

Barbara Kay: Kathy Griffin just learned a tough lesson about free speech — sometimes, people tell you you're fired  
[National Post](#) - Wednesday June 7th, 2017

Pity naive comedian Kathy Griffin. She discovered, to her cost, there are limits to tolerance for edgy humour, even amongst the entertainment world's most irreverent, Trump-loathing denizens.

In a now-infamous photo released by photographer Tyler Shields on Twitter last week, a deadpan Griffin holds aloft — in mock ISIL-style trophy mode — the bloody, lookalike “head” of Donald Trump.

Griffin waited for the laughter that never came.

Instead, the stunt provoked fiercely condemnatory blowback. It didn't help that Trump's 11-year old son Barron suffered the shock of seeing the photo on TV and thinking it was real, after which his parents expressed their eminently justified revulsion at Griffin's enormous gaffe. For perhaps the only moment in his life, Donald Trump became an object of non-partisan sympathy.

Anger at Griffin then took material form.

Too late, the photo was removed from Twitter. Shocked at the mobbing, Griffin grovelled: ‘I crossed the line’ and ‘I beg for your forgiveness’

CNN terminated her steady, New Years Eve co-host job with Anderson Cooper. Four November comedy shows were cancelled in Northeastern states as well as a gig at a New Mexico casino. Griffin lost her endorsement deal with Squatty Potty. Democratic senator, former comedian and personal friend Al Franken at first stood by Griffin and their contract to co-host a book launch July 7, but then, perhaps reflecting on the fact that Hillary Clinton had won his home state of Minnesota by only 45,000 votes in the presidential election, gently bailed.

Too late, the photo was removed from Twitter. Shocked at the mobbing, Griffin grovelled: “I crossed the line” and “I beg for your forgiveness.” Later, clearly panicking over her career meltdown, a lachrymose but combative Griffin held a press conference, in which she tried to present herself as a portrait of courage. “I'm not laying down for this guy,” she said referring to Trump. “I'm going to keep making jokes about this guy.” But she also attempted to shift the blame and brand herself as the victim in the affair by accusing the Trumps of “trying to ruin my rights forever.”

(--image--)

Now that's just plain silly. Americans are privileged to enjoy speech rights that are the envy of the world. Nobody was attempting to “ruin” anyone's speech rights. Like many other progressives, Griffin seems not to understand that (except on university campuses, alas) freedom of speech generally works both ways: Trump “resisters” are free to speak their minds in America, and so are others — including Donald and Melania Trump, everyone with a Twitter account and the folks who employed Griffin at CNN and elsewhere who did not want to be associated with her blunder. In this case, the free speech the latter employed was, “You're fired.”

A Huffington Post article tried to mitigate Griffin's social crime by comparing her photo to the widely circulated, and somewhat shocking, satirical photo of Trump kissing Putin, but that is a poor comparison. The point of satire is to hold the hypocrisy or duplicity of people in high places up to ridicule in order to chivvy the target into a more ethical and appropriate line of behaviour. The authentically satirical Trump-Putin kiss points to an actual concern about illicit political collusion, implicitly calling on Trump to clean up his wanton, often highly un-presidential behaviour. Griffin did not use mockery to effect change, but to invite derision through a powerfully hateful image. She must have gauged the general disgust for Trump as capacious enough to absorb the image's transgressive punch.

Griffin chose as a symbol for mockery an icon of Islamist terrorism that is a byword for unspeakable cruelty and barbarism

There is plenty of disgust for Trump to draw on, to be sure, but the vehicle for her invitation was where the canker gnawed. Griffin chose as a symbol for mockery an icon of Islamist terrorism that is a byword for unspeakable cruelty and barbarism. ISIL, and other Islamist groups, film beheadings for maximum intimidating effect. The action symbolizes their triumphalist goal of completely subjugating their enemies.

