



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on October 5, 2011

Political Correctness and Hank Williams, Jr.

When Hank Williams, Jr. (left, performing during a 2006 concert) made a politically incorrect off-the-cuff comment on Fox News' Fox and Friends, he likely did not predict the series of repercussions that would follow. The exchange became the talk of the Internet and video footage of the interview on Fox and Friends went viral. As Williams is the iconic figure who delivers the recognizable "Monday Night Football" jingle, his remark was treated more seriously. In fact, ESPN has decided to pull his opening before Monday's game.



During Williams appearance on Fox and Friends, he discussed with the shows hosts the infamous golf game between House Speaker John Boehner and President Obama. The exchange went as follows:

HANK WILLIAMS: Remember the golf game?

STEVE DOOCY: Boehner?

HANK WILLIAMS: That was one of the biggest political mistakes ever.

CO-HOSTS: Why?

HANK WILLIAMS: That turned a lot of people off. You know, watching, you know, it just didnt go over.

GRETCHEN CARLSON: You mean when John Boehner played golf with President Obama?

HANK WILLIAMS: Oh, yeah! Yeah. And Biden and Kasich, yeah. Uh-huh.

GRETCHEN CARLSON: What did you not like about it? It seems to be a really pivotal moment for you.

HANK WILLIAMS: Come on. Come on. It would be like Hitler playing golf with Netanyahu, OK?

The Blaze reports, After the statement was made, all three Fox hosts looked surprised, if not uncomfortable. Carlson had a visible look of shock on her face, while Brian Kilmeade said, Yeah, I dont understand that analogy, actually.

Immediately following the close of the interview, Fox and Friends host Gretchen Carlson disavowed the comment.

Likewise, ESPN was [quick](#) to react, deciding to pull Williams Monday Night Football intro, and issuing the following statement to explain their decision:

While Hank Williams, Jr. is not an ESPN employee, we recognize that he is closely linked to our company through the open to Monday Night Football. We are extremely disappointed with his comments, and as a result we have decided to pull the open from tonights telecast.

The interview became such a source of controversy that Williams was forced to issue this statement following the cancellation of his Monday Night Football intro performance:



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Some of us have strong opinions and are often misunderstood. My analogy was extreme but it was to make a point. I was simply trying to explain how stupid it seemed to me how ludicrous that pairing was.

Still, Williams was ultimately forced to apologize:

I have always been very passionate about politics and sports and this time it got the best or worst of me. The thought of the leaders of both parties jukin and high five'n on a golf course, while so many families are struggling to get by, simply made me boil over and make a dumb statement, and I am very sorry if it offended anyone.

The entire incident has provoked bloggers and pundits to remark on both the interview and ESPN's extreme reaction to it.

For example, Meredith Jessup, a blogger for *The Blaze*, [wrote](#):

Note the actual comparison going on here: In no way is Williams saying Obama is Hitler, nor saying that the president is even *like* Hitler. In fact, since Williams does not clarify his remarks further, one could claim that Boehner was just as representative of Hitler in the hypothetical scenario.

Instead, the media was quick to (wrongfully) attack Williams for comparing *the ideological rift* between Boehner and Obama to Hitler and Netanyahu.

Most contend that the entire incident is an example of political correctness run amok. Jessup pointed out that it is particularly ironic to see such intolerance for a more conservative viewpoint when one considers the statement made by then-Senator Hillary Clinton in 2008 in defense of political dissent:

Im sick and tired of people who say that if you debate and disagree with this administration, somehow youre not patriotic. We need to stand up and say were Americans, and we have the right to debate and disagree with any administration.

Jessup also noted that during George W. Bush's administration, protesters often waved signs comparing Bush to Hitler. Likewise, there are currently protesters standing on Wall Street comparing bank executives to Hitler, and those protesters have been applauded by those in the liberal media as well as by a Democratic Representative.

Jessup applauded Williams' unwillingness to kowtow to the political correctness mania, remaining steadfast in his convictions: I suspect Williams sees the sheer hypocrisy in the reactions to his comments and, unlike Clinton and others, doesn't feel the need to go around complaining that his patriotism is being impugned.

However, the Anti-Defamation League condemned Williams' comments and praised ESPN for pulling Williams. Are you ready for some football? musical recording, "The Holocaust was a singular event in human history, and it is an insult to the memory of the millions who died as a result of Hitler's plan of mass extermination to compare the Nazi dictator to any American president," said Abraham H. Foxman, ADL national director and a Holocaust survivor, adding:

Hank Williams Jr. should know better. He owes an apology to Holocaust survivors, their families, and the brave American soldiers who gave of themselves to fight the Nazi menace during World War II. The last thing we need is to enter another election cycle on a sour note tainted with inappropriate, tired and over-the-top analogies to the Nazis.



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In response to all the criticism of Williams, conservative pundit Glenn Beck passionately defended him. After airing the Fox and Friends interview on his radio program, Beck observed:

Now what does that mean, exactly? Theyre opposites golfing! Hitler would not golf with Netanyahu, and Netanyahu wouldnt have golfed with Hitler. Why? Because theyre polar opposites! So what hes saying here is, Boehner was supposed to be a polar opposite to Barack Obama, but they get together to play golf. Which makes total sense because thats why he says hes not for any of the GOP, because theyve betrayed, theyre not polar opposites, thats what hes saying here. But no, the geniuses at ABC [which owns ESPN] decide theyre going to pull the "Monday Night Football" theme because apparently you cant say "Hitler." I thought we got over that in the 1960s!

Don Imus also defended Williams on his Fox Business Network program, asserting that the analogy was meant to show dichotomy, not to draw parallels between the individuals referenced.

Even liberal comedian Jon Stewart interjected his own defense of Williams on his popular Comedy Central program, *The Daily Show*. Stewart remarked that Williams comment was merely a mangled metaphor and then took shots at Williams critics: When Williams says something down-home and gritty, thats what hes there for!



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