

FACING REALITY

TWO TRUTHS
ABOUT RACE
IN AMERICA

CHARLES
MURRAY

— COAUTHOR OF *THE BELL CURVE* —

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Encounter
BOOKS

NEW YORK · LONDON

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First American edition published in 2021 by Encounter Books, an activity of Encounter for Culture and Education, Inc., a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation.

Encounter Books website address: www.encounterbooks.com

Manufactured in the United States and printed on acid-free paper. The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of ANSI/NISO Z39.48–1992 (R 1997) (*Permanence of Paper*).

FIRST AMERICAN EDITION

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

Names: Murray, Charles A., author.

Title: Facing Reality: Two Truths about Race in America / Charles Murray.

Description: First American edition. | New York, New York: Encounter Books, 2021. | Includes bibliographical references and index. |

Identifiers: LCCN 2021000549 (print) | LCCN 2021000550 (ebook) | ISBN 9781641771979 (hardcover) | ISBN 9781641771986 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Racism—United States. | Race. | Intelligence levels—United States. | Crime and race—United States. | Discrimination in law enforcement—United States. | United States—Race relations. | United States—Social policy.

Classification: LCC E184.A1 M8955 2021 (print) | LCC E184.A1 (ebook) | DDC 305.800973—dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2021000549>

LC ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2021000550>

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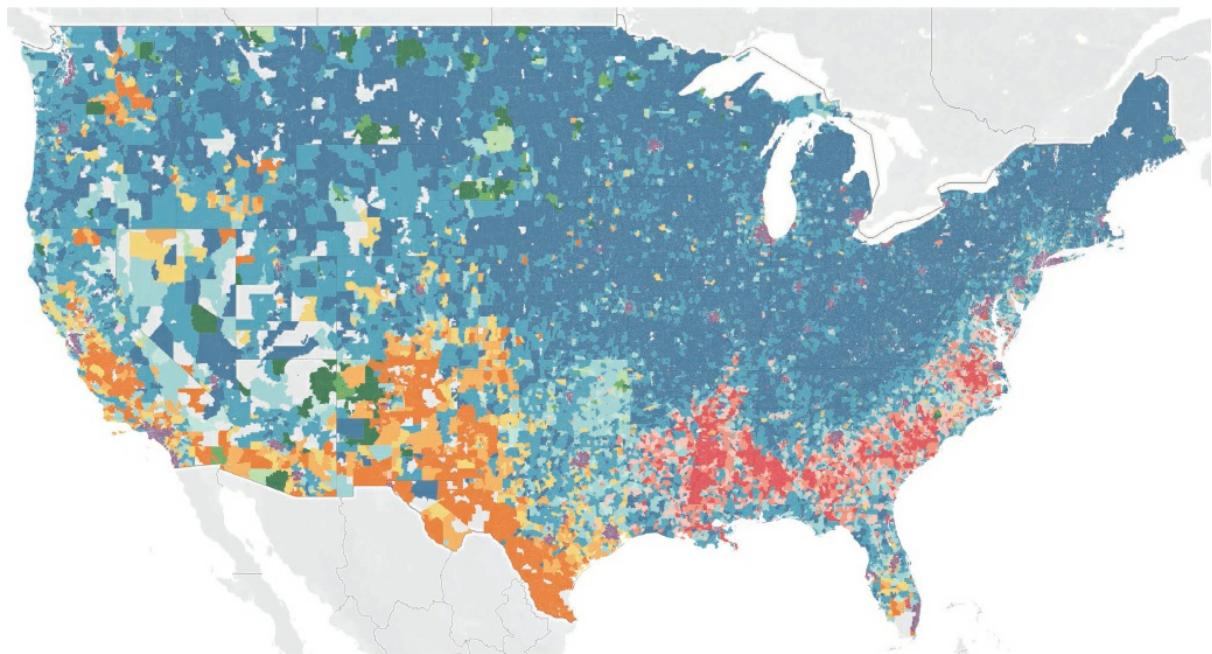


