

November 24, 2004

 [Print this article](#)

Loic Le Ribault's Resistance

Categories

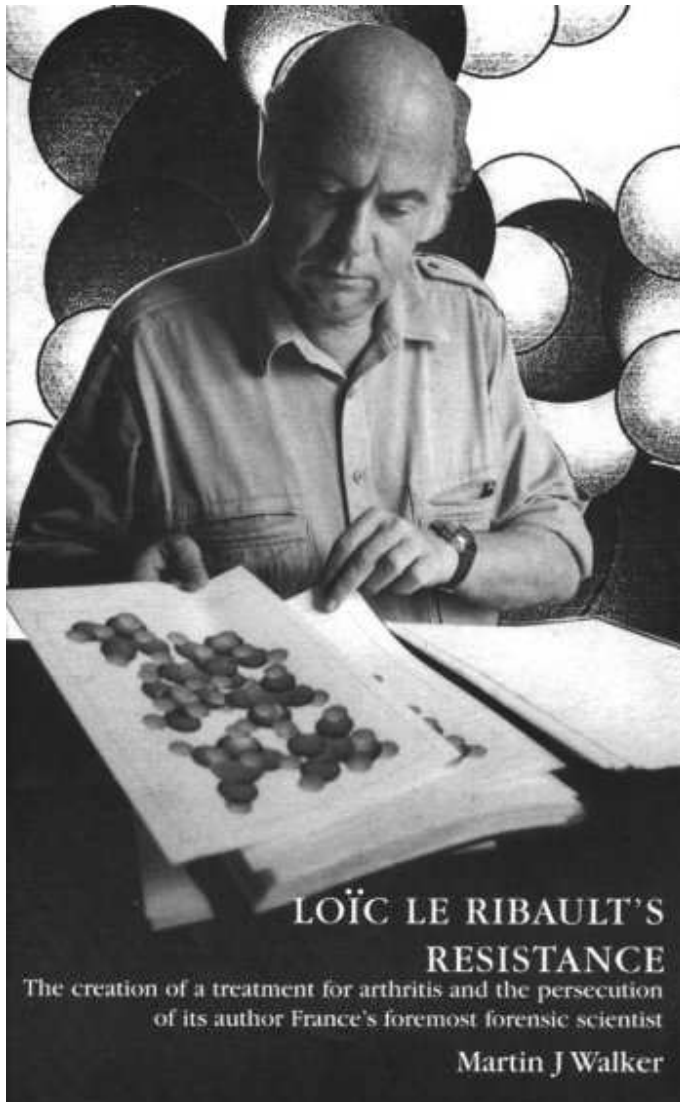
[Health Freedom](#)

The creation of a treatment for arthritis and the persecution of its author, France's foremost forensic scientist

by Martin J Walker

"In 1985 while working as an independent forensic scientist for the French judiciary, Le Ribault joined forces with a highly acclaimed research chemist, Professor Norbert Duffaut from the University of Bordeaux. Between them, they hoped to develop their common work on organic silica, a substance which they believed had a wide range of therapeutic uses.

After twelve years work together, perhaps as a consequence of their work on the new therapy, Duffaut was dead, poisoned in suspicious circumstances and Le Ribault himself had suffered two months solitary confinement in a French jail."



Loic Le Ribault's Resistance

"I shall continue my actions of distributing OS5 despite all the opposition. I do it for all those patients for whom I have the opportunity and honour of caring, those who were abandoned by modern medicine which was unable to offer them a cure or who found the orthodox treatments offered worse than the illness itself."

Loic Le Ribault, France's most renowned forensic scientist (1) and specialist in the study of silica, holds court in the dingy surroundings of the Flying Fish pub on the harbour in St Helier, Jersey. With a Gaelic shrug and in faltering English, he explains how the pub has become his home and his office.

He knows almost everyone in the bar, as he knows the bus drivers, the local shopkeepers and many of the harbours boat owners. He knows them, he says, *'because I have treated them, for this illness and that illness. Many of them I have cured with OS5'*.

Sitting in the Flying Fish, drinking bitter and smoking the occasional Galloises, Le Ribault does not seem like a man who has been hounded out of France because he discovered and distributed a treatment for arthritis and a number of other common ailments.

In 1985 while working as an independent forensic scientist for the French judiciary, Le Ribault joined forces with a highly acclaimed research chemist, Professor Norbert Duffaut from the University of Bordeaux. Between them, they hoped to develop their common work on organic silica, a substance which they believed had a wide range of therapeutic uses.

After twelve years work together, perhaps as a consequence of their work on the new therapy, Duffaut was dead, poisoned in suspicious circumstances and Le Ribault himself had suffered two months solitary confinement in a French jail.

Today, Le Ribault is on his own, forced to ground in Jersey, a stateless alien on the run from the French police. His life turned into a desperate adventure, Le Ribault is paying the price for falling out with scientific orthodoxy, medical professionals and the French establishment.

Loic Le Ribault appears quintessentially French. He is phlegmatic and when he is not laughing gently and self-deprecatingly, his rubbery face deflates with the world-weary sadness of a circus clown. In well-worn casual clothes, with white wings of cotton wool hair floating around the bald dome of his head, his lack of fluent English, for which he constantly apologises, makes him appear wise but forgetful. Listening to him, you have to keep reminding yourself that over the last five years, he has lost everything but his mind.

AN EARLY PROMISE

Thirty years ago, still in his twenties, Loic Le Ribault was a precocious young academic, having ground-breaking papers published by the French Academy of Science. At twenty-four, in 1971, he discovered a new function for the electron scanning microscope (ESM) which enabled him to discern the history of grains of sand.

Previously the electron scanning microscope capable at that time of 30,000 magnification had been used in biology and medicine, no one had imagined that it might be used for looking at rocks. Under the electron scanning microscope, Le Ribault found that he could discern the entire history of a grain of sand; where and when it originated, how it was formed, where and how it had been transported, where it had next lodged, how long it had stayed in that place. By the time he had finished his research, he had devised a list of two hundred and fifty criteria by which the history of sand might be diagnosed. The field was later to become so specialised that it would take three years to train a scientist in the technical knowledge to carry out these tests. (2)

Le Ribault's approach to analysis and detection of sand, had some academic and commercial uses but was most clearly an invaluable aid to policing. While still working at university, he was approached by the FBI and became a forensic consultant for them.

