

July 17, 2013

Abigail Thernstrom nicely sums up the president's Zimmerman actions.

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"If I had a son, he'd look like Trayvon," the president said when asked about the case in the Rose Garden on March 23, 2012, after many had called for Zimmerman's arrest but several weeks before he was charged. "When I think about this boy, I think about my own kids."

In fact, if the president had a son, he would have been born to extraordinary privilege and raised with all the advantages of two very affluent and highly educated parents. He would have gone to tony private schools. His path in life would have been almost as dissimilar from Trayvon's as one could imagine.

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The president's remarks created a clear impression that he was motivated by one of two factors, and we can only guess as to which, or what combination of the two, was at work here. One possibility is that this is merely another manifestation of the president's well-known narcissism: No matter what the situation may be, it's all about him. ...

John Fund with more on the Zimmerman travesty. It's worse than you thought.

The trial of George Zimmerman should be taught in law schools and elsewhere as a prime example of one of the most mishandled and politically motivated prosecutions in recent U.S. history. If we want to reserve the criminal-justice system for deciding guilt or innocence rather than for playing out social and racial grievances, it's important to review the spectacle we just witnessed.

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Angela Corey flagrantly violated those standards. Her prosecutors waited months before giving the defense photos showing the extent of George Zimmerman's injuries the night of the shooting. Ben Kruidbos, the information-technology director for the state attorney's office, was shocked when he learned that prosecutors hadn't turned over to the defense evidence of photos and text messages that Kruidbos had recovered from Martin's cell phone. The photos included images of a pile of jewelry on a bed, underage nude females, marijuana, and a hand menacingly holding a semiautomatic weapon. ...

American Spectator writes about the cover-up of Trayvon Martin's crimes in a Miami high school. Another fraud from this country's educators.

The February 2012 shooting death of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin might never have happened if school officials in Miami-Dade County had not instituted an unofficial policy of treating crimes as school disciplinary infractions. Revelations that emerged from an internal affairs investigation explain why Martin was not arrested when caught at school with stolen jewelry in October 2011 or with marijuana in February 2012. Instead, the teenager was suspended from school, the last time just days before he was shot dead by George Zimmerman.

Trayvon Martin was not from Sanford, the town north of Orlando where he was shot in 2012 and where a jury acquitted Zimmerman of murder charges Saturday. Martin was from Miami Gardens, more than 200 miles away, and had come to Sanford to stay with his father's girlfriend Brandy Green at her home in the townhouse community where Zimmerman was in charge of the neighborhood watch. Trayvon was staying with Green after he had been suspended for the second time in six months from Krop High School in Miami-Dade County, where both his father, Tracy Martin, and mother, Sybrina Fulton, lived.

Both of Trayvon's suspensions during his junior year at Krop High involved crimes that could have led to his prosecution as a juvenile offender. However, Chief Charles Hurley of the Miami-Dade School Police Department (MDSPD) in 2010 had implemented a policy that reduced the number of criminal reports, manipulating statistics to create the appearance of a reduction in crime within the school system. ...

Pajamas Media posts on black kids in Baltimore beating up a Hispanic man yelling, "This is for Trayvon."

... A witness posted on Facebook that she saw the gang of young men chasing the victim before they caught up to him and started kicking and beating him. That witness wrote that the black males were shouting "This is for Trayvon!" as they beat the man.

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In case you have doubts **The Economist** has become an organ of the radical left, a post from the magazine's Democracy in America Blog, is a good example of why reading The Economist on politics or economics is a waste of your time. Just in case

their readers are thickheaded, the title was "Getting Away With It." Follow the link if you want to read it. We're not going to soil *Pickings* with more of this.

... We know that Mr Zimmerman said Mr Martin knocked him down, punched him, slammed his head into the sidewalk, and that he shot Mr Martin in self-defence. (Mr Martin could not relate his side of the story, of course, and there were no other witnesses.) We also know that America is a country still divided by race and fond of guns, and that Mr Zimmerman cursed "punks" who "always get away". ...

... Now, I don't know it, but I seriously doubt Mr Zimmerman needed to shoot Mr Martin, even if Mr Martin did attack him. And I seriously doubt Mr Martin would have been shot if he hadn't been a black kid. In my heart of hearts, I too think Mr Zimmerman did something terribly wrong, and that this misdeed reflects a number of things that are terribly wrong in our culture. And I share the impulse to identify something in the criminal-justice system that, if fine-tuned, would have drilled down to the honest-to-god truth about the case and rendered perfect moral justice.

