

The Real Offense

by Kenneth A. Kuhn
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*"I would hope that a wise Latina woman with the richness of her experiences would more often than not reach a better conclusion than a white male who hasn't lived that life."
Judge Sonia Sotomayor*

I am a white male. In this age when anything said negatively by a person of one group concerning another group is automatically taken as offensive, I am supposed to be offended – but I am not. What does offend me is moronic political correctness and I will address that shortly.

First, let me say that I do not disagree with what she said. There are many white males for which her statement is absolutely true. The truth is not always pleasant or pretty. But the truth is always superior to the lies of political correctness. The truth can not be offensive even though it may be distasteful. Political correctness is always offensive even though it sounds nice. Lies are offensive period.

Second, people seem to forget that the Constitution of the United States guarantees the right of freedom of speech. She has the right to say whatever she wants and express whatever opinion. I do not have to like what she says. But I do respect her right to say it.

What offends me is that if a white male were to say the identical statement with the roles of women and male reversed then he would be highly condemned as a bigot and would have zero chance to become appointed to the Supreme Court. In fact, most anything a white male says is often interpreted in some way to be bigoted. Why is it politically correct for any other minority to bash white males but wrong for a white male to make even the slightest negative inference, however factual, about any other minority? That concept offends me.

It is not that I want to make offensive statements about other people and feel repressed. I do want to be able to make truthful statements without any fear of reprisal. In my many writings posted on my web site I call things as I see them and some people take offense because I am not politically correct. I do not care. That is their problem, not mine.

The fundamental definition of political correctness is to state things in a falsely positive way to obscure the true negative. Thus, political correctness by its own definition is always wrong. I have always been against it. It is moronic to state something that you know to be wrong. One of the doctrines of political correctness is that it is wrong and offensive to say negative things about any group of people – except normal white males. That doctrine offends me. Why is it that members of my group are automatically presumed guilty in any dispute?

Sometime in the 1970s I saw a news segment in which the fighter Muhammad Ali was doing a show for the inmates at some prison. I will never forget one thing he said, "I am

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a mean nigga. You white folks can't say that – you'll get in trouble. But you black folks can call me a mean nigga.” Ali was exactly right. But why? If the n-word is universally bad then why is it OK for some to say it and not OK for others? It is not that I want to use the word. What offends me is the concept that I can be told what I can not say. It offends me that we are all equal with different rights. Suppose (because it really happened) that a white person who has associates and friends who happen to be black is called a nigger lover by a racist white. In this example there is no doubt that the intent is to offend. The question is should the victim waste their time being offended and seek some civil rights/legal action against the perpetrator? I think not. I am sure everyone who reads this has been called ugly things in life that were definitely meant to offend. One should never take the words of a moron seriously – it is not worth the waste of time. The moron has a right to be a moron. That is freedom and that is fine. There will always be morons in the world. There is a *The Far Side* cartoon by Gary Larson that shows God creating the Earth in His kitchen and is sprinkling some ingredients on the Earth in the big pot and is pondering to Himself, “Hmmm, just to make things interesting.” On the can of ingredients can be read the word, Jerks, and the ingredients falling onto the Earth were people. So learn to live with the jerks and do not give credence to any moronic thing they might say.

How come it is that a black person can say to a white person, “Civil rights laws be not apply to black people.” That was really said to a white victim I know of racial harassment on the job. If the protagonists were reversed the white person would very likely have been fired. There was another incident when a black worker made a harmless slip of the tongue in a joke gone bad that all but one white worker dismissed as innocent. One person saw the opportunity to make a case (revenge?) out of this and did and the black person lost his job. Was that justice? No. Was it justice in similar situations when the white person lost their job? No. I am opposed to the concept of being offended just because you can be. It creates so much trouble – but to the profit of sleazebag lawyers – hmmm, that seems to be a common theme with our system (remember that I have already stated that the truth cannot be offensive).

Years ago I used to watch the black sitcom known as *The Jeffersons*. George sometimes referred to white people as honkies. As a white person, a.k.a. honky, I was not offended and laughed with the humor of the moment. That is the whole point of watching the show. All groups of people have different styles, approaches, etc. that in some cases are humorous to other groups. There is nothing wrong with that – provided it stays at the level of humor. Actually, there is a lot of good about it. Humor is good for all of us. Laughing sure beats fighting. If we were all identical wouldn't life be dreadfully boring?

There is a huge difference between something that a moron says with the intent to offend and something that is said by a knowledgeable person as a statement of fact without any intent to offend – the Sotomayor quote. I think the problem is that a lot of people are too ignorant to be able to make the distinction. The fact in question may be unpleasant and certain people may be conditioned to take offense. But that does not mean that it is offensive or that the person who said it should be persecuted. It would help us all if we would judge others on their true intent rather than looking for ways to read false intent

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into what they say. I have heard too many examples of people who made a statement of fact with no intent to offend and were ruined by the self-appointed political correctness freaks who know how to manipulate society at large against them. That is absolutely wrong and the end result is widespread ignorance in our society. Ignorance is an obstacle to the solution of real problems. Only the truth, however unpleasant, can tear down the obstacles of ignorance. I am for the truth.

So let's remove the chips from our shoulders and listen to and understand the perspective of others. Just because something said is unpleasant does not mean that it is not true and that offense should be taken. We do not have to agree with everything. But we should seek to learn and improve ourselves. Then perhaps in the future some unpleasant things do not have to be said anymore. Then the issue of whether some statements are offensive or not becomes moot.