

## Script Video Thirteen: The profit motive

In a nice small restaurant not far from the city center Nora and Alice met for brunch.

Alice was naturally very proud of her achievements in the citizen science project. In the last week she had quite a lively discussion with the lead scientist of the project concerning the upcoming publication. She was told that the large pharmaceutical company supporting the citizen science project has been preparing to file a patent for new medicament treatment for long Covid.

That meant that the suffering of potentially millions of people will be alleviated, and Alice had played very important role in this collaborative effort.

As co-author of the paper, the only one not on a payroll by the corporation, Alice could try to stop the patent. She could hold the pharmaceutical company hostage until she is paid large sum of money, but that would deny treatment of many people and Alice said she is a better person than that.

Nora mumbled something during Alice's speech, but Alice didn't pay much attention. She wanted to boost a bit in front of her friend. However, it was Nora's turn to talk, and she started with the very firm observation that there was no chance for Alice to stop the patent unless she files one herself.

Nora explained that there are - legally speaking - two types of intellectual property protections that a citizen scientist may be concerned with. The first one is copy right - which is, as Nora said, precisely that - the right to copy someone else's work. The second - a patent - is the right to exclusively use certain technological advancement.

Copy right is granted automatically upon publication. Patents on the other hand are based on patent filing - relatively complex procedure that describes the technology and its production process.

Strictly speaking a patent can be filed for someone else's copy right. The law will not protect the authors, but the patent holders.

Alice said that this hardly seems fair. Nora agreed but explained that the law was from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In that time there was no other way to guarantee who is the author than to file for a registration and the first one who filed was considered the author.

Alice thought that the law needed to be updated, which is also what Nora thought as well.

Still to celebrate Alice's achievements they ordered from the famous desserts of the restaurants. And Nora insisted to pay the bill - a small joke to cater to her friend's profit motive. Both laughed for quite a bit on that.

It was a lovely brunch.