

Cheshire Innovation® / Latent Power Turbines Ltd

17 Vale Rd, Timperley, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA15 7TQ

Tel/Fax +44 (0) 161 980 5191

E-mail bill.courtney@cheshire-innovation.com

Web site www.cheshire-innovation.com

28 August 2018

To

(i) **Rt Hon Sam Gyimah MP**, Minister for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation.

(ii) **Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP**, Chair of the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee.

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

Dear Messer's Gyimah and Lamb,

A victim of research fraud responds to the Parliamentary report on research integrity

I am writing to you both as a small technology business owner whose business has been very badly damaged by university research fraud. My patented inventions have received approximately £0.5 million of taxpayer funds to support their development. So there is a public interest in the matter. **I attach a brief summary of the fraud as Appendix 1** below.

The original fraud took place at Manchester University and my MP, Graham Brady, was in communication with the then Minister for Science, Lord Sainsbury about the matter as long ago as 2006.

I presented my evidence of commercially damaging academic misbehaviour to the Science and Technology Committee Inquiry into Research Integrity. But, for reasons best known to itself, the Committee does not appear to have taken my case seriously.

This is surprising because the fraud may have cost thousands of deaths and crippling injuries on European roads.

My evidence also reveals that a Manchester University academic may have been instrumental in leaking my unpublished car suspension designs to an economic competitor, China.

The original misbehaviour at Manchester University was bad enough, but it was made far worse when the United Kingdom Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) became involved in creating false evidence to hide the original frauds.

For a brief summary of the role of the UKRIO, please see Appendix 2.

The Committee never bothered to contact or interview me to check my allegations. Yet in spite of this, the report recommends that the government should write to universities, encouraging them to subscribe to the UKRIO. I quote from their report,

50. It is surprising that most UK universities are not subscribers to the UK Research Integrity Office. The result is that the profile and impact of UKRIO might be highest with the institutions which already choose to participate, rather than the ones that might need the most help. The default assumption for all universities should be that they are subscribers to UKRIO, unless they can explain why they do not need to use UKRIO's advisory services. We recommend that the Government and Universities UK write jointly to all universities to encourage them to engage with UKRIO and consider subscribing to its services.

As a small business victim of these 'services', I am alarmed by this advice.

Our country will be placed in great economic jeopardy during the next few years if Brexit goes badly. The government must use its best efforts to support technology based

businesses, to minimise the damage. This is far more important than supporting the status quo in research integrity standards by pretending that the UKRIO is the answer to research integrity problems.

In the long term, paragraph 50 of the Report could return to haunt the Committee, because I have been fighting to expose research corruption which may have cost lives for the last fifteen (15) years, with the UKRIO being complicit for the last eight. I can assure you both that I have no intention of giving up now.

I refuse to tolerate British science being weakened by a culture of burying research fraud just to keep the public funds rolling in. This money centred sickness at the heart of British science is completely at odds with our scientific truth centred history.

I also wish to remind the Committee that a parliamentary report that misleads the government and the voters by ignoring inconvenient evidence damages the reputation of parliamentary democracy. Given the potentially deadly nature of this fraud, you can expect the relatives of pedestrians that have been killed or maimed to be particularly vocal in their anger.

I hope that after re-examining my evidence, the Committee will recognise the necessity of withdrawing its misleading report.

I also hope that after reading this letter, the Science Minister will desist from taking any actions as recommended by the Committee until his department has had an opportunity to independently examine my evidence.

I have published my case that the report needs to be withdrawn on this page on the Cheshire Innovation website <http://www.cheshire-innovation.com/the-parliamentary-inquiry-into-research-integrity-2017-18>

Better still, please go to the home page of my website www.cheshire-innovation.com and scroll down to the section headed, "*How the UK Research Integrity Office is corrupting British science*".

The page link from this section also explains how we have let our fellow Europeans down by hiding a fraud that may have cost pedestrian lives on European roads.

In another section on my home page headed, "*Car suspension units, was a British invention plagiarised by the Chinese?*" you will find a link to detailed evidence that a Manchester University academic leaked my intellectual property to China. On this same linked page you will see how Manchester University created a legal smokescreen to deceive my MP, Graham Brady.

