



# Racial Paranoia: The Unintended Consequences of Political Correctness

By John L. Jackson

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In this courageous book, John L. Jackson, Jr. draws on current events as well as everyday interactions to demonstrate the culture of race-based paranoia and its profound effects on our lives. He explains how it is cultivated and reinforced, and how it complicates the goal of racial equality. In this paperback edition, Jackson explores the 2008 presidential election, weaving in examples ranging from the notorious *New Yorker* cover to *Saturday Night Live*'s political parodies.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Calls for a conversation about race crop up persistently—as in the wake of the Imus scandal or O.J. Simpson's acquittal. Jackson's (*Harlemworld*; *Real Black*) examination of how race remains singular in American consciousness proves a lively opening gambit to a thought-provoking analysis. After a loose historical survey of race matters before the 1960s, when brash and brazen American racism was mainstream, Jackson focuses on the current state of affairs in racial fears and distrust that have gone underground and express themselves as racial paranoia and de cardio racism (what the law can't touch, what won't be easily proved or disproved, what can't be simply criminalized or deemed unconstitutional). Racial paranoia, not just 'a black thing,' owes much to the way mass media confirms or subverts stereotypes; de cardio racism is cloaked, papered over with public niceties and politically correct jargon. Jackson explores particularly fresh areas in his illuminating consideration of *The Man Who Cried I Am* and 1996, racial paranoia's canonical texts and in his attention to the McCarran Act's effect upon black thinkers. Passionate and committed Jackson is, but his content is balanced. Casually scholarly and often witty, Jackson offers the reader new ways of talking about race's subtler dynamic and new ways of spying racial conflict in the twenty-first century. (Apr.)

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From [Booklist](#)

In this era of political correctness, racism has become more subtle and perhaps more subversively dangerous than ever before. So argues Jackson in this thought-provoking, scholarly examination of the ambiguous sense of racial distrust that infects both blacks and whites in contemporary America. Terming the new reality of race in mainstream America racial paranoia, he analyzes the origins, the consequences, and the future implications of a racism that is often difficult to see, touch, and define but nevertheless exists and tempers the ways in which people across racial lines react to one another and interact with each other. Racial paranoia should not be dismissed as extremism; rather, it must be publicly acknowledged, understood, and expressed before it can be combated. Although it might make uncomfortable reading for some, Jackson's well-reasoned analysis is right on target. --Margaret Flanagan

About the Author

**John L. Jackson, Jr.** is the Richard Perry University Associate Professor of Communication and Anthropology in the Annenberg School for Communication and the Department of Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania. He is the author of *Harlemworld* and *Real Black*. His writing has appeared in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *American Anthropologist*, and more. He lives in Philadelphia.

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