

# CORNAVIRUS SPREAD WITH RACISM

Story/F.Centeno

It has been all over the internet, bringing a panic across social media platforms such as Facebook, Tik Tok, and Twitter. It's been guided by false information and conspiracy theories causing hoaxes that leap from person to person like a virus itself. In the beginning of the year, the discovery of a new coronavirus caught the attention of many individuals not only fearing for their health but also making racist and insensitive jokes towards Asians.

"In this society if there are problems, we're not even coping with them. As a society we should cope and figure out to battle it together as one but no we just want to make fun of it. We want to joke and jab about real oppressive matters," senior Sunya Hardi said.

Coronavirus was discovered in the

1960's, it's a family of viruses that cause deadly diseases in mammals and birds. The most dangerous kinds are SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) and MERS (Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome). Coronaviruses are zoonotic which means they are transmitted between animals and humans. SARS are transmitted from cats to humans and MERS are transmitted from camels to humans. These two kinds can cause death to humans.

2019-nCoV or 2019 Novel Coronavirus, is a virus that causes inflammation in your nose, sinuses or upper throat. It was first detected in Wuhan, China and early on, an outbreak of patients reportedly had a link to a seafood and animal market. It was suggesting an animal-to-person spread, especially to those that either worked or shopped in a Huanan market. This virus causes pneumonia. Those who are affected can experience fever, coughs, and breathing failure.

In severe cases, it can cause organ failure as well.

"The common flu is more dangerous than the coronavirus, you should not be scared," Hardi said.

According to [cnn.com](http://cnn.com), novel coronavirus has killed more than 630 people, the ma-

majority in China but globally it has infected over 31,400 people across 25 countries and territories. On Jan.30, the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee of the World Health Organization announced that the outbreak is a public health emergency of international concern (PHE-IC). On Jan 31, the Health and Human Services claimed public health emergency to aid the United States' healthcare community. According to [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov), the President of the United States signed a presidential Proclamation on Suspicion of Entry as Immigrants and Non immigrants of Persons who Pose a Risk of Transmitting 2019 Novel Coronavirus.

"I have an international friend who is from China and I know it affects him, he will not be able to travel back home anytime soon, maybe not even during summer break," East Alumni Nawal Rai said.

According to [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov), Arizona, California, Illinois, Massachusetts, Washington and Wisconsin have confirmed 2019-nCoV cases. Americans that are coming from China to the United States are being medically checked for symptoms.

"Many people have the misconception that all Asians are Chinese. They believe that anyone who looked Asian has the coronavirus, therefore people are having a fear of catching the disease from us even if we don't have it," junior William Chhim said.

Two individuals in Iowa are being tested for novel coronavirus. Both have returned from China. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are currently waiting for the results whether Iowa tests positive for coronavirus. According to [kcci.com](http://kcci.com), State Medical Director and epidemiologist Dr. Caitilan Pedati said that Iowa has a low risk of the spread of coronavirus.

Even though Iowa is seen as a low risk, there still has been a problem with racist jokes and comments towards the Asian community for entertainment purposes.

Many comments have been made such as 'Don't buy anything from China because you might get the virus', to even 'China needs to stop eating everything that moves'. These comments are not just a harmless joke

Photos/F.Centeno



# THE CORONAVIRUS CAUSES MISCONCEPTIONS OF THE ASIAN COMMUNITY

but there are people who actually believe them and have committed hate crimes towards Asians.

“The memes that are made because of coronavirus (are) not acceptable because it is affecting people in a negative way. It’s not funny to laugh at something that is taking people’s lives. Being racist does not make anyone great,” Rai said.

One example, is how in New York during early February a woman wearing a face mask covering her mouth, was attacked at a Chinatown subway station after being called a ‘diseased b\*\*\*\*\*’. A video was released on Twitter of her being kicked and punched while witnesses stood and watched. Another example that has happened, is on Jan. 28, a Chinese man who suffered a heart attack in Sydney was left to die because bystanders were too scared to give him CPR, worrying if he had coronavirus.

“Our country was founded through destroying others and it’s really sad people these days still think it’s okay to treat a human like that. It proves that racism and discrimination towards minorities will never end in this country and we as a new generation and young people need to stand up against it instead of making insensitive memes and laughing at it,” Rai said.

One student even from East High School has faced this discrimination. She was with a group of friends at Target, all three are Asian, and two Caucasian adults saw them and immediately pulled up their shirts over their mouths when they passed them.

“Legitimate hate crimes against not only people of Chinese descent but Asian people because non-Asians don’t care about ethnicity division within the Asian diaspora,” Hardi said.

This is not the first time that society has made jokes about a serious deadly virus. In 2014, people were making many jokes about the spread of Ebola.

