



DON'T JUDGE BLACKS DIFFERENTLY

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Many people believed that the election of a black President would advance America to a new era of racial harmony.

That belief proved to be mistaken. In retrospect it was naive to think that a single event – even the election of a black president – would wash away a stain so deeply ingrained in our culture. The debate about how much racism there is in America – and specifically the disparity between the races – is just as fierce as ever. That's okay with me. Discrimination still exists. Let's deal with it openly and honestly. Unfortunately, that's very hard to do.

One reason, I've discovered, is that many people feel that they have to treat blacks with kid gloves. They think this is noble... enlightened... progressive. It's not. It's demeaning and condescending. In fact, it's racist.

A recent experience brought this home to me. In an anthropology class, my professor decided to discuss the shooting of Michael Brown, a black teenager, by a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri. Before I tell you what transpired, I need to tell you something about this professor. First of all, I like her very much. She's interesting and engaging. But more importantly, she took a non-PC approach to the class, which I found refreshing. She encouraged us to study the data dispassionately and draw our conclusions from that.

But when the subject of Ferguson came up, all this objectivity went out the window. When a classmate said, following a debate over the details of the case, that the facts “ultimately don't matter,” my professor agreed. All that matters, this classmate added, is that a “black boy was killed by a white cop.” Another example of racism in a racist society. Pure and simple.

So, therefore, riots that followed the grand jury decision not to indict the officer were the legitimate reactions of people who “just couldn't take it anymore.” And that's when I knew that what I was really hearing was not an expression of compassion and understanding, but something else.

Rioting and looting are acceptable forms of behavior? Why? Because the rioters and looters have no other options? Really? In free, democratic America, you have no other options? Does this apply to all ethnic groups? Hispanics? Southeast Asians? Pacific Islanders? Of course not.

But we – the enlightened ones – are ready with a pre-packaged list of excuses when blacks riot and loot. Worse, when it comes to judging black behavior, even facts don't matter. All that matters is the skin color of the teenager and the skin color of the cop.

Well, not in my world. If a white cop kills a white kid, the facts matter. If a black cop kills a

black kid, the facts matter. If a black cop kills a white kid, the facts matter. And if a white cop kills a black kid, the facts matters. To suggest anything else is to perpetuate discrimination, the very thing that those who espouse social justice claim to want to end.

Anyone, whether white or any other color, who excuses blacks for bad behavior just because they are black obviously doesn't consider blacks their equal. Rather, they view blacks, in effect, as children who are unable to adhere to the standards to which every other group is held. Think carefully about that. The only difference between this view and that of white supremacists is that white supremacists are honest and open: in their view blacks are inferior to whites. Period.

But those who condescend to blacks cloak themselves in self-righteousness. So, somehow that makes it okay. The bad behavior happens -- a riot in Ferguson -- and they nod knowingly: "They couldn't take it anymore. Who can blame them?" I'll take the white supremacist any day. First, there are very few of them and they have no power. Second I can easily prove them wrong. But how do I shake off the Condescenders, the Patronizers? There are a lot of them, they have a lot of power and they think they mean well. How do I convince them that, as a black human being, I want to be -- I must be --judged by the same standards as everybody else?

So, how about this for a change? Treat blacks equally. Always. In every way. Not differently. Not better. Not worse. Not like we're demons. Not like we're angels. Is that so hard to do?

Because if we really want racial harmony -- not to mention an end to racism -- that's the only way to get there.

I'm Chloe Valdary for Prager University.