



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on June 7, 2013

Al Sharpton: A Lucrative Career Built on Hate and Racial Conflagration

Twenty-five years ago the Tawana Brawley  case enflamed race relations in America and catapulted Al Sharpton into the national limelight. But Sharpton's race demagoguery had begun years before that, and his notoriety as a racial arsonist continues up to the present, as testified by his leadership role in turning the Trayvon Martin shooting into a national racial confrontation.

The Tawana Brawley case is the subject of a short, excellent [new documentary](#) by [Retro Report](#) that expertly combines historic photos, documents, and news footage with recent interviews (including with Al Sharpton himself) along with important perspective on the tactics and sordid record of one of America's most (in)famous agitators and race hucksters. Surprisingly, the [New York Times](#) and [Newsweek/Daily Beast](#), two of the MSM flagships that helped boost Sharpton to prominence and shield him from the consequences of his violent advocacy, have promoted the recent Retro Report exposé of Sharpton. The *Daily Beast* article went further, not only highlighting Sharpton's role in the Brawley affair but also touching upon the "Rev. Al's" incendiary role as both the gasoline and the spark in the Crown Heights riots and the Freddy's Fashion Mart murder/arson tragedy.

Tawana Brawley: Rev Al's Launchpad

In November 1987, Tawana Brawley, a 15-year-old black girl from Wappingers Falls, New York, knew she was in trouble. Although she had been grounded, she had gone out with her older boyfriend anyway and had been gone for four days. She knew from past experience that when she went home she could expect a beating from her mother's live-in boyfriend, a violent ex-con and alcoholic who had served time for murder. To avoid those consequences she concocted a lurid story that ended up being transformed — once Sharpton got ahold of it — into a racially polarizing incident at the national (and then global) level.

Tawana claimed that she had been abducted, raped, and abused by a group of white men, who smeared her with feces and wrote "B****," "KKK," and "N*****" on her clothes and body. If true, this would have been a horrendous crime. But Sharpton turned this hoax of a troubled teen into a malicious cause célèbre to advance his own career. Sharpton and his fellow activists, attorneys C. Vernon Mason and Alton Maddox, turned the case into a three-ring media circus that ran for months in 1988, capturing the top headlines of many of the MSM daily news cycles.

Under Sharpton's tutelage, two of Miss Brawley's four anonymous white men developed names: local police officer Harry Crist, Jr. and local prosecutor Steven Pagones. Not only that, but Sharpton accused Gov. Mario Cuomo and other state officials of covering up the crime. Officer Crist, who, according to testimony of family and friends, was already dealing with despondency over personal issues, committed suicide, very likely pushed over the edge by the onslaught of defamatory accusations and hateful publicity orchestrated by Rev. Al. But Sharpton, ever the audacious opportunist, even exploited the Crist suicide, accusing Pagones of murdering Crist to keep secret their rape of Miss Brawley. As with all



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of his other outrageous charges, he offered no evidence.

A special New York State Grand Jury composed of both white and black members spent seven months examining evidence and hearing from 180 witnesses, including forensic experts. One of the witnesses, a black woman who was a resident of the apartment complex where Tawana Brawley was “found” in a garbage bag, said she had seen Brawley climb into the bag. Forensic experts said there was no evidence of rape and the evidence overwhelmingly indicated that the alleged abuses were self-inflicted. While the Grand Jury was conducting its investigation, Sharpton & Co. were conducting daily rallies and marches, as well as busing in demonstrators to lay siege to the Grand Jury and milk the MSM press corps for as much publicity as they could get. The Grand Jury released its [170-page report](#) in October 1988. In its conclusion, after summarizing the key evidence, the Grand Jury stated:

Based upon all of the evidence that has been presented to the Grand Jury, we conclude that Tawana Brawley was not the victim of a forcible sexual assault by multiple assailants over a four-day period. There is no evidence that any sexual assault occurred.

(The conclusion of the Grand Jury can be read [here](#).)

The Grand Jury also exonerated prosecutor Steven Pagones, who later was awarded \$345,000 in a defamation lawsuit against Sharpton, Maddox, and Mason.

