

FORUM

Emotional Evin Cosby defends her father



**Evin
Cosby**
Guest
Columnist

I am the youngest of five. I remember our family trips and moving to NYC just so we could be closer to my father as he worked. From the time he worked in Las Vegas to the Cosby show in NYC, he always wanted us to be close, to be a part of his whole life, at home and on stage.

I felt loved and remembered loving the moments that my parents shared with us by exposing us to all types of people from all walks of life. We grew up appreciating my father's success because we knew the prejudice and racism he endured getting to where he got and how hard he worked for our family.

Because I loved my childhood, I couldn't wait to have a family of my own. I have two amazing

children who love their grandfather. I already work hard as a single mother, with no full-time help, and with a career in fashion design, I am lucky that I have supportive friends that I call family because my children and I need that support.

The public persecution of my dad, my kids' grandfather, and the cruelty of the media and those who speak out branding my father a "rapist" without ever knowing the truth and who shame our family and our friends for defending my dad, makes all of this so much worse for my family and my children.

When people are so quick to cast hate, and make accusations of horrific violence against my dad, they are callous in their carelessness about the harm they are causing to others. I thought when my brother Ennis was murdered, that was the worst nightmare of all time.

It's so hurtful to this day. I try to block out the day he was killed, but that pain has only worsened in these last years. For some

reason, my family's pain has been a trigger for people to seize upon us harder.

On the same day that Ennis was murdered, a woman came out claiming that my father had a "love child." She was arrested for extortion. She was not my father's daughter.

On the day I gave birth to my son, another woman came out, but that case was dismissed too — the district attorney investigated her claims also and didn't press charges.

Two years ago, and over 10 years later, several women came out. Like the woman from 2005, they claimed to have been raped and drugged.

But, like the one from 2005, their stories didn't match up.

Instead of going through the criminal justice system, these stories never got investigated and just got repeated. They have been accepted as the truth. My dad tried to defend himself. His lawyers tried to defend him, but they all got sued.

People were constantly reaching out to me about

why doesn't your dad say something. I kept saying he's trying, but the media is only interested in the stories of the women. Friends of ours tried to help, but the media wouldn't print what they said or knew.

Our friends that spoke up were pressured to shut up. No one wanted to print their supportive words.

We live in a scandalous country where the more sexualized and provocative the story, the more attention it gets. We get all sorts of mixed up messages in our society.

We are told that we have fundamental rights to be innocent until proven guilty. But, if enough people think you are a bad person, you are branded a bad person and the media just reinforces that.

My dad, like anyone in this country, deserves to be treated fairly under the law. My dad broke barriers and raised the conscious of America on important topics, especially for the advancement of women.

On "The Cosby Show" he only depicted women as



Bill Cosby

smart and accomplished.

On "The Cosby Show" and on "A Different World," he took on then taboo subjects like menstrual cycles and rape, and even did a show on AIDS before anyone else would bring it up.

I am his fourth daughter. He raised me to go to college, start my own business, and be my own woman. He is helping me raise my children and teach them family values. I know that my father loves me, loves my sisters and my mother. He loves and respects women.

He is not abusive, violent or a rapist. Sure, like many celebrities tempted by opportunity, he had his affairs, but that was between him and my mother. They have worked through it and moved on, and I am glad they did for them and for our family.

The harsh and hurtful accusations of things that

supposedly happened 40 or 50 years ago, before I was born, in another lifetime, and that have been carelessly repeated as truth without allowing my dad to defend himself and without requiring proof, has punished not just my dad but every one of us.

They have punished the talented people who were still earning money and feeding their families from my dad's shows and work.

I am pleased that finally we are seeing the whole picture and seeing cases and claims dismissed from court. I just hope that those who pre-judged my dad are now willing to admit that they were wrong.

Evin Cosby, Bill Cosby's youngest daughter, writes this unedited commentary as an NNPA Newswire exclusive.

