

The Unz Review • An Alternative Media Selection

A Collection of Interesting, Important, and Controversial Perspectives Largely Excluded from the American Mainstream Media

Five Years and Thirty Million Deaths • 1h35m

RON UNZ • JANUARY 6, 2025 • 12,700 WORDS • 1 COMMENT [Q&A](#)

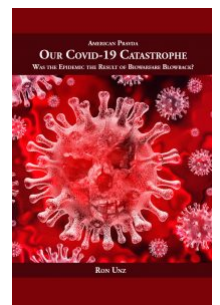
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Prof. Ralph Baric of the University of North Carolina

The Fifth Anniversary of the Global Covid Epidemic

In recent years the sharp decline in quality of the *New York Times* has left the *Wall Street Journal* as America's best major newspaper, a development that no one had expected when Rupert Murdoch purchased that venerable publication in 2007. Over the last couple of years, I've spent fewer and fewer minutes each morning reading the nonsense that the *Times* publishes, and one of these days may finally give up on it entirely.



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Consider, for example, the global Covid epidemic that began in early 2020 and dominated all the world's headlines for the following couple of years. According to the careful analysis of the *Economist*, "excess deaths" due to Covid probably totaled around thirty million[1], and the disease certainly disrupted the lives of many billions more, while most of the American population spent much of the next year or two living under intermittent lockdowns.

The massive Covid coverage in the *Times* was led by Douglas G. McNeil, Jr., a 45-year veteran of the newspaper, whose byline graced countless front-page stories during that period. But in 2021, the *Times* organized a lucrative Peru outing for wealthy high school students and the reluctant McNeil was cajoled into leading it. Unfortunately, some of those students reported McNeil for the "politically incorrect" language he had casually used[2], and despite his illustrious career the journalist was

summarily purged from the *Times*, later telling the shocking story in a widely-discussed, [four-part essay](#)[3] on *Medium*.

As the world suffered under the pandemic, the *Times* and every other Western media outlet had declared that Covid was a natural virus, denouncing as “conspiracy theorists” anyone who suggested otherwise, with Facebook enforcing that consensus by banning anyone who dissented from it.

But in May 2021, that established narrative was suddenly transformed by Nicholas Wade, a very distinguished science journalist who had spent decades at the *Times* including serving as its Science Editor. Wade self-published an 11,000 word blockbuster article pointing to the overwhelming genetic evidence that Covid was artificial and arguing that it had likely leaked from a lab.

- [Origin of Covid — Following the Clues](#)[4]

Did people or nature open Pandora’s box at Wuhan?

Nicholas Wade • **Medium** • May 2, 2021 • 11,000 Words

As [I explained](#)[5] later that same month:

Despite such extremely inauspicious beginnings and the cautious and subdued tone of his text, the consequences were dramatic. Although nearly all the facts and evidence that Wade discussed had already been publicly available for most of the past year, his careful analysis and considerable journalistic credibility quickly transformed the intellectual landscape. He began his long article by explaining that from February 2020 onward a huge ideological bubble had been inflated by political propaganda masquerading as science, a bubble that was afterwards maintained through a combination of journalistic cowardice and incompetence. President Donald Trump had proclaimed that the virus was artificial, so our media therefore insisted that it must be natural, even if all the evidence seemed to suggest otherwise.

Wade’s careful presentation immediately punctured that bubble, and upended the public discussion of an epidemic that had killed millions around the world. By May 28th, the *Wall Street Journal* carried the headline [“Facebook Ends Ban on Posts Asserting Covid-19 Was Man-Made,”](#)[6] so that in less than one month a self-published article had already changed what nearly three billion individuals around the world were allowed to read and write. This illustrates the totalitarian control of information on the Internet held by American’s huge Tech monopolies, which determine the limits of permitted discussion worldwide at the flip of a switch. Can there be any better example of the ridiculous, Stalinesque climate of intellectual censorship currently enforced by those corporate giants?

The impact of Wade’s article was considerably enhanced by an important column by McNeil that soon followed, in which the latter completely reversed his own position and seconded the conclusions of his former colleague. Thus, the *Times* journalist who had spearheaded his paper’s entire Covid coverage now endorsed the theory that he and every other mainstream writer had spent more than a year dismissing as “far right” lunacy, with that volte-face obviously having a great deal of impact upon the public debate.

- [How I Learned to Stop Worrying And Love the Lab-Leak Theory](#)[7]
Donald G. McNeil, Jr. • **Medium** • May 17, 2021 • 4,700 Words

The rapidity of this dramatic sudden shift in the public media narrative struck me as almost Orwellian, and I applied that metaphor in the article I published discussing all these developments.

- [American Pravda: George Orwell's Virus Lab-Leak](#)[8]
Ron Unz • **The Unz Review** • May 31, 2021 • 5,200 Words

Perhaps because *Times* had defenestrated its leading Covid journalist in 2021, the fifth year anniversary of that gigantic epidemic has so far passed without any notice in that newspaper. Meanwhile, a week or two ago, the rival *Journal* published a lengthy front-page article revisiting the hotly debated question of whether Covid was natural or had instead leaked from a lab.

- [Behind Closed Doors: The Spy-World Scientists Who Argued Covid Was a Lab Leak](#)[9]
The idea that the pandemic's origins lie with a research facility in China was once labeled a conspiracy theory
Michael R. Gordon and Warren P. Strobel • **The Wall Street Journal** • December 26, 2024 • 2,800 Words

The Important Covid Origins Research of Jim Haslam

Throughout 2020 and 2021, the overwhelming focus of my work had been the Covid origins controversy, and this had substantially continued into 2022. But over the last couple of years, my interest has shifted toward the Russia/Ukraine and Israel/Gaza conflicts, and I've only occasionally covered Covid matters, which have anyway largely faded from the headlines along with the disease itself.

As a consequence, I failed to notice the later arrival of an important new participant in the Covid origins debate. In October 2022, an independent researcher named Jim Haslam began posting on that topic. His Substack account was entitled [Reverse Engineering the Origins of SARS-CoV-2](#)[10], and over the last couple of years I'd very occasionally seen reference to his work, which claimed that Covid was a bioengineered virus that had leaked from the Wuhan lab. But since I was preoccupied with other matters and his views seemed entirely similar to those of so many others whom I'd encountered from early 2020 onwards, I didn't pay much attention to his work. Every now and then I'd see it mentioned or cited somewhere and would resolve to take a look, but I never got around to it.

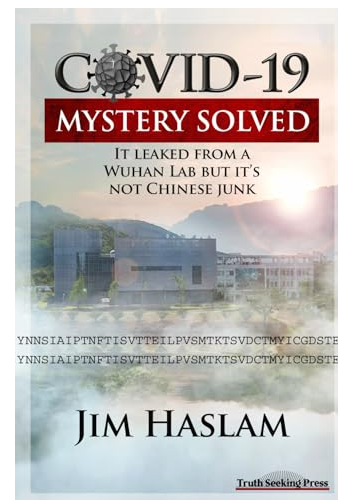
However, Ukraine's unexpected December assassination of a top Russian general named Igor Kirillov at his Moscow home suddenly revived the issue. Lt. Gen. Kirillov had been in charge of Russian biowarfare defense and very soon after the Russian invasion, his organization claimed that America had established dozens of biolabs filled with illegal bioweapons on his own country's border. Many Western analysts have suggested that these dramatic accusations drew permanent Ukrainian enmity and eventually marked him for death. But aside from myself, no one else mentioned that Kirillov had attracted far greater attention later that same year when he suggested that Covid had been an American bioweapon unleashed against China and Iran, so I published an article discussing his killing and recapitulating some of my own evidence that strongly substantiated Kirillov's accusations.

- [Assassinating a Top Russian General](#)[11]
Ron Unz • **The Unz Review** • December 23, 2024 • 5,600 Words

That piece attracted many responses, one of which mentioned that Haslam had recently published a Covid origins book that came to very different conclusions. Given my renewed focus on the subject, this seemed the perfect opportunity to finally his work, so I quickly ordered the book and read it.

Independent researchers who present a Covid analysis not aligned with that of the mainstream media obviously face huge difficulties in getting their manuscripts into print, and this is especially true of a topic such as Covid that faded from the headlines a couple of years ago. Therefore, I was hardly surprised that Haslam's book was self-published on Amazon, nor that it lacked any endorsements or favorable cover-blurbs.

This was compounded by the explosive nature of his conclusions, which went far beyond those of the various lab-leak advocates whose work I'd previously read. Back in late 2021 I'd published a review of a half-dozen such Covid origins books, most of which were released by major publishing houses and reviewed in mainstream media outlets. But I now found the analysis and information contained in 90% of Haslam's book far superior to any of those, although the remaining 10% unfortunately fell into an extremely different category.