...

... [In Texas](#) you can get away with shooting someone to death if they're running away with your property. That's insane, and it's easy to see how a law like that rigs the system in favour of people with a lot of property—a class that remains disproportionately white and male. However, on the whole, our criminal-justice system is [so frightfully racist](#) because [it's too easy for prosecutors](#), not because it's too hard. Of course, in a racist society, rules that help defendants are going to [help the most privileged defendants the most](#), and that's maddening. But that shouldn't stop us from recognising that the least privileged, the most oppressed, the most discriminated against, are far and away most likely to stand accused. That's why I suspect that a legal system making it harder for the likes of Mr Zimmerman to get away with it would be a system of even more outrageous racial inequity.

For apple fans, [Mother Jones](#) has a very long piece on long forgotten apple varieties. We have a taste of the article for you. Follow the link if you want more.

Every fall at Maine's Common Ground Country Fair, the Lollapalooza of sustainable agriculture, John Bunker sets out a display of eccentric apples. Last September, once again, they covered every possible size, shape, and color in the wide world of appleness. There was a gnarled little yellow thing called a Westfield Seek-No-Further; a purplish plum impostor called a Black Oxford; a massive, red-streaked Wolf River; and one of Thomas Jefferson's go-to fruits, the Esopus Spitzenburg. Bunker is known in Maine as "The Apple Whisperer," or simply "The Apple Guy," and, after laboring for years in semi-obscurity, he has never been in more demand. Through the catalog of [Fedco Trees](#) [1], a mail-order company he founded in Maine 30 years ago, Bunker has sown the seeds of a grassroots apple revolution.

All weekend long, I watched people gravitate to what Bunker ("Bunk" to his friends, a category that seems to include half the population of Maine) calls "the vibrational pull" of a table laden with bright apples. "Baldwin!" said a tiny old man with white hair and intermittent teeth, pointing to a brick-red apple that was one of America's most important until the frigid winter of 1933-34 knocked it into obscurity. "That's the best!"

A leathery blonde from the coast held up a Blue Pearmain in wonder. "Blue Peahmain," she marveled. "My ma had one in her yahd." ...

CNN

Obama's mistake on Trayvon Martin case

by Abigail Thernstrom

Every American can make their own judgment about whether justice was served by the verdict in the George Zimmerman murder trial but one thing we should all recognize: President Obama's interference in a local law enforcement matter was unprecedented and inappropriate, and he comes away from the case looking badly tarnished by his poor judgment.

"If I had a son, he'd look like Trayvon," [the president said](#) when asked about the case in the Rose Garden on March 23, 2012, after many had called for Zimmerman's arrest but several weeks before he was charged. "When I think about this boy, I think about my own kids."

In fact, if the president had a son, he would have been born to extraordinary privilege and raised with all the advantages of two very affluent and highly educated parents. He would have gone to tony private schools. His path in life would have been almost as dissimilar from Trayvon's as one could imagine.

Yes, Obama's hypothetical son and Trayvon would have shared the same brown skin color. Would that have made them interchangeable? Not unless all brown-skinned boys are the same. Does the president really believe that?

The president's remarks created a clear impression that he was motivated by one of two factors, and we can only guess as to which, or what combination of the two, was at work here. One possibility is that this is merely another manifestation of the president's well-known narcissism: No matter what the situation may be, it's all about him.

The other, more troubling possibility is that the president surrendered to his political instincts. He wants disadvantaged Americans to believe that he and his family are one of them -- despite their life of unparalleled privilege -- and he wanted the prosecutors, judge and jury to believe that this was a case about race where justice demanded a guilty verdict.

If that was his motivation -- and we cannot know, but reasonable people certainly may suspect -- then Obama should be ashamed of his effort to stir America's turbulent, dangerous racial waters. The president's role is not to be a racial agitator, and the mark of a great civil rights leader has been a determination to reject the temptations of that approach. And not that long ago -- in 2008, in Philadelphia -- candidate Obama distanced himself from such agitators.

People such as Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson see white racism as endemic and elevate what's wrong with America over all that is remarkably right. In his 2008 Philadelphia speech, Obama separated himself from activists of their ilk: the very people who today still hope to punish George Zimmerman.

