



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on August 14, 2014

Local Black Leaders Nervous About Sharpton's Presence in Ferguson

On Newsmax's *The Steve Malzberg Show* on Wednesday, Ferguson, Missouri, Mayor James Knowles [expressed his concerns](#) about Al Sharpton's presence in his town following the shooting death of Michael Brown by a local police officer on Saturday. Knowles told Malzberg, "There's a lot of concern among a lot of the African American leaders here. I have the concern that we'll ... become a national spectacle. Sometimes star power is not always a good thing."



Sharpton showed up in Ferguson on Tuesday and walked arm-in-arm with Brown's family members, their attorney, and some clergy members. He then gave an incendiary speech at the city's Old Courthouse predictably pushing his "America's racism" view:

St. Louis is in fact bearing witness for America. The Band-Aid has been ripped off, and all of America is seeing the open wound of racism exists.

What America is seeing instead is that Sharpton exists and is ever ready to take advantage of incidents like the shooting that happened on Saturday to promote his own agenda. With the media's help he is treated with dignity and respect, including being a regular guest on Fox's *The O'Reilly Factor* and having his own show, *PoliticsNation* on MSNBC.

But the truth about his tawdry, violent, and deceitful background is getting out, and locals such as the mayor and some of his better-informed clergy would like to steer clear of this high-volume race-baiter. At present, local police and other officials in Ferguson have managed to tone down both the rhetoric and the public gatherings in support of Brown and they would like it to stay that way. Sharpton, if his past is any indication, would like instead to stir things up.

Sharpton became a national icon for race in late 1987 in a scandal now referred to as the Tawana Brawley Racial Hoax. The details [can be found here](#) but in essence Sharpton saw an opportunity for self-aggrandizement, and he took it. Despite a grand jury ruling that the entire incident was a hoax and Sharpton suffering the indignity of having a judgment against him for defaming the character of one of the investigators, Sharpton remains unrepentant to this day. It served his purposes, as noted by one of Sharpton's aides, who said,

Sharpton acknowledged to me early on that "the Brawley story [does] sound like [baloney], but it don't matter....

This is the perfect issue ... we've got whites on blacks. That's an easy way to stir up all the deprived people, who would want to believe ... that all white people are bad....

Then you've got a movement.

No movement remains virulent unless it is constantly fed, and Sharpton seized on every opportunity he could to keep the movement well nourished. In the summer of 1991, Sharpton showed up in the Crown



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Heights section of Brooklyn, where a Hasidic Jew had accidentally run over and killed a seven-year-old black boy. A mob of local blacks sought retribution by attacking and murdering an innocent rabbinical student from Australia. Sharpton entered the fray, challenging local Jews to “pin their yarmulkes back and come over to my house” to settle the score. This was followed by three days and nights of rioting, stirred on by Sharpton with his cries of “No justice, no peace!”

In 1995, Sharpton seized on another incident to keep his fetid brew boiling, this time in Harlem. The Jewish owners of Freddy’s Fashion Mart decided to expand their business and told the black owner of a record shop they had leased part of their building so that they wouldn’t be renewing his lease. Sharpton and his people took to the streets out in front of Freddy’s, intimidating customers and hurling epithets such as “the greedy Jew bastards [are] killing our people” and calling the Jewish owners of the store “white interlopers.” The boycotting ramped up into a riot, leading to one of Sharpton’s followers entering Freddy’s and shooting four customers and then setting the building on fire, killing seven employees in the resulting conflagration.

In March 2006, Sharpton saw and seized another “opportunity,” this time at Duke University, where a black stripper claimed she had been beaten, raped, and sodomized by members of the school’s lacrosse team at an off-campus party. Sharpton jumped on this, declaring that these “rich white boys” had attacked a “black girl” and warned that there would be violence if justice were not served immediately and forcefully. When the stripper’s claims were later found to be fraudulent, Sharpton lost interest and moved on.

Ferguson’s mayor has every reason to be concerned about Sharpton’s presence. As the riots have temporarily subsided into quiet vigils and prayer meetings, the very last thing the town needs is the entry of a firebrand such as Al Sharpton to roil things up again for his own purposes.

Photo of Al Sharpton: AP Images

A graduate of Cornell University and a former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American magazine and blogs frequently at www.LightFromTheRight.com, primarily on economics and politics.

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