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6abc anchor Nydia Han: Asian Americans saw this coming | Opinion

Every time I scroll through social media — including now, as we kick off Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month — I see a new hate incident.



Nydia Han, 6abc reporter and anchor, says it's time to seize the moment against anti-Asian hate.

DAVID MAIALETTI / Staff Photographer

by Nydia Han, For the Inquirer

Published May 1, 2021

On Easter Sunday, I was celebrating the holiday and our son's seventh birthday with family. It was the last day of a weeklong vacation and I felt light and carefree for the first time in at least a year — when suddenly my phone started vibrating nonstop. Without even looking, I knew why.

I excused myself from our celebration, looked at my screen, and there they were. Text after text alerting me to another assault on an Asian American in our area. This time a 27-year-old Korean American woman was smacked in the face as she was walking to H&M with her sister near the Convention Center.

I immediately felt a pit in my stomach. I made a few calls to vet the incident, alerted our station for coverage, and posted the video on social media. I called my father and reminded him, yet again, not to walk alone.

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Then two days later I went through the same terrible cycle. This time, a 64-year-old Chinese American dad was assaulted in Chinatown. The attacker yelled, “YOU GAVE ME THE CORONAVIRUS!”

These attacks are relentless. Every time I scroll through my social media feed — including now, as we kick off Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month — I see a [new hate incident](#) reported by fellow journalists. Yet another Asian American slugged, spit on, or slashed. Often the [victims are seniors](#). [Sometimes they die](#) from their injuries.

Asian Americans saw this coming

Some of us tried to warn America this was coming. More than a year ago, weeks before the country shut down due to the pandemic, weeks before reports of explosive violence, I made a plea on social media and right here in [The Inquirer](#), asking people not to blame Asian Americans for COVID-19. I wrote: “My dad does not have coronavirus. Neither do I. So please don't treat us like we do.”

But as is often the case when Asian Americans speak, the rest of America did not listen. So can you hear me now? I am not asking anymore. I am begging. Because while I have no outward injuries to prove my pain, I do feel sick, heartbroken, and traumatized by it all.



Nydia Han with her father and children on April 5, 2020.

Andrea Cipriani Mecchi

From March 2020 to February 2021, nearly [3,800 anti-Asian hate incidents](#) were reported across the country. Hate crimes against Asian Americans have [increased by 200%](#) in Philadelphia.

And as I've reported for [6abc](#) and [ABC News](#), this rise in violence is deeply rooted in [long-held stereotypes](#) and [anti-Asian sentiments](#). So if we don't seize this moment of long-overdue attention to anti-Asian prejudice, and turn it into a sustained movement to change the narrative, this hate will continue long after the coronavirus pandemic ends. Asian Americans will be blamed for another crisis that originates overseas.

How to stop the hate

To prevent that from happening, we — all Americans — have a lot of [work to do](#). If we want to stop the hate, we need to acknowledge the struggles of every community, without comparing one to the other.

When I was pitching a [6abc docu-series](#) on racism and the diverse American experience, a white friend told me I need to tread carefully in speaking up for Asian Americans because “a lot of people have had it a lot worse.” I was so stunned at the time, I didn't push back.

“We need to stop ‘grading’ racism.”

— Nydia Han

Let me be clear in my response now: We need to stop “grading” racism. Racism is not a competition and this is not a zero sum game. We can support — with hashtags but also with action — the Black Lives Matter and Stop Asian Hate movements, because [this is America](#).

We also need to acknowledge the racism that lies within our own communities and learn from a long history of solidarity in America, particularly Black-Asian solidarity. At a time of political pressure to ban Chinese immigration to the United States, for example, Frederick Douglass spoke out in 1869 in favor of their entry. Later, the [Emergency Detention Act](#) was repealed only after Japanese Americans locked arms with Black activists.

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Today many Asian Americans and Black Americans are holding joint rallies, thanks to groups like [Philly Solidarity](#). On May 12, I will participate in the [Unity Rally](#) against gun violence and Anti-Asian hate. It will bring communities together — white, Black, Latino, and Asian — calling upon everyone to act for the sake of public safety. Make no mistake, it is in all of our interests to raise one another up. Today, Asian Americans are the focus of hate. [History has shown](#) tomorrow it will be another group.

