



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on August 10, 2010

Black Tea Partiers Defend Tea Party Express

In an effort to refute allegations of Tea Party racism, particularly within the Tea Party Express, black conservative Tea Partiers held a press conference last week. The Tea Party Express organized the event to address accusations of racism that were elevated by the group's split from its former leader Mark Williams. At last week's conference, members explained that accusations of racism are merely ploys to discredit the movement.



Williams recently posted a phony satirical letter written to Abraham Lincoln by the NAACP on his blog that suggested that black people would prefer slavery over actual work. It was meant to mock claims that the Tea Parties were racist but was indisputably in poor taste. However, the Tea Party Express was slow in its split from the leader, provoking further accusations of racism.

Black conservative author William Owens, who is also a frequent speaker at Tea Party Express tours, explained, "Our slowness to split with Mark should be no means condone racism. It was just out of loyalty to our friend."

The NAACP exploited the letter as proof of racism, though accusations of Tea Party racism were launched long before the letter.

Selena Owens, Tea Party Express speaker, remarked, "The injection of race has come from those who want to destroy us."

Radio talk-show host Herman Cain added that the accusations are "hurled at us to divide us and to deflect attention away from the failed policies of this congress and this president."

Seeking to dispel any of the stereotypes of the Tea Party movement, Kevin Jackson, author of *The Big Black Lie*, asserted, "There are two kinds of people I have never seen at a Tea Party: a racist and anyone who owns a yacht. And if they do own a yacht, they pay their taxes."

Much of the conference focused on the NAACP and its treatment of the Tea Party movement. Tim Johnson, vice chairman of the North Carolina GOP, dismissed the organization. "I don't think the NAACP are even relevant anymore."

In addition to the NAACP, the conference focused on specific issues, the most notable being the incidents involving Shirley Sherrod, John Lewis, and Representative Emanuel Cleaver.

Shirley Sherrod was a U.S. Department of Agriculture official who was prematurely forced into resigning her position by the White House after a video clip of a speech Sherrod gave before the NAACP



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surfaced on the Internet. The excerpt was found to be racist, though it was later found that Sherrod's comments were taken out of context, prompting the White House to attempt to assuage the situation by offering Sherrod a new position with the USDA.

Unfortunately, Fox News and the "Right-wing conservative media" became the scapegoat, accused of racial bias toward Sherrod by the mainstream media and the NAACP. However, at the Tea Party Express press conference, one Tea Partier noted that despite the excerpt in the video that really was taken out of context, there is little to account for some of Sherrod's other statements. "If you look at the whole tape, you'll find out just how racist Shirley Sherrod is." (To view Sherrod's speech in its entirety, [click here](#).)

Likewise, a female Tea Partier inquired why the reporters did not question Sherrod about her lack of gratitude towards Fox News host Glenn Beck, who came out in defense of Sherrod. Silence was the response she received.

The reporters turned their attention to Representative John Lewis, who claimed that during the Tea Party rally, protestors yelled racial epithets, including the "n-word", though evidence has not been produced to corroborate the story. Tea Partier Andrew Breitbart went so far as to offer a monetary award to anyone who can produce proof of the alleged incident, but none has been found, despite the vast number of people, journalists, and video cameras present at the rally.

Joyce Jones of *Black Enterprise* asked, "I want to know why it is so impossible for you to think that somebody actually spit on him and called him the 'n-word'." To this, one Tea Partier remarked, "There has been no evidence to substantiate this claim, and in the state of public opinion, evidence is paramount."

Jones insisted that Lewis' word should be "good enough" to accept as truth. One Tea Partier then needled the reporter, "Why wasn't George W. Bush's word good enough?"

Tea Partiers were also asked about Representative Emanuel Cleaver, a black Democrat from Missouri who claimed that he was spit on during a the healthcare Tea Party rally on Capitol Hill last March. Conference participants claim that the event never happened, citing Cleaver's unwillingness to prosecute the man allegedly responsible as proof that the incident did not actually occur.

Niger Innis, spokesman for the Congress of Racial Equality, stated, "There's no evidence, and we are a country of laws."

When asked what the Tea Party Express was really about, one Tea Partier carefully articulated that it was about the Constitution: "It is the lack of understanding what our Founding documents are that brought us to this point where we're actually ready to give up our Republic in exchange for a social democracy, and that is not what we want."

Most Americans would agree.

Overall, the event proved to be successful and the conference participants representing the Tea Party Express effectively articulated the ideals of the movement.

To view a portion of the event, see below:



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