Despite this early discovery of a new use for the ESM, Le Ribault found it hard to get work in the universities after he qualified and in 1982, he set up his own national laboratory for electron microscopy, called CARME and quickly became France's most noted forensic scientist. CARME became the principal laboratory used by the police service, the judiciary and the French Home Office.

Le Ribault is the first to admit that he is not a diplomat, even that he is anarchistic in his view of society. Constant struggles between himself and the French Home Office, seemingly about hegemony, did not endear him to servants of the State. At the height of CARME's work, Le Ribault was a nationally recognised figure with a high public profile, working and commenting on some of France's most intriguing criminal, military and political cases. Always a populist, he was much sought after by television, radio and newspapers as well as the French political parties.

'When I had CARME, every week I had articles in the press and on TV, and every French party asked me to be involved with them. On TV and in newspapers, I made information accessible, very often I did lectures in Primary and secondary schools as well as universities'.

Despite a brilliant record as an expert witness, the French Home Office and the police service seemed to have been wary of Le Ribault's cavalier genius as well as his tacit control of Home Office forensics. He says that the French State frequently referred to him as their scientist and to his laboratory as that of the Home Office.

Le Ribault's career as France's most eminent forensic scientist came to a sudden end in 1991, when the Home Office decided to integrate their own regional forensic laboratories equipped with electron microscopes. In the following debacle, Le Ribault lost his laboratory, which had employed thirty odd people, and his home which he had mortgaged as surety for the laboratory.

A resilient character, Le Ribault adapted to his new life, lived in the family home and returned to his first love, silica. Back in 1972, while working with sand on the ESM he had made an interesting discovery, a layer of water-soluble amorphous silica which contained micro-organisms covered the surface of some sand grains. He found that these micro organism and the secretions which they left on the sand contained organic silica. Organic silica differs from mineral silica which makes up the majority of the earth's crust, in that it contains Carbon and can be readily assimilated by animals.

By 1975, Le Ribault had created a process by which it was possible to recover these deposits from the surface of the sand. All of this work was accepted by the scientific establishment and his papers published by the French Academy of Science.

There had been constant research into organic silica over the previous fifty years and some of this research had raised questions about its therapeutic use. In his early work, as a geologist, Le Ribault had not been following the research into silica and health. But in the early eighties, while working on the organic silica deposits he had found, he immersed his hands in organic silica solution and found that his psoriasis was cured. From then on, Le Ribault's work became focused in the therapeutic properties of silica.

FROM POLLUTANT TO ESSENTIAL NUTRIENT

Silica is an essential element of living matter. Found in body tissue, the thymus gland, the vascular lining, the adrenal glands, the liver, the spleen, the pancreas and in considerable quantity in hair. With age the body loses its store of organic silica and is unable to replace it from sources outside the body which are predominantly mineral silica.

It was originally thought that silica was at worst an environmental contaminant of the human body and at best an element which quickly passed through the body and was excreted. These ideas were based almost entirely upon observations of mineral Silica, which in the form of dust and particles was responsible for a number of serious illnesses such as silicosis.

Silica in mineral form had been used therapeutically, it was however absorbed inefficiently into the human body. It had traditionally gained a place in the pantheon of herbal remedies, being present in Horse's Tail Fern, and some vegetables.

Work over the years on absorbable mineral and organic silica since the nineteen thirties, showed irrefutably that organic silica could be described as an essential nutrient for both humans and other animals. (3) It is necessary for early calcification of bones and animals shells, its deficiency has been found to produce alterations and abnormalities in bone growth. It has also been observed that silica plays a part in the make up of the cells which formed blood vessel walls. Perhaps most importantly, silica has been found to directly affect and form a large part of the connective tissue and cartilage which plays an important part in joints and the illnesses which affect them.

In studies during the nineteen seventies it was found that silica supplementation aided bone and cartilage growth, in 1993, it was reported that treatment with silicon could stimulate bone formation.

By the nineteen nineties, silica formulations were being used by some pharmaceutical companies, on wound dressings and burn dressings because it was recognised that wounds healed more quickly and burns could be stabilised. (4,5)

A MAN ON THE MOON

In 1982, Le Ribault began work with Professor Norbert Duffaut, a chemist and research engineer at the CNRS (The National Centre for Scientific Research) situated at the

University of Bordeaux. In 1957, Duffaut had synthesised a molecule of organic silicon which was capable of being absorbed by the human body.

Unlike Le Ribault, Duffaut had been using his organic silica as a therapeutic agent, treating patients since his first discoveries in the nineteen fifties. Like Ribault, Duffaut paid little attention to the academic papers on organic silica, convinced that he was ahead of the field.

When Le Ribault first met Duffaut, he had been treating people for years and he was well known in the South West of France and even in Paris. Duffaut had created NDR, the Norbert Duffaut Remedy, and had manufactured many litres, for thousands and thousands of patients. Whether to avoid the regulatory agencies, or simply out of sheer cussedness, Duffaut refused to keep any records of his transactions. *'He absolutely refused to keep a record of anything which he did'*, says Le Ribault. He would say, *'We are right, we will win in the end'*.

In 1958 Duffaut had begun successful clinical work with Dr Jacques Janet, a gastroenterologist. He had also begun treating people, very successfully, for arthritis. Duffaut was, however, sure that cardiovascular work and blood circulation work were the most important therapeutic goals in relation to organic silica. In the nineteen sixties, Duffaut worked with Dr Rager a cardio-vascular surgeon, who used organic silica for post-operative recovery. In 1967 Rager was awarded the J Levy Bricker Prize by the French Academy of Medicine for his work on the use of organic silica in the treatment of man. Rager's work also determined that organic silica helped cancer patients withstand chemotherapy.

