

Don Lemon is Just Doing his Job! Objectors are Barking Up the Wrong Tree by Cleo Manago



Cleo Manago

In 2010, during a radio interview, former CNN anchor Rick Sanchez, a Latino, called “The Daily Show’s” Jon Stewart a “bigot” and intimated that CNN was “run by Jews.” Swiftly, in response to Jewish outrage about his comments, Sanchez was fired. Former CNN pundit Roland Martin would later be “let go” by CNN because White people who make up close to 100% of gay leadership complained about Mr. Martin and did not like him.

At the moment, many Black people are outraged by comments from CNN anchor Don Lemon. Lemon apparently “sided” with Bill O’Reilly, a known racist and White supremacist, during his typical anti-Black and ill-informed rant about Black people on his talk show. Of course Don Lemon offending Black people will not result in his being fired by CNN. As a matter of fact, Lemon has been featured on other high-profile talk shows to explain himself. Neither Sanchez, nor Martin were afforded these opportunities. That is because White folks like and are comfortable with Lemon. And (right now) what White folks like – Jewish or otherwise – White folks get.

Lemon proved his undying love and loyalty to White people some time ago, particularly when dedicating his memoirs to a White male, after coming out as gay-identifying in 2011. Offending Black people, like murdering a 100% innocent Black child (Trayvon Martin) is not offensive in America or among media bosses. The United States’ media manufactures Black

dismissing, dehumanizing, anti-Black, and White protecting and accommodationist thinking.

Again, this tendency in America directly contributed to Trayvon Martin's cold-blooded murderer being found not guilty. This same thinking occurs and is internalized among Black people too. Without deliberate means, it can be difficult to avoid. It is not a rarity to locate a Black American who sees other Black people through the lens of a White racist. Even among Black people, the widely used term "nigga" came from racist White people.



Cleo Manago,
founder and CEO of
the Black Men's
Xchange

Armstrong Williams, Larry Elders, Rev. Jesse Lee Peters, Clarence Thomas, just to name a few, are often given a platform specifically to low rate Black people. Yet Black people are almost never given a primetime platform to do the opposite. Most of America's systems are designed to be White comfort zones, or to be non-threatening to White people.

Typically, success for Black and Latino people, in corporate America for example, involves if they have the capacity to walk, talk and act in ways that comfort White folks. In America, being Black and actually loving yourself and your community without question is a challenge for many. Yet, having that disposition can get you more rewards, White associates, jobs and approval.

The recent hoopla about Don Lemon's "race" comments divert from the fact that there are few to no Black males in high profile television positions like his, because of White racism and control. What other Black men in Lemon's position (an anchor on a major network) have we heard from at-all regarding

their views of the Black community? None. When was the last time you've heard a high-profile media personality go into any detail, let's say, about the impact of racism and the media on Black people? Never. How many other daily televised Black male anchors have given an analysis of life in Black communities, since the Zimmerman trial (let alone before)? None.

Don Lemon is just doing his job, and was selected as one who would be good at it. And, he is. Lemon is just another ambitious, non-threatening, White accommodationist Black male who gets to be on camera because White CNN executives are comfortable with him.

Complaining about Don Lemon, and not holding his racist bosses accountable, again, you are barking up the wrong tree. Protest racism in America's media. It does much greater damage to Black people than Don Lemon does.

Cleo Manago is founder and CEO of the Black Men's Xchange (BMX) (<http://www.bmxnational.org/>), the nation's oldest and largest community-based movement devoted to promoting healthy self-concept and behavior among diverse males of African-descent.