



What Would Brokaw Do?

BY BILL O'REILLY
Creators Syndicate

Shortly after the terror bombings in Boston last week, two different media people made statements that were alarming to say the least. Two days after the attack, McClatchy reporter Amina Ismail asked White House spokesman Jay Carney: "President Obama said that what happened in Boston was an act of terrorism. Do you consider the U.S. bombing on civilians in Afghanistan ... a form of terrorism?"

As usual, Carney didn't have an answer and referred the reporter to the Department of Defense.

What Carney should have said is this: "Are you kidding me? U.S. policy in Afghanistan is designed to protect civilians, and thousands of our military people have been killed and wounded doing just that. Your question is an insult to them, to this country and to the intelligence of any sane person."

That's what Carney should have said. Four days later, Tom Brokaw appeared on "Meet the Press." The former NBC News anchor has drifted sharply to the left with age, much like Walter Cronkite did. Amazingly, Brokaw equated drone warfare with the Boston bombings.

"I think we also have to examine the use of drones, which the United States is involved in. There are a lot of civilians who are innocently killed in drone attacks in Pakistan, in Afghanistan and in Iraq," he said. "And I can tell you having spent a lot of time over there, young people will come up to me on the streets and say, 'We love America, but if you harm one hair on the head of my sister, I will fight you forever.' And there is this enormous rage against what they see in that part of the world as a presumptuousness of the United States."



Bill O'REILLY

When I heard Brokaw say that, I was stunned. Isn't this the guy who made millions of dollars writing about the glory of "The Greatest Generation" winning World War II? Didn't "the greatest generation" kill millions of civilians in Japan and Germany in order to defeat the atrocious villains those populations supported? I believe they did.

But America is not supposed to defend itself against a different set of atrocious villains who hide among civilians in mountain redoubts? As I said on television: "Would you invade Pakistan, Tom, or just sit back while al-Qaida and the Taliban send more killers our way? It's either-or, Tom — one or the other."

I believe invading Pakistan might cause some civilian casualties.

Brokaw's loopy analysis wants you to believe that "good" Muslims are being alienated by how the USA defends itself in the war on terror. Well, so what? Are the "good" Muslims actively helping the world fight

jihad? Are they, Tom?

And then there's the Boston equation. Drone attacks are designed to kill mass murderers. The Boston Marathon bombing was designed to kill an 8-year-old boy. One of the terrorists put his bomb right at the boy's feet on Boylston Street. Do Ismail and Brokaw not understand that injecting battlefield measures into a civilian terrorist attack situation is inappropriate to say the least?

Apparently, they do not. Everyone makes mistakes. Brokaw just made a huge one. I hope he acknowledges it.

Veteran TV news anchor Bill O'Reilly is host of the Fox News show "The O'Reilly Factor" and author of the book "Pinheads and Patriots: Where You Stand in the Age of Obama."

A Little Humility May Be In Order

BY LEONARD PITTS JR.
Tribune Media Services

This is for the rest of us. Meaning the ones who don't have personal chefs, gift-wrapping rooms or hired sycophants, who don't hobnob or rub shoulders, and who drive the same car every day of the week.

The rest of us would like to offer some of you a little advice:

If you ever find yourself asking, "Do you know who I am?" or any variation thereof, it's a pretty good indicator that you are not, in fact, as famous as your hired sycophants (and your ego) have led you to believe. If it is necessary to call attention to your fame, you may not be all that famous to begin with.

Besides which, doing so is in terrible taste.

Reese Witherspoon, known for her work in films like "Legally Blonde" and "Walk the Line" (for which she won an Academy Award), is the latest celebrity to learn this. She was arrested for disorderly conduct recently after allegedly interfering with a Georgia state trooper, who had pulled over her husband, Hollywood agent Jim Toth, on suspicion of drunk driving.

Authorities say Witherspoon, who has since apologized and pronounced herself "deeply embarrassed," asked the trooper, "Do you know my name?" and announced to him, "You're about to find out who I am. ... You're about to be on national news."

In other words: "Do you know who I am?" — a question that should never be asked by anyone who is not suffering amnesia. And yet, it — or, again, some version of it — is asked often whenever the famous, the near-famous, the used-to-be-famous and the famous in their own minds find themselves colliding with real life.

