

Asian Newspaper Apologizes for 'Why I Hate Blacks' Column

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SAN FRANCISCO An editor of a weekly newspaper calling itself "The Voice of Asian America" apologized after Asian-American leaders condemned a column titled "Why I Hate Blacks."

In the piece, which appeared in the Feb. 23 edition of San Francisco-based AsianWeek, contributor Kenneth Eng lists reasons why he supports discrimination against blacks -- including because "they are the only race that has been enslaved for 300 years."

Leaders at the Asian American Justice Center, Chinese for Affirmative Action, Coalition for Asian Pacific Americans and other groups began circulating a petition denouncing the column as "irresponsible journalism, blatantly racist, replete with stereotypes, and deeply hurtful to African Americans."

"It certainly does not speak for the vast majority of Asian Americans," Stewart Kwoh, who heads the Asian Pacific American Legal Center in Los Angeles, said Tuesday. "This kind of inflammatory (column) really can hurt and damage relations with the broader African-American community."

The petition calls on AsianWeek to cut ties with Eng, issue an apology, print an editorial refuting the column, and fire or demote the editors who published it.

AsianWeek, with a circulation of 48,505, issued a statement apologizing for "any harm or hurt this has caused the African American community."

The newspaper plans to hold a news conference with NAACP leaders in San Francisco on Wednesday to discuss how the Asian and black communities "can be different and yet get along and work together," said Ted Fang, the paper's editor-at-large.

"The newspaper is sorry that this got published, and I am personally sorry that this got published," Fang told The Associated Press. "The views in that opinion piece do not in any way reflect the views of AsianWeek."

The paper plans to review its policies to "understand how this happened and make sure it doesn't happen again," Fang said, calling the decision to publish Eng's piece a "mistake."

Fang's family publishes AsianWeek, along with a local newspaper called the Independent, and owned the San Francisco Examiner between 2000 and 2004.

Kenneth Eng, who has described himself as an "Asian Supremacist," has written several columns for AsianWeek since November, including pieces titled "Proof That Whites Inherently Hate Us" and "Why I Hate Asians."

Eng is in his early 20s and a graduate of New York University, according to a biography on a Web site promoting his science fiction writing.

A telephone listing for Eng could not immediately be located. Mayor Gavin Newsom said in a statement that the column had "no place in a city that is known around the world for civil rights and equality for all people. I am deeply concerned, both for the opinions expressed in the column and the fact that these opinions were published in a local newspaper."

Supervisor Sophie Maxwell, one of the city's top black officials, has co-sponsored a city resolution condemning the article and AsianWeek's decision to publish it. But she doesn't believe Eng's column will hurt relations between blacks and Asians in San Francisco.

"This man clearly is very ignorant of African-American history and his own history, and he's very angry," said Maxwell, who represents a district with large black and Asian populations.

JON CARROLL (Column)

Jon Carroll

See, the person I worry about is Samson Wong, editor in chief of AsianWeek, a free publication aimed at the Bay Area Asian community and published by the famously powerful Fang family. I put myself in his place. He gets a new column from his feisty young columnist Kenneth Eng. The title of the column is "Why I Hate Blacks."

Maybe the first thing he thought was, "I sure hope this is a fashion column." It is true that this "black is the new black" thing is way out of control, and it's about time some feisty young columnist started to ridicule it. But no, it was not a fashion column -- it was a column about why Kenneth Eng hates black people and, by extension, why you should hate black people too.

Does it get more racist than that? I mean, here people are mulling over the idea that Eddie Murphy's movie "Norbit" might be racist because of its depiction of black women (even though Eddie Murphy is black) -- your assignment: Compare and contrast "Norbit" with "Tyler Perry's Daddy's Little Girls" -- and then comes something that puts all those nuanced discussions on the back burner. Racism in the grand old manner! It's the 19th century again!

(You might wonder whether the column was some sort of satire. It really wasn't. No one is even pretending that's true. This is a column about hating black people by a guy who hates black people.)

So Samson Wong apparently says to himself, "Sure, why not, it's a free country," and he prints the column. Did he not perhaps think that a newspaper has many missions, and fostering community understanding is one of them? This wasn't a reasoned screed against affirmative action; this was a goddamn "Why I Hate Black People." One has been in the newspaper business many years; one's jaw is agape.

