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Why We Forget COVID-19: Pandemic Thought Crime

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*The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed, But, swoll'n with wind and the rank mist they draw, Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread ...* —John Milton

The next pandemic will be the vaccine.

Pandemic thought crime is all too familiar. First it took the form of denial of the “official story”—the bats killed us. Then it became affirmation of the denial of the official story—the CCP and PLA (Peoples Liberation Army)—killed us. Then the vax killed us. The classic command, “dog, sit, roll over” and so on and on. Madness ensues.

The globalist war-game continues over health control, where the specter of the World Health Organization looms large as does the new Western turn to populism and renewed citizen power. How can the propaganda/social science methodology of “conspiracy theory” labeling function in this war-game? Kurtis Hagen begins with a well-remembered quote from British PM Tony Blair:

[In dismissing a certain account of the war in the Middle East] when Tony Blair says, “But honestly, I mean, conspiracy theories,” he appears to be encouraging the dismissal of the theory in question simply by suggesting that it counts as a conspiracy theory.<sup>1</sup>

Hagen’s example is well-placed. The war on Terror was infested with deception and manipulation of nation-state populations. Recall the more recent STD “Monkey Pox” attempt at popular panic. Fortunately, like AIDS before it, it failed. Next week, the pathogen vector will be dogs and cats? Or the hypothetical vaccine itself? Let’s consider the process we are trapped by. A variant of *Rule by Crisis*.<sup>2</sup> Rule by crisis is simple: Create the perception of a fundamental crisis and gain control of a population to combat that perceived crisis. But there are aftereffects not fully mastered by our collective master class. Understanding these is a key problem within social epistemology.

## The Experts

Hagen quotes the 2020 critique found in the medical journal *The Lancet*. Similarly, consider what twenty-seven prominent scientists published a letter in *The Lancet*:

We stand together to strongly condemn conspiracy theories suggesting that COVID-19 does not have a natural origin. ... Conspiracy theories do nothing but create fear, rumours, and prejudice that jeopardise our global collaboration in the fight against this virus (Calisher et al. 2020).

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<sup>1</sup> Hagen, Kurtis. 2025. “Generalist Denialism and the Particularist Critique.” *Social Epistemology Review and Reply Collective* 14 (2): 35–45. <https://wp.me/p1Bfg0-9yW>.

<sup>2</sup> Basham, Lee. 2018. “Joining the Conspiracy.” *Argumenta* 3 (2): 271–290.

These scientists appear to be attempting to discourage belief in the lab-leak hypothesis by calling it a “conspiracy theory.”

These *Lancet* remarks appear to take an epistemically dim view of conspiracy theories as conspiracy theories, particularly *The Lancet* remark: “Conspiracy theories do nothing but create fear, rumours, and prejudice that jeopardies our global collaboration in the fight against this virus” (Calisher et al. 2020). To itemize in this instance:

Create fear;  
Rumors;  
Prejudice;  
Jeopardizes research into a virus.

The force of this list as an objection is unclear. Fear is a serious and well placed reaction in a vast number of scenarios. Rumors are often true and/or they frequently signal real dangers to ourselves and others (that’s why we wisely attend to them), prejudice is a vice or virtue according to its target given the reasons, and how a lab-leak theory jeopardizes research into a virus is far from clear; we lose the cooperation of the CCP establishment that created the virus? What is clear is this is a very general critique of conspiracy theories as such and uses “conspiracy theory” in a directly pejorative way to attain its attempted effect. Compare, “We stand together to strongly condemn *explanations* suggesting that COVID-19 does not have a natural origin ... These *explanations* do nothing but create fear, rumours, and prejudice that jeopardise our global collaboration in the fight against this virus.”

But this is obviously untrue. We can’t ban the notion of *explanatory theory* but we can sometimes usefully attempt to make problematic a common instance of it, *conspiracy theory*. So Hagen is right. *Lancet* authors appear to be attempting to discourage belief in the lab-leak hypothesis by calling it a “conspiracy theory” and attacking “conspiracy theory” as fear producing, etc. “Explanation” doesn’t do this by itself, but at least in the view of the *Lancet* authors it is needed to convey their position and the severity of a lab-leak conspiracy theory.

