What Can We Learn From the Pfizer Whistleblowers?

Even with all that we've been through, much of what goes on behind the scenes is hard to believe.

A Midwestern Doctor
Jan 21

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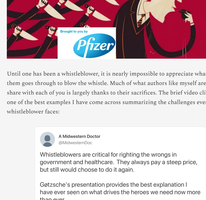
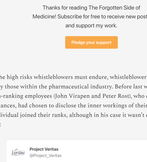
In this series, I will discuss what can be learned from the (largely forgotten) whistleblowers in the pharmaceutical industry. Since the misconduct of the industry has persisted for decades, there is an enormous amount that can be learned retrospectively from each of their testimonies. The focus will be upon those Pfizer's whistleblowers who can tell us exactly what type of company Pfizer is behind the curtains. We will also look at the work of one Pfizer Vice President who managed to do the impossible by waging a remarkable campaign against Pfizer, which came to be known across America.



Until one has been a whistleblower, it is nearly impossible to appreciate what each of them goes through to blow the whistle. Much of what authors like myself are able to share with each of you is largely thanks to their sacrifices. The brief video clip below is one of the best examples I have come across summarizing the challenges every whistleblower faces:



Note: I post videos within Tweets now because Twitter is the only platform from which Substack embeds videos which does not censor controversial content (e.g. consider how YouTube recently deleted the Project Veritas videos below).

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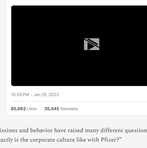
Due to the high risks whistleblowers must endure, whistleblowers are quite rare, especially those within the pharmaceutical industry. Before last week, I only knew of two high-ranking employees (John Virapen and Peter Rost, who due to peculiar circumstances, had chosen to disclose the inner workings of their industry. Recently, a third individual joined their ranks, although in his case it wasn't exactly a voluntary decision:



One of the many remarkable aspects of this story was how he handled getting caught:

His admissions and behavior have raised many different questions. One of those was "what exactly is the corporate culture like with Pfizer?"

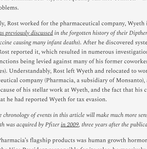
Recently, whistleblower Brook Jackson painted a very troubling picture of what happened within the clinical trials for Pfizer's vaccine, and most importantly, followed the appropriate procedures to be a whistleblower. Because this is an important story which needs to be told (concisely summarized in the above video), I recently did my best to document the fraud that occurred throughout those clinical trials; the fraud was perpetrated to sustain the lie that the vaccines were "safe and effective" when the opposite was true:

In addition to highlighting significant fraud in the trials, Brook's experience also tells a lot about the culture in this industry. As the above video shows, when the trial was being run, everything was a mess, and Brook, fearing that they were violating laws, repeatedly ask her management to address these problems. Nothing was ever done, she eventually reported these violations to the FDA, and was fired 6.5 hours later (indicating the FDA did nothing beyond notifying Pfizer or her employer of what she had reported). The FDA ultimately gave her clinical trial site a pass, which again, demonstrates just how corrupt our entire regulatory system is.

Following her dismissal, despite her qualifications, it became very difficult for Brook to find another job. Not long after she left, quite a few employees she worked with were also fired. Finally, the employees who remained were required to sign an agreement that they would not communicate with Brook. As you will see in this series, Brook's experience is fairly consistent with that of someone who goes against the pharmaceutical industry, and especially Pfizer.

It should be noted that the company Brook worked for, Ventavia, was a company Pfizer subcontracted to do their research, thereby giving Pfizer a buffer and the ability to claim any misconduct that occurred was solely at the discretion of Ventavia and not Pfizer's responsibility (even though Pfizer almost certainly gave Ventavia their marching orders). As far as I can tell, this structure has become more and more popular in the industry, since it gives the large pharmaceutical machine much more freedom to engage in research misconduct that is often necessary to get their product to market. Finally, while what Brook discovered was particularly egregious, other friends who worked in contract research organizations a bit over decade ago have also told me they also witnessed questionable conduct at the research sites they helped supervise.

