

## Exceptions can be costly

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I have always been amazed by technology and how it shapes our lives. When I was a child I was fascinated with landline telephones. I couldn't get over the fact that I could pick up the handset and speak with people all over the country instantly, but that it could take hours or days of travel for me to have that same conversation in person. I was obsessed with the telephone and remember visiting the library to learn how it worked. Then fax machines arrived and totally blew my mind! Most of us don't give any of this much thought anymore. We live in the Information Age. We're used to immediate access to people and information, and we expect our lives to become more convenient with time. Who needs a phone book or a library when we can "let our fingers do the walking" on keyboards that fit in our pockets to cruise the internet? Virtually anything we want to know is a few keystrokes away, and anything we want others to know can be uploaded easily to the information superhighway.

The internet is especially relevant in the context of social movements, where facts become homogenized with opinions and emotions in real time. Animal rights groups have used this strategy to sway public opinion against biomedical research for decades. Reality gets morphed in these digital slurries, and truth seekers become misinformed believers after just a few experiential gulps. When credible counterpoints from our community don't pop up within a few more clicks, the indoctrination is solidified and new animal rights believers are born. Our silence becomes an admission of guilt that catapults the propaganda to gospel status, and the most passionate believers feel called to destroy us. We gave them no choice. To them we are all subhuman, self-promoting megalomaniacs who

misuse tax dollars to line our pockets at the expense of helpless animals. These believers feel obligated to expose us to the rest of the world. And they are among us right now, as undercover operatives for animal rights organizations that recruited them online.

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Trained infiltrators are working alongside us in our labs and vivaria at this very moment. They join us for lunch and other social occasions, and we think highly of them because they are likeable, skilled and reliable employees. In fact, they were selected because of these very qualities by the animal rights organizations that hired them. One of the recruitment listings that I saw stated that undercover investigators are expected to "prepare for and research assignments" and "behave legally and professionally." The job description also requires "diligent attention to detail" and the ability to handle "extreme stress," while using "photography and videography to document conditions and use of animals as well as illegal, cruel, and/or improper conduct." And recording images and video secretly is easier than ever. Hidden cameras are now available in pens, eyeglasses, watches, caps, keychains, ties, buttons and earbud headphones; and all of these items can be purchased online. The ultimate assignment for animal rights moles is to submit the footage they collect,

along with detailed "daily log notes," and "work closely with office-based staff to develop documented cases." While it is well established that many of the cases "developed" against researchers have been contrived to further the animal rights agenda, some investigations have revealed legitimate issues of professional misconduct and animal mistreatment. Extremists live for these rare discoveries, showcasing them to defame us all in their subversive campaigns against necessary biomedical studies with animals. What I would like to know is how the moles discovered these mavericks before we did. Is it because we couldn't see them or because we didn't want to see them?

Let's face the elephant in the ivory tower; shall we? Within our walls are a few rogue researchers who seem to be shielded from accountability by virtue of their funding and status in the scientific community. There are sociopaths in every walk of life, and these people are among them. They have little regard for animal well-being because they fail to see them as anything other than data points for publications, self-promotion and career development. And, while they are clearly exceptions to the rule, they are too costly to ignore! Animal rights infiltrators are lying in wait to make poster children of these big shots in their war against human and animal health, and in my opinion, these self-righteous deviants aren't worth the ink used to print their grant dollars. It's time for us join together as a community and let these people know that we don't appreciate them, their unacceptable behavior and the risk they pose to our essential and loving mission. They are not our kind, and they don't belong in biomedical research. Let's treat them like the pariahs they are and clean house, before the animal rights movement burns it down.

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