

How Racism Harms White Americans

Featuring Prof. John Bracey

[Transcript]

BRACEY: A couple things. This talk used to be a fairly complicated talk because I had to explain to white people why they suffered from racism. Well, after three and a half years of the Obama regime, you can see what I'm talking about. There's a significant portion of white people in this country that will let the country go off a cliff rather than let a black person save them. Right? And they don't mind saying that. They don't hide it. It's not closet racism. It's straight-up, old-fashioned racism. And it's costing everybody.

So what I want to talk about is where did those ideas come from? How did they get here? How are they so entrenched that even 200 years after the American Revolution, we still have people that cannot see the world except in racial terms. That don't understand what this country is in terms of white privilege and patriarchal privilege and so I'm going to work your way through that.

How did we get here? So we are going to go back to the beginning. Let me give you the footnotes at the beginning so if I don't finish up everything I want to do, go read some books. One important book is by an ex-colleague, Meyer Weinberg. Before he died, Meyer wrote *A Short History of American Capitalism*. If you want one short, non-complicated, non-jargon study of where we are, read Meyer Weinberg. The second person is William Appleman Williams, *Empire as a Way of Life*. It explains how America has always been an empire. We didn't have to discover imperialism last week. Or globalization last week. And Williams' writes about empire as a way of life. We're so used to it, we don't even understand we live in it.

And, of course, Du Bois. You can't understand the world without Du Bois. Don't read the obvious. Read *The Gift of Black Folk*. *The Gift of Black Folk*. What African-Americans have contributed to making this country halfway civilized and the cost to white people is they haven't read *The Gift of Black Folk*. They don't know what they could get by looking at black people, because one of the costs of white racism is you don't see the contributions that black people have in helping you understand the world. And so I want to talk about, from the beginning, how we got here.

If you look at the American narrative – freedom, democracy, equality, liberty – all of that can be qualified by saying, "What about me? What about black people?" Freedom – what about slaves? Equality – what about racism? Justice? How about "give me liberty or give me death"? Can I have that too? From the very beginning, black people fought for the

British. Why? Because the monarchy gave you more freedom than patriarchic white Americans. The British said, "You fight with us, we'll free you." Thomas Jefferson didn't say that. He said, "If we do that, what's the point of having to fight? The fight is to be free to own these black people. If we free them, then we just blew the whole thing." But we get some kind of bizarre notion that somehow freedom and justice and equality are enshrined in the American experience and that if you don't understand it, there's something unpatriotic or wrong about you.

What does this do to poor white people? Women? Well, the reason you can have a democratic system that's not democratic is because there are black people here. Slaves. What is the argument to keep women out of the body politic, into their homes, safe? "If you go out there, they will get you. It's dangerous out there. There are Native Americans over here, who want to kill you and these dark people we kind of had to bring because we needed labor, who really want you. They would lust after you, so we're going to keep you in the house, on a pedestal. We'll do the politics, we'll run the government, you stay home where it's safe." That argument is still here. That's an argument that's fundamental to the republican attack on women's rights. Their argument is, "Get back in the home. They're out there, they're taking over." That's the fear. That is an argument that's at the foundation of race and patriarchy in this country. Scare white women to death with black men. Keep black men as slaves; keep white women powerless. It's the cost of racism to white people. We are slaves, but you can't come out of the house either. You can't own property either. Your husband dies, the brother moves in. Takes you and the kids and you're his. It's the cost of racism to white people.

You look at a political system that counts the black people who are property as people in terms of political representation, thereby magnifying the power of non-democratic Americans. Slaveholders who are counting their property. It would make as much sense for New England to say, "Well, can we count our sheep? Can we count our hogs? Can we count our cattle? Can we count our pigs?" They say, "No, no, no. Those are animals." But they're property. "Well, black people are property but for our purposes, they're also people, so can we count them?" Well, they were nice about it and they gave us a discount so we got 40 percent off. We didn't get to count as whole people, we get to count as 60 percent. Or three-fifths. There's nothing democratic about that. But the presence of black people warped the American democratic system so it's not democratic. It's a cost to white people. Slaves can't vote, but neither can poor whites. Some of us don't have enough white people to dominate the country, but the slave population – they do. Six out of seven of the first presidents are slaveholders. They dominate the national government, down to the civil war. When they lose, they fight. This hurts white people. You don't have a democracy for white people because of the presence of black people who have to be contained.

