On November 24, DNA Diagnostics, a veterinary laboratory headed by Dr. Melba S. Ketchum, issued a press release that rocked the cryptozoological world:

A team of scientists can verify that their 5-year long DNA study, currently under peer-review, confirms the existence of a novel hominin hybrid species, commonly called “Bigfoot” or “Sasquatch,” living in North America. Researchers' extensive DNA sequencing suggests that the legendary Sasquatch is a human relative that arose approximately 15,000 years ago as a hybrid cross of modern *Homo sapiens* with an unknown primate species.

The study was said to include sequences of twenty whole mitochondrial genomes. "Next generation sequencing" was used to obtain three whole nuclear genomes from "purported Sasquatch samples." The mitochondrial DNA was identical to modern *Homo sapiens*, but the nuclear DNA was described as "a novel, unknown hominin related to *Homo sapiens* and other primate species." Thus, the researchers concluded from this DNA data that not only does the North American Sasquatch exist but that it is a hybrid species, "the result of males of an unknown hominin species crossing with female *Homo sapiens*.

This announcement enthralled the press but annoyed many cryptozoology and science observers because it came with *no published paper and no data*, only a long and shady history of partnerships, projects, and promises. Ketchum promised the paper would soon follow. When it finally did appear, *nearly three months later*, it was less than impressive, made no sense evolutionarily, and sparked new controversies about her personal responsibility, the ethics of publishing, and what was going on behind the scenes with this project.

Science by press release is an unprofessional form and often is a bust upon peer review. (The classic example is cold fusion.) Melba Ketchum asked the public directly to buy into an extraordinary claim: that she has categorized Bigfoot DNA and understands its origin, proposing not one but two unknowns—Sasquatch and an unknown ancestor of Sasquatch. What evidence is there that this is true? We have only her word on the samples and just one paper that, as we will see, has had a difficult history, but there are no corresponding, converging lines of evidence. No other reliable physical evidence, traces, fossil record, historic record, or an undisputed clear picture or video of a Sasquatch exists. Moreover, environmental factors have not been shown to reasonably support the existence of a number of large primates reproducing in the wild often reportedly visiting human-inhabited areas. Even besides these obvious hurdles to acceptance, we have many reasons to be suspicious.

The Ketchum DNA project spans more than five years. Drama, propelled by occasional leaks that fueled speculation and hype, played out on the Internet via social media and blogs. Many inside Bigfootery had been following Dr. Ketchum's progress closely for more than a year prior to the official announcement. Hints of the findings were long discussed in Internet forums and on websites. It is extremely difficult to parse what is factual about Ketchum's project.
Hints of the findings were long discussed in Internet forums and on websites. It is extremely difficult to parse what is factual and what is unfounded, and sometimes ludicrous, speculation. I have attempted to chronicle the story with the help of those who have been watching it more closely than I and, on occasion, Dr. Ketchum herself has spoken on it. Here I document the chronology and claims as best as I can, but many of the sources are secondhand. You can make up anything on the Internet and obviously some people do. However, rumor and wild speculation are a major part of this story primarily because the public was not given solid information but rather an intriguing tale.

Questions and disputes about the plausibility of Ketchum's results and the origins of Sasquatch/Bigfoot created a schism in cryptozoological circles. The focus of the dispute is often on Ketchum herself, who has control of the entire project.

Who is Melba Ketchum? She is a veterinarian who graduated from Texas A&M veterinary school. She did not complete a PhD. While not an academic, she runs her own genetics lab and has been a coauthor on several published papers but never a lead author. With such a complicated and extraordinary claim as the discovery of Bigfoot DNA, her lack of experience in the specialized field of primate genetics hurt her credibility with the members of the scientific community who have actually expressed an interest in this project. She notes that she does have experience in forensics because she worked on DNA evidence from crime scenes, which was vital in assuring these study samples were not contaminated. There remains the murky area regarding the origin and history of the purported Sasquatch samples, the validity of her data, and how one can so definitively conclude "Bigfoot" from this one study prior to review by the scientific community. I found that these big ideas about Bigfoot precluded the data. Many other red flags obscure the view as well.

