

NBC's *Today*
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25 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: In the Hot Seat]

HODA KOTB: In the hot seat. Dr. Anthony Fauci, the public face of the pandemic, forced to defend the government's response to covid with Republicans alleging he helped cover up its origins.

DR. ANTHONY FAUCI The accusations being circulated — [SCREEN WIPE] — is absolutely false and simply preposterous.

KOTB: We'll have the latest, including the emotional moment he revealed his family is still facing death threats.

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07:15:47 a.m.
3 minutes and 2 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Dr. Fauci at Center of Heated Hearing]

CRAIG MELVIN: Tensions running high on Capitol Hill yesterday. Dr. Anthony Fauci testifying on the government's response to the pandemic and hitting back at Republican lawmakers who claim Fauci tried to cover up the origins of Covid-19. NBC's senior Washington correspondent, Hallie Jackson has that story for us. Hallie, good morning.

HALLIE JACKSON: Hey Craig, good morning to you. We're talking about a high-profile moment for one of the pandemic's most high profile figures with Dr. Anthony Fauci saying if health officials had done nothing during the pandemic, which killed more than a million Americans, then nearly a million more may have died. Many Republicans blasting the doctor for what they see as his missteps and many Democrats coming to his defense. Dr. Anthony Fauci on defense.

FAUCI: When you're dealing with a new outbreak, things change.

JACKSON: And dismissing claims he played any part in a suggested cover-up of COVID origins.

FAUCI: The accusation being circulated — [SCREEN WIPE] — is absolutely false and simply preposterous.

JACKSON: The doctor, who retired 18 months ago, back in the spotlight as part of a

Republican-led investigation into the pandemic's origins and response. A hearing at times turning testy.

CONGRESSMAN MARJORIE TAYLOR GREENE (R-GA): Mr. Fauci, because you are not doctor — [SCREEN WIPE] — that man does not deserve to have a license. As a matter of fact, it should be revoked and he belongs in prison.

JACKSON: Fauci explaining what he meant when he testified behind closed doors in January that the six foot social distancing rule "sort of just appeared", according to transcripts, now clarifying it came from the CDC with no clinical trials done.

CONGRESSMAN JOHN JOYCE (R-PA): You didn't feel an obligation as the lead scientist at the NIH to challenge that.

FAUCI: I've challenged the CDC multiple times.

JACKSON: Fauci served in his government role since 1984, advising seven Presidents of both parties and was a prominent expert in the fight against diseases like HIV/AIDS. Back when Covid started spreading, he became the pandemic's public face.

JIMMY FALLON: Here's Dr. Anthony Fauci!

JACKSON: Appearing on late-night shows. But, since then, he's become politically polarizing, alternately idolized or demonized. Overnight Fauci saying the vitriol he faces, including on Capitol Hill, means he still gets death threats, even while out of government service.

FAUCI [on CNN's *The Source with Kaitlan Collins*, 06/03/24]: You have performances like that, unusual performance by Marjorie Taylor Greene in today's hearing, those are the kind of things that drive up the death threats.

JACKSON: Testifying emotionally, now, about the death threats his family has faced.

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

CONGRESSWOMAN DEBBIE DINGELL (D-MI): At these moments, how do you feel?

FAUCI: Terrible.

JACKSON: As for how prepared we are for the next pandemic, Dr. Fauci thinks in some respects we are better equipped to deal with one but says he's disappointed in other areas from the Covid pandemic. Like the divisiveness over a coherent response. Craig?

MELVIN: Our senior Washington correspondent, Hallie Jackson. Hallie, thank you.