

# Skeptics choke on Frog: was Dawkins caught on the hop?

First published in:

*Prayer News* (both Australia and UK) p.  
3, November 1998

Our new video [From a Frog to a Prince](#) (right) is having a beneficial effect. It illustrates the amazing design in living things, and the encyclopedic information stored in the DNA, required as a blueprint for all the designs. It also shows that mutations and natural selection merely remove information, not add information, as particles-to-people evolution requires.

One of its highlights is the stumping of the ardently atheistic evolutionist Richard Dawkins<sup>1</sup> by the simple question: 'Professor Dawkins, can you give an example of a genetic mutation or an evolutionary process which can be seen to increase the information in the genome?'

If anyone should know any true scientific (i.e. observable and testable) evidence that mutations and natural selection can add information, Dawkins should. However, the video shows that Dawkins was unable to provide any experimental evidence, and gave an 'answer' completely unrelated to the question.

Dawkins is a hero of the Australian Skeptics, who helped bring him to Australia (showing their anti-Christian bias contrary to their professed religious neutrality — see [How Religiously Neutral are the Anti-Creationist Organisations?](#)). It was obviously too much for the Skeptics that their hero was stumped. In their magazine *The Skeptic*, the editor, Barry Williams, published a vitriolic article accusing the video of deception, as well as smearing creationists in general.<sup>2</sup>

These tactics should surprise no one familiar with the Australian Skeptics. To us, allegations from the Australian Skeptics have a big question mark over their credibility. After all, their leading light Ian Plimer in his book *Telling Lies ...* bragged about blatantly deceiving creationists, and that book has the full support of the rest of the Australian Skeptics (see [The Ian Plimer Files](#))

Since the Australian Skeptics clearly think the end (combatting creationism) justifies the means (lies, deception and slander), how can anyone be sure that anything else they write is not deception for the good of the 'cause'?

Of course, biblical creationists are committed to belief in God's written Word, the Bible, which forbids bearing false witness; atheistic skeptics like Plimer, Dawkins and Williams have no such inhibitions. We are not saying that all atheists lie, but that they certainly have no absolute moral basis for refraining from lies.

**Expose the mythology  
behind macro-evolution!**

**From a Frog To a Prince**  
(Video)

Conclusively shows that there is no mechanism for evolution, and that life could only evolve by chance in fairy tales, not in the real world of true science.  
(27 minutes)

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**Finally, despite all the bluff and bluster by Dawkins and Williams, they *still* have not answered the question!**

The producer of the video, Gillian Brown of *Keziah Video Productions*, has submitted the following response to *The Skeptic* (slightly edited for our *Prayer News*), which thoroughly refutes their charges.

**Gillian Brown's letter to *The Skeptic***

You have written an article in *The Skeptic*, which claims to 'demonstrate the depths to which the creationist movement will stoop in order to try to discredit its critics', in which you denigrate my character and work, and that without having spoken to me at all.

Your article recounts Prof. Dawkins' recollection of an interview, which is included in the video *From a Frog to a Prince*, which I produced, in which Dawkins is seen to pause for 11 seconds, and evade a simple question. As you yourself say: 'It beggars belief that someone of Richard Dawkins' stature in the field would have been stumped by such a simple question or would have evaded it.' So, you conclude that Dawkins was 'set up', with 'malicious intent', in 'a piece of crude propaganda', 'deliberately manipulated' with 'deceitful intent'.

First, if you are going to publish a libellous attack against someone, it is responsible journalism to inquire into both sides of the story. And in this case, before making accusations about the circumstances of an interview, it would have also been wise to have viewed the unedited tape. That way you could have presented a serious investigation of the matter, and avoided making ill-informed and false assertions.

You state: 'perhaps it could be argued that Prof. Dawkins' memories of the events might have deteriorated with the passage of time since the interview ...' In fact, whether from memory lapse or for other reasons, the recollection of Dr Dawkins is riddled with inaccuracies and some downright untruths. Following is an accurate account of the interview, which may be confirmed by viewing the unedited video tapes.

Dr Dawkins makes a number of incorrect statements [marked with **RD — Editor**] as cited by Mr Williams to which my replies are interspersed and marked with **GB**.

**RD:** 'On September 16, 1997, *Keziah Video Productions*, in the persons of Gillian Brown and Geoffrey Smith, came to my house ...'

**GB:** I was accompanied by a former geologist, Philip Hohnen, not Geoffrey Smith.

**RD:** '... I was challenged to produce an example of an evolutionary process which increases the information content of the genome. It is a question that nobody except a creationist would ask ...'

**GB:** That question actually came at the end of the interview. At the beginning, Philip Hohnen asked several general questions on the origin of new information. These questions are recorded on tape and may be viewed, either on tape or transcribed, by anyone interested in the exact nature of the questions. Dawkins objected to the questions and stopped the recording. He claimed that questions on the origin of new information were invalid, and that nobody ever asked him such questions. I responded that the question of information was perfectly valid, and very important to the evolution-creation debate.

**RD:** 'The tape having stopped, I explained to them my suspicions, and asked them to leave my house.'

**GB:** At no time did Dr Dawkins ask us to leave his house. A second camera (newly purchased, which we were testing) was inadvertently not switched off until later, so it recorded most of the ensuing conversation. This remains on record to clarify supposed 'lapses of memory'.