- [American Pravda: Confronting Covid Crimestop](#)[12]

Ron Unz • **The Unz Review** • December 13, 2021 • 6,400 Words

During his long March discussion with Tucker Carlson, Prof. Jeffrey Sachs of Columbia University had made[13] some controversial statements about the origins of Covid, and he reaffirmed these a second time[14] just a few weeks ago, with these two interviews together generating tens of millions of impressions on Twitter and millions more views on YouTube. Sachs' ideas apparently relied heavily upon Haslam's research findings, so although the very highly regarded chairman of the *Lancet's* Covid Commission never mentioned Haslam's name, he seemed to have tacitly provided a strong endorsement of author's analysis.

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Although reasonably well-written and edited, Haslam's book lacked any index, severely reducing its value, and although I assumed that I could use the text search feature of the Kindle version[15] for that purpose, the latter suffered from some sort of indexing problem that rendered it useless, so I hope that the author will soon correct this.

An even more serious problem was inherent in any printed work. Haslam's controversial Covid analysis relied upon a vast number of references, sources, and documents, which would normally be provided as online links. However, the analogous footnotes or endnotes of a print edition are obviously much less useful, so Haslam did not even bother including any of those, any more than had the earlier Covid origins books released by major publishers. This forced his readers to take almost all his statements on pure faith, a huge difficulty as I began reading through a book whose chapters were filled with so many extremely controversial claims.

Fortunately, the many lengthy posts published on his Substack largely solved this problem, linking to all the hundreds of source documents that he had relied upon. Therefore, I think his book should best

be regarded as a mere overview of his ideas, while anyone interested in exploring those in any depth should instead rely upon his online writings. Furthermore, his online analysis also provided a multitude of diagrams, charts, and other graphic images totally lacking in his book, as well as numerous videos that also contained information important for his conclusions. His book consisted of thirty chapters and his Substack contained fifty-odd different posts, so associating those two sources of information would have been much easier if each chapter suggested the post or two that best documented its claims, and perhaps he will add such a feature in a future edition.

On the more positive side, seven of his longest posts from late 2022 and 2023 were labeled #1 through #7, with these totaling nearly 60,000 words and apparently providing much of his core analysis. So after finishing his book I carefully read all of these, along perhaps another 50,000 words of other posts, though I skipped over the dozen or more short ones that were labeled “Weekly lab leaker.” Providing some sort of road-map to his most important posts and a brief summary of their contents would be a helpful addition to his Substack.

The central thesis Haslam that set forth can be summarized in just a couple of sentences. Just like all the other lab-leakers, he believed that the Covid virus was bioengineered, but argued that its creation took place in an American lab rather than in Wuhan. According to him, the Chinese virologists who were so heavily demonized in the Western media from 2020 onwards had almost no role in that process and were completely innocent, even being unaware that Covid had been created.

Thus, the virus that killed tens of millions and devastated the world was an *American* virus, and this remarkable conclusion surely explained Prof. Sachs’ striking March 16th column suggesting that America owed the world gigantic financial compensation[16]. Given Haslam’s hypothesis, it’s easy to understand why his book needed to be self-published and will almost certainly be totally ignored by every major Western media outlet.

Although there are several separate strands to Haslam’s analysis, I thought he made a pretty strong case for most of these, while also solving some of the strange mysteries that had puzzled so many observers. His analysis seemed to straighten out a number of the mistakes, unintentional or otherwise, that earlier lab-leak advocates had quoted back-and-forth so many times until they became widely accepted truths. But Haslam’s important work can only be properly understood when placed in the context of what so many Americans and others around the world had originally come to believe about the origins of the Covid disaster.

The Demonization of China for the Wuhan Lab-Leak

When word of the outbreak of a mysterious new viral disease in the central Chinese city of Wuhan reached the world’s media in the first few days of January 2020, American tensions with China under the Trump Administration had been at a very high level, and right-wing activists had already spent years heavily demonizing China, portraying our main geopolitical competitor as a global font of evil.

Almost immediately, our CIA-affiliated propaganda outlets such as *Radio Free Asia* began emphasizing that the city was home to the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV), one of China’s most advanced viral research facilities. Some journalists and activists even promoted the theory that the Covid virus had been a Chinese bioweapon that had accidentally leaked from one of its labs. Indeed, as Rupert Murdoch’s *Sky News* journalist Sharri Markson later recounted[17] in her 2021 book *What Really Happened in Wuhan*[18], some influential anti-China activists argued that a faction of the Chinese

government might have deliberately released the deadly virus in one of their own largest cities as part of a murky political power-struggle, though she herself claimed never to have been convinced by that suggestion.

While these sorts of anti-China theories soon became widespread within the conservative wing of the mainstream media, far more extreme beliefs began circulating in less respectable venues. For example, within a few weeks numerous Internet websites[19] began republishing the alleged text[20] of a 2005 speech by a top Chinese general in which he declared that China planned to use biological weapons to exterminate most of America's population, then conquer the world and send forth hundreds of millions of Chinese to colonize our own newly depopulated territory along with that of many other countries. Although such outrageous notions were hardly endorsed by mainstream conservatives, Alex Jones eagerly promoted them to his audience of many millions, and through social media they probably somewhat filtered into the consciousness of many ordinary Republicans and conservatives.

With so many right-wingers having become convinced that Covid was a leaked Chinese bioweapon, related propaganda soon attracted huge attention on the Internet. Anti-China activists and anti-China websites began promoting anti-China propaganda-videos allegedly showing large numbers of ordinary Chinese suddenly dropping dead in the streets of Wuhan as a result of the fearsome Chinese bioweapon now uncontrollably circulating in that city. In those early days, even respectable mainstream analysts wildly over-estimated Covid's fatality rate.

As a result, a powerful narrative took hold among many Americans of that ideological ilk. The evil Chinese had created a devastating biological weapon that they had probably been planning to unleash against America and the rest of the world but they were so incompetent that they had instead allowed it to leak into their own society. Thus, their malevolently fatal own-goal might bring down America's most powerful global rival.

At the time, I regarded all these theories and accusations swirling on the Internet as ranging from the very doubtful to the totally deranged, and my opinion has never changed. But some of the more explosive ones became wildly popular on social media, and this surely explains why Donald McNeil and other mainstream journalists covering Covid lumped them all together, dismissing all the lab-leak scenarios as "far right conspiracy theories." Meanwhile, Facebook came under increasing pressure to ban or censor these controversial Covid views as dangerously inflammatory.

But as so often happens, the baby was thrown out with the bathwater. This was especially true in the case of a highly technical issue then only known to professional virologists, involving something called a Furin Cleavage Site (FCS). Soon after the Chinese released the full Covid genome on January 10th, virologists noticed Covid contained an FCS, a structure that allowed it to easily enter human cells and therefore greatly increased its infectivity. Covid without an FCS would have been almost harmless, but an FCS-equipped Covid ultimately caused some thirty million deaths and inflicted enormous disruption and damage upon the world economy. And oddly enough, no previous coronavirus of the Covid type had ever been found with a FCS, which raised some eyebrows among virologists. But until Wade published his seminal article in May 2021, few mainstream journalists had paid any attention to that crucial fact.

During this period, two distinct ideological camps formed. The entire mainstream establishment closed ranks around the belief that Covid was a natural virus, while an agitated alternative lab-leak community formed around the conviction that Covid had been bioengineered, and in such an

ideologically super-charged atmosphere anyone who challenged the assumptions of either group might be ferociously attacked. This can be seen in the case of a rather minor figure in the Covid controversy, someone who was only very occasionally mentioned[21] in our media stories.

Australian virologist Danielle Anderson held an academic appointment at the National University of Singapore (NUS) but for several years had also been working at the Wuhan lab, splitting her time between those two research institutions. She happened to be the only Westerner working at WIV during the period in question, and after the lab-leak theory was revived in mid-2021, she was interviewed by *Bloomberg*, declaring that the Western media's portrayal of the lab and its operations was totally at odds with what she had herself seen there. She argued that the likelihood that Covid had leaked from that facility seemed almost nil.

- The Last—And Only—Foreign Scientist in the Wuhan Lab Speaks Out[22]
Virologist Danielle Anderson paints a very different picture of the Wuhan Institute
 Michelle Fay Cortez • **Bloomberg** • June 27, 2021 • 2,200 Words

As I wrote[23] at the time:

Based upon a few sentences in American government cables, our media has repeatedly alleged[24] that the operating standards of the Wuhan lab were poor, but Anderson's own experience had been entirely different, with the safety protocols so impressive that she later suggested they be adopted at her own research organization. For many months, former members of the Trump Administration had been promoting[25] some questionably-sourced "third party" intelligence claiming that three lab workers became seriously ill in November 2019 with Covid-like symptoms, but Dr. Anderson could recall no such cases, and believed that she would have heard about them. She had generally enjoyed a very friendly and open relationship with her Chinese colleagues, with scientific gossip regularly being shared back and forth. Under these circumstances, she felt certain that if a suspected lab-leak had occurred, she would have heard about it, but there had never been a hint of any such incident.