On the campaign trail, Obama understood the sensibilities of the American people on these questions; in office, Obama seems to have lost that touch.

On Sunday, the [president did once again separate himself](#) from the voices of anger. "We are a nation of laws and the jury has spoken," he said. But if his Justice Department brings civil rights charges against Zimmerman, as the NAACP has urged and which it is reportedly still considering, the ugly racial politics of this prosecution will be undeniable.

Let us hope it never comes to that, for at that point a double tragedy will have occurred. Trayvon Martin will be dead, and our hopes for a president whose judgment is unaffected by his race will have been thoroughly and irreparably dashed.

Abigail Thernstrom is the vice chairwoman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and an adjunct scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. She is the author, most recently, of "Voting Rights -- and Wrongs: The Elusive Quest for Racially Fair Elections."

National Review

[Injudicious Criminal Justice in Florida](#)

The prosecutorial misconduct in Zimmerman's trial reveals a judicial system run amok.

by John Fund

The trial of George Zimmerman should be taught in law schools and elsewhere as a prime example of one of the most mishandled and politically motivated prosecutions in recent U.S. history. If we want to reserve the criminal-justice system for deciding guilt or innocence rather than for playing out social and racial grievances, it's important to review the spectacle we just witnessed.

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images of a pile of jewelry on a bed, underage nude females, marijuana, and a hand menacingly holding a semiautomatic weapon.

Kruidbos feared he would put his job in jeopardy if he came forward with this information, but he also was concerned about a possible miscarriage of justice, so he directed his attorneys to alert Zimmerman's defense team about the withheld evidence. He turned over the photos in late May, and the state placed Kruidbos on administrative leave until this past Friday, the day the Zimmerman case went to the jury. That morning, according to the *Florida Times-Union*, he received a hand-delivered letter from Corey informing him that he was fired and that he "can never again be trusted to step foot in this office." The treatment he received for telling the defense about government misconduct will discourage others from becoming whistleblowers.

In addition, Corey's deputies interviewed key witnesses with Trayvon Martin's family present. Jonathan Turley, a self-proclaimed liberal and a law professor at George Washington University, called such behavior "a highly unusual and improper practice."

The government's presentation of its case in court was so badly bungled that panicky prosecutors demanded at the very end of the trial that jurors be allowed to consider not just a second-degree murder charge but also manslaughter and third-degree murder due to child abuse (the 158-pound Martin was 17 at the time of his death). The judge allowed the jury to consider the manslaughter charge but not the charge of child abuse.

Noted Harvard Law School professor Alan Dershowitz told radio-talk-show host Steve Malzberg that such last-minute maneuvering is apparently allowed in rare circumstances by Florida law — but "these prosecutors should be disbarred," he added. "They have acted absolutely irresponsibly, in an utterly un-American fashion."

That's not going to happen. What may happen is a form of double jeopardy if Eric Holder's Justice Department decides to follow the advice of the NAACP and the Reverend Al Sharpton and file criminal civil-rights charges against Zimmerman. (Justice has already announced that it will investigate such charges.) Even Eliot Spitzer, the disgraced former New York attorney general and governor who seems never to have encountered a liberal cause he couldn't embrace, says that such a move would be problematic. "The Justice Department will step in, but it's in a very dicey position because there has been a criminal case," he told the *New York Daily News*. "Double jeopardy is a fundamental principle in our American judicial system, as it should be. And so it's going to be hard for them to come back at the defendant."

Here's hoping that the tensions and anger stirred up by the Trayvon Martin case subside instead of being inflamed by a rogue Justice Department. But let's not forget the prosecutorial abuse the trial has revealed. If a criminal-justice system can be hijacked for political purposes, it can also be misused in other cases and at other times. Of course, it was important to thoroughly review Trayvon Martin's death. But allowing politically correct prosecutors to cross bright lines limiting their behavior only politicizes our system and helps no one except demagogues and cable-TV talking heads in search of ratings.

American Spectator

[How a Miami School Crime Cover-Up Policy Led to Trayvon Martin's Death](#)

by Robert Stacy McCain

The February 2012 shooting death of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin might never have happened if school officials in Miami-Dade County had not instituted an unofficial policy of treating crimes as school disciplinary infractions. [Revelations that emerged from an internal affairs investigation](#) explain why Martin was not arrested when caught at school with stolen jewelry in October 2011 or with marijuana in February 2012. Instead, the teenager was suspended from school, the last time just days before he was shot dead by George Zimmerman.

