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Pacific NW News
World News
Opinions
Jobs, Bids
Entertainment
Community Calendar

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Opinion

Despite Unequal Treatment, Black Women Will Rise

Many women's organizations commemorate Equal Pay Day, which this year was April 5. It meant that women, in general, would have had to work all of 2016, and until April 5, 2017, to earn the same amount of money that a White man earned in 2016. Few will recognize July 31, 2017, the day that the pay for African American women catch up to the 2016 earnings of White men — seven extra months. Hispanic women will have to work until October, or nearly 10 extra months, to earn the same money White men earned last year.

I wonder about our "women's coalitions" when majority women's organizations, like the National Organization for Women, are basically silent on Black Women's Equal Pay Day. I wonder how much Black women's issues really matter to majority women's organizations. It matters when they want to present a multiracial, multicultural "united front" at a Women's March, but less so at other times.

The lesson, Black women, is a lesson some sisters remember from 1991, when Anita Hill testified during the Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings. People had all kind of explanations for Hill's testimony, most of them woefully wrong and viewed



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through a lens, darkly. Led by feminists Elsa Barkley Brown, Deborah King and Barbara Ransby, more than 1500 women raised enough money to pay for an ad in the *New York Times* on November 17, 1991. The ad, titled "African American Women in Defense of Ourselves" (AAWIDO), reminded Black women that no one should speak for us, except us. No one can be relied on to defend us, except us. And no one can be depended on to celebrate us, but us. No one can lead advocacy for our equal pay, but us.

I'm not dismissing our allies — "woke" men of color, especially Black men, "woke" White women and other women of color — I'm just saying we can't count on everybody to be woke. Evidence: How much noise did majority group's make on Black Women's Equal Pay Day?

And in the Reign of Ignorance, there is likely to be even less noise, as the House Appropriations Committee has actually proposed defunding a program that collects salary

data from employers. Without the data, we won't know the extent of pay discrimination. We know plenty now. We know that Black women earn 63 cents for every dollar paid to White men; White women earn 80 cents for every dollar White men make. We know that Black women in Louisiana earn the least com-

“No one can be relied on to defend us, except us

pared to White men, about 48 cents on the dollar. In comparison, Black women in Missouri, Tennessee, Maryland and Pennsylvania earn 68 cents for every dollar a White man earns. Whatever we earn, it ain't equal.

Under President Barack Obama, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission established requirements to provide pay transparency. Businesses with more than 100 employees were required to start releasing salary data in March 2018. And now, the Republican Congress says that no resources may be used to collect this very necessary data. It reminds me of the old folks who used to say, "you don't miss what you can't measure." But we can measure the

pay inequity, and we can see it in the quality of women's lives. We might not be able to point a finger at one company or another (Republicans are also likely to make class action lawsuits more challenging), but we have enough aggregate data to know that there is pervasive gender discrimination in the workplace, and that Black women shoulder an extra burden.

Not only do African American women earn less, but we also catch more shade because of our skin color, because of who we are and what we represent.

Former First Lady Michelle Obama has spoken out, though very gently, about the racism she experienced while in office. At a recent gathering in Colorado, she spoke about the many "cuts" she experienced, and told *The Denver Post* that "The shards that cut me the deepest were the ones that intended to cut," referring to comments about her looks, and especially those that referred to her as "an ape." She said she was dismayed in "knowing that after eight years of working really hard for this country, there are still people who won't see me for what I am because of my skin color."

Read the rest of this commentary at
TheSkanner.com

Trump's Circus in the White House Continues

In only six months in the White House, the Trump Administration has delivered the shortest tenure of any White House Chief of Staff in United States history (189 days) and the shortest tenure for a White House Communications Director (10 days). President Trump's former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn, holds the record for the shortest tenure of any National Security Advisor in U.S. history (24 days).

On July 21, Anthony Scaramucci made his debut as the new White House Communications Director in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. It was a smooth-talking, personality-driven press conference; Scaramucci showed all the signs that he was ready for prime time as newly-appointed White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders stood nearby. The political commentator and capital management executive took question after question and many political observers called Scaramucci Trump's "Mini Me."

The conservative *New York Post* ran a cover that depicted the jungle-set reality TV show "Survivor" featuring several current White House employees including Counselor to President Trump Kellyanne



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Columnist

Conway; then-Chief of Staff Reince Priebus; senior advisor to President Trump Jared Kushner; and then-White House Communication Director Anthony Scaramucci.

“Trump's skills as an alleged master of negotiation are yet to be seen during his time in the White House

It turns out the cover was extremely well timed.

On July 26, Scaramucci went on a profanity-laced tirade during a phone call with Ryan Lizza, a Washington correspondent for *The New Yorker* magazine; the investment banker-turned White House insider threatened "to fire the entire White House communications staff" and called Priebus "a f---ing paranoid

schizophrenic, a paranoid."

Priebus resigned on July 28. On Monday, July 31 Scaramucci was gone, too, even though his first official day would have been August 15.

CNN.com reported that, "Scaramucci is the third White House communications director to leave the post that had been vacant since late May, when Mike Dubke left after about three months on the job. Sean Spicer, the former White House press secretary, also assumed some of the communications director role before he resigned when Scaramucci was hired July 21."

The article continued: "In addition to Priebus, Katie Walsh, the former White House deputy chief of staff, left the administration in March, and Michael Short, an assistant press secretary, resigned earlier this month when it became clear Scaramucci was going to fire him."

The revolving staff door in Trump's immediate orbit could not be consoling to anyone hoping that his administration, nearly 200 days into the job, would achieve some sense of stability. The Trump staff rollercoaster can't be calming to foreign leaders, either, who have relied on the U.S. for decades.

The staff shakeups fly in

the face of one of President Trump's biggest claims of his 2016 presidential campaign: That he was an incredibly successful, billionaire real estate mogul driven by "The Art of the Deal." Trump's skills as an alleged master of negotiation are yet to be seen during his time in the White House.

Trump's biggest and most embarrassing legislative failure, to date, occurred on July 27 after the Senate failed to vote on a partial repeal of the Affordable Care Act. The vote failed after Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.) walked in through a Senate lobby and at the front of the chamber, as other senators and congressional staffers milled about, lifted his hand and quickly pointed his thumb down. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) looked on in dismay.

Republicans control the U.S. House of Representatives, the U.S. Senate and White House, but with Trump's combustible managerial style, it feels as if Republicans are in control of nothing.

Now that President Trump has named retired four-star Marine General John Kelly as his new Chief of Staff, the beleaguered reality TV star will have yet another shot at trying to run the country with some semblance of order.