



THURSDAY, AUGUST 11, 2005

"New York" Magazine: Of Course We Should Do Racial Profiling

by Michael in New York on [8/11/2005 02:01:00 PM](#)

Columnist [Kurt Andersen](#) weighs in on racial profiling by saying he gets nervous when a group of young black teens "in cornrows and gangsta jeans" near him on the street (sorry, kids) and that a black man would be crazy not to get nervous in Brooklyn when he sees a pair of "bulky, buzz-cut, swaggering teenagers...maybe one of them carrying a softball bat." See, everyone racially profiles.

Andersen says random subway searches in NYC are stupid and that you have to racially profile. Skip the grandmas, he says, and focus on people more likely to be bad -- ie. Muslim youth.

One of his arguments: when you're going after the mafia, you go after Italians, even if you realize most Italians aren't in the mob. Problem: you'll be ignoring the Russian mob, Latin druglords, and other members of organized crime whose name doesn't end in -ino.

I don't reject racial profiling because it offends my pc sensibilities. I object to racial profiling because it lets security lull into complacency when facing anyone other than young Islamic men. What about the young, clean-cut militia member -- a former Marine -- disgruntled over gov't intrusion into his life? What about the out-of-shape, middle-aged radical abortion foe who once was a security guard and now takes pot shots at doctors' homes and sets off bombs at clinics? What about the Jewish settler who wants to get the world's attention over what he sees as his gov'ts immoral abandonment of its people?

Behavioral profiling is logical and makes more sense than closing your eyes and randomly stopping people for bag searches. But racial profiling is just another way of closing your eyes to the many threats that don't always look the way you expect.



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