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The Trump Presidency

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Hi my name is Ethan Johnson and I am an associate professor of the Black Studies Department in the school of Gender, Race and Nations at Portland State University in Oregon. I would like to thank Professor Jaime Costa and the Portuguese Anglo-American Association for inviting me here to talk. I would also like to give thanks to my mom and dad, who raised and loved me to the best of their ability. I was asked to discuss my thinking about the Trump candidacy and presidency, which is no small task. I told Jaime I would discuss this issue through the lens of racism and sexism. As a scholar and teacher of the Black Experience in the United States, Latin America and Europe I almost always begin my thinking through my personal, educational and research experiences. So, that is what I am going to do here. I would like to start out stating that Trump's election is no aberration within American politics. His election fits very well within both the colonial history of North America and the history of the United States. I also will not be talking much about Donald Trump in this talk. I am more interested in the socio-historical context of his presidency and candidacy than him although I talk about him briefly throughout.

Sometimes I find it hard on where to start, but I begin with my parents. My dad is a Black man from New Orleans, Louisiana. He is the descendant of slaves, and the earliest records we have of his relatives are one of his great grandfather's Friday Porter who was released from formal slavery I imagine sometime around 1865. My father moved out to San Francisco with his family when he was about 15 in the late 1950s, which makes him a member, although on the tail end, of the 2nd great migration of

Black people out of the Jim Crow South to northern and western cities in search of a better life. While I am sure it was not the only reason his family moved out of the South to California, one of the primary motivations must have been the murder of my dad's uncle by a White man that wanted his job. His uncle was a train porter in New Orleans, Louisiana. With declining job opportunities in post WW2 America White people began to take jobs from Black people that were previously the only jobs black people were allowed to do. My great uncle was told to leave his job so that a White man could take his position. He refused and was subsequently murdered. As far as I know, no one was charged for the crime.

My dad joined the Navy shortly after he arrived in San Francisco and while stationed in San Diego he met my mom on a Catholic retreat to Oregon. My mom is a White woman of various ethnic backgrounds, English, Irish and American Indian. They had three children, of whom I am the oldest. Interracial marriage was very rare between any racial groups at the time and even less so between Black and White people so in some ways I can say my parents were courageous. Nevertheless, as an interracial couple raising racially mixed children in the 1960's and 70's they did confront racism.

I attended a predominantly white private school in Berkeley, CA and one day during lunch when I was about 6 years old a young White boy came up behind me with a metal pipe and hit me over the head and knocked me out. When I woke up I had a big gash on my head that needed stitches. I was told that the kid who hit me wanted to see if Black people had green blood. (black people have green blood slide). I have told this story before when giving talks and once a Black woman about my age approached me

and said she had also heard that White people believed that Black people had green blood.

My experience was not isolated. In fact my experience was normal. The reference to green blood stems from the white supremacist idea that Black people are not human or subhuman which provides the right for White people to do violence, social, political and epistemic violence, against Black people almost at any time and anywhere in America. I have googled the words Black People have green blood and you can find recent discussions of this idea on the internet.

When this happened to me it was the late 1960s or early 1970s, and like now it was an incredible time to be living in the United States. Events that stand out to me from this period are the murder of Martin Luther King Jr. in April of 1968, the Supreme Court decision to end anti-miscegenation laws in the United States ironically and appropriately called the Loving Case of 1967; and the presidential candidacy of Shirley Chisholm in 1972, the first Black person who happened to be a Woman to run for president.

