



January 26, 2007

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Abe Kwok
Co-chair, AAJA Media Watch Committee
1182 Market Street, Suite 320
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Mr. Kwok:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to concerns and questions you raised on behalf of the Asian American Journalists Association Media Watch Committee. It also is an opportunity to clarify and correct some inaccurate assumptions cited in your letter.

First, you are correct in citing that the headline "Chinks in Jack's armor" is offensive, especially in the context of the story and the TV show's storyline. The error is regrettable, and we apologize to all who were offended by the usage.

Second, however, there are assumptions cited in your letter that are inaccurate. The assumption that we thought the double-entendre "clever" and an editor or editors gave it the seal of approval by doing nothing are simply untrue. It was a bad headline to be sure, but it was not a misguided attempt to be clever.

Rather it was an error of naiveté and lack of awareness. While that is not an excuse, please know that had it occurred to the editor involved that it was an epithet, she would not have used it.

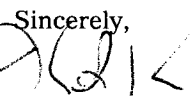
To further clarify the false assumption that the word choice was intentional, the copy editor's original headline was "Cracks in Jack's armor." The slot editor who clears headlines and stories before they are put on a page recognized that the commonly used phrase is "chinks in the armor" and changed it without reading the full text of the story.

Again, not as an excuse but explanation, one definition of chink is crack or fissure. The story previewing the season premiere of "24" describes how the invincible lead character is now showing signs of vulnerability. A photo illustration of the lead character also was an attempt to show this.


Also please know that editors did take action when the issue was raised. The headline was changed and the page was substituted as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, some copies -- less than half -- had already been printed. Should red flags gone up sooner? Absolutely.

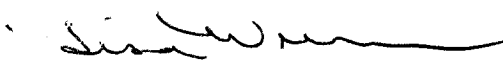
The issue has been discussed with the editors involved. The features copy desk has been made aware of the error and how to be more conscious of unintended consequences. Copies of AAJA's handbook and addendum "All American: How to Cover Asian America" is being distributed to the staff. The staff will be invited to a meeting with key editors to discuss this issue and others related to inaccurate, unfair and biased depiction of groups of people.

We appreciate and support AAJA's diligence in its mission to promote and monitor fairness and accuracy in regards the media's coverage of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

Sincerely,


Kevin Keane
VP News/Executive Editor


Bob Nishizaki
Assistant managing editor


Lisa Wrenn
Features Editor