

Fox News the CBC and the Indictment of 'Dollar Bill' Jefferson

Written by BAR managing editor Bruce Dixon ID3714
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African America - Black Misleadership Class. A Black Agenda Radio commentary by managing editor Bruce Dixon

Both "liberal" Democrats and the far-right Fox News network have used the indictment of Louisiana congressman "Dollar Bill" Jefferson for their own ends. Liberals who couldn't get worked up about the disenfranchisement, dispossession and dispersal of 200,000 black New Orleanians are happily howling for pieces of Jefferson's crooked scalp.

And Fox News has seized the occasion to besmirch and defame its so-called "partners," the Congressional Black Caucus.

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After months of raids, rumors and leaks from Justice Department officials, the indictment of William "Dollar Bill" Jefferson, the congressman from New Orleans was no surprise. According to CBC Monitor, the watchdog organization which rates African American representatives in Congress, Jefferson was at best a career [underachiever](#), and at worst a derelict who consistently failed to represent the political will of black New Orleans.

His self-serving antics during the Katrina disaster were especially memorable.

""Dollar Bill" Jefferson deserves a fair trial, and is innocent till proven guilty. But as a congressman, he was no bargain and won't be missed."

With some of his constituents still stranded on rooftops and while others trying to walk out of the flooded, dying city were being turned back at gunpoint by suburban cops, Jefferson [commande](#)
[ered](#) a National Guard detachment for more than two hours and monopolized a helicopter an hour so he could return to his home in the flood zone and recover his laptop, some luggage and a box of

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important belongings. Like all accused, "Dollar Bill" Jefferson deserves a fair trial, and is innocent till proven guilty. But as a congressman, he was no bargain and won't be missed.

In the wake of the injury Jefferson's disappointing career and current indictment have inflicted on black America, additional insults have flown thick and fast, aimed not just at the hapless congressman, but at all of us, and coming not just from the traditional foes of African American interests, but from our so-called friends and allies. Following the lead of corporate mainstream media, white liberals who never managed to get, let alone stay worked up over the dispersal and permanent exile of 200,000 black New Orleanians are egging each other into a frenzy demanding pieces of Dollar Bill's crooked scalp.

"Caucus members have granted Fox free reign to besmirch and defame them at will."

And of course Fox News, the network chosen by the Congressional Black Caucus to host its 2008 presidential debate marked the Jefferson indictment by spitting directly in the face of the Black Caucus and its dean, the 40 year congressman from Detroit and chair of the House Judiciary committee John Conyers. Fox led off the brief segment announcing the 16 count indictment with a still picture of "Dollar Bill" Jefferson. Then over printed and audio blurbs on the indictment, Fox producers switched to video footage of Rep. Conyers walking across a crowded hearing room past somebody holding a "resign" placard, as though one bald black guy in a business suite were pretty much the same as any other. Fox News later issued a ten second on-air apology, and a response from the office of Rep. Conyers, the second most senior member of the House of Representatives, has been strangely muted.

Thus is revealed the nature of the partnership the Congressional Black Caucus has entered into with Fox News. For a handful of internships to "train" young black reporters its brand of fair and balanced journalism, and a few hundred thousand in campaign and other "donations", Caucus members have granted Fox free reign to besmirch and defame them at will, to indoctrinate the next generation of black journalists, and to distort black America's voice on the national stage during the 2008 presidential election.

In a perverse way, perhaps Fox News is right. It is indeed becoming harder and harder to tell elected black crooks and cowards from those who hold to the original mission of the Black Caucus - to be the authentic voice of Black America and the "conscience of the Congress."

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