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Fla. Paper Apologizes for Use of 'Ho' in a Cartoon NAACP Calls 'Racist'

By E&P Staff

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NEW YORK Some Florida Times-Union readers, including the president of the local NAACP, feel Ed Gamble's Friday cartoon in the Jacksonville paper was racist.

In the cartoon, a little girl is talking to a male wearing a "Don't snitch!" T-shirt who has just shot another male. The girl says: "I didn't see nuttin'!" The male replies: "Now that's a good little ho!" In the background is a billboard that reads: "Rap your life away."

The NAACP president, Charles Anderson, called the cartoon "highly offensive and racist," according to a Sunday piece by Times-Union reader advocate Wayne Ezell.

Anderson added that not "snitching" isn't limited to the African-American community, and that the terms "ho" and "nuttin'" are offensive.

"Using the word 'ho' was bad judgment, and I regret that I did not edit it out," said Times-Union Editorial Page Editor Mike Clark.

Ezell wrote that the cartoon was drawn after police said a "don't snitch" culture has hurt efforts to solve crimes in Jacksonville, and that a recent "60 Minutes" segment "focused on the growing problem, especially in inner-city neighborhoods, and how some rap artists have encouraged it."

Gamble acknowledged that the term "ho" is demeaning to women, but added: "I was making a point that rappers are demeaning to women."

The NAACP's Isaiah Rumlin asked how many people of color are on the Times-Union's staff -- saying the cartoon "would not have been printed" if the newsroom were more diverse.

Ezell reposed that the paper "has people of color among its writers and copy editors, and has one African-American columnist, [but] no people of color are involved in the day-to-day operations of the opinion pages, which are separate from the newsroom."

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