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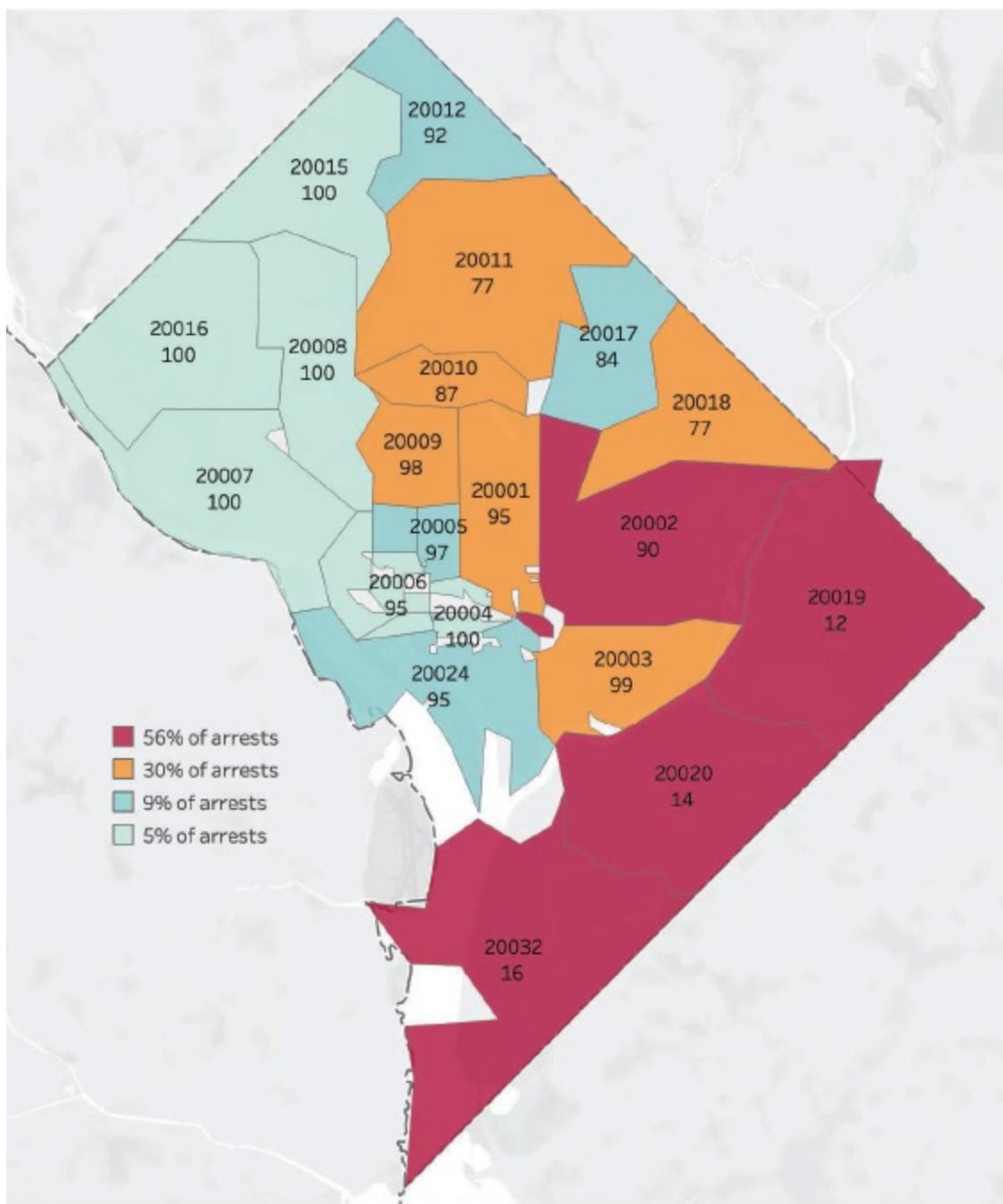