After (strangely) praising the “transparency” of Chinese virologists working for the Chinese government Calisher and the other *Lancet* authors add:

We stand together to strongly condemn conspiracy theories suggesting that COVID-19 does not have a natural origin. Scientists from multiple countries have published and [analysed genomes](#) of the causative agent, [severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 \(SARS-CoV-2\)](#),<sup>1</sup> and they overwhelmingly conclude that this [coronavirus](#) originated in wildlife, [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [10](#) as have so many other emerging [pathogens](#). [11](#), [12](#) This is further supported by a letter from the presidents of the US National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine [13](#) and by the scientific communities they represent.

But this is irrelevant. Of course, *all* viruses have a natural origin *at some point*. We have not created from raw materials anything as complex as a self-replicating virus. As far as I am aware humans have created nothing of any kind with the complexity and sophistication of a corona virus, even in the vast, super-cooled electromagnetic systems of our most complex super-computers; a model of a corona virus variant by one of these computational systems involves none of the abilities, chemical complexity or molecular-dynamic remarkableness of that virus. Instead, the relevant point is that we can *alter* existing virus types in limited ways, ways that include the notorious project of “gain of function” (GoF). GoF has several forms, one of which is “... the generation of highly pathogenic and/or transmissible viruses in animal models that nevertheless *do not appear to be a major public health concern*” (italics added). “[D]o not appear to be a major human health concern” calls out for our attention. Set aside the ambiguity of “major” and the evasion of “appear”: Are we not “animal models”?<sup>3</sup>

### COVID-19 Origin Reassessed

The issue is when is this “nonhuman” line is crossed into work on human populations; human pathogenic virus GoF projects. Clearly it would be quite naïve to believe such do not exist. The current majority report from our Western virologists appears to be yes, for instance *COVID-19*. In 2024 the US House investigation into COVID-19 origins reports, The Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic recently reviewed classified U.S. Department of State (State Department) documents that credibly suggest COVID-19 originated from a lab related accident or other kind of *event* in Wuhan, China. The documents also strongly convey that the Chinese Communist Party attempted to cover-up the lab leak (intentional or unintentional) and that the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) maintains a relationship with the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA).<sup>4,5</sup>

This is a conspiracy theory, if anything is. And a reasonable one. A secret is devised, a group keeps that secret and disseminates a false account to rebut and rebuke those who suspect the truth. In the popular vernacular, a “cover-up”. We see that government explanations can themselves be conspiracy theories. The “official story” *verses* “conspiracy theory” distinction collapses immediately. One wonders, if in our current context, if China’s economic problems might encourage additional virological misbehavior; a economy and a single party nation (CCP) on the edge of the abyss might wish to take its chances and crash the world.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK285579/>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK285579/>.

<sup>5</sup> See, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/lab-leak-true-origins-of-covid-19/> (April 18, 2025). See also, <https://oversight.house.gov/release/classified-state-department-documents-credibly-suggest-covid-19-lab-leak-wenstrup-pushes-for-declassification/> One can view the highly redacted original US government document at, <https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/FL-2022-00075-April-2023-Production-ccp.pdf>. The House letter is at, <https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2024.05.07-SSCP-Letter-to-State-Department.pdf>.

## Pejorative Ideations

Scott Hill argues, surprisingly, that among most people—roughly the majority of our population—“conspiracy theory” simply does not popularly suffer a negative—pejorative—connotation and that whatever it is that explains an aversion to “conspiracy theory” it is not the psychological and social anxieties associated with conspiracy and statements to the effect that we are the victims, sometimes horrifically, of these conspiracies. But it frequently does. So the situation is more complex than Hill appears to imagine. Our pejorative reaction responses are situational. My own research in this question shows most people are highly episodic in their pejorative “conspiracy theory” labeling. Widely, in isolation, the phrase has little pejorative connotation, but in a mass-victim scenario, where we are the victims, it frequently is resorted to as an escape from the depth of the fearful offense: This didn’t just happen to us, *powerful people did this to us and they knew they were doing it to us*. All these responses would support the use of the phrases “conspiracy theory” or “*just* a conspiracy theory” as pejorative and something we might wish to avoid experiencing, but Scott Hill claims he has seen no evidence of this tactic among the general population. It is somewhat hard to imagine this as a serious stance, but he has given good voice to it:

I [Hill] asked: “Where are the Generalists?” Hagen answered:

[T]he answer to the question “Where are the generalists?” is this: wherever one finds a theory dismissed because it is a conspiracy theory (as one often finds in the media), and wherever conspiracy theories are assumed to be false just because they fall into that category (as in much of the social science work on conspiracy theories). Indeed, anyone who dismisses an explanation with words like, “That’s just a conspiracy theory” is implicitly relying on generalism.<sup>6</sup>

Hagen looks to be right. “Conspiracy theory” (see above) was being used as a silencing tactic, as “*conspiracy theory*” *writ large*, whatever its success. Still, Hill replies:

If that is where the Generalists are, I don’t think there are any Generalists (with the possible exception of some of the philosophers Hagen talks about. I thank Hagen for correcting me on that point). I recognize there are cases in which a claim that should be taken seriously is instead dismissed as a mere conspiracy theory. But I have yet to see evidence that such claims are dismissed *because* they are counted as conspiracy theories. Consider the lab leak hypothesis about the origins of COVID-19. It was prematurely dismissed. It was also called a ‘conspiracy theory’. But I don’t see why we should think that it was dismissed *because* it was called a ‘conspiracy theory’.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Hill, Scott. 2024. “Particularism and the Conventional Wisdom.” *Social Epistemology Review and Reply Collective* 13 (12): 44–51. <https://wp.me/p1Bfg0-9og>.

<sup>7</sup> Hill 2024.

The answer is complex, but fear is an important feature. Fear of being lied to. That is, fear that high level economic and deceitful agreements between the West and China were implemented, fear the US government would lie about origins at this juncture to avoid a trade war and attempted invasion of a disputed territory, fear that the obvious was being denied—an “Institute of Virology” was only a few kilometers away from the stated patient zero in the outbreak—and that, in sum, the entire affair was manufactured by governmental and other powers. “Conspiracy theory” gave shelter, however fragile and temporary. This is a generalist, strategic deployment and its acceptance, a popular reality. Bats were killing us, even while numerous people familiar with the “wet market” denied anyone in the area consumed bats or sold them.<sup>8</sup> A human action become an accident of nature, which is far less traumatic, like a tornado is far less traumatic when it sucks up a farm family than when that same family is killed *in cold blood* by murderous fiends.

Here we read “theory”, as “explanation”, a type of theory quite ordinary in investigative work. It posits a conspiracy as an explanation for various events, including claims made. (If one wishes to add a moral dimension to our use of “conspiracy theory”, it is *prima facie* immoral to evade the truth here.) Millions of conspiracy theories are defended, and successfully, in courts of both informed public opinion but also law. These legal cases even often carry the term “conspiracy”; persons x, y and z (etc ...) are guilty of conspiracy to murder, libel, defraud, etc., person(s) (fill in the blanks).

The 2024 subcommittee also argues that had WIV, the People’s Liberation Army and top leadership in Beijing not covered up the lab leak at Wuhan, the outbreak could have, contrary to the *Lancet* cosigners, been contained to the Wuhan area and the pandemic avoided. Ibid. Millions of people died in this pandemic, “With the latest COVID-19 deaths reported to WHO now exceeding 3.4 million, based on the excess mortality estimates produced for 2020, we are likely facing a significant undercount of total deaths directly and indirectly attributed to COVID-19.”<sup>9</sup> This number is a moral outrage. Any number is, really. Worse, with this announcement, in May of 2022, WHO apparently indicates this number to be too low, an “undercount”.<sup>10</sup>

So we might think is any attempt to evade culpability both on the part of the primary criminals in China and their accomplices elsewhere. For instance, did elements of the US federal government know Covid 19 was a lab-leak and when? The highly redacted documents indicate no later than July 2020 and probably *sometime earlier*. Consider: “19” indicates the year, 2019, of recording its existence into various data bases. CO stands for “corona”, VI for “virus” and D for “disease”, so “COVID 19”.<sup>11</sup> So the US government was classifying COVID 19 in the 19<sup>th</sup> year. More deception.

