

QUESTION (HD 2005) You are not writing any reviews for Math Reviews. Were you fired for making mistakes? (This question was asked by Professor D.D. Anderson some time ago, in a phone conversation. Being occupied with other things, such as how to get back to life, after a number of serious operations and after my webpage was hacked by some Romanian entity, I could not respond to this very important question, publicly.)

ANSWER: No. I resigned. It was over a difference of opinion, with Darla Kremer, then an official at the Math Reviews, on a review of a book that I had written. I thought the book was full of holes, and if I did not give enough examples of what the author was doing, the readers won't be sufficiently informed/warned/served. Modus operandi of the author in question was that he would state a result, start the proof in a standard form, do some unintelligible things in the middle and end the proof with standard ending. As a reviewer who has a longish book to read through I could have taken the easier way out, skimmed over a part and written a nice review praising the book. But I had some time at my hand those days. So I decided to do what I call chasing the implications through. I did that and found out the holes. Of course I wrote a review pointing out the mistakes. The review was a tad longer. I was worried and so I asked. Apparently at that time Math Reviews folks decided to put Darla Kremer on top of me. She started making demands that I curtail the review by throwing out proofs of what was wrong with the book. I complied with some of those demands, but took a stand on others. Then I sensed that she was sort of worried about me being a threat to you and your brother (Dan and David Anderson) and frankly I felt insecure about her handling my reviews and resigned. She accepted my resignation with the air of mission accomplished and that was that.

I am able to put together some of the correspondence with her and put a link to it on my vita. This will give you some idea. (She did not realize that my name is Muhammad Zafrullah. So I am not to be preferred against you or anyone.) Now I wonder if she could have messed up the count of my citations on the record at Math Reviews. For while she was there the number seemed to be stuck at around 1485.

PS. Note that I had mentioned her to you, noticing her peculiar behavior.