

An aerial, high-angle photograph of the New York City skyline, showing numerous skyscrapers and buildings. The image is faded and serves as a background for the title. The title is centered over the image.

NEW YORK'S CORONAVIRUS DISASTER

To the wrath of countless liberal pundits, President Donald Trump commonly referred to the coronavirus as the “Chinese virus” for the obvious reason that the virus originated in China. Unaware of the many other viruses named after places and people, liberals immediately branded the term “racist” because, let’s be honest, it’s 2020 and what other argument were you expecting?

While the coronavirus may be the China virus on a global level, in the context of America it’s the New York virus. The Empire State quickly became the epicenter of the coronavirus outbreak in the U.S. thanks to the incompetence of Governor Andrew Cuomo and Mayor Bill de Blasio, and from there the virus was exported to the rest of the country.

DUMB AND DUMBER

If New York were its own country, it would have more coronavirus deaths per capita than any other in the entire world as of this writing. At the state level, only New Jersey has more per capita deaths.

But you wouldn't know it if you were fed a steady diet of mainstream media news.

Even as the virus ravaged the state and New York City in particular, the media praised the leadership of the two stooges while condemning Trump. While this would be paradoxical without our media, Andrew Cuomo's approval rating throughout the pandemic surged alongside the virus's death toll in his state.

A review of the media response to the crisis shows Murphy's Law in full effect, hence why the mainstream media is so desperate to ignore it.

DE BLASIO'S ADMINISTRATION DOWNPLAYS A PANDEMIC

NYC's Mayor Bill de Blasio held his first briefing on the looming coronavirus crisis on January 24, a day when his state still had zero confirmed cases. If there was a time to get ahead of the curve to implement preventative measures, this was it. Presented with this opportunity, de Blasio spread disinformation. While acknowledging that the city would eventually be hit by the virus, de Blasio incorrectly assured the public that "what we do know, to date, is that only through prolonged exposure can someone contract this virus. It is not a situation as with some other diseases where a single contact would be enough."

De Blasio's health commissioner, Dr. Oxiris Barbot, was in agreement, stating that "New Yorkers should know the risk to residents of the city is low."

NEW YORK'S CORONAVIRUS DISASTER

The city's deputy mayor for health and human services, Dr. Raul Perea-Henze, said, "We urge all New Yorkers to continue to pursue their everyday activities and routines, but to remain aware of the facts about coronavirus."¹

Days later, on January 29, President Donald Trump created his White House Coronavirus Task Force, and then two days after that he restricted entry into the U.S. from China to slow the spread of the virus.

Meanwhile, Health Commissioner Barbot decided that fighting hypothetical racism against Chinese people caused by the virus was more important than fighting the virus itself. "As we gear up to celebrate the Lunar New Year in NYC, I want to assure New Yorkers that there is no reason for anyone to change their holiday plans, avoid the subway, or certain parts of the city because of coronavirus," she tweeted on February 2.²

"We're telling New Yorkers, go about your lives, take the subway out, enjoy life," Barbot proclaimed on February 7.³

She later stated on the ninth that it was "understandable that people were anxious when there is something new or something

- 1 Jim Geraghty, "The Timeline of How Bill de Blasio Prepared New York City for the Coronavirus," *National Review*, March 27, 2020, <https://www.nationalreview.com/2020/03/the-timeline-of-how-bill-de-blasio-prepared-new-york-city-for-the-coronavirus/>. ni ma
- 2 @NYCHealthCommr, "As we gear up to celebrate the #LunarNewYear in NYC, I want to assure New Yorkers that there is no reason for anyone to change their holiday plans, avoid the subway, or certain parts of the city because of #coronavirus," Twitter, February 2, 2020, 12:53 p.m., <https://twitter.com/NYCHealthCommr/status/1224043155852537863>.
- 3 Jon Lentz, "New York Political Leaders Who Downplayed the Coronavirus Threat," *City & State*, May 19, 2020, <https://www.cityandstateny.com/articles/politics/new-york-state/new-york-political-leaders-who-downplayed-coronavirus-threat.html>.

