

Genetics and Neuroscience communities condemn a white supremacist in our ranks:

As a community of geneticists and neuroscientists, we are keenly aware of the historical use of pseudoscientific eugenic thinking as the underpinning of violent, racist movements. Indeed, we live in a time when the USA is experiencing a disturbing rise in white supremacist domestic terrorism, that already has inspired violence against private citizens and against elected officials. Throughout modern history, racism and misogyny have been at the root of the most violent and destructive movements. These include colonial conquest leading to genocide against indigenous people, the kidnapping and enslavement of African people, racially motivated forced sterilizations, the mass murder of millions of Jewish and Roma people by the Nazis, and in this country, an ongoing power structure that continues to marginalize and discriminate against communities of color.

With this history in mind, we are appalled to learn that a member of the neurogenetics community has used the “[@The_Dr_Caveman](#)” twitter account to spread vile racist, anti-semitic, misogynistic, and Nazi tropes, and to articulate calls for political violence. The owner of this twitter account has repeatedly used racist slurs against Muslims, Black people, asians, and Jewish people, has made openly misogynistic and homophobic posts, and has repeatedly called for violence. This online hatred has included frequent references to gun violence, and threats against anti-fascists and the black lives matter movement.

What is particularly disturbing to us as neuroscientists and geneticists is that the owner of this twitter handle self identifies as a “Chicago based neuroscientist” who “studies small animal brains”, a phrase that often is used by Drosophila and C. elegans neurobiologists and geneticists. This person also frequently references circadian biology, which is another link to a community that we hold dear. Public investigative efforts on social media to identify the individual have alleged, based on credible evidence ([link here](#) and [here](#)), that a member of the scientific community at Northwestern University is the true owner of the account.

We, the undersigned geneticists and neuroscientists write to condemn the white supremacist twitter account. We call upon Northwestern University to investigate the credible allegations that have been levied. There is no question that the person behind such a twitter account, with their abhorrent and bigoted views, should not be in a position of authority over junior trainees. Clearly, if this were the case, these trainees would not be in a safe training environment as the views of this individual are likely to infect their interactions with them. Moreover, it is a danger to our society when individuals with extremist racist views hold academic positions that may appear to lend credence to pseudoscientific justifications to calls for racial violence. Our concerns regarding this individual are not simply an issue of disagreeing with someone who holds conservative views. Rather, we are calling attention to and warning of a scientist who publicly voices an affinity for acts of fascist violence. While we acknowledge that the first amendment allows even extremists to freely express their abhorrent views, threats of violence are not protected, and steps must be taken to prevent the negative impact that such bigotry may have upon students and trainees.

We condemn racism, misogyny, antisemitism, white supremacy and Nazi ideology in the strongest possible terms. We recognize the very real danger to our society from white supremacist violence and rhetoric and we also understand the responsibility that scientists in general and geneticists in particular have to oppose racism in all of its forms.

The owner of the twitter account in question states that his work alongside his fellow academics puts him "behind enemy lines." Indeed, the views espoused in this account are the negation of our values as a community of scientists and academics. We refuse to tolerate the promotion of white supremacist and misogynist views or calls to violence within our community. In short, all efforts must be made to protect our fellow academics from an individual who bears such ill will against our colleagues and trainees.

Signed:

(Note, all signatories with NU affiliation have been anonymized to minimize risk of retaliation)

Name

Title

Institution