

About My Letter to the NY Times ...

☒ On Thanksgiving morning the New York Times ran a page one story under this headline:

“Experts Weigh Officer’s Decisions Leading to Fatal Shooting of Michael Brown”

The Times acknowledges that, “ To many experts, Officer [Darren] Wilson’s actions in the confrontation with Mr. Brown – as he described them to the grand jury – were within the bounds of standard police protocol.”

Then, as the headline foreshadows, the story goes on to quote several other experts who say Officer Wilson could have done things differently, things that might have de-escalated the tense situation and avoided the tragic conclusion.

Fair enough. But I figured it wasn’t enough to simply tell us what Officer Wilson could have done differently. So I wrote the following letter to the editor of the Times:

“Your page one story on what Ferguson, Mo. Police officer Darren Wilson might have done differently to avoid fatally shooting 18-year old Michael Brown is important journalism, and the expert observations in the story might save some other young man’s life sometime in the future. Now, Times editors might want to consider doing a story on what Michael Brown might have done differently – given how many needlessly provocative things he did that led to his demise. That story might, if you decide to do it, also save some young man’s life sometime in the future.”

The Times chose not to publish my letter, despite its impeccable reasonableness (if I do say so myself). Let’s just say I’m not surprised.

So while I'm making suggestions that are filed in the trash can, here's another one – this one aimed at the high school and college students – and everyone else – who have taken to the streets the last few days to protest the shooting death of Michael Brown.

Next time you decide to march and block traffic, do it for causes that might actually help black people in America. For instance, you might consider protesting the epidemic of black girls having babies with no hopes of marrying the father. Having a baby when you're not much more than a baby yourself – with no husband around – is a road to poverty. An out of wedlock birth rate in black America of more than 70 percent is the major cause of income inequality in this country – not racism.

And while you're at it, protest the high school dropout rate among black boys. That's another reason they don't do well when they get older

March with signs that say, "Stop the violence in black communities" – black-on-black violence that kills far more young black males than all the white racist cops in all 50 states put together.

Of course, this will never happen. Too many liberals in America treat black people like hothouse flowers. To condemn dysfunctional behavior is seen as "blaming the victim" – and letting whitey off the hook.

So thank goodness for black men like Charles Barkley who when asked on a Philadelphia radio show about Ferguson said this: "There's a perception amongst some black people that if you're not a thug or a hood rat, you don't wear your pants down by your [expletive] you're not black enough. And they're always holding us back, plain and simple. And I ain't shutting up and I ain't backing down."

As for the perception among many blacks and white liberals

that the real problem is bad white cops, Barkley had this to say: "If it wasn't for the cops, we'd be living in the wild wild west in our neighborhoods. We can't pick out certain incidents that don't go our way and act like the cops are all bad. I hate when we do that. Think about it. Do you know how bad some of these neighborhoods would be if it wasn't for the cops?"

Racism comes in many forms. There's the old fashioned kind that we all know about. And yes, in a country of more than 300 million people, some Neanderthals are still around, unfortunately. But they're not doing as much harm these days as the softer, gentler kind of racists – the liberal kind filled with "good intentions."

As I wrote in my letter that the liberal New York Times didn't see fit to print: Run a story on what Michael Brown might have done differently – not just what Officer Wilson might have done differently – if you're really interested in saving some young black man's life sometime in the future.

As for the demonstrators who think blocking traffic is a way to focus attention on racist cops: It isn't. It turns the public against your cause. But it does make the demonstrators – especially the young, white ones – feel good about their supposed nobility. It makes them feel like they're *good* white people, not like all those other not-so-good ones. Memo to white liberals: Having "good racial manners" is all about you; it's all about you feeling good about yourself. And it doesn't do a hell of a lot for black people.