

WHY is it so hard for some people to admit there is a racial double standard in the U.S.? We see double standards with all sorts of situations. Tall people get more credit than short people. Pretty people are chosen for jobs over less attractive people. Babies are cute and old people smell. (Actually, babies and old people both smell and can be cute. Except when old people act like babies and except for those unfortunate babies that look like old men. I always say a prayer that the cranky miniature senior citizen isn't peaking, but I digress.) Able-bodied people are valued more than disabled people. Boys are described as studs for the same behavior that girls get labeled as sluts. It is a world gone mad.

I know there are some people out there who believe even these statements aren't true because only whack-job feminazi's rant about imaginary sexism and gay people have an "agenda" whereas heterosexual people are just living "normal". At the same time some employers won't admit they are more likely to hire younger workers than older ones based on pre-conceived ideas about those individuals based on their age instead of their qualifications. That was a really long sentence. The double-standard I'm hung up on at present is the assumption that white people are innocent and black people are guilty. The comparisons are so glaringly obvious if you are paying attention even just a tiny bit.

I have attended several demonstrations in St. Louis and Ferguson since Darren Wilson shot Michael Brown. One such demonstration was the Mothers March for Justice. There was scant police presence and the air was devoid of tension. Why? Because the protesters were mostly women. Strong, beautiful, angry women. Women are perceived as less violent so we get the benefit of the doubt that we're not going to go all crazy overturning cars like drunk white college students wielding pumpkins. Men don't get that benefit of the doubt. Most assumptions are that angry men will turn into an unruly mob. When you add black skin to that equation, all benefit of the doubt dissipates. Please don't argue that we have footage of looting black men stealing from QuikTrip during small pockets of unrest. There are knuckleheads in every group of every movement. Looters are not synonymous with protesters any more than Honey Boo Boo is an ambassador for everyone in rural Georgia. (You're welcome, Georgia)

Do you consider me a looter? Because I've been out demonstrating and supporting the Ferguson community in different capacities. Though I'm sure free kit-kats and taking your anger out on a QT window would be awesome, that's not why the protesters (as opposed to the looters) are there. When Ferguson is mentioned in conversation, does your mind go directly to molotov cocktails, looting and nooses? Because that's what happened to me in a very non-diverse party recently. The person that said it I am certain isn't racist. She just didn't think about her language before she spoke. She didn't hear herself jump directly to only the negative imagery of the protests instead of conceding that maybe race relations are tense because black lives aren't treated as sacredly as white lives. I should have said something non-confrontational to her so that maybe she would think next time she spoke about it. Other party-goers simply didn't know how to receive me when I mentioned

Ferguson or the protests. I didn't want to be a killjoy at a pleasant event, but it was hard to go back into the white bubble after having spent as much time as I have outside.

Sometimes when you give someone the benefit of the doubt you get burned. That's a risk you take. Once all the evidence comes in I may agree that Officer Wilson was justified in shooting Michael Brown.

Regardless of what the grand jury or any investigation determines doesn't change the fact that if Officer Wilson perceived Michael Brown as a threat, part of the reason was simply because Michael Brown was black.

Whether Michael Brown lunged or mouthed-off to Officer Wilson doesn't change the fact that justice for black people is not doled out the way it is for white people. (and it sucks to be black if you want unbiased justice).

Black child on white dad's shoulders at Mothers March for Justice
If Officer Wilson over-reacted to the situation doesn't negate the reality that black communities are segregated and disenfranchised. I've heard arguments that because "They got their black President" somehow proves the U.S. has attained racial equality. I'm proud that Americans voted a black man into office but that doesn't even the playing field any more than the election of a female President eradicates unequal pay for women.