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Black Coons & FOX News: A Worthy Partnership The Substance of Truth By Tolu Olorunda BlackCommentator.com Columnist

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Most would agree that *FOX News*, Rupert Murdoch's crumbling empire, has not been exactly [fair to Black people](#) over the years. In fact, it has, whenever possible, vehemently attacked whoever it perceived to be an important factor in Black America. At any given opportunity, its multi-millionaire hosts have encouraged, entertained and enlisted the support of pundits who openly detest Black people, and feel undaunted in speaking out publicly about it. Occasionally, when the fruits seem too ripe to withstand, the hosts themselves, caught in the hysteria of race-intoxication, spill out their guts about their disdain for Black humanity.

An example of this [occurred](#) in September 2007, when *FOX News*' top-rated host, Bill O'Reilly, narrated a recent encounter he had at a Black Harlem Restaurant - Sylvia's. As O'Reilly claims, this experience was life-changing, because *"there was no difference between Sylvia's restaurant and any other restaurant in New York City. I mean, it was exactly the same, even though it's run by blacks, primarily black patronship."* O'Reilly later continued: *"There wasn't one person in Sylvia's who was screaming, 'M-Fer, I want more iced tea'."* The host, undisciplined by the network, would thereafter suggest that not only were his words misconstrued, but he deserves an apology from his detractors, because their nitpicking plays a part in stalling ongoing racial progress.

Bill O'Reilly recounting his racial *Road to Damascus* moment in Harlem was, though met by fierce criticism, expected for a host with such an esteemed track-record of

race-baiting. O'Reilly, who [told Temple University professor](#) Marc Lamont Hill in Feb. 2007 that inter-racial reconciliation is frozen, because "white Americans are terrified," to the point where they "can't even say" blacks are "articulate," for fear of being perceived as condescending, has never wavered in blurting out his bigoted feelings about Black folks, and daring anyone to call him racist. With the docility of paid Black FOX analysts like Dr. Hill - the once-upon-a-time formidable crusader - O'Reilly is validated in his [bizarre claims](#) to be color-blind, and thus, unintentional about the Ku Klux Klan-esque views he espouses about Black people, and people of culture/color around the globe. It is the same host who, last year, took time out to comment on the media-driven flap about First Lady, Michelle Obama's "for the first time in my adult lifetime, I am really proud of my country" statement. O'Reilly lashed out at the First Lady, [threatening her](#) with a "lynching party," if he found her to be truly unpatriotic - as she was charged, at the time.

O'Reilly had the full backing of *FOX News* - a TV network which doesn't care for Ms. Obama and the Obama family, either. During the 2008 Presidential campaign, it was *FOX News* which [relentlessly distorted](#) the First Lady's Senior Thesis to accuse her of anti-white values; it was also *FOX News* which knowingly [perpetrated the ugly untruth](#) that Ms. Obama had used the word "whitey" to describe Caucasians in a dated tape; it was also *FOX News* which [saw no wrong](#) in describing Ms. Obama as President Obama's "Baby Mama." *FOX News'* deep-seated convictions about President Obama, and his family, would also be exposed when Liz Trotta, a paid contributor for the network, [revealed some disturbing desires](#) on the air, without much reprimand from *FOX News*. In a discussion surrounding Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton's eerie comments linking RFK's assassination to Obama's lead in the Democratic primaries, Ms. Trotta had the following to say: "... *Some are reading [Clinton's remarks] as a suggestion that somebody knock off Osama. Um, uh, Obama. Well, both, if we could.*" Ms. Trotta would, [soon after, blame](#) her "mistakes" on the "colorful political season" - a time when many White pundits, unused to seeing a Black family at the center of political discourse, unwillingly confess their racial sins before a global audience. It should also be noted that the *apology* came only after *FOX News'* reception of thousands of phone calls and e-mails in disgust over Trotta's comments. To avoid this repetition - a white Woman vocalizing rabidly destructive intimations on the air about Black people - *FOX News* has employed a strategy that it hopes might militate against public reaction to the racism promoted on its network.

Instead of feeding its message of hate through the tube of White pundits, *FOX News* now utilizes the *stepin fetchit-like* willingness of Black Conservatives to do its dirty and deadly work. A few notables include RNC Chairman Michael Steele, Juan Williams, John McWhorter, Star Parker, Rev. Jesse Lee Peterson, Angela McGlowan, and Erik Rush. Above all listed, a couple of them have risen, over the past few years, to critical acclaim from within the neo-conservative, hard-right network.

Juan Williams, an *NPR*-Senior Correspondent, is one of them. Williams, unlike other Black *Fox News* analysts is aware of his role in the network's roster. As a shill for racist characterizations about Black people and [people of culture/color in general](#), Williams never shies away from playing the field with impeccable perfection. Following O'Reilly's Sylvia's comments, it was Juan Williams who was first called to refute any arguments made by anti-racism advocates, that O'Reilly was a racist. In a [TIME Magazine op-ed](#), Williams defended O'Reilly at all costs, claiming his boss was unfairly "slammed,"

simply for saying "he went to a restaurant in Harlem and had a good time." His ability to stand by O'Reilly, *come what may*, earned him a special nickname from Syracuse University Professor, Dr. Boyce Watkins: "The Eternal Happy Negro." Watkins [sees Williams](#) as one who "*conspires to provide black* (not African- American, for he is Panamanian) *validation* for these *racist viewpoints*." What *FOX News'* white contributors cannot say, without being branded as unashamedly racist, Williams would, without hesitation, confirm. Juan Williams [appearing on FOX News](#), before Ms. Obama's DNC keynote address, accused her of "sometimes" using a "*kind of militant anger*," to get her message across. Ms. Obama, who, in Williams' eye, can be "*rather cynical or dismissive of people*," had to watch her "issues" - or risks losing her husband the election.