Back to the Beginning

The Ketchum story begins in 2008 when her lab was picked to analyze a suspected Bigfoot/yeti hair from Bhutan collected as part of Josh Gates's adventure show, Destination Truth, which airs on the Discovery Channel in the U.S. Ketchum appeared twice on the show, in 2009 and 2010 (Season 3 numbers 9 and 12), as a forensic analyst. She then became one of the "go to" people for those who had collected DNA samples that they thought might be from a Bigfoot.

Over the next few years, Ketchum received many additional samples and funding from various sources to conduct more analyses of these samples (mostly hair, but also blood, saliva and tissue) through her own lab, DNA Diagnostics, and other laboratories.

Uneasiness about the project might start with Ketchum's business dealings. She was affiliated with various corporations registered in the state of Texas, including one called Science Alive, LLC. This partnership included Robert Schmalzbach (better known as "Java Bob" who was previously an officer under Tom Biscardi's group Searching for Bigfoot) and Richard Stubstad, an engineer who became interested in Bigfoot DNA and was a funder of Ketchum's work. According to Stubstad, some sort of dispute occurred in the fall of 2010 as lawyers eventually managed to cut Schmalzbach and Stubstad out of this corporation venture leaving Ketchum with entire control of any media from publicizing Bigfoot DNA findings.

This was not the first or last of legal dealings where Ketchum was involved. Ketchum had been sued and lost a claim for patent infringement that required her lab to stop using certain tests. In addition, the lab itself was not in good standing with the public, having an "F" rating by the Better Business Bureau due to complaints for delivering results, a possible problem with the state of Texas regarding payment of franchise taxes, and some lost client contracts.

Ketchum responded to these issues by admitting some mistakes and reminding us that Bigfoot is an enigma. She took the stance that the general public needs a way to explore this phenomenon and that her work was beneficial in the search for Bigfoot DNA.
Ketchum responded to these issues by admitting she was naive regarding the people involved in Bigfootery, some of whom she described as turning out to be unethical. She did not know of their reputations but wanted them removed from the study to protect its integrity. This naïveté continued even after the paper hit the mainstream.

Ketchum has been associated with several other individuals and projects throughout the years of Bigfoot DNA collection and analysis, including the Olympic Project—a group of researchers studying habitat and attempting to obtain trailcam photos of Bigfoot; Tom Biscardi of Searching for Bigfoot, Inc., involved with the infamous 2008 Georgia "Bigfoot in a freezer" hoax, who collected DNA samples for her project; Wally Hersom, a generous contributor to several Bigfoot research projects, who funded at least some of Ketchum's work; Adrian Erickson of Sasquatch – The Quest, who stated he has high quality pictures and video of the creatures; and David Paulides of North American Bigfoot Survey, who is a Ketchum supporter. Paulides, an ex-police officer and author of books about missing persons and the “tribe” of Bigfoot has been particularly outspoken about Ketchum, placing the responsibility of the scientific study of Bigfoot DNA all on her, saying each of the samples used had its own specific story. Ketchum alone had all the data, he says, and deserves the praise.

Nondisclosure agreements were signed among participants of the projects so that information would not be leaked prior to the reveal. But it was anyway. The sources of these samples supposedly included a toenail obtained by Biscardi from Larry Johnson, blood from a smashed PVC pipe, and flesh from the remains of a Bigfoot body (see sidebar, "Sierra Kills"). But it is not clear that all the samples were collected properly. They also may have been exposed to contamination or to degradation.