What is the white brain response to this? You figure all this great leadership we have – Washington, Jefferson, Madison and all these wonderful people. What do they have to say about this? Because they're not stupid. Jefferson of course had a problem. He needed slaves in fact to pay for all these wonderful ideas he had. What did Jefferson say? 1820. Done with being president, done with being a famous, important person. And a man named John Holmes wrote him and said, "Mr. Jefferson, what about this slavery question?"

Jefferson says, "It's like a fire bell in the night. When I think about it, I wake up in a cold sweat. I don't know what to do. It's just like having a wolf by the ears. You can't hold it and you can't let it go. I'm glad I don't have to deal with it," he said, "That's your generation." He says, "I'm done. I did my part. I have no solution to this problem." He's probably the smartest political mind this country ever produced, and that's his view on how you deal with slavery? Like, "I don't know. Y'all deal with it later. I'm out of here." It's Thomas Jefferson.

1820. Alexis de Tocqueville comes. He's from France. What does he know? He's an aristocrat. He says, "Oh! Democracy in America?" Why don't you read those middle chapters where he talks about black people. He said, "This is a very democratic country, except for black people." He said, "If there will ever be a revolution in this country, it will be because of the inequality of black people." Nobody talks about what de Tocqueville said; they jump all around about how democratic we are and the amber waves of grain and the frontier spree. He said, "No, in the middle of all that – black people. If you don't deal with this, you will not have a democracy. If there will ever be a revolution in this country, it will be because of the inequality of black people."

The presence of black people: We don't have the power to exert directly in the political system but our presence shapes the political system.

We spend more money – before the civil war, the largest military campaigns were the Seminole wars. What is that? A combined attempt to exterminate Native Americans who are harboring runaway slaves. Forty million dollars, and that's forty million dollars in that kind of money. Today that'd be billions. Twenty years worth of warfare. Seminoles are still at war, wouldn't give up the slaves. Forty million dollars to try drive Native Americans out of the Southeast.

What's our next war? Well, freedom and justice and equality for the Republic of Texas. Why does the Republic of Texas want freedom? Because Mexico doesn't have slavery. You know those tricky Mexicans, they free everybody. So we send slaveholders into Mexico, declared the need to be free, get the government to fight a war – The Mexican-American War – take half of Mexico so we can extend slavery, not freedom. Black people at the Alamo fought on the side of Santa Ana. Make that movie. Put John Wayne in there somewhere.

If we don't know this, we have no idea – because of the cost of racism – why we have an immigration problem. We have half of somebody's country, people have been here ten thousand years if you're a Native American, and you walking up and down to see your grandmother and grandfather and cousins, which you've been doing for ten thousand years and some fool just drawn a line and said, "This is another country." In your mind it is! But if I were Mayan or a Toltec or an Apache or a Comanche, I'm going home. You can build all the fences you want, I'm going home to see my grandmother. She lives up there that you call "Arizona." That's not what we call it. You call it Arizona. You can build a wall this high, you can dig all the trenches you want, I'm going home.

Racism makes that an immigration problem: why do they want to come to "our" country? What do you mean, "our country"? Our country. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo is only 1848, that is less than two hundred years ago. In that span of time if you're a Native American, that's no time at all. It's no time at all. A couple of hundred years? We've been here ten thousand. You go to Sag Harbor in New York and you see a cemetery with graves two thousand years old. You tell me your ancestors were pilgrims, they weren't even here when these people were here. The cost of racism is you don't see that. You think that America started when white people showed up and you can't see that other people see the world and that what you think is a fixed entity – the United States of America – is new. Wasn't here three hundred years ago. It might not be here three hundred years from now. Nothing's guaranteed. We don't see that. And it's the cost of not seeing these things that give us the way we look at the world and give us problems that we cannot possibly solve.

