

# Quotes

## Science and Commerce

(The following passages are from an article by John Seabrook titled "A Reporter At Large (Gold Mining)," which appeared in the April 24, 1989, issue of The New Yorker, pp. 69-70.)

'One evening early in 1961, having settled in with an issue of the United States Geological Survey's Professional Papers series, he (John Livermore, a geologist who played a major role in locating and developing the Carlin deposit) came across a two-and-a-half-page paper entitled "Alinement of Mining Districts in North Central Nevada." Its author was a field geologist with the U.S.G.S. named Ralph J. Roberts.

"I remember I got terribly excited when I finished reading that little paper. Here was a guy, this fellow Roberts, who, totally independent of me, had worked out a theory to explain where the gold I was looking for was. I found out he would be lecturing soon to the Eastern Nevada Geological Society, which was meeting in the Nevada Hotel in Ely. It was about a four-hour drive from Eureka. Altogether, about thirty other exploration geologists showed up, most of them just for the free dinner and a little conviviality.....Anyway, (Robert's) speech ended, people began drifting off to the bar; I walked up to Roberts and introduced myself. We shook hands. I guess that was the most important handshake of my life."

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## On Scientific Writing

(The following letter-to-the-editor is reprinted with permission from page 851 of the June 11, 1954, issue of Science (vol. 119, no. 3102))

Apropos of the April 23 (1954) issue of Science, concerned largely with the problems of scientific writing, I find in my files the following quotation from a source unknown to me. Other readers may also find this of interest, and perhaps one of them can inform me of its authorship.

### Advice to Young Writers

In promulgating esoteric cogitations and articulating superficial sentimentalities, philosophical and psychological observations, beware of platitudinous ponderosity, jejune babblement and asinine affectations. Let your extemporaneous discantings and unpremeditated expiations have intelligibility and vivacity without thrasonical bombast. Sedulously avoid all polysyllabic propensity, psittaceous vacuity and ventriloquial verbosity. Shun double-entendre, imprudent jocosity, and pestiferous polluting profanity either obscure or apparent. Don't call names or use big words, but talk plainly, sensibly and truthfully. All of which is mindful of Disraeli's philippic for Gladstone: he was a sophisticated rhetorician inebriated by the exuberance of his own verbosity.

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