With the Destination Truth samples of 2008 apparently the primer for her interest in the subject, in August of 2010, Dr. Ketchum disclosed on the Coast to Coast AM radio program that she had a scientific paper in the works. The forthcoming paper provided an excuse for her to avoid discussing the results at the time. However, in the fall of 2010, Ketchum was doing additional interviews about her work. Ideas about Bigfoot being a type of human were already formed by other Bigfoot researchers. A copyright filing in her name dated September of 2010 described a media project related to "a new tribe of living humans." The theme of a book or video was to be "Sasquatch as a modern human with some genetic mutations accounting for their physical appearance." This copyright notice foreshadowed the results of her DNA study stating that the project would describe "complete Sasquatch mitochondrial genome sequence and nuclear DNA variations." Ketchum later brushed aside the notice saying it never came to fruition. But, this idea also corresponded to hypotheses proposed by David Paulides in his book Tribal Bigfoot published in 2009.

Bigfoot Community Feeds Hype and Grows Impatient

News about Ketchum and the various Bigfoot projects was fed by rumors, speculation, and opinions that appeared unsourced on the Internet. The social media aspect, especially personal web logs and the Facebook network have provided a near-steady stream of both clear and dubious information. Melba herself became active on her own Facebook fan page in 2009 providing information directly to the public. In June 2012, the public page went away and only the private "friend" page existed. Several Bigfoot-themed blogs dutifully reproduced any news she posted on Facebook verbatim. She occasionally did address questions about the study on her page but often referred questions to her publicist, Sally Ramey, who possibly also posted updates to this page. Therefore, it was not clear who was actually supplying the content for the Facebook page.

In late 2011, Ketchum provided an update on Facebook that the results were complete and the paper was being submitted for publication. She told her...
She told her followers to be patient—good science takes time. Citing the famous skeptical mantra, "Extraordinary claims require extraordinary proof," she added, "This is what we are doing." She appeared confident that her data would stand up to scrutiny. However, Ketchum herself avoided opportunities of appearing in public. She was a no-show at two conferences in which she was scheduled to speak about Bigfoot DNA—a Bigfoot conference in Honobia, Oklahoma, in October 2011 and the Richland, Washington, Bigfoot conference in May 2012. For the latter, she completed a "DNA 101" presentation via Skype computer connection. Those observers in attendance reported their disappointment to interested Bigfoot bloggers. The community of Bigfooters expressed their concern that she was avoiding questioning by not appearing in public and completely controlling the discussion while everyone waited, hopeful for concrete results. However, Ketchum has alleged that she chose not to attend because there was a threat against her person at one of these events.

Every week, a diligent few searched the embargoed papers awaiting publication. There were many false alarms. A prolific blogger named Robert Lindsay was a major informant who published inside information and leaks from the various Bigfoot projects and activities for several years. Throughout 2012, he sparked interest on multiple occasions that the Ketchum paper would be published very soon. It wasn't. There were rumors that the paper had been submitted to the prestigious journal Nature but had been sent back due to lack of qualified authors or a testable hypothesis. In February 2012, Ketchum implored her followers to have patience saying, "Our data is amazing and beautiful and all cutting edge." She also noted she was creating a website for nonscientists to be able to access the paper and understand what it meant. This was seen to be in the works in December 2012 on the DNA Diagnostics website.

Ketchum continued the "hurry up and wait" status by suggesting that revisions were requested for the paper, but it was never made clear if it was actually accepted anywhere for publication. She bragged that the paper had "double digit coauthors, many with PhDs and some University heads of departments." In July, she assured followers that the bases were covered and "It will be worth the wait." Throughout 2012, her supporters in the Bigfoot community grew frustrated by the secrecy and delays. Confidence in the Ketchum Project and in Melba herself eroded. The red flags noted by commentators included rumors of infighting among the project members, the fractioning of the original group of participants, the ever moving release date for the data, and concerns about the sample origins and the ability of the results to withstand scrutiny of the scientific community. To be clear, many scientific papers do take months of waiting and back and forth exchanges to revise the manuscript prior to publication. So this frustration by spectators was unfounded and should, in fairness, not have been attributed to Ketchum creating delays.

