

## 'I'm in an apocalypse:' American student trapped in coronavirus-hit Chinese city

(Reuters) - For almost a week, 21-year-old American-born college student Nicholas Schneider has been trying and failing to find a way out of Wuhan, China, the quarantined city at the heart of a fast-spreading coronavirus outbreak.

Nicholas Schneider, 21, student at Wuhan University, appears on a screenshot during an online interview from Wuhan, China January 29, 2020. Courtesy of Nicholas Schneider via REUTERS

An eerie calm has descended on the normally bustling streets of the city of 11 million people, where Schneider has been studying geodesy - a branch of applied mathematics - at Wuhan University, about 10 miles (16 km) from where experts believe the new coronavirus originated in a market illegally trading in wildlife.

"It's like a ghost town, barely any people and cars. It's a weird feeling. I feel like I'm in an apocalypse somehow," said Schneider in a phone interview with Reuters on Wednesday.

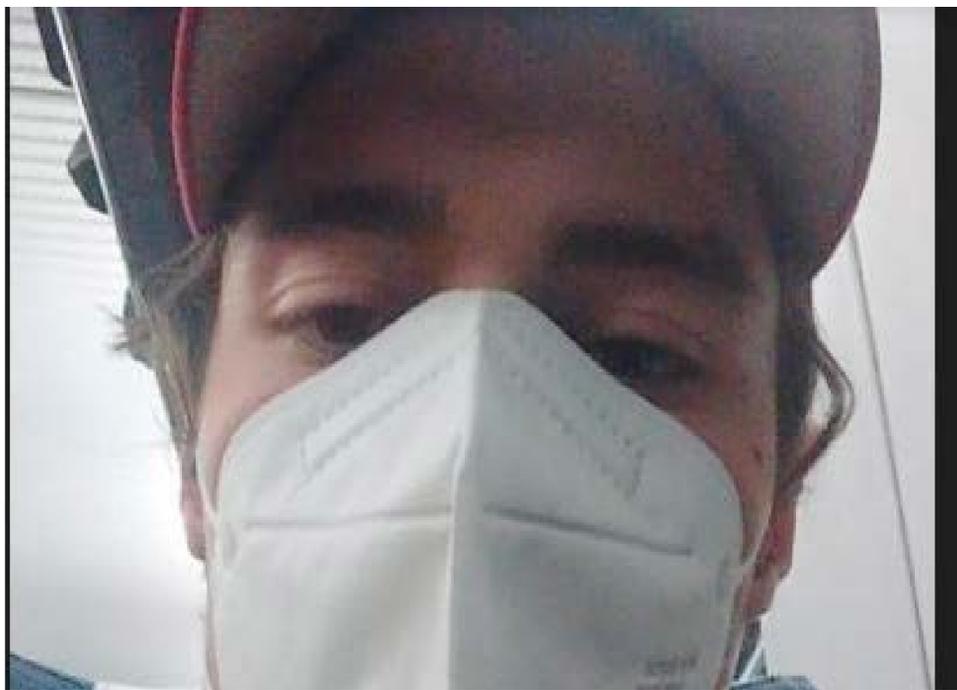
Chinese officials cut most transport links to Wuhan on Jan. 23 in an effort to slow transmission of the virus, which has infected nearly 6,000 people in China - more cases than were recorded in the 2002-2003 SARS outbreak - and killed more than 130 people.

Schneider, who holds dual U.S.-German citizenship, thought of dashing to a train out of the city that morning, but said his parents advised against it.

"They said that the train station was not the place to be at time like this with the virus," he said. "So I decided to stay ... and that's when I was scared for the first time because I didn't know what to do."

He contacted German and American officials seeking a way out. The U.S. embassy offered him a \$1,100 seat on a charter flight, he said.

But an embassy official told him he would have to get himself to the airport on the other side of Wuhan, 30 miles (48 km) away, he said. With most transportation down, he found no way to make the trip, and an embassy staff member told him that they would



Nicholas Schneider, 21, student at Wuhan University, appears on a screenshot during an online interview from Wuhan, China January 29, 2020. Courtesy of Nicholas Schneider via REUTERS

give his seat to someone else, Schneider said.

