

Abstract

After months of buying the changing Chinese stories about the origins of COVID-19, some in the media are finally beginning to connect the dots, i.e. that the COVID-19 pandemic escaped from China's only bioweapons lab in Wuhan China. Part 1 of this paper follows China's attempts to distract, deflect, and deny to the world the real source of COVID-19. One month ago when I started documenting this to myself, this part of the story was for the most part not known widely known at best, or ignored at worst. Part 2 of this paper brings up data that is still unreported anywhere else (so far as I know) i.e. that the major and widely reported scientific study that attempted to lay the blame elsewhere, and entirely on naturalistic causes, is badly flawed from top to bottom, and obfuscates the origins of its true authors: Chinese scientists with ties to that Wuhan bioweapons laboratory.

Part 1: The Denial

Despite the fact that a new and very deadly virus had quickly emerged, and was spreading alarmingly fast, Chinese Communist Party officials were equally quick to hide evidence of the wildfire that was racing through the city of Wuhan, China. According to The Guardian, citing unpublished Chinese government data obtained by the South China Morning Post, "Chinese authorities had identified at least 266 people who contracted the virus last year and who came under medical surveillance, and the earliest case was 17 November – weeks before authorities announced the emergence of the new virus."

The fact that Wuhan hosts China's only Biosafety Laboratory Level 4 (BSL 4) lab, and is home to the nation's premier bioweapons laboratory, must have been a source of extreme concern to the Chinese government. Their actions, from Day One, underscore exactly that concern.

Even while Chinese medical professionals in Wuhan were struggling to diagnose and treat the mystery illness, Chinese local and national government officials were equally determined to hide the very existence and cause of the rapidly spreading epidemic.

According to the Washington Post, one of the first doctors to raise a public alarm was Dr. Li Wenliang, a 33-year-old ophthalmologist at Wuhan Central Hospital. On December 30, Li tried to warn his medical school colleagues about a new and highly contagious virus that resembled the deadly severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). Official government reaction to Li's warnings were swift and severe: only two days later, on January 1st, Li was detained by police for "rumor-mongering." His posts were censored, and Li was forced to apologize, admitting he committed an illegal act by making "untrue statements" and promising that he would "earnestly reflect" on his mistakes.

After his detention, "Wuhan police appeared on Chinese state television to warn the public about the dangers of spreading rumors. In a coordinated state media push that

day, they urged Internet users across the country to not believe online rumors and help build a 'clear and bright cyberspace.'”

Dr. Li Wenliang died of the virus on February 7th, leaving behind a pregnant wife and a small child. Within hours, the hashtag #wewantfreedomofspeech trended on Weibo (the Chinese version of Twitter). It was shut down by Chinese government censors 5 hours later, but not before it gained over 2 million views and over 5,500 posts.

Seven other medical whistleblowers, colleagues of Dr. Li, were also silenced and punished. The other doctors couldn't even report a diagnosis within the Chinese medical community. They stated: "It's fairly easy to fill out the disease reporting form. When we get cases of hepatitis B or other severe infectious diseases, we can make a diagnosis directly on the computer, fill in the infectious disease report in a pop-up window and just click OK." But "to do that, a diagnosis must be made." However a law enforcement official visited the hospital on January 12, and told medical staff that the infectious disease forms could only be completed and submitted with guidance from experts within the government. Exacerbating the problem and further allowing the disease to spread, doctors in the Wuhan area were initially directed by government officials to attribute the deaths to other illnesses.

On December 31st, Chinese authorities informed the World Health Organization's China office of the mysterious pneumonia cases in Wuhan. But they lied to the WHO, who uncritically accepted the Chinese narrative, and on 14 January famously tweeted “Preliminary investigations conducted by the Chinese authorities have found no clear evidence of human-to-human transmission of the novel [#coronavirus](#) (2019-nCoV) identified in [#Wuhan](#), [#China](#)".

And thus the deadly coverup - went global.

Some reports in the medical community estimate world-wide deaths could have been reduced by as much as 95% had the world known sooner of human-to-human transmissions, and taken earlier steps to practice separation and isolation procedures.

But the effort to hide the extent and origins of the virus internal to China was now at a fever pitch.

Officially, China was only reporting 41 cases on January 11th, despite the fact that by then they had hundreds of examples known to be from human-to-human transmissions, according to the South China Morning Post. It was not until January 20th that the Chinese government admitted to the world what they had known for weeks if not a month: that the virus could be transmitted human-to-human.

