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# Clinton's joke with New York mayor criticized as insulting black people



Democratic U.S. presidential candidate Hillary Clinton speaks at the Suffolk County Democratic Committee's annual spring dinner in Holbrook, New York April 11, 2016.  
REUTERS/LUCAS JACKSON

A comic gag turned into a gaffe for Democratic presidential hopeful Hillary Clinton and New York Mayor Bill de Blasio, triggering a social media storm over what some said was their insensitivity to African-Americans.

Clinton, who has the key New York primary coming up next Tuesday, took the stage with de Blasio on Saturday at the Inner Circle, an annual media roast of city and state politicians that traditionally ends with New York's mayor delivering a snarky rebuttal in the form of a rehearsed skit, often with the help of Broadway cast members.

This year Leslie Odom Jr., who is black and plays Aaron Burr in the hit Broadway show "Hamilton," participated in the skit in which Clinton kidded de Blasio about his delay in endorsing her bid for the White House.

"Sorry, Hillary, I was running on C.P. Time," de Blasio said, referring to the phrase "colored people time" used to indicate chronic lateness.

"I don't like jokes like that," Odom said.

Clinton then added: "'Cautious politician time.' I've been there."

Clinton has strong support from black voters heading into New York state's Democratic primary next week but some supporters worry that Democratic challenger Bernie Sanders has begun making inroads with them.

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De Blasio defended the joke in an appearance on CNN on Monday. "It was clearly a staged event," he said " ... I think people are missing the point here."

In a statement on Monday, the mayor's office said, "Let's be clear, in an evening of satire, the only person this was meant to mock was the mayor himself - period. Certainly no one intended to offend anyone."

A spokesman for Clinton's campaign referred to the mayor's statement in response to a request for comment. A publicist for "Hamilton" did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The New York Daily News put the controversy on its front page on Tuesday with the headline "Skit for Brains."

The joke set off angry reaction on social media with commentators criticizing Clinton and de Blasio, whose wife Chirlane McCray is African-American, for insensitivity.

"In what kind of twisted world does a POTUS candidate make a #CPTime joke at a high \$ event "inner circle" & ppl think it's ok... #wakeup," Jenny Li, @jennyjenli, posted on Twitter on Tuesday.

"@HillaryClinton did the equivalent of kicking Blacks in their butts by participating in #CPTime 'joke,'" tweeted Anthony B., @PoliticalAnt.

(Reporting by Barbara Goldberg and Joseph Ax; Editing by Lisa Von Ahn and Bill Trott)



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