



Tony Powell is among many radio personalities operating in the post-Don Imus era.

A year into return, Don Imus different person

NEW YORK (AP) — Don Imus makes no excuses for his offensive remarks about the Rutgers women's basketball team, but says: "I deserved a second chance."

He's 14 months into that second chance, trying to make the most of it. The new "Imus in the Morning" has key differences from the old one in tone and is certainly different visually, with the addition of two comedians who are Black, Karith Foster and Tony Powell.

"What happened is what should have happened," Imus said in an interview. "So much good has come out of what happened. I really do think it's like an alcoholic, which I am, and a drug addict, which I am. You're presented with the unique opportunity to be a better person than you had been. I consider this situation to be analogous to that, almost identical to that."

Imus, 68, works now for the ABC Radio Networks and rural RFD-TV after being fired by CBS Radio and MSNBC in spring 2007 for referring to the Rutgers women as "nappy-headed hos."

His show has the same mixture of interviews and cantankerous commentary on what he calls the "freak show," the world of politics and media. Imus will still call someone an idiot — some guests consider it a rite of passage — and he and his cast ride each other mercilessly.

Although NBC News cut him loose, both top NBC anchor Brian Williams and chief White House correspondent Chuck Todd appeared on Imus' show during the past two weeks. The hard-edged, ethnically based humor is largely gone; Imus said he had felt pressure from his old bosses to be more shocking, like Howard Stern or Opie & Anthony. The innocents, like women basketball players who didn't ask or deserve to be part of his world, are now off-

limits.

One of his bosses, RFD chief executive Patrick Gottsch, described the changes simply: "He's not making stupid remarks anymore."

RFD is a step down for Imus. The young network is in less than half the homes as MSNBC and isn't on big-city cable systems in the Northeast, and Imus' primary appeal is in the Northeast corridor.

But he's not doing a TV show, just simulcasting a radio show. After early indications that the enforced layoff cost him listeners, Imus is approaching the average of 2.25 million people who tune it at least once a week, about what it was before, said Michael Harrison, publisher of the trade journal *Talkers* magazine.

Harrison estimates that Imus is on about the same or even more radio stations than he was before. While Harrison said his influence has dwindled — "you don't hear about him as much as you did" — last fall's Imus-curated CD benefiting his ranch for young cancer patients was a surprise best-seller.

Dennis Baxter, who runs KCAA radio in San Bernardino, Calif., brought back Imus' show last year, but only after talking with members of the local Black community about how it might be received. He finds the show much the same, but said Imus is "a little bit toned down" and "a little more respectful of people. He's not going over the edge maybe as much," Baxter said.

Imus, who talked one day recently in a Manhattan office, resists the idea that he has less of an edge.

"In some cases we do stuff that's more edgy," he said. "There are things that are said on the program that would not be said

(See Imus, Page 5)

Murder

(Continued from Page 3) realized," said Deputy Chief Kenneth Garner. "It's just not a solution. There's just so many ways you find alternatives to doing something so horrific and drastic as this."

Ervin Lupoe removed three of the children from school about a week and a half ago, saying the family was moving to Kansas, the principal told KCAL-TV. Crescent Heights Elementary School Principal Cherise Pounders-Caver said nothing seemed to be troubling Ervin Lupoe, and she did not ask why the family was moving.

Kaiser Permanente Medical Center West Los Angeles released a statement confirming Lupoe and his wife were fired as medical technicians more than a week ago. The hospital said the firings followed an internal investigation but would not specify why they lost their jobs.

In his letter, Ervin Lupoe claimed he and his wife both had been fired and that she suggested they kill themselves and their children. Police described the fax but did not release details.

The letter indicated that Lupoe and his wife had been investigated for misrepresenting their employment to an outside agency to obtain childcare. He claimed that an administrator told the couple on Dec. 23: "You should not

even had bothered to come to work today you should have blown your brains out."

Lupoe's letter said the couple complained to the human resources department and eventually were offered an apology but two days later they were fired.

"They did nothing to the manager who stated such and did not attempt to assist us in the matter, knowing we have no job and five children under 8 years with no place to go. So here we are," the note said.

At the bottom of the letter, Lupoe wrote, "Oh Lord, my God, is there no hope for a widow's son?" The phrase is frequently found in Internet discussions about the novel "The Da Vinci Code," Freemasons and Mormonism. Kaiser Permanente said staff was "saddened by the despair in Mr. Lupoe's letter ... but we are confident that no one told him to take his own life or the lives of his family."

Police Capt. Billy Hayes said the hospital may have had reason to fire the couple. "It wasn't that he was laid off as a result of the economic situation," he said.

Lupoe's fax identified his children as Brittney, 8; 5-year-old twins Jaszmin and Jassely; and twins Benjamin and Christian, ages 2 years and 4 months.

The two-story home, much larger than its one-story neighbors, sits in front of a railroad track in Wilmington, a small community about 18 miles south of downtown Los Angeles. A children's playset stood in the backyard.

In 1994, Lupoe was charged with carrying a concealed firearm but it was either dismissed or not prosecuted, court documents show.

Lupoe got a state license to work as a security guard in 1989 and a permit to carry a gun as a security guard in 1993 but both expired in 2007, said Russ Heimerich, a spokesman for the state Bureau of Security and Investigative Services.

Lupoe and members of his family were plaintiffs in an auto accident case that had recently been resolved, said John Wallace, an attorney for the defendant in the case. Bob Pierce, a Long Beach attorney who represented the Lupoes in the accident, said the case did not involve any serious injuries and the family was expected to receive "well below \$10,000," he said.

Lupoe had called to find out when the money might be coming, Pierce said. Pierce told him that it might be another week or two and he said it wasn't a problem.

Obamas dislike Beanie Babies named for kids

By James Wright
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama are not happy with new dolls that resemble images of their two young daughters.

Ty Inc., makers of the popular beanie baby dolls, has created two 12-inch dolls named "Sweet Sasha" and "Marvelous Malia." The Westmont, Ill.-based company said, through spokeswoman Tania Lundeen, that the dolls' names were chosen because they were "beautiful names."

"There's nothing on the dolls that refers to the Obama girls," Lundeen told the Associated Press. "It would not be fair to say they are exact replications of these girls. They are not." The Obamas, through a spokesman, said it would be "inappropriate to use young private citizens for marketing purposes."

Also in the news, Mattel Inc. announced it will launch its first complete line of African-American Barbie dolls.

The line, which features three adult dolls, was previewed one day after America's first African-American president, Barack Obama, took office.



Beanie Baby dolls are named "Sweet Sasha" and "Marvelous Malia"

The "So in Style" dolls, expected to be released in fall 2009, come with little sisters as part of a mentorship theme.

James Wright writes for the Afro-American Newspapers.

Court ignores suit on flag shirts

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — A full federal appeals court won't hear a lawsuit by three Tennessee students threatened with suspension if they wore Confederate flag T-shirts. A three-judge panel ruled in August that Blount County, just south of Knoxville, could ban the clothing,

On Friday, the judges denied a request for a hearing by the full federal appeals court in Cincinnati.

Students Derek Barr and Craig and Chris White argued their free speech rights were violated by the ban on clothes with the flag, which is considered a symbol of

racism and intolerance by some and an emblem of Southern heritage by others.

School officials said their ban came after racial tension at William Blount High.

There have been a string of similar claims from Texas to South Carolina since the 1990s.