Le Ribault and Duffaut had more than a passion for silica in common. Duffaut, in his sixties, was considered by many to be an impossibly difficult man. Le Ribault, speaking with sadness but with his usual humour says of Duffaut

'He was less diplomatic than me! A lot less diplomatic than me! Can you imagine? He was impossible. He considered that the system was made up of stupid people, he was right of course, but he said it to them on many occasions. He was eccentric, very much an individualist. I guess I was the only person able to work with him'.

Like Le Ribault, Duffaut also used humour to shield himself from the deeper conflicts. *'Duffaut was a very, very clever man, really a genius, a high level chemist who was always singing and joking and smiling, all the day long - every day!'* Le Ribault fondly remembers an unmarried man, utterly immersed in his scientific work, cut off from the humdrum intercourse of the everyday world to such an extent, Le Ribault jokes, that he was, 'on the moon' for much of the time.

When Le Ribault met Duffaut, he had been testing his synthetic organic silica molecule therapeutically for fifteen years and had frequently offered his invention free to the French State and its medical research organisations. All his approaches had been met with an utter and seemingly deliberate silence.

In 1985, Duffaut and Le Ribault took out an international patent to protect the therapeutic use of organic silica. And in 1987, like many other publicly concerned scientists outside the pharmaceutical companies, they made representations to the French Minister of Research, asking that he consider their discovery for trials in cases of AIDS-related illnesses. So determined were they to force recognition of the health-giving qualities of silica on the Government that they had their request, and the evidence to support it, legally served on the Minister. Duffaut and Le Ribault receive no reply.

In November 1993, Duffaut, was found dead in his bed by neighbours who noticed he had not been out of his house. Despite the fact that Duffaut was in his early seventies and had died in bed, a post-mortem was held and potassium cyanide in his system. Although no letter was found and despite the fact that witnesses had seen Duffaut the night before in good spirits, the police concluded that he had committed suicide.

Initially, Le Ribault accepted the suicide of his colleague but has since begun to have doubts. His principle doubt was that Duffaut, a highly trained chemist would have chosen Potassium Cyanide as a vehicle for suicide, knowing that it would occasion an incredibly painful death. Duffaut's writing prior to his death did show a despondency clearly brought about by continual disappointment and frustration. His last notes contained the sentence. *'The authorities have condemned my discovery out of hand without having even tested it'*.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

As his work progressed with Duffaut, Loic Le Ribault found that there was, in his mind, less and less academic considerations about the therapeutic uses of organic silica. He was preoccupied throughout the eighties and early nineties with trying to make the organic silica Duffaut had been using for compresses, drinkable.

'One of the most serious difficulties, was trying to make G5 drinkable. The solution we had created was slightly toxic, alright for using on the skin but not for drinking. Perhaps no more toxic than red wine, but I didn't want it to be at all toxic'.

When Le Ribault first make his therapeutic discovery, he was sceptical. However, after two or three years working with a number of doctors who used the discovery on patients and after his years of work with Duffaut, he decided that he was in a position to send files to the Ministry of Health, asking them to carry out trials on the basis of free solutions which would be supplied by him. He did not receive an answer to his many communications. The private treatment of patients, did not fit with either Le Ribault or Duffaut's ideas about health care, both wished that the French government would take up the idea of organic silica. By the mid nineties, between them, Le Ribault and Duffaut had treated well over ten thousand people, firstly with organic silica poultices and then with a drinkable tonic solution.

Determined to make his findings of public consequence, Le Ribault arranged personal meetings in America with the Chairmen of the main pharmaceutical laboratories; he travelled to visit executives in Canada and the length and breadth of France. All the

people he met showed interest and most told him that they would be in touch within weeks, as he now says, *'I have been waiting fifteen years for a reply'*. One executive of a pharmaceutical company offered him £1,000,000 just to bury his discovery.

REGULATING MOLECULES

At the end of 1994, Le Ribault, now working on his own with an organic silica molecule suspended in water, which he called G5, stepped up production and distribution to people with health problems. It was Le Ribault's case that as a natural non toxic substance, G5 did not need a licence; he saw it as a tonic or dietary supplement.

The problem of who pays to test a novel medical product, developed outside the pharmaceutical companies, has become a serious issue in America and European countries. On the boundaries of different kinds of medical treatment, a constant war is being waged. Trade and practice with non-pharmaceutical treatments are constantly attacked by big companies. The most common aggressors in this war of attrition are the pharmaceutical companies. With close allies in the regulatory agencies, university research departments, hospital Trusts and the media, a strategy of attrition whittles away at the number of herbs which are legally available and constantly attempts to restrict the availability of vitamins and food supplements.

The highly capitalised pharmaceutical companies can afford to compete with each other, paying hundreds of thousands, often millions, of pounds to carry out trials and then thousands of pounds for preparatory paper work so that their cases can be put before the regulatory agencies. When they have obtained licences, aggressive marketing strategies, regulatory protection and sometimes 'dirty tricks' ensure competitive ascendancy.

Herbalists, homoeopaths, nutritional therapists and those producers and practitioners who work with non-pharmaceutical treatments, unable to raise the money or hire sympathetic laboratories to carry out trials, are forced to market and use their treatments with one hand tied behind their back, unable to advertise any health-enhancing effects of any of their therapies.

Some few innovators are fortunate, in achieving special discretionary awards from the FDA in America, or the Medicine Controls Agency or MAFF in Britain, which exempt their natural therapies from the the needs of a license (6). The career of these odd treatments is irregular and haphazard and is probably dependant upon whether or not there is competition from pharmaceutical products.

The competitive, financial and professional censorship by multinationals and doctors of novel natural health therapies, at this lower end of the health care market, has inevitably spawned 'illegal' businesses and made criminals out of some doctors, scientists and therapists. But perhaps more importantly, in an odd way the pharmaceutically protective regulations and their policing have also created criminals out of many patients. By denying patients the freedom to chose their own treatments, the law and the regulatory agencies have forced some patients into a culture of underground health care.