Furthermore, the creation of a dangerous virus such as Covid would have required many layers of official authorization by lab administrators, and she doubted that a decision of such importance could have been taken without word getting around. While she admitted that it was theoretically possible for some rogue Chinese lab researcher to have secretly undertaken such a project and bioengineered the virus, then accidentally infected himself or others, she rated the likelihood as "exceedingly slim."

So based upon her personal experience at the Wuhan lab, she thought it very unlikely that the Covid virus was developed there and equally unlikely that any lab-leak had ever occurred. For these reasons, she still leaned towards a natural source for the viral outbreak.

As a result, Dr. Anderson was ferociously vilified by agitated lab-leak advocates, some of whom denounced her as a traitor and an obvious stooge of "the ChiComs." In fact I think I remember reading

that the mild-mannered scientific researcher was so harshly attacked on Twitter that she was driven off that platform. Over the years, I've regularly cited Anderson as probably the single best eyewitness to what had actually happened at the Wuhan lab, and I've always considered it highly suspicious that all the leading lab-leak proponents such as Alina Chan and Matt Ridley seemed to pretend[26] that she didn't exist.

Anderson's eyewitness testimony has only very rarely been mentioned in our media while the explosive claims of the lab-leakers have steadily gained ground among Americans. A 2023 survey showed that two-thirds of our population believed[27] that Covid came from a lab in China, and since then support for that theory has further increased[28]. I haven't seen any recent international surveys on the origins of Covid, but given that our own country heavily dominates the global media, I'd assume that the worldwide numbers are also quite high.

Haslam's Exoneration of China for Creating Covid

Little of this recent political history was presented in Haslam's narrative, which instead heavily focused on the scientific issues rather than the ideological battles of the last few years. But in an interview[29] a few days ago, he mentioned that he himself had earlier believed that Covid had probably been created by China's military and might have been a Chinese bioweapon until the release of secret American documents and his own extensive research completely changed his mind over the last couple of years.

Perhaps as partial atonement for such past mistakes, he devoted one of his longest posts to the unfortunate case of a leading victim of that over-heated ideological atmosphere, namely Dr. Shi Zhengli[30], a senior virologist who had spent nearly her entire career working at the Wuhan lab. Widely known as "the Bat Lady," Dr. Shi was for several years subjected to unprecedented vilification across much of the conservative-leaning American media, often portrayed as the likely creator of Covid and hence the individual responsible for so many millions of deaths.

When a mysterious and dangerous viral outbreak suddenly erupted in the city that was home to China's most advanced center for viral research, only the most obtuse could have failed to recognize that remarkable coincidence, and Shi later explained how she immediately became terrified that a virus from her own lab had somehow gotten loose and was responsible for the emerging catastrophe. But after frantically checking her database, she was very relieved to see that Covid was not among any of those viral samples. The closest match she found was to a virus labeled RaTG13, a sample that she'd obtained a decade earlier but never bothered investigating, and although it was more than 96% identical, the 1,200 nucleotides that differed represented a yawning genetic chasm that would have required many decades of random mutations to cross.

However, given that Covid was so close to the one in her collection, she decided to publish a February 2020 paper providing the genome of the latter virus and suggesting that the strong similarity supported the idea that Covid was probably also natural.

Unfortunately for Shi, the results were explosive. Many American activists had already convinced themselves that Covid had leaked from the Wuhan lab, and once they discovered that the closest viral match anywhere in the world was found in Shi's virus collection, they became certain of that fact.

Many of them soon argued that Shi or one of her close Chinese colleagues had bioengineered Covid from the original RaTG13 virus.

Although others over the years have defended Shi against those accusations, Haslam does an extremely thorough job, demolishing the case against her in the 10,000 words of Post #4[31], and instead praising her as a heroic whistleblower. He explains how her decision to publish that virus rendered her the primary target of worldwide accusations:

Shi's attempt at transparency turned her into the #1 international suspect[32], because her lab possessed the closest (known) genetic match to SARS2. Looking back, Shi's publication may go down as the bravest decision in this sordid tale of cowards.

[VIDEO LINK](#)

“We[33] can never prove something that doesn't exist. All these attacks on us come from the U.S. and are unfounded. We never had this novel coronavirus in our lab, let alone handled it. Before December 30, 2019 such a virus did not exist in our lab. There could not have possibly have been a lab leak. So this kind of attack is invalid.” Shi's remarks are quoted from an August 2020 interview.

[VIDEO LINK](#)

However, he noted that Shi's entire expertise actually centered upon breeding and caring for bats, rather than any sort of genetic bioengineering. Her strictly limited skills in that latter field was in very sharp contrast with those of her occasional collaborator Dr. Ralph Baric[34] of the University of North Carolina (UNC), who was the world's leading expert in such genetic manipulation:

You can tell someone's scientific interest by looking at their patents[35]. Her American collaborator Ralph Baric held patents for reverse genetics[36] and vaccines[37]. But Shi and her WIV colleagues were breeding[38] and feeding[39] bats. WIV filed two recent patents on breeding and feeding bat cages. She perfected her methods over the past decade of “raising bats[40].”

The “artificial breeding method for wild bats” patent was a detailed six-step process. Meal preparation for the bats includes one week of detailed temperatures, proportions and time for preparation of...worms. Step two is a paragraph of instructions for hand feeding[41] bats via tweezers, what Linfa called the “puppet show[42].”

In sharp contrast with Shi's very limited bioengineering expertise, Dr. Baric could even synthesize entire viruses from merely a listing of their genetic structure.

In 2013, Shi emailed[43] an unpublished Chinese bat sample called SHC014[44] to Baric. Shi could not isolate the sample, so Baric used his patented reverse genetic method to create an infectious clone (lab created version) in North Carolina. The paper was controversially[45] published two years later in 2015[46].

Baric did not isolate the Chinese bat virus; he *created* the Chinese virus based simply on its genome sequence, sent by Shi via email. He 'resurrected the virus' based on an emailed sequence. To repeat, Baric's lab in North Carolina was able to create a live Chinese virus based on an emailed genome sequence. No other lab on the planet can do this with a 30,000bp genome. We know because he brags about being able to do it, in front of his own international peers! (5:34:00[47])

Shi was listed as a co-author[48] on the 2015 hot potato paper[49] for sharing an unpublished SHC014 Chinese bat sample, which the WIV could not synthesize (engineer[50]). UNC[51] was the only US Government select agent[52] coronavirus lab[53] where "some virus growth studies will be conducted in primary human airway[54]" cells. That 2015 paper was on Fauci's mind at midnight, just two hours after being told SARS2 "looks engineered[55]" on January 31, 2020.

From: Fauci, Anthony (NIH/NIAID) [E]
Sent: Sat, 1 Feb 2020 12:29:01 +0000
To: Auchincloss, Hugh (NIH/NIAID) [C] (b) (6)
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: IMPORTANT
Attachments: Baric, Shi et al - Nature medicine - SARS Gain of function.pdf

Hugh:
 It is essential that we speak this AM. Keep your cell phone on. I have a conference call at 7:45 AM with Azar. It likely will be over at 8:45 AM. Read this paper as well as the e-mail that I will forward to you now. You will have tasks today that must be done.
 Thanks,
 Tony

Anthony S. Fauci, MD
 Director
 National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
 Building 31, Room 7A-03
 31 Center Drive, MSC 2520
 National Institutes of Health
 Bethesda, MD 20892-2520

Baric Shi 2015[46] paper on Fauci's midnight mind[56] after informed SARS2 "looks[57] engineered[58]" on Feb 1 and maybe edited[59] March 2020

- In 2015 interview Baric[60] described the controversial[61] paper (9 min[62]) and furin cleavage sites (15 min[63]) being the biological key for jumping species[64].

To appreciate the engineering capabilities of modern virology, Nicholson Baker in NY Magazine[65], laid out a plausible lab leak hypothesis (that convinced me). But to provide

the evidence for potential genetic engineering, Baker had to reference the Corona King, Ralph Baric 40 times, which was three times more than Shi. For Yuri Deigin's Medium piece[66], he referenced Baric nearly as many times as Shi.

The 30 year NYT science writer Nicholas Wade[67] claimed Baric “taught[68]” Shi how to engineer SARS2, and called it “their work” linking to a paper[69] that Shi had zero to do with regarding engineering. Co-authorship[70] is a complicated[71] scientific[72] subject[73], but corresponding author (last name listed = lab) is more important due to ‘tacit[74]’ knowledge, which is “we can know more than we can tell.”

Wade claimed that “if the SARS2 virus were to have been cooked up in Shi’s lab, then its direct prototype would have been” the 2015 paper[69]. Shi couldn’t reverse engineer that paper and it was actually a prototype for UNC to follow in creating SARS2.

