Journalist, author and biographer Juan Williams was fired from his job as an NPR commentator after comments he made on Fox News raised new questions about political correctness.

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Juan Williams, NPR, National Public Radio, Journalism, Integrity, Bias, Political Correctness, Fox, News, Broadcast, Comments, Religion, Muslim, Fly, Airplanes, Planes, Terrorism, Bill O'Reilly, Sarah Palin, Twitter, Standards, Practices, Mike Huckabee

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"Comments Cost NPR Commentator His Job." Mike Taibbi, correspondent. NBC Nightly News.
Transcript

Comments Cost NPR Commentator His Job

BRIAN WILLIAMS, anchor:

Another prominent media figure is in the spotlight tonight because of something he said. Journalist, author and biographer Juan Williams has been a commentator on National Public Radio for a decade, but something he said that's echoed through the new media universe and other media got him fired and raised new questions about political correctness. The story tonight from NBC's Mike Taibbi.

MIKE TAIBBI reporting:

It didn't take much. In this case about 12 seconds of a response by NPR's Juan Williams to Fox host Bill O'Reilly's question about what he called the Muslim dilemma.

Mr. JUAN WILLIAMS (Fox News Contributor): (From Fox News) When I get on a plane, I got to tell you, if I see people who are in Muslim garb, and I think, you know, they're identifying themselves first and foremost as Muslims, I get worried, I get nervous.

(Clip from "The View")

TAIBBI: O'Reilly himself caught heat earlier this week for saying on morning show "The View" that Muslims killed us on 9/11. Two of that show's hosts walked out on him. After Williams appeared on O'Reilly's show, NPR issued a statement saying Williams had violated his contract and was fired because his comments were "inconsistent with our editorial standards and practices, and undermined his credibility as a news analyst with NPR."

Williams said today it's just political correctness run amok, that he was only saying what millions of Americans feel. Conservative figures from Sarah Palin to Mike Huckabee to Newt Gingrich all supported him, Palin tweeting, "NPR defends First Amendment right but will fire you if you exercise it." But critics say it's not about the First Amendment.

Professor LONNIE ISABEL (City University of New York Journalism Professor): The First Amendment gives Juan Williams the right to say whatever he'd like to say, but it doesn't necessarily give him the right to require that people employ him.
Mr. RICK SANCHEZ: (From CNN) Politics, politics, politics.
TAIBBI: There have been others. CNN's Rick Sanchez, radio host Laura Schlesinger, and longtime White House reporter Helen Thomas jettisoned or choosing to resign from their lofty media perches recently because of commentary judged to have gone over the line.
Mr. WILLIAMS: (From Fox News) Political correctness...
TAIBBI: No the line of what you're allowed to say but what you ought not say at the risk of your job in today's media environment...
Ms. HELEN THOMAS: (From Rabbilive.com) Tell them to get the hell out of Palestine.
TAIBBI: Although late word is that Williams has a new multimillion-dollar contact with Fox News. Mike Taibbi, NBC News, New York.