

**Note from Brittney Martin, EP of Sugar Land:**

**The redactions in the body of these emails refer to Ph.D. Student Sam Archer and her research. They were made by the University of Connecticut.**

**From:** [Bolnick, Deborah](#)  
**To:** [Cat's Prodigy](#)  
**Cc:** [Reign Clark](#); [REDACTED] [Abigail Fisher](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Following Up  
**Date:** Friday, May 21, 2021 11:24:26 AM

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Dear Catrina,

Thanks for letting us know. I am checking with [REDACTED] about her availability, and will suggest some possible times as soon as I hear.

All the best,

Deborah

On May 19, 2021, at 10:04 AM, Cat's Prodigy [REDACTED] wrote:

Thank you. I am available all week.

Catrina

Sent from my iPhone

On May 19, 2021, at 8:49 AM, Bolnick, Deborah [REDACTED] wrote:

Dear Catrina,

Thank you for your reply. I am pretty tied up for the next couple of days, and [REDACTED] is out of the country until next week. I think it is important for both of us to be part of this conversation, so I would suggest that we schedule a time next week to talk.

All the best,

Deborah

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Deborah A. Bolnick  
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354 Mansfield Road, Unit 1176 Storrs, CT  
06269-1176

On May 18, 2021, at 1:17 PM, Catrina Whitley  
[REDACTED] wrote:

Deborah,

Please see the attached letter regarding the Wenner-Gren grant and the participation of your lab in this project. Thank you for including the DNA research proposal and I was already aware of and remember what was in that proposal and our discussions.

I am available to speak Wednesday or Thursday this week.

Catrina

Catrina Banks Whitley, Ph.D., RPA  
Bioarchaeology Support  
Research Associate, Office of Archaeological Studies, Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe  
PO Box 122  
Midlothian, TX 76065  
Phone: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

On Friday, May 14, 2021, 05:24:42 PM CDT, Bolnick, Deborah  
[REDACTED] wrote:

Dear Reign and Catrina,

I hope you're doing well. I would like to follow up about setting up a time to talk. Please let me know what might work for both of you. It would also be helpful to get the list of samples to extract in the first batch so sample preparation can begin as planned.

All the best,

Deborah

On Apr 29, 2021, at 2:38 PM, Bolnick, Deborah  
[REDACTED] wrote:

Dear Reign and Catrina,

We apologize for omitting any mention of Principal Research Group. The by-laws and mission statement for PRG hadn't yet been drafted or circulated when this proposal was submitted last fall, but PRG should have been mentioned in the proposal. That will be corrected and Wenner-Gren formally notified.

We apologize as well for providing a closed permit number as part of the proposal, and will notify Wenner-Gren of the correct permit number and permit holder. Permit details were not included in the proposal because of word count limitations; the proposal just specified that the necessary permits for the proposed research had been obtained, and did not say that [REDACTED] was the permit holder. We apologize if that seems to suggest that [REDACTED] is the permit holder. We had not read that sentence as implying that, but understand why it could be seen that way. We will ensure that Wenner-Gren knows that Catrina is the permit holder. Furthermore, we apologize for the inaccurate citation of the archaeology report and will submit a correction that reads as Clark et al. The specific section in which the report is cited is in direct association with the bioarchaeological data, and while [REDACTED] now sees this was an incorrect citation, her line of thinking at the time was to cite the lead researcher for the project's bioarchaeology components.


We also want to clarify that no other researchers have been invited to take part in any analyses of the Sugar Land 95. The other researchers mentioned in the proposal are either (a) collaborators on the analyses of the Oakwood Cemetery remains (Kate Spradley, Maria Franklin, Lauren Springs), which is also part of this proposal, or (b) individuals who are playing an advisory role for the theoretical facets of [REDACTED] (Sarah Willen, Ashanté Reese, Rick Smith). None will be involved in the genetic analyses of the Sugar Land 95, and none will be credited in any way for the outcomes of this study. As we have said before, we would never invite anyone to work on the Sugar Land 95 samples or genetic study without express permission from both of you.

We also want to reiterate that the lab analyses proposed here are what we have previously articulated in our written proposals, in our conversations, and in the presentation that gave in Texas. The focus of this research proposal is not the entire PRG study, but rather the three specific hypotheses about epigenetics and the lived experiences of Black, Tejano, and white Americans in 19th century Texas – namely, that individuals who experienced skeletal trauma also show epigenetic changes, that racial identity influences epigenetic patterns, and that different experiences of penal labor have epigenetic correlates. This proposal goes into greater detail and situates these analyses broadly, but the analyses are what we previously discussed with both of you and were presented at the symposium in November 2019. See, for example, the attached DNA Sampling Proposal from 10-24-19.

