

Jehovah's Witness Elder Removed Because His Daughter Went to College, Leaked Internal Letter Reveals

[WT Policy](#)

It's no secret among active and former Jehovah's Witnesses that seeking and obtaining a university education is not only frowned upon, but comes with ominous consequences for the entire family.

Recently I discovered a leaked letter from inside the Jehovah's Witness Headquarters complex that verifies what we already knew - that Witness elders are often removed from their positions when their baptized children exercise their right to an education.

The following 2014 correspondence memorandum was written from the Hospital Information Desk (HID) in New York to the United States Branch Committee with reference to personnel changes for the Hospital Liasion Committee (HLC) in the Cayman Islands. The U.S. Branch Committee responded to this letter in blue lettering at the top of the letter, approving the recommendations.

Near the bottom of this letter you will see the following statement:

"[xxxxname redacted] - Removed. Local brother no longer serving as an elder. It is our understanding that this capable local brother was removed because his daughter went to college in Britain."

HOSPITAL INFORMATION DESK: We have reviewed this proposal, and have no objection to your proceeding as recommended. Thank you very much. U.S. BRANCH COMMITTEE (BF:BT September 18, 2014)

MEMORANDUM

IHA:IHB September 5, 2014

Via E-Mail

U.S. BRANCH COMMITTEE
c/o [REDACTED]

Re: Adjustments on Cayman Islands Hospital Liaison Committee

Dear Brothers:

Please see the attached letter, dated July 21, 2014, from the Cayman Islands HLC, informing us of personnel changes to their committee and of additional recommendations. After receiving this letter, we made an immediate adjustment in the chairman of the committee due to the fact that we had been awaiting a recommendation since Brothers Menner and Calderon visited there in April 2014. A phone call was made to Brothers D [REDACTED] and Z [REDACTED] who both agreed to the adjustment while the Branch Committee considered this letter.

We would appreciate having your direction in addressing the needs of this committee, which is currently made up of three special full-time servants. Listed below are the names of those who were on the committee when we visited in April, and now reflect the current situation:

- I [REDACTED] – He and his wife were assigned as missionaries to Grand Cayman and have served there for over thirty years. He served as HLC chairman until last month. Brother Dobbins' wife suffers with a failing memory and he also has health problems.
- J [REDACTED] – He and his wife were assigned to Grand Cayman as special pioneers by the Jamaica branch. With our letter dated IHF July 31, 2014, he was appointed to serve as interim HLC chairman. However, in his e-mail dated August 19, 2014, Brother Z [REDACTED] informed us that he has been invited to the new school for Kingdom evangelizers on September 22 and should be prepared to move.
- D [REDACTED] – Originally from Jamaica, he was moved by the Jamaica branch as a special pioneer and HLC member in Jamaica to the same positions on Grand Cayman.
- T [REDACTED] – Removed. Local brother no longer serving as an elder. It is our understanding that this capable local brother was removed because his daughter went to college in Britain.
- S [REDACTED] – Removed. Canadian brother who resigned for unknown personal reasons.

In their letter, all three special full-time servants are willing to resign because of a misunderstanding that they should not be serving on the HLC. However, they are quite willing to

Clearly, the US Branch Committee that oversees the US, the Cayman Islands, and other territories, had no issues with the notification that a "capable local brother" was removed because his child left home to get an education.

The phrasing of that comment would seem to indicate that the elder had no other concerns or faults - only that he failed to prevent his child from going to college, and he was punished for it.

In the view of Jehovah's Witnesses, any baptized member who seeks a 4+ year education is spiritually weak, and reflects poorly on their family. If their father is an elder, he is viewed as not having control of his household, especially if he facilitated the education.

The March 6th, 2012 letter from CCJW to all elders revealed that "some of our brothers are pursuing higher education, feeling that they can acquire a measure of financial security."