Sharpton: Brawley Case Will Make Us “the Biggest N***s in New York”**

However, even several months before the Grand Jury issued its report, one of Sharpton’s top aides revealed Sharpton’s mercenary motive. Perry McKinnon, a decorated black Vietnam vet and former police officer, told federal investigators that Rev. Al had admitted privately that he didn’t believe Tawana Brawley’s story, but intended to ride it to fame and glory. McKinnon [stated](#):

Sharpton acknowledged to me early on that “The Brawley story do (sic) sound like bull****, but it don’t matter. We’re building a movement. This is the perfect issue. Because you’ve got whites on blacks. That’s an easy way to stir up all the deprived people, who would want to believe and who would believe — and all [you’ve] got to do is convince them — that all white people are bad. Then you’ve got a movement.... It don’t matter whether any whites did it or not. Something happened to her ... even if Tawana don’t (sic) it to herself.”

Perry McKinnon submitted to a lie detector test administered on camera and passed all questions. In the Retro Report video, McKinnon further remarked, on camera:

This whole situation is not about Tawana Brawley. It’s about Mason, Maddox, and Sharpton taking over the town. Their exact words were, “We beat this, we will be the biggest N***** in New York.”

Tellingly, when Sharpton is confronted with McKinnon’s accusations, he doesn’t deny them. In his interview with Retro Report, Sharpton utilizes his standard evasiveness and weasel-worded response. He refuses to apologize, admit that he was wrong, or concede that Brawley was lying. He resorts to his standard line that “*something happened*,” as if that absolves him of all the unethical and criminal activities he and his team employed. “Whatever happened, you’re dealing with a minor who was missing for four days, so it’s clear that something wrong happened,” Sharpton says. He goes on in a pathetic attempt to cloak his activities in righteousness, declaring: “Even if you think I was wrong on some cases, don’t act like I wasn’t geared towards social justice.”

Yes, no matter how wrong, corrupt, dishonest, or criminal his tactics, they can all be rationalized as acceptable, or even good, because they are employed in the pursuit of Rev. Al’s warped definition of



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“social justice.”

As Sharpton predicted, the Brawley hoax did indeed catapult him to new levels of fame and political power, even though it should have landed him in jail and forever exposed him as a malicious charlatan. The Tawana Brawley hoax cost New York taxpayers over a million dollars, but the far greater cost in terms of poisoning black-white race relations is incalculable.

Serial racial arsonist, liar, demagogue, media celebrity

Even before the Tawana Brawley case had made him a household name, Sharpton had established himself as a racist demagogue. An in-depth, 49-page report by Carl F. Horowitz entitled [Mainstreaming Demagoguery: Al Sharpton's Rise to Respectability](#) (published by the [National Legal and Policy Center](#)) traces Rev. Al's sordid career as an incendiary race baiter and race hater from the famous 1984 Bernard Goetz “Subway Vigilante” shooting, through the Howard Beach conflict (1986), the Tawana Brawley hoax (1987-88), the Central Park “Wilding” rape case (1989), the Bensonhurst siege (1989-90), the Crown Heights riots and Rosenbaum murder (1991), the Freddy's Fashion Mart murder/arson tragedy (1995), the Amadou Diallo shooting (1999), and much more.

Rev. Sharpton's sordid career also has been ably summarized by John Perazzo in [“The Nine Lives of Al Sharpton”](#) for FrontPageMag.com.

Sharpton's role in the vicious racist campaign against Jewish storeowner Fred Harari, owner of Freddy's Fashion Mart in Harlem, that resulted in the murder of seven people, should have spelled curtains for the hate-spewing “reverend.” Sharpton and Morris Powell, a lieutenant in Sharpton's National Action Network (NAN), organized an ongoing street demonstration against Freddy's, with escalating rhetoric that culminated in a shooting rampage by one of Sharpton's followers, Roland J. Smith, aka Abubunde Mulocko, who burst into the store and shot four people, torched the shop, and then shot himself. Three others died in the fire. In all, eight people, including Smith/Mulocko, died. Sharpton immediately tried to distance himself from the deadly debacle, insisting he had nothing to do with it. However, it was Sharpton and Powell who launched the incendiary boycott and demonstrations against Freddy's, and Sharpton's man Powell who daily stoked the rallies with vitriolic denunciations of the Jewish “crackers.” It was Sharpton who publicly denounced Fred Harari as a “white interloper” and an “outsider,” even though he had been a Harlem merchant for decades. Sharpton turned up the vitriol in his speeches attacking Freddy's in [broadcasts over black radio stations WWRL, WLIB and KISS](#).

What neither the Horowitz or Perazzo exposés mention is that Sharpton's radical racial activities go back much further, to his activities with Communist Party activists and violent revolutionaries and terrorists in the 1970s.

