

Excerpted from *Mike! Wall Street's Mayor*

Racing to the Bottom:2001

Television ads featured blacks and Hispanics criticizing Green for “dividing the people with his negative campaigning.” Mark Green was being transformed into Lester Maddox. *New York Times* columnist Bob Herbert called Mike out:

Even as the Democrats were trying to pull themselves out of the slough of racial politics, Mr. Bloomberg was finding new and creative ways to crawl in ... What the ad shows is that Mr. Bloomberg is as opportunistic and hypocritical as any professional pol ... And after running this blatantly racially exploitive ad, he stood before reporters over the weekend and solemnly proclaimed, “Nobody should be discussing race whatsoever.”

Al Sharpton, the grandmaster of racial politics, didn't appreciate Mike messing with his franchise. “Bloomberg is playing hardball in my ballpark,” he said, pointing out Mike's memberships in several no-blacks-need-apply social clubs. Pointedly, Sharpton didn't attack Mike's membership in the most notorious whites-only club of all, the New York State Republican Party, where black people rarely if ever rise above the level of secretary, but where the occasional clergyman–politician who is black can be found feeding at the Republican patronage trough. Apparently Reverend Al thought he could do business with Mike. He announced that he was leaving for Israel. “I am going to the Wailing Wall to promise God that I will not support Mark Green for mayor.” And he went.