In an attempt to control the media narrative, China kicked out foreign journalists from places like the New York Times, Washington Post, and the Wall Street Journal. Brave Chinese national journalists, who courageously reported the truth like Chen Qiushi, Fang Bin, and Li Zehua, are missing and may have been killed. Even the rich and

powerful within China are not exempt. Chinese tycoon Ren Zhiqiang, despite being a member of the Chinese Communist Party, criticized the Chinese government for their COVID-19 coverup, and as of the date of this writing is now missing.

According to the New York Times, China also ignored offers of help from the CDC and the WHO to send experts. Those experts might have been able to help save lives in China, and more quickly spread the warning to the rest of the world, thus minimizing the global pandemic. But, as China also feared, those medical professionals also might have helped to trace and identify the true origins of the virus.

The Washington Post reported “A Hubei Health Commission official also called a company that did the viral sequencing and directed the company to stop the sequencing from Wuhan — although these tests would have been a useful indicator of the spread of the novel coronavirus that causes the disease covid-19.”

In perhaps the most stunning development, “Chinese laboratories identified a mystery virus as a highly infectious new pathogen by late December last year, but they were ordered to stop tests, **destroy samples** [emphasis added] and suppress the news” according to Caixin Global, a respected and independent Chinese research publication. “A regional health official in Wuhan, center of the outbreak, demanded the destruction of the lab samples that established the cause of unexplained viral pneumonia on January 1.”

At about the same time, two things happened almost simultaneously. First, Chinese President Xi called for a national system to control biosecurity “to protect the people’s health,” declaring lab safety is a “national security” issue. It is interesting to note when he says “national system” that the only Biosafety Laboratory Level 4 is located in Wuhan, China. The Wuhan bioweapons lab was opened over the objections of the world health community, due to its proximity to a large population center. And second, the very next day, the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology issued a directive titled: “Instructions on Strengthening Biosecurity Management in Microbiology Labs that Handle Advanced Viruses Like the Novel Coronavirus.” As stated above, the only BSL-4 lab in China authorized to handle the coronavirus family, including COVID-19, is the National Biosafety Laboratory, a subset of the Wuhan Institute of Virology, in Wuhan China.

But an even darker truth was hiding just below the surface. Having failed to contain their first narrative about an unknown cause, and lack of human-to-human transmission, China then began to blame the Wuhan wet meat market. (A “wet” market is where the vendor slaughters the animals in front of the customer. It is often characterized by the inclusion of both domesticated and rare/exotic wild animals.) What they failed to point out, however, is that China has a bad history of containing pathogen outbreaks. Various media reports indicate the SARS virus escaped twice from Chinese research labs. Other media reports claim that **Chinese researchers were previously arrested and imprisoned for selling laboratory animals to local meat markets rather than cremating them after the experiments were over.** And

what lab is only 19 miles away from the Wuhan wet meat market? The National Biosafety Laboratory, where Chinese bioweapons research is conducted.

It is likely not a coincidence that the People's Liberation Army's top expert in biological warfare, Major General Chen Wei, was dispatched from Beijing to Wuhan almost immediately after the outbreak.

Part 2: The Deflection

As the original Chinese attempts to control the narrative started to unravel, a new and insidious plot to deflect responsibility was hatched.

A paper was released from a Western research firm that purported to “prove” that the SARS-CoV-2 virus was a product of nature, and not altered in a bioweapons laboratory. (Strictly speaking COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus (aka HCoV-19)). The Scripps paper, “The Proximal Origin of SARS-CoV-2” published in Nature Medicine on 17 March 2020, allowed for no uncertainty in their conclusions, writing in their introduction to the Editor: “Our analyses clearly show that SARS-CoV-2 is not a laboratory construct or a purposefully manipulated virus.”

The article quickly became headline news around the world, and was widely cited by left-leaning publications like the New York Times as well as right-leaning publications like Fox News. With titles like “The coronavirus did not escape from a lab: Here's how we know” the blizzard of media reports seemed to put to bed the debate, definitively, once and for all.

Citing the report from Scripps Research, Fox News (and others) wrote things like: “As the novel coronavirus causing COVID-19 spreads across the globe, with cases surpassing 284,000 worldwide today (March 20), misinformation is spreading almost as fast. One persistent myth is that this virus, called SARS-CoV-2, was made by scientists and escaped from a lab in Wuhan, China, where the outbreak began.” ... “Our analyses clearly show that SARS-CoV-2 is not a laboratory construct or a purposefully manipulated virus,’ they write in the journal article.”