Jehovah's Witnesses repeatedly impute poor motives to anyone who would seek a university education, implying that such persons are doing so only for personal gain, rather than to become an educated person and make this world a better place. This is an insult to the motives and intelligence of any person who ever considered obtaining a degree.

The letter goes on to imply that university education is synonymous with sexual immorality- as if those pursuing it will become sexually promiscuous by association.

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses

2821 Route 22, Patterson, NY 12563-2237 Phone: (845) 306-1100



March 6, 2012

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: Reminders from Kingdom Ministry School held during 2011 service year

Dear Brothers:

Much of the Kingdom Ministry School held during the 2011 service year focused on the portions of the *Shepherding* textbook that deal with shepherding, unity among the body of elders, and judicial matters. We encourage you to take time to review those parts of the textbook from time to time. Perhaps pertinent portions could be discussed during your quarterly elders' meetings. That will serve to reinforce those points in your mind and heart so that you can be of even greater service to the brothers. By means of this letter, we also wish to provide you with helpful reminders on a few additional matters that were discussed at the school.

Pursue divine education: Some of our brothers are pursuing higher education, feeling that they can acquire a measure of financial security. As you are aware, the educational system varies from country to country. In the United States, for example, public schools offer 12 years of basic education. Thereafter, students may choose to attend university for four or more years, leading to a bachelor's degree or to postgraduate studies for careers in medicine, law, engineering, and so forth. Such university education is what we mean when the term "higher education" is used.—*w05 10/1 pp. 26-31.*

Of course, education is an essential part of Christian life, and we highly value it. Education equips us to care for our responsibilities, both material and spiritual. (1 Tim. 5:8) However, Satan, the master of deception, has made the pursuit of higher education dangerous for a Christian. (2 Cor. 11:14) Many of our young people have been misled from the faith or have become involved in immorality as a result of pursuing higher education. The "fight for the faith" is especially challenging when one leaves the good influence of his home and congregation and places himself in the university environment. (Jude 3) Besides involving bad associations, higher education often erodes faith in Jehovah God and in the Bible. All must weigh carefully the disadvantages and any perceived advantages of pursuing higher education before determining what they will do. Christians must remember that the purpose of any supplementary education should be to praise Jehovah and serve him as much and as effectively as possible, while providing for material needs.—*Eccl. 12:13.*

Appointed men must be exemplary in heeding the warnings given by the faithful slave and its Governing Body when it comes to education. (Matt. 24:45-47) Would an elder, a ministerial servant, or a pioneer continue to qualify to serve as such if he, his wife, or his children pursue higher education? Much depends on the circumstances and how he is viewed. When such a situation arises, the body of elders should consider the following questions and scriptures:

- Does he show that he puts Kingdom interests first? (Matt. 6:33)
- Does he teach his family to put Kingdom interests first?
- Does he respect what has been published by the faithful slave on the dangers of higher education? (3 John 9)
- Do his speech and conduct reveal that he is a spiritual person? (Ps. 1:2, 3; 1 Cor. 2:13-16)

3/6/12a-E

- How is he viewed by the congregation?
- Why is he or his family pursuing higher education?
- Does the family have theocratic goals? (Phil. 3:8)
- Does the pursuit of higher education interfere with regular meeting attendance, meaningful participation in field service, or other theocratic activities?

As the body of elders prayerfully and carefully considers the matter, it may be readily apparent that the brother has a positive attitude about what the organization has published regarding higher education and still retains the respect of others in the congregation. They may also observe that he and his family are keeping Kingdom interests first if the education does not interfere with meetings and the ministry. In such a case, the elders may determine that he could continue serving.—1 Tim. 3:2, 4-6; Heb. 13:7.

