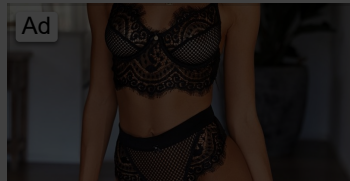



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CULTURE

"We Can't Be Silent": Asian Americans in Hollywood Denounce "Chinese Virus" and Racist Incidents

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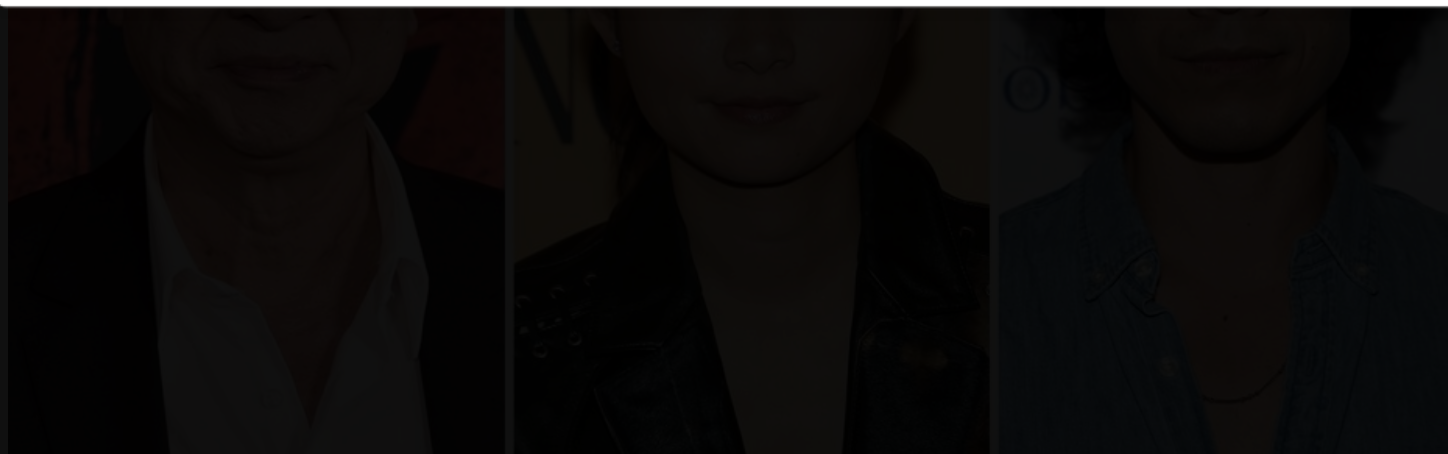
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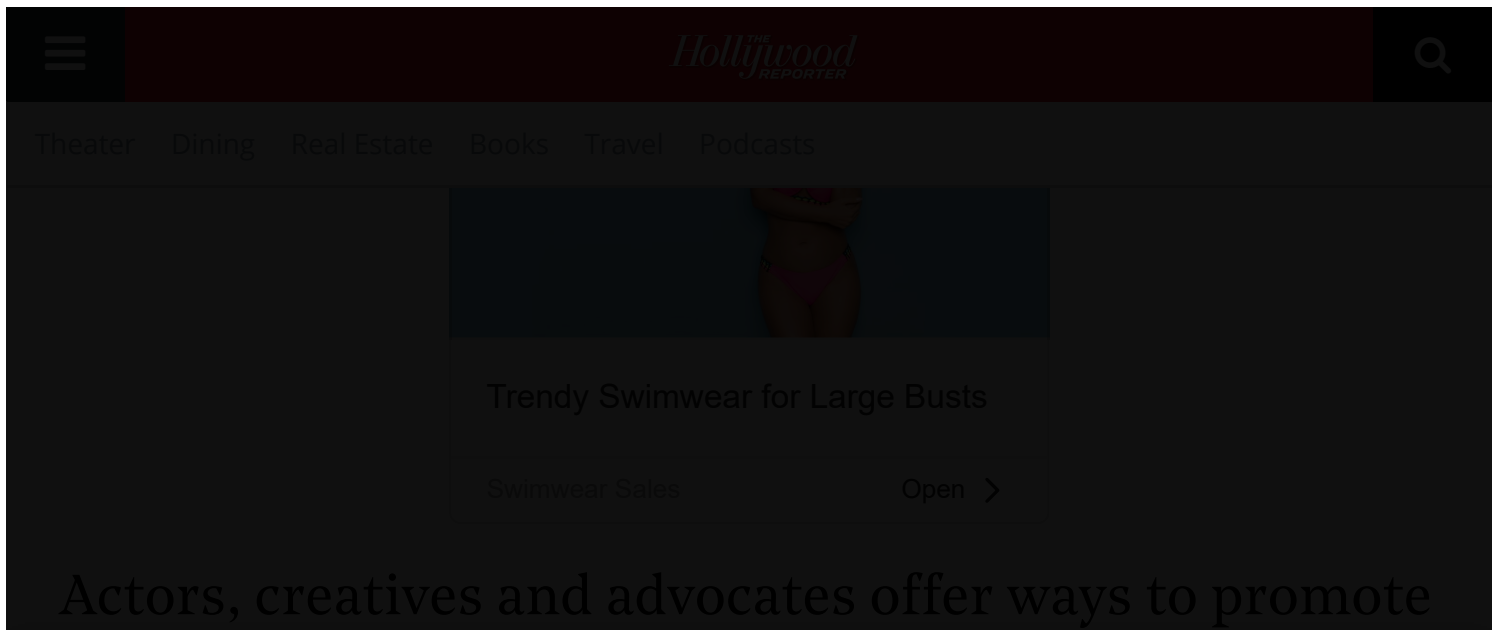
Matthew Belloni, Editorial Director

Lynne Segall, EVP/Group Publisher



Gregg DeGuire/FilmMagic; Monica Schipper/FilmMagic; Amanda Edwards/Getty Images

Tzi Ma, Celia Au and Eugene Lee Yang



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Organization's warning against using geographic locations when naming illnesses.

