

Zimmerman is Not Guilty – What About the Media?

✘ There are certain things polite people are not supposed to say out loud, and certainly not in public. I thought of this while listening to what passes for television analysis after the George Zimmerman verdict came in.

First, let's acknowledge that Trayvon Martin's death is a tragedy. I'll go so far as to say it was a tragedy that should never have happened. I think George Zimmerman, the "wannabe cop," was too vigilant that night.

I also think George Zimmerman profiled Trayvon Martin – and profiled him because he was a young black man in a predominantly white neighborhood. But what polite people don't do in public is talk about *why* George Zimmerman was suspicious of 17-year old Trayvon Martin.

The morning after the verdict came in, Ben Jealous, who heads the NAACP, told Bob Schieffer on Face the Nation that, "Too many people in our country use color as grounds for suspicion."

He's right. But what he didn't get into is that they do it for a reason. And Bob Schieffer, a white man from Texas, wasn't about to press the head of the NAACP about why skin color might be grounds for suspicion.

The sad fact is that while African Americans make up only about 12 or 13 percent of the population, and young black men considerably less than that, they commit a disproportionate amount of crime. This is no secret. Everybody knows it's true, even anchormen and other white liberals. So when Zimmerman saw this black kid in his mostly white, gated community, he did some quick, reflexive calculations – and thought the boy might be up to no good. Yes, he did use color

as a ground for suspicion.

That doesn't make Trayvon Martin a criminal, of course, but it also doesn't make George Zimmerman a racist. He had the same thoughts about Trayvon Martin that most of us would have had, whether we admit it or not.

If I were black I wouldn't like this stereotyping. I'd say Trayvon Martin had as much right to be inside the gates of that community as George Zimmerman did. He shouldn't have been looked upon as a potential criminal.

But he was looked upon with suspicion because, as painful as it is to acknowledge, he looked like too many other black kids in hoodies who do bad things. Black people know this better than anyone else. They're the victims of most black crime. Remember what Jesse Jackson said several years back. "There is nothing more painful to me at this stage in my life than to walk down the street and hear footsteps and start thinking about robbery. Then look around and see somebody white and feel relieved." Does that make the Reverend Jackson a racist – or a realist?

Television host Tavis Smiley, who also is black, was also on television Sunday morning. He told George Stephanopoulos on ABC's This Week, "For many Americans [the verdict] is another piece of evidence of the incontrovertible contempt that this nation often shows and displays for black men."

Stephanopoulos, being a polite white liberal man, of course didn't say, "Black men are doing a pretty good job of showing incontrovertible contempt for each other in our nation. Have you checked the crime statistics for Chicago on any given weekend? The Ku Klux Klan isn't killing those young black men. Black thugs are."

So-called civil rights leaders, like Al Sharpton, painted a picture of a black teenager walking home and being attacked by a white vigilante for absolutely no reason except that the boy

was black – and, of course, because the shooter was sort of white. If Sharpton and the others talked about the fight that immediately led up to the shooting, I missed it. Instead, they preferred to peddle a fairy tale version of what happened. They left out the ugly stuff – that there was plenty of reason to believe Trayvon Martin was on top of George Zimmerman pummeling his head into the concrete sidewalk right before Zimmerman fired his gun. And, of course, none of the mostly white, mostly liberal anchors, said, “Hold on, you’re leaving something very important out of your story.”

This is what is known as showing good racial manners. It’s how white people behave to show that they’re not bigots like all those other white people. Never mind that treating black people like delicate flowers is a kind of soft bigotry all by itself. All that matters is that white people – white liberals, mostly – feel better ... about themselves.

Another recurring theme coming from liberal analysts, black and white, after the verdict was that in America we don’t put the same value on black lives as we do on white lives. That’s certainly true when it comes to the liberal media.

Every weekend in big cities across America numerous black kids shoot and often kill each other. None of these stories get very much national media attention and none of them get wall-to-wall TV coverage the way the Zimmerman trial did. Is this because liberal white journalists don’t put the same value on black lives as they do on white lives? It sure looks that way.

Let’s end by stating the obvious: The single biggest reason the trial got so much attention is because it played into a narrative, a false one to be sure, but one that many blacks and many white liberals love to perpetuate. It’s the Great American Drama about how white people get away with not only oppressing black people, but even get away with killing them. Isn’t that what Tavis Smiley meant when he said, ““For many

Americans [the verdict] is another piece of evidence of the incontrovertible contempt that this nation often shows and displays for black men.”

Someone needs to tell Mr. Smiley, the Reverend Sharpton, the civil rights establishment and white liberals both in and out of the media that we are no longer living in 1955 Mississippi. If there is a crime involving two races today, the victim is most likely going to be white and the criminal is most likely going to be black – not the other way around. That may be one more thing polite people aren't supposed to say out loud – and certainly not in public.