



The SPEISENSTEIN Files

3. The Last Poster

“You seen our poster?”

“Not yet, Spicy.” And then I add “But its high on my list.”

“Come on over and have a look.”

A tall gangling youth with a pony tail and gold ring in the left ear is standing alone in front of a Joseph’s coat of a board, across the top of which in gold lettering on a deep blue background is the title: Three dimensional analysis using real time deconvolution of the parallel reciprocal gating mechanisms in the catecholamine induced response of the ionic transport microenvironment of the isolated perfused electronically substimulated paraganglionic Fleischer organ of the South American Toadfish maintained at sea water temperature: Importance and implications for the clinical cardiologist.

I get as far as Fleischer.

Speisenberg has his arm round my shoulder. “Neat, isn’t it?”

“You mean the title?”

“Well, yeah, that too. Its kinda cryptic. But I’m really talking about the conclusion. The conclooosion, you see.”

My eye blips across the chequer board of the poster to a minute white square at the bottom right corner: These results prove the hypothesis that the CIR of the SAMTF is critically involved in IT_3 but not mediated by PRGMs as shown by TDA under SWT conditions of the ME. R-TD is essential to demonstrate the loss of entropy and/or energy dissipation. An important model for the clinical and cardiac S.

“There’s a lot of work there,” I observe.

“You’re darn right. Young Joe here’s a great worker. Right Joe?”

The boy gives an embarrassed grin. “You said it.”

“Can’t understand why they didn’t put it in the oral communications. You think Witherington’s on the Selection Committee?”

“He’s Chairman.”

Speisenstein draws in a prolonged breath. But, before he can express his opinion on that information, his eye becomes transfixed on something beyond a small crowd gathered on the other side of the passageway.

In an instant, his face is transfigured into an uncanny resemblance of the South American Toadfish in aggressive display, red eyes bulging out of a sort of purple puff pastry.

“What in the hell!” he hisses.

As I follow his eye I see the poster facing him, with a prominent title: The Toadfish Model: Fact Or Fiction? S Dubois et al.

Beside it is leaning a cool young lady with long blond hair, doubtless the Dubois, earnestly discussing her work with a group of nodding elder statesmen. I place a restraining hand on Speisenstein’s arm as he starts forward.

But, at that moment, a further twist of fate intervenes. Turning the corner at the end of the line of posters appear Audley and Witherington, arm in arm.

The pro spy, so I understand, has a second sense by which he knows he is being trailed. The experienced scientist also learns to read the signs. No normal person in his right state of mind progresses steadily down a row of polyglot posters making notes of each one on a spiral-backed pad. If you see such a one slinking along, smarten up your act. However ingenuous he may seem, however old and dodderly with whiskers coming out of his ears, he’s not just your ordinary poster bum just slunk in for the warmth and a free cup of coffee; you can be pretty sure he is one of the Judges. If you see two together, it’s a certainty.

Judges! In microseconds, Speisenstein and I have come to the same conclusion.

“Let’s go and get a coffee,” he suggests.

The gala dinner has reached its alcoholic titration point. Speisenstein, sitting beside me, has been uncommunicative all evening. On the head table the President and Witherington are slapping each other’s backs in some private joke. Audley is in animated conversation with S Dubois at the table beyond. At some unseen signal the President rises to introduce Dr Witherington, Chairman of the Judging Committee for the Poster Award.

Witherington pays tribute to the high level of the poster contributions. It has been, he says, an almost impossible task to select a prize-winner. However, he and his colleagues, whom he thanks for their wholehearted support, have, after much heart searching, come to a unanimous decision.

“And now,” he says, consulting a greasy copy of the scientific program over which he has just spilled the last ml of red wine, “It is my honor and my pleasure to invite Doctor Stephanie

Dubois to kindly come forward to receive...”

As the radiant victoress pushes her seat back and, propelled initially by an affectionate pat on the rump from Audley, is gliding forward amid riotous applause, the voice of Witherington drones on over the loudspeakers... “to receive her award for the prize-winning poster: Three dimensional analysis using real time deconvolution of the parallel reciprocal gating mechanisms in the catecholamine induced response of the ionic transport microenvironment of the isolated perfused electronically substimulated paraganglionic Fleischer organ of the South American Toadfish maintained at sea water temperature: Importance and implications for the clinical cardiologist.”

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