

Timeline of unfolding events in “the Bailey case”: A research-tool for ethicists, students and scholars of the history of science

Investigative report and [timeline-spreadsheet](#) initially filed on November 12, 2004
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Contents:

[The timeline-spreadsheet as a tool for researching this case](#)

[Case background: The Bailey book sets off a wave of complaints](#)

[How Mr. Bailey and the National Academies responded to their critics](#)

[Resulting challenges to the science establishment](#)

[The spreadsheet as a sequence of events and encodings of their properties](#)

[Tabulations of event properties and participants](#)

[Visualizing the flow of events and cause-effect relationships in the timeline](#)

[Further enhancements of this research tool](#)

[References](#)

The timeline-spreadsheet as a tool for researching this case:

The historical sequence of events in “the Bailey case” (TBC) is likely to be of considerable interest to research ethicists, academic offices of research integrity and IRB rules overseers, as well as to students and scholars of the history of science.

In order to enhance scholarly studies of these events, we’ve created a “time-line spreadsheet” tool that can be used to gain a broad overview of the unfolding investigation and aid in-depth probes into the details of the unfolding events (on a day-to-day basis). It can also be applied in explorations of the cause-effect relationships amongst and the impacts of those events.

Case background: The Bailey book sets off a wave of complaints:

In April 2003, J. Michael Bailey, the Chairman of the Psychology Department at Northwestern University, threw the socially endangered community of transsexual women into serious distress by authoring a book that pseudo-scientifically defamed their identities [[1](#)].

When his book (published by the National Academies Press) immediately set off a firestorm of complaints, he was quoted in the media as making responses such as follows [[2](#)]:

“... the book is intentionally controversial,” Bailey said. “I write about things that matter and that people are uncomfortable with. The cover (as well as the book) is meant to be provocative.”

Then, when he began receiving large numbers of well thought out, sincere complaints about the credibility of his scientific pronouncements [[3](#), [4](#)], and about the dangers those pronouncements presented to transsexual women, he cavalierly responded in the media by saying things such as:

“I can’t be a slave to sensitivity” [[5](#)].

When those complaints escalated into a major investigation into ethical misconduct on his part [3, 4], he began to bitterly complain in the media about his life being ruined, while at the same time showing no remorse whatsoever about the angst he had caused thousands of women [6].

Rather than confront scientific or methodological criticism with a scientific defense, Mr. Bailey instead undertook a campaign of personal attacks in the media upon women who had lodged formal complaints against him [7, 8], and upon any others who dared criticize his scientific work, accusing them of being mentally-ill sexual paraphilics who were trying to ruin his life [6]:

"Their primary sexual attraction is to themselves..." Meaning they're turned on by a vagina, but they'd prefer it to be their own. [7]

While sweepingly defaming trans women as sexual perverts, Mr. Bailey claimed he himself was simply being scientifically "truthful" about them and couldn't be concerned about their feelings:

"I'm concerned with science and truth and not the feelings of groups," Bailey said [9].

Meanwhile, in a defensive effort to rally his sex-science colleagues behind him, to turn attention away from actual scientific debate, and to further isolate transsexual women from any participation in the emerging debate, Mr. Bailey harangued those colleagues with a conference talk about how the critics of his scientific research were engaging in "identity politics" and were endangering sex-science's search for "truth" [10].

How Mr. Bailey and the National Academies responded to critics:

Mr. Bailey's behavior towards his lay critics and research subjects, as further uncovered in the ensuing trans community investigation [3, 4], are very troubling (for more details see ref. [11]).

From the start he showed no surprise at the massive scientific and social criticism of his book. He showed no remorse about the angst that the book was causing amongst thousands of transwomen. He made no effort to clarify or defend his scientific and social views, or to ease the distress those views were causing. He instead aggressively attacked his critics' sanity and veracity.

For the Chairman of the Department of Psychology of a major research university to feel comfortably and professionally able to openly engage in personal attacks upon the gender identity, sanity and truthfulness of trans women who filed complaints about his research conduct, and upon any others who simply dared to criticize his scientific defamations of their endangered class of people, is a frightening development in the history of modern science.

Even more frightening is the way the "scientific establishment" and the National Academies in particular stood by in silence while this outrage unfolded, in many cases deliberately turning their backs on trans women who stepped forward to complain about what was being done to them [12].

