

March 16, 2009

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Dean Nicholas Lemann  
Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism  
2950 Broadway (at 116th Street)  
New York, NY 10027

Dear Dean Lemann:

We are writing regarding the conference "Enlarging the Space for Watchdog Journalism: Countering Threats, Supporting Investigations," held at Columbia University last week. We read a piece in the *Huffington Post* where a reporter was questioning why there were no journalists of color on the panels. In her post, she reports that the conference organizer, Center for Public Integrity founder Charles Lewis, responded that there were no U.S. journalists of color whose investigative chops were sufficient to merit inclusion.

We would like to know what qualifications one needs to be included in such elite company?

We are board members of the National Association of Black Journalists and we understand that Columbia may have played no role in selecting the panelists. But, NABJ is concerned by the fact that there WERE no black journalists on the panels. There are a number of black journalists who have worked as investigative reporters for years: Pulitzer prize winners *New York Times* Washington bureau chief Dean Baquet and Cheryl W. Thompson of the *Washington Post* are two names that immediately come to mind. Certainly Les Payne, who trained the *Newsday* staff of investigative reporters, could provide even more names.

When you plan your next event, please contact NABJ for a list of names of black journalists "with investigative chops" that can be included on your panels.

Also, we visited the Columbia Journalism School Web site "events" page to get more information about the conference but could not find any mention of it there. The Journalism School site is impressive with many photos of your events but, again, we were disturbed by the lack of diversity of the panelists.

Regards,



Barbara Ciara  
President

Bob Butler  
Director, NABJ Region 6