



Drew Holden @DrewHolden360

25 May · 23 tweets · [DrewHolden360/status/1397334751774658562](#)



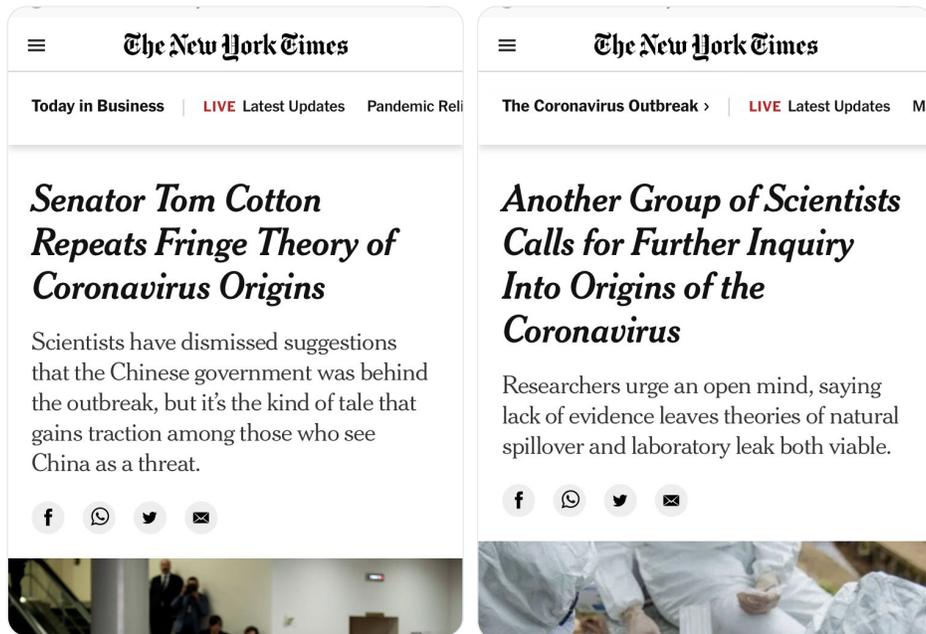
🧵 THREAD 🧵

That the Covid pandemic could've leaked from a lab in Wuhan went from terrible, racist conspiracy theory to plausible overnight for the mainstream media, without a shred of accountability.

If you don't believe me, look at these stories side-by-side, then vs. now

You may remember that much of the really bad coverage was focused on [@SenTomCotton](#)'s suggestion that we better understand the potential for a lab leak from Wuhan.

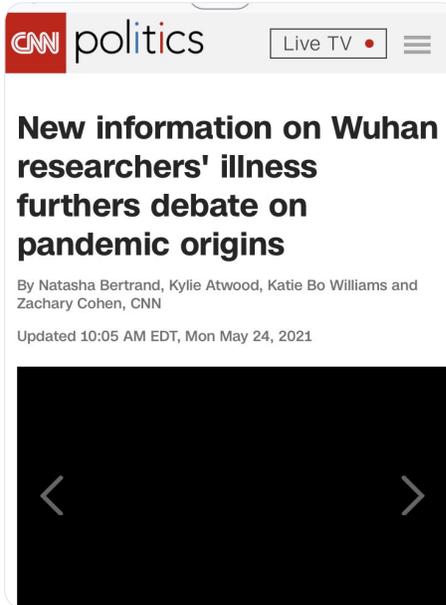
The difference in framing here from [@nytimes](#) between May 2020 and May 2021 is...stark.



But it wasn't just NYT. There's a lot of ammo from [@CNN](#), too.

Not even two months ago, they ran a piece writing off the lab leak theory as "like something out of a comic book."

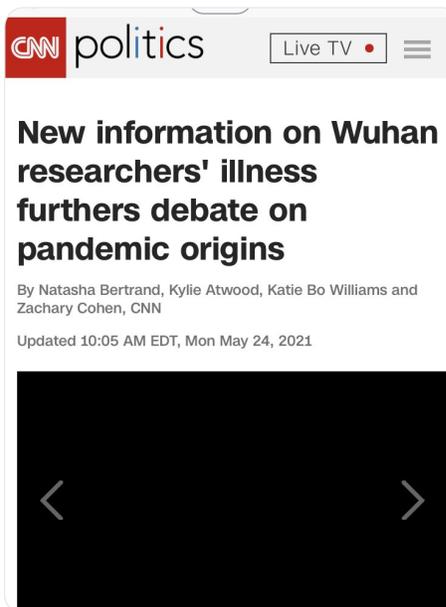
Yesterday, the tone had changed, without any reference to their own role in the previous debate.



But if you go back further, @CNN's coverage gets even worse.

Early in 2020, they ran CCP talking points suggesting it was all a political tactic based on "disinformation."

