

Know Better Narrative

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I woke up one morning to my phone ringing, it was my mom. "Hey Lenna, Good Morning! How are you doing? Did you eat yet? You're not skipping breakfast, are you?" My mother asked. "Hi, Ma! I'm doing good! Don't worry, I'm eating fine. What about you? Do you need anything?" I replied. "I am good! I needed some groceries, but your father is at work so I have to wait for him to come home." "Do you want me to get the groceries for you?" asks Lenna. "Could you? You're the best! Make sure to take care of yourself first, though." Mom replied

I continued my day, after making some breakfast I immediately went out to buy groceries since I didn't want to forget about it later in the day. Luckily mom sent me a list this time.

Once I got there, I put on my mask and gloves and headed inside. I hardly noticed the stares people gave me as I walked through the store. I only realized when I went down an aisle and someone backed out of it, almost simultaneously. *Were they avoiding me?* I reached for some canned soup, however, there was already a woman and her child there. I waited for them to leave, because of social distancing. The woman turned around once she was done and her eyes widened. She whispered to her child and pushed him toward the aisle's exit. *What was that about?* I was finally done getting the groceries Mom had requested. Heading toward the checkout, I unloaded the items from the cart. Weirdly enough, no one was lining up behind me. After I finished checking out, I walked toward the car.

While taking the bags out of the cart, a man ran into me, dropping a can out of my bag. First, he just paused and stared at me, then his eyes widened in what looked like disgust.

"You dropped your COVID. Pick it up," he smirked and ran back to the rest of his friends.

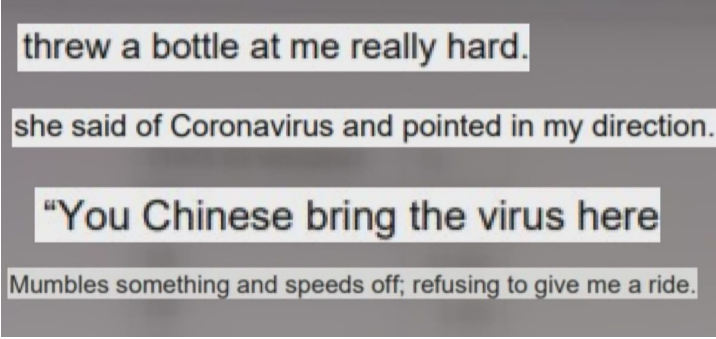
Taking a moment to realize what had just happened, I was frozen in place. *So this is what all that was about.* I did my best not to look hurt, but I was so shocked that I let him get away with it. I had never been looked down upon like that before. Anger and self-pity swelled in my chest. *I am not a virus.* Trembling, I picked up the can and got in my car. I sat there for as long as it took for my hands to stop shaking.

Later that night, the more I thought about what had happened, the more it hurt. My roommate, Chelsie came in late after work and asked me what was wrong.

By the time morning came, I was still curled in bed, squeezing my eyes shut. My tears had long since dried and the exhaustion was creeping up on me. Thinking of the busy day ahead, I slowly opened my eyes, daylight greeting me once more. The bed creaked beneath me as I forced myself to get up. I talked with Chelsie all through the night. Just thinking of her support made me want to cry all over again.

Chelsie was just called in for jury duty this morning, so she had asked me to take care of her dog today. I gladly accepted, using this as a way to thank her for the support and loyalty from last night. I also wanted to get back to doing normal things again, without having to worry about another racist assault. I would never stoop that low ever again as to be offended by something I knew was not true.

As I continued on that thought, out of the corner of my eye, I saw a man rush across the street and push down a young woman who was walking just behind me. I didn't need to hear to know what he said as he ran away. Rushing to her, she was still in shock. Her black hair hung limp around her as silent tears fell to the ground. I wanted to chase after that man, but I stayed. Her name was Lin. A few minutes later, after talking with her and sharing my own story, Lin thanked me and managed a smile of her own. I would never forget how wonderful it felt to help someone going through the same thing, knowing that they knew they were not alone.



threw a bottle at me really hard.

she said of Coronavirus and pointed in my direction.

"You Chinese bring the virus here

Mumbles something and speeds off, refusing to give me a ride.

Just before bed, I was scrolling through my social media, when I saw a post from that same girl I had bumped into. There she shared her story of a woman just like her, helping her up after being horribly discriminated against and assaulted for her race. In the comments, more and more people

were telling stories of their own. Talking of injustice, giving sympathy, and understanding to one another. I felt like my heart was melting with warmth. People helping each other, strangers and friends, family and classmates, standing together, unified by racism.

As I scrolled through all of the stories I was urged and inspired to share my own. I poured out my empathy for all the other people who also faced such discrimination in this time of hardship. As I wrote, I found myself feeling bad for the people who were so affected by the pandemic and forced the blame onto Asian-Americans. I wrote down what I thought. Why can't we just bring our community together instead of dividing us apart, especially in a pandemic? We should correct all hate crimes to bring and promote mutual respect and our compassion. We are still in this together and it is not the time to make more

problems than the ones we already have. Dehumanizing someone isn't going to fix problems at hand, it's just adding to the load. So is saying angry at the people who racistly attack people because they're also scared and tired. We should do something to help our community without further dividing it. The world is already messed up as it is. We only have each other to get through this.