



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on June 18, 2021

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COVID Lab-leak Theory Media Lied, People Died

President Trump was right all along.

The leftist media will never say those words, but they have admitted the truth implicitly. They are openly and seriously discussing the theory that the China Virus — COVID-19 or SARS-Cov-2 — sprung from a lab in Wuhan, China. That lab was most likely in the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV), which was manipulating bat coronaviruses so they could attack humans.

Solid evidence has surfaced for what the media sneeringly called a “debunked conspiracy theory” last year, and it has snowballed into almost-certain fact in recent months. Multiple reports in May detailed the institute’s virus manipulation and disclosed that lab workers were sick with virus-like symptoms before the virus began its deadly march across the globe. Top U.S. officials, *Vanity Fair* reported in June, ordered underlings not to open a “Pandora’s box” by discussing the lab-leak theory. The massive trove of Dr. Anthony Fauci’s e-mails, also disclosed in June, shows that he knew last year the virus might have been created in a lab. During a briefing to world health officials, Fauci said as much. The smoking gun that just about proves the lab-leak hypothesis is video that shows bats at the lab, which a top supporter of the experiments there had denied.

Better late than never, one could say of the media’s sudden willingness to believe what seemed entirely credible before May of last year. U.S. intelligence sources told Fox News in April 2020, for instance, that they believed the virus sprung from a lab. World-class scientists were concerned about it by then.

But the media spiked the story. Trump said the virus escaped a lab; thus, it had to be untrue. Worst thing is, we are now to believe the media’s mulish refusal to report the story was Trump’s fault. He was the racist “bomb-thrower in chief,” *Vanity Fair* opined, and therefore had to be wrong.



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Evidence for the Lab Leak

When SARS-Cov-2 went global last year, the official story was this: It sprung from the city's filthy, repulsive wet markets that sell exotic animals, including bats, for human consumption. Coronaviruses are bat-borne. Thus, a vendor who sold the bats, or someone who purchased it, contracted and spread it. That was Patient Zero.

But that was too hasty a conclusion for people with common sense, such as U.S. Senator Tom Cotton (R-Ark.). On January 20, Cotton tweeted that the city where the virus broke out was the home of the virus institute: "I would note that Wuhan has China's only biosafety level-four super laboratory that works with the world's most deadly pathogens to include, yes, coronavirus."

When the Chinese ambassador to the United States said Cotton was "absolutely crazy" to suggest a lab leak, Cotton answered thusly:

Here's what's not a conspiracy, not a theory: Fact: China lied about virus starting in Wuhan food market. Fact: super-lab is just a few miles from that market. Where did it start? We don't know. But burden of proof is on you & fellow communists. Open up now to competent international scientists.

Then came the "debunked conspiracy theory" narrative:

The *Washington Post* tried to kneecap Cotton with a story that said he "keeps repeating a coronavirus conspiracy theory that was already debunked." The *New York Times* similarly pooh-poohed Cotton. "Senator Tom Cotton Repeats Fringe Theory of Coronavirus Origins," the Old Grey Lady told readers.

And later, when a Chinese scientist appeared on Fox talker Tucker Carlson's program and said the virus was engineered as a bioweapon, Politifact was ready with its ballyhooed "Pants on Fire" rating. "The genetic structure of the novel coronavirus ... rules out the possibility that it was manipulated in a lab," the non-scientists at Politifact confidently huffed.

Except that it wasn't "debunked," it wasn't a "fringe theory," and it wasn't "ruled out."

A year later, in May 2021, *Post* fact-checker Glenn Kessler explained "how the lab-leak theory suddenly became credible" with a long timeline of events that included this item:

Feb. 6 [2020]: Botao Xiao, a molecular biomechanics researcher at South China University of Technology, posts a paper stating that "the killer coronavirus probably originated from a laboratory in Wuhan." He pointed to the previous safety mishaps and the kind of research undertaken at the lab. He withdrew the paper a few weeks later after Chinese authorities insisted no accident had taken place.

This one timeline entry shows that even the headline over Kessler's corrective was wrong. The theory didn't "suddenly become credible." It was *always* credible.

On April 14, 2020, the *Post*'s own Josh Rogin reported that U.S. science diplomats were extremely concerned about biosecurity at the institute. The lab had a "serious shortage of appropriately-trained technicians" said a State Department cable, a worrisome fact given the dangerous research the lab



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conducted on bat coronaviruses.

