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Mention the word race and immediately people's minds start swirling. It's difficult not to have an opinion about something tied so closely to politics. Ask what President Obama represents to people—both living in the United States and abroad—and responses range from, “he's a beacon of hope for all Black people” and “his politics aside, he represents advancement for people of color” to “at no time in history has a president done so much to divide a nation” and “he's a racist who doesn't care about anybody but Black people.”

The question is, how can one person draw such sharply contrasting views?

The answer is both simple and complex.

By now you've likely seen the Gap ad featuring four girls—three White and one Black. Two of the White girls are flexing their gymnastics prowess, while one White girl is resting her arm on the head of the Black girl. The Black girl's body language and facial expression say it all—oppression.

As I have just done, so too did many flock to social media and write blogs to express their opinions.

And just as President Obama represents different things to different people, reactions to the ad (recently pulled by the Gap) ranged from, “Thanks for perfectly illustrating what passive racism looks like!” and “@GapKids proving girls can do anything, unless she's Black. #EpicFail!” to “I don't see anything wrong with this ad. There are four beautiful girls doing their thing” to “If the Black girl were depicted doing gymnastics while the White girls stood still, you'd scream that it's racist for portraying Black people as athletes.”

One person went so far as to write an Op-Ed piece shaming those of us who saw the ad as racist. The author of this Op-Ed, Kira Davis, discloses at the top of her piece that she is Black, her husband is Black, ergo their children are Black. They live in a mostly White suburb and at home, race comes up “from time to time.”

She and her husband are raising their children to be gracious and not bitter about being Black. They want their kids to believe when they walk into a job interview, they will get the job based solely on merit and that the color of their skin won't be a factor in the decision to hire or not.

The majority of what Ms. Davis wrote in her Op-Ed angered me, so it's difficult for me to single out any one particular part of it to highlight. I came away with the feeling that she is incredibly out of touch with the everyday Black experience.

My gripe isn't with Ms. Davis per se, but it is with the class of people she represents: The Black Person Who Has Arrived and Expects the Same Doors to Open that Many White People Have Come to Expect for Centuries.

In her paragraph titled, "Get a Life, People" Ms. Davis wrote, "I'm raising my kids to be humble, to earn their way to the things they want, to be respectful of those in authority and those whom they choose to serve as Christians and generous Americans. I'm raising them [SIC] see themselves as a part of whatever community in which they choose to put down roots. They are not "others." They are Americans, and if they're the only black kids in a community full of people who are different from them I expect them to adapt and succeed, not melt into a puddle of tears."

Tell that to the swaths of families who, like Ms. Davis, are raising their kids to be hard working, generous Americans; whose kids are humble, respectful and see themselves as part of the community in which they live, but not necessarily the one they chose to live in. Tell that to the swaths of families whose kids will be judged solely by the color of their skin.

And while we're at it, tell that to Louis Gates, PhD, the highly respected and tenured professor of Harvard University's African American studies department who was arrested outside his home in an affluent neighborhood in Cambridge, Massachusetts on July 16, 2009.

Returning home from a trip to China, Professor Gates was unable to get the door open. Together with his driver, they tried to no avail. A passerby noticed and rather than ask if the (then) 58-year-old clearly distinguished man needed help, this person called the cops fearing a suspected break-in.

When the police arrived, they asked for identification, and Dr. Gates complied. Unsurprisingly the address on his driver's license matched that of the address Professor Gates was trying to "break into." Rather than chalk it up to a simple misunderstanding, matters escalated and the multiple award winning and undeniably accomplished professor was arrested outside his home.

Is this the level of success Ms. Davis's kids can hope to achieve?

That this woman lives in an all-White neighborhood, has been able to send her kids to good schools and has raised them to believe that based on qualifications alone they will get the job is one thing.

However she is delusional for believing she has been afforded Black privilege and true acceptance by those outside the Black community and that this so-called Black privilege extends to all Black people simply because of mindset. I have known a great many Black people who

have bought into this fallacy because they've reached some level of what they perceive as being Black privilege—thanks to their arrival into the upper middle class ranks.

They believe because they drive the Mercedes SUV, live in affluent neighborhoods with only Whites as neighbors, send their kids to “exclusive” private schools, are able to pay for their kids' Ivy League educations for both undergrad and graduate school, etc. that they will be seen as different from the rest of us who aren't so fortunate. Moreover, they don't get why all Blacks aren't elevating themselves to this level.

Let me bring them and Ms. Davis back down to earth.

Let's leave aside the issue that this arrival is into a world established by White people, and that there is no expectation that Whites would ever desire to arrive into a standard established by Black people. That's another rant for another day. Let's assume that I am going along with the program that this is the world we all desire to live in.

Step outside their comfort zones and society sees them for who they are ... Black people.

What Kira Davis and others just like her see is a world that is contained within their little bubbles. When the president of the United States is, too, just another example of the N word in the eyes of many White people, I know we haven't gotten to the point Ms. Davis mistakenly believes we have reached—just because she, her family and others just like her have.

This is not to suggest I don't wish she and I could see eye-to-eye on this one. Would I love nothing more than for us all to live in a world where we are operating on a level playing field? Of course!

However, until then, I think it's unrealistic, irresponsible and actually downright dangerous for her and others just like her to raise their kids to believe they will get the job based on experience and education and that they won't be DWBd—you know, like those Black people. And worse, that they won't be used as target practice by a racist cop who not only doesn't know the difference between their “Black privilege” and Trayvon Martin, Sandra Bland, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, et al.'s lack thereof, but couldn't give a rat's ass if she pointed it out to him. Moreover, he might shoot to kill just to prove a point that all Black people are the same.

Ms. Davis concludes her piece by saying, “Tomorrow my kids will wake up [SIC] do their chores and their homework, and their parents will go to work and we'll eat dinner in our home with our pets and our Internet and our comfy chairs and we'll dream together about our futures. Just like we do every day.”

Ms. Davis and others just like her who may be reading this and thinking I am being overly dramatic or doing my part to point out our differences rather than celebrate the similarities

between us all, I highly recommend you take a look at this video. When I say it's dangerous to believe that because you've "arrived" into a world of so-called Black privilege and live with the blinders you walk through life wearing, I am not kidding. But don't take my word for it.

<https://youtu.be/3P9-BjYxTu8>

Video titled Traffic Stop is published with permission by Alex Landau.