Trayvon Martin was not from Sanford, the town north of Orlando where he was shot in 2012 and where a jury acquitted Zimmerman of murder charges Saturday. Martin was from Miami Gardens, more than 200 miles away, and had come to Sanford to stay with his father's girlfriend Brandy Green at her home in the townhouse community where Zimmerman was in charge of the neighborhood watch. Trayvon was staying with Green after he had been suspended for the second time in six months from Krop High School in Miami-Dade County, where both his father, Tracy Martin, and mother, Sybrina Fulton, lived.

Both of Trayvon's suspensions during his junior year at Krop High involved crimes that could have led to his prosecution as a juvenile offender. However, Chief Charles Hurley of the Miami-Dade School Police Department (MDSPD) in 2010 had implemented a policy that reduced the number of criminal reports, manipulating statistics to create the appearance of a reduction in crime within the school system. Less than two weeks before Martin's death, the school system [commended Chief Hurley for "decreasing school-related juvenile delinquency by an impressive 60 percent for the last six months of 2011."](#) What was actually happening was that crimes were not being reported as crimes, but instead treated as disciplinary infractions.

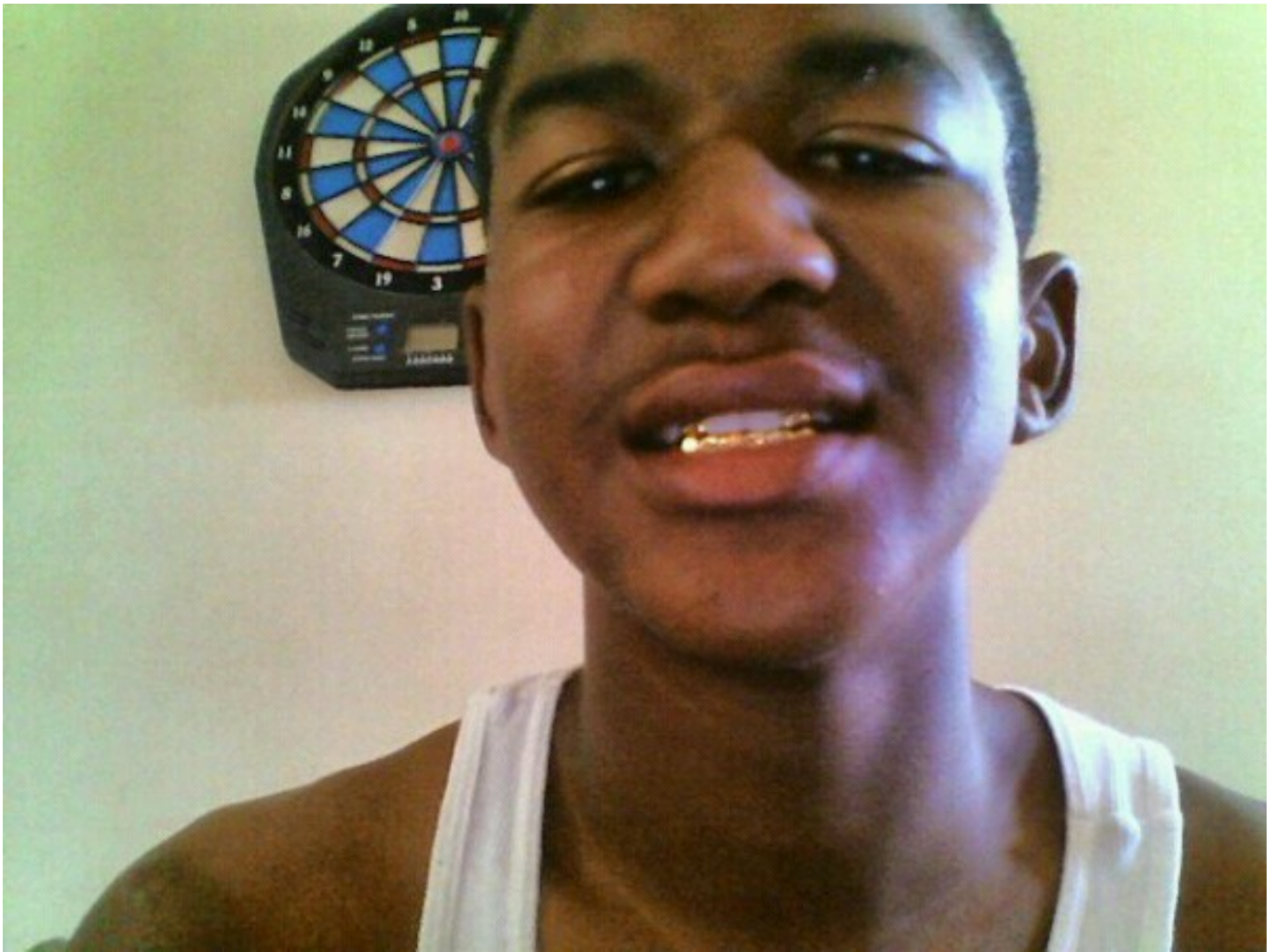
In October 2011, after a video surveillance camera caught Martin writing graffiti on a door, MDSPD Officer Darryl Dunn searched Martin's backpack, looking for the marker he had used. Officer Dunn found 12 pieces of women's jewelry and a man's watch, along with a flathead screwdriver the officer described as a "burglary tool." The jewelry and watch, which Martin claimed he had gotten from a friend he refused to name, matched a description of items stolen during the October 2011 burglary of a house on 204th Terrace, about a half-mile from the school. However, because of Chief Hurley's policy "to lower the arrest rates," as one MDSPD sergeant said in an internal investigation, the stolen jewelry was instead listed as "found property" and was never reported to Miami-Dade Police who were investigating the burglary. Similarly, in February 2012 when an MDSPD officer caught Martin with a small plastic bag containing marijuana residue, as well as a marijuana pipe, this was not treated as a crime, and instead Martin was suspended from school.

