



"Do NOT say the 'race card' is being pulled..."

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This comes from a high school friend, Tamara Anderson. I had posted a link to an insightful article on Christianity Today, and had received a question as to whether whites really had "privilege" or not (<http://www.facebook.com/ramone.romero/posts/10151788179954187>).

In part, I (Ramone) replied,

It is challenging and difficult to hear that there may be more ways of seeing reality than we've been able to see. I grew up looking like the majority in the US, and would likely have felt the same way if I had not moved to a different country and lived here as a minority for 12+ years. Things really do look different from a minority's perspective. It really is hard to see "privilege" being in the majority. Listening is paramount...

Tammy then shared the following... are you ready to listen?

Ramone, I am going to share what I shared on another friend's page. It is my perspective from the other side:

I am going to say one thing and this is all I am going to say.

I will preface by saying that I grew up in a well educated, upper middle class black family and that I have many friends of all races. I am married to a white man.

Zimmerman should have stood down when he was told to. He followed Trayvon because he was a black kid in a fairly affluent area. Please do not deny that there is a tendency to grab purses and look over our shoulders more when there is a black man involved. Because there is. I am going to give you another perspective and I hope that you can think about it and ponder it. Until you have



been followed around a store because you are black, you cannot say that the "race card" is being pulled. I have been followed in stores. In one store I confronted the worker and she said that "I

wanted to be sure that you did not steal anything." I was with a white friend. She did not even look for her. I was dressed nicely and had more than enough money to pay for anything in the store.

My cousin, who has been an executive at two of the biggest banks in America, is regularly pulled over in his Jaguar and searched for drugs because he "looks suspicious" (Expensive Car + expensive suit + black man apparently equals suspicious). He lives in a mansion, is about to publish a book with Wiley Publishing, sends his daughters to one of the most exclusive schools in his state and STILL he gets pulled over because of the perception that black men who have expensive clothes and transportation are drug dealers.

Those of you who are white will never have to sit down with your sons and tell them that there are certain neighborhoods in which they will be viewed with suspicion. You will never have to tell your son that if he drives a nice car, he probably will get pulled over...no matter how well-educated and employed he is. You will never have the PAIN of explaining to your children that no matter how good they are they will be viewed with suspicion by many. That there will be times that they will be followed, denied service and viewed negatively... all because their skin is darker.

Until you walk in the shoes of a people that are targeted by racism, you cannot say that the race card is being pulled. My husband has told me time and time again, that he had NO idea that racism was so prominent and sometimes blatant until he got married to me. Now that he sees the ugliness of racism that he did not know before.

In the little town where I grew up and we got married, the clerk's assistant refused to give us our marriage certificate at first. She did not approve of interracial marriages. She refused to accept Allan's PASSPORT as a valid form of ID. She looked at us with SUCH disgust and when she HAD to give us our marriage certificate, she passed the work off to a co-worker.

And let's not talk about the people who tell me about "my kind".



Segregation officially ended just 50 years ago. It is ridiculous that so many of you seem to think that centuries of racist thinking just disappeared in one or two generations. That plus the fact that the media focuses on the blacks that do things wrong is not helping. How many times have you seen Hollywood and/or the news talk about me or people like me? I have a BA and a MA degree. I LOVE classical music, speak three languages, play 3 instruments and travel often. My ENTIRE family and

ALL of my black friends are like me. But mainstream media pushes the stereotype of the dishonest, uneducated, violent black person.

DO not dismiss the fact that race was an issue here just because you do not feel you are racist. Until you have walked on THIS side of the race line you do not know what it is. Until you stay up at night with knots in your stomach, as I have, and think about how you are going to prepare your children for a world that might not accept them because of the color of their skin, do NOT say that this is a "race card." Until you have been pulled over and searched because you are black and your car is too nice, do NOT say that a "race card" is being pulled. Until you have been denied service in a restaurant (as I have been denied in certain areas of Florida and Tennessee), do not say that the "race card" is being pulled. Until you have been pulled aside to have your purse searched to check for stolen goods—the only person pulled aside out of 4 people, three of whom were white—do not say that the race card is being pulled.

Because it is not a race card being pulled. It is a reality for some of us that we are judged by our skin first.

Until we are honest about what is happening, it will never change. Until we acknowledge that blacks, and in particular black men are viewed with more suspicion in America, we will have no platform to move forward.

- Tamara Anderson