

# CLASSIC NASTY, INCOMPETENT, AND STUPID STATEMENTS ABOUT COLD FUSION

Compiled from the Bad-Mouthings  
of the Ignorant, Misinformed, and Arrogant  
Circa 1989-1991

A Public Service by Dr. Eugene F. Mallove  
(Compiled from *Fire from Ice* and other sources.)

“It would not matter to me if a thousand other investigations were to subsequently perform experiments that see excess heat. These results may all be correct, but it would be an insult to these investigators to connect them with Pons and Fleischmann.

“Putting the ‘Cold Fusion’ issue on the same page with Wien, Rayleigh-Jeans, Davison-Germer, Einstein, and Planck is analogous to comparing a Dick Tracy comic book story with the Bible.”

Professor Ronald G. Ballinger, MIT Associate Professor of Nuclear Engineering, [In *The Gordon Institute News*, March/April 1991]

“I think it is very premature at this time to say that we are losing a race in cold fusion when *we have very clearly validated that we are not sure that it’s fusion.*”

James Watkins, U.S. Secretary of Energy, January 1990

“In one word it’s garbage.”

MIT Professor of Physics Emeritus Martin Deutsch, *Science News*, May 6, 1989,  
characterizing cold fusion

“Most screwy ideas turn out to be screwy ideas .. [cold fusion] was preposterous to begin with.”

Professor Robert Park, University of Maryland, *Science*, July 6, 1990

“A séance of true believers”

Professor Robert Park, University of Maryland, describing (without even having been there) the First Annual Conference on Cold Fusion in Salt Lake City, March 1990

“. . . though some will say the matter is not quite settled, it is a safe bet that cold fusion will soon bubble off into oblivion.” [He also equated the search for cold fusion with “Elvis Sightings.”]

NBC TV science reporter Robert Bazell, March 1990.

“It seems the time has come to dismiss cold fusion as an illusion of the past four months or so.”

John Maddox, Editorial in Nature, July 6, 1989

“End of Cold Fusion in Sight -- Although the evidence now accumulating does not prove that the original observations of cold fusion were mistaken, there seems no doubt that cold fusion will never be a commercial source of energy.”

John Maddox, Editorial in Nature, July 6, 1989

“I think it will turn out after two or three years more investigation that this is just spurious and unconnected with anything you could call nuclear fusion -- thermonuclear fusion I think that broadly speaking, it's dead, and it will remain dead for a long, long time.”

John Maddox, Editor of Nature, in the NOVA program “Confusion in a Jar.” broadcast in 1991.

“All cold fusion theories can be demolished one way or another, but it takes some effort.... Would a measure of unrestrained mockery, even a little unqualified vituperation have speeded cold fusion's demise?”

Dr. David Lindley, Editor of Nature, March 29, 1990

“It is possible that Fleischmann and Pons have rediscovered a 150-year-old German cigarette lighter.”

Dr. George Chapline, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, May 1989

“Although cold fusion excited our imagination, in the end it was just another corrected mistake.”

Professors Steven E. Koonin and Nathan Lewis, Caltech, The Los Angeles Times, May 25, 1990.

“My conclusion is that the experiments are just wrong and that we are suffering from the incompetence and delusion of Doctors Pons and Fleischmann.

Professor Steven Koonin, (Caltech, at Baltimore Maryland, APS Meeting, May 1989

“It’s all very well to theorize how cold fusion in a palladium cathode might take place ...one could also theorize about how pigs would behave if they had wings. But pigs don’t have wings.”

Professor Steven Koonin, Caltech, at Baltimore, Maryland, APS Meeting, May 1989

“The University of Utah may now claim credit for the artificial heart horror show and the cold fusion circus, two milestones at least in the history of entertainment, if not science.”

New York Times Editorial, April 30, 1989

“The ‘discovery’ of cold fusion grabbed headlines, but chemists Stanley Pons and Martin Fleischmann found something that probably does not exist.

Time Magazine, August 26, 1991 in a chart labeled “Frauds and Embarrassments”

“I have had 50 years of experience in nuclear physics and I know what’s possible and what’s not. . . I don’t want to see any more evidence! I think it’s a bunch of *junk* and I don’t want to have anything further to do with it.”

MIT Institute Professor Emeritus of Physics Herman Feshbach to Eugene Mallove in a telephone conversation, May 1991

“I’ll tell you what my opinion is of that work. because I was part of it I don’t think it’s worth very much. Alright? And that’s why it’s just published in a tech report. I don’t think it’s worth very much. I think to do calorimetry is one of the hardest things I ever tried to do. I’d rather stick to plasma physics When you have an open system is where you can make big errors where you don’t know the overpotential, the electrode potential, and so on. These things are unknown I mean it’s really tough and that’s why I don’t put any stock at all -- you can redraw those curves anyway that you want. I don’t think that data is worth anything.”

Professor Ronald Parker, Director of the MIT Plasma Fusion Center, to Eugene Mallove, on June 7, 1991, describing the quality of the MIT PFC work.

“MIT scientists have reviewed their paper that contains the data about which Mallove raised questions. Following the review, Professor Ronald R. Parker said, the conclusions of the study stand as published.”

Statement issued by the MIT News Office August 30, 1991) and approved by Professor Parker.

“. . . Sometimes the faithful don’t completely turn off their reason. They become captive to a fantasy they hear in one ear, but listen for science with the other ear. So begins a deterioration that dims the wits but leaves a zealous heart beating - the result is a cult of fervent halfwits. Some of them believe the Universe is only 6000 years old. Some sing praises to satellites. Some claim to fuse hydrogen in a jar.

Cloistered in southern France are the cold fusion team of Martin Fleischman and B. Stanley Pons. While every result and conclusion they publish meets with overwhelming scientific evidence to the contrary, they resolutely pursue their illusion of fusing hydrogen in a mason jar. They warn of fireballs that will be hurled from closed-cell experiments. They promise to produce an energy source by the end of the year that can power a home for 10 000 years. And a few scientists, captivated by the team’s fantasy and exile, pursue cold fusion with Branch Davidian intensity.”

Slakey, F., *When the lights of reason go out - Francis Slakey ponders the faces of fantasy and New Age scientists*. New Scientist, 1993. 139(1890): p. 49. Slakey was the Science Policy Administrator of the American Physical Society. (Added by Jed Rothwell)

“Furthermore, if the claimed excess heat exceeds that possible by other conventional processes (chemical, mechanical, etc.), one must conclude that an error has been made in measuring the excess heat.”

Huizenga, J.R., *Cold Fusion: The Scientific Fiasco of the Century*. second ed. 1993, New York: Oxford University Press. Here, Huizenga dismissed *a priori* all excess heat results as experimental errors, no matter how many times the effect was replicated, and no matter what the signal to noise ratio was. (Added by Jed Rothwell)