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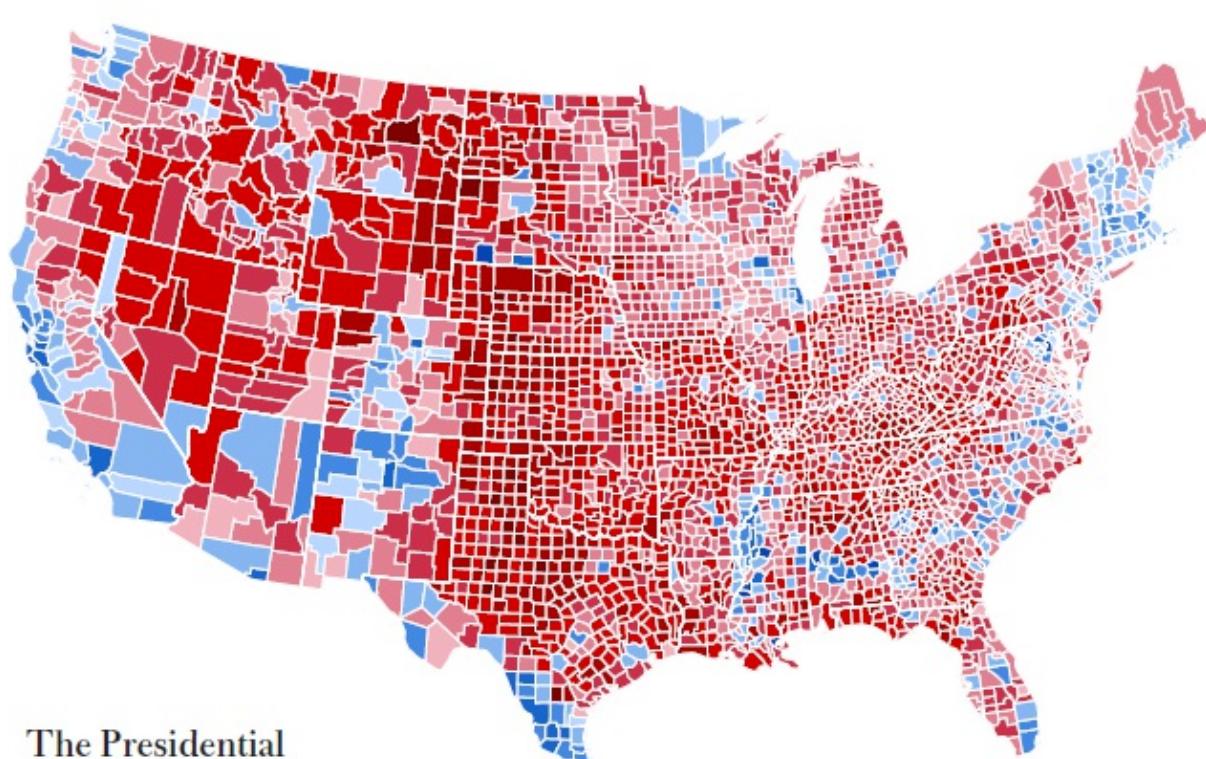
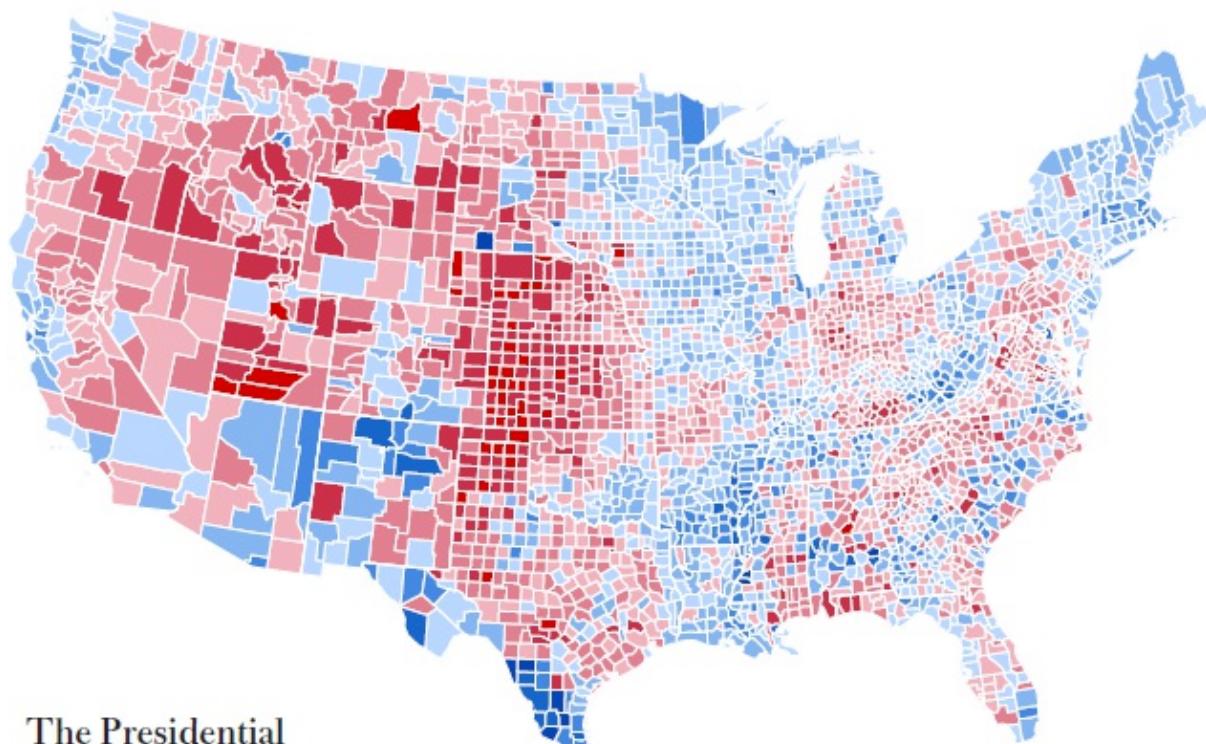