Several of their beheading victims have, agonizingly, been Americans. Griffin's “joke” was no different in kind than if she had filmed an effigy of Trump being gassed at Auschwitz or – let's imagine Griffin as a Hillary-phobe — an effigy of Hillary as a Yazidi sex slave. A bridge way too far, even for Americans in whom patriotism is a long-dormant sentiment. Griffin co-opted our historical moment's ultimate expression of evil to convey her personal contempt for Trump. Americans rightly perceived this act as a repellant abuse of her democratic privilege.

I have no pity for Griffin. The photo was a puerile act of self-indulgence, and the only people laughing at it — apart from actual barbarians delighted to discover this accidental groupie on enemy territory — are the morally relativistic deplorables

of the left.

National Post

kaybarb@gmail.com

(--image--)

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```
CommentsnpReady(function(){npJ('.npStoryShare .npIconComments').unbind().bind('click',function(){npJ('html, body').animate({scrollTop:npJ('#disqus_thread').offset().top});return false}}))
```

LinkedIn

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Five things you should know before you start your work day (--image--) Shell is poised to make biofuels in Alberta, and the petrochemicals industry is calling for help. These stories and more in your morning cheat sheet to the FP

Short-haired girl, team kicked out of U.S. soccer tournament because someone thought she was a boy (--image--) Mili Hernandez, 8, has been playing soccer for three years and never had an issue like this before, her father said. He added that she was devastated

'Lean into your biology': Big Bang Theory's Mayim Bialik says women aren't wired for open relationships (--image--) 'It goes against millions of years of evolution. ... The male body produces millions of sperm every day. A woman produces one egg per month'

It's a brave new world: Amal Alamuddin and George Clooney officially welcome their twins into the world (--image--) This photogenic couple have not only spawned their highly desirable genes into one unit of humanity, but two. Our cup runneth over. What even is a Beyoncé?

## Recent Tweets

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Avi Benlolo: Canada must follow Europe's example and do more to combat anti-Semitism [ow.ly/qSKN50bYOEa](https://ow.ly/qSKN50bYOEa) 20 hours ago

--image-- FP Comment Kevin Libin: Regulatory profiteers in the corporate climate swamp stand with Paris Stephen Jarislowsky: Our tax system is now so unfair it will push productive people to leave Canada The Trudeau government finds a good idea for actually making pipeline approvals easier

```
jQuery( document ).ready( function() {  
  
  googletag.cmd.push(function() {  
  
    var gpt_bigboxbot = googletag.  
  
    defineSlot ("/3081/npo_opin/full-comment/story", [[300,250],[300,253],[300,600],[300,603]] , 'gpt-bigboxbot');
```

```
adSlots.push( gpt_bigboxbot ); gpt_bigboxbot.addService( googletag.pubads() )
.setTargeting(
'loc'
, "bot" )

; pnJustInTime.route(
{
ad_id: "#gpt-bigboxbot",
pixels_away:100,
pixels_away_count:1,
mode:'down',
lazy_loading_enabled:"on",
refresh_enabled:"on",
refresh_count:5,
refresh_time:62,
block_these_ads:"#gpt-bigboxtop, #gpt-grannybar,#gpt-skinnybar,#gpt-wallpaper, #gpt-leaderboard, #gpt-leaderboard-
mobile, #gpt-oop, #gpt-bigboxtop-mobile, #gpt-impulse, #gpt-impulse-mobile, #gpt-300x600, #gpt-title250x60, #gpt-
title88x31, #gpt-tile-120x90, #gpt-bigboxnewsletter, #gpt-impulsebot, #gpt-impulsebot-mobile, #gpt-impulsemid",
admode:""",
ad_data:'null',
adslot: gpt_bigboxbot,
}
);