To: Baric, Ralph S[rbaric@email.unc.edu]
 From: 石正刚[zishi@wh.iov.cn]
 Sent: Wed 4/29/2020 5:06:34 AM (UTC-04:00)
 Subject: conspiracy information

Dear Ralph,

Have you read this information? <https://www.newsweek.com/controversial-wuhan-lab-experiments-that-may-have-started-coronavirus-pandemic-1500503>.

I found several points misleading the readers:

1. Regarding our joint publication in *Nature Medicine* in 2015, the experiment was conducted in your lab. But according to this news, it was assumed that it was conducted in my lab. In fact I have been blamed by the peoples from the beginning of the outbreak because of this paper.
2. The above chimERIC virus is to study a bat coronavirus with unknown function, which is not related to GOF.
3. The phrase “Wuhan would probably have had to start with a virus closer to SARS-CoV-2 than RaTG13, which is within the realm of possibilities” immedicately follows your words and make people think it's your comments.
4. In the last paragraph, I don't agree with you on the origin of the virus. Ian Lipkin has a very close collaboration with a lab in Guangdong province. My lab is transparent and open in bat coronavirus research because I have several long-term international collaborators. Each time I had a meeting with our colleagues within and outside of China, I reported some novel and unpublished results. We have nothing to conceal.

It's a pity that our science is involved in politic conflict.

Best regards,

Zhengli.

Shi's email[75] to Baric on April 2020 discussing this article[76]

Up until January 23, 2020, the nearest sample[77] previously collected to SARS2 was a distant PLA lab near Shanghai. The samples[78] were collected from an island[79] closer to Japan than the Mojiang[80] mine[81] where RaTG13 was collected...

When Shi published the *natural* RaTG13[82], she showed the world SARS2 was *unnatural*. It brought attention to the “peculiar[83]” furin cleavage site (PRRA[84]), making it stick out like a bright neon virologist sign. A Taiwan[85] professor described it as “unlikely to have four amino acids added all at once.” It is “the magic sauce of this virus[86], whether it’s natural or genetically modified, this is why this virus is circulating in humans.” Shi’s UNC collaborator, Ralph[87] Baric[88] of UNC[89], remained quiet[90] about the furin cleavage site. Others rang the alarm bell, only to be quieted with NIAID grant money.

- SARS2 is the only sarbecovirus[91] with furin cleavage site (PRRAR). It’s easy to remember as roar[92]: R-R-A-R.

- “We didn’t perform any experiment with any coronavirus in which we attempted to insert a furin cleavage site. It’s not within my expertise, that’s simple.” [Shi](#)[93]

Shi published RaTG13 the day after the [lockdown](#)[94] started on January 23rd and just one [month](#)[95] before China CDC clamped down on all lab origin papers. All of this happened the same week the [PLA](#)[96] took over the WIV. If Shi did not publish RaTG13, the nearest match to SARS2 would be [two](#)[97] PLA lab [samples](#)[98] ([ZXC21](#) & [ZC45](#)[99]) from Eastern China, that have nothing to do with her Wuhan lab. Ironically by publishing RaTG13 in 2020 she brought more attention to her lab.

Haslam emphasized that once Shi published the RaTG13 genome, leading virologists began noticing that the remarkably close match to Covid (also known as SARS2) primarily differed in that the latter included a Furin Cleavage Site (FCS). Many of them immediately recognized this as very strong evidence of bioengineering. Perhaps some of them even recalled that Baric had previously published papers describing the use of bioengineering to insert a FCS into viruses that lacked such a structure.

When the full SARS2 genome sequence was published on [January 10th](#)[100], a Tulane [virologist](#)[101] was aware of the deadly [Furin Cleavage Site](#)[102] in SARS2. But he would not suspect [engineering](#)[103] until *after* [January 24th](#)[104] when Shi published the similar SARS like strain called [RaTG13](#)[105]. It was without the furin cleavage site called “[PRRAR](#)[106].”



Do the alignment of the spikes at the amino acid level – it’s stunning. Bob Garry [email](#)[107] to Fauci

“Things were made worse when (the WIV) published the (RaTG13) bat virus sequence – a bat sampled in a different province for which they have a large collection of samples,” from an Eddie Holmes [email on February 8th](#)[108]. He was [60/40%](#)[109] in favor of the lab leak theory ([80% on burner phone](#)[110]) during the [February 1st teleconference](#)[111], but the [Australian](#)[112] virologist now blames the Wuhan wet market.

[Holmes](#)[113] was the [first](#)[114] to publish the SARS2 sequence [January 10th](#)[100] breaking China’s code of silence. Holmes also [did not suspect engineering](#)[115] until after Shi published RaTG13 on January 24th; replying “[Fuck this is bad](#)[116].”

- Holmes [emphasized that Shi’s BSL2 lab](#)[117] was not working on anything genetically close to SARS2 in 2018-19 because their unpublished paper ([with RaTG13 sequences](#)[118]) was under a four year embargo.

The Scripps virologist who told Fauci that SARS2 “[looks engineered](#)[119]” on January 31 would later [lie](#)[120]. After the [Fauci gate](#)[121] emails were released in 2021, [Kristian](#)[122]

Andersen[123] claimed RaTG13 was published after the Fauci February 1st teleconference[111], but it was before, so Shi publishing RaTG13 was the SARS2 engineering tattletale. Again, when Shi published the *natural* RaTG13[124] sample on January 24th[125], she showed the world SARS2 was *unnatural*.

The SARS2 'engineering rumors[126]' and Fauci's teleconference[127] started days later. Both the Scripps and Tulane virologists were later added to Fauci's ongoing \$82M CREID network[128], which potentially funded the creation[129] of SARS2 (more details below). The Tulane virologist recently admitted the CREID grant proposals were submitted in 2019[130]. He now claims SARS2 was a "product of nature[131]." Duke[132] was the leading CREID contractor, with both Linfa and Dani of Duke-NUS[133] listed as Southeast Asian CREID contractors, but not Shi.

Haslam argued that Shi's publication of the RaTG13 genome proved her innocence and that if she hadn't done so, the apparent bioengineering of Covid/SARS2 might have remained hidden:

Yes, everything about RaTG13 was weird[134] and a close match to SARS2, but why[135] even[136] publish[137] RaTG13 if you have something to hide? Because they had to? WIV published RaTG13 one full week before Wuhan University published 4.9.91[138], which itself did not know about RaTG13, so they also had nothing to hide.

It was not easy to see that SARS2 was engineered. It was synthetically *designed* to look natural to the Chinese bat immune system. Even longtime[139] biosecurity expert Richard Ebright[140] told US media on January[141] 29th[142] that "based on the virus genome and properties there is no indication whatsoever that it was an engineered virus." This line was repeated on February 5th[143] to Chinese media[144] (same infamous article about Shi swearing on her life).

- #4: I, Shi Zhengli, guarantee with my life that SARS2 is not related to 'my' lab[145]
How an Asian woman's transparency became a Western man's conspiracy
Jim Haslam • **Substack** • February 5, 2023 • 10,200 Words

As a coda to all of this, Haslam later published a 2024 post[146] that scathingly attacked Alina Chan and Matt Ridley for their 2021 book Viral[147], which had strongly suggested that Dr. Shi was responsible for Covid. While I agreed with much of his criticism, I thought his verdict was far too harsh considering that their manuscript had probably been finalized only about a year after the epidemic began and before much of the important information had been released and properly digested. When I'd reviewed[148] their book soon after it appeared, I'd also been critical, but emphasized that most of the other Covid books published around the same time were so extremely bad that theirs stood head-and-shoulders above the rest.

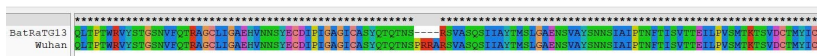
Haslam on America's Covid Cover-Up

Later in 2023, Haslam followed up this lengthy Post #4 narrative with [Post #6](#)[149], describing in greater detail the stunned reaction among so many top virologists as they digested the obvious evidence of bioengineering in the Covid/SARS2 genome.

On January 24th, 2020, a world-class [evolutionary](#)[150] virologist walked into his San Diego office, overlooking the Pacific Ocean, and logged into his favorite forum, Virological.org. Dr. Kristian G. Andersen (KGA) of the Scripps Institute was excited to download the latest mutations from the (not yet named) Wuhan coronavirus...

Dr. Shi Zhengli of the Wuhan Institute of Virology published a never-before-seen bat sample, called RaTG13. Shi uploaded its sequence to [GISAID](#)[151] (a [competitor](#)[152] to the NIH NCBI database) on January 24, 2020. This was technically the [second](#)[153] [time](#)[154] Shi uploaded RaTG13, but oddly, the NIH server (NCBI) didn't release [parts](#)[155] of the genome until [2022](#)[156]...