A little over a year later, CNN is asking the same questions President Trump and his team were panned for.



@ChrisCillizza has been a key voice for @CNN on this. In February 2020, he cited a CNN factchecker who concluded you can "say that didn't happen" about the lab leak.

Yesterday, he seemed baffled that Dr. Fauci wasn't entirely on his side anymore.

So much for “trust the science”

CNN politics Live TV

Tom Cotton is playing a dangerous game with his coronavirus speculation

Analysis by Chris Cillizza, CNN Editor-at-large
Updated 2:46 PM EST, Tue February 18, 2020



BIG news, right? Except that there's no actual evidence to back up Cotton's claim. Here's what CNN fact checker Tara Subramaniam wrote about Cotton's claim:

"Regarding Cotton's hypothesis that the virus originated in connection with a lab, Dr. William Schaffner, an infectious disease specialist at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, said 'I have seen no one provide any solid information to support that theory. I think at this point you can draw a line through it and say that didn't happen.'"

"Everyone with whom I've spoken, or whom I've read, thinks that it has come from a natural source, as did the SARS virus, as did the MERS virus. Both of those were also coronaviruses in

CNN politics Live TV

Why is Anthony Fauci hedging on the origins of the coronavirus?

Analysis by Chris Cillizza, CNN Editor-at-large
Updated 12:29 PM EDT, Mon May 24, 2021



Dr. Fauci says he's 'not convinced' Covid-19 devel...

I can't say this enough. In early 2020, [@washingtonpost](#) accused [@SenTomCotton](#) of “fanning the embers of a conspiracy theory repeatedly debunked by experts” for asking the same questions the Post’s reporting is currently asking.

The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

Politics Live updates Biden administration T

Politics

Tom Cotton keeps repeating a coronavirus conspiracy theory that was already debunked



The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

Coronavirus U.S. map World map Vaccine tr

The Fix • Analysis

The vexing ‘lab leak’ theory on China and the coronavirus



Yet Cotton acknowledged there is no evidence that the disease originated at the lab. Instead, he suggested it’s necessary to ask Chinese authorities about the possibility, fanning the embers of a conspiracy theory that has been repeatedly debunked by experts.

“baseless” or “conspiracy theories?” Do you call them “lies,” even if you can’t 100 percent disprove them, or even if you don’t know for sure that the person promoting them actually knows better?

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It has become evident that some corners of the mainstream media overcorrected when it came to one particular theory from Trump and his allies: that the [coronavirus](#) emanated from a laboratory in Wuhan, China, rather than naturally.

And for some reason [@washingtonpost](#)’s timeline of events just so happens to omit their own “fact check” of the lab leak theory from April 2020 that concluded “the balance of the scientific evidence strongly suggests the conclusion that the new coronavirus emerged from nature.”

 **The Washington Post** 
@washingtonpost

Fact Checker: Was the new coronavirus accidentally released from a Wuhan lab? It's doubtful.



The Fact Checker

Analysis | Was the new coronavirus accidentally released from a Wuhan lab? It's...
washingtonpost.com

7:30 AM · 5/1/20 · SocialFlow

The Bottom Line

The balance of the scientific evidence strongly supports the conclusion that the new coronavirus emerged from nature — be it the Wuhan market or somewhere else. Too many unexpected coincidences would have had to take place for it to have escaped from a lab. But the Chinese


Democracy Dies in Darkness

Coronavirus U.S. map World map Vaccine tr

Fact Checker • Analysis

Timeline: How the Wuhan lab-leak theory suddenly became credible



[@politico](#) had a quicker about-face than most. While they decried that the Wuhan lab was “at the center of conspiracy theories about the pandemic’s origin,” in March 2021 they resurfaced worries about “risky coronavirus experiments” from 2018.

Wonder why “no one listened.”

POLITICO @politico

The Trump administration abruptly cut off funding for a project studying how coronaviruses spread from bats to people after reports linked the work to a lab in Wuhan, China, at the center of conspiracy theories about the pandemic's origins



Trump cuts U.S. research on bat-human virus transmission over China ties

POLITICO @politico

Diplomats in 2018 warned of risky coronavirus experiments in a Wuhan Lab. No one listened.



In 2018, Diplomats Warned of Risky Coronavirus Experiments in a Wuhan Lab. N... politico.com

9:45 AM · 3/9/21 · Hootsuite Inc.

Much of the problem originally was that so many outlets relied on less than trustworthy sources - like the lab itself - to reject the lab leak theory & render it a “conspiracy theory.”

Even @Reuters, who doesn't usually make the threads, did this. It was unbelievably pervasive.