"I couldn't believe what I just heard. That's not how you deal with a citizen in need ... it seemed like she didn't care," Schneider said.

That flight left Wuhan with 210 Americans aboard. It was due to arrive in California on Wednesday.

"Priority was given to vulnerable in-

dividuals at higher risk from coronavirus: small children, older adults and persons with other health conditions that put them at greater risk," a State Department official said by email on Wednesday.

Schneider, who has lived most of his life in Germany, then turned to German embassy officials, who he said promised him a bus ride to the airport with several other stranded students and seat on a flight to Germany on Saturday.

Representatives of the German government could not be reached for immediate comment.

Until then, Schneider said he will hunker down in his room, heading out only to go to a nearby market for fresh water and food. When he leaves, he plans to wear a black cap with the logo of the Miami Heat basketball team, gloves and a thick cloth mask over his mouth and nose.

## 訃聞

主內楊本禮弟兄，聖名若望，於主曆二〇二〇年一月二十五日上午九時十分，蒙主恩召。距生於主曆一九三七年十二月二十八日，享壽八十四歲。

謹擇於主曆二〇二〇年二月七日（星期五）上午九時四十五分，於【聖家堂】（地址：台北市大安區新生南路二段五十號）舉行家奠禮，十時舉行殯葬彌撒，十一時舉行公奠禮，隨即發引火化。

懇請諸位神長、修女、主內弟兄姐妹及親友主前代禱，賜其靈魂安息於主懷。

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孝外孫	楊信達	
孝外孫女	楊信雅	
胞兄	敦禮	
胞妹	蔡珍妹	
堂弟	錦蓉	
堂媳	陳聰禮	
孝侄女	張美娥	
	智齡	智安
護喪妻	周嘉川	

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# Editor's Choice



Workers operate machines in a section of the wall that the U.S. government is building on its border with Mexico, after a part of it fell over on the Mexican side due to high winds in Mexicali



A man wears a masks in Chinatown following the outbreak of a new coronavirus, in Chicago



FILE PHOTO: Amazon boxes are seen stacked for delivery in the Manhattan borough of New York City



A woman wears a masks in Chinatown following the outbreak of a new coronavirus, in Chicago



U.S. President Trump arrives at Selfridge Air National Guard Base in Harrison Township, Michigan



FILE PHOTO: A pedestrian passes a mural at the entrance of the Iowa Veterans Home in Marshalltown



Jan 30, 2020; Houston, Texas, USA; Dusty Baker speaks after being announced as the Houston Astros manager during a press conference at Minute Maid Park. Mandatory Credit: Troy Taormina-USA TODAY Sports



Mirzaie, founder of a Sama Dance group dances with her teammates in Kabul

## Misinformation About The Coronavirus Is Spreading Almost As Fast As The Virus Itself



**Illustration: Sarah Grillo/Axios**  
Misinformation about the coronavirus is testing governments, tech platforms and health officials — as well as a nervous public — in both the U.S. and China.

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

The new cycle of misinformation around the deadly disease is testing Big Tech platforms' ability to police rule-breaking content and China's ability to control domestic criticism.

**Tech platforms** — including Facebook, Twitter and Google — are scrambling to stop the spread of misinformation about the virus, much of which violates their own content rules.

•Buzzfeed News has documented several examples of misinformation about the virus, including fabricated government warnings and false information about the number of people affected in U.S. cities. •Some of it's coming from private Facebook groups that popped up after the virus began spreading, The Washington Post reports.

**The Chinese government is facing similar challenges — a clear change from past outbreaks.**

•Some of the fastest-spreading misinformation about the crisis involves unfounded rumors that the Chinese government started the virus, according to an

analysis provided to Axios from social media intelligence company Storyful.



•According to Storyful's Catherine Sanz, dozens of posts across Weibo, the Chinese messaging app, are making claims that the virus was engineered by either the Chinese or the U.S. governments, a narrative that exploits the already strained relationship between the two countries.

•According to the data, nearly 13,000 posts across Twitter, public Facebook pages, and Reddit between January 24 and January 27 have propagated conspiracy theories about the virus, including

that it may be a bioweapon or a depopulation method.