DUMB AND DUMBER

they don't understand and something that may change on a daily basis.... The risk for New Yorkers of the coronavirus is low, and our preparedness as a city is very high. While it is understandable that people feel anxious, that is no way shape or form an excuse for them to use that as an opportunity to spread misinformation, to spread racist ideas because that is currently the greatest risk to New Yorkers.”⁴

Dr. Barbot said residents should instead, “come together, know the information and share that information.” But she warned, “rumors can be as dangerous as any virus.”

Queens state senator John Liu was in agreement, saying that the virus not only caused “unreasonable fears” but that “I’ve been somewhat disturbed if not outright appalled at some of the comments and gestures that I’ve seen and my constituents have seen against the Asian community.” He asserted that there “is no reason” for anyone to panic or avoid the activities in Chinatown.⁵

On February 10, NYC Council Speaker Corey Johnson tweeted a video of himself in Chinatown celebrating the Lunar New Year. “The Chinese community has been rocked by hateful, xenophobic fears of the coronavirus hurting their businesses. I encourage everyone to #DineInChinatown!” he wrote.⁶

4 Todd Maisel, “City Leaders Seek to Allay Fears of Coronavirus in Chinatown,” *AM New York Metro*, February 2, 2020, <https://www.amny.com/editorial/city-leaders-seek-to-allay-fears-of-coronavirus-in-chinatown/>.

5 Maisel.

6 @NYCSpeakerCoJo, “I was so happy to be in Chinatown yesterday celebrating the #LunarNewYear and eating at some amazing restaurants and bakeries. The Chinese community has been rocked by hateful, xenophobic fears of the coronavirus hurting their businesses. I encourage everyone to #DineInChinatown!” Twitter, February 10 2020, 8:59 p.m., <https://twitter.com/NYCSpeakerCoJo/status/1226883517742747648>.

NEW YORK'S CORONAVIRUS DISASTER

The virtue signaling of these officials may have cost lives by encouraging the spread of a virus—but at least they will not be remembered as racist?

“We can really keep this thing contained,” de Blasio promised on February 26.

And then came case one.

On March 1, NYC had its first confirmed case, a woman who had just traveled back to New York from Iran. The next day, a man in New Rochelle tested positive even though he hadn't traveled outside the country, indicating that the first confirmed case wasn't the city's actual first case.

Even that did not seem to be a cause for alarm.

“Everybody is doing exactly what we need to do,” Governor Cuomo said at a March 2 press conference. “We have been ahead of this from Day 1” (which is an oddly clichéd way of saying “yesterday”).

“We'll tell you the second we think you should change your behavior,” de Blasio said on March 5.⁷ Authorities are “fully prepared to respond,” he said. New York City Council Speaker Corey Johnson tweeted that “this is no cause to panic.”

“Despite this development, New Yorkers remain at low risk for contracting COVID-19,” Barbot chimed in.⁸

They assured the public that the city would begin contacting everyone who was on the flight with the woman who was the

7 Chris Francescani, “Timeline: The First 100 Days of New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo's COVID-10 Response,” ABC News, June 17, 2020, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/News/timeline-100-days-york-gov-and-rew-cuomos-covid/story?id=71292880>.

8 Tamar Lapin, “NYC Officials: Don't Panic after First Confirmed Coronavirus Case,” *New York Post*, March 1, 2020, <https://nypost.com/2020/03/01/nyc-officials-dont-panic-after-first-confirmed-coronavirus-case/>.

DUMB AND DUMBER

city's first confirmed case. Dr. Bruce Farber, who is the chief of infectious diseases for the largest hospital system in New York, promised to take action. "Out of an abundance of caution we will be contacting people who were on the flight with her from Iran to New York."

And then, after that, Cuomo and de Blasio never addressed the plane or its passengers ever again—because no one bothered to do the work of tracking down those passengers. Local officials did request an investigation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), but they didn't perform one because they assumed the woman wasn't contagious.

By March 10, de Blasio was facing calls to shut down the city but said during an appearance on MSNBC's *Morning Joe*: "We cannot shut down because of undue fear. I would advise against these mass closures when we're keeping this situation relatively contained."⁹ Because of the exponential growth of viruses, the correct time to scale back human contact is (seemingly paradoxically) when cases are few in order to nip the problem in the bud. Instead, de Blasio decided it would make more sense for the virus to become a massive problem before trying to combat it. Regardless of one's opinion on the merits of lockdowns, the point here is that de Blasio showed no concern about the virus at all, eschewing even basic measures like social distancing and, in fact, encouraging the opposite behavior.

