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Censorship by a tobacco company

Received: 27 April 2005 / Accepted: 28 April 2005 / Published online: 6 July 2005
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Scientific advance requires communication of new knowledge. Censorship restricts the necessary communication. The article by DeNoble and Mele in this issue of the Journal was a victim of censorship in 1983, and again in 1986 by the Philip Morris Company.

My involvement in this censorship began with a letter from Victor J. DeNoble on August 30, 1983. As editor of behavioral studies on drug effects in laboratory animals for *Psychopharmacology*, I had requested revisions of a manuscript "Nicotine as a positive reinforcer in rats: effects of infusion dose and fixed ratio size" by Victor J. DeNoble, Paul C. Mele, and Francis J. Ryan. The authors were employed at the Philip Morris Research Center, in Richmond, VA, USA. The letter from Victor DeNoble stated that due to factors beyond his control, he must withdraw the manuscript.

I became aware of the censorship by the Philip Morris Company in a phone call from Victor DeNoble 3 years later, on September 18, 1986. He was then employed at Ayerst Laboratories Research, in Princeton, NJ, USA. He said that the Philip Morris Company, where he had done the research, had issued an injunction against the publication of two manuscripts that he had submitted to me.

One was a revised version of the withdrawn manuscript. I had received it on January 8, 1986, and sent it to the same two reviewers of the prior version. A new version, with changes I had requested, was acceptable. I complied with the author's request to withdraw his manuscript.

The other was a new manuscript, received on October 23, 1985, "Brain sites involved in the mediation of the behavioral effects of intraventricularly administered (-)-

nicotine" by Victor J. DeNoble and Paul C. Mele. I had sent the revised version to the Journal's production editor on February 21, 1986. The injunction was too late in view of the Journal's policy of rapid publication of accepted manuscripts. It was printed in volume 90, pages 156–159, in 1986. I am glad about this failure of censorship.

More than 7 years later, in 1994, I provided information to Dr. David Kessler, Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, supporting an investigation of the censorship by the Philip Morris Company. This incident received national publicity. Several years later, David Kessler wrote a book *A Question of Intent: a Great American Battle with a Deadly Industry* (PublicAffairs, New York, 2001). Page 151 quoted a passage from my letter dated September 22, 1986 to Victor DeNoble. "I share the distress you expressed in your phone conversation of 18 September that the Philip Morris Company has issued an injunction against publication of this paper."

The last paragraph of the same letter began with the following lengthy sentence. "Although it is disappointing both for you and me that the efforts on this paper by you, by two expert reviewers, and to a lesser extent by me will apparently not result in publication, I believe that your effort and experience will be beneficially applied to your future papers." I am glad that contrary to my expectation, this paper is now published.

Important scientific findings require multiple publications. Differences in procedures may have important effects. In spite of the delay of almost 20 years, the article in this issue by DeNoble and Mele contributes advantageous procedural differences from other articles on this topic, including several that it cites. Fortunately, no censorship was applied to an excellent manuscript I received in 1989, "Nicotine maintains robust self-administration in rats on a limited-access schedule" by William A. Corrigall and Kathleen M. Coen, at the Addiction Research Foundation, in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Their article was published in *Psychopharmacology*, volume 99, pages 473–478 (1989).

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