



Skin Color in America Can Fuel the Fire of Road Rage

Written by Robert Woodard

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Does the color of your skin make you a target for “Road Rage”? The answer is, Yes. As a Black person living in America, just being pulled over by Police for a simple traffic stop can become fatal. The color of your skin can promote hate and fear in the minds of prejudice communities and Police. In my state of Pennsylvania it is known for having many White Supremacist groups. Prejudice, Bigotry, Hate and Discrimination are all considered unlawful in this country. However, you have the right to voice your opinion which is called “Freedom of Speech”.

Being confronted with “Racial Road Rage” is nothing new to the “Children of Former Slaves” who live in America today. At Woodard’s Barbershop, located in the Wynnefield section of Philadelphia, many of my Patrons have shared with me life threatening bouts they have encountered with Police and other prejudice communities, who reacted with hate, while they were driving down the road. Yes, there is “Road Rage” where Race may not be a major factor, but if the color of your skin is Black, it can escalate the problem of “Road Rage”.

The history of driving while being Black is a serious issue in this Nation and it must be addressed. Black communities would always warn their neighbors to be safe on the road whenever they would travel outside their own neighborhoods. The fear of Police in foreign communities, have always been a threat to Black travelers. I can remember as a child my Grandfather, who was very dark skinned, telling me that my Grandmother, who was very light skinned, made it a threat for him when traveling down south to visit relatives. He told me that she could be mistaken for being a White Woman, which would endanger his life, while simply driving down the road.

Even walking down the road, while being Black, is a battle in this country. Remember, in 1998, in Jasper, Texas, Mr. James Byrd, Jr. was picked up while walking, by three White Males. They drove him to a desolate area, severely beat him, chained him to the back of the truck by his ankles and dragged him for more than three miles resulting in his body falling apart which caused his death. Hence, traveling while being Black, can be very dangerous.

“Racial Road Rage” (RRR) has never been a serious term in America for Whites. However, “RRR” can mean life or death to a Black driver. Ms. Bianca Nikol Roberson, a young High School Graduate, was recently shot in the head by a White Male while driving down the road. He was angered by the hate of “RRR”, so he reacted with hate by shooting her with his registered weapon while he was driving. Remember, by just having a permit for a gun does not give you the right to shoot and kill someone, because of the hatred that causes “RRR”. The stereotypical views of our media and our educational system on how Race is viewed in America can mean life or death to those of darker hue. There needs to be a study on the dangers of driving while being Black in America. I hope the News Media does not try to sweep this latest incident of “Racial Road Rage” under the rug by insisting it was just “Road Rage”.

I, as a Barber, get the opportunity to hear the experiences of many serious horrors and incidents of “RRR”. If we as a Nation are ever going to be truly great, we have to face this serious issue on how we as a Nation view Race. It all starts by listening to those who have suffered from “Racial Road Rage” and stop trying to hide the issue of Race. Remember, how America views Race comes from 400 years of “Chattel Slavery” in this Country and the reality of the horrors and affects for those who just happen to live in dark skin. The aftermath of Slavery in America has caused our Nation to be socially diseased. Hence, anyone

feeling superior or inferior, just because of the color of their skin or the texture of their hair, has two of the major symptoms of this disease. I see this disease in definition as “Post Slavery Syndrome” (PSS). The disease of PSS has affected the “Children of Former Slaves” as well as the “Children of Previous Slave Owners” living in America today. America has the disease and the people both Black and White are affected by it with superior or inferior complexes. In addition, Dr. Avery August of Cornell University has studied a disease called Epigenetics. His studies show that Epigenetics can travel through the blood line with fears from traumas centuries ago into the children of today.

If America is ever really going to be great, it is going to depend on how we educate through our Media as well as our Colleges/Universities and Public Educational Systems. We as Americans must undo the divisive stereotypical views of how we teach our children to view Race, because our children could become the future of a better and greater America tomorrow. Take the “RACE Test” today for a better way at www.BarbershopTalkHFD.org.

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