});
});
```

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```
var NPFreeScreen = NPFreeScreen || {};  
NPFreeScreen.ajaxUrl = 'http://news.nationalpost.com/wp-admin/admin-ajax.php';  
NPFreeScreen.nonce = 'ed7c4c1abf';_fskparameters=[];
```

```
if ( localStorage && localStorage.getItem("janrainCaptureToken") ) {
  _fskparameters['_sid'] = localStorage.getItem("npPostPointsSid");
}
if ( ! _fskparameters['_sid'] ) {
  _fskparameters['_sid'] = "";
}
} else {
  _fskparameters['_sid'] = "";
}
}
```

```
janrain.settings.borderColor = '#ffffff';
janrain.settings.fontFamily = 'Helvetica, Lucida Grande, Verdana, sans-serif';
janrain.settings.width = 300;
janrain.settings.actionText = '';
janrain.settings.capture.modalCloseHtml = '';
janrain.settings.capture.noModalBorderInlineCss = true;

janrain.settings.capture.flowName = 'standard';
```

[Sign Up / Sign In](#)

With your existing account from:

```
{* loginWidget *}
```

or with your account:

```
{* #signInForm *}
```

```
{* signInEmailAddress *}
```

```
{* currentPassword *}
```

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[Sign In](#)

[Create Account](#)

```
{* /signInForm *}
```

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Sign in to your account

Welcome back, { \* welcomeName \* }!  
{ \* loginWidget \* }  
Not { \* welcomeName \* }? Switch Account

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Sign in to your account

Welcome Back, { \* welcomeName \* }!

{ \* #signInForm \* }  
{ \* signInEmailAddress \* }  
{ \* currentPassword \* }

Sign In

{ \* /signInForm \* }  
Not { \* welcomeName \* }? Switch Account

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Account Deactivated

Your account has been deactivated.

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Account Reactivation Failed

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Account Activated

Your account has been reactivated.

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## Email Verification Required

You must verify your email address before signing in. Check your email for your verification email, or enter your email address in the form below to resend the email.

{\* #resendVerificationForm \*}  
{\* signInEmailAddress \*}

{\* /resendVerificationForm \*}

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## Almost Done!

Please confirm your details below.

{\* #socialRegistrationForm \*}

{\* firstName \*}  
{\* lastName \*}  
{\* emailAddress \*}  
{\* displayName \*}

Postmedia wants to improve your reading experience as well as share the best deals and promotions from our advertisers with you. The information below will be used to optimize the content and make ads across the network more relevant to you. You can always change the information you share with us by editing your profile.

Birthdate{\* birthdate \*}

Gender{\* gender \*}

Attention Print Newspaper SubscribersFor verification of Print Subscriber offers (e.g. epaper, Digital Access, Subscriber Rewards), please input your Print Newspaper subscription phone number and postal code.

{\* phone \*}

{\* addressPostalCode \*}

By clicking "Create Account", I hereby grant permission to Postmedia to use my account information to create my account.

I also accept and agree to be bound by Postmedia's Terms and Conditions with respect to my use of the Site and I have read and understand Postmedia's Privacy Statement. I consent to the collection, use, maintenance, and disclosure of my information in accordance with the Postmedia's Privacy Policy.

{\* backButton \*}

{\* /socialRegistrationForm \*}

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Almost Done!

Please confirm your details below. Already have an account? [Sign In](#).

{\* #registrationForm \*}

{\* firstName \*}

{\* lastName \*}

{\* emailAddress \*}

{\* displayName \*}

{\* newPassword \*}

{\* newPasswordConfirm \*}

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Birthdate{\* birthdate \*}

Gender{\* gender \*}

Attention Print Newspaper SubscribersFor verification of Print Subscriber offers (e.g. epaper, Digital Access, Subscriber

Rewards), please input your Print Newspaper subscription phone number and postal code.

{\* phone \*}

{\* addressPostalCode \*}

By clicking "Create Account", I hereby grant permission to Postmedia to use my account information to create my account.

I also accept and agree to be bound by Postmedia's Terms and Conditions with respect to my use of the Site and I have read and understand Postmedia's Privacy Statement. I consent to the collection, use, maintenance, and disclosure of my information in accordance with the Postmedia's Privacy Policy.

{\* backButton \*}

{\* /registrationForm \*}

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Verfiy your email

We have sent you a confirmation email to {\* emailAddressData \*}. Please check your inbox and follow the instructions to confirm your email address.

