



illustration by Jovian Turnbull

Post Racial America or Post Blatantly-Racist America?

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We are living in less hostile times as far as race is concerned.

Less than 100 years-ago, those who bucked the Jim Crow system—blacks and whites—were subjected to ridicule, violence, and in some states even punishment by law. Peaceful civil rights demonstrators were sprayed with powerful water hoses and attacked by police dogs. Without intimate protection from federal troops, the Little Rock Nine could've perished to the angry, hatred-driven mob that gathered outside Central High for days in 1957, after the nine African-American students enrolled in the predominantly white school. The Freedom Riders were threatened, beaten and some nearly killed as they rode public buses throughout the South to resist several states' illegal noncooperation with federal desegregation laws at the time.

But all that was 60-something years ago. This nation has undoubtedly come a long

way from the segregated, discriminative and once-normal lifestyles of Americans, particularly in the South. You won't see blacks and "abolitionist-type" whites hanging from nooses on trees and light-poles.

Children of all races can be seen attending school together on any given day. You won't find "whites only" or "coloreds" signs on bathrooms, water fountains, restaurants, and movie theaters.

With the exception of various hate groups and independent, agenda-driven media outlets, racism is not a mainstream ideology.

Or, is it?

Let's examine the facts.

Since President Barack Obama emerged onto the national political scene, we have witnessed a barrage of disrespectful "satirical" comics and inappropriate remarks towards him. From the recent racist and sexist comic by conservative blogger Darleen Click, depicting Obama as the U.S.'s "rapist", to Geraldine Ferraro's disparaging remarks about his presidency, to a Fox News post calling

Obama's birthday celebration a "Hip-Hop BBQ," it's unwise and quite ignorant to make the claim that we are in post-racial America.

Even before Obama was a prospect, candidates of the late 1980s and early 1990s battled less bashful political racists, enduring smear campaigns and comments that aren't reminiscent of a post-racial nation.

In the '90s, Harvey Gantt, architect, former mayor of Charlotte, and North Carolina Democrat came under the attack of retired Sen. Jesse Helms.

Helms aired a television advertisement that zoomed in on two white hands disposing of a job rejection letter. The audio that accompanied the visual said, "You needed that job and you were best qualified. But they had to give it to a minority because of racial a quota."

That was just 20 years ago. I was alive.

In a post-racial society, global companies like Nivea and Vogue would understand the social repercussions of publishing uncouth material.

Alluding to this fact is frightening. And black president or not, people are still blind and insensitive concerning race relations.

The latest pair of public relation-faux pas are strong indicators of the disregard for true, honest diversity, particularly in the beauty & cosmetics, and fashion industry.

A recent Nivea for Men ad appearing online and in print, nationwide, caused the company to receive a bombardment of complaints and unappealing press on August 4. The ad shows a "clean-cut" black man, with a fresh haircut, nice sweater and collar shirt, jeans, and loafers holding a head that had an afro and beard. The man appears to be on a football field preparing to get rid of the "unruly

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