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<sup>8</sup> Aside: “wet market” means it was sprayed down with water to keep it clean on a daily basis, not that it was dripping with infectious blood.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.who.int/data/stories/the-true-death-toll-of-covid-19-estimating-global-excess-mortality>.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.who.int/data/stories/the-true-death-toll-of-covid-19-estimating-global-excess-mortality>.

<sup>11</sup> <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/93060>.

We find a child-like response in the well-intended remarks by Henry Bauer, a chemist by training:

The duties of that office [the Science Court] would be to exert constant vigilance for ideas or claimed discoveries with the potential for wide-ranging public policies and actions, and in such cases to make sure that alternative ideas and dissenting voices are not suppressed.<sup>12</sup>

Bauer adds:

A necessary corollary to such an office would be a protocol for assessing, in an entirely independent, unbiased manner, the relative merits of mainstream and dissenting voices: something like the Science Court for which I have argued elsewhere ... Indeed, a Science Court would need such an early-warning system to know when its services might be required.<sup>13</sup>

I think we can see where this is going. The “Science Court” will fall to the usual forces of corruption; funding and academic and other advancements for its members and “cancellations” for the honest. The irony is Bauer is author of a book, *Why We Can’t Trust Science*.<sup>14</sup>

Aside: It’s important to notice that *particularism* is not the claim that at least one conspiracy theory has proven to be true. None might be true. It is instead the evaluative claim that all conspiracy accusations, if salient to those exposed to them, must be evaluated on the evidence. It is an epistemic stance, one not resting on well-known history. Pathologizing conspiracy theories and theorists, as social scientists do as a government-funded and quite profitable industry, violates this by substituting an *ad hominem* expectation, that *conspiracy theorizing is a pathology*. *The pathologizing stance* is rationally and epistemically unsound. No matter the government funding, it is bad science. We can’t trust it and would be foolish to try.

### Why We Forgot COVID-19

Again, I suspect the simple answer is psychological survival. We forgot it happened in our practical considerations, and more important how, at least in practice, because the panic it produced and the borderline fanatical responses it evoked as a result of our government, mainstream media (or “legacy media”), as well as even the actions of law enforcement. It is not hard to suspect the COVID-19 pandemic was an experiment, and an intentional one, in mass psychology. Both the CCP and the US government would gain important information, and it is not hard they cooperated in unleashing the initial conditions for this purpose. COVID-19 has a curious feature; it disables and kills almost exclusively the old. Which are

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<sup>12</sup> Bauer, Henry H. 2025. “COVID was Mismanaged: How Not to Repeat that History?” *Social Epistemology Review and Reply* Collective 14 (4): 36–38. <https://wp.me/p1Bfg0-9Lg>.

<sup>13</sup> Bauer 2025.

<sup>14</sup> <https://henryhbauer.substack.com/p/needed-a-specifically-dedicated-science> [court].

from an economic perspective, arguably expendable. Ulterior motives of social experimentation aside, it produced violent demands for conformity and a malaise of mutual enforcement. We've seen this before: This was generationally crippling in the case of World War II and the Vietnam War and its governmentally engineered, precipitating events of Pearl Harbor and the Gulf of Tonkin incidents.<sup>15</sup>

As a result of the emergence of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) infection in the Chinese city of Wuhan, a situation of socio-economic crisis and profound psychological distress occurred worldwide. Various psychological problems and important consequences in terms of mental health including stress, anxiety, depression, frustration, uncertainty during COVID-19 outbreak emerged progressively. The core issue was continuity of government. And here it survived the test admirably—too admirably.