Finally, we have attached a detailed schedule for labwork for this summer. We have confirmed that the first batch of DNA extractions and libraries will be completed before the website launch and public presentation on June 22. Please send us a list of the 10 samples you would like extracted first, so we know which to begin preparing for extraction.

We are happy to set up a time to discuss all of this further.

All the best,

Deborah and 

On Apr 29, 2021, at 11:29 AM, Reign Clark

[REDACTED] wrote:

All,

I must point out the first three critical details that leapt out at me.

First, there is not one mention of the project sponsor for the genetic research. That is Principal Research Group.

Second, permit #8197 was held by Ron Ralph and is closed. Catrina is not identified as holding the current permit as the PI and it reads as if the permits are "in-hand" held by [REDACTED]

Third, our Back to Bondage report in your references is referenced as Banks Whitley, et. al rather than Clark, et. al.

The biggest issue! Other researchers were invited to take part in this study without explicit authorization from the TAC permit holder, Catrina, and the permit sponsor, Principal Research Group, which, as of right now, is me! One would think that it would be totally obvious that Catrina and I should have reviewed and agreed to this proposal prior to its submission. I, for one, am extremely uncomfortable agreeing to move forward without a discussion between the four of us about the path of this project and a discussion about who is involved, in what parts they will be involved, and who will be getting credited for the outcomes of this study. The proposal reads as if this study encompasses the entire study that PRG is tasked with. UCONN was selected as the laboratory for extraction of aDNA for the purposes of identification of the cemetery population and its descendants, only.

Please respond today with extraction start date and schedule, as well as a date and time when you can take part in the discussion that should have occurred prior to application of this grant. You will be required to provide corrections to Wenner-Gren regarding the project sponsor being Principal Research Group and the Principal Investigator being Catrina Banks Whitley. Additional correction will undoubtedly will follow from both Catrina and I after our meeting.

Sincerely,

Reign Clark  
Chairman - Principal Research Group

[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

On Apr 29, 2021, at 9:53 AM, Bolnick, Deborah  
[REDACTED] wrote:

Dear Catrina and Reign,

Please find attached the proposal that [REDACTED] submitted and was funded by the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. We will get you the more detailed schedule for DNA extractions and library construction later today.

All the best,

Deborah

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[REDACTED]

Book: [\*Reflections of Our Past: How Human History is Revealed in Our Genes\*](#) (Routledge Press, 2018)

<[REDACTED] W-G FINAL November 2020.pdf>

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[REDACTED]

Book: [\*Reflections of Our Past: How Human History is Revealed in Our Genes\*](#) (Routledge Press, 2018)

<DNA Sampling Proposal 10.24.19.pdf><DNA Labwork  
Schedule-Summer 2021.docx>

May 18, 2021

Deborah Bolnick  
Department of Anthropology  
University of Connecticut  
354 Mansfield Road  
Storrs, Connecticut 06269

Deborah,

Submitting a grant using our research materials without my nor Reign's knowledge, input, or approval is unethical. A grant should never be submitted for research on materials under a permit that is being held by another individual without their knowledge or approval and I am shocked by your effrontery. It does not matter that the scope of work in the THC permit stated additional funds "would be sought" from granting agencies or that the scope discussed Sam's dissertation work. Any of the work being performed by your lab on these materials is under my permit and is sponsored by Principal Research Group/Reign Clark. These individuals' genetic materials are not available nor approved for your lab to use for research on topics or in any fashion of your choosing. Additionally, any potentially identified descendants, descendant groups, or interested parties have not been consulted on the specifics of epigenetic research or Samantha's dissertation research because epigenetic studies were not to be started until aDNA was first analysed and descendants were actively being sought. The issues Reign and I outline in the following letter must be given a meaningful response and must be fully addressed to our satisfaction before your lab moves forward participating in the project. The corrections must also be submitted to Wenner-Gren once we have given them our approval.

