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'It has escalated': Chinese Cultural Centre targeted with vandalism, hateful graffiti


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VANCOUVER -- May 1 update: Vancouver police released surveillance camera photos of a suspect in this case.

Hateful messages calling for the death of Chinese people were scrawled on windows and windowsills in Vancouver's Chinese Cultural Centre earlier this month.

And the next night, hooded figures entered the courtyard in the heart of Chinatown and smashed several windows — another sign of escalating hate crimes against Asian people during the pandemic.

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The attacks have rattled the centre's executives. Chair Fred Kwok said they are used to a certain level of vandalism, but nothing like this has happened before.

"This is an extreme case. Before, it was never a hate narrative," Kwok told CTV News. "For the past three months, it has escalated to another level."

The centre's cameras captured two men on the afternoon of April 2, writing messages in marker over several windows.

"Two guys had caps on with their faces masked. They wrote all this hate on the glass. It makes you feel uncomfortable reading it," he said.

The centre is in the process of removing them, but messages over at least two windows remain.

"Kill all" in red and white, one says. Another, apparently written in black marker, uses a slur against Chinese people, saying, "Let's put a stop to (them) coming to Canada," and "Drive them out of Canada."

Kwok said he notified Vancouver police, who came to take pictures and put a mobile surveillance trailer in front of the centre. But Thursday morning, he found a smoke grenade that had been set off behind the fence.

The VPD have said that during the pandemic, reports of hate crimes have been on the rise, with several directed at people of Asian descent.

Police recorded nine hate crimes against Asians in the city in 2020, compared with 12 for all of last year. Among them was a man pushing a grandfather to the ground outside of a convenience store on Nanaimo Street.

Vancouver's mayor called for it to stop.

"I want everyone to know these actions will not be tolerated," Kennedy Stewart said on Wednesday. "This is not what Vancouver is about. I will do everything I can to combat hatred in our city."

The Vancouver Asian Film Festival has started the "[#Elimin8hate](#)" campaign, with actor Ludi Lin, to denounce racism and provide an anonymous reporting option for Canadians of Asian ancestry experiencing attacks.

"I want people to speak up and speak out. This doesn't seem like the Canada I grew up in, and it shouldn't be the Canada we live in now, in 2020," said president Barbara Lee.

Lin, who has been featured in Aquaman, Black Mirror, and will play Liu Kang in the upcoming Mortal Kombat film, told CTV News he believes racism is rooted in ignorance, fear and misinformation.

COVID19 may have started in China, but people of Chinese descent are not responsible for it, he said.

"Don't worry. Don't be afraid. We're all in this together. We're on the same boat on planet Earth," he said.

Kwok said he wishes that the young men who vandalized the cultural centre could learn that lesson.

"You and I are the same," he said, when asked what he would say to one of them if he had the chance. "We are no different. It doesn't help the situation to put blame on someone."

