

Asian Americans use social media to mobilize against attacks

By Terry Tang
The Associated Press

Kyle Navarro was kneeling down to unlock his bicycle when he noticed an older white man staring at him. Navarro, who is Filipino, tried to ignore him, but that soon became impossible.

The man walked by, looked back, and called Navarro a racial slur. He “spat in my direction, and kept walking,” Navarro said.

Navarro, a school nurse in San Francisco, already had anxiety about racism related to the coronavirus, which emerged in China and has Asian people facing unfounded blame and attacks as it has spread worldwide. Now, he was outraged.

“My first instinct was to yell back at him in anger. But, after taking a breath, I realized that would have put me in danger,” Navarro said.

Instead, he took to Twitter to turn the ugly moment into an opportunity for a conversation about racism, generating thousands of sympathetic comments.

Asian Americans are using social media to organize and fight back against racially motivated attacks during the pandemic, which the FBI predicts will increase as infections grow. A string of racist run-ins in the last two weeks has given rise to hashtags — #WashTheHate, #RacismIsAVirus, #IAmNotCOVID19 — and online forums to report incidents. Critics say President Donald Trump made things worse by calling COVID-19 the “Chinese virus.”

For a group with a history of being scapegoated — from Japanese Americans detained during World War II to a Chinese-American man killed by autoworkers angry about Japanese competition in the '80s — there's urgency to drown out both bigotry and apathy.

To that end, the California-based groups Chinese for Affirmative Action and the Asian Pacific Planning and Policy Council set up a hate reporting center last month. New York's attorney general also launched a hotline.

“We kind of just knew from history this was going to snowball,” said Cynthia Choi, co-executive director of Chinese for Affirmative Action. “With the rising stress and anxiety, we knew we'd see a rise in hate incidents.”

The center has fielded more than 1,000 reports from across the U.S., ranging from people spitting to throwing bottles from



cars. An FBI report distributed to local law enforcement predicts the attacks will surge and pointed to the stabbing of an Asian-American man and his two children at a Sam's Club in Texas last month, ABC News reported. According to the report, the 19-year-old suspect said he thought they were “infecting people.” The victims have recovered.

Amid the explosive climate, former Democratic presidential candidate Andrew Yang drew backlash for urging fellow Asian Americans to display more “American-ness.” In a *Washington Post* editorial, he called on them to avoid confrontation and do acts of goodwill like volunteering and helping neighbors.

“Being ‘the good Asian’ has not fared well for Asian Americans,” Choi said. “We don't have to prove our worth and that we belong, that we're exceptional. And we certainly don't have to believe that this is something that we should ignore.”

Yang's spokesman declined to comment.

Meanwhile, Trump has walked back on calling COVID-19 the Chinese virus, saying at a media briefing and on Twitter last week that Asian Americans should not be blamed “in any way, shape, or form.”

Democrats in the U.S. Senate and House worry the damage has been done and have introduced resolutions to condemn anti-Asian racism.

“His followers continue to double-down on that term,” said U.S. representative Judy Chu of California, chairwoman of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus.

Some of the reports received by the advocacy groups describe harassment that appears to parrot Trump, Choi said.

A White House spokesman declined to comment and referred to Trump's remarks at the March 23 briefing.

The president's words also drew some Asian Americans in entertainment and fashion to the #WashTheHate social-media campaign. Celia Au, star of the Netflix show “Wu Assassins,” and others posted videos showing them washing their hands and talking about the effect of racism.

“It comes from the top down at the end of the day,” Au said. “Our top leader is not doing the job, so it's time for us to step up.”

People turning against Asian Americans in an uncertain time and sputtering economy echoes the climate in 1982, when Vincent Chin was killed in Detroit as laid-off autoworkers blamed a recession on Japanese competition.

“At that time, I knew I had to watch out and be careful — who I was around, how they looked at me,” said Helen Zia, a Chinese-American author and journalist from Oakland, California, who lived in Detroit at the time. “I think we're in that

How to clean the bundle of germs that is your phone

By Tali Arbel
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — You're washing your hands countless times a day to try to ward off the coronavirus.

You should also wash that extension of your hand and breeding ground for germs — your phone. Tests done by scientists show that the virus can live for two to three days on plastic and stainless steel. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends cleaning all “high-touch” surfaces daily, including

MOBILIZING MEDIA. Kyle Navarro poses for a photo in San Francisco. The school nurse was recently unlocking his bicycle when an older white man called him a racial slur and spat at him. Asian Americans are using social media to organize and fight back against racially motivated attacks during the coronavirus pandemic, which the FBI predicts will increase as infections grow. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)

stage now.”