What do we then as slavery expands? Slavery's all over the place. Massive numbers. It grew up from one million in 1800 to four million in 1860. There's some people that try to warn white Americans. Black people of course, but nobody listens to us.

And then you have abolitionists. Now they say the way you end slavery is you abolish it. Stop it. Sorry, that's crazy. Owning people is sane, freeing them is crazy. You can see where this is going in the white psyche. We are producing a nation full of people that think down is up and up is down. So we have this strange phenomenon where Robert E. Lee is a noble Southern gentlemen and John Brown is a fanatic. Why is John Brown a fanatic? Well he thought the slaves ought to be free. Oh my god, he's gotta be nuts. And furthermore, he said the way to end slavery is you kill the slaveholders. That's the American way. You see something you don't like, you kill it right? That's why we have the biggest military in the world. We got a lot of things we have to keep track of. John Brown said, "I'm a good American. You end slavery, kill the slaveholders. Solve that problem right away. Let's arm everybody, get one big battle and it'll be all over." Well, it didn't work. Black people loved him though. When John Brown was captured by Robert E. Lee and kept in jail, black people fought for the right to bring him food. In those days, you didn't have regular meals, people had to bring you food. Black people fought for the right to feed him in jail. John Brown was a courageous man. Wasn't crazy. A very prophetic man. And they were about to hang him, he said, "I don't mind dying," he says, "I did my part and I lost. That's okay. But let me tell you something. He said, "I thought that we could end this thing with just a little blood," This is 1859, "Just a little blood." He said, in vain, "We're going to have to purge this land with blood in order to end slavery." This is 1859. Two years later, what did we have?

First, the civil war. What did they walk into battle singing? "John Brown's body lies a molding in the grave but his soul is marching on." Who was right? Robert E. Lee or John Brown? How come we know about Robert E. Lee as a southern gentleman and know nothing about John Brown? That's the cost of racism to white Americans. We don't know who we are. We don't know who's important and why they're important. You look away from somebody that had a keen insight into racism and slavery. Because if John Brown is right, the whole rest of the country is wrong. And white supremacy will not allow that to take place.

Then we have, of course, the civil war. A million casualties. Dead, wounded – a million. It's the cost of not dealing with the problem of slavery. If you had said to white Americans, "Give us a million people to die and we'll end slavery," nobody ain't doing that... That's what it cost. Not a million black people died. The majority of the casualties were white people. Dead and wounded. A million. Out of a population of under thirty million. That's a lot of people. Because they would not address the reality of slavery. They said, "No, we'll put it off, we'll put it off." You can't put it off. That's a cost – a horrible cost – in lives and suffering, to white people.

So you think, 'Well, maybe they'll learn.' Right? Well, Abraham Lincoln did. Abraham Lincoln said, "I been dealing around, talking about unity and this is about the national government," and all kinds of stuff like that. Second inaugural address, Lincoln said, "it's about slavery. Enough. This is about slavery." And he said, "I know what the cost is and I'm prepared to pay the cost." What did he say? "Pay back every drop of blood drawn with the lash with one drawn by the sword." He says, "In the judgment of the lord, it's true and righteous together." This is Abraham Lincoln. This is not "Let's Make a Deal." This is not, "can I scheme my way through this some kind of way..." He said, "No, no, this is destroying the unity of our nation. We have to destroy it rude and fast, if we have to tear the whole thing down. Kill everybody we have to kill to make this country whole again." He said, "I'm going to do that." That's what he did. People still trying to deal with that.

There are a lot of books about whether Abraham Lincoln liked black people. Well I don't really care. As long as he loaned me the Union Army when I needed it, I'm cool. I don't want to have dinner at the White House with him. It's like, "Can we have the Union Army to help free us? Good." Abe Lincoln's on my side. Whether he wants me to play cards with him... You know, I ain't into that. How many people have loaned you an army to free yourself? Give me some of the craziest military minds that ever lived, Grant and Sherman, because they're psychopaths. There's no doubt about that, they are psychopaths. But they were our psychopaths. And they did the destruction that freed black people. Let black people participate. And they had enough sense to let black people participate. But that's the cost of racism – it's our lives. It's Sherman, destroying everything through the South.

