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Video falsely claims Asian shopper was arrested after spitting on fruit to spread COVID-19

posted by Jennifer Zhan



Screen capture of woman arrested in an Australian supermarket. TikTok user @damansingh120 posted a now-deleted video where this footage was edited with a separate incident of another woman spitting on fruit and posted with the claim that the woman tested positive for COVID-19 and was trying to spread the virus.

By Jennifer Zhan, AsAmNews Associate Editor

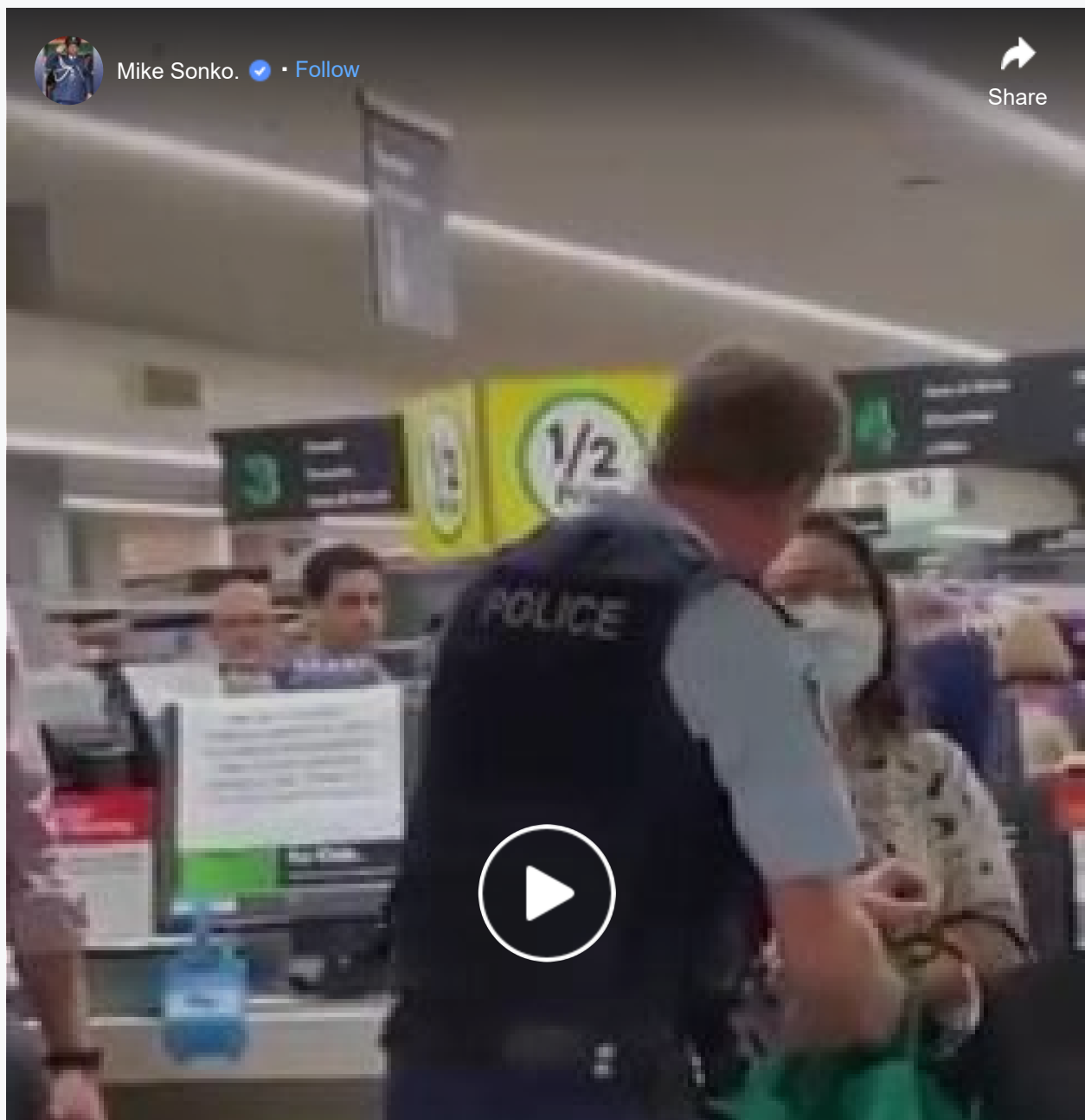
Last month, a TikTok user with the handle @damansingh120 uploaded a video claiming to show an Asian woman who had tested positive for COVID-19 being arrested after trying to spread the virus in an Australian supermarket.

When she first saw the video, New York resident Kelly Hu told *AsAmNews* she was wary of the content in the captions, which anyone could write. She also thought the footage looked clearly edited and that it would be strange for police to confirm the identity of an individual who tested positive for the coronavirus.

Her instincts were right. The clip edits together footage of two separate incidents, and the captions are false. [According to News.com.au](#), local police confirmed the first woman shown was actually arrested after causing a disturbance involving a staff member in a Sydney store. Close examination reveals that the second woman seen spitting on bananas is wearing a different outfit and in a different location.

Despite the video being deleted on TikTok, copies have spread on other social media platforms. In a [Facebook post](#) that's garnered almost 880,000 views and 9,000 shares as of Friday afternoon, Nairobi governor Mike Sonko described the "lady of Chinese origin" as an agent of the devil.

"More people are believing, and (this) creates more hate that we don't need right now, that paints and demonizes Chinese people as disgusting, diseased human beings," Hu said.



The Nairobi governor shared the video with a message warning his constituents that this could happen in their supermarkets.

She's been trying to get Facebook to take down the video. In the meantime, Hu has also reached out directly to the Kenyan official to ask him to make a new post with correct information, but said he's not responding.

Confirmed cases in Hu's state of New York have [now surpassed](#) the amount of any country outside of the United States. As the numbers rose, so have instances of [hate crimes](#), and to Hu, misinformation related to the coronavirus can exacerbate anti-Asian sentiment.

"They already have the biased notion, that's why we get so many hateful, racial attacks," she said. "Without even fact checking, (they believe) we're spreading disease, or Chinese people are the virus, Asian people are the virus."

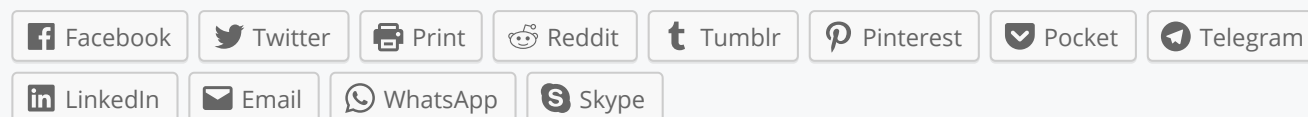
Nearly a month later, other versions of the manipulated TikTok are still circulating. [The Gladstone Observer reports](#) that a 4Chan user posted a screenshot of the video in a message board thread, writing "Ch-nks are purposely getting everyone sick!!!"

For now, whenever Hu encounters someone sharing their belief that the Asian shopper in the video tried to infect others, she tries to report the post or share links to articles debunking those claims.

"I just want to get the message out there, stop the video or at least bring awareness so people realize it's fake when they see it," Hu said.

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