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**CRIME** 04/01/2020 02:07 pm ET

# Stabbing Of Asian American Toddler And Family Deemed A Hate Crime: Report

The teenage suspect reportedly said he thought the family was Chinese and spreading the coronavirus.



By Sara Boboltz

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Weijia Jiang   
@weijia

This morning a White House official referred to [#Coronavirus](#) as the "Kung-Flu" to my face. Makes me wonder what they're calling it behind my back.

7:35 AM · Mar 17, 2020 from Washington, DC · Twitter for iPhone



ABC15 MORNINGS

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66°



Federal investigators determined that the man who stabbed an Asian American family out shopping at a Sam's Club last month committed a hate crime fueled by coronavirus panic, according to an [FBI report](#) [obtained by ABC News](#).



children ages 2 and 6.

Suspect Jose Gomez, 19, admitted to police that “he stabbed the family because he thought the family was Chinese, and infecting people with the coronavirus,” according to the document. A Sam’s Club employee named Zach Owen was stabbed in the leg as he tried to stop the attack.

Gomez is being held on several bonds [totaling \\$1 million](#) as federal investigators pursue the case.

The World Health Organization had declared the spread of COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, a pandemic three days earlier. Because the virus is believed to have originated in China, Asian Americans across the country have reported being harassed in public over baseless accusations that they personally had something to do with the crisis.

The FBI said it has already started to see a surge in coronavirus-related hate crimes across the country, and warned that the U.S. will only see more as the coronavirus spreads, according to the ABC News report.

“The FBI makes this assessment based on the assumption that a portion of the US public will associate COVID-19 with China and Asian American populations,” the agency said.

President Donald Trump has certainly not helped to discourage the connection, refusing to apologize for calling COVID-19 by the derogatory “China virus” nickname. Instead, he has issued tweets discouraging hate crimes against Asian Americans.

The FBI report made no mention of Trump or any other specific official, according to ABC News.

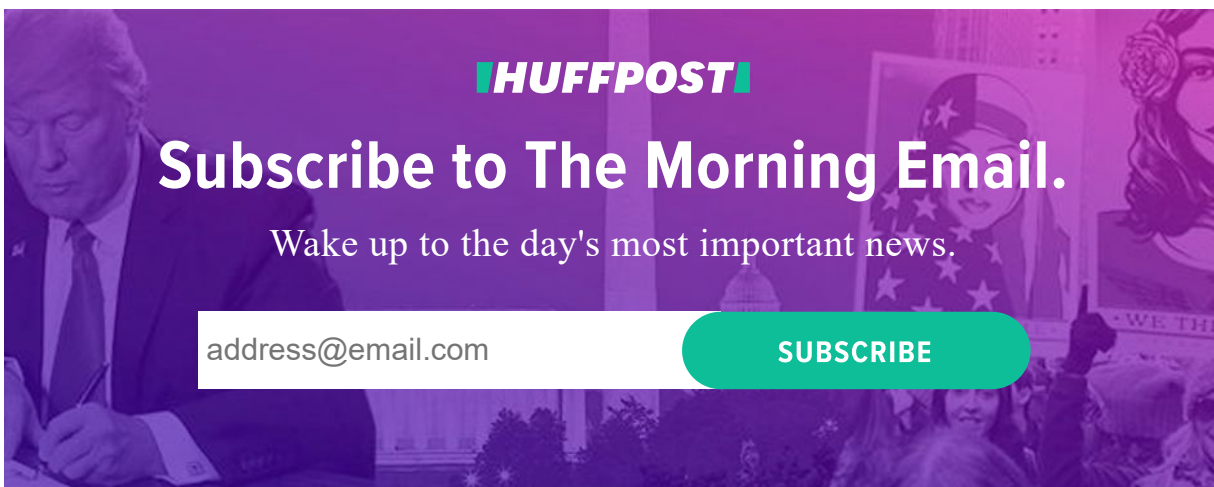
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