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Morning Edition
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1st U.S. Case Of Coronavirus Confirmed In Washington State

January 22, 2020 · 5:06 AM ET

Heard on Morning Edition

WILL STONE

FROM



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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported the first U.S. case of the coronavirus has been discovered in Washington. The patient traveled from China and was diagnosed earlier this week.

NOEL KING, HOST:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the CDC, has reported the first case in the United States of a new and deadly coronavirus. A resident of Washington state in the Seattle area is infected. The man had traveled to central China to the city of Wuhan, where the virus was first discovered. It has killed at least 17 people, and scientists now say humans can transmit the virus to one another. And as Will Stone from member station KNKX in Seattle reports, officials in Washington state are trying to prevent the spread of the virus, and also projecting calm.

WILL STONE, BYLINE: The first U.S. patient is a man in his 30s who had spent several months traveling in Wuhan, China. That's the region where the new coronavirus has emerged. It's been traced to a large seafood and animal market. On January 15, the patient took an indirect flight back to Washington, where he lives just north of Seattle. The next day, he fell ill and went to a nearby clinic.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

JAY INSLEE: At that time, he was - it was suggested to him that he remain in isolation at home.

STONE: That's Washington Governor Jay Inslee.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

INSLEE: On January 20, samples were confirmed by the CDC in Atlanta that, in fact, he carried the novel coronavirus, and he was hospitalized.

STONE: The patient is in good condition but remains in isolation at the hospital outside Seattle as doctors monitor his condition and determine whether he's contagious. Inslee says at the moment, there's no indication the public is at risk of the virus spreading.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

INSLEE: This is certainly not a moment for panic or high anxiety. It is a moment for vigilance.

STONE: In Washington, that means tracing all the people the patient may have come in contact with on the plane, in the airport, on the way home and at the doctor's office. Scott Lindquist is Washington state's epidemiologist.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

SCOTT LINDQUIST: This is a new virus, so we don't know when you're truly infectious.

STONE: Health officials say it doesn't appear people are passing the virus as they simply walk through airport terminals. Most transmissions are among people who are in close contact for a sustained amount of time. Lindquist says the incubation period can last up to 14 days, but there are unknowns.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

LINDQUIST: Does it constitute an exposure before you're even ill? And then how long should we monitor? So those things are all going to be worked out in the next day or two.

STONE: The symptoms of the coronavirus can resemble the common cold - sore throat, a cough and fever. Across the country, passengers flying from China are being redirected to five major airports for screening before they can continue on to their final destinations. Satish Pillai with the CDC says they've developed tests to accurately detect the virus, which led to the diagnosis of the Washington patient in only 24 hours.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

SATISH PILLAI: I think this is a really good case in point of the timeliness of testing to help inform clinical decision-making.

STONE: The CDC will be distributing those tests to state health agencies in the coming weeks.

For NPR News, I'm Will Stone in Seattle.