We're now free. If we were human beings and seen as human beings, what would you say to a population of people that you had kept in bondage for two hundred and fifty years? Given nothing that they had earned. You would say, "Well, minimum we owe them a little bit of something." The slaves said, "Okay, we'll ask for the minimum. Not everything. Can we have forty acres? That ain't a lot of land, forty acres. One mule. We'll work it. We could feed ourselves, that's all. Just leave us alone. We won't fight nobody, we ain't mad. Slavery's over. You hand us forty acres and a mule." You know what the argument was? An entire body of slave Marxists. They said, "Our labor gave this land value. Therefore, we are entitled to ownership of it."

That ain't working under capitalism. Can you imagine poor Thaddeus Stevens going back to his steel mill in Pennsylvania and the workers say, "Wait a minute. If their labor made the Southern plantation owners rich, what about this steel mill? Does that mean we own the steel mill?" No it don't. Right. Race, posed by black people in the context of slavery,

prevented in fact a national movement, a unified movement. If white workers had understood that, then they could have put that question on the table. But if you don't see slavery as the work of workers and you see black people as some separate species, and you say, "Well, that's slavery. We do free labor." No, no, labor is labor. Surplus value is surplus value. And the slaves weren't begging. You see, if we had begged, we might have got a little bit. We didn't beg. We said, "No, we entitled to this. We built this. There was nothing here when you brought us here. We built it. Everything. Therefore, we think we're entitled to the fruits of our labor."

It's not capitalism. If I own a factory, I'm entitled to the fruits of your labor. And I'll give you a little chump change and make sure you come back to work the next day, just enough. You know, reproduce yourself as a worker. Maybe a little more to buy my junk that we're making. But you're not entitled to the fruits of your labor, and certainly not my job and my mansion. And my stable of horses. And my trip to France. No, no, no, the fruits of your labor is a dollar an hour. And if I can get you down to fifty cents, I'll do that too. But no – we were in the wrong place because we saw too clearly being where we were situated in this society. But race prevented white Americans from seeing that. So white workers said, "At least we're not black."

So here come immigrants. Now that there's plenty of land opened up because of the end of slavery, do they come and say, "We're going to join hands with our fellow workers who are black?" They said, "No, we come here and we know we're not black." They weren't white in Europe. They became white when they came here. They were Polish, they were Irish, they were Italian, they were Jewish. Right? They were Catholic. But when they came here, the way to know you're not on the bottom is to say, "At least I'm not black." So what would have been a natural, normal alliance of workers, that Marx himself saw. Marx said, "Now, what's this foolishness in America about white people over here?" He ain't into that crap. And Lenin certainly didn't. Lenin said, "Why do you have separate trade unions and separate socialist cliques for black people?" They said, "Why, they're black!" He said, "That's the dumbest thing I ever heard. Are they workers? Well, they should be in one organization." He says, "What are you talking about?"

Racism in this country prevented white workers from seeing black workers as workers. They saw them as black, not as workers. Who does this help out? Rulers at the top that says, "Oh these suckers are giving me the hammer I need to beat them over the head with." So you organize the American Federation of Labor white-only. The "Union Bug" was a white symbol put on the product to show it was made by white hands, not by Chinese or by black workers. That's the first Union Bug. That thing that's on everything now. The first one was a white circle showing that this product was made by white hands. And then you wonder why, when you go on strike for two dollars an hour, they'll say, "We'll hire some n-- in here for a dollar." And you'll say, "Woah. Okay, we'll take \$1.50." He said, "No you won't, you'll take \$1.25." That's the cost to white workers. That's the cost of racism to the white working class. We will not organize unskilled labor because too many of them are black, so it took the 1930's to organize black people in the AFL-CIO. It's the cost to white workers. All of the gains that they had in Europe in the 1880's – national health insurance, social security, pensions, workman's compensation – they had this in European countries

in the 1880's. We didn't get that until the New Deal and we still don't have national health insurance. We still don't have a national retirement system that covers all workers.