The [KeyWiki website points out](#), for instance, that as far back as 1971 Sharpton was supporting the Communist Party's effort to aid terrorist Angela Davis, who later went on to run twice as the official candidate of the Communist Party USA for vice president of the United States. In 1971 Sharpton endorsed the Communist Party's Free Angela Davis campaign. Moreover, he has worked closely over the years with communists and Marxist-Leninists, and radical racists such as William Kunstler, Sonny Carson, Ben Chavis, Khalid Muhammad, Malik Zulu Shabazz, Ron Kuby, Michael Ratner, Leslie Kagan, and many others.

Why do NBC, MSNBC, Fox promote this Sociopath?

Considering his toxic record and his cartoonish, buffoonish persona, Al Sharpton should be considered a pariah, a leper, whom no politician and no media organization would dare go near or quote. But Rev. Al



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leads a charmed life and serves a purpose for various powers that be; not only has he not paid a price for his despicable actions, he has actually prospered.

In his Daily Beast article cited earlier, Stuart Stevens writes:

There are a lot of angry, twisted individuals in America and Sharpton is hardly alone in having spent decades vomiting hate, leaving innocent victims in his wake. What distinguishes Sharpton is the willingness of powerful people and organizations to look past the hate when they believe it may benefit them.

The Democratic Party and its candidates for president in 2004 were perfectly content to have Sharpton appear in presidential debates. Not one candidate called Sharpton out for his outrageous history of hate.

And today one of the great American news organizations, NBC News, is spending millions of dollars to rehabilitate and promote Al Sharpton. Americans have been pretty good at sniffing out and discarding haters, but here is Al Sharpton on NBC and MSNBC being promoted as a credible source of information. Sharpton has gone from manipulating the news with vile accusations to delivering the news for NBC. When the Boston-bombing story broke, there was Al Sharpton delivering breaking news for MSNBC.

Yes, the man who has set back race relations in America more than David Duke, the KKK, and the Aryan Nations combined, has been rewarded with his own network platform. He can be viewed daily on NBC's [Politics Nation with Al Sharpton](#), where he continues his attacks on conservatives, "white America," Republicans, capitalism, and traditional morality, while promoting Big Government, gun control, homosexual marriage, and other pet hobby horses of the far-left agenda. But NBC is far from being Sharpton's only media gig; he also has a regular [blog on the Huffington Post](#) and has replaced his friend and ally Jessie Jackson as the go-to "black leader" the MSM pundits shower with the most face time.

Fox, O'Reilly, Hannity: What Gives With the Sharpton Lovefest?

If the MSM love affair with Sharpton is reprehensible, the ongoing romance Sharpton enjoys at the Fox network has been doubly so. The top offender at Fox has probably been Bill O'Reilly, who has featured Sharpton as a guest many times, according him a credibility he does not deserve. Moreover, the "tough guy" O'Reilly treats Sharpton with kid gloves, never calling him out on his outrageous antics and never giving him the bully treatment he (O'Reilly) dishes out to conservatives.

Back in 2007, [Accuracy In Media's Cliff Kincaid called O'Reilly](#) out for his support of Sharpton, pointing out that the Fox celebrity anchor was also a featured "special guest" at Sharpton's annual National Action Network conference, along with Democratic presidential candidate Senator John Edwards. That Democrats such as Edwards, Clinton, Obama, Kerry, et al, find it expedient to associate with the likes of Sharpton is at least somewhat understandable, considering that "the party of Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson" long ago gave up any pretense of being shocked at the even the most extreme radical-left political activities or the sexual scandals of its heroes (think Barney Frank, Bill Clinton, Anthony Weiner). But what is it that makes Fox's Bill O'Reilly, Sean Hannity, Mike Huckabee, or politicians such as [Newt Gingrich](#) so chummy with charlatan Sharpton? It's not like Rev. Al's sordid record is any secret. In fact, regular Fox commentator Michelle Malkin has repeatedly exposed Sharpton over the years (see [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)).

Stuart Stevens concluded his *Daily Beast* column with this common-sense recommendation:



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Here's a simple test that doesn't involve market research or complicated board meetings. If you are an NBC exec and have kids, sit down with them and watch the Times documentary on Tawana Brawley. And when your kids ask why your colleague Al Sharpton is working for NBC, you can explain to them why everything you've tried to teach them about honesty, fair play, and decency is wrong and Al Sharpton is right.

Sound advice not only for NBC, but also CNN, ABC, CBS, PBS, FOX, and all the other MSM organizations that regularly give Sharpton a platform for his hate mongering and racial agitation.

Photo of Al Sharpton: AP Images

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