

US Lab Is Linked to COVID Virus, Before Outbreak

Analysis by [Dr. Joseph Mercola](#)

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Researchers with the NIH's National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) infected 12 Egyptian fruit bats with severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS)-like WIV1-coronavirus (CoV) in 2018
- › The bats came from the Catoctin Wildlife Preserve (CWP) in Thurmont, Maryland, a roadside zoo with numerous animal welfare violations and a curator with NIH ties
- › The WIV1-coronavirus came from the lab in Wuhan, China, that may have caused the COVID-19 pandemic
- › The research took place at Rocky Mountain Laboratories in Montana — a biolevel 4 facility — under the direction of Dr. Anthony Fauci
- › Rocky Mountain Laboratories also has a Lyme disease connection, as evidence suggests it may be a biological weapon gone rogue

In 2018, researchers at the U.S. National Institutes of Health's (NIH) Rocky Mountain Laboratories in Montana — a biolevel 4 facility — experimented with a SARS-like coronavirus to see if it would infect bats.¹ The revelation came from a resurfaced study published by the group, which was flagged by activist group DRASTIC.

The White Coat Waste Project, which aims to stop taxpayer-funded experiments on animals, is also using the Freedom of Information Act to find out more about the research, noting:²

“We’ve uncovered new details about how a shady roadside zoo whose curator was an NIH animal experimenter shipped off bats to a deadly government virus superlab to be infected with a coronavirus obtained from the notorious Wuhan lab that experts believe caused COVID.”

Fauci’s US Lab Experimented With Wuhan COVID Virus Before Pandemic

Researchers with the NIH’s National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) – formerly run by Dr. Anthony Fauci – and colleagues, including gain-of-function (GOF) researcher Ralph Baric, Ph.D., at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, infected 12 Egyptian fruit bats with severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS)-like WIV1-coronavirus (CoV) in 2018 to see what would happen.³

The bats came from the Catocin Wildlife Preserve (CWP) in Thurmont, Maryland, a roadside zoo with numerous animal welfare violations. In addition to confining 523 federally regulated animals – 241 of them bats – the zoo’s curator has ties to NIH. According to the White Coat Waste Project:⁴

“We’ve uncovered how the person who is the zoo’s curator and in charge of the animals’ well-being, CWP’s “Director of Animal Health,” worked at the in-house animal testing labs at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) from 2003-2012! ... under their supervision, CWP shipped animals to an NIH in-house lab, then run by Dr. Anthony Fauci, for cruel and deadly experiments!”

What’s more, the WIV1-coronavirus came from the lab in Wuhan, China, that may have caused the COVID-19 pandemic.⁵ The study found WIV1-CoV did not cause a robust infection in the bats,⁶ but once again highlights the taxpayer-funded coronavirus experiments with ties to the Wuhan lab.

Did Lyme Disease Also Originate in the Montana Lab?

“OK, so look, I hate to be the bearer of bad news,” Mike Benz, executive director of the Foundation for Freedom Online, tweeted, “but it looks like Covid may have actually been made in the same military lab where the Pentagon created Lyme disease.”⁷

He’s referring to evidence presented in Kris Newby’s book “Bitten: The Secret History of Lyme Disease and Biological Weapons,” which suggests U.S. bioweapons researchers used ticks as biological weapons and may have created [Lyme disease](#) for this purpose.⁸

In an interview with investigative journalist Paul D. Thacker, Newby describes being at a party where a former CIA agent bragged about a Cold War operation that involved dropping infected ticks on Cuba. “At that point, I knew I wasn’t done with the story,” she told Thacker. “This CIA guy was a little bit in his cups, but what he said rang true. I started doing some research, interviewed him several times, and found that it was a verifiable story.”⁹

She also filmed Willy Burgdorfer, who discovered Lyme disease. Burgdorfer worked at Rocky Mountain Labs in Montana – the same lab that tested the WIV1-coronavirus on bats prior to the pandemic. Thacker says:¹⁰

“Rocky Mountain Lab, run by the National Institutes of Health, shows up in documents as collaborating on coronavirus research with Peter Daszak of EcoHealth Alliance. This is the scientist who was working with researchers at the Wuhan Institute of Virology where the pandemic may have started.

So Rocky Mountain Labs are now part of the investigation into how the current pandemic started—they are involved in this coronavirus bat research.”

Burgdorfer was retired at the time of the filming, and Newby and her team flew out to his house for the interview, as no one from the NIH or the CDC agreed to be filmed. Someone from Rocky Mountain Labs showed up at the filming to try and intervene. She told Thacker:¹¹

“We were setting up our lights and cameras for about 45 minutes. And then there was a pounding on the door; it was one of the people from Rocky

Mountain Labs where he had worked his whole career. The visitor said he was told to sit in on the interview by someone at NIH. And we said, 'No, we're not going to let you sit in.'

It was a stressful confrontation – frightening. But he finally left and then Willy said things he might not have said otherwise. He said the NIH knows Lyme disease is chronically disabling. It's more neurologically damaging to children who have developing neurological systems. And then at the end of the interview – with this evil little smile – he said, 'I didn't tell you everything.'"

While most of the evidence is circumstantial, when taken together, it forms a highly suspect picture that Lyme disease may be a biological weapon gone rogue. Newby continued:¹²

"The official story is that Willy Burgdorfer was sent to Lyme, Connecticut, and Long Island to research this crazy epidemic. In 1980, he discovered the Lyme spirochete and he said, 'This is what's causing the disease.' ... I did an animation of the outbreak, and the point source for the beginning of the epidemic was the mouth of the Connecticut River, near Long Island.

