

Racism in America

I: Angela, you're an African American.

A: Yes.

I: It must be wonderful for you. Obama was elected four years ago, the first black president. So race is no longer an issue. Everything is solved.

A: Not necessarily.

I: Really? I thought it was over. You know, a black president. What more could you want?

A: Well, it's a great thing, not just for America, but a great thing for the world because when he was elected, there were conversations in England about, you know, could we have a black prime minister, and it really started stirring the ambitions of people, and they could actually, sort of, see, maybe this is a possibility, maybe I can do this because it happened... It happened in America. So I think that that's a fabulous thing. But race problems are certainly not over.

I: You say to me that in America, you still experience race problems?

A: It's really ignorance. So you'll have difficulty catching a taxi. There are a few black celebrities who've had difficulties hailing a cab, getting a taxi, because the taxis just pass them by.

I: Because they're black?

A: Yeah. Oprah had a problem.

I: Oprah?

A: Oprah had a problem hailing a cab. They didn't realize that it was Oprah. But you shouldn't stop your cab simply because there's a celebrity. Your job is to pick people up and take them where they're supposed to go. Danny Glover had a problem. He's an American actor. People have had problems, just some basic, you know, problems catching a taxi on the street.

I: You know, they have this thing called race profiling. Do you feel that you're treated differently still because you're black then?

A: No, I haven't had many problems, or what I would consider problems, but some things will happen and you always have to kind of stop and wonder, was it my age,

was it my colour, was it...? What specifically was the issue there because, you know, the situation wasn't right.

I: But you got a black president now. Shouldn't that be over?

A: No. He's having problems. People are blatantly disrespectful — disrespectful to him as a president.

I: Because he's a Democrat or because he's black?

A: It's more so because he's black, because there have been other Democrats in office, and Democrats that people have not liked, but they haven't received the type of treatment that he's received, and not just from the general public, but also from members of Congress and other political figures.

I: I find that shocking. And what about on a personal level? What about for example your parents and yourself? Have you anything you can tell me there?

A: I think that anyone who's different from the majority — black people, we make up one-eighth of the population — we're still not the majority, so anyone who's not of the majority, you're going to have some problems, and so it's difficult to do a lot of things, especially if your name is different. If you're comparing two resumes, and one name is an ethnic-sounding name or a black-sounding name versus a name that's white, even though it's got the same exact information, education — everything's exactly the same, the percentage that the black-sounding name will be called back is far, far, far, far lower. So there's still some issues. Things have come very, very far, but I think what's happened is that since Obama has been elected, it's now out in the open, whereas many years ago, back in the '50s and '60s, when there was this civil rights movement and there was struggles, it was very out in the open, and then things calmed down once blacks received more rights, and really, my generation really didn't have the huge, huge in-your-face struggles that my parents or grandparents would have had. But now that I think Obama's been elected, it's really sort of divided the people from the, you know, more ignorant from less ignorant people. And so now you're seeing different types of disrespectful behaviour from some of these.

I: And so in fact you're saying that with Obama's election, it brought everything to the front again.

A: I think so, because now you have... Now you have politicians coming out and either yelling out during a speech or something along those lines that no one would ever do to a president or a leader or a head of state. So it's... So these things are coming out and people are divided and so more the race, I think, issue is coming to the front, as you said.

I: Do you think it will be an issue in the coming election or will you keep it quiet then?

A: I don't know. I think that's a good question. I think people are very... People have taken notice and that has affected a lot of Americans of all backgrounds and descents. I think that people have been frustrated and they see the problems, and I don't think that's helping. But I'm not sure how this election will turn out because there's just so many issues. We have the economy. We have health care. We have all these other issues. And then religion's being thrown in. So yes, it's actually pretty interesting. I'm not sure how it's going to play out.

I: Okay. Thank you.