

What Would Martin Luther King Think of Chris Matthews?

✘ Like many people in our country, I was born after the African-American Civil Rights Movement. I wasn't around to witness the shameful legalities of racial discrimination, and the bold acts of civil disobedience led by brave heroes to end that discrimination. No, I learned of the historical plight where many of us did: From school, film footage, and the words of the great Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

King's *dream* of a colorblind society has made him one of the most important figures in all of American history. He died for that dream, but thanks to his bravery, leadership, and moral messages of freedom and equality, his dream now flourishes in this country.

On the few occasions when I'm asked which people inspire me the most, Martin Luther King, Jr. is always right at the top of that list. In my view, King's most powerful message was that he wanted his children to grow up in a country where they "will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character." It's such an amazingly profound statement to me, and he phrased it so simply and earnestly that its meaning was unmistakable.

That's why I find it absolutely astonishing that, after nearly fifty years of amazing racial strides in this country, many proclaimed admirers of King seem to have absolutely no clue what the man gave his life for. They not only fail to understand it, but manage to unwittingly marginalize and even pervert King's dream under the premise of defending it.

From a media standpoint, the most vocal offender has to be MSNBC's Chris Matthews. While there's no shortage of knee-jerk race-baiters in the left-wing media, Matthews is in a class

all by himself. He has actually managed to pollute the sincere meaningfulness of the *actual* civil rights movement, by conducting a hair-on-fire, satirical civil rights movement of his own.

The *Chris Matthews Civil Rights Movement* isn't about freedom, racial equality, or advancing society. It's about taking viewpoints that he disagrees with, reflexively crumpling them up into something unrecognizable, then unraveling them through a nonsensical methodology to expose the inevitable conclusion of *racism*.

He's been skipping down this tasteless and obnoxious path for some time now, but while broadcasting from the Republican National Convention this week, he demonstrated just how truly demented he has become.

Monday night, he interviewed former presidential candidate, Newt Gingrich. Matthews took the opportunity to accuse both Gingrich and Mitt Romney of using "racial code words" (a favorite phrase of his over the past year) by bringing attention to the large number of Americans that are on welfare and food stamps. According to Matthews, if you point out that an unhealthy, unsustainable number of people are reliant on these programs, you're a racist. Why? Well, Matthews' rationale is that when the public thinks about welfare and food stamps, they also think of black people. So if those programs are mentioned aloud, the public (presumably white people) will be inclined to believe that black people are a drag on our society. Matthews has been insisting that Republicans realize this, and that's why they keep bringing up the topic.

Newt Gingrich found the obvious irony in Matthews' logic: It's Chris Matthews (not the Republicans) who is making the connection between welfare, food stamps, and the black community. The Republicans have merely stated the numbers without any mention of ethnicity. Of course, that observation

was adamantly rejected by the *Chris Matthews Civil Rights Movement*.

That same day, an unhinged Matthews scolded RNC chairman, Reince Priebus, for the Republican party's criticism of the president's recent changes to welfare eligibility requirements. "You are playing that little ethnic card there!" Matthews chided, forcing even his liberal colleagues seated at the same table to squirm uncomfortably in their chairs. "It's a race card!"

When Priebus stated that Obama is using a European approach in managing our economy, Matthews screamed, "You're doing it again!... You're saying he's influenced by *foreign* influences! You're playing that card again!" Matthews' assertion was that if you believe the president is taking our economy in the direction of European economies, you're a racist. I would love to be able to explain his thinking on that one, but I started to form a headache when I tried... so I stopped. Sadly, that statement wasn't even the most outrageous one that Matthews made during the discussion...

He complained that Mitt Romney had a cushy life growing up, in comparison to the president. Matthews screamed that President Obama has "an African name, and he's had to live with that!" Aside from the obvious racial condescension of that statement (again, not recognized by the *Chris Matthews Civil Rights Movement*), I found it humorous that Matthews was trying to evoke sympathy for the president's name from a guy named "Reince Priebus".

