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In Support of Dr. Thomas Butler

TO THE EDITOR—We would like to thank Greenough [1] for his update on Dr. Thomas Butler. It is important that young physicians remain aware of the pitfalls that exist within the field of infectious diseases and within the academic environment. We are sure that all of us will now pause for a moment before we transport microbiologic agents, sign a contract with an academic institution, or report a missing specimen. To not pause would be foolish; the personal risks are too great. However, as each of you realize, it will take far more than a moment's pause to assure adherence to new standards, and as Relman et al. [2] state, the losers will be life sciences research and the biodefense effort.

One would hope that Tom's horrendous experience will help others to avoid the "woods" that incarcerated him and robbed him of his precious medical license and career. We hope that some person who reads about his plight will find a niche that will provide emotional and financial relief to this dedicated scientist.

We met Tom in Vietnam in 1974 while he was conducting research on plague and diarrheal diseases. We knew him to be an enthusiastic and diligent researcher. We were particularly encouraged to read Tom's words and to see that he has been able to find employment. We are sure that his reunion with family and friends will go a long way in helping him to heal. Although Tom and family have led a frugal existence, they continue to have tremendous debts and to face the challenges of day-to-day life.

We in the Infectious Diseases Society of America should reach out to Tom and his family with generous support, to help him

overcome some of his legal debts. We would encourage all who can afford a donation to send it directly to Tom:

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Acknowledgments

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