

Jim,

Your lack of integrity following Moffat's disgraceful interview last July is a matter of great concern to us and, increasingly, other colleagues. We've had conversations with some who are appalled at your behaviour, and we won't hesitate to continue raising our concerns with relevant parties and discussing the facts openly.

There is a way out for you. Think how much better off all of us would be if you'd made an honest response to our e-mails last July, rather than resorting immediately to vicious legal threats? It is still by far the best outcome for you to come clean, admit what was wrong and make a commitment to maintain high standards in the future. If you don't formally withdraw the baseless legal threat you made against us, it will continue to be a stain on your professional reputation. Your failure to respond adequately to the "massively subsidised" claim, despite repeated requests, has already done you damage.

Similarly you need to withdraw all the false statements made in your Genomes Unzipped post of Jan 3. The most important of these, it seems to us, are:

1. That we accused you of fraud. You know this is not true: you couldn't substantiate it when we challenged you in December. Moreover thanks to Mike Weale's clear-headed and revealing post on Genomes Unzipped, everyone else now knows that it is not true.
2. That we responded to your e-mail of August 30 with a "dismissive three-liner response". We have shown this to be untrue by printing verbatim our actual response, raising a very important question to which you shamefully did not respond.
3. Your claim of "... repeated attempts at engagement (including the letter I quote from below) failed to elicit any retraction, we felt forced to seek legal advice" is untrue in many ways. You did not make any attempt at engagement. Your letter was threatening in tone and made a false allegation against us. The threat of legal action was the first response we heard to our e-mail to you, not a last resort as you imply. The "failed to elicit any retraction" is misleading because you've not asked us to retract anything that we said.
4. You claimed "This was done to protect the business, and the jobs of its staff", but you know there was no threat to the company from us - you've never been able to identify what that threat might be. The consequence for the company of our e-mails, copied only to Mike Weale and Francois Balloux, was nil. The threat to the company came from Alistair Moffat's many false claims, his disguising of your business as a research project and his "massively subsidised" claim: you could have eliminated that threat straight away by retracting the falsehoods.

Jim, integrity is essential to academic life, as so much is based on trust. Your record of dishonesty could damage you for years to come – the best outcome now is for you to make a clean break, admit the errors and untruths publicly in an appropriate way, including a retraction on Britain's DNA website. Then we will consider the matter over, and you can get on with your academic career without having to worry about who among your colleagues knows the truth about your behaviour.

Regards

David and Mark