

Stop talking about it

by BRIAN LOCKHART

The word 'racism' is thrown about a lot these days.

In fact, it's in the news pretty much every day in one way or another.

The word 'racist' has become one which gets thrown into an argument at the drop of a hat by some people - especially those that are arguing some kind of agenda.

For many people, calling the other person 'racist' or accusing them of 'racism' is the knee-jerk reaction to any event, comment, or idea, they don't like.

I've seen people on news shows accuse other people of being 'racist', when they are the same race, but from different parts of the world, or of a different religion. It made no sense at all.

Just scream 'racism' and everyone is afraid to say anything after that for fear of also being accused.

I read a quote from noted actor Morgan Freeman who said the way to stop racism is to 'stop talking about it.'

I researched the quote and found he said it on a news show several years ago.

To stop talking about it may seem like a weak response, at first, but when he explains what he means, it makes perfect sense.

'I'll stop calling you a white man, and you stop calling me a black man,' he said to the TV host.

The media in particular is bad for pointing out a person's race when it comes to news stories - especially when race has nothing to do with the story. And they only point out the race, when it is a non-white person.

A recent tragic incident in Florida resulted in the death of a football fan from Six Nations, in Ontario. The man was a Buffalo Bills fan and travelled to Miami to watch them play the Miami Dolphins. An altercation after the game resulted in the man being shot and killed.

A CBC report on the incident began with the line, 'An Indigenous man from Ontario was shot and killed in Florida.'

What does the fact that he was Indigenous, have to do with the story? Why point that out? The fact that an Ontario man was killed is the story, not the fact that he was Indigenous.

He was there to watch a football game, not solicit funds for the Indigenous community, or promote an Indigenous philosophy. He is the victim of violence that had nothing to do with his ethnic background.

If a white guy named Bob Smith, who attended a local Presbyterian church, was murdered, the story would not begin with 'Local WASP murdered.'

This type of labelling goes on all the time.

As part of my job, I do a lot of research in many different areas. This includes historical research.

For some reason, articles and news reports always managed to include the fact that a person involved in the story wasn't white.

It could be something as simple as a UFO sighting, and the story will point out it was an ethnic minority person who saw the flying saucer.

It always seems to say something like, "Fred Jones, an African-American man, saw the UFO over his farm on Monday night."

What does being an African-American have to do with the fact that a guy saw a UFO flying over his property? Isn't the story about a UFO, and not a person's ethnicity?

And why is it also pointed out when a person is the first of their race or ethnic background to achieve something? Why not just congratulate the person on a job well done or valuable contribution without having to point out the person's race or ethnicity?

I can think of no other time you would mention race in some type of social setting.

When have you ever been to an event, and someone was introduced as "George, the brown guy," or "Bob, the white guy"? It simply doesn't happen, so why is it always mentioned in news stories?

To "stop talking about it" seems like a simple solution, but it would be effective in a lot of ways and eliminate a lot of problems, especially those where there shouldn't be a problem in the first place.