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## Create a new password

Follow these simple steps to create a new password:

1. Enter your email address below
2. Wait for the instructions to arrive in your inbox
3. Follow the instructions to update your password

{\* #forgotPasswordForm \*}

{\* signInEmailAddress \*}

{\* backButton \*}

{\* /forgotPasswordForm \*}

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## Create a new password

We've sent an email with instructions to create a new password. Your existing password has not been changed.

Close

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```
{* mergeAccounts {"custom": true} *}
```

## Merge Your Accounts

```
{| rendered_current_photo |}
```

```
{| current_displayName |}  
{| current_emailAddress |}
```

```
{| foundExistingAccountText |} {| current_emailAddress |}.
```

```
{| moreInfoHoverText |}  
{| existing_displayName |} - {| existing_provider |} : {| existing_siteName |} {| existing_createdDate |}
```

```
{| moreInfoText |}
```

```
{| existing_displayName |}  
{| existing_provider_emailAddress |}
```

```
Created {| existing_createdDate |} at {| existing_siteName |}
```

{| connectLegacyRadioText |}

{| createRadioText |} {| current\_provider |}

Validating

{| connect\_button |}

{| create\_button |}

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Sign in to complete account merge

{\* #signInForm \*}

{\* signInEmailAddress \*}

{\* currentPassword \*}

{\* backButton \*}

Sign In

{\* /signInForm \*}

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## Resend Verification Email

Sorry, we could not verify your email address. Please enter your email below, and we'll resend the instructions for email verification.

{\* #resendVerificationForm \*}

{\* signInEmailAddress \*}

{\* /resendVerificationForm \*}

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## Verification Email Sent

Check your email for a link to verify your email address.

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Email Verified

Thank you for verifying your email address.

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Change Password

{\* #changePasswordFormNoAuth \*}

{\* newPassword \*}

{\* newPasswordConfirm \*}

{\* /changePasswordFormNoAuth \*}

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Password Changed

Your password has been successfully updated.

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Create New Password

We didn't recognize that password reset code. Please enter your email below, and we'll send you a new code to reset your password.

{\* #resetPasswordForm \*}

{\* signInEmailAddress \*}

{\* /resetPasswordForm \*}

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Create New Password

We've sent you an email with instructions to create a new password. Your existing password has not been changed.

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Post to

Cancel

/\* \*/

/\* \*/

```
/** */

/** */

//

_tkq = window._tkq || [];
_stq = window._stq || [];
_tkq.push(['storeContext', {'blog_id':'37979189','blog_tz':'-4','user_lang':'en','blog_lang':'en','user_id':'0'}]);
_stq.push(['view', {'blog':'37979189','v':'wpcom','tz':'-4','user_id':'0','post':'1391832','subd':'nationalpostcom'}]);
function st_vt() {var
x=document.createElement("img");x.src="http://pixel.wp.com/g.gif?v=wpcomvt&tz=-
4&user_id=0&post=1391832&subd=nationalpostcom&rand="+Math.random();}
_stq.push(['extra',
{'crypt':'UE40eW5QN0p8M2Y/RE1BNmNJfGhxNCVxUDEExYmtib2E/SzdeJm0lUEtbdFU0fFk4cHZvcUFRZT90Tn4yQr
_stq.push(['clickTrackerInit', '37979189', '1391832' ]]);

(--image--)

if ( 'object' === typeof wpcom_mobile_user_agent_info ) {

wpcom_mobile_user_agent_info.init();
var mobileStatsQueryString = "";

if( false !== wpcom_mobile_user_agent_info.matchedPlatformName )
mobileStatsQueryString += "&x_" + 'mobile_platforms' + '=' +
wpcom_mobile_user_agent_info.matchedPlatformName;

if( false !== wpcom_mobile_user_agent_info.matchedUserAgentName )
mobileStatsQueryString += "&x_" + 'mobile_devices' + '=' +
wpcom_mobile_user_agent_info.matchedUserAgentName;

if( wpcom_mobile_user_agent_info.isIPad() )
mobileStatsQueryString += "&x_" + 'ipad_views' + '=' + 'views';

if( "" !== mobileStatsQueryString ) {
new Image().src = document.location.protocol + '//pixel.wp.com/g.gif?v=wpcom-no-pv' + mobileStatsQueryString +
'&baba=' + Math.random();
}