Sadly the internally flawed logic of the Scripps analysis seemed to be lost on the entire media, who clearly did not do their homework. Again citing media reports speaking about the ability of the virus to bind onto the host cells: “Yet in computer simulations, the mutations in SARS-CoV-2 don't seem to work very well at helping the virus bind to human cells. If scientists had deliberately engineered this virus, they wouldn't have chosen mutations that computer models suggest won't work. But it turns out, nature is smarter than scientists, and the novel coronavirus found a way to mutate that was better — and completely different — from anything scientists could have created, the study found.”

It never occurred to the media to ask probing questions such as the following:

- If the computer model Scripps used shows bad binding capabilities for SARS-CoV-2, when in reality the extremely infectious nature of this pandemic is proof of the **exact opposite**, why does this prove anything other than the computer model Scripps used is fundamentally and badly flawed and should be fixed at best, if not abandoned at worst?
- Why would Scripps assert to know **anything at all** about the classified computer models used in the Top Secret National Biosafety Laboratory, in the Wuhan Institute of Virology? Nothing in the paper suggests the Scripps scientists have any background whatsoever about classified bioweapons research. (But more on this topic later...)
- Their statement that “Nature is smarter than scientists” and “the novel coronavirus found a way that was better — and completely different — from anything scientists could have created” is an extremely bold assertion, especially given the logical flaws above. What data do they have for that assertion, much less proof? How do they purport to know what bioweapons engineers would or would not do in secretive Chinese laboratories? Do they have any experience at all with bioweapons, and how such decisions are made? To the contrary, this statement is a **hypothesis with no data whatsoever to back it up**. It is invented out of thin air. And yet, it was accepted uncritically and gleefully broadcast around the world by the media, who seem to have done little more than “copy and paste” together their stories.

But the Scripps article had a second reason used to try to justify a naturalistic origin of the pandemic: “Another nail in the ‘escaped from evil lab’ theory? The overall molecular structure of this virus is distinct from the known coronaviruses and instead most closely resembles viruses found in bats and pangolins that had been little studied and never known to cause humans any harm. ‘If someone were seeking to engineer a new coronavirus as a pathogen, they would have constructed it from the backbone of a virus known to cause illness,’ according to a statement from Scripps.”

Again, Scripps’ statements would require insider knowledge of how a classified bioweapons research facility in Communist China would work, something they simply couldn’t have. How could they possibly know that? Indeed they admit “viruses found in bats and pangolins” have “been little studied” ... by Scripps. How do they know what was or was not studied in China’s National Biosafety Laboratory? Wouldn’t it make sense for a county, bent on developing a devastating bioweapon for which the rest of the world would have no likely defense, to in fact begin investigating little known and little studied viruses?

The paper continues:

“While the analyses above suggest that SARS-CoV-2 may bind human ACE2 [i.e. the the human cell receptor area] with high affinity, computational analyses predict that the interaction is not ideal and that the RBD sequence [i.e. the receptor-binding domain, or how one of six possible amino acids in a virus binds to the ACE2] is different from those shown in SARS-CoV to be optimal for receptor binding. Thus, the high-affinity

binding of the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein to human ACE2 is most likely the result of natural selection on a human or human-like ACE2 that permits another optimal binding solution to arise. This is strong evidence that SARS-CoV-2 is not the product of purposeful manipulation.”

No, it isn't strong evidence at all. Once again, the authors make a conclusion based upon a flawed premise, i.e. their computer model, **known to be wrong**, is nevertheless useful in drawing conclusions about natural selection vs. purposeful manipulation.

Another reason stated in the Nature Medicine article is the structural makeup of SARS-CoV-2 itself. “Furthermore, if genetic manipulation had been performed, one of the several reverse-genetic systems available for betacoronaviruses would probably have been used.”

Probably have been used? How would they know that? Do they have some insight into how bioweapons engineers think? Can they rule out novel and creative approaches? Wouldn't you expect weapons designers to innovate new techniques that “the enemy” wouldn't expect, and wouldn't have defenses (vaccines, etc.) researched, manufactured, and deployed? How can they possibly know what a bioweapons lab would or would not do? **This is uninformed speculation at best, with absolutely no scientific evidence to back it up.** This is poor science, coupled with poor journalism.