On the other hand, if an elder or a ministerial servant is promoting higher education to others for the material advantages or the status it may bring, he is calling into question his qualifications to serve the congregation because of the effect on his and his fellow appointed brothers' freedom of speech. (1 Tim. 3:13; Titus 1:9) The body of elders may therefore determine that the brother no longer qualifies to serve. In most cases, however, such a determination should be made in conjunction with the visit of the circuit overseer. If the brother does not agree with the decision, he may be invited to express his reasons in writing, and this should be sent along with the circuit overseer's report.

If a person is serving as a regular pioneer only and the body of elders determines that he no longer qualifies to serve because of decisions he has made with regard to higher education, the person, the congregation, and the branch office should be informed of the deletion in the usual manner.

In view of the foregoing, each elder should make the following notation next to the subheading "Situations That May Raise Questions About an Appointed Man's Qualifications" before paragraph 15, chapter 3, in the *Shepherding* textbook: "See letter dated March 6, 2012, to all bodies of elders for direction on considering the qualifications of appointed men in connection with higher education."

What is *porneia*? The definition of *porneia* is outlined in paragraph 5, chapter 5, of the *Shepherding* textbook. Therein, three expressions are highlighted: "immoral use of," "lewd intent," and "manipulation." At the Kingdom Ministry School, these expressions were elaborated on as follows:

- "Immoral use of" conveys the thought not just of touching but of operating, manipulating, or employing something. For example, it is one thing to touch a musical instrument; it is something different to make "use of" a musical instrument.
- "Lewd intent" identifies the motive. For example, a doctor may need to manipulate the genitals in examining a patient. A veterinarian, farmer, or rancher may do something similar to an animal. However, the intent is not sexual gratification.
- "Manipulation" conveys the idea of operating something, whether by use of the hands or some other means, and does not require skin-to-skin contact. Momentary touching of another's genitals, even if intentional, would generally not be considered *porneia*.

It is the responsibility of the judicial committee to use the Scriptures to weigh carefully the facts in each case and to determine whether *porneia* is involved. This responsibility is especially serious when it involves the Scriptural freedom to remarry. (Mal. 2:16a) In situations where the elders are uncertain or divided on their conclusions, it is best to write the branch office.

March 6th, 2012 BOE Letter, page 2

In looking at the big picture as well as recent events, it's clear that Jehovah's Witness elders are walking a very treacherous tightrope. They are constantly scrutinized by their fellow elders, the Circuit Overseer, the US Branch Committee, the Service and Legal Departments, their own family members, and members of their congregations.

It's wearing these men down to the point where many don't want to be elders any longer, and quite a few find that they can't support this kind of stress in their lives. The same is true of Headquarters members, who are under even greater pressure. I know this because of how many have reached out to me privately, both during and after their exit from Bethel. Same with local elders; more than I can count.

And now, following the [criminal conviction of two elders in Illinois](#), elders across the United States are at risk of being prosecuted for failing to report child abuse- although most are not aware of this yet.

Matthew 23:4: They bind up heavy loads and put them on the shoulders of men...

I feel sympathy for that elder in the Cayman Islands. While we don't know much about him, we know he was a respected elder, and we know he lost his position as an elder and his appointment with the Hospital Liaison Committee. Losing such positions and being deleted comes with a great deal of stigma and anguish, as it's the mark of an inferior man- a man who has been judged unworthy of his assignments.

It also creates guilt on the part of the child who just wants an education, but suddenly she becomes the reason her father is no longer an appointed man in the congregation. The wife also faces especially uncomfortable circumstances when her husband is removed, and often doesn't know how to explain it to her fellow JW sisters, family members, and other friends.

Perhaps he worked hard to regain his respect in the congregation and maybe he's an elder again. Or maybe he decided to pack it in and never serve again- or even leave the organization. Either way- the damage is done, and it seems that none of this business has anything to do with Christianity or faith.

These circumstances and stresses may be part of the reason the JW Organization recently made an unorthodox announcement in which they are encouraging the appointments of Ministerial Servants and Elders at younger ages than ever. They would not need to do this if their existing body of mature men were handling the job adequately.