The O.G. Pfizer Whistleblower



In many of the articles I have written here, I've tried to detail how the same playbook gets used over and over by the pharmaceutical industry. I hope that by drawing attention to these issues, we can move towards ending those dysfunctional cycles. It thus should not come as any surprise that the same misconduct that has been perpetrated repeatedly by the industry, and many of the complaints raised about Big Pharma decades ago are just as true now as they were then.

Speaking out in the pharmaceutical industry is extremely challenging as it immediately blacklists you from future employment in the industry (and relatively few employment options exist outside it). For this reason, even though there are many well-intentioned people within the industry, there will be severe repercussions if they speak out. This is especially true with executives in the business, because speaking out requires them to forfeit a lucrative career they had worked for decades to attain.

Peter Rost had a remarkable set of circumstances fall upon him that positioned him to fulfill just that role, and in the process, gained an insider's view of Pfizer's sociopathic culture. He later chronicled his discoveries in a book. I would highly recommend (to my knowledge, no equivalent insider scoop on the industry has ever been written). An abridged summary of it discussing Pfizer's conduct will be the central focus of this article.

Peter Rost's Journey to Pfizer

Peter Rost M.D. was a talented executive who really believed in pharmaceuticals, caught many internal issues his colleagues neglected, and consistently boosted sales at each company he worked for. However, because he was not comfortable being complicit in criminal activity, he frequently ran into conflicts when he tried to address these problems.

Originally, Rost worked for the pharmaceutical company, Wyeth in Europe (note: Wyeth was previously discussed in the *forgotten history of their Diphtheria/Pertussis/Tetanus (DPT) vaccine causing many infant deaths*). After he discovered systemic tax evasion at Wyeth, Rost reported it, which resulted in numerous investigations being launched and harsh sanctions being levied against many of his former coworkers (including many executives). Understandably, Rost left Wyeth and relocated to work for an American pharmaceutical company (Pharmacia, a subsidiary of Monsanto), a position he was able to get because of his stellar work at Wyeth, and the fact that his colleagues were not yet aware that he had reported Wyeth for tax evasion.

Note: The chronology of events in this article will make much more sense when you understand that Wyeth was acquired by Pfizer in 2009, three years after the publication of Rost's book.

One of Pharmacia's flagship products was human growth hormone, and once Rost became the Vice President responsible for its sales, he massively increased profits while simultaneously uncovering signs of illegal activity, which he reported to Pharmacia. Rost loved working at Pharmacia and was well-recognized for his contributions there.

Many of the larger pharmaceutical companies have concluded that developing drugs is not a good investment (as most will fail to make it to market). Instead, it is better for them to acquire successful drugs from smaller companies (e.g.

Pfizer's mRNA vaccine was created by BioNTech. In the case of Pharmacia, due to their success, they were targeted for acquisition by Pfizer (which has recently become one of the largest pharmaceutical companies due to their excellent sales strategy; which had made them number one in drug sales)

> Such results don't make anyone humble, and Pfizer employees were considered by industry-watchers to be the most arrogant in the business. Many other companies made it a practice to hate them. Some competing sales people called Pfizer sales reps "robotic," or "EnterAid drinking sales reps," a reference to both Pfizer's rigorous sales training as well as the fact that many of their reps were former military officers [I learned from a former sales rep that this came about after Clinton downsized the military because Pfizer's CEO decided to hire veterans as he thought they would be good at following orders and sales scripts].

Once it became known that Pfizer would acquire Pharmacia, everyone at Pharmacia became quite worried, since Pfizer was known for firing everyone at companies they took over:

> Business Week's Amy Barrett wrote an article that gave an unusual glimpse into Hank's thinking, describing a meeting between Pfizer's CEO Hank McKinnell and Anthony Wild, former president of Warner-Lambert. They were working on the integration of their two companies in early 2000 and had dinner in a Paris restaurant when, according to Wild, McKinnell observed that he'd become convinced that Pfizer managers might be the best choice for key positions in the combined company. Wild claimed that his Warner-Lambert executives in attendance were stunned, and took the comment as an indication that they had no future with Pfizer. "I saw a few jaws dropping," Wild stated. According to Business Week, after the acquisition most of the Warner- Lambert managers left or were let go.

