after setting off on his own career as a lead rider.

"There's no doubt that cyclists have bought into the institutional culture of cheating, and that's a big, big problem for the sport," said Steven Ungerleider, a research

psychologist, antidoping expert and consultant for college, Olympic and professional sports organizations. He described that culture as “a mob psychology.”

A Widespread Problem

In his 12 years as a professional cyclist, Frankie Andreu was a domestique, a worker bee whose job was to help a top rider like Armstrong win.

He said his introduction to performance-enhancing drugs came in 1995, when he and Armstrong were with the Motorola team. He said some of the team’s riders felt that they could no longer compete with some European teams that had rapidly improved and were rumored to be using EPO.

Motorola’s top riders asked their doctor, Massimo Testa, about the drug’s safety because more than a dozen young riders in Europe had died mysteriously of heart attacks. Some cyclists had linked those deaths to rumored EPO use.

Dr. Testa, now a sports medicine specialist at the [University of California](#) at Davis, said in a telephone interview that he had given each rider literature about EPO, in case any of them decided to use it on their own.

Dr. Testa said he urged the riders not to take the drug, but he wanted them to be educated.

“If you want to use a gun, you had better use a manual, rather than to ask the guy on the street how to use it,” he said. “I cannot rule out that someone did it.”

One of Armstrong’s teammates, Steve Swart, has admitted using EPO while riding for Motorola. He discussed his time with the team in the book “L.A. Confidential: The Secrets of Lance Armstrong,” which was published in 2004, only in French.

The book’s allegations that Armstrong doped prompted the lawsuit between Armstrong and SCA Promotions, which was settled out of court in February. Because of Armstrong’s suspected drug use, SCA withheld a \$5 million bonus after he won the 2004 Tour de France. Armstrong and Tailwind Sports, the company that owned his cycling team, sued SCA for the money.

Testimony in the case was never supposed to become public. A confidential settlement awarded Armstrong and Tailwind Sports the bonus, and \$2.5 million in interest and lawyers' costs. The Times obtained the legal documents in July.

In testimony in the case, Swart, a retired rider from New Zealand, said top riders on Motorola discussed EPO in 1995. He testified that Armstrong told teammates that there was "only one road to take" to be competitive. In a sworn deposition, Swart said the meaning of Armstrong's comment was clear: "We needed to start a medical program of EPO."

EPO, cortisone and testosterone were common in European cycling, Swart said in a telephone interview. He said using cortisone, a steroid, was regarded as "sucking on a candy stick." Cyclists acquired the drugs from European pharmacies and took them in private, Swart said. "You basically became your own doctor," he said.

He said signs of drug use were widespread at the 1994 and 1995 Tours, when there was no testing for EPO.

"Everyone was walking around with their own thermos, and you could hear the sound — tinkle, tinkle, tinkle — coming from the thermoses because they were filled with ice and vials of EPO," Swart said. "You needed to keep the EPO cold, and every night at the hotel, the guys would be running around trying to find some ice to fill up their thermos."

'It Was for Lance'

In the weeks before the 1999 Tour, Andreu's wife, Betsy, found one of those thermoses in her refrigerator. She was furious.

"I remember Frankie saying: 'You don't understand. This is the only way I can even finish the Tour,' " she said. " 'After this, I promise you, I'll never do it again.' "

Betsy Andreu said she grudgingly watched her husband help Armstrong traverse the mountains at the Tour that year. Later, she said, she was angry when her husband said he had once allowed a team doctor to inject him with an unidentified substance.

To this day, she blames Armstrong for what she said was pressure on teammates to use drugs. Her husband, she said, "didn't use EPO for himself, because as a domestique, he was never going to win that race."

“It was for Lance,” she said.

Three years earlier, she and Frankie, who were engaged at the time, visited Armstrong at an Indiana hospital after he received his cancer diagnosis. Last fall, under court order to testify in the SCA Promotions case, the Andreus said that they had overheard Armstrong tell doctors he had used steroids, testosterone, cortisone, growth hormone and EPO.

