

## **Don't pay attention to them, but just look and go on.** By Aksè Pyrobrain.

When I was fifteen years old, I lived in a flat, with my family, on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. A friend of mine lived in the next building, but at ground level.

At that time, I used to play with electronics and I managed to build a small transmitter, using a 6J5 triode driver, a 45 output valve and a 6V6 high frequency oscillator.

The purpose was to let my friend Rob listen to the music I was listening to.

I was in a foreign country with a different taste on music so, one day, a neighbour, who apparently did not share ours, suspected me and complained to my mother ( my hobby was quite known around).

Fearing some consequences, I stopped the emissions but, at the same time, started, naively, to think about some way that I could still send the music to my friend, without being located (?!).

This is when I imagined the following device : my transmitter was set on a frequency where the powerful national emitters had left a hole. Around it there was no transmitting station for many kilohertz. At his place, Rob had a receiver tuned on my station, on the medium waves.

Looking at the variable condenser that decided the frequency of transmission, I thought : what if I moved it back and forth continuously, with a synchronized mechanical device and my friend did the same at his receiver ?

I soon realized it was not easy, so I gave up for some time and my station remained silent.

As every year at that time, in the summer, when I was about the same age, my mother used to send me, for a couple of weeks to stay with my uncle Tony, who was the Chief Decorator of a big Movie Studio (I admired him a lot, he was a real artist) and had his apartment nearby (or inside the same set of buildings). It was a fabulous place that fascinated me and that I'll never forget.

There, I met two brothers, both sound recording engineers, with a lot of instruments and magic stuff available, to whom, as soon as I could, I told about my transmission problem and my idea to solve it. They laughed and said something like : "mind about your studies at school, son, it is much better than wasting your time trying to make useless inventions". When he had introduced me to them, my uncle had specified that they were very skilled and, moreover, had invented some kind of metal detector. Imagine how excited I was when I learned this and how disappointed I was hearing their reaction to my enthusiasm.

Several years later I got married and at that time, had a nice, smooth job that did not generate any stress from work overload. That's why I could still, now and then, play again with electronics. After some time, I had built a couple of miniature traffic lights, connected to sensors placed on the sides of what represented two crossing roads. With small toy cars, I could create a simulation of a real traffic, while the sensors measured the motion and the density. According to the information received, they could let the green lights of the streets go on sooner or after a longer time. I was proud of my invention to the point that I looked for a specialist in patents, and submitted to him my idea and plans.

He agreed and asked for a check of 60 \$, that I sent without delay.

When the receipt/invoice came, I could read the sentence : "Initial fees" or something like that, but anyway, it was obvious that the 60 \$ were just part of a consistent lump sum to come, so I got scared and waited, still, for his next move. Apparently I had not been lucky or I had been wrongly informed about the real costs of getting an invention patented (1).

Anyway, I stopped there, in spite of many reminders and, luckily, I was spared from subsequent demands.

I had, after that, several "brilliant" ideas, but the discouragement previously received, prevented me from starting any other venture.

According to my dictionary, inventor is someone who “conceives of, or devise first; originates” and the invention is “a new device, method or process developed from study and experimentation”. This is partially true but it is open to discussion.

Taking the first sentence, for instance, how many human beings have “conceived and devised first” an invention ? Millions, but they are not considered “inventors” .

And when you specify that the word “invention” is a new device, how can you say that “there is nothing new under the sun ?” (2)

I heard this sentence many times and recently from a friend of mine who quoted a similar reply he had received from an expert in transformers to whom he had submitted his idea before applying for a patent. To his question : “What is your advice on this layout ? “ (3)

the reply had been : “Don’t waste your time, there is nothing new to be invented, in this field”.

Of course, nobody is forced to give an answer, but, if he does, he should, at least, think twice. We must distinguish good faith answers from a calculated action of discouragement.

**If** you meet one of the latter case persons, remember : “ Don’t pay attention to them but just look and go on.” ( non ti curar di lor ma guarda e passa – Dante – The Divine Comedy – Hell). They do not deserve any attention.

**If** you believe in what you have discovered, don’t keep it for you and don’t stop at the first obstacle. Sometimes it could be a step forward in a specific field, large or small.

Choose a good, reliable, skilled person and talk to him.(4)

Listen to his advices and think.

**If** you are absolutely seeking for a patent, you must first prepare yourself to a no-return on the investment you’ll have made and, what is worse, to eventually see your invention copied by a giant industry that employs well paid technicians and advocates, specialized in stealing ideas (it’s part of their responsibilities) who, if you complain, turn their back and say:

“If you want to take us to court, go ahead, but don’t forget it will last years and cost you a lot of money” . And they are right, because you cannot afford that **further** sacrifice

After all “cost reduction”, for their company, is extremely important, no matter how it is achieved and the orders are strict. (5)

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Next paper : **VIP or VSP ?**

(1) The fees change from a Country to another, whilst the patents have the same value everywhere ( see last part of the text ).

(2) To be fair, this statement can be interpreted in the sense that “everything is there, all you have to do is to use your brain to discover what has not been discovered so far”.

(3) Note : Some years thereafter, he was granted more than one patent on the same subject.

From the application to the certificate, you must count an average of three years, due to the fact that, before granting the patent, the Institute in charge must effect an international research, submit any objection to you and evaluate your answers. If everything is in order, there is still the paperwork procedure and the official publication that take a couple of months.

(4-5) Unfortunately, it not easy to foresee all the possible consequences. In the worst cases, you could raise a kind of envy and connected feelings. In a Forum where they were discussing a novel device, one of the participants wrote “ I had the same idea long time ago, but did not consider it worth of attention and I am still of the same opinion” . It would have been more elegant to say: “I had the same idea some years ago, but, unfortunately, did not care to develop it.”. Ideas, alone, mean nothing.

(5) Obviously, he had no experience on what it involves, in terms of time, money, difficulties and, last but not least, feelings, to convert an idea into an active and useful product, exactly as the engineers and advocates mentioned above.