Not surprisingly, despite assurances to the contrary, Pfizer fired over half of Pharmacia's workforce within a year of taking over the company. Rost viewed Pfizer's approach as being reflective of an insecure management afraid of losing power and firmly believed hiring and retaining employees on merit was a much more effective business strategy. I also thought that how Pfizer went about these firings was instructive for understanding their corporate character:

> A third meeting took place when one of Pfizer's HR people, dressed in a red leather skirt, visited Pharmacia. Apparently, she had worked as a lawyer in a prior life, and she came off as fairly arrogant to the assembled Pharmacia crowd. When pressed with more and more pointed questions, she yelled to the packed room, "You should realize that it is Pfizer taking over you and not the other way around." The wolf had just dropped her sheep's clothing.

Since many of the employees were aware they had a high risk of being fired once the merger commenced, everyone worked as hard as they could to present their value and need to Pfizer. One of Rost's best employees provided essential work for Pharmacia that could not be replaced, so she was fortunate to receive an offer to continue her employment, but it came with a low salary.

> To Isadora this welcome felt like a cold embrace. She knew she was good; she knew that her project knowledge made her one of the most important staff members in my group. Pfizer really needed her, so why would they treat her this way?
>
> What she might not have realized was that Pfizer was a company where senior employees often had toiled for ten, twenty, or thirty years with minimal raises. According to some recruiters, this had resulted in a pay that was 20 percent lower than what Pharmacia offered. Such a situation is not uncommon and even has a name: Salary compression.
>
> But Isadora hadn't succeeded by sitting back and letting her salary be compressed. She did what any good businessperson would do; she e-mailed her prospective new boss at Pfizer and asked a few polite questions. Her new boss, Harry Orne, had just been promoted from director to vice president in anticipation of the acquisition. As a matter of fact, a whole slew of promotions were announced at Pfizer in anticipation of the merger—they were positioned to be the new lords of the conquered Pharmacia masses.
>
> Aside from several more voicemails that Isadora left over the following days with Otter, they didn't speak until Monday, January 13, 2003. He was brief and very clear: Pfizer was retracting their job offer, primarily because he felt that Isadora wasn't a good fit for Pfizer...The news of her fate swept through Pharmacia like a prairie fire. Everyone was talking about the fact that if you ask questions when you get an offer from Pfizer, they will retract it.
>
> It is worth noting that Pfizer later went on to launch the drug Isadora was going to put on the market without the help from anyone on her marketing team. **The launch turned out to be a complete and utter disaster, with the drug not selling half of Pfizer's forecasts.**

Worse still, Pfizer not only fired Pharmacia's employees but also destroyed their future prospects for employment at other companies:

> Meanwhile, according to a revised employment contract for top Pharmacia officers, filed December 20, 2002, with the SEC, Fred the CEO and his direct reports had agreed to an unsecured part with Pfizer, promising not to hire any employees from Pharmacia in return for three years' base salary and bonus. This meant that if our top management, including Fred, started work at another company, they wouldn't be able to bring aboard any of their old colleagues or subordinates until such a person had left Pfizer, or until two years had passed.
>
> As the actual takeover approached, the messages from Pharmacia's HR department also took on a new tone. In an e-mail sent in March of 2003, Pharmacia's managers were told that they were forbidden to give references to employees who were leaving the company, "The company does not provide written or oral references for current or former employees. Pharmacia has adopted this policy to ensure all employees receive consistent treatment.
>
> The e-mail caused an outcry at Pharmacia, since abiding by this edict would make it all but impossible for anyone to get a new job. Despite one's abilities and job history, without excellent references from prior supervisors one stands no chance of getting a job offer.
>
> I was furious when I read this, and so were many of my colleagues. I found it reprehensible that the people in charge of the company first negotiated golden severance packages for themselves and then stuck it to the rank and file employees.