KGA aligned the [natural](#)[157] RaTG13 sequence over the circulating SARS2 virus and the results were astonishing. The world-class evolutionary virologist called his evolutionary colleague Bob Garry of Tulane University.



I aligned (SARS2) with the 96% (similar RaTG13) bat sequence from WIV...they are essentially identical at the amino acid level – well all but the perfect insertion of 12 nucleotides that adds the furin cleavage site (PRRAR)...I really can't think of a plausible natural scenario...where you insert exactly 4 amino acids (PRRA)...at the exact same time to gain this function...**do the alignment of the spikes at the amino acid level** – it's stunning – [Bob](#)[158] by February 1st.

KGA then called Dr Eddie Holmes of the University of Sydney on Jan 30th to show the alignment, exposing the furin cleavage site. They also noticed two restriction sites flanked the furin cleavage site, so both were “nervous.” Eddie [said](#)[159] he was “about 80% sure this thing had come out of a lab.” KGA was “60 to 70%” and admitted that “I drank about three beers after that early call with Eddie”...

Bob Garry knew about the SARS2 furin cleavage site (PRRAR) by [Jan](#)[160] [12th](#)[161], when Eddie [published](#)[162] the complete SARS2 sequence on the Virological forum. But KGA, Bob, and Eddie didn't suspect engineering until *after* the WIV published RaTG13 on Jan 24th.

Dr Andrew Rambaut of the University of Edinburgh was looped in. Andrew had created the Virological forum just five years earlier, during the Ebola outbreak in Liberia. His website was designed to share and discuss the available sequences during an outbreak rapidly. Still, now the SARS2 origin was too sensitive of a subject to discuss on his public forum.

These four world-class evolutionary virologists created a private Slack[163] channel on Feb 1st. Andrew noted, “RaTG13 is identical except for the four residue insertions.” Eddie said this “would also be exactly what was expected by engineering.” They were preparing for the infamous February 1st teleconference...

Jeremy Farrar of the Wellcome Trust was the Fauci of the UK. Early in the outbreak, he tried to get scientists to share[164] SARS2 sequences. But after the WIV shared RaTG13, he was scared[165] enough about the origins of SARS2 to buy a burner phone[166]...

One week after the WIV uploaded RaTG13, on Jan 31st, Farrar told[167] a collection of money managers how bad it would get. The furin cleavage site made SARS2 a “prepandemic potential[168]” pathogen...

Farrar had been trying to contact Fauci all week to warn the same and finally got through on the 31st. Farrar introduced Fauci to three concerned virologists: KGA[169], Bob[170], and Eddie[171]...

Four world-class evolutionary virologists with PhDs from Harvard[172], Texas[173], and[174] Cambridge[175] emailed Fauci to say that we find “the genome inconsistent with expectations from evolutionary theory.” Why? Because the WIV had published RaTG13 one week earlier. The 80-year-old Fauci would be up until 3 AM[176] covering his tracks.

At the behest of Farrar, Fauci finally called one of the concerned virologists. KGA told Fauci about Baric’s 2015[46] paper[177], which[178] “looked like a how-to manual for building the Wuhan coronavirus in a laboratory.” UNC just months later[179] uploaded the genome sequence for this 2015 paper, which meant Baric’s No See’m method was too “obscure[180]” for Chinese copying[181].

KGA also told Fauci about the “furin site mutation.” Fauci replied, “They should report it to the appropriate authorities...FBI.” Farrar’s book[182] said that KGA asked, “Am I supposed to call the FBI? What burden of proof were we looking for?”

It was widely[183] reported[184] that Fauci wanted to call the FBI, because of this midnight email, but Fauci was parroting what KGA told him via phone. In recent testimony, KGA repeated[185] that he wanted to call the FBI, but Fauci told him he would do it. KGA had some FBI “brochures and pamphlets” ready to go!

The following day, KGA, Andrew, Bob, and Eddie started preparing for the teleconference in their newly created Slack[163] channel. Andrew noticed Ron Fouchier of Erasmus University in the Netherlands would be on the call. “It will be interesting to know what Ron thinks. He will not want it to be a Gain of Function escape.” KGA noted, “Ron will likely push back hard – which is fine.” Eddie shared a Montana lab paper[186], which inserted a furin cleavage site into a bovine[187] (e.g. deer[188]) coronavirus at the exact same[189] location[190] (R667[191]) as SARS2...

KGA gave a six-page presentation[192] to the audience, comparing the unnatural SARS2 (top) and the natural RaTG13 (bottom).

KGA then zoomed in on the alignment of RaTG13 versus SARS2, exposing the now easy-to-see furin cleavage site. Again, this was only possible because Dr Shi of the WIV had published RaTG13 precisely one week earlier...

KGA ended the presentation with references for his engineered hypothesis. All of the papers were from Baric, including the infamous 2015 Baric-Shi Nature Medicine paper[69], along[193] with[194] five[195] others[196].

As Haslam explained at length, most of the top virologists initially declared that the Covid/SARS2 virus had very likely come from a lab, but they eventually shifted to claiming it was a natural virus:

- KGA[197] was 60-70%[198] lab origin.
- Bob[199] said the RaTG13 alignment was “stunning,” but Tulane had previously been accused[200] of a lab leak[201]...
- Eddie[202] was 60/40%[109] via email and 80%[203] in private...
- Andrew[204] was “agnostic[205]” but noted the unusual furin cleavage site.
- Mike Farzan[206], who discovered the SARS1 receptor[207], was 70/30% lab origin...
- Farrar[208] was 50/50% lab origin but also funded[209] self-spreading[210] vaccine research...

What started as KGA’s lab leak ‘report’ slowly evolved into a natural origins paper. On Feb 4th, Eddie submitted the first draft[211], which speculated about possible reasons for a natural origin...

By Feb 12th, the draft had evolved from KGA’s lab leak report into Eddie’s natural origin paper. Nature Medicine’s editor replied, “Yes, please!” but they had to edit it down to 2,200 words and 30 references. Little space was left for nuance, and by Feb 25th, Eddie had convinced himself and the others that SARS2 had a natural origin...

The entire scientific enterprise (grants[212], funding[213], administrators[214], publication[215], patents[216], medals[217], Scripps 89.5% overhead[218]) rested on the natural origins idea because otherwise, “it would shatter[219] the scientific edifice top to bottom.”

- #6 If you believe the WIV engineered SARS2, then published RaTG13:[220]
You are probably a simpleton (unlike KGA)
 Jim Haslam • **Substack** • August 30, 2023 • 5,800 Words

Thus, his detailed narrative described how plans by top virologists to publish a paper highlighting the obviously bioengineered nature of Covid were gradually transformed into their publication of an exceptionally influential paper taking the exact opposite position. No new facts had changed their minds but merely the steady application of political and grant-making pressure, and I found Haslam’s reconstruction quite convincing.

Haslam on the Covid Infections of American Animals

When a natural virus first begins infecting humans, it has almost always jumped from some other mammalian species, which is considered the wildlife reservoir for that disease.

Since the entire scientific establishment declared that Covid was natural soon after the outbreak began, major efforts were undertaken to locate the local species that served as its reservoir, but these completely failed. No Chinese species has ever been found that contained the Covid virus, and this gradually began to raise serious doubts about the assumptions of its origins.

Oddly enough, however, several *American* animal species were eventually found to be heavily infected with Covid, including deer, a certain species of field mice, American mink, and American bats. Covid was obviously not a natural American virus, so this constituted a major puzzle, both to myself and to many other curious observers.

Haslam may have solved this mystery through some shrewd scientific detective work in his [Post #2](#)[221], and thereby also possibly identified one of the American biolabs responsible for Covid's creation.

He began by noting that massive efforts failed to find infected Chinese animals, while chance tests on American animals had strangely succeeded, and proceeded from there:

- The [WHO](#)[222] later tested [80,000](#)[223] Wuhan area animals and all were negative.
- Chinese researchers trapped and tested more than [17,000](#)[224] Chinese bats, all negative...

Two years later in 2022 the Wuhan wet market is still on the front page of [NYT](#)[225] [based](#)[226] on two non peer [reviewed](#)[227] [papers](#)[228] (by [virologists](#)[229] on [NIAID](#)[230]'s [payroll](#)[231]). Just three weeks earlier the [NYT](#)[232] asked if Coronavirus is in your backyard? North American white tailed [deer](#)[233] are infested with Covid! Sounds like Fauci is [rallying](#)[234] the virology boys?

- WHO report investigated [antlers](#)[235] and [Sika](#)[236] [deer](#)[237] meat at Wuhan wet market, but results were all [negative](#)[238].
- Sika deer meat is found on American [exotic](#)[239] [menus](#)[240] but you will *not* find North American white tailed deer in China...

