

# The Audacity of Nope

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Two hundred and twenty years after George Washington, a wealthy slave owner, was sworn in as the nation's first president a black man, Barack Hussein Obama, shattered the proverbial glass ceiling becoming our nation's first black president. Black folks young and old alike beamed with pride and celebrated his triumph as a victory for the entire black community. Black people desperately hoped that maybe this time in American history, this single act of electing a black man to the nation's highest office, was a gesture of respect for the black masses. The announcement of Obama's historic win was a symbol of black American progress. Like many other times in history, black folks once again stood face to face with the okeydokey, and like so many times before as a community we have missed the mark.

As a people, we have stood in the same place for 400 years as other groups have reaped what we sowed. When America declared her Independence from Great Britain, we joined her ranks filled with hopes of gaining our freedom. Once we helped America win her freedom, we were forced back into chattel slavery signifying the end of what we thought would be black progress. The money earned from this inhumane system is the engine which the American economy continues to run on to this day, yet as a community black folks are the poorest group of people in the richest nation on the planet.

In the roaring twenties, black folk had accepted the 1896 ruling of Plessy vs. Ferguson and were building strong communities despite the hardships they endured. One such city was a town that historically we remember as "Black Wall Street." Despite our humble beginnings, black folks were able to create a prosperous city that had an economy that surpassed any white community surrounding it, and in 1921 the first bomb ever dropped on American soil was one of the many reasons why this wonderful example of black progress burned to the ground after 18 hours of white backlash and the survivors and family members haven't received a single penny to help them repair this community even to this day.

In the 1960's, the black community again was ready to try their hand at receiving equal rights as a citizen. On March 7, 1965 600 people crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge in an attempt to begin the Selma to Montgomery March when state troopers violently attacked the peaceful demonstrators in an attempt to stop the march for voting rights. Soon after President Lyndon Baines Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act in August of 1965 removing legal barriers at the state and local levels that prevented blacks from exercising their right to vote under the 15th Amendment.

Yet 50 years later, while the first black man ever to be elected the President of United States sat in the Oval Office, the supreme court struck down the heart the very Voting Rights Act making it hard for black folks to vote again. Like always, when there seems to be a bit of black progress there seems to be an even greater amount of white backlash.

Black folks, our time in the United States of America has been mired in the audacity of nope. Every time as a community we seem to take two steps forward, we seem to be pushed 4 steps back. This year is yet another example of us staring face to face at the same old okeydokey we have dealt with for 400 years. Just 7 years ago, as a community, black folks were beaming with pride and looking forward to a brighter future. But like always White America always reminds us to stay in our place. We have missed the mark too many times black folks. In the past we have spent far too long celebrating the symbolic victories, and we were caught off guard by the white backlash that forever will loom in the shadows of black progress.

In 6 months we will be watching an end of an era. We have celebrated the election of the nation's first black president for 7 years. Yet we cannot be had. We cannot be allow ourselves to be took. This time we cannot be hoodwinked. Bamboozled. Led Astray. Or even run amok. President Obama's election was a symbol of possible black progress. This time for the first time in our American experience, let's circle our wagons and put an end of the looming audacity of nope that always follows black progress. Stay Woke!