On Wednesday night, Matthews decried the Republicans for repeatedly mentioning that Barack Obama comes from Chicago. The nerve! How could they do such a thing?! As we all know, the president IS from Chicago. It's the city where he has lived much of his adult life (and still has a house there), it's the city he served public offices in, and it's the city where his presidential campaign is based. According to

Matthews, because there's a significant black population in Chicago, mentioning Chicago in accordance with Obama is another "racial code word." Yes, in the *Chris Matthews Civil Rights Movement*, saying the name of President Obama's hometown is considered *hate speech*.

Later Wednesday, after Vice Presidential nominee Paul Ryan delivered his well-received speech to the RNC crowd, Matthews came forward with some unique, on-the-spot analysis. After hearing Ryan's line about our rights coming from "nature and God", he pondered what type of audience that comment was tailored for. His determination was that it was designed to resonate with people who received their rights prior to 1965. In other words, *white people*. The *Chris Matthews Civil Rights Movement* has apparently decided that either "nature", "God", or a combination of the two are also *racial code words*.

Now, maybe I should cut Matthews a little slack on that last one. It was pretty late at night when he made those comments. He may have just been a bit tired after a long day of identifying other, various forms of racism (I've heard that can be exhausting). Maybe a night's sleep did him some good. When Chuck Todd interviewed him Thursday morning, it was a perfect opportunity to find out if that was the case. To his credit, Matthews' didn't repeat his 1965 reference. Nope, he instead took us back further in time and suggested that the Republican party wanted to take the country back to the days of slavery. Yes, slavery. Thanks for clearing that up, Chris! You're a class act!

At least when Al Sharpton does stuff like this, the motivation is clear. He's just trying to market his career.

But with Matthews, I think it's more complicated than that. Sure, he's a committed liberal with a crippling case of *white guilt*, who is astonishingly desperate to earn acceptance from the hardest-left elements of the Democratic party. But there's something else, and I think it goes to his professional

career. I think he has felt so tormented and bitter over the thumping he's taken from conservative critics over his embarrassing fawning of Barack Obama, that he somewhere along the line blew a gasket.

Four years ago, Chris Matthews sacrificed any journalistic integrity he may have still had to serve as a shameless media-cheerleader from Barack Obama. No one has let him forget it. To this day, he's still often antagonized by hecklers and guests on his show for confessing that he felt a "thrill" up his leg when listening to Obama speak. With his audience dwindling, his media colleagues regularly laughing at him, and his very relevance steadily slipping from his grasp, he's made a life-decision to re-establish himself as a man of great importance – a crusader, if you will. And for a dedicated, bleeding-heart liberal like Matthews, there is no more noble crusade than that of exposing racism.

Thus, he appears to have made it his life mission to strike back at conservatives in the most lethal way he knows how: Exposing *them* as racists. It doesn't matter how ridiculous he sounds in the process. It doesn't matter how illogical his arguments are. It doesn't even matter that his entire supposition (that *wink-and-nod* racism is somehow a political winner in a country that has soundly rejected racism) makes absolutely no sense. He has gone *all in* with the *Chris Matthews Civil Rights Movement*. The result is an angry man with a microphone who sounds more unhinged with each passing day.

Matthews' often references Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in his commentary. It's clear he admires King. One has to wonder, though, what King would have thought of Chris Matthews. I have little doubt that he'd be absolutely ashamed of him, because Matthews' plight pretty much goes against everything that King that stood for.

The *Chris Matthews Civil Rights Movement* isn't about advancing

an oppressed people. It's about presuming racism in order to slander people that Matthews doesn't like. The *Chris Matthews Civil Rights Movement* isn't about judging people by the content of their character. It's about condescendingly assuming that judgement of our African-American president's job performance is not about his character, but about the color of his skin. The *Chris Matthews Civil Rights Movement* isn't about striving for a colorblind society. It's about identifying and differentiating people by their race.

While King risked everything to defeat racism, Matthews uses presumed racism to advance his own sanctimony. While King's message transcends politics, Matthews' message is nothing but pure politics.

