

Bing Liu: Chinese-born professor dies in US murder-suicide

By Zhaoyin Feng
BBC Chinese Service, Washington

🕒 7 May 2020



Top Stories

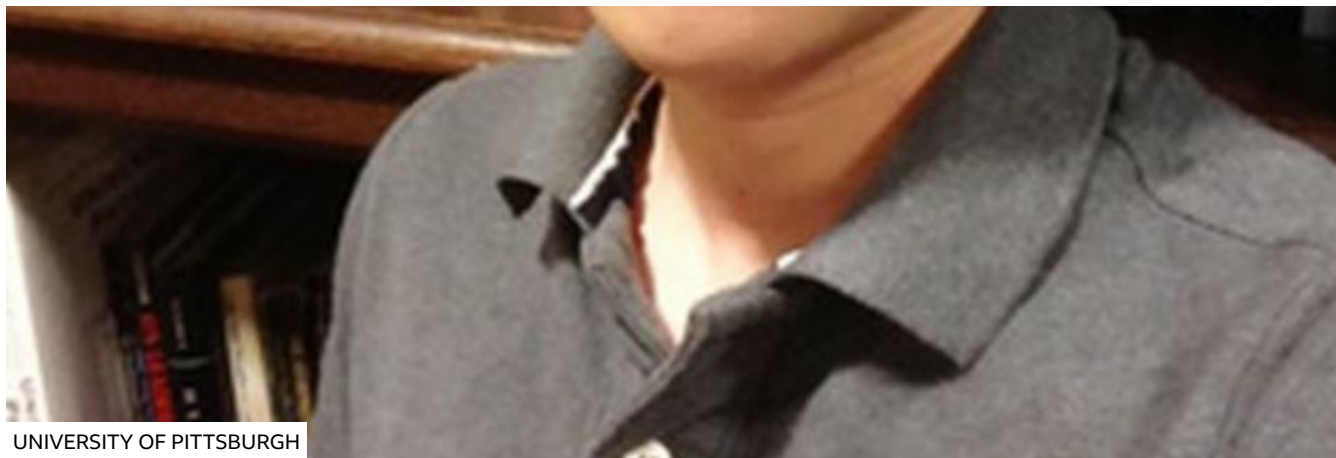
🕒 **LIVE** Battle for the Don has begun, says Zelensky

First civilian deaths in Lviv shatter sense of safety

🕒 8 hours ago

Images appear to show sinking Russian warship

🕒 8 hours ago



The fatal shooting of a Chinese-born coronavirus researcher on US soil has fuelled conspiracy theories around the world.

Bing Liu, a 37-year-old assistant professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, was found dead in his house on Saturday.

Colleagues said he was close to making "significant findings" on his studies of Covid-19, sparking online speculation it was an assassination.

But police say it was a murder-suicide.

Why did Liu die?

He was found with multiple gunshot wounds to the head, neck, torso and extremities at his home in the Pittsburgh suburbs, according to the local police department.

The gunman was identified as 46-year-old software engineer Hao Gu. Authorities say he took his own life after returning to his car.

Features



**Beautiful tourist town bra
for Russian assault**



Liu and Gu knew each other, homicide detectives said.

The investigation has determined it was a murder-suicide resulting from "a lengthy dispute regarding an intimate partner".

They said there was "zero evidence" the case was linked to Liu's research work and the current public health crisis.

- [China and the US trade coronavirus conspiracy theories](#)
- [Is there any evidence for lab release theory?](#)
- [Misinformation spreads online about origin and scale](#)

Who was Liu?

In a statement, Liu's colleagues describe him as an outstanding researcher who "was on the verge of making very significant findings" towards understanding the cellular mechanisms of Covid-19 infection.

They mourned Liu's passing and pledged to complete his research "in an effort to pay homage to his scientific excellence".

Liu, a native of China, earned his Bachelor's degree and PhD in computer science in Singapore before conducting research in the US.

According to his online CV, he had collaborated with biologists and clinicians to study human immunity.

What are the conspiracy theorists saying?

