

NATHAN COFNAS

GHENT UNIVERSITY SUSPENSION

Publication Edition V2.0

A forensic reconstruction of the Ghent disciplinary dispute, the Emmanuel/Cambridge precedent, the Jason Arday research-integrity controversy, academic-freedom law, race/genetics claims, death-causation narratives, and the principal misinformation circulating online.

EVIDENCE CUTOFF | 21 AUGUST 2026

PUBLICATION STATUS

Prepared for public release. This edition supersedes V1/V1.1 where wording or classifications differ. No cover photograph is used, avoiding unresolved republication-rights issues from the earlier layout.

BOTTOM-LINE FINDING

Ghent University has precautionarily suspended Nathan Cofnas while a preliminary disciplinary investigation proceeds. It has not publicly announced a dismissal, merits finding, or detailed specification of alleged misconduct. The Arday research-integrity controversy contains substantial independently checkable evidence and predates Cofnas, but not every allegation was adjudicated. Claims assigning Cofnas individual causal responsibility for Arday's death, or treating suicide as established, exceed the public evidence. The ultimate legality and proportionality of Ghent's action remain unresolved until the actual allegations and record are disclosed.

Prepared under the Pangburn Analysis Forensic Fact-Checking Replication Standard. This report is analytical journalism/research, not legal advice.

01 / EXECUTIVE FINDINGS

What a publication-safe account can presently say

The controversy is easiest to understand by separating institutional status, research-integrity evidence, ideological framing, academic-freedom protection, and causation. Viral narratives repeatedly collapse these into a single moral story.

PRESENT STATUS

Suspended as a precautionary measure during a preliminary Ghent disciplinary investigation; not publicly dismissed or found guilty. [G01-G02]

ARDAY PLAGIARISM RECORD

Genuine and serious attribution/overlap concerns exist, including 2023/2024 corrections and independent reviewers; concerns predate Cofnas. [A01-A03]

EMMANUEL HISTORY

Emmanuel ended a non-employment CRA affiliation after the Feb. 2024 blog; a 2026 County Court dismissed Cofnas's challenge. [C03]

DEATH CAUSATION

Arday documented profound distress from scrutiny. That does not establish that Cofnas caused his death. Police had not publicly established cause/manner as suicide at cutoff. [A10,A14]

SCIENCE

Ancestry/population structure is real; social race categories are not globally equivalent to discrete biological taxa. Within-group IQ heritability does not prove causes of between-group mean differences. [S01-S04]

EXACT GHENT CHARGE

Not publicly disclosed. "Discriminating against Arday" is Cofnas's characterization reported by Reuters, not a quoted Ghent specification. [G01,A12]

SCOPE LIMIT

The evidence does not establish that every allegation against Arday was proven, nor that every later allegation was fully cleared. [A01,A06-A08]

CAMBRIDGE HISTORY

Cambridge University separately investigated Cofnas and found his published views did not breach law or University free-speech rules. [C04]

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The free-speech objection is substantive. ECHR authority protects factually grounded academic criticism, including plagiarism accusations, but does not pre-decide Ghent's case. [L01-L02]

CURRENT DEVELOPMENT

On 21 Aug, The Times reported U.S. Ambassador Bill White urged Ghent to reverse the suspension. No public reinstatement was found by the cutoff. [A16,G01]

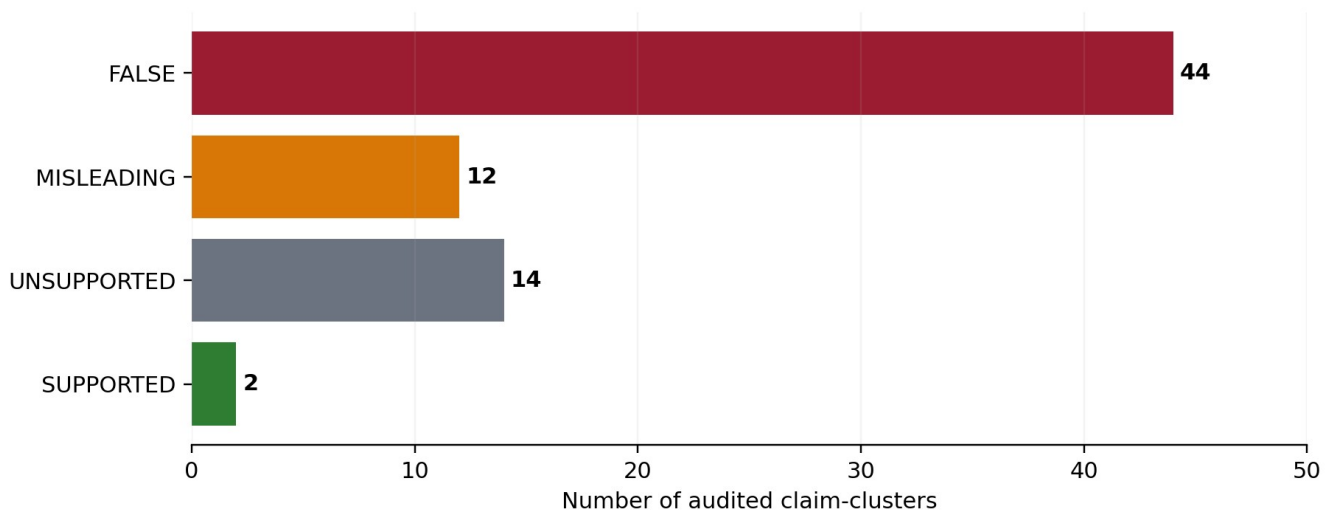


Figure 1. Outcomes across the defined V2 corpus of 72 recurring claim-clusters. Counts describe this audited corpus only; they are not estimates of the entire internet.

V2 corrections and upgrades over the previous edition

- Corrected the Cambridge 5 August chronology: the new investigation concerned academic qualifications and honorary appointments; academic-misconduct complaints were separately ongoing. [A07]
- Expanded the Emmanuel/Cambridge case from a shorthand timeline sentence into a full case study grounded in the 2026 County Court judgment. [C03-C05]
- Added the Harvard 0.67% source reconstruction and distinguished “academics only” from a race-neutral holistic-admissions model. [C06-C07]
- Expanded Ghent’s pre-Arday hiring controversy and separated documented procedural facts from accusations that the appointment was fixed or improper. [G06-G11]
- Added a formal death-manner correction: “unexpected” and “not suspicious” do not establish suicide, natural death, or cause. [A14]
- Added the 21 August diplomatic intervention, carefully attributed to The Times because the underlying ambassadorial correspondence was not independently obtained. [A16]
- Upgraded scientific framing with a primary population-structure study, National Academies guidance, Cell Genomics recommendations, and 2024 quantitative-genetic analysis. [S01-S04]
- Removed the earlier cover photograph because a photo credit is not itself a republication license.

02 / METHOD AND EVIDENTIARY DISCIPLINE

How the report was triple-checked

For high-stakes propositions, V2 uses a three-layer audit: primary record, independent corroboration, and adversarial/counter-source testing. Where one layer is unavailable, the report says so instead of manufacturing certainty.

2.1 Source hierarchy

- Level A - primary institutional/legal/scientific record: Ghent statements/rules, Cambridge statements, court judgment, journal corrections, original scientific papers, original Cofnas/Arday writings.
- Level B - specialist and high-quality independent reporting: Reuters, Retraction Watch, major newspapers used to establish chronology or report unavailable private material.
- Level C - interested advocacy, petitions, party statements and social-media claims: used mainly to identify what is being alleged, not to prove the allegation.
- Conflict rule: when an interested source and a primary record conflict on a verifiable point, the primary record controls unless there is affirmative evidence the record is unreliable or incomplete.

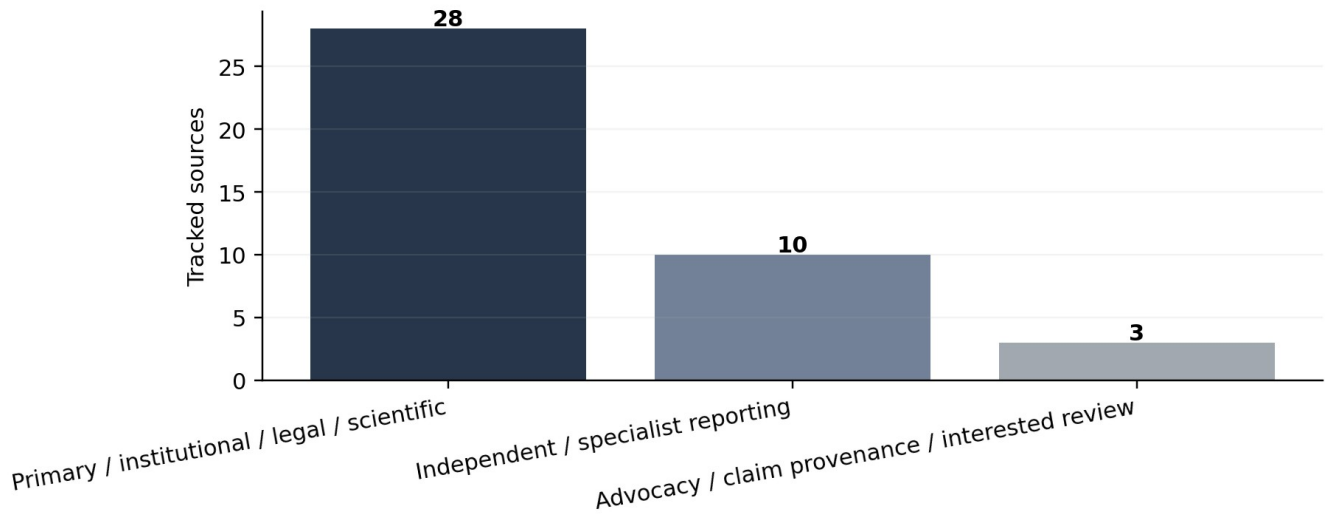


Figure 2. Source architecture across 41 tracked sources. Categories are exclusive audit buckets, not quality scores for every proposition.