“People are being xenophobic towards Asian communities now like they were being xenophobic towards African Americans back then. It’s how we are and there isn’t much we can do to change it,” Chhim said.

Although some argue that these types of jokes are a form of dark humor, however it is not right for people to be laughing and making memes about a situation that has killed hundreds of lives.

“I think people are going to make memes and jokes about serious topics no matter what because that is the society we live in today,” Chhim said.

Authorities recommend avoiding the disease by regularly washing your hands and covering your mouth and nose while sneezing and coughing. Also, to thoroughly cook your meat, eggs and to avoid close contact with anyone showing a respiratory illness.

The bottom line is that not all Asians or specifically Chinese people have the disease. Making memes to most people are both fun and entertaining but by making fun of a serious deadly disease that has killed many people can be seen as disrespectful and disgraceful.

“This world has lost empathy for other people. We don’t have empathy towards people that don’t look like us and that don’t live in the same place as us,” Hardi said.

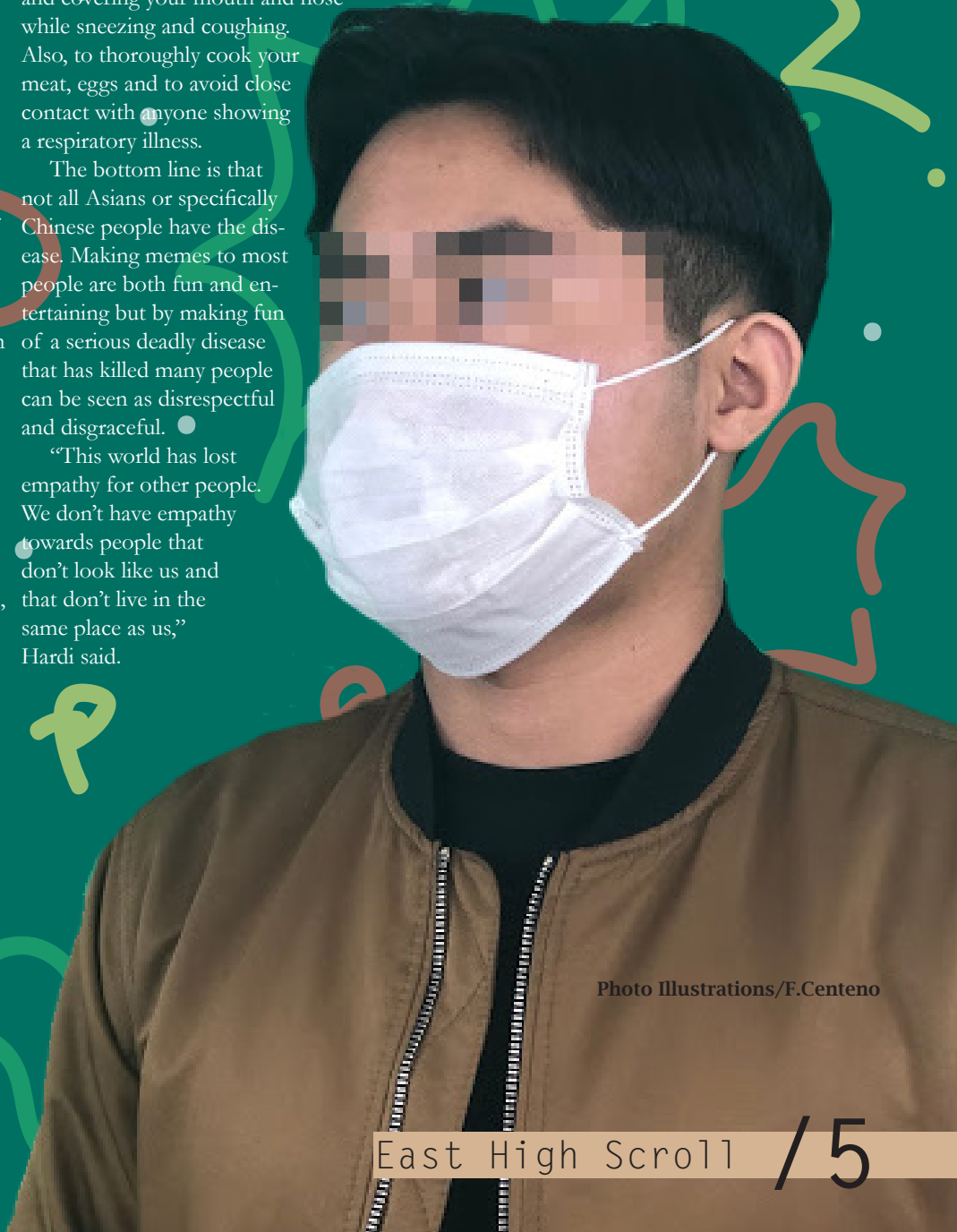


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