Here are my corrections and comments regarding the Wenner-Gren proposal (in no particular order):

1. Your lab was hired to pull DNA and provide a cost analysis *only*.
2. This grant was written without discussing with me and the rest of Principal Research Group's input into the types of studies being done. We, as Principal Research Group partners, have questions and important input on hypotheses to be tested, regardless that this is Samantha's dissertation.
3. Not all my data is published yet and will be necessary for Samantha to adequately address these hypotheses. I am not at a point I can share a lot of my data.
4. Estimating genetic ancestry was not approved to be done by your lab. This is stepping beyond the bounds of your involvement in the project, and it was not cleared through me, nor was it listed in the permit.
5. I am not affiliated with SMU. I should be listed with Principal Research Group. My name is Catrina Banks Whitley and does not have a hyphen.
6. I am not an "academic collaborator", particularly considering none of these hypotheses and such were ever discussed with me.

7. I am not listed as the permit holder for this research on the proposal. This research can only occur with my consent and input whether or not it was discussed in the scope of work.
8. The correct permit number is not even listed on the grant proposal. The permit number is #9105.
9. What is permit #9301? Both permits #9301 and #8197 must be removed from the Wenner-Gren grant.
10. Work on the aDNA research you were hired to perform has not yet been started. Stating to Wenner-Gren that the work began in November of 2020 is erroneous. What was the delay?
11. Epigenetics is a *side project* under this grant. The focus, as stated in the cover letter and opening paragraph of the scope of work, is to *identify the individuals and their descendants*.
12. Your lab also pursued this grant without discussing research agendas with descendant groups, identified descendants, or interested parties and did not give me and Principal Research Group the opportunity to collaborate. Collaboration is essential and ethical, and your lab has not even considered what questions they may have that can be answered using epigenetics.
13. The Sugar Land 95 project was linked with another project without my express permission. The Sugar Land 95 is under significant scrutiny and moving forward with comparisons with other cemeteries is explicitly outside the permission of the permit.
14. The proposal listed other labs that could complete the work if your lab could not. These optional labs and sending the samples elsewhere *was not even discussed* with me, cleared by me, in the permit nor cleared by the THC.
15. I have not heard about Dr. Reese's project and would have appreciated notification of anyone you know of that is working on a project about the Sugar Land 95 because it is of great interest to us.
16. We did not approve coupling the Sugar Land 95 research with any other research. I want to see the projects entirely separated with the research groups explicitly listed and approved by us before the corrections are submitted to Wenner-Gren.
17. Dr. Reese is not involved in our project but coupling the grant with Oakwood and not explicitly separating research groups sounds like her group will take part in both projects.
18. Is there a reason Dr. Helen Graham was not consulted or included since she is the genealogist for our project nor Reign Clark since he is the historian?
19. I see that Samantha had organized a session with the AAA on convict leasing. It should *not* contain any reference to the Sugar Land 95 nor work under this permit. At this point, neither you nor Samantha can discuss the Sugar Land 95 with any public forum. *Any work* that we have asked you to do is not available for public discussion, even any potential epigenetic studies. I hold the permit and all research that has been given permission by the THC falls under that permit. No part of the work being done under this permit is ready for any public discussion and particularly without me, Reign, and Principal Research Group knowing what you intend to speak about or discuss. Neither you nor Sam were/are given permission to give public lectures, interviews, or discuss this project, including epigenetics, with any outside individuals. As was stated earlier,



your part of this project is to *only* pull DNA and provide a cost analysis and, to date, your lab has not participated in *any* research.

Issues with the hypotheses in the grant

Hypothesis 1

1. How did you choose your samples from the cemetery population?
  - a. Did you take everyone with trauma or separate them between healing/healed trauma and perimortem trauma?
2. What was your criteria for determining skeletal trauma?
3. How are you defining discernable trauma?
4. I am curious why I was not consulted since I was listed as a “collaborator,” especially since I am the one directing the research agenda for this project and am the bioarchaeologist that did the research? Neither Samantha nor you have collaborated with me regarding her research and Samantha has not reached out to me to discuss any of her research.

Hypothesis 2

1. How are you determining significant African Ancestry?

Hypothesis 3

1. We will not have data needed to answer these questions until we have identified the individuals in the cemetery. There is a high potential we will not be able to identify all the individuals.
2. How will you separate individuals that grew up in slavery versus those who were raised during emancipation? Their childhood experiences were very different, and this could significantly influence any methylation patterns.
3. Will there be a difference based on the length of time they were slaves?
4. How are you defining heterogeneous experiences?

I look forward to speaking with you regarding these issues and questions. Also, if Samantha can continue with the research, we will be included in any discussions and guidance regarding her dissertation research as it applies to the Sugar Land 95.

Sincerely,

Catrina Banks Whitley, Ph.D., RPA  
Principal Research Group- Vice President