These dismissive responses did not have the intended effect "of making the problem go away". Instead they only deepened the sense of outrage felt by transsexual women and increased their determination to investigate and expose those responsible for this scientific fiasco.

Resulting challenges to the science establishment:

We believe that the record of these events will in time expose major flaws in the institutional conduct of scientific research involving human subjects, leading to new rules of conduct for researchers, and to more vigilant community self-policing regarding the rogue scientists amongst us. Otherwise, more scientific fields will fall into ridicule and disrepute in the public eye, as has the field of psychology for condoning of the likes of J. Michael Bailey [13].

Thus it is likely that the investigation of these events will “*have ramifications far beyond the Bailey case*” [6] among overseers of research integrity and in the research community in general.

Meanwhile, the revolution ignited in response to the publication of Mr. Bailey’s book by the National Academies has become a defining moment in our community’s history [14].

The revolution against psychiatric and psychological defamation of gender minorities that is now underway will insure that in the end the scientific community will be held to account for these offenses – as we move out from under the scientific microscope as “pathological specimens,” seize our full human rights, and make our voices increasingly heard.

The spreadsheet as a sequence of events and encodings of their properties:

The timeline spreadsheet is posted on the internet both as a webpage and as an Excel spreadsheet file [15]. If your browser does not display the html webpage in proper columnar form, you can retrieve the xls spreadsheet and view it off-line using Excel:

<http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/TS/Bailey/Timeline/Timeline%20spreadsheet.htm>
<http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/TS/Bailey/Timeline/Timeline%20spreadsheet.xls>

The timeline of events in the spreadsheet runs vertically from the top (earliest events) to the bottom (latest events).

Each entry in the “**Timeline Event**” column includes a hyperlink to information about the event, and is either encoded in red (for actions by or supportive of Mr. Bailey, his publisher, his supporters) or in blue (for actions by or supportive of the trans investigators, the trans community and their supporters).

The “**Date**” column contains the calendar date of each event, while the “**#**” column consecutively numbers entries within any given calendar date. The combination of Date and # for an event can thus be used to uniquely identify the event. For example:

7/17/03:3 = [Bailey calls Cops to keep IASR conference attendees from meeting Anjelica!](#)

Note: In a few cases, contingent events may later prove to have been misdated, in which cases their identifiers would then be revised – and new unique identifiers established. We will later establish tabs to indicate contingent (as opposed to witnessed, documented, media, etc.) events.

Tabulations of event properties and event participants:

The remaining vertical columns of the Timeline-Spreadsheet tabulate properties of the events, including indication of active agents and participants in the events (direct or implicit). In some cases, the tabulations link to further information about the event, or about its participants.

The **“Invest”** column tabs events of “investigation activity” by investigation team members.

The **“Rpts”** column tabs events involving web posting of some form of “report” or commentary about the investigation.

The **“Comp”** column tabs events involving filings of formal complaints at Northwestern University. These complaints are numbered, so they can be referred to as “Complaint 5”, etc., and the numbered entries also contain direct links to the complaints themselves.

The **“Med”** column tabulates media publications of news and information about the case.

The **“CHE”** column marks new stories in the [“Chronicle of Higher Education”](#), an important source read by many people in leadership circles in U.S. colleges and universities.

The **“HB’DA”** column shows events involving the [Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association](#) (HBIGDA), the professional association of researchers, counselors and caregivers to transsexual people – an important group involved in this case.

The **“SPLC”** column shows events involving the [Southern Poverty Law Center](#) (SPLC), a highly respected civil-rights organization that fights hate-crimes in the U.S. The SPLC conducted its own investigation into Mr. Bailey’s work, and published an expose of his [“Queer Science”](#) in a special Intelligence Report covering transgender hate crimes in the Washington, D.C. area.

The **“D-NU”** column tabs publication of news stories about the case in the [Daily Northwestern](#), with stories numbered for convenient reference.

The **“NU”** column tabs events involving [Northwestern University](#), such as complaint filings, NU investigation activities, etc. Most of those events involve the [NU administration](#), [Office of the Provost](#), [Office of the Vice President for Research](#), and/or [Office of Research Integrity](#) at NU.

The **“LLF”** column tabs events in the strange saga of the gay and lesbian [Lambda Literary Foundation’s](#) nomination Bailey’s book for a literary award upon request of Bailey’s publicists and promoters – and its subsequent withdrawal once LLF’s leaders finally read the book and pronounced it transphobic.

