

In-Sight Publishing
Ask A Genius 123 – Antisemitism, Old is New¹
Scott Douglas Jacobsen & Rick Rosner
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[Beginning of recorded material]

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Antisemitism is increasing, apparently. There are some hoaxes, but, in general, there are things like, for instance, bomb threats directed at Jewish centres or federations. I have noticed this in British Columbia, Canada. You have noted it across America.

Rick Rosner: Okay, well, I have, as a Jew, and not just a Jew, but a Jewy-looking Jew.

SDJ: [Laughing]

RR: I have a stake in antisemitism. I have experienced very little of it. I have experienced very little overt antisemitism. The worst I've been called is Jew-boy on Twitter. I think being Jewy and nerdy in Boulder, Colorado, which is like 98% super Caucasian. When all of my friends were 6'1" blonde ski instructors, that wasn't—being Jewy wasn't helpful in trying to get a girlfriend.

I think if I grew up in New York or Los Angeles—cities with larger Jewish populations—I may have found more of peeps to hang out with and mac on. I was born in 1960. So 15 years after the end of WWII. So it has always been – the potential for antisemitism and the Holocaust – a part of my awareness than people who are younger than me. Antisemitism, much antisemitism and particularly American antisemitism, strikes me as—most racism is stupid.

But antisemitism strikes me as particularly stupid because most people don't have much contact with Jews. I think there are about 6 million Jews in American in a population of about 300 million people, so just under 2%, with Jewish people being concentrated in bigger cities. I grew up in Boulder, which had a population of 20,000 to eventually 100,000, and Albuquerque. My parents got divorced, so I had two families.

¹ Four format points for the session article:

1. Bold text following “Scott Douglas Jacobsen:” or “SDJ:” is Scott Douglas Jacobsen & non-bold text following “Rick Rosner:” or “RR:” is Rick Rosner.
2. Session article conducted, transcribed, edited, formatted, and published by Scott.
3. Footnotes & in-text citations in the interview & references after the interview.
4. This session article has been edited for clarity and readability.

For further information on the formatting guidelines incorporated into this document, please see the following documents:

1. American Psychological Association. (2010). Citation Guide: APA. Retrieved from <http://www.lib.sfu.ca/system/files/28281/APA6CitationGuideSFUv3.pdf>.
2. Humble, A. (n.d.). Guide to Transcribing. Retrieved from <http://www.msvu.ca/site/media/msvu/Transcription%20Guide.pdf>.

There were not many Jews in each city enough to sustain 1 or 2 synagogues. All of the Jews knew all of the other Jews because there weren't that many of them. The Jews in Albuquerque knew the Jews in Boulder and Denver, at least the ones who live there for 4 or 5 generations because you did business across those networks in addition to across other networks. Anyway, not a lot of Jews across most of America.

So I always have to ask, "What is there to be anti-Semitic about?" You can ask this about other small minority members of the population. Most obviously right now: Muslims. I think in the 60s there were like 60,000 Muslims in the whole country. Now, I have a conservative buddy who is freaking out because there are 3 million Muslims in the country, but still less than 1% - which means most people don't have much contact with Jews or Muslims in their daily lives.

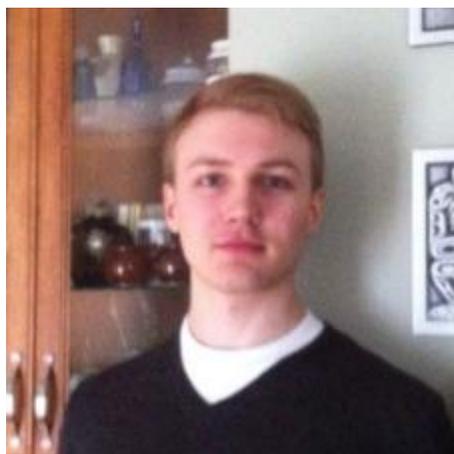
I don't know. It is a dumb stance for me to have, but "if you're going to be racist, at least base your racism on personal experience, it is bullshit that you're basing your racism on people you've never met and know nothing about." That opinion itself is stupid because it expects racism to make sense or to somehow be justified.

[End of recorded material]

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