On April 15, Fox News' Bret Baier reported that U.S. intelligence sources told him the virus accidentally leaked from a lab, and a week later, *Newsweek* confirmed that suspicion with a report from the Defense Intelligence Agency: "China: Origins of COVID-19 Outbreak Remain Unknown." Wrote Baier:

The report, dated March 27 and corroborated by two U.S. officials, reveals that U.S. intelligence revised its January assessment in which it "judged that the outbreak probably occurred naturally" to now include the possibility that the new coronavirus emerged "accidentally" due to "unsafe laboratory practices."

The report said the virus was not genetically engineered, a claim many now believe to believe highly suspect.

"We know that this virus originated in Wuhan," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told Martha McCallum of Fox News when Baier's report surfaced. "We know there is the Wuhan Institute of Virology just a handful of miles away from where the wet market was."

Next month, as the *Post's* timeline noted, Pompeo repeated it. "There's enormous evidence that that's where this began," he told ABC News. "Remember, China has a history of infecting the world, and they have a history of running substandard laboratories. These are not the first times that we have had the world exposed to viruses as a result of failures in a Chinese lab."

Though China eventually admitted the virus did not come from a wet market, it wouldn't and won't say where it did originate. But Pompeo was right. A report from the World Health Organization in 2003 included these facts:

Since July 2003, there have been four occasions when SARS has reappeared. Three of these incidents were attributed to breaches in laboratory biosafety and resulted in one or more cases of SARS [Singapore (10-12), Taipei (13) and Beijing (14,15)]. The most recent laboratory incident resulted in 9 cases, 7 of which were associated with one chain of transmission and with hospital spread. Two additional cases at the same laboratory with a history of illness compatible with SARS in February 2004 were detected as part of a serosurvey of contacts at the facility.

In June on a podcast with Joe Rogan, evolutionary biologist Bret Weinstein, a member of the anti-cancel-culture "intellectual dark web," said the outbreak's occurring in a city where scientists were fiddling with bat coronaviruses was a "heck of a coincidence." That's exactly what Cotton and Pompeo said.

When Weinstein "went down the rabbit hole" and started looking at the facts, he concluded that the virus was from the lab. "The virus itself has several components that suggest that it is actually the result of manipulation in the lab and that it escaped, possibly from the institute," he told Rogan:

There is a strong possibility that this virus was under study, that it was enhanced in the laboratory, and that we are dealing with consequences that are the result of that enhancement that make it more dangerous than it would otherwise be.



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That “study” was gain-of-function research by which scientists manipulate viruses so they can infect human beings, ostensibly for the purpose of creating an immunity against the virus.

But back to May 2021, when Nicholas Wade published an 11,000-word report in the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*. A former science writer for the *New York Times*, Wade wrote about the research and the woman in charge of it, Shi Zheng-li. She is known as the Bat Lady because of her expertise with bat coronaviruses.

Wade’s report detailed the Bat Lady’s dangerous experiments, done with the help of American researchers, and even worse, U.S. taxpayer subsidies from Dr. Anthony Fauci’s National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. Fauci, of course, is the man in charge of the federal government’s virus response.

The claim that the virus erupted from a wet market was a cover, Wade suggested, to keep the public from learning what the Bat Lady was doing with American help and know-how. Indeed, the man who directed some of the subsidies led the group that “debunked” the lab-leak theory in a letter to Britain’s *Lancet*. Prominent British zoologist Peter Daszak also happened to join the team from the World Health Organization that gave the lab a clean bill of health.

The Bat Lady “teamed up with Ralph S. Baric, an eminent coronavirus researcher at the University of North Carolina,” Wade wrote, adding:

Their work focused on enhancing the ability of bat viruses to attack humans.... In pursuit of this aim, in November 2015, they created a novel virus by taking the backbone of the SARS1 virus and replacing its spike protein with one from a bat virus (known as SHC014-CoV). This manufactured virus was able to infect the cells of the human airway, at least when tested against a lab culture of such cells....

“It is clear that the Wuhan Institute of Virology was systematically constructing novel chimeric coronaviruses and was assessing their ability to infect human cells and human-ACE2-expressing mice,” says Richard H. Ebright, a molecular biologist at Rutgers University and leading expert on biosafety.

“It is also clear,” Ebright said, “that, depending on the constant genomic contexts chosen for analysis, this work could have produced SARS-CoV-2 or a proximal progenitor of SARS-CoV-2.” “Genomic context” refers to the particular viral backbone used as the testbed for the spike protein.

The lab escape scenario for the origin of the SARS2 virus, as should by now be evident, is not mere hand-waving in the direction of the Wuhan Institute of Virology. It is a detailed proposal, based on the specific project being funded there by the NIAID....

On December 9, 2019, before the outbreak of the pandemic became generally known, Daszak gave an interview in which he talked in glowing terms of how researchers at the Wuhan Institute of Virology had been reprogramming the spike protein and generating chimeric coronaviruses capable of infecting humanized mice....