It was into this maelstrom of pharmaceutical protection, pharmaceutical company biased regulation and confused policing, that Le Ribault, tired of the invisibility of the authorities and angered by the odd death of his colleague, launched G5 in 1994. Le Ribault's determination to confront the big companies and the regulatory agencies was to bring his life collapsing about him.

Soon after Le Ribault began to distribute G5, in June 1995, Jean-Michel Graille, a journalist on *Sud-Ouest Dimanche*, approached him and asked if he could write about his discovery. Ten years previously, Graille had written a book called *Dossier Priore; une nouvelle affaire Pasteur?* (7) After getting agreement from his editor, Graille attached himself to Le Ribault for four months, observing his work as a scientist, innovator and now entrepreneur. After some initial scepticism, Graille became completely convinced of the therapeutic effects of Le Ribault's discovery. In October 1995, *Sud-Ouest Dimanche* published, across five pages of their magazine, a detailed account of Le Ribault's work and the suppression of his findings.

The unbelievable results of this article were to drag Le Ribault into an uncontrollable conflict with the judiciary and other, more hidden, forces. In the days following publication, Le Ribault received 35,000 phone calls, letters and visiting patients. He was obliged to rent an hotel and call scientists, doctors and personal friends to help sort out the calls and callers. *Sud-Ouest Dimanche* had to hire eight receptionists to answer calls. The local telephone service broke down and the phone lines to police stations and post offices were blocked for days. In the three months that followed the article, Le Ribault did his best to treat the thousands of people who converged on the area, seeking help. He says now, that pharmacists in the area, lost around 35% of their turnover in this tidal wave.

The article had other, more sinister results. As soon as it came out, Le Ribault claims, other newspapers were warned not to publish more articles. He received frequent death threats, his house was burgled, and his collaborators were threatened. One middle aged woman, who had been his aide for many years, was held hostage for an hour, in Le Ribault's house, attacked and seriously wounded. Le Ribault and his colleague knew the assailant, a Marseilles criminal who had tried to force Le Ribault to give him a franchise on G5. The police did nothing when they were informed.

Either by conspiracy, or simple criminal opportunism, companies suddenly began to spring up claiming to be using organic silica for health therapies. Many of these companies, used Le Ribault and Duffaut's names, their photographs and even their fake signatures. Illegal advertising material flooded the market using quotes from Graille's article. Le Ribault later saw public laboratory analysis of these products, which he says were either water, mineral silica or dangerous, unstable synthesis of organic silica.

Le Ribault had nothing to do with these ventures, but in January 1996, after a number of apparently genuine complaints had been received about these fake products, the *Order of Doctors* and the *Order of Pharmacologists*, the professional institutions which protect the interests of doctors and pharmacists throughout France, laid a complaint against Le

Ribault before an examining Magistrate. The complaint cited the illegal practices of medicine and pharmacology. Initially, with the naivete of one divorced from politics, Le Ribault was pleased that the complaint had been lodged; *'this was something which I had been looking for, something which I expected. I thought that now the court would be obliged to instruct someone to make the tests'*. Le Ribault had about six months grace before the hearing was due.

In the middle of these assaults, Le Ribault was unable to see the wood for the trees, unable to perceive that an all-out campaign had begun, the objective of which was to put an end to the therapeutic use of his discovery. His confusion and unhappiness were deepened by the death of Jean-Michel Graille in April 1996. Graille, perhaps his most articulate public supporter died suddenly and unexpectedly, aged fifty, of a stroke, while relaxing in his garden.

GOING TO ANTIGUA

Le Ribault looks back upon his own unworldliness and the dangers which he has faced with some mirth. His most self-deprecating story, in an otherwise dark melodrama, is the story of how he came to end up in Antigua.

Following the publication of Graille's story, many individuals sent money, in total £500,000, to enable Le Ribault to build a clinic. Amongst the sharks who suddenly appeared wanting a piece of the action, were a group of businessmen who sought to advise Le Ribault on the setting up of a company. He took their advice, transferring the control of the new company to nominee shareholders suggested by the group.

After some discussion and planning, Le Ribault was told that contacts had been made and bank accounts opened, for him to set up his clinic in Antigua. Le Ribault's passport had been stolen when his house was burgled. With his fare paid by the company, he set off for Antigua, undercover, via the French protectorate of Martinique. It was only when he landed in Antigua and found no one there to meet him, that he began to realise he was alone on the other side of the world with no passport, no English language, no funds or friends.

'I was told that the Prime Minister himself would be waiting for me in Antigua with a diplomatic passport and I would be free to travel. I was told that there was a bank account for me and everything was ready to start the clinic. Of course, when I got there, no one was waiting for me. I had only three small bottles of G5'

As resourceful as ever, Le Ribault began treating the rich, elderly and often arthritic boat owners as they returned from their days sailing around the coast. At the end of his first days work, he had a hundred pounds and appointments for the whole of the following week. A week later, he had enough money to travel back to France, had he wanted to.

By his own perseverance, Le Ribault made the contacts himself which should have been made for him in Antigua.

'I got permission from the Prime Minister to start a health centre. I had two kinds of patients, local patients, who have no money and I never asked money from them, they paid what they were able for their treatment; they brought me fish and vegetables and other things. In the evenings I went to the big hotels filled with the millionaire tourists, to cure them of their sunburn. Every day I had between twenty and forty tourists to cure. G5 gets rid of the pain of sunburn within five minutes and within an hour cures the sunburn itself. I also taught the barmen in the hotel bars how to use G5, so every evening the barmen applied poultices to the tourists'.

During his time in Antigua, Le Ribault pursued an embittered relationship with his homeland. When he received regulatory agreement to produce and use G5 on Antigua, he made sure that the French press raised awkward questions about the situation in France.

Le Ribault's strategy of embarrassment was to cost him dear. Two days after the issue was raised in the French newspapers, the French police raided the home of his eighty-five year old mother and questioned her for five hours. His mother, who had been fit and healthy before the interrogation, fell ill that evening. She never recovered her health and died two weeks later.

