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Media exhibit double standards in coverage

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Media exhibit double standards in coverage

Last Thursday a nationally-recognized figure, one who has become the standard against which others in his profession are measured, said some nasty things about gays, whites, Asians, Hispanics and American Indians. Racism rears its ugly head again.

This person is an ordained minister (on top of the profession for which he is nationally known) and was giving a sermon to a group of lawmakers in Wisconsin. His stereotype-laden remarks made the legislators nervous and were an embarrassment to himself and to both of his professions.

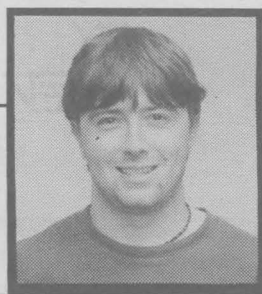
The story made all the newspapers, but few people knew about it. They didn't see it. It wasn't on the

securing that job. While a CBS Sports spokeswoman wouldn't say whether his speech would affect his chances, it's probably a good bet that networks won't be in any hurry to sign White to their broadcast teams.

So what did White say that was so bad? Here's a sampling:

- Blacks are gifted at worship and celebration.
- Whites do a good job building business and "know how to tap into the money."
- Hispanics are gifted at "family structure" and can fit 20 to 30 peo-

By Derek Rice



front page, where it should have been, but buried on the fourth page of the sports section, at least in the Portland Press Herald.

Why is that? Because the speaker, Reggie White, who is black, has a Super Bowl ring. He's an all-pro defensive end for the Green Bay Packers. He is the all-time National Football League leader in quarterback sacks. It's almost a lock that he will one day find himself enshrined in the NFL Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio.

Had it been someone like Cal Ripken, a white baseball player, the story would have been Page One without a question. Somehow, we seem to tolerate racism a little, but not much — more when it comes from a member of a group that has suffered oppression. It just feels less wrong, even though it is equally intolerable in any instance.

For anyone who doesn't know much about football, he's the big guy with the raspy voice who hawks Chunky Soup on TV.

White has always been well-liked as both a player and a person, kind of like Ripken in baseball. Some of his teammates said they were happiest for White after the Packers won Super Bowl XXXI. He had paid his dues as a player and had finally reaped the ultimate reward.

In the year after that win, White became more of a national presence. More people than John Madden could identify him. Many thought White would make a good TV football analyst. This was a job White himself has said he would like to do.

White may have jeopardized any chance he may have had at

ple in one home.

- Asians, especially the Japanese, are inventive and "can turn a television into a watch."
- American Indians are gifted in spirituality and were never enslaved because they knew the territory and "how to sneak up on people."
- On the subject of homosexuality, White said the Bible speaks against the practice, but "we've allowed this sin to run rampant in our nation, and because it has run rampant in our nation, our nation is in the condition it's in today."

White the football player is someone children look up to. As a preacher, his message should be one of love and acceptance, not one of hatred and stereotype.

What's done is done. White said those things and can't take them back. He can apologize, but that doesn't change the fact that he revealed himself as a bigot.

What's surprising is that if anyone knows anything about racism, it should be White. His church was burned to the ground two years ago in a racially-motivated attack. After the incident, White talked about forgiving and loving the perpetrators.

Perhaps in time White will find the same forgiveness he was so willing to dole out to others. To do so, he must first apologize, and there is no indication that White believes he said anything wrong.

For White, it would appear that racial stereotyping, like the Chunky Soup he hawks, hit the spot.

Derek Rice is an English graduate student from Bath, Maine, and is the style editor for The Maine Campus.