Why were only humans infected with Covid in Wuhan? Not a single infected [animal](#)[241] was infected in all of China? No [mink](#)[242]. No [deer](#)[233]. No deer [mice](#)[243]. No [bats](#)[244]. Nothing inside the vast borders of China.

Most of the [animals](#)[245] you heard about [catching](#)[246] Covid were [experimental](#)[247] infections ([raccoons](#)[248], [rabbits](#)[249], [monkeys](#)[250], etc) in a [biolab](#)[251]. Or they were domesticated animals living in captivity like [mink](#)[252] on farms, [cats](#)[253] and [hamsters](#)[254] as house pets, [tigers](#)[255] and [monkeys](#)[250] in zoos. Or they showed low levels of [antibodies](#)[256] and not actual virus [transmitted](#)[257] back to humans. None of these experiments show efficient animal-to-animal transmission.

We will find the natural animal reservoir (asymptomatic infection) but it will emerge “in new animal reservoirs in the US[258]” with “spillback[259]” in the New[260] World[261], not here in the Old World. Start thinking[262] outside the (nation-state) box.

- The virgin SARS2 virus from Wuhan (lineage A) can infect and transmit in American deer[263], American deer mice[264], American mink[265], American bats[266] and Fauci’s RML[267] biolab[268] bats[269].
 - American deer mice are housed in Fauci’s RML[270] biolab[271], serve as a self spreading[272] vaccine[273] model[274], and efficiently[275] transmit[276] SARS2
 - UNC/WIV ‘humanized[277]’ lab mice[278] are not transmission[279] model[280] for SARS2, which doesn’t infect[281] lab mice[282] and are safe[283] i.e. not airborne and transmissible...
- US researchers found “stunning[284]” and “gobsmacked[285]” levels of Covid in American deer, but without symptoms, becoming the only “wildlife reservoir[286]” on the planet.
- Covid *only* infects American deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) not European[287] (*Cervus elaphus* red) deer or Asian (Sika[236]) deer[237]...

North American white tailed deer are housed in US bioabs[288], serve as a self spreading vaccine model[289], and efficiently[290] transmit SARS2 over plexiglass[291] dividers

- North American white tailed deer are a US lab “large animal model[292]” for “aerosolization” transmission studies (on chronic wasting disease[293]).
 - “Bottle-feeding[294] and hand-raising deer fawns have a profound effect on their suitability as research subjects in general and inside biocontainment housing in particular.”

Just like Shi’s patented[295] biolab bat colony[296], hand raising and bottle feeding each deer makes an ideal biolab animal transmission model, for self spreading coronavirus animal vaccines[297].

• #2 Why did the ‘Batman’ fly into Wuhan?[298]

Because a contagious bat vaccine has jumped species

Jim Haslam • **Substack** • October 16, 2022 • 5,500 Words

In this and several other posts, Haslam argued that infected American animals were among those used for lab testing of Covid as the infectivity of the virus was tuned, with the most likely site for that testing being Dr. Vincent Munster’s Rocky Mountain Lab (RML) in Montana.

Haslam’s Astonishing Lab-Leak Scenario

Perhaps 90% of Haslam’s work covered the scientific evidence that the Covid virus was bioengineered and his closely-related analysis of the massive cover-up that was soon launched to conceal that obvious reality. Although I lack the personal expertise in virology to render a definitive verdict, nearly all of his arguments seemed convincing to me, and he presented large amounts of documentary evidence that I hadn’t previously seen or considered.

He demonstrated that neither Dr. Shi nor any of her Chinese colleagues possessed the technical expertise to create the Covid virus by inserting a FCS, and that the virus had instead very likely been created by Dr. Baric of UNC, once again seeming to muster a great deal of supporting evidence for his conclusions.

I found all of this material quite interesting and persuasive, but hardly surprising. Based upon entirely different arguments, I'd already become convinced by the early months of 2020 that Covid had been produced in an American lab, but had never much known or cared about the particular lab responsible.

Therefore, as various leaked documents over the next several years roiled the Covid origins debate, leading more and more analysts to accept a major American role in its creation, I paid little attention to that controversy. All the facts that were coming out merely confirmed my own longstanding assumptions, so I smiled with satisfaction that the rest of the world years later was finally inching towards the same conclusions I'd reached just weeks after the epidemic first began.

Haslam's analysis took this much further, arguing that not only American funding and American biotechnology had been involved, but that the Covid virus itself had actually been created in an American lab, probably through the joint efforts of Dr. Baric of UNC and Dr. Munster of RML. Once again, I found this quite interesting, but hardly surprising. As early as 2021, I had learned of Dr. Baric's tremendous expertise in viral bioengineering, so I'd come to regard him as a leading suspect.

However, the remaining 10% of Haslam's work provided his own reconstruction of how the Covid virus created by Baric and Munster had reached Wuhan in China and created an epidemic in that city, and I was utterly shocked by the story he told.

The first chapter of his book was entitled "Identifying Patient 0" and as promised he identified the source and circumstances of the global Covid epidemic, beginning his explanation in the very first paragraph and providing all the astonishing details across the following dozen pages:

On an October morning in 2019, Assistant Professor Danielle Anderson waited for the bus to the new BSL4 laboratory at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV)...a new FedEx package awaited her...

Dani is uniquely qualified to enter the BSL4 lab and conduct specialized tests. Above all, she is a trusted team member on both sides of the world...

The RaTG13 bat sample contained one notable modification. Ralph Baric of UNC, the American designer, had inserted a furin cleavage site in the middle of the genome....The vaccine's co-designer, Vincent Munster from Rocky Mountain Lab, also needed this feature because it facilitated the vaccine's onward transmission. Dani's task was to test the final Western product inside the Eastern lab...

Dani received a FedEx package in the "cold chain" containing a new serum...She was experimenting with a novel genome called "HKU3r-CoVs."...

The HKU3r-CoV virus that Dani injected into the bat was...later identified as SARS-CoV-2...

Dani was safely spacewalking in her Wuhan positive pressure suit through the BSL4...

A needle from Montana punctured her positive pressure suit in Wuhan. A vaccine designed to prevent the jumping of species had jumped species in the BSL4. The vaccine intended to infect a Chinese bat had infected her human lungs. The synthetic genome, designed to resemble a Chinese virus, was now in Wuhan's first human patient...

From her experiments, Dani knew that the incubation time was 2-5 days, giving her ample time to self-isolate in her small Wuhan dorm room...

A few days later, the BSL4 lab went into lockdown, and weeks later, the entire city of Wuhan followed. The world soon did the same...What began as a SARS1 animal vaccine became SARS2...It self-disseminated around the globe while searching for the return address on the FedEx package Dani had opened on that fateful October day...

Dani Anderson self-isolated in her downtown apartment for the rest of October 2019...

Dani's one-month indoor quarantine passed without incident. She tracked her symptoms, but the vaccine evaded her mammalian immune system. Despite wearing a face mask, the vaccine was designed to shed high virus levels in the upper respiratory tract. The incubation time passed, but it was too late. Being an avid runner, she might have spread the virus asymptotically.

Upon reading the first few paragraphs of Haslam's book and the pages that followed, my eyes nearly popped out of my head. For several years, I'd been regularly citing Dr. Danielle Anderson as "the single best eyewitness" to the internal workings of the Wuhan lab. But according to Haslam, she had actually been Patient Zero, the asymptomatic "Typhoid Mary" who had personally started the gigantic global epidemic that had devastated the entire world. I was utterly flabbergasted at that revelation. Anderson's carelessness with a needle-stick had cost us 30 million lives, probably making her responsible for more deaths and human suffering than any other single individual in all of world history.

In a recent interview[299] with a German podcaster, Haslam minced no words, declaring that he was 99.999% certain that Anderson had been Patient Zero, the individual who had infected the entire world.

But what was Haslam's evidence for such a dramatic claim? His book contained no source notes nor references, so I carefully examined the related posts on his Substack, and found a very similar account of how the outbreak had supposedly occurred in Post #1 of the series[300], the very first item he had ever published on his Substack. However, in that online version, a disclaimer at the top indicated that the entire post was a "Wuhan lab leak hypothetical based upon an accident" and he was also more cautious in his account, writing that "Maybe a needle punctured her hand while trying to handle the tiny wild bat, turning her human lungs into the superspreader."

So what elements of his lengthy published account of the source of the Wuhan outbreak were actually documented? As far as I could tell, absolutely none at all. ***His entire narrative was purest fiction.***

- There is no evidence that Anderson received a FedEx containing the Covid virus.
- There is no evidence that Anderson began inoculating Chinese bats with the Covid virus.
- There is no evidence that Anderson accidentally suffered a needle-stick, infecting herself with Covid.
- There is no evidence that Anderson self-isolated after such an infection.
- There is no evidence that Anderson suffered an asymptomatic Covid infection and became Patient Zero.
- I'm also extremely skeptical of the supposed evidence that Anderson's BSL4 lab went into lockdown following her alleged exposure to Covid.

