

Fox News fetes Chinese scientists claiming China made and intentionally released COVID virus. Turns out they are on former Trump strategist Steve Bannon's payroll

A strange [new paper](#) claiming the coronavirus was a “laboratory product” quietly made its way into a repository of preliminary research on [September 14].

“The laboratory creation of this coronavirus is convenient and can be accomplished in approximately six months,” the paper's authors, four Chinese virologists who fled to the US earlier this year, wrote.

Li-Meng Yan, the lead author, went a step further in [a \[September 15\] interview](#) with the Fox News host Tucker Carlson.

She told Carlson that her government had “intentionally” released the “man-made virus” — comments that echoed a fringe conspiracy theory that Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and President Donald Trump [alluded to in May](#).

But a closer look at Yan and her coauthors' work shows they're affiliated with a pair of nonprofits based in New York City, the Rule of Law Society and the Rule of Law Foundation, that were led by the former Trump strategist Steve Bannon before his arrest in August.

Neither organization has any history of publishing scientific or medical research, and the new paper has not been peer-reviewed by other scientists.

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There's no evidence supporting the theory that the new coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, was genetically engineered. [A March study](#) concluded based on genetic analysis that the coronavirus wasn't a hodgepodge of existing coronaviruses, as Yan and other supporters of the theory have suggested.

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