2.2 Rating vocabulary

FALSE

Contradicted by strong evidence or by a primary record on the proposition as stated.

MISLEADING

Contains a real fact but materially distorts scope, institutional identity, procedure, quotation, context or causal meaning.

UNSUPPORTED

May be possible, but the public evidence does not establish it at the confidence implied by the claim.

SUPPORTED

Affirmative control claim supported by strong evidence; included to anchor what is actually known.

2.3 Anti-error rules used throughout

- Exact institutional attribution: Emmanuel College, University of Cambridge and Ghent University are never treated as interchangeable.
- Exact procedural vocabulary: preventive suspension, preliminary investigation, referral, finding, sanction, dismissal and appeal are distinct states.
- Atomic decomposition: “he was fired for exposing plagiarism” is separated into employment status, causal reason, plagiarism evidence and institutional motive.
- No chronology-to-causation shortcut: an event preceding a death does not establish medical, psychological, moral or legal causation.
- No motive-to-truth shortcut: ideological targeting can be ethically relevant without invalidating reproducible text overlap.
- No adjudication fetishism: absence of a final institutional finding does not erase primary evidence; strong primary evidence does not license claiming every allegation was adjudicated.
- No scientific bridge inference: within-group heritability and ancestry structure are not treated as proof of the genetic cause of a between-group mean difference.
- Publication-safe language: contested allegations remain allegations; quotations are kept short; scope words such as “all,” “never,” “solely,” “proved,” “cleared,” “suicide,” and “caused” receive special scrutiny.

03 / INSTITUTIONAL MAP

Three institutions, three different legal relationships

A recurring misinformation mechanism is institutional conflation: a College affiliation becomes a University firing, a University inquiry becomes a scientific verdict, or a Ghent precaution becomes a final sanction.

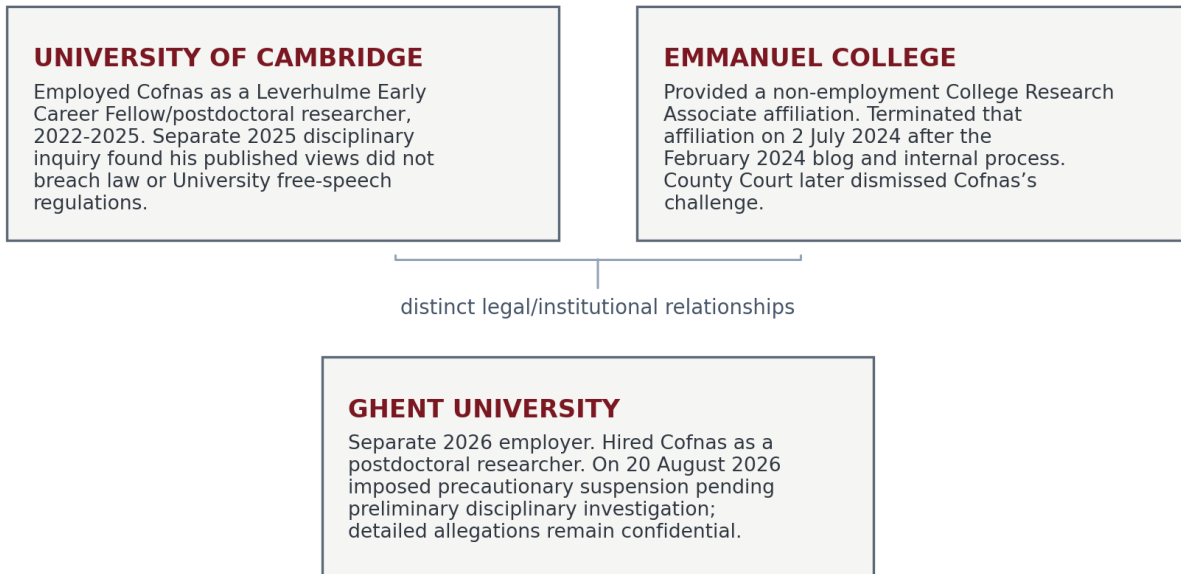


Figure 3. Cofnas's distinct relationships with Cambridge University, Emmanuel College and Ghent University.

3.1 University of Cambridge, 2022-2025

The County Court record states that Cofnas began a three-year postdoctoral University research appointment on 1 September 2022, funded by the Leverhulme Trust, ending 31 August 2025. Cambridge, not Emmanuel College, was the employer. [C03]

3.2 Emmanuel College, 2023-2024

Emmanuel separately gave Cofnas College Research Associate status effective October 2023. The court records that CRAs were not College employees, had no required College work, and received primarily social affiliation and limited benefits. Emmanuel terminated that status on 2 July 2024. [C03]

3.3 Ghent University, 2026

Cofnas's May 2026 CV lists him as a postdoc in Ghent's Department of Philosophy and Moral Sciences. The official project page identifies "Liberalism's Fertility Problem," led by Bouke De Vries, as a Special Research Fund project running 2024-2027. [G04-G05]

WHY THIS MATTERS

"Cambridge fired him for racism and Ghent hired him anyway" compresses at least four separate propositions. Emmanuel ended a non-employment affiliation; Cambridge University later issued a no-breach speech-rule finding; Ghent then independently hired Cofnas as a postdoc; Ghent later imposed a precautionary suspension in a different controversy. Each proposition has its own evidentiary status.

04 / MASTER CHRONOLOGY

The sequence before the spin

The chronology is the backbone of the fact check because several recurring narratives erase earlier plagiarism concerns, confuse 2024 College action with 2025 University findings, or treat August 2026 investigative steps as completed adjudications.

2013	Harvard OIR admissions model Internal "Academic Only" simulation later central to Cofnas's 2024 0.7% claim. [C06]
May 2023	Pre-Cofnas Arday concerns emerge Dave Harris raises textual similarities; Martyn Hammersley independently examines the 2018 paper. [A01]
Dec 2023	First formal journal correction Social Sciences correction materially clarifies attribution/citations. [A02]
5 Feb 2024	Cofnas publishes hereditarian political essay The post becomes the center of the Emmanuel College controversy. [C05]
16-29 Feb 2024	Cambridge/Philosophy public responses University and Faculty respond to controversy while invoking free speech, opposition to racism and student welfare. [C01,C02]
May 2024	Second formal journal correction Educational Philosophy and Theory publishes a correction addressing methodological/source relationships. [A03]
2 Jul 2024	Emmanuel terminates CRA status College affiliation ends after internal Fellowship Committee and appeal process; University employment continues. [C03]
2025	THE investigates Arday allegations Retraction Watch later reports a planned story did not publish after a legal letter denying allegations and warning of harm. [A01]
2 Oct 2025	Cambridge clears Cofnas under University rules University inquiry finds his published views did not breach law or University free-speech regulations. [C04]
Mar 2026	Ghent hiring controversy erupts Petitions, faculty criticism and press coverage begin months before the Arday 2026 campaign; Ghent defends procedure. [G06,G07,G10]
13 Mar 2026	County Court judgment Cofnas's Emmanuel claim is dismissed; hereditarian and anti-woke beliefs protected with reservation, but College response held proportionate. [C03]
21 Jul 2026	Cofnas publishes Arday dossier Text-overlap evidence is combined with wider DEI, hiring and biographical claims. [A04]

27 Jul 2026	Retraction Watch reconstruction Specialist reporting documents pre-Cofnas concerns, independent overlap review, corrections and 2025 THE work. [A01]
2 Aug 2026	Cambridge clarifies prior investigations Says thesis and some journal allegations were investigated by LJMU and journals. [A06]
5 Aug 2026	Arday resigns; Cambridge opens new inquiry Arday cites profound toll; Cambridge opens investigation into qualifications/honorary appointments and separately notes ongoing misconduct complaints. [A07,A10]
12-14 Aug 2026	Cambridge expands institutional review Appointment/time-at-Cambridge inquiry and broader process review announced. [A08,A09]
14 Aug 2026	Arday found dead Police say death unexpected and not believed suspicious; no public cause/manner determination at cutoff. [A14]
19-20 Aug 2026	Ghent action Ghent issues public values statement, opens preliminary disciplinary investigation, and precautionarily suspends Cofnas. [G01]
21 Aug 2026	U.S. diplomatic pressure reported The Times reports Ambassador Bill White urges reversal and says U.S.-Ghent relationships are under review. [A16]

05 / BEFORE ARDAY: THE GHENT HIRING CONTROVERSY

The suspension did not arise in an institutional vacuum

Cofnas entered Ghent in 2026 amid an already intense dispute over his published race-related claims, the University's ethics code, and the selection process. This background is pertinent to motive and context, but it is not itself proof of the present disciplinary allegation.

5.1 What Ghent says it hired him to do

The official project "Liberalism's Fertility Problem" asks how liberal democracies might respond to differential fertility/retention among ideological or religious groups while respecting liberal constraints. The stated project is social and political philosophy, not a race-IQ project. [G04]

5.2 Opposition was organized by March 2026

Students and academics publicly objected to Cofnas's appointment before the Arday dossier. Press reports and petitions focused on his hereditarian/race claims, the ethics code, and whether his work met academic standards. The existence of that early campaign directly falsifies the story that Ghent only became hostile to Cofnas after he targeted Arday. [G06-G10]

5.3 Was the appointment procedurally improper?

Contemporaneous reporting quotes Ghent saying Cofnas was selected as the most suitable candidate after a procedurally correct process. Critics later alleged the procedure bypassed normal departmental governance or was otherwise improper. A June report by Doorbraak, based on internal documents it said it reviewed, described an unusually extensive comparison of Cofnas with other candidates. Because the complete personnel file is not public, V2 rejects categorical claims of a "fixed" or corrupt appointment while preserving the fact that process objections were real and contested. [G06,G09,G11]

5.4 Ethics-code controversy before the suspension

Critics invoked Ghent's Code of Ethics provisions concerning incitement to discrimination/hatred/segregation and ideas of racial superiority or racial hatred. Ghent's ethics rules are genuinely relevant to staff conduct; however, public criticism that speech violates a code is not the same as an institutional finding that it does. [G03,G08,G09]

FORENSIC BOUNDARY

The pre-existing controversy makes two opposite inferences unsafe: (1) "Ghent's August action must be retaliation for plagiarism because there was no prior conflict" is false; (2) "Ghent always wanted to remove him, therefore the present process is necessarily pretextual" is also unsupported. Prior conflict is context, not a substitute for evidence about the present decision.

