

Leaked Documents: Officials Are Hiding What Happened in Wuhan

Analysis by [Dr. Joseph Mercola](#)

✓ Fact Checked

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Newly leaked documents released by research group DRASTIC include a March 2018 grant proposal from the EcoHealth Alliance filed with the Pentagon's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)
- › The proposal aimed to collaborate with the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) to "carry out advanced and dangerous human pathogenicity bat coronavirus research"
- › According to DRASTIC, the proposal involved "injecting deadly chimeric bat coronaviruses collected by the Wuhan Institute of Virology into humanized and 'batified' mice"
- › The proposal involved the introduction of human-specific cleavage sites to bat coronaviruses; the existence of a novel furin cleavage site is a significant reason why many believe SARS-CoV-2 was created through gain-of-function (GOF) research
- › EcoHealth Alliance requested \$14 million from DARPA for what it expected to be a 3.5-year project; DARPA rejected the proposal but that doesn't mean the research wasn't ultimately carried out
- › The revelations further erode the credibility of Dr. Anthony Fauci, who has denied funding GOF research at WIV, and EcoHealth Alliance's Peter Daszak, who called claims that SARS-CoV-2 may have come from a lab "conspiracy theory"

Yet another smoking gun has been found in the origin of COVID-19, courtesy of newly leaked documents released by research group DRASTIC, or Decentralized Radical Autonomous Search Team Investigating COVID-19.

The documents include a March 2018 grant proposal that EcoHealth Alliance filed with the Pentagon's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) to collaborate with the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) to "carry out advanced and dangerous human pathogenicity bat coronavirus research."¹

The proposal was reportedly rejected by DARPA for being too risky, but the revelations further erode the credibility of Dr. Anthony Fauci, who has denied funding gain-of-function (GOF) research at WIV,² and EcoHealth Alliance's Peter Daszak, who called claims that SARS-CoV-2 may have come from a lab "conspiracy theory."³

DARPA Rejected the Risky Research Proposal

According to DRASTIC, the proposal rejected by DARPA involved "injecting deadly chimeric bat coronaviruses collected by the Wuhan Institute of Virology into humanized and 'batified' mice" and aimed to "defuse the potential for spillover of novel bat-origin high-zoonotic risk SARS-related coronaviruses in Asia."⁴ As reported by Newsweek:⁵

"Thanks to DRASTIC, the world now knows that the Wuhan Institute of Virology had an extensive collection of coronaviruses gathered over many years of foraging in the bat caves, and that many of them – including the closest known relative to the pandemic virus, SARS-CoV-2 – came from a mineshaft where three men died from a suspected SARS-like disease in 2012.

It knows that the Institute was actively working with these viruses, using inadequate safety protocols, in ways that could have triggered the pandemic, and that the lab and Chinese authorities have gone to great lengths to conceal these activities."

EcoHealth Alliance requested \$14 million from DARPA for what it expected to be a 3.5-year project. DARPA, however – despite stating the project had a "good running start" –

rejected the proposal, citing “several weaknesses,” including “concern that vaccine approaches may lack sufficient epitope coverage to effectively protect against the diverse and evolving quasi species of the many coronaviruses found in the bat caves.”⁶

Still, even though DARPA denied the grant proposal, and has denied funding the EcoHealth Alliance and WIV,⁷ it doesn’t mean the research wasn’t ultimately carried out. As the Daily Mail put it, “The \$14.2 million (£10.5 million) grant bid was rejected. But did another funder pick up the proposal? At the very least, this proves the researchers were toying with precisely the sort of risky science that could have cooked up a virus eerily similar to the one behind the pandemic.”⁸

Proposal Involved Search for Novel Furin Cleavage Site

To gain entry into your cells, SARS-CoV-2 must first bind to an ACE2 or CD147 receptor on the cell. Next, the S2 spike protein subunit must be proteolytically cleaved (cut). Without this protein cleavage, the virus would simply attach to the receptor and not get any further.

“The furin site is why the virus is so transmissible, and why it invades the heart, the brain and the blood vessels,” Dr. Steven Quay, a physician and scientist, explained at a GOP House Oversight and Reform Subcommittee on Select Coronavirus Crisis hearing.⁹

While furin cleavage sites do exist in other viruses like Ebola, HIV, zika and yellow fever, they’re not naturally found in coronaviruses. The entire group of coronaviruses to which SARS-CoV-2 belongs does not contain a single example of a furin cleavage site, Quay said, and is a significant reason why many believe SARS-CoV-2 was created through GOF research.

In a jaw-dropping turn of events, DRASTIC’s research revealed that EcoHealth Alliance’s 2018 proposal involved the introduction of human-specific cleavage sites to bat coronaviruses. As noted by The Intercept:¹⁰

“[T]he proposal describes the process of looking for novel furin cleavage sites in bat coronaviruses the scientists had sampled and inserting them into the

spikes of SARS-related viruses in the laboratory.

'We will introduce appropriate human-specific cleavage sites and evaluate growth potential in [a type of mammalian cell commonly used in microbiology] and HAE cultures,' referring to cells found in the lining of the human airway, the proposal states."

COVID-19 Lab Origin: 'A Threshold Has Been Crossed'

A number of scientists speaking with The Intercept told the news outlet that the furin cleavage site information unveiled in the 2018 proposal has tipped the scales in the search for COVID-19's origins. Scientist Alina Chan stated:

"Some kind of threshold has been crossed ... Let's look at the big picture: A novel SARS coronavirus emerges in Wuhan with a novel cleavage site in it. We now have evidence that, in early 2018, they had pitched inserting novel cleavage sites into novel SARS-related viruses in their lab. This definitely tips the scales for me. And I think it should do that for many other scientists too."

