

Omarosa factor: Attitude drags down all sisters

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I cringed every time Omarosa Manigault-Stallworth opened her big, deceptive mouth on real estate tycoon Donald Trump's hit reality show "The Apprentice." Besides giving an Oscar-worthy performance as the resident Achilles' heel every week, Omarosa perpetuated the negative stereotypes of African American women as being rude, neurotic and unnecessarily confrontational.

Her malicious machinations ranged from almost single-handedly thwarting Charlotte native Kwame Jackson's chance at winning the competition to playing the race card to the hilt by accusing fellow candidate Erika Vitriini of calling her the N-word, an allegation which Vitriini hotly contests.

Knowing Hollywood like I do from living there a year and half, I must presume that the producers of the show probably persuaded Omarosa to play up her obnoxious behavior for the purposes of achieving high TV ratings. So, at first, I denounced the improbable occurrence that this one woman could possibly encompass almost every negative stereotype traditionally associated with black women in America.

And now, much to everyone's chagrin, Ms. Omarosa is popping up on TV everywhere from "Oprah" to "Extra." It appears she is actually being rewarded for her dubious deeds as she is courted from one publicity opportunity to another. And what's more disturbing is that she seems to have no qualms about it. In fact, she appears quite proud of herself.

For hundreds of years, African American women have had to beat down negative stereotypes about our attitudes, competency and intelligence in order to climb up the professional and social ladders. But it seems that all it takes is an "Omarosa episode" to knock us right back down a few pegs and negate the pioneering efforts of the likes of former U.S. senator Carol Moseley Braun or author Maya Angelou.

Did none of the black women in Omarosa's family or circle of friends feel it imperative to pull her aside and say, "For the sake of Rosa Parks, please shut up!" As intelligent and "real" as she routinely proclaimed to be, could Omarosa not deduce for herself that she was coming off as being a

pretentious fraud before radio talk shows and tabloids made the official announcement?

Unfortunately in our society, African Americans as a whole are judged by what one member of our race does. It has become such the norm for a few to represent all of us that the assumption is constantly made that our entire race is that way.

Not all black men are gold-teeth-wearing, baggy-jean-sagging, Ebonics-speaking criminals. Nor are all black women finger-snapping, head-rolling, bubble-gum popping baby mamas. Therefore, we should be cognizant of how we represent ourselves. We have to be. Because it is likely that our society will hold all of us to whatever standard, however low, a few of us portray.

Perhaps Omarosa was just "putting on a show" for TV viewers, but we as African Americans do not have the luxury of assuming that society will recognize that such behavior is neither genuine nor indicative of our entire race.

Another fallout from Hurricane Omarosa was the public verification of the long-suspected strained relationship between black men and women. Socio-economic, political, and racial factors have all contributed to the relationship rift between black men and women throughout the years. So, when Kwame Jackson quickly chose Omarosa to be on his final team, you could almost hear the collective cheers as black women everywhere applauded him for putting his trust in a "sister."

Then, just as quickly, came our collective jeers as Omarosa lived up to her despicable ways and led the charge to stab Jackson in the back. Not only did she essentially fire a perfectly qualified candidate for the president of Trump's newest project, but, in the process, she also reiterated the sad state of affairs that is our race's self-destructive tendency.

Now that the show is over, I wonder just how well Omarosa will fit back into society. I wonder if anyone will ever take her seriously or if they will scatter like roaches in daylight when they see her coming from a mile away. A public boycott of Clairol Herbal Essences hair products has already been threatened since the company offered Omarosa a contract to do their commercials.

Regardless of whatever financial gain Omarosa may attain as a result of her radical high-jinks, as an African American woman, she should be ashamed. The rest of us are.

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POSTSCRIPTS

We all have stake in doing right thing

FELICIA HALL



On Easter Sunday, I attended service at Victory Christian Center with a friend. He insisted that I attend as Victory always does a wonderful Easter production. He's right!

Marilyn Gool, the pastor's wife, wrote the play "Who Is Guilty?" The play caused me to take inventory and re-account how easy it is to cast blame on others. Many times we fail to take a closer look at ourselves and the role we play in the current state of affairs.

"Who Is Guilty" begins with the pastor of a community church giving instructions and assignments to his Bible study leaders. He asked them to read scriptures in the 26th book of Mark, which gives an account of the events leading up to the betrayal, arrest and crucifixion of Jesus. Judas was singled out as the one who betrayed Jesus Christ by those he lived among. In the play, Judas attempted



Marshall

to explain why he wasn't the only one to blame for the crucifixion. There were 11 disciples who knew the truth about Jesus, but did not speak up when asked or stand up for what was right.

The play drew a parallel to every day people who do the same, everyday people look at others and cast blame without taking into account their own past and present actions. The play demonstrated how we all are guilty for something. All we have to do is take a closer look at ourselves.

The play also exposes the Governor's guilt. He was given the opportunity to do what he knew to be right according to the law of the land and yet he allowed his fear of his followers to sway his actions. Instead of leading, he was led even though he believed his actions were unjust. If leaders can be so easily influenced by society, we all may be in trouble.

We must be mindful of whom we elect to

positions of authority and who we select to serve on the bench in our judicial system. We must also be mindful of who we fail to keep in office. Remember Wilhelmina Rembert?

Times are changing and if we are not careful, those in the minority will have given up their voice for failure to speak up. This November, we must exercise our right to vote and keep judges in office like Avril Ussery Sisk and Yvonne Mims Evans.

The high priests also played a role. They used their influence and the respect of their followers to sway them. They were the voices of authority on religion and they wanted it to stay that way. They were willing to lie, manipulate, beg, borrow and steal to bring down the one who they perceived as their enemy and to make sure that they reined supreme. This is done every day in our current culture, as we climb the corporate ladder to success.