These events demonstrate the continuing centrality and significance of what Patricia Hill Collins and others refer to as a racialized system of sexism or sexualized system of racism in the United States. Beginning with the colonial project Black men and women experienced racism differently through their genders. The myth that Black people are sexually deviant is arguably the cornerstone of historical and contemporary racial discrimination and inequality (Collins 2004; hooks 2001; West 1993; Nagel 2003). Racial oppression during slavery and the Jim Crow era vilified Black people as

hyper-heterosexual in order to justify and perpetuate their exploitation (Collins 2004; Davis; 1981; Nagel 2003). Patricia Hill-Collins (2004) captures how Black people's understanding of the role of gender shaped the Civil Rights movement where lynching as a public spectacle done to Black men became the centerpiece through which racial struggle was framed. She states, "In a climate of racial violence, it was clear that victims of lynching (mostly Black men) were blameless and murdered through no fault of their own (223)." In this way the struggle against the clear and present danger of lynching defined racism as something that happened to Black men not Black women. As a result, Black women have remained largely invisible and secondary in the struggle for racial equality.

This system of hierarchical masculinities, that is sexism within the Black community and hegemonic White male patriarchy, made it challenging for Black Women and their voices to be heard. It is indicative that from Frederick Douglass to Marcus Garvey to WEB Dubois to Malcolm X and to Martin Luther King, not one Black woman learned about in school or recognized nationally in comparison to these men rose to the level of prominence and recognition as a leader both within mainstream institutions and many black institutions although they have played just as an important role in the fight for racial justice if not more so. I point in particular to Fannie Lou Hamer, the first Black person to be a national delegate for the democratic party, Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, human rights activist Ella Baker and itinerant preacher and abolitionist Sojourner Truth.

This has hurt the struggle for racial justice because women's voices and non conforming gender and sexuality voices within Black communities have had less space to be heard. The hierarchical masculinities of White male hegemonic patriarchy and Black male patriarchy have limited the possibilities for the development of other forms of leadership within Black communities.

Analysis of the 1967 Supreme Court Case (show loving slide) ending anti-miscegenation laws that made it illegal for Black and White people to marry is instructive. These laws were put in place primarily to keep Black men from marrying and having romantic relationships with White women. In the Southern United States during the 1960s few Black men would have attempted to marry a white woman knowing full well that it would have resulted in their death. That the Loving case involved a white man marrying a mixed race black woman in the rural south is significant. If Richard Loving had been Black he would have very likely been lynched. Richard and Mildred Loving were both arrested and put in jail, but only his wife Mildred was threatened with rape while imprisoned. The threat of rape points to the other and often ignored side of racist terror that within hierarchical masculinities was often made absent and/or silenced.

Shirley Chisholm's efforts to be president of the United States in 1972 also demonstrate the centrality of a sexualized system of racism within US society. Chisholm was a dark skinned Black woman that spoke her mind (show slide). She was unequivocally devoted to supporting the needs of all poor people and woman. While she expected to meet resistance from both mainstream political parties, she was

particularly frustrated that Black men within the democratic party did not support her nomination. Very simply, many Black men and many Black women could not fathom or support a Black women running for president at the time. In addition many white feminists also did not support her.

Martin Luther King's rise to leadership, the Loving Case and Shirley Chisholm's 1972 run for presidency each reveal that the hierarchical masculinities of White male patriarchy and Black male patriarchy are at the center of political and cultural life in the US.

While no one ever hit me over the head with a pipe again, I did have various experiences that continued to demonstrate that White Supremacy was alive and well in the United States.

My dad moved me out of the private school when I was about 10 years old and I began attending Rockridge Elementary School in Oakland, California. Here I was placed in a segregated mostly black class, which did not have an academically challenging curriculum. I was in Mr. Osborne's 6th grade class. Directly across the hall from Mr. Osborne's class was the mostly white gifted and talented class. I remember having a crush on one of the girls in that class. Howard Boyd my neighbor was the only Black kid in the class and the activities they were doing were much more challenging than what I was being asked to do in my class. William Darity in his article Desegregation without Integration explains exactly this process. From the outside the schools looked desegregated, but once you got inside they were segregated ostensibly by academic achievement. However, the ideology of the inferiority of Black people

remained at the root of this separation of students and we received an inferior education. Additionally, keeping Black boys away from White girls also appears to be the goal of segregation policies.

