



**Mathias Boelinger** @mare\_porter Sun Jul 25 05:44:26 +0000 2021

Long thread: Yesterday @aliceysu and I were out in Zhengzhou when we were surrounded by an angry mob. 1/11  
<https://t.co/goGDIzx7iU>

It started when two women approached me saying they needed to talk to me and asked me who I was. They said they were from local TV. While one of the women was talking to me the other one kept filming the whole time, which made me quite suspicious about their intentions. 2/11

This was near ██████, where many shopkeepers had lost their assets when an underground market was flooded. The situation was quite tense already. Lots of people took my picture. I thought it was partly curiosity, partly plainclothes. I would learn the real reason later. 3/11

One woman we talked to was rushed away by her colleagues. Other people told us filming was forbidden without identifying themselves. 4/11

I pretended not to understand these two women and left. They shouted at me that I was not allowed to leave and approached @aliceysu. I told them not to harass her and that we would leave. Then one of them blocked my way while keeping filming. 5/11

I then started filming as well. Then she called other people over. I think it was about ten men, mostly middle aged. They showed me a picture of @robindbrant and kept asking is that you? Then things quickly escalated. 6/11  
<https://t.co/GInNKPuCK5>

They kept pushing me yelling that I was a bad guy and that I should stop smearing China. One guy tried to snatch my phone. 7/11

The women eventually calmed the crowd down and explained that they just wanted to help me get to know all the volunteer work that is done in the area. Eventually when convinced that I was not @robindbrant the crowd calmed down. Some even apologized. 8/11

What I did not know at the time was that a manhunt was on after @robindbrant. (Neither did I know I look like him██████). There is a vicious campaign against the @BBCNews in nationalistic circles and state media. 9/11

People had mistaken me for Robin for some time and following me around. On Weibo calls for action against me/him has been posted. (Some of them hours after the incident). 10/11 <https://t.co/4krEXAyW5R>

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余生谋日 博主

有人觉得不太像一个人的，我也没办法确认，因为第一我没见过本人第二大家都知道上镜与本人是有偏差的。但是在发这条微博

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I don't know what would have happened had it really been him. The media environment in China right now is frightening.<https://t.co/nv7wlpPtFB> 11/11 <https://t.co/mHw58r0BFB>

This is Alice's account of the incident <https://t.co/AcXQN5ffpq>

Al Jazeera's [@Katmyu](#) has similarly been targeted by netizens <https://t.co/Dksbytidim>