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Racial Discovery

Why are African American Viewed as Hoodlums? Is Racism dying or thriving?

Whenever a person is on the street, they are instantly judged. By men, women, children, and all of the above. The judgment by people can be either bad or good, for African Americans though, the judgment is usually negative. Before entering into this class I always pondered the question as to why people see an African American as thugs/hoodlums? Is it because of the way they dress or just because of the color of the skin? I understand something such as sagging is a good cause to think this but what about the people of color who don’t sag? What about the people of color who just enjoy wearing hooded jackets and sports caps or bucket hats, are they all hoodlums because they have a different style than the traditional person. Sometimes even the clothes do not matter, such as if a black person is inside of a courtroom and people look and automatically assume they are standing trial when in reality they are actually defending their client as a lawyer. When the world sees African Americans they always think the worse or have negative thoughts. The way that we carry ourselves should not determine our worth in the world.

We have seen many examples of African Americans being judged as hoodlums or thugs, one example that still stings America is when young Trayvon Martin was gunned down because he “looked suspicious” wearing a hoodie at night. I understand the fact that people who often commit crimes wear hoodie and black clothes, but to some people that is often what they enjoy wearing and find comfortable. There are better ways that people can be prepared to differentiate between a criminal and an everyday citizen who happens to “look” like one in the eyes of others. The streetwear that many people of color is not meant to be seen as thuggish, it is meant to be a fashion sense that is most preferably worn by people of color. They should not freight nor worry that because they are dressed a certain way they instantly have a target painted on their back. The style of our clothes should not depict the character within our bodies. People should not be judged by what they wear or how they wear it, but by who they are on the inside whenever people get the chance to know someone.

On the other hand, there is a time and place for everything. The clothes a person wears can paint a target on their back unfortunately and that’s mostly due to stereotypes that have been pumped into society about the African American culture. Stereotypes that often make it hard to be an African American in today’s society. We are supposed to be the land of the free, but the only people who are truly free are everyone who isn’t of color. The clothes a person wears usually vary depending on when and where they are and how that affects them. As I brushed over earlier, if I were to walk down the street at night in a hoodie then I would instantly be a target for people and police to watch and be on red alert. On the contrary, if I were a defense attorney in the courtroom, people may look at me and think that I was, in fact, the defendant who is being put on trial. One thing that is a common trend is that whenever an African American is in a profession that strays away from manual labor and actually has to deal with their intellectual power, people often look at them funny. They observe them as if they are in disbelief that the African American man and woman are incapable of having the brainpower to do more in society that takes heavy power thinking or strategical skill not just simple tasks and brute force. The reasoning behind this is unknown, but speculation is that people look at people of color and think that they are not smart enough to succeed in that said profession. When in reality, they are afraid that they are going to be surpassed by people that aren’t the majority and that scares people.

In my own personal opinion though, I think that what a person wears or how they dress should not determine how valuable they are.weafher we recognize it or not, racism is still thriving in this country, it’s just more subtle in some cases but it is still present! Racism is thriving in the country and to be honest, I do not think it is slowing down anytime soon. Being a black male in this society in America, you are already counted against and seen as being on the path to a criminal lifestyle. ALL BLACK MALES ARE NOT HOODLUMS AND THUGS, this is a stereotype that needs to be changed. Black individuals should have the same opportunities and the same benefit of the doubt just as all other ethnicities do. The instant feeling of safety should not only be for the caucasian male but for all males of color. Equality should be something that we are striving for in America and we have started by giving black males a running chance in society and not putting them in this category of thug based on their outer appearance.