Much of the public debate about the merits of cDNA sequencing is focused on the filing of patents on fragments of genes. We believe that gene fragments are of value and are thus worth patenting. Nevertheless, because of the rapid identification of new genes by many different groups worldwide, we believe that use patents may ultimately be more important than DNA patents to the future of the biotechnology industry. We plan to pursue the biological function of interesting new molecules we discover in our program accordingly.

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Converting Weapons to Fuel

Of the many new problems introduced by the end of the Cold War, none presents a greater threat than the fate of weapons-grade nuclear materials in several countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Denaturing stockpiles of weapons-grade uranium could be accomplished quickly by reversing the separation process used to make it. Enriched uranium could be mixed with depleted material to create isotopic compositions that would not be weapons-grade but would be useful as fuel for nuclear power reactors. This process is cheap and would require no research, development, or investment in infrastructure. Recent indications that the United States may purchase weapons-grade uranium from Russia (*1*) are heartening. Such a purchase could be preceded or followed by denaturing.

Unfortunately, denaturing weapons-grade plutonium is not feasible, as it can be reversed by widely known chemical processes. However, plutonium could be consumed in the intense neutron fields of nuclear reactors. The technology and infrastructure necessary to produce mixed oxide fuel, composed of natural or depleted uranium and a small percentage of plutonium, are available in several nations. If all of the power reactors in the United States were fueled with mixed oxides, the time required to effectively eliminate a weapons-grade plutonium stockpile of 200 tons (a common estimate of the total stocks in the United States and the CIS) would be about 2 years.

It took four decades to build up today's stockpiles of weapons-grade uranium and plutonium; they could be eliminated in a few years. Furthermore, they could provide a benefit to mankind in the form of electric power, which would partly compensate for the terror they have engendered.

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1. "Economic stimulus and investment package fact sheet" (U.S. Department of Energy, Washington, DC, 1993).

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The G-Word

I enjoyed very much "Heavenly name dropping" (ScienceScope, 29 Jan., p. 587), which gently pokes fun at my co-author Leon Lederman for calling his new book *The God Particle*. I must say that I've gotten a giggle out of the mental picture of Lederman crisscrossing the country over the past 6 weeks, eating bad airline food, breathing the rancid air in television green rooms, developing repetitive motion disorder

from incessant book signings, and trying (unsuccessfully) to fend off criticism over the use of the G-word in the title of the book. Meanwhile, I've been lying in bed munching nachos and watching Amy Fisher TV movies.

But I digress. Any criticism of the title (which comes, by the way, from a comment Lederman made in a 1986 speech to high school students) should rightfully be directed at me, since I came up with it. It was meant as a joke. I inserted it on the proposal we wrote back in 1989 as a temporary thing, meant to fill that awkward space at the top of the page right above the important stuff, our bylines.

We had hoped to find a better title, but the name just sort of stuck. Lederman and I later lobbied to call the book *The Goddam Particle*, since that's how most journalists today regard particle physics. As a second choice, I suggested *Boys in the Band*, since a history of physics is mostly a story about a bunch of men, but it seems that title had been taken. *SSC, We Hardly Knew Ye* was also ruled out as too downbeat. So *The God Particle* it is, and while neither of the book's authors believes in God, at least one of us believes in particles.

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Incorrect GenBank Numbers

Note 12 in the report "Rejection of the 'flying primate' hypothesis by phylogenetic evidence from the ϵ-globin gene" by Wendy J. Bailey, Jerry L. Slightom, and me (3 Apr. 1992, p. 86) (*1*) contained incorrect GenBank accession numbers and voucher specimen numbers for the flying lemur, tree shrew, megabat, and microbat. The correct numbers for these sequences and specimens are as follows. Flying lemur, M81368, CM87909; tree shrew, M81367, CM88634; megabat, M81365, CM88359; and microbat, M81366, CM88012. In the GenBank listing under M81366, the species name that was originally given, *Megaderma spasma*, was incorrect and should have been *Megaderma lyra*. Also, under M81365, in the section called Definition, the word Cenopterus was a misspelling of *Cynopterus*.

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1. W. J. Bailey, J. L. Slightom, M. Goodman, *Science* **256**, 86 (1992).