Every time you bring up a program like that in this country, the way to stop it is to say, "It helps black people." That's why, if you want to stop national health insurance, you call it "Obamacare." "Woah! Couldn't possibly want something named after a black person." Well it's good for you. "No, it couldn't be good for me. Even if it's good for me, I don't want it if a black person is giving it to me." Fifty-one percent of the white people in this country are opposed to national health reform. What are they in favor of? They don't know, but as long as it ain't black. That's the cost of racism to white people. That's a level of insanity that's hard to get a grip around. I'm going to give you free health insurance, guaranteed, preconditioned, all that stuff – and a black man giving it to me? I don't want it. The poorest states in the Union are turning down expansions of Medicaid because a black person is offering it to them. It's the cost of racism to white people. I know, it's hard to get around that because your mind... you know, it really does a level of craziness here that's hard to get a grip on. But it's real. It's real.

1930's, when you get social security, they specifically exempted the two occupations that black people were predominant in: domestic labor and farm labor. Those weren't covered until the 1960's. The majority of domestic labor in the country were not black women, they were white women. The majority of agricultural workers in the country are not black people, they are white people. But you stop it by saying, "If you give them social security, our negroes won't work because we're paying them less than that." So white people don't get social security. And they seem happy about it because, "Oh, we not dependent. We on our own." You on your own to starve.

You look at the school systems in the South. Black people set up the school systems after reconstruction, there was no public education in the South. Black people set those schools up. White people thought it was a good idea so they took them over and put the black people out, said, "You can have your separate schools." Black people said, "Okay. We have separate schools." So now you have to pay for two systems. Not two equal systems, but like one and a half, one and a third, whatever. Still more money than having the one unified school system.

Or if you have that special meanness and craziness that my mother benefitted from – In Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Louisiana and so forth, if you could not get into a segregated school because they wouldn't let you in, they would pay for you to go to a school that you could go to. So my mother, she wanted a teaching certificate, she could not go to the University of Mississippi so she was forced to go to the University of Chicago, that the state of Mississippi paid for! I want to go to medical school at University of Mississippi, oh my god, can't come here. Well, Chicago said they'll take me, Stanford will take me, Harvard will take me, Jefferson in Philadelphia will take me. Okay, we'll pay for that. As long as it's not University of Mississippi. Thank you very much. This is insane. You're paying an educated group of people to leave your state and never come back.

Why does this help white people? So of course these are the states with the lowest health rates, the fewest doctors, no compulsory attendance until the 1960's. Because if you make everybody go to school, then how are we going to keep the negroes out in the fields? Well, the majority of workers are not black. You're keeping white kids out of school. White kids out of school. You're dragging down a whole population of white people by saying, "If we have compulsory attendance then all these black kids will go to school, so you can't have that." Well what about your, "Well, he can't go to school, put him out in the fields too, next to the black people." It's the cost of racism to white people. They still haven't quite got a grip on this thing. I mean, it's kind of staggering.

What do you do with . . . You know, I'll give you another example, the most horrible example I know about – the textile mills in North Carolina. These are white jobs until the 1930's. And before you had child labor laws, black kids weren't allowed to work in the textile mills but the white kids could. So little black kids are going off to school. White kids are going to the textile mills. What do kids do in the textile mill? Well, when the looms not up, the threads not up, you need a tiny body to crawl up under a loom that might be the size of this room and pull the knots out so the loom can move again. What happens when you pull the knots out? The loom moves and it drops and kills the kids. White kids. This is a white job. Black kids can't do this kind of work. It's a white-only factory. Can't have no n--- in here doing this kind of work. Thank god. And when did they unionize? When they finally hired black women into those plants.