One can only imagine Daszak’s reaction when he heard of the outbreak....

But instead of providing public health authorities with the plentiful information at his



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disposal, he immediately launched a public relations campaign to persuade the world that the epidemic couldn't possibly have been caused by one of the institute's souped-up viruses. "The idea that this virus escaped from a lab is just pure baloney. It's simply not true," he declared in an April 2020 interview.

Bonus fact from Wade: The Wuhan lab had all the biosecurity of a dentist's office.

More damning evidence surfaced in the *Wall Street Journal* after Wade's report: Three workers at the lab landed in the hospital with COVID-like symptoms in November 2019. A month later, a lab worker's wife died with the same symptoms. That news came from former State Department official David Asher, who led the probe into the pathogen's origin during the Trump administration. He thought the wet-market theory implausible from the start.

Last, the *Daily Mail* disclosed the work of two scientists, Angus Dalglish and Birger Sørensen, who say they have proof the virus was created in a lab. The virus has "unique fingerprints" it could leave only if it were lab-made:

Dalglish and Sørensen claim that scientists ... took a natural coronavirus "backbone" found in Chinese cave bats and spliced onto it a new "spike," turning it into the deadly and highly transmissible SARS-Cov-2. One tell-tale sign of alleged manipulation ... was a row of four amino acids they found on the SARS-Cov-2 spike.

The amino acids all have a positive charge, which cause the virus to tightly cling to the negatively charged parts of human cells like a magnet, and so become more infectious.

But because, like magnets, the positively charged amino acids repel each other, it is rare to find even three in a row in naturally occurring organisms, while four in a row is "extremely unlikely."...

"You cannot have four positively charged amino acids in a row. The only way you can get this is if you artificially manufacture it," Dalglish told [DailyMail.com](#).

Thus did the *Post* and other media backpedal furiously. The newspaper stealth-edited the headline over its story about Cotton, and Politifact retracted its "Pants on Fire" rating of the scientist.

Of course, the *Post* and Politifact wouldn't have published the falsehoods if those news outlets had been less worried about proving Trump wrong and more worried about finding out the truth.



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They could have filed a Freedom of Information Request for Fauci’s e-mails early on. Had they done so at the end of April 2020, they would have discovered a damning e-mail from Kristian Andersen, a researcher for the Scripps Research Institute. In March 2020, Andersen and a group of scientists confidently asserted in a letter to *Nature Medicine* that the virus was naturally occurring. But in February 2020, he had e-mailed Fauci and said it might be “potentially engineered” because its genome is “inconsistent with expectations from evolutionary theory.”

The media would also have learned that Francis Collins, head of NIAID’s parent agency, the National Institutes of Health, irresponsibly called the lab-leak hypothesis a “conspiracy theory.” Singularly uninterested in Daszak, who channeled subsidies to the institute, the media would have learned that he thanked Fauci for helping dispel the myth of a lab leak.

The latest on Fauci is this: Scott Gottlieb, Trump’s chieftain of the Food and Drug Administration, said Fauci briefed world officials on a possible lab leak even as he said publicly the outbreak was bat-to-human spillover.

Though Senator Cotton and other so-called lab-leak theorists believe the leak was accidental, they also wonder whether the lab was manipulating the virus to create a bioweapon.

In January 2021, the State Department’s fact sheet on the institute disclosed that the institute “has collaborated on publications and secret projects with China’s military. The WIV has engaged in classified research, including laboratory animal experiments, on behalf of the Chinese military since at least 2017.”

In May, the *Australian* published the contents of a 263-page research paper from China’s People’s Liberation Army that discussed a “new era of genetic weapons” — coronaviruses that are “artificially manipulated into an emerging human- disease virus, then weaponized and unleashed.” Published in 2015, the paper speculated about overwhelming an enemy’s healthcare system with millions of sick people.

In other words, the Bat Lady was fiddling with the viruses at about the same time the PLA was speculating about turning them into bioweapons.

These facts, too, somehow escaped scrutiny from the leftist media.

Another piece of evidence that points to a lab leak is this: A researcher who worked with the Bat Lady



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applied for a SARS-Cov-2 vaccine patent in China *before* the first reported case. Yusen Zhou, a PLA scientist, filed for the patent early last year, the *Australian* reported. Then he died under suspicious circumstances.

In a letter to *Science* in May, 18 scientists — including one of the Bat Lady’s American enablers, Baric — confessed that the lab-leak theory “remains viable” and must be investigated. Late the same month, the Biden Regime reopened the government’s probe into the hypothesis. Trump had begun that investigation, and Biden shut it down, much to the joy of the hate-Trump media.

