



A Scandal's Arc

August 19, 2026

When did you first hear the story of Jason Arday?

In 2023, Mr. Arday became something of a public sensation in Great Britain, where his claims to being autistic, mute till age 11, and illiterate till 18 made a striking rag-to-riches/up-from-racism story upon his appointment as Professor of Sociology of Education at the University of Cambridge.

The youngest Black professor at that institution ever.

But few in America heard much about him.

Last September, *Times Higher Education* journalist Jack Grove documented what he alleged to be plagiarism in Arday's 2015 PhD thesis and academic publications. Grove contacted Arday for comment; Arday [responded](#) with a [letter](#) from his lawyers. The story was not published.

Then, a month ago, philosopher Nathan Cofnas [published](#) his exposé, which began with a litany of Arday's

autobiographical whoppers, *not* including the one I heard most bandied-about: that at age 7 the young Jason had been interviewed for the famous documentary *Seven Up!* — a glaring fib because the movie came out 21 years before Prof. Arday was born.

Cofnas compared passages in Arday's 2018 paper to someone else's 2012 paper. One sentence can serve to illustrate: "In particular, I seek to make a direct association between the tools of *normative* Whiteness and the deployment and consequences of racial microaggressions." The italics indicate the one word Arday added.

A key contribution.

The *Telegraph* and *The Times* [published stories](#) on July 24th. On August 1, *The Guardian* got into it; four days later, the university opened an inquiry; the next day, Arday resigned.

Eight days later, Jason Arday was found dead in his apartment. Suicide? That's what many surmise, but police have only said his death was "unexpected but is not believed to be suspicious."

For some, a *cause célèbre!* Vigils, ongoing. But his mourners downplay the lies and plagiarism. It's all about racism.

But whose? Could it be those who rushed to promote a man beyond his merit merely because of race?

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.