

The Presumption of Racism Has Stunted America's Growth



When Barack Obama won the presidency in 2008, I was not a happy camper. The thought of a liberal ideologue with no leadership experience (but grand dreams of “fundamentally transforming” the country) sitting in the Oval Office wasn’t at all appealing to a *right-leaning* fellow like me. Still, I did see a silver lining in his victory. I thought the

election of our first black president would go a long way in helping to heal the country’s racial divide that still existed – despite having made significant strides over the decades.

Boy, was I wrong.

It didn’t take long for some on the left to begin using the president’s skin color as a political weapon against those who had the gall to disagree with his agenda. Loud opposition to President Obama was not portrayed by the media as *patriotic*, like it was during the Bush era, but as an ugly display of racial bias put forth by people who just couldn’t accept that a black man was now the leader of the free world.

The Tea Party, who had a very clear policy message, was depicted and marginalized as a bunch of *angry, old white guys*, and during the 2012 presidential campaign, liberal media outlets obsessed over dissecting the political rhetoric of Republican candidates and deciding that it contained a slew of racist “dog whistles.” That sentiment trickled its way down to the public and became conventional wisdom for some.

The incessant race-baiting has harmed American culture. It has diminished the capacity of people to view accusations of racism responsibly and objectively. A reasonable level of scrutiny no longer has to be met in order for a divisive racial narrative to be put forth and bolstered by the media. In far too many cases, a *presumption of racism* has been applied to people and events that have provided no basis for that judgement. We've seen it done recently with the high-profile, unfortunate deaths of black men like Michael Brown in Ferguson.

The so-called civil rights leaders like Al Sharpton, who've latched onto the tragedies, seem to be pushing the theme that *any* scenario, that results in a black person being killed by a white person, is *murder* attributable to racism. The circumstances surrounding the event don't really seem to matter. Neither do the eye-witness accounts or the physical evidence. The narrative being wielded is that it's "open season" for killing black men in this country, and the facts and statistics just aren't going to stand in the way of the oratory.

Many people are reasoned enough to see past the vitriol and recognize these deaths as the tragedies they are without jumping to the conclusion that institutional racism is to blame. They realize that while racism still exists, it's not a contributing factor to the number of untimely, black deaths in this country.

Many others, however, aren't so reasoned – especially young people. They've been taught through academia and media-driven, politically correct sensibilities that America is still a fundamentally bigoted country, despite a black man being elected to the highest office in the land – twice. They've been taught that the societal sins of several decades ago are still being practiced with impunity by the *white establishment*.

The dishonesty of this narrative, and society's inability to have a mature, open discussion about race is absolutely devastating to our culture. We've seen it in the way the country's economic and social discrepancies are portrayed as a products of racial oppression. We've seen it in the stores that were looted and set ablaze in Ferguson. In my home state of Colorado on Wednesday, we saw it in the way high school students, who were protesting against the Ferguson grand jury decision, reportedly cheered when four police officers managing traffic for their march were struck by an out of control vehicle.

Let's examine that last example for a minute. In Denver, police officers were working on traffic control duty for the benefit of students from East High School who walked out of class to protest the decision not to indict Officer Darren Wilson. When four of those officers were struck by a runaway car – resulting in critical injuries to one of them – some of the protesters were heard cheering and chanting “hit him again.” That is beyond deplorable.

The Denver Police Protective Association released the following statement in regard to the protesters: “These actions are not only reprehensible but quite possibly the most disturbing thing this Association has ever heard.”

I don't doubt the sincerity in that statement. I'm sure it was indeed one of the most disturbing things the DPPA has ever encountered, and its no coincidence that it happened now, in 2014, when reckless, racial rhetoric is drowning out reasoned discussion.

When people let ethnic solidarity or collective guilt blind them to the cold, hard facts surrounding a situation, we have truly lost as a society. Never did I think in 2009 that race relations would actually worsen in this country over the next six years, but that appears to be what has happened. Presumptive racism has been a major cause of it.

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