

# If Sullivan's Offit, then JB is Bigfoot!

By David N. Brown

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The "neurodiversity" sphere has been abuzz for the last day over the latest antic of AoA, particularly a contributor I have, for purposes of more secure discussions, dubbed the "Hairy Biped" or simply HB (a designation in Fortean/ cryptozoological circles for Bigfoot-like creatures ). The HB has claimed that "Sullivan" of LBRB is actually Bonnie Offit, wife of vaccine researcher Paul Offit. Here is my analysis of his major arguments, plus a shocking revelation:

*"He is the de facto spokesperson for the other side, be it CDC, AAP, or Big Pharma, and AoA has demonstrated that he has both voted himself rich by adding his own vaccine to our kid's schedule and never never treated treated a child with autism, despite inserting himself into our debate as some sort of expert."*

The HB starts strong with a massive, jumbled run-on sentence to hold his fuzzy allegations and facts. When exactly did Offit "add his own vaccine to our kid's schedule"? While he did vote to add rotavirus vaccination, while holding a patent on a rotavirus vaccine, his patent was nowhere close to becoming a commercial product at the time. On what basis does Handley say that Offit "never (sic) never treated an autistic patient"? What does that even mean? Is he saying that not one of the thousands of children Offit must have seen was autistic, even though the diagnosis rate is currently estimated at ca. 1 in 100? Finally, how exactly has Offit "inserted" himself as "some sort of expert" on autism? Offit is not an expert on autism, but then he has never claimed to be. He is indisputably an expert on vaccination, so as long as the HB and others insist vaccines cause autism, he has a perfectly appropriate role to play in discussion. And, incidentally, the HB has no formal credentials whatsoever on autism OR vaccines, so what right does he have to complain?

*"'Sullivan' is a prolific, anonymous blogger. In the last few years, Sullivan has essentially hijacked a website, LeftBrainRightBrain --a site that used to be dedicated to the concept of 'Neurodiversity.' Sullivan's subject matter, in dozens of blog posts, is the vaccine-autism controversy, and really nothing else. "*

Really? What is Handley's idea of "anonymous"? "Sullivan" withholds his identity in public posts, but he is quite free in identifying himself in personal and "friendly" correspondences (including communications with me). And what's this about "hijacking" the site? Sullivan shares duties with Kev Leitch in managing LBRB, and I understand that, in times when Kev is particularly busy with other matters, Sullivan has taken the lead. That's delegation, not "hijacking"- does the HB not get the former concept? Finally, why is JB suddenly trying to separate a "concept of 'Neurodiversity'" from the subjects of his wrath? He didn't seem interested in making fine distinctions when he was threatening "you neurodiversity folks" back in 2005.

*"If you read the above post again closely, you'll see 2 things: 1) Liz Ditz claims to know Sullivan personally, and 2) Liz Ditz refers to Sullivan as 'her.' Conclusion: Sullivan claims to be a man, and is actually a woman. "*

Problem: Why is Liz Ditz a better source than others (including Kev Leitch and myself) to whom

Sullivan has unequivocally self-identified as a man? It can be granted, for purposes of discussion, that we might be fooled. Just explain, why would Liz know anything we don't? Gee, no answer. Oh, and if Sullivan *is* a woman, and Liz Ditz *does* know it, wouldn't that raise the possibility that they live in approximately the same area, which, given Liz's known CA address, would be on *the far side of the country* from where Paul Offit lives? Huh, still no answer. So why shouldn't we just accept in good faith Liz's own explanation that the slippery pronoun on which the HB builds his hypothesis was about a different person mentioned by name in the same paragraph?

*Anyone who reads dozens of Sullivan's posts, as I have, would probably reach the same conclusion. It's hard to hide your gender when you write, much as it's hard to hide your nationality.*

Gee, who might know how to learn about the author's identity from the document? Literary scholars, linguists, psychologists, theologians, folklorists... and is the HB trained or even well-read in these subjects? If so, he hasn't done much to advertise it. And who, among those who claim to know what they are doing, is saying that document analysis offers a decent chance of identifying an author's gender? Well, apparently, three computer scientists teamed up with an English professor to develop an [algorithm](#) that was claimed to predict a writer's gender correctly 83% of the time. Given that the chances of doing so by random chance alone should be about 50%, this is not unduly impressive. [Gender Genie](#), a web site/ service using a "simplification" of the algorithm, admits to a success rate of about 60%. So, could the HB explain how a distinction that an academically designed tool can make half again as often as random guessing should be reached by "anyone" who gives it thought?

*"I have yet to see a single post where Sullivan mentions her autistic child in any material way or reveals anything about the pain of caring for an affected child."*

I find it hard even to dignify this stupidity with a rhetorical question. I'll try this: Would JB find it more satisfactory if Sullivan told in pages of tear-jerking, stomach-churning detail how his autistic child had been kidnapped through a secret door in a department store changing room, left in a bathtub full of ice with both kidneys missing, and needed the donation of 10,000 soda can tabs before the hospital would provide a dialysis machine? Even I will credit the HB with enough intelligence and honesty to say no. It should go without saying that the detail of a narrative is no useful test of the narrator's honesty. In fact, it is my experience and opinion, based particularly on interactions with veterans, that reservation is a hallmark of authenticity: Quite simply, people who have survived terrible things do not like to talk about it, and when they do they do not go into detail. If JB cares to disagree, then he can first tell me how many people he knows have been in combat.

*"Sullivan brings up and protects Offit at every turn"*

So what is, as it were, the evidence of this evidence? A forum exchange involving 6 posts by "Sullivan", in which ONE mentions Offit. How does 1 in 6 add up to "at every turn"? And who is the one really obsessing about Paul Offit?