Dear Minister, reading all the evidence I offer will take some time and you may wish to delegate the task to a researcher. But it should be illuminating because it provides an entirely different picture of research integrity in Britain, compared with the benign image presented in the Committee's report.

After studying my evidence of how wide spread the cover-up culture has become in British science, I hope that the Science Ministers will encourage debate on how to discourage it. For what it is worth, my own contribution to this debate has been published in a journal paper available online at <http://www.cheshire-innovation.com/images/A%20pdf/A-private-researcher-struggles-against-research-fraud-2.pdf>

Yours sincerely,

Bill (William) Courtney

APPENDIX 1

The original research fraud at Manchester University – Brief summary

In 1986 I invented a new type of elastic liquid which if correctly packaged had excellent crash energy absorbing properties. I refer to this invention in the literature as **Shock Absorbing Liquid (SALi)**

After living frugally and saving up for ten years, I gave up my job as a physics teacher to work fulltime on developing SALi.

On the advice of a government backed agency of the time called 'Business Link', I enrolled as a mature engineering research student at Manchester University.

I signed a 50:50 royalty sharing agreement with the University, hoping that this would create sufficient revenue for the University to become a SALi research hub.

My half of the royalties were intended to finance the development of other inventions, especially my alternative to wind turbines and solar cells, for generating green energy.

Around this time, the EU Commission published draft pedestrian safety legislation requiring all cars sold in EU countries from 2005 to be fitted with soft, pedestrian friendly bumpers. But the car makers wanted to retain stiff bumpers because they reduced bodywork damage in minor crashes.

I was aware that SALi could keep both EU legislators and car makers happy because it had 'smart' properties, allowing SALi filled car bumpers to be soft for pedestrian lower leg impacts, but stiff for other types of collisions.

A collaboration involving Dow Chemicals (Auto division), Manchester University and Cheshire Innovation (my trading name) received government funding to develop a prototype bumper to meet the draft EU requirements

[Named the PedSALi Project – This is referred to in Hansard at

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmhansrd/vo011025/text/11025w18.htm>]

Unfortunately, my research supervisor at the University became very unhappy about my pending fame, fortune and University benefactor status. This resulted in him sabotaging PedSALi and other projects. There was no other car bumper design that offered smart stiffness properties. So the EU put back the planned implementation date from 2005 to 2012.

Coincidentally, Cardiff University expressed an interest in doing the PedSALi research correctly, to meet the new 2012 deadline.

While carrying out their preparatory work, Cardiff University researchers also discovered that my unpublished SALi based car suspension designs, known only to British colleagues had somehow ended up in China. Although the Chinese research breached my intellectual property rights, it was in fact extremely good. It was far better than research into SALi based car suspension units concurrently being done at Manchester University. (This second research project was also part funded from the public purse.)

In order for Cardiff University to obtain research funding to do the SALi car bumper work correctly it was first necessary to prove that the Manchester research was fraudulent. This is where the UKRIO comes in.

Appendix 2

The role of the UKRIO in hiding research fraud – Brief summary

Sir John Sulston was a Nobel Laureate at Manchester University who took an interest in research integrity matters. Thanks to his intervention, a Formal Inquiry into my complaints was set up.

The Formal Inquiry Panel consisted of two Manchester University professors and a representative of the UKRIO.

Unfortunately, the panel's methods were shamefully unethical and parodied the published UKRIO inquiry guidelines.

On the other hand, by corrupting the formal inquiry process, they were able to protect the good name of Manchester University. This was very convenient for the University because at that time two Manchester researchers were the hot favourites to win the Nobel Prize for

Physics. Furthermore, the Manchester Professor who chaired the inquiry was their head of department. She had also collaborated with them, writing a paper on the subject that eventually won the Nobel Prize¹.

Here are the key tricks that were used to corrupt the formal inquiry process.

