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Ben Carson: Obama was 'raised white' and cannot relate to black experience

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Retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson said the idea that [Barack Obama](#) can relate to “the experience of black Americans is a bit of a stretch” because the president was “raised white”.

Asked [in an interview](#) with Politico’s Glenn Thrush to recall his reaction at witnessing the election of the first black US president, Carson said: “Like most Americans, I was proud that we broke the color barrier. But I also recognize that [Obama’s] experience and my experience are night-and-day different.”

Carson, whose candidacy for the Republican presidential nomination has had difficulty gaining traction, went on to draw a contrast between Obama’s life story and “the experience of black Americans”:

He didn’t grow up like I grew up, by any stretch of the imagination. Not even close.

He’s an *African-American*. He was, you know, raised white. Many of his formative years were spend in Indonesia. So for him to claim that he identifies with the experience of black Americans is a bit of a stretch.

Carson was raised in intense poverty with his brother by a single mother in Detroit and then Boston. He favors ending some government welfare programs which he believes breed dependency, and favors private charities taking over welfare work from the government.

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Obama lived with his mother, who was white, and his Indonesian stepfather in Jakarta from ages six to 10. After that he was raised in Hawaii by his white maternal grandparents. The president’s paternal roots lie in Kenya.

In the interview with Thrush, Carson said he did not encounter racism among [Republicans](#) but he did sense it from the left, in expectations for how he should think.

“Because you’re black, you have to think a certain way, and if you don’t think that way, you’re Uncle Tom ... whereas if I weren’t black, then I would just be a Republican,” Carson said.

The retired surgeon said he saw “very little” evidence that criticism of Obama was rooted in racism. “What President Obama represents is an ideology that is antithetical to the ideology of most people in the Republican party. And I don’t think it has anything to do with race,” Carson said.

“I’ve been around for 64 years. I’ve had a chance to see what real racism is.”

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