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To eradicate the virus of hate, we also need to shatter the myth that Asians are “a model minority.” By holding us up as a “model,” it suggests that other people of color are “inferior.” It builds resentment and pits us against our Black and brown brothers and sisters.

And the truth is not all Asians are privileged, educated, or rich. In fact, [income inequality](#) is greater among Asian Americans than [any other racial group](#) in the United States. Asian Americans work in great numbers in low-wage industries, including salons, restaurants, and factories. We have some of the [highest poverty rates](#) in the country. During the pandemic lockdown, [long-term unemployment rose more sharply](#) for Asian Americans [than any other racial group](#). [One in seven](#) Asian immigrants is undocumented.

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The model-minority myth discounts these realities and makes it harder for struggling Asian Americans to get help. To some people, it also makes it permissible to mock us and hurt us.

Celebrating being Asian American

Since the rise in violence against Asian Americans began last year, I've worried a lot about my father. But today, I'm also writing for my children.

When I was a kid, I sometimes wished I were white. I once asked my mom when I was going to "turn blond" and "get long legs." I cringed when anyone would learn my Korean name, which is Hyungah. I wanted my nose to be pointier, so I would pinch it 50 times a night.

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As an adult, I tried not to be “too Asian” for much of my TV news career, lightening my hair and rationing how many stories I pitched related to Asian communities. I was basically hiding my Asian self in plain sight. I was on television every day but not fully seen and heard.

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But no more. Especially after this year, I feel a sense of responsibility to bring my entire self to my work and am gratified by what happens when I do. Thanks to my Asian American colleagues’ and my speaking up, 6abc is airing [PSAs](#) in support of our community, asking viewers to “Join us to end racism.” [Our station](#) and [ABC News](#) have also aired several programs to take action against hate.

I now see that my greatest assets are the gifts my ancestors gave me. I see strength, power, and beauty in being Asian. And being Asian American brings me joy. I celebrate Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month with the same pride I am working to instill in our kids every day.

Of course, in a few short weeks this month will end. Someday the coronavirus-related [attacks](#) will end too. But I hope even when the news cycle has turned

its focus away from our [communities](#), you will not. I hope you can hear me now.

Nydia Han is 6abc's Emmy Award-winning consumer investigative reporter and coanchor of Action News Sunday mornings. She is also the creator of #ThisIsAmerica.

Ways allies can support Asian Americans:

- 1. Show up for us:** Every day. Fight your own assumptions about us at work, school, and social settings. Persistently call out bad behavior, including microaggressions and racism masquerading as humor. Those tiny paper cuts are killing us.
- 2. Be informed:** Learn about our history. Follow Asian Americans on social media who share stories.
- 3. Take the initiative:** Volunteer to walk with an Asian American senior, like my dad. Help someone report a hate incident. Put a free #StopAsianHate sign in your window.
- 4. Use your pocketbook:** Spend money at an Asian American business. Watch a film made by an Asian American. (Ahem, *Minari*.) Donate to an organization working to stop the hate or help victims.

Published May 1, 2021


 Nydia Han, For the Inquirer


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Philadelphia to ease COVID-19 restrictions, cases dropping in Pa. and N.J.

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Violent crime in Pa. is a problem. But it's not a reason to end reform. | Opinion

Pennsylvanians should be wary of those who use the existence of crime to oppose desperately needed changes to the criminal legal system.

Reggie Shuford, For the Inquirer May 10, 2021

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A PHILADELPHIA MOVE TO REFORM THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

AS PHILLY reckons with MOVE remains tragedy, anthropologists must confront our role | Opinion

It's time for those of us working in academic and other institutions to reassess our roles, and not just react in performative allyship with those harmed.

Tisa Loewen, For The Inquirer May 10, 2021

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A cash gimmick to help voter turnout in Philly | Opinion

Democracy should be its own reward, but our democracy is failing at least in part because we don't use it. Maybe a monetary incentive is one way to reinvigorate it.

Larry Platt, For The Inquirer May 10, 2021

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Taste won't persuade Americans to swap out beef for plant-based burgers | Opinion

Showcasing the social costs of meat consumption instead is what gets consumers to change their ways.

