

**From:** bbc\_complaints\_website@bbc.co.uk  
**Subject:** BBC Complaints - Case number CAS-1652349-ZNQC7N  
**Date:** 18 September 2012 12:52  
**To:** David Balding d.balding@ucl.ac.uk

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Dear Prof Balding

Reference CAS-1652349-ZNQC7N

Thank you for contacting us regarding 'Today', broadcast on 9 July and our interview with the writer and historian, Alistair Moffat.

We acknowledge that you made your complaint just before the expiry of the 30-day limit and we apologise for the delay in responding. You believe that we promoted a commercial enterprise and that the interviewing was woefully inadequate. Your complaint has been referred directly to a senior editorial figure on 'Today'.

As you say, Mr Moffat does represent a commercial company. 'Today' regularly interviews commercial firms about their products – the criterion we use is whether the story is interesting in its own right. We interviewed Mr Moffat in good faith. It's also fair to point out that the questioning was exploratory rather than directly challenging. James Naughtie's remark about purity was more to do with lineage than with DNA itself.

The project has been quoted elsewhere, including in at least one national newspaper:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/science-news/9363268/Scottish-lecturer-found-to-be-grandfather-of-everyone-in-Britain.html>

(The BBC is not responsible for the content of external websites.)

It was also not the first time that similar claims have been made – this online story dates back to 2000:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/999030.stm>

We note that you have also written to professional colleagues of Mr Moffat and that he is aware of your views.

We appreciate that you feel strongly about this issue and we have registered your comments on our audience log. This is an internal document, prepared daily for Editors and news teams across the BBC, as well as channel controllers, programme makers and other senior managers. It ensures that points raised by members of our audiences are considered in the making and broadcast of future programmes.

Thanks again for taking the time and trouble to raise this issue with us.

Kind Regards

Peter Thompson

BBC Complaints

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