

Michael Breen (author)

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Michael Breen (born 31 July 1952) is an English author, consultant and journalist covering North and South Korea.

Breen writes occasional opinion columns for international and South Korean media. Since 2000, he has written a featured column for *The Korea Times*, an English-language daily in South Korea, where he comments on Korean society, culture, and political issues.^[1]

<div>Michael Breen</div>	
Born	31 July 1953 <div>Aylesbury, United Kingdom</div>
Nationality	British
Occupation	Writer

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Career

Breen is a graduate of the University of Edinburgh and first began living in South Korea in 1982.^[2] He was the correspondent in Korea for *The Guardian* and the *Washington Times*.^[3] In 1987, he became the first non-Korean president of the Seoul Foreign Correspondents Club. In 1994, he became a management consultant specializing in North Korea, with clients such as Coca-Cola. He entered the public relations field in 1999 as the managing director of Merit/Burson-Marsteller, where he remained until 2004. He is the founder and CEO of Insight Communications Consultants, a Seoul-based public relations firm. Breen was made an honorary citizen of Seoul in 2001.

A former follower and biographer of the controversial Unification Church leader Sun Myung Moon, Breen was described in a 2005 *American Prospect* story as having brokered talks in the early 1990s between Moon and the North Korean leadership, laying groundwork for a visit by the staff of Moon's *Washington Times*.^[4] Breen has also authored an unauthorized biography of Moon, *Sun Myung Moon: The Early Years*.^[5]

Controversy

Lawsuit

On 25 December 2009, Breen wrote a satirical column in the paper which lampooned various South Korean public figures, including president Lee Myung-bak, singer Rain, and Samsung. Displeased with Breen's allusions to their corruption and arrogance, Samsung filed civil and criminal suits against him and the paper for libel. After an apology and after Breen told prosecutors during interrogation that the column was his own idea, the paper was dropped as a respondent, but the suit against Breen himself remained.^{[6][7]} One South Korean media outlet claimed that the entire column as an insult to the country of South Korea itself.^{[8][9][10]}

Samsung dropped the civil suit after an apology by Breen. The criminal case went to trial but was thrown out by the judge on the grounds that there was "no victim."

Published works

- *Sun Myung Moon: The Early Years*. Refuge Books, 1999.
- *Kim Jong-Il: North Korea's Dear Leader*. John Wiley and Sons, 2004. ISBN 978-0-470-82131-2.
- *The Koreans: Who They Are, What They Want, Where Their Future Lies*. St. Martin's Griffin, 2004.

References

1. The Korea Times: Opinion (http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinion/opi_list.asp?categoryCode=170)
2. LaMoshi, Gary (January 16, 2004). "Man of contradictions" (<http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Korea/FA16Dg03.html>). Asia Times.
3. holtzbrinck publishers (<http://www.holtzbrinckpublishers.com/academic/Book/BookDisplay.asp?BookKey=1325433>)
4. [1] (<http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?articleId=9868>)
5. <http://www.unification.org/ucbooks/earlyyears/index.html>
6. Los Angeles Times: Samsung doesn't find satirical spoof amusing (<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/asia/la-fg-korea-samsung-20100510,0,7395282,full.story>)
7. "What People Got for Christmas" (full text) by Michael Breen (<http://thebobster.wordpress.com/2010/05/13/michael-breen-%E2%80%9Cwhat-people-got-for-christmas%E2%80%9D/>) December 25, 2009 (Note: Original publication was in the Korea Times, but later the original column was removed.)
8. 한국 '조롱' 마이클 브린, "사과한 것 맞아?" (Michael Breen mocking Korea, Is he really going to apologize to us?) (http://www.ebn.co.kr/news/n_view.html?id=437428)(**Korean**)2010-05-14. EBN News
9. "Samsung Sues Satirist, Claiming Criminal Defamation, Over Satirical Column Poking Fun At Samsung" (<http://www.techdirt.com/articles/20100510/1820159367.shtml>). Techdirt. 2010-05-11. Retrieved 2010-09-04.
10. Glionna, John M. (2010-05-10). "Samsung doesn't find satirical spoof amusing" (<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/asia/la-fg-korea-samsung-20100510,0,7395282,full.story>). *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved 2010-05-23.

External links

- Bio page (http://insightcomms.com/sub/team/team_leader01.htm) at Insight Communications Consultants
- An interview with Michael Breen (<http://blog.colinmarshall.org/?p=2554>) on *Notebook on Cities and Culture*

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