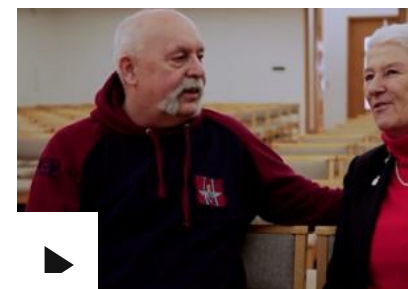
"Oh my god," a user on the Chinese social media platform Weibo wrote. "This seems like coming straight out of Mission Impossible. Perhaps he found out that the virus originated from an American lab."



First civilian deaths in Lviv as shelling shatters sense of safety



Photographing the diversity of Aboriginal Australia



Injured Falklands veteran nurse reunited



Many similar comments suggested Liu was killed because he was supposedly about to unravel the mystery of coronavirus' origin.

Chinese officials and state media had previously promoted a baseless claim that the virus originated in the US and was brought to Wuhan by American soldiers.

Some Weibo users said the case "seems too coincidental".

"A very unusual case. There are likely secrets hidden in the dark," one remark read.



Reality Check debunks coronavirus claims by politicians

Many Weibo comments suggested Liu's Chinese background may have put him at risk in the US, though no evidence has emerged that Liu was targeted because of his ethnicity.

Global Times, a website affiliated with the Chinese state media, published an



Can India feed the world during Ukraine war?



What's Elon Musk's value of Twitter? Our timed qui



How dangerous is tongue-



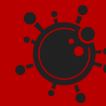
Nigeria's Spider-Man figh

Global Times, a website affiliated with the Chinese state media, published an article various speculation surrounding Liu's death.

On Twitter, meanwhile, some have speculated on unfounded claims that the Chinese government may have played a role in the case.

Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, a variety of conspiracy theories about the virus and its origins continue to be spread on online platforms. Some unverified claims have been promoted by politicians and media outlets in both the US and China.

More about coronavirus



- A SIMPLE GUIDE: [What are the symptoms?](#)
- LIKE 9/11 EACH DAY: [A New York paramedic's diary](#)
- FACTORY HOTSPOT: [The untold story behind America's biggest outbreak](#)
- GUNS & CHEESE: [The unexpected items deemed 'essential'](#)
- REASON TO HOPE: [The good that may come out of this crisis](#)

More on this story



China and the US trade coronavirus conspiracy theories

26 April 2020



How bad information goes viral

for a cleaner society



War forces Germany to build bridges with Russia

Elsewhere on the BBC



Make tonight a movie night

There's something for everyone on iPlayer





How bad information goes viral

19 March 2020



US allies tread lightly around Trump virus lab claims

5 May 2020

The most powerful man you've never heard of

Searching for Vladislav Surkov, key architect of the 'post truth' world



'Almost everything you ever do is going to fail'

Richard Osman on life as a broadcaster and writer

Most Read

- 1 Images appear to show sinking Russian warship
- 2 Man wins \$450k suit after unwanted office birthday
- 3 US judge throws out Biden's traveller mandate

- 4 Ronaldo and partner announce death of baby boy
- 5 Female TikTok star jailed for three years in Egypt
- 6 Beautiful tourist to braces for Russian assault
- 7 War forces German to burn bridges with Russia
- 8 Captured Britons on Russian TV appeal for UK help
- 9 Alex Jones' Infowars files for bankruptcy in US
- 10 Death sentences over Pakistan blasphemy killing

On your mobile

On smart speakers

Get news alerts

Contact BBC News

Home

Sport

Worklife

Future

Music

Weather

News

Reel

Travel

Culture

TV

Sounds

[Terms of Use](#)

[About the BBC](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Cookies](#)

[Accessibility Help](#)

[Parental Guidance](#)

[Contact the BBC](#)

[Get Personalised Newsletters](#)

[Why you can trust the BBC](#)

[Advertise with us](#)

[AdChoices / Do Not Sell My Info](#)

© 2022 BBC. The BBC is not responsible for the content of external sites. [Read about our approach to external linking.](#)