

LADIES CLUB INCIDENT

A.S., a buxom secretary to the Chief of Personnel (E.H.) exercised a considerable amount of power by controlling who could, and who could not, come in to see her boss, as well as who was delayed in so doing. One day, A.S. walked up to the second floor of the hospital and knocked on José's office door. As she came in, she immediately mentioned that the Department of Personnel, through the years, had approved José's giving lectures to some of the other hospitals in the area, as well as his visits out of town when José presented papers at scientific meetings. José explained that he did not get paid for the lectures that he gave. A.S. then pointed out that José could get paid if he took annual leave and got permission from the Chief of Staff (Dr. J.). She assured José that there would be no problem getting this permission, especially with Personnel's recommendation.

José inquired why this information was being given to him now. A.S. then elucidated. Her mother, she pointed out, was President of a Women's Club in Media. A.S. added that she had heard that José's talks were considered good. She now requested that José give a talk to this women's club in Media, and told José that he would get paid for doing this. She had just prepared, she told him, a memo for the Chief of Staff to approve, a memo already endorsed by the Head of Personnel. In his memo, José was requesting one day of annual leave for the purpose of presenting a talk to a women's group. José felt rather strange about this whole situation, yet he feared antagonizing the people involved were he to refuse. No mention was made of the subject of the talk, nor was there anything said about the fee to be paid him.

One week later, he found out that all the paper work had been signed, and that the date (a Thursday) arranged for the talk to be given two weeks hence. A few days after this, A.S. saw José and told him that the Ladies' Club would like José to talk to them on the subject of "God and Scientists". José almost fainted. A.S., however, insisted that this was the topic, and that it had already been advertised to the ladies. The total number in the audience was expected to be about one hundred.

José felt lost and somewhat bewildered by this turn of events, but it seemed impossible for him to get out of this arrangement. He decided to go to the library to see whether he could get some information on the topic he was to discuss. Much to his surprise, he found a book written by David Sarnoff, Head of R.C.A. discussing God, religion, and scientists. He also discovered that an excellent condensation, only a few pages long, of this book was also available. It was published by **The Readers Digest**. José immediately telephoned the offices of this publication, and found that he could purchase reprints of this article for less than one dollar apiece. He placed an order for one hundred fifty of the reprints to be shipped in a rush to his home, and mailed a check to the company. The reprints arrived a few days

later, by which time José had finished reading the Sarnoff book.

On the day of the lecture, José signed out of the hospital and drove in his car to Media, to the inn where the women's club was having its meeting. When he arrived, it was approximately 12:15. He found that the main room of the inn was taken by the ladies and their escorts. All were in the process of eating their dinner as he entered. He approached A.S.'s mother, who explained that he would have to wait in a small room to the side because they were not yet ready for him. The group, she informed him, had to discuss some of the club's business first and, since José was not a member, they would call him when they were ready for him to give his talk.

The room where José was taken was a small waiting room where he sat, hungry, and waited until about 1:30, when he was finally called in. José distributed the pamphlets containing the abstract, all of which quickly disappeared. (José was able to save only one for himself.) He then proceeded to talk about the lack of conflict that most scientists feel exists between their work and organized religion. The talk took about fifty minutes. Afterwards, there were some questions. Then, A.S.'s mother came to José with a small sealed envelope, which she handed him. She mentioned that they had not yet finished their business meeting, thanked him for the lecture, and escorted him out. He got into his car and left Media. He drove to the nearest restaurant that he could find, where he finally bought himself some lunch. It was, by now, close to three o'clock. José then opened the envelope that he had received. Inside, he found eighteen dollars and seventy-five cents, some in bills, some in coins. Also included was a little slip of paper reading, "Sorry that this is all the money we have left."

He drove back to his home, and calculated that his total expenses and the loss of one day of vacation time were far greater than he had expected. The payment to **The Readers Digest** alone for the reprints had come to over one hundred dollars. Travel expenses to Media and back, as well as lunch and the loss of a day's vacation time all amounted to a sum close to ten times greater than what he had been paid.

José did not hear from A.S. for several days. Then she suddenly appeared, saying that she was very thankful for the talk he had given, and that the group would like José to be their speaker again at the following month's meeting. After a moment of shocked silence, José thanked A.S. for her confidence in him, but explained that he could not again take the time to oblige. After that, A.S. never spoke to José again.