

MSNBC Twitterer Fired for Race Baiting; Chris Matthews Still Employed

On Wednesday night, conservatives honed in on offensive tweet that appeared on MSNBC's official Twitter feed. The full tweet read, *"Maybe the rightwing will hate it, but everyone else will go awww: the adorable new #Cheerios ad w/biracial family."*

The comment was in reference to a new television commercial for Cheerios entitled "Gracie" that features a biracial family enjoying a breakfast conversation at their kitchen table. The implication by the MSNBC employee behind the tweet, of course, was that the *rightwing* in this country is racist, and therefore they would surely be disgusted by the visual scene of a family with one white parent and one black parent.

As is often the case with controversial statements on Twitter, this one received an enormous amount of attention in a very short period of time. Much of that attention understandably came in the form anger, which conservative blogger Michelle Malkin tapped down by instead encouraging fellow conservatives to reply to the tweet with pictures of their own biracial families. Many did. Additionally, Republican National Committee chairman Reince Priebus jumped into the act, calling for a GOP boycott of the network.


The tweet was soon deleted and replaced with the following statement: "Earlier, this account tweeted an offensive line about the new Cheerios ad. We deeply regret it. It does not reflect the position of msnbc."

Less than 24 hours later, MSNBC president Phil Griffin issued a public statement calling the tweet, "outrageous and unacceptable." He apologized for the incident, reiterated that

the tweet had been deleted, and announced that the person responsible for it had been “dismissed,” aka fired.

I suppose Griffin should be commended for taking swift action on this matter, but I must say that I’m terribly confused by his rationale for doing so. If making an “outrageous and unacceptable” statement that presumes racism in conservatives is grounds for firing someone, how can he possibly keep people like Chris Matthews on the payroll who routinely do that very same thing in front of the MSNBC cameras?

During MSNBC’s coverage of the 2012 presidential election alone, Matthews made numerous statements of presumptive racism that Wednesday’s tweet pale in comparison to. He categorized terms including “food stamps”, “welfare”, “European economics”, “Chicago”, and the phrase “nature and God” as “racial codewords” that Republicans were using to give a wink and nod to their *racist base*. He also went as far as saying that Republicans wanted to take the country back to the days of slavery, which seems to me to be quite a bit more offensive than saying that they hated the notion of a biracial family.

Matthews certainly hasn’t let up since then, outright declaring just last month that Republicans are “racists” for not wanting to raise the minimum wage. 

Matthews obviously isn’t alone at MSNBC. Numerous hosts at the network including Lawrence O’Donnell, Melissa Harris-Perry, Al Sharpton, and until recently, Martin Bashir have turned such talk into an art-form. They’ve helped make race-baiting a large part of MSNBC’s culture. It’s indisputably one of the network’s hallmarks.

All the MSNBC twitterer is guilty of, in my opinion, was trying to “fit in” to the MSNBC culture. Blaming him or her for doing so is like blaming someone for sitting on a park bench. It’s not a misdeed. It’s what is expected and encouraged.

