



Letter to the Editor: A Letter to Joe Biden from the Barbershop

Written by Robert 'Woody' Woodard | Posted: Tuesday, June 2, 2020

Dear former Vice President Joe Biden:

My name is Robert Woodard; I'm a barber in Philadelphia. I appreciated your position as Vice President in the Obama Administration. You, as a White Man, and Barack Obama, our first Black President, seemed to have had a wonderful relationship leading our country. I am proud to have had the opportunity to vote for you both. I understand why President Obama chose you.

America has a long way to go to understand the damages of Chattel Slavery. Four hundred years of suppression of humans in this country just because they were Black was a total catastrophe. Your comment to a man about not being Black enough if he did not vote against Donald Trump was completely out of line.

America's history is unfavorable for children of Chattel Slaves living here today. The 15th Amendment represented abolishing slavery in 1865. It inspired France to create and gift a statue to represent freeing Chattel Slaves. Not wanting a Black female slave statue to represent America's freedom, they sent the statue back to France, asking to replace it with one of a White Female. That statue is known today as the Statue of Liberty, representing immigrants seeking citizenship. Hence, give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free. That was the open door for immigration. Keep in mind this was not the original purpose of the statue. It was sent from France to us to represent America's elimination of Chattel Slavery.

Mr. Biden, we need an office in every city to help all ethnicities and cultures address Americans not understanding enough about one another. Just think about it. If you were knowledgeable of the damages of Chattel Slavery in America, you wouldn't have challenged that man on his Blackness based on his voting preferences. In Philadelphia, City Hall has an office for the LGBTQ and one for immigrants. Mr. Biden, I'm asking for your help here to get an office for non-immigrants, the children of those former slaves. This would help Americans give credit to those laborers who built this country for free. Laws against teaching Blacks reading, writing and arithmetic have rendered them unable to exercise any constitutional rights successfully. We have to address the aftermath of Chattel Slavery if we are going to go forward as a country. Currently, the bigger and darker the Black man is, the more of a threat he is, causing fear fueled by Police, media and prejudiced communities in this nation. Blacks may be victimized on any given day due to this prejudice and fear, like Eric Gardner; Ahmaud Arbery, shot down and killed while jogging; James Byrd in Texas — stopped by three White Males in a pickup truck who tied him up, pushed him off the truck, and dragged him to his death. Now, George Floyd, most recent victim of Police violence. He too, cried out "I can't breathe," while three Policemen held him down, with one forcing his knee into his neck cutting off his oxygen, causing death.

Our overwhelmingly negative news media plays a big role in much of the fear that causes Police to kill first and ask questions later. Many positive things are happening in Black communities and must be reported regularly or these same fears will continue to get many of the children of former Chattel Slaves killed in this country, just because they're Black.

The only way out of this, former Vice President Biden, is to re-educate America about the aftermath of Chattel Slavery and its damages. I look forward to hearing from you in helping all Americans understand that we're all in this together. So let's work together and get this job done.

Robert L. Woodard is commonly known as "The Wynnefield Barber."