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MARK SQUIRES'
Wine Bulletin Board

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Author

Topic: Retail, wholesale, and website practices.

Victor Hong



Senior Executive
Oenophile
Member # 310

posted January 12, 2005 03:55 PM



The store below (and its web operator) recently solicited our patronage on the Commerce Forum. So, I bought several excellent 2000 Bordeaux, which it confirmed via e-mail, website account, credit-card charge, and telephone as executed sales available for prompt delivery. However, it afterwards sought not to deliver these committed transactions, when I called about arrival dates. The owner and staff eagerly pointed me toward off-label wines instead, at similar prices, feeling that they displayed comparable quality.

The store repeatedly stated that those 2000 Bordeaux wines which I had bought were now absolutely depleted----unavailable from any wholesalers. Yet, numerous other US retailers currently sell and deliver them, as the Internet shows.

Moreover, a leading wholesale-only trade publication called me at home on the evening of December 15, per initiation of the store, and sternly urged me to comply. Yet, days later, its representatives (including COO) admitted that my purchased wines should be available among wholesalers. This unsolicited approach by a third-party business, **bearing confidential personal financial information without authorization**, seems odd or intimidating in terms of consumer retailing, financial privacy, web commerce, and multi-business coordination.

Has anyone experienced anything similar? Is such appropriate? What would you suggest in fairness? I have electronically documented my transactions, confirmations, and conversations with the retail store and the wholesale publication. (NOTE: A like-named store in Rye, New York, is NOT affiliated or involved.) Thanks.

quote:

Originally posted by Vijay Bhatler (December 12, 2004 07:00AM):

Hi Bob,

..... In case you looking for some nice Wine to go with it why not

check the website www.grapeswine.com 😊

Cheers,
Vijay Bhattar
[Grapes Wine & Wine Gifts Connecticut](#)

<http://fora.erobertparker.com/ubb/ultimatebb.php/topic/2/1208.html>

"WineHunter."

From: **Noo Yawk** | Registered: **Apr 2000** | IP: [Logged](#) | Report Post

Ken van Wyk
Executive
Oenophile
Member # 1603

posted January 12, 2005 04:02 PM

Victor,

At the **very** least, this is extremely inappropriate of them to have given your information to another business. If it were me, I'd demand my money back and then never do business with them. If they decline, then I'd go after them via my credit card company. Dispute the charge and the credit card company will take it up with them. I've had good success getting credit card charges dropped that way, at least.

Good luck, and please let us know how it ends up.

Cheers,

Ken van Wyk

From: **Alexandria, Virginia, USA** | Registered: **Sep 2002** | IP: [Logged](#) | Report Post

Jayaram_Bhat



Executive
Oenophile
Member # 5516

posted January 12, 2005 04:02 PM

I think it is totally inappropriate especialy since they solicited you business and getting a third party to "sternly urge you" is way over the top! I'd complain to BBB or any other appropriate organization.

Jayaram

Jayaram Bhat

From: **Cupertino, CA** | Registered: **Aug 2004** | IP: [Logged](#) | Report Post

David Kolin



Executive
Oenophile
Member # 5032

posted January 12, 2005 04:02 PM

from slow burn to full flame. Best of luck, Victor - I've never heard of a retailer trying to cover its flank with a trade affiliate in such a manner. Wonder what they wqere trying to accomplish - bullying you in to submission?


Pull the cork already

From: **Chicago** | Registered: **Jun 2004** | IP: [Logged](#) | Report Post

Victor Hong



Senior Executive
Oenophile
Member # 310

 posted January 12, 2005 04:07 PM



quote:

Originally posted by David Kolin:

from slow burn to full flame. Best of luck, Victor - I've never heard of a retailer trying to cover its flank with a trade affiliate in such a manner. Wonder what they wqere trying to accomplish - bullying you in to submission?

Why else?


Can you imagine if the floor-display designers at Bloomingdale's called you at home, to say that your credit-card data shows that you bought red socks-----but should have selected blue? 🤖

"WineHunter."

From: **Noo Yawk** | Registered: **Apr 2000** | IP: [Logged](#) |  Report Post

Doug Millowitz

Executive
Oenophile
Member # 2201

 posted January 12, 2005 04:09 PM



Victor

I've had the same experience from them in the past where I ordered 2 cases of First Growth Bordeaux (which they listed on Winesearcher.com). Fortunately they never took my credit card, only said they will take my credit card when the wine arrives. Well, the wine never arrived even though they promised me it would.