The police told Ribault's mother that there was now a warrant out for Le Ribault's arrest and they were searching for documents not only about G5 but also about Ribault's forensic laboratory CARME. Le Ribault thinks now, that when his trouble began to develop over G5, the police became concerned about the possible leaking of information about sensitive police cases.

Stranded in the Caribbean, Le Ribault was deeply saddened by the death of his mother and angered by what appeared to be a gratuitous police strategy. He had not hidden himself in Antigua: the judge who was dealing with the complaint against him, had his fax, phone number and address,

'The police knew that my mother was very old and tired. When she died, I suppose they reckoned that I would turn up at the funeral and they would be able to arrest me.'

In November 1997, Le Ribault felt obliged to go back to France to recover the personal and work documents which he needed to continue work in Antigua. Knowing that there was a warrant out for his arrest, he decided to return covertly. *'It was my intention to show the Antiguan agreements to people in France in the hope that I could get a similar one there. I visited doctors and a number of other sympathizers who I thought could push my case forward'.*

DIRECTLY TO JAIL

Although Le Ribault was 'underground' in France, two of his friends suggested that he give a lecture, about G5, to a select audience. Unbeknown to him, however, with the intention of creating media interest in his case and G5, his friends had contacted the police and told them where the seminar was being held. To set Le Ribault's mind at ease

his friends told him that if the police did appear he would be whisked away, leaving sympathetic attending journalists to report the crisis. In the event Le Ribault was whisked away, not by his friends but by a jubilant police posse.

And so, by accident, the most frightening part of Le Ribault's journey began.

'I was sent immediately to jail. I was taken first to the Bordeaux station of the Regional Crime Squad, from where the police called the judge dealing with my case, they said to him, "Victory, we have caught Le Ribault".'

The judge declined to hear Le Ribault that day and he was taken to Gradignan prison.

The next day, Le Ribault was taken before the judge for a ten-minute hearing. Despite the fact that the only complaint against him was, he thought, a civil complaint from the *Order of Doctors and Pharmacists*, the judge ordered that Le Ribault be kept in prison. In answer to his lawyer's protests that in the prison, he was in danger from men whom he had helped convict, the judge ruled that he be kept in solitary confinement.

What worried Le Ribault as he was taken back to the jail, was the fact that no time limit had been put on his imprisonment. The judge who was clearly 'building a case', had said only that with Christmas coming up his schedule would be full and he would not be able to hear the case. Le Ribault was also concerned that the judge who had been selected to hear his case had been one of the main customers for his forensic services when he worked for the police: a judge known throughout Bordeaux, according to Le Ribault to be *'a crazy judge, very strange, very dangerous'*.

Earlier on the day of his arrest, Le Ribault had five teeth extracted, now as he entered solitary confinement he was not only uncomfortable and isolated but also unable to eat. In the depths of winter, with snow falling outside and no heating inside, Le Ribault served his solitary in a cell which had next to no glass in the windows. Two fingers on one hand and both his feet became frozen and, consequently, he now has trouble walking any distance.

'The cold was the worst problem, even greater than not knowing when I would be released'.

The deprivations which Le Ribault suffered in a contemporary French prison sound echoes of Solzynitsin. As with many prisons, old systems had fallen into disuse or been adapted by the screws. Every cell had a bell in case of emergency but the guards had switched them off because of the continuous noise. To get help, the prisoners had to push a piece of paper between the door and the door jam which could be seen in the corridor. This, Le Ribault says, was *'all right as long as the officers liked you'*, if they didn't, you could wait *'a thousand hours'*. The judge allowed Le Ribault visits from only two working colleagues, while specifically excluding his partner.

Le Ribault's scientific imagination is also very creative. In prison, he not only recorded the day-to-day events and his thoughts, but made a number of detailed drawings of his surroundings, including the prison courtyard and his cell. Having finished these, he began meticulously copying the graffiti of other prisoners from the walls; *'Some of the drawings were very good, very interesting, some poems had a lot of feeling'*.

RELEASED FROM PRISON

At his second and last hearing before the magistrate, Le Ribault discovered that more complaints had accumulated in his file. The charges had grown from two civil complaints to include nine criminal charges, such as, the selling of a toxic substance, illegal experimentation in biology, and advertising a medicine in the press. Le Ribault was guilty of none of these further charges.

Of the charge that he was not a doctor, Le Ribault could say only that his qualification, that of a Doctor of Science, was the highest qualification awarded by a university in France. He also made the point that any biologist and similar natural scientist who wished to emulate Pasteur, himself not a doctor, stood a good chance of being thrown in prison in modern France.

Following the arrest of Le Ribault, the authorities made a number of statements relating to G5; one, very much in his favour, was an assurance that the substance was completely not toxic.

Desperate to get La Ribault out of this nightmare backwater, his lawyer made an application to the High Court for his release.

'I was released by the High Court but the judges reserved their opinion and gave it two days after the hearing, which meant that I was an extra three days in prison. Three days in which I did not know whether I would be released.'

On his release the court imposed strict conditions on his bail, he had to surrender his passport and he was to report to the police station twice a week.

Released from prison, Le Ribault stayed first with a friend but two months after he settled there, he received a phone call from a police friend informing him that police officers were on their way to arrest him. Five minutes later, with Le Ribault watching from the garden, six police officers raided his friend's house.

He went next to stay with another friend, a woman with whom he had been in contact while in prison, the next day Le Ribault noticed police cars observing the address. This time, he decided to make his way to Belgium.

'It took me one month to get to the Belgian border, where I was hidden in a police station by a friend who was an officer of the Gendarmerie. The policemen drove me over the

Belgian frontier, using his police papers. From there I rang Belgium friends and spent four months in an isolated house in the middle of the Ardennes forest'.

From Belgium, Le Ribault went secretly to England and from there to Jersey, where he has stayed for the last eleven months. He is now very aware of his position as man without a home or a public identity. Although he does not mention it, he must frequently weigh up his situation in light of his early brilliant career.

'My friends have helped me because I have absolutely nothing. I have no money, no relatives. I am an illegal person, a stateless alien'.