Figure 3

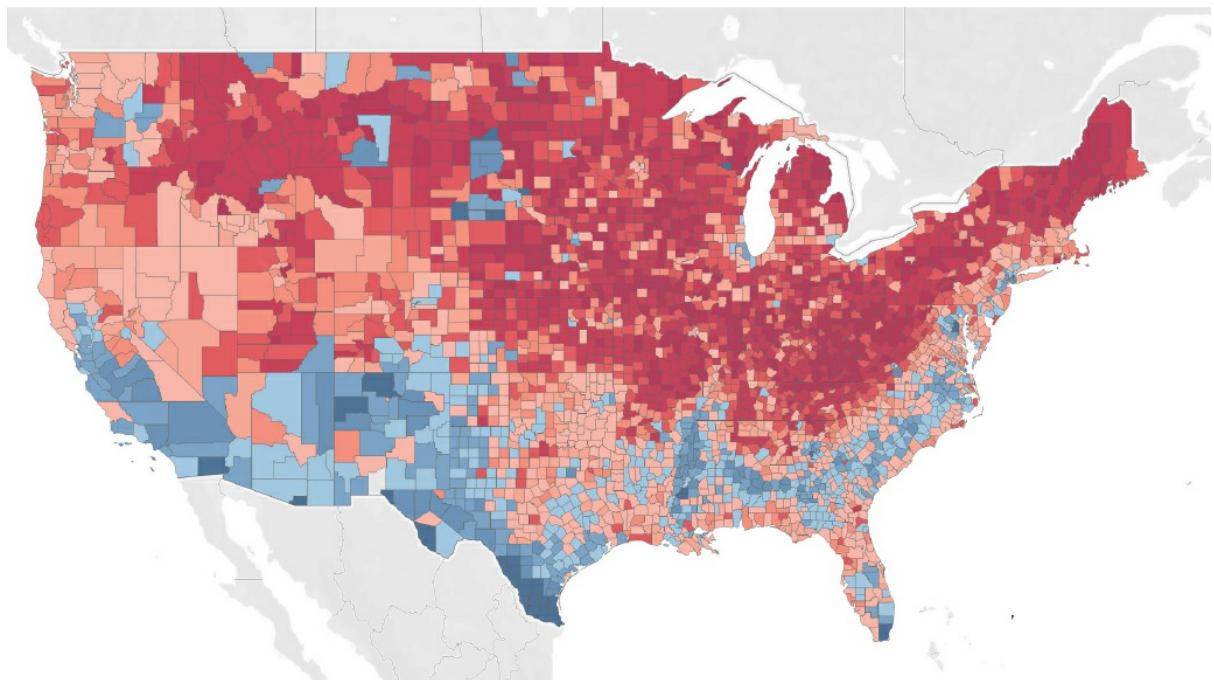


Figure 4
The Racial Echo of the Political Polarization



Note to the Reader

THE EMPIRICAL ASSERTIONS in *Facing Reality* are not complicated in themselves, and in a reasonable world they would not be controversial. They are facts that we must face. It shouldn't take long to read them, and it won't. You can read the main text of *Facing Reality* over the course of an evening. Maybe two.

The story behind the facts is occasionally complicated, however, and aspects of the facts are controversial for understandable reasons, but different readers will have different reservations. Some of you will be comfortable accepting arrest data as quantitative evidence of criminal behavior but doubt that IQ tests tell us anything worth knowing. Others will be familiar with the basics of IQ but suspicious of anything the police tell us. The endnotes present additional evidence or further explanation of technical issues. Standard documentation of sources, still more elaboration of technical issues, and downloadable databases have been posted online at [encounterbooks.com/books/ facing-reality](http://encounterbooks.com/books/facing-reality).

Introduction

I DECIDED TO WRITE this book in the summer of 2020 because of my dismay at the disconnect between the rhetoric about “systemic racism” and the facts. The uncritical acceptance of that narrative by the nation’s elite news media amounted to an unwillingness to face reality.

