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Barack Obama, Donald Trump

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Trump's appeal to black America is ludicrous — but that doesn't mean Obama was our savior

Trump's choice of Don King as a black surrogate is insulting — and we don't need him to tell us Obama is imperfect

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Iwonder what Donald Trump is smoking?

The idea that he, the onetime slumlord who refused to rent properties to black people, the ultimate justifier of police shootings and the spearhead of the most racist political movement in my lifetime, is now **presenting himself** as the solution to the problems that exist within the African-American community is as stupid as **using Don King as a Negro surrogate** — oh wait, he did that too.

No black person in their right mind would ever listen to Don King. It's 2016: Many of us have the internet now, and are well aware of his history of exploitation. Don King is pretty much a black version of Trump — he would probably think that's a compliment, "Ebony and Ivory"-style. They're a match made in heaven (or maybe in the other place). I honestly don't think any black person would listen to any black person that would speak on Trump's behalf — he just started allowing black people to attend his rallies last week be-

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cause some genius probably told him that the Republican primaries are over and that he can't win the election without at least a few votes from "the blacks."

Being black at a Trump rally a few months ago could've easily earned you a head punch. "In the old days, people like that would be carried out in a stretcher," **the candidate said** after a person of color was assaulted at one of his rallies in North Carolina.

The idea of Trump calling himself the solution to black issues, without offering any concrete plans or suggestions, shows the amount of respect he has for our community. Acknowledging the problems is easy, anyone with cable TV can master a few statistics or B.S. talking points, but what can he do? What would he do?

And please don't be confused: Criticizing Trump or Clinton for their handling of black issues doesn't imply unqualified praise for Barack Obama.

President Obama's approval ratings among African-Americans are high. But many public intellectuals like Michael Eric Dyson have been extremely critical of how he has handled issues involving race.

"Mr. Obama's failure to take to the bully pulpit on race unhappily coincided with the rise of racial demagogues," **Dyson wrote** in the New York Times. "Part of the racist reaction to Mr. Obama's presidency has found its troubling apotheosis in Donald J. Trump's presidential campaign. Mr. Trump's surprising run for the White House has amplified our country's worst racial instincts in a generation."

Other celebrities take issue with the ideas of "hope" and "change" that were promoted during Obama's 2008 campaign but never materialized into opportunities for African-American advancement. **Sean "Diddy" Combs told Complex**, "You put somebody in office, you get in return the things that you care about for your communities. I think we got a little bit shortchanged. That's not knocking the president. ... He's done an excellent job, you know, but I think it's time to turn up the heat because the black vote is going to decide who is the next president of the United States."

My introduction into the world of politics, as with many people from my community, came during that 2008 Obama campaign — I even donated money. For the first time in our lives, we really thought we had a person that was going to grab the White House and fight for us. As I have previously argued, I still can't help but think that Obama's heart is in the right place.

He put forth so many policies, initiatives and programs with the purpose of providing an equal playing field for minorities — programs that range from job creation and mentorship to providing more money to historically black colleges and universities, or HBCUs. The problem is that anything and everything he proposed, regardless of who could benefit, has been met with resistance by almost every Republican in Congress, and maybe by every Republican, period. Some even gained fame for disrespecting him, like that idiot Joe Wilson from South Carolina, who stood up during a presidential address and shouted, "**You lie!**"

Collectively, we were all ignorant to view President Obama as our black savior. The images of him and his family accomplishing something we all thought couldn't be accomplished has paid many dividends. Why would we believe, however, that his eight years in the White House could erase 500-plus years of structural racism? Does anybody think that if Hillary Clinton wins, the battle for women's rights will end? Women won't be sexualized in the workplace, will receive equal pay and get the universal respect that they de-

serve? I don't think so.

These are all teachable moments. I feel like Obama did everything he could with his limited powers under the circumstances -- expect to carry out his role as a teacher. Those same teachable moments are what made Obama's 2008 campaign so successful. As a candidate, he taught us how to be active and how to achieve -- and connected it to why we need to get out and vote. As president, he failed to shed light on the systemic racism that prohibited a huge part of the change he preached about, that change we all wanted to see. The president didn't renege on his promises; he's just one black man in a country that has a history of suppressing black people, regardless of their job title. It's 2016, and currently we only have two black U.S. senators and no black state governors.

Whatever issues and problems still exist, I'm confident that Barack Obama didn't create them -- and Donald Trump definitely can't solve them. Yes, we had our black president, and it's not like he made everything perfect. Things could definitely get worse with Trump in the White House.

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