

CNN NEWSROOM

Not Just a Game, Fighting Together, Wounded Together; Motown Goes Green; Updates on Major Accident on Missouri's I-44 Crash

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T.J. HOLMES, CNN ANCHOR: I want to show you a picture now of something that had a lot of people around the newsroom and around the country even now scratching their heads.

Can we just put that up?

I want to just tell you what it is, and you can come to your own conclusion. Just initially take a look at this picture.

This is a carnival game. And what you see on the far left side is a young man at the carnival. He's paid his money to take shots at the figure you see in the middle.

That figure is wearing a suit. It's clearly a black man. It has a target on his head and a target on his chest to shoot at.

Don't know what conclusion you might come to, but now let me give you a little further detail.

This image of this black man in the suit also has a belt on it with something that resembles the presidential seal. That black man is holding in his hand -- that figure is holding a scroll that says "health bill" in it.

This is in Leigh Valley, Pennsylvania. The game had people shooting these foam darts at a game called Alien.

Now, you can jump to your own conclusions, but you can probably guess the conclusion that a lot of people came to, which was, in fact, that this was supposed to be a depiction of President Obama, that people were paying \$1 to take shots at his head and shots at his chest.

Now, a lot of people -- this is from Goodtime Amusements that put on this carnival there. The president says this was a mistake. He says, in fact, they have now thrown this thing away. They said that some of the visitors actually complained about it at this particular fair.

Take a listen here to the president of the amusement company that put this game up, how he explained what this was about.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

IRVIN GOOD JR., PRESIDENT, GOODTIME AMUSEMENTS: It's not meant to be political at all. It was just meant to be current.

We apologize for anybody that took offense to this. If we're guilty of anything, I'm certainly sure it's of poor judgment. We've eliminated the game. It's no longer a part of our operation.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

HOLMES: Now, I want to actually give you a statement as well we got from the diocese. This whole fair was put on as part of a school here.

Essentially, the statement -- if you see it up on your screen, you can read it there -- it says, "The carnival game was offensive. The pastor says he was not aware of its contents until the carnival was over. He added that had he known sooner, he would have put a stop to it."

But something that has a lot of people scratching their heads and in shock, and thinking, how can it get this far? But, yes, in fact, people were paying money to take shots at this figure.

I want to bring in Christopher Baxter. He's a reporter with "The Morning Call, who did a story, brought this particular story to a lot of people's attention.

Christopher, we appreciate you hopping on the phone here.

Could you believe you were even doing this story in the first place? What kind of reaction initially were you getting from people when they saw this picture?

CHRISTOPHER BAXTER, REPORTER, "THE MORNING CALL": Thanks for having me, T.J.

Well, it's pretty surprising to come in and find this to be the story I was covering for the day, but, you know, we were first talking to people and talking to the woman who first complained and sort of brought this to light. It was pretty clear that it struck a chord with her, and struck a chord with others as we started reaching out to people. And certainly online, on our Web site, morningcall,.com, and also in our in boxes. We've been certainly getting a lot of messages.

So there's been quite a reaction here, and I think it's gone national, too.

HOLMES: Christopher, can you help us understand? You talked to the guy who put this thing up. Help us understand the logic, or why in the world would someone think this was funny or OK in any way, shape or form?

BAXTER: My understanding from Irvin was that they've had this game called Alien Attack for quite some time, and the image that they actually use on the board periodically changes, and that a worker for him had drafted up this image of the man, which many believe to be President Obama. And he's had the game out there, he says, for six or seven weeks, and says he's only gotten two complaints about it. In talking to him in retrospect, he says, hey, I probably should have put the nix on this. I don't think he realized what kind of stir it would create. Obviously, now he's had a visit from the Secret Service, which I think shook him up a little bit.

HOLMES: Yes, the Secret Service takes things like this certainly very seriously. And the Secret Service has looked into it, as you reported.

But how long was the game up? And how many people actually went through and actually paid some money to take some shots at this figure?

BAXTER: Well, like I said, six or seven weeks. This company sort of does work for various fairs. So this one in Rosetto (ph), they were just there for a weekend in late July.

But they had been to other places throughout other months where they've had the game. And certainly, these fairs are very popular. I can say that, big time, in Rosetto (ph), it was a very popular fair.

Like, this woman who complained, she came all the way from Massachusetts, part of her family reunion there. So, you know, a lot of people play the games, a lot of people were there, and, you know, certainly a lot probably paid to play.

HOLMES: What about the school itself that was helping -- we read a statement from the school there, but were they embarrassed by this? They didn't -- of course, they contracted out with this company, but were they embarrassed by this?

BAXTER: You know, I got pretty much the same that you got from the diocese. It's their position that they didn't know about it.

The woman from Massachusetts said she did, she and her family members tried to talk to members of the church about it, and they told her they didn't know about it. To be fair, it was towards the end of this particular fair, so it may have been gone by the time, you know, word got through the church. But, you know, certainly we've heard from several people asking, how could this be at a church event?

HOLMES: All right.

Christopher Baxter with "The Morning Call."

We appreciate you hopping on the line with us, and appreciate you bringing the story to the attention of a lot of folks.

Christopher Baxter of "The Morning Call."

We appreciate you.

BAXTER: Thanks, T.J.