

She's Up a Level

by Smiley McGrouchpants

"Life sucks. She comes in — of all things — and says, 'Hey Tim, I'll be an hour late tomorrow, I got a doctor's appointment ... see ya at 10:00!' And waves her hand with this goofy grin. I'm like, 'Is she serious?' I'm South African, so I don't always get the intonation, the idiom, but I realize: *She has no idea who I am!* I ask my wife what to do — after some murmured bemusement between the two of us — and, stirring a cocktail as she does, she lets it come to her: 'Well, we could send Jen to a conference at Duke, where 7 of 11 papers are yours, at that one at Northwestern, where 9 of 13 papers are yours ... ' I start to get it. It will cost a bit more — more to lost time and momentum — to send her, later, to Stanford, where *8 of 9 papers are mine*, but ... sheesh! She'll get it then, right?"

THE END

MORAL: It's great when your Ph.D. candidate gets to work on the first iPod (HINT: Not published in *Science* or *The New England Journal of Medicine*, but ...), and your insisting on another *year* out of *forty or fifty*, her *whole career*, gets you brought before a hearing and mildly reprimanded but — that's okay!

