

The Civil Rights Movement Reenactors on the Left

✘ As a conservative columnist, I'm pretty used to being called some fairly colorful names by some of the liberal readers who find their way to this website and don't like what I have to say. At least they don't *think* they like what I have to say, because I'm pretty confident, based on their remarks, that they don't actually ever make it beyond the first paragraph of what I've written before they start casting aspersions.

Some of the more common names I'm called, that make it past the profanity filter, are "liar", "racist", "redneck", "bigot", and "hater". On occasion, however, I'll get some more exotic ones that I can't help but chuckle at. One of them is "Civil War reenactor" – you know, one of those passionate hobbyists who dons old military attire and participates in elaborate recreations of American Civil War battles between the North and the South. I've been called that more than once, and I've noticed over time that it's actually become a fairly common insult for liberals to toss at conservatives on the Internet.

The joke, of course, is that conservatives are supposed to be a bunch of unsophisticated, gun-toting windbags who share a bigoted, southern mentality of longing for the *good old days* when men fought for *important things* like keeping slavery alive. In other words, it's a convenient way of using a stereotype to load a barrage of insults into a single, handy phrase.

Well done, Internet. Well done.

It kind of makes sense why liberals would view that Civil War reenactment hobby with such disdain. It involves guns, it

typically takes place in red states, and it's made up primarily of people who would not only never vote Democrat, but seem to have a legitimate fascination with the Confederate Army.

People like Bill Maher have certainly made their opinions clear on the topic. Maher views any sort of celebratory throwback to the Civil War era of American History as being morally repugnant because of what the Confederacy fought for.

In a piece entitled "The Foolishness of Civil War Reenactors" written for *Salon* in 2011, liberal historian Glenn W. LaFantasie stated a similar point of view.

"...the entire idea of commemorating the Civil War strikes me as perverse, including bloodless battle reenactments," LaFantasie writes. *"Why would anyone want to replicate one of the worst episodes in American history? Why would anyone want to pretend to be fighting a battle that resulted in lost and smashed lives on the field and utter grief among the soldiers' loved ones back home?"*

LaFantasie even takes a pretty personal swipe at the actors themselves: *"They live and breathe the war readily, without hesitation, and with a passion that veers close to a religious experience or even sexual arousal."*

Wow. That was a pretty scathing critique. Yet, I think it was probably pretty representative of how most liberals (at least the elites) feel about Civil War reenactors, if they've ever thought about them at all. Maybe the point has merit. Maybe it doesn't. Either way, it's fascinating for me to hear this perspective, because if such an activity truly is met with eye-rolls by the left, how can these same liberals fail to notice that they have their own army of *perverse* reenactors that make the Civil War enthusiasts look as dignified as NASA astronauts.

I'm talking about the *Civil Rights Movement* reenactors.

These are the people who refuse to accept, despite all evidence to the contrary, that racial relations in this country are significantly better than they were in the 1960's. I'm talking about all those liberal journalists who *only* find stories of violence against minorities to be emblematic of a broader cultural problem when a black person is harmed or killed at the hands of a white person. As we've seen with Michael Brown in Ferguson, these people don't bother to wait for the facts to come out before drawing the conclusion that a racially-driven hate-crime was committed. All that matters is the societal outrage. That's why they came up with the term "White Hispanic" to describe George Zimmerman; they feared the story of a black teenager being shot by a Hispanic just wouldn't send a powerful enough message. It wasn't 1960's enough.

I'm also talking about the hustlers like Al Sharpton who fly into racially tense situations merely to cling to their own relevance by firing people up with the same grievance rhetoric they've been using for decades.

As Bernard Goldberg stated in his column this week, these people "*need* to feel that black kids are being hunted down like rabid dogs by modern day Bull Connors."

Why do they need to believe that? Perhaps it would be better to phrase the question as Glenn W. LaFantasie did: ***Why would anyone want to replicate one of the worst episodes in American history?***

A lot of lefties – journalists in particular – recognize the Civil Rights movement of the 1960's as the immensely important turning point in U.S. history that it was. They see it – and understandably so – as perhaps the biggest news story of the modern era. The ultimate fantasy of such people is to pretend that they were somehow a part of it. The problem with that, of course, is that most of them weren't. Most were either born too late or entered their journalistic profession too late.

Yet, their liberal sensibilities have left them with the inherent belief that the United States of America is still riddled with social and racial injustice, and hasn't progressed all that much over the past few decades. It doesn't seem to matter that the country elected an African American president to the highest office in the land... twice! A modern era, where racism has been greatly marginalized, just isn't what these people want to see.



Because they don't have a souped-up DeLorean to drive back to the 1960's in, all they can do is willfully fool themselves into believing we never left those days. Thus, what we end up with is *activist journalism* from people vying to be this generation's new Civil Rights heroes. We get headlines like "ARREST HIM!" that appeared on the *Huffington Post* website after an autopsy revealed that the police officer who shot Michael Brown shot him six times. We get reporters releasing pictures of where the police officer who fired the shots lives, as well as the license plates of the cars belonging to his supporters. We watch the people who've been calling for law enforcement transparency get angry when the information that's released doesn't play into the narrative of a white racist who targeted a black victim.

It's the height of irresponsibility, but the Civil Rights Movement reenactors are enjoying the ride. You can see it in how excited they are just to be a part of it, even when they're fleeing teargas, getting arrested, and being pelted by rocks thrown from the very protesters they're pulling for.

To quote LaFantasie again, "*They live and breathe the war readily, without hesitation, and with a passion that veers close to a religious experience or even sexual arousal.*"

I apologize for leaving you with that imagery, but the point had to be made.