



Asian American Organizations Appalled by Chicago Police Department’s Discriminatory, Abusive Treatment of Jianqing Klyzek

Asian Americans Advancing Justice—Chicago, the Japanese American Citizens League and the South Asian American Policy & Research Institute are appalled by the treatment of Jianqing "Jessica" Klyzek by Chicago police officers. According to a lawsuit filed in federal court, during a raid of Ms. Klyzek’s business in 2013, Chicago police officers verbally and physically abused Ms. Klyzek with racist taunts and unnecessary force. The incident was captured by a surveillance camera.

In the video footage, available on the website of Chicago Sun-Times, a Chicago police officer can be seen striking Ms. Klyzek on the back of the head after she is handcuffed, subdued, and kneeling on the ground. Another officer is heard to shout at Ms. Klyzek that she is “not f—ing American,” and threatens to “put [her] in a UPS box and send [her] back to wherever the f— [she] came from.”

Ms. Klyzek, a U.S. citizen, protested to the officers that she is a citizen. The response from the officer was, “No you’re not!, no, you’re not a citizen! No, you’re not! You’re here on our borrowed time. So mind your f----- business before I shut this whole f----- place down. And I’ll take this place and then whoever owns it will f----- kill you because they don’t care about you, OK! I’ll take this building. You’ll be dead and your family will be dead.”

The Asian American community is well acquainted with the slander shouted by the officer who arbitrarily denied Ms. Klyzek’s claim that she was a citizen. It is a stereotype that continues to marginalize Asian Americans by perpetuating the myth that all Asians are foreigners. This myth was reinforced by the officer’s unwarranted, unauthorized, and unacceptable threat of deportation.

We are aware this case is in litigation and all parties deserve their due process rights. However, the outrageous and disgraceful behavior and statements in the video footage, purportedly by members of the Chicago Police Department who are sworn to serve and protect all members of our society, must not be tolerated – regardless of a crime suspect’s actual or perceived race, national origin, immigration status, or level of English proficiency.

When law enforcement officials abuse their power to intimidate, harass, assault, and stereotype, the harm goes far beyond hurting the feelings of minority and immigrant communities. Abuse of power by law enforcement threatens our entire city’s safety and security, by undermining our community’s trust and cooperation with the police. A spokesperson for the police has said that the alleged comments are reprehensible and intolerable. Our organizations demand that concrete steps be taken by the Chicago Police Department and the City of Chicago to train law enforcement and other city personnel about the lack of tolerance for such conduct.

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