

**A WVIP Commentary**  
**By William O'Shaughnessy**  
**May 8 2017**

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Some have called it a “firing,” others a “resignation” and Politico elegantly and accurately referred to his downfall as a “defenestration,” which means an assassination by act of throwing someone out a window or in more polite discourse: “dismissing someone from a position of power.”

We'd call it a “lynching.” Granted that leverage may now be The New American Way. But the O'Reilly ouster also reeks of Censorship by organized corporate intimidation.

“The old order shatters. We slayed the dragon. Never forget this is what we're capable of” bragged Lisa Bloom, attorney for a woman who launched a sexual harassment allegation.

“He was a mouthpiece for Trump ... and we got him” said another attacker, a U.S. congresswoman!

Marc E. Kasowitz, an O'Reilly lawyer properly called it: “A brutal campaign of character assassination unprecedented in post-McCarthy America. The smear campaign is being orchestrated by far-left organizations bent on destroying O'Reilly for political and financial reasons.” Bingo.

The Murdochs, pere et fils, brought in Paul, Weiss, Rifkin, Wharton and Garrison to “investigate and report.” But the atmosphere at white-shoe law firms is altogether different from a television network where sharks swim and poseurs parade – behind and in front of the camera.

We can't shake the notion that ultimately this is a Free Speech issue, although my friend Judge

Jeffrey Bernbach cautions: "Sexual harassment is illegal. That's not free speech."

But who is to blame for the atmosphere, the milieu, the culture where most of the on camera stars display pulchritude, low cut décolletage and display fine legs abetted by rising hemlines.

Most performers on TV these days are talking air-heads who if the teleprompter froze ... would also instantly become immobile. Most are not serious journalists.

There is something in the jargon of the law profession known as a BFOQ (Bona Fide Occupational Qualification) which means a woman or man can be hired and retained by a television network if they are comely or attractive. Thus there is no question that women performers in this field are looking to get "noticed."

Those prowling the corridors and posing in front of the cameras in this day and age are not exactly Mother Therasas. Or Janet Renos. Nor are they naive.

When you look at some of O'Reilly's female accusers and detractors, one wonders just Who is the Real Predator?

Bill O'Reilly is a performer, a social commentator no different than Howard Stern or Don Imus or Rush Limbaugh all of whom we defended when the roof fell in.

He was clearly done in by pressure groups and hostile public relations campaigns eagerly embraced by his envious competitors in the public press.

Although there appeared to be multiple allegations of mis-conduct, there are no reports that O'Reilly ever touched anybody. He just said stuff. Another interesting player in all this is Megyn Kelly who turned on O'Reilly to facilitate her own highly orchestrated and well-publicized exit and she has been called "That cyborg-like individual who wants to be the next Oprah" by the marvelous, contrarian commentator Michael "Lionel" Lebron.

Suspicion exists abroad in the land that O'Reilly was accused by women who would do anything to get ahead in the Fox News milieu. But quality, educated, well brought-up women know how to handle and deflect offensive moves and untoward and awkward, even predacious compliments in most workplaces or social situations, which is not to say vulgar behavior is acceptable.

On the current Fox on-air roster of comely females is one Jeanine Pirro, well-known to all of us and her neighbors here in Westchester. Few of her Fox female colleagues can match Her Honor Judge Jeanine in displaying pulchritude. And, as her former colleagues on the Westchester bench will readily – and admiringly – confirm: she can also swear like a trooper through those puffed-up, reconstructed lips. Certainly none wear shorter skirts. But could you see any guy taking a verbal shot at “Judge Jeanine.” At their own peril. Forget about it!

In the O'Reilly Affair, the allegations against him did not seem to involve violent or even “non-consensual” physical activity.

Example, the New York Times cited this juicy vignette and ribald conversation: “O'Reilly stepped aside and let her off the elevator first (like a gentleman) and said: “Lookin’ good, gal!” How altogether terrible! How insulting! How abusive! How sexist! How ribald! How injurious! How disgusting!

Many/most of the cant-filled attacks on O'Reilly were dripping with hypocritical or sanctimonious blather. The commentator Lionel also said this week: “This isn’t about sexual harassment. This is about sponsors and money.” We agree that the fault also resides among many holier-than-thou (spineless) sponsors who abandoned O'Reilly and collapsed in the face of organized, politically-correct pressure fueled by envy and by contrary political (anti-Trump) views. That, we’re afraid, is really what’s behind this contretemps. And everyone knows it.

Despite any “findings” of the mighty Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton and Garrison white-shoe law firm, O'Reilly should not have been fired or denied his podium.

To be sure, in this whole dreary matter, we’re confronted by a civility issue which is valid, necessary and altogether appropriate, even in a charged-up, behind-the-scenes office setting

populated by bimbos – male and female – lacking in any solid journalistic credentials.

The organized opposition to O'Reilly – and thus to FOX News – and ultimately to President Trump – have, for the most part, used salacious accusations as weapons to knock him off the air and further drive their own agenda.

There are thousands of show biz types and feminist lawyers just waiting to cash in on sexual discrimination and sexual harassment suits. But much of this resembles a witch hunt replete with character assassination. Among which was a 10-year-old allegation from an anonymous individual ... part of a campaign orchestrated by activist lawyers and Trump haters to destroy O'Reilly.

I've discovered, just this morning, a humorless woman named Letitia James, the "Public Advocate" for New York City, who took to the MSNBC airwaves to attack Bill O'Reilly in harsh, unforgiving tones and a voice dripping with venom that even made Andrea Mitchell and some of her other guests uncomfortable. I'd love to see a debate between this Letitia James and Elizabeth Warren.

Judge Bernbach doesn't see this as a Free Speech issue. But censorship from corporate intimidation in the face of politically-driven economic boycotts is just as dangerous as the stifling of creative and artistic expression by government fiat, decree, sanction or regulation.

That's just as treacherous as any racism, misogyny, sexism or bigotry.

We agree with the President of the United States: "He should not have "resigned." He did nothing wrong."

We agree and we also wonder if some of Bill O'Reilly's opponents aren't kith and kin to the mob that ganged up on our protégé and former colleague William "Billy" Bush.

*William O'Shaughnessy, a former president of the New York State Broadcasters Association, was chairman of Public Affairs for the National Association of Broadcasters in Washington. He has been a point man and advocate for the broadcasters of America on First Amendment and Free Speech issues and is presently chairman of the Guardian Fund of the Broadcasters Foundation of America, the national charitable organization. He is also a longtime director and member of the Executive Committee of the Foundation. He has operated WVOX and WVIP, two of the last independent stations in the New York area, for over 60 years as president and editorial director.*

*He is the author of "AirWAVES" (1999) ... "It All Comes Back to Me Now" (2001) ... "More Riffs, Rants and Raves" (2004) ... and "VOX POPULI: The O'Shaughnessy Files," released in January, 2011. He has also written "Mario Cuomo: Remembrances of a Remarkable Man," a tribute to his late friend Governor Mario M. Cuomo. His newest book RADIOactive for Fordham University Press, another anthology with interviews, commentaries, speeches and tributes was published in 2019. He is presently working on Townies, a paean to those without wealth, influence or high estate in suburban Westchester County, the heart of the Eastern Establishment.*