Previously, Richard Ebright, board of governors professor of chemistry and chemical biology at Rutgers University and laboratory director at the Waksman Institute of Microbiology, said that additional documents released by a FOIA lawsuit show without doubt that grants from NIH were used to fund GOF research at WIV, and that Fauci lied about it:¹¹

"The documents make it clear that assertions by the NIH director, Francis Collins, and the NIAID director, Anthony Fauci, that the NIH did not support gain-of-function research or potential pandemic pathogen enhancement in Wuhan are untruthful."

Much of the controversial research was carried out by the EcoHealth Alliance. Fauci told a House Appropriations subcommittee that more than \$600,000 was given to EcoHealth Alliance, which funneled the money to WIV, over a five-year period for the purpose of

studying bat coronaviruses and whether they could be transmitted to humans.^{12,13}

Regarding the latest documents uncovered by DRASTIC, Ebright told The Intercept:¹⁴

“The relevance of this is that SARS Cov-2, the pandemic virus, is the only virus in its entire genus of SARS-related coronaviruses that contains a fully functional cleavage site at the S1, S2 junction [the place where two subunits of the spike protein meet] ... And here is a proposal from the beginning of 2018, proposing explicitly to engineer that sequence at that position in chimeric lab-generated coronaviruses.”

32 Emails – Almost Every Word Redacted

The U.K.’s Daily Mail also obtained key documents – a total of 32 emails – that could shed light on a secretive teleconference held among British and U.S. health officials at the beginning of the pandemic February 1, 2020. But the emails, which were obtained via a FOIA request, were nearly entirely blacked out.¹⁵

The call was organized by Fauci and Jeremy Farrar, director of The Wellcome Trust, and attended by Patrick Vallance, Britain’s chief scientific adviser, and others, “to address several aspects of the SARS-CoV-2 genome that pointed towards an artificial origin, by means of generating adaptive changes through passaging and/or direct manipulation of the genome.”¹⁶

Charles Rixey, a COVID-19 analyst who combed through 100,000 pages of FOIA documents and reviewed more than 1,000 research articles, stated:¹⁷

“[C]ompletely obscured is the fact that at least one, and very likely all, of the people on the conference call were aware of the existence of the FCS ... It’s even worse when you consider that 18 months later, they still can’t explain it – the Proximals refuse to respond to the fact that the FCS doesn’t exist within the sarbecovirus sub-genus that SARS-CoV-2 falls under.

This is a problem, because members of the sub-genus are too distinct to recombine with the varieties of SARS-like viruses from other branches that do

contain the FCS."

The "Proximals" Rixey refers to are the five editors of "The Proximal Origin of SARS-CoV-2,"¹⁸ a paper published in Nature Medicine in March 2020 that became the preeminent "proof" that SARS-CoV-2 had a natural origin and couldn't possibly have come from a lab.

It was later revealed that Fauci, Farrar and Dr. Francis Collins, NIH director, had a hand in the paper, as one of its authors wrote a March 6, 2020, email to the trio and colleagues, thanking them for their "advice and leadership."¹⁹

Did Pivotal Call Change the Pandemic Narrative?

January 31, 2020, virologist Kristian Andersen — one of the Proximals, whose paper found the virus could not have been created in a lab — emailed Fauci, cc'ing Farrar, stating, "The unusual features of the virus make up a really small part of the genome (<0.1%) so one has to look really closely at all the sequences to see that some of the features (potentially) look engineered."²⁰

It was clear that Andersen and others on the February 1 call thought the virus looked engineered. According to the Daily Mail:²¹

"He [Andersen] said the binding mechanism 'looked too good to be true, like a perfect key for entering human cells' while its furin cleavage site — a feature not found on similar types of coronavirus that allows it to enter efficiently into human cells — might be expected 'if someone had set out to adapt an animal coronavirus to humans by taking a specific suit of genetic material from elsewhere and inserting it.'

Farrar opened the discussion, which was then led by Andersen and Eddie Holmes, an Australian-based virologist who told the Wellcome chief before the call he was '80% sure this thing had come out of a lab.' Yet after their conference call, these same experts played leading roles in efforts to dismiss such fears as conspiracy theories in science journals and on social media."

The Daily Mail requested emails, notes or transcripts relating to the February 1 call as well as WIV or Shi Zhengli, Ph.D., the director of WIV's Center for Emerging Infectious Diseases, also known as "bat woman," but the government rejected the request due to "costs," even though they stated, "We hold the information that you have requested."²²

This, together with the heavily redacted emails and abrupt change in scientists' opinions regarding COVID-19's origins, "begs an obvious question," Bob Seely, a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, said. "Just as with China's secrecy: why would officials not share such information if there was nothing to hide?"²³

Sources and References

- ^{1, 4, 5, 6, 7} [Newsweek September 22, 2021](#)
- ² [CNBC July 20, 2021](#)
- ³ [USRTK November 18, 2020](#)
- ^{8, 15, 21, 22, 23} [Daily Mail October 2, 2021](#)
- ⁹ [YouTube June 29, 2021](#)
- ^{10, 14} [The Intercept September 23, 2021](#)
- ¹¹ [Newsweek September 9, 2021](#)
- ¹² [New York Post May 25, 2021](#)
- ¹³ [NIAID, Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence](#)
- ^{16, 17, 20} [Prometheus Shrugged July 22, 2021](#)
- ¹⁸ [Nature Medicine volume 26, pages 450–452 \(2020\)](#)
- ¹⁹ [The Defender June 4, 2021](#)