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On “Woke” White People Advertising their Shock that Racism just won a Presidency



Last night my black friend posted that he needs to Call in Black tomorrow; I “liked” his status and was immediately irritated when what appeared to be a white female replied, “Wish I could do the same.”

Another friend of mine, white female, posted a long apology to black, Latinx, LGBT, and Muslim people and ended the lengthy post with “I don’t know what else to say to you. I’m so so so sorry.”

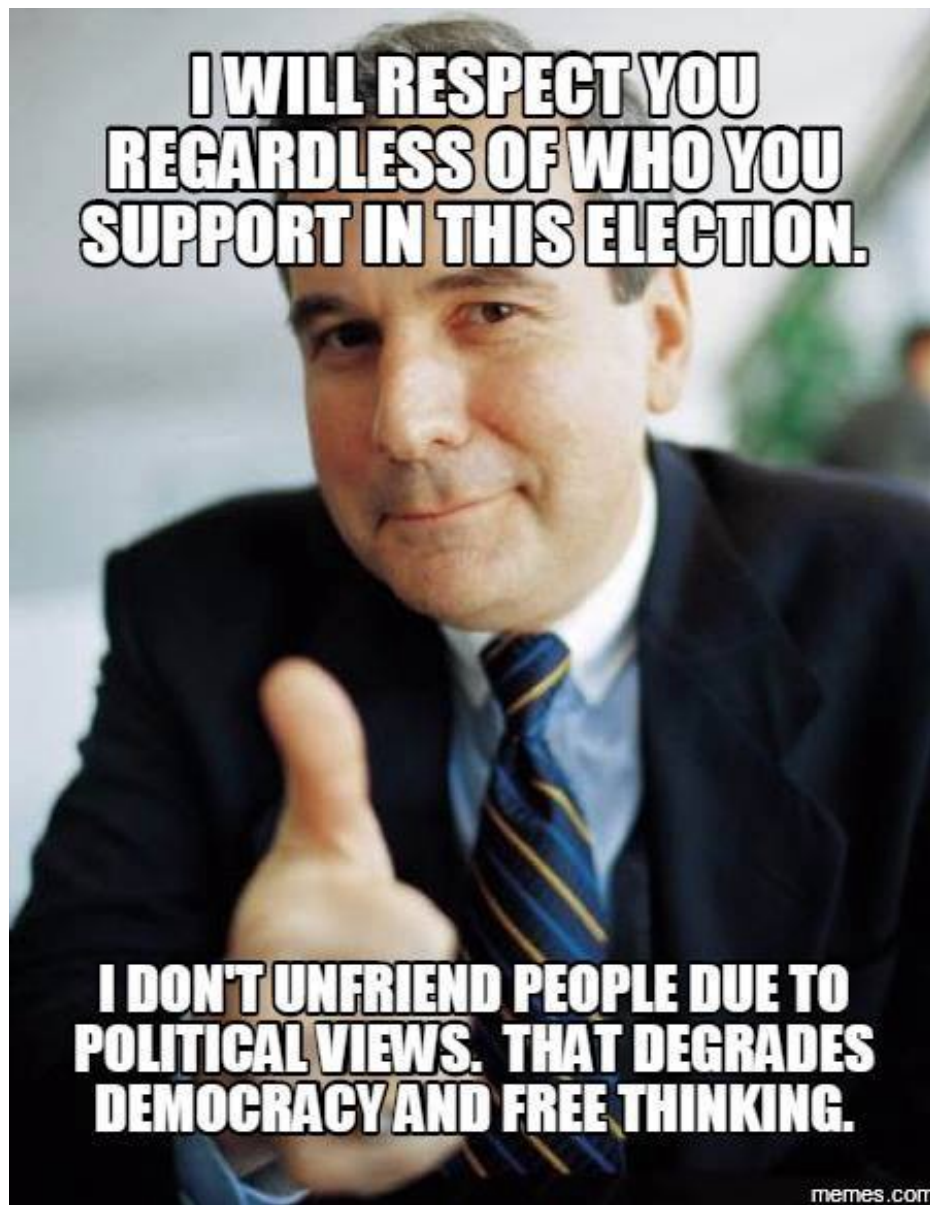
In the days leading up to the election, it was almost exclusively middle and upper-middle class white women posting about how they just need everyone in this election season to “let live, let love, let vote” and “not judge each other, ok?” because “I’m over, like, the stereotypes!”



Annoyed White Female

Yet none of the irritated white women acknowledged anywhere in their exhaustion the rage and frustration that people of color and LGBT folk might be feeling because we've kinda wanted all those things—the life, the love, the vote—for hundreds of years and have been routinely denied them. Because of, like, the stereotypes. And the systemic, institutional oppression. And the culture of white supremacy and entitlement. And the microaggressions of the overwhelmingly privileged who had the nerve to express irritation this election cycle when many Americans have been terrified for their safety.

It's all been a lot to swallow, particularly when those who have had the least at stake this year have posted condescending memes about how we shouldn't even unfriend people on Facebook when they undermine our humanity because *that's* the biggest threat to democracy. (But not redlining, gerrymandering, voter suppression laws, and the electoral college.)



