

Life Imitating Art

By Marilyn Reeves

Ever since I was a little girl, I loved watching movies, and learned a lot about life from some of my favorite stars. Roy Rogers, Hopalong Cassidy and John Wayne taught me it was okay to hate the 'Injuns' because they were the bad guys. Humphrey Bogart and other actors taught me that it was okay for men to slap women around. Doris Day and Ronald Reagan taught me it was glamorous to smoke. And they all taught me that women were second class citizens. Our primary role was to try to look pretty and to please the men we married – if we were lucky enough to catch one!

Happily, most of those erroneous concepts have since been overturned. But whether or not we're aware of it, the media influences our acceptance of what we deem to be the 'social norm.' I'm convinced that the recent rash of school shootings has been inadvertently promoted by the evening news. The horrific occurrence at Columbine received national attention, and it was that attention that has fostered the rash of 'copy-cat' incidents.

We seem to have entered into a new age of intolerance, reminiscent of the McCarthy era. Celebrities like Papa John and Roseanne Barr, the latter having made her career by being rude, crude, and defiant, haven't been given second chances after making impromptu racial slurs. Both were booted out in an instant!

Yet I'm beginning to wonder if today's law enforcement isn't being trained to shoot on sight any person of color, whether or not they've committed a crime. Too bad the media doesn't focus more on the good cops, they probably still far outnumber the bad. But being fed a steady diet of police brutality, it's hard to keep that fact in mind.

And then there's the 'Me Too' movement, or 'Women's Lib on Steroids.' Men we once looked up to are losing their careers and their reputations for acts they may have committed decades ago, back when it was still a man's world and women went along with it. I'm not saying their cavalier treatment of women was right – quite the contrary. But I do think in some cases those women were partially responsible. Surely they must have known that Cosby had a reputation as a lecher – so why did they go out with him? And women who dress and act seductively but expect men not to notice, are, by definition, hypocrites. In some cases, yes, they *are* asking for it!

The last couple of years, more and more men have been taken to task for their transgressions. All save one – the leader of the pack – who seems to want to turn back the clock to the accepted mores of the 40's and 50's. All he seems to care about are his 'popularity ratings' as if he were still the star of his own reality show!

What will it take to finally hold him accountable for all his malevolent and misguided behavior? I await his comeuppance with bated breath. There's a missed connection somewhere here, in urgent need of repair.