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# Dog Whistle Politics: How Coded Racial Appeals Have Reinvented Racism And Wrecked The Middle Class

IAN HANEY LÓPEZ

**DOG  
WHISTLE  
POLITICS**

HOW CODED RACIAL APPEALS HAVE  
REINVENTED RACISM & WRECKED THE MIDDLE CLASS



## Synopsis

Campaigning for president in 1980, Ronald Reagan told stories of Cadillac-driving "welfare queens" and "strapping young bucks" buying T-bone steaks with food stamps. In trumpeting these tales of welfare run amok, Reagan never needed to mention race, because he was blowing a dog whistle: sending a message about racial minorities inaudible on one level, but clearly heard on another. In doing so, he tapped into a long political tradition that started with George Wallace and Richard Nixon, and is more relevant than ever in the age of the Tea Party and the first black president. In *Dog Whistle Politics*, Ian Haney Lopez offers a sweeping account of how politicians and plutocrats deploy veiled racial appeals to persuade white voters to support policies that favor the extremely rich yet threaten their own interests. Dog-whistle appeals generate middle-class enthusiasm for political candidates who promise to crack down on crime, curb undocumented immigration, and protect the heartland against Islamic infiltration, but ultimately vote to slash taxes for the rich, give corporations regulatory control over industry and financial markets, and aggressively curtail social services. White voters, convinced by powerful interests that minorities are their true enemies, fail to see the connection between the political agendas they support and the surging wealth inequality that takes an increasing toll on their lives. The tactic continues at full force, with the Republican Party using racial provocations to drum up enthusiasm for weakening unions and public pensions, defunding public schools, and opposing health care reform. Rejecting any simple story of malevolent and obvious racism, Haney Lopez links as never before the two central themes that dominate American politics today: the decline of the middle class and the Republican Party's increasing reliance on white voters. *Dog Whistle Politics* will generate a lively and much-needed debate about how racial politics has destabilized the American middle class - white and nonwhite members alike.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As a black person, this book connected many dots for me. After reading this book, I had a much better understanding regarding the things that I hear from the political world on a daily basis. This book should be required reading for seniors in high school. I want to give it to my daughter, but she's only in the 7th grade. As Americans, we have to open our minds, open our eyes and put this country to work for all Americans. Whether we believe it or not, there is enough to go around.

Essential to those who forget just how ingrained racism is embedded in the culture of USA policies, communications and daily exchanges. Makes audible that which needs to be heard.

This is just an amazing book. A MUST READ for anyone, Democrat or Republican - especially Republican.

This is one of the most significant piece of writing in the last decade or so. It distills and explains in plain terms, how the Republican Party shifted to one extreme using racist methods. A must read for everybody during this election cycle (and after).

A must read really blows the lid off of various tactics such as "colorblindness" and its "punch-parry-kick" turn-the-tables routine, with all the code language. All of this has been ignored for far too long, leading as he said, to the conservative slant of things to be the only one.

You have to read it. It is informative, absorbing and in these times, a must-read. Thank you for writing it.

Went through much of my life thinking large sections of the population were either evil or insane when it came to politics. Now I understand a little better. A clear and damning analysis of a major

driver of US politics across history, hidden in plain sight.

Lopez has brought clarity to the topic of the evolving nature of racism in this country. Not being a person of color and now in my 60s I found the book spot on. Having grown up in the 1950s and 1960s, I have watched the open and blatant political racism of that era evolve into what Lopez calls Dog Whistle Politics today. His book is a well documented and thorough discussion of the evolution of racism in this country and should be read by all of us.

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