



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on March 2, 2011

Holder Reveals Underlying Racism in DOJ Treatment of Black Panther Case

[Politico](#) reports: "Holder's frustration over the criticism became evident during a House Appropriations subcommittee hearing as Rep. John Culberson (R-Texas) accused the Justice Department of failing to cooperate with a Civil Rights Commission investigation into the handling of the 2008 incident in which Black Panthers in intimidating outfits and wielding a club stood outside a polling place in Philadelphia."



Allegations that the Justice Department failed to cooperate with the Civil Rights Commission Investigation were [leveled](#) by Christopher Coates, the former voting chief for the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice. On September 24, Coates gave testimony before the same commission indicating that the Justice Department had a different attitude toward civil rights violations against black Americans than it did toward violations against white Americans.

According to Coates, the Justice Department bowed to pressures to dismiss the voter intimidation case from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) as well as from individuals within the Justice Department.

Prior to the accusations of Coates, [J. Christian Adams](#) testified in July 2010 against the Justice Department, asserting that the agency bore hostility toward taking cases where perpetrators were black and the victims were white. [According to Fox News](#), Adams quit over the handling of the voter-intimidation case against the New Black Panther Party, and "accused his former employer of instructing attorneys in the civil rights division to ignore cases that involved black defendants and white victims." Adams added, "We abetted wrongdoing and abandoned law-abiding citizens."

Of the Justice Department's handling of the voter-intimidation case, *The New American's* Bruce Walker wrote:

The case exposes the problems caused when government tries to especially protect a certain class of citizens. The supporters of those departments and bureaus tasked to protect those particular citizens almost inevitably are special interest organizations such as the NAACP. And it is not unusual for bureaucrats to leave government for a cushy job in one of those special-interest firms. The relationship, almost inevitably, becomes incestuous. This grows, over time, into an institutional bias which seems quite natural to those who inhabit the closed world of advocacy for



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these special classes of citizens.

On March 1, Holder not only defended the Justice Department's handling of the case, but appeared personally offended by statements provided by former Democratic activist Bartle Bull, who called the Black Panther case the most blatant example of voter intimidation he had witnessed in his career.

Holder retorted,

Think about that. When you compare what people endured in the South in the 60s to try to get the right to vote for African Americans, and to compare what people were subjected to there to what happened in Philadelphia — which was inappropriate, certainly ... to describe it in those terms I think does a great disservice to people who put their lives on the line, who risked all, for my people.

Holder continued to make it a personal issue as he touted the role his sister-in-law played in the integration of the University of Alabama, adding,

To compare that kind of courage, that kind of action, and to say that the Black Panther incident — wrong thought it might be — [is] somehow greater in magnitude or is of greater concern to us, historically, I think just flies in the face of history and the facts.

When Rep. Culberson insisted, "There's clearly evidence, overwhelming evidence, that your Department of Justice refuses to protect the rights of anybody other than African Americans to vote," Holder outright denied it: "I would disagree very vehemently with the notion that there's overwhelming evidence that that is in fact true. This Department of Justice does not enforce the law in a race-conscious way."

Photo: Eric Holder



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