Either of those incidents could have put Trayvon Martin into the custody of the juvenile justice system. However, because of Chief Hurley's attempt to reduce the school crime statistics — [according to sworn testimony](#), officers were "basically told to lie and falsify" reports — Martin was never arrested. And if he had been arrested, he might never have been in Sanford the night of his fatal encounter with Zimmerman.

In fact, the reason Zimmerman was patrolling the townhouse community the night of the February 2012 shooting was that [there had been a rash of burglaries in the neighborhood](#), although there was no indication that Trayvon Martin was involved in any of those crimes.

As for Chief Hurley's policy, it was the controversy over Martin's death that accidentally exposed it. In March 2012, the [Miami Herald reported on Martin's troubled history of disciplinary incidents at Krop High](#). Chief Hurley then launched the internal affairs investigation in an attempt to find out who had provided information to the reporter. During the course of that investigation, MDSPD officers and supervisors described Chief Hurley's policy of not reporting crimes by students. Chief Hurley was subsequently accused of sexually harassing two female subordinates. He [resigned in February](#), about a year after Trayvon Martin's death.





Pajamas Media

[‘This is for Trayvon!’ — Gang of Black Men Chase, Beat Hispanic Man in Baltimore](#)

by Bryan Preston

No justice, no peace, [on the streets of Baltimore](#). Of, if you prefer, [open season](#) in Harm City.

Using a translator, police spoke to the victim, who knows some English, according to the police report. The victim told officers that he was standing in the intersection of Fairmont and N. Potomac Street when a group of five black males first approached him.

He described all of the males as between 16 and 18 and told police a 6-foot suspect with a black “stretchy” shirt and mohawk told him, “What’s up, [expletive].” When the victim raised his phone to call 911, the suspect raised his shirt and flashed a silver handgun in his waistband.

The victim turned and ran before he was caught in the 2800 block of Fairmont and was beaten, police said. He sustained abrasions to his elbows and forearms but refused medical attention.

Police listed all of the suspects involved as black males. Three were "skinny" while one was described as overweight.

A witness posted on Facebook that she saw the gang of young men chasing the victim before they caught up to him and started kicking and beating him. That witness wrote that the black males were shouting "This is for Trayvon!" as they beat the man.

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Not for the first time over the past few years, I am glad to have left Baltimore in the rear-view mirror. It's an anti-gun state, tilted against the law-abiding. The leaders there, all Democrats, are the usual collection of demagogues and monsters that infest most urban governments in America. They will have no serious response for the communities among them that are now under threat from the Sharpton brigades.

