

GMO satire broadcast raises questions

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

The Vern Blazek Science Power Hour podcast is an interview show. On each episode, Blazek, a self-described radio personality, who has an oddly deep and lispy voice, talks to a different scientist or science advocate. On June 13, Blazek published an interview with Kevin Folta, a plant scientist from the University of Florida. Anti-GMO activists, Folta lamented to Blazek, were making misguided attempts to tie independent scientists to Monsanto, one of the most polarizing companies in America.

In July, through a bizarre email exchange, I discovered that Blazek is Folta's alter ego. It was Folta who put on that disguised voice and interviewed his colleagues. Folta had interviewed himself, without ever telling his audience. Because of our correspondence, Folta shut down the show and killed off Vern. Two weeks after that, a scandal broke that uprooted his life.

That's when a group called U.S. Right to Know revealed the results of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests for the emails of Folta and 42 other academics. The group hoped to reveal unsavory ties between scientists and the biotech industry — and particularly to Monsanto.

Most appalling to his critics, in August 2014, the company gave Folta, through his university, a \$25,000 grant to use however he saw fit.

The public backlash against Folta has been harsh, culminating in a *New York Times* [exposé](#) in September. Strangers have called him a liar and a whore. They've published his home address, and turned his face into cruel memes.

Perhaps most surprising of all: Folta appears to be mystified as to why everybody's so upset, and seemingly clueless about how his choices are perceived by non-experts.

Read full, original post: [Seed Money](#)