

Brutal assault on female Filipino immigrant captured on security camera in New York City

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On Monday, a 65-year-old female Filipino immigrant who has lived in the US for decades was attacked and brutally beaten near Times Square in Manhattan in broad daylight.

Family members reported that Vilma Kari was in the hospital recovering from a fractured pelvis and contusions on her body and forehead after she was kicked in the chest to the ground and repeatedly stomped in the head by a man who shouted an obscenity and then said, “You don’t belong here,” according to New York City police.

The man, 33-year-old Brandon Elliott, was arrested and charged with felony assault as a hate crime on Wednesday. He was identified after an image of his face was copied from nearby security camera footage and shared on social media.

Elliott was reported by police to be on lifetime parole upon his release in 2019 after serving 17 years in prison for the fatal stabbing of his mother. According to the Manhattan District Attorney’s office, Elliott faces up to 25 years in prison if convicted for the assault.

The entire attack was recorded on a video from the lobby of a luxury apartment building in Midtown Manhattan at approximately 11:40 a.m. The video had been viewed more than 625,000 times by the time of this writing.

The low-resolution video shows several men inside the apartment building witnessing the attack without coming to the aid of Ms. Kari either during or after the assault. A security guard is seen closing the front door of the building as the victim struggled to get up from the sidewalk and, after several minutes, stepped outside to see what happened before others appeared on the scene.

The assault on Monday in New York City is the latest in the alarming growth of violent attacks against Asians in the US over the past year. Research released by Stop AAPI Hate (Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders) last week shows that there were 3,800 racist incidents—including verbal harassment, shunning and violence—primarily against Asian women between March 2020 and February 2021.

Significantly, the data shows that of these incidents, more than two-thirds have occurred in the past five months and women report incidents more than 2 times more often than men. Approximately 7 percent of the cases (more than 250 instances) the victims of the hate were either coughed or spit upon by the assailants.

Additional data maintained by California State University at Santa Barbara’s Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism shows that anti-Asian hate crimes increased between 2019 and 2020 in fifteen US cities including San Francisco, San Jose, Seattle, Boston, Los Angeles and New York City. While all of these cities have large Asian populations, New York City is by far the largest and with both the most instances of hate crimes (28) and the largest increase between 2019 and 2020 (nearly ten times).

New York Police Department (NYPD) received that 33 complaints about anti-Asian hate crimes in the first three months of 2021, already surpassing the total number of 28 reported last year. NYPD said that these numbers do not reflect the real scale of the problem with many cases going unreported for a host of reasons such as language barriers and distrust of law enforcement.

NYPD also said the victims of most assaults are middle-aged Asian men and women who were alone on

the streets or public transit and the attackers tended to be homeless people and individuals who have prior arrests as well as behavioral or emotional conditions.

The attack on Ms. Kari followed the publication of a video on TikTok the same day of an Asian man being brutally beaten on a subway train by another passenger. This event is still under investigation.

Whatever the immediate individual causes of the attacks, the fact of the increasing manifestations of discrimination, hatred and assault is directly related to the deliberate stirring up of anti-Asian sentiments by the political establishment and corporate media over the coronavirus pandemic and the intensifying global conflicts between the US and China. The pursuit of anti-Chinese politics is being pursued by the Democrats and Republicans alike as well as the so-called “conservative” and “liberal” media.

For example, on March 26, Republican Ohio Lieutenant Governor Jon Husted tweeted, “So it appears it was the Wuhan Virus after all?” with a link to a news report on Axios which quoted a statement by former Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Robert Redfield on CNN that day. Redfield said on CNN, “I’m of the point of view that I still think the most likely etiology of this pathology in Wuhan was from a laboratory.” Redfield added that the virus “escaped” from the Wuhan Institute of Virology as early as September or October of 2019, although he readily admitted he had no scientific evidence to back up the assertion.

The Axios report did little to clarify the issue, saying only that the World Health Organization (WHO) had said that it was “extremely unlikely” that the COVID-19 virus escaped from the Wuhan lab and then repeating the statement of the Biden administration that it had “deep concerns” about the WHO investigation and was demanding “transparency from Beijing.”

Following public outrage over Husted’s Twitter provocation that further encourages anti-Asian sentiments, the Lieutenant Governor doubled down on his comment on Wednesday getting to the crux of the political position of both governing parties in Washington DC, “To be clear, the tweet above referred only to the Chinese GOVERNMENT. A government of oppression that imprisons people of faith, silences dissenters and the media, manipulates its currency and steals our technology.”

Washington Monday, published on the WHO-China report stating, “the findings are far from conclusive and will be overshadowed by questions about China’s lack of transparency—and the WHO’s apparent inability to press for more.” Here the position of the Democratic Party-affiliated *Post* is indistinguishable from that of right-wing Republicans such as Husted.

There is widespread public outrage in the US against the expanding attacks on Asian-Americans and growing demands for equality and the defense of the democratic rights of all people regardless of ethnic or national origin. As explained here on the *World Socialist Web Site*, the “Wuhan lab” lie is connected to the geopolitical aims of American imperialism and is a central aspect of the Biden administration’s military escalation against China. Anti-Asian prejudice and all forms of racist chauvinism are rooted in world capitalism and can only be defeated on the basis of the socialist unity of the international working class.



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