**RD:** 'As it happens, my forthcoming book, *Unweaving the Rainbow*, has an entire chapter ("The Genetic Book of the Dead") devoted to a much more interesting version of the idea that natural selection gathers up information from the environment, and builds it into the genome. At the time of the interview, the book was almost finished (it is to be published in November, 1998). That chapter would have been in the forefront of my mind, and it is therefore especially ludicrous to suggest that I would have evaded the question by talking about fish and amphibians.'

**GB:** After he asked for the camera to be switched off, Dawkins asked that his answers to the first few questions would not be used (and they have not been used). He then agreed to make a statement, but refused to take more questions from Philip.

We resumed recording, then after he finished his statement I asked for a concrete example in which an evolutionary process can be seen to have increased information on the genome. The long pause seen on the video immediately followed my question, he then asked me to switch off the camera so he could think, which I did.

After some thought he permitted the camera to be switched on again and his final answer was recorded, the answer which appears in the video, which, as can be seen, does not answer the question. Because my question was off-camera and off-mike (though clearly audible on the tape), it could not be used in the finished production. That is why the presenter was recorded later, repeating my question as I had asked it.

Your concern is that the pause was fabricated. No, the pause followed by an irrelevant answer was in response to that exact question, a question which Dr Dawkins could not answer and would have preferred not to even discuss. 'Ludicrous' perhaps, but the question was indeed evaded. If you would care to view the unedited tape you will be able to confirm my account.

**RD:** 'If I'd wanted to turn the question into more congenial channels, all I had to do was talk about 'The Genetic Book of the Dead'. It is a chapter I am particularly pleased with. I'd have welcomed the opportunity to expound it. Why on earth, when faced with such an opportunity, would I have kept totally silent? Unless, once again, I was actually thinking about something quite different while struggling to keep my temper?'

**GB:** Whatever he may have been thinking about I don't know, but it is clear that he did not answer the question.

[From here, Gillian responds to Barry Williams' article in *The Skeptic*<sup>2</sup> (his comments are marked by **BW**) — Ed.]

**BW:** 'If it had been left at that, it might merely have been evidence of professional incompetence on the part of the producer and editor of the tape ...'

**GB:** Before making charges of 'incompetence', the original tape should be viewed ... The question, asked by myself (not Geoffrey Smith) was off camera, and that's why the

question was re-recorded by the narrator, the pause and the answer which follows is exactly the response from Prof. Dawkins.

The actual pause was in fact shortened from 19 seconds to 11 seconds, and Dawkins' request to switch off the camera so that he could think was also cut out. So, there was no malicious intent whatsoever, what is seen is Dawkins' exact response, with a shortened pause, and the (merciful not malicious) removal of his request for time to think.

**BW:** 'Certainly this is by no means the first occasion on which the creation 'science' movement has sought to misrepresent the words of eminent scientists to bolster their own inept grasp of scientific matters, and to mislead their own unfortunate followers.'

**GB:** This accusation is beneath contempt now that your willingness to make accusations without doing your homework has surfaced. Another skeptic of creation, Glenn Morton, made similar charges on the Internet. He asked Richard Dawkins about it and Dawkins denied recollection of the interview. Finally, after listening to an audio tape of the interview, Dr Morton posted the following apology:

'... I had originally questioned whether there was some doctoring going on in the tape because of certain technical details that were amiss. The shadows on the narrator were not the shadows from the room in which Dawkins sat. And the room appeared to be different. I wrote Dawkins and asked him about this. He denied having any recollection of this event. I suspected a video hatchet job. After Gillian established contact with me in June, I found that my suspicions were correct that the narrator was not in the same room as Dawkins. Gillian admitted that she had the narrator re-dub the question but contended that she had asked exactly that question and that Dawkins was shown exactly as he performed at the filming [a practice that Williams stated was acceptable — Ed.]. Gillian sent a copy of the original audio tape of the interview with Dawkins to a friend of mine. He sent the tape to me.

**I will state categorically that the audio tape of the interview 100% supports Gillian Brown's contention that Dawkins couldn't answer the question.'**

### References

1. For scientific refutations of Dawkins' works, see:
  - o G.H. Duggan, 'Review of *The Blind Watchmaker*', *Apologia*, **6**(1):121–122, 1997.
  - o [R.G. Bohlin](#), 'Up the River Without a Paddle — Review of *River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life*', *Creation Ex Nihilo Technical Journal*, **10**(3):322–327, 1996. See [online review](#).
  - o [J.D. Sarfati](#), 'Review of *Climbing Mt Improbable*', *Creation Ex Nihilo Technical Journal*, **12**(1):29–34, 1998. See [Online review](#).
  - o [W. Gitt](#), Weasel Words, *Creation Ex Nihilo* **20**(4):20–21, September–November 1998 refutes Dawkins' computer 'proof' of information arising by mutation and selection. Dr Gitt shows that the information was pre-programmed, something Dawkins admitted but glossed over. See [online version](#).

[Royal Truman, \*The problem of information for the theory of evolution: Has Dawkins really solved it?\*](#) ((Technical) — refutes Dawkins' belated subsequent attempt to answer the question he couldn't in the interview).

[Return to text](#)

2. B. Williams, 'Creationist Deception Exposed', *The Skeptic* **18**(3):7–10. This article has also been widely circulated on the Internet. [Return to Text.](#)