

'Bombshell' New Emails Reveal Dr. Fauci was Part of NIH and WHO Conspiracy to Silence Wuhan Lab Leak Theory

## **Description**

Dr. Anthony Fauci, once considered America's 'top Covid doc,' conspired with influential scientists around the world, including at the World Health Organization, to quell concerns that SARS-CoV-2 may have leaked from the Wuhan Institute of Virology, newly unredacted emails show.

The newly released <u>emails</u> raise questions about Dr. Fauci's motives in dispelling public scrutiny over the potential the novel coronavirus had escaped from the Wuhan laboratory. Fauci had misled Congress over the extent that the National Institutes of Health had funded the Wuhan lab as a subcontractor of EcoHealth Alliance. The Wuhan laboratory was also funded by the Pentagon, contract awards show.

The unredacted NIH emails show how public questioning that SARS-CoV-2 may have escaped from a laboratory was a concern for the group's scientists lest it become a "conspiracy theory."

Emails were exchanged among Dr. Anthony Fauci, the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases chief; Sir Jeremy Farrar, a top scientist at the World Health Organization; Kristian Andersen, a leading immunologist and microbiologist with Scripps Research; Professor Edward Holmes, a biologist at the University of Sydney; Dr. Francis Collins, former Director of the National Institutes of Health; Chris Elias of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; George Fu Gao of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention; Viktor J. Dzau of Duke University; and various other influential scientists and philanthropists around the world.

An academic paper, "The Proximal Origin of SARS-CoV-2," published on March 17, 2021, had definitively propped up the rival theory to the lab leak theory that SARS-CoV-2 had natural origins. But the final form of the paper was far afield of its initial stages, as shown by the NIH emails. The influential academic paper evolved from its early stages seriously entertaining three rival hypotheses (the bioengineered theory, the lab leak theory, and the natural origins theory) to one that attempted to close the book on public inquiry into the possibility that SARS-CoV-2 had escaped from the Wuhan laboratory.

This evolution was due in no small part to the feedback from Dr. Anthony Fauci, Dr. Francis Collins, and Sir Jeremy Farrar, the unredacted emails show. The academic paper upon publication was soon weaponized by the mainstream press to attack critics of the Wuhan laboratory as "conspiracy theorists"; but behind-the-scenes the authors themselves were taking the possibility that the virus escaped from a laboratory more seriously. (Recent insights into the strong probability that SARS-CoV-2 originated in a laboratory bears out that the authors' inclination to take the lab leak theory seriously was justified, as will be briefly covered below.)

The Intercept, the publication that obtained the unredacted emails, gives an overview of the paper's influence on the national debate.

Drawing on "comparative analysis of genomic data," the paper's authors wrote that "our analyses clearly show that SARS-CoV-2 is not a laboratory construct or a purposefully manipulated construct." Toward the end of the paper, they added, "we do not believe that any type of laboratory-based scenario is plausible" in explaining the origin of the virus. Instead, the scientists strongly favored a natural origin, arguing that the virus likely spilled from bats into humans, possibly by way of an intermediate animal host.

The peer-reviewed paper proved to be hugely influential. Dr. Francis Collins, then the director of the National Institutes of Health, or NIH, announced its findings in a post on the agency's website in late March 2020. When asked during an April 17 press briefing at the White House about concerns that SARS-CoV-2 had come out of a lab in China, Dr. Anthony Fauci, who recently stepped down as head of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, referenced the paper, describing its conclusions and calling its authors "a group of highly qualified evolutionary virologists." The paper has been accessed online more than 5.7 million times and has been cited by more than 2,000 media outlets. ABC News, for instance, ran an article on March 27 titled "Sorry, Conspiracy Theorists. Study Concludes Covid-19 'Is Not a Laboratory Construct." In that article, one of the paper's authors, Robert Garry, is quoted saying, "There's a lot of speculation and conspiracy theories that went to a pretty high level, so we felt it was important to get a team together to examine evidence of this new coronavirus to determine what we could about the origin."

The author of the Intercept's <u>article</u>, Jimmy Tobias, explains that the pre-published version of the academic paper had provoked pushback from the group led by Fauci, Collins, and Farrar.

What that quote didn't quite convey was that Garry and several of the paper's other co-authors were themselves initially suspicious that SARS-CoV-2 may have emerged from a lab. They communicated their suspicions to Fauci, Collins, and others in late January and early February 2020, and what ensued was a period of intense and confidential deliberation about the origin of the virus.

Two of the paper's authors, Edward C. Holmes and Kristian Anderson, had seriously enterained the "lab side" of the Covid origins investigation. But Dr. Francis Collins and Farrar "nudged" them incrementally away from the lab leak theory and toward the natural origins theory — including with information that would later prove to be inaccurate.

After reviewing the summary document from Holmes and his team, Collins responded: "Very thoughtful analysis. I note that Eddie is now arguing against the idea that this is the product of intentional human

engineering. But repeated tissue culture passage is still an option—though it doesn't explain the Olinked glycans."

Dr. Collins and Farrar steered the authors away from even entertaining the notion that SARS-CoV-2 was "engineered" in a laboratory.

Farrar replied to the thread: "Being very careful in the morning wording. 'Engineered' probably not. Remains very real possibility of accidental lab passage in animals to give glycans."

"Eddie would be 60:40 lab side," Farrar added. "I remain 50:50."

"Yes, I'd be interested in the proposal of accidental lab passage in animals (which ones?)," Collins wrote.

"?? Serial passage in ACE2-transgenic mice," Fauci responded.