What Black leaders can learn from the O'Reilly debacle



**Julianne
Malveaux**
Guest
Columnist

Former Fox News Channel anchor Bill O'Reilly, the man whose lofty ratings were responsible for the growth of the



O'Reilly

network, is no longer on the air.

Revelations that \$13 million had been paid, either by O'Reilly or the network, to women who said they had been sexually harassed repelled millions, some of whom protested outside Fox headquarters and took to the airwaves with their complaints. But it is unlikely that protests or complaints moved Fox to separate themselves from O'Reilly. Instead, it is most likely that the network severed ties with O'Reilly, because advertisers did not want to be associated with a program anchored by a man who seemed to find nothing wrong with sexual harassment.

More than 52 advertisers pulled ad spots from "The O'Reilly Factor" program, in the wake of "The New York Times" article about the payouts. They included Advil, Mercedes, BMW, Jenny Craig, Hyundai, Allstate, Lexus and H&R Block. The O'Reilly Factor was the highest revenue-generator in cable television, bringing in about \$120 million in the first nine months of 2016. The O'Reilly Factor dominated the 8 p.m. weekday hour, drawing more viewers than any other cable network.

Don't cry for Bill O'Reilly. He is leav-

ing Fox News with "tens of millions of dollars" in a settlement; be concerned, instead, for the women who have had to put up with his odious behavior; be concerned for those who didn't come forward to get paid because they were afraid for their jobs, or because they feared they would not be believed; be concerned for the black woman that O'Reilly allegedly called "Hot Chocolate," grunted when he saw her, and behaved so badly that she was frightened for her safety. Why didn't she leave? She valued her job. She didn't know if she could find another one. An African-American woman who heads a household, on average, has just \$4,400 in liquid assets, compared to \$20,519 for white women. With such a tiny cushion, an African-American woman is likely to think twice before airing a sexual harassment complaint.

African-American women are also less likely to be believed than white women are, at least partly because of the way the world views black women. So, right on, to the sister who called the Fox Hot Line to report that she was being harassed. She,

and many of the other Black women who have protested the culture of sexism at Fox need to have champions that are as vocal as the champions Megyn Kelly and Gretchen Carlson had. Indeed, one might look at the fact that Megyn Kelly pushed Tamron Hall off her perch as the only Black woman anchor at the Today show as evidence of how much more highly valued White women are than Black women.

What did we learn from O'Reilly's ouster, though? We learned that advertisers are controversy-averse. They don't want to be associated with an accused sexual harasser, especially when the accusations are persistent and are backed up with numerous settlements to women who have experienced harassment. Advertisers saw their brands tarnished, and their consumer base angered, by O'Reilly's behavior. Too many of the companies that abandoned O'Reilly's show have increasing numbers of women in senior management, in advertising, and on their boards.

While Roger Ailes, now himself dismissed from Fox for his harassing behavior, described O'Reilly's antics with "Bill will be Bill," increasing numbers of women (and some men) in charge find Bill's behavior, not only odious, but also illegal. Increased sensitivity to issues of sexual harassment helped make it clear that O'Reilly's behavior was simply unacceptable.

What would it take for advertisers to draw the line on racial discrimination and/or discrimination against African-American women? Racial discrimination does not cause the same repugnance that

sex discrimination does. Indeed, companies that engage in widespread race discrimination might even get high fives from consumers who might like to practice racism themselves. The only way that African-Americans could spark an advertiser exodus, on par with what happened to The O'Reilly Factor, would be to either work with partners who would put their feet down strongly, or to boycott the goods and services that a discriminating company provided.

Unfortunately, there are few African-Americans who would emulate those who boycotted busses for 381 days in Montgomery during 1955 and 1956. It seems unlikely that a critical mass of African-Americans would inconvenience themselves to punish a discriminator.