Of course they DID try to sell me other wine which I was not interested in - 'bait and switch'.

Doug

From: **NYC** | Registered: **Dec 2002** | IP: [Logged](#) |  Report Post

Kelly Walker



Senior Executive
Oenophile
Member # 712

 posted January 12, 2005 04:12 PM



Sounds like they did not follow their own [Privacy Policy](#)

Kelly

I got a nickel, have you got a dime?
Let's get together and get a little wine
Some buys a fifth, some buys a quart
But when you buy DRC now you're doing things smart

From: **Charlotte, NC** | Registered: **Jan 2002** | IP: [Logged](#) |  Report Post

Jay C Miller



Executive
Oenophile
Member # 1196

posted January 12, 2005 04:14 PM

Victor,

If you search you'll find several less than flattering threads on the grape swine people. Their web site bears no relation to what they actually offer and this board was instrumental in getting them thrown off of wine-searcher.

From: **Jersey City** | Registered: **May 2002** | IP: [Logged](#) | Report Post

Dale Williams

Oenophile
Member # 1990

posted January 12, 2005 04:14 PM

Didn't these guys get thrown off winesearcher.com for constant bait and switch?

From: **Dobbs Ferry, NY** | Registered: **Nov 2002** | IP: [Logged](#) | Report Post

Michael Sopher



Oenophile
Member # 6484

posted January 12, 2005 04:15 PM

Victor, (or Vivtor - the Avenger)

I'm sure no retailer or credit card company has any record of you purchasing any color socks

MS - Everything you gather is just more that you can lose

From: **New York** | Registered: **Dec 2004** | IP: [Logged](#) | Report Post

Kelly Walker



Senior Executive
Oenophile
Member # 712

posted January 12, 2005 04:18 PM

Victor,

Check this out. Look at the last post from the guy you were dealing with:

[Vijay Bhatler](#)

Now you know what you are dealing with.

Kelly


I got a nickel, have you got a dime?
Let's get together and get a little wine
Some buys a fifth, some buys a quart
But when you buy DRC now you're doing things smart

From: **Charlotte, NC** | Registered: **Jan 2002** | IP: [Logged](#) | Report Post

Victor Hong



Senior Executive
Oenophile
Member # 310

 posted January 12, 2005 04:18 PM



quote:

Originally posted by Dale Williams:

Didn't these guys get thrown off wine searcher.com

Anyone have personal examples? Thanks.

quote:

Originally posted by Kelly Walker:

Victor,

Check this out. Look at the last post from the guy you were dealing with:

[Vijay Bhatler](#)

Now you know what you are dealing with.

An independent web administrator can be held accountable for knowingly promoting inappropriate business practices.


[January 12, 2005, 02:00 PM: Message edited by: Victor Hong]

"WineHunter."

From: **Noo Yawk** | Registered: **Apr 2000** | IP: [Logged](#) |  Report Post

Doug Millowitz

Executive
Oenophile
Member # 2201

 posted January 12, 2005 04:26 PM




According to Grapes Vijay Bhatler does not work at Grapes but works on their website.

Doug

From: **NYC** | Registered: **Dec 2002** | IP: [Logged](#) |  Report Post

**Bruce
Leiserowitz**


Senior Oenophile
Member # 5895

 posted January 12, 2005 05:15 PM



Victor--Assuming the facts are as stated, I would send a letter to the State AG's office and State Alcohol Beverage Control office. Simply state the facts, and submit supporting documentation, and request that they investigate the practices of this business.

Bruce

From: **Los Angeles, CA** | Registered: **Oct 2004** | IP: [Logged](#) |  Report Post

Victor Hong



Senior Executive
Oenophile
Member # 310

 posted January 12, 2005 05:18 PM



quote:

Originally posted by Bruce Leiserowitz:

Victor--Assuming the facts are as stated, I would send a letter to the State AG's office and State Alcohol Beverage Control office. Simply state the facts, and submit supporting documentation, and request that they investigate the practices of this business.

Bruce

While the Commerce Forum thread related to this store has been quiet, I have not been idle. My documentation has been remarkably thorough, as Michael Sopher could understand from his days of working in my risk-management team. I wonder if that nationwide liquor trade publication is subject to liquor regulations in its states of operation. Thanks.