Most importantly... Every time Matthews condemns imagined racism, he marginalizes actual racism. Genuine elements of racism absolutely still exist in this country, but those elements are largely ignored because official and unofficial followers of The *Chris Matthews Civil Rights Movement* have turned racism into a satire. They've turned what should be a serious charge – one worthy of attention – into a reflexive insult that is taken with a grain of salt. He's not carrying on Martin Luther King's dream. He's trashing it.

Chris Matthews is earning himself a legacy alright, but not the one he wants. He's securing his proper spot as the national media's most abhorrent buffoon.

The Interesting Reactions to

Don Rickles' Obama Joke

☒ Like many, I consider legendary comedian Don Rickles to be a comedic genius. Though I'm a bit young to have enjoyed his work while he was in his prime, I've always gotten a kick out of his appearances on late-night television shows, and his acting in re-runs of some of the classic television sitcoms he guest-starred on. From his hard-edge, insulting style and quick-wit to his hilarious mannerisms, it's hard not to marvel at the man's talent.

What I didn't realize until just a couple of years ago was something that pretty much everyone else had apparently long been aware of: Just how ethnically offensive Rickles' standup comedy act is. I rented a documentary on Rickles from 2007 entitled, *"Mr. Warmth: The Don Rickles Project."* Only being a casual fan, I had never actually seen one of his uncensored routines. Quite frankly, I was shocked by its content. Jews, Asians, African Americans, the Irish... They were all broken down into the bigoted stereotypes of decades past. Forget the era of political correctness. Rickles' jokes seem to pre-date even the civil rights movement.

The common message from celebrity friends of his, who were interviewed for the documentary, was that Rickles himself is certainly no bigot or racist. Even the hardest-left of the bunch (Roseanne Barr, Sarah Silverman, Kathy Griffin, Carl Reiner, and Whoopi Goldberg) explained that Rickles is essentially *in character* when he's on stage, and his style is a throwback to the "Golden Age" of standup comedy when performers could freely deliver insulting, racially insensitive diatribes. All of his friends conceded that Rickles is probably the only comedian today who could get away with such rankness, due to his legendary status.

Though the double-standard makes me uncomfortable, it's an argument I've bought into. I've never been one to hastily

throw around blanketing accusations of racism (which happens far too often these days) and I'm inclined to recognize Rickles' art form as lighthearted, equal-opportunity denigration.

The consensus seems to be that Rickles can say whatever he wants because he's, well... Don Rickles. Fair enough.

That's why I found it so interesting a couple of days ago when headlines like, "Don Rickles Shocks Hollywood Crowd With Racial Obama Joke", began to appear across the internet. Numerous media sources described a scene that occurred last Thursday night at the American Film Institute's tribute to actress Shirley MacLaine. Don Rickles was a featured speaker at the event, and he made the following joke in front of a microphone:

"I shouldn't make fun of the blacks. President Obama is a personal friend of mine. He was over to the house yesterday, but the mop broke."

The *Hollywood Reporter* reported that the black-tie crowd gasped in reaction to the joke which was said to have "bombed". The *Drudge Report* and numerous other news-sites linked to the story, and the topic was discussed on a number of cable-news shows. *The Politico* actually felt the need to contact Rickles' people for comment, who made it clear that Don is not a racist. Regardless, Viacom (who owns TV Land) announced days later that the joke will be edited out of the television broadcast of the event, which is planned for June 24th. Their decision was reported by ABC News among others.

Now, I'll be the first to admit that Rickles' joke wasn't funny. Even beyond the realm of political correctness, it was lazy at best.

What kind of fascinates me, though, is the reaction the joke has received. There seems to be a consensus that the quip was newsworthy. Enough media outlets have picked up on the story

to conclude that. And judging by the reactions of both the Hollywood elites who were in attendance, and Viacom, the joke apparently crossed a line that they weren't comfortable with.

My question in both cases is... Why?

If even the ultra politically-correct society we live in today has deemed Don Rickles a pass on his choice of comedy, why is such a joke a controversy?

After all, the celebrity-roasts that Viacom has aired on its Comedy Central channel have proudly featured far more offensive rhetoric than anything that came out of Don Rickles' mouth last Thursday. If you don't believe me, just watch their roast of William Shatner and the types of jokes that were made at George Takei's expense.