Now they made the movie about Norma Rae. "Oh Norma Rae." No, no, no – Black women came to those plants and they said, "All the stuff you're doing that's not what the job is, like taking out the trash, washing," They said, "No, no. The job is around these machines. Don't say nothing about garbage, don't say nothing about windows, we ain't doing that." They said, "I don't care what you always did, we ain't doing that. And by the way, how come you all ain't organized?" They said, "Well, my husband said that unions were bad." "I guess he did." Black women. Racism hurt a generation – two or three generations – of white workers. They are happy that they are white, that's all they got, being white. Their kids are dead and maimed, they're underpaid, it's a horrible job, the women are being overworked and abused. But they're white. It's the cost of racism to white people.

We skip down to the... Well, World War II is an easy example. Blood banks. There are white people that died because they didn't want black blood to save them. Here's a country going to fight the Nazi's, shipping around Europe with a whole freezer full of white blood, a whole freezer full of black blood. The Asians can't get no blood because they're blood is sneaky and gets in there and messes up everything. So there was no Asian blood. So you had white blood, you had black blood. Everybody's lugging this blood around. And if you were white and wanted to get a blood transfusion from black people, you had to sign a release form saying that, "If my life is in danger, I don't mind having some black blood." A lot of white people didn't sign the release. They said they'd rather die than have negro blood. That's what a bad education will do for you. Right? If you have a school system with no compulsory attendance, no biology and you think that the world was made in six days, then you are dumb enough to let yourself die because you think there's something called "black blood." A lot of white people in World War II died with blood flowing out of

them with a freezer full of black blood plasma that they refused to take. They'd rather die than have black blood coursing through their veins. That's the cost of racism to white people. Now, of course, some of the smarter ones said, "Well, a little black blood... Wait until I get back, I can always get a transfusion and get it all out of me. Maybe it will teach me to tap dance, get rhythm." This is insane! Think of the insanity of lugging chunks of blood around Europe, fighting Nazi's who believe in racial... and you lugging white blood in one side and don't get the blood all mixed up. This is insane, it's totally insane.

So now we get to the Civil Rights movement. There's a problem before that. There's a study done by Gunnar Myrdal in the 1940's called *An American Dilemma* and we knew there were problems ahead because what Myrdal found out is that what black people wanted in rank order was the opposite, the inverse, of what white people wanted. The biggest fear of white Americans – an overwhelming majority of white Americans – their biggest fear was racial amalgamation. Black people barely had that on their list. This is white people's first concern. All of the problems in the world, this is their fear: amalgamation. "Do you want a negro to marry your daughter?" We think that it's about, "Can I get a job? Can I go to school?" These people are talking about their daughters. How are you going to deal with that? So you start off in the Civil Rights movement. "Okay, we'll start way away from their daughters." Right at the bottom with Kindergarten, and then at higher education where they're grown-ups. So the NAACP specifically picked cases that did not confront adolescence. How are we to know that black males came into sexual power when they're about six or seven years old? North Carolina, 1957, the "Kissing Cases." Two black kids, six and seven years old, were indicted for rape for kissing a white kid at a playground in the sandbox. Sentenced. Two years in jail.

And what did Eisenhower say when they talked about integration? He says, "Well, I wouldn't want my little daughter sitting next to one of those big bucks." He's talking about kindergarteners, for Christ sake. Big bucks in kindergarten? How are we going to deal with that? How do you approach that as the problem? And so, even if you start at the bottom... You know, Little Rock. A frenzy of white people coming out, foaming at the mouth, hollering and screaming, throwing stuff at them. But they paid the price of that. If you look at the cities in the South in the 1950's that had armed and violent attacks on black people, those cities haven't budged in 40 years. The ones that had armed struggle against black people paid the price. You go to Little Rock today, it closes up at five o'clock. Nothing's opening downtown Little Rock after five o'clock. Nobody moved anything into Little Rock. The cities will say, "We ain't doing that." Atlanta, Charlotte now have bank presidencies and major-league baseball teams and all kinds of stuff, they're modern cities. Why? Because you're not going to move into a place where the workers are going to be fighting each other all the time. Right? If I'm running a corporation, why would I move to Birmingham? With dogs in the street attacking black boys, these people are supposed to come to work and make my automobiles. I don't want them fighting in the street. Make a deal of some sort. The ones that didn't have enough brains to understand how to make an accommodation to black people as human beings are suffering for it. It's the cost of racism to white Americans.