I also fret about David Lee, spokesman for the Chinese American Voters Education Committee. He said that Eng's column reflects the way some Asians really feel and that it's good to get this stuff out on the table. "Rather than refute and bury this, we should be calling for a community dialogue to address this."

I'm just guessing here, but if I wrote a column called "Why I Hate Yellow People," I'm pretty sure that David Lee would not be quite so sanguine about it. I imagine he would refute the column, probably really strongly, and I don't imagine he'd want to have a town hall meeting first. I'm all for dialogue, but there's a baseline of respect that's necessary for the dialogue to work. If there's no respect, then the dialogue can often turn into what we like to call "war."

So, you may be asking yourself, why does Kenneth Eng hate black people? Here's a sample: "Blacks hate us. Every Asian who has ever come across them knows they take almost every opportunity to hurl racist remarks at us."

Kenneth, two words: Tiger Woods. Tiger's father, Earl Woods, was 50 percent African American; his mother, Kultida Woods, is originally from Thailand and is 50 percent Thai and 25 percent Chinese. I don't imagine their courtship involved a lot of epithet hurling. And there are a million other examples just like that, a lot of them going to high school in the Bay Area. If Kenneth Eng's experience with African Americans has been entirely bad, maybe he needs to get out more.

"Contrary to media depictions, I would argue that blacks are weak-willed. They are the only race that has been enslaved for 300 years." Well, no. The word "slave" has the same root as the word "Slav" because most of the slaves in the Caliphate or Islamic Empire were from what we would call Eastern Europe. And the feudal system in the imperial China of the Qin and Han dynasties created a vast underclass of serfs whose life was pretty darned slavlike. And so forth. It's a silly argument, really, because the premise is so laughable.

"Blacks are easy to coerce. This is proven by the fact that so many of them, including the Rev. Al Sharpton, tend to be Christians." Note gratuitous Al Sharpton reference -- the paragraph doesn't work so well if the name "Martin Luther King" is inserted, because he was so famously difficult to coerce. Oh, and there are lots of Korean Christians and Filipino Christians, too. And, since Christianity was originally a sect of Judaism, I guess pretty much the whole world is easy to coerce. Feh. Another idiotic argument.

Of course there is racial tension in the United States. Ignorance only adds to the tension. If Samson Wong knew how ignorant the column was and published it anyway, that's one kind of bad. If he didn't, what's he doing editing a newspaper?

As someone once said, ignorance can be cured but stupidity cannot. I'm afraid we have a deadly double-barreled strain of the disease here.

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Why I Hate Blacks

Kenneth
Eng

COD OF THE UNIVERSE



Here is a list of reasons why we should discriminate against blacks, starting from the most obvious down to the least obvious:

- Blacks hate us. Every Asian who has ever come across them knows that they take almost every opportunity to hurl racist remarks at us.

In my experience, I would say about 90 percent of blacks I have met, regardless of age or environment, poke fun at the very sight of an Asian. Furthermore, their activity in the media proves their hatred: *Rush Hour*, *Exit Wounds*, *Hot 97*, etc.

- Contrary to media depictions, I would argue that blacks are weak-willed. They are the only race that has been enslaved for 300 years. It's unbelievable that it took them that long to fight back.

On the other hand, we slaughtered the Russians in the Japanese-Russo War.

- Blacks are easy to coerce. This is proven by the fact that so many of them, including Reverend Al Sharpton, tend to be Christians.

Yet, at the same time, they spend much of their time whining about how much they hate "the whites that oppressed them."

Correct me if I'm wrong, but wasn't Christianity the religion that the whites forced upon them?

- Blacks don't get it. I know it's a blunt and crass comment, but it's true. When I was in high school, I recall a class debate in which one half of the class was chosen to defend black slavery and the other half was chosen to defend liberation.

Disturbingly, blacks on the prior side viciously defended slavery as well as Christianity. They say if you don't study history, you're condemned to repeat it.

In high school, I only remember one black student ever attending any of my honors and AP courses. And that student was caught cheating.

It is rather troubling that they are treated as heroes, but then again, whites will do anything to defend them.