Ketchum threw many observers for a loop when she disclosed that she had actually seen the creatures herself and described them as "peaceful and gentle." In April of 2012, she made public a photo she said she took with her mobile phone of an array of sticks in the forest with a suggestion that it was made by the creatures. This "blurry sticks" picture incited nasty comments on forums and blogs by a discouraged audience who bemoaned this unprofessional behavior. Ketchum claimed to have additional evidence to support the claim that a family of five "playful" Sasquatch repeatedly visited a site, known as a "habituation" site, but she did not reveal the location or further details. Her comments stated that her personal experiences were not meant to convince the nonbelievers; the DNA study would do that.

Meanwhile, a parallel Bigfoot DNA project was launched by Bryan Sykes, professor of human genetics, University of Oxford, and Dr. Michel Sartori, directeur Musee de Zoologie, Switzerland. This Oxford project invited submission of indeterminate DNA samples "as part of a larger
enquiry into the genetic relationship between our own species Homo sapiens and other hominids."

According to the published schedule for this project, samples were to be collected from May to September of 2012, analyzed from September through November, with a paper to be prepared for publication before the end of 2012. Because the peer review process does indeed take months and perhaps up to a year, we should not expect to see these results published until possibly well into 2013. Dr. Sykes obtained a copy of Ketchum’s paper to analyze and told me through personal communication that he has no comment on it (as of the time of this piece going to press) nor any updates on his own project to share. That is a different tactic from the parade of social leaks Ketchum provided.

Dr. Jeff Meldrum, of Idaho State University, a well-known academic involved in Bigfoot research, has also steered clear of the Ketchum project and, instead, backs the Sykes study, perhaps even by submitting a sample toward it. Meldrum was also critical in semi-public (through released email exchanges) of the Ketchum "science by press release" approach. It surely did not help Ketchum's reputation that she was associated with Igor Burtsev, a Russian Yeti researcher. In the recent past, Meldrum expressed annoyance with the approach of Burtsev and other Russian "scientists" eager about the study of Bigfoot in their native lands.

When fall 2012 came and no paper had yet appeared, things started to turn sour for the Ketchum camp. In September, Ketchum’s public relations person Sally Ramey was gone. She was replaced with Robin Lynne Peffer, a woman who claimed a family of Bigfoot (whom she refers to as "Forest People") lived on her land in Michigan. She is known in the Bigfoot community for her widely publicized comment that the Bigfoots like blueberry bagels. Peffer, however, does not appear to have any experience in either science or in public relations. It is not clear why or how Peffer was named as the Ketchum spokesperson.

Observers noted in October that Ketchum’s lab building in Timpson, Texas, was closed and up for lease. The phone had been disconnected. One blogger followed up and discovered a back story of Ketchum’s missing payments and her neglect of the business itself. The business, nevertheless, still exists but at a different mailing address.

Results Are Exposed
Ketchum’s key to gaining acceptance for her Bigfoot DNA claims was to publish in a respected peer-reviewed scientific journal. But the plan went awry. The complicated mix of people, secrecy, delays, and promises boiled over in late November when news of the study was "outed" by Igor Burtsev. The self-appointed head of the Russia-based International Center of Hominology, Burtsev issued this "Urgent" announcement on his Facebook page on November 23:

"The DNA analysis of the Bigfoot/Sasquatch specimen conducted by Dr. Melba Ketchum the head of DNA Diagnostics, Timpson, TX, USA has been over!" He stated that the team of American scientists led by Ketchum analyzed 109 purported samples of the creatures.

Ketchum sounded somewhat dismayed when responding to the leak saying, "It is unfortunate that the partial summary of our data was released in this manner, however, I will be making a formal response in the next few days. Even though Igor Burtsev released this, it was not Dr. Burtsev’s fault." She later admitted that possibly misunderstandings due to language and his eagerness was why the nondisclosure agreement was breached. At this point, she felt that the study must be addressed instead of ignoring the leak that might cause further damage if left unattended.

After the official announcement of the results in November, Ketchum appeared in a few media interviews. In one, she mentioned that the paper of the study would be accompanied by high-definition video footage of the creatures. The origin of this video is the Erickson Project.
his website, Erickson mentions the video and the many samples they collected that were analyzed for DNA (included in the cache of Ketchum samples). Back in February of 2012, Ketchum had thanked Erickson for funding support for DNA testing. None of the footage has been released except for one still shot of a hairy, indeterminate shape on the forest floor and hearsay that the images were either wonderful or not convincing. The Erickson project website went down for a while in November 2011 when it was rumored that Erickson had run out of money for it. It resurfaced in 2012.

