



*Illumina guests on the Naked Genetics podcast: Dan Letchworth, Courtney Gonzalez, Scott Kuersten, Trevor Ho, Ros Jackson, Michal Szpak, and Ilaria Grizzi. Photos courtesy of their subjects*

## Podcast stories explore unusual and surprising applications of genomics

*Illumina partners with Naked Genetics to engage audiences in the world of next-generation sequencing*

FOR THE PAST FEW MONTHS, Illumina employees have been working with the team behind the podcast *Naked Genetics*<sup>1</sup> to produce six stories in upcoming episodes about the multifaceted applications of sequencing technology. This collaboration seeks to demonstrate the practical utility of genomic sequencing across diverse fields, and aligns with Illumina’s mission to broaden public understanding of genomics.

In each story, listeners are invited on an expedition that covers each step in the process of DNA sequencing—from gathering samples to library preparation, imaging, and analysis using advanced Illumina systems. Often recorded on location during sample collection, the stories immerse listeners in the excitement of scientific discovery and speculates on the implications of the findings through discussions with key contributors.

The episodes’ tentative release dates, working titles, and the Illumina employees featured are as follows:

*Available now:*

- “ADHD advantages, and mining microbiomes,” with Manager of Editorial Content Dan Letchworth<sup>2</sup>
- “Will It Sequence? Hunting drug resistant bugs,” with Staff Bioinformatics Scientist Courtney Gonzalez and Senior Staff Scientist Scott Kuersten<sup>3</sup>

*June: “Food Expiration,” with Senior Scientist Trevor Ho*  
*July: “Clean Hands vs. Dirty Hands,” with Director of Scientific Research Ros Jackson*

*August: “Ancient DNA,” with Staff Bioinformatics Support Scientist Michal Szpak*

*September: “Synthetic DNA,” with Director of Systems Integration Ilaria Grizzi*

Illumina previously collaborated with The Naked Scientists in 2019 for a diverse set of stories about sequencing a black Labrador puppy’s genome,<sup>4</sup> analyzing seawater,<sup>5</sup> and other topics. Hosted by Will Tingle, *Naked Genetics* is one of many podcasts produced by The

1. <https://www.thenakedscientists.com/podcasts/naked-genetics>

2. <https://www.thenakedscientists.com/podcasts/naked-genetics/adhd-advantages-and-mining-microbiomes>

3. <https://www.thenakedscientists.com/podcasts/naked-genetics/will-it-sequence-hunting-drug-resistant-bugs>

4. <https://www.thenakedscientists.com/articles/interviews/will-it-sequence-bruce>

5. <https://www.thenakedscientists.com/podcasts/naked-genetics/whats-water>

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Naked Scientists brand founded by Chris Smith. Tingle and Smith are driven by a shared vision to bridge the gap between genetics enthusiasts and those less familiar with the field.

Tingle emphasizes the podcast's mission, saying: "The ability to bring genomics to light in an interesting, applicable, and meaningful way was the reason we decided to reignite the spark and get back in contact with Illumina. I think the biggest thing for me is to highlight how things are changing in the genomics world, but also how the world around us is changing in terms of climate and health and technology."

On Illumina's side, the stories were coordinated by Ros Jackson and Communications Intern Laura Malaussene,

who both enjoyed the experience. "It's really exciting to be part of it," Jackson says. "Illumina certainly wants to help people see the value that genomics can bring to medicine and science, and to all of our lives."

Malaussene adds: "Contributing to this project and witnessing its progress has been incredibly rewarding. Seeing how our teamwork reflects our shared passion for genomics is really inspiring."

As *Naked Genetics* continues to unravel the mysteries of genomics, it promises to engage and educate audiences, providing a unique perspective on the profound impact of sequencing technologies in various aspects of our lives. ♦