

December 10th, 2007

To: Mr. Stuart Ashman
New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs
407 Galisteo St.
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Mr. Ashman,

For the sake of courtesy, we will try to keep this as brief as all your previous communications. Thank you for your letter dated the 16th of November 2007, in which you explained that Mr. Jimenez, the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees of the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science and yourself have discussed our allegations of plagiarism and found them to be “without merit.” We have no wish to continue to impose on your valuable time. However, as we indicated in our most recent letter (dated November 15th), such a brief, uninformative, and unsupported response is unacceptable given the length at which we explained our case.

If Mr. Jimenez, the Board of Trustees, and yourself, were all able to come to the same conclusion after careful discussion, surely you can explain why. When a carefully documented case that wrongdoing has occurred is presented, we do not think it is unreasonable to expect a thorough and convincing explanation of the decision made by those responsible for investigating such allegations. We are familiar with the details of our own case, and do not find a vague negation such as “without merit,” which does not address the specific reasoning and evidence for ethical misconduct that we presented, to be convincing or reassuring, particularly coming from a public official.

Judging by the amount of communication and support we have received from members of the vertebrate paleontology community over the past few months, we are far from being the only researchers who are aware of, affected by, and concerned about, Dr. Lucas' publishing practices and their ramifications. We therefore repeat our request that you respond to the specific questions that we posed in our previous letter regarding your decision. If you are unable or unwilling to explain your decision, there is little point in further communication, and as your last message indicated that additional correspondence from us would be unwelcome, we will not include the DCA in future discussions and inquiries. However, we have made an effort to assume that you have been responding to our concerns in good faith, and would consider it deeply regrettable if the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs chose to consider such explicitly documented allegations of ethical misconduct settled without a clear and convincing explanation to the plaintiffs.

Sincerely,

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