

Physics 596 – Fall 2023

Scientific Ethics Case Study #9*

“A couple of years ago I was writing a paper and disliked the look of a figure a collaborator had made. Since I had set up the apparatus he was using, I knew how to access the raw data and I downloaded it in order to make a more attractive plot. When I did so, I was shocked to see that the data that were presented in the figure as being from one specimen were actually from three different specimens. He had created a false impression of reversibility by gathering together data that were actually on different samples.”

Before discussing the case: Identify people in the group for the following presentation duties: (i) A person to present the ‘case’ in their own words to the rest of the class; (ii) a person to present one point of view in this study; (iii) a person to present the opposing point of view; and (iv) a person to lead a class discussion of the case. Feel free to take notes as necessary to present your discussions to the class.

Discuss this case study with your team and prepare to relate your discussions to the rest of the class. Among the topics you might consider: Were the collaborators’ actions unethical? What should/can this person do?