Do you know who I am? This was, in essence, Gloria James' alleged riposte during a drunken 2011 altercation with a parking valet, though her only claim to fame is that, 29 years ago, she gave birth to LeBron. It is what washed-up NBA star Allen Iverson reportedly spent 20 minutes yelling at a police officer during a 2011 traffic stop in Atlanta. It is said to be what Lindsay Lohan's mother



Leonard PITTS

Dina yelled when she was turned away from a Hollywood nightspot in 2009 for trying to take her then-15-year-old daughter Ali inside. It is, according to police, what the rapper N.O.R.E. screamed as he was punching into a customer a few years ago at a Fatburger in Miami Beach.

Do you know who I am? It might as well be the battle cry of privilege. The rest of us have a complicated relationship with privilege.

We know the rules apply differently to those who possess celebrity. It gets you better seats in restaurants, more attentive service in stores. You don't wait in lines. And if you find yourself in trouble, you may even receive the kind of "justice" O.J. Simpson did in 1995.

No one loses sleep over this. So be it. C'est la vie.

But that forbearance carries an unwritten rule: You may accept these perks, but you may not ostentatiously demand them. To do so is to affront what remains of our egalitarian ideals. From those upon whom we confer celebrity, we expect a little occasional humility in return. If you have none,

at least have the good sense to fake it.

Witherspoon did not.

Do you know who I am? The question reeks of entitlement, condescension and arrogance. It is the bratty inquiry of someone who has believed her own hype, drunk her own Kool-Aid, become lost in her own image.

The lady will weather this, of course. Who could hold a grudge against Reese Witherspoon?

Still, there is a certain satisfaction in seeing her rant answered with handcuffs, in watching humility imposed on someone who needs it. It seems a welcome reminder of egalitarian ideals too often lost in celebrity's flashbulb glare. Witherspoon has enrolled in a pre-trial intervention program. She has a May 22 court date.

Score one for the rest of us.

Leonard Pitts is a columnist for The Miami Herald, 1 Herald Plaza, Miami, Fla., 33132. Readers may contact him via e-mail at lpitts@miamiherald.com.

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OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

Names: Historical Context Should Rule

RAPID CITY JOURNAL (April 21): Times change, and so do attitudes. Recent news stories show how attitudes can change over time.

The South Dakota Board on Geographic Names recently scrubbed offensive names off the maps of the Pine Ridge Reservation — such as "Squaw Humper" — and the board has its eraser ready to remove several West River geographic names that include "Negro."

The board has opened a 45-day comment period to replace the names of "Negro Wool Ridge" and "Negro Canyon" in Custer County, "Negro Hill" and "Negro Gulch" in Lawrence County and "Negro Creek" in Pennington County.

The new names should be based on local history, folklore, events or natural features of the area.

The state geographic board will review the submitted names in June, propose new names for the features and the public will again be asked to submit comments. The U.S. Board of Geographic Names has the final say on accepting the new names.

The state board was tasked with renaming 38 racially charged landmarks in 2001, and it has renamed 20 locations.

There is no question that names like "Squaw Humper" are offensive, and that they were offensive when the geographic features were first named. Of course, the names should go, and we applaud the state geographic board for getting around to it — did it really take the board 12 years to decide what names were most offensive and change them?

We're less certain about the degree of offensiveness of "Negro" in a geographic name. While the word has fallen out of favor today, it's not insulting, although the Associated Press Stylebook says the preferred word is "black" in most usages.

There may have been reasons a century ago for the names the features have, but no one knows what those reasons are today.

Meanwhile, a complaint about a Confederate flag at a historical display at the Veterans Affairs medical center in Hot Springs has led to its temporary removal while the Black Hills Health Care System decides what to do next.

Our recommendation is to consider the historical context of how the flag is displayed to decide whether it is appropriate. Was the flag in the VA display to symbolize slavery or the Confederate states and veterans that participated in the Civil War?

Slavery was wrong, and millions of Union soldiers fought and died to end slavery. Symbols that celebrate slavery — as the Confederate flag is sometimes used — also are wrong.

We doubt that the VA's historic display was to celebrate slavery. As a historical representation of the Confederacy, we see nothing wrong with including the Confederate flag.

What we wouldn't want to see happen is a whitewashing of our history. Reflexively removing all references to the Confederacy also removes references to evil of slavery.

