

OPINION

Yes, Families come in all Types

When women use donors for motherhood

BY TAMAR ABRAMS

You know things aren't going well when your life story turns into romantic comedies. I guess it beats tragedies, but still...



Two of this summer's hottest films, "The Kids Are Alright" and "The Switch," involve women who use donor insemination to become pregnant. In one case, it's to help lesbians, played by Annette Bening and Julianne Moore, have children. In the other, it's a single woman. Jennifer Aniston, who in real life is over 40, unmarried, childless, and subjected to endless tabloid fixation on both counts, stars in that one.

Eighteen years ago, I used an anonymous donor to become pregnant with my daughter.

Back in the early 1990s, this topic was hardly fodder for hit films. Sure, there was a brief

exchange between then-Vice President Dan Quayle and a fictional TV character named Murphy Brown who gave birth (no mention of a father) as a single mom. He took the fictional character to task, but this was a man who famously spelled potato with an "e" on the end so it blew over pretty quickly.

Months later, I gave birth to a perfect baby girl who was destined to grow up without a father. It wasn't Plan A, believe me. But a long-time relationship had ended and I thought that at 34 my chances of getting pregnant were quickly growing dimmer. "Baby first, husband later," I recall thinking at the time.

It wasn't out of lack of respect for the role of fathers. In fact, my 81-year-old dad is still a vital part of my daughter's life and mine too. It wasn't even that I particularly wanted to do it on my own. It was more about circumstances and timing. And I made sure that my child was surrounded by loving, caring friends and family including quite a few men. My child

is now starting her senior year of high school.

How did it all work out? Well, she certainly isn't a man-hating, truant, pregnant juvenile delinquent. In fact, she has a 4.3 GPA, is a member of the National Honor Society, has had a great boyfriend for the past year, and is popular and sunny. In fact, her

She has liked that. But she has also said that she wouldn't be who she is today if she had a father. And she likes who she is today. So do I.

Bill O'Reilly was clearly cruising for a fight when he recently slammed Jennifer Aniston for appearing in a movie that he claims tells "12-year-olds and 13-year-

fatherly instincts), but for those who've not yet found their Bill O'Reilly, I'm just glad science has provided a few other options."

Thank you, Jennifer. The truth is that families come in all types of formations these days--single moms, single dads, step-parents, two moms, two dads, grandparents raising their grandchildren...The configuration that prevailed when O'Reilly was growing up is still around, even though married mothers are more likely to work outside the home. But the ideal setting for raising young people hasn't changed: Every child should grow up loved and nurtured.

I'm OK with moviegoers laughing about sperm donors. All I know is that a decision that I made 18 years ago has produced an amazing, resilient, and gorgeous child on the brink of womanhood who is surely going to make the world a better place. You're welcome.

Tamar Abrams is the communications director of the Institute for Policy Studies.

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fatherlessness may be the least remarkable thing about her.

But, the truth is there were many times over the years when she wished for a father. Once, when she was in grade school, I asked what she would do if she had one. "Call him Daddy," she responded. I have had a long-term relationship and, though we've never married, he has stood in for a dad on several occasions.

olds that, 'Hey you don't need a guy. You don't need a dad.'

Luckily, she's smart enough to deliver a message that might just shut him up. "Of course, the ideal scenario for parenting is obviously two parents of a mature age," Aniston told People. "Parenting is one of the hardest jobs on earth. And, of course, many women dream of finding Prince Charming (with

Clueless Commentator with a Microphone

A brazen insult by Dr. Laura

BY MARC H. MORIAL

Here we go again. One more time, a clueless commentator with a microphone and an audience of millions, has brazenly insulted Black America and reacted as if we were the perpetrators.



The latest incident involves Dr. Laura Schlessinger, the host of the Dr. Laura radio show. On Aug. 10, Dr. Laura made racially insensitive statements and repeatedly used the "n-word" in responding to Jade, a black woman caller, who complained that her white husband's friends and relatives use racial slurs and make racially demeaning comments in front of her.

Instead of offering helpful advice, Dr. Laura scoffed, "some people are hypersensitive." She noted that "black guys" use the n-word "all the time," and repeated the word 11 times during the call for emphasis.

But her most revealing comment was, "I don't get it. If anybody without enough melanin says it, it's a horrible thing, but when black people say it, it's affectionate. It's very confusing."

As she admitted, Dr. Schlessinger most emphatically doesn't get it and she is very confused about what constitutes racism. It is beyond comprehension that she would consider Jade "hypersensitive" for being offended by the n-word.

Dr. Schlessinger's comments, which can be heard in their entirety at mediamatters.org/blog/201008120045, created a national uproar.

Millions of people of all races were offended by her insensitive and highly offensive on-air rant. Her resignation on Aug. 18 came just five days after the National Urban League urged the Talk Radio Network to drop the Dr. Laura Show from syndication; and it demonstrates the impact people of good conscience can have when they speak out against intolerance.

Several days after the incident, Dr. Schlessinger did issue a written apology which said in part, "I was attempting to make a philosophical point, and I articulated the 'n' word all the way out - more than one time. And that was wrong. I'll say it again - that was wrong."

That is an understatement. We cannot help but wonder, as did Nita Hanson (Jade's real name), how Dr. Schlessinger, who grew up during the height of the civil rights movement, and who once was a practicing marriage and family counselor, could not understand how hurtful the n-word is to most Americans.

It is also disturbing that former vice presidential candidate, Sara Palin would publicly say to Dr. Schlessinger, "Don't retreat...reload." That kind of pandering to the basest element of the American electorate is highly offensive, inflammatory and counterproductive.

Dr. Schlessinger claims she resigned to "regain her Constitutional right to free speech." That is ludicrous on its face. Nobody has pre-

vented her or her supporters from speaking their minds. But nobody is also preventing the public from reacting. It should be noted that following her remarks, several of her affiliates and major sponsors dropped her show. That was their Constitutional right.

As the nation works toward ra-

cial reconciliation and a celebration of diversity, we find it necessary to make it clear once again that this kind of divisiveness and casual use of racial slurs have no place among the public discourse.

Marc H. Morial is president and chief executive officer of the National Urban League.

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