"WineHunter."

From: **Noo Yawk** | Registered: **Apr 2000** | IP: [Logged](#) |  Report Post

Jumron



Executive
Oenophile
Member # 2357


 posted January 12, 2005 05:25 PM



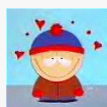
"(NOTE: A like-named store in Rye, New York, is NOT affiliated or involved.) "

This bears repeating. The CT Grapes has a less than stellar reputation, whereas the Rye, NY Grapes is an absolutely top notch shop. It's a shame they share the same name.

Jason DeGoes

From: **Connecticut** | Registered: **Jan 2003** | IP: [Logged](#) |  Report Post

Michael Sopher



Oenophile
Member # 6484

 posted January 12, 2005 05:40 PM



I don't know about that Victor, there was never a scrap of work documentation on your desk, menus maybe but no work...

[January 12, 2005, 03:14 PM: Message edited by: Michael Sopher]

MS - Everything you gather is just more that you can lose

From: **New York** | Registered: **Dec 2004** | IP: [Logged](#) |  Report Post

Victor Hong



Senior Executive
Oenophile
Member # 310

posted January 12, 2005 05:47 PM



quote:

Originally posted by Michael Sopher:

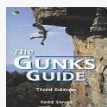
I don't know about that Victor, there was never a scrap of work documentaion on your desk, menus maybe but no work...

But when I needed information to undercover a misbehaving trader.....

"WineHunter."

From: **Noo Yawk** | Registered: **Apr 2000** | IP: [Logged](#) | Report Post

Dan Teng



Senior Executive
Oenophile
Member # 1969

posted January 12, 2005 06:17 PM



quote:

Originally posted by Victor Hong:

quote:

Originally posted by David Kolin:

from slow burn to full flame. Best of luck, Victor - I've never heard of a retailer trying to cover its flank with a trade affiliate in such a manner. Wonder what they wqere trying to accomplish - bullying you in to submission?

Why else?

Can you imagine if the floor-display designers at Bloomingdale's called you at home, to say that your credit-card data shows that you bought red socks-----but should have selected blue? 🤔

I had a similar experience - I ordered a blue right sock and a red left sock and they switched it on me!! Blue on left, red on right.

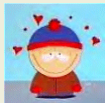


What's great about wine is that with each new vintage, you basically go back to school, you're forever a student. - RMP

...and often times you flunk and are held back a grade. - DT

From: **Spokane, WA** | Registered: **Nov 2002** | IP: [Logged](#) | Report Post

Michael Sopher



Oenophile
Member # 6484

posted January 12, 2005 06:25 PM



I stand by my earlier point... no retailer has any history selling any color sock to Victor

MS - Everything you gather is just more that you can lose

From: **New York** | Registered: **Dec 2004** | IP: [Logged](#) | Report Post

Hank Gillespie



Senior Executive
Oenophile
Member # 1473

posted January 12, 2005 06:38 PM



Victor, YOU bought red socks? 🤖

At least Dan had the presence of mind to order one red and one blue. Now, if he could only remember which is his left foot..... 🤖 😊

Hank 🍷 😊

From: **Edmonton, AB Canada & Tucson,AZ** | Registered: **Aug 2002** | IP: [Logged](#) | Report Post

Thomas Concilio



Senior Oenophile
Member # 6067

posted January 12, 2005 06:40 PM



I kinda figured this was a scam. Anytime someone tries to "help" me by steering me to a web site I kinda wonder. Correct me if I am wrong, but weren't they(he) trying to "help" us with some Christmas Wine Baskets. The wine was worthless. The whole site smelled of a scam or at the very least "shady."

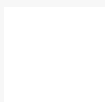
It is too bad that Victor got taken like this and then to rub salt in the wound passed his information to a wholesaler. Shame! Shame! 😡

Victor go get em! Absolutely write to the State AG and to whomever issues the state liquor license. They should be shut down! 🤖

--Thomas

From: **Atlanta, GA** | Registered: **Nov 2004** | IP: [Logged](#) | Report Post

Steffen Pelz



Senior Executive
Oenophile
Member # 4676

posted January 12, 2005 06:47 PM



Victor.

