

"Writing the truth  
as I see it;  
trying not to  
offend  
those who will  
disagree."

# The truth as I see it™

Idaho Common Sense™



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## Was it racism?

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Last month during a golf tournament, anchor Kelly Tilghman was joking with her co-host that young golfers have no chance of winning because Tiger Woods is just too good. Her co-host said, "To take Tiger on, maybe (the young players) should just gang up for a while." To which she responded their only chance would be to "lynch him in a back alley."

Was this comment racist? Was she referring to the history of lynching black men? Kelly Tilghman and Tiger Woods have been friends for over twelve years! Do you think he would remain her friend if she were racist? Mr. Woods said it was a "non issue". He said he knew "unequivocally that there was no ill-intent in her comments." Why was this not the end of the discussion? She was joking and he knew she was joking. They both knew she was not racist, nor were her comments. In the past the word "lynching" was used, primarily in the South, to describe the hanging of black men who were overwhelmingly more often than not innocent of any wrongdoing. It was a horrible period in our history and I am not attempting to minimize the evil. Nevertheless, must we remove the word "lynch" from our dictionary and vocabulary? Can we use this word, as Kelly did, without someone interpreting it as racist?

While Tiger Woods was dismissing these comments, two other men decided this was an issue and Kelly Tilghman's comments were obviously racist despite what Tiger Woods said. Did Tiger Woods have a better understanding of what is and is not racism than either Rev. Al Sharpton or USA Today reporter,

DeWayne Wickham? Why were they offended when Tiger Woods was not?

Did these men get involved to help Tiger Woods even though he did not seem to need any help? Alternatively, did they impose themselves, uninvited, into this situation for another agenda, to create a racist issue where none existed? Rev. Sharpton demanded Kelly Tilghman be fired immediately even though he knew Tiger Woods said this was not racism. Isn't the issue of racism far too important an issue to be manipulated in this way? Racism still exists in our culture. In fact, talking with people in our own community, racism exists here and is actually more prevalent than I believed. My concern with Rev. Sharpton is that with his constant claiming that the sky is falling, when real racism occurs his voice will fall on deaf ears, too many tiring of his continuing accusations. I know I cannot understand the racism people endured in the past or the racism some still endure today. Nevertheless, I fear when Rev. Sharpton behaves this way he does more harm than good and may actually hinder, rather than advance, efforts to eliminate racism.

Sharing the soapbox, DeWayne Wickham, in the USA Today newspaper, claimed racism as well. He said Tiger Woods was wrong to dismiss this issue and it was racist despite what Mr. Woods said. Mr. Wickham proceeded with extraordinary attempts to justify his position. To add credibility to his argument he quoted from a speech given by Senator Benjamin Tillman of South Carolina in which the Senator said the lynching of black men was appropriate. I had difficulty believing what I was reading and then I saw the

speech was given in 1900, 108 years ago! Isn't it a bit of a reach to quote a speech from that long ago to justify a position today? He also made Kelly Tilghman akin to those "white women inciting the lynching of black men." Are statements like these appropriate in this situation? Is Mr. Wickham's goal to eliminate racism or is his goal to manufacture racism where none existed?

These two men would have us believe that Kelly Tilghman's remarks were no different from those of Don Imus when he called the Rutgers women's basketball team "nappy-headed hos." Wasn't that different? Didn't Don Imus know precisely what he was saying? Wasn't that real racism? Was their evaluation of Kelly Tilghman too simplistic; she is a white woman, Tiger Woods is a black man; therefore, the word "lynch" must be racist? If these men accuse people of racism when none exists are they squandering their credibility? Are they going to be accused of racism themselves?

Will we see an end to racism as long as there are Al Sharptons and DeWayne Wickhams going out of their way to create racism to keep it alive? To bring an end to racism don't we need to be honest about what is and is not racist? We need to learn from yesterday's racism but it is today's racism that needs our attention. Don't we need Rev. Sharpton and Mr. Wickham working to eliminate real racism rather than propagating racism? They have a forum and we need them to use it appropriately and successfully.