SOME JERSEY CASES

Loic Le Ribault has become a medical attraction on Jersey; he has given his treatment, now called OS5, to hundreds of people and although a few have found it to be ineffective for certain conditions, in the main, his clients have been satisfied. Most of those who have been treated know of Le Ribault's deeper problems and some of them, infected by the fear which surrounds such cases do not want to be interviewed. Many others, however, are transparently behind him in his efforts to provide OS5 to wider public.

Maria de Jesus is a nervous and exuberant thirty three year old Maderian who has lived in Jersey for the last 22 years. In the first months of this year, training to run 150 miles across the Sahara desert in the Marathon des Sables, she nearly broke her ankle when her foot caught in a hole.

With five weeks to go before the marathon, hospital doctors gave her crutches and told her that she would definitely not be fit for the race. She became increasingly convinced of this, when after a week and a half of concentrated physiotherapy, she was no better.

A friend suggested that she visit Le Ribault and made an appointment for her.

'My friend rang him at eight o'clock in the evening and he said come over. I told him about my ankle, he looked at it and told me that I would be able to do the race. I did not believe him and was very sceptical. I had to drink a spoonful as well as putting a poultice on my foot. I was quite frightened but I was willing to do anything in order to go on the race'.

Maria says that, after taking OS5 for a few days, she felt more energetic and began jogging. A week after she began the treatment, her ankle was completely healed. Three weeks later, Maria set off for Morocco where she ran the gruelling one hundred and fifty mile race across the desert.

Maria has advised a number of her friends to use OS5 and to see Le Ribault and says that from these people, she has not had a single complaint.

'This is a treatment with absolutely no adverse side effects and it should be freely available to people. I hope that Mr Le Ribault is able to open a clinic here on the island'.

Frank Amy is a tough, level headed, sceptical working-class man, who has had a crumbling spine for the last eighteen years. Initially it was Le Ribaut who contacted Amy, wanting him to help in introducing OS5 to the Island. After his first meeting with Le Ribault, Ames read the case histories of other treatments and felt complete disbelief.

Amy, who had been on strong pharmaceutical pain killers for eight years, was sleeping only from two to five hours a night because of discomfort and pain but what really upset him was that he was unable to bend enough to tie his shoe laces. After his first meeting with Le Ribault in November 1997, Amy began treating himself with OS5.

Feeling that it was important, 'to be fair to the treatment', Amy stopped taking his expensive pain killers. Within a fortnight of taking the treatment he was feeling and sleeping better; some nights he was sleeping for eight hours. Within a month he could bend down to tie his shoe laces. Amy took OS5 for ten weeks, now, seven months after the treatment, he says he still feels very well and he is almost able to touch his toes without the slightest pain. Apart from the continuing problem of a crumbling spine and occasional painful twinges which he puts down to sensitive nerves, he considers himself cured.

Since his experience with OS5, Frank Amy has become the distributor of the therapy on Jersey. As Head Constable of his elected Parish police, one of twelve on Jersey, Amy is in charge of licensing; he also sits in the States Parliament. With these duties, he feels a certain responsibility for Le Ribault and his therapy, he also feels that it is important to get proper legal status for him and a specially built clinic. Amy suggests that his full time post as Head Constable, a little like an English Mayor means that he should '*assist the people as much as possible*'. He sees the possibility of help being extended to Le Ribault because he is in effect a businessman, and to his parishioners who might gain from his treatment. Sitting in the States parliament, Amy also keeps a weather eye on the Island's drugs bill and can see evident savings if OS5 were to be used more widely.

Paul Leverdier is a forty year old pool technician for the Jersey General Hospital, a carefully spoken triathlon athlete who works with patients in the hospital pool. In early 1998 he suffered with chronic achilles tendonitis, a painful tightening and jamming of the achilles tendon often caused by overtraining.

Laverdier's tendonitis had lasted for six months and was badly affecting the running and cycling aspects of his triathlon events. A physiotherapist colleague at the hospital had tried to treat the condition with ultra sound and frictions (a massaging of the tendon). After six months, the problem had been going on for so long that Leverdier began to think that he would reluctantly have to take long-term rest.

In February, after Laverdier was introduced to Le Ribault, he put SO5 on a tissue, taped it to the back of his ankle and left it overnight. Previously, when he went running, the pain

on starting to run and speeding up had been crippling. The morning after he treated himself, there was no pain and, when he had finished, the tendon was not jammed up with heavy mucus as it had been in the past. He continued with the treatment for two more consecutive nights, now treating both tendons. Five months after the treatment, Laverdier seems to have shaken off the tendonitis completely and is turning in triathlon times which he would have been proud of five years ago.

Laverdier has still not told his colleagues at work about his self-medication; he would, he says, be embarrassed by their scepticism.

THE MEANING OF A STORY

Dr Loic Le Ribault's story reads in part like a Walt Disney film in which the boffin-like scientist, after some hocus pocus in the laboratory, discovers a 'cure-all elixir' and is then hounded, chemical flask in hand, by men in black hats. From another perspective, however, his story reads in shades of the darkest noire, a synthesis of classic contemporary dramas, in which the publicly concerned scientist, finds himself, like Ibsen's character, in 'An Enemy of the People', beyond the pale of the orthodox community, branded as a fraud and a charlatan and hounded by the furies of profit and power.

However we read the tale, we might recognise it as a once apocryphal story which is fast becoming an everyday reality. The scientist, medical scientist or doctor, forced to work beyond orthodoxy and subjected to powerful manipulation, ridicule, sabotage or criminalisation, is becoming an increasingly common figure in contemporary drama and real life.

Although the ethnic or national details of these histories of scientific dissent, whether their subject be BSE, Vitamin B6, OS5, cold fusion, homoeopathy or everlasting light bulbs, differ slightly, they are all Euro-American stories of the post-modern era. Le Ribault's case, that of a well established scientist living on an independently governed island, in exile from a European, apparently democratic, power and owning a medicinal product which is legally produced and distributed across the world, illustrates the international nature of the condition.

