

2010 Diversity in Media (Rucker Handout – Info from [ABC News.com](http://ABCNews.com))

A recent ABC News/Washington Post poll found **fewer Americans believe Obama has helped race relations than when he took office, dropping from 58 percent to 41 percent.** That confidence fell 15 percentage points among whites, but more sharply -- 24 percent -- among blacks.

ABC News.com took a look back at some of the examples of racially charged incidents which made the public record over the last 18 months. It reached out to those who made the following offending statements to see what they had to say about them now. Some answered, some didn't:

Race comments in the Media – Prof Bob asks the question...



MSNBC Host Chris Matthews

Then, Jan. 2010: As Chris Matthews, host of MSNBC's "Hardball with Chris Matthews" reflected on Obama State of the Union address, he dropped the line, "I forgot he was black for an hour," while discussing the apparent lack of racial overtones during the speech.

Now: Matthews tried to clarify his comments on "The Rachel Maddow Show" by explaining that he was delighted to see race had no place in the State of the Union address after growing up in a country divided by race. "It wasn't even in the room tonight," he said.

MSNBC did not immediately return a request for comment.

"WHAT'S WRONG WITH CHOO???"



Rush Limbaugh

Then, June 2009: The conservative radio host has been cited for a series of remarks that liberal Media Matters for America has concluded are racially charged statements. Among them, are Limbaugh saying in June Obama was "behaving like an African colonial despot" and calling Obama an "angry black guy" a month later.

Early on in Obama's White House bid, Limbaugh was flamed for playing "Barack, the Magic Negro" to the tune of "Puff the Magic Dragon" on his show.

(Note from Prof Bob: Limbaugh is also quoted as saying on his radio program, "I hope Obama fails" as President of the United States.

Now: Kit Carson, Limbaugh's chief of staff, told ABCNews.com that the radio host would have no comment about his prior statements.

"WHAT'S WRONG WITH CHOO???"



Glenn Beck

Then, July 2009: The host of "Fox and Friends" said the president was racist in late July. While discussing the arrest of black Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates Jr., Beck said Obama had repeatedly shown that he is "a guy who has a deep-seated hatred for white people or the white culture. I don't know what it is."

When it was noted that Obama's administration was largely white, Beck continued, "'I'm not saying he doesn't like white people, I'm saying he has a problem. This guy is, I believe, a racist.'"

Now: Through his publicist, Beck declined to comment further to ABCNews.com. In a September interview with CBS' Katie Couric he apologized for "the way it was phrased."

"WHAT'S WRONG WITH CHOO???"



Dr. David McKalip

Then, July 2009: The Florida neurosurgeon and healthcare reform opponent sent out an e-mail in July containing an image of Obama as an African witch doctor, dressed in a loincloth and with a bone through his nose. Underneath the picture were the words "Obama Care: Coming Soon to a Clinic Near You."

Now: "I did not create that image. I did not widely spread it," McKalip told ABCNews.com. "It got more exposure because of the media than me forwarding it."

McKalip complained that liberals and the media picked on Republicans, especially small-town Republicans like him, while giving a free pass to people like Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid.

"That image was offensive and inappropriate. I apologized," McKalip said.

"WHAT'S WRONG WITH CHOO???"



Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid

Then, Jan. 2010: One of several high-profile politicians to merit a mention in the controversial book "Game Change," Reid, a Democrat and longtime Obama ally, was cited in the book for describing the president before his election as a "'light-skinned' African American, 'with no Negro dialect, unless he wanted to have one.'"

Now: On Jan. 9, Reid issued a written statement that read in part, "I deeply regret using such a poor choice of words. I sincerely apologize for offending any and all Americans, especially African Americans, for my improper comments." Reid's Senate office had no further comment.



Former Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich

Then, Jan. 2010: Illinois' disgraced former governor told Esquire magazine, "I'm blacker than Barack Obama. I shined shoes. I grew up in a five-room apartment. My father had a little laundromat in a black community not far from where we lived. I saw it all growing up."

Now: He quickly apologized for the comment, telling reporters, "I deeply apologize for the way that was said and having said it. Obviously, I am not blacker than President Obama." Blagojevich declined to comment further to ABCNews.com.

"WHAT'S WRONG WITH CHOO???"



Minnesota State Senator Mike Parry

Then, Jan. 2010: Earlier this month, Parry, then a GOP Senate candidate, was found to have scrubbed several tweets from his Twitter account, including one that described Obama as a "power hungry arrogant black man."

Now: Neither Parry nor his campaign manager returned calls or e-mail seeking comment. He told reporters recently, "My opinion is that our president is arrogant and angry. The fact is that he is a black man."



President Obama's first year in office has been punctuated by a steady stream of racist insults and innuendos despite poll numbers that show voters do not judge him by race

(ABC News Photo Illustration)

"WHAT'S WRONG WITH CHOO???"