The Chinese government is spreading some misinformation of its own in response.

•Storyful found that Chinese state media has tweeted photos purporting to show a new hospital, but which were actually stock images from a company that sells modular containers.

**The big picture:** Health care has long been a target of misinformation, because it plays into existing fears. This is especially true for disease outbreaks, which can spread faster than the news cycle is equipped to handle.



•Axios wrote last year that Russian efforts to sow discord ahead of the 2020 elections appeared to be focused on spreading inaccurate information about vaccines and 5G wireless technology.

•The Council on Foreign Relations wrote last year that online disinformation about the Democratic Republic of Congo's Ebola virus outbreak in 2018 and 2019 made the crisis worse, because it undermined confidence in the underlying science being used to stop the spread of the disease.

**2020 Misinformation Campaigns Take Aim At Current Emotional Issues**



Is this true? Wow.

Efforts to sow discord via misinformation ahead of the 2020 election cycle are pegged to a new set of societal controversies, including the race to spread 5G, anti-vaccine fears, and immigration.

**Why it matters:** The timelier the issue within the national conversation, the more effective it can be to sow confusion.

**Flashback:** The key misinformation targets during 2016 focused on memes and posts around #BlueLivesMatter, #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo.

“The most effective form of disinformation has the ring of truth.”

— Matthew F. Ferraro, a lawyer at Wilmer Hale who writes about misinformation issues

**The big picture:** Deepfake technology is making it easier to create misinformation about about our preconceived concerns or doubts.



•A good example: The video of Nancy Pelosi that went viral last week, which was slowed down to make her appear drunk.

•Similar misinformation schemes around Hillary Clinton being sick circulated in 2016, playing off a “weak, older woman” narrative.

**The bottom line:** “Sometimes that is the point – not to convince you of one thing but to make you doubt the accuracy of anything,” says Ferraro. (Courtesy axios.com)



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肺炎疫情牽動海內外華人

美國德州休斯敦 美南新聞傳媒集團

各位海內外華人同胞暨兄弟姐妹們，正當我們大家共同迎接鼠年來臨之際，一種新型肺炎冠狀病毒正在猛烈衝擊中國大陸，並已蔓延到世界各地；我們身處海外之華人，正為此疫情深感焦慮，我們已經派出一支堅強的採訪團隊，在世界最大的美國休斯敦德州醫學中心，進行全面之採訪，企望世界一流的傳染病醫學專家，提供預防及治療參考。我們在全球各地之華文媒體同仁，此時此刻大家要動員起來，和海內外同胞來戰勝這場挑戰。

我們希望大家保持鎮靜，拒絕新聞渲染，造成群眾的恐慌，今天我們全世界的媒體人，應以最忠實之態度，來報導疫情，更希望海外華人共同努力，共體時艱，同舟共濟，表現華夏兒女人溺己溺之情操。

李蔚華 鼠年除夕  
於美國德州休斯敦  
德州醫學中心

Americans Still Have Low Risk Of Coronavirus Infection, CDC Says

What's Happening Now With The Coronavirus?



Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

A new strain of coronavirus has now infected more people in China than the 2002-2003 SARS epidemic, according to AP.

China reported 5,327 cases of SARS during its outbreak, while 2019-nCoV has topped that by several hundred. However, the death toll this time around is lower as at least 348 people died of SARS, while 132 people have died from the new coronavirus so far.

Several nations have begun evacuating citizens from China as the outbreak has grown wider.

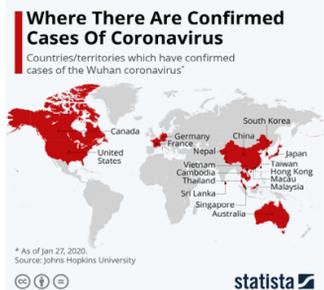
British Airways on Wednesday became the first major international airline to suspend all direct flights to and from mainland China in response to the outbreak.

A charter flight carrying the first group of Japanese people to be evacuated from Wuhan arrived in Tokyo Wednesday, with four of the 206 passengers showing symptoms of the virus, an official from Japan's government said, per Reuters.

Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison said Wednesday the country's at-risk citizens evacuated from Wuhan and

China's Hubei province would be held in quarantine on Christmas Island, an Australian territory known for its now-closed refugee detention center.

The U.K. is preparing to evacuate hundreds of its citizens from China, as are other countries in the EU and New Zealand, the BBC notes.



Information breakdown on the effect the coronavirus is having

The Fed: What was going to be a very simple and straightforward policy meeting for the Fed this afternoon has been significantly complicated by the outbreak of the Wuhan coronavirus and new geopolitical tensions.

Diverted: A chartered plane carrying some 200 Americans from Wuhan landed in Alaska Tuesday night and were screened for symptoms, the Anchorage News first reported. It then left for March Air Reserve Base in Riverside County, California, which was the third proposed final destination. (Axios)

U.S. cases: The CDC confirmed there were 5 cases in the U.S. as of Sunday, all of whom traveled in Wuhan, China and are now in California (2), Arizona, Washington state and Chicago. (Axios)

Lunar New Year: The holiday was extended until Feb. 2, but many celebrations were canceled, the Washington Post reports, in an effort to stop people from traveling and spreading the virus.

Market jitters: Coronavirus fears are taking their toll on the financial market and airlines, but some wonder if the oil market is unnecessarily spooked. It's also raised concerns about a global shortage of drug supplies and sparked a run on surgical masks.

Teamwork: China is allowing the WHO to send international experts to observe the coronavirus on the ground — a move U.S. public health officials say is needed to understand the virus and develop vaccines, diagnostics and treatments. (Axios)



Warning: The U.S. raised its travel advisory for China, with the CDC recommending Americans avoid nonessential trips there.

Transportation limits: Hong Kong's Chief Executive Carrie Lam said the semiautonomous city would cut its rail links to mainland China and flights

would be reduced, though the measures stopped short of a total closure of the border, per AP.

Scientific breakthrough: Scientists in Melbourne, Australia, have become the first to recreate the Wuhan coronavirus outside of China. Researchers are calling it a "game-changer for diagnosis." (Axios)

Specialized hospital: Wuhan is quickly building a pre-fabricated 1,000-bed hospital to treat only patients infected with coronavirus, as other hospitals struggle to meet demand and deal with a shortage of supplies, per AP.



Misinformation: Fabricated warnings and false information about the coronavirus are testing governments, tech platforms and health officials — as well as a nervous public — in both the U.S. and China. (Axios)

Lock-down: The Chinese government locked down the cities of Wuhan, Huanggang and Ezhou, collectively home to nearly 20 million people, AP reports. (Courtesy axios.com)

Related Americans still have low risk of coronavirus infection, CDC says

The risk of U.S. residents becoming infected by the coronavirus that's devastating China remains low right now, public health officials said Monday, even as there's growing pressure to ramp up U.S. and international pandemic preparedness.



National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases Director Nancy Messonnier speaks during a press conference on the coordinated response to the coronavirus outbreak. Photo: Samuel Corum/Getty Images

The latest: There are at least 2,886 confirmed cases of 2019-nCoV in 16 countries or regions and 82 deaths in China. The U.S. has five confirmed cases with 110 people in 26 states under investigation so far, 32 of whom tested negative, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Coronavirus in the U.S. "At this time in the U.S., the virus is not spreading in the community ... the risk remains low."

Nancy Messonnier, director of the CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, at a press briefing

The CDC says flu activity remains high — this season so far has an estimated 15 million illnesses, 140,000 hospitalizations and 8,200 deaths (including 54 children) in the U.S. as of Jan. 18.

"Absolutely, the flu is a bigger risk for Americans than the coronavirus, right now."

Melissa Nolan, an infectious disease expert, tells Axios

Because this is a new coronavirus, and there are many "unknowns" about it, there's the potential for a pandemic, which the CDC acknowledged on Sunday.

For now, the U.S. will continue screening passengers coming indirectly from Wuhan at five airports, conduct contact tracing for all confirmed patients to monitor for new infections, and publicize research via GenBank so labs can develop targeted diagnostics, treatments and vaccines. (Courtesy axios.com)

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