Armstrong testified that no one at the hospital had asked him if he had used performance-enhancing drugs. He testified that Betsy Andreu had lied because “she hates me,” and that Frankie Andreu had lied because “he’s trying to back up his old lady.”

Frankie Andreu, once Armstrong’s close friend and roommate, testified that he never knew if Armstrong was doping. But once, he testified, he saw Armstrong sorting “little round pills” on his bed before a race. “He talked about that he would take these at different parts during the race,” Andreu said under oath, adding that he did not know what the pills were. Armstrong testified that they were caffeine.

Johan Bruyneel, the longtime director of Armstrong’s team, did not respond to an interview request through a team spokesman.

In a news conference he held at this year’s Tour, Armstrong said his opponents in the SCA case were “crushed — totally crushed” upon cross-examination.

Sean Breen, one of Armstrong’s lawyers, said the opposing witnesses were not credible. In the case of Betsy Andreu, Breen said, “Like her testimony, I think her motives are completely unexplainable.” He added that Frankie Andreu’s dismissal as a rider on the United States Postal Service team after the 2000 season might have been one reason for their testimony. (Andreu returned to the team the next year as the team’s American director.)

Armstrong has said he never tested positive for performance-enhancing drugs. He tested positive for cortisone at the 1999 Tour, but he was not penalized after producing a doctor’s prescription for a skin cream he said he used for saddle sores.

At this year’s Tour, Armstrong said he was tired of dealing with doping accusations.

“Why keep fighting lawsuits when my time needs to be spent being a dad, being a philanthropist, being a fan of cycling, being a guy that just wants to have fun?” he said.

Pat McQuaid, president of the International Cycling Union, the sport’s governing body, said the union’s lawyers would review the SCA Promotions case after they prepared files on the riders implicated in the Spanish doping scandal that preceded this year’s Tour. In May, the Spanish police raided several apartments in Madrid and seized steroids, hormones, EPO, nearly 100 bags of frozen blood and equipment for treating blood. The Tour began in July with nine riders being barred from the event after they were implicated in the investigation.

Cleaning Up the Sport

Armstrong has kept his distance from cycling’s recent troubles.

He is training for the New York City Marathon in November. In a few weeks, Armstrong will celebrate the 10th anniversary of his cancer diagnosis, and he has a new line of apparel from Nike commemorating the date.

At the same time, some of his former teammates and rivals are struggling.

Ivan Basso of Italy, Jan Ullrich of Germany and Francisco Mancebo of Spain — who finished second, third and fourth when Armstrong won the 2005 Tour — were all implicated in the Spanish scandal. Government and sports authorities continue to investigate them.

One of Armstrong’s former lieutenants, the 2004 Olympic champion Tyler Hamilton, was also named in the Spanish investigation. His two-year suspension for blood doping in 2004 ends this month, but his future remains uncertain. The cycling union said it would seek a lifetime ban for Hamilton if he were found guilty of wrongdoing in the Spanish case.

Another former lieutenant of Armstrong’s, Roberto Heras of Spain, tested positive for EPO last year. He is serving a two-year suspension.

Landis, meanwhile, could be stripped of his Tour title. The [United States Anti-Doping Agency](#) is expected to decide whether to charge Landis with a doping violation sometime in the next week, according to Landis’s lawyer, Howard Jacobs.

All of those cyclists have denied using performance-enhancing drugs, but antidoping officials hope that will change, if those athletes have, indeed, doped.

Travis Tygart, general counsel for the United States Anti-Doping Agency, says he encourages athletes to be honest. “Those who stand up will hopefully influence other competitors in the sport to be clean,” he said.

Ultimately, Frankie Andreu said, only riders can clean up cycling.

“There’s always going to be the guy who denies and denies that he’s ever used something,” he said. “Nobody really knows what that guy is really doing when he goes home and closes the door.”

Edward Wyatt contributed reporting from L’Alpe d’Huez, France.

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