

Texting cop a victim of thought police?

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Marc Randazza

April 28, 2016

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Documents: Racist texts sent by San Francisco officer

01:55 - Source: [CNN](#)

Editor's Note: Marc J. Randazza is a Las Vegas-based First Amendment attorney and managing partner of the Randazza Legal Group. Follow him on Twitter: [@marcorandazza](#). The opinions expressed in this commentary are his.

CNN —

Let's take out the pitchforks and torches. Grab the rope so we can lynch former San Francisco police officer Jason Lai. What was his sin? Is he on the growing list of police officers who have taken the life of a fellow citizen? No. Did he falsify evidence? No. What did he do? He used naughty words when talking about other people. He used racial and homophobic slurs.

Did he use them when he was speaking to suspects or victims? No.

He used them in private conversations via text message with his friends. Private conversations.

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For his private thoughts, and with no evidence that he ever behaved in a racist manner, he is the latest victim of the Internet hate machine and he is being hung out to dry by his former superiors. Let's remember that when a cop kills someone, we usually hear "well, we don't know what really happened."

But this time, San Francisco Police Chief Greg Suhr told reporters Tuesday, "Reading the text messages literally makes me sick to my stomach." He apologized to the public, adding that there is "no tolerance for officers who hold such reprehensible views."



No tolerance. Suhr is putting his foot down. Suhr isn't waiting for context. Suhr isn't interested in the whole story.

Meanwhile, in the separate instances when San Francisco police shot and killed [Alex Nieto](#), [Mario Woods](#), or when the police fired six rounds into [Amilcar Perez Lopez](#), Suhr defended them and tried to tell us we didn't know the whole story and we didn't know the context.

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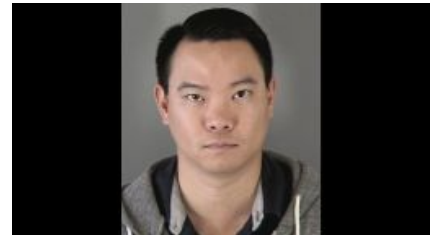
Report: Mario Woods shot 21 times in San Francisco

01:00 - Source: [KRON](#)

Because this is America in 2016. We have decided that having bad thoughts is the worst thing you can do. Or at least Police Chief Greg Suhr thinks so.

Do we want racist cops? Of course not.

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In a perfect world nobody would think bad, mean, racist thoughts. We don't live in a perfect world, and we are never going to have a police force that is so pure of mind that they are without any sense of bias. In fact, we don't even know if Lai had a sense of bias. He might have just been telling ironic, crude jokes to his friends. But, we have his text messages, and we now all believe they show him to think racist thoughts. So that's the end of the inquiry.

But here is the problem. We are punishing him for his mere thoughts. Thought crime. His personal cell phone texts, which should have been private conversations between him and his friends, are now a matter of public record. And the politically correct idiots are cheering that we have now "caught another racist."

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San Francisco police facing image issue

02:20 - Source: [CNN](#)

The deeply troubling part about us catching him committing bad thoughts is that we delved into his "mind" to find them.

If you're confused, follow me here. Your cell phone is an extension of your mind.

What are you searching for on the Internet when you are waiting for your doctor's appointment? That search history might just become public.

Your text messages with your boyfriend? Yep, those are potentially public.

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We have less and less regard for personal privacy, and thus I would like to make sure that every one of you out there who might be cheering this “exposure” of Lai for having bad thoughts had better be prepared to have your search history, your text messages, your emails, your most intimate private thoughts broadcast to the public so it can decide how it would like to judge you.



If you are not ready for that, then I would ask if you are really so pure of heart and mind. Are you so good at hiding your embarrassing or unorthodox thoughts? Are you so clean that your private thoughts can be put on the Internet for everyone to see?

We need personal privacy. We need to know we can talk to our friends without it being used against us later on. But, we also need to get a grip.

If a cop can put six bullets into an unarmed kid and find himself protected behind the “thin blue line,” but he can’t make a private comment to his personal friends, then we really have entered a bizarre world of political correctness and form triumphing over substance.

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