NAACP Full Steam Ahead

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Elliot Simon, in his op-ed of July 17th, goes on about the president of Jefferson County's NAACP, George Rutherford. Mr. Rutherford was concerned that Jefferson County Commissioner Tricia Jackson had had her picture taken with two members of the Proud Boys and had called for an explanation or for her to step down. Mr. Simon believes that Mr. Rutherford's comments represent, in his words: "an ugly, unseemly and baseless smear campaign…".

Mr. Simon's nose is further out of joint because he believes the NAACP is "…about the advancement of a leftist ideology." He tries to marshal figures from OpenSecrets.org to bolster this claim. When I go to the OpenSecrets webpage however, I don't find the "over $1.2 million" he claims were spent on the Democrats, "in 2021 and 2022 alone" by individuals associated with the NAACP. I found members of the NAACP spent altogether about $20,000 for candidates for political office in 2020 and less than $3000 for candidates for political office in 2022, so far. Now, the NAACP, as a non-partisan organization, never backs either political party or contributes NAACP funds for the benefit on any candidate. He's also unhappy that none of the members' money was spent for candidates of the Republican persuasion. By way of explanation, Mr. Simon, I can only explain to you that the NAACP is a civil rights organization (the nation's oldest and largest) and if our members—I've been a proud member since 2016—think their donations are better served going to Democratic candidates, well that speaks for itself.

Mr. Simon wants us to believe that The Proud Boys are wonderful guys. This is even though both the guys in the photo were demonstrating the white power hand sign. The index finger and thumb are touching with the other three fingers extended straight. Those three fingers form a "W" for white and the

index finger and thumb form a “P” for power. Get it? This is not the “OK” sign you might be familiar with. It is not OK.

Despite Mr. Simon’s apologetics on behalf of the Proud Boys, I’ll put the NAACP up against them any day of the week. The NAACP was founded in 1909 and has worked since to ensure that civil rights for all Americans, regardless of who they are or what they believe, is guaranteed. We have participated in most of the great fights for freedom over the last century, including the Civil Rights Act of 1957, the Civil Rights Act of 1965, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Fair Housing Act of 1968, Brown versus Board of Education, sit-ins, freedom rides, I could go on. Today, the NAACP continues to work on behalf of all Americans. Let’s see, the Proud Boys, founded in 2016, they’ve done what?

So, Mr. Simon, I don’t think the NAACP owes Commissioner Jackson an apology. I agree with George Rutherford, that the people of Jefferson County deserve an explanation for why she is hanging out with people like the Proud Boys.

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