

CBS News 24/7's *The Takeout*

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5:00:13 p.m. [TEASE]

14 seconds

MAJOR GARRETT: They're being called the Fauci diaries, the private notes doctor Anthony Fauci took during Covid. Do they reveal more than he said at the time about its origins? A longtime critic, GOP senator Ron Johnson joins us.

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5:33:58 p.m. [TEASE]

13 seconds

GARRETT: Anthony Fauci is set to testify before the Senate Homeland Security Committee Wednesday. Next, I'm joined by a committee member, Wisconsin Republican Senator Ron Johnson. He's going to have some questions you can count on that. We'll get a preview when we come back.

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5:38:00 p.m.

7 minutes and 41 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Sen. Paul Releases "Fauci Diaries" Ahead of Senate Showdown]

GARRETT: Wednesday, Anthony Fauci will testify before a Senate panel on how the federal government responded in its many different ways to the Covid pandemic. Ahead of this, Kentucky Republican Senator Rand Paul, who has clashed with Fauci on numerous occasions, released more than a thousand diary entries from the former director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. In one entry, Dr. Fauci wrote, "Apparently, the WH is very upset that I am being profiled, and it looks like I am putting down the POTUS being the president of the United States and becoming a star that outshines him. The press is playing into this as is the tweet storm. Very stressful!!" Wisconsin Republican Senator Ron Johnson joins me now. He serves on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, which Fauci will be testifying before. Senator Johnson, I don't want to spend a lot of time on Anthony Fauci's ramblings about how to — star he became during Covid. I'm much more concerned, as I think you are, about what he said privately about the COVID origin lab leak theory and what he said publicly. Do you believe there is a fundamental disconnect there? And in that disconnect, the American people were deceived? Yes or no

SENATOR RON JOHNSON (R-WI): Well, absolutely, the American people received by Anthony Fauci. This has been obvious for quite some time as soon as we got access to those email exchanges of the phone calls that were occurring the end of January, early February of 2020, when a lot of these individuals that Anthony Fauci had been funding the research for years,

and then funded their research after they changed their tune from saying that this is looking man-made. You got that fur-and-cleavage site. So, all of a sudden, Anthony Fauci arranges these phone calls with the, you know, eight or nine individuals, and all these people who are — who are looking at this thing, as I looked at it, is this is man — man-made, okay, you just don't have a fur-and-cleavage site here. A lot of other, you know, computational biologists make the same conclusion. All of a sudden, within a couple of days, oh, that's a conspiracy theory. This had to spring from nature, although they've never, ever been able to track that down. By the way, he also lied then to Congress when he said I wasn't involved in the intelligence community's assessment at all. Those very same individuals that he corralled in that — in those January, February phone calls that changed their opinion from man made to spring from nature, those are the exact same people he salted in the intelligence committee — community with to come up with their assessment as well. So, no, he's dirty in this thing. He's been lying to the American public. He directed a miserably failed response to Covid. I don't know what else I can say. He's a very bad guy.

GARRETT: All right. So, let's put the response in one category, senator, and let's put the origin story in another category, which is more important in our look back understanding of what went wrong or what went right with COVID. Is it the origin that we got wrong or the response, which is more important?

JOHNSON: Well, I would say they're equally important because it costs millions of people's their lives, okay? I mean, the fact that he funded gain-of-function research before the moratorium, continued to fund it, denied it, was fully aware of Ralph Baric, Peter Daszak, the folks in China, again, I think it's pretty obvious that if it wasn't a direct result, he certainly funded the kind of research that produced this man-made virus that created the pandemic. Now, fast forward to sabotaging early treatment with effective generic drugs so he could get emergency use authorization on the gene therapy — experimental gene therapy, injection that then they denied the safety signals that were screaming at them with, you know, being deluged with reports because they denied them. More and more people were either mandated, coerced, or convinced to take this experimental injection. Some of them died, some of them were permanently injured. Again — so, I don't know how to weigh that. You fund research to create a pandemic, and then the countermeasure kills and injures untold numbers of people. We still know that there's still not acknowledging it. So, those people who are injured by the injection, they can't get treatment. So, again, I just across the board, I think Anthony Fauci has all kinds of things to be held accountable for. Unfortunately, the media crowning him Saint Fauci. He says he's the science and he's not been held accountable. Of course, now he's — the pardon, which I'm sure he needed from President Biden.

GARRETT: Imagine I'm a constituent of yours, Senator Johnson, and I ask you this question. Shouldn't we be more concerned about China than Anthony Fauci? Don't they have blood on their hands? That is, as more apparent than Anthony Fauci or anyone who funded any gain-of-function research.

JOHNSON: I'm not holding China harmless here. But again, it's Anthony Fauci that covered this, and if we don't hold these people accountable, they'll do it again. You can see them trying

to do it with monkeypox or this hantavirus, whether it's another bird flu, whether it's Ebola, they create fear so that they can force these countermeasures on us. And, by the way, the whole issue of creating countermeasures, you know, this, you know, bio-weaponry, countermeasures, it's to me, it's a smokescreen to do bio-weapon research itself, which we're, you know, prohibited from doing based on agreements. So, again, this, this entire thing is a ruse and it's a ruse that I think created a pandemic that ended up killing millions of people.

GARRETT: Here's why I ask about China, because as you know, senator, as well, if not better than I do, the Wuhan Institute of Virology advertised itself as a grade four. It was a grade two at best lab, which means it was prone to leaks. It had bad security. Things got out. They arrested people who talked about it, and they suppressed — meaning the Chinese government — all available information to anyone in China who knew anything about that. Isn't that as big a part of story as gain of function research dollars?

JOHNSON: It is. But again, why in the world would we fund gain-of-function research here in America and then allow those people doing the research to transfer the technology to China? I mean, we know that the Chinese, their military, is in total control of those of those laboratories. So, again, this is dangerous research. They all know it. It's why President Obama put a moratorium on it, which they circumvented. But at a minimum, if you're going to do it, if you're going to circumvent the gain-OF-function moratorium, do it in safe bio labs here in America. Don't share the — the humanized mice with the lab in China, don't share the technology with some of the — Bat lady so they can continue on the research in China that, you know, the PLA is going to have access to.

GARRETT: What do you want Anthony Fauci to tell you Wednesday?

JOHNSON: I don't expect him to tell me anything that has any — any value to hold him accountable. He's going to be pretty slippery. So, again, I think the most we can expect is, you know, and what I intend to do is just lay out the facts, ask him pretty concise questions that only require a concise answer. I don't want him filibustering. I don't want him trying to explain things away. But again, he's — he's very practiced to this. He — we know he's willing to lie. He's lied to Congress repeatedly. I think we've got him dead to rights from that standpoint. But again, I don't — I don't expect any bombshells from this because we've known a lot of this. It just hasn't been covered by the legacy media.

GARRETT: Senator Ron Johnson, Republican of Wisconsin, I appreciate the time

JOHNSON: Have a good day.