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Iowa GOP Win: Santorum's Race

AGAINST THE GRAIN

C. D. Ellison

It's a pickle the former underperforming Pennsylvania Senator has been in before. Perhaps afraid of repeating past electoral mistakes (flashbacking in cold sweats to his 18 point loss in 2006 to current Sen. Bob Casey), Rick Santorum appears to fall back on race as a way to gain tactical advantage in the Republican presidential primaries.

Some experts call Santorum's come-from-behind photo finish, statistical tie with frontrunner Mitt Romney in the Iowa Caucuses proof that retail politicking works. While Romney, Newt Gingrich, Rick Perry and others were looking for the right social media trend and relying on debate performances, Santorum went native in Iowa, shaking hands, kissing babies and slapping backs. Other experts call it pure luck.

But some are calling it a cheap attempt at racial coding that worked. In a place where only 2 percent of the population is African American, and the majority of caucus goers are rural white seniors, aged 50 and up, Black people become an easy target.

Santorum hasn't been able to shake that perception since right before the caucus. "I don't want to make Black people's lives better by giving them somebody else's money. I want to give them the opportunity to go out and earn the money," was Santorum in the flesh, free-styling about Medicaid and other social entitlements before a small sea of white faces.

To Santorum supporters, and rank and file Republicans, it's as if he didn't use the word "Black." Passionate debates flared up throughout Facebook and the Twitterverse, with loyal conservatives (both Black and white) swearing the senator didn't say it. Others blamed it on an invisible

reporter asking the question. Still, when watching the CBS video that went viral across the Web, it's clear as Hawkeye State snow on a bitterly cold day what Santorum said:

"Black."

It was an awkward moment. Even the senator admitted as much in a follow-up interview on CBS

Santorum's been here before. Back in July of 2011 when he announced his run for the Presidency under a hot Somerset County sun, he was digging back into old racial coding crates, lamenting to cheers and applause from an ocean of white Pennsylvanians how "... America was a great country before 1965."

It was the same question back then as it was this week: Why pick 1965? Was the wine good that year? Some observers, particularly many civil rights historians and

love entitlements, and once we get them hooked, they will never let it go."

Some suggest that Santorum knows what he's doing, but observe that critics shouldn't be so fast to knock him as "racist." It's all politics, they say, and the senator is doing what it takes to win the primary.

"Look — Rick is from a state where the Black population surpasses the national one," says one source speaking anonymously on background. "He worked closely with Black clergy and community activists as a senator and found federal money for programs when they couldn't. You can't walk around Pennsylvania and not bump into a Black person."

"But," the source wryly adds, "Rick has this habit — just like most politicians — of sometimes tailoring his message for a particular kind of base. And he's always getting into trouble for it."

Long-time Washington observer and Politic365.com Congressional Correspondent Lauren Burke says Santorum's not the only repeat offender. That former Sen. Santorum brings up Blacks within the context of poverty is telling. Though 10 percent of whites in the U.S. were in poverty in 2010, you'd never know it listening to Republicans running for president," argues Burke. "There are 223,553,265 non-Hispanic whites in the U.S., 10 percent of whom live in poverty. That's 22,355,326 people. Yet when poverty comes up in GOP political discussion it's in the context of Blacks and

Charles D. Ellison Special to the NNPA from the Philadelphia Tribune

Read the rest online at www.theskanner.com



'I don't want to make Black people's lives better by giving them somebody else's money'

News in which the host dogged him with questions on what he meant. Santorum reached for the mental lapse defense, swatting at his own comment as if a mosquito were buzzing in his ear. He claims he didn't know the context — while not denying he said it.

"If you look at what I've been saying, I've been pretty clear about my concern for dependency in this country and concern for people not being more dependent on our government, whatever their race or ethnicity is," Santorum said in the interview.

