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Republican

Perspective

The Post-Racial Presidency

By John Littig

Part of Barack Obama's appeal in 2008 was that he was seen as a “post-racial” candidate. His election would mark the beginning of an era in which we could put racial conflict behind us. How has that worked out?

When Trayvon Martin was shot and killed by George Zimmerman, activists Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson declared that the killing was racially motivated. This, despite the fact that the incident had self-defense written all over it, to the extent that the local law enforcement and the district attorney refused to prosecute.

Even President Obama weighed in on the side of racism. CBS News reported that “the president suggested he was sympathetic to suspicion that the shooting may have been racially motivated.” And “You know, if I had a son, he'd look like Trayvon.”

So the activists marched and threatened, and the state of Florida took over the case and mounted a doomed prosecution the result of which was an acquittal - it was self-defense all along. And although the FBI had interviewed over 30 witnesses in their attempt to find Zimmerman a racist, they came up empty.

Nevertheless, after the verdict, the activists re-emerged. Jackson called Florida an “apartheid state” and “our Selma.” Stevie Wonder and White House favorite Jay-Z declared boycotts of Florida. And Eric Holder's Justice Department continues to look for a way to put Zimmerman in prison.

Now comes along the case of Joshua Reddin, Julian McKnight and Lloyd Khemradj, three 15-year-olds who on July 9 beat up a 13-year-old fellow student on a school bus in Pinellas County, Fla. The beating was captured on surveillance and cell phone video.

CNN reported “The wind-milling fists and stomping feet rain down blows on the 13-year-old boy. Trapped on the floor between the bus seats, he cries out as he receives fierce punch after vicious kick from the three bigger, older youths.” The 64-year-old bus

driver radioed “You've got to get somebody here quick, quick, quickŠThey about to beat this boy to deathŠ”

The three assailants have been arrested and charged with aggravated battery. Reddin is also charged with robbery for taking the boy's money after the beating.

Where are Sharpton and Jackson? Have they spoken out on the racial motivation behind this beating? No, they have been dead silent. Has President Obama weighed in? Has he declared the victim would look like his own imaginary son? Not a peep. Oops, did I forget to mention that the assailants are black, the victim white.

Well, truth be told, there likely was no racial motivation--just like the Zimmerman case. It has been reported that the beating was in retaliation for the victim having told school authorities that one of assailants had tried to sell him drugs.

The question, of course, is why the racial activists (including the president!) are quick to jump in declaring racial motivation when the victim is black but not whenŠ. Well, you get the idea.

For additional perspective on the president's treatment of such situations, remember the “beer summit” incident? The president's friend, Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates, was arrested by Cambridge police after a heated confrontation. The president led off with “I don't know, not having been there and not seeing all the facts, what role race played.” Then, just having correctly declared himself ignorant of the facts: “But I think it's fair to sayŠthat the Cambridge police acted stupidlyŠ” and that the incident shows “how race remains a factor in this society.”

Is he right? Does race remain a factor in this society? Well, yes. So much so that this society is willing, even eager, to elect a black president.

There's surely no hope for Sharpton and Jackson. Regardless of the facts, they will forevermore find racism in every confrontation. It's their job.

But this “post-racial” president, at least, should be above declarations of racism when, by his own admission, he doesn't know the facts. Sadly, he is not.

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