It would be theoretically attractive to describe a temporal and social continuum for dissident scientists, beginning with the resurgence of science as a powerful ideology in the post-industrial period. In fact, the struggle between science and the ideological establishment and within science between its ruling groups and its dissidents, has changed little in quality, since the time of Galileo who was tortured by the Catholic church for claiming that the earth revolved around the sun.

It seems possible, however, that a century ago, or even fifty years ago, Le Ribault's work, pursued only out of a pure and curious interest in science and health, might have been supported by the State or by philanthropists and the results of his work offered by some commercial organisation to the people. In post-industrial Europe and France particularly,

'the public' no longer has a voice at powerful tables. Today the remarkable discovery of Loic Le Ribault and Norbert Duffault, which is indisputably in the interests of the public, has become the carrion for the wolves of private, vested interests.

In an era when the market, especially in medicine, is fought over by multinational corporations and manipulated by huge trading blocs, Le Ribault's path is an increasingly well-trodden one. The metropolitan centres of orthodox industrial science are now fringed by dissidents: intellectual 'travellers' who are as surely banished as the religious heretics who wandered medieval Europe.

In the post-modern era, vested commercial interests regulate both science and medicine and more than ever before the leading institutions of the scientific and medical professions are in the pockets of industry. This free-for-all between science, professional dogmatism and vested interests was most colourfully displayed during the years which followed Robert Gallo's 'discovery' that the probable cause of AIDS was HIV.

For those who take an interest in dissent within science, the year 1985 is recognisable as the point at which scientific work began to be reviewed by press conference rather than peers groups. In France, in the years that the Wellcome Foundation protected its monopoly licence for AZT, a number of medical research scientists found themselves facing the possibility of criminal charges, for pursuing their own scientific investigations of AIDS related illness. In both Britain and America, scientists who failed to concur with the viral model of AIDS-related illness were frozen out of their work and their funding withdrawn.

When Le Ribault and Professor Duffault applied to have G5 tested on people with AIDS-related illnesses, in 1987, the Wellcome Foundation had, weeks before, gained its monopoly licence to market AZT. This initial licensing in Britain and America, which had been received only six months after Phase II trials for the drug had been aborted, was followed by a multi-million dollar campaign across the world, beseeching governments to buy. In 1989, for example, the Brazilian government paid US\$130 million for AZT. France bought into AZT within a matter of weeks of it being licensed.

It was clear from the amount of money which Wellcome pumped into professional committees, advertising and ongoing research into AZT, that when a country bought AZT, it was also expected to cease research on any other approach to the problem of Aids-related illnesses. In America and other European countries, non-pharmaceutical and specifically non anti-viral approaches to AIDS, were discouraged.

The other ailments for which OS5 has proved most effective, rather than speculative, have been inflammatory illnesses like arthritis and injuries such as muscle strains. These are all highly competitive areas of profit for the pharmaceutical industry.

If Ribault's case is anything to go by, the French, like the Americans, appear to have a very demonstrative way of resolving their battles over science. While the British tend to be fair and transparent in theory, while secretly smudging decisions in practice, the

French take their recalcitrant scientists to court or throw them in prison, while at the same time silencing the press.

In Italy, patients and cancer doctors have been publicly divided by the unorthodox vitamin and hormone treatment developed by Professor Luigi Di Bella. But there, as is often the case in Italy, the people have taken to the streets to express their views, turning choice in medicine into a fundamentally political issue, related to concepts of democracy as well as science.

In America and Canada, countless physicians and research scientists working especially in the field of innovative cancer treatments have been pushed over the national boundaries, into Mexico or to off-shore islands like the Bahamas. During the early nineties, a number of herbal practitioners were sent to prison for contravening the laws which govern the use and prescription of herbs. Throughout the eighties and nineties, numerous practitioners have been brought before professional disciplinary panels for practising alternative or complementary medicine. In 1995, armed FDA officers, in search of B vitamin complexes, raided the laboratory and offices of one of America's leading nutritional doctors, Jonathan Wright. Clinic workers were made to raise their hands and stand against the wall, while officers pointed guns at them. It took the agents, with the help of police, fourteen hours to strip the clinic of all equipment and its vitamin and food supplement stocks.

In 1989, a French Canadian scientist and pioneer of microscopy, Gaston Naessens, was put on trial in Quebec. After forty years' research, Naessens, had concluded that it was possible to diagnose cancer by observing the life-history of micro-organisms in the blood. The Canadian government and the medical establishment indicted Naessens on charges of manslaughter as well as the illegal practice of medicine. More recently, another French Canadian, medical doctor Dr Guylaine Lanctot, resigned from the Royal College of Canadian Physicians, rather than stand disciplinary trial over her position on vaccination and what she had termed The Medical Mafia, in her book of that name.

In Britain, in 1990, powerful individuals within orthodox medicine and medical science, tried to shut down the Bristol Cancer Help Centre. They gave world-wide publicity to bogus research results claiming that anyone going to the Centre was three times more likely to die of cancer than someone who sought orthodox help. In 1997, vested interests in science and the pharmaceutical industry managed to persuade the new Labour government that the sale of vitamin B6, particularly useful in cases of stress and hormonal problems in women, should be restricted.

Because the power of today's corporations is so awesome, there are fewer and fewer people willing to fight the corner for the Loic Le Ribaults of the world, disparaged or criminalised by the system. This lack of popular defence for those who argue the public interest is a sad reflection on European democracy. Although the voice of the dissident has always been with us, the wilderness into which that voice now sounds has radically changed in the post-industrial era. Dissidents are no longer popular figures as they were in the nineteen fifties and sixties.

Le Ribault has harsh words for the French public, who he feels must have known of his circumstances but did nothing.

'I have cured maybe 20,000 patients and there are now many doctors using OS5. Everyone in France knew that I was put in jail, many of my patients knew that I was in jail. Yet I received only 30 letters. Even about such an important problem as their own health, French people unfortunately do not act together. I keep remembering that during the second world war, many of them were like sheep and numerous people in authority collaborated with the enemy. Only a very few dared make any resistance. I have lost everything to help people, now the patients have to fight if they want the cure. They have to ask for the right to use the medicines they want'.