What Ghent actually did - and what it has not yet decided

This section should control every headline-level description of the current case. A precautionary suspension during a preliminary investigation is a serious employment action, but it is not synonymous with a final disciplinary finding.



Precautionary suspension can operate during the disciplinary process; it is not itself a merits finding.

Figure 4. Simplified Ghent disciplinary sequence based on the University's public guide. The visual is explanatory, not a substitute for the regulations.

6.1 Official language

Ghent's 19 August statement said it was taking "appropriate action" concerning recent public statements by a postdoctoral researcher in the Arday matter while stressing that this did not pre-empt future decisions. Its 20 August update stated that a preliminary disciplinary investigation had been launched and that Cofnas was suspended as a precautionary measure pending that investigation. [G01]

6.2 What a preliminary investigation means

Ghent's public guide describes the preliminary stage as a fact-assessment step used to determine whether there are sufficient grounds for referral. The procedure can end without referral. If referred, a Disciplinary Chamber decides the merits and any sanction. [G02]

6.3 Preventive suspension versus disciplinary suspension

The guide separately describes preventive suspension during a disciplinary procedure and disciplinary suspension as a possible final sanction. Conflating them converts an interim risk-management measure into a finding of misconduct. Preventive suspension can still be highly burdensome, including restrictions on professional activity, campus access, staff/student contact and University account access. [G02]

6.4 The exact alleged misconduct remains the decisive missing record

Ghent has not publicly released a notice of allegations, evidentiary specification, witness material or legal theory. Cofnas says the investigation concerns discrimination against Arday. The University publicly connects its action to recent statements in the Arday matter and invokes human dignity, discrimination, hatred, racism and limits on academic freedom, but it does not identify which statement is alleged to breach which rule. [G01,A12]

CURRENT LEGAL VERDICT

HOLD / UNRESOLVED. It is possible to identify strong academic-freedom concerns and strong institutional anti-discrimination interests, but the proportionality of the actual suspension cannot be responsibly adjudicated from the public record without knowing what conduct Ghent is investigating.

What Cofnas actually wrote in 2024 - and why Emmanuel acted

This is essential background because current reporting often uses “fired by Cambridge for racism” as a character shortcut. The real history is more precise and more complicated.

7.1 The trigger was a specific February 2024 political essay

The County Court record identifies Cofnas’s 5 February 2024 post, “A Guide for the Hereditarian Revolution,” as the publication that triggered the formal Emmanuel process. The Master had already learned in September 2023 that Cofnas’s prior work was controversial and did not act then. [C03,C05]

7.2 The essay goes beyond “meritocracy”

Cofnas argues that elite acceptance of hereditarian explanations of racial differences is politically desirable because, in his view, it undermines the egalitarian premise of “woke” ideology. He describes “race realism” as scientifically correct, predicts dramatic racial representation changes under his conception of meritocracy, challenges simple colorblind liberalism, and entertains some race-conscious group boundaries and self-segregating communities. [C05]

At the same time, a publication-safe description must include contrary context: the essay criticizes white nationalism, antisemitism and racial hatred. It is therefore inaccurate to reduce the document either to “ordinary meritocracy” or to a straightforward white-nationalist manifesto. [C05]

7.3 The Harvard 0.7% claim: real source, overextended inference

Cofnas’s approximately 0.7% figure has a real documentary source. A 2013 Harvard Office of Institutional Research “Academic Only” simulation reported an African-American share of about 0.67% among simulated admits. That model was not simply Harvard’s ordinary holistic process with race removed; it relied on academic measures and excluded multiple nonacademic factors. [C06]

A separate Harvard race-neutral analysis asked a different question and estimated African-American representation falling from about 14% to about 6% if race ceased to be considered while the broader holistic admissions structure remained. Thus “Harvard’s own data produced 0.67% in an academics-only model” is supported; “Harvard proved ordinary race-blind admissions would be 0.7% Black” is misleading. [C07]

7.4 The extrapolation to faculty and elite occupations

Cofnas then extrapolates from an undergraduate admissions simulation to claims that Black Harvard professors would approach zero and that Black Americans would largely disappear from high-profile positions outside sports and entertainment. The Harvard model did not analyze faculty hiring, graduate training, occupational pipelines, international recruitment, lifetime achievement or the national labor market. These broader conclusions are not results of the cited Harvard analysis. [C05-C07]

7.5 What Emmanuel’s decision-makers said mattered

The court record reconstructs the Fellowship Committee’s concern with the blog’s tone, sweeping racial generalizations, lack of qualification, perceived impact on Black students, conflict with the College’s culture of respect, and potential effect on outreach. Cofnas was asked to amend or qualify passages and refused. [C03]

This does not mean substantive ideological disagreement was absent. The judgment records strong disapproval of Cofnas’s ideas by College figures. The court nevertheless rejected the contention that hostility to the protected beliefs was the sole or predominant reason and accepted a distinction between beliefs and their manifestation. [C03]

7.6 What the County Court actually held

- The CRA status was a loose social affiliation, not Emmanuel employment; Cofnas remained a Cambridge University employee. [C03]
- The court held, with reservation, that the pleaded hereditarian and anti-woke beliefs were protected philosophical beliefs. [C03]
- The separately pleaded “meritocracy” and “freedom” beliefs were treated as generalized/peripheral instances of the anti-woke belief and insufficiently coherent to qualify separately. [C03]

- The court accepted that the College objected to the manner/manifestation rather than merely the holding of the beliefs and found termination proportionate in that relationship. [C03]
- The claim was dismissed. A Free Speech Union appeal update later said Cofnas's team intended to appeal; V2 does not assume the appeal's outcome. [C08]

7.7 The Cambridge University counterpoint

The University of Cambridge separately investigated complaints in its role as Cofnas's employer. In October 2025 it publicly stated that a rigorous inquiry concluded his published views, although offensive to many, did not breach law and did not contravene University regulations designed to uphold free speech. [C04]

THE GENUINE INSTITUTIONAL TENSION

Emmanuel's termination was later upheld as proportionate under the College relationship, while Cambridge University's own rules process ended without a breach finding. That is not a contradiction that fact-checking should erase: different institutions, legal relationships, policies, decision-makers and remedial contexts can produce different lawful outcomes.

08 / SCIENTIFIC CONTEXT

Race, ancestry, heritability and the inferential limits

This report does not attempt to settle the entire race-and-intelligence literature. It isolates only the scientific propositions necessary to evaluate internet claims about what Cofnas's 2024 argument has or has not established.

8.1 Population structure and self-identified race

Tang et al. analyzed 3,636 participants using genetic markers and found very high correspondence between self-identified categories and inferred genetic clusters in that particular sample, with five discordant assignments. This supports the existence of ancestry-related population structure and shows that some social categories can correlate strongly with ancestry in some datasets. [S01]

The inference must stop there. Modern National Academies and genomic-reporting guidance emphasizes that human genetic variation is continuous and overlapping, that race and ethnicity are socially shaped categories, and that genetic ancestry should not be treated as interchangeable with universal discrete racial essences. [S02,S04]

8.2 Heritability does not bridge the between-group causal gap

A trait can be highly heritable within groups while an observed mean difference between groups is substantially environmental, substantially genetic, or some combination. Schraiber and Edge formalize why within-group heritability is uninformative by itself about the causal partition of a between-group difference. [S03]

8.3 What follows for Cofnas's strong claim

The publication-safe assessment is not "genes are irrelevant to intelligence" and not "the racial IQ gap is established as genetic." The strong hereditarian causal claim about a particular Black-White mean difference is not established as settled scientific consensus by the evidence Cofnas invokes. Conversely, the exact-zero genetic proposition is also not established by the sources cited here. [S02-S04]

LOGICAL CHECKPOINT

Within-group heritability -> does NOT entail -> between-group genetic causation. Ancestry structure -> does NOT entail -> discrete biological races. Social race categories -> can correlate with ancestry in specific populations, but correlation does not make the concepts globally interchangeable.

What is evidence, what is adjudication, and what predates Cofnas

The strongest public account must resist both denial and overclaim. Serious source-attribution evidence exists. So do institutional reviews and unresolved scope questions.

9.1 The issue predates Cofnas by years

Retraction Watch documents Dave Harris raising concerns in May 2023 and Martyn Hammersley independently examining similarities in Arday's 2018 work. It also reports that Times Higher Education developed a 2025 story based on a larger dossier. Cofnas therefore was not the first person to discover the underlying concern. [A01]

9.2 Cofnas nevertheless produced independent evidence

The same specialist reporting says Cofnas independently found substantial overlap between Arday's 2015 dissertation and an earlier dissertation and reproduced text comparisons in 2026. "Not first" does not mean "found nothing." [A01,A04]

9.3 The formal correction record

A December 2023 Social Sciences correction and a May 2024 Educational Philosophy and Theory correction materially clarified sources, citations and methodological relationships. These notices are primary publication evidence that attribution/citation issues were real enough to require correction. [A02-A03]

But a journal correction is not automatically equivalent to a formal misconduct verdict, just as a correction does not mean the problem was trivial. V2 therefore rates both "the corrections prove plagiarism" and "the corrections prove nothing serious happened" as distortions. [A02-A03]

9.4 The unpublished Times Higher Education story

Retraction Watch reports that a planned 2025 Times Higher Education story did not publish after a Carter-Ruck letter denied the allegations and warned of reputational harm. The public record does not reveal THE's complete internal editorial reasoning, so claims that the story was dropped because the allegations were disproved—or that Cambridge ordered suppression—remain unsupported. [A01]

9.5 Cambridge's jurisdictional position and prior investigations

On 2 August 2026 Cambridge said allegations about Arday's thesis and some journal publications had been investigated by Liverpool John Moores University and the relevant journals, following the sector approach that work is investigated where it was undertaken. That directly contradicts Cofnas's categorical claim that Arday had "never been investigated." [A05-A06]

At the same time, the underlying LJMU report is not public. Secondary reporting describes the review as not upholding plagiarism and as leaving the PhD award in place, but outsiders cannot independently audit its full scope, evidence or reasoning. "Previously investigated" is therefore stronger than "fully cleared of every allegation." [A06,A15]

9.6 The August 2026 Cambridge investigations

On 5 August, Cambridge opened an investigation into new information about Arday's academic qualifications and honorary appointments, while separately noting ongoing academic-misconduct complaints. On 12 August, the Vice-Chancellor announced an independent investigation into the circumstances of Arday's 2022 appointment and his time at Cambridge, along with a review of appointment and misconduct processes. These were investigative steps, not findings of guilt. [A07-A09]

FORENSIC SYNTHESIS

The public record supports a middle position that is stronger than either partisan slogan: (1) there is serious, independently checkable research-integrity evidence and a correction record; (2) some allegations were previously investigated; (3) not every later allegation was finally adjudicated; and (4) Cofnas's own campaign combined evidence with ideological conclusions that must be judged separately.

