

## Baloney

I think I'm going to give up being a bullsh\*\*ter. No, I haven't had a life-changing conversion. It's just that I'm getting old and I don't do it as well anymore. Even criminals have to retire, eventually.

There was a time when I think I ranked among the best. As a kid, I printed up raffle tickets for non-existent organizations and sold them to unsuspecting grandmothers up and down my street. In the seventh grade, I convinced my friend George I was actually a visitor from the planet Magbutt. He didn't argue with me, come to think of it.

I remember the night I tried to persuade my high school girlfriend that I had a deadly disease and would soon die, as in "all gone, no more." "So," I said mournfully, "this could be our absolute last night together and, you know, we've never experienced each other in a *really* friendly way....." She got up from the couch and left the room, returning in only a moment to hand be a bottle of aspirin.. "Hope this helps," she said.

Lately, I've wondered if I'm losing my touch. I've been bothered for some time by businesses that force us to do things their way. At my local drug store, I have to affix my signature to a clipboard when they hand me prescription drugs. This act evidently acknowledges all my pharmaceutical questions were answered by an eleven year old clerk.

So, one night last week I handed the clipboard back over the counter to the

adolescent girl and asked what surely must have seemed a knowledgeable question about the cinnamyl-4 antihypoxic class drugs I was getting. Then, to be a complete smart-ass, I asked if it was generally OK to take isomeric fluorenols within 2 hours after ingesting a small dose of dibenzothiopyran. No, of course I didn't know what I was talking about, but I was sure I'd impress her.

She rolled her eyes, as if she had heard this routine, and called the pharmacist over to join us.

"How much dibenzothiopyran have you taken?" he asked. He was almost my age, so I sensed I was about to be had.

"Two," I blurted

"Milligrams? Micrograms? Telegrams?" he mused, looking up at the ceiling and trying to keep a straight face.

Flustered, I said, "I don't know...*two*," as I tried to figure out how I would get out of this with my pride. The young woman was openly smirking at me.

"Well," said the pharmacist, "I think maybe you should get to some sort of hospital."

"No problem," I said. "There was an ambulance over at the Pizza Shop when I came by. Maybe they'll give me a ride." I turned and left in a hurry.

Maybe I should retire before I get too far beyond my peak. Maybe I peaked back on Magbutt.

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