The phrase is now linked to a wave of racist attacks against Asians and Asian Americans, from hate-filled messages on social media platforms to physical assaults in public.

The Young Turks host Cenk Uygur tweeted about his children being bullied by classmates. Weijia Jiang, CBS News' White House correspondent, revealed that a White House official had referred to the coronavirus as the "Kung Flu" "to my face." Actor Daniel Dae Kim, who recently tested positive for the novel coronavirus, wrote that it had been "too heartbreaking" to initially comment on the "blatant acts of racism against Asian people during this outbreak."


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the novel coronavirus while also aiding Asians and Asian Americans under attack.

In interviews over the past week, six Asian and Asian American actors, creatives and advocates spoke with *The Hollywood Reporter* about incidents they've recently endured, reactions to Trump's attempts to racialize the pandemic, and how they and others in their community can advocate for truth and peace.

Eugene Lee Yang, one of the four comedic online personalities that form The Try Guys, tweeted on March 13 that while at a local coffee shop, "an older woman in front of me demanded her drink

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media that she was body-slammed and her dog was kicked while she was out walking him. "The person kept walking without reacting to anything I said to them," she wrote on Instagram.

Speaking to *THR*, Grey says she has felt depressed and has not walked her dog outside herself since the incident. "I worry about everyone else who doesn't have the chance to stay home around the clock: those who need to go to work or lose their apartments, those who don't have partners to walk the dog for them, or those who have to go get groceries."

She says that Trump's calling the coronavirus a "Chinese virus" is "only adding fuel to an already blazing fire."


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Yang finds Trump's usage of the phrase "calculated," calling the president a "master of verbiage" that can inflame things like xenophobia that then help his administration's priorities."

"When you see the deeming of this as the 'Chinese virus' or 'Kung Flu,' I sincerely don't think it's just because Trump is asinine and doesn't understand how Chinese people or people of Asian descent live," Yang added. "I think it's really just a deflection and a misdirection to place blame elsewhere, ... tapping into people's innate xenophobia to shift focus away from his administration's poor response to the virus. It's the same thing that happened with him placing totally unfounded blame on Mexico. It's the same of his Muslim travel ban."

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"The definition of xenophobia is actually the fear of strangers and foreigners. What's happening to Asian Americans is not xenophobic. We are citizens. We belong here. What's happening is bigotry, and the incidents that we see should really be labeled as bigotry," Lee explains.

Mulan's Tzi Ma spoke with *THR* about a recent visit of his to Whole Foods in Pasadena. The actor said a man drove a car past him while saying, "You should be quarantined."

Ma says he went numb for a moment before screaming and yelling at the driver who by that point had exited the grocery store's underground parking. "This is in Pasadena, a really diverse community. I was really caught off-guard, and that taught me a lesson," Ma tells *THR*. "I should always be on guard in these troubled times."


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The Asian American communications agency IW Group teamed up with Ma, Opening Ceremony founders Carol Lim and Humberto Leon, and more artists and creatives to launch the campaign, which raises awareness around racial insensitivity. As part of the campaign, actors, social media influencers and musicians are tweeting videos of themselves washing their hands according to CDC guidelines while speaking out against racism.

"We're hoping this campaign sends a message of solidarity and compassion to the world," Ma shared in a statement about the campaign. "Hatred and division aren't going to prevent this virus

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Springs massacre, the 1992 Los Angeles riots."

Celia Au, who stars in Netflix's *Wu Assassins*, is also participating in the #WashTheHate campaign.

"There are serious concerns in the Asian American community about scapegoating and becoming the targets of misplaced fear and anger," she shared in a statement. "The mission of this campaign is to get our stories out there and build a constructive dialogue with the public. We can't be silent."

Speaking with *THR*, Au voices her own frustrations with leadership in D.C., commenting that the usage of "Chinese virus" as well as "Kung Flu" can create a harmful ripple effect into the epicenter of the coronavirus pandemic — the health care system. Au detailed stories from Asian American

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many Asian Americans work in the medical field, he said. "They're already risking their lives going to work every day trying to save your life. By attacking them, they are afraid to go to work. They're afraid that on their way to work, they're going to get attacked by people. ... If these people don't go to work, you're not going to get care."

Guy Aoki, leader of the Media Action Network for Asian Americans, tells *THR* that those safety concerns could easily move into entertainment when film and television sets become fully active again. The activist says if someone is discriminated against for being Asian while working in Hollywood, his organization would be on the front lines to help. "If we did hear that any staff or a

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