The **“CR”** column tabs events re Bailey’s defamations of his critics in [The Chicago Reader](#) in Dec. 03.

The **“HBI”** column tabs events involving Bailey’s intellectual affiliations with the [“Human Biodiversity Institute”](#). Many of his strong supporters belong to [this neo-eugenics group](#).

The **“Bailey”** column tabs events involving [J. Michael Bailey](#), Professor and Chairman of the Psychology Department at Northwestern University.

The **“NAP”** column tabs events involving the [National Academy Press](#), Bailey’s publisher.

The **“Bsup”** column tabs events involving Mr. Bailey’s (BBL’s) active supporters of various kinds.

The **“Bi-attack”** column tabs events involving Mr. Bailey’s later attack on the identities of bisexual people.

Visualizing the flow of events and cause-effect relationships in the timeline:

With this tool we've tried to reveal the "mental imagery" we've manipulated in our own heads when visualizing and interpreting the events as the investigation actually unfolded, seeing it in overview as a complex two-sided struggle involving the intertwining of many parallel threads of actions/reactions. By sharing this tool, we establish a shared visualization of the array of unfolding events, enabling us to better explore, discuss and understand the events together.

As you can see, the columns towards the left (Invest, Rpts, Comp, Media, Chron, HB'DA, SPLC) mark events primarily in "blue", that were either conducted by or were supportive of the transsexual community and its investigators.

The NU column entries are also shown in blue, since they mostly represent actions supportive of the trans community (receipts of complaints, conduct of investigations, etc.), even though Northwestern was a neutral party in the case. The same applies to the D-NU column - since that campus news reporting was primarily about the complaints filed and the ensuing investigation, which was generally supportive of the trans community's actions by alerting the Northwestern community to the situation – even though the Daily Northwestern was a neutral party in the case.

OTOH, the columns towards the right (LLF, HBI, Bailey, NAP, BBLsup) mark events primarily in "red" that were primarily done by, caused by or were supportive of Mr. Bailey, the NAP, and Bailey's supporters.

If you now look at the way the saga opens, you can probably see the back-and-forth actions and reactions – especially at the outset of the drama. Note the way "red" opens (in tabs on the upper right) and "blue" then begins to respond (in tabs a little lower on the upper left). You will then sense how to follow all kinds of back and forth actions/reactions between red and blue, as various events break out, unfold and intertwine.

- - - TBD - - - some examples - - - causes and effects - - - actions and reactions - - -

Further enhancements of this research tool:

We are now in the process of adding major new features to this research tool, including building a table of "causes => effects" and "actions => reactions" in which we can reveal and explore in detail the wild and wooly ways various threads of events ricocheted around as the case unfolded.

We will define and add tabs indicating the solidity-status of entries – i.e., whether they are preliminary, contingent, witnessed, documented, published in media, etc. We will then go back and add (and mark as preliminary or contingent) entries that are not in the timeline now but that are important evidence or events needing further investigation.

We will also continue to insert many more events into the spreadsheet over time, including (at some point) adding a reconstruction of the prior history (from 1994-2003) of how the Blanchard-Bailey-Lawrence interactions unfolded, how Mr. Bailey recruited and interviewed his research subjects, and how the Bailey book got launched in the first place.

Lynn Conway

Report completed and initially filed with the [BBL Clearinghouse](#) on November 12, 2004

References:

1. J. Michael Bailey, *The Man Who Would Be Queen: The Science of Gender-Bending and Transsexualism*, Joseph Henry Press (JHP), National Academy of Sciences, 2003.
<http://books.nap.edu/catalog/10530.html>
2. Sarah Dreier and Kevin Anderson, "Bailey tackles sensitive transsexuality issues; some find his views offensive", *The Daily Northwestern*, April 21, 2003
http://www.dailynorthwestern.com/vnews/display.v/ART/2003/04/21/3ea39785e6cef?in_archive=1
3. Lynn Conway, "An investigation into the publication of J. Michael Bailey's book on transsexualism by the National Academies" (website):
<http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/TS/LynnsReviewOfBaileysBook.html>
4. Andrea James, "BBL Clearinghouse" (website):
<http://www.tsroadmap.com/info/bailey-blanchard-lawrence.html>
5. Robin Wilson, "'Dr. Sex': A human-sexuality expert creates controversy with a new book on gay men and transsexuals", *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 20, 2003.

