Nominative Determinism or Aptonyms

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These terms are not really of neurological origin, but as I scribble this at the New Year, this rather British diversion may serve to amuse.

In essence, these terms describe a profession or work reflected by the person's surname. No less an authority than C. Jung wondered: 'Are these whimsicalities of chance, or ... are they "meaningful coincidences"?'

In October 1994, Jen Hunt wrote an article in *The Psychologist* called 'The Psychology of Reference Hunting'. It was remarked that J.W. Splatt and D. Weedon wrote a paper on incontinence in the *British Journal of Urology*! The *New Scientist* magazine was swamped with examples of people whose names matched their jobs. Entertaining examples abound.

A former surgical colleague was named Mr. Kille, but maintained a good practice. As did another former colleague, a venereologist Dr. Horne.

The *New Scientist* reported: 'S.M. Breedlove who wrote on sexual dimorphism for the *Journal of Neuroscience* ...'

Barry Mason is a famed British stone sculptor. Brian Mole is Head of Security, University of Sheffield. The weather presenter for the BBC's *East Midlands Today* news broadcast is Sara Blizzard. The World Bank country director for China is David Dollar. Gene Shearer is a Biologist with the U.S. National Institute of Health at Trinity College Dublin. Iain Attack, is a lecturer in international peace studies.

Franklin P. Adams, a famous newspaper columnist, called them 'aptronyms'. James Taranto, a columnist for the *Wall Street Journal* calls the phenomenon 'eponymy'. Tom Stoppard (in his play, *Jumpers*) calls it 'cognomen syndrome'. In its 'Frontiers' column, the British magazine *New Scientist* called it 'nominative determinism'. And, Gene Weingarten of the *Washington Post* calls them 'aptonyms'.

Postscript to All Readers

Please don't all of you send me examples!