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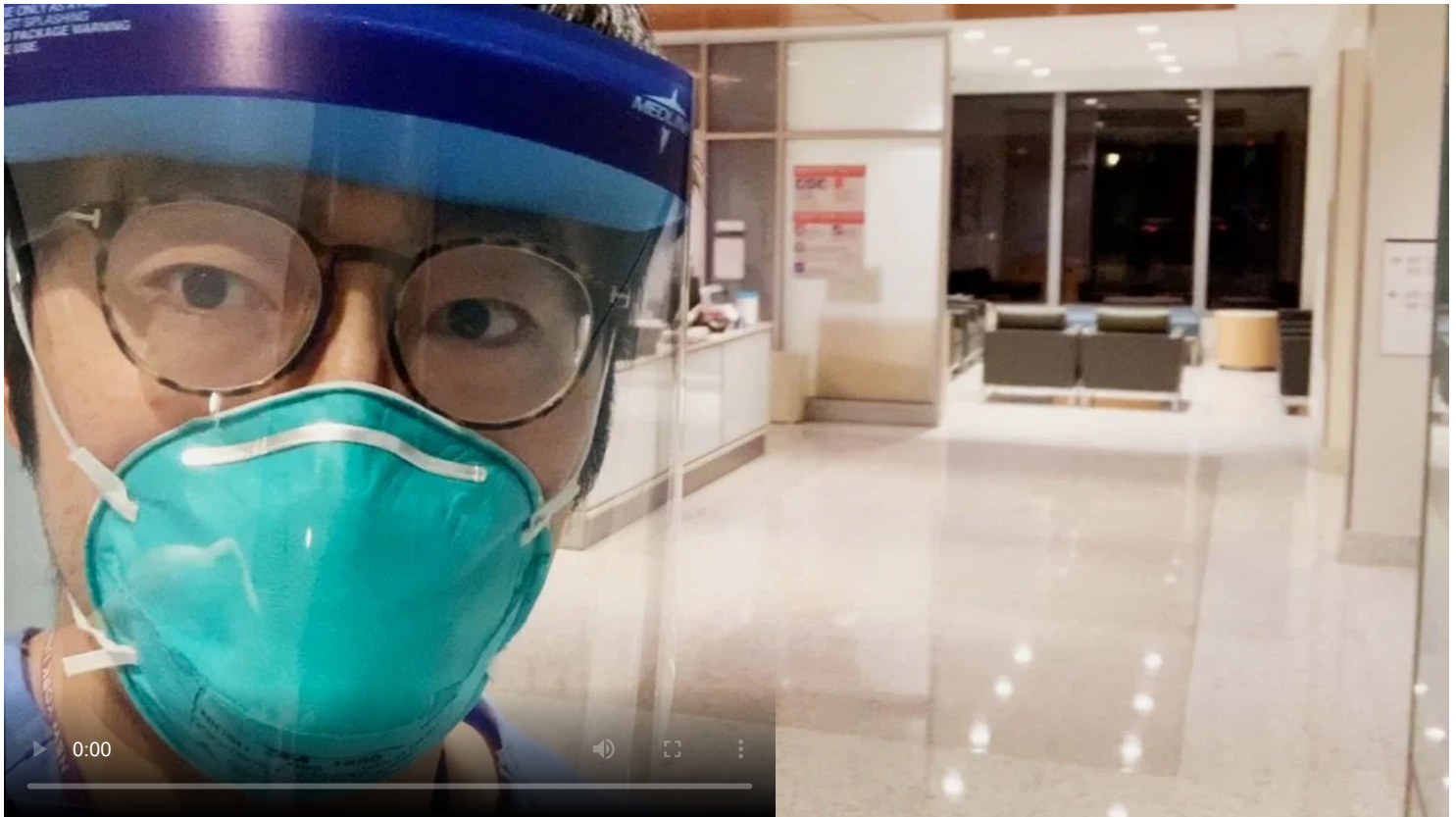


Heroes of the Front Lines

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'It's Tough to Reconcile Being Both Celebrated and Villainized.' An Asian-American Doctor on the Challenges of the Coronavirus Pandemic



April 9, 2020

Dr. Chen Fu, 31, is a hospitalist at NYU Langone Medical Center

As an Asian-American doctor, it's tough to reconcile being both celebrated and [villainized at the same time](#). My parents, who live in Southern California, have been calling me every day. My mom says that she can't sleep unless she hears from me every night, which I totally understand. But the truth of the matter is, I'm worried about them.

My mom works as a clinical laboratory scientist at a major hospital, and her car was broken into. Nothing was taken. But my mother has been talking with a lot of her [Asian American](#) friends, and the same thing has been happening to a lot of them.

The other day, I got stopped in the subway and one of the passengers started screaming [racial slurs at me](#). I was dressed in scrubs and it was pretty clear that I was on my way to the hospital. Luckily, somebody stepped in and pushed him away and said, "No. You can't do this."

Courtesy Chen Fu

At 7 p.m. every night, I sit and listen as people across New York City [cheer the health care workers](#). At the same time, I read the news about how people of my ilk are experiencing tensions that they haven't experienced in modern history.

[Keep up to date on the growing threat to global health by signing up for our daily coronavirus newsletter.](#)

The only thing that really keeps me going is the kindness that everybody's been showing me and everybody in the [healthcare profession](#) at this time. People who reach out, who buy me a meal, the people who let me know that they're there for me across the digital line.

When all of this started, the first thing my parents told me was, "Don't be a hero. But I know you're not going to listen to me." They know me too well—I couldn't imagine doing anything else. —*As told to Diane Tsai*

Contact us at editors@time.com.

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