But, that's a big part of the problem, argues Urban League President Marc Morial, who blasts Santorum for picking on people of color when nearly 85 percent of food stamp recipients are white. "By falsely suggesting that people of color are a disproportionate drain on resources provided mainly by whites, Santorum deliberately fans the flames of racial divisiveness," says Morial.

activists, chomped on the senator's bit about that, accusing him of racial pandering to an anti-Black conservative electorate seething with resentment at any sign of Black progress. It just so happened 1965 was the year President Lyndon Johnson signed Executive Order 11246, otherwise known to most as "Affirmative Action."

Later on in that same speech, he rails on entitlements and clumsily inserts recent small talk with Juan Williams as validation. Williams is the Black journalist famously disgraced from National Public Radio, but now happily skipping about on FOX News as their most visible face of color.

"Juan Williams said to me about a week after President Obama decided to double down. I saw him in the green room. And I said why are you doing this? Here's what he said. He said, 'Let me tell you what President Obama's team is telling me.' He said, 'Americans

Holidays in Manhattan: 'Happy New Year!'

NORTHWESTER IN NYC

Jeff Tryens

New Yorkers are fond of their declarative statements. Twice in the last couple of months, I've heard a New Yorker declare his love of the city by describing it as the expected location of his demise. Now I know lots of Portlanders and Adelaidians who will be content to die in their home city but I've never heard such a declaration before. The other day I accidentally bumped a woman with my grocery bag, followed by an apology on my part, which elicited, not one, but two, "You're an idiot" declarations from the nice lady. And New Year's is apparently a time for New Yorkers, who rarely even make eye contact on the street, to declare "Happy New Year" to the slightest acquaintances for days on end.

Speaking of New Year's, no, we did not go to Times Square to watch the ball drop. Instead, we did the real New Yorker thing. First, we joined 2,000 of our neighbors at our neighborhood church - St. John the Divine Cathedral (largest Gothic cathedral in the world) — for a concert hosted by Judy Collins (yes, THE Judy Collins) who was kind enough to perform a lovely a

capella rendition of "Both Sides Now" as a warm-up for a very heavy-duty oratorio written to commemorate Kristallnacht. Later, we wandered over to our neighborhood park — Central Park — where we sat on the Great Hill watching a quite spectacular fire-

Plaza. One of our favorite activities was the store window walk. All were pretty cool and different but the best, hands down, were the Bergdorf Goodman windows.

Not surprisingly given its density, New York is a city of rules. If you live in an apartment, for instance, there's a rule about what percent of your floor area has to be covered by carpeting (to dampen inter-apartment noise). New York City government is no exception.

bers are astronomical - over 300,000 workers, billions in overtime, millions of hours of "comp," 43 agencies - many with different working agreements and expectations. And I'm running this analysis??? Now that's a scary thought given how little I know about the rules around here.

Gripe of the month — dog pee on the sidewalks, everywhere. Now I like dogs as much as anyone, and more than most, but, really, if you have a dog in the city, teach it to pee in the street.

Coolest discovery of the month — the Septuagesimo Uno "vest pocket" park tucked away between two buildings on the Upper West Side. As you can see from the photo, it's tiny. In fact, it's the city's smallest park at four one hundredths of an acre but, oh what a lovely, quiet sitting area at the rear -and what a lovely, great big gate that is locked at night. Apparently, it had a cameo in a movie called Little Manhattan that is a must see if you're 11, growing up in Manhattan. What a thought — growing up in Manhattan.

Well that's it for now. Oh, and HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!

The holiday season in Manhattan is as amazing as advertised

works display with midtown Manhattan as the backdrop. Some neighborhood!

The holiday season in Manhattan is as amazing as advertised. For over three weeks, midtown Manhattan is absolutely jammed with people checking out the sights. Don't even think about trying to get through Rockefeller

Rules in government come in many forms — actual regulations, labor agreements, a bureaucracy inclined toward the status quo and the many informal understandings about the way things really work. Even after six months, the complexity of it all is daunting.

My latest project is developing good, cross-agency data related to workforce productivity. The num-