Perhaps the final blows to the bat-to-human theory were two reports published as *The New American* went to press. In mid-June, a new study of the wet markets in Wuhan reported that they didn’t sell bats or pangolins, another possible source of the virus, just prior to the outbreak. And Sky News Australia broadcast secretly acquired video that showed bats at the lab and Chinese scientists catching them. Though Taiwan News reported in February that Chinese scientists admitted capturing bats for the lab, the video conclusively proves that Daszak was dead wrong when he indignantly tweeted that bats couldn’t be at the lab because “that’s not how science works.” Continued Daszak, “This is a widely circulated conspiracy theory.... [Labs] do not have live or dead bats in them.”

Of course, it wasn’t a conspiracy theory, despite what Daszak, his colleagues, and, of course, the leftist media wanted everyone to think.

Trump’s Fault We Missed the Story?

Yet perhaps more exasperating than the media’s intransigence on the matter was that State Department bureaucrats clamped a lid on the lab-leak theory. If that became public, U.S. taxpayers would learn they had subsidized the lab’s dangerous research.

That truth surfaced in *Vanity Fair* on June 3. Explained the magazine’s Katherin Eban:

In an internal memo ... Thomas DiNanno, former acting assistant secretary of the State Department’s Bureau of Arms Control, Verification, and Compliance, wrote that staff from two bureaus, his own and the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, “warned” leaders within his bureau “not to pursue an investigation into the origin of COVID-19” because it would “‘open a can of worms’ if it continued.”

Open a can of worms it would have.

The State Department’s arms-control bureau had received intelligence about the three lab workers who fell ill in November before the outbreak. But “as officials at the meeting discussed what they could share with the public, they were advised by Christopher Park, the director of the State Department’s Biological Policy Staff in the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, not to say anything that would point to the U.S. government’s own role in gain-of-function research.”

Some attendees were “absolutely floored” about the coverup, Eban wrote:

Park, who in 2017 had been involved in lifting a U.S. government moratorium on funding for gain-of-function research, was not the only official to warn the State Department investigators against digging in sensitive places. As the group probed the lab-leak scenario,



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among other possibilities, its members were repeatedly advised not to open a “Pandora’s box,” said four former State Department officials.... The admonitions “smelled like a cover-up,” said Thomas DiNanno, “and I wasn’t going to be part of it.”

Despite knowing the truth, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence claimed that intelligence officials agreed with the “wide scientific consensus that the COVID-19 virus was not man-made or genetically modified.” In fact, of course, U.S. intelligence officials strongly suspected the virus sprung from a lab, as Fox and *Newsweek* had reported.

Trump spilled the beans hours after the DNI’s statement, which required Eban to implicitly suggest that he was the reason the media wouldn’t take the lab-leak theory seriously:

Then, the bomb-thrower-in-chief weighed in. At a press briefing just hours later, Trump contradicted his own intelligence officials and claimed that he had seen classified information indicating that the virus had come from the Wuhan Institute of Virology. Asked what the evidence was, he said, “I can’t tell you that. I’m not allowed to tell you that.”

Trump’s premature statement poisoned the waters for anyone seeking an honest answer to the question of where COVID-19 came from. According to [Deputy National Security Adviser Mark] Pottinger, there was an “antibody response” within the government, in which any discussion of a possible lab origin was linked to destructive nativist posturing.

Who Eban is to declare Trump’s statement “premature” we are not given to know. That aside, Eban blamed Trump for the media’s dereliction:

When Trump himself floated the lab-leak hypothesis last April, his divisiveness and lack of credibility made things more, not less, challenging for those seeking the truth....

And yet, in the wake of the Lancet statement and under the cloud of Donald Trump’s toxic racism, which contributed to an alarming wave of anti-Asian violence in the U.S., one possible answer to this all-important question remained largely off-limits until the spring of 2021....

Thanks to their unprecedented track record of mendacity and race-baiting, Trump and his allies had less than zero credibility.

Message: Trump — *not the media’s Trump Derangement and refusal to accept anything he said* — is the reason the media left the lab-leak theory unexamined. That mirrors the *Post’s* and Politifact’s correcting their archives and pretending their reluctance to follow obvious clues — and widely available, credible reports — was only cautious skepticism.

The simple truth is this: The lab-leak theory was credible from Day 1, and the media purposely ignored it to press its hate-Trump narrative and prove Trump a menace and failure.

The media lied. And Trump, again, was right from the start.

R. Cort Kirkwood is a longtime contributor to The New American. He was a newspaperman for more than 25 years.



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