

13th August 2006

Testimony

Wayne Douglas is a personal friend of mine whom I have known since 1996. I first met him when he was organizing a New Zealand festival for the Kitakata Town Office in Miyazaki Prefecture where he was working as a Coordinator of International Relations (CIR). He had gathered together a group of New Zealanders from across Japan to participate in the festival. At the time I was working on the Japan Exchange Teaching Programme as an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT). Since that time Wayne and I have developed a strong friendship through to the present day.

I was pleased when I heard from Wayne again saying that he had been appointed as a CIR for the Saitama International Association. At that time I was working as an ALT for the Sayama City Board of Education in Saitama. Wayne was one of the closest New Zealanders living next to me and I was in regular contact with him from March 2000, about two months prior to his vertigo attack, which had left him with an ongoing balance problem. I maintained regular weekly phone contact and met with Wayne every two weeks or so following the attack that left him unwell. I kept in touch with Wayne in this manner throughout the course of his subsequent drug treatment right up until he left Japan for New Zealand in late March 2001.

Prior to the aforementioned incident that led to Wayne being so unwell I knew him to be a healthy, active, confident and well-rounded person. He always maintained a cheerful disposition and was someone who exuded positive energy. Wayne was someone whose company it was always a pleasure to be in. However, a few months after the drug treatment began it was immediately obvious to me that Wayne was not his normal self. He seemed emotionally unstable and I was deeply concerned that his physical and mental health was deteriorating rapidly during the course of this treatment.

An example of this is when I met with Wayne in October 2000 at the Saitama Super Arena, where he had organized another New Zealand stage show. He appeared to be in quite a drugged out state, skinny, confused, pale and sick. Subsequently, everyone there showed their genuine concern for Wayne's state of wellbeing.

The next time I met with Wayne was in November. I invited him to watch a boxing match with other friends in Tokyo. Due to Wayne's deteriorating condition he was often inclined to shut himself away at home. We did not want to see him fall into a state of depression and we thought that this occasion might help to raise his spirits a bit. I went to meet him in Omiya along the way, as Wayne had been having difficulty in walking. I felt disappair when I saw that Wayne's condition had deteriorated even further since I last saw him only a few weeks earlier.

His face had become more gaunt, much like a like a light bulb, with darker sunken eyes, obviously confused and disorientated. He seemed somewhat detached and difficult to communicate with. He looked very exhausted and skinny with obvious physical deterioration. I recall us having to get taxis between the stations, as Wayne was not well enough to walk for anymore than about fifty metres at the most.

I saw Wayne again at a café along with another friend in Kawagoe a few weeks later. My friend and I were beside ourselves with disbelief when Wayne started arguing with some of the customers there. This was totally out of character for Wayne to be aggressive like that. I was adamant at this point in time that Wayne' physical and mental health were being affected by the drugs that he was taking at the time.

Needless to say, I held grave concerns for Wayne's immediate safety and future welfare. Accordingly, I strongly advised him to get on the next available plane and return home to New Zealand. Wayne responded to that advice saying he wished to complete his employment contract before returning home. I personally felt that his mental and physical condition was such that his very survival meant a return to New Zealand was vital. By the time Wayne finally returned to New Zealand in March 2001 he was an absolute mess and completely burnt-out, and I felt regret for having supported his earlier decision to stay on in Japan until the end of his employment contract. Wayne was in desperate need of help.

During the course of Wayne's drug treatment from the Japanese balance specialist he changed from a healthy vibrant person to someone who progressively lost physical condition, general motivation and, what had prior to his attack been, a deep passion for life. His mental and emotional condition deteriorated dramatically during this time and I was shocked at the changes in Wayne. He became devoid of energy, anorexic, unstable, confused, depressed, aggressive and generally unsure of himself.

In marked contrast to this, however, when I returned to New Zealand myself and had the opportunity to meet with Wayne again in late 2002, I was surprised at the vast improvement in his physical appearance and his mental outlook. He now looked a healthy weight with a muscular physique and appeared to have a positive glow about him. Also, his confidence had improved considerably since the last time I had seen him back in Japan in March 2001.

I continued to meet regularly with Wayne until he went back to Japan again in early 2005. It was clear to me that Wayne showed a consistent improvement in his general health since discontinuing the drugs that he had been prescribed in Japan.

I have been aware for sometime now that Wayne has been preparing a case for compensation with regards to the damages and suffering caused by his previous prescription drug dependence. I am also aware that this has placed yet another toil on Wayne's general well being.

As I mentioned previously, I have worked with Wayne in Japan on several occasions as well as having done work for the Japanese Consulate in New Zealand together. Wayne has made significant contributions to International relations in Japan, which has been highly commended, and I know that this case for compensation against a Japanese hospital is hurting him. As a close friend and former coworker, I sincerely hope that he is able to get some justice and closure on this matter, so that he can reclaim his life and continue with his good work in Japan.

Yours Sincerely,

Edward Te Ua