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Maybe the Earth Is Flat Journal-ISMS THE ROOT TV NEWS POLITIC







Kyrie Irving (Ronald Martinez/Getty Images)

This past weekend during the National Basketball Association's All-Star festivities, Cleveland Cavaliers basketball star Kyrie Irving appeared on the NBA podcast *Road Tripping With RJ & Channing* and said, "The Earth is flat. The Earth is flat. ... It's right in front of our faces. I'm telling you, it's right in front of our faces. They lie to us."

Asked about his comment the next day on ESPN, Irving refused to backtrack, and offered the following:

Hopefully they'll either back my belief or they'll throw it in the water. But I think it's interesting for people to find out on their own. ... I've seen a lot of things that my education system has said that was real that turned out to be completely fake. I don't mind going against the grain in terms of my thoughts.

News outlets, blogs and social media immediately blew up, branding him an insane, anti-science conspiracy theorist. How could someone who attended one of the country's most prestigious universities long enough to play 11 whole games believe something so asinine? Is Kyrie going crazy? Is he a victim of gross misinformation? Maybe one of the NBA's most eloquent black players is simply stupid.

Or maybe he is just like America.

For a moment, let's set aside the fact that the flat-Earth theory is a growing, global movement that fascinates many ill-informed people (including rapper B.o.B.—who feuded with astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson about this subject last year). Irving is a 24-year-old millennial who lives in a world where facts no longer matter. Media, politicians and the entire Cabinet of our pea-brained, petty president have repeatedly shown that truth, logic and science are all debatable in this new era where data exists in shades of gray.

Make no mistake, the Earth is round. Astronomy proved it millennia ago. Every third-grade teacher can explain it in 11 minutes. There is no need to debate it.

How crazy is it to believe the Earth is flat?

It is as crazy as the debate that police brutality is not a black problem. Last week the Journal of Criminology and Public Policy analyzed 990 police shootings in 2015. It found that black Americans are more than twice as likely to be unarmed when they are shot by police. Even when the journal

adjusted the data to account for the people who attacked police or other victims, the results were clear: If your skin is black, your chances of getting killed by police while unarmed are double.

Yet police unions, Blue Lives Matter advocates and anyone appearing on Fox News refuse to admit that police brutality is a black problem. Every study shows it, but when faced with facts, they act just like Irving. When the journal released its findings, every black person reading it had the same reaction they would have if you told them the Earth was round:

"Well, duh."

Yes, you'd have to be an idiot to believe the world is flat, but there are also people who believe that voter-ID laws aren't racist despite the evidence to the contrary. The Washington Post published its own extensive research last week after studying data from elections from 2006 through 2016 that shows voter-ID laws suppress the minority vote and benefit Republicans. But state legislatures continue to institute these laws and pretend to act befuddled when people accuse them of racism. Even after courts across the land say they are prejudiced. Even after the facts show that voter-ID laws make the electorate more conservative. Even after Republican consultant Carter Wrenn said, "Look, if African Americans voted overwhelmingly Republican, they would have kept early voting right where it was."

But none of these statistics matter. If you learned that the fucktard-in-chief had placed a longtime opponent of the Voting Rights Act in charge of the Department of Justice, you'd think that was as stupid as someone telling you that you might fall off the edge of the world.

Water is wet, the planet is actually a sphere and black people have an economic disadvantage in America.

All three of those statements seem clear to anyone with a double-digit IQ, yet only two of them are accepted by the conservative Zeitgeist (pronounced "why-pee-pull"). Keeping in the theme of studies released last week, the Institute on Assets and Social Policy at Brandeis University joined with the

think tank Demos to release a study entitled "The Asset Value of Whiteness" (pdf). The paper shows that there is an inherent value of being white in America that translates to an economic advantage. It proves that the racial wealth gap in America has nothing to do with education level, income or spending habits.



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Since the first iteration of slavery transformed into its more contemporary forms—Jim Crow, mass...

They will tell you the American dream is achievable through hard work alone. They would have you believe that education is the key, and that success has nothing to do with race, being born into privilege or the generational inheritance of whiteness. If you believe that, you might as well believe the planet is shaped like a dinner plate.

No, the Earth is not flat, but Irving is as crazy as the people who believe that a Muslim ban can save us from terrorism—even though most terrorists are white males. He is as misguided as the people who see the floods, tornados, blizzards and droughts but refuse to believe that global warming is real. Thinking that you are affixed to a Frisbee flying through space is as ludicrous as "guns don't kill people, people kill people." The "flat-Earth theory" is as stupid as "All Lives Matter."

The fact that Irving believes that scientists, astronauts, physicists and everyone in the world who owns a telescope are complicit in a global conspiracy to hide an inconsequential fact is absolutely preposterous. But he puts a ball into a hole for a living, so his paranoid delusion about planetary physics doesn't hurt a soul (until he tries to help his kids with their science homework).

Conversely, the people in power who deny the obvious by-products of racism in America to maintain their white-knuckle grip on power and control aren't being silly or ill-informed. Their intentional disregard for repeatedly proven fact at the expense of people of color is evil and deranged, and it is our duty to keep punching them in the face until we finally knock out the 400-year-old hate monster.

They would have you believe that math, data, science and truth are now irrelevant and meaningless, but if we allow opinion and lies to replace evidence and accuracy, then we all get to live in our selective, delusional reality. I'm sure that in some of those universes, racism doesn't exist, Donald Trump is a great president and, yes ...

Maybe the Earth is flat.

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