"...Mr. Bailey is an academic nerd who is just growing into his reputation as a provocateur. He doesn't mind exposing what he considers sexual myths, no matter how much the results might offend people. And he argues that he is "very pro gay," while acknowledging that "the research I do isn't." While he counts female transsexuals among his friends, he says some "have their feelings hurt" when he contends their sex changes were motivated by erotic fantasies... But he adds, "I can't be a slave to sensitivity." ..."

<http://chronicle.com/free/v49/i41/41a00801.htm>
6. Julie M. Klein, "Ethical minefields: The sex that would be science", *Seed Magazine*, May/June 2004:

"Did I think that people would devote their lives to trying to ruin me? I did not.... I have also never been an advocate of believing things just because it makes people comfortable. Sometimes, when the emperor has no clothes, I'll be one of the first to say it."

Note: This article opens as follows, articulating some of the deep issues emerging in this case:

"J. Michael Bailey was visiting the popular Chicago nightclub Crobar to recruit subjects for a study on transsexuals and drag queens, and found himself especially entranced by a transsexual he called Kim. "She is spectacular, exotic... and sexy," he wrote in *The Man Who Would Be Queen: The Science of Gender-Bending and Transsexualism*. "Her body is incredibly curvaceous, which is a clue that it may not be natural.... It is difficult to avoid viewing Kim from two perspectives: as a researcher but also as a single, heterosexual man."

It's this sort of rumination that has gotten Bailey, now chairman of Northwestern University's psychology department, and an expert on the biological origins of human sexuality, into trouble. His book, published last year, has sparked both a bitter ideological dispute and an ongoing university investigation that will likely have ramifications far beyond the Bailey case.

In the minefield of sexual research on human subjects, preconceptions can easily taint observations, and the intimacy between researcher and subject can overtake objectivity. The Man Who Would Be Queen is presented as science, but at times it seems more like a voyeuristic memoir by a man admittedly fascinated by the links between sexuality and gender."

[http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/TS/Bailey/Ethics/Ethical Minefields - Seed Magazine.html](http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/TS/Bailey/Ethics/Ethical%20Minefields%20-%20Seed%20Magazine.html)

7. Dennis Rodkin, "Sex and Transsexuals", *The Chicago Reader*, December 12, 2003.
[http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/TS/Bailey/Reader/Chicago Reader.12-12-03.html#anchor512626](http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/TS/Bailey/Reader/Chicago%20Reader.12-12-03.html#anchor512626)

8. Lynn Conway, "Desperate times lead to desperate actions in the Bailey camp," Investigative report filed April 18, 2004 [updated 10-01-04]
<http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/TS/Bailey/NFIC/NFIC.html>

9. Jennifer Leopoldt, "Transsexuals file 2 more claims against Bailey", *The Daily Northwestern*, July 31, 2003
<http://www.dailynorthwestern.com/vnews/display.v/ART/2003/07/31/3f28b1b021f1b>

10. J. M. Bailey, "Identity politics as a hindrance to scientific truth", presented at the conference of the International Academy of Sex Research, July 19, 2003.
<http://www.iasr.org/meeting/2003/ABSTRACTS2003.doc>

11. Lynn Conway, "How Bailey Responds to Critics", Investigative report filed on October 12, 2004.
<http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/TS/Bailey/Bailey%20Responses/How%20Bailey%20Responds.html>

12. Lynn Conway, "The Silent Treatment Continues at the National Academies: Report on encounters at the National Academy Press", July 22, 2004.
<http://www.tsroadmap.com/info/silent.html>

13. Joan Roughgarden, "The Bailey Affair: Psychology Perverted," Department of Biological Sciences, Stanford University, February 11, 2004.
[http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/TS/Reviews/Psychology Perverted - by Joan Roughgarden.htm](http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/TS/Reviews/Psychology%20Perverted%20-%20by%20Joan%20Roughgarden.htm)

14. Andrea James, "A defining moment in our history: Examining disease models of gender identity," *tsroadmap.com*, September 24, 2004.
<http://www.tsroadmap.com/info/gender-identity.html>

15. Lynn Conway, "Timeline-spreadsheet of unfolding events in the Bailey investigation," Initially filed with the [BBL Clearinghouse](#) [4] and posted on the [Bailey Investigation website](#) [3] on 11-12-04.
<http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/TS/Bailey/Timeline/Timeline%20spreadsheet.htm>
<http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/TS/Bailey/Timeline/Timeline%20spreadsheet.xls>