

Take Political Action

April 11, 2008

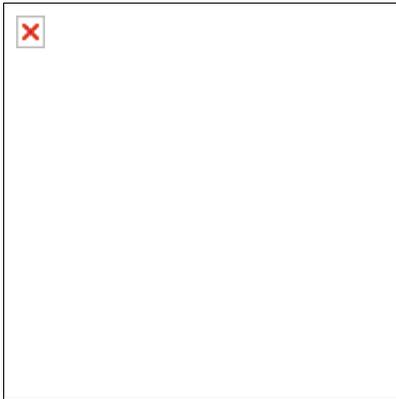
Tavis Smiley Quits Tom Joyner Show

April 11, 2008

Activist Said to Be Hurt by "Hate" Over Obama Stance

By Richard Prince

After 12 years as a fixture on radio's syndicated "**Tom Joyner** Morning Show," activist, commentator and broadcast personality **Tavis Smiley**  has quit the show, Joyner told listeners  on Friday.



Tavis Smiley

"He called me yesterday and said, 'I quit,'" Joyner said on the air.

Joyner said Smiley told him he was working on too many projects, but believed the real reason was that "he can't take the hate.

"He can't take the hate he's taken over **Barack Obama**. He's always busting Barack Obama's chops. They call. They e-mail. They joke. You know Tavis like I do. He needs to feel loved.

"We're so emotional about this Barack Obama candidacy. If you don't say anything for Barack Obama, you're considered to be a hater. . . . It's just that it hurts so deep when the people you love don't agree with you.

"He loves black America and black America has been very critical of him," Joyner said of Smiley. "It hurts. It hurt me to hear black Americans criticize him."

Joyner said Smiley's resignation was not effective immediately, but Joyner considered it to be so. "I asked him to reconsider," Joyner said, and although Smiley agreed to do so, "he had pretty much made up his mind."

Late Friday, Smiley issued a statement saying "it is my intention to take on the issues of the day in my commentary twice every week with the same energy, passion and commitment until the end of June." (See next item).

Smiley had been critical of Obama for not attending Smiley's annual "State of the Black Union" symposium on Feb. 23. Of the presidential candidates, only Sen. **Hillary Clinton** accepted the invitation. Obama said he would send his wife, **Michelle**, but Smiley insisted that was not good enough.

"I'm catching hell," Smiley acknowledged  in an interview then with **Michael H. Cottman** of BlackAmericaWeb.com.

"Who Died and Made Tavis King?" asked a headline on theRoot.com over a [column](#) by **Melissa Harris-Lacewell**. "Does Tavis realize that Obama is trying to win an election?"

Not only have Joyner and Smiley been friends and allies, but Smiley's twice-weekly commentaries brought political analysis to the Joyner program, which also serves up music and comedy.

Joyner's "decision in 1996, to hire former Black Entertainment Television host Tavis Smiley to provide daily political commentary on The Tom Joyner Morning Show, was pivotal in raising political activism and awareness among blacks via the airwaves," **Chandra R. Thomas** wrote on Time.com last Saturday, in a [story](#) called "How Black Radio Found Its Voice."

Joyner urged listeners to call or e-mail Smiley or even their friend, professor **Cornel West**, who has been a part of Smiley's forums. "I think we should all let him know that black America still loves him."

Smiley addressed the controversy in a Feb. 14 [commentary](#) on the Joyner show, but it apparently failed to persuade listeners.

Among the projects Smiley is working on are a documentary, a bus tour and a book publishing company. But Joyner said both he and Smiley have always been multi-taskers.

Joyner asked one of the show's comedians, **Huggie Lowdown**, to make Smiley the "'Bama of the Week" for resigning.

Smiley: I'm Not Leaving the Joyner Show Until June

Tavis Smiley issued this statement late Friday:

There is no way to put into words the love and respect that Tom Joyner and I have for each other, or the love affair that I've had with TJMS listeners for almost 12 years now.

Due to the overwhelming amount of phone calls and e-mails I have received from listeners and other media, I wanted to briefly clarify a few issues that I will address more fully in my regular TJMS commentary on Tuesday morning, April 15, at 8:20 a.m. ET.

I did not "quit" the **Tom Joyner** Morning Show effective immediately. In July I will celebrate my 12th anniversary with the show, and as I discussed with Tom, it is my intention to take on the issues of the day in my commentary twice every week with the same energy, passion and commitment until the end of June.

Contrary to what has been suggested, I have decided to clear some things off my plate so that I can devote my time and attention to some exciting and empowering projects that The Smiley Group, Inc. and other divisions of my company have underway this summer, this fall and beyond.

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Tavis Smiley are Kwanza Kunjufu are FAKE. We as a race need to stop downing our own whom have excelled and have placed themselves in a position to not only talk about change but MAKE change. Tavis is an intelligent brother and I have gotten a lot of good food for the soul from him in the past as far as his political knowledge, but come on take the bib off. We are in trying times and this is not the time to show discord among our race. Our problem is we want so much to be the center of attention.

Michelle Obama was very suitable but as we know Tavis has to be the man and if Barack is not there he has issue. Kunjufu talks a good game but I have personal experience with him and he is not going to help anyone if he does not benefit. These brothers get on air and in public and portray that they care. If you do show it. Support Obama Tavis. Kwanza stop talking and start doing!!!!

Posted by: Seldom Seen | [September 04, 2008 at 11:38 PM](#)

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