

Fox News Host Claims Chinese People Eating 'Raw Bats' to Blame for Coronavirus

| 'NO, JESSE!' |

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Senior Media Reporter Published Mar. 02, 2020 6:44PM EST



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Fox News host Jesse Watters demanded a formal apology from China on Monday before pushing unproven rumors that the new coronavirus came from Chinese citizens “eating raw bats and snakes.”

With fears heightening around the virus as the death toll in the United States jumped to at least six on Monday, Watters began Monday’s broadcast of Fox News chatfest *The Five* by lashing out at China, which has been the epicenter of the growing pandemic.

“I would like to just ask the Chinese for a formal apology,” Watters said. “This coronavirus originated in China, and I have not heard one word from the Chinese. A simple ‘I am sorry’ would do.”

As the rest of his colleagues appeared somewhat embarrassed and tried to laugh off his rant, Watters then insisted that the virus originated from the Chinese eating diseased uncooked animals.

“Let me tell you why it happened in China,” he declared. “They have these markets where they were eating raw bats and snakes.”

“No, Jesse,” co-host Dana Perino pleaded as the other hosts could be seen face-palming.

“They are very hungry people,” Watters continued, causing more laughter. “The Chinese communist government cannot feed the people. And they are desperate, this food is uncooked, it is unsafe. And that is why scientists believe that’s where it

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very deceitful and deceptive in the communicating the extent of the infections to the world,” Watters concluded. “So, as I said, tomorrow I will expect an apology.”

Except it is not clear that COVID-19, as it the disease is officially known, originated at a Chinese market in which shoppers purchased bats to eat. Earlier this year, right-wing media was abuzz over claims that “bat soup” was to blame for the disease spreading, based largely on a viral video that was later debunked. (The video was actually of a travel show host in a Pacific island nation, and bats aren’t considered a delicacy in Wuhan, the Chinese city where the virus first exploded.)

Furthermore, while a “wet market”—markets that sell live animals for food and medicine—was initially believed to be the origin of the outbreak, it appears that specific market may not have been the cause at all, as the earliest known victims had no contact with it. And while the virus likely originated with bats, it still hasn’t been fully established how it moved from the bats to humans.

Watters, meanwhile, has a history of making culturally insensitive remarks and innuendo, particularly about Asians. The Fox personality sparked outrage in 2016 for a Chinatown segment that featured blatantly racist mockery of Asian-Americans, prompting an apology.

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