

Democrats' own racial exclusion

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I can't help but wonder how a Republican Senate majority leader would have been treated by the mainstream news media if he had made it clear he didn't want no coloreds appointed to fill the Illinois U.S. Senate seat recently vacated by Barack Obama. According to Illinois' impeached Gov. Rod Blagojevich, D, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D, called to ask that the governor not appoint any of the leading African-American candidates seeking that seat.

Reid revealed himself as a soulmate of Pennsylvania Gov. Fast Eddie Rendell, D, who argued during last year's Democratic presidential primary that conservative Democrats might not vote for a darkie. Reid worried that labor union Democrats would recoil from a candidate with a name like "Jesse Jackson Jr." in the 2010 election and the Democrats would lose that seat.

All this drifted through the ether with little comment from the mainstream media. Could a Republican have gotten away with standing in the doorway like George Wallace, D, blocking African Americans from entering the world's most exclusive club? You could answer that yourself.

And further, the incident would have been used to smear the entire Republican Party. Just look at the price Republicans paid for Trent Lott's kind words about the late Strom Thurmond at the latter's retirement party. Wags managed to infer from Lott's speech an endorsement of Thurmond's 1948 segregationist presidential campaign. But not once in Lott's long career did he ever try to pull anything like Harry Reid's Orval Faubus, D, impersonation when Roland Burris showed up to legally take Obama's seat.

Of course, if those racist union members were to see and hear videotape of former Clinton Administration Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich, D, and Rep. Charles Rangel, D-N.Y., trying to formulate the Democrats' economic stimulus plan in such a way that the money would not benefit "white construction workers," it wouldn't matter who the Democrat fielded as a candidate. But, the media are in protection mode and if you want to see the clip of exchange, you'll have to use YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5KI61z5Dyo>).

When last I searched, there was no mention of that committee hearing on CNN, ABC, NBC, CBS, The New York Times, The Washington Post or the Associated Press. You would have had to be watching C-SPAN's unblinking eye or tune into

Fox News, where the story received scant mention. If a Republican said something similarly racist, it would be the No. 1 story for weeks. That Rangel and Reich felt that they could get away with this conversation reveals how safe they feel when the mainstream media are the anointed judge, jury and executioners.

Meanwhile, until she took herself out of the running, all the signs pointed to the prominent and vapid social X-ray Caroline Kennedy as the odds-on favorite for gaining New York Gov. David Paterson's nod to replace Hillary Clinton as New York's junior U.S. senator.

Kennedy has precisely one qualification for the position - her last name. While the mainstream media made considerable light of Sarah Palin's purported missteps, some of which were the media's errors, Caroline Kennedy's interviews exposed her as possessing the maturity of a 15-year-old and the vocabulary of a fifth grader.

If her last name were Schlossberg (her husband's name) instead of Kennedy, someone with her resume would be laughed into oblivion. For that matter, if she were a Republican, it wouldn't matter what her last name was. She would have been laughed off the stage.

For all its claims about being the party of the common man, the Democratic Party truly is the party of the elite. Former New Republic writer and current Slate contributor Mickey Kaus (a lifelong Democrat) lamented his party's elitism and described the discrimination he experienced at the inaugural balls. He has previously commented on similar social stratification at national conventions. At Republican fetes, the common man is free to mingle with the celebrities. At Democratic events, the social strata are formalized with rope lines or separate rooms, or informally in cliques that do not admit, or even acknowledge, the existence of the little people.

Somebody once described the role of journalism is to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. That's not true. The roll of journalism is to tell the truth. But the mainstream news media fail in both goals. Is there anyone more comfortable than the Democratic Party's leadership?

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