

The 2008 democratic presidential primary has generated more renewed interest and inspired more new voters in this electoral political process than there has been in the last 40 years. One reason for this is the difficult economic times we currently face as a country. Gas prices have hit the \$4 mark for unleaded, people are losing their homes to foreclosures at an alarming rate, jobs are scarce due to outsourcing, higher education is economically out of reach for most, and 50 million U.S. citizens cannot afford healthcare. And let us not forget the Iraq war! \$607 billion has been spent on the Iraq war since 2003 and over 4,000 U.S. soldiers have been killed. That equates to almost \$17,000 per family of four and the tragic loss of loved ones. But the most compelling reason for the unprecedented excitement of this 2008 democratic presidential primary is the historicity in which the final two democratic candidates for nominee of president of the United States of America are a black man and a white woman.

While this historic presidential campaign should be a celebration of America's commitment to civil rights and her constitutional mandate in the Declaration of Independence that, "that all men (and women) are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness", it has revealed that America is far from realizing her own declaration. This democratic presidential primary campaign has instead revealed that America does not believe in equality, but rather believes in privilege based on race. Black Americans have lived and suffered for over 100 years from the institutionalized inequality of slavery, Jim Crow segregation and legal discrimination. We fought against the concept of inequality and race privilege through the civil rights movement. We unwillingly sacrificed the lives of countless black Americans who were murdered and leaders such as Martin, Malcolm, and both Kennedy's, who were politically assassinated, while in "pursuit of happiness". And yet, in this 2008 democratic primary for president of the United States, America is reminded from one of her most influential and powerful democratic families in American political history that race privilege continues to be at the core of America's power structure.

Senator Barack Obama has based his entire campaign on inclusion and has calculatedly and deliberately kept the issue of race out of his campaign. He has attracted Americans of every hue; white, black, brown, yellow and red...Americans of every ethnicity, culture, gender, age and religion. Yet, the issue of race continues to raise its ugly head in the midst of this historic moment in American history, but amazingly from the ugly history of America itself, and from those that have made a political career on pretending that race doesn't matter, and from a political party that has prospered in fighting for equality.

When President Bill Clinton, long adored by the black community such that he was nicknamed "the first black president", injected the race issue into this democratic primary by suggesting that Senator Barack Obama's primary win in South Carolina was like Jesse Jackson's win, and that it was only because of the large black population that both Jesse and Barack won that contest, the first shot of was fired. There were then successive shots fired by the Clinton campaign that continued to further prejudice the campaign based on race. Clinton supporter and former vice presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro stated

that "If Obama was a white man, he would not be in this position." She continued, "And if he was a woman (of any color) he would not be in this position. He happens to be very lucky to be who he is. And the country is caught up in the concept." CAUGHT UP IN THE CONCEPT?! What concept...the concept that "all men are created equal"? Geraldine Ferraro's statements inject not only racism but now sexism.

And then there is the constant claim by Senator Clinton that she is the more electable (sic) candidate in the general election because she wins the "white working class", suggesting that Senator Barack Obama, a black candidate, cannot win white working class voters. And if these shots fired are not enough to prove that race is constantly being injected into this presidential primary, the recent comments by Senator Clinton making reference to the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy in June of 1968 as her justification for staying in a race that she cannot legally win is the A-bomb of racial divisiveness and insensitivity.

Combine the racially charged statements of the Clinton campaign with the recent statements by former Governor and republican presidential candidate Mike Huckabee. When giving a speech at a National Rifle Association convention, Governor Huckabee heard a noise backstage and stated that it was Barack Obama falling off a chair and diving for cover because someone pointed a gun at him. And just recently, Fox News contributor Liz Trotter joked on national T.V. about killing senator Obama. Liz Trotter subsequently apologized about her comments but was cavalier in her apology stating that it was simply a mistake attributable to the "colorful political season".

The real tragedy is that the pattern of statements made by many white people are being minimized or even dismissed simply as mistakes. Except for Keith Olberman, I haven't heard any notable news anchor, analyst, commentator or celebrity characterize these racial statements as wrong. I haven't heard anyone, except for Keith Olberman, state that the statements are racist. The only characterizations I have heard regarding these statements is that "race is an issue" in this campaign. America, particularly American media, needs to call these statements and sentiments for what they are...RACISM.