REUTERS

TUE APR 28, 2020 / 10:12 AM EDT

China lab rejects COVID-19 conspiracy claims, but virus origins still a mystery

David Stanway

REUTERS Sign In

May 24, 2021 5:44 AM EDT

Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals

Wuhan lab staff sought hospital care before COVID-19 outbreak disclosed - WSJ

Reuters 4 minute read

I don't know how else to put it. @NPR was awful about this one.

In April 2020, the story was “scientists debunk lab accident theory” but in March 2021 the idea suddenly “takes on new life”.

Did anyone consider who killed the original theory? I have an idea.

WAMU 88.5
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SCIENCE

Scientists Debunk Lab Accident Theory Of Pandemic Emergence

April 22, 2020 · 4:08 PM ET
Heard on All Things Considered

GEOFF BRUMFIEL

3-Minute Listen

Scientists dismiss the idea that the coronavirus pandemic was caused by the accident in a lab. They believe the close

WAMU 88.5
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Coronavirus Updates

CORONAVIRUS UPDATES

Theory That COVID Came From A Chinese Lab Takes On New Life In Wake Of WHO Report

March 31, 2021 · 8:11 PM ET

JOHN RUWITCH

I've talked often about how the media has an enormous power in shaping narratives through framing.

Here's an example from [@thehill](#). Trump is portrayed as acting in bad faith ("efforts to blame China for the virus") and then that framing gets jettisoned when no longer necessary.

THE HILL The Hill @thehill

Even as the World Health Organization and others say they've seen no evidence linking coronavirus to being created in a Chinese lab, President Trump is doubling down on his efforts to blame China for the virus.

thehill.com
Trump steps up effort to blame China for coronavirus

THE HILL The Hill @thehill

COVID-19 Wuhan lab theory gains more credibility hill.cm/2PBrdJa

1:49 PM · 5/25/21 · SocialFlow

13 Retweets 4 Quote Tweets 33 Likes

For [@BBCNews](#), the lab leak theory went from a conspiracy theory on par with China's suggestion that the US created the virus to "all hypotheses are on the table" without an ounce of self awareness.

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Coronavirus: US and China trade conspiracy theories

By Shayan Sardarizadeh and Olga Robinson
BBC Monitoring

26 April 2020



BBC NEWS

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Coronavirus: More work needed to rule out China lab leak theory says WHO

30 March 2021
Updated 31 March 2021

'Accidentally escaped'

Claims by elements in the Chinese government and media about the US being a possible origin of the virus prompted a response from US President Donald Trump who referred to Covid-19 as a "Chinese virus". And Secretary of State Mike Pompeo demanded that China stop spreading "disinformation".

President Trump recently announced that he was going to halt funding for the World Health Organization (WHO), accusing it of being "very China-centric". In response, Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said it was "not the time" to cut funds to the UN agency.

But a number of US politicians and commentators have also made unfounded claims about the origin of the virus.

'All hypothesis on the table'

However the theory that the virus might have come from a leak in a laboratory "requires further investigation, potential with additional missions involving specialist experts," Dr Tedros said on Tuesday.

"Let me say clearly that as far as WHO is concerned, all hypothesis remain on the table," he added.

- [Five days that shaped the Wuhan outbreak](#)
- [UK scientist defends WHO Wuhan fact-finding mission](#)

The virus was first detected in Wuhan, in China's Hubei province in late 2019. An international team of experts travelled to the city in January to probe the origins of the virus.

Again, why did no one at [@BusinessInsider](#) stop to consider whether the director of the lab that had just been accused (by the leader of the free world) of starting a once in a century plague might not be telling the entire truth?

Seems something changed since.

INSIDER

US MARKETS CLOSED In the news

▲ Dow Jones	▲ Nasdaq	▲ S&P 500	▼ TSLA
-0.24%	-0.03%	-0.21%	+0.08%

HOME > NEWS

The theory pushed by Trump that the coronavirus began at a laboratory in Wuhan is 'pure fabrication,' according to the lab's director

Adam Payne May 24, 2020, 8:33 AM

INSIDER

US MARKETS OPEN In the news

▼ Dow Jones	▼ Nasdaq	▼ S&P 500	▼ TSLA
+0.75%	+1.72%	+1.27%	+4.88%

HOME > SCIENCE

3 Wuhan lab workers were sick enough to go to the hospital in November 2019, report says, bolstering calls to reconsider the coronavirus lab-leak theory

Sarah Al-Arshani May 23, 2021, 8:34 PM

Unfortunately there was a lot to work with for [@BusinessInsider](#). I couldn't help but include these two pieces that haven't exactly aged perfectly.

Business Insider @Busin... · 5/2/20 ...
Replying to @BusinessInsider

A fringe theory suggests the coronavirus could have leaked from a lab at the Wuhan Institute of Virology in China, but there's no evidence of this.