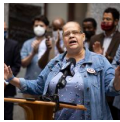
Anna Mattila, For the Conversation May 10, 2021



Dan Hirschhorn
@Inky_Dan



Larry Krasner's reelection is shaping up as the clearest test yet of whether Philly's progressive movement can evolve from being a thorn in the Democratic establishment's side to a full-fledged political force [inquirer.com/politics/elect...](https://www.inquirer.com/politics/elect...) don't miss this [@sbcmw](#) & [@anna_orso](#) special



Larry Krasner has progressives in a new position: Defending a controversial incumbent

Sean Collins Walsh and Anna Orso 4 hours ago

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One Liberty Place is still considered the German American

One Liberty Place is still considered the German-American architect's finest high-rise design

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Police robbed these Black men of their lives, too, but we're not talking about this | Will Bunch

Scores of Black men have spent decades in prison for crimes they didn't commit, due to racist policing practices. We must find and free more of them.

 Will Bunch | Columnist May 9, 2021

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The MOVE bombing was a Philadelphia tragedy — and an American one | Opinion

If we take on a personal commitment to the truth, we could make Philadelphia the last American city that has to mark the day it destroyed a Black community.

Mistinguette Smith, For the Inquirer May 8, 2021

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Tips for pitching The Philadelphia Inquirer's Opinion section.

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Philadelphia needs a second MOVE bombing commission | Opinion

Despite the work of the first commission, the full story of the MOVE bombing remains unknown to many.

Shannon McLaughlin Rooney, For the Inq... May 7, 2021

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Philly and Pittsburgh primaries are

referendums on progressive politics | Opinion

On May 18, Pittsburgh has a mayoral primary and Philly, one for District Attorney.

Charles McElwee May 7, 2021

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'Buy American' policies are good for Pennsylvania | Opinion

American manufacturing has been in decline for decades, with the federal government playing a frustrating role in its demise.

Stanley J. Koon, For the Inquirer May 7, 2021

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5 ways Philly should spend stimulus dollars to

curb violence | Opinion

Although the Mayor’s budget proposes nearly doubling the allocation for our violence prevention work, it is still vastly below the need.

Jamie Gauthier and Kenyatta Johnson, For Th... May 6, 2021



Jason Laughlin
@jasmlaughlin



North Philly’s Esperanza vaccination site isn’t connecting Black Philadelphians to vaccine doses like it has for Latinos. Here’s a look at the factors that may be playing a role there.
[inquirer.com/health/coronav...](https://www.inquirer.com/health/coronav...)



Esperanza has been a success at vaccinating Latinos, but Black Philadelphians still lag behind

Jason Laughlin May 10, 2021

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Pa. needs help on climate change. RGGI is one solution. | Opinion

In other states, many electric bills have actually gone down since joining this program.

Derek Green, For The Inquirer May 5, 2021

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City of Philadelphia should thoroughly investigate the MOVE remains' broken chain of custody | Opinion

Newly reviewed archival materials suggest the original responsibility for separating these remains from family members lies with Penn and the city.

Abdul-Aliy Muhammad, For The Inquir... May 5, 2021

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What Pennsylvania schools most need is not more white teachers like me | Opinion

Only 6% of teachers in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania are teachers of color, one of the worst teacher disparity rates in the country.

Michelle Gainer, For The Inquirer May 5, 2021

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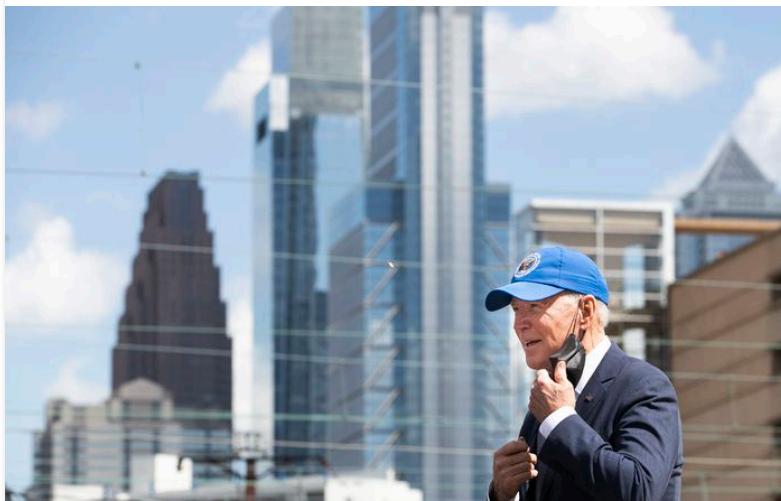