At this time, NYC was relying on fifty disease detectives to trace rising cases across the city. Wuhan, China, had nine thousand such detectives deployed for their city. Near the end

9 Julia Marsh, "Coronavirus in NYC: 5 New Cases in City, Bringing Total to 25," *New York Post*, March 10, 2020, <https://nypost.com/2020/03/10/coronavirus-in-nyc-5-new-cases-in-city-bringing-total-to-25/>.

NEW YORK'S CORONAVIRUS DISASTER

of March, the Health Department saw fit to finally increase the number of disease detectives—to a meager 150.¹⁰

On the next day, March 11, de Blasio encouraged people to go on with life as usual, specifically instructing people to dine out at restaurants because the virus “doesn’t transmit through food and drink” (it does). “If you’re not sick, you should be going about your life,” he said. We now know that such advice greatly exacerbated the virus’s spread since many people who are infected are either asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic for a period. “If we get to the point where any particular type of activity needs to be suspended, we can do that voluntarily with the organizations or we can mandate it,” de Blasio said. “We are doing this day-by-day, hour-by-hour.”¹¹

He appeared that night on *The Daily Show* with Trevor Noah to joke about elbow bumps.

He later told reporters on March 14: “I am not ready today at this hour to say, let’s have a city with no bars, no restaurants, no rec centers, no libraries. I’m not there.”¹² It became clear in the following months that de Blasio has no problem swinging between

10 Anna Sanders, “NYC Tripling ‘Disease Detectives’ to Track Coronavirus among Health Care Workers and Other At-Risk Groups,” *Daily News*, March 22, 2020, <https://www.nydailynews.com/coronavirus/ny-coronavirus-disease-detectives-health-care-workers-20200322-fdn4rcw7sjdkdpv4rdf4ga5yay-story.html>.

11 Serena Dai, “Mayor Says That Healthy People Should Still Be Dining Out,” *Eater*, March 11, 2020, <https://ny.eater.com/2020/3/11/21175497/coronavirus-nyc-restaurants-safe-dine-out>.

12 Jake Offenhartz and Christopher Robbins, “With de Blasio’s Blessing, NYC Nightlife Still Buzzing Despite Pleas to Self-Isolate,” *Gothamist*, March 15, 2020, <https://gothamist.com/news/pandemic-at-the-disco-nyc-coronavirus-bars>.

DUMB AND DUMBER

extremes. Only a few months later, de Blasio would switch to vilifying anyone advocating for these same places to reopen.

The unions de Blasio is beholden to eventually led him to close schools. “We understand the immense disruption this will create for our families,” United Federation of Teachers president Michael Mulgrew said. “But right now, more than a million students and staff crisscross the city every day on their way to schools, putting themselves and others at risk of exposure and increasing the likelihood of bringing exposure into their homes and communities.”

In hindsight, it now seems that shutting down schools was an overreaction, but de Blasio’s motivation for keeping them open in the first place had nothing to do with virology or the fact that the virus barely poses a risk to children. Instead, de Blasio was worried about schools effectively serving as day cares and providers of other city services (such as state-funded school lunches). So, it was by pure accident that he was right about the issue of keeping schools open; the effect of keeping schools open on the transmission of the virus wasn’t even on his radar.

De Blasio eventually did shut down the city, and on March 16, after declaring that all gyms must be closed, he foreshadowed the selective enforcement of his policies and got in one final gym run at the Prospect Park YMCA.¹³ It wasn’t until members of his own staff threatened to resign that de Blasio did so—and regardless of one’s stance on lockdowns, you probably don’t want one

13 Nate Church, “NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio Ignores Coronavirus Rules to Hit the Gym,” *Breitbart*, March 16, 2020, <https://www.breitbart.com/politics/2020/03/16/nyc-mayor-bill-de-blasio-ignores-coronavirus-rules-to-hit-the-gym/>.

NEW YORK'S CORONAVIRUS DISASTER

implemented by someone influenced by staffer temper tantrums over science.