After Rockridge Elementary I went to Claremont Junior High School. The student body was about 95 percent Black. I remember one Black student telling me I did not speak like a Black person and another student telling me I had nice hair. What the student meant is my hair was not kinky or tightly curled. I also recall Mr. Smith, the only Black male teacher I ever had from elementary school until graduate school. He was my physical education teacher. He talked to the young male students in his classes about the importance of using condoms so we did not get young girls pregnant. At Claremont Junior High, I learned that Black people policed the boundaries of Blackness and of the phenotype and complexion hierarchies practiced by Black people within their own communities. Both of these practices are a result of and response to the imposition of the racial hierarchy on these communities. Mr. Smith, my physical education teacher taught me, however, that Black people also supported, cared and loved each other. He was concerned about our lives and futures and attempted in the best way he knew to teach us about the importance of contraception (slide on importance of black teachers).

My last years of secondary schooling my dad did not want me to attend Oakland Tech High school, which was very near my house. It did not have a good reputation and by coincidence was a predominantly Black School. He lied about my address and got me into Berkeley High School. My dad made sure I was in college preparatory classes

at Berkeley High. I find it illustrative that it was my dad who was making decisions about my education. My mom, a white person, made few efforts to make sure I received a good education, like many white people she tends to see the world through a colorblind lens (show slide of comic). My dad having worked for equal housing opportunities for black people was probably more aware of Black kids receiving remedial education and he tried to make sure I was in classes that prepared me for college. I was often, however, the only kid of African descent in these classes and I recall feeling very isolated. Many if not most of the Black students at Berkeley high were placed in regular and/or remedial classes. I did not do very well academically at Berkeley High. I struggled to figure out who I was. I spent my time mostly with White students who I had little in common with. Many came from upper and middle class backgrounds. The content of my courses also did not speak to my experiences. Drugs and alcohol were easily available at school particularly among the White students. I am unsure of the reason exactly, but I believe drugs offered me an escape from the feelings of isolation I was experiencing and I began to use use them to cover up my feelings.

It is also during this time, the early 1980s, that the era of mass incarceration and the ideological construction of Black people as criminals gains standing as arguably the primary cog of US domestic policy. I was unaware of this as a teenager. I saw on tv the shows like Cops that portrayed Black people as dangerous criminals mostly associated with crack cocaine, but did not understand this was part of an national policy to do away with the civil rights gains of the 1960s and 70s. Presidents Carter, Reagan and then Clinton from the early 1980s to the 1990s gutted social welfare programs and Black

people were locked up in prisons faster than you can imagine. From the early 1980s to the the 21st century the US prison population jumped from approximately 380,000 to 2 million people and most of the incarcerated are Black and Latino males for non-violent drug offences. Today, as I am sure most of you know my country's prison population is the highest both numerically and proportionally in the world.

Through a sexualized system of racism, the myth of Black hypermasculinity and criminality supports the lock-up of millions of Black men, while the myth of the hypersexuality of Black women supports the disinvestment in social welfare programs that would have helped not only Black women but all people in the US. My mom was on welfare for two years after my parents divorced in the late 1970s after my parents separated. Without this support life would have been much more difficult for my mom and her three children.

To explain and justify the institution of mass incarceration, media and government portrayed and instituted a policy that was built primarily on the myth of the violent and hypersexual Black male. Yes, Black females and poor women generally were and continue to be targeted by the criminal injustice system disproportionately, but they did not and continue to not receive the same amount of mainstream media attention. One of the most well known national events that epitomized the mythical fact of Black male criminality, The Central Park Jogger case in the late 1980s, demonstrates the effectiveness of this policy. 5 Black teenages were wrongfully convicted of raping a White woman as she jogged through Central Park in New York City. Like today in many of the murders by police of innocent Black people, they were made guilty in the court of

public opinion before any judicial decision was made. Ironically, the current president of the United States Donald Trump put out a full page ad in the New York Times arguing for the state of New York to reinstate the death penalty because of this case. I say ironically, because he himself is accused of rape and sexual assault by multiple people (show trump's add).

