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Gabourey Sidibe in Elle: Light, Bright and Almost White

By Matthew Fleischer on Sep 16, 2010 08:21 AM

When word broke out that African-American actress [Gabourey Sidibe](#) would grace the cover of Elle's 25th anniversary issue, the magazine received plaudits all around. It's not often that an overweight black woman finds herself on the cover of a major fashion mag. But as the blog [Womanist Musings pointed out](#) several days ago, now that the cover has been revealed, Sidibe's skin appears several shades lighter than her natural tone.

I am sure that Elle felt that just having Gabby on the cover was making some statement about how progressive they are, and so I suppose that actually having a picture of Gabby in her natural skin colour was easy to deem unimportant. As the two other images reveal, Gabby is actually several shades darker than she is pictured in Elle. Photoshopping is quite common in magazines, but when they choose to lighten a dark skinned Black woman, it is racist no matter what the original intent was.

Light bright and damn near White, is still the standard in the media, unless they are trying to portray a POC as guilty of a crime.

An Elle flack denied any wrongdoing to Yahoo's [Shine blog](#): "Nothing out of the ordinary was done. We have four separate covers this month and Gabby's cover was not retouched any more or less than the others. We had 25 cover-worthy subjects in our portfolio and we chose Gabby because of who she is. We shot this as a story of exuberant young women changing the world. If you take a look at the portfolio, each of the women were shot in different ways and for different reasons."

Exactly...Nothing to see here...Nope...Not a thing amiss...

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