

Black & White & NPR

November 29, 2021

The NPR headline mentioned race: “3 white men are found guilty of murder in the killing of Ahmaud Arbery.”

Before the verdict, I had mentioned the case on my This Week in Common Sense podcast, expecting and supportive of that ultimate outcome. So I left it at that.

But Sean Malone, the brilliant videographer, had something to say about that headline: “Dear NPR: You don’t need to put race in every headline. Please stop. Alternatively, if you’re hell-bent on doing this, then do it consistently.”

Relentlessly focusing on race as the ultimate driver of our society is not likely to reduce racism but to encourage it.

Legacy news media outfits seem committed to a racial double standard, which Mr. Malone calls our attention to: “I notice that you didn’t put ‘black suspect’ in this article,” linking to “The Waukesha death toll rises to 6, and the suspect faces homicide charges.” The suspect in this horrific crime is African-American, but NPR



doesn’t give that fact banner billing in this or a separate headline on the same horrific incident.

Yet, on November 4, the title was “A nearly all-white jury will hear evidence in the Ahmaud Arbery case.”

Selective race identification is journalistic practice.

The pattern used to be that newspapers went out of their way to identify black criminals and white victims, but not vice-versa. Now it seems to be the reverse.

Are NPR and other outfits deliberately fanning the flames of racism, with a constant stream of implied and sometimes explicit ‘Hate Whitey’ themes?

Relentlessly focusing on race as the ultimate driver of our society is not likely to reduce racism but to encourage it.

To the detriment of individuals of all races.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.