These added burdens and pressures have created a noticeable void in the organization, and it appears the risky solution is to train younger men to pick up the slack- a decision that is surely going to produce negative results for years to come.

Even more to the point, it seems they are luring college-aged young men with the notion of appointments primarily to distract them from attending college.

In any case, I wanted to share this example of Organization-sponsored sanctions against an elder to prove that it's not just a policy- it's a practice.

I look forward to comments from the community.

Link to 2012 letter:

https://accessjw.org/.php/lte-2012.php?download=20120306LTE_us.pdf

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[Complex Ad5004](#)

[·2 hr. ago](#)

And the cherry on top, is that the branch needs college educated brothers and sisters in their legal and IT departments and constantly ask for volunteers to come to Bethel to work for free.

Now imagine those elders that lost their privileges because one of their kids decided to go to college and them and their families were humiliated in front of the congregation, hearing a letter being read from the platform asking for volunteers with the same skills that their children were reprimanded for seeking.

Get a load of that cognitive dissonance.

49

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[linuxisgettingbetter](#)

[·2 hr. ago](#)

I have no idea how a functioning human mind can be in the situation you described and not have a problem.

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[J_Sanchez1970](#)

· [1 hr. ago](#)

The real cherry on top is when the kid gets accepted to bethel as a volunteer to help in one of those fields.... 🙌

That would be a real kick to the nuts for the elder.

7

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[stagofrenly](#)

·49 min. ago·edited 46 min. ago

Yep, you should have seen the looks of shock I got from my congregation elders after not only going to college against their advice, but grad school and then applying for Bethel and getting in without ever pioneering or even being a ministerial servant (at that time).

Not only that, but got to skip that entrance (essentially hazing) period of manual labor/housekeeping/etc meant to make new ones stay humble because they were desperate for brother's with my degree, and got given my own office. Then, got quickly appointed while I was there because they needed me to have access to more info.

Looking back I should have seen the hypocrisy as an indictment of our religion right away, but I was focused on being proud that my education was appreciated and assumed that just my local elders were extreme about education.

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[SortofGideon](#)

[·44 min. ago](#)

Was just thinking that!

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[ziddina](#)

· [2 hr. ago](#)

'Zactly!

Great find! Thank you for posting this.

I also noticed that the Canadian brother left for "unknown personal reasons". I hope he woke up and escaped.

23

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[Physical-Space-9255](#)

· [2 hr. ago](#)

Thank you for providing proof for something my mom says it's not true. I was removed as an MS. They never told me why, but it was a year after starting my bachelors degree in 2016. Glad they did because it re-ignited my inquisitive and critical thinking mind. All but left the organization but still technically a witness to keep communication with my parents. They know I

don't want anything to do with this high control group and don't want my daughters to be indoctrinated. So far they have respected my stance. Education is so important and most do it not for the selfish riches that they claim, but to provide a decent life to those we love the most!

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[nelatayinthewhey](#)

[·2 hr. ago](#)

Notice it says 'does he respect what the faithful and discreet slave has published on higher education' not 'what the Bible says about higher education'.

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[lancegalahadx](#)

· [2 hr. ago](#)

What if an adult (18+) moves out of the house and goes to college independent of their parents help or wishes?

Would they strip an elder of his privs in that case? If so, they are really start to move to the extreme side of things.

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[Complex_Ad5004](#)

· [52 min. ago](#)

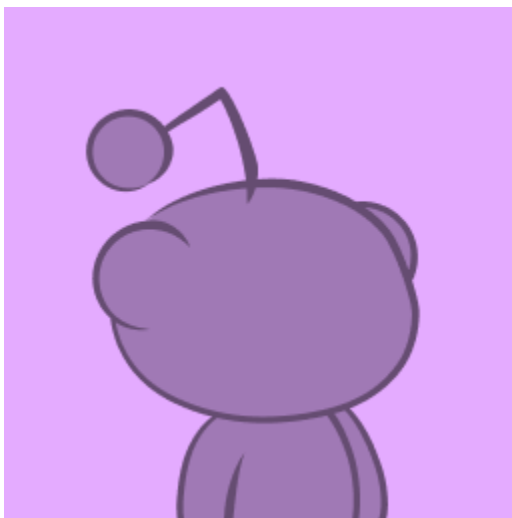
Unlikely. Only if the elder speaks in favor of it or recommends it to others, he could still be stripped of his title.