Pfizer then began bringing in consultants trained in "career transition" to train Pharmacia's remaining managers like Rost to fire their subordinates:

> I heard the male Terminator at the podium say something about how important it was to show compassion. Crying together with the targeted employee, however, was not recommended.
>
> In short, the day was a miniature course in emotional manipulation, with the objective of getting rid of people without causing a scene.
>
> We were also instructed that company policy was not to provide any references, as if anyone could have forgotten the infamous memo on this topic. So, "Off you go, you've done a great job, but we're not going to tell anyone, because that could be unfair to others.
>
> Finally, we were given a "script" to use when firing an employee. It ended, "I know this is difficult news to hear. If I can be of assistance to you in any way, please come to me." Too bad they had just forbidden us to do the one thing that could really have assisted a terminated employee—give them a reference.

Similarly, Pfizer also made sure to retain as much control as possible over the terminated employees (which Pfizer not surprisingly made sure to leverage as much as possible):

> A leaked "Release Agreement" circulated among Pharmacia' employees. This was a draft of the agreement departing employees had to sign in order to receive a severance package, which ranged from seven months up to a year's pay—more for some high earners and long-timers.
>
> The agreement required that departing employees release and forever discharge the company from any and all claims in any way relating to their employment or termination. They also had to agree not to disclose the existence of the release agreement, including the amount they received for signing it. If they violated this term they had to return all the money paid to them, They also had to promise not to make any statements of a disparaging nature about Pfizer.
>
> Again, anyone in breach had to repay all the monies. Finally, the departing employees had to agree to cooperate in any potential or pending litigation that may involve them in any capacity, including meeting with Pfizer's attorneys, attending meetings, depositions, and trial, if necessary. Clearly Pfizer didn't want to take any chances. This clause would be one they would frequently exercise down the road, especially with the people in my group.

Rost's Gambit

Rost then enacted a strategy to protect his job which will always make him a legend to me. He decided to become a whistleblower against Pharmacia (and by extension Pfizer) because the existing legal protections for whistleblowers made it illegal to fire an active whistleblower.

This was initially made possible due to Pharmacia's illegal marketing of human growth hormone which Rost had tried to put a stop to long before Pfizer attempted to acquire Pharmacia. Because the US code had specific criminal penalties for illegally distributing growth hormone, Rost had a strong leg to stand on and immediately attracted the concern of Pfizer's legal team.

The first time he was summoned to review the concerns he had raised about that marketing, he was given an insider's view on Pfizer's headquarters:

> Pfizer's offices were shoddy in comparison to Pharmacia's headquarters. The corridors were small and cramped, and the carpet looked like it hadn't been replaced in thirty years. Even Pfizer's vice presidents were squeezed into offices so small they could stand and touch virtually everything in their room. It didn't look like a fun environment to work in; it reminded us of a beehive.
>
> They put us in a dinky conference room, and when the last one of us had arrived, the Pfizer people joined. Their employees appeared different too: Tense, harried, and stressed. Many were quite old in relation to the positions they held—promotions were few and far between. Compared to Pharmacia, this was a different country.

Ex-Pharmaceutical Employees

Not long after this meeting, the lawsuit from his whistleblowing on Wyeth's tax evasion was unsealed, and Rost's name appeared in mainstream articles on the subject. Soon after, he was contacted by Wyeth employees who had received devastating consequences from being penalized by the tax authorities. I feel these remarks are helpful to illustrate what executives in the pharmaceutical industry are like once they lose the halo of protection that their position affords them (note, consider the recent Pfizer employee's outburst to Veritas when you read these quotations):