After flying from Philly to Palm Springs, I'm waiting for vaccine passports before my next trip | Opinion

I would've felt safer, knowing that everyone on our flights had been inoculated against and/or tested negative for COVID-19.

Janice Ford Benner, For The Inquirer May 5, 2021

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Biden's American Families Plan can boost Philly students and teachers | Opinion

The plan includes a needed \$9 billion to bolster the teaching workforce.

Sharif El-Mekki, For The Inquirer May 4, 2021

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Period products should be free in public bathrooms | Opinion

Some lawmakers continue to see these crucial items as a luxury.

Misha Valencia, For The Inquirer May 4, 2021

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Do attorney general's crackdown on wage theft

Pa. attorney general's crackdown on wage theft sets a good example | Opinion

Charges against a big State College construction company point to problems across the industry.

William Sproule, For the Inquirer May 3, 2021

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Chris Christie has the right idea on how the GOP can win | Opinion

If Christie is thinking of another run, starting in the Granite State makes sense.

Andrew Mahaleris, for InsideSources.c... May 3, 2021

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Is it time to ditch Philly's iconic cobblestones?

| Pro/Con

Two Philadelphians go head-to-head to battle over one of Philly's most iconic — or is it iconically annoying? — local features: cobblestoned streets.

May 3, 2021

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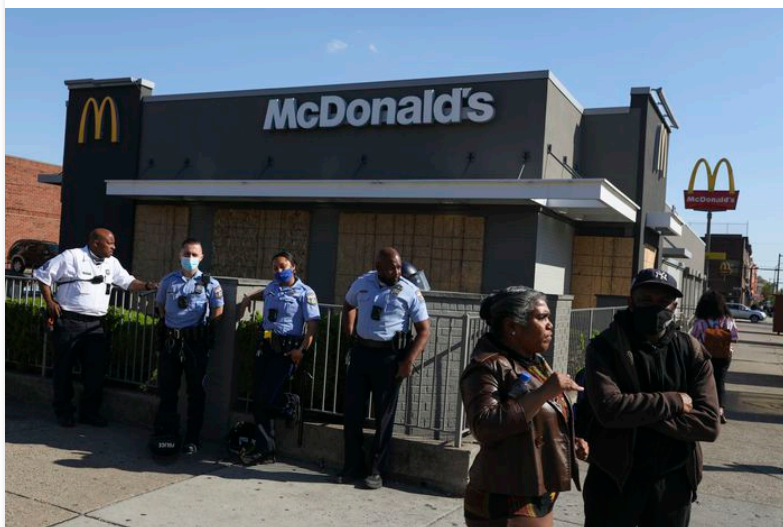


The failure to unionize Amazon is the union's own fault | Opinion

Workers don't always buy the value proposition from a union.

Rick Grimaldi, For The Inquirer May 3, 2021

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In wake of Derek Chauvin verdict, Pennsylvania can learn from Maryland's police reform |

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Changing statewide use-of-force policies and protecting civilian recordings are two of the ideas Pa. should look to.

Riley Ross and Teri Ravenell, For The Inqu... May 3, 2021

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Why it took Joe Biden to carry out the Bernie Sanders presidency | Will Bunch

President Biden is poised to pull off an agenda that looks a lot like the fear of a "socialist" presidency under Bernie Sanders. Why Biden, and why now?

 Will Bunch | Columnist May 2, 2021

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HOW I WENT FROM 'MEN' TO IMPASSIONED ABOUT celebrating my Asian heritage | Opinion

It took a request from my employer to make me feel less ho-hum.

Jobert Abueva, For the Inquirer May 2, 2021

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