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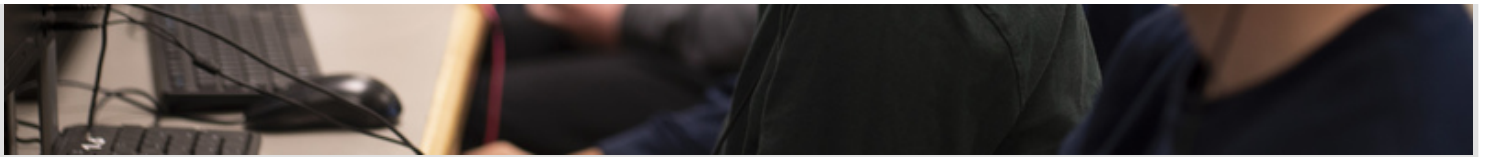
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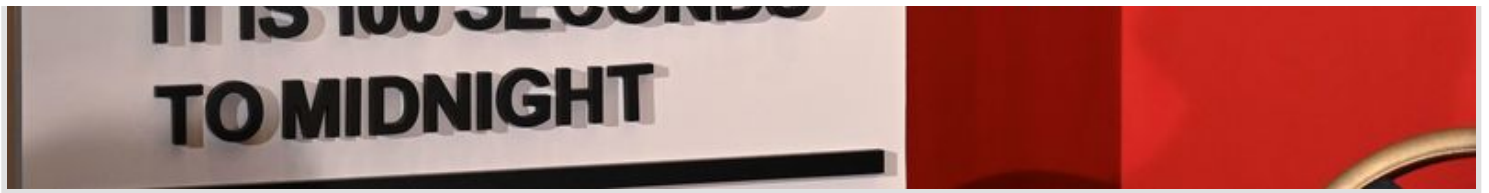
