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ENOUGH ROOM
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The Honorable City Council
City of Cambridge
795 Mass Avenue
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OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

Re: Abercrombie & Fitch

Regarding the April 29, 2002 City Council order to Abercrombie & Fitch, attached is a relevant essay by syndicated columnist Michelle Malkin, whose ancestry is Filipino. The Philippines is still in Asia.

Hers is a different perspective than the Harvard students who spoke on behalf of all Asian Americans.

Encl. Michelle Malkin, "White & Wong Profiteers," *New York Post*, May 1, 2002, page 31

Roy Bercau

White & Wong Profiteers

ABERCROMBIE & Fitch tried to sell some silly T-shirts with Asian caricatures a few weeks ago. One showed a pair of slant-eyed Chinese men with the phrase, "Wong Brothers Laundry Service: Two Wongs Can Make It White." Some very loud, wired and whiny Asian-American kids didn't like them. So the company pulled the clothes line and apologized profusely. "We're very, very, very sorry," a company representative said. "It's never been our intention to offend anyone."

End of story. Right?

Wrong. The Wong flap is still going. Fifty aggrieved young people protested at A&F's Seattle store over the weekend. "Racism is not chic," their signs lectured. "Racist fashion has got to go!" they shouted.

Um, it already went. So what more do these kids want? A big, fat payoff.

According to the "BoycottAF" Web site (boycottaf.com), run by a nationwide coalition of Asian-American college groups, the protests won't



MICHELLE MALKIN

stop until the retailer meets their "National Unified Demands." A&F must promise to "increase philanthropy to non-profit organizations that promote racial awareness and sensitivity"; "increase diversity" in its advertising and promotions; and hire "a new consultant team to ensure company-wide sensitivity to minority issues, improve diversity training for all employees, and increase minority representation in all levels of the company's workforce."

The very demanding protesters argue that if only there were more sensitive, non-white people in Abercrombie & Fitch's corporate structure, the T-shirts would never have come into existence. Never mind that the Abercrombie & Fitch designer who conceived the shirts in the first place was an Asian-American. Can't let facts get in the way of a shakedown.

Some of the enraged Seattle marchers could barely collect their thoughts. One C. Duong told KOMO-TV news: "You can't, it's what, 2002, and you're trying to make money off making fun of a certain group. You can't do that." Quick. Somebody call Margaret Cho, Chris Rock, Paul Rodriguez and Jackie Mason and tell them to stop profiting from ethnic-based humor!

Duong continued: "I don't think I'll ever shop here again because it hurts, it hurts, it cuts too deep. I don't think the wound will ever heal."

My, what a privileged life this fragile person must lead — to have no bigger sources of emotional pain to dwell upon than a few overpriced T-shirts with stereotypical cartoon characters. If I reacted as Duong did to every ethnic slight ever uttered against me or to every loser who talked to me in pidgin English, I'd be on life support by now.

Instead of learning to get over petty stupidities, these Asian-American stu-

dents have learned from their professors and race-card role models to milk their "hurt" for all it's worth. It's Ethnic Extortionism 101. They'll never, ever wear another piece of Abercrombie & Fitch clothing as long as they live. But they'll gladly take a hefty "philanthropic" donation from the company — or a few modeling jobs for the next skin-baring A&F catalogue.

Meanwhile, the same stereotypes are being marketed elsewhere with hardly a peep. In Canada, two "hip" Internet retailers — chinkdesign.com and Yellowfellow.com — sell popular T-shirts with slant-eyed icons and ethnic slurs. The makers of these T-shirts are young Asian entrepreneurs. "It was meant to start conversations," says chinkdesign.com founder Albert Liao. "It's an empowerment thing," one Asian-American patron explained.

Understand? It's OK to cash in on the Wong thing — as long as you aren't white.

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Communication #5

A communication was received from Roy Bercaw, regarding a council order on Abercrombie & Fitch.

In City Council May 13, 2002

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