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**Jonathan Shi**

February 24 ·

### Day 4 of the Northern Italy shutdown.

The atmosphere is—not outright panicked... but high-anxiety. I stayed in today, but have talked with people. On the streets, it looks normal, if sparser—people maybe more spaced out, and some masks here and there. Shelves are empty in some places and there's a report of people fighting over food in a store, but I think this happens only in some areas, like small towns that have smaller supply lines. A subdued panic comes out more between friends and family: urgent expressions of concern, to "a kind of psychosis". One contact of mine actually lost a friend because one of them was mad the other might've infected them.

Myself, I feel nervous, but I'm not really sure why. Maybe I'm afraid of falling ill with pneumonia and being helpless and alone (but this is unlikely, and I do have friends here). Maybe it's the fear of my ethnicity being blamed when I go out, which... I count myself mostly "cured" of social anxiety, but that still doesn't blend well with me. Would I end up stuck in Milan if it gets out of hand? Or maybe I worry about the humanitarian disaster if (when?) this becomes widespread: there are plenty of humanitarian disasters, but this one is new, close to home, and addictively tilts on the threshold of "maybe it'll be stopped".

I have to remind myself that the preparation I did was to reduce my exposure, to slow the spread of the virus, and not to literally shut myself in for two weeks. Slowing it gives the workers time to find everyone who carries it, and maybe that would end the outbreak. Maybe weirdly, I feel comforted when they report more "confirmed cases": it means that the health authorities are successfully tracking it down. We're at 219 found now, compared with the 200–800 that I estimated on the first day: this gives me hope that their efforts are working.

Working in the short term, anyway. There are still 3–5 outbreaks elsewhere where it's unclear if they'll be able to stop local transmission, and one of those has been exporting cases like mad. I'm starting to accept that this will pretty likely become endemic in our species within months. If so, there will no longer be any question of if people get the disease, but when. Until there's a vaccine, it'd become as "normal" as chickenpox once was.

Swine flu also went pandemic, but by all indications this is substantially worse than that. Compared to the flu, this thing spreads faster, has a completely naive host population, is (I think much) more likely to cause severe illness like pneumonia, and keeps people in ICUs for longer. These factors all multiply. Do we have the hospital capacity to treat 10–100 times the usual burden, when they're already taxed by the flu? I'm pretty sure the answer is "no". But that's what we'd get if COVID is allowed to spread unchecked.

So even after we can't contain it, we'll still have to keep doing everything we can to slow its spread: social distancing, hygiene, staying home when sick, and cancelling and avoiding crowded events. Because like, I was already crying reading the stories from Wuhan; having that repeat everywhere isn't an option, I can't imagine it.

43

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**Jonathan Shi** See also

<https://www.nytimes.com/.../opi.../coronavirus-pandemic.html>



NYTIMES.COM

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Keep us posted bröthr

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Thank you for keeping us updated!  
Sending you good thoughts, for whatever that's worth.

15w



**Jonathan Shi** \*Streets were normal at day, anyway. The authorities put a curfew on bars and clubs, so it's starkly empty at night. Usually crowds are all over the place after midnight.

15w



"exporting cases like mad" - huh?

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**Jonathan Shi** travelers departing iran have been detected with covid after arriving in iraq, egypt, kuwait, oman, bahrain, afghanistan, canada, lebanon, and the UAE.

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**Jonathan Shi**  
<https://www.nytimes.com/.../middleeast/coronavirus-iran.html>



NYTIMES.COM

'Recipe for a Massive Viral Outbreak': Iran Emerges as a...

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Quarantine: -1 sanity, +1 lore

15w · Edited



Sending you good thoughts.

15w



this gives +1 sanity for a net +1 lore

15w

2



This somewhat reads like those zombie apocalypse journals

15w

2



**Jonathan Shi** i think i got that comment on my day 2 log too.

15w

3



Take care Jonathan!

15w



Thanks for these updates!

15w



**Jonathan Shi** i've been told there are some promising early results with antivirals, which is nice.

15w

3



Are you considering coming home for a bit?

15w



**Jonathan Shi** not to flee the virus, but I do have a conference trip planned in two weeks.

15w

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Take care Jonathan.

15w



**Jonathan Shi** after reading this article, sounds like COVID will be more "normal" like the seasonal flu (getting it yearly) instead of like chickenpox (once or twice in a lifetime). and a vaccine won't even make it go away. D:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/.../02/covid-vaccine/607000/>



THEATLANTIC.COM

**You're Likely to Get the Coronavirus**

15w

2



**Jonathan Shi** i was having trouble sleeping and wondering why... "is it bc of coronavirus nerves??" then it hit me that the answer was much more mundane: i forgot to take my medicine. again.

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1



██████████ Take care and keep us posted!

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