When I drew a 50-mile radius around that point, there were three new, highly virulent tick-borne diseases that showed up at that same time, in the late '60s. This was 13 years before the Lyme bacterium was declared the cause of 'Lyme disease' in 1981.

I started looking through military records to see if the outbreak could be tied to any bioweapons accidents. And that's when I discovered this massive bug-borne weapons program, as well as a program where germs were sprayed from airplanes over large areas, called Project 112. Some of those germs were tick-borne diseases that they freeze-dried and aerosolized for spraying."

Montana Bat Tests Were a Joint Venture With Baric

China's GOF research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) has been at the center of concerns that COVID-19 may have originated in a lab. The 2018 study was a joint venture with Baric, who developed humanized mice used in GOF research by WIV.¹³

Baric worked closely with Shi Zhengli, Ph.D., the director of WIV's Center for Emerging Infectious Diseases. Also known as "bat woman," Zhengli was involved with research using genetic engineering to create a "new bat SARS-like virus ... that can jump directly from its bat hosts to humans." According to Peter Gøtzsche with the Institute for Scientific Freedom:¹⁴

"Their work focused on enhancing the ability of bat viruses to attack humans so as to 'examine the emergence potential.' In 2015, they created a novel virus by taking the backbone of the SARS virus replacing its spike protein with one from another bat virus known as SHC014-CoV.¹⁵ This manufactured virus was able to infect a lab culture of cells from the human airways.

They wrote that scientific review panels might deem their research too risky to pursue but argued that it had the potential to prepare for and mitigate future outbreaks. However, the value of gain-of-function studies in preventing the COVID-19 pandemic was negative, as this research highly likely created the pandemic."

February 26, 2023, The Wall Street Journal reported that the U.S. Energy Department had revised its assessment of the origin of SARS-CoV-2, concluding the pandemic "most likely arose from a laboratory leak."¹⁶

In March 2023, FBI Director Christopher Wray also acknowledged that the lab-leak theory has likely been right all along, stating in an interview with Fox News that "the FBI has for quite some time now assessed that the origins of the pandemic are most likely a potential lab incident in Wuhan ... You're talking about a potential leak from a Chinese government-controlled lab that killed millions of Americans, and that's precisely what that capability was designed for."¹⁷

Yet, this doesn't show the full picture, as evidence continues to emerge about US-funded GOF research with ties to the Wuhan lab. I first [raised the lab leak theory](#) February 4, 2020, but it wasn't until June 2021 that Facebook finally reversed its censorship policy on this topic, stating, "In light of ongoing investigations into the origin of COVID-19 and in consultation with public health experts, we will no longer remove the claim that COVID-19 is man-made or manufactured from our apps."¹⁸

Virus-Hunting Project Quietly Shut Down

Millions of U.S. tax dollars have been sent overseas for experiments aimed at identifying new viruses in animals that could trigger the next pandemic,¹⁹ despite growing concerns that such experiments may have been involved in the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Although critics have raised concerns over the potentially catastrophic risks of such virus hunting activities, hundreds of millions of dollars in unabated funding have symbolized a commitment to the effort," investigative journalist David Willman wrote in the BMJ.²⁰

In 2021, the U.S. also launched a five-year project intended to hunt for viruses in wildlife in South East Asia, Africa and Latin America. The program, named DEEP VZN – for Discovery & Exploration of Emerging Pathogens–Viral Zoonoses – was run by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), an arm of the US State Department.

DEEP VZN succeeded the earlier USAID PREDICT program, which funded laboratory equipment for the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) in China through grants to the EcoHealth Alliance. Zhengli, the top coronavirus researcher at the WIV, also worked with PREDICT.²¹

Washington State University officials, who were hired to administer DEEP VZN, intended to collect about 480,000 wildlife samples to identify potential pandemic threats, with plans to characterize up to 12,000 new viruses. At least for now, however, a potential catastrophe may have been avoided, as DEEP VZN was quietly shut down in 2023. Willman reported:²²

“The previously unpublicized decision by USAID to terminate DEEP VZN comes amid heightened concerns over the many risks of working with exotic viruses – including unresolved questions about whether a research mishap or a naturally occurring spillover of virus from an animal species to humans caused the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic.

... In the wake of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic others have raised additional concerns, saying that the risks of collecting animal-to-animal transmitted viruses should not be dismissed lightly. Such research typically entails collecting biological specimens – such as excrement, blood, or saliva from bats dwelling in caves or tree groves – followed by shipments of the samples to one or more labs for analysis.

A mishap at any stage of the work would, some experts warn, invite the risk of an outbreak or a pandemic ... In May of this year three leaders of the Republican controlled House Energy and Commerce Committee asked the Government Accountability Office to open a scientific audit to ‘assess the benefits and risks of conducting predictive field research programs for viruses.’

The members cited research funded over the past decade by both USAID and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, an arm of NIH.

Although such research, including USAID’S PREDICT program (DEEP VZN’s predecessor), had ‘identified thousands of new viruses,’ wrote the House members, ‘some researchers have questioned whether collecting and characterizing viruses found in animals can accurately predict those that may infect humans, or what the effect would be if and when humans are subsequently infected.’”

Sources and References

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