RAB Source Entry #3: Interview with Aunt Cathy

**Part 1 MLA Citation**

Lim, Catherina, [Asian American senior]. Personal Interview by telephone. Brooklyn, NY and Silver Springs, FL. 15 Nov 2021.

**Part 2 Summary**

My Aunt Cathy is a senior who is living very independently in rural Florida. She is an active 69-year-old who walks everyday, does yoga, and drives everywhere for her errands. She lives in a mainly white neighborhood and does not see many Asians in her area. We talked about her experiences being an Asian woman now in these times of the pandemic. Here are some incidents she told me about.

Earlier in the pandemic, she was at her gym where the members are mostly seniors like herself from the neighborhood. As she was leaving, she heard a “snide” remark from a man. “Chinese,” he was saying in a low tone to his companion, another man standing next to him. She took a hard look at the man and realized he was indeed a neighbor and it sent a chill up her spine. She felt uncomfortable because this man had never said anything against her before.

Cathy also told me about a shopping trip to Walmart. She had just parked her car and was walking toward the entrance. Next to her, walking parallel with her toward the entrance was a couple (white) and they stared at her and began to walk faster to be ahead of her. As she neared the entrance to the store, she overheard, “Stupid people. Still wearing masks. There’s no virus! Or she has the virus!”

Sometimes on her morning walk in the shopping center, she notices that people walking by on the sidewalk give her a wide berth, swinging way off to the side and even into the street to avoid walking next to her. Sometimes the people will even turn around and walk the other way. She can’t say whether this is just the normal observation of social distancing or that people notice her Asian face and try to avoid her.

So I asked her what she thinks about all these small changes she notices in the way people move or walk or behave and the comments she overhears around her.

She is honestly not sure if these actions are directed at her because of her Asian identity, but these incidents have begun to make her think and to change her ways of dressing and walking. Now Cathy always wears a sun visor low on her forehead, sunglasses, and a mask. She does this consciously to hide her identity as an Asian woman. “The fact that I am a bit older is also worrying. I have heard about the attacks on older Asian women in bigger cities. I haven’t seen that happening here, but it worries me.”

When she does her morning walks at the shopping center, she walks with her head down so as not to be noticed by passersby. If she sees a pick-up truck with Trump stickers, she tries to walk far away. Cathy fears that Trump supporters, and there are many in her part of Florida, are actively speaking outloud and behaving in ways that show their inner feelings of prejudice.

**Part 3a Reflection:**

I am sorry to hear this and I feel sorry that my Aunt has to hide her face as she goes around her day. I am also a bit worried as she says that there have not been attacks against older Asians in her neighborhood but you never know. I want her to be extra careful and I do worry that she is so independent going around by herself. Attacks against older Asians might become a reality in her area too. However, I do think that with the vaccine and more people being vaccinated that tensions may calm down.

**Part 3b Rhetorical Analysis:**

The interview was a good genre because it allowed me to be a bit more free and decide where I wanted the conversation to go. I was able to guide our conversation and when she went off topic, I kept bringing our talk back to incidents of being targeted. I chose to interview Aunt Cathy because she is an Asian woman and I wanted to know her own personal experiences of being the target of Anti-Asian prejudice.

**Part 4 Notable Quotable**

“I am not sure if these acts are because I am Chinese” (Lim).

“I have heard about attacks against older Asians in bigger cities and even though I don’t see it happening here where I live, it makes me worry” (Lim).