10 / WHISTLEBLOWING, IDEOLOGY AND TARGETING

Why “he exposed plagiarism” is true but incomplete

The phrase “whistleblower” can be useful in ordinary language, but it becomes misleading if it suppresses the content and political framing of Cofnas’s intervention or implies statutory whistleblower status that has not been established here.

10.1 Evidence layer

Cofnas’s July 21 article contains verifiable text comparisons and builds on a record that includes independent reviewers and corrections. On that narrow question, dismissing the entire investigation as fabricated because of Cofnas’s ideology is evidentially unsound. [A01-A04]

10.2 Political/racial framing layer

The same article explicitly presents the Arday controversy as evidence about DEI, Black professorships and Cambridge’s standards. It also carries wider biographical and institutional allegations. This means a claim that Cofnas did nothing except neutrally report plagiarism is inaccurate. [A04]

10.3 Why motive still matters

- Truth of overlap: motive has limited probative value; text either overlaps or does not.
- Selection/targeting: motive can matter if an investigator scrutinizes people because of race or other protected status.
- Employment conduct: tone, repetition, harassment, defamatory factual assertions, discriminatory targeting or misuse of institutional position can be independently relevant even if some core allegations are true.
- Academic freedom: if Ghent’s real target is factually grounded scholarly criticism, protection is stronger; if the target is distinct discriminatory or harassing conduct, the legal balance can differ.
- Current limitation: the detailed Ghent allegation is not public, so none of these possible theories should be silently substituted for the actual charge.

11 / ARDAY'S DEATH AND CAUSATION

The highest-risk zone for misinformation

Because death invites moral certainty under emotional pressure, V2 uses an unusually strict causal standard. Distress, chronology, cause of death, manner of death and responsibility are separate propositions.

11.1 What Arday himself said

In his 5 August resignation statement, Arday described years of scrutiny and personal attack, said recent accusations/speculation/public commentary had taken a profound toll on him and people he loved, and said he was resigning for wellbeing, family and privacy. He also expressly said the decision should not be interpreted as acceptance of the surrounding narratives. [A10]

11.2 What police publicly said

Reuters reported that Arday was found unresponsive in Battersea and that police were treating the death as unexpected but not suspicious. At the evidence cutoff, no public coronial cause/manner determination was located. [A14]

11.3 The causation ladder

- Established: public scrutiny caused Arday substantial experienced distress, by his own account. [A10]
- Established: Cofnas's July article and broader media/social scrutiny preceded Arday's resignation and death. [A04,A10,A14]
- Not established: the medical or coronial cause and manner of death as suicide. [A14]
- Not established: that Cofnas individually caused, drove or was legally responsible for the death. [A14]
- Not established: that the controversy played exactly zero causal role. Evidence of distress makes that categorical claim equally unsafe.
- Even a later suicide finding would not, by itself, identify which actor or set of circumstances was legally or morally causal.

PUBLICATION RULE

Do not write "Cofnas drove Arday to suicide," "Arday killed himself because of Cofnas," or "suicide proved the allegations were malicious." At the cutoff those statements outrun the public evidence on both manner and causation.

12 / ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND PROPORTIONALITY

The strongest case for Cofnas - and the strongest case for Ghent

A rigorous report should steelman both sides before stating what cannot yet be decided.

12.1 Strongest academic-freedom case for Cofnas

- Plagiarism and research-integrity criticism concern the core functioning of academic institutions and are matters of legitimate scholarly/public interest.
- The Arday allegations had substantial factual support independent of Cofnas, reducing the case for treating the entire intervention as baseless abuse. [A01-A03]
- ECHR materials include *Boldea v. Romania*, where a university lecturer's plagiarism accusation with a factual basis received Article 10 protection, and *Sorguç v. Turkey*, which emphasizes academics' ability to criticize institutional systems. [L01-L02]
- Precautionary suspension can significantly burden professional activity even before guilt is determined. If the target is substantially the act of publishing well-founded research-integrity criticism, proportionality concerns are serious.
- Ghent had already defended Cofnas's appointment amid pressure in March; a later change in treatment after a politically explosive controversy invites scrutiny of consistency and process. [G06,G01]

12.2 Strongest case for Ghent's authority to act

- Academic freedom is not absolute. Ghent's own ethics framework recognizes personal expression and also sets boundaries related to discrimination, hatred, violence, segregation, racial superiority and racial hatred. [G03]
- Cofnas's Arday intervention was not limited to technical overlap analysis; it included racial/DEI conclusions and wider personal/biographical claims. [A04]
- An employer may have legitimate interests in anti-discrimination duties, staff/student welfare, harassment prevention, reputational integrity and the manner in which institutional status is used.
- Ghent's process is currently preliminary. A preventive measure may lawfully serve service interests before a final merits decision if the regulatory conditions are met; whether they are met here is the unresolved issue. [G02]
- The Emmanuel judgment demonstrates that protected beliefs do not automatically immunize every manner of manifestation from proportionate institutional consequences. [C03]

12.3 Why V2 refuses a final legality verdict

The missing allegation specification is outcome-determinative. The legal analysis changes radically depending on whether Ghent is investigating the publication of plagiarism evidence itself, allegedly discriminatory racial conclusions attached to that evidence, harassment/repeated targeting, statements about biographical claims, use of University status, or some combination. [G01-G03]

LEGAL CLASSIFICATION

HOLD / UNRESOLVED. The public record supports a non-trivial academic-freedom concern and a non-trivial institutional authority argument. It does not support declaring the suspension either obviously unlawful retaliation or obviously justified discipline before the alleged conduct is specified and tested.

The dispute has become an international political issue

The latest development changes the political stakes without changing the underlying evidentiary status of Ghent's disciplinary process.

On 21 August, The Times reported that U.S. Ambassador to Belgium Bill White contacted Ghent Rector Petra De Sutter, urged the University to explore rescinding the suspension and securing Cofnas's continued employment, and said U.S. relationships with Ghent were being reviewed. The report also attributed public statements to White characterizing the matter as punishment for accurate journalism/academic dishonesty. [A16]

V2 treats these as reported diplomatic actions because the underlying email and a complete primary embassy record were not independently obtained. The intervention does not establish that Ghent acted unlawfully, that Cofnas's entire Arday dossier is correct, or that reinstatement has occurred. [A16,G01]

FACT-CHECKING SIGNIFICANCE

Political pressure creates a new misinformation vector: a diplomatic demand can be misreported as a legal order; a warning can be misreported as a completed cutoff of partnerships; and advocacy by a government official can be mistaken for adjudication of the underlying facts. None of those substitutions is warranted.

14 / MISINFORMATION ARCHITECTURE

How opposite camps distort the same record

The errors are not symmetrical in content, but they often use the same reasoning failures: institutional conflation, scope inflation, modal certainty, motive substitution and causation by chronology.

STATUS INFLATION

“Suspended” becomes “fired”; preliminary investigation becomes guilt; prospective dismissal becomes completed dismissal.

DISCOVERY ERASURE

Cofnas is presented either as sole discoverer or as someone who found nothing independently; the record supports neither extreme.

CLEARED/PROVEN ABSOLUTISM

A prior review becomes “cleared of everything,” while strong overlap evidence becomes “every allegation proven.”

QUOTATION INFLATION

“Approach 0%” becomes a literal “zero/no Black professors” quotation; the substantive extremity is real but the quote changes.

CAUSAL OVERCLAIM

Public distress + chronology becomes individual responsibility for death; “not suspicious” becomes suicide or natural cause.

POLITICAL OVERCLAIM

Ambassadorial pressure becomes a binding government order or completed reinstatement.

INSTITUTIONAL CONFLATION

Emmanuel College action is rewritten as Cambridge University firing; University speech-rule finding becomes scientific validation.

CORRECTION MISUSE

Formal corrections are treated either as formal plagiarism convictions or as meaningless clerical changes.

MOTIVE SUBSTITUTION

Cofnas’s ideology is used to invalidate text overlap; or the presence of overlap is used to erase his racial/DEI framing.

SCIENCE BRIDGE ERROR

Within-group heritability is converted into between-group genetic causation; ancestry clustering becomes discrete biological race.

LEGAL OVERCLAIM

ECHR analogies become a conclusive Belgian judgment; University ethics rules become automatic proof of violation.

MORAL LAUNDERING

A preferred moral conclusion is treated as if it resolves disputed empirical questions without evidence.

15 / FULL CLAIM LEDGER

72-claim forensic audit

This corpus represents recurring, materially distinct claims located across official statements, major media, advocacy pages, commentary and social media. It is not literally every post on the internet. Each claim is rated on its exact wording.

Ghent status

C-01 | FALSE GHENT STATUS

“Ghent University fired Nathan Cofnas.”

