When the discovery of RNA-dependent DNA-polymerase activity in retroviruses was announced, I was a graduate student in Sol Spiegelman's lab at Columbia University, one of the few in his group still working on Qβ replicase. The others were studying RNA tumor viruses. Spiegelman hoped these variant RNAs might be useful as agents for specifically destroying malignant cells. Only in infected cells containing the viral replicase would the variant RNAs multiply exponentially and so destroy them.

The evidence presented by Baltimore and Temin that these viruses replicate via a DNA:RNA hybrid-directed DNA polymerase activities found in the virion. [The SCP indicates that this paper has been cited in over 305 publications since 1971.]

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