

Podcast: Plagiarism, data fabrication in science threaten public health. Meet one biologist who's fighting back

Scientific misconduct is a serious problem in academia today. High-profile examples of data fabrication, falsification or plagiarism often generate lots of media coverage, but the problem goes beyond a few instances of blatant fraud. As Leaps reported in [October 2018](#):

In a 2012 study published in the *Journal of Research in Medical Sciences*, researchers estimated that 14 percent of *other* scientists commit serious misconduct, while up to 72 percent engage in questionable practices. While these are only estimates, the problem is clearly not one of just a few bad apples.

These startling numbers have spurred [many scientists to investigate](#) the extent of research misconduct and how to prevent it from destroying the integrity of science. Biologist Elisabeth Bik is one researcher on the front lines of this anti-fraud effort. Classically trained with plenty of lab-bench expertise, today she patrols the best scientific literature in search of plagiarism and image manipulation. Her expert eye identifies manipulated images in the best scientific publications, including the revered weekly science journals that present allegedly breakthrough work.

On this episode of Talking Biotech, Bik joins plant geneticist Kevin Folta to discuss how she became a publication sleuth with an eye for images and text that just don't look right. She offers shocking insights about the pervasiveness of plagiarism and image manipulation in contemporary science, explaining why she and others are working at a feverish pace to expose and prevent these behaviors.

<https://geneticliteracyproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/203-bik.mp3>

Elisabeth Bik earned her PhD at Utrecht University in The Netherlands. In March 2019, she became a science integrity consultant. Follow her on Twitter [@MicrobiomDigest](#)

Kevin M. Folta is a professor in the Horticultural Sciences Department at the University of Florida. Follow professor Folta on Twitter [@kevinfolta](#) and email your questions to kfolta@ufl.edu

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