Historical context should rule. As someone more clever than ourselves (George Santayana) once observed: If we cannot remember the past, we are condemned to repeat it.

OUR LETTER POLICY

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TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, April 29, the 119th day of 2013. There are 246 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On April 29, 1913, Swedish-born engineer Gideon Sundback of Hoboken, N.J., received a U.S. patent for a "separable fastener" — later known as the zipper.

On this date: In 1429, Joan of Arc entered the besieged city of Orleans to lead a French victory over the English.

In 1861, the Maryland House of Delegates voted 53-13 against seceding from the Union. In Montgomery, Ala., President Jefferson Davis asked the Confederate Congress for the authority to wage war.

In 1863, newspaper publisher William Randolph Hearst was born in San Francisco.

In 1916, the Easter Rising in Dublin collapsed as Irish nationalists surrendered to British authorities.

In 1945, during World War II, American soldiers liberated the Dachau concentration camp. Adolf Hitler married Eva Braun and designated Adm. Karl Doenitz president.

In 1946, 28 former Japanese officials went on trial in Tokyo as war criminals; seven ended up being sentenced to death.

In 1968, the counterculture musical "Hair" opened on Broadway following limited engagements off-Broadway.

In 1974, President Richard M. Nixon announced he was releasing edited transcripts of some secretly made White House tape recordings related to Watergate.

In 1983, Harold Washington was sworn in as the first black mayor of Chicago.

In 1992, rioting resulting in 55 deaths erupted in Los Angeles after a jury in Simi Valley, Calif., acquitted four Los Angeles police officers of almost all state charges in the videotaped beating of Rodney King.

In 1993, Britain's Queen Elizabeth II announced that for the first time, Buckingham Palace would be opened to tourists to help raise money for repairs at fire-damaged Windsor Castle.

In 2011, Britain's Prince William and Kate Middleton were married in an opulent ceremony at London's Westminster Abbey.

Ten years ago: The Palestinian parliament approved Mahmoud Abbas as prime

minister, clearing the final obstacle to the launch of a U.S.-backed "road map" to peace. Pakistani authorities captured Waleed bin Attash, accused of playing a leading role in the Sept. 11 attacks.

Five years ago: Democratic presidential hopeful Barack Obama angrily denounced his former pastor, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, for what he termed "divisive and destructive" remarks on race. Swiss chemist Albert Hofmann, the discoverer of LSD, died in Burg im Leimental, Switzerland, at age 102.

One year ago: Despite past differences, President Barack Obama and former President Bill Clinton began a summer fundraising blitz with an event in McLean, Va. An out-of-control SUV plunged more than 50 feet off the side of a New York City highway overpass and landed on the grounds of the Bronx Zoo, killing all seven people aboard, including three children.

Today's Birthdays: Poet Rod McKuen is 80. Actor Keith Baxter is 80. Bluesman Otis Rush is 79. Conductor Zubin Mehta is 77. Disgraced financier Bernard Madoff is 75. Pop singer Bob Miranda (The Happenings) is 71. Country singer Duane Allen (The Oak Ridge Boys) is 70. Singer Tommy James is 66. Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., is 63. Movie director Phillip Noyce is 63. Country musician Wayne Secrest (Confederate Railroad) is 63. Comedian Jerry Seinfeld is 59. Actor Leslie Jordan is 58. Actress Kate Mulgrew is 58. Actor Daniel Day-Lewis is 56. Actress Michelle Pfeiffer is 55. Actress Eve Plumb is 55. Rock musician Phil King is 53. Country singer Stephanie Bentley is 50. Actor Vincent Versesca is 47. Singer Carrie Wilson (Wilson Phillips) is 45. Actor Paul Adelstein is 44. Actress Uma Thurman is 43. Tennis player Andre Agassi is 43. Rapper Master P is 43. Actor Darby Stanchfield is 42. Country singer James Bonamy is 41. Gospel/rhythm-and-blues singer Erica Campbell (Mary Mary) is 41. Rock musician Mike Hogan (The Cranberries) is 40. Actor Tyler Labine is 35. Actress-model Taylor Cole is 29. Actor Zane Carney is 28.

Thought for Today: "Human beings are perhaps never more frightening than when they are convinced beyond doubt that they are right." — Sir Laurens van der Post, South African author (1906-1996).

FROM THE BIBLE

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above. James 1:17. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

CONTACT US

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