

Dr. Lathardus Goggins II

Of course it's racist. Regardless of his intentions, we must consider the social and historical context in we live. Of all the words he could have use (i.e. man, dude, dawn, homie, brotha(er), etc.) he choose niggah. When considering the impact of one's actions, intentions are amongst the least important concerns. Consider arriving at a scene of an accident. Does it matter, if he was run over by accident or on purpose? It does not effect the treatment. Intentions only matter to the person perpetrating the harm. I can still be a "good" person, if I didn't mean the harm. But to the person to which the harm is done.... Check out "Ridding the world of nigaas" I wrote a while back <http://www.afrocentric.info/AfroSoul/NoNigg.html>

We often assume being a racist is about hate or being "mean." Many people "wrongly" equate being a bigot, discrimination, and racist as the same thing. It's not. No more so than rape is about sex. Rape is about power and control using sex as a tool. Racism is about power and privilege.... who has access to them base on the social construction of race (e.g. How the Irish became white; and Andrew Hacker's discussion about white on reserve). This teacher's privilege and power to define the meaning is at work. "Our" willingness to accept niggah(er) is submission to the power of others to define us. Remember Dr. Carter G. Woodson wisdom, "When you control man's thinking you don't have to worry about his actions.. If there is no back door [i.e. nigger]... he will cut one for himself [i.e. niggah].. His education makes it necessary."

There's a funny old SNL skit with Chevy Chase and Richard Pryor. Chevy Chase is coming up with insult after insult and Richard Pryor only has honky. The joke is that whites have the power to define us (spade, coon, jigaboo, darky, darkie, darkey, pickaninny, at-risk, disadvantage....) and we do not. That racism and anyone benefiting from such a system is a racist (However nice and unaware they are).

At our best we (humans) are independent and interdependent. You may define your self but the tools and notions of "who (and who's) you are" are reflections from your environment. You know yourself as Michael because the people who trust call you Michael. Moreover, when you pick nick-name for those "close" to you tend to pick something based on your central understanding of yourself (i.e Michael -> Mike and not Michael -> Dave). Likewise, those who argue that nigger was transformed to nigga fail to acknowledge that the central understanding one self has not changed.