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[ibpenquin](#)

· [1 hr. ago](#)

The Shepard the flock of God book also warns against the same issues. Basically what is said in the letters is the same.

They warn against higher education, as it helps gain the critical thinking skills back, that the organization works so hard to take away from all members.

Gaslighting and fear mongering, making the elders deny these things for their families.

Keep them uneducated, and poor, then take away their critical thinking skills, and reliant on the society. The masses will follow you anywhere.

Higher education

Tony M. No college, chose construction.

<https://youtu.be/vfWRI-H8RiM>

Tony M. Beware high education. <https://youtu.be/UcJU-eY1TYg>

Tony M. The better the university the greater the danger.

https://youtu.be/xMG0lc_6NiI

Garret L. Warning about higher education <https://youtu.be/v5JlbEm3UL0>

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[Wide Ocelot](#)

· [1 hr. ago](#)

Spiritual Zit

I feel like (at least back in the 80's and 90's) the WT waffled a bit on college. I remember a prominent elder's son who was permitted to attend a junior college part time - so that he could get training that would be used at Bethel in the IT department.

I also recall a sister married to an unbeliever whose PIMI children were allowed to attend college because it was a demand of her unbelieving husband. In this case, they were allowed to go and pursue higher education in order to appease the husband as head of the household. It always seemed a little unfair to me that these kids were allowed to go to college while the rest of us couldn't. They even were allowed to remain pioneers. I should add that the unbelieving husband also beat the crap out of his wife but she was a "fine example" by taking the punches and not trying to divorce him. Years later he was no longer beating her and that was considered a triumph because she won him over with her submissiveness.

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[ProbablyNotGTFO](#)

[· 27 min. ago](#)

No they didn't. That was the HEIGHT of the WBTS telling parents not to let their children pursue college.

Not one JW my age (young 50's) had a college degree.

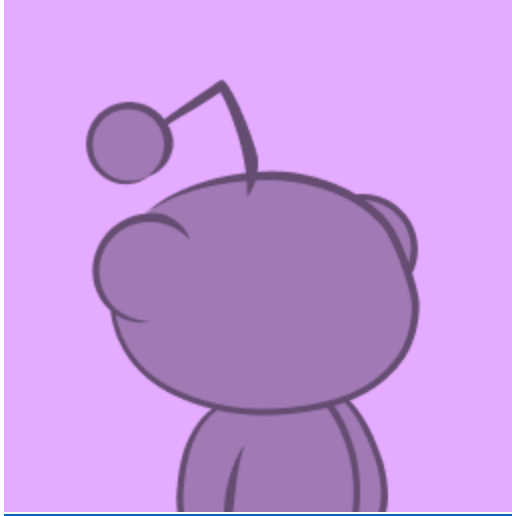
That didn't happen by accident.

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The Shepard the flock of God book also warns against the same issues. Basically what is said in the letters is the same.

They warn against higher education, as it helps gain the critical thinking skills back, that the organization works so hard to take away from all members.

Gaslighting and fear mongering, making the elders deny these things for their families.

Keep them uneducated, and poor, then take away their critical thinking skills, and reliant on the society. The masses will follow you anywhere.

Ironically, hypothetically, WT has actually sent people to college/university to gain higher education. They continue to ask for those who have higher education. Yet, they tell you not to get it.

Higher education

Tony M. No college, chose construction.