> The man on the phone cried and said that he had thought of killing himself. After the article ran in the New York Times, he and many others were ruined, he said. He would lose everything, and so would the others. I listened to him for over an hour as he told me his story.
>
> He claimed that seventy-two employees in his country had been called to meetings with three lawyers sent out by Wyeth. All these employees had apparently received bonuses or other income paid from the U.S. over many years. The lawyers informed the employees that Wyeth would now report all this income to taxing authorities and they had two weeks, until April 14, to plead guilty to tax evasion to avoid criminal charges. He said that he had thought about suicide and that he had a 9 mm gun—a Luger—in his drawer, but that he couldn't force himself, since he had a family to think of. He also said that others had talked about suicide, too.
>
> **He said he knew what he had done was wrong**, but that everyone—everyone—in senior management had done the same thing. It hadn't seemed so wrong at the time, with the exorbitant taxes his country charged. Then he started hinting at what he knew about other transactions that he could blow the whistle on [I can only wonder what the Pfizer director exposed by Veritas would say if he read this passage].

Rost was also contacted by one of the most senior officers from Wyeth, who he greatly respected, and met with her when she visited the area:

> My few words were all that she needed. She spent the rest of the lunch telling me what had happened. How the lawyers had come in and told everyone that they had two weeks to report their earnings to tax authorities. No chance to negotiate, and even the authorities had told her that they had never seen anything like that before: A large group of people self-reporting income that they hadn't declared for more than a decade back. She told me she had lost $2 million.
>
> I just shook my head. "I'm so sorry," I said. "I'd like to say some- thing more, but I really can't."
>
> "I understand," she said. "I had to pay back 115 percent of what I made during those years—115 percent." Her clear blue eyes looked sad and tired. "People lost everything." She named many names that I was familiar with, told me who had lost a house, who had lost even more than that. It was a terrifying tale...She kept repeating that while she had lost most, many had lost what they didn't have anymore. They were old and wiped out. There was even a senior officer's widow who had known nothing and now, after her husband had passed away, found herself in the middle of a tax inquiry. She was bankrupted.
>
> Many of the employees apparently had looked into taking legal action against the company and had hired lawyers. She asked what I thought of that. I responded that it wasn't something I could advise on.

Later, Rost also read a case of another Wyeth executive with a family who curiously fell to his death from his apartment (which may have been a suicide). As Rost who does appear to be a genialty caring fellow with a real sense of guilt became more and more aware of the rot within his industry, his sympathy for these individuals however declined:

> Or maybe I had become cynical about my fellow executives, knowing that very few of them would ever have stood up to do the right thing.
>
> Working for a corporation is like running with a wolf pack. Everyone helps out and is friendly as long as it benefits the group, but each wolf cares only about himself and will do anything to survive. Compassion, loyalty, caring, "best managed behaviors," these are all buzz words invented to control the masses. If the ship goes down, the CEO leaves first on the biggest life boat with gold in his pockets, and his crew can fight over the remaining vessels and the weak perish. That is not so noble but it's corporate reality. I couldn't sit back and just be quiet.

The Life of a Pharmaceutical Whistleblower

Everyone in the pharmaceutical industry knows that speaking out against criminal conduct blacklists you for life. In Rost's case, like many of his other colleagues at Pharmacia, once the industry knew Pfizer was likely to fire many of Pharmacia's staff, recruiters descended upon them, leading to numerous calls, interviews and job offers coming Rost's way. However, the second the New York Times story broke, all of them suddenly dried up.

> The most memorable situation was a biotech company that had begged for me to see them. The recruiter had worked a head of personnel at a company I had once worked for and knew me well; the president had been the CEO at the same company; and one of the board members had been my direct supervisor and had known me for many years. They had repeatedly asked me to come and interview, and I had agreed, even though the role was more limited than my current position.
>
> It didn't take more than a couple of days after the New York Times article for the recruiter to call and say they had put the new position on hold. I was a bit suspicious, so I called the company to check the situation. First I spoke to the assistant to the president. She let it slip that the position wasn't on hold, that it was just "me." I then called the recruiter back and he said she didn't know what she was talking about.
>
> This wasn't the only case of someone suddenly losing interest in me. A friend told me she had spoken to the recruiting firm who had assisted in hiring me in the past, and they had told her that I would never work in the pharmaceutical industry again, and that "it was a real shame for such a talented guy." Their prediction didn't take long to be confirmed.

