

Where Are the Apologies?

Written by Ed Baswell
Monday, 07 January 2013 08:43 -

Robert Griffin III Getting the ‘Uncle Tom’ Treatment



Is sensational black Washington Redskins quarterback Robert Griffin III, also known as RG III, “a brother, or is he a cornball brother?”

That was the question asked on the air by black ESPN sports analyst Rob Parker not too long ago. Not “Is RG III the best rookie quarterback to ever play in the National Football League?” Not “Is RG III going to be able to stay healthy when he runs so much?”

Not “Is RG III going to be one of the best quarterbacks ever to play the game?” Instead, “Is RG III a brother, or is he a cornball brother?”

For Parker, this was the most critical question on the table when he appeared on ESPN to talk about RG III. The sports analyst felt he had to answer that burning question. Much like what happened to NBC sportscaster Bob Costas after his halftime gun rant, Parker got some heat about his racial rant.

What did RG III do to make Parker question the Heisman Trophy winner’s “blackness”? What did that rant have to do with appreciating or not appreciating RG III’s skill as an athlete?

As it turns out, RG III sees himself as a quarterback who happens to be black, as opposed to being a black quarterback. Here was the former Baylor star’s answer when asked for the

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umpteenth time about his status as a “black quarterback”: “I don’t play too much into the color game, because I don’t want to be the best African-American quarterback, I want to be the best quarterback.”

Here was his response when asked at a news conference about Martin Luther King, Jr.: “For me, you don’t ever want to be defined by the color of your skin. You want to be defined by your work ethic, the person that you are, your character, your personality. That’s what I’ve tried to go out and do. I am an African-American in America. That will never change. But I don’t have to be defined by that.”

However, for Parker, there was no color-blindness. In fact, it was all about color. In addition to the “cornball brother” comment, Parker said, “OK, he’s black, he kind of does the thing, but he’s not really down with the cause. He’s not one of us. He’s kind of black, but he’s not really, like, the guy you want to hang out with because he’s off to something else...We all know he has a white fiancée’. Then there was all this talk about him being a Republican.”

This is the same RG III who has helped revive a moribund Redskins franchise. This is the same RG III whose athletic skills have made him so popular, his jersey set a single-year NFL record for sales. This is the same RG III who was elected high school class president, ranked seventh in his class, graduated a semester early and began college at the age of 17. This is the same RG III who graduated from Baylor in just three years with a degree in political science. This is the same RG III who put together a 3.67 grade point average and made two appearances on the Dean’s list. This is the same RG III who took graduate classes in his fourth year.

This is the same RG III who is the youngest of three children and whose mother and father were both sergeants in the Army. This is the same RG III who has had the same girlfriend since college.

Yeah, he’s a regular cornball, isn’t he?

Parker’s mouth earned him a 30-day suspension. In response to the public backlash and the discipline he got for his bigoted comments, he wrote: “I blew it and I’m sincerely sorry. I completely understand how the issue of race in sports is a sensitive one and needs to be

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handled with great care. This past Thursday, I failed to do that. I believe the intended topic is a worthy one.”

Parker’s letter continued with: “Robert’s thoughts about being an African-American quarterback and the impact of his phenomenal success have been discussed in other media outlets, as well as among sports fans, particularly those in the African-American community. The failure was in how I chose to discuss it on ‘First Take,’ and in doing so, turned a productive conversation into a negative one.”

Parker’s suspension was well deserved, but many others in the mainstream media have, so far, escaped punishment for equally egregious statements. Parker’s kind of commentary is standard fare elsewhere and no one is sent to the network woodshed. On MSNBC, the “blackness” of certain people is questioned all the time. Herman Cain, Allen West and Clarence Thomas just aren’t “black” enough.

Hell will almost certainly freeze over before the following media darlings are suspended and/or apologize for saying these things:

MSNBC contributor Karen Finney said this about Cain, the Republican: “I think he makes that white Republican base of the party feel OK, feel like they are not racist because they can like this guy. I think he is giving that base a free pass, and I think they like him because they think he is a black man who knows his place.”

Hell is getting frosty, and then this:

MSNBC’s Martin Bashir said, “Mr. Cain was supposed to attend the dedication of the Martin Luther King Memorial on Sunday...but he failed to attend. Now there’s been some surprise at his absence. But being honest, isn’t this consistent for a man who really doesn’t want to be overtly associated with African-Americans?”

Hell is getting colder, and then this:

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MSNBC's Chris Matthews told black former Republican National Committee Chairman Michael Steel that his party was "the Grand Wizard crowd."

Hell's temperature is still falling, and then this:

HBO's Bryant Gumbel, on his "Real Sports" program, said he would not watch the Winter Olympics: "Try not to laugh when someone says these are the world's greatest athletes, despite a paucity of blacks that makes the Winter Games look like a GOP convention."

Hell is frozen solid.

Maligning a black person for not being "black" enough is a shameful and inexcusable form of racism. It is the exact opposite of what Martin Luther King stood for.

Looks like it's time to sign these network race-baiters up for some "sensitivity training."

Ed Baswell is the host of "Crossfire Radio," Monday through Friday, 7-9 am, on The Promise, 90.7 FM. The show is streamed live at promisetalkradio.org.