Are They Truly Remorseful Or Are They Merely Protecting Their Paychecks?

June 15, 2011 By Angel Mason

(THE TRACY MORGAN HOMOPHOBIC RANT)

Four years ago, Grey's Anatomy star Isaiah Washington was fired from the hit ABC series after using a homophobic slur during an off-camera altercation with co-star Patrick Dempsey. A few months ago Kobe Bryant hurled a gay slur at Bennie Adams, an NBA referee without conscience or remorse because he wanted to strike an emotional chord that would reverberate through the man's psyche. It was crystal clear that the Laker star meant to hurt the referee in the worse possible way, and that was to assassinate his character publicly and demean his manhood.

Then, almost like a nightmare scene recaptured on instant replay (and unfortunately viewed by millions), Bulls center, Joakim Noah another NBA player catapulted the exact same gay slur at a fan heckling him in the stands with the same intent; calling him the what he surmised was the worst thing any man could ever be called a, "F*@king Faggot!" Noah still succumbed to his homophobic preconditioning even in the aftermath of Kobe's stupid mistake, costing both players collectively over $150,000 in penalty fees, to the dismay of team owners.

Now, even before the dust could settle on the NBA courts from both of these unfortunate incidents, Tracy Morgan, a renowned comedian and actor did what I consider the ultimate, when he said in a monologue performed at a show in Nashville, Tennessee at Ryman Auditorium, that if his son was gay he would "pull out a knife and stab that little [n-----] to death." Additionally, he made other serious inflammatory remarks about lesbian women, claiming all lesbians have "daddy issues" and just hate men.In fact the monologue was so offensive and riddled with such extreme language about gays and lesbians, until people in the audience immediately began to get up and leave during the show. Do you think this discouraged Tracy, oh no, instead, he responded to their disapproval and their exiting the building by stating, "That he didn't care who felt offended by his jokes, because if the gays were brave enough to live their lifestyle, with all it implied, then they should be brave enough to take a joke." Please, someone remind Mr. Morgan that it's these kinds of harmful jokes that result in the suicides of countless LGBT youth annually. In fact these suicides have reached a point of epidemic proportions. Thankfully, there is no video of Morgan making these derogatory comments but there are plenty of eyewitnesses whom have boldly come forth to confirm Morgan's comments, while expressing their outrage and vehement disapproval.

Among other things, Morgan said that gays needed to stop whining about something as insignificant as bullying, and that they should also consider manning up and stop speaking in high pitched voices. Perhaps even more upsetting, the actor/comedian bluntly proclaimed to his listening audience that being

gay was a matter of choice and programming and that "Kids learn it from the media and programming!

Now like Bryant, and Noah, the embattled 30 Rock star, and his publicist are doing everything humanly possible to “erase the hate” and rescue his public persona by crafting a tear-jerking, heart wrenching apology similar to that of Bryant’s and Noah’s. Additionally, Morgan has agreed to meet with parents of the LGBT youth and young adults whom have committed suicide, been seriously hurt and physically abused by homophobic offenders, and teens who have been rejected and/or thrown out by parents because of their sexual preference, as part of his penance.

While it is commendable for anyone to apologize for making a mistake, something that we all are prone to do at some point in our lives, a simple apology does not always mend broken fences or undo the horrific damage done to others. As a student of the Bible I have come to understand that true repentance is not just expressing what appears to be a heartfelt apology, especially when it has to be coaxed out the offender. True repentance is also taking full responsibility for the damage you may have caused to the one injured, adapting a new attitude and new behavior, and even being willing to pay restitution to the victim, if necessary!

You might be thinking to yourself, “Well my God, Angel, he has apologized and he is going to all of these meetings and jumping through hoops to demonstrate his sincere remorse.” This is true, but it is important to note that the meetings were arranged and agreed to, only after Morgan was told that his apology was not sufficient enough to undo his catastrophic actions.