White Privilege on the face of a Douche

But the real trigger has been the shock. The absolute unpreparedness. The need to proclaim this astonishment and all but out yourself as having been blind and truly unbelieving of what we already done-told you was our reality—all whilst being down for the cause.

More white people than I can count, people who are quick to profess themselves as oh-so-woke, have expressed some real shock and dismay not only at the election results, but at the racism, sexism, xenophobia, and bigotry that paved the way to those results. And this is not just me surmising what has them all up in their feelings. This is me reading their words: “I cannot believe how racist America is.” “I really never thought that bigotry would win out.” “What do I say to the people of

color in my life, the LGBT people, the Muslim people...I never thought hatred would make it this far.”

**America,
You are so much more
racist and misogynistic
than I'd ever imagined.**

This one came from Moby, or so the Internet tells me. Full caption: “I’d always known that there was racism and misogyny in America but I had no idea it was this virulent and widespread. I mean, the USA is an inch away from electing a man who has ruined businesses, bragged about sexually assaulting women, and spewed racist hate speech. America you are breaking my heart.”

Dear liberal white people whom I often love: advertising your shock and surprise that racism, sexism, xenophobia, and bigotry are pervasive enough to hand that man the Presidency is a microaggression. Please stop.

I’m all about you processing your Feelings. There are a lot of us up in our Feelings right now. But spare me the advertisement of just how shocking it all is. Don’t tell me you “just can’t imagine” because some of us—*my* little black and Indigenous ass—have a real big imagination when it comes to the racism and bigotry that has ruled our country for hundreds of years. *We* are not aghast that Presidents who say bogus shit dance their way into office. *We* are not paralyzed by the injustice of it all, proclaiming “oh the humanity” and all that mess. *We* have seen

this before. And it's not just the overt bigotry; that soft systemic racism can be tricky, I get it. Had she shimmied her way into the oval office, I may have been under the spell for a minute. But don't get it twisted: black and brown and queer folk (especially the queer black and brown folk) have a big imagination for the terrifying policy that follows the horrific rhetoric, whether that rhetoric is being spouted by an orange-faced man promising a wall or a white woman in a pantsuit warning us of superpredators. I am devastated, but no, I am not shocked.

For a lot of people of color, this election was really about trying to find the lesser of two evils. America asked us: "How do you prefer your racism—blatant or systemic?" And when we couldn't answer immediately, white liberals patronizingly walked us through our own history and experiences to guide us to the candidate that best suited their needs. When we still needed time, white liberals got impatient and aggressive. When we begrudgingly muttered #iguessimwithher, white liberals were like, "YAAAAYY!" and skipped away to campaign. Some took a third-party stance and I'm of the opinion that it was a privileged stance to take, but hey, let's not pretend that only the third-party votes helped decide this election. Let's be clear: poor, angry, uneducated white men—and women—helped decide this election. Educated middle class white men and women helped decide this election. Those who exercised that protest vote helped decide this election. And if any of that's shocking for you, then you weren't paying attention in Institutionalized Racism 101: divide shared economic interests and offer the poor white man a seat on a bus, a toilet, or a water fountain so he knows he's not a Negro and he WILL hand you a Presidency. Dr. King already laid that out for us in '65:

"If it may be said of the slavery era that the white man took the world and gave the Negro Jesus, then it may be said of the Reconstruction era that the southern aristocracy took the world and gave the poor white man Jim Crow. He gave him Jim Crow. And when his wrinkled stomach cried out for the food that his empty pockets could not provide, he ate Jim Crow, a psychological bird that told him that no matter how bad off he was, at least he was a white man, better than the black man. And he ate Jim Crow. And when his undernourished children cried out for the necessities that his low wages could not provide, he showed them the Jim Crow signs on the buses and in the stores, on the streets and in the public buildings. And his children, too, learned to feed upon Jim Crow, their last outpost of psychological oblivion."

So What's Next?



Now is the time to be like Gloria whose very side-eye was revolutionary.

I get it. It's awful. It's terrifying. It's devastating. But find yourself a white person and complain to them, then get past your feelings because if you really want to be an ally, we don't need your posts or your shock or even your tearful apologies, but rather your organizing manpower. People of color have always resisted and you can follow us. You can't be with her anymore, so be with us.

And to my black and brown brothers and sisters reading this, I won't tell you to not be discouraged, for I am discouraged. I will not tell you that we shall overcome, for I am tired of overcoming. I will not tell you to keep on keepin' on like there's any other option for us. I will only say that I will resist alongside you in love and justice because we come from a tradition of resistance.

"What I know is that we will resist. We come from a tradition of resistance...They wanna talk about 'Make America Great Again.' What I know is the only glimpse of greatness this country has ever had, the only glimpse of the ideals this country was founded on that we've ever had is because of our resistance. Because we dragged America to it kicking and screaming—that is our part in this story. And the kickers and screamers won last night...I don't know what comes next. But I know that we are

going to wake up tomorrow and do what we have always done: we will be there for each other, we will support each other, we will defend each other, we will love each other. And we will spend the next four years giving them something to kick and scream about.” -Jay Smooth

Meanwhile, white girls be reading this post like, is she mad at *me*???



You'll be alright.