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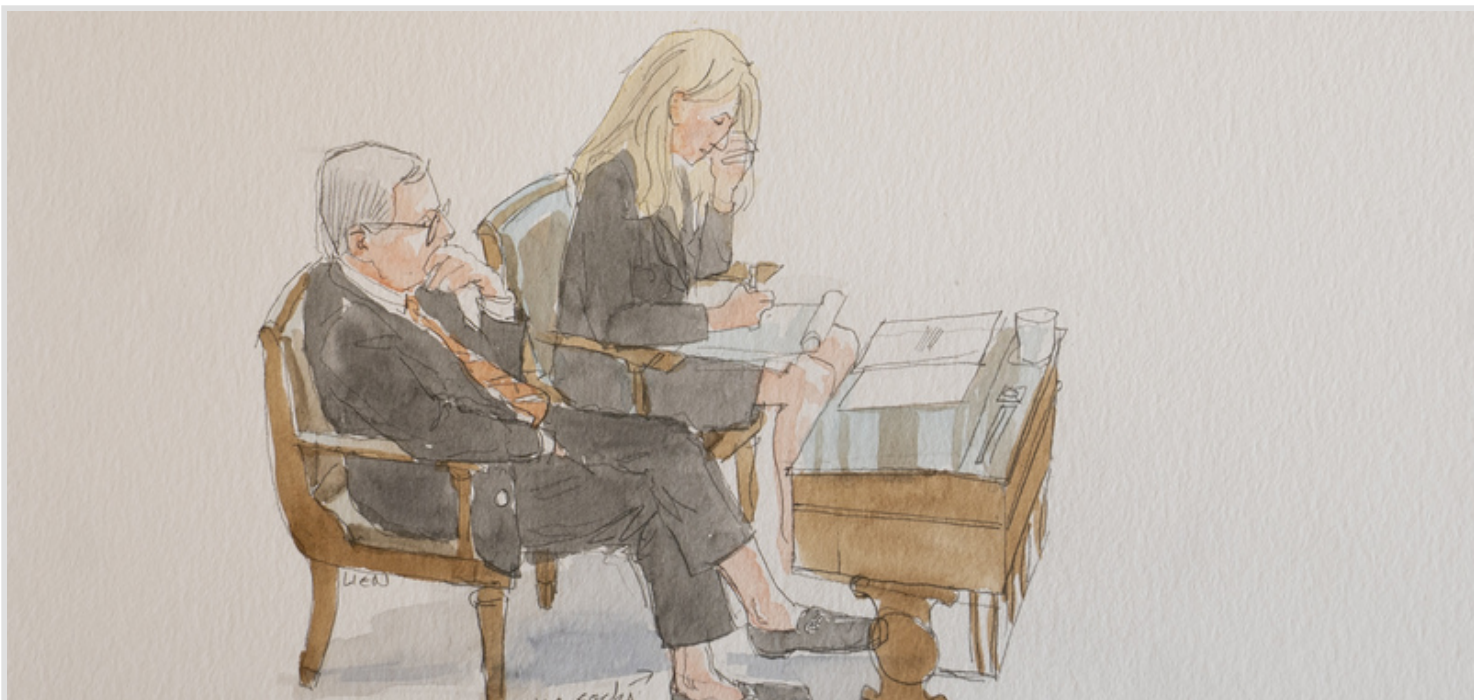
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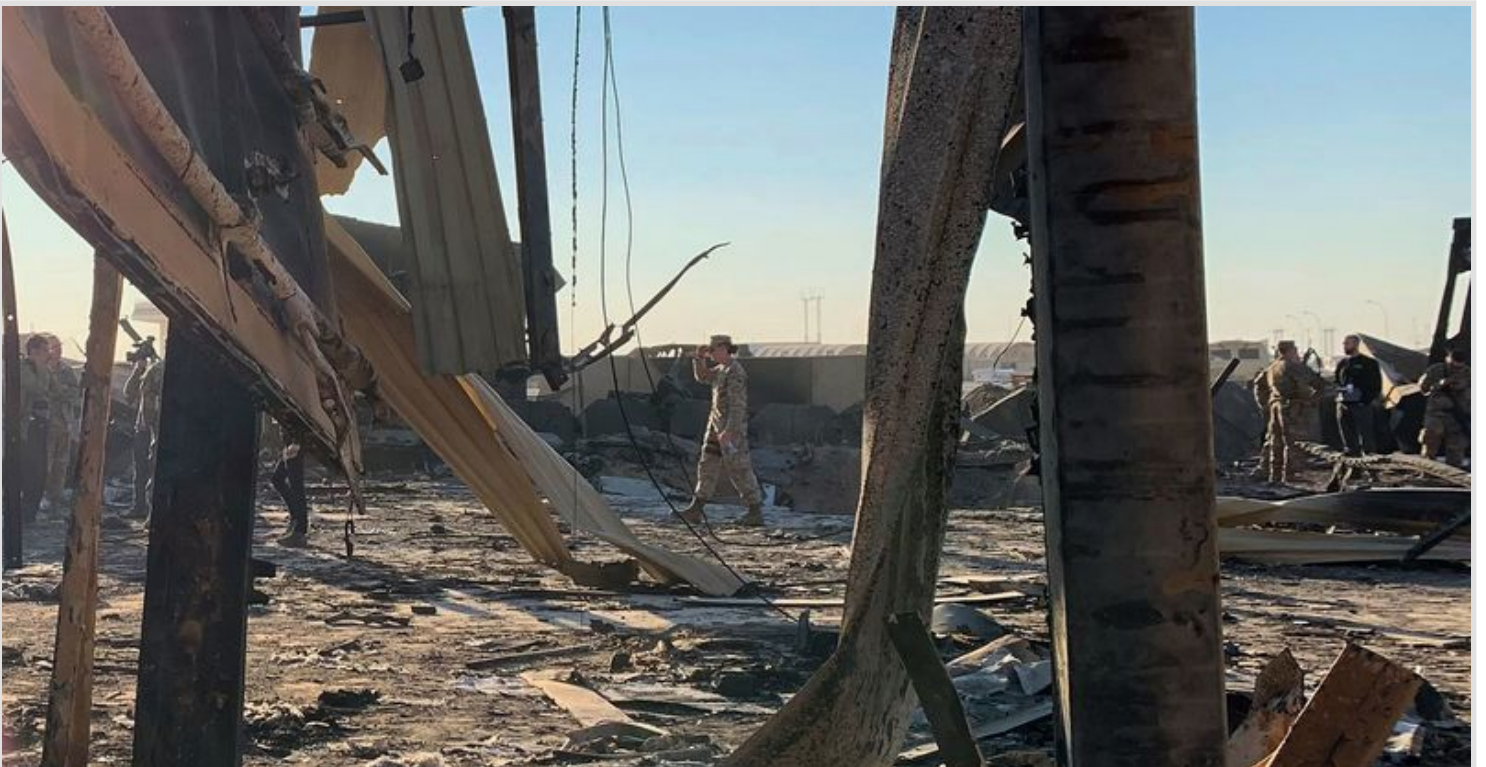
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