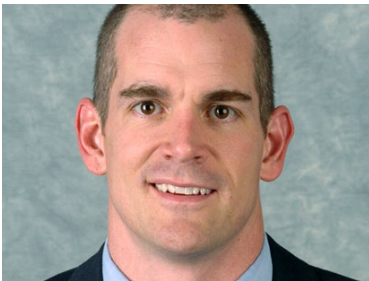
Former President Bill Clinton

Then, Jan. 2010: The former president was one of many politicians called out in Mark Halperin and John Heilemann's new book "Game Change." In the book, they said Clinton caught flak from Obama's campaign for reportedly telling the late Sen. Ted Kennedy of Obama, "A few years ago, this guy would have been getting us coffee."

During the presidential campaign Clinton also called Obama's run for the White House as "the biggest fairy tale I've ever seen."

Now: A Clinton spokesman declined to comment.

"WHAT'S WRONG WITH CHOO???"



Arlington, Tenn., Mayor Russ Wiseman

Then, Dec. 2009: Settling down last month to watch the annual showing of "A Charlie Brown Christmas," Wiseman was irked to find the Christmas favorite had been pre-empted by Obama's speech announcing efforts to send more troops to Afghanistan. He took to Facebook, lashing out at Obama for being a "Muslim president."

"Try to convince me that wasn't done on purpose," Wiseman posted, according to the Memphis Commercial Appeal. "Ask the man if he believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and he will give you a 10 minute dissertation (sic) about it....w...hen the answer should simply be 'yes.'"

Now: "They were totally taken out of context," Wiseman told ABCNews.com.

"All it was, was me trying to get my Democratic friends riled up. But did I mean it? No," he said. "If somebody reads that and these guys don't know me they think immediately, 'Either this guy's an idiot or he's a racist.'"

Wiseman said he's neither.

"I was looking forward to Obama inviting me to the White House for a beer," he said, "but that didn't happen."

"WHAT'S WRONG WITH CHOO???"



U.S. Rep. Lynn Jenkins, R-Kan.

Then, Aug. 2009: The congresswoman raised eyebrows in August when she told a public forum "Republicans are struggling right now to find the great white hope."

Now: A spokeswoman for Jenkins told ABCNews.com that the congresswoman had no comment on her statement.

“WHAT’S WRONG WITH CHOO???”



Atwater, Calif., Councilman Gary Frago

Then, July 2009: The Merced Sun-Star newspaper revealed that Frago had sent several racist e-mails, including a comparison between Barack Obama and O.J. Simpson and a crack about Michelle Obama posing in National Geographic.

Now: Frago did not return phone or e-mail messages seeking comment. He told the Sun-Star in July, "I'm not the only one that does it. I didn't originate them, they came to me, and I just passed them on."

“WHAT’S WRONG WITH CHOO???”



Rusty DePass

Then, June 2009: The longtime South Carolina GOP activist was responding in June to a Facebook post about an escaped gorilla at the Riverbanks Zoo in Columbia when he wrote, "I'm sure it's just one of Michelle's ancestors – probably harmless."

He later confirmed that he was referring to First Lady Michelle Obama. "I am as sorry as I can be if I offended anyone," he said. "The comment was clearly in jest."

Now: Reached at home, DePass had no interest in explaining his comment further, saying his apology should stand on its own.

"Do you think I've changed my mind?" he said. "I've said all I've got to say about it."

"WHAT'S WRONG WITH CHOO???"



Tennessee State GOP Staffer Sherri Goforth

Then, June 2009: The legislative aid for Republican state Sen. Diane Black was reprimanded in June for forwarding an e-mail image showing all the presidential portraits, with Barack Obama appearing only as a set of white eyes on a black background. She later told the online publication NashvilleisTalking.com that she only felt bad about sending it to the wrong list of people.

Now: Goforth told ABCNews.com she had nothing further to say about the e-mail. But Black's spokeswoman, Darlene Schlicher, said the incident prompted mandatory all-day diversity training sessions for all employees of the Tennessee Legislature.

"WHAT'S WRONG WITH CHOO???"



GOP activist Mike Green

Then, June 2009: The South Carolina businessman, whose communications company worked on the gubernatorial campaign of U.S. Rep. J. Gresham Barrett, was caught by the Indigo Journal in June tweeting, "I just heard Obama was going to impose a 40% tax on aspirin because it's white and it works."

Now: Green admitted the tweet was his and pointed ABCNews.com to tweets he made shortly after, which read, "I sincerely apologize for the comments I made on Twitter yesterday. I made a mistake," and "I realized that my comments were hurtful, wrong and have no place in civil discourse."

"I think I should just stand by that and not elaborate," Green said.

"WHAT'S WRONG WITH CHOO???"



Texas GOP Leader Diann Jones

Then, May 2009: Jones, a vice president of the Collin County Republican Party in Texas, forwarded an e-mail to area Republican clubs calling a state-sponsored firearm tax "another terrific idea from the black house and its minions."

Now: Jones did not return phone or e-mail messages seeking comment. In June, The Dallas Morning News reported, she sent a follow up e-mail saying she was "horrified" and did not see that particular comment in the forwarded e-mail.

"WHAT'S WRONG WITH CHOO???"