A few scientists have spoken out, showing enthusiasm and interest in the Ketchum results. Others were scathing in their criticism against her and the entire concept of the study. To fuel further ridicule, the "unknown novel" DNA was publicized as "angel DNA" by blogger Lindsay. A few press outlets included this mention in their pieces. Dr. Ketchum denies ever using such a label.

David Paulides, the Director of the North American Bigfoot Search (NABS) once again threw support behind the results and Ketchum, saying, "Dr. Ketchum originally found the combination to unlock Bigfoot DNA and utilized top scientists in various fields to validate her results. The results were independently verified with the group silently sitting on these findings for months, as the results were validated a third and fourth time." If true, that may explain the delays exhibited through 2010–2011. Paulides had more commentary to add regarding the DNA. In the press, he is quoted as saying that "It falls in the realm of human." Experts in the field of human DNA studies may wonder why they weren't consulted for her publication.

The worldwide media coverage over the press release from Ketchum on November 24 had not quite died down when, on December 6, Igor Burtsev was spilling more news on Facebook, saying the paper was rejected by the U.S. journals, but is now under review in a Russian journal. Burtsev issued a scathing rebuke of what he considers the closed-minded American science establishment and their rejection of Bigfoot, noting that the creature's existence is accepted by the public—as if scientific truth is somehow based on popular vote.

Response from the Ketchum camp was incoherent with Robin Lynne remarking, contrary to Burtsev, that the paper was still under review and "extremely scientific." Again, we are left wondering what role Burtsev was playing in this drama.

There may be some truth in the allegation that reputable science journals would not touch the study due to its association with Bigfoot. Because there is no type specimen or any corroborating credible physical evidence, there is no justification for mentioning a creature known only from folklore in the study. Scientifically, all the results could say is that the DNA is "unidentified."

The Paper Appears

On February 12, 2013, Ketchum commented on social media outlets "Buckle up!" and the next day, the paper appeared along with a new press release.


The paper describes the conclusion stated earlier in the November pre-paper press release, that both the mitochondrial and nuclear DNA were sequenced. The mitochondrial DNA, inherited from the maternal side, was human. But the nuclear DNA was not. This consisted of a "structural mosaic" of "human and novel non-human DNA."
Upon attempting to access the paper the morning it appeared, I encountered the next huge misstep by Ketchum. The journal, *DeNovo*, is a brand-new online outlet that consists of one issue with only this one paper. The website is clunky and amateurishly designed with stock “sciencey” photos of animals and test tubes. A strangely placed “buy now” button was in the center yet on one page, the words “DeNovo – Open Access” floats in a blank box. For a moment, I did think the paper was freely available. Not so. Clicking on the buy now button, I was taken to a checkout page that charged $30 for access.

Backing out of the site to look for other reactions, I noticed that several Bigfoot bloggers had already obtained complimentary copies or they had managed to download the paper for free care of a site glitch. I requested, through email to the address in the press release, a complimentary press copy as well.

This inquiry went unanswered. I was provided two review versions of the paper later in the day via other means.

Regarding the origins of *DeNovo*, Ketchum said on the day of the paper release that an unnamed journal had accepted the paper after peer review was completed, but their lawyers advised them *not* to publish due to the disreputable topic. Instead of continuing to shop the paper to other sources, she decided to acquire the rights to this unnamed journal, suspected to be the *Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Exploration in Zoology*. Looking into the history of that journal, investigators found it was registered under Ketchum’s name on January 9, 2013. This led to serious ethical questions about self-publishing. The *DeNovo* website was created on February 4, 2013, just nine days prior to the release of the paper. Ketchum claims to have documentation of the prior reviews and from the acquisition of the new journal. These, and any information on which journals previously rejected the paper, have not yet been released.

