

Past Racism is The Ugly Past

I went through a phase where I was *terribly* racist. Mostly against “black” people.

It began soon after I moved to Arkansas from Texas. Interestingly enough, my elderly grandmother underwent the same transformation within a few months of also moving from Texas to Arkansas to be closer to us. Before she moved she had scolded me for saying ugly racist things, yet soon after she moved she was saying the same things she had previously objected to me saying.

My racist thoughts and feelings began to fade as soon as I left Arkansas.

Maybe it was a coincidence, or maybe there was a reason the area had that effect on two people who had never thought racist thoughts before. I can't say.

What I can say, and know, is this: **I was wrong**. I don't know a stronger way to say it. It was collectivist and disgusting. Nothing done to me personally can justify it. I should have simply focused my dislike on the individuals who were violating me, not on their “race” and not on individuals I grouped with them who had never done anything to me.

Yet, in the midst of my racism, I had a really good “black” friend. He always called me a “nigger” and I called him a “honkey” – the most common racist slurs used by ignorant people against each group at that place and time. When we were hanging out I would “talk black” and he would “talk white”. We switched roles in every way we could think of. We thought it was hilarious and we laughed hard over it. The other kids ignored us. The teachers were aghast but they didn't try to stop us. Imagine that happening today – outside of follower-hungry YouTubers and “white” kids who want to emulate rappers, I mean.

I never wore “blackface” or a KKK robe and don't know of anyone who ever did. I knew a bunch of kids who revered the KKK (at least in theory) and bragged about relatives who belonged to it. But I didn't speak up against those things because I didn't care.

I'm ashamed of that now. I'm not that person anymore. I hope I'm a better person than I used to be.

Should I be judged on what I did and thought back then? I hope not. I'm horrified by my past self now and I don't even like sharing this.

This is all to say I think the current witch-hunt over the politician who is being scolded for a yearbook page, appearing on a page with someone in “blackface” and someone else in a KKK robe, is dumb. That was *years* ago – he's not the same person today that he was then.

He's undoubtedly *worse*.

Criticize him for the wrong he's doing *NOW*. He's a politician, just like all other politicians—including the politicians of the Congressional Black Caucus. That's evil. That's archaion. His past is nothing but a distraction from his current crimes.