

Winnipeg

by [Peter Glassman](#) (March 2023)



Which Way?, Martin Lewis, 1932

Dr. Saul Bessell had completed a pivotal endocrine anti-cancer drug study at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Canada. He now needed a major drug company to sponsor the treatment, and take his clinical trial to the FDA. Dr. Jonah Birdhead, Medical Director of the oncology division at Chancellor Pharmaceuticals got the contract. Birdhead addressed his staff regarding the Winnipeg study.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I’m appointing Dr. Elroy Sloan to head up the team going to Winnipeg. He’ll write the clinical trial report for both Chancellor and the FDA. Dr. Sloan will also select the team of another clinician, statistician, data quality analyzer, pharmacist, and administrative assistant. I

regret the months of December, January and February will be compromised, but you will be allowed interim home visits.”

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Dr. Sloan looked at the assembled department members and selected all but the second clinician. “Before I complete the team membership, let me again state that this is a work assignment. Winnipeg is not a resort city. Heavy winter clothes are mandatory, and should be more cold protective than what we wear for Connecticut winters. We’ll return to Connecticut for two weekends a month during this three month assignment. I now ask for the final volunteer for the clinical position second to my leadership”

Several MDs raised their hands. There would be extra pay and a possible 15% salary bonus for getting the clinical trial report accepted by the FDA. Sloan pointed to a clinician seated to his right. Another MD stood up and began shouting.

“I’m the senior clinician, and, although not chosen to head this Winnipeg venture, I demand to be there. I have the most experience. The FDA knows my quality work.” Dr. Adam Jameson looked at the other volunteer MDs, and the one Sloan selected. “You all originally report to me. I strongly recommend all you volunteer MDs decline.”

Sloan groaned as the physicians backed off their initial eagerness. Jameson was a Senior Associate Medical Director, and the most hated MD at Chancellor Pharmaceuticals. He was noted for taking credit for any positive results obtained by others; giving blame to subordinates for his mistakes; and assuming creation of brilliant drug development ideas when, in fact, they were those of someone else.

“Well, it looks like Dr. Jameson will be my co-physician for this assignment.” Sloan sighed. “We leave from Kennedy Airport with a Chicago connection at Air Canada for Winnipeg. I have one additional note of advice. Do not, I repeat, do not state

that your purpose for visiting Winnipeg is to work on a drug study. The word 'drug' will get you stranded at Winnipeg customs for as long as a week."

*□

Jameson presented as a problem right from the start at Kennedy. "I demand a First Class ticket. After all, I'm the most important member of the team."

Sloan glared at Jameson. "My orders are that all team members go Coach."

Jameson grabbed his cell phone and contacted the CEO. He handed the phone to Sloan after threatening a lawsuit against the company if he didn't fly First Class.

"Yes, sir. I understand," Sloan listened to Dr. Birdhead's orders.

"Sloan, I want you to let Jameson have first class airline seats, but keep him from messing up the report any way you can."

With Jameson isolated in first class, Sloan talked to his four other members. "Dr. Birdhead recognizes Jameson's volatility and potential threat to the project and to the company. Once we get to the University of Manitoba, do not confront Jameson on anything. Run all Jameson problems and potential issues by me. The boss also said if we let Jameson botch this, we're all fired." Sloan left out Birdhead's advice to go to any lengths to contain Jameson's contamination and sabotage of the project.

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As Air Canada Flight W209 approached Winnipeg International Airport, the view out the window changed from a flat vista of white blowing snow to a shiny skyscraper horizon. The flight attendant made several announcements.

“The outside temperature is -48 C, which is -54 F. There are no covered arrival gates for this plane. The extreme cold will cause instant frostbite, so please cover up. Remove glasses with metal frames and metal temple pieces. Do not touch the metal ramp rail when disembarking without gloves. Remove contact lenses which could freeze and cause permanent eye damage.”

The team made it to the baggage claim with Jameson elbowing his way ahead of the others. Immigration control asked him the standard query while looking at his passport. “What is the purpose of your visit to Winnipeg, Mr. Jameson?”

Jameson puffed himself up. “First, it’s Dr. Jameson, not Mr. Jameson. And second, I’m here to perform a most important drug study at the university.”

Within seconds alarms rang, two armed immigration officers grabbed Jameson’s luggage, and moved him to a security-check area.

The rest of the team had no difficulty, and one security officer approached Sloan. “We have a man who calls himself Dr. Adam Jameson. He said you can vouch for him.”

Sloan looked at the rest of the team and back to the officer. “I have no knowledge or acquaintance with this Jameson person.”

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At the Hertz car rental desk, the agent advised Sloan and his team, “You must plug in the oil heaters of your rental van everywhere you go. If your vehicle freezes up because of not doing so, repairs will be at your expense.”

They surrendered the minivan to the hotel car valet, who reassured them of plug-in knowledge. Hotel Winnipeg was a five star toasty facility. Sloan explained to his team about

Jameson, "Dr. Jameson will be held until Winnipeg security verifies he's not a drug dealer or illegal trafficker. It gives us time to establish good relations with the university oncology department staff."

They had a wonderful meal at the hotel's steakhouse when Sloan's cell phone rang. Sloan spoke to his group. "Dr. Bessell wants to see me tonight for a briefing prior to tomorrow's first meeting. I'll see you at breakfast at seven."

Sloan requested a taxi. The doorman signaled the cab and pulled Sloan aside. "Sir, I must advise that you ask the cab driver to remain at your destination until you are safely inside your destination. If you are stranded, you will freeze to death in an hour even with your current clothing."

*□

The next evening Jameson arrived seething. He gave everyone from the hotel staff to his team, verbal abuse rivaling that of Hitler to his generals. The statistician was trembling. "Dr. Sloan, he's going to get us all fired. He's going to call Dr. Birdhead tomorrow."

Sloan was as shaken as the rest until he remembered a place he saw midway to Dr. Bessell's home. "Wait, I have a possible solution. We can't have Jameson show up at the university like a crazy man." He went to the message desk, looking back at his team.

Jameson came over to the group. "You people think you're important, do you? Well, I just got a message to visit Dr. Bessell, the chairman of the university oncology department. He knows who's important." He went to the front entrance and bumped into Sloan who was coming in from outside.

"Adam, make sure you bundle up," Sloan advised. "It's bitter cold out there."

“Get outta my way Sloan. I have the next cab.” Jameson gave Sloan the middle finger. “You should have backed me up at the airport. You wait till you and the others get back home.”

*□

Jameson never returned. A week later Sloan was called by Dr. Birdhead. “Thanks for sending the newspaper, Elroy. The plan worked. You don’t know how much you’ve done for the company. Your group’s clinical trial report was excellent.”

“Sir, I didn’t do anything. Adam Jameson was a victim of his own mind.” Sloan smiled. “It’s just like the newspaper said. Jameson should have had his cab driver wait for him. I’ll never understand why he went to a closed warehouse that night. The temperature was -58F. He never had a chance but it was typical for Jameson to isolate for imagined selfish gains.”

[Table of Contents](#)

Peter Glassman is a retired physician living in Texas, who devotes his time to writing novels and memoir-based fiction. He is the author of 14 novels including the medical thrillers *Cotter*; *The Helios Rain* and *Who Will Weep for Me*. Some of his short stories were written for presentation at the San Antonio Writers Group Meetup. You can read more about him and his books [here](#).

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