

METRO

Jewish family says they were harassed by anti-Semite on Upper West Side

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The 'No Hate, No Fear' March in New York City on January 5, 2020.
Dan Herrick

A Jewish man says he and his family were harassed by a raging anti-Semite who told them to “go to Israel” and yelled “heil Hitler” at them on a Manhattan street last week.

Dovid Efune, 35, — who describes himself as a “conspicuous Jew” due to his yarmulke and tzitzit, a ritual garment of knotted tassels — recounted the shocking interaction to The Post on Monday, describing how a stranger hounded his family, including his 1-year-old daughter, as they walked on the Upper West Side last Sunday.

“If you have people that are espousing that type of hate and have no qualms about approaching a family with children, including a baby, God knows what they can do,” Efune said.

“It’s frightening.”

Efune, who runs the NYC-based Jewish newspaper The Algemeiner Journal, was heading to the Barnes & Noble on Broadway and 82nd Street with his wife and their four young kids on Jan. 3 when the man accosted them.

"In a seemingly innocuous way he said, 'I have a question. Is it true that the Bible says all the Jews have to live in Israel?' I responded saying 'Not that I know of,'" Efune recalled.

The dad explained to the man that "Obviously there is a very close connection between the land of Israel and the Jewish people," but that "They have a right to do so and have a choice of whether they'd like to live in Israel or not."

Still, "He really wanted to push the issue so his follow up was, 'My Jewish friends tell me that their rabbi says they have to go and live in Israel.'"

At his 8-year-old son's urging, Efune said he told the man that the family needed to go — but the creep kept following them.

"Don't Jews need to go to Israel?," he continued pressing.

Efune said he pleaded with the man to leave his family alone and told him to go away — prompting the stranger to shout at them "Go to Israel."

"He turned around and you could see that his anger was really building and he just shouted, 'Heil Hitler!' And he looked at us waiting for a response."

Efune said he called 911, prompting the man to finally walk away.

"This was somebody behaving in a very threatening fashion," Efune recalled. "I wasn't looking to get in a physical altercation with a 1-year-old baby and other kids with me."

Efune said the stranger — who was in his late 40s with dyed blond hair and wearing a gray beanie, black face mask and bomber jacket — had been walking his dog at the time, leading him to believe the harasser is a local.

He wrote about the encounter [in a post Friday on the Algemeiner](#), explaining to The Post that "If you have somebody with those views who is circulating around the neighborhood, that's a threat that people should be made aware of."

Efune said police officers took down a description of the man but that he had not heard from the NYPD since.

He said that even "If no crimes have been committed, at the very least [people] should watch their backs."

"It's plain to see for anyone living in this great city that it has devolved considerably in recent years and especially in recent months. There is [a rise in hate crimes](#) and a lack in the kind of policing that we would like to see," he said.

"There is a lack of responsibility to create secure communities."

In a statement, Efune added that he was grateful for the "outpouring of solidarity" his family has received since he wrote about the incident. He asked people to "Join hands with us in the fight against hate."

"Help us track down this cretin and show the world his ugly face," Efune said.

Addressing the assailant directly he said: "It's true that Israel is the historic homeland of the Jewish people. We, Jewish Americans, are also citizens of this great country and have been among its finest patriots."

"We are here to stay. Get used to it."

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