}

//right rail native ads position
jQuery(document).ready(function(){
if (jQuery("#npContentSide .pn_kultura").length>0) {
jQuery("#npContentSide .pn_kultura").prev("#npContentSide
.npGutterBot:not(.npAd)").removeClass("npGutterBot").css("margin-bottom", "30px");
}
}
```

```
});
```

```
jQuery(document).on('keydown', '.sponsored-icon img', function() {  
jQuery(this).click();  
});
```

```
jQuery(document).on('click', '.sponsored-icon>img', function() {  
var popUpBox=jQuery(this).next(".sponsored-icon-popup");  
if (popUpBox.css("display")==='none') {  
popUpBox.fadeIn("slow");  
} else {  
popUpBox.fadeOut("slow");  
}  
});
```

```
jQuery(document).on('click', '.sponsored-icon-popup>img', function() {  
jQuery(this).parent().fadeOut("slow");  
});
```

```
jQuery(document).on('click', '.sponsored-icon>input[type=image]', function() {  
var popUpBox=jQuery(this).next(".sponsored-icon-popup");  
if (popUpBox.css("display")==='none') {  
popUpBox.fadeIn("slow");  
popUpBox.focus();  
} else {  
popUpBox.fadeOut("slow");  
}  
});
```

```
jQuery(document).on('click', '.sponsored-icon-popup>input[type=image]', function() {  
jQuery(this).parent().fadeOut("slow");  
});
```

```
window.fbAsyncInit = function() {  
FB.init({  
appId : '114466555268868',  
xfbml : true,  
version : 'v2.4'  
});  
};  
(function(d, s, id){  
var js, fjs = d.getElementsByTagName(s)[0];  
if (d.getElementById(id)) {return;}  
js = d.createElement(s); js.id = id;  
js.src = "//connect.facebook.net/en_US/sdk.js";  
fjs.parentNode.insertBefore(js, fjs);
```

```
}(document, 'script', 'facebook-jssdk'));
```

(--image--)

```
var _sf_async_config = {uid: 34988, domain: 'postmedia.com', sections:'nationalpost.com,nationalpost_full comment',  
path: window.location.pathname};  
_sf_async_config.authors = 'Barbara Kay';(function(){  
function loadChartbeat() {  
window._sf_endpt = (new Date()).getTime();  
var e = document.createElement('script');  
e.setAttribute('type', 'text/javascript');  
e.setAttribute('src',  
(('https:' == document.location.protocol) ? 'https://a248.e.akamai.net/chartbeat.download.akamai.com/102508/' :  
'http://') +  
'static.chartbeat.com/js/chartbeat_video.js');  
document.body.appendChild(e);  
}  
var oldonload = window.onload;  
window.onload = typeof window.onload !== 'function' ? loadChartbeat : function () {  
oldonload();  
loadChartbeat();  
};  
})();
```

```
var _gaq = _gaq || [];  
_gaq.push(['_setAccount', 'UA-17097415-1']);  
_gaq.push(['_setDomainName', document.location.hostname]);  
_gaq.push(['_trackPageview']);  
(function() {  
var ga = document.createElement('script'); ga.type = 'text/javascript'; ga.async = true;  
ga.src = ('https:' == document.location.protocol ? 'https://ssl' : 'http://www') + '.google-analytics.com/ga.js';  
var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0]; s.parentNode.insertBefore(ga, s);  
})();
```

```
var _comscore = _comscore || [];  
_comscore.push({ c1: '2', c2: '10276888' });  
(function() {  
var s = document.createElement('script'), el = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0]; s.async = true;  
s.src = (document.location.protocol == 'https:' ? 'https://sb' : 'http://b') + '.scorecardresearch.com/beacon.js';  
el.parentNode.insertBefore(s, el);  
})();
```

(--image--)

/\* \*/

(--image--)