Similarly, following the publication of the New York Times article, Rost's boss who had previously written glowing reviews of him (which Rost needed for any future job referral) provided a very different opinion of him:

> Fred's boss, Tom Cunningham, called me into his office and said, "I don't know what you did, but I'm going to make sure you never work in this industry again." Their prediction didn't take long to be confirmed.

Once the Wyeth news broke, Pfizer not surprisingly moved to fire Rost immediately. Rost took advantage of his whistleblower protection to begin his crusade against Pfizer and politely responded to this dismissal with a letter detailing the extent of Pfizer's liability. Two weeks, he later received this email from their legal counsel:

> "We regret to inform you that there will not be a position for you in the new Pfizer organization." He also wrote, "After the close, your job responsibilities will be the same as they are now until we notify you of a change."

Rost ultimately became locked into a position where Pfizer could not fire or demote him, but they did not want him to have any involvement in the company. Because of this, Rost ended up spending a lot of time at work but having no responsibilities to occupy that time.

The Code of Silence

One of my favorite authors who has worked to expose the misconduct within modern medicine, Peter C. Gøtzsche, has made the case that pharmaceutical companies follow the same patterns that are observed in criminal enterprises (e.g., pushing addictive and harmful drugs on the populace, routinely buying off government officials etc.). In turn, quite a few of the references used to compile this series came from his book *Deadly Medicines and Organised Crime: How Big Pharma Has Corrupted Healthcare*.

One of the interesting things I just learned from a commentator on one of the previous tweets was this:

When the stories of each whistleblower are reviewed, you will observe how widespread the omertà is in the pharmaceutical industry, and that even "competing" companies will enforce this universal code.

Unfortunately for Pfizer, Rost knew how their game was played and due to a very odd confluence of fate, had nothing to lose by breaking that silence and doing everything he could to make things difficult for his employer.

Conclusion

When I completed this article, I realized it was a bit too long to post as a single article, so it will be broken into two parts. In the second part of this series, I will discuss exactly how Rost ended up using his work time , along with the experiences of other Pfizer whistleblowers who independently corroborated the systemic malfeasance that Rost witnessed.

What Rost accomplished was nothing short of miraculous, and I do not believe there has been anyone else who has ever caused as much grief for Pfizer as he did. Much of what Rost saw twenty years ago is just as relevant now as it was then; the corporate culture of Pfizer is rotten to the core, and it has been that way for a very long time. Rost dug up a lot of dirt on Pfizer, which even now, very few people know about. It is, quite frankly, astounding how well omertà is enforced in this industry, and Rost is one of the few who truly overcame that obstacle.

In the second part of this series, we will review the abhorrent behavior Rost and other whistleblowers saw behind the scenes:

The Forgotten Side of Medicine

What Was Seen By The Pfizer Whistleblowers?

In the first part of this series, I discussed the profound challenges a whistleblower faces when they break the code of silence held by the pharmaceutical industry. Nonetheless, a few people have been willing to make that sacrifice, and there is so much to learn from each of them. If you have not yet read it, I would highly recommend reading it first...

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2 days ago · A Midwestern Doctor

I thank each of you for your support and help in getting the word out about this story and what was done to the participants in the COVID-19 vaccine trials.

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Allen Jan 31

Pfizer is a serial felon, convicted on over 70 occasions and has paid to date around $10 billion in fines comprising just about every corrupt practice known in the book of corporate fraud.

Not sure what more one needs to know. Looking at Pfizer's record, one thinks of the phrase 'habitual criminal.'"

Why hasn't Pfizer been shut down and it's top executives put in prison?

That's the larger question.

It's an operation- The Pharma Cartel makes a lot of money for massive investment firms and the Pandemic Business Model is one of the more lucrative investment strategies for these firms.

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when you understand the corruption of Pharma coupled wiith CDC/FDA corruption, you understand the medical model is corrupted absolutely.

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