I cited Patricia Hill collins previously in regards to the development of racism being something done to Black men and not Black Women during the Jim crow era. She wrote, "In a climate of racial violence, it was clear that victims of lynching were blameless and murdered through no fault of their own (223). During the era of mass incarceration, while Black men may not have been literally lynched as during the Jim crow era, they were being made obsolete through mass incarceration. With the mark of a felony arrest one becomes a second class citizen. Many if not most employment and housing applications and voting rights are often denied based on one having a felony conviction. Black women again remained invisible. Black male patriarchy repeated the framing of racism as what was done to Black males. The physical, social and epistemological violence Black women and LGBT people experience is ignored, diminished and/or made absent through the disproportionate focus on Black male murders and incarceration by police. While the examples are numerous, I cite one to illustrate the point and significance of making absent the lives and experiences of Black women and LGBTQ people.

In 2016 the serial policeman rapist of Black women Daniel Holtzclaw was convicted of raping 13 Black women. He would stop black women for petty crimes and

then tell them if they had sex with him he would drop the charges. They often had criminal records so he knew most would not believe them if they went to the police to report him. The last woman he raped was an older black women of over 60 years who did not have a criminal record. When she reported the rape to the police and the news of his crime became public many other women he had violated felt more hopeful their cases would also be heard. If he had killed or sexually assaulted 13 Black men this case would have received much more national media attention from Black organizations and leaders struggling against police terror. I ask my students about this case in class and I am struck by how few know about it even though it happened last year. This case powerfully indexes the ways racism as it is constructed in the US tends to erase the lives and experiences of Black Women and LGQBT peoples relative to Black men.

For me, the event that seared into my mind the centrality of White Supremacy, that is hegemonic white male patriarchy, in the US and the globe was when I was returning on a plane from Japan in 1994. In my effort to save my self from self destruction of drug addiction I moved to Japan to teach English. I had been teaching Spanish at a junior high school in Oakland, California for one year and was falling apart. I had a friend in Japan who agreed to let me stay with her until I got a job. I had been in Japan and teaching without a work permit for 3 months when I realized I needed to leave the country to renew my tourist visa. I went to Seoul Korea for a few days to do this. On my way back in to Tokyo, Japan the customs and immigration police stopped and questioned me in the Narita airport. They correctly accused me of working in Japan without a work permit and stamped my passport persona non grata. I was put in an

airport hotel jail for 36 hours, brought to the airplane in handcuffs and sent back to San Francisco on the earliest flight available. On the flight I picked up a Time Magazine and on the front cover were the words the Bell Curve. I began to read this front page article, which described an academic book by Charles Murray about how he had proved Black people's genetic inferiority. Bill Clinton had just been elected president and the Bell Curve advocated for the dis-investment in social programs such as schooling for Black people. President Bill Clinton, as the first Black president while he may have disagreed with the findings of the Bell Curve, nevertheless passed comprehensive legislation undermining social welfare programs. The Bell Curve along with the dominant rhetoric of personal responsibility helped to prepare the way for the US Congress to pass this legislation and the president to sign it.

Clinton also signed and advocated for three strikes laws that put even more Black people in prison. Charles Murray, a white man, who is a professor at Harvard University continues to maintain his job. Like our currently elected president Trump and those before him including Obama and Clinton, he can openly practice White supremacy with few negative consequences. For me at this time American politics at the national level at least became bankrupt.

Just so you know, when I got back to San Francisco after being removed from Japan, I waited about three weeks and returned with a new passport. When I went back to Japan I was not detained and I later was able to secure work with a permit. I imagine computers at that time had not become as efficient as they have today, which is why they didn't notice when I came back to Japan.

I ended up staying in Japan until 1995 and returned with my now wife. I started teaching again in Oakland California at Castlemont High School. While I know you're all interested in my history of drug addiction, suffice it to say when I came back I jumped back into it, but for reasons I cannot explain was able to find recovery fairly quickly. As a result I experienced 3 years of challenging but rewarding teaching at Castlemont High.

