

**Republican Perspective**  
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## **Unworthy of Presidential Comment---the Sequel**

In my August 5<sup>th</sup> column, I discussed the inconsistency with which President Obama has publicly commented in favor of some perceived victims but not others. Now comes the police shooting of unarmed teen Zachary Hammond---so let's consider that incident in the context of the earlier discussion.

Here, in condensed form, are the five cited situations in which President Obama was moved to comment---and indeed to point to racial injustice as the issue.

- Henry Louis Gates: “I don't know, not...seeing all the facts, what role race played...But I think...that the Cambridge police acted stupidly...” And “... there is a long history in this country of African-Americans and Latinos being stopped by law enforcement disproportionately.”
- Trayvon Martin: “If I had a son, he'd look like Trayvon.” And “When I think about this boy, I think about my own kids.” And later “...there is a history of racial disparities in the application of our criminal laws...”
- Michael Brown: “The death of Michael Brown is heartbreaking, and Michelle and I send our deepest condolences to his family and his community...”
- Eric Garner: “When anybody in this country is not being treated equally under the law, that's a problem,” he added “...this is an American problem and not just a black problem...when anybody in this country is not being treated equally under the law.”
- Freddie Gray: “...there are problems and challenges when it comes to how policing and our laws are applied in certain communities and we have to pay attention to it.” And “Don't just pay attention to these communities when a CVS burns.”

Here's what happened in the Zachary Hammond case. On July 26, 19-year-old Hammond and an unidentified woman sat in his car in a Hardee's parking lot in Seneca, South Carolina. They were there to sell marijuana to (surprise!) an undercover police officer. Uniformed police lieutenant Mark Tiller approached in support of the narcotics officer.

According to the police version of events, the unarmed Hammond tried to drive away, heading toward Tiller with his car. Tiller, in fear for his life, shot

Hammond at point blank range through the car's open window.

The family's lawyer calls the police version "ridiculous" and "offensive," since Tiller must have been beside rather than in front of the car when he shot Hammond. The lawyer also claims the bullet entry wounds were to the back of Hammond's side, not his front. The county coroner has been mum on this point.

Whatever the truth is, there is certainly a controversy---and the police version seems implausible to many.

So the Hammond case seems ripe for presidential comment, such as "...the police acted stupidly..." and "When I think about this boy, I think about my own kids." As well as for presidential sympathy "Michelle and I send our deepest condolences to his family." But the President has been silent on this one.

We might be able to give the President a pass, though, since he may have been unaware of Hammond's killing at the hands of the Seneca police. The case has been largely ignored in the media. Perhaps this is because there have been no protests, no marches, no looting, no candle-light vigils, no T-shirts featuring the angelic face of the victim. No fiery oratory by Al Sharpton. No CVS has been burned to the ground in honor of the memory of the deceased teen.

Or maybe the President doesn't get a pass after all. If past performance is any indicator, he probably would not have commented in favor of the victim or sent condolences to the family anyway. Why? As you've no doubt already surmised, the Hammond killing does nothing to affirm Obama's narrative of racial injustice and disparate treatment by the police. Thus his killing is unworthy of presidential concern. Hammond was white.