He would drown his hatred of Michelle Obama in deeper waters, a couple weeks back, in an [infamous appearance](#) on Bill O'Reilly's program. On the subject of "liabilities for President Obama," Williams referred to the First Lady as being "right there." "Stokely Carmichael in a designer-dress," as he called Ms. Obama, has to tame her "instinct," which "is to start with this 'blame America,' you know, 'I'm the victim [narrative]'. For one who, in 1991, [was disciplined](#) by the *Washington Post*, following allegations of sexual harassment - which were substantiated and "found to be serious" - by his female colleagues, Juan Williams sure has a lot of nerve telling Women - especially Black Women - what to do, and not do. Williams, who at the time accused Prof. Anita Hill of having no "credible evidence" against Chief Justice Clarence Thomas, was publicly humiliated and forced to pen a letter of apology for his repulsive conduct.

The Rev. Jesse Lee Peterson is another chicken *FOX News* calls up whenever it plans on laying another golden racist egg on its airwaves. Peterson, [infamous for thanking](#) God and White men for slavery, "because... had not [there been the enslavement of Black folks], the Blacks who are here would have been stuck in Africa, and you see how bad Africa is," is a cartoon character, at best, but loved by *FOX News* host, Sean Hannity - second only to O'Reilly in the expression of [racist values](#). With [Peterson's views](#) that, "Racist blacks have the freedom of expression when it comes to the issue of race and morality, but white folks are made to be quiet and not even mention race;" [and that](#), "Most of the discrimination today is from black folks toward white Americans;" [and that](#), "The real racists are the so-called black leadership who protested in Louisiana," for the Jena 6 teens; not forgetting how, [as he noted last week](#), "Barack Obama was elected by, mostly by black racists and white guilty people," given the reality that "most black Americans, 96 percent of them, are racists," it's easy to see why he's a favorite on the channel. *FOX News* has provided Peterson a platform, unimagined in the history of journalism, to express the vile and despicable sentiments fed to him by the show's producers and hosts.

FOX News cannot simply be ignored, because its [influence in mass-media](#) has had - and is having - a deleterious impact on the mainstream discourse surrounding the Obama family. It has encouraged other, assumedly less-reactionary, outlets to follow in its footsteps, in the road to stardom. These, otherwise respected, journalism store-fronts now, with *FOX News* charting the course, uncaringly now carry out their personal racist agendas against Michelle Obama, and the First Family. The *New York Magazine*, a considerable liberal publication, [published an article](#) in August 2008 that reeked of unfettered racist-characterizations of the First Lady, and President Obama. In "Black and Blacker: The Racial Politics of the Obama Marriage," *NY Mag* reported that, "*The*

description of the Obamas' life together displays no evidence of their connections to black culture, especially now that it's not prudent for them to join a new church before the election." It goes on to skewer Michelle Obama for being "a little more tense," than former First Ladies-to-be. *"Before she goes on-camera for interviews, we'd have to give her a couple of minutes to compose herself... That's a mask she's wearing in public, most of the time, and we aren't sure what is underneath,"* it said. Stressing the perceived differences in Ms. and Mr. Obama, more than the shared similarities of the couple, the magazine sought to extend the work already begun by FOX News.

Other publications have followed suit, such as the *Politico*, an internet news site, which, [recently characterized](#) Ms. Obama as one of "Ten Dems Obama should watch out for." As a part of the ten-member "White House [Frenemies](#) List," *"a slip of the tongue, a too-frank statement, any disagreement with the administration's positions - could reflect harshly on her husband."* The *Politico's* portrayal of the First Lady, similar to Juan Williams' comments, as a *liability* for President Obama speaks volumes to the intentions of White-owned mainstream publications.

23/6, a subsidiary of the liberal website, *Huffington Post*, in a supposedly comedic bit, saw fit to take digs at the youngest daughter of the Obamas, following the historic events on January 20th. In a "5 things that could have happened," at the inauguration, "but didn't" piece, Sasha Obama made an [unflattering appearance](#): *"Sasha Obama didn't tell anybody off. The youngest first daughter is brimming over with sass, and she COULD HAVE spent the day adorably demanding that people talk to her tiny hand or shaking her hips defiantly at every photo op, but she chose to reign it in. Incidentally, Secret Service have already changed her code name to 'The Little Handful'."* The site which has, in the past, [published deeply offensive](#) photo-shopped images of Ms. Obama, must have not gotten the memo - that kids are off limits in any political analysis of Obama's presidency (especially in a weak-handed attempt at satire).

The battle to keep the claws of mass-media off the First Family is revealing itself to be even harder than predicted. Drunk and overfed pundits, unskilled in areas of diversity (Blackness), are finding it hard to keep their racist ideologies secret, and the Obama family's presence at the center of international stardom, poses an unanticipated threat to their [bigoted perceptions](#) of Black people. What conscientious Black people, and others of all stripes must accomplish is the declaration of unequivocal refusal to racist attacks on Michelle Obama - perpetrated by conservative or liberal; mainstream or alternative; white-owned or black-operated media. The Black community must stand firm as inevitable racist summarizations - deemed satire or objectivity - of the first family are rendered by journalists and writers across the globe. Disagreements with President Obama's political persuasions should not be a distraction in keeping alive the legacies of freedom fighters who labored hard, that a first family might live happily, without the cloud of media-sanctioned hate looming over their existence.

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BlackCommentator.com Columnist, Tolu Olorunda, is an activist/writer and a Nigerian immigrant. Click [here](#) to reach Mr. Olorunda.

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