

http://www.chronline.com/northwest_regional_news/seattle-police-search-for-suspect-after-three-bias-incidents-targeting-asians/article_9fabe462-9e97-11ea-b839-3352cfa8c36e.html

Seattle Police Search for Suspect After Three Bias Incidents Targeting Asians

By Sara Jean Green / The Seattle Times

May 25, 2020



Visit www.lewiscountywatch.com for news on courts and emergency services in Lewis County and surrounding areas.

Seattle police are investigating three separate incidents of bias targeting people of Asian descent that were reported in Ballard on Saturday, possibly all committed by the same suspect, according to an item posted on the police department's online blotter.

Two of the incidents occurred at Golden Gardens Park: At around 6:30 p.m., police say a man chased an Asian woman, yelling at her as she attempted to leave the park. The woman made it to her car and was driving out of the parking lot but got stopped by traffic, according to the online blotter.

The suspect ran up to her car, knocked on the woman's window and demanded her identification, the post says. He photographed the woman's vehicle and said, "Chinese disease ... they bring it here!" according to police. The woman drove to a safe place and called 911, telling officers she believed she was targeted because of her ethnicity.

Then, a couple reported they were walking to their car in the Golden Gardens parking lot around 6:45 p.m. Saturday when a man aggressively approached them, yelling and getting into the male victim's face, the blotter says. The man was spat on as the suspect continued to yell, asking them where they were from, police said.

The couple, who also believe they were targeted because of their race, left the area and reported the incident to police a few hours later, according to the blotter item.

At approximately 8:30 p.m., police responded to another bias incident that had happened three hours earlier at a restaurant in the 2000 block of Northwest Market Street. Employees reported that a man yelled racist remarks against Asians, knocked on the restaurant's windows, kicked a sign inside the business, then threatened to throw a table at an employee, the blotter item says. He picked up and threw a wooden doorstop.

A day earlier, the same man came to the restaurant, yelled and created a disturbance outside, the blotter says.

The suspect description in all of the incidents is very similar, police said: The blotter post described him as a white man, in his 30s, approximately 5-feet, 10-inches tall with a muscular build and dark hair.

The FBI warned in March of a possible surge in hate crimes directed against Asian communities, who have been scapegoated for the spread of the coronavirus, which President Donald Trump, at times, has called "the Chinese virus," according to multiple news reports.

"The FBI assesses hate-crime incidents against Asian Americans likely will surge across the United States, due to the spread of coronavirus disease ... endangering Asian American communities," ABC News reported March 27, citing an intelligence report compiled by the FBI's Houston office and distributed to local law-enforcement agencies across the country. "The FBI makes this assessment based on the assumption that a portion of the U.S. public will associate COVID-19 with China and Asian American populations."

In February, Seattle Times columnist Naomi Ishisaka wrote about the rise of "yellow peril" racism spreading alongside the virus and detailed several instances of bias aimed at Asian Americans.

Local reports of racial hostility have continued: Last weekend, an Asian couple walking in downtown Seattle were accosted by a man and blamed for the coronavirus, according to Seattle police. The male victim was spat on, shoved and suffered a minor hand injury.

A week earlier, Kert Lin, of Seattle, was the target of racist slurs in the Home Depot parking lot and told to "Open your eyes, go back to China," The Seattle Times reported.

Saturday's incidents are being investigated by the department's Bias Crimes Unit, and anyone with information is asked to call the Seattle Police Department's tip line, 206-233-5000. The department, which is documenting and investigating bias incidents and crimes, encouraged anyone who feels they have been victimized to call 911.