



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on April 29, 2011

Media: Birthers Are Racist

This meme [has been running wild](#) in the media for some time, but now that the President has released his alleged bona fides, the leftist media and the usual suspects are resurrecting it to ensure that all opposition to Obama is depicted as racially motivated. The recently deceased Democrat Geraldine Ferraro [noted the inclination of the press to smear Obama's opponents as racists](#) in her honorary position in the presidential campaign of Hillary Rodham Clinton. The media is even more [virulent today](#). Of course, Ferraro [left the campaign](#) shortly after telling that truth.



Oddly, those who make the charge offer no proof, yet the nature of the charge means that once lodged, the target is guilty.

The *Times* Editorial

The [financially ailing](#) *Times*, which permits [a shill](#) for the leftist Southern Poverty Law Center to write its editorials, didn't miss the opportunity, on the occasion of Obama's releasing the new version of his birth record, [to slime](#) the birther opposition:

It was particularly galling to us that it was in answer to a baseless attack with heavy racial undertones....

Several [birthers] quickly questioned its authenticity. That's because the birther question was never really about citizenship; it was simply a proxy for those who never accepted the president's legitimacy, for a toxic mix of reasons involving ideology, deep political anger and, most insidious of all, race....

There was a price to the party for keeping the issue alive; inevitably, it was picked up by a cartoon candidate, Donald Trump, who rode birtherism directly to the prime-time promontories of cable TV. The Republican establishment began to wince as it became increasingly tied to Mr. Trump's flirtations with racial provocation, and Karl Rove told him to knock it off. Naturally, he did not.

Even worse, the *Times* averred, evil "Republican leaders allowed [the birth issue] to simmer to satisfy those who are inflamed by Mr. Obama's presence in the White House."

The *Times* [offered no proof](#) that anyone who questioned Obama's citizenship is a racist. It merely advanced the claim, [begging the question](#) and [arguing from authority](#).

Other Leftist Voices

But the *Times* was not alone. PBS talker Tavis Smiley [dumped on](#) the birthers, noting on Lawrence O'Donnell's MSNBC sinistral gabfest his prediction that "this presidential race ... was going to be the ugliest, the nastiest, the most divisive, and the most racist in the history of this Republic."

But Smiley had nothing on [Leonard Pitts](#), the dyspeptic and melancholy columnist for the *Miami Herald*.



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Pitts [flatly says](#) birthers are racists. His April Fool's nastygram pulled no punches: Birther = Racist. That is the Pitts equation:

So it is time to call this birther nonsense what it is — not just claptrap, but profoundly racist claptrap....

Spare me the e-mails where you soliloquize like Hamlet, the back of your hand pressed to your forehead, eyes turned heavenward, as you moan how it is impossible to criticize this president without being accused of racism.

Criticize him to your heart's content. Give him hell over Libya. Blast him about Guantanamo. Knock him silly on health care reform. He is the president; taking abuse is part of his job description.

But this ongoing birther garbage, like the ongoing controversy about his supposed secret Muslim identity, is not about criticism. It is not about what he has done but, rather, what he is.

Like "state's rights," these controversies are a code, a dog whistle for those with ears to hear. They provide euphemistic cover for those who want to express alarm over the raw newness of him, the sweeping demographic changes he represents ("He's black! Oh, my God, they've got the presidency now!") without appearing uncouth enough to do so.

Memo to the morons: It doesn't work, folks. Nobody is fooled. You are about as subtle as Lady Gaga.

Michael Tomasky, a blogger for the leftist *Guardian* in London, agrees. [The problem](#) with birthers, he wrote when [Obama released](#) his birth certificate, is "racial paranoia and the bald willingness of politicians to lie in order to stoke it. In at least this one respect, the election of the first African American president, rather than taking us forward, has drawn us back into a cobwebbed and pitiless past, from which there seems no escape."

Jesse Jackson, he of the [Hymietown rant](#), [offered this](#) to Politico: "Any discussion of [Obama's] birthplace is a code word," Jackson said. "It calls upon ancient racial fears." As well, Jackson says, Donald Trump was "tapping into code-word fears that go far beyond a rational discourse."

Like those in the *Times* editorial, none of these assertions contains a shred of proof that any birther is racist or that raising the issue of Obama's mystifying nativity, strange upbringing, and murky college career is a sign of racial animus.

It seems that merely asking a question about the most powerful man on earth can mean only one thing: that the question is, at bottom, racial.

Photo of Geraldine Ferraro: AP Images



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