Recently, pop culture brought it to light through the infamous Omarosa on the reality show "The Apprentice." Omarosa was willing to sacrifice and step all over the business savvy Kwame, an INROADS Charlotte graduate, to be the "one" chosen by Donald Trump. Her actions were shameful and embarrassing. I thought, WOW! - We are so willing to step on each other to get to the top. In hindsight, what is it worth? Our soul?

In this play Jesus paid it all. His blood paid the cost for our salvation. Mel Gibson's movie "The Passion of the Christ" further illustrates the story and reveals the danger of idly standing by and watching, rather than speaking up and being heard. Silence, could be the death and ruin of a man, our community and our society.

There were others that paid the cost for freedom and hope - Martin Luther King, Jr., Thurgood Marshall, Mary McLeod Bethune and Harriet Tubman. Unlike many in today's society they stood up and were counted instead of watching in silence hoping to go unnoticed.

The price is high for not speaking up and standing up for what is right when given the opportunity. Take note of the little minority representation on the CMS School Board, the Chamber's Executive Committee, the County Planning Commission, as well as the dissolution of the Minority Women Business Enterprise. In Charlotte, silence equates to fewer voices at the table and fewer opportunities for those in the minority.

Who is to blame for the current state of Charlotte, or America itself? The president? Our legislators? Senators? The mayor? City council? County commissioners? Those that vote? Those that don't vote? Those with money? Those without money? Those with positions of influence and power? The church? Our schools? Your neighbors? Or the media? Who's guilty?

This play reminded me that "one person" is not to blame for our current state of affairs. For that, many are to blame. It is time to stand up and take action for what happens in your world, your community and your home! Don't place blame on others because you have been silent. At least those with a voice, be it right or wrong, have taken a stance based on their convictions. This play also reminded me that the penalty for silence is far too great. It reminded me that because of the price paid on Calvary, we all get a second chance to get it right. I left church on Easter Sunday with a renewed sense of purpose to stand up, speak up, not cast blame, but assume responsibility for my part in creating a better society. What will you do with your opportunity to get it right?

FELICIA HALL is president of Felicia Hall & Associates in Charlotte.

OUR VOICES

If arrest brings changes, great

The writer is founder of the Crusade and Stop the Killing and a longtime advocate of anti-violence programs in Charlotte.

At this time I take the time to stop and say "thanks" for the way in which you covered the matter of my arrest. All in all I would say that the coverage was good. However, I now move on to deal with the aftereffects and to put in writing what the stunt was all about. Attorney James J. Exum will now deal with any and all questions on the matter.

I bear in mind that it will be hard if not impossible for those outside of the target community to understand the outcome of this matter. It will also be hard for many within the community that are not in touch with the grassroots to understand.

The stunt was to bring attention to me and was to show that law enforcement was doing their job.

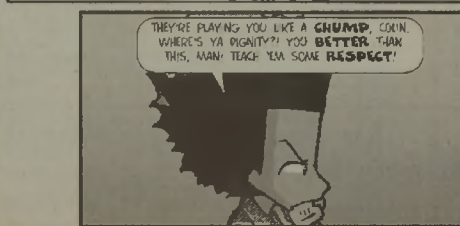
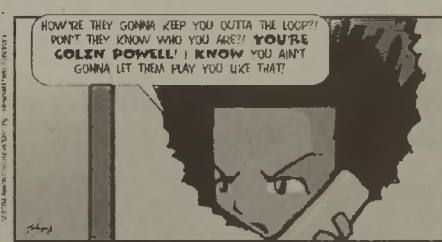
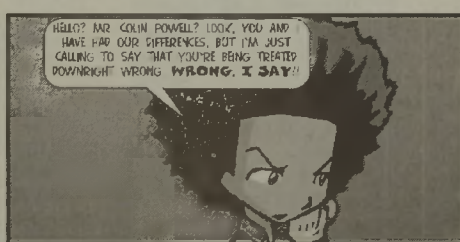
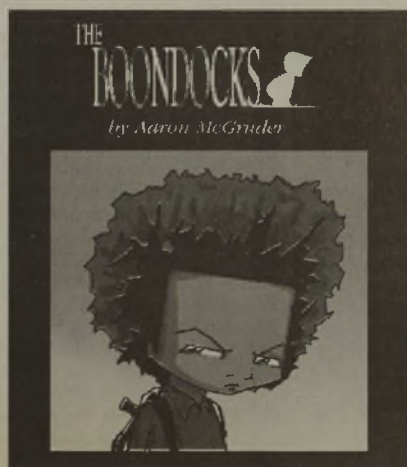


Barnett

The attention was to help make the community better as well as help the campaign to Stop The Killing. I was to receive a letter from law enforcement which was to cause much talk in the community as to the problem. Many questions would be asked on talk shows, thereby raising the awareness which would not only help the community but would help the campaign. It has always been my belief that all the campaign needed was for people to talk about the problem. The stunt got the black media involved in a way that it has not been involved in the history of the campaign. We were able to go back to them and state that the problem of black-on-black crime is still a part of our community, what are you going to do about it? The stunt was to also aid law enforcement. If a high profile person was arrested, then that should send a strong message that law enforcement was doing their job.

As I state, only time will tell if this stunt was worth the price I have paid. If the community is not better; the murder rate increases and my support does not increase, then all was in vain. With that in mind I move on to deal with the aftereffects. The Crusade has received more calls for help than we can handle. We hope to end the year with a decrease of 25 percent or more in the city's murder rate.

The Rev. James Barnett
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