

My College Experience: A Poem
By Sarah Cohen

I walk through the campus to class,
My mind on last night's assignment,
The weather,
And probably boys.
I feel safe here,
Free to focus on building myself
As a newly formed adult,
Free to be able to answer questions in class,
To make friends,
To assimilate.
Sometimes, I forget that I am privileged,
Forget that not all those who go here
Feel as free to do all that I can.
I am on the surface of this college,
Floating near the top where the sun reaches,
But I have learned there is also a darker underbelly
I have been fortunate enough to not see.
An underbelly that still harbors prejudice
And racism
That I had no idea still perpetuated hatred
Until it was shown to me in an assignment.
I have been privileged enough to not see it,
But it should not be a privilege to be shielded from it,
It should be a right.

Kong's fourth chapter of analysis discusses the Compton Cookout held by UCSD students, an incredibly racist event that openly mocked not only black students, but the entire race in general. He discusses the events that transpired after the event, from even more racist incidents to how the community came to support black students at UCSD. Kong also discusses that Asian Americans at UCSD, a minority as well, did not really get invited or the opportunity to get involved in the meetings and decisions held after the incident. According to him, there is often a false perception of Asian Americans as a whole being the minority who no longer needs resource centers or help being given to them specifically, despite them still dealing with racism on campus themselves.

This reading certainly did change my perception of UCSD. I always saw UCSD as a very laid back, liberal school, where even though everyone seemed to focus on studies, it was easy to make friends with anyone. Now I see that I have not had to experience the racism that happens at our school because I was merely "lucky" enough to have been born white. Of course, I saw the chalk on the side walks on campus not too long ago, terrible words written to slander the Mexican Americans. That scared me, but I never expected that anything worse had happened on this campus, let alone so recently.

After reading Kong's analysis, I did more research on the Compton Cookout. In my readings, I found that the event had been orchestrated by a fraternity I am very familiar with. Being a newly joined sorority member, we often meet with fraternities for events and coordinate philanthropies and such. It shocked me. Looking at all the friends I've made in fraternities, I could've sworn to you two weeks ago that they were all nice guys, that they would never do something so terribly racist. But now, I'm not so sure. The Compton Cookout didn't happen in the 60s, it happened a

mere few years ago. It really makes me wonder about who around me is capable of doing something so terrible.

Ultimately, since reading this, UCSD's campus climate, to me, seems a tad superficial. It seems there are constantly flyers floating around boasting positive words, glossy photos promoting a happy campus, everyone on campus in Price Center milling about. But why don't I know about the issues happening now? Shouldn't everyone? I don't trust anymore that everything is still as good as it seems, so any issues that are still happening, everyone should know about so we can all fix it together. Racism is everyone's problem.