In the announcement of the paper, Ketchum mentioned two associated websites: the Sasquatch Genome Project and the Global Sasquatch Foundation. Both were produced with what appeared to be very basic web tools and hosted on low-volume servers. Both sites failed the first day possibly due to traffic. Prior to their inaccessibility, I captured some information published on them. On the Sasquatch Genome Project page, Ketchum denied she self-published and took a dig at the scientific community. “We encountered the worst scientific bias in the peer review process in recent history,” she said, calling it the “Galileo Effect” and suggesting she was treated unfairly. Ketchum’s explanation for publishing in *DeNovo* was that she was eager to get the data out there and not have to deal with further rejections, hinting that all the previous reviewers were less than decent or open-minded seemingly because they rejected her work.

On the Global Sasquatch Foundation site, this statement appeared: “Due to the efforts of our founder Dr. Melba Ketchum it has been proven that Sasquatch are a human hybrid. Here at G.S.F. we have made it a priority to protect these indigenous people from being hunted, harassed, or even killed.” One could assert that this statement was premature considering the scientific community had not assessed her conclusion. Regardless, she had extreme confidence in her results. The Foundation site also included pictures of stick structures supposedly constructed by the creatures and a photo of a matted horse’s mane, an example of what Ketchum has alleged is Sasquatch “braids” in the horse's mane.

As for the paper itself, it was incomprehensible to those without specialized training in genomics or forensics. It began with the premise that Sasquatch exists and this study helps to confirm that. Two days later, Ketchum announced through social media that (unnamed) “top level scientists” volunteered to assess her data. A few days after, a statement appeared on the *DeNovo* website from David H. Swenson, a biochemist, who said he reviewed the manuscript and agrees with the conclusions. This statement, as well as Ketchum’s own statements and those of her spokesperson were also riddled with grammatical and typographical errors.
The few experienced geneticists who viewed the paper reported a dismal opinion of it noting it made little sense. The DNA sequences did indeed contain matches to human chromosome 11, a lot of undetermined DNA, and some that, in part, matched to other animals. Thus, the whole sequences do not resemble any known animal and are contradictory with evolutionary biology. In a curious sidenote, the term *de novo* is used in bioinformatics to designate the absence of a reference genome. Next generation sequencing (NGS) technology was used in this study to read the whole genome, a process that used to be far more time and labor-intensive. There are problems with NGS *de novo* protocols that can lead to poor data quality. We do not know if the results were properly evaluated prior to concluding that the genome data could be used and if the interpretation of the results is reasonable. These factors will likely come into play during the expert external reviews of the paper.

Some critics have stated that the DNA may have been contaminated. Ketchum assures everyone that she fully accounted for contamination issues and dismisses this allegation, citing her own the lab’s experience with handling forensic crime samples. The samples have not been made available to others so there is currently no way for anyone to run a retest to compare results. There appear to be multiple places where the data quality could have been compromised, regardless of how confident Ketchum is in her results.

**The Circus That Followed**

Accompanying the official version of the paper was Erickson’s video, which supposedly showed a sleeping Sasquatch. The short clip, made public a day later, showed a brown, furry mass sleeping on a woodland floor. The Erickson project claimed that DNA was obtained from this individual, named Matilda, which was analyzed as part of the Ketchum study providing a link to a real creature. The promised high-definition video evidence was not made available. Within a week, researcher Bill Munns claimed that he had acquired still shots of Matilda whereby the face strongly resembled Chewbacca, a tall, hairy Bigfoot-esque creature from the Star Wars movies. If that wasn’t enough to increase the derision for Ketchum’s work, what may be the most humiliating find came from careful readers on a skeptical forum. Three of the references cited in the Ketchum paper as prior published research on the creatures were discovered to be questionable in validity. One was an openly-stated April Fools prank that concluded the Yeti was actually an ungulate (hoofed mammal) and that its resemblance to apes was due to convergent evolution. When confronted with this information, Ketchum denied responsibility, saying she was told to include “all” references by one reviewer. She did not concede that she knew they weren’t reputable scientific works.