When I was teaching at Castlemont most of the students were Black people, but there was a growing number of mostly Mexican immigrant students. These students needed to be taught in Spanish in content areas such as history, math, science and literature while they learned English. I had previously gained my Spanish bilingual teaching certificate and was asked to teach these classes. For three years I taught literature and US history in Spanish full time to my mostly Mexican immigrant students.

Castlemont was located in one of the poorest neighborhoods in Oakland, in what had previously been referred to as the crack corridor. Meaning it was where crack cocaine arrests and related murders were the highest in the city. Crack cocaine destroyed major urban areas where Black people lived across the country. At one time in the late 1980s Oakland was known as the murder capital of the United States because of the violence associated with Crack cocaine.

I remember I went to visit one student's house and he showed me a shotgun and pistol under his bed. I also remember regularly seeing kids wearing Rest in Peace shirts with the date of the birth and death of the person who had been murdered. Violence was a regular part of these kids lives in a way I could not imagine. I recall a

study conducted by Pedro Noguera in West Oakland in his book *City Schools and the American Dream*, an area with similar issues as Castlemont. Prof. Noguera in his research of the school would spend time out on the playground of the school. He saw the kids played a particularly violent game, where they would beat each other up. He asked them about it and they told him it was called Nigger Ball. The kids who played it were all Black and what they explained to him is that they played the game to practice defending themselves because it was inevitable that they would have to physically defend themselves at some time.

At Castlemont violence was also normal. While I worked at Castlemont the violence at the school sometimes developed along racial lines between the Black and Mexican students. I recall twice being with my Mexican students while they fought against the Black students in large groups, which the media referred to as riots. Besides it being scary, it was also challenging because while I identify as a Black American person, I was defending my students against the same people I identified with. Sometimes my students expressed in my classes their animosity towards Black people. Many of the faculty and teachers were also Black and sometimes the tension and frustration developed between Black and Latino faculty and administration on campus. Often Black faculty felt that the Latino/a students received resources that took away from the Black students. My position as a bilingual teacher inhabited this tension. Black educators have argued for extra resources for their students based on socio-linguistic differences, but were often ridiculed for this position.

To me the challenges in the community and the school were insurmountable as a teacher and I believed maybe naively that by gaining greater understanding of the powerful forces shaping life for the students at Castlemont I could be part of positive change at the school. I decided to apply for a PhD program at U.C. Berkeley.

I had a friend who knew a professor in the Graduate School of Education at UC Berkeley and he agreed to meet with me. This professor is Pedro Noguera and I know he was invested in helping to bring Black students with an interest in racial inequality in education into his program. Social capital is real. Classed based social networks can have both positive and negative impacts on people's lives. In this case my racialized social networks facilitated my entry into graduate school to a prestigious institution. Pedro is a Black man living in America and like Mr. Smith---my first and only Black male teacher until graduate school--- Pedro cares about the lives of Black people deeply and has supported and facilitated through the years students of color's access to higher education. After we talked and I told him about my interests, teaching experience and education, he supported my application and I was admitted to the Social and Cultural Studies Program in Education PhD program in 1998.

When I entered the program there were various work/research opportunities for grad students and as fate would have it there was a position to work as an ethnographer for a community organization doing work on interracial conflict at Castlemont high school. I worked on this project for two years. Here I was able to study the history of the school and community of Castlemont and the work the community organization was doing to stop the conflict between Black and Latino

students. I locate the violence at Castlemont and the local community within the larger structures of economic disinvestment, deindustrialization, urban development policies and racial segregation, which ultimately created huge populations of Black urban poor across the country with little to no opportunity for social class mobility. I eventually published a paper with a colleague on these processes and how Black people and supportive individuals and groups have resisted these practices. However, I believe that substantive change will not occur until White America acknowledges the centrality of these processes in creating these issues within communities of Black people and begins to care enough to do something about them.

