

GENOMIC GLADIATOR

Sporting the latest in avant garde lab-**wear**, and challenging the supremacy of Andrew Shelling's long reign as Fashionomics-ista, comes Fashionomics **virgin** Professor Martin Kennedy, all the way from University of Otago, Christchurch.

This fine garment, created by Dr Rachel Purcell - aptly based in the Department of Surgery - is actually sutured to the wearer's body, ensuring wardrobe malfunctions will not occur during battle. The lab-chain mail is carefully constructed from the up-cycled backing plates of innumerable ThermoFisher QuantStudio 3D digital PCR chips. Such an innovative use of a lab-waste stream not only spares the environment, it protects the wearer from many of the travails of modern laboratory life, including exploding agarose, splashes of liquid nitrogen, overly large VCF files, stray irradiation, or abdominal needle stick injuries. It also helps disguise his paunch.

Rachel's noble henchman, Dr Aaron Stevens, spent many hours of his (now) limited postdoctoral tenure carefully forging the pipette-sword weapon wielded by our hero. Professional modesty is maintained by strategic placement of biohazard bags – unused, we hasten to add. The gladiatorial attire is topped off with a war-worn helmet, bearing the stains of many ethidium-soaked gels from battles past.

So armed and clad, our Genomic Gladiator is ready to vanquish grant applications, concoct progress reports, and deride reviewer comments. He can force the truth from a GWAS, tease out subtle gene expression changes, and cleave a G-quadruplex at will. With one sweep of his mighty sword, he can scythe hordes of email, dispel spurious administrative requests, and then, despite exhaustion (and before heading off for a cup of tea), come up with an endless string of completely daft ideas in order to keep his postgrad students eternally occupied at the bench.

Not yet past his prime, this warrior is also renowned for dispensing random hypotheses, proffering generally unwanted advice, and continually reminding his young troops how easy they have it all today. Why, PCR wasn't even a thing when he was a boy!

Despite his legendary status, he does not have superpowers and rarely attends conferences, because he has yet to work out how to bypass airport security!

Before the many avid admirers rush the floor in order to test the hypothesis that the designer man-kilt is worn with no undergarment, we can assure you that this hypothesis is, fortunately for all concerned, untrue.

While the rewards of this life may appear alluring, reserve some pity for this fine figure you see before you. If the Genomic Gladiator fails to win this contest, he will be condemned to see out the remainder of his days as a human mirror-ball, a shadow of his former self, only to be glimpsed at laboratory Christmas functions and Abba revival concerts!

So give it up for the team from University of Otago, Christchurch Rachel Purcell, Aaron Stevens and Martin Kennedy!