That last gym run predictably produced widespread outrage, including from his own longtime advisors. Advisor Rebecca Katz tweeted that “no current or former staff member should be asked to defend this. The mayor’s actions today are inexcusable and reckless.” Staffer Jonathan Rosen reacted to Katz’s post, “She’s right. It’s pathetic. Self-involved. Inexcusable.” De Blasio later defended himself by saying that he “lives in the regular world”—a defense oddly similar to Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez defending her environmentally destructive behavior while calling for a Green New Deal.

According to former CDC Director and former NYC Health Department Commissioner Tom Frieden, closing schools, non-essential stores, and restaurants two weeks earlier could have reduced the city’s mortality by 50–80 percent. “Flu was coming down, and then you saw this new ominous spike. And it was COVID. And it was spreading widely in New York City before anyone knew it,” said Frieden. “You have to move really fast. Hours and days. Not weeks. Once it gets a head of steam, there is no way to stop it.”¹⁴ While it’s impossible to know if such an estimate is true, and many readers are justifiably skeptical of the efficacy of lockdowns, we know for sure that de Blasio did absolutely nothing to get ahead of the virus. And in many cases, his and his colleagues’ advice literally encouraged the spread of it.

That would become evident again many times, such as when the debate shifted toward how schools should be reopened. In

14 Zack Budryk, “Former CDC Head: New York Death Toll Might Be 80 Percent Lower if Social Distancing Was Enacted 2 Weeks Earlier,” The Hill, April 8, 2020, <https://thehill.com/homenews/state-watch/491737-former-cdc-head-if-new-york-enacted-social-distancing-2-weeks-earlier>.

DUMB AND DUMBER

June, the SOMOS network reached out to de Blasio five times to offer to set up free testing sites to test teachers and schoolchildren. They proposed setting up eighty testing sites, and had 2,500 doctors on staff to conduct tests. De Blasio sat on that offer for two months before replying, and no deal was struck after their initial meeting.¹⁵

While New York State was the American coronavirus epicenter, within New York, New York City was the epicenter. It was from there that the virus was exported to the rest of the nation, fueling a national crisis.

According to the *New York Times*' summary of the research on the spread of the virus throughout America:

New York City's coronavirus outbreak grew so large by early March that the city became the primary source of new infections in the United States, new research reveals, as thousands of infected people traveled from the city and seeded outbreaks around the country.

The research indicates that a wave of infections swept from New York City through much of the country before the city began setting social distancing limits to stop the growth. That helped to fuel outbreaks in Louisiana, Texas, Arizona and as far away as the West Coast.

"We now have enough data to feel pretty confident that New York was the primary gateway for the rest of the

15 Christopher Cameron, "De Blasio Sat on Offer to Provide Free COVID-19 Testing for Students," *New York Post*, August 29, 2020, <https://nypost.com/2020/08/29/de-blasio-sitting-on-offer-of-free-school-covid-19-testing/>.

NEW YORK'S CORONAVIRUS DISASTER

country,” said Nathan Grubaugh, an epidemiologist at the Yale School of Public Health.¹⁶

In total, travel out of New York caused about 65 percent of new coronavirus cases in the U.S. (their report was as of May 7). Nationwide, 92 percent of cases in the Northeast were linked to New York, 82 percent of cases in the South, 78 percent in the Midwest, 78 percent in the West, and 43 percent in the Northwest.

THE DE BLASIO TRAGIC COMEDY OF ERRORS

That the World Health Organization (WHO) and other health leaders gave the world contradictory information has been a common theme in comparing the advice given during the onset of the virus and with the benefit of hindsight. As bad as that was, none of them even come close when it comes to the sheer volume of contradictory and just plain stupid information dispersed by de Blasio.

Virus on Surface

A week after de Blasio’s first press conference, he claimed that “we understand some things about this disease” before rattling off a number of falsehoods. “What is clear is the only way you get it is with substantial contact with someone who already has it. You don’t get it from a surface. You don’t get it from very temporary contact, based on what we know now.”

In reality, little was known about the virus’s transmissibility on surfaces at the time—but the CDC encouraged people to err

16 Benedict Carey and James Glanz, “Travel from New York City Seeded Wave of U.S. Outbreaks,” *New York Times*, May 7, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/07/us/new-york-city-coronavirus-outbreak.html>.