



Written by [Steven Yates](#) on July 29, 2009

Gates and Crowley to Meet With President at “Beer Summit”

President Obama has planned tomorrow as the day he, Harvard Afro-American scholar Henry Louis Gates Jr., and Sgt. James Crowley of the Cambridge Police Department sit down to work out their differences over a beer at the White House.

Obama, who came under fire from police departments and organizations across the country after stating in a news conference last Wednesday that Cambridge police “acted stupidly” after Crowley arrested Gates on a disorderly conduct charge, partially retracted his words (stated they could have been “calibrated differently”), contacted each of the two men by phone, and on Crowley’s suggestion, arranged a “beer summit” for the two.



That summit is now scheduled for tomorrow. Given that Gates has expressed hope that if any long term good comes from this incident, that good will be to reduce incidences of racial profiling, and given that Crowley teaches courses at a police academy on racial profiling, the conversation promises to be interesting. There are indeed grounds to hope that the meeting will generate positive results.

Moreover, as it turns out, Gates and Crowley now have something to talk about other than racial profiling. Ancestry, for example.

Evidence has surfaced that Gates and Crowley are (very) distantly related. According to an [ABC News report](#), both men have lines of ancestry that can be traced to a fourth century Irish warlord-king named Niall of the Nine Hostages. Gates is descended from an Irish immigrant and a slave girl. Crowley traces his family’s roots to the same source.

According to [IrishCentral.com](#), as many as 3 million Americans with Irish ancestry may be descended from Niall, who ruled from an ancient Irish city named Tara from 379 to 405 A.D.

Distant kinship relations have turned up elsewhere in the curious world inside the beltway. Obama is distantly related to six other U.S. presidents through his mother, who as we know was white, and also the late British prime minister Winston Churchill. He is also an eighth cousin of former vice president Dick Cheney.

That Gates and Crowley would turn out to be distant relatives, however, no one expected.

Gates says he told the genealogist who traced his Irish roots, “I find this oddly moving. It is astonishing, that I have this kinship with someone (Niall of the Nine Hostages) dating back to the fourth century A.D.”



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