White people in Birmingham may have loved Bull Connor in 1963, you go to Birmingham today, it still looks like 1963. They paid for that. And Mississippi, of course, is one big disaster and it still is. Why would you move into a state with no compulsory school attendance? Where the slightest attempt for a black person to take one step is met with murder? Where you kill a fourteen-year-old kid, Emmett Till, because a white woman in a grocery store said that he whistled at her and she went home and told her husband. And he thought the only thing he could do was get two other men and beat this kid's brains out and dump him in a river. What kind of human being is threatened by a fourteen-year-old kid? If my wife came home and said a fourteen-year-old kid in the Walmart or in the Macy's or somewhere says something to her, I would say, "He obviously has good taste." I'm not going to get a gun and go looking for him. My sense of myself is not threatened by a fourteen-year-old. Why is a fourteen-year-old black man a sexual threat to a grown white man? Why does he think that's a sexual threat, that your wife is going to run off with a fourteen-year-old? And that's the tension out of, "Do you want your daughter to marry a negro?" See, because if your daughter's a grown-up, which is to say if women are free and can make choices, and black men are free to make choices, then your daughter can say, "No." Right? She's a grown-up. Groups don't marry, people marry. But if, in fact, you are afraid that your daughter really wants these negroes because of what you've said about them and stereotypes, then your daughter might say, "Yes." And then ain't nobody left.

That is why today, all of the white women and all of the black people are in the democratic party, and the republican party is left with a bunch of white men talking about, "How come the women ain't home doing home-schooling and baking brownies? And why they having birth control if they ain't having sex?" That's where that comes from. That's the perfect storm. Right? An intelligent white woman stands up and says, "I want the right to have birth control." White men said, "No, no, no. She's having sex." What? Ain't none of your business. What is the solution? Take away the right to have birth control so that they cannot control their own bodies, get them back into the home and try to restore order. It's not going to happen. But the cost and damage to this country, while they attempt to do that, is going to be severe. Battles that people thought they had won a long time ago are now being lost again. You got to fight them all over again. Because those twin pillars – white supremacy and patriarchy – are both moving out from under white males. And the cost to the country as a whole, if we don't deal with that, is going to be severe. Tremendously severe.

So we are pretty much down to the present. What are we going to do? How are we gonna negotiate the world? Well, I'll end up with Obama again. Obama's the perfect president for white people, except white people didn't get that. He was brought in because he, in fact, is what the system needed. We have to as a country – if we're going to survive into the twenty-first century – we have to negotiate our downshift from being number one in the world to being one-A with a bunch of other powers. And maybe B if we don't watch out for the Chinese. And the Indians, who are again going to have over a billion people, moving toward two billion people. Or the strength developing in Latin America with Brazil; or in Nigeria, approaching three hundred million people. We can't just go around beating everybody anymore. Military power doesn't cut it. We have never won a land-war in Asia, ever. Ever. We put feet on the ground in Asia, we lose. Obama says, "Don't put feet on the

ground. Get these things that just shoot people from the air without any bodies in them, no body count – Americans don't care." He's a technocrat. He's a very skilled technocrat. I wouldn't want to meet him in a dark alley. I mean, he's just what the system needed. He can go talk to the rest of the world. And downshift America so it can fit into the rest of the world. That's what he was brought in to do.

But what we didn't understand was the strength of white supremacy in a segment of the white population. So you immediately get the initial response from white males when they're threatened is, "Kill him." So gun sales go up. Death threats are off the hook. And then you start with, "Well, he's not really one of us." And this takes up all kinds of strange forms. You know, "He's a Muslim. He's a communist. Well, he's a so-and-so but he has a Christian pastor... I thought he was a Muslim – Well, don't worry about it, we'll throw him out on any guilt. He's going to sell out the country to whoever, just fill in the blank." "Why is he apologizing?" Well he's trying to make a deal, fool. You can't go around beating everybody, you got to talk to them. That's his job. The issue is when enough white people in this country understand that. If you don't understand that, then the continuing cost of white supremacy will be even greater.

