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You're Not a Field Geologist Until You've...

A Monday Morning Musing from Mickey the Mercenary Geologist

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In October 2007 I was having a few beers with friends in the lobby bar at the Intercontinental Hotel in Toronto, Ontario. We had just finished another Cambridge House investment show, my second conference during a busy October, the junior markets had been on a bit of a run, and the mood was at least festive if not downright boisterous.

I saw my good buddy Jeff Reeder from Edmonton, Alberta across the bar in the very crowded venue. I hadn't talked with Jeff for several months, likely the previous March at the PDAC, so he was a must-see contact. It's always good to know what Jeff is up to since money seems to follow him around. It took a few minutes and some nubile maneuvers but I was finally able to wend my way thru the throng to his table, whereupon I immediately invited myself into quite the animated conversation.

I really can't remember all who were there (my Calgary friend Raju Wani was) but one of the participants was an easily forgettable GIS-office-geologist-draftsman-computer-nerd-teckie type and he was trying to give Jeff, the Canadian version of a Mercenary Geologist if I've ever known one, some sort of lesson in *field geology*.

Suddenly Jeff had had enough: He quaffed his brew, stood up, pounded his empty fist on the table, and shouted loudly enough in his pronounced Western Canadian accent to quiet a goodly portion of the packed-to-overflowing bar:

"You're not a field geologist until you've had malaria, got thrown in jail in a third world country, and had a fist fight with a driller in a foreign language!"

This missive brought down nearly half the house which was half geologists to begin with. I laughed so hard I halfway cried; Raju was halfway rolling on the floor.

After collecting my thoughts, I realized Jeff's interjection was quite simply *profound*. So I chewed on my cheek, scratched the bald pate, stroked my goatee, and conjured for a bit.

And just as suddenly I slammed my beer, stood up, pounded my fist on the table, and exclaimed in my best gravelly Midwest American "outside voice":

“You’re not a field geologist until you’ve had cholera, traveled for 10 days under an assumed name, and escaped from a third world country with a warrant for your arrest!”

My inspiration for this essay is of course Jeff Reeder. I’ve solicited a few of my friends to contribute their true, absolutely unembellished experiences as field geo-mercenaries to this effort.

I trust you will find my Musing amusing.

According to the experts, here are some of the many ways to earn your field geologist stripes:

From James MacDonald, a Brit living in Brisbane and semi-retired consulting geologist:

“You’re not a field geologist until you’ve fled a Latin country to escape a shotgun marriage, sold everything except your rock hammer to get the bus out, and upon arrival at your next assignment have three kids run up to you screaming ‘Papi, Papi!’

Luckily you find out they were bribed by your so-called Aussie ‘amigos’.”

From Thomas Bissig, a Swiss living in Vancouver and head of UBC’s Mineral Deposits Research Unit:

"You're not a field geologist until you've married a sleeping dictionary, been held at gun point by Mexican federales, and witnessed your camp cook get struck by lightning!

From Don Bubar, a Canadian living in Toronto and CEO of a TSX-listed rare metals company:

"You're not a field geologist until you've spent a night in the bush with a space blanket and emergency rations crushed into a pasty mess by rock samples at the bottom of your pack, come back to your fly camp after a long day to find it flattened by a grizzly bear, and survived the forest fire you started by firing a helicopter signal flare into tinder dry bush!

From Terri Kasten, a fellow New Mexican living in Phoenix and jack-of-all-trades for a Peruvian mining company:

"You're not a field geologist until you've hiked 12 miles out of Death Valley in mid-July after getting three flat tires at once, used your hand lens to identify broken glass along with the salt at the bottom of your margarita, and turned down at least one marriage proposal from a driller!

From Chuck Downie, a Canadian living in Cranbrook, B.C. and Vice-President Exploration for a Venture Exchange prospect generator:

"You're not a field geologist until you've had the cargo door blown open during flight, you take over the controls while the pilot goes to the back and jumps up and down to make it close, and you're sitting there, flying the plane, and thinking: " Jeez I hope he doesn't fall out!"

I first requested these anecdotes over a year ago. My many geo-buddies were asked to send me an email relating their best all-time experiences in the field.

I requested that they be direct, succinct, if ribald not vulgar, limited to three items and two or three lines, and constructed in one sentence using the format that Jeff first put down in his brief diatribe.

I received numerous responses but soon discovered that few of my mates possess any prose writing skills whatsoever. Guess that's why they are *field* and not *office* geologists.

As Mark Twain once said, "*I would have written you a shorter letter but I didn't have the time.*"

If you didn't follow the rules, you didn't make the cut. So my fellow field geologists, using the above ground rules I again solicit your true tales from the wilds of the world.

If I can get enough responses that don't require my editor Jeff Stuart to *completely* re-write them, we will publish additional versions of: **"You're Not a Field Geologist Until You've..."**

As only we who live this crazy life may know, our profession can be adventure, boredom, misery, excitement, disappointment, success, failure, reward, and danger at any given moment, on any given day, in any given place.

But how many people can get paid to do this:

See the World, Explore, Discover, and Create Wealth?

It is my hope that thru a series of these anecdotes we can communicate to the lay investor what may be involved, what may be encountered, and what we may experience in our big big world of field geology.

Thanks in advance for your efforts.

Ciao for now,

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The [Mercenary Geologist Michael S. "Mickey" Fulp](#) is a Certified Professional [Geologist](#) with a B.Sc. Earth Sciences with honor from the University of Tulsa, and M.Sc. Geology from the University of New Mexico. Mickey has 30 years experience as an exploration geologist searching for economic deposits of base and precious metals, industrial minerals, uranium, coal, oil and gas, and water in North and South America, Europe, and Asia.

Mickey has worked for junior explorers, major mining companies, private companies, and investors as a consulting economic geologist for the past 22 years, specializing in geological mapping, property evaluation, and business development. In addition to Mickey's professional credentials and experience, he is high-altitude proficient, and is bilingual in English and Spanish. From 2003 to 2006, he made four outcrop ore discoveries in Peru, Nevada, Chile, and British Columbia.

Mickey is well-known throughout the mining and exploration community due to his ongoing work as an analyst, newsletter writer, and speaker.

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