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The Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Vancouver has been the target of racist graffiti and vandalism linked to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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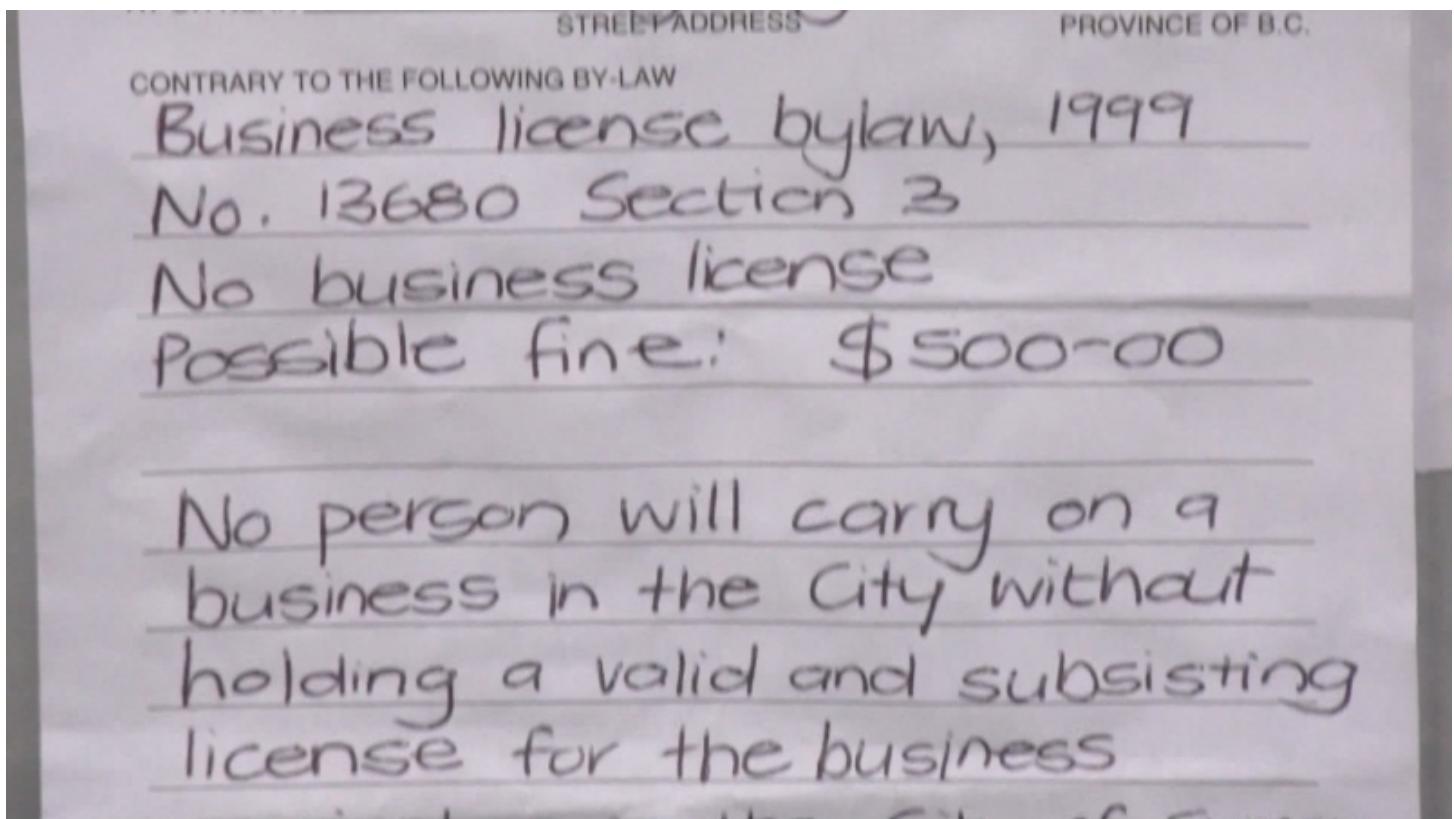
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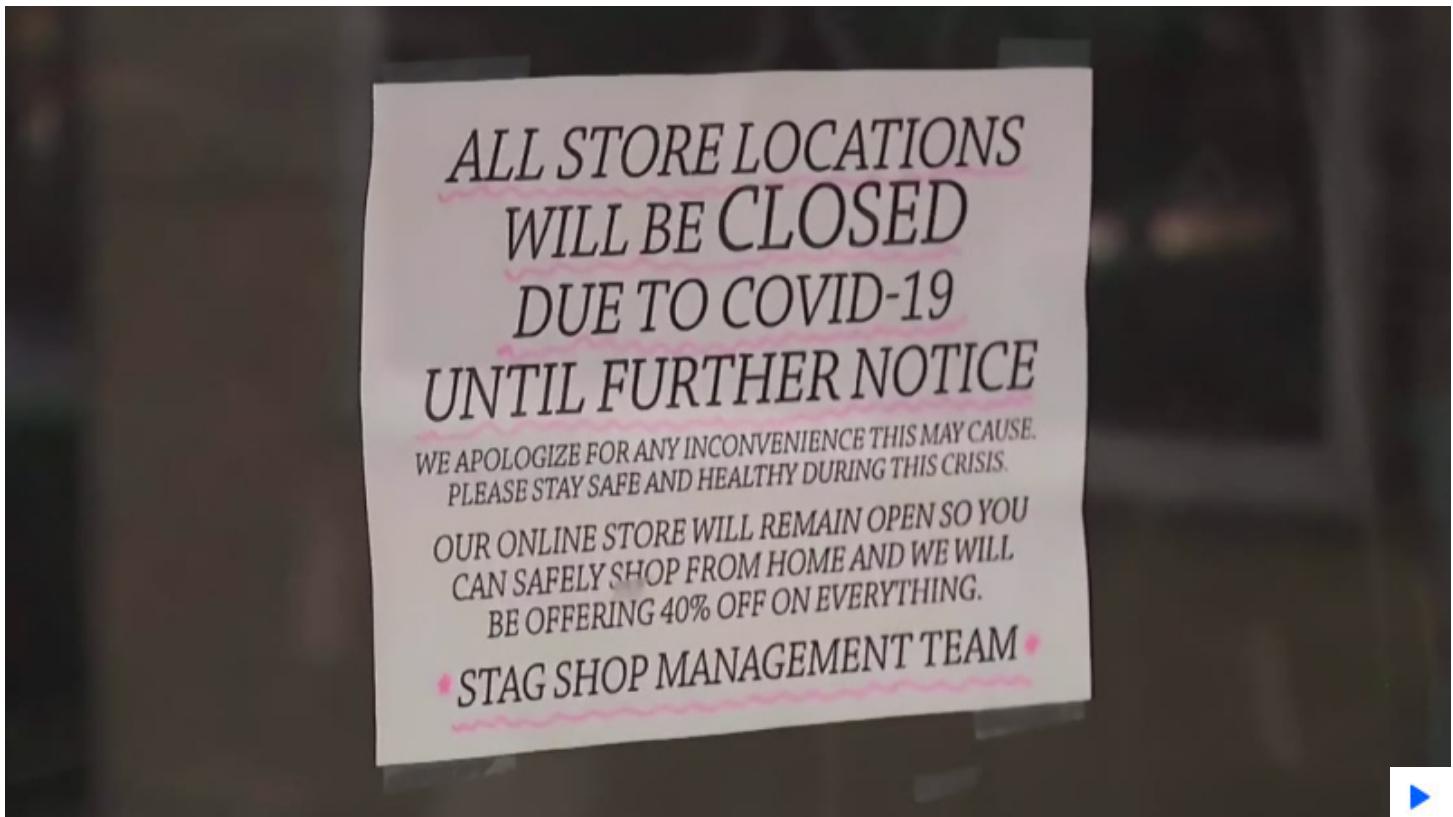
