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Racism Is Alive at Ole Miss: Shocking Video Shows How Little America Has Changed

Viral video of white women making monkey gestures outside Black students' apartment raises troubling questions about racism, accountability and the lack of racial progress in America



Manny Otiko Follow 3 min read · 2 days ago

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Manny Otiko (YouTube screengrab)

One of the worst things about getting old is that you get really cynical about things. After more than 50 years on this planet, nothing seems to surprise me. I'm also not shocked by the lack of progress that has been made, especially in race relations.

So I wasn't totally surprised when I saw the terrible doorbell camera video of three white women at the University of Mississippi, also known as Ole Miss, making monkey gestures in front of a Black woman's door. This is Ole Miss, after all, a university with a long history of Confederate symbolism.

Racism Caught on Camera

The incident occurred Nov. 6, when a Ring doorbell camera captured three white women walking past an apartment shared by three Black Ole Miss students. Two made monkey noises and gestures, while a third walked alongside them.

Jakiyra Metcalf, one of the Black students who lived in the apartment, posted the video on social media. According to The Daily Mississippian, the video

has been viewed more than 11 million times. She later said the women were her upstairs neighbors.

Names have circulated online, but the university has confirmed that at least one student was incorrectly identified. Ole Miss is investigating the incident, but the identities of the women have not been officially confirmed.

These young women apparently felt comfortable displaying this kind of racist behavior right outside the home of Black students. What kind of environment makes someone think that is acceptable?

Ole Miss Black Student Union President Demetrick M. Stringer Jr. issued a statement on Instagram on Nov. 7, condemning the behavior of the three women involved in the incident.

“Comparisons of this kind carry a long and painful history, and directing them at a student where she lives has left her, and many of our members, feeling unwelcome and unsafe. The Black Student Union condemns this behavior, and we stand firmly with our fellow student,” Stringer’s statement said.

But this is typical for Ole Miss.

I remember dating a Black woman several decades ago who received a scholarship to Ole Miss. She wanted me to move down there with her. I said, “I don’t want to end up hanging from a tree.”

My fears were justified, apparently. From what I’ve heard about Mississippi, it’s still fairly backward when it comes to race.

A Legacy of Fear

Still, this kind of abysmal behavior is unacceptable.

The worst thing about this scandal is the possibility that these young women, who all appear to be under 20, are growing up in households where this kind of behavior is acceptable. Nobody can tell me they don't know better. It's extremely insulting to compare Black people to animals.

This is a battle Black people have been fighting for centuries, and things aren't changing. My dad dealt with it, I've dealt with it, and my nieces and nephews will probably deal with it, too. I faced these kinds of insults growing up, and apparently, they haven't gone away.

And I don't want to hear any excuses about, "Oh, these are just kids." These are young adults, old enough to serve in the military. They need to be held responsible for their behavior. If they were in a professional workplace, they would likely be fired.

Demanding Accountability

The university is investigating the incident, and the women could face disciplinary action. The university has already issued the usual boilerplate statement about racism not being tolerated, but this kind of thing keeps happening at Ole Miss. It's a de facto message that racism is tolerated!

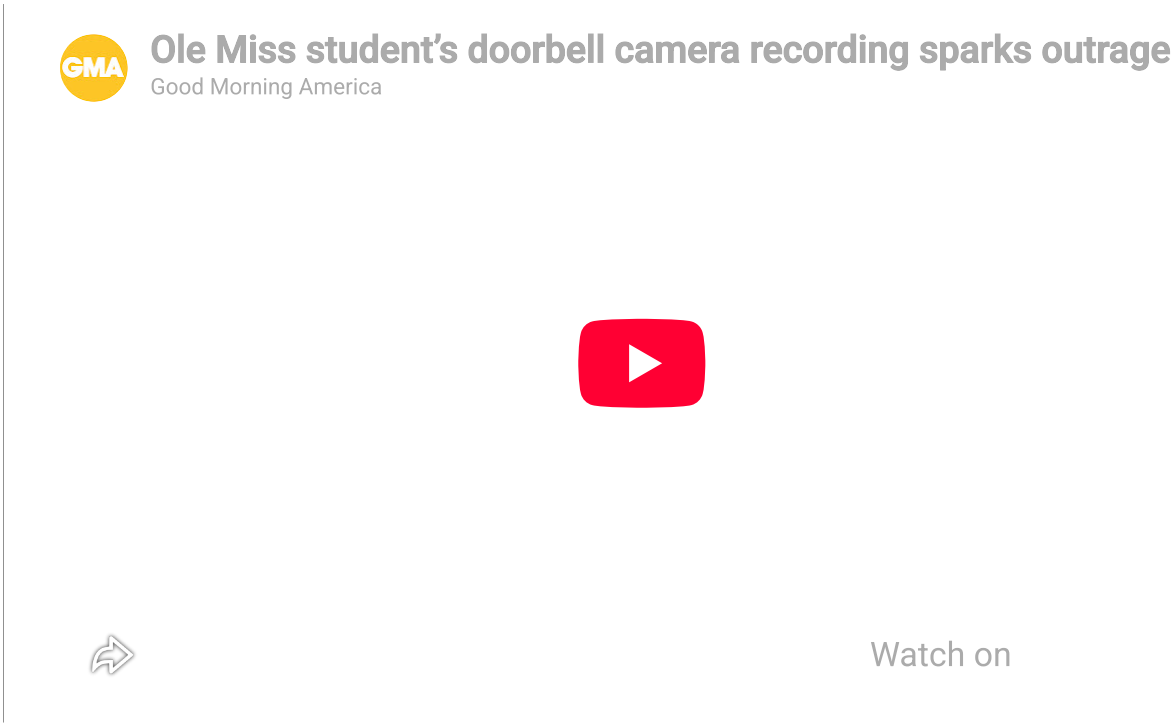
In 2024, a fraternity member at Ole Miss was expelled from his fraternity after he was caught on video making monkey noises and gestures toward a Black pro-Palestinian demonstrator.

Critics often ask me, "Why do you focus so much on race?"

I say, "I'll stop writing about racism when it stops happening."

Unfortunately, I don't think that's going to happen anytime soon. It's sad that Black people still have to fight for their humanity in the 21st century.

Buy me a Kofi.



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Written by Manny Otiko

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Manny Otiko writes about race, politics and sports. He has been published in Salon and LA Weekly. Follow him at @mannyotiko.bsky.social



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Tom Mitchell

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Forrest K.
2 days ago

Throw these girls out of school. Intolerable behavior. Decent people don't behave like this.

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2 days ago

This is reprehensible. Those three women should be expelled immediately.

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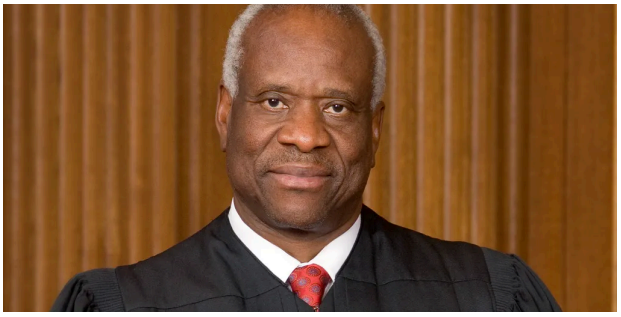
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