Bat Lady & The Dark Knight



Courtesy WIV website, 2005 (now deleted): Cohorts Cahooting˙ From left: Don't know, (i'd like to), Hume Field (Aus), Bat Lady, The Dark Knight, Batty Man

ABC interview at the Bat Lab, 2011: *Waiting on the secure side is Dr Linfa Wang* ***-*** *leader of the group known as the* ***"bat pack" -*** *and personally known as the* ***bat virus man****. He's been working at the Animal Health Lab for 20 years.*

Yeah, *Bat Virus Man* is pretty good - i still like Dark Knight - now i'm in a quandary. *Bat Pack* though, that's great - can i use that?

As published by Formosahut in May 2020, there was a pivotal *Bat-Pack* GoF experiment in 2008 (same year Bat Virus Man was promoted to Head Scientist at CSIRO) that *inserted a SARS S sequence into a bat virus to enable ACE-2 binding*.

The experiments were conducted at WIV, led by Bat Lady & The Dark Knight - with Meng Yu, his wife, also employed by CSIRO.

Differences in Receptor Usage: *ACE2-binding activity of SL-CoVs was **easily acquired** by the replacement of a relatively small sequence segment of the S protein from the SARS-CoV S sequence.*

Easy-peasy.

*Differences in Receptor Usage: This work was jointly funded by .. **a special fund** from the president of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (no. 1009), the **Knowledge Innovation Program** Key Project (KSCX1-YW-R-07) to **Z. Shi*** (Bat Lady), *.. and the **Australian Biosecurity CRC** for Emerging Infectious Diseases (project 1.026RE) to **L.-F. Wang*** (the Dark Knight)

(Aside: This is how rabbit-holey everything is: ***CRC***, the funding arm for Linfa, was set up in **2002** (so pre-SARS) - one of its supporting members is *Consortium for Conservation Medicine* - which was one of Daszak's & Epstein's first incarnations of EcoHealth. What are they doing on an Australian bio-security org in 2002? CRC: *The threats may be natural, accidental, or deliberate (as in **bioterrorism**).* (CRC's brackets))

So how did Linfa and Zhengli meet?

Their relationship, like most things Covid, goes back to SARS. Technically, Anthrax ignited the funding explosion, but SARS provided a new rallying point once it became clear the whole Anthrax bioterrorism attack was literally a(/some) Fort Detrick scientist(s) drumming up business for vaccines.

Science: *After WHO declared the epidemic over in July 2003, it put together a mission of eight scientists, including Wang, to investigate the origins of the virus in China.*

Cool. Linfa was an original WHO investigator representing CSIRO, Australia. Dominic E. Dwyer (Westmead, Aussie) was also a WHO investigator for SARS - wonder if he was one of the eight?

*Science: Wang **had a hunch** bats could be the source, but the rest of the team was skeptical. At a meeting in Beijing, Wang met the head of WIV, who suggested he collaborate with a scientist at her institute: Shi Zhengli, who was then studying viruses in fish and shrimp.*

Linfa: *She was the **only virologist who believed me** and was willing to collaborate with me.*

So a legend was born: Bat Lady & the Dark Knight. Bound by science - but also *belief*.

As Science notes, they took bat viruses from a fringe theory to an industry where *the two have co-authored **dozens** of papers*.

In 2005, they published a landmark paper with Daszak, Epstein (EHA) and other scientists from WIV/CSIRO, the original Bat Packers, titled *Bats are Natural Reservoirs of SARS-like coronaviruses* - which established their reputations in virology.

Zhengli & Linfa then shot to fame (along with Daszak) for *finding* the SARS-1 bat virus from the famous Yunnan caves. Though in fact, it was nothing of the sort - less than 97% - same range as RaTG13 & the Lao sample but typical zoonati - never let facts get in the way of a good zoonosis narrative. As Linfa admits in a different article:

Nature, Feb 26 2020: *Even a 99% similarity between the RBDs of the two viruses is not necessarily enough to link them, says Linfa Wang, .. who was part of the team that* ***found the origin*** *of the SARS virus.*

(A neat example of how blithely Nature pedals misinformation - If 99% isn't definitive, then how does *nearly 97% = found the origin of SARS*?)

In 2006 Linfa won: *CSIRO Award for Excellence in Partnership, (SARS Team)* (with Bat Lady),

Together they launched a worldwide bat virus hunting movement (with Dazza coming on as PR guy), often funded under the PREDICT umbrella. They were especially attracted to the Yunnan caves - but also SE Asia & Africa - the WIV website from 2016 says: *WIV has also played a key role in the development of the CAS-African Research Center in Nairobi.* (What are they up to there i wonder?)

NPR: *Daszak says the China bat sampling project has already racked up quite a number of successes (*to the tune of) *15,000 samples from bats. From these they have already* ***identified*** *...about 50 (that) fall into a category that caused SARS and ... COVID-19,* including *all the building blocks for SARS.*

Technically, i doubt Linfa was/is traipsing through the batcaves of SE Asia collecting samples - he doesn't like plants or animals for a start - Bat Lady does - loves the outdoors. Not Linfa's cup of tea though. His job starts when the samples get to the Bat Lab - that's where the magic begins.

So our duo are a slight odd couple - but they *are* old friends - and they do click:

Science: *They also like to team up in karaoke bars to sing classic Chinese ballads, says Peter Daszak, a researcher at the EcoHealth Alliance, a New York City nonprofit, and a longtime collaborator with Wang and Shi.*

Pete: *Linfa is an excellent singer and to see him and Shi Zhengli do a duet is very special.*

I'm sure it is! I'm wondering if we haven't just seen a masterful performance.

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