Ghent publicly announced a precautionary suspension during a preliminary disciplinary investigation. Dismissal is a possible later sanction, not the present status.

Confidence: High | Sources: G01,G02,A12

C-02 | FALSE GHENT STATUS

“Cofnas has already been found guilty of racism or discrimination by Ghent.”

No public merits finding has been issued. Ghent has not disclosed the detailed factual allegations and explicitly says the preliminary stage does not pre-empt later decisions.

Confidence: High | Sources: G01,G02

C-03 | FALSE GHENT STATUS

“There is only an investigation; he was not actually suspended.”

Ghent's 20 August update expressly states that he was suspended as a precautionary measure pending the preliminary investigation.

Confidence: High | Sources: G01

Ghent procedure

C-04 | MISLEADING GHENT PROCEDURE

“The precautionary suspension is itself the six-month disciplinary punishment.”

Ghent distinguishes preventive suspension from disciplinary sanctions. The preventive measure can last up to six months and may be justified for one extension, but it precedes a final merits sanction.

Confidence: High | Sources: G02

Ghent reason

C-05 | UNSUPPORTED GHENT REASON

“Ghent officially said the charge is discrimination against Jason Arday.”

Cofnas publicly used that characterization. Ghent itself has linked the matter to recent public statements concerning Arday while withholding the detailed allegations for confidentiality.

Confidence: High | Sources: G01,A12

C-06 | FALSE GHENT REASON

“Ghent officially said it suspended Cofnas because he proved plagiarism.”

Ghent has not described the suspension that way and has not adjudicated the plagiarism claims in its public suspension statement.

Confidence: High | Sources: G01

Ghent procedure

C-07 | FALSE GHENT PROCEDURE

“A private complaint is required before Ghent may begin disciplinary proceedings.”

Ghent’s guide allows the Rector to initiate proceedings when facts become known, including through public/media information; a formal complaint is not always required.

Confidence: High | Sources: G02

C-08 | FALSE GHENT PROCEDURE

“Private or off-campus speech can never be relevant to Ghent discipline.”

Ghent’s rules provide a narrower, conditional route for some private-context conduct to become disciplinary. Whether Cofnas’s conduct meets those conditions is unresolved.

Confidence: High | Sources: G02,G03

C-09 | FALSE GHENT PROCEDURE

“Opening a preliminary investigation means Ghent has already determined there is enough evidence for a disciplinary hearing.”

The preliminary investigation exists precisely to decide whether sufficient grounds exist for referral. It can terminate without referral.

Confidence: High | Sources: G02

C-10 | FALSE GHENT PROCEDURE

“Any final disciplinary judgment will be made only by the Rector who suspended him.”

If the matter is referred, the merits are handled under Ghent’s chamber structure; Ghent says a majority of members of the relevant disciplinary bodies are external.

Confidence: High | Sources: G02

Ghent employment

C-11 | FALSE GHENT EMPLOYMENT

“Cofnas is a tenured Ghent professor.”

Official/primary materials identify him as a postdoctoral researcher. His May 2026 CV lists a Ghent postdoc.

Confidence: High | Sources: G04,G05

C-12 | FALSE GHENT EMPLOYMENT

“Ghent hired Cofnas specifically to conduct race-IQ research.”

The official project is “Liberalism’s Fertility Problem,” a social/political philosophy project about demographic dynamics and liberal democracy. His controversial race-related work is separate from the stated project remit.

Confidence: High | Sources: G04,G05

Ghent hiring

C-13 | FALSE GHENT HIRING

“The Cofnas controversy at Ghent began only after the Arday plagiarism campaign.”

Public petitions, faculty criticism and news coverage were already active in March 2026, months before Cofnas’s July Arday article.

Confidence: High | Sources: G06,G07,G10

C-14 | FALSE GHENT HIRING**“Ghent admitted the Cofnas hiring process was improper.”**

Contemporaneous reporting quotes Ghent saying the selection was procedurally correct and that he was the most suitable candidate. Internal critics disputed the process, but that is not an institutional admission of impropriety.

Confidence: High | Sources: G06,G07,G09

C-15 | UNSUPPORTED GHENT HIRING**“The hiring process has been conclusively proven to have been fixed or ‘smuggled through.’”**

Critics raised process concerns. Ghent defended the procedure, and a later outlet reported internal records showing unusually extensive review. The complete personnel file is not public, so a categorical corruption/fixing claim is not established.

Confidence: Medium-High | Sources: G06,G09,G11

C-16 | FALSE GHENT HIRING**“By hiring Cofnas, Ghent University institutionally endorsed all of his views on race.”**

Employment or project selection does not logically constitute institutional endorsement of every public view held by an employee. Ghent's own public statements registered serious concern about aspects of his speech.

Confidence: High | Sources: G01,G06

Emmanuel/Cambridge

C-17 | FALSE EMMANUEL/CAMBRIDGE**“Cambridge University fired Cofnas in 2024.”**

Emmanuel College terminated a College Research Associate affiliation; the University of Cambridge remained his employer through the Leverhulme post and later ran its own disciplinary inquiry.

Confidence: High | Sources: C03,C04

C-18 | FALSE EMMANUEL/CAMBRIDGE**“Emmanuel College fired Cofnas from his paid research job.”**

The County Court record says CRAs were not employed by Emmanuel and performed no required work for the College. The affiliation was primarily social and coterminous with University employment.

Confidence: High | Sources: C03

C-19 | MISLEADING EMMANUEL/CAMBRIDGE**“Emmanuel acted because of a vague collection of race and meritocracy writings.”**

The formal 2024 episode centered overwhelmingly on Cofnas's 5 February 2024 blog essay, followed by student complaints and an internal process. Earlier controversial views were already known to the Master.

Confidence: High | Sources: C03,C05

C-20 | FALSE EMMANUEL/CAMBRIDGE**“Emmanuel did not know Cofnas held controversial hereditarian views before affiliating him.”**

The County Court found the Master learned in September 2023 of online controversy surrounding prior work and did not take further action at that point.

Confidence: High | Sources: C03

Cofnas 2024 essay

C-21 | MISLEADING COFNAS 2024 ESSAY

“The 2024 essay merely defended ordinary race-blind meritocracy.”

The essay argues for a hereditarian political strategy, challenges pure colorblind liberalism, discusses racial group interests and some barriers between groups, and contemplates greater self-segregation. “Meritocracy” is only part of the program.

Confidence: High | Sources: C05,C03

C-22 | MISLEADING COFNAS 2024 ESSAY

“The 2024 essay is accurately described as a white-nationalist manifesto.”

The essay contains sweeping racial claims and race-conscious political proposals, but it also explicitly criticizes white nationalism, antisemitism and racial hatred. That label erases important contrary content.

Confidence: High | Sources: C05

Harvard statistic

C-23 | FALSE HARVARD STATISTIC

“Cofnas fabricated the claim that an academics-only Harvard model produced about 0.7% Black admits.”

Harvard OIR’s 2013 “Academic Only” model reported approximately 0.67% African-American admits. Cofnas did not invent that number.

Confidence: High | Sources: C06,C05

C-24 | MISLEADING HARVARD STATISTIC

“Harvard proved that simply removing race from its ordinary holistic admissions process would make enrollment only 0.7% Black.”

The 0.67% result came from an academics-only counterfactual that removed many nonacademic factors. A different Harvard race-neutral analysis retaining the holistic framework estimated roughly 6% African-American representation rather than 0.7%.

Confidence: High | Sources: C06,C07

Harvard extrapolation

C-25 | UNSUPPORTED HARVARD EXTRAPOLATION

“Harvard’s 0.7% model proves Black professors at Harvard would approach zero under meritocracy.”

The admissions simulation did not model faculty hiring, graduate pipelines, occupational selection or academic careers. That conclusion is Cofnas’s extrapolation, not Harvard’s result.

Confidence: High | Sources: C06,C05

C-26 | UNSUPPORTED HARVARD EXTRAPOLATION

“Data prove Black Americans would disappear from virtually all elite occupations outside sports and entertainment.”

No source in the evidentiary record models the broad occupational claim. It requires multiple additional empirical assumptions beyond the Harvard undergraduate simulation.

Confidence: High | Sources: C05,C06,S03

Quotation accuracy

C-27 | MISLEADING QUOTATION ACCURACY

“Cofnas literally wrote that Harvard would have ‘no Black professors.’”

His wording was that the number would “approach 0%.” The proposition remains sweeping, but quotation accuracy matters.

Confidence: High | Sources: C05,C03

Cambridge University outcome

C-28 | FALSE CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY OUTCOME

“Cambridge University determined Cofnas’s 2024 publication violated its regulations.”

Cambridge’s 2025 public statement says its rigorous inquiry concluded that his published views did not breach law or University regulations designed to uphold free speech.

Confidence: High | Sources: C04

C-29 | FALSE CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY OUTCOME

“Cambridge University’s no-breach finding scientifically validated Cofnas’s race claims.”

The finding addressed law and University speech rules, not whether hereditarian empirical claims are scientifically true.

Confidence: High | Sources: C04

Emmanuel litigation

C-30 | FALSE EMMANUEL LITIGATION

“The 2026 County Court ruled Cofnas’s hereditarian beliefs were legally unprotected.”

The court held, with reservation, that his pleaded hereditarian and anti-woke beliefs qualified as protected philosophical beliefs under the relevant test.

Confidence: High | Sources: C03

C-31 | FALSE EMMANUEL LITIGATION

“The court separately held Cofnas’s ‘meritocracy belief’ was a protected philosophical belief.”

The judgment treated the pleaded meritocracy/freedom beliefs as generalized instances of the anti-woke belief and insufficiently coherent to qualify separately.

Confidence: High | Sources: C03

C-32 | FALSE EMMANUEL LITIGATION

“Cofnas won his Emmanuel case and the court ordered reinstatement.”

The County Court dismissed the claim and held the College’s response proportionate on the record before it.