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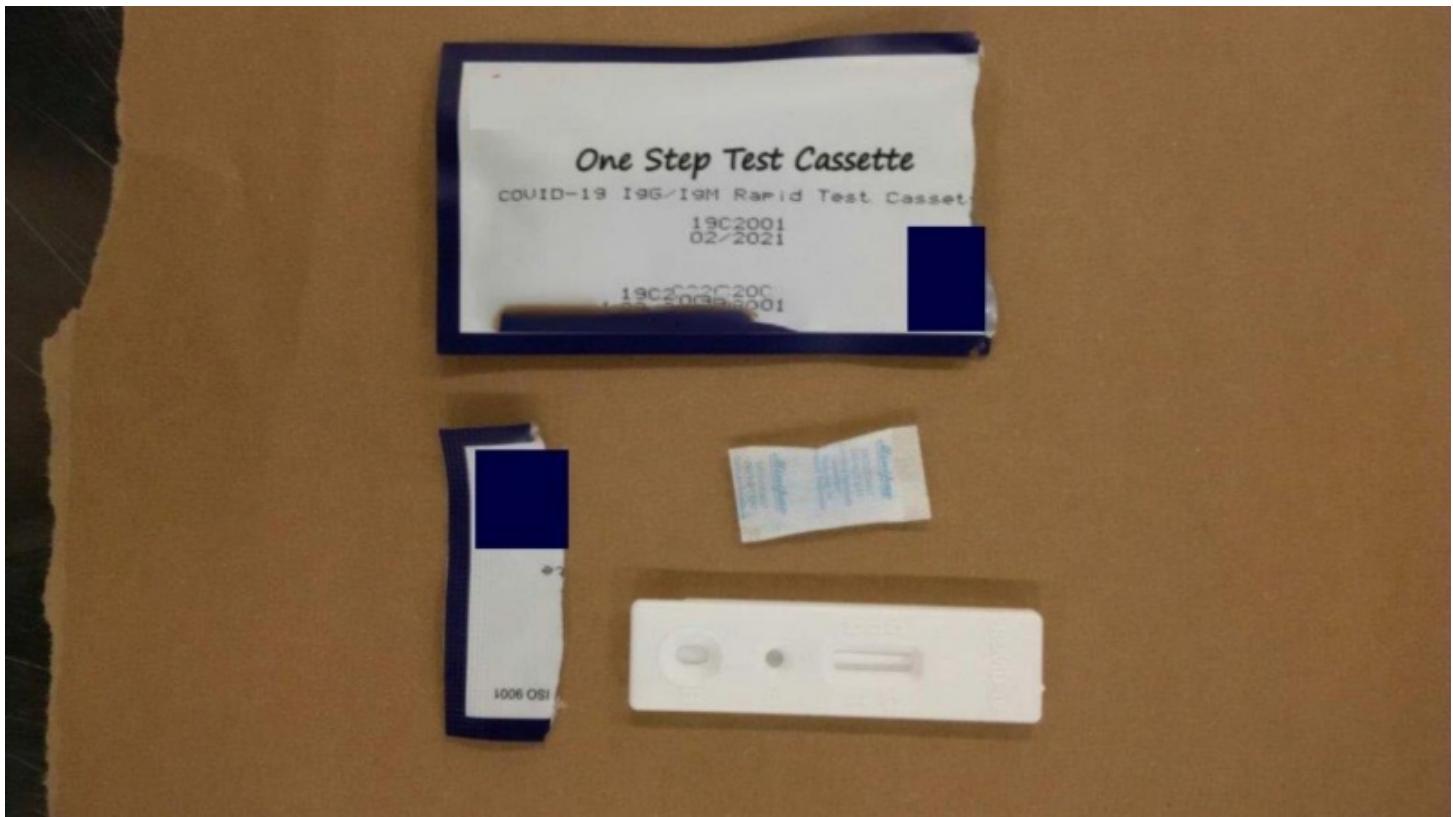
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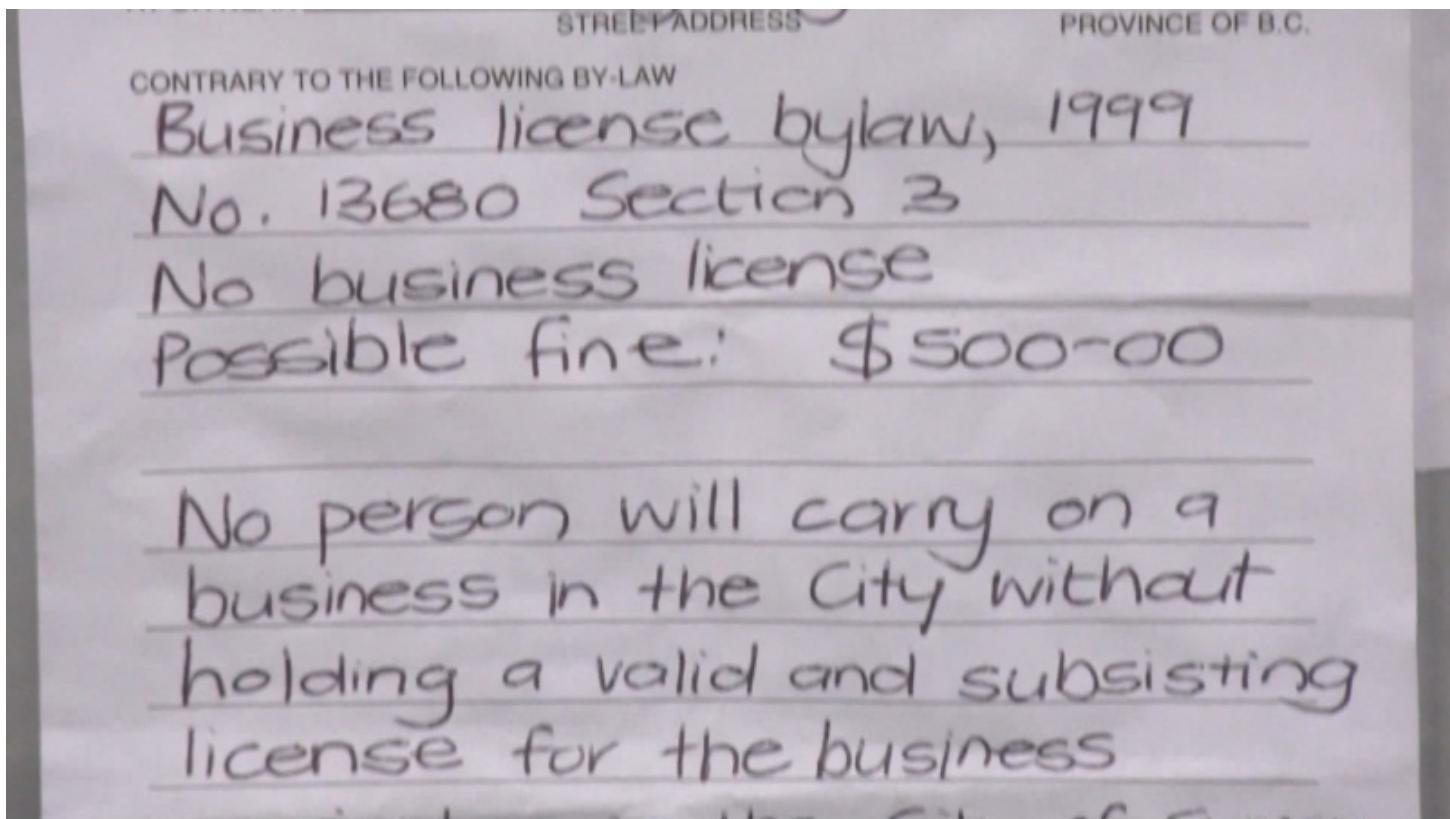


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