Unfortunately, much like the WHO's original tweet parroting the Communist Chinese's assertions that there was no evidence for human-to-human transmission, the Scripps report was taken at face value, despite obvious internal fallacies, huge leaps of faith, and no real data to back up their wild conclusions.

Alas there are even more troubling aspects of the Scripps Research Nature Medicine article. **Scripps did not do the research themselves.** A check of the references in their paper demonstrate a possible, although admittedly not proven, source of bias that is undisclosed in their paper. And that unreported possible bias is: **the real scientists behind the research have strong ties to the bioweapons lab in Wuhan China.**

The flawed computational model, upon which Scripps places so much trust, is based on a 29 January paper “Receptor Recognition by the Novel Coronavirus from Wuhan: an Analysis Based on Decade-Long Structural Studies of SARS Coronavirus” published in the Journal of Virology. The paper has five authors. The lead author is Yushun Wan, who currently works at the University of Minnesota. However that's not where he began his career. Formerly, he was at, guess where: the Department of Virology, Wuhan University, China. Now it is not uncommon for researchers to change universities, or even countries. Science thrives when the best minds of the world collaborate together. Even coming from the Virology Department in Wuhan is not, in and of itself, proof of bias. But it is something that in fairness should be known (it was

undisclosed in the Nature Medicine article) so that reasonable people can ascertain for themselves whether or not there is an inherent conflict of interest involved.

But the linkages do not stop there. The secondary author? Jian Shang, also from the University of Minnesota, also formerly from Wuhan University's Laboratory of Virology and College of Life Sciences. Another author? Fang Li, also from the University of Minnesota, but he got his first degree from Beijing University (Biochemistry and Molecular Biology).

Another critical paper referenced in the Scripps Nature Medicine article supported their second major allegation, about the structural aspects of SARS-CoV-2. That article, "Origin and evolution of pathogenic coronaviruses," was published on December 10th, 2018, in Nature Reviews Microbiology, well before the public emergence of SARS-CoV-2. Yet the list of authors is similarly enlightening. The lead author is Jie Cui, from the Key Laboratory of Special Pathogens and Biosafety, Wuhan Institute of Virology. The second author is Fang Li (the same person cited above, from Wuhan). And the third author is Zheng-Li. She is also from the Key Laboratory of Special Pathogens and Biosafety, Wuhan Institute of Virology.

Such a strong conflict of interest should be taken into consideration when discussing the validity of the research. However, as demonstrated above, the Scripps Nature Medicine article is so badly flawed, the strong ties to the Chinese bioweapons laboratory may be little more than piling on.

Finally, it's a well-known human trait to blame others for what you, yourself did. Entire books in physiology have been written about that. It is, therefore, interesting that China's evolving explanation for the source of the virus more recently blamed the United States for introducing a bioweapon into China, rather than the other way around.

Zhao Lijian, the Deputy Director of China's Foreign Ministry Information Department (i.e. the Chinese propaganda minister) tweeted "CDC was caught on the spot. When did patient zero begin in US? How many people are infected? What are the names of the hospitals? It might be US army who brought the epidemic to Wuhan. Be transparent! Make public your data! US owe us an explanation!"

To add insult to injury, China has threatened to cut off the US' supply of pharmaceuticals. From Xinhua, China's official state-run media agency: "If China retaliates against the United States at this time, in addition to announcing a travel ban on the United States, it will also announce strategic control over medical products and ban exports to the United States. Then the United States will be caught in the ocean of new coronaviruses." The US will then fall into a "hell of a new coronavirus pneumonia epidemic."

This is not an idle threat, since due to the COVID-19 pandemic 24x7 media reporting, we've now learned that most of the US' supplies of pharmaceuticals are manufactured in China.

Part 3: Selected References (duplicates or those adding only marginal extra information are not included):

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Early PRC coverup:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/03/10/wuhan-officials-tried-cover-up-covid-19-sent-it-careening-outward/>

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<https://www.foxnews.com/world/world-health-organization-january-tweet-china-human-transmission-coronavirus>

PRC government records indicate the virus might go all the way back to 17 November
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WHO blindly took China's word on no human transmission with their 14 Jan tweet. Covered up knowledge, destroyed evidence, silenced doctors

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Doctor silenced on tasing alarm; later dies:

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<https://nypost.com/2020/03/17/chinas-new-top-priority-spinning-coronavirus-and-blaming-the-us/>

Sample destruction:

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Early COVID-19 intro

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Chinese blame game

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<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8163767/Downing-Street-says-China-faces-reckoning-coronavirus.html>

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