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# BioPolitical

## News&Views

April 29, 2021

### SPOTLIGHT

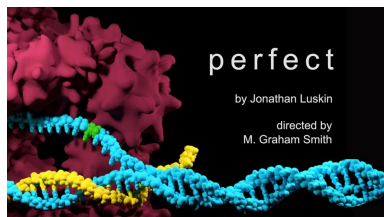


**Gene-edited Enhancements for Sale in Ukraine?**

Pete Shanks, *Biopolitical Times* | 04.28.2021

A clinic in Ukraine plans to sell CRISPR enhancements for hair color, skin, and breast size, writes UC Davis professor and stem cell researcher Paul Knoepfler.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS



#### Don't miss *Perfect!*

Catch this “dive into the brave new world of genetic engineering” in two live virtual performances on May 15 and 16.

[Information and pay-what-you-wish tickets here.](#)

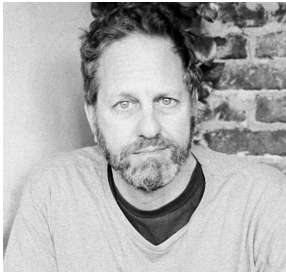


#### Take action to support survivors of eugenic sterilization in California

Compensation for survivors of eugenic sterilization in California has failed to clear the state legislature for the past three years. California Latinas for Reproductive Justice is calling on Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez to support the Compensation for Survivors of Forced or Involuntary Sterilization Act (AB 1007).

[Call and/or post on social media in support of AB 1007.](#)

## COMMENTARY



### **Perfect: An Interview with the Playwright**

**Marcy Darnovsky**, *Biopolitical Times* | 04.27.2021

Award-winning playwright **Jonathan Luskin** set out to explore the theme of perfection in a context of genetic engineering. What kind of world will this science build? And what will be our experiences in that world?

## CGS IN THE NEWS



### **Bayer plots big cell therapy building as master plan for Berkeley site moves forward**

**Ron Leuty**, *San Francisco Business Times* | 04.22.2021

CGS executive director Marcy Darnovsky urged the City of Berkeley and the Planning Commission to make sure they “understand thoroughly and exactly what techniques will be used for the entire duration of the new development agreement” and what risks those techniques may carry.

## WHAT WE'RE READING

GENOME EDITING | GENOMIC DATA | ASSISTED REPRODUCTION |  
EUGENICS | MOSQUITOES | VARIOUS

### GENOME EDITING

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#### **An experimental gene therapy was little Alissa's only hope. Now, instead of certain death, she faces an uncertain future.**

**Karen Weintraub**, *USA Today* | 04.25.2021

It's too early to know whether these approaches will change a child's trajectory, allow an adult to live without fear and pain, or prevent a disease from ever coming back. Alissa's parents say they hope the trial will help others, but are realistic about what might be achievable for themselves. They just want a daughter they can communicate with in some way.

#### **Reversible Gene Editing Is On The Horizon**

**Amanda Winkler**, *Freethink* | 04.24.2021

A team of researchers at MIT and UCSF has developed a new gene-editing system that they call “CRISPRoff.” According to the researchers, this system can change how specific genes behave, much like CRISPR, while leaving the DNA strand unaltered — and offering the possibility of reversible modifications.

#### **Scientists Create Early Embryos That Are Part Human, Part Monkey**

**Rob Stein**, *NPR* | 04.15.2021

The embryos were created in part to try to find new ways to produce organs for people who need transplants, said the international team of scientists who collaborated on the work. But the research raises a variety of concerns. For instance, critics worry that human cells could become part of the developing brain of such an embryo — and of the resulting animal.

## From Gene Bombs to Classroom Curriculum

[Svetlana Reiter](#), [Alexander Ershov](#), and [Farida Rustamova](#), *Meduza* | 04.14.2021

The Russian government seems likely to allocate \$3 billion to genetic research in the next few years. Vladimir Putin personally supervises the program, and has put his own relatives and closest friends in charge, with the oil giant Rosneft as the state's main corporate partner. The role of molecular biologist Denis Rebrikov, who wants to use CRISPR to produce gene-edited children, is unclear.