Sean Delonas

Then, Feb. 2009: The cartoonist caused a firestorm in February after his cartoon appeared in the New York Post depicting two police officers, one with a smoking gun, standing over a dead chimpanzee with the words, "They'll have to find someone else to write the next stimulus bill." The cartoonist was inspired by the mauling of a Connecticut woman by a pet chimp which was shot and killed by police officers.

The Rev. Al Sharpton quickly lent his voice to the controversy, calling it offensive and divisive. Rupert Murdoch, chairman of the New York Post and also of News Corp., which owns the paper, apologized for the offending cartoon.

Now: Delonas' brother, Nick Delonas, told ABCNews.com that the controversy was painful for his brother and the family because he never meant for the chimp to represent the president.

"The cartoon was wildly misinterpreted," Nick Delonas wrote in an e-mail. "The idea was that the stimulus bill was so bad, so massive and so outrageous, it must have been written by a mad chimpanzee. The chimp represented nothing. It was literally a picture of Travis, the rampaging chimpanzee shot dead in Connecticut after mauling a poor woman."

Delonas said the association between the chimp and race never occurred to his brothers or the editors who approved the cartoon.

"WHAT'S WRONG WITH CHOO???"



Buck Burnette

Then, Nov. 2008: The Texas Longhorn lineman Buck Burnette was booted from the university's football team in 2008 after posting as his Facebook status, as quoted by NCAA Football Fanhouse, "all the hunters gather up, we have a #\$\$%&er in the whitehouse."

Now: Burnette issued an apology shortly after the incident. He did not return repeated messages left by ABCNews.com.

"WHAT'S WRONG WITH CHOO???"



Chaffey Community Republican Women, Federated

Then, Oct. 2008: The California women's GOP group put out a newsletter in October 2008 with an image of "Obama Bucks" – food stamps with Obama's head on a donkey surrounded by fried chicken, watermelon and ribs.

Now: Organization president Diane Fedele did not return messages seeking comment. She told the Press Enterprise in southern California after the incident that she intended to apologize, but that they were only trying to draw attention to the fact that Obama "doesn't look like all those other presidents on the dollar bills."

"WHAT'S WRONG WITH CHOO???"



Former Florida GOP Leader David Storck

Then, Oct. 2008: Storck, the former chairman of the Hillsborough County Republican Party, forwarded an e-mail in October 2008 written by GOP volunteer Ron Whitley that said, "I see carloads of black Obama supporters coming from the inner city to cast their votes for Obama. This is their chance to get a black president and they seem to care little that he is at minimum, socialist, and probably Marxist in his core beliefs. After all, he is black — no experience or accomplishments — but he is black."

Now: Current Hillsborough GOP Chairwoman Deborah Cox Roush told ABCNews.com that the party denounced the e-mail shortly after it came out.

"To me, it's bad to re-hash it all," she said. "That's not what we're about at all. I think David just made a terrible mistake."

Storck and Whitley did not return messages seeking comment.

"WHAT'S WRONG WITH CHOO???"



Virginia GOP Leader Bobby May

Then, Oct. 2008: May, then the treasurer of the Buchanan County Republican Party, wrote a column for the Virginia Voice shortly before Obama's election questioning whether Obama would change the American flag to include the Islamic symbol or divert more aid to Africa so "the Obama family there can skim enough to allow them to free their goats and live the American Dream."

Now: May did not return repeated calls for comment.

"WHAT'S WRONG WITH CHOO???"



U.S. Rep. Geoff Davis

Then, April 2008: As Obama's presidential bid heated up in April 2008, Davis, R-Kentucky, said, "That boy's finger does not need to be on the button," according to a blog in the Lexington Herald-Leader, referring to the country's nuclear arsenal.

Now: Davis' spokesperson did not return calls to ABCNews.com. Davis wrote a letter to Obama shortly after the incident apologizing for using "boy," a term widely believed to be derogatory toward black men.

"WHAT'S WRONG WITH CHOO???"



Geraldine Ferraro

Then, March 2008: The one-time Democratic vice presidential candidate made headlines while working on Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's presidential bid for saying Obama's candidacy wouldn't have been so successful if he weren't black.

"If Obama was a white man, he would not be in this position," Ferraro told reporters in March 2008. She left the Clinton campaign shortly after.

Now: Ferraro told ABCNews.com that she stands by her comments.

She said Obama's success at the polls were due to not just the black community, but to the unprecedented numbers of young voters hitting the blogs and the voting booths to be a part of history.

"When you end up with these young people -- what an exciting thing for them to be able to tell their children, 'I helped to change history,'" Ferraro said, adding that she fully supports Obama in the White House. "No way in hell could anyone say I was a racist. They know better than that."

Note from Prof Bob:

Despite this seemingly endless set of quotes, it seems likely this list will probably grow over time.

If only media and public figures would do what most of our parents told us as children...

"Watch what you say. Even with the best of intentions you still might offend someone."

Of course there is also this famous line with its words of wisdom:

"It is better to say nothing and be thought stupid, than to speak up and remove all doubt."