

Racial profiling



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

On April 19, 1995, around 9 a. m. a yellow Ryder Rental truck pulled up into a parking area outside the Alfred P. Murrah Building in Oklahoma City. Two minutes later all hell broke loose as the truck's 4000-pound cargo blasted the government building shattering one-third of the seven-story building. Investigators got it right, they said the suspect was a white male, possibly with military training. Timothy McVeigh thinking he was defending the Constitution, caused the death of 168 and wounded more than 500 others (Ottley, n. d).

Nobody was surprised because it seemed like something a “ white person” would do. Fast forward to October 2002, just over a year from the September 11th attacks. The nation is in a panic wondering when the next attack is going to take place. Then on October 2, 2002 about 5: 20 p. m. a victimless shot rang out in the Washington Metropolitan Area this was followed by an hour later a man was shot in the parking lot at a grocery store. The next day four more people were shot in a 2 hour period. The “ DC Sniper” spent the next 3 weeks terrorizing the citizens of the Washington DC area with random shootings.

Profilers were brought in to assist local law enforcement in narrowing down the suspect. This time they got it wrong. The FBI behavioral scientist profile team said the suspect was a white male, working alone, in his 30's. Turns out the DC sniper were a black male in his 40's with his Jamaican step-son (Bothe, 2002). The nation was shocked because it seemed like a crime that a “ white person” would do. Increase in Racial Profiling Victims? Unfortunately with 9/11 the increase in profiling people who are Arab, Muslim, South Asian

or of Middle Eastern descent has made people in law enforcements job harder than ever.

With the increase of racial profiling and it defining that any particular individual of one race or ethnicity is more likely to engage in misconduct; President George W. Bush, in his February 27, 2001 address to the Joint Session of Congress declared that racial profiling is “ wrong and we will end it in America (DOJ, 2003).

But it did not stop there, the Baton Rouge Serial Killer was predicted by the FBI to be an unskilled white man and awkward around women. Turns out the killer was Derrick Todd Lee, a black man, with a family and a job (Ramsland, nd). While the President may have wanted racial profiling to stop, the court of public opinion has not stopped racial profiling. Whenever something happens you can go on any message board of any news group and see where public opinion will start profiling a suspect depending on the nature of the crime.

Again the nation was shocked, more white men are serial killers according to profilers. Laws and Services While most of our political leaders believe that there should be an end to racial profiling, it is proving to be difficult to pass the End of Racial Profiling Act (ERPA). The ERPA has been introduced to congress in 2001, 2004, 2005, 2007 2009, 2010 and 2011 but Congress failed to enact legislation to ban the practice (LCCHR, 2011). To this date the Act has failed to pass through Congress. Luckily civil rights groups have taken action and offer support to victims of racial profiling.

They have set up support groups as well as legal teams to help victims fight the embarrassment and harassment of being of a particular race, ethnic group or belong to a certain religious group. Stopping Racial Profiling The problem with racial profiling is it has become a norm in today's society. We base things on color. Halle Berry wins the Best Actress award and it was not so much presented because of her outstanding performance in the movie 'Monster's Ball'. The press paid more attention that she would be the first African-American woman to win the award.

Even Halle compared how she felt to how Sidney Poitier when he was the first African American man to win in 1963. As the country focused on the Trayvon Martin case, the one statement that stood out he most was " this guy looks like he is up to no good or he is on drugs or something" would George Zimmerman thought the same thing if the person would have been a 40 year old white man, or a 20 year old Hispanic woman? Although he may claim he was not profiling Trayvon the evidence speaks for itself, he jumped to a conclusion because it was a black male in a hoody.

Recently, someone having a conversation told how when they go into a local store, store employees follow them around and the store manager informed the customer they were not longer allowed to wear hoodies in the store. When asked what happened, the young man stated that the store manager assumed he was a drug dealer because of his tattoos, piercings and his clothing. It turns out that this young white male is a member of a rock band in town and was unjustly profiled by the store owner because of his appearance. Fair – no, reality – yes!! How do we stop profiling?

The first thing we have to do is remember that crime has no color, religious origin or gender. All pedophiles are not white males, not all terrorists are of Arabic descent or Muslim, not all serial killers are white males, not all drug dealers are black males. We as a nation have to take a stand against racial profiling and the only way to do that is to get rid of the racist mentality of our citizens. Stop looking at the color of one's skin or mentioning that they were the first black, Asian, Hispanic, Jewish, Baptist, Muslim cross-gender person to do something. If the person is an American then they are an American.

For us to be the "melting pot" of the world we have lost focus of how we got the nickname. Conclusion If we continue to judge a person by the way that they look, the color of their skin, or how they present themselves then we are limiting ourselves in law enforcement. History has shown that you cannot go by the profile of the "typical" person who commits certain crimes. Law enforcement cannot assume that because a certain crime was committed it must be this type of person or that type of person. The problem is that we as a nation are the worst in judging a person by the color of their skin.

If we could ever get past the "color barrier" we could see that crimes are committed by people from all walks of life. Any given day you can turn on ID Discovery or look on CNN justice news and you will see that not one race, gender or nationality of person commits certain crimes. Law enforcement is bound by a code of ethics, we are not supposed to look at the color of one's skin but as life has taught us that when given a choice between a black person, white person, Hispanic person or Muslim person, society will try to convict the one that considered public enemy number one at the time.

If you ask black citizens what they think of white police officers they will tell you that they are racist, if you ask white citizen what they think of black officers they will tell you that they will give white people more tickets are arrest than black people. We have got the change the image of the public when it comes to law enforcement. Law enforcement has to make sure that they do not give into the perception of the public as far as race is concerned. Law enforcement has to hold to the motto “ that justice is blind.

This is the only way we can end the racial tensions in the nation. As we watch the Trayvon Martin case play out in the media and know that we are given much more information than the jury. Instead of focusing on the color of Martin and Zimmerman’s skin; ask yourself what would you have done in that situation? Ask yourself if you would judge a person by the way they dress or the color of their skin? If you are able to look past those two circumstances then Trayvon would probably still be alive. If you cannot look past them then would you be sitting in George Zimmerman’s place?

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