Indeed, in her 2021 *Bloomberg* interview, Anderson explicitly stated[301] that after returning to Singapore, she was tested for Covid prior to being vaccinated, and the tests revealed that she'd never been infected.

It seems to me that anyone who writes a book accusing a particular individual as being responsible for 30 million deaths should at least be able to muster a few shreds of supporting evidence.

The problem with this portion of Haslam's narrative was considerably magnified by his writing style. Nearly his entire book consisted of short, declarative sentences, a punchy style that presented his information in a very forceful manner. This approach was quite effective when he was writing about settled scientific matters or when he was certain of his facts, but it was a dangerous style when he was describing matters that are ambiguous or doubtful, let alone purely fictional. Similarly, I found the rather blustery, emphatic style of his podcast interviews[302] rather off-putting, especially given that he apparently seemed to lack any scientific or journalistic credentials.

However, let's set aside the burden of proof and merely consider the likelihood of the hypothetical lab-leak scenario that Haslam has advanced. He explained why Baric would never have entrusted his Covid virus to any of the Chinese workers at the Wuhan lab, and since Anderson was the sole Westerner there, she must therefore have been the human vector for any lab-leak. Despite the lack of any supporting evidence, let's simply consider the plausibility of his hypothesis.

According to Haslam, Anderson knew that she was the only individual in Wuhan with access to the Covid virus and that she might have accidentally infected herself with a needle-stick, so when the huge epidemic began a few weeks later, she must have known she was personally responsible for everything that subsequently happened, both in Wuhan and the rest of the world.

Yet there seems not the slightest trace of any psychological agitation or guilty conscience in any of her media interviews or public talks on the Covid disaster over the next several years. I find that exceptionally difficult to believe.

Keep in mind that Anderson was not a crazed sociopath nor a political/military leader, ideologically inured to the deaths of millions of people. She was just a mild-mannered scientific researcher, whose careless lab mistake accidentally inflicted massive suffering upon most of the world. Could she have really maintained her total composure under such extreme circumstances?

Journalists are trained to detect lies or deception by those whom they interview. Obviously, their efforts can often be defeated by trained Intelligence operatives, experienced PR professionals,

dishonest politicians, or sociopaths, or any others who are skilled at lying and deceiving. But Anderson didn't fall into any of those categories, not even being an experienced political administrator such as Anthony Fauci. She was just an ordinary research scientist.

David Quammen is a very experienced science journalist and he interviewed her by video in early July 2021 for his book *Breathless*, reporting some of her statements about the Wuhan lab in a paragraph in his ending "Credits" section. Yet he considered her such a peripheral figure in the Covid outbreak that her name never appeared anywhere else in his 350 pages of text. I think something like 15 million people had already died at that point and much of world was still locked down. Is it really plausible that Anderson would have been such an incredibly cool customer that she never showed a hint of the huge emotional agitation that would have led him to suspect anything? The *Bloomberg* journalist who interviewed her around the same time also noticed nothing unusual.

Neither I nor most of us possess the virological expertise to render solid verdicts on complex technical issues. But I think each of us can judge personal psychological reactions with some degree of confidence, and Haslam helpfully provided several video clips of Anderson being interviewed about Covid in January and February 2020, just a few weeks after the beginning of the gigantic global epidemic she had allegedly unleashed, an epidemic that seemed likely to kill millions. I suggest that individuals watch those clips and decide for themselves whether they believe that Anderson could have knowingly been responsible for that gigantic disaster:

[VIDEO LINK](#)

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Here's a short clip from her 2021 *Bloomberg* interview:

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Here's her 15 minute presentation at a 2022 Australian conference on Covid, given after the worldwide death toll had probably topped 20 million:

[VIDEO LINK](#)

I'm belaboring this point because Haslam has declared he is 99.999% certain that this poor woman has the blood of 30 million innocent people on her hands, and he actually believes that those interviews demonstrated that she was "laughing at all of us" for having avoided any discovery of what she had done.

Each of us must judge for ourselves, but my reaction is entirely different. Based upon all her video interviews and presentations, none of which I'd previously seen, I find it extraordinarily unlikely that she had any connection whatsoever with the Covid outbreak, let alone that she knew she was personally responsible for the entire pandemic. Only the best actress in the history of the world could

have carried off such astonishing performances and I'd need to see a mountain of hard evidence before I would change my mind about that.

But once we do some further thinking, we quickly see that Haslam's lab-leak scenario is even more wildly implausible than what I have already described.

Let us assume that Anderson was the sort of utter psychopath who could retain total composure despite her personal responsibility for the deaths of millions. Her supervisor was Singapore virologist Linfa Wang[303], who was directing her work in Wuhan, and he obviously would have been informed if she had accidentally suffered a needle-stick and needed to spend a full month self-isolating as a result. So he too would have also known the exact circumstances of the Wuhan outbreak.

Indeed, in his Post #5[304] Haslam noted that Wang resigned from his position on January 10, 2020. He seemed to regard that as a sinister admission of guilt, demonstrating the latter's recognition of his own role in the emerging disaster, but I'm very skeptical of this. Wang's resignation came the day after broadcasts on America's CIA-affiliated *Radio Free Asia* propaganda outlet had suggested[305] that genetic engineering at the Wuhan lab might have been responsible for the spreading epidemic. For several years, Wang had worked with the Wuhan lab, so under such circumstances, it's easy to understand why a mild-mannered Chinese-born scientist[306] such as Wang, trained in the West and working for a Duke University research center, would want to avoid such heated political controversy.

Wang was a far more prominent figure than Anderson during the Covid outbreak, and he was later interviewed numerous times at great length about the origins of the epidemic, defending Dr. Shi and generally taking the same "natural virus" position as all of his professional colleagues in virology. Just as in the case of Anderson, none of his interviews or presentations seemed to display the slightest sign of any secret knowledge that his subordinate had been personally responsible for the disaster, but I suggest that others watch several of those clips and judge for themselves:

Here's a lengthy interview he gave to *Bloomberg* in late January 2019:

[VIDEO LINK](#)

On October 1, 2021, *Science Magazine* staff writer John Cohen hosted an amicable hour-long debate on the origins of Covid, in which Wang was one of the four virologists participating. None of his behavior provided even the slightest hint that he knew the terrible secret of how the epidemic began in Wuhan:

[VIDEO LINK](#)

In 2022, *PBS Frontline* broadcast an 80 minute, somewhat propagandistic documentary entitled "China's COVID Secrets,"[307] in which Wang was one of the key individuals interviewed. In one of those segments, he explained that he had been among the first individuals outside China to learn of the sudden disease outbreak occurring in Wuhan, but once again, I detected absolutely no indications that he was concealing such stupendous guilty knowledge:

[VIDEO LINK](#)

I'd think that a diligent investigator could locate dozens of other clips of Wang, none of which would seem much different. So to accept Haslam's lab-leak scenario, we are forced to assume that just like Anderson, Wang was also a psychopathic liar, who was "laughing at all of us" as the pandemic unfolded.

Moreover, Wang would have had no reason to conceal the truth since he himself hadn't been responsible. Wang and Anderson had been working together for years and I'm sure that they were friendly, but if his friend and subordinate had carelessly been responsible for 30 million deaths, I just don't think that personal friendship would have covered that situation. By the time the epidemic began, Anderson had already returned to Singapore, so Wang wouldn't have feared that the Chinese might execute her, and I'm not sure that either Singapore or her native Australia would have even prosecuted her for what was a completely accidental lab mistake. Obviously, her scientific career would have been over, but that's the sort of thing that happens when you accidentally kill 30 million people.

I think a final consideration firmly nails down the total implausibility of Haslam's reconstruction.

According to his account, Anderson's BSL4 lab was evacuated and put into lockdown after her exposure to Covid while she self-isolated for most of the next month. So obviously large numbers of the Wuhan lab workers and their managers would have been entirely aware of what had happened, recognizing that Anderson was responsible for the Covid outbreak that soon engulfed Wuhan and began spreading throughout all of China, a gigantic national disaster caused by the only Westerner working at the Wuhan lab. Under those circumstances, ***why wouldn't the lab officials and the Chinese government have publicly admitted what had happened, denouncing Anderson as the guilty culprit?!*** Under Haslam's reconstruction, everyone in China was totally innocent while the only Westerner working at the Wuhan Lab had been guilty.

With American propaganda [blaming China](#)[308] for the Covid lab-leak, the Chinese would have (very justifiably) thrown Anderson under the bus, perhaps even hinting that since she was indirectly paid by Pentagon/Biodefense grants, her disastrous mistake might have even been part of a deliberate American attempt to infect China. Everyone in the world would have blamed Anderson for the global disaster and even the most fanatically anti-China Neocons would have been forced to admit that the Chinese were entirely innocent.