I may be wrong, but if the wine store gave your credit card info and/or possibly any other info to another entity other than the government (because they were subpoenaed), you should be able to take them for the ride of their lives.

SP

Unofficial, official host of monthly off-lines in Austin TX.

From: **Austin, TX** | Registered: **Apr 2004** | IP: [Logged](#) | Report Post

Peter Finkelstein



Executive
Oenophile
Member # 318

posted January 12, 2005 06:56 PM



Victor.....

As a retailer there is one part of your post I find VERY confusing.

You say a representative of a wholesale only publication contacted you at the request of the retailer.....

You gotta tell me which one (even if you do it privately). I cannot imagine this actually happening, yet I COMPLETELY believe that someone said, on a phonecall to you, that the were working for this "publication", when they were probably a store representative. This has SCAM written all over it!

Peter Finkelstein

From: **Annapolis, Maryland USA** | Registered: **Jun 2000** | IP: [Logged](#) | Report Post

Victor Hong



Senior Executive
Oenophile
Member # 310

posted January 12, 2005 07:26 PM



quote:

Originally posted by Peter Finkelstein:
Victor.....

As a retailer there is one part of your post I find VERY confusing.

You say a representative of a wholesale only publication contacted you at the request of the retailer.....

You gotta tell me which one (even if you do it privately). I cannot imagine this actually happening, yet I COMPLETELY believe that someone said, on a phonecall to you, that the were working for this "publication", when they were probably a store representative. This has SCAM written all over it!

Peter Finkelstein

[A hint.....](#)

"WineHunter."

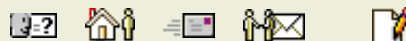
From: **Noo Yawk** | Registered: **Apr 2000** | IP: [Logged](#) | Report Post

David N



Executive
Oenophile
Member # 1203

posted January 12, 2005 07:38 PM



As suggested above I would write the State AG's office and State Alcohol Beverage Control office.

In addition I would try and get one of the local Norwalk consumer advocates on the case. There has to be a radio or TV station in that market that would love to put their consumer advocate to work on something like this and jump all over these people.

David Niederauer

From: **Los Gatos, CA USA** | Registered: **May 2002** | IP: [Logged](#) | Report Post

Thomas Concilio



Senior Oenophile
Member # 6067

posted January 12, 2005 07:59 PM



Just to be clear. I am on Victor's side on this one. It just makes me real mad to see stuff like this happen to good people.

--Thomas

From: **Atlanta, GA** | Registered: **Nov 2004** | IP: [Logged](#) | Report Post

Victor Hong



Senior Executive
Oenophile
Member # 310

posted January 12, 2005 08:06 PM



quote:

Originally posted by Steffen Pelz:
Victor.

I may be wrong, but if the wine store gave your credit card info and/or possibly any other info to another entity other than the government (because they were subpoenaed), you should be able to take them for the ride of their lives.

SP

The NYS and CT Attorneys General, FBI, and FTC operate that ride.

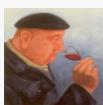
Vijay Bhattar stated that he manages the retailer website. I expect that my transactions data are preserved, in case anyone wishes to review them.

By the way, Frank Quattrone now regrets the destruction of electronic files.

"WineHunter."

From: **Noo Yawk** | Registered: **Apr 2000** | IP: [Logged](#) | Report Post

Hank Gillespie



Senior Executive
Oenophile
Member # 1473

posted January 12, 2005 10:15 PM



"J. Edgar" wore red socks, too, Victor! 😊


Hank

From: **Edmonton, AB Canada & Tucson, AZ** | Registered: **Aug 2002** | IP: [Logged](#) | Report Post

Victor Hong



Senior Executive
Oenophile
Member # 310

 posted January 12, 2005 11:36 PM



[Store response on Commerce Forum](#)

quote:

Originally posted by A. Saha:
Dear Friends,

As lovers of wine around the world, we take great pride in sharing our experiences with wines, wine stores and the wine industry, with fellow wine connoisseurs. This forum on Mark Squires has been a very active, bubbling storehouse of knowledge that has immensely helped all of us who have frequently felt the need to reach out to like-thinking individuals. Wine stores, and wine reviews can only tell so much about wines, but, a personal word from a friend about the great wine he tasted last week delivers more confidence than any of these rather venereal alternatives.