In the US, a one-size fits all approach, fortunately with resistance in some states (like Florida and Texas):

... [L]ocal scientists and public health experts banded together to counter COVID-19. We tested saliva because we ran out of swabs—this ultimately led to Yale's famous SalivaDirect, led by Drs. Grubaugh and Wylie. We optimized different primers, pooled samples, and multiplexed PCR to save reagents and money. We shifted to studying immune responses in COVID-19 patients in the hope of coming up with a better therapy. While I am immensely proud of the incredible accomplishments by the scientists fighting the virus, we cannot bring back the 280,000 people who died as a result of the lack of national COVID strategy. The painful lesson we learned from all this is that our country needs a president who can provide a concrete and consistent plan for battling the next pandemic, and that this plan must be guided by science.<sup>16</sup>

And in China, the same:

The China CDC team...[implemented] control measures were implemented based on the epidemiological assessment, and within 100 days the epidemic in Wuhan was under good control. How did China achieve such a great goal? The so-called non-pharmacological interaction (NPI) measures have been executed very efficiently in China. They are mainly as follows: (1) strong political will; (2) science-based guidelines for prevention, control, and treatment; (3) active case finding and quarantine of close contacts (quarantine included welding the infected into their apartments to die); (4) public understanding and involvement; (5) public compliance with the three “big measures” of mask-wearing, social distancing, and hand-washing; (6)

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<sup>15</sup> See, for instance: Stinnett, Robert. 2001. *Day of Deceit*. New York: Touchstone.

<sup>16</sup> <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7748395/>.



restricting public gathering and movement; (7) environment disinfection; (8) nucleic acid testing for a wider population once an outbreak was noticed; and (9) preventing the infodemics.<sup>17</sup>

1-9 equally characterize the broad US response. Focus on (1), the quasi-religious (2), the political (5) and (6) and thought control, (9).<sup>18</sup>

By the numbers:

(1) Strong political will means government policy dominance and force over all other factors and every person's life in the territory of attempted control. This is far more terrifying than the virus. (2) is deployed as a silencing tactic, auxiliary to (1). In sum, "We own the science, science is our prophet, and you will obey." This is far more terrifying than the virus. In the case of COVID-19 (5) is a list of ineffective measures and therefore ritualistic obedience. The masks don't work against viruses and as commonly used, against anything noxious, social distancing was irrelevant unless you were very old or very obese—a rare condition in China. (6) was the infamous lock-downs that led to mass suicides and cripple social development in non-endangered children. (9) is by far the most disturbing: Government mass thought control and systematic censorship. COVID thought crimes. This is far more terrifying than the virus.

Germany, no surprise:

The German success in controlling COVID-19 is in accord with some common stereotypes: strictness regarding rules, adherence to authority, and a workplace preference over other social activities.<sup>19</sup>

Fortunately, we find a different and preferable attitude in at least one South Korean medical professional:

At the crux of South Korean success lies in the central leadership's rapid, responsible, and humble approach, catalyzed by the *golden balance* [emphasis added] between science and democracy. Imperfect scientific knowledge was overcome by dedicated civic engagement to collectively deal with an uncertain future during a crisis.

Common psychological reactions related to the mass quarantine which was imposed in order to attenuate the COVID-19 spread are generalized fear and pervasive community anxiety which are typically associated with disease

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<sup>17</sup> <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7748395/>. See also, *Coronavirus: Welding Doors Shut*. CBC/Radio Canada, [www.cbc.ca/player/play/1703503427818](http://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1703503427818).

<sup>18</sup> <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7748395/>. See also, *Coronavirus: Welding Doors Shut*. CBC/Radio Canada, [www.cbc.ca/player/play/1703503427818](http://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1703503427818).

