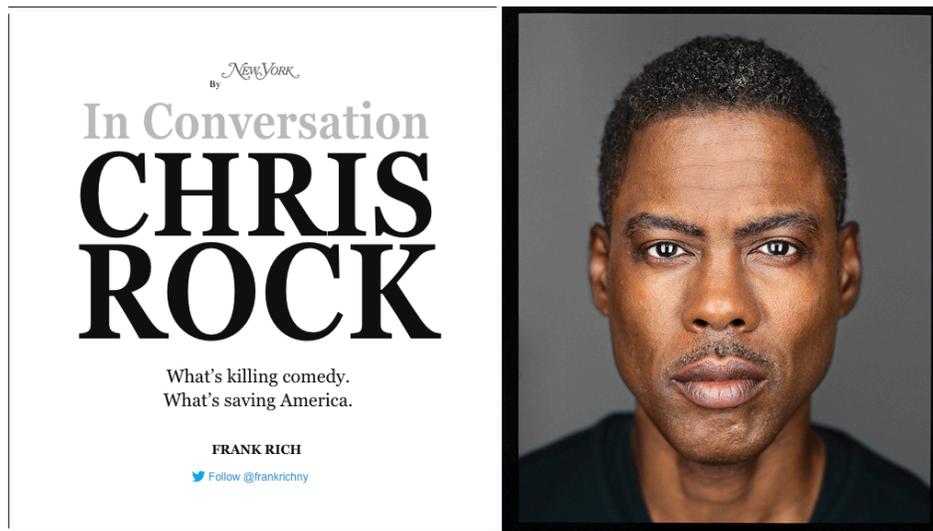


*****EXCERPTS*****



November 30, 2014

One thing that was so exciting to many people, including you and me, when Obama got in was the hope, however delusional, that his election signaled some kind of racial progress in America. When, in fact, I don't think there's been much at all.

Grown people, people over 30, they're not changing. But you've got kids growing up.

Your own kids are all girls, right?

All girls. I mean, I almost cry every day. I drop my kids off and watch them in the school with all these mostly white kids, and I got to tell you, I drill them every day: *Did anything happen today? Did anybody say anything?* They look at me like I am crazy.

And you think this change is generational? That maybe it has nothing to do with Obama?

It's partly generational, but it's also my kids grew up not only with a black president but with a black secretary of State, a black joint chief of staff, a black attorney general. My children are going to be the first black children in the history of America to actually have the benefit of the doubt of just being moral, intelligent people.

I hope you're right.

But these things take a while. The Triborough Bridge has been called the Robert F. Kennedy for years now, and we're still calling it the Triborough Bridge.

We still have some white people taking the Sarah Palin line about blacks and immigrants alike. They want to “take back the country” — and we know from whom. I find it depressing. The increments of change seem to be so much tinier than we wanted to believe when the Civil Rights Act passed 50 years ago, or when Obama was elected in 2008.

Yeah. The stuff you’re talking about is pockets though. There’s always going to be people that don’t know that the war’s over. I’m more optimistic than you, but maybe it’s because I live the way I do. I just have a great life, so it’s easier for me to say things are great. But not even me. My brothers drive trucks and stock shelves. They live in a much better world than my father did. My mother tells stories of growing up in Andrews, South Carolina, and the black people had to go to the vet to get their teeth pulled out. And you still had to go to the back door, because if the white people knew the vet had used his instruments on black people, they wouldn’t take their pets to the vet. This is not some person I read about. This is my mother.

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What would you do in Ferguson that a standard reporter wouldn’t?

I’d do a special on race, but I’d have no black people.

Well, that would be much more revealing.

Yes, that would be an event. Here’s the thing. When we talk about race relations in America or racial progress, it’s all nonsense. There are no race relations. White people were crazy. Now they’re not as crazy. To say that black people have made progress would be to say they deserve what happened to them before.

Right. It’s ridiculous.

So, to say Obama is progress is saying that he’s the first black person that is qualified to be president. That’s not black progress. That’s white progress. There’s been black people qualified to be president for hundreds of years. If you saw Tina Turner and Ike having a lovely breakfast over there, would you say their relationship’s improved? Some people would. But a smart person would go, “Oh, he stopped punching her in the face.” It’s not up to her. Ike and Tina Turner’s relationship has nothing to do with Tina Turner. Nothing. It just doesn’t. The question is, you know, my kids are smart, educated, beautiful, polite children. There have been smart, educated, beautiful, polite black children for hundreds of years. The advantage that my children have is that my children are encountering the nicest white people that America has ever produced. Let’s hope America keeps producing nicer white people.

It’s about white people adjusting to a new reality?

Owning their actions. Not even their actions. The actions of your dad. Yeah, it’s unfair that you can get judged by something you didn’t do, but it’s also unfair that you can inherit money that you didn’t work for.