<https://youtu.be/vfWRI-H8RiM>

Tony M. Beware high education. <https://youtu.be/UcJU-eY1TYg>

Tony M. The better the university the greater the danger.

https://youtu.be/xMG0lc_6NiI

Garret L. Warning about higher education <https://youtu.be/v5JlbEm3UL0>

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[mizgriz](#)

· [1 hr. ago](#)

'fellow jw sisters' is a peculiar expression...

Other than that, great analysis of some self defeating borgish contradictions.

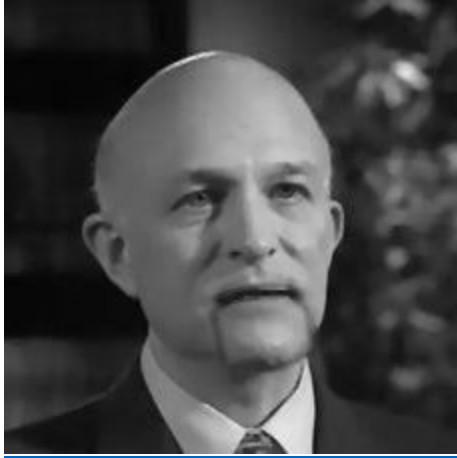
Based on countless accounts from young folk on this sub, WT has it backward: the kids have already decided to leave, often YEARS before going to college. They have already rejected jwland based sexual mores, especially if on the rainbow spectrum.

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[IntoObIvion](#)

· [1 hr. ago](#)

Excellent research, collated into a concise article - many thanks for the time you must have put into this; bookmarking this post for future use!

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[LeekEnvironmental235](#)

· [1 hr. ago](#)

YASSSSS! Comparing sexual immorality to pursuing a higher education...and the slut-shaming

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[Keesha2012](#)

· [38 min. ago](#)

Even if all someone wants is a shot at greater financial stability, so what? It's a perfectly valid reason. Unlike the Governing Body, the vast majority of us won't have our needs and wants paid for by others. Higher education is no one's business except the person/family making the decision.

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[Moontie-Baggins](#)

[.34 min. ago](#)



A little off topic but, one thing I found odd was the sentence about "heeding the warnings by the faithful slave and it's Governing Body"...only months later, they were suddenly one and the same.

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[ProbablyNotGTFO](#)

· [26 min. ago](#)

Damn.

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level 1

[J. Sanchez1970](#)

· [1 hr. ago](#)

So much for the Jeremiah 31:30 and Gal 6:5....

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[BadAssociation 97](#)

· [1 hr. ago](#)

Yup. This unfortunately happened in my old congregation to a servant. His son went to university and a lot of people had a problem with it, saying he doesn't have "freeness of speech". So they removed him as a servant. So sad. Cult is gonna cult.

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[ModaMeNow](#)

[·38 min. ago](#)

Youtube: JW Chronicles

I'm not surprised at all.

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[Jaspersmom1953](#)

· [32 min. ago](#)

The JWs would have to eat crow if that college student became a lawyer, went to work for them at Bethel as an unpaid volunteer and won many cases for them against litigation that would cost them millions. Of course we all know how little they really care for their slaves. They do beat them emotionally and mentally through gaslighting and the FOG... fear, obligation and guilt.

Curse that evil slave 🖤🖤

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[redditing again](#)

· [20 min. ago](#)

Former elder, inactive, and mostly POMO!

So, I always understood this to be the official (though asinine) stance of the org. As with lots of things, though, I find it interesting how ambiguous it is when it comes to removing the brother. No true criteria besides "advocating for" university education. If it's a brother who's well-liked, it's very easy to sway it so that his kid didn't follow his advice and he can continue to serve. Yet if the CO or the rest of the body wants him removed, they can easily sway it the other direction saying he supported his child's decision.

Gotta love it.

Edit: came back to commend you on your thoroughness, went to look at who posted this, and of course it's you. As always, thanks for being so thorough and for sharing it with us here.

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