To me, it seems that the controversy comes directly from the fact that Rickles' joke was aimed at the sacred cow of Hollywood elitism: President Obama.

I wish I could say it stems from Hollywood's reverence to the office of the presidency, but that's clearly not the case. Hollywood liberals and Viacom were never queasy when it came to raking President Bush over the coals. Virtually nothing was off-limits when it came to Bush, even on TV Land whose annual award show featured presenters that regularly skewered the president.

No, it's different because it's Barack Obama. That's what makes it controversial. That's also what makes it yet another example of how defensive the left, in this case Hollywood, has been of the president since he took office.

Liberals were taken back by the joke because, with Obama, they felt it was overboard. I'm pretty confident that if Rickles had made the same joke about Herman Cain, there would have been no collective gasp and Viacom would not have edited it out of the broadcast. After all, Viacom didn't edit out Jon

Stewart's controversial Herman Cain impersonation on Comedy Central's *Daily Show*.

Conservatives, on the other hand, are fascinated with the story because they don't often hear stinging jokes made about President Obama, especially by Hollywood darling like Don Rickles. It's something very rare.

In the end, the overall reaction to the joke is more of a symptom of the kid-gloves President Obama has been approached with over the past four years, than it is anything else. Don Rickles should be left to be *Don Rickles*. How is it fair for Hollywood to suspend the exemption they've long given to Don Rickles' humor in order to maintain the exemption *from* humor that they've given to Barack Obama?

Listen Up: I'm Not a Racist!

☒ Every time I turn around, someone is calling me a racist.

A Facebook "friend" constantly ranted about the tea party people, calling them racists because they disagreed with our President. Not being a tea party member, but agreeing with a lot of what they're about, I "unfriended" her after I got sick and tired of hearing it. She never asked me why I unfriended her, but she'll mention it every time she sees my husband. He tells her, "don't get me involved."

Just about every week, some "celebrity" is spouting off and calling anyone who doesn't think our President walks on water a racist. You can also hear this mantra from the likes of Chris Matthews over at MSNBC.

Just for the record, I am not a racist.

I don't care if President Obama is all black, all white, half black, half white, Native American, part Asian, all Asian or any other race, creed, nationality or religion.

I don't care where he was born or in what country he was raised. I'm not interested that he ate dog as a child in Indonesia. I don't care who his mother was or whether his father was from Africa. I don't care his grandparents raised him or that he lived in Hawaii.

Where he went to school, how well he did or didn't do, what kind of education he received, what degrees he earned or the fact he was the editor of the Harvard Law Review doesn't impress me.

I do care that his friends included America-haters Bill Ayers and Jeremiah Wright only to the extent they shaped the President's views of America.

It's his business who he married except when she tries to get into my kitchen and tells me what to eat. I couldn't care less if he's a good husband, how many children he has, or whether he's a good father. I don't care whether he had girlfriends before he was married or whether he has any friends.

I don't care whether he can bowl, likes beer, looks good in a tuxedo or on the beach, can read from a teleprompter, likes Al Green or Paul McCartney, likes basketball, whether people think he's "cool," or whether he can sing or dance or slow jam the news.

I don't like his policies. Plain and simple.

I didn't like him in 2008 when he wanted to "spread the wealth" as he told Bill O'Reilly in an interview back then, and I still don't like him in 2012 because he still wants to "spread the wealth" by taxing millionaires, which, by the way, isn't going to make even a dent in our horrendous debt.

I don't like that he's spending us into bankruptcy. I don't like that he's raised our national debt over \$4 trillion since taking office less than four years ago.

I didn't like his stimulus package which cost the American taxpayer over \$800 billion dollars with very little to show for it. I don't like his philosophy that government creates jobs (except, of course, government jobs which continue to grow under his administration).

I don't like Obamacare. I don't like the government telling me I have to buy something. I can only hope the Supreme Court will overturn this debacle.

I don't like that he's turned a Constitutional issue regarding freedom of religion into a "war on women."