Le Ribault sees the patients 'right to choose' as being the salient right in the dispute between himself and the French State. In arriving at this conclusion, he has much in common with those on the American Right who are demanding the break up of big regulatory government and protective professional cartels.

'One point of great weight' Le Ribault says, 'seems to have been forgotten in this whole affair. It is not the medical authorities who should be deciding the fate of sick people. It is for the sick themselves and only the sick to make such decisions'.

Le Ribault has so far survived his ordeal, with his sense of humour remarkably intact and his mental and moral faculties well- balanced. He is presently putting the finishing touches to a 400 page book entitled *A Letter to my Judges*. The book bears no resemblance at all to *The History of a Grain of Sand* the major work of his intellectual youth. His new book is a gauntlet thrown at the feet of the French establishment, studded with the names, addresses and telephone numbers of those in the judicial and policing establishment who brought about his downfall. It reads like a handbook for intellectual guerilla warfare. Not surprisingly, the book will not be published by any of Europe's leading publishing houses but sent only in a special edition of 500 to individuals in the French media. Although Le Ribault holds out little hope, and has, anyway, little desire for his political and social resurrection in France, he still wants to force the French establishment, the police and the judiciary in particular, to face their crimes.

If *A Letter to my Judges* fails to stir the conscience of the French Republic, then Le Ribault hopes that his case, due to be heard before the European Court of Human Rights in the next months and involving thirty-seven charges against the French authorities, will at least send a public signal to those who have tried to destroy him. His struggle has turned Le Ribault into a political radical; he says ironically, that although he has never had anything to do with French politics, his next book could well be about revolution.

On a personal level, Le Ribault is becoming frustrated with his virtual house arrest in Jersey. Despite the fact that the authorities have acted with understanding and the locals with empathy, and although he still considers plans to set up a clinic there, he also feels the call of his newly-adopted Antigua. He hopes in time to reclaim his possessions, his

books and papers, from France, and begin a new life of retirement working on his molecule and fishing in the warm clear seas around the island.

His principal regret, he says laconically,

'is not that I have this story to tell, but that such a story should have to be told in modern France'. Asked if he is sad that he cannot return to France, Le Ribault is definite: 'I never' he says, slowly, 'wish to set my foot on France soil again ... ever. Perhaps to see the graves of my parents, for a moment I would go back' he adds, 'but then come away again. I consider now that I was before a citizen of Brittany and not of France'. He can hardly contain his anger, 'I have been told by the police that if I am in France again, I would not just be arrested but killed. I hate France' he says softly.

Le Ribault now feels, that he has done all he is personally able to do with OS5:

'I have agents in many countries and about 100 doctors and practitioners now using OS5. I receive calls from new doctors every day, there is a lot of interest in France, Belgium, Ireland, Switzerland and Portugal. I have the task of improving the molecule, it is doctors that should be treating people. The production of OS5 is in France, it is legal and it is non-toxic and it is to high standards.'

Le Ribault is still angry and perturbed that the French government did not take the discovery from him and Norbert Duffaut, taken over its production, and introduced it to the world as an accepted international medicine.

'But' he says, 'It is not the government who are in control of the country, but the multinational corporations and the financial people, my struggle is evidence of that'.

Notes and References

1 Between 1982 and 1991, Le Ribault gave evidence in over a thousand cases, helping to convict 800 defendants mainly of murder and other violent crimes. He introduced not only the electron scanning Microscope to French criminal forensic work, but also the high technology mobile laboratory constructed in the back of a van. He published over fifty papers in journals about different aspects of forensic work and was the subject of hundreds of newspaper articles.

2 Le Ribault received his doctorate in geology and as a result of his early work with electron microscopy, he got to know silica so well, that he could determine the geological history of a grain of sand. In his first book *The History of a Grain of Sand*, told this very story. When he was first approached by the FBI to test three blinded sand samples, he was able to tell them the exact location in the world from which they had been collected, that one sample had been gathered from the bonnet of a car and that another had been in the vicinity of an explosion in Buiruit.

3 Carlisle, Edith M. Silicon as an essential element. Environmental and nutritional science, school of public health, University of California, Los Angeles. Newer Candidates for essential trace elements. Federation proceedings Vol. 33. No 6. June 1974 .

4 Silastic Gel and elastomer in the cicatrization of wounds in the rabbit, Aubert, J.P., Magolon, G. J.Chir. Paris. 1993 Dec; 130 (12): 533-8)

5 Treatment of burn wounds and wounds healing with secondary tightening using dressings with aerosil. Mishchuk I.I., Nagaichuk, V.I., Gomon, N.L., Berezovskaia, Z.B., Ossovskiaia, A.B. Klin. Khir. 1994 (4) : 21-2)

6 See for example the case of methyl sulphonyl methane (MSM) which has a remarkable similarity to the case of OS5. MSM is an organic sulphur, found in meat fish and fresh vegetables and used originally, in synthetic form as an animal nutrient for stiff joints but now sold as the food supplement Supersulf. Dr Robert Hershier who synthesised the compound, has always refused to deal with the pharmaceutical companies because he knows that the substance would be withdrawn and subjected to lengthy trials, which would in turn increase the price of MSM. Dr Hershier, has however managed to get his therapy passed by the American Food and Drugs Administration as a food supplement)

7 Jean-Michel Graille (1984) Dossier Priore; une nouvelle affaire Pasteur? Editions Denoel, Paris.

During the second world war, Priore, an officer in the Italian Navy, discovered by chance that certain forms of radiation were able to cure cancer. Following the war, Priore went to France and built a machine to generate radiation and with which he began to get good results on cancer patients. His work was watched, supported and verified, with great interest and excitement by the French political establishment. But when an 'independent' scientific report was made of his work by cancer specialists, its conclusions were falsified. Priore died in 1983

Contacts

OS5 can be ordered from the address below in Ireland where Loic Le Ribault has set up a laboratory to produce organic silica.

Loic Le Ribault
C/o., Ross Post Office,
Castlebar,
County Mayo,
The Republic of Ireland