

The Myth of Post-Racial America and the Lessons of Cliven Bundy and Donald Sterling

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Two arch racists were on national display this week, reminding folks that a post-racial America is a myth. Cliven Bundy did a further service by showing federal reluctance to confront White Terror, while Donald Sterling's case outed the Los Angeles NAACP as a hangout for worthless Black misleaders.

There is nothing like the musings of racist white people to garner media attention and public outrage. Unfortunately there is usually more heat than light generated in these situations and the opportunity to gain insights on the condition of black America is lost.

Such is the case with mooching rancher Cliven Bundy and racist basketball team owner Donald Sterling. Hopefully they woke black Americans from any delusion of a post-racial society and in Sterling's case simultaneously revealed the traitors and mis-leaders in our midst.

Bundy is a Nevada rancher who like 16,000 others across the country grazes his cattle on federal property, which comprises 85% of that state's land area. Bundy is within his rights to graze his cattle there but he is required to pay a fee for doing so. He has gotten away with paying absolutely nothing for 20 years and after losing many court cases now owes the Bureau of Land Management more than \$1 million.

When the BLM finally had enough and confiscated his cattle, Bundy issued a call to arms to other terrorist minded white people. They came from all over the country, pointing guns at federal agents and creating a media firestorm. In the ironically named town of Bunkerville, Bundy held court among his fellow domestic terrorists and became the darling of Fox news and the Republican Party.

It is obvious that black people or even white people on the left would not get away with publicly brandishing fire arms, forming a de facto militia and threatening the lives of federal employees. The government backed down to prevent violence but Bundy's fifteen minutes of fame went on a little too long for his own good. He ended what had been a galvanizing event for the right wing when he uttered his opinions about "niggers." Some media claim he used the word "nigra" and others say "negro" but the [audio is clear](#). Bundy expressed the opinion that black people were better off in slavery than we are today because we had work to do when we picked cotton. He rambled on against abortion and mused about why black people are in jail, but he summed up his theories by saying that freedom just didn't help black people very much. The best part of this debacle was watching Republicans flee from the public relations disaster but the whole episode should be treated as a serious lesson.

Bundy is no outlier in any of the opinions he holds. There are millions of Americans who

would take up arms to kill mostly because they would enjoy it. They might defend their actions with an appeal to patriotism or a sage brush rebellion or doomsday prepping or whatever rationale would be most convenient, but the bottom line is that they would like to get away with killing as many people as possible. That is why we have stand your ground laws and why Georgia recently passed legislation making it legal to carry guns anywhere and everywhere in that state.

Bundy is also not alone in seeing chattel slavery as being worthy of nostalgia. It is not a coincidence that gun and slavery lovers so often find common cause. The two go together and the [Second Amendment](#) is directly tied to the granting of police force status to every white person in the country in the days of slavery. Bundy's popularity is deep and dangerous and he is no less popular now in some circles than he was before he made his remarks. Most racists know how to filter their thoughts in polite society. But Bundy is an ignorant man with no clue about niceties and said what was on his and others' minds. It doesn't matter that Rand Paul and Fox News back tracked from the Bundy love fest. If millions of white Americans were granted their ultimate fantasy, black people would be back in chains on the auction block.

Neither Bundy's actions nor his politics gave him any connection to the black community but Los Angeles Clippers' owner [Donald Sterling](#) is a rich man in a sport where a majority of players and fans are African American. The angst surrounding his racism is far more instructive and also more dispiriting too.

The public drama began with a private one. Sterling's wife wasn't pleased about the amount of time and money he spent on a woman known as V. Stiviano. Mrs. Sterling was so fed up that she sued Stiviano for \$2 million, who decided to tape conversations to protect herself. The rest is history.

It is interesting what the media chose to emphasize and to cover up in their conversation. Sterling's rant was racist and bizarre, telling Stiviano that she could have sex with Magic Johnson but that she shouldn't be photographed with him or bring him or any other black people to Clippers' games. Those words were the main focus of media attention.

Sterling, whose real name is Tokowitz, defended himself by pointing out how badly black people are treated in Israel. This exchange with Stiviano was ignored by many news organizations.

"It's the world! You go to Israel, the blacks are just treated like dogs [emphasis mine]."

"So do you have to treat them like that, too?"

"The white Jews, there's white Jews and black Jews. Do you understand?"

"And are the black Jews less than the white Jews?"

"A hundred percent, fifty, a hundred percent."

Sterling's racism was well known in Los Angeles prior to the taped conversations being revealed but obedience to a rich man protected him from full exposure. In 2008 he was sued by former NBA star and Clippers general manager Elgin Baylor, who claimed a "plantation mentality" permeated the work environment in that organization. Also in 2009 the Sterlings

were forced to pay \$2.7 million due to discriminatory housing practices against black and Latino tenants in apartment buildings they owned in Los Angeles. It was the largest such judgment paid in a housing case at that time. None of this mattered to the Los Angeles branch of the [NAACP](#), which honored Sterling with a humanitarian of the year award in 2009 and was prepared to give him a lifetime achievement award before the scandal was revealed.

Not only was Sterling to be honored, but also executives from Walmart and Fedex. Walmart is known for its low wages, union busting, discriminatory hiring and promotion policies, theft of public services and push to privatize education. Fedex is also a well known union breaking corporation. The branch had to be dragged kicking and screaming to cancel the honor for Sterling and also to return funds he had donated over the years. The organization also declined to reveal the amount of those donations but they are estimated to be in the [range of \\$45,000](#). (*link 45k) The NAACP sold itself cheaply.

It isn't enough to say that the Los Angeles NAACP represents the worst of the black mis-leadership class. Apparently its sole mission is to raise money because it clearly has no integrity and does nothing to help anyone outside of its own shallow circle. It does no good to anyone who is in need and if it were disbanded it wouldn't be missed.

The mis-leaders are not the only bad guys in this tale. Former NBA star and current team owner Michael Jordan had nothing to say about Sterling for a full two days after the story broke. He finally announced that he was "disgusted" and "outraged" but apparently only after his handlers gave him permission to speak up.

Both Bundy and Sterling must be given a strange sort of credit because they exposed the degree of confusion that permeates this country. While Bundy said that black people were better off as slaves he also praised Asians and Latinos as being hard workers. He suddenly became not so racist in the eyes of many people, who began to downplay the awfulness of his sentiments in the model minority game. Sterling's friend Stiviano was initially the object of derision, the "gold digger" whose motives were suspect.

The only question about racism is how well people cover it up. There is an endless supply, and wishful thinking makes it tempting to forget until the next clueless person raises his or her head. In the meantime remember that criticism of Israel shouldn't be swept under the rug and that some respected individuals and organizations should not be respected at all. There are many villains to go around in this story, and Bundy and Sterling are just two out of many.

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