- In spite of my written protests, a scapegoat was named and two other academics whose behaviour should have been investigated were allowed to testify on behalf of the scapegoat.
These two people described as 'witnesses' in the report had a vested interest in making false statements in order to hide their own role in the fraud.
- The Panel failed to examine good SALi research work done at Cardiff University. (A Cardiff research paper was submitted as evidence.)
- They also failed to examine the good but incriminating work done in China. (A Chinese research paper was also submitted as evidence.)
- They failed to mention that I was a contractually agreed partner with the University who had signed a 50:50 royalty sharing agreement with the University. (Documentary evidence of the contract was supplied to the Panel.)
- They failed to call two key witnesses who could testify to my partnership claim.
- Instead, they implied that I was a fee paying client of the University, who refused to pay his bills. Again, one of the uncalled witnesses could testify that this was false. (She was a business manager at the University who had earlier been involved in drawing up the royalty sharing agreement. Crucially, she was also aware that as part of the agreement I had handed over commercial negotiating rights to the University.)
- The Panel created false evidence the shifted the blame for the Manchester research fraud on to me. This false evidence was so bizarre that it was easy to expose. The other uncalled witness could have demolished the false evidence in a few words. (He was a Professor of Engineering at a 'sister university', UMIST.) In contrast with Manchester University, excellent but small scale SALi research was being done under his supervision at UMIST.

This collusion between the Manchester University professors and the UKRIO representative resulted in the scapegoat (my supervisor) being cleared, at the cost of my good name being tarnished and my years working on SALi being wasted. (24 years at that time.)

During the years when I had happily placed my trust in the University, I had invested my £140,000 retirement savings in the collaboration, on the assumption that I was working with an honest party.

On the assumption that I could trust the University, I had also become locked into a legally binding royalty sharing agreement, with Manchester University holding the commercial negotiating rights. This was particularly frustrating because researchers at the same University were generating false evidence suggesting that SALi was ineffective.

I had invested very heavily in gaining international patents to protect SALi. But after handing over negotiating rights to a University which then became hostile, all of my investments were wasted.

Here is an example of the false evidence created by the Inquiry Panel.

The report included a **straw man statement** supposedly coming from me that completely distorted my explanation about how SALi worked. This misrepresentation defied the basic laws of physics and also contradicted my SALi patents and research papers.

The Panel then created a fictional 'Technical Committee' that supposedly investigated the statement purported to have been made by me.

The Panel then used the 'findings' of the fictional Technical Committee as grounds for claiming my evidence could not be trusted.

[Under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, I requested information about this Technical Committee, but no evidence could be found that it ever existed.]

Thus, by creating a tissue of lies, the Panel was able to dismiss my evidence as being unsound. [This staggering example of chutzpah is discussed in greater detail on the web pages I have referred to above.]

One of the consequences of this corrupt report was that Cardiff University was unable to win research funding and pedestrians were denied the benefits of smart, SALi based bumpers for a second time.

All of these shenanigans took place several years ago but exposing the fraud could still deliver life saving benefits. In the coming era of driverless cars, one of the biggest logjams to progress is making autonomous vehicles pedestrian safe. Using SALi Technology, Britain could become the world leader in this aspect of motor vehicle design.

However, the 22 year old SALi patents have expired, so whoever develops a SALi based car bumper will have to rely on design rights to protect the intellectual property. Approximately 70 million passenger cars are manufactured annually worldwide. So the potential profits from a smart car bumper are massive.

If a foreign competitor seizes the initiative, this will create a missed opportunity scandal from which the government will not be immune.

I have repeatedly called upon Manchester University and the UKRIO to investigate my evidence that the formal inquiry process itself was corrupt, but they dodge the issue by hiding behind each other.

Manchester University claims that there is no need to examine my evidence of corruption because the inquiry was quality controlled due to the inclusion of a UKRIO representative on the Inquiry Panel. On the other hand, the UKRIO refuse to investigate the behaviour of their representative until the University asks them to do so – which they decline to do.

Thus, the UKRIO has been instrumental in creating the perfect cover for research fraud, while fooling the Committee that it is a defender of research integrity.

The Parliamentary Science and Technology Committee is gold plating this novel type of collaborative research fraud by championing the UKRIO's 'services' and urging the government to also back them.

As I have already emphasised, I will not give up my fight for honesty in British science.

I urge the Ministry for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation to carefully assess my evidence, to avoid the risk of being duped into a research integrity scandal that has international implications.

¹ The following October (2010), Professor Andre Geim and Professor Konstantin Novoselov of Manchester University were awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics. They thoroughly deserved the award for their brilliant research on graphene. But, abusing research integrity and risking European pedestrian lives to puff up British science is too high a price to pay.