Friends, here is the question that we all need to be asking ourselves: “Would Morgan, Bryant or Noah have come to the realization on their own that they had grossly offended so many people, and possibly placed the lives of countless LGBT youth in jeopardy all over the world, had not organizations like GLAAD, PFLAG, HRC, GLSEN and the ACLU not condemned and reprimanded them publicly for making such statements. Would they have so willingly yielded to the powers that be if the possibility of boycotts and loss of jobs and loss of support or revenue not loomed over their heads?”

All three of these mega-stars have consented to work with Human Rights organizations in various ways and/or to create PSA’s or do some other community service that will paint them in a more positive light. If these things are being done from the heart, then I am somewhat relieved. But if they are done simply because these individuals fear losing their prominence, position and/or lucrative paychecks then, I must call it what it is - a media orchestrated farce.

Simply to say, “I am sorry”, because one fears losing a high paying position which garners them fame and fortune, allowing them to live “the good life” and keeps them in the good graces of the public’s eye, is hypocritical (at best) if the person still harbors deep rooted discrimination, homophobia and hatred in the core of their being.

It is however encouraging that NBC entertainment chairman Bob Greenblatt and 30 Rock star and producer Tina Fey just issued statements reacting to the controversy that’s erupted over Tracy Morgan’s homophobic rant during a Nashville stand-up performance:

“I speak for NBC and myself personally when I say we do not condone hate or violence of any kind and I am pleased to see Tracy Morgan apologizing for recent homophobic remarks in his standup appearance,” Greenblatt said, then added, “We will always recognize an artist’s freedom to express him or herself, but not when reckless things are said no matter what the context. Unfortunately, Tracy’s comments reflect

negatively on both 30 Rock and NBC -- two very all-inclusive and diverse organizations -- and we have made it clear to him that this kind of behavior will not be tolerated."

What impresses me are not the athletes or actors who initiate damage control to save their careers, but the ones who do the damage control to make sure these unfortunate incidents never happen! If anyone is to be commended and praised, it is the NBA athletes like Grant Hill and Jared Dudley of the Phoenix Suns, who have never uttered any of these homophobic slurs and have teamed up with organizations like GLSEN (The Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network), to discourage bullying and homophobia in sports and in our communities.

In the past, there was a time in which black men were oppressed, tortured and marginalized politically, physically, and emotionally by racist people and racist political institutions. Subsequently, in order to psychologically and physically endure and persevere, black men taught and conditioned themselves not to show any kind of weakness. Black men had to portray themselves as being strong as steel and hard as granite! Anything less would be considered "soft", "weak" or "womanish"! Thus began the practice of demeaning and insulting a black man's manhood by the use of homophobic slurs. To be called a" faggot" or any similar slur meant that not only were you a failure as a man, but you were a failure to your race as well!

But Black men have achieved great progress and social freedom presently, even though some argue that Black men still aren't free! In my opinion, Black men will never be free until we realize that true masculine strength is defined as a set of values that recognizes and honors diversity in others which includes sexual expressions as well. Real men possess these traits and are not fearful in expressing them. Furthermore, I strongly believe that Black men will never be free until we purge ourselves of the antiquated psychological and demeaning homophobic mentality which divides us, degrades us, and evokes such pain and anguish in our LGBT youth to the point that many of them are succumbing to suicide.

In the heat of the tragic teen suicides emanating from intolerance of same-gender-loving people in the political and religious arenas, as stated previously, it is becoming fashionable by Hollywood publicists, campaign managers, actors, and renowned athletes to mend fences quickly if they can so that they can survive the onslaught of bad press and keep their bank accounts sufficiently padded. After all, no one wants their client viewed by their constituents or anyone in Hollywood or in the NBA as someone who is openly prejudice or homophobic (even if they are)! But I can assure you of one thing that is true and shall remain true: You might be able to paint over the stripes on a tiger, but deep at the core of that unbridled animal is still a ferocious tiger. A dangerous feline, whom when given the opportunity, will unfailingly roar again, and will unfailingly and viciously bite off a few more heads, all over again in the process, during what they perceive to be --private uncensored moments!

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