

Commentary

A Less Valued Life?

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The Indian diaspora in the US is not even 1% of the general population. Hence their votes don't make much difference on state and national levels. Because the Indian community lives peacefully without demanding special rights, their lives matter less to media, politicians and human rights organizations. I am not being rancorous or fatalist. I am just stating the fact.

A maniac killed Srinivas Kuchibhotla, 32, and wounded Alok Madasani, also 32, in Austins Bar and Grill in Olathe, Kansas, on Wednesday evening shouting, "get out of my country" before shooting the Indian victims. I must also mention the heroic act of Ian Grillot, 24 who intervened and said later, "I was just doing what anyone should have done for any other human being." The incident happened on Wednesday evening.

It is hard not to wonder whether the color of the skin is at the root of the renewed manifestation of racism when one reflects that the gunman, Adam Purinton, had wondered whether the victims were from the Middle East -- and hence identified with a community -- when he pulled the trigger.

However, violence against Asian-Indians is nothing new. "In the 1980s, a gang known as the Dotbusters specifically targeted Indian Americans in Jersey City, New Jersey with violence and harassment. Since the September 11, 2001 attacks, there have been scattered incidents of Indian Americans becoming mistaken targets for hate crimes. In one example, a Sikh, Balbir Singh Sodhi, was murdered at a Phoenix gas station by a white supremacist. The murderer claimed that his

turban made him think that the victim was a Middle Eastern American. In another example, a pizza deliverer was mugged and beaten in Massachusetts for "being Muslim" though the victim pleaded with the assailants that he was in fact Hindu. In December 2012, an Indian American in New York City was pushed from behind onto the tracks at the 40th Street-Lowery Street station in Sunnyside and killed. On April 5, 2006, the Hindu Mandir of Minnesota was vandalized allegedly on the basis of religious discrimination. I can go on and on and cite at least ten more violent attacks against Asian-Indians." (Compiled from various sources)



It is disturbing that the Trump administration instead of stating the truth stated, "It's too early to determine the motive."

I urge the Indian diaspora to look at what has happened this past week and internalize that two beautiful, loving men were killed and injured because of misconceptions about their race. I urge them to do whatever they can to help realize a nation in which all lives do matter. All it takes is voicing discontent in whatever way is needed. Take to social media, write to your congressperson, senators and president. None of us should be okay with this. If they truly believe that Indian lives are equally valuable, it is their civic responsibility to make sure that our government understands that they (Asian-Indians) will not tolerate this wanton apathy anymore.