

NBC Nightly News with Lester Holt

06/03/24

6:31:12 p.m. [TEASE]

15 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Breaking News; Dr. Fauci on the Hot Seat]

LESTER HOLT: Dr. Anthony Fauci grilled on Capitol Hill by Republicans on the origin of Covid. The moment he choked up describing death threats against his family and tensions erupting. Marjorie Taylor Greene refusing to call him a doctor.

(....)

6:41:02 p.m.

1 minute and 58 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Breaking News; Dr. Fauci on the Hot Seat]

HOLT: Now to the combative day on Capitol Hill. Dr. Anthony Fauci hitting back at Republican attacks over his handling of Covid in his first public testimony since leaving the government in 2022. Ali Vitali takes inside the tense hearing room.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Breaking News; Dr. Fauci Grilled About Covid on Capitol Hill]

ALI VITALI: Tonight Dr. Anthony Fauci in the hot seat.

CONGRESSWOMAN MARJORIE TAYLOR GREENE (R-GA): You belong in prison.

CONGRESSMAN ROBERT GARCIA (D-CA): I am so sorry that you are subjected to those level of attacks.

VITALI: House Republicans pressing the former face of America's pandemic response on past Covid restrictions, including that rule Americans should stay six feet apart.

FAUCI [in July 2020]: Wearing a mask, maintaining six feet of distance.

VITALI: Fauci told the committee behind closed doors that six-foot rule "sort of just appeared". Today clarifying he meant there were no clinical trials done.

CONGRESSMAN JOHN JOYCE (R-PA): Do you think that a role that sort of just appeared is substantial justification for the regulations that we saw based on that six-foot rule?

FAUCI: When saying it just appeared, it came from the CDC.

JOYCE: And you didn't feel an obligation as the lead scientist at the NIH to challenge that.

FAUCI: I've challenged the CDC multiple times.

JOYCE: Publicly you challenged them on the six-foot distance rule?

FAUCI: It is not appropriate to be publicly challenging a sister organization.

VITALI: Republicans also pressing him on Covid's origins. Fauci denying he downplayed the possibility of a leak from Wuhan, China.

CONGRESSMAN JIM JORDAN (R-OH): Do you agree that there was a push to downplay the lab league theory?

DR. ANTHONY FAUCI: Not on my part.

JORDAN: Really?

FAUCI: Really!

JORDAN: Wow.

FAUCI: Wow.

JORDAN: I think most of the country would find that — find that amazing.

FAUCI: But look at the facts. I've kept an open mind throughout the entire process.

VITALI: Fauci emotional talking about the threats he and his family still face.

FAUCI: It is very troublesome to me. It is much more troublesome because they've involved my wife and my three daughters.

VITALI: That hearing underscoring time hasn't healed those political wounds. Meanwhile, former New York Governor Andrew Cuomo set to testify next week. Lester?

HOLT: Ali Vitali, thank you.