



Plastic Fantastic: How the Biggest Fraud in Physics Shook the Scientific World (MacSci)

By Eugenie Samuel Reich

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Highly regarded science journalist Eugenie Samuel Reich recounts the case of wunderkind physicist Jan Hendrik Schön, who faked the discovery of a new superconductor at the world famous Bell Laboratories. Many of the world's top scientific journals and experts, including Nobel Prize-Winners, supported Schön, only to learn that they were the victims of the biggest fraud in science. What drove Schön, by all accounts a mild-mannered, modest, and obliging young man, to tell such outrageous lies? Reich dives into the riveting world of science to examine how fraud perpetuates itself today. Schön's rise and fall will be an essential and fascinating account of the missteps of the scientific community for years to come.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Reich, a former editor at New Science, unravels the absorbing story of Jan Hendrik Schön, a researcher at the prestigious Bell Laboratories from 1998 to 2002, who achieved star status in cutting-edge materials technology—super-conductivity, lasers, nanotechnology—by falsifying data. A graduate of Germany's "low key" University of Konstanz, he dove immediately into "a demanding environment... known for big discoveries, ambitious expectations." When his papers on experiments with organic crystals were rejected, he manipulated data and made false claims; publication followed. When the tech bubble burst, Bell came under increasing pressure from parent company Lucent to justify its existence; short-circuiting the normal process of peer review, the lab turned to public relations, "press-releasing exciting scientific findings" to fool investors, customers and Lucent into believing Bell had "a sound long-term technological future." Reich's clear explanation gives general readers a real sense of the excitement generated in the scientific community by Schön's "discoveries," how he made them appear credible and how his ability to dissemble eventually failed him; he also raises profound ethical questions that resonate with current concerns over science and its place in the public sphere.

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From [Booklist](#)

Reich recounts the read-it-to-believe-it saga of physicist Hendrik Schön. At Bell Labs in the late 1990s, Schön's apparent discoveries about atomic-scale devices called field-effect transistors earned him a stellar peer-group reputation—until his research was exposed as faked in 2002. While science's self-correcting mechanism did dissolve Schön's deceptions, its failure to catch the frauds sooner motivates Reich's tenacious pursuit of the story. Along with failures in the peer-review process of journals like *Science* and *Nature*, which published some of Schön's papers, Reich found a propensity within Bell Labs to believe Schön's results, which, had they been real, could have commercially benefited the home of the original, macroscale transistor. Another crucial factor that Reich develops was Schön's ability to allay tough questions with revised data, though when he began to manipulate and outright invent data remains mysterious, for on that he eluded Reich, too. Nevertheless, Reich's journalistic persistence and technical thoroughness yield a largely complete, often dramatic account of Schön's roguery and downfall. --Gilbert Taylor

Review

"*Plastic Fantastic* offers a compelling, timely and well-written dissection of our era's most outrageous scientific fraud, and of what it means for science today." ?*American Scientist Magazine*

"Reich's readable account of a fairly recent science fraud, is valuable chiefly as a close look at the 'kitchen' where scientific results are assembled and validated--and whence occasionally comes forth something that should not have seen the light of day." ?*John Derbyshire, The Wall Street Journal*

"Reich pursues this affair in depth...does an excellent job of dealing with the facts of the Schön case" ?*Martin Blume, Nature*

"Eugenie Samuel Reich offers an inside look into how the scientific establishment deals with human imperfection. *Plastic Fantastic* is a transfixing cautionary tale of how easily wrongdoers can hide and thrive in modern science." ?*Jörg Blech, author of Inventing Disease and Pushing Pills*

“In a warts 'n all expose of the scientific process, Eugenie Reich investigates the world's greatest scientific fraud. Fascinating, startling and highly readable. If you thought science was as pure as the driven snow, prepare to be shocked.” ?*Justin Mullins, consultant editor, New Scientist*

“A riveting tale of scientific detective work, and a story about an important issue in science that is often overlooked. A well researched page-turner.” ?*Amir Aczel, author of Fermat's Last Theorem*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Robert Stitt:

A lot of people always spent all their free time to vacation as well as go to the outside with them loved ones or their friend. Were you aware? Many a lot of people spent they free time just watching TV, or maybe playing video games all day long. If you need to try to find a new activity that is look different you can read some sort of book. It is really fun to suit your needs. If you enjoy the book which you read you can spent all day every day to reading a publication. The book *Plastic Fantastic: How the Biggest Fraud in Physics Shook the Scientific World (MacSci)* it doesn't matter what good to read. There are a lot of those who recommended this book. These were enjoying reading this book. When you did not have enough space to develop this book you can buy typically the e-book. You can m0ore very easily to read this book from your smart phone. The price is not too costly but this book possesses high quality.

Eli Benton:

People live in this new day of lifestyle always try to and must have the time or they will get wide range of stress from both day to day life and work. So , if we ask do people have free time, we will say absolutely indeed. People is human not really a huge robot. Then we question again, what kind of activity do you possess when the spare time coming to anyone of course your answer will unlimited right. Then ever try this one, reading guides. It can be your alternative within spending your spare time, typically the book you have read is *Plastic Fantastic: How the Biggest Fraud in Physics Shook the Scientific World (MacSci)*.

Susan Brooks:

Reading can called brain hangout, why? Because when you are reading a book especially book entitled *Plastic Fantastic: How the Biggest Fraud in Physics Shook the Scientific World (MacSci)* your thoughts will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in each aspect that maybe unknown for but surely will become your mind friends. Imaging every single word written in a book then become one web form conclusion and explanation in which maybe you never get ahead of. The *Plastic Fantastic: How the Biggest Fraud in Physics Shook the Scientific World (MacSci)* giving you a different experience more than blown away your thoughts but also giving you useful data for your better life within this era. So now let us demonstrate the relaxing pattern this is your body and mind are going to be pleased when you are finished examining it, like winning an activity. Do you want to try this extraordinary investing spare time activity?

Kimberly Plummer:

Plastic Fantastic: How the Biggest Fraud in Physics Shook the Scientific World (MacSci) can be one of your nice books that are good idea. We recommend that straight away because this e-book has good vocabulary that may increase your knowledge in vocab, easy to understand, bit entertaining but nevertheless delivering the information. The author giving his/her effort to get every word into pleasure arrangement in writing Plastic Fantastic: How the Biggest Fraud in Physics Shook the Scientific World (MacSci) nevertheless doesn't forget the main stage, giving the reader the hottest as well as based confirm resource information that maybe you can be among it. This great information may drawn you into new stage of crucial pondering.

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