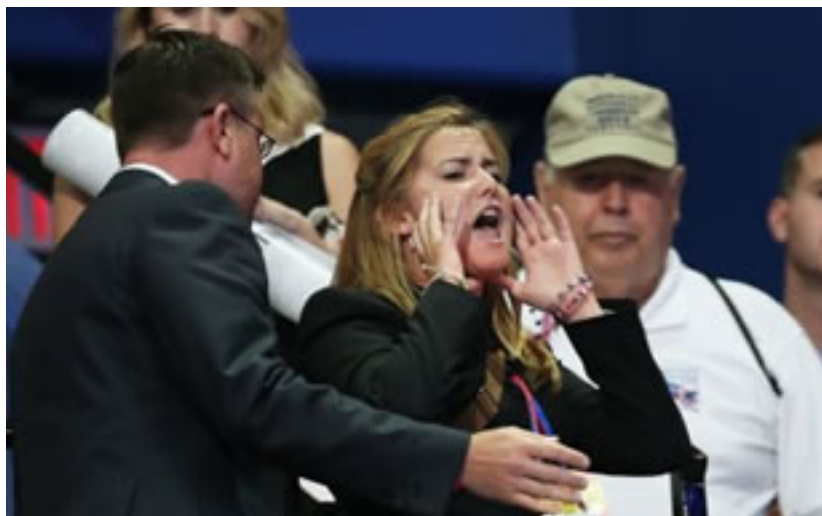


Republican Assaults on People of Color

Written by Barbara Reynolds
Friday, 07 September 2012 09:04



From a Black camerawoman being pelted with nuts at the GOP convention to private remarks from House Speaker John Boehner of aspirations that Blacks and Latinos won't vote to Mitt Romney's jokes about President Obama's birth certificate, the Republicans have a talent for assaulting people of color and opening up wounds from a bitter past.

Recent actions off stage and on the big stage of Tampa demonstrate why The Wall Street Journal's latest poll shows African-Americans giving Zero percent of their vote to the Republicans in the November election.

For me, this latest hurt feeling ignited with Romney's recent statement in his hometown of Detroit about "no one's ever asked to see my birth certificate." This was a sop to the idiotic birther movement. Despite President Obama's repeated display of his birth certificate, no proof is good enough for the Right Wing. These kinds of demands on Blacks to prove that water is wet resonate deep in our DNA. We can get the same degrees as Whites, pass the same tests and die in the same wars, but so often our credentials are often devalued or discredited in the effort to paint Blacks as "the other, the lesser, the outsider." When this happened to President Obama, I felt like it was happening to me.

The hateful incident of Patricia Carroll, a Black camerawoman who works for CNN, only intensified the pain many Blacks have felt as they were undermined or thrown out of their own workplaces. Two Whites in the GOP convention threw peanuts at her saying "this is what we feed animals."

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The culprits were reportedly evicted from the convention area by security officials, but for some mysterious reason their identities were not revealed. While this was apparently an isolated incident, to me it was reminiscent of how in 2010 right wing Tea Party protesters hurled the N-word at Rep. John Lewis (D. Ga.) a hero of the civil rights movement and it shows how hard it is to rise above racial hatred in America.

As some were reeling from the nut-throwing action, the current Romney TV ads just keeps the temperature rising. The false ads accuse president Obama of gutting the welfare work requirements to “shore up his base,” just another divisive way to paint Obama as the “welfare president” who caters to lazy Blacks living off the dole. Data, however, show that the overwhelming populations of welfare recipients are non-whites. Only about 5 million are recipients of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families in 2011, which would be a small base if true.

But what do Romney facts have to do with truth? As Neil Newhouse, a Romney pollster reminded: the “campaign is not going to be dictated to by fact checkers.”

The crowning blow, however were the words of House Speaker John Boehner who reportedly told a luncheon hosted by the Christian Science Monitor that his party’s strategy for winning the presidential race does not rely on winning over more Black and Latino voters, but hoping they won’t vote at all. He was reported as saying: “This election is about economics... These (Latinos and Black) groups have been hit the hardest. They may not show up and vote for our candidate but I’d suggest to you they won’t show up and vote for the president either.”

Political strategist Faye Morrison says Boehner’s words go far beyond mere aspirations but underscore a national Republican strategy to suppress the Black vote. As national attention focused on the GOP convention, efforts in 33 states continued to block hard-won voting rights. Morrison pointed out that recently a federal court ruled that a Texas voter identification law violated the Voting Rights Act but the pattern continues to emerge as GOP lawmakers enact illegal voter suppression legislation. Those restraints include: tight voter ID laws, provisional voting restrictions, limits on voter registration drives, and reduced availability for early voting. Studies have proved those kinds of strict rules diminish minority voting.

“How dare Boehner push apathy as a strategy,” Morrison fumed as she packed her bags to attend the Democratic Convention in Charlotte as a delegate. “This election is about the price paid by Dr. Martin Luther King, NAACP leader Medgar Evers, Fannie Lou Hamer and the

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hundreds of other Whites and Blacks who died for our right to vote. Voting is a way to make them – as well as ourselves -- matter. Apathy will only continue our suffering.”

In the highly charged patriotic setting of the GOP convention, nothing of course was said about the voter campaigns underway to suppress the African-American vote - just another reason Blacks aren't warm and fuzzy about the Republican Party.

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