"Exactly!" Farrar replied.

"Surely that wouldn't be done in a BSL-2 lab?" Collins asked, referring to biosafety level 2 labs.

"Wild West..." was Farrar's response.

This is a particularly damning phrase, given Dr. Fauci's funding of gain-of-function research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology. Intentional or not, the sensitive research has bioweapons implications. And nothing in China is beyond the reach of the Chinese Communist Party.

On February 7, Farrar notified Fauci and Collins with data that proved to be inaccurate about the presence of coronaviruses in pangolins.

"Reports coming out overnight that Chinese group have pangolin viruses that are 99% similar," Farrar wrote. "This would be a crucially important finding and if true could be the 'missing link' and explain a natural evolutionary link."

"That will be VERY interesting," Collins responded. "Does it have the furin cleavage site?"

As Tobias notes, the pangolin data did not provide an explanation for the scientists' central concerns about the furin cleavage site.

"The viruses isolated from some pangolins were not 99 percent similar to SARS-CoV-2, but the data did show that coronaviruses circulating in pangolins shared other key features with the pandemic virus," Tobias explains. "This seems to have played an important role in shifting the scientists' thinking away from the lab hypothesis."

Holmes, who had been "60:40 lab side," shifted his position: "Personally, with the pangolin virus possessing 6/6 key sites in the receptor binding domain, I am in favour of the natural evolution theory."

Christian Drosten, a scientist from Germany, then provided an observation about the email exchanges: "Can someone help me with one question: didn't we congregate to challenge a certain theory, and ifwe could, drop it?"

"Who came up with this story in the beginning?" he added. "Are we working on debunking our own conspiracy theory?"

Holmes replied: "Ever since this outbreak started there have been suggestions that the virus escaped from the Wuhan lab, if only because of the coincidence of where the outbreak occurred and the location of the lab. I do a lot of work in China and I can you [sic] that a lot of people there believe this and believe they are being lied to."

Kristian Andersen, one of the authors of "Proximal Origin," chimed in on February 8.

"The fact that Wuhan became the epicenter of the ongoing epidemic caused by nCoV [novel coronavirus] is likely an unfortunate coincidence, but it raises questions that would be wrong to dismiss out of hand," he wrote. "Our main work over the last couple of weeks has been focused on trying to disprove any type of lab theory, but we are at a crossroad where the scientific evidence isn't conclusive enough to say that we have high confidence in any of the three main theories considered."

"As to publishing this document in a journal," he added, "I am currently not in favor of doing so. I believe that publishing something that is open-ended could backfire at this stage." Andersen suggested that the scientists wait and collect more evidence so they could publish some "strong conclusive statements that are based on the best data we have access to. I don't think we are there yet."

But the inconclusive evidence supporting any one theory had persuaded the five authors to come out with a definitive conclusion in support of the natural origins theory by the next month.

On March 6, Andersen <u>wrote to</u> Farrar, Fauci, Collins, et al. informing them that "Proximal Origin" had been accepted for publication.

"Thank you for your advice and leadership as we have been working through the SARS-CoV-2 'origins' paper," he wrote. "We're happy to say that the paper was just accepted by *Nature Medicine* and should be published shortly (not quite sure when)."

"Thanks for your note," Fauci replied. "Nice job on the paper," he added, approvingly.

David Relman, a professor of microbiology, immunology, and medicine at Stanford University, told the Intercept that the paper rested on "flawed assumptions and opinion" and it didn't properly address the possibility of a lab-associated origin for Covid-19, which he believes is as plausible as the natural origin thesis.

"When I first saw it in March 2020, the paper read to me as a conclusion in search of an argument," he said. "Among its many problems, it failed to consider in a serious fashion the possibility of an unwitting and unrecognized accidental leak during aggressive efforts to grow coronaviruses from bat and other field samples. It also assumed that researchers in Wuhan have told the world about every virus and every sequence that was in their laboratories in 2019. But these [unredacted emails] actually provide evidence that the authors considered a few additional lab-associated scenarios, early in their

discussions. But then they rushed to judgment, and the lab scenarios fell out of favor."

"It appears as if a combination of a scant amount of data and an unspoken bias against the [lab origin] scenario diminished the idea in their minds," he added.

The Intercept added that "several academic scientists who were asked to comment for this article expressed their gratitude that these documents are now public but declined to speak on the record given the rancor surrounding this subject."

There is new cutting-edge research into the origins of SARS-CoV-2, replicated by Dr. Francis Balloux, strongly supports the laboratory origins theory.

Princeton researcher Alex Washburne in October 2022 announced the <u>pre-print publication</u> of the study, which some skeptics are now crediting with changing their mind on the issue.

"We examined whether SARS-CoV-2 was synthesized in a lab," Washburne wrote. "We studied a common method for synthesizing CoVs in the lab. This method was thought to not leave a fingerprint. We found the fingerprint. That fingerprint is in the SARS-CoV-2 genome."

Professor Francois Balloux, a world renowned expert on Covid-19, gave his assessment of the study. Professor Balloux said that he could replicate its key findings.

"This is an important piece of work," Balloux said. "To me, it looks solid both conceptually and methodologically. I was given advance warning and was able to replicate the key findings. To the best of my knowledge, I confirm the reported patterns are genuine."

Dr. Anthony Fauci and other top scientists are expected to be called before the new GOP-led House of Representatives to account for misleading the public on Covid-19. These newly unredacted NIH emails will provide more ammunition for critics of the U.S. government's Covid-19 pandemic response.

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