*"Sullivan is in communication with Paul Offit, with great insight."*

So, what is the first example given of such "insight"? "(I)n my experience, Dr. Offit doesn't read blogs." As is clear even from Handley's dubious recounting, Sullivan drew this conclusion from electronic correspondences. So where is the evidence for a personal, let alone "intimate", connection supposed to be?

*"I asked Mark and Dan about Sullivan. Mark Blaxill noted that Sullivan, `seemed to have an unusually good knowledge of Offit's finances as well as terrific research skills in finding old CHOP policies."*

Strange that they would have said this. They got the correct figures from me well before I provided Sullivan with the same information. Besides which, they were the ones who assumed that Offitt's Rotateq income could be established from public records. As it turns out, they were right about that much: When I contacted Paul Offit about the matter, I had already calculated a figure which he confirmed. If AoA's reporters had consulted the RIGHT documents, they could have done the same thing first.

*"Mark and Dan had a brief exchange with `Sullivan' who, despite repeated requests from Mark, refused to disclose her true identity."*

Again, one may wonder, how well this represents Olmsted's and Blaxill's own perceptions? On reviewing "Sullivan's" [post](#) about this interaction, it appears that, in fact, AoA's own editors drew very different conclusions than the HB. Blaxill reportedly replied, in part, *"The only definitive way to resolve the ambiguity is full disclosure of the amounts Offit received from all sources and he has declined to do so. So we have no plans at the moment to act on this or any other new information."* If these words are taken at face value, then at the time, Blaxill and Olmsted were skeptical whether Sullivan had even been in contact with Paul Offit. So why is it that, at their own blog, the same events are suddenly being used to argue that Sullivan is a member of Offit's household? It is tempting to wonder whether they had a choice...

*"Sullivan knows what's in Paul Offit's new book, Deadly Choices, even though it hasn't been released yet."*

Let's see... The book is already listed on [Amazon](#). (Incidentally, I sell my own books there.) The page includes four reviews, so presumably some people are already reading it. There is also a [link](#) advertising how publishers and authors can upload content from their books for potential buyers to read online. The publisher hasn't exercised that option, but what are the chances the HB bothered to figure that out? Indeed, it is tempting to speculate that the Biped considers himself above becoming conversant with something as proletarian as amazon.com.

*"In a post titled "Storm in a Teacup, " Sullivan goes out of her way to defend Paul Offit's rotavirus vaccine, after it was determined that the vaccine contained a pig virus..."*

A non-trivial factual problem: Offit holds the patent on Rotateq, which is made by Merck. The pig virus contamination was found in Rotarix, which is made by GSK. So, not only was the contamination NOT in "Paul Offit's rotavirus vaccine", it was in fact found in the COMPETITOR to Offit's vaccine. So, *wouldn't that give an actual representative of Offit motive to ENCOURAGE a panic over the contamination?*

*"I'm personally convinced, I think Bonnie Offit is Sullivan."*

In other words... the Biped *believes* he is thinking? Now *that* I can believe.

*"I believe there is compelling evidence to implicate Bonnie Offit as the blogger known as Sullivan. If true, then Bonnie Offit is posing as a parent of a child with autism to engender sympathy and credibility for her point of view. This is dishonest and, well, absolutely reprehensible. In fact, I'd even call it disgusting--Offit's wife is pretending to be one of us!"*

Now this one is "interesting" indeed. It opens the way for an even more interesting line of questioning of Handley's assumptions. Suppose Bonnie Offit ***DID*** decide to try to be an "autism blogger". Well then, why would she claim to be male? Many prominent bloggers, including AoA's Kim Stagliano, are women. Why would she hide that she is a doctor? Even the "anti-vax" side does not treat medical credentials as automatic cause for suspicion. Why would she invent a story about an autistic child? There is no shortage of people with a meaningful presence as "autism bloggers" who make no claim of a diagnosis for themselves or anyone in their immediate family. For that matter, why not just **blog under her own name?** If she did, there is no reason why she would not be accepted as warmly as her husband has been... in other words, warmly by everyone except the HB, AoA and associated "anti-

vaxxers”.

And by the way, who is “us”? There's “anti-vax/ biomed”, which is for a causation theory science declares debunked and “treatments” science considers unproven at best and useless and dangerous at worst, and “neurodiversity”, which accepts the paradigm of genetic causes for autism and seeks better treatment rather than a “cure”. So, what common ground do “we” have to be united upon?

And now, the finale, the HB's “challenge”:

*“Bonnie Offit, or Sullivan for that matter, I have a simple offer:*

*If you can produce a dad with a child with autism with a remarkable grasp of the medical and scientific literature who blogs under the name Sullivan, a man who has an inordinate grasp of the details of your husband's patents, lawsuits, published studies, and web habits, I will make sure that the pauloffit.com website is given to you and your husband for good. “*

This leads me to my own conclusion: JB HANDLEY IS BIGFOOT!

Evidence? Oh, I guess I should have some... Okay, how about this:

1. JB Handley's initials, backwards, are HBJ, and HB stands for “Hairy Biped”, a designation for Bigfoot and/or Bigfoot-like creatures.
2. JB Handley lives in northern California, a major locality for Bigfoot sightings.
3. The theory of Bigfoot is questioned or rejected by most scientists. JB's theory of vaccine-caused autism is questioned or rejected by even more scientists.
4. People who see Bigfoot may be too embarrassed to report it. People seen with JB may be embarrassed to be reported.
5. Video recordings has failed to prove that Bigfoot is true. Videos have also failed to record JB telling the truth.
6. JB has never denied he is Bigfoot.
7. Bigfoot has never denied being JB.

So there you have it: Proof that JB is Bigfoot, until and unless he proves he isn't.

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