

BACTERIAL PHYSIOLOGY UNIT
HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL

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Mr. Edward L. Burlingame
Senior Vice-President
J. B. Lippincott Co.
521 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10017

Dear Mr. Burlingame:

In your company's press release of March 7, 1978, on David Rorvik's book on the alleged cloning of a man, the author states that Dr. Bernard Davis "has suggested cloning individuals who he felt might 'enormously enhance our culture'". The quoted words came from an article in Science in Dec. 18, 1970 (170:1279), which I am enclosing. My actual sentence (pp. 1281-1282) reads "If the cloning of mammals becomes technically feasible its extension to man will undoubtedly be very tempting, on the grounds that enrichment for proved talent by this means might enormously enhance our culture, while the risk of harm seemed small."

The quoted language is willfully taken out of context, in a manner that attributes to me views that I offered speculatively as future possible views of others. Moreover, you will note that my article is an analytical, non-prescriptive discussion, first of the technical aspects of various conceivable forms of genetic intervention and then of their possible advantages, disadvantages, and dangers. Following the quoted sentence this article discusses the disadvantages of cloning at much greater length than the advantages.

I have never advocated cloning, and I consider Rorvik's statement false, defamatory, and damaging to my professional reputation. For a number of years I have been engaged in public discussion of various issues involving science and society, and this quotation seriously undermines confidence in my judgment. Moreover, I am senior author of a widely used textbook of microbiology, and it is quite conceivable that if Rorvik's statement should receive wide publicity the sales of the book would suffer.

As a first step toward clearing up this false attribution I wish to ask what corrective actions you propose to undertake. In addition, on advice of counsel I suggest that you check the manuscript of the book for possible similar distortions of my views and those of other scientists.

I look forward to your early reply.

Yours truly,



Bernard D. Davis