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READERS AND LISTENERS

On St. Patrick's Day in 1977, the weather in La Jolla was the usual perfect. During lunch break I walked across our soccer-scarred lawn to the thinking bench under a tired old Sofus tree. For the next twenty minutes, I mused on the circumstances of my defection to a commercial presence in La Jolla from an academic sinecure in Ithaca.

My public explanation of this heresy is the seven ingrate mouths I feed, but the real truth is quite different. Even then, academic life was far too institutionalized for many of us. The Calbiochem of 1961 was quite free of institutional trappings. A perfect place to work.

My final interview before leaving Cornell was at Will Corp. in Rochester. Older eastern scientists will recognize Will Corp. as a major scientific supply house. In the spring of 1961, I met with personnel directors of a number of science-oriented firms including Hiram N. Fyrem at Will. This meeting fizzled like the others but Hiram did advise me to buy a necktie or move west.

As soon as I returned to Ithaca, I put on my new necktie (although otherwise quite nude) and typed a 23-word postcard-resume to Calbiochem. Fortunately, Calbiochem had no personnel director in that era and the president inadvertently hired me. I remained there for 25 years.

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My first assignment required researching and writing *Biologics*, drawing crude cartoons, and cultivating the mailing list. My boss, Ismael Tymagen was an older Dutch fellow from Mexico City with a categorical knowledge of world geography. When Zip codes arrived, categorical knowledge went obsolete and Izzy moved suddenly to the great Post Office in the sky. An IBM computer named Bruno was engaged to look after our mailing list. Helen Gone took charge of the mailroom and I moved over to Purchasing to work for Robin Steele.

Robin was the politest purchasing person I ever met. She couldn't say, "No! Most purchasing folk are *cum laude*'s from the Genghis Kahn School of diplomacy. Robin flunked out of Ghengis Kahnt. She always said, "Yes," never asked for a discount, paid cash in advance when she could, and even picked up lunch checks for vendors. Robin eventually said, "Yes" to a supplier's offer of money and was fired for excessive politeness. Today she sells "Yes's" in the San Francisco Tenderloin at \$100/word. Tradition returned to Purchasing and I moved to Quality Control.

A substantial portion of our manufacturing output went then, as now, to pharmaceutical firms for compounding into their products. Good manufacturing practices on both ends of the transaction dictate that each and every such shipment is accompanied by an official "Certificate of Analysis" signed by the man in charge.

Warren made a good living signing things. I did all the work, carried out the analyses, and typed the certificates in triplicate and hand-held them on his desk while Warren's continence assumed an official look and he scribbled, "Warren T. Voigt" at the bottom of each one. Warren had calluses on his pen hand and his chair interface but his brain tissue in no way suffered. He was a psychoceramic in the original bureaucratic

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tradition. The legal department loved him and still does. No Certificate of Analysis, signed by Warren T. Voigt, ever came back to haunt his employer.

The readers of this world can sail through the text above in a few seconds, never noticing a phonetic relationship between the personal names and the related job function. If you are primarily a listener who reads by verbalizing the words, you might have stopped from time to time for a little mirth. Maybe you will even tell your friends about us. A reader on the other hand, if he stumbles onto the connection, will show this article to others.

A serious moral hides here. Reader/writers and talker/listeners have trouble with cross-communication. You know this if you married into the wrong crowd. When your spouse, the talker, stubbornly refuses to read this obvious truth, please read it aloud over an empty bottle of Pinot Noir. If you read loud enough, your spouse might even believe you.