Here's why an accidental lab leak is extremely unlikely.



businessinsider.com
A US researcher who worked with a Wuhan virology lab gives 4 reasons...

762 1,663 2,160

INSIDER

US MARKETS CLOSED In the news

▲ Dow Jones	▲ Nasdaq	▲ S&P 500	▼ TSLA
-0.24%	-0.03%	-0.21%	+0.08%

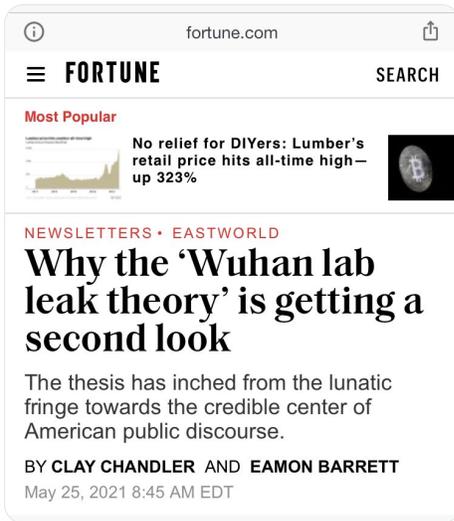
HOME > POLITICS

Trump cut funding for a group researching bat-to-human virus transmissions after unfounded conspiracy theories linked it to a Wuhan lab, report says

Rosie Perper Apr 28, 2020, 6:32 AM

The extent to which the mainstream media trusted the lab in Wuhan at their word is jarring. [@FortuneMagazine](#) was just one of many.

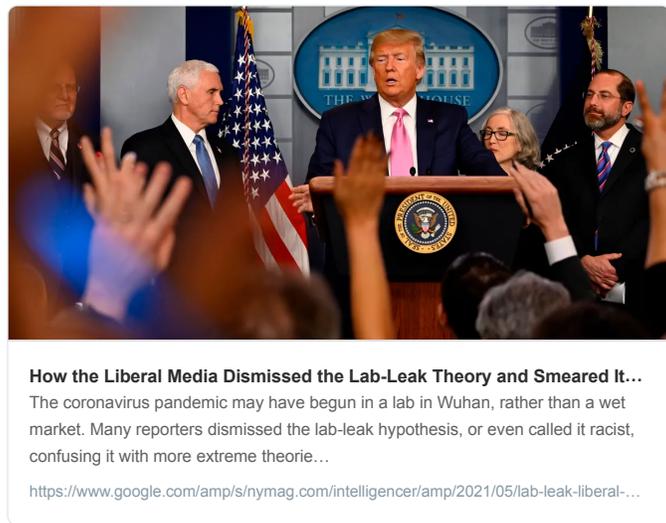
But it's also impossible to ignore - both here and in general - that the contrast is always between Wuhan and President Trump. More on that later.



The worst part of all of this (except for the damage to public trust, of course) is the absolute lack of accountability.

The media totally blew it on this story in ways that could make it less likely that we ever get to the bottom of this. Without offering so much as an apology.

There have been a couple of exceptions. The best in my estimation is this piece from [@jonathanchait](#) that tracks through some of the bad coverage in a way that doesn't make excuses:



But broadly, the old reporting went down the memoryhole and has already been incinerated. No lessons will be learned. No improvements will be made. This will happen again.

And it will continue to be everyday Americans who suffer the impact of bad information.

My (unsolicited) postmortem: the idea that President Trump could've been right about something this important w/o definitive public proof was something journos and newsrooms simply could not bring themselves to take seriously.

Instead, because they hated Trump so much, they preferred to trust a lab run by shadowy hostile autocrats who had every incentive to lie (and long history of lying) about something that could turn out to be the most consequential coverup in living memory.

That's...not good.

But these are precisely the sorts of blind spots we should expect from a collection of people who all share the same worldview. Until that changes - until we get more perspectives/people who don't have those blind spots - all of this will continue to get worse.

And these aren't all the bad takes. I did another thread last week with even more, it's just that not every outlet has done an about face (yet).

I have a feeling this thread will get longer, unfortunately.



Drew Holden
@DrewHolden360

THREAD

The idea that Covid-19 may have leaked from a lab in Wuhan, China has gained mainstream traction of late.

It can be easy to forget that, a little over a year ago, the idea was derided as a vile, senseless conspiracy theory.

Let's revisit. ↴

11:31 PM · May 18, 2021

7.9K ⚡ See the latest COVID-19 information on Twitter

And if you haven't already, read this piece from [@redsteeze](#) that urges us not to let this one go by unremarked.



Don't let the media get away with U-turning on the lab leak theory - The...

While there is still only an amount of circumstantial evidence pointing to the lab theory, there is more and more smoke around the fire

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/spectator.us/topic/media-u-turn-lab-leak-coronavirus-th...>