Grapes of CT realizes that there have been instances in the past, specifically in 2002, when, due to a major issue with one of it's primary wine distributors, several orders of wines had to be cancelled. Over the past couple of years, we have worked hard to correct this. We urge the wine-loving community to understand the cause of this apparent failure in service. Wine retailers work with wine distributors, who in turn provide them with inventory details on a periodic basis. Sometimes, not all the wines are available at the point of sale. In particular, the case with 2000 Bordeaux in the year 2002, was a classic example of when a distributor completely failed to provide wines as promised.

We realize that this had caused inconvenience to many of our patrons back then. We also noted the discussion threads on forums that pointed to particularly this event. Ever since, some members in the community has turned a blind eye to the developments and changes that have happened since. We do not want to dwell in the past. Instead, we would like to tell you about what we have done to correct this, as a measure of restoring faith in Grapes.

We have hand-selected distributors who have a track record of over 90% delivery per inventory they provide to us. This means, that over 90% of the time wines will be available as promised on www.grapeswine.com. According to our research, this is by and far superior to several other sites that have misguided inventory information, but due to their lower sales volume, seldom gets noticed as often.

We have also noted your comments on bait-and-switch. It is not our intention to drive a wine-lover away from the wines that he or she is most interested in. Each and every member in our team are just as much a wine enthusiast as many of you out there. However, due to the issues we have had with a couple of our distributors, and with our high sales volume, we had encountered out-of-stock and unavailable situations. And, as noted above, our diligent and keen focus on selecting the finest distributors has eliminated this problem.

Please do let us know if you have any concerns. We would like to


help you and understand your needs in order to provide you with the best service possible. With over 15 years in this industry and as one of CT's leading fine wine specialists, we have sufficient command over the wine market and believe that we are one of the superior venues that can provide you with the wines that are high quality and hard-to-find. We would also like to thank every one of you for sharing your thoughts with us. Rob, Steve, Victor and Doug - we would like to thank you all specifically for your words - it is only through mutual exchange of thoughts that we can work out an ideal model of satisfaction for everyone alike.

We are all connoisseurs of wines, and it is in our best interest to be optimistic, look towards the future, and work together to get what we are looking for. If you have any questions about the steps we have adopted to ammend what has been a primary bottleneck in service in the past, please let us know, and we would be glad to work with you. With best wishes for the New Year,

Sincere Regards,

Does this mean that at least 90% of my purchased wines will soon be delivered?
Thanks.

"WineHunter."

From: **Noo Yawk** | Registered: **Apr 2000** | IP: [Logged](#) |  Report Post

**Thomas
Concilio**



Senior Oenophile
Member # 6067

 posted January 12, 2005 11:47 PM



Victor,

I may be wrong, but if they didn't take any money before delivery then "Grapes Wine" wouldn't have had this problem. Just my .02 cents, but why do any retailers require payment upfront? 🙄 Based on what I have read, most if not all wholesalers/distributors don't require payment for futures. Why do the retailers? It's not like they wouldn't be able to sell them anyway.


--Thomas

From: **Atlanta, GA** | Registered: **Nov 2004** | IP: [Logged](#) |  Report Post

David Kolin



Executive
Oenophile
Member # 5032

 posted January 13, 2005 12:11 AM



quote:

Originally posted by Victor Hong:
[Store response on Commerce Forum](#)

quote:

Originally posted by A. Saha:


We have hand-selected distributors who have a track record of over 90% delivery per inventory they provide to us. This means, that over 90% of the time wines will

be available as promised on www.grapeswine.com.

Does this mean that at least 90% of my purchased wines will soon be delivered? Thanks.

You take the cash, you deliver the goods. 90% is not a solution, it's a disaster. Stay clear.

Pull the cork already

From: **Chicago** | Registered: **Jun 2004** | IP: [Logged](#) |  Report Post

Victor Hong



Senior Executive
Oenophile
Member # 310

 posted January 13, 2005 12:29 AM



quote:

Originally posted by David Kolin:

quote:

Originally posted by Victor Hong:
[Store response on Commerce Forum](#)

quote:

Originally posted by A. Saha:

We have hand-selected distributors who have a track record of over 90% delivery per inventory they provide to us. This means, that over 90% of the time wines will be available as promised on www.grapeswine.com.

Does this mean that at least 90% of my purchased wines will soon be delivered? Thanks.