Conflating Covid Bioengineering with a Covid Lab-Leak

Although I've been extremely critical of Haslam's claims that Dr. Danielle Anderson unleashed the Covid plague upon the world, I should strongly emphasize that this portion of his analysis—the 10% that presents his particular lab-leak scenario—has little if any connection to the other 90% regarding the bioengineered American origins of the virus, which seems quite thorough and solid. So if we reject the former, the latter still remains completely intact. He has convincingly explained how the Covid virus came into existence and who created it, but he was forced to grasp at extremely implausible straws to explain how it then reached Wuhan and came to be released into that city.

Over the last five years, I have published [a long series of articles](#)[309], now totaling nearly 200,000 words, and I regard these as entirely complementary to Haslam's work. None of my many articles have

focused on the scientific or technical aspects of Covid that he has made his forte, nor on the details of exactly who created the virus or how it was done, at most very occasionally citing some of the leading Covid researchers who have intensely studied that topic.

As an example of my extremely narrow focus, until this article I had almost never mentioned Dr. Shi Zhengli of the Wuhan lab nor Dr. Ralph Baric of UNC nor even Anthony Fauci in this context. I was obviously aware of the huge role those individuals played in the heated ongoing Covid origins debate, and my own casual speculations were fairly close to the conclusions that Haslam has much more rigorously established, but since those individuals had nothing to do with my own analysis, they never came up in any of my writing.

My own scenario begins exactly where Haslam's leaves off, arguing that once the Covid virus had been created in America, rogue elements of the Trump Administration used it to launch an exceptionally reckless biowarfare attack against China (and Iran), a botched attack whose blowback ultimately infected our own country and the rest of the world. I have consistently maintained this position since April 2020[310], arguing that the evidence for it is overwhelming, but during all those years almost no one else on the Western Internet has been willing to endorse that hypothesis, or even recognize its existence.

I think we should also consider Haslam's own circumstances. China is viewed with enormous hostility by many Americans, and his exhaustive research has completely exonerated the Chinese from having had any role in the Covid disaster, instead implicating one of our own esteemed academics Prof. Ralph Baric as the creator of the virus. These are extremely bold and courageous positions for someone to take who is writing under his own name as a citizen-researcher while he holds down a job in the regular economy. It's very easy to understand why he would so firmly exclude any possible notion of an illegal American biowarfare attack from his considerations.

Based upon his video appearances, he seems a relatively young man, perhaps in his late thirties. The brief last page of his self-published book carried the heading "About the Author" and although he provided no biographical details, he emphasized that he wasn't an anti-vaxxer and that he also absolutely rejected all "conspiracy theories," including those involving the JFK Assassination or the 9/11 Attacks. So could we possibly expect him to take a far more dramatic position on the Covid epidemic that killed well over a million Americans?

But for those who are willing to reject Haslam's theory that Dr. Danielle Anderson accidentally started the entire epidemic, here's a brief summary of some of my own major pieces of evidence against the lab-leak hypothesis and favoring the contrary biowarfare hypothesis, a summary list I've occasionally provided to people:

(A) There doesn't seem to be any evidence I can see that a Wuhan lab-leak actually occurred, and in a Bloomberg interview, Danielle Anderson, the Australian virologist who was working there at the time, was very doubtful that anything like that had happened. She also claimed that the WIV safety precautions seemed outstanding. (Obviously, if Anderson had been actually Patient Zero, responsible for the entire global epidemic, her statements to the MSM can't be trusted.)

(B) In early January, just days after the initial Wuhan outbreak became known and long before it was seen as any major global event, our intelligence agencies were already spreading the story[311] that it

might be a bioengineered virus that had leaked from the Wuhan lab, which seems like a suspiciously rapid propaganda response.

(C) From January to August 2019, Robert Kadlec's department had run the federal/state Crimson Contagion exercise to protect America against the possible leakage of a dangerous respiratory virus that might hypothetically appear in China, and just a couple of months afterwards, Covid suddenly appeared in Wuhan. That seems like a highly implausible coincidence for the accidental leak of a virus in Wuhan. Since the late 1990s, Kadlec has been one of America's leading experts and advocates of biowarfare.

(D) With low lethality but very high communicability, Covid had the ideal characteristics of an anti-economy bioweapon according to a forty-year veteran of American biodefense[312]. Furthermore, it appeared in the key transit hub of Wuhan, timed almost perfectly to reach widespread local circulation at the time of the Lunar New Year travels, thereby infecting the entire country.

(E) It's generally agreed that Patient Zero in Wuhan was probably infected around the end of October, plus or minus a couple of weeks in either direction. By an astonishing coincidence, 300 American military servicemen were in Wuhan during late October for the World Military Games, which provided an ideal opportunity for slipping in a couple of covert operatives to release the virus at that point. Again, the almost perfect match of timing seems very suspicious. How would Americans react if 300 Chinese military servicemen visited Chicago and immediately afterwards a mysterious viral disease began spreading in that city?

(F) During "the second week of November" a unit at our Defense Intelligence Agency was already preparing a secret report warning of a "cataclysmic" disease outbreak occurring in Wuhan. But there was no visible outbreak at that point, with perhaps only a couple of dozen people infected in a city of 11 million. There is absolutely no evidence that anyone in China was aware of the circulating Covid virus at that point. So the timing of that secret DIA report seems a smoking gun, demonstrating foreknowledge.

(G) The Covid virus almost immediately jumped to Qom, Iran, which became the second global epicenter of the outbreak, especially hitting the Iranian religious and political elites, and this occurred just after we had assassinated Iran's top military commander. Qom's local Chinese population was absolutely negligible, so it seems very implausible that Covid would have randomly spread there before anywhere else in the world. At that point, China and Iran were the two countries viewed with greatest hostility by the hardliners in the Trump Administration, so it seems an astonishing coincidence that they would be the first two countries in the world hit with a Covid epidemic. In fact, the Iranians publicly accused America of an illegal Covid biowarfare attack at the time and filed a formal complaint with the UN.

Certainly any one or two of these items might easily be explained away as mere coincidences or such, but I think the sum-total of them makes the biowarfare attack hypothesis by far the most likely explanation for what happened. Indeed, I think the only reason that more people haven't come to exactly this same conclusion is that our mainstream media has almost never reported any of these facts, and the same has been true for nearly all of our alternative media outlets as well.

In many respects, I think that the body of Haslam's work provides a perfect illustration of an important point that I have been making for nearly the last five years. The 90% of his analysis that focuses on the bioengineering origins of the Covid virus appears excellent, even outstanding. But the 10% that presents his lab-leak scenario seems like almost total lunacy to me.

Since the early months of 2020, there has been a confusing conflation of those two entirely separate issues, namely whether Covid was bioengineered and whether it somehow leaked from the Wuhan lab. This severe muddle has greatly hindered our attempts to understand what happened, with those two different questions having been almost always lumped together by journalists and researchers. For example, in late 2022 I reviewed some of the most recent Covid origins evidence, and then summarized this material in a section entitled "Considering the Excluded Third Possibility"[313]:

I think these exchanges demonstrate that to a considerable extent, the two main camps on the Covid origins debate have been talking past each other.

The testimonies provided by Quammen and Holmes strongly challenged the possibility of any lab-leak at Wuhan, suggesting that this proves the virus must have been natural, even though few arguments on that latter point were ever made; at most, they raised some doubts about the strength of the evidence for bioengineering.

Meanwhile, the articles and papers by Wade, Sachs, Bruttel, and others have provided strong evidence that the virus was artificial. All of this has usually been interpreted as support for the lab-leak hypothesis, even though very little evidence was ever presented that any lab-leak had occurred.

Yet the apparent vector-sum of these conflicting arguments is the conclusion that the Covid virus neither leaked from the Wuhan lab nor was natural, and this suggests that the public debate has been improperly restricted to just those two possibilities.

For more than 30 months I have emphasized that there are actually three perfectly plausible hypotheses for the Covid outbreak. The virus might have been natural, randomly appearing in Wuhan during late 2019; the virus might have been the artificial product of a scientific lab in Wuhan, which accidentally leaked out at that time; or the virus might have been the bioengineered product of America's hundred-billion-dollar biowarfare program, the oldest and largest in the world, a bioweapon deployed against China and Iran[314] by elements of the Trump Administration at the height of our hostile international confrontation with those countries.

The first two possibilities have been very widely discussed and debated across the Western mainstream and alternative media, while the third has been almost totally ignored, despite top Russian, Iranian, and Chinese government officials having publicly accused America[315] of releasing Covid in a deliberate biowarfare attack.

Once we carefully separate the bioengineering question from the lab-leak question, we can much more easily explain the disaster that killed well over a million Americans and disrupted all our lives for

several years.

Related Reading:

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- [American Pravda: Confronting Covid Crimestop](#)[12]
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