So what does Ketchum have? Is it human DNA with an undocumented variation? Is it animal samples contaminated with human DNA or vice versa? Is it a concocted hoax? Or is it actual unique DNA that may point to the existence of an unknown hominin (or two)? In a revealing interview on *Coast to Coast AM* she told the public she is not after glory, would rather avoid the publicity, and has turned down (others’) money-making offers. She admitted that she wouldn’t tackle this project if given another chance due to the trouble it created for her. She admits she was not privy to the culture of Sasquatchery that exists where many players try to either one-up or discredit the other person. She is solidly convinced that she has enough data to unquestionably make the case for the existence of Bigfoot even without a type specimen. In the *Coast to Coast AM* conversation, she likened them to "special forces soldiers" who cannot be seen unless they want to be. She has completely accepted that they exist across North America and wishes them to be protected as a tribe of people. Her research continues.

In the presentation of this potentially earth-shaking discovery, Dr. Ketchum lost every shred of scientific credibility through her short-circuiting genetic experts and the process of peer review. Instead, she attempted to appeal to the popular Bigfoot enthusiast crowd as if she was some kind of gumshoe. This was a disastrous move that left many of us to wonder about whether her research will ever reach the esteemed level it deserves.
genetic experts and the process of peer review. Instead, she attempted to appeal to the popular Bigfoot enthusiast crowd as their savior who has the goods. Even that backfired. She continues to make excuses instead of admitting her errors and poor judgment. She censors those who point out these serious problems or ask questions about them, and she has not exhibited cooperation with geneticists who are experts in human DNA. The people supporting her are not usually helpful to her cause. Her disclosures about her own personal sightings and obvious missteps in the process have done much to sabotage her own credibility. It’s not a pleasant picture.

For now, the Ketchum chapter in the saga of Bigfoot remains unresolved. There is one thing we can be certain of: this is not the end of the story of Bigfoot. The legend will live on in the hearts of those who believe.

Notes
19. http://is.gd/6WrhXK
Sharon Hill
Sharon Hill is a scientific and technical consultant for the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry and creator of DoubtfulNews.com. Read more at SharonAHill.com.
The Ketchum DNA project spans more than five years. Drama, propelled by occasional leaks that fueled speculation and hype, played out on the Internet via social media and blogs. Many inside Bigfootery had been following Dr. Ketchum’s progress closely for more than a year prior to the official announcement. Ketchum has been associated with several other individuals and projects throughout the years of Bigfoot DNA collection and analysis, including the following: the Olympic Project—a group of researchers studying habitat and attempting to obtain trailcam photos of Bigfoot; Tom Biscardi of Searching for Bigfoot, Inc., involved with the infamous 2008 Georgia “Bigfoot in a freezer” hoax, who collected DNA samples for. New evidence is supposedly in the works confirming that Dr Melba Ketchum’s original analysis of some Bigfoot DNA samples was correct. It is time to jump for... If you read my Bigfoot articles at all, you’ll know I already believe that Bigfoot exists, and in several iterations around the world. What we’re all longing for is some definite DNA proof that we can take to the scientific community at large and prove to them that these creatures exist. Just this month Dr. Ketchum appeared on Coast to Coast with host George Noory and spoke about some other Bigfoot DNA research that is currently happening which she feels will vindicate her findings from a few years ago. You can watch the video yourself, it’s just under 6 minutes. Cloak and Dagger. Previous alleged Bigfoot samples subjected to DNA analysis have been deemed "unknown" or "unidentified." However, "unknown" or "unidentified” results do not mean “Bigfoot.” There are many reasons why a DNA sample might come back unknown, including that it was contaminated or too degraded by environmental conditions. Ketchum’s is not the only genetics-based project intended to find Bigfoot. Earlier this year, researchers from Oxford University and the Lausanne Museum of Zoology announced they were collecting samples of alleged Bigfoot and Yeti hair for genetic identification. Oxford geneticist Bryan Sykes collected materials from the public from May through September, and is currently conducting DNA analysis.