Confidence: High | Sources: C03,C08

C-33 | FALSE EMMANUEL LITIGATION

“The court held that Cofnas’s scientific hereditarian theory is factually true.”

The court decided protected-belief, causation/discrimination and proportionality issues. It did not adjudicate population-genetic or intelligence-science truth.

Confidence: High | Sources: C03

Institutional tension

C-34 | FALSE INSTITUTIONAL TENSION

“Because the court upheld Emmanuel, Cambridge University must also have found his publication punishable.”

The two institutions reached different outcomes under different relationships and rules: Emmanuel's affiliation termination was upheld; Cambridge's separate employer inquiry found no law/rules breach.

Confidence: High | Sources: C03,C04

Arday chronology

C-35 | FALSE ARDAY CHRONOLOGY

“Nathan Cofnas was the first person to discover plagiarism concerns involving Jason Arday.”

Retraction Watch documents Dave Harris and Martyn Hammersley raising textual-overlap concerns in 2023 and an unpublished Times Higher Education investigation in 2025.

Confidence: High | Sources: A01

C-36 | FALSE ARDAY CHRONOLOGY

“Cofnas merely copied a pre-existing rumor and found no independent evidence.”

Retraction Watch reports that Cofnas independently identified substantial dissertation overlaps, while also documenting that the broader concern predated him. Both propositions can be true.

Confidence: High | Sources: A01,A04

Research integrity

C-37 | FALSE RESEARCH INTEGRITY

“There are no formal corrections connected to the Arday plagiarism controversy.”

Two journal correction notices are part of the public publication record, in 2023 and 2024.

Confidence: High | Sources: A02,A03

C-38 | MISLEADING RESEARCH INTEGRITY

“The correction notices themselves constitute a formal finding that Arday committed plagiarism.”

Corrections document attribution/source problems and revisions. A correction is not automatically an institutional research-misconduct finding or admission of plagiarism.

Confidence: High | Sources: A02,A03

C-39 | MISLEADING RESEARCH INTEGRITY

“The correction notices prove the allegations were trivial clerical citation errors.”

The notices and Retraction Watch record show meaningful attribution/methodology revisions. Calling them trivial is minimization; the notices still do not adjudicate every broader allegation.

Confidence: High | Sources: A01,A02,A03

C-40 | UNSUPPORTED RESEARCH INTEGRITY

“Every plagiarism allegation against Arday has been conclusively proven.”

There was no completed public adjudication of every thesis, journal, biographical and qualification allegation. Some concerns are reproducible; others remained disputed or under investigation.

Confidence: High | Sources: A01,A06,A07,A08

C-41 | UNSUPPORTED RESEARCH INTEGRITY

“Arday was fully and finally cleared of every plagiarism allegation.”

Cambridge says some thesis/journal allegations were previously investigated, but later complaints remained open; corrections remained on record; additional qualification/appointment investigations were launched. The underlying LJMU report is not public.

Confidence: High | Sources: A01,A06,A07,A15

C-42 | MISLEADING RESEARCH INTEGRITY

“Cambridge itself investigated Arday’s Liverpool PhD and cleared it.”

Cambridge’s 2 August statement says the thesis allegations were investigated by Liverpool John Moores University, consistent with its policy that work should be investigated where undertaken.

Confidence: High | Sources: A06

C-43 | FALSE RESEARCH INTEGRITY

“Arday’s thesis had never been investigated at all.”

Cambridge’s 2 August statement expressly says plagiarism allegations regarding the thesis had been investigated by Liverpool John Moores University.

Confidence: High | Sources: A05,A06

Times Higher Education

C-44 | UNSUPPORTED TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION

“Times Higher Education dropped its 2025 story because the allegations had been disproved.”

Retraction Watch reports that the story did not publish after a legal letter denied the allegations and warned of reputational harm. The publicly available record does not establish the publication’s internal causal judgment that the allegations were disproved.

Confidence: Medium-High | Sources: A01

Cambridge conduct

C-45 | UNSUPPORTED CAMBRIDGE CONDUCT

“Cambridge ordered Times Higher Education to suppress the story.”

The record documents a legal letter associated with Arday and later institutional responses; it does not establish that Cambridge University ordered THE not to publish.

Confidence: Medium | Sources: A01

Cofnas framing

C-46 | MISLEADING COFNAS FRAMING

“Cofnas’s Arday intervention was an ideologically neutral technical plagiarism audit.”

His July article presents concrete overlap evidence but explicitly embeds it in a broader critique of DEI, race, Black professorships and Cambridge institutional standards.

Confidence: High | Sources: A04

C-47 | FALSE COFNAS FRAMING

“Because Cofnas had an ideological motive, the text overlaps he documented are therefore false.”

Motive does not determine whether passages overlap or whether correction notices exist. Reproducible evidence must be evaluated independently of the investigator’s politics.

Confidence: High | Sources: A01,A02,A03,A04

Cambridge response

C-48 | MISLEADING CAMBRIDGE RESPONSE

“Cambridge’s 5 August 2026 announcement opened only a new plagiarism investigation.”

The 5 August new investigation concerned academic qualifications and honorary appointments. Academic-misconduct complaints were described separately as ongoing.

Confidence: High | Sources: A07

C-49 | FALSE CAMBRIDGE RESPONSE

“Cambridge’s 12 August appointment investigation proves Arday was guilty of misconduct.”

Opening an investigation is not a finding. The Vice-Chancellor explicitly emphasized thorough process and future review.

Confidence: High | Sources: A08,A09

Arday admissions

C-50 | FALSE ARDAY ADMISSIONS

“Jason Arday admitted plagiarism before resigning.”

Arday denied the surrounding narratives and did not present his resignation as an admission. Public reports describe acknowledgment of mistakes, which is not the same as admitting plagiarism.

Confidence: High | Sources: A10,A12,A14

Arday resignation

C-51 | FALSE ARDAY RESIGNATION

“Arday’s resignation is itself proof that the allegations were true.”

Resignation is not an evidentiary admission. Arday’s own statement attributes the decision to wellbeing, family and the personal cost of scrutiny, while expressly rejecting an inference of acceptance.

Confidence: High | Sources: A10

Impact/distress

C-52 | FALSE IMPACT/DISTRESS

“There is no evidence the controversy caused Arday serious distress.”

Arday’s own resignation statement says sustained accusations, speculation and commentary took a profound toll on him and his loved ones. This establishes experienced distress, not cause of death.

Confidence: High | Sources: A10

Death causation

C-53 | UNSUPPORTED DEATH CAUSATION

“Cofnas caused or drove Jason Arday to his death.”

Chronology and evidence of distress do not establish individual medical, legal or psychological causation. No public police, coronial or judicial finding attributes Arday’s death to Cofnas.

Confidence: High | Sources: A10,A14

Death manner

C-54 | UNSUPPORTED DEATH MANNER

“It has been established that Jason Arday died by suicide.”

At the cutoff, police publicly described the death as unexpected and not suspicious. No public coronial determination of manner/cause was available. “Not suspicious” does not establish suicide.

Confidence: High | Sources: A14,A15

C-55 | FALSE DEATH MANNER

“Police said Arday was murdered or that foul play was suspected.”

Contemporaneous police reporting said the death was not believed suspicious.

Confidence: High | Sources: A14

C-56 | FALSE DEATH MANNER

“Because police said the death was not suspicious, it must have been natural causes.”

“Not suspicious” addresses suspected criminality; it does not establish medical cause or manner.

Confidence: High | Sources: A14

Death causation

C-57 | UNSUPPORTED DEATH CAUSATION

“The controversy can be proven to have played no role whatsoever in Arday’s death.”

Arday documented severe distress, but the public record does not establish causal contribution to death in either direction. A categorical zero-causation claim exceeds the evidence just as a categorical blame claim does.

Confidence: High | Sources: A10,A14

Family statements

C-58 | FALSE FAMILY STATEMENTS

“Statements by Arday’s family blaming harassment constitute an official cause-of-death finding.”

Family statements are important testimony about their experience and interpretation; they are not coronial or medical determinations.

Confidence: High | Sources: A14

Academic freedom

C-59 | FALSE ACADEMIC FREEDOM

“Plagiarism accusations by academics receive absolute immunity under academic freedom.”

Academic freedom strongly protects scholarly criticism but remains subject to law, proportionality, rights of others and institutional rules.

Confidence: High | Sources: G03,L01,L02

C-60 | FALSE ACADEMIC FREEDOM

“European human-rights law offers no protection to academics who publicly accuse colleagues of plagiarism.”

Boldea v. Romania, summarized in the ECHR academic-freedom factsheet, is directly relevant: a plagiarism accusation with factual basis concerning academic conduct received Article 10 protection.

Confidence: High | Sources: L01

C-61 | UNSUPPORTED ACADEMIC FREEDOM

“Boldea and Sorguç prove Ghent’s present suspension is unlawful.”

Those cases establish important principles and analogies, not a pre-judgment of this Belgian personnel dispute. The exact allegations and evidentiary record in Cofnas’s Ghent case remain undisclosed.

Confidence: High | Sources: L01,L02,G01,G02

C-62 | FALSE ACADEMIC FREEDOM

“If speech is offensive, it automatically falls outside academic freedom.”

Neither ECHR doctrine nor Cambridge’s own Cofnas outcome supports that categorical rule. Protection can extend to offensive/disturbing speech, subject to context and lawful limitations.

Confidence: High | Sources: L01,C03,C04

C-63 | FALSE ACADEMIC FREEDOM

“If speech concerns scholarship, a university may never impose employment consequences for its manner or effects.”

The Emmanuel judgment is a concrete counterexample: the court accepted protected beliefs yet upheld a proportionate response to their manifestation in that particular institutional relationship.

Confidence: High | Sources: C03

Science

C-64 | FALSE SCIENCE

“Human genetic ancestry or population structure does not exist; race-related clustering is entirely fictional.”

Human populations exhibit genetic structure correlated with ancestry. The scientific caution is about how that structure is described and whether social race categories are treated as discrete biological essences.

