



Committee of 100

For immediate release

Committee of 100 Condemns Racist Lyrics Taunting Tsunami Victims

(New York--Monday, January 31, 2005)--The Committee of 100 condemns and denounces the recent radio skit at WQHT-FM, in which station personnel wrote and then broadcast flagrantly (for four days) racist song lyrics mocking the deaths of over 225,000 *tsunami* victims in southeast Asia and Africa. We expect and demand that the Federal Communications Commission will investigate this anti-black, anti-Asian incident and levy the maximum fine permitted by law.

We commend WQHT-FM for responding to the understandable public outrage, prompting the station to apologize and terminate the individual producers of this "Tsunami Song" on January 24, 2005. Like other Americans, we recognize the role of humor as one human response to cope with dire circumstances, and we appreciate and respect every medium's First Amendment rights. However, the Committee of 100 asks how, in the alleged name of "entertainment," the station's editors and management ever conceived that it would be appropriate to produce and broadcast a song that:

- exulted in the brutal, ugly deaths of so many people, including innocent children;
- used the most offensive racist term possible for Chinese;
- referred to countless drowning African and Chinese women as "bitches;" and
- invoked the image of a dead mother's body floating by her own child with a tree limb protruding from her head and suggesting the orphaned child would now be "sold into slavery" as a result of that loss.

There is an utterly depressing lack of humanity in such lyrics, for they betray an emptiness of the soul about the entire organization at that station. There is not one redeeming word or line in this "song," not one indication that the writers, singers or producers could imagine the viciousness of these images to their fellow Americans of African or Asian descent, much less the immensity of the tragedy that recently scarred the nations of southeast Asia and Africa.

For a cutting-edge hip-hop radio station in a city that rightfully mourned the loss of more than 3,000 of its citizens on 9/11 to broadcast such a song – gleefully cheering the deaths of more than 225,000 fellow human beings and the suffering of countless orphaned children – is incomprehensible. The station's management team clearly assumed it was amusing for so much death and destruction to occur, so long as it occurred only to black and yellow people.

WQHT-FM cannot simply wash its hands by terminating a few individuals. To deal with its own lack of management vision and to help heal the racial and ethnic wounds this skit

has opened up, WQHT-FM should invest in in-house multicultural sensitivity training, make appropriate public service announcements for victim relief, and use air time to build, rather than tear down, inter-racial respect.

All FCC regulated media are guardians of the public trust because they use the public airwaves. In this case, WQHT-FM not only betrayed that trust but showed a degree of moral myopia that calls for the most stringent government punishment and public rebuke and for WQHT's own internal management review to prevent any recurrence of such unacceptable conduct. The Committee of 100 hopes that a major FCC fine will prevent such cruel behavior even if it cannot cure the gross indecency that produced it.

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The Committee of 100 is a national non-profit, non-partisan organization based in New York City. The Committee pools the experience, knowledge and resources of outstanding Chinese Americans who have achieved prominence in a variety of fields. Its website is www.committee100.org. Its two-fold mission is:

- To promote the full participation of Chinese Americans in all fields of American life; and
- To encourage constructive relations between the peoples of the United States and Greater China (which includes China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan).

The Committee has been active in a number of civil rights issues, most notably advocating for fair media coverage of the Dr. Wen Ho Lee incident.

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