<sup>19</sup> <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7748395/>. See also, *Coronavirus: Welding Doors Shut*. CBC/Radio Canada, [www.cbc.ca/player/play/1703503427818](http://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1703503427818).

outbreaks, and increased with the escalation of new cases together with inadequate, anxiety-provoking information which was provided by media.<sup>20</sup>

And the children:

The youngest children have been most affected by lockdowns and closures during the Covid pandemic, with new research finding that the educational progress and social development of four- and five-year-olds suffered severely during their first year at school. Aggressive behavior such as biting and hitting, feelings of struggling in class or being overwhelmed around large groups of children were among the difficulties reported by teachers during interviews.<sup>21</sup>

The reason we forget COVID-19 is simple: It produced a nightmare of disease mass-manipulation and proof of the ease with which we, as a population, could be controlled, demoralized and even rendered suicidal by our government and main-stream-media. We came to recognize this ignoble nightmare. Shame and fear followed. The mass experiments preformed on world populations appear to be gratuitous, as it was quickly recognized the disease, as lethal as it was, targeted three very limited, population-wise, groups: The old, the obese and anyone immuno-compromised by respiration or other medical issues. Obesity, for instance, appears when it is extreme enough to reduce lung capacity and ventilation. These compound each other, but age is by far dominant. The numbers speak for themselves: It was overwhelmingly the elderly that died, regardless of race or gender.<sup>22</sup> There is some evidence obesity is associated with various sub-groups in the US. The CDC explores this aspect.<sup>23</sup>

Our conclusion is fairly simple: COVID-19 was radically mishandled in ways that were well understood by most of the Governments and perhaps mainstream media at the time. It was used as an instrument of social experimentation, experimentation into producing mass-panic, irrational conformity and overarching even if clearly illegal control.

This is a conspiracy theory, one many would like to dismiss as such. Which returns us to Hill. There is little doubt a *pejorative* status of the phrase *conspiracy theory* is inviting to Hill and his like at a moment like this. Hill is like a kid with his hand caught in the cookie jar; there is no pejorative status to “conspiracy theory” but I’ll reach for it if it works for my public stance as politically pious. I got caught? Well, “This isn’t a cookie jar.” Hill’s approach is simple; to protect the pejorative political tactic for future use he insists it doesn’t really exist. But fear is the foundation of at least one element of its popular pejorative status. It is also a good predictor of its pejorative deployment and public acceptance.

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<sup>20</sup> <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7337855/>.

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/may/18/younger-children-most-affected-by-covid-lockdowns-new-research-finds>.

<sup>22</sup> <https://data.cdc.gov/NCHS/Provisional-COVID-19-Deaths-by-Week-Sex-and-Age/vsak-wrfu/data>.

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/obesity-and-covid-19>. A study of COVID-19 in those under age 65. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/may/18/younger-children-most-affected-by-covid-lockdowns-new-research-finds>.

My research in the fear factor is simple if merely descriptive. In conspiracy theories where the accusation of a conspiracy was contrived to produce broad-based fear, the vast majority of respondents (who did not know my views) found that fear was a significant element of their reaction and a significant force in their rejection of the reasonable conspiracy theory as “just a conspiracy theory” ( $n = 162$ ). A Student (the statistician) T test showed a more than 95% correlation between fear ratings and the hopeful reaction of “just a conspiracy theory”. That is, it passed the threshold for statistically significant, albeit in a relatively small  $n$ .<sup>24</sup> That’s statistically significant situational generalism. The situation is *fear provoking*.

The results of COVID-19 were devastating and are within each of us now at a psychological and social level. Our question: Can we forget COVID-19’s political, social, economic and psychological impact in the hands of our mainstream mass media and related political elite? Of course, the answer is yes. One that in its many dimensions seems shot through with conspiracy? And any proper accounting for constitutes a multi-faceted “conspiracy theory”? Or can we remember this conspiracy theory for what it is: Well-evidenced, in a word, epistemically “warranted”?

### **Next Week**

The next pandemic will be vaccine driven, where the actual pathogen will be the vaccine itself. The initial cases will be falsified, the “sick” will be seized by a small cabal of government health agencies and disposed of. We will be told by the Experts we have a “sleeper virus” of unknown origin embedded in our DNA and to prevent its eventual, inevitable activation we will have to receive an emergency vaccine as a matter of national and global security. Resisters will be arrested and disposed of as the vaccine activates *en masse*. Subsequently the “vaccine” will “fail” (succeed) and a 40 percent or more kill rate will quickly follow, instituting a pattern of global totalitarianism.

Would you really be surprised?

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<sup>24</sup>  $n$  means number of respondents.