I don't like that in 1996 as a candidate for State Senator, Mr. Obama supported same-sex marriage, then while running for President in 2008 said his views were evolving and now in 2012, he's come out of the closet and says he supports same-sex marriage. I'm with the 67% of those surveyed, in a recent NY Times poll, who believes his change of heart is politically motivated. (Being opposed to same-sex marriage, I've now subjected myself to a double-whammy. Too some, I'm now a racist homophobe.)

Let me say it one more time. I don't like his policies. Period.

They See Racists Everywhere ...

☒ So I'm reading the op-eds in the Sunday New York Times and the headline catches my eye: "What's Race Got to Do With

It?" I roll my eyes and say to myself, Here we go again.

The column is by Lee Siegel, an opinion writer of the liberal persuasion, whose main point is – and these are his exact words – “Mitt Romney is the whitest white man to run for president in recent memory.”

“Of course,” he says, “I’m not talking about a strict count of melanin density. I’m referring to the countless subtle and not-so-subtle ways he telegraphs to a certain type of voter that he is the cultural alternative to America’s first black president.”

Bet you didn’t see that one coming. Just kidding.

Romney’s “whiteness,” says Siegel, is “grounded in a retro vision of the country, one of white picket fences and stay-at-home moms and fathers unashamed of working hard for corporate America.”

Sounds good to me. But Siegel’s not-so-subtle point is that this was also racist America.

So what’s he getting at? Simple, that Romney offers “millions of Americans” who are unwilling to accept Mr. Obama as someone who legally and morally deserves to sit in the White House “the white solution of the problem of a black president.” He goes on to say that, “I am sure that Mr. Romney is not a racist. But I am also sure that, for the many Americans who find the thought of a black president unbearable, he is an ideal candidate.”

Ok, so let’s review: According to Lee Siegel, Mitt Romney is not a racist, but he appeals to millions of racists in America – because of his whiteness – and this whiteness “could well put him over the top in the fall.”

This is not political analysis. It is something mean and shallow that is only masquerading as political analysis. Are

there racists in a country of some 310 million people? Unfortunately, yes. Do some of these bigots like Romney because he's white and Mr. Obama is black? Probably. But in a big country like ours there are also black racists who also see things through a prism of color. That's not Barack Obama's fault; and the white racists aren't Mitt Romney's fault.

It's true that Siegel never blames Romney for the racists out there. But like a drive-by gangster he sprays his bullets recklessly. After all, what are we to think of a white man who appeals to bigots?

A few weeks ago, Andrew Rosenthal, the paper's editorial page editor, published a blog about white racism in America, or at least his view of it, saying that, "There has been a racist undertone to many of the Republican attacks leveled against President Obama for the last three years, and in this dawning presidential campaign."

He even goes further than Siegel and accuses Romney of "oblique" racism because Romney has said that president Obama wants to create an "entitlement society."

So merely saying that the president believes in big government, with its many programs that "spread the wealth around" – which strikes me as nothing more than a run-of-the-mill political accusation – somehow, in the liberal mind, is racist.

My friend Bill O'Reilly believes these people are saying these inane things in order to energize the black vote. I don't think so. I think they're saying these inane things because a) they honestly believe that conservatives have bigotry running through their DNA and b) these pundits, despite their SAT scores, are not very smart people.

They fancy themselves progressives, but they haven't progressed at all from the bad old days of segregation and Jim

Crow. They still live in 1955 America. They see racism everywhere. In a strange and sad way, this warped view of America makes them feel better about themselves. They're the good ones, they can tell themselves. The ones who aren't racists.

And I'm starting to think that the liberal nonsense that dresses itself up as analysis is the face of a growing fear among the liberal elite. Fear that their messiah may fall. They could never accept that he may be rejected because of his policies or because of incompetence. That would be too painful, given how much of their own hopes and dreams they have invested in him. It must be something else. And what else could it be, except for racism?

Inside their comfy, liberal elite bubble, the only reason the great Barack Obama could lose is because of the rampant bigotry in America. It's nonsense, for sure. But it's a lot easier for them to take than reality.

Race and the NY Times

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