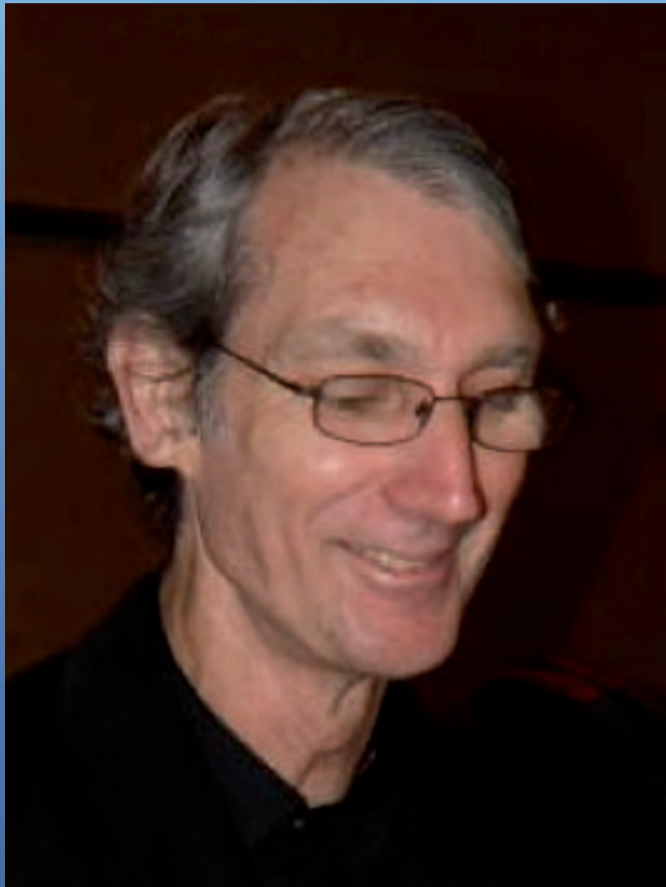


# Earthquake Scientists and their Convictions



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**lundi**  
**22 avril 2013**

**École Polytechnique**  
Amphi. Gay-Lussac  
14h

Département de Mécanique

The L'Aquila earthquake struck at 3:32 am April 6, 2009, 309 people died, many asleep in their homes. In the weeks before there had been more over 300 tremors, some quite large. Shortly before the quake the head of the Italian Government's Major Risks Commission, Dr. Bernardo De Bernardinis, reportedly told news media: "The scientific community tells me there is no danger because there is an ongoing discharge of energy." Dr De Bernardinis and six seismologists from the Commission have been convicted of manslaughter, the first seismologists ever convicted for failing to fulfill their responsibilities. What compelled Dr. Bernardo De Bernardinis to make his statement of assurance? Did he get the science wrong? What are the implications for scientists giving advice to the public? Are the "L'Aquila Seven" guilty of manslaughter? Should they even have been tried? Are scientists above the law?



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