Two white autoworkers beat Chin to death with a bat outside a strip club during his bachelor party simply because they thought he was Japanese. The 27-year-old's attackers were convicted of manslaughter and received only three years of probation.

Zia said she and others contacted advocacy groups, churches, and Chinese-language media about protesting the sentence. Relying only on mail and telephones, they found allies in the NAACP and Anti-Defamation League and launched demonstrations nationwide.

“It was a watershed moment,” Zia said. “We were drowning, and we had to organize to change what we saw going on around us.”

Thanks to social media, younger generations of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are speaking up during what could be another seminal moment. Choi hopes they will rally non-Asians to see the wave of racist attacks in the COVID-19 era as their issue, too. Groups like the NAACP and Council on American-Islamic Relations have condemned anti-Asian rhetoric.

With attacks escalating, Zia can't help but fear the pandemic could result in another tragedy like Chin's death.

“The level of anger ... it's already here,” Zia said. “For Asian Americans, there's the virus of COVID-19 and there's the virus of hate. The hate virus is also going to get much worse.”

Tang reported from Phoenix and is a member of The Associated Press' Race and Ethnicity team.

phones, keyboards, and tablet computers.

But cleaning your phone improperly can damage it. You want to avoid getting moisture inside it or scratching the surface. Don't spray cleaners directly on the phone, don't dunk it in cleaning solutions, don't spray it with compressed-air devices used to clean keyboards, and avoid rubbing it with abrasive materials.

Instead, start by turning off the phone and unplugging all cables. Your phone shouldn't be charging as you clean.

Continued on page 14

Chef Floyd Cardoz dies at age 59 of coronavirus complications

By Leanne Italie
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Chef Floyd Cardoz, who competed on “Top Chef,” won “Top Chef Masters,” and operated successful restaurants in both India and New York, died March 25, 2020 of complications from the coronavirus, his company said in a statement. He was 59 years old.

Cardoz had travelled from Mumbai to New York through Frankfurt, Germany, on March 8. He was admitted to Mountainside Medical Center in Montclair, New Jersey, with a fever and subsequently tested positive for COVID-19, the statement said.

The committed advocate of making the food industry more sustainable began his hospitality training in his native Mumbai, formerly known as Bombay. He later moved to Switzerland, where he honed his skills in French, Italian, and Indian cuisine before moving on to the kitchens of New York City.

He was a partner in Bombay Sweet Shop, O Pedro, and The Bombay Canteen in India at the time of his death.

An Indian American, he partnered with famed restaurateur Danny Meyer's Union Square Hospitality Group to open Tabla in 1997. The Manhattan spot was praised by critics. It closed in 2010.

Cardoz's death was mourned by famous friends in both the restaurant and television industries.

“Love you so much @floydcardoz,” Meyer tweeted, calling him a “beautiful human being.”

The two worked together for 17 years. At Tabla, they celebrated Cardoz's new Indian cuisine that melded the sensual flavors and spices of his homeland with western techniques.

Padma Lakshmi, host of the Bravo cooking competition series “Top Chef,” praised the success of Tabla and offered condolences to Cardoz's loved ones, including his wife and business partner, Barkha.

“He had an impish smile, an innate need to make those around him happy, and a delicious touch,” Lakshmi tweeted.

The Twitter account for “Top Chef” offered condolences and called Cardoz an “inspiration to chefs around the world.”

In 2011, Cardoz competed in and won



Season 3 of “Top Chef Masters.” He used his \$110,000 in winnings to support the Young Scientist Cancer Research Fund at New York's Mount Sinai School of Medicine.

The now-independent foundation, referred to as the Young Scientist

CHEF SUCCUMBS. Chef Floyd Cardoz is seen at The Hundred-Foot Journey premiere in New York, in this August 4, 2014 file photo. Cardoz, who competed on “Top Chef,” won “Top Chef Masters,” and operated successful restaurants in both India and New York, has died of complications from the coronavirus, according to his company. He was 59 years old. (Photo by Charles Sykes/Invision/AP, File)

Foundation, enables high school and college students to work alongside accomplished researchers to develop new treatments for diseases, according to a spokesperson for Cardoz's company. It was a central focus of his charity work.

In addition to Tabla, Cardoz and Meyer partnered in 2012 on North End Grill, a Battery Park City staple that was a downtown Manhattan favorite until its closing in 2018. In addition to his work with Meyer, Cardoz partnered with Sameer Seth and Yash Bhanage in Hunger Inc. Hospitality starting in 2015.

Cardoz was a four-time James Beard Award nominee. He was the author of two cookbooks, *Once Spice, Two Spice* and *Flavorwalla*. In 2008, he launched a line of ready-to-cook entrees in collaboration with the online grocer Fresh Direct.