

## **Just a Shell Game**

*Letter to the Editor, Brunswick Beacon, 6.24.21*

In banning Critical Race Theory, the Brunswick County School Board got played. “CRT” is not taught in NC K-12. Universities and law schools use it to examine how, for example, the 1898 Wilmington Massacre, or the 1921 Tulsa Massacre happened. If, like me, you didn’t learn about them in school, blame your school board.

If you learned of CRT just recently, blame Christopher Rufo. He created the controversy with a July 2020 article to distract from the outrage over George Floyd’s murder. It took off when Rufo appeared with Tucker Carlson last September. He called on Trump to issue an Executive Order “to abolish CRT training from the federal government”. Trump was watching, and invited Rufo to help draft the Order. Trump signed it. A federal court called it a “gross mischaracterization” of CRT and an “insult” to efforts “addressing discrimination and injustice”, declaring the Order an unconstitutional violation of the First Amendment right of free speech.

Rufo admits he “decodified the term” to “turn it toxic”. He tweeted: “The goal is to have the public read something crazy in the newspaper and immediately think ‘critical race theory.’” Like March’s phony outrage over Dr. Seuss and Mr. Potato Head, this fake controversy is a Republican shell game diverting attention from the January 6 insurrection and ongoing GOP efforts to suppress, and, if they choose, overturn future votes.

Rufo boasts: “This entire movement came from nothing”. Saying the quiet part out loud, he admits his goal is “to politicize the bureaucracy”. That includes school boards, and Brunswick County unwittingly obliged. If these “educators” had educated themselves, they would have learned that they were being manipulated.

Instead, all they will learn from the Republicans’ dangerous shell game is that it’s hardest to follow the pea when the pea is you.

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