You take the cash, you deliver the goods. 90% is not a solution, it's a disaster. Stay clear.

How does coordinating with a third-party organization, in efforts to "lobby" me, facilitate the delivery of either the first 90% or last 10% of my purchases? Thanks.

"WineHunter."

From: **Noo Yawk** | Registered: **Apr 2000** | IP: [Logged](#) |  Report Post

Old_Winyards



Senior Oenophile
Member # 3854

posted January 13, 2005 12:55 AM



State AG and be careful to not do anything that can be construed as attempting to strong-arm them (e.g. - if you cut me deal X, I won't turn you in), which they could potentially turn the tables claiming blackmail.

Jim Brennan

From: **Detroit** | Registered: **Oct 2003** | IP: [Logged](#) | Report Post

Rich Hanna



Oenophile
Member # 2373

posted January 13, 2005 09:23 AM



quote:

Originally posted by A. Saha:
Dear Friends,

... Wine stores, and wine reviews can only tell so much about wines, but, a personal word from a friend about the great wine he tasted last week delivers more confidence than any of these rather *venereal* alternatives.

(emphasis mine)

On a less serious note... what could he possibly mean by this statement? How are wine stores and wine reviews 'venereal'? Do y'all go to very different wine stores than I? Is that what the 'back room' is for? I'm lost...
-Rich

From: **Boston, MA** | Registered: **Jan 2003** | IP: [Logged](#) | Report Post

Victor Hong



Senior Executive
Oenophile
Member # 310

posted January 13, 2005 10:51 AM



Dear Angie Saha,

You are welcome to e-mail or call me to discuss those wine deliveries, per your well-thought response to we bulletin-board members. Thanks.

"WineHunter."

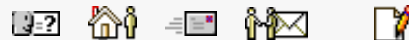
From: **Noo Yawk** | Registered: **Apr 2000** | IP: [Logged](#) | Report Post

Rick Morgan@Total Beverage



Senior Oenophile
Member # 5111

posted January 13, 2005 11:31 AM



quote:

Originally posted by Thomas Concilio:
Victor,

I may be wrong, but if they didn't take any money before delivery then "Grapes Wine" wouldn't have had this problem. Just my .02 cents, but why do any retailers require payment upfront? 🙄 Based on what I have read, most if not all wholesalers/ distributors don't require payment for futures. Why do the

retailers? It's not like they wouldn't be able to sell them anyway.

--Thomas

Just a side note. It all depends on what state you are in. I have already had to pay for all my 2003 futures. I don't sell futures to customers, thus havn't charged anyone for anything, but in some states the dist does require payment upfront. I just wanted to throw that out, some retailers are paying upfront.





Rick Morgan

No Hockey The only good news is it leaves more time and money to drink wine!

From: **Thornton,CO** | Registered: **Jun 2004** | IP: [Logged](#) |  Report Post

NY Retailer

Senior Oenophile
Member # 2622

 posted January 13, 2005 01:06 PM   

As many of you know, I have much personal interest in the monitoring of this situation as my store shares the same name. I just wanted to make mention of the fact that this person has chosen to blame all of their problems on the wholesalers of Connecticut.

See..."However, due to the issues we have had with a couple of our distributors, and with our high sales volume, we had encountered out-of-stock and unavailable situations."

That seems like a poor excuse to not being able to supply wine you have chosen to list as available on your website. But I am not involved.

They have blamed me, in the past, for the reason that they have the reputation that they have in the marketplace so I say no more.






Daniel Posner

From: **New York** | Registered: **Feb 2003** | IP: [Logged](#) |  Report Post



Vinotas



Senior Executive
Oenophile
Member # 2315

 posted January 13, 2005 02:06 PM     

I can say from personal experience that the Grapes in Rye has fantastic service. Never having dealt with the CT Grapes, all I can say from reading this post and speaking with Victor is that the whole thing sounds shady.

Cheers!  

Michel Robert Abood


"Tasting is a way of life. We taste everything that comes into contact with our senses, be it a work of art, the present moment, the reality of existence; objects, people, the arts, love, life." -Poupon

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 posted January 13, 2005 02:10 PM



I would bet that Vijay has never even set foot in the store considering he is in Kolkata, West Bengal, India -per his website

Never confuse your career with your life.
paul ragheb

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