I completed my graduate studies and dissertation in 2005 and began looking for academic positions. My dissertation called *The Unfulfilled Promise of Equality: Blackness, Nation and Schooling in Esmeraldas, Ecuador examined through ethnographic methods* how students at one school in the city of Esmeraldas, Ecuador made sense of and negotiated race and racism. The site of my research was a school where most of the students were of African descent and many of the teachers and administrators also. Esmeraldas is the only city in the nation where Black people make up the largest proportion of the population.

During my undergraduate studies I lived and worked for extended periods of time in Mexico and Brazil. I was very impressed and intrigued with how differently race and racism happened in these countries. I also confronted anti-Black racism with my mostly Mexican students at Castlemont and for these reasons I decided to extend my understanding of racial inequality in education to the African Diaspora in Latin America.

I have been teaching, writing and conducting research in the Black Studies department at Portland State University for 12 years now. As a graduate student I did not focus on the intersection of race and gender in my courses. I had a professor named Ruthie Gilmore who introduced me to the subject. I took a course with her and she became one of my dissertation committee members. As a committee member she had me read *Everyday Racisms* by Philomena Essed, which focused on the experiences of Black Women in Holland. This book introduced me to the ways Black women experienced racism differently from Black men. When I started teaching my Racism course at Portland State I came across the book *Black Sexual Politics* by Patricia Hill Collins. Hill-Collins arguably one of the most important Black feminist scholars in the US taught me through her texts that a sexualized system of racism is at the heart of US historical and contemporary political and economic practices and processes.

One of the most troubling observations I have made in the courses I teach at Portland State University is that my Black male students are disproportionately not encouraged to challenge themselves academically. Two students stand out to me. One played semi-professional basketball. He rarely came to class or turned in his work during the academic term, although what work he did turn in was very good. I remember him talking to me before the grades were due and he asked me “to break him off something proper”, which meant he wanted me to do him a favor and give him a passing grade. When it came time to evaluate his work I gave him an F. He failed the course. After the grades had been turned in my department chair asked to talk to me.

The student had complained to him that I had graded him unfairly. He also had said I taught the course using material that focused on the experiences of homosexuals as if this was a problem. In all my classes I include sections on sexuality. Nevertheless, as I did not have tenure at the time, I agreed to change his grade on the recommendation of my chair to a C a passing grade.

Patricia Hill Collins discusses how Black males at times do not invest in their schooling and look to others to help them, which is as she claims crippling to their their psyches. In asserting their masculinity through manipulation to pass their classes they actually undermine their manhood. Besides this, his expressed homophobia, which was supported by my department chair also speaks to black male patriarchy, which silences the important work and significance of scholars such as James Baldwin and other Queer Black people.

Another Black male student of mine demonstrated a lack of basic writing skills. He wrote in what many would refer to in Black vernacular. I told him that he needed to get support from the writing center at Portland State. I asked him about his educational experience and he told me he had transferred from the local community college to Portland State and his writing teachers there had given him all A's for grades, which represents excellent. There are many possible reasons to explain these teachers actions. First, some of his teachers did not want to be accused of racism so they avoided challenging him academically and the other is they were scared of this tall relatively strong Black man and possibly felt that if they did give him a grade reflecting his academic ability or actually tried to engage him about his writing he would have

gotten angry and possibly hurt them. Of course, they could also have felt sorry for him because he was a Black kid who may have come from humble beginnings and had enough challenges in his life and felt where he was at academically, while low, was as best that could be expected. In other words they pitied him. Each of these reasons are criminal as they reproduce racial inequality. How many other Black students had these teachers treated in the same way? When I confronted this student about his lack of writing skills and asked him to go to the Writing Center he did. He told me I was the first teacher to ever point out to him that his work was not good enough. He eventually graduated from Portland State and went on to find work in the Admissions Department of the university. He only needed some encouragement and honesty.

