

'Racist' cartoon: New York Post endangers president and community

Written by Cyril "Josh" Barker, Special to the NNPA from the Amsterdam News
Friday, 27 February 2009 15:28

NEW YORK (NNPA) - A political cartoon published by the New York Post on Wednesday, Feb. 18, has many alleging the newspaper promotes blatant racism. The [cartoon](#) that ran in the newspaper's "Page Six" section features two white police officers who have gunned down a chimpanzee in a pool of blood.

One of the officers says, "They'll have to find someone else to write the next stimulus bill." Sean Delonas drew the cartoon. The work is a parody of a recent news story that broke earlier in the week where a woman was attacked in Connecticut by a chimpanzee. Police shot and killed the animal that was being kept as a pet. President Barack Obama also signed \$787 billion stimulus bill on Tuesday.

The cartoon appeared in the tabloid on Wednesday and prompted immediate opposition from civil rights organizations. At the National Action Network headquarters in Harlem, the Rev. Al Sharpton voiced his outrage. "We cannot have different standards in this country when it comes to offending people," said Sharpton. "This, to us, is something that's offensive to all Americans, Black, white, Hispanic and Asian."

In an act of protest, Sharpton led picketing of the offices of the New York Post on Thursday at noon. He's demanded that the paper clarify the meaning of the cartoon and/or discipline the artist and editor responsible. Community leaders and political figures joined him, including Councilmember Charles Barron and Assemblywoman Inez Barron.

"The racist rag sheet [the New York Post] has hit an all-time low," said Councilmember Barron. "The cartoon is racist and threatens the life of our president, Barack Obama. We are calling on the Justice Department to investigate the New York Post. Overall, our community, city and country will not accept this." Sharpton told the AmNews that he is also going to focus on Rupert Murdoch, "head of the world's largest media empire" and CEO of News Corp., which owns the New York Post and Fox News. "The National Action Network and I are challenging the fact that Rupert Murdoch had to obtain a federal waiver from the FCC to own a TV and radio station in the same city. He did it in Boston, and he did it in New York. We're going to challenge him maintaining that waiver."

The reverend added that the NAN protests will take place outside the New York Post daily at noon.

Along with picketing, Sharpton plans on going after companies who advertise in the New York Post. He said, "There's no other conclusion I can come to other than the inference, that in some way, they're trying to say that this monkey and the president are one and the same, which speaks to the historic, frightening stereotype that we've seen in the past of African-Americans."

Upon seeing the cartoon in the newspaper early in the morning, Sharpton discussed it on the nationally syndicated radio program "The Tom Joyner Morning Show." The picture was also posted on the NAN website.

At the time of the press conference on Wednesday morning, Sharpton said he had not received

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any explanation from the New York Post nor an apology. The editor in chief of the Post, Col Allen, said in a statement, "The cartoon is a clear parody of a current news event, to wit the shooting of a violent chimpanzee in Connecticut. It broadly mocks Washington's efforts to revive the economy. Again, Al Sharpton reveals himself as nothing more than a publicity opportunist."

In response, Sharpton said at the press conference, "That's not clarification at all. How do you mix that? To say that I am a publicity hound, that is correct. I seek to get all of the publicity I can on injustice. That's what activists do. I'm a very proud publicity hound."

"This cartoon is racist, vile and disgusting," decried Assembly Member Hakeem Jeffries. "It is offensive to me as a Black man. It is offensive to me as an American. It is offensive to me as someone who represents a community that has been victimized by police brutality. The election of President Obama demonstrates that we have made significant racial progress in this country. This cartoon, which portrays our president as a monkey, demonstrates that we still have a long way to go. The New York Post should issue an immediate apology."