

ingredient”—two drops of balsamic vinegar for each ounce of beer. (Some of the MIT students objected to our calling Budweiser “beer,” so in subsequent studies, we used Sam Adams—a substance more readily acknowledged by Bostonians as “beer.”)

At about seven that evening, Jeffrey, a second-year PhD student in computer science, was lucky enough to drop by the Muddy Charles. “Can I offer you two small, free samples of beer?” asked Leonard, approaching him. Without much hesitation, Jeffrey agreed, and Leonard led him over to a table that held two pitchers of the foamy stuff, one labeled A and the other B. Jeffrey sampled a mouthful of one of them, swishing it around thoughtfully, and then sampled the other. “Which one would you like a large glass of?” asked Leonard. Jeffrey thought it over. With a free glass in the offing, he wanted to be sure he would be spending his near future with the right malty friend.

Jeffrey chose beer B as the clear winner, and joined his friends (who were in deep conversation over the cannon that a group of MIT students had recently “borrowed” from the Caltech campus). Unbeknownst to Jeffrey, the two beers he had previewed were Budweiser and the MIT Brew—and the one he selected was the vinegar-laced MIT Brew.

A few minutes later, Mina, a visiting student from Estonia, dropped in. “Like a free beer?” asked Leonard. Her reply was a smile and a nod of the head. This time, Leonard offered more information. Beer A, he explained, was a standard commercial beer, whereas beer B had been doctored with a few drops of balsamic vinegar. Mina tasted the two beers. After finishing the samples (and wrinkling her nose at the vinegar-laced brew B) she gave the nod to beer A. Leonard poured her a large glass of the commercial brew and Mina happily joined her friends at the pub.