By *facts*, I mean what Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan meant: “Everyone is entitled to his own opinion but not to his own facts.” By *reality*, I mean what the science fiction novelist Philip Dick meant: “Reality is that which, when you stop believing in it, doesn’t go away.”

I do not dispute evidence of the racism that persists in American life. Rather, I reject the portrayal of American society and institutions as systemically racist and saturated in White privilege. What follows is a data-driven discussion of realities that make America a more complicated and much less racist nation than its radical critics describe.

Of the many facts about race that are ignored, two above all, long since documented beyond reasonable doubt, must be brought into the open and incorporated into the way we think about why American society is the way it is and what can be done through public policy to improve it.

The first is that American Whites, Blacks, Latinos, and Asians, *as groups*, have different means and distributions of cognitive ability. The second is that American Whites, Blacks, Latinos, and Asians, *as groups*, have different rates of violent crime. Allegations of systemic racism in policing, education, and the workplace cannot be assessed without dealing with the reality of group differences.

There is a reason that reality is ignored. The two facts make people excruciatingly uncomfortable. To raise them is to be considered a racist and hateful person. What’s more, these facts have been distorted and exploited for malign purposes by racist and hateful people.

What then is the point of writing about them? Aren’t some realities better ignored? The answer goes to a much deeper problem than false accusations of systemic racism. We are engaged in a struggle for America’s soul. Facing reality is essential if that struggle is to be won.



CHAPTER ONE

The American Creed Imperiled

It has been our fate as a nation not to have ideologies, but to be one.

RICHARD HOFSTADTER

AMERICA'S FOUNDING IDEALS – America's soul – used to be called the American creed. The creed's origin is the first sentence of the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights...." In Samuel Huntington's words, the creed embodies "the political principles of liberty, equality, democracy, individualism, human rights, the rule of law, and private property."¹

Europeans who looked with hope to America in the nineteenth century grasped a simpler meaning: In America, they would be the equals of anyone else – equal before the law and possessing the same inherent human dignity as anyone else. In America, they would be judged on who they were as individuals, not by what social class they came from or how they worshipped God. That promise drew immigrants by the millions who believed that in America you could go as far as your own hard work and talent would take you.

Our history is riddled with failures to achieve our ideal, starting with the Declaration's failure to condemn slavery, but the American creed itself has always been powerful. Over the course of the nineteenth century, both the abolitionist and the feminist movements drew their moral authority and their ultimate successes from appeals to live up to the American creed. In the early 1940s, writing in his landmark book, *An American Dilemma*, the Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal capitalized the term and marveled at the creed's continuing universality. "Even a poor and uneducated white person in some isolated and backward rural region in the Deep South who is violently prejudiced against the Negro and intent upon depriving him of

civic rights and human independence, has also a whole compartment in his valuation sphere housing the entire American Creed of liberty, equality, justice, and fair opportunity for everybody,” he wrote. The creed was what made America *America*.

Myrdal was writing a decade before the civil rights movement gained momentum in the mid-1950s. The most dramatic single moment of that crusade, Martin Luther King’s “I have a dream” speech on the Washington Mall on August 28, 1963, evoked the American creed from start to finish.

“In a sense we’ve come to our nation’s capital to cash a check,” King said near the opening. “When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir.”

Reaching the peroration, he proclaimed his first dream, that “the nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.’”

The iconic line from the speech, King’s dream that his four children would one day “not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character,” was a reification of the creed.

That speech was the capstone to a compelling appeal that had raised the consciousness – the phrase is appropriate, for once – of White America over the course of the preceding decade.

You have to be quite old to remember how uncomplicated it seemed to many of us, White and Black alike, in 1963. African Americans had been wronged for centuries, during slavery and after. It was time to set things right. Ten months later, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was signed by Lyndon Johnson. It had passed by overwhelming margins in both houses of Congress, with almost all of the opposition coming from Southern members.

There. We had done it. We had set things right.

Some who voted for the bill had misgivings about a few provisions. Titles II and III, banning race discrimination in public accommodations and public facilities, entailed obvious restrictions on freedom of association. Title VII, on equal employment opportunity, made employers vulnerable to legal scrutiny if they didn’t think in terms of groups. But in the floor debates and in the press, these provisions were described as one-time exceptions justified by the unique injustice done to African Americans. It’s not as if the act would seriously infringe on traditional American freedoms. As Hubert Humphrey, the Senate’s leading liberal, put it when discussing the section on employment discrimination, the