



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on March 19, 2018

China's Propagandists in U.S. Media Exposed by a Reporter's Eye-Roll That Went Viral

China's censors went on a rampage last week, all because of a reporter's spontaneous, on-camera facial expression that signaled her exasperation at Communist China's stage-managed National People's Congress. The Internet storm caused by the now-famous eye-roll also exposed the communist regime's dangerous media penetration of the United States. 

It's the eye-roll seen 'round the world. *China Business News* reporter, Liang Xiangyi, is now globally famous for rolling her eyes in exasperation — several times — as well as turning her head away, throwing her head back, and making several additional facial expressions and body-language signals indicating extreme annoyance. She was obviously more than just a little frustrated at the long-winded, sycophantic question directed to a top Communist Party official by one of her media colleagues, at the March 13 session of the National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing. Ms. Liang's momentary scornful display violated a rigidly-enforced taboo in the People's Republic of China (PRC), which requires that "journalists" dutifully perform as obsequious supporters of, and propagandists for, the communist regime.

A video clip (see below) of her eye-roll at the news conference quickly went viral, not only in China, but around the planet. Liang's name became one of the most popular terms online, but at the same time one of the most censored terms on China's Internet platforms. However, the communist regime's Internet police had not been quick enough, and the eye-roll became one of the most shared, talked-about, and written-about items in Chinese social media. Internet eye-roll imitations have proliferated, with comedic skits, commentaries, and cartoons inspired by Liang's simple, spontaneous gestures. Vendors immediately churned out T-shirts, caps, jewelry, and other wares to hawk bearing Liang's name and/or image. The [sensation she caused among China's netizens](#) powerfully demonstrated the widespread disdain for the Communist Party's scripted public performances and the toadying role of the state-run media propagandists posing as journalists. The Liang Eye-roll Affair has also brought attention to Zhang Huijun, the "reporter" who caused Liang's reaction. Zhang works for the California-based American Multimedia Television (AMTV) in Los Angeles. She is the woman in red (appropriately enough) in the video, while Liang is dressed in blue. More on Zhang and AMTV in a moment.

Ms. Liang's reactions, which from all appearances were sincere and unrehearsed, made headlines worldwide:

The New York Times — "A Reporter Rolled Her Eyes, and China's Internet Broke."

The Washington Post — "In China, a reporter's dramatic eye-roll went viral. Then searches of it were censored."

AsiaOne (Singapore) — "This epic eye roll from a Chinese reporter is breaking the internet."

The Guardian (U.K.) — "Chinese reporter's spectacular eye-roll sparks viral memes and censorship"

South China Morning Post (Hong Kong) — "Chinese social media storm over reporter's eye-roll"



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highlights impatience with staged political events.”

Followers of Liang Xiangyi’s account on Weibo, one of China’s social media giants, soared to over 100,000 — and was still soaring, reportedly — *before* government censors took down her account and began scrubbing her name from China’s search engines. While her name still brings up huge results on Internet searches throughout the rest of the world, it has all but disappeared in China, except for renegade breakthrough postings, which do not stay up long before the communist thought police expunge them. Liang herself has disappeared from public view, leading to rumors that in addition to being banned she may be suffering even more dire consequences.

Why the Global Hubbub Over a Simple Facial Contortion?

Since when does a mere theatrical scoff by a reporter rate a global meltdown? An “incident” such as this in any other country would barely rate a mention — if any at all — let alone a full-blown media sensation and a government crackdown. Well, for those who have swallowed the propaganda line that China is no longer communist because they have now have “capitalist” billionaires, gleaming skyscrapers, and all the conveniences of a modern developed nation, the “Eye-Roll Affair” may come as a rude awakening.

Liang Xiangyi’s now-historic reaction occurred during a highly scripted Q&A press conference at the “Two Sessions” of the annual meeting of the National People’s Congress (NPC), the sham “legislature” that rubberstamps whatever laws the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) puts before it. This year’s NPC convocation was centered on the historic task of formally enthroning President Xi Jinping as China’s undisputed Paramount Leader, with more far-reaching powers than any Chinese ruler since Mao Zedong. The 64-year-old Xi, who also is the head of the Communist Party and the military, now formally has been handed vast economic and regulatory powers as well. In addition, he has been exempted from constitutional term limits, essentially naming him “ruler for life.”

“Liang’s scoffing didn’t appear that newsworthy to me at first glance,” said Audrey Jiajia Li, a reporter for the Hong Kong-based *South China Morning Post*, in a March 15 [posting](#). “But people in China quickly attached far more meaning to it, venting their frustrations at the heavily choreographed rubber-stamp Congress and the tightly controlled news coverage.”

Ms. Li wrote that a journalist friend of hers who has been reporting on the NPC for almost two decades, remarked that when “she wanted to ask a question, she would not only have to submit the question, but also to tell the organiser what colour she would be wearing.” “A few years ago,” the journalist friend said, “a host at a press conference called on ‘the journalist in red sitting in the second row’ without lifting his head, and as the person stood up, people saw she was in black, as she had taken off her jacket.”

“That’s why,” says Li, “such a minor scene broke the Chinese internet: everything about the meetings has been staged and no trace of dissatisfaction is allowed to be made visible. Liang just shattered that.”

“What we see here,” says Li, “is that, on the one hand, a rising China has become increasingly confident so that from, time to time, the spokesperson for the foreign ministry would criticise big-name Western news outlets as ‘hostile and biased.’ On the other hand, the authorities are so desperate for praise from the international community that they would play up anything positive from the West and invest a lot in these bogus foreign media outlets to show the domestic audience how significant the country and its agenda are. Now, to some extent, the viral eye-roll is just like the little child in *The Emperor’s New Clothes*, isn’t it?”



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Which brings us back to Zhang Huijun, the obsequious propagandist in red and her employer, American Multimedia Television (AMTV), a Chinese-language broadcasting and Internet media company in Los Angeles. AMTV is clearly operating as a PRC propaganda arm inside the U.S., and, as the eye-roll affair demonstrated, is viewed as a key instrument in reinforcing the illusion of the Beijing emperor's new clothes.

The AMTV website, [proudly boasts](#) — in somewhat broken and clumsy English — that it is the first local television station on the United States' West Coast to sign a cooperation agreement with CCTV (China Central Television, although critics refer to it as Communist China TV) to broadcast daily "news" programming directly from the People's Republic. We learn from various news accounts, including the *New York Times*, that AMTV's president Jason Quin also lists himself as the president of the Confucius Institute of Education. The Confucius Institutes (as we have reported [here](#) and [here](#)) are not only propaganda arms for Beijing's communist regime on hundreds of American campuses, but also serve as spying and enforcement arms to keep students from China in line and obtain technical and scientific information that will advance Red China's plans for global domination.

Petitioning President Trump to Investigate Communist China's Propagandists in U.S. Media

Yujing Liu, a reporter for the *South China Morning Post*, wrote on March 16 that "hundreds of internet users have signed a petition calling on the White House to investigate US-based broadcaster [AMTV] and its ties to the Chinese Communist Party after a Chinese journalist's eye-roll set off a storm online."

According to the report, the petitioners want the investigation to determine whether Los Angeles-based American Multimedia Television USA (AMTV) is linked to the publicity apparatus of the Chinese government. "Based on the Foreign Agents Registration Act, we ask to investigate its fund sources and cooperation with the Communist Party of China and shut it down if it is found to have violated the law," the petition on [Petitions.whitehouse.gov](https://petitions.whitehouse.gov) says.

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