

SOFTWARE

THE AMYLOID WESTERN BLOT: SCHRAG VS LESNÉ

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Piller has now even [published a book](#) “Doctored Fraud, Arrogance, and Tragedy in the Quest to Cure Alzheimer’s”. As expected the book is not very well received, just to mention Lola Butcher [at Undark](#)

His specific focus is on images — particularly Western blot images and micrographs — that bolster research findings. In “Doctored,” he takes a deep dive into two cases. The first is the story of Cassava Sciences ... The book also zeroes in on Alzheimer’s researcher Karen Ashe, a University of Minnesota professor, and her colleague, neuroscientist Sylvain Lesné ...

Despite the worrisome picture they paint, the people who identified the problem images — and other experts Piller recruited to review their work — do not accuse their fellow scientists of fraud. Image-doctoring does suggest probable or apparent misconduct, Piller writes, but a definitive conclusion requires comparing the images with lab notebooks and other sources of data that were not available to the reviewers.

Unfortunately, Piller’s many tangents and the confusing organization of his material make for rough reading. For example, the first five chapters are devoted to detailed biographies of individuals who might be considered main characters of the book. As the narrative unfolds, though, the hundreds of minute details in those 50 pages are never shown to be particularly relevant.

or [Ian Kremer](#), [Dave Weisman](#) or [Dennis Selkoe](#)

Charles Piller's book contains errors of fact, distortions, and misleading messages to our patients...

First, Piller emphasizes some cases of fraudulent or badly executed research. Such work is grossly unacceptable ... Second, there exists no "amyloid cabal." Many other features of Alzheimer's have been researched over decades ... Piller's claim that an evidence-based focus on amyloid prevented other research is wrong. As of September 2024, the National Institute on Aging had 68 active pharmacological trials on Alzheimer's; only 14 focused on amyloid.

Third, many investigators have chosen to work on amyloid because 13 specific lines of published evidence support an early role for amyloid as a driver of tau and inflammation....

Science integrity should [neither used as weapon](#) should not be exploited for financial gain, as happened in this instance.

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PAGES: **1** **2** **3** 4
