



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on June 4, 2025

## Two Chinese Nationals Charged With Smuggling Deadly Agroterror Fungus Into U.S.

The FBI has charged two Chinese nationals in connection with smuggling a deadly fungus into the United States, FBI Director Kash Patel and the Justice Department (DOJ) announced yesterday.

The couple was supposedly studying what officials called a “potential agroterrorism weapon” at the University of Michigan. One of the suspects worked at the university; the other worked at a lab in China that researches the fungus.

Had the pathogen escaped, the nation’s wheat and other grain crops could have been severely affected. That raises the question of whether China had ordered the two to release the pathogen and wreck the nation’s grains.



Tomasz Klejdysz/iStock/Getty Images Plus  
Grain with Fusarium head blight

New... I can confirm that the FBI arrested a Chinese national within the United States who allegedly smuggled a dangerous biological pathogen into the country.

The individual, Yunqing Jian, is alleged to have smuggled a dangerous fungus called “*Fusarium graminearum*,” which is an...

— FBI Director Kash Patel (@FBI DirectorKash) [June 3, 2025](#)

### ***Fusarium graminearum***

On X, Patel alleged that [Yunqing Jian](#), a postdoctoral fellow at the university, smuggled *Fusarium graminearum* into the United States.

“Evidence also indicates Jian had expressed loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party and had received funding from the Chinese government for similar work on this pathogen in China,” Patel continued:

Jian’s boyfriend, Zunyong Liu — also charged in the complaint — works at a Chinese university where he conducts research on the same pathogen. Liu is alleged to have first lied [about], then admitted, to also smuggling *Fusarium graminearum* into America — through the Detroit Metropolitan Airport — so that he too could conduct research at the University of Michigan.

Both individuals have been charged with conspiracy, smuggling goods into the United States, false statements, and visa fraud.



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Evidence of Jian's membership in and loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party was found on her "electronics," [DOJ reported](#).

Here's what the two were attempting to smuggle into the country:

[The Wikipedia entry](#) for *Fusarium graminearum* reported that it causes a "devastating disease" called fusarium head blight, which "is responsible for billions of dollars in economic losses worldwide each year."

The infection fiddles with the wheat's amino acids, wrecking the kernels and then infecting the grain with mycotoxins. Those toxins inhibit [protein synthesis](#), Wikipedia says. "These toxins cause vomiting, liver damage, and reproductive defects in livestock, and are harmful to humans through contaminated food," the entry continues, and, frighteningly enough, the mycopathogen has stumped efforts to "find resistance genes against *F. graminearum*," so "no completely resistant variety is currently available."

Had the toxin escaped the lab — or been purposely released — the damage to American crops would have been unimaginable.

[Said U.S. Attorney Jerome Gorgon Jr.:](#)

The alleged actions of these Chinese nationals — including a loyal member of the Chinese Communist Party — are of the gravest national security concerns. These two aliens have been charged with smuggling a fungus that has been described as a "potential agroterrorism weapon" into the heartland of America, where they apparently intended to use a University of Michigan laboratory to further their scheme.

## Criminal Complaint

The criminal complaint against the two elaborates.

Liu worked at Zhejiang University, where, again, he was researching the potentially deadly pathogen.

According to the [complaint](#):

On July 27, 2024, Liu unlawfully smuggled this biological pathogen into the United States at the Detroit Metropolitan Airport. When Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Officers questioned Liu, he made false statements to CBP Officers about the purpose of his visit to the United States, and his knowledge of the existence of the biological pathogen in his possession.

Ultimately, Liu admitted to smuggling the pathogen and stated that he brought the pathogen into the United States so that he could conduct research on it at a laboratory at the University of Michigan where his girlfriend, Jian, worked.

Chinese National at the University of Michigan Charged with Illegally Voting in the 2024 Election <https://t.co/t2VVRV6o9O>

— U.S. Attorney EDMI (@USAO\_MIE) [June 3, 2025](#)

For her part, Jian lied, too, the complaint alleges. It also says Jian had smuggled other unnamed items



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into the United States:

Jian ... falsely claimed that she knew nothing about Liu's smuggling or his intent to conduct research on the pathogen at the laboratory during his visit. In fact, an examination of electronic communications between Liu and Jian shows that the two discussed the shipping of biological materials and research being done in the laboratory prior to Liu's arrival. Electronic evidence also shows that Jian has been involved in smuggling packages of biological material into the United States on prior occasions.

Liu unwisely kept incriminating material on electronic devices, the complaint says.

CBP agents found a message from Liu to Jian that said he shipped [peptides](#) — short chains of amino acids — that arrived in Ann Arbor on July 19 last year. "CBP Officers saw that one of Liu's Apple iPhones contained an article titled '2018 Plant-Pathogen Warfare under Changing Climate Conditions.pdf' in the WhatsApp application," the [complaint alleges](#). "Open-source research revealed that this article references *Fusarium graminearum* as an example of a destructive disease and pathogen for crops."

The complaint shows as well that Jian might have been working for Liu. "It's a pity that I still have to work for you," a text message says.

[Also in the complaint](#) is Jian's loyalty oath to the Chinese Communist Party when she worked at the same university as Liu. Agents found it on her phone:

I adhere to the four basic principles, support the leadership of the Communist Party of China, resolutely implement the party's educational guidelines and policies, love education, care for students, unite colleagues, love the motherland, and care about national affairs. In my daily work and life, I conscientiously do a good job as an international student, conscientiously implement the rules and regulations of the school, and always remind myself to maintain the image of a Chinese person and not smear the motherland.

## Questions Abound

Jian's loyalty to the Chinese Reds, and her boyfriend's work on the pathogen at a lab in China, should raise several concerns among national security officials. Top among them is whether Jian and Liu were saboteurs — sent by the Chinese government — waiting for the right moment to unleash the pathogen. Some evidence for that possibility is the "plant-pathogen warfare" article on Liu's iPhone.

Why Jian needed her boyfriend to send her the mycopathogen is unclear. Why he was permitted to enter the country, given his research, is also unclear.

Whatever the answers, the next task for immigration and national security officials may be to revoke the visas of all [Chinese nationals working](#) at American universities, then deport them back where they belong.



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