

## THE LYNCHING OF KELLY TILGHMAN

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by Al Sharpton and the Radioactive Guilt-Rappers

*Hey sounds like a rock group, eh? Note: I want to stress at the outset that referring to Reverend Sharpton as radioactive is only metaphorical and implies no racial stereotyping.*

Well, most of us have heard the news, especially all the golfers, many of whom tune into the Golf Channel (GC) on a regular basis. Kelly Tilghman made remarks about Tiger Woods during a January 4, 2008 PGA Tour Telecast. In response to some joking banter from coanchor Nick Faldo that in order to win, today's young players need to "gang up on" Tiger Woods, Kelly in a similar jocular vein said, "right, like lynch him in the back alley or something." Two days later she apologized to Woods; Mark Steinberg, Woods' agent at IMG, said the incident was not an issue and considered the "case closed."

Still, the GC, reversing an earlier decision to keep her working, went ahead and suspended Kelly for two weeks starting January 9. Prior to the suspension, Al Sharpton spoke to CNN's "Prime News" and advocated that Kelly Tilghman be fired. He wanted to meet with GC executives and convince them to can the respected announcer because her comment was "an insult to all blacks." Those appear to be the facts as we know them today, approximately a week after the comments were made. And the general sense of the golf community comes courtesy the Palm Beach Post golf writer and blogger Craig Dolch: "If Woods doesn't have a problem with it, why should anyone else?"[1]

Kelly Tilghman (37), a former touring golf professional and member of the women's golf team at Duke University, joined the GC when it debuted in 1995. She's served in a variety of roles with the channel, then in 2007, with three-time Master's champion Nick Faldo, she took the microphone to do play-by-play for the PGA Tour. She thus became the first woman to do so full-time in television history. For those of us who have seen her in front of the camera doing GC news and features since the late 90s, we know her as an enthusiastic, knowledgeable interviewer/host. She also projects this highly personable aura of a grown-up tomboy who basically adores men, especially men in sports; she's like the girl next door who's your best friend and will keep you honest in a game of snooker.

Admittedly, I sort of have a crush on Kelly Tilghman: she puts her heart on her sleeve and works her ass off. There's nothing of the plastic smile or constant self-promotion that accompanies so many others in the media; she's down to earth and as authentic a human being as one can be in that world of the many flickering screens. So when I first heard she'd been reprimanded for something, I guessed it was total horse pucky. Then when I saw the clip—by the way, the YouTube video of the incident has been withdrawn due to copyright claims by the GC—I said to myself, "How in the hell can anyone get in trouble for that?"

I should have known. When Al Sharpton stepped right in the pile disparaging Kelly's motives/intentions I thought, "You have absolutely got to be kidding me." Even a pretentious old buffoon like Al would have the good sense to understand the reality of the situation: she didn't find the right word in an voluble moment.

But here's what Reverend Al told that bastion of free thought, CNN:

"Lynching is not murder in general, it's not assault in general. It's a specific racial term that this woman should be held accountable for. What she said is racist. Whether she's a racist... is immaterial. She's a broadcaster. The channel has to be accountable to the public."

Sorry Al, perhaps you have a more up-to-date racially PC dictionary, but my good ol' American Heritage lays it out straight:

*lynch (linch) tr. v. To execute without due process of law, esp. to hang. (Perhaps from lynch law—the punishment of persons suspected of crime without due process of law—named after a man Charles Lynch (1736-1796) who presumably got his jollies from that sort of thing.)*

Thus lynching isn't necessarily committed against blacks; it isn't even necessarily hanging. And if anyone wants to apply the term colloquially then what Sharpton and his National Action Network are doing to Ms. Tilghman is more like lynching than anything Kelly Tilghman has ever said or done. In effect, they're seeking to "execute (i.e. terminate) her without due process"... of logic.

The attempted symbolic lynching of Kelly Tilghman represents yet another sorry spectacle in a long chain of media cave-ins... not to mention another episode of "fear of being honest" among celebrities the media exploits. As to cowardice of the media: simply giving air time to a bunch of bleating demagogues—who treat social paper cuts as mortal wounds of the civic fabric—is to shamefully abdicate its journalistic responsibility to truth and justice.

*Note: I want to stress that suggesting Reverend Sharpton is a demagogue is metaphorical and implies no racial stereotyping.*

As to the celebrities peripheral to the story, consider for example multiple PGA-tournament winner Jim Furyk's comments: "I'm sure Kelly wishes she never said that. I haven't spoken with Tiger, but I've been told they've had their talk and they've discussed it. Anything I say is kind of just like pouring salt in the wound.... Obviously, she would love to not have said that and for it not to be news. I'm glad that her [sic] and Tiger spoke." Talk about fear of being honest! Geez, Jim, let's call a shovel a shovel and tell the world Sharpton and his ilk are sliming your tomboy sister. Show some manhood, for chrissakes.

*Note: I want to stress that the phrase about shovels is only a metaphor and intends no racial stereotyping.*

Tiger could (and should) end all of this by manning up, himself, calling CNN and stating the obvious:

"Kelly Tilghman is my friend, as well as a superb announcer. She has done nothing wrong besides inadvertently picking a word that did not fit her intended meaning. Al Sharpton and others who seek her dismissal from the Golf Channel are out of line. They don't represent me, nor I expect other members of the Tour, nor reasonable people of any ethnic background, anywhere."

That would mean the end of Radioactive Al. None too soon.

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Some related speculation:

The other night I happened to be watching Bill Maher's Real Time on HBO where one of his guests was Tony Snow, a former newspaper columnist and radio-TV commentator for Fox. Snow laid down his mantle as Rupert Murdoch's war propagandist to become President Bush's war propagandist—as press secretary. Snow is one of those corporate-PR and master-debater types who puts a happy face on the most egregious abuses of power; he's a slick pathological liar who can smile and earnestly cite "reliable sources" that the Nazis were only burning leaves in the death camps... or that Bush invaded Iraq because of WMDs. The Pathocracy loves glib shysters like Snow and, as we have seen, brings them inside when they can.

It strikes me Tony Snow and Al Sharpton are two sides of the same deceptive coin of the realm. While Snow and his kind dissemble to enable or whitewash the most outrageous transgressions against humanity, Sharpton and his sort deceive us with contrived outrage to elevate the most trivial actions into high crimes. Both such behaviors, of course, let the actual criminals off scot free. If I didn't know better, I'd say Tony Snow and Al Sharpton have gotten where they are in the social order by pure accident of history and personality, and no one in the Pathocracy would see any value in developing them as assets.

One final thought in the hopes we as a species can figure out the Tony Snows and Al Sharptons of the world... and at least come up with an antidote to the latter:

When an individual calls attention to alleged racial slights that have nothing to do with sticks and stones, i.e. coercion, he does a disservice to social justice. Anyone concerned with racial equality needs to lead or to follow in a cause that treats people as individuals and stresses psychological independence from any sort of collective vice or virtue. Groups are not good or evil, individuals are. Real leaders of minorities in this country are liberty-minded folks like Walter Williams, Shelby Steele, and Thomas Sowell. Sharpton is a bad joke, a barnacle on the ass of progress, and maybe with this Tilghman excess he'll go quietly into the night and make everyone better off, especially black people.

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[1] [http://www.palmbeachpost.com/blogs/content/shared-blogs/palmbeach/golfblog/entries/2008/01/09/tilghmans\\_comment.html](http://www.palmbeachpost.com/blogs/content/shared-blogs/palmbeach/golfblog/entries/2008/01/09/tilghmans_comment.html)

2008 January 14

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