

## **Submission by Kylie Chang (Scholarship Recipient of \$2,000)**

The Asian-American community experienced devastation and disappointment in the judicial system as a result of Chinese American Officer Peter Liang's conviction of manslaughter and official misconduct. Despite the incident being accidental, I believe that Officer Liang was rightfully convicted, as any person, regardless of their race or ethnicity. A person should be convicted of manslaughter or murder for either voluntarily or involuntarily committing a crime and killing another human being. Although Liang was convicted of manslaughter, the New York Supreme Court recently only sentenced Liang to five years of jail time. In contrast, I believe that any person, again regardless of race and ethnicity, should receive jail time as punishment for killing somebody.

According to a recent article from the Stanford Daily, Peter Liang was the only New York Police Department officer out of 121 other incidents of officers killing unarmed civilians within the past decade to be convicted. The statistics reveal that Liang's status as an Asian officer may have affected the outcome of his conviction, as other officers, primarily white, failed to receive lawful punishments for their wrongdoings. While Liang did kill somebody and fail to perform the proper medical services, regarding his conviction of misconduct, one cannot ignore that race had a major effect on his conviction. I believe that Liang's conviction may have been a scapegoat within the judicial system, sacrificing the reputation of an Asian officer in order to uphold the image of the police department that mainly consists of white males.

Unfortunately, the incident has caused relations between Asian Americans and African Americans to suffer. In recent years, police brutality has increased, especially of cases involving white police officers mistreating or killing unarmed black people and receiving little to no punishment. As a result, the African American community greatly opposes the police force and white officers. Gurley's death allowed the African American community to direct their hatred onto the Asian community as well. Although Asian Americans are also a minority group, African Americans viewed Asian Americans as a privileged group, comparable to whites, desiring Liang to be convicted guilty and receive jail time. Simultaneously, the protests and angry backlash of the Asian community was directed towards the Black Lives Matter movement, although their anger should have been directed at the police force and judicial system. Consequently, relations became tense between the two minority groups.

If the judge had not convicted Liang of manslaughter, his case would be another example of police brutality and an unjust judicial system. Thus, I ultimately believe that while Liang was rightfully convicted, I also believe that Liang being the only NYPD officer to be convicted of manslaughter places the Asian community at an inferior and vulnerable position in society. Using Liang as a scapegoat cannot balance out the unfair police brutality that has occurred for years or please the African American community. Instead, Liang's conviction further proves how both Asian Americans and African Americans lack power, dignity, and justice in politics and society.