

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ASIAN AMERICAN THEATER ARTISTS HIT BACK AGAINST DISCRIMINATION DURING COVID-19 CRISIS

*New monologue project emphasizes the radical notion that
Asian Americans are, in fact, Americans*

Minneapolis, MN -- April 29, 2020 -- While the current Coronavirus crisis has been accompanied by an increase in discrimination and violence directed at Americans of Asian descent, playwrights from across the country have joined forces for UNALIENABLE, an Asian American monologue project. Created and organized by Twin Cities-based actor and playwright Eric "Pogi" Sumangil, founder of Barkada Theater, UNALIENABLE will feature monologues written by Asian American playwrights from across the US, and performed by local and national Asian American actors. Videos of these performances will be posted on Barkada Theater's [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) pages beginning the week of May 4th and throughout the month of May, in honor of Asian Pacific Islander American Heritage Month.

"We [Asian Americans] end up spending a lot of energy proving to people that we're Americans." Said Sumangil. "I've seen and read too many accounts of people being blamed, told they 'brought the virus' here just because they have Asian faces. That's not happening with Italian Americans."

Death threats, along with a rise in "bias incidents targeting Asian Americans," have been reported to the Minnesota Department of Human Rights as well as the Attorney General's Office and other state agencies, [according to the Star Tribune](#). In late March, the FBI warned of a [surge in hate crime incidents](#) against Asian Americans. Threatening notes left on doorsteps, confrontations in grocery stores and on the street have left many Minnesotans of Asian descent feeling unsafe. UNALIENABLE, hopes to humanize these Americans while giving playwrights and actors of Asian descent an outlet to express how they are being affected by the coronavirus crisis.

The monologues themselves are not all about discrimination. The only prompt given to the playwrights was to write an "Asian American character living through the daily life of the coronavirus/COVID-19 reality." And so far, the product has been a beautiful variety of snapshots from many perspectives. They come from a cross section of Asian American playwrights from all over the US including Elizabeth Wong, Christine Toy Johnson, Eric Sharp, Eliza Shin, Kit Yan, Karen Huie, Manjula Padmanabhan, Kathy Hsieh, Lucy Wang, Genny Lim, and Amy Hill, among others.

For more information, please visit www.ericpogisumangil.com/unalienable

Contact: Eric "Pogi" Sumangil, 347 217 1556 barkadatheater@gmail.com