Confidence: High | Sources: S01,S02,S04

C-65 | MISLEADING SCIENCE

“Tang et al. proved that traditional racial categories are globally discrete biological races with 99.86% accuracy.”

The study found strong correspondence in a specific 3,636-person U.S./Taiwan sample using particular self-identification categories and markers. It does not establish universal discrete human subspecies or global equivalence of race and ancestry.

Confidence: High | Sources: S01,S02,S04

C-66 | FALSE SCIENCE

“High heritability of intelligence within populations proves that the average Black-White IQ gap is genetic.”

Within-group heritability does not by itself identify the causes of a between-group mean difference. This is a basic inferential limitation formalized in modern quantitative-genetic work.

Confidence: High | Sources: S03

C-67 | UNSUPPORTED SCIENCE

“Cofnas’s strong hereditarian explanation of Black-White IQ differences is settled scientific consensus.”

The relevant causal partition is not established as settled consensus. Current genetics guidance and quantitative-genetic analysis require much more than within-group heritability or ancestry structure to establish between-group causation.

Confidence: High | Sources: S02,S03,S04

C-68 | UNSUPPORTED SCIENCE

“Science has conclusively proved that genetics contributes exactly zero to every observed Black-White cognitive-score difference.”

The cited scientific literature rejects simple inference from heritability but does not justify a categorical exact-zero genetic conclusion for every observed difference. The publication-safe conclusion is epistemic: causal decomposition remains unresolved and difficult.

Confidence: High | Sources: S02,S03

Current politics

C-69 | FALSE CURRENT POLITICS

“The U.S. government has already ordered Ghent to reinstate Cofnas.”

The Times reports that the U.S. Ambassador urged Ghent to reverse the suspension and said relationships were under review. A diplomatic request or warning is not a legally binding order on Ghent.

Confidence: Medium-High | Sources: A16

C-70 | FALSE CURRENT POLITICS

“Ghent has already reinstated Cofnas after U.S. intervention.”

No public reinstatement announcement was located by the 21 August evidence cutoff. The latest official Ghent status remains precautionary suspension pending preliminary investigation.

Confidence: Medium-High | Sources: G01,A16

Control

C-71 | SUPPORTED CONTROL

“Cofnas’s Arday investigation contained genuine, independently checkable research-integrity evidence.”

The evidence includes reproducible textual overlap reported by independent specialists and formal journal corrections. This does not validate every broader allegation.

Confidence: High | Sources: A01,A02,A03,A04

C-72 | SUPPORTED CONTROL

“The central unresolved question is whether Ghent’s actual alleged conduct and evidence justify the preventive suspension and any later sanction.”

Ghent has disclosed the procedural posture but not the detailed specification. The legality/proportionality question therefore cannot be responsibly closed on the public record.

Confidence: High | Sources: G01,G02,G03

16 / FINAL FINDINGS

Publication-safe Pangburn verdict

A reliable public account should be more precise than either the martyrdom narrative or the culpability narrative.

16.1 Findings established at high confidence

- Ghent University has precautionarily suspended Nathan Cofnas during a preliminary disciplinary investigation; it has not publicly dismissed him or issued a merits finding. [G01-G02]
- The detailed Ghent allegations are not public. Describing the official charge as either “exposing plagiarism” or “racism/discrimination” adds specificity not supplied by Ghent. [G01,A12]
- Cofnas’s Ghent employment was already controversial months before the Arday dossier. [G06-G10]
- Emmanuel College, not Cambridge University, terminated Cofnas’s non-employment CRA affiliation in 2024. [C03]
- The 2026 County Court dismissed Cofnas’s Emmanuel claim while recognizing his hereditarian and anti-woke beliefs as protected with reservation and upholding the College response as proportionate. [C03]
- Cambridge University separately concluded in 2025 that Cofnas’s published views did not breach law or University free-speech regulations. [C04]
- The Arday research-integrity controversy contains serious, independently checkable evidence and formal correction notices; the concern predates Cofnas. [A01-A03]
- No public record supports claiming every Arday allegation was proven, every allegation was finally cleared, or resignation constituted an admission. [A06-A10]
- Arday’s own statement establishes serious distress from scrutiny; the public police record does not establish suicide or individual causal responsibility by Cofnas. [A10,A14]
- ECHR academic-freedom principles are materially relevant but do not decide the legality/proportionality of Ghent’s particular preventive suspension without the actual allegations. [L01-L02,G01-G03]

16.2 Highest-risk language to avoid in publication

- “Ghent fired Cofnas.”
- “Ghent found Cofnas guilty of racism.”
- “Cofnas was fired by Cambridge University in 2024.”
- “Harvard proved race-blind admissions would be 0.7% Black.”
- “Cofnas discovered the Arday plagiarism scandal from scratch.”
- “Arday was fully cleared of every plagiarism allegation.”
- “Every plagiarism allegation against Arday was proven.”
- “Arday admitted plagiarism when he resigned.”
- “Cofnas drove Arday to suicide.”
- “Police established suicide.”
- “ECHR case law proves Ghent’s suspension is illegal.”
- “The court proved Cofnas’s race science is true.”

16.3 Recommended 130-word public summary

PUBLICATION COPY

As of 21 August 2026, Ghent University has precautionarily suspended postdoctoral researcher Nathan Cofnas while a preliminary disciplinary investigation proceeds; it has not publicly announced a dismissal, finding of misconduct, or detailed charge. Cofnas’s recent campaign against former Cambridge professor Jason Arday combined substantial, independently checkable research-integrity evidence with broader DEI, race and biographical claims. Concerns about Arday’s work predated Cofnas and resulted in journal corrections, but the public record does not establish that every allegation was proven or fully cleared. Arday documented profound distress from public scrutiny before his death; police described the death as unexpected and not suspicious, and no public record at the cutoff establishes suicide or individual causal responsibility by Cofnas. The central unresolved question is whether the specific conduct Ghent is investigating lawfully and proportionately justifies the suspension.

APPENDIX A / SOURCE REGISTER

Verification register - 41 tracked sources

Links are provided for public replication. Primary sources control where possible. Interested sources are explicitly labeled and are not used alone to prove contested claims.

G01 Statement: Respect for human dignity and opposition to discrimination

PRIMARY / GHENT | Ghent University | 19-20 Aug 2026

Official source for the preliminary disciplinary investigation and precautionary suspension; Ghent does not publicly identify the detailed allegations.

[Open source](#)

G02 Overview of the disciplinary procedure

PRIMARY / GHENT | Ghent University | current guide, accessed 21 Aug 2026

Defines disciplinary offenses, preliminary investigation, referral, disciplinary chambers, sanctions, and preventive suspension.

[Open source](#)

G03 Code of Ethics

PRIMARY / GHENT | Ghent University | accessed 21 Aug 2026

Ethics rules applicable to staff/postdocs; protects personal expression while setting limits related to discrimination, hatred, violence, segregation, racial superiority and racial hatred.

[Open source](#)

G04 Liberalism's Fertility Problem (BOF/STA/202302/012)

PRIMARY / GHENT | Ghent University Research Explorer | project 2024-2027

Official project page for the research project under which Cofnas was hired.

[Open source](#)

G05 Curriculum Vitae, updated May 2026

PRIMARY / COFNAS | Nathan Cofnas | May 2026

Primary source for Cofnas's listed employment and research areas.

[Open source](#)

G06 Ghent University under fire over hiring of "race realist" philosopher

SECONDARY / NEWS | Times Higher Education | Mar 2026

Reports Ghent's statement that Cofnas was selected as the most suitable candidate through a procedurally correct process and documents early opposition.

[Open source](#)

G07 Ghent University under fire for appointing US philosopher with ties to "scientific racism"

SECONDARY / NEWS | The Brussels Times | Mar 2026

Contemporaneous reporting on appointment controversy and Ghent's defense of procedure.

[Open source](#)

G08 Position paper concerning Nathan Cofnas appointment (English translation)

PRIMARY / INTERNAL POSITION | Ghent philosophy faculty members | Jun 2026

Detailed critical case by members of the Ghent philosophy environment; treated as an interested position document, not an institutional adjudication.

[Open source](#)

G09 Interview with Cofnas critic Dr Pieter Beck

SECONDARY / LOCAL | Schamper | 6 Apr 2026

Documents arguments by an internal critic concerning the ethics code and hiring.

[Open source](#)

G10 Stop the hiring of Nathan Cofnas at Ghent University

CLAIM PROVENANCE | Change.org | created 7 Mar 2026

Petition used to document opposition narrative and scale; not used as proof of scientific or legal propositions.

[Open source](#)

G11 No, the appointment of Nathan Cofnas at Ghent was not “fixed”

SECONDARY / DOCUMENT REVIEW | Doorbraak | 19 Jun 2026

Reports review of internal hiring documents and an unusually extensive comparison process; used cautiously because underlying complete file is not public.

[Open source](#)

C01 University response to recent blogs by Dr Nathan Cofnas

PRIMARY / CAMBRIDGE | University of Cambridge | 16 Feb 2024

University response distinguishing free speech from widespread disagreement and student impact.

[Open source](#)

C02 Statement regarding recent blog post by Dr. Nathan Cofnas

PRIMARY / CAMBRIDGE | Faculty of Philosophy, Cambridge | 29 Feb 2024

Faculty-level statement about academic freedom, racism/discrimination, and student/staff welfare.

[Open source](#)

C03 Cofnas v The Master, Fellows and Scholars of Emmanuel College, Claim L04CL172

PRIMARY / LEGAL | County Court at Cambridge | judgment 13 Mar 2026

Best public reconstruction of the Emmanuel process, Cofnas's CRA status, College reasoning, protected-belief findings and proportionality judgment.

[Open source](#)

C04 Statement on disciplinary investigation: Dr Cofnas

PRIMARY / CAMBRIDGE | University of Cambridge | 2 Oct 2025; updated Dec 2025

University employer-level inquiry concluded Cofnas's published views did not breach law or University regulations designed to uphold free speech.