Mother Jones

[Why Your Supermarket Only Sells 5 Kinds of Apples](#)

And one mans's quest to bring hundreds more back.

by Rowan Jacobsen

Every fall at Maine's Common Ground Country Fair, the Lollapalooza of sustainable agriculture, John Bunker sets out a display of eccentric apples. Last September, once again, they covered every possible size, shape, and color in the wide world of appleness. There was a gnarled little yellow thing called a Westfield Seek-No-Further; a purplish plum impostor called a Black Oxford; a massive, red-streaked Wolf River; and one of Thomas Jefferson's go-to fruits, the Esopus Spitzenburg. Bunker is known in Maine as "The Apple Whisperer," or simply "The Apple Guy," and, after laboring for years in semi-obscurity, he has never been in more demand. Through the catalog of [Fedco Trees](#) [1], a mail-order company he founded in Maine 30 years ago, Bunker has sown the seeds of a grassroots apple revolution.

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A leathery blonde from the coast held up a Blue Pearmain in wonder. "Blue Peahmain," she marveled. "My ma had one in her yahd."

Another woman got choked up by the sight of the Pound Sweet. "My grandmother had a Pound Sweet! She used to let me have one every time I hung out the laundry."

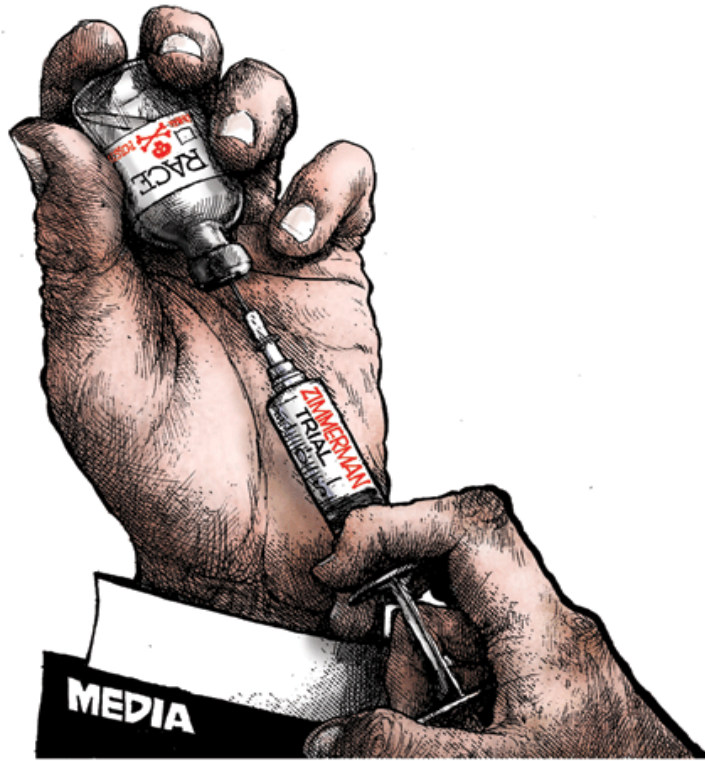
It wasn't just nostalgia. A steady conga line of homesteading hipsters—Henry David Thoreau meets Johnny Depp—paraded up to Bunk to get his blessing on their farm plans. "I've got three Kavanaghs and two Cox's Orange Pippins for fresh eating, a Wolf River for baking, and three Black Oxforths for winter keeping, but I feel like there are some gaps I need to fill. What do you recommend for cider?" Bunk, who is 62, dished out free advice through flayed vocal cords that made his words sound as if they were made of New England slate.

Most people approached with apples in hand, hoping for an ID of the tree that had been in their driveway or field ever since they bought the place. Some showed him photos on iPhones. Everywhere he travels in Maine, from the Common Ground Country Fair to the many Rotary Clubs and historical societies where he speaks, Bunk is presented with a series of mystery apples to identify. He's happy to oblige, but what he's really looking for are the ones he *can't* identify. It's all part of being an apple detective.

In the mid-1800s, there were thousands of unique varieties of apples in the United States, some of the most astounding diversity ever developed in a food crop. Then industrial agriculture crushed that world. The apple industry settled on a handful of varieties to promote worldwide, and the rest were forgotten. They became commercially extinct—but not quite biologically extinct.

<http://www.motherjones.com/environment/2013/04/heritage-apples-john-bunker-maine?page=1>





THE ADDICTION.

www.investors.com/cartoons