African-American leaders would do well to study the O'Reilly case and to ask what it would take for us to send as strong a signal about race discrimination as the O'Reilly dismissal did about sexual harassment. Many thought O'Reilly was invincible, but he wasn't. Race discrimination isn't invincible, either. We just have to decide what we want to do about it!

Julianne Malveaux is an author, economist and founder of Economic Education. Her podcast, "It's Personal with Dr. J" is available on iTunes. Her latest book "Are We Better Off? Race, Obama and Public Policy" is available to order at www.juliannemalveaux.com at Amazon.com. Follow Dr. Malveaux on Twitter @drjlastword.



**Karen
Bass**
Guest
Columnist

Famine in Africa: Will Trump act?

As you read this, our world stands at a crossroads. As you read this, 20 million people stand at risk of starvation at the hands of what has the potential to become the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II; famine in South Sudan and impending famine in Northeast Nigeria, Somalia, and Yemen.

Our country has a moral responsibility to address this issue head on.

For famine to be declared, two children younger than 5 years old in every 10,000 people have to die due to malnutrition and one in five families have to have insufficient food to sustain themselves. Waiting for famine to be

declared to act means you're already too late.

Famine has already been declared in South Sudan, where hunger is expected to spread to 40 percent of the country's population in the absence of humanitarian aid. The country's man-made famine is a result of violent conflict in vast swaths of the country. Despite promises of access for relief efforts to these areas by the South Sudanese government, humanitarian organizations remain unable to gain access to provide urgent vital assistance in the form of food, water and shelter in many locations.

Somalia, Nigeria, and Yemen are all on the brink of having famine declared. More than half of Somalia's total population of 12.3 million are experiencing acute food insecurity and are on the brink of

death from starvation as a result of drought. Due to conflict with Al-Shabaab terrorists, humanitarian access remains an obstacle in providing the country's 6.2 million people experiencing acute food insecurity with the aid that they desperately need.

In Northeast Nigeria, terrorism by Boko Haram has resulted in widespread displacement and a growing humanitarian crisis. Over 50,000 people in the region are at risk of famine. In addition, counter-insurgency operations against Boko Haram by the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in Adamawa, Yobe and Borno states have led to population displacement, limited access for relief efforts and have prevented farmers from accessing their fields, leading to significantly below-

average harvests.

In Yemen, agriculture production has drastically declined due to conflict, insecurity, high costs, and sporadic availability of agricultural inputs. Two years of escalating conflict have left 18.8 million Yemenis in need of some kind of humanitarian or protection support. Seven million women, children, and men could risk famine in 2017.

In each country, whether it's existing famine in South Sudan or the brink of famine in Somalia, Nigeria, or Yemen, the particularly disastrous characteristic is that these situations are either caused or exacerbated by man-made crisis.

You wouldn't know that this was occurring though — other than a largely lackluster statement about South Sudan

on "Face the Nation" in early April by Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley, the administration has been quiet about the impending disaster in Africa and Yemen. When asked about the implications of the administration's budget proposal, Ambassador Haley called for "smarter spending" when it comes to foreign and humanitarian aid.

Smarter spending is, of course, necessary, but, in the face of the president proposing cuts of nearly 30 percent to foreign aid and diplomacy efforts, it's hard to imagine that the appropriate amount of aid and assistance will be provided to these four countries. At a fundamental level, President Trump's America-first budget would forego international diplomatic leadership and ignore the impending cri-

sis. Foreign aid is an investment, and it makes our country and those overseas fighting for us, dramatically safer. With leadership comes responsibility. Providing aid is a moral imperative.

Despite the lack of coverage in TV media on the issue, we are at a crossroads. Congress has the decision before them to either continue America's legacy in ending famine now, or forgo our diplomatic leadership in the area entirely.

Congresswoman Karen Bass represents California's 37th Congressional District. She is the 2nd Vice President of the Congressional Black Caucus and she co-chairs the CBC's Africa Taskforce.