

CBS Affiliate Says Would Be Thief a Hispanic

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Princeton, NJ - Would you be as vexed as I upon reading a story about a man on a horse who lassoed a would be bicycle thief, noting in the second sentence that the roped man was “a Hispanic male adult.” Yup! The incident occurred in an Eagle Point, Oregon Walmart store parking lot. The alleged thief was identified as Victorino Arellano-Sánchez, age 23.

I was irked – and still am – because all too often our not-too-revered media identify the ethnic background of Hispanics in crime incidents. Do you remember ever reading about a Scandinavian-, a German- or a British-background person so identified? I think not. But Hispanics? Hey, we are fair game!

In Princeton, NJ, where I live, the local “periodiquillos” (little newspapers) often publish police crime reports that say that the suspect – not apprehended – “appeared to be Hispanic,” was “believed to be Hispanic,” or “was Hispanic.” Now, what the perpetrator’s ethnicity has to do with it astounds. Unless, of course, you believe that “Hispanic” is a race or an otherwise readily identifiable individual. This stereotyping of Hispanics is unacceptable, deplorable!

This happens too often. Once, in fact, is too often. For at a time when campaign rhetoric demeans immigrants, Mexicans and, by extension, Mexican Americans and other Hispanics, such practices are way out of bounds. The editors should know better. But, then, they are myopic; their newsrooms lack diversity and the valued perspectives diversity might add.

Some years ago, I wrote an article after being incensed by a New York Times article about an assault. The perpetrator was not apprehended and there was nothing to indicate ethnicity; but the assailant was described as a Hispanic male. Would the Times have said a Nordic male? Of course not. But hey! We are fair game!

Another New York Times article, in December 2012, reported this: “Investigators released a grainy black-and-white video overnight showing a person they identified as the attacker fleeing the station.... She was described by the police as Hispanic, 5 feet, 5 inches tall, in her early 20s and heavy set.” Again, why “Hispanic?” It appears that nothing indicated ethnicity except the grainy photograph and perhaps some witnesses. Again, Hispanics are uniquely identified, even when Hispanics can be of any race, any color ... We are fair game!

Now, I confess that I am a news junkie and have many news sources. I wonder, however, if I am the only one among us who noticed this most recent of many offenses. Where are our “leaders?” And why have they not raised an outcry about this and similar incidents? And why did the Reverend Al Sharpton get more publicity when, two years ago, he protested Maricopa County Sheriff Arpaio’s anti-Latino, anti-immigrant actions in Phoenix? Where were our “leaders”?

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WHERE :

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