## GENOMIC DATA

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### We Have “Gifted” Enough: Indigenous Genomic Data Sovereignty in Precision Medicine

[Krystal S. Tsosie](#), [Joseph M. Yracheta](#), [Jessica A. Kolopenuk](#), and [Janis Geary](#), *The American Journal of Bioethics* | 04.07.2021

Erasure of the ongoing resistance of Indigenous peoples leads to the problematic framing of Indigenous participation in research as being a matter of “gifting” and “reciprocity.” An alternative concept of “DNA on Loan” opens pathways toward Indigenous genomic and data sovereignty in precision medicine.

## ASSISTED REPRODUCTION

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### Standard IVF is fine for most people. So why are so many offered an expensive sperm injection they don't need?

[Robert Norman](#) and [Ben W. Moi](#), *The Conversation* | 04.22.2021

A new study shows a widely used fertility treatment, the expensive sperm injection technique known as ICSI, is no better than standard IVF for most people. Why do clinics around the world routinely offer it?

### The Lost Embryos

[Katherine Rosman](#), *The New York Times* | 04.16.2021

Elaine Meyer and Barry Prizant had given up on having more than one child. Then, in their 60s, they got a letter from the hospital where they'd long ago had IVF treatment. The hospital had found two frozen embryos in a glass vial at the bottom of a tank and wanted to charge for storage. The couple say they were never informed.

## EUGENICS

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### The Lasting Impact of Eugenics: An Interview with Audrey Clare Farley

[Eleanor J. Bader](#), *The Progressive* | 04.20.21

The author of a new book, *The Unfit Heiress: The Tragic Life and Scandalous Sterilization of Ann Cooper Hewitt*, discusses the politics and history of the eugenics movement. She explains why intellectual disabilities were seen as a bigger threat to white supremacy than physical disabilities, and how today's religious right grew out of the eugenics movement.

### I'm the Head of Planned Parenthood. We're Done Making Excuses for Our Founder.

[Alexis McGill Johnson](#), *The New York Times* | 04.17.2021

We don't know what was in Sanger's heart, and we don't need to in order to condemn her harmful choices. Achieving health equity requires fighting the systemic racism that creates barriers to sexual and reproductive health care. Our reckoning is understanding her full legacy, and its impact. Our reckoning is the work that comes next.

## Conservative Judges Are Manipulating the History of Eugenics to Overturn Roe v. Wade

[Mark Joseph Stern](#), *Slate* | 04.15.2021

A U.S. Court of Appeals upheld an Ohio law that prohibits doctors from performing an abortion if they know the reason is that the fetus has been diagnosed with Down syndrome. In an interview, New York University law professor Melissa Murray explains, and strongly critiques, the rationale for this decision and describes what to expect next.

## MOSQUITOES

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### Oxford malaria vaccine proves highly effective in Burkina Faso trial

[Sarah Bosely](#), *The Guardian* | 04.23.2021

The vaccine, developed by scientists at the Jenner Institute of Oxford University, showed up to 77% efficacy in a trial of 450 children in Burkina Faso over 12 months. It is the first to meet the WHO goal of 75% efficacy against the mosquito-borne parasite disease. Larger trials are now beginning, involving 4800 children in four countries.

### Paradise altered: EPA approves first release of genetically modified mosquitoes in Florida Keys

[Taylor White](#), *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* | 04.19.2021

This spring, the biotechnology company Oxitec plans to release genetically modified mosquitoes in the Florida Keys. But their plan, in the works since 2011, has long been met with suspicion among locals and debate among scientists.

## VARIOUS

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### Stop talking about AI ethics. It's time to talk about power.

[Karen Hao](#), *MIT Technology Review* | 04.23.2021

Kate Crawford, author of *Atlas of AI*, wants to change the kinds of conversations we have about AI. "Where are the civil society groups, where are the activists...? How do we make this a far deeper democratic conversation around how these systems are already influencing the lives of billions of people in primarily unaccountable ways that live outside of regulation and democratic oversight?"

### Inside the rise of police department real-time crime centers

[Rowan Moore Gerety](#), *MIT Technology Review* | 04.19.2021

Police departments want to know as much as they legally can. But does ever-greater surveillance technology serve the public interest? How does the use of surveillance tools affect the relationship between officers and the residents they encounter in their daily rounds? How do they change the collective understanding of the purpose of policing?

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