While my Black students consistently provide examples of being stopped, harassed and terrorized by the police, treated unfairly by teachers, denied housing, and avoided by people on the street, the stories of the white students are just as revealing. In most of my courses I ask my students to write a final essay that encourages them to explore and analyze how the terms and concepts in the course are related to their lives. Many struggle, because they do not think racism is something that has happened to them. However, one White male student explained in his final essay how he had hit another car while driving intoxicated and fled the scene to avoid getting arrested. He later felt guilty and went to the police to confess what he had done and the policeman told him if he was not White he would have arrested him, and let him go. Another female White passing student also explained a similar experience. In the context of the class material I think that these students felt guilty, because they were benefiting

undeservedly because they are White. Their guilt was evident in their unwillingness to share these example at a group level. They only felt comfortable sharing these experiences through their papers.

My research has taken me many places however one thing I have learned is that focusing on what is right in front of you is critically important. I moved north to Portland, Oregon from Oakland, Ca and found that just as in Oakland a sexualized system of racism is in place. Portland is known as the Whitest city in America. This is no accident as Oregon attempted to make itself a white homeland. It is the only state of the united states to have in its original constitution the exclusion of Black people from the state. The exclusion policy was repealed in 1926, but through other measures Black people were made to feel unwelcome in the state, one of those being the rescission of the 14th amendment until 1974, which provided Black people with full citizenship rights. Today, although our numbers are small, Oregon imprisons its Black citizens at higher rates than the national average. One recent study found that black people were charged for spitting on the street at 27 times the rate of white residents and eight and a half times the rate of whites for jaywalking.

Two of Oregon's most prominent politicians are Neil Goldschmidt and Robert Packwood and both are white men. Goldschmidt was the mayor of Portland and then went on to be governor of Oregon in the late 1980s. While he was mayor he had an affair with a 14 year old girl for a number of years that he never revealed until she pressured him to, however it was after he left the governor's office. Bob Packwood was a US senator for many years until the 1990s. He was convicted of multiple counts of

sexual harassment while he was senator and never lost his job. Both of these actors continue to be respected in mainstream media.

Within this context I do not find it difficult to understand that a person such as Donald Trump who has been accused of rape and sexual harassment and made very derogatory comments about women can become president of the United States. As I said in the beginning, he is no aberration.

In conclusion, my concerns and interests lie more with how a racialized system of sexism impacts Black people. Namely how Black male patriarchy is complicit in the reproduction of racial inequality. I recently completed a study on the Black press in Portland, Or. In the United States we have a history of newspapers being run by and for Black people. In 2006 a White woman accused the second Black police chief of Portland, Or of sexual harassment. The investigation that followed found that all of the charges lacked merit. The chief of police nevertheless lost his job because he was found guilty in the court of public opinion before the investigation finished. The two Black newspapers in Portland both neglected to address the issue of sexuality in this case and instead treated it as an example of racism. The mainstream white press treated the case only from the perspective of sexuality and branded the chief a sexual deviant.

Analysis of this case reveals how it is linked to a “sexualized system of racism. The Black press in providing little or no space to examine the link between Blackness and sexuality, did not reflect the diversity of Black sexual experience and limited critical reflection concerning issues of sexual impropriety within communities of Black people.

The other aspect of this case is the issue of the significance of interracial relationships within communities of Black people. The dominant discourse of Black female and male sexuality has provided more space for Black men to transgress the racial romance divide, because their sexuality was more overtly sanctioned. The stigma of race traitor is lessened due to the increase in masculinity afforded Black males when they transgress the racial romance border. Today, with the perceived lack of eligible Black men due to high rates of incarceration and low academic achievement coupled with the discourse of the strong Black woman, Black women as 'overbearing or not knowing their place' finds a place for reproduction when they critique Black men for having interracial relationships. Treating gender and sexuality as if they do not matter in the perceptions and experiences of interracial intimacy in the Black community neglects these critical ways Black men and women experience sexuality differently. Furthermore, within this dilemma, the role of White women is left unexamined, as if there is no place for analysis of their role in "taking" Black men (Collins 2004; Nagel 2003) or of their claims of sexual impropriety.