[Open source](#)

C05 A Guide for the Hereditarian Revolution: How to Win the Elites and Create a Better World

PRIMARY / COFNAS | Nathan Cofnas | 5 Feb 2024

Primary source for the essay at the center of the Emmanuel controversy.

[Open source](#)

C06 Modeling Admissions to Harvard College: Preliminary Analysis

PRIMARY / LITIGATION EXHIBIT | Harvard Office of Institutional Research | 8 Oct 2013

Internal Harvard modeling: the “academic only” model produced about 0.67% African-American admits.

[Open source](#)

C07 Report of the Committee to Study Race-Neutral Alternatives

PRIMARY / HARVARD | Harvard University | 2018

Different simulation of ending consideration of race while retaining holistic admissions; estimated African-American representation falling from about 14% to 6%.

[Open source](#)

C08 Academic freedom under threat at Cambridge - appeal update

ADVOCACY / PARTY | Free Speech Union / Cofnas supporters | 19 Mar 2026

Confirms the County Court claim was dismissed and states Cofnas's team intended to appeal; advocacy source for appeal status, not merits.

[Open source](#)

A01 Cambridge professor faced plagiarism allegations before Cofnas investigation

SPECIALIST / INVESTIGATIVE | Retraction Watch | 27 Jul 2026

Key independent chronology: concerns in 2023, 2025 unpublished reporting, independent reviewers, corrections, and Cofnas's separate 2026 work.

[Open source](#)

A02 Correction: Arday, Jason (2018). Understanding Mental Health: What Are the Issues for Black and Ethnic Minority Students at University?

PRIMARY / JOURNAL | Social Sciences (MDPI) | 6 Dec 2023

Formal correction adding/clarifying citations and overlap/source attribution.

[Open source](#)

A03 Correction: Attempting to break the chain: reimaging inclusive pedagogy and decolonising the curriculum within the academy

PRIMARY / JOURNAL | Educational Philosophy and Theory | 16 May 2024

Formal correction clarifying methodology/source relationships and references.

[Open source](#)

A04 DEI Fraud and Cover-Up at Cambridge

PRIMARY / COFNAS | Nathan Cofnas | 21 Jul 2026

Primary source for Cofnas's plagiarism evidence, wider biographical allegations and explicit DEI/race framing.

[Open source](#)

A05 Public note asserting Arday had never been investigated or cleared

PRIMARY / COFNAS | Nathan Cofnas | 25 Jul 2026

Primary source for a categorical procedural claim later contradicted by Cambridge's 2 August statement.

[Open source](#)

A06 Statement to media

PRIMARY / CAMBRIDGE | University of Cambridge | 2 Aug 2026

States thesis and some journal-publication plagiarism allegations had been investigated by Liverpool John Moores University and journals under sector practice.

[Open source](#)

A07 Statement about Professor Arday

PRIMARY / CAMBRIDGE | University of Cambridge | 5 Aug 2026

Opens investigation into academic qualifications and honorary appointments; separately notes ongoing academic-misconduct complaints.

[Open source](#)

A08 Statement from the Vice-Chancellor

PRIMARY / CAMBRIDGE | University of Cambridge | 12 Aug 2026

Announces independent investigation into Arday's 2022 appointment and time at Cambridge and review of senior appointment / misconduct processes.

[Open source](#)

A09 Statement to the Cambridge community

PRIMARY / CAMBRIDGE | University of Cambridge | 14 Aug 2026

Expands review of relevant University processes and reiterates merit, fairness and due process.

[Open source](#)

A10 An update from Jason Arday

PRIMARY / ARDAY | Jason Arday via Good Law Project | 5 Aug 2026

Arday's resignation statement: denies that resignation should be read as accepting surrounding narratives and describes profound personal/family toll from accusations and public commentary.

[Open source](#)

A11 Jason Arday appointed Professor of Sociology of Education

PRIMARY / CAMBRIDGE | Faculty of Education, Cambridge | 23 Feb 2023

Contemporaneous institutional account of Arday's appointment and public biography.

[Open source](#)

A12 Academic who raised concerns over Jason Arday suspended by Ghent University

SECONDARY / WIRE | Reuters | 20 Aug 2026

Independent reporting on suspension, Cofnas's characterization of the investigation and Ghent's confidentiality.

[Open source](#)

A13 Academic who accused Jason Arday of plagiarism suspended by his university

SECONDARY / NEWS | The Guardian | 20 Aug 2026

Independent reporting and example of compressed institutional/causal framing.

[Open source](#)

A14 Jason Arday, ex-Cambridge professor at centre of plagiarism scandal, found dead

SECONDARY / WIRE | Reuters | 14 Aug 2026

Reports police description: death unexpected and not treated as suspicious; no public cause or manner finding.

[Open source](#)

A15 Tributes paid to Jason Arday after former Cambridge professor's death

SECONDARY / NEWS | The Guardian | 15 Aug 2026

Reports LJMU review outcome in broad terms and police status; useful secondary source where underlying LJMU report remains non-public.

[Open source](#)

A16 Trump official intervenes in suspension of Arday critic Nathan Cofnas

SECONDARY / NEWS | The Times | 21 Aug 2026

Reports U.S. Ambassador Bill White urged Ghent to reverse the suspension and warned U.S.-Ghent relationships were under review. Primary diplomatic correspondence was not independently obtained.

[Open source](#)

L01 Factsheet: Academic freedom

PRIMARY / ECHR | European Court of Human Rights | current through 2026

Summarizes Article 10 academic-freedom case law including *Boldea v. Romania* and *Sorguç v. Turkey*.

[Open source](#)

L02 Sorguç v. Turkey, Application no. 17089/03

PRIMARY / ECHR | European Court of Human Rights | 23 Jun 2009

Academic-freedom judgment emphasizing academics' ability to express opinions about institutions/systems; not a direct ruling on Ghent.

[Open source](#)

S01 Genetic Structure, Self-Identified Race/Ethnicity, and Confounding in Case-Control Association Studies

PRIMARY / SCIENCE | Tang et al. | Am J Hum Genet 76 (2005)

3,636-person sample; strong correspondence between self-identification and genetic clusters in that particular study population, with five discordant assignments.

[Open source](#)

S02 Using Population Descriptors in Genetics and Genomics Research

CONSENSUS / SCIENCE | National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine | 2023

Consensus framework distinguishing race/ethnicity from genetic ancestry and warning against discrete innate-category interpretations.

[Open source](#)

S03 Heritability within groups is uninformative about differences among groups

PRIMARY / SCIENCE | Schraiber & Edge | PNAS 121 (2024)

Formal demonstration that within-group heritability alone does not identify genetic versus environmental causes of between-group mean differences.

[Open source](#)

S04 Recommendations on the use and reporting of race, ethnicity, and ancestry in genetic research

EXPERT GUIDANCE | Khan et al. | Cell Genomics 2 (2022)

Peer-reviewed recommendations distinguishing social race/ethnicity labels from genetic ancestry and population descriptors.

[Open source](#)

APPENDIX B / ADVERSARIAL AUDIT

Final error-prevention checklist

This pass was designed to find reasons the report could be wrong, not reasons to preserve its preferred conclusion.

- Current-state check repeated against Ghent's latest official statement at the 21 August cutoff; no later public Ghent reinstatement, dismissal or merits finding located.
- Ghent procedure checked against the University's own disciplinary guide: preliminary investigation, referral, preventive suspension and final sanctions kept distinct.
- Ghent hiring claims checked against University-reported procedural defense, critics' accounts and a counter-report based on internal documents; categorical "fixed appointment" claims held unsupported.
- Emmanuel/Cambridge identities checked against the 2026 County Court judgment and Cambridge's 2025 official employer inquiry outcome.
- Court holdings checked at paragraph level, including protected beliefs, meritocracy-belief treatment, manifestation analysis, proportionality and dismissal of the claim.
- Cofnas's 2024 essay re-read in full enough to capture both its sweeping hereditarian/race-political claims and its explicit criticism of white nationalism/antisemitism/racial hatred.
- Harvard 0.67% figure checked against the underlying 2013 OIR model and contrasted with the separate race-neutral holistic analysis.
- Arday chronology checked against Retraction Watch, primary journal correction notices and Cambridge's 2/5/12 August statements.
- Cambridge 5 August scope corrected: qualifications/honorary appointments investigation is separate from ongoing academic-misconduct complaints.
- Arday resignation checked against his own published statement; resignation is not treated as admission.
- Death language checked against Reuters/police reporting: "unexpected" and "not suspicious" are not converted into suicide, natural death or medical cause.
- Causation language checked to distinguish experienced distress from causal responsibility for death.
- ECHR cases treated as legal principles/analogies, not as direct adjudications of Ghent's Belgian employment dispute.
- Science claims checked against Tang et al., National Academies guidance, Cell Genomics recommendations and Schraiber & Edge; bridge inferences explicitly blocked.
- Latest political intervention checked against 21 August reporting and labeled secondary because the complete diplomatic correspondence was not independently obtained.
- All 72 claim ratings checked for scope words and consistency with source notes.
- No copyrighted news photograph reused in the V2 cover.

Known evidence gaps that could materially change later editions

- Ghent's notice of allegations / factual specification and complete evidentiary file.
- Any final Ghent preliminary-investigation decision, referral, merits finding, sanction or appeal outcome.
- The complete Liverpool John Moores University investigation report concerning Arday's thesis.
- Complete Times Higher Education editorial/legal file concerning the unpublished 2025 story.
- Any final Cambridge reports on Arday's qualifications, appointment, time at Cambridge and research-misconduct complaints.
- Any public coroner determination concerning Arday's cause and manner of death.
- Any appellate decision in Cofnas's Emmanuel litigation.
- Primary U.S. diplomatic correspondence or official State Department record regarding the 21 August intervention.

AUDIT RESULT

V2 preserves the core conclusion of V1 while correcting scope errors and substantially expanding context. The strongest justified conclusion remains procedural and evidentiary rather than partisan: serious research-integrity evidence exists; serious speech/anti-discrimination questions exist; and the decisive Ghent merits record is still not public.

END OF REPORT