SCIENCE

American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1333 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005

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15 June 1990   *(202) 326-6440*
(Mailed 12 June 1990)

MEDIA ADVISORY

COLD FUSION REVISITED

Shortly after Stanley Pons and Martin Fleischmann announced that they had achieved cold fusion, hundreds of research laboratories worldwide began the race to duplicate and confirm the results. Among those was the research laboratory of John Bockris at Texas A & M University, After much work, Bockris announced that he too had detected tritium, a nuclear reaction byproduct, and could confirm cold fusion. Partly based on Bockris's testimony, the Utah legislature committed $5 million for cold fusion research.

But according to an investigative news report in the 15 June issue of SCIENCE, "suspicions were raised almost from the first that the tritium in the A & M cells was put there by human hands." Was this a fusion reaction, was it inadvertent contamination, or was it something more insidious?

"In an atmosphere of increasing public scrutiny of the scientific process by legislators ..., the scientific community must have ready answers for such questions," notes SCIENCE. Questions such as these "take on added importance in this case, because of its high profile and the tens of millions of dollars and thousands of scientific man-hours spent chasing after the chimera of cheap, plentiful energy from `fusion in a jar'."

Through a series of exclusive in-depth interviews, SCIENCE reports on the events that amount to a case study in "the damage that can be done when questions of fraud, legitimately raised, are not. seriously addressed by researchers or their institutions." The news article raises "crucial questions about how rumors and allegations of fraud should be investigated while ensuring academic freedom and protecting the reputations of scientists whose careers may be at stake."

A copy of the news article from the 15 June issue has been attached for your information. It is EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE 15 June 1990. Please contact me at (202) 326-6440 if you have any questions, or if I can be of any further assistance to you.

Attachment