And if white Americans, who are about to go into the other side of the old "negro question," there is a significant chunk of white Americans who are not totally racist, but who are mad because the house isn't clean. The only reason you put in a black person is because the house is dirty. So, we got to be the mayors of cities when they were so messed up, nobody could do anything with 'em, so you elect a black mayor, he comes in and cleans up the house. Well, the country was so jacked up under Bush that they said, "Bring in a negro, let him clean up the house." Well people are saying, "How come they're still... the bedrooms... the bed ain't made!" The whole house is jacked up! I'm trying to do this in three years, you all messed it up over two decades and I'm supposed to come in in three years and do the windows, the floors, this and that. See, everybody saying after he been in there two minutes, "How come he didn't patch the..." I just got here! This is how you talk to your...? See people think he's a servant. Right? "You said you were going to do windows!" Ahhh, I got to do the door first! There's water in the basement, can I do the windows after I get the water out of the basement?

So everybody's mad: "Well, he didn't do this!" It's white people, we brought in a negro servant and he ain't doing the windows. Now black people of course knew about it because we actually cleaned people's houses. And we saw, "Oh man, brother, how you gonna... This is a mess here!" So he said, "Okay, I'll go do the easy stuff. I'll go kill Osama bin Laden, I can do that without talking to anybody." The stuff he doesn't have to talk about, he can do, if you notice. The quick stuff. The stuff that's really zap-zap stuff – because he's a technocrat, he can do it. "If I don't talk to Congress, I can do a lot of stuff. I have to talk to these white people, they just mess up everything." That's why the government doesn't work. Every good idea he has – republican ideas, because he's not a radical. He's not a radical, but compared to those lunatics behind him, you don't have any choice.

The cost of white supremacy is to sit here and debate like there's a choice. And if you're a white person that really thinks that you have to debate whether you're going to support an

intelligent black person that's trying to do something – and not everything, but something – versus people with pitchforks and sheets on their head, who wants you back in the kitchen barefoot, want black people back on the plantation and you think that this is a choice, then check your own white supremacy. What do you think black people are supposed to be? We are not your maid. Obama's not the help. He's the President of the United States. You all put him in there. If you want him to do better, push him, make him do better. I know you don't pick up your vacuum cleaner to help your maid, but in this case, he's not the maid. It's a political fight. And the severe cost of white supremacy will be not to understand that. And that deep down, even among liberals, is that where we put a black guy in there and he just, I don't know... it's like, "Woah, man, woah. He's been there three years now and woah." That's white supremacy creeping up in your psyche there. Black person got to be twice as good as everybody else, otherwise why is he in there? Why we waste our time putting a black guy if he can't do everything? Might as well have a white guy in there. No, no, that's the cost of racism creeping back up again. So, check yourself on that.

Let me end with Du Bois. I like to end with Du Bois. I can begin with Du Bois, I end with Du Bois. Du Bois, when he wrote his doctoral dissertation, 1896, on the suppression of the African slave trade. And he ended up with a kind of coda at the end, talking about the essentials of the struggle. And the last, absolute last, section is called, "Lessons for Americans." And he ends up saying, this is his conclusion: "It behooves the United States therefore, in the interest both of scientific truth and of future social reform, carefully to study such chapters of her history as that of the suppression of the slave trade. The most obvious question which this study suggests is, "How far in a state can a recognized moral wrong safely be compromised?" And although this chapter of history can give us no definite answer suited to the ever varying aspects of political life, yet it would seem to warn any nation from allowing, through carelessness and moral cowardice, any social evil to grow. No persons would have seen the Civil War with more surprise and horror than the revolutionists of 1776, yet from the small and apparently dying institution of their day arose the walled and castled slave power. From this, we may conclude that it behooves nations as well as men to do things at the very moment when they ought to be done." And I'm going to leave you with that. Thank you.

[END]