



As Russell Simmons Told Oprah, It's Time for Rappers to Drop the N-Word

By Jessica Durando

From "nappy-headed hos" to the N-word, there is an ongoing debate over who can use demeaning, racially tinged language and who cannot. And hip-hop music is finding itself squarely in the crosshairs.

"Does hip hop hate women?" The question drew a crowd of 400 to the University of Chicago, where a panel discussion was held Sunday on the topics of hip hop and sexism.

As radio shock-jock Don Imus tried in vain to hold onto his job earlier this month, he quickly pointed the finger at the rap community, saying they defame and demean black women and call them "worse names than I ever did," according to [MSNBC](#).

Imus ultimately lost his job, but his protests didn't fall on deaf ears. The reaction to his "nappy-headed hos" comments has caused some in the hip-hop community to take a look in the mirror and examine their own language.

The New York Times is currently holding an online forum, "Don't Blame the Rappers," in response to Russell Simmons' appearance on "The Oprah Winfrey Show," where the hip-hop mogul said it was not right to use hateful, degrading words in rap songs.

But what's going on in the forum isn't a blame game per se. It's really talking about responsibility.

"Everyone should be judged by the same set of standards—period. To say otherwise is hypocrisy no matter the excuse," one person wrote.

He called for ending the double standard, and I agree. Imus is not the only one to blame—we all are. And we should take responsibility for calling any woman a ho or using a word that degrades, demeans or humiliates every time it rolls callously off a person's tongue.

One of 50 Cent's album titles sums it up: "Get Rich. Or Die Trying." The Machiavellian attitude conveyed leaves little, if any, restrictions on what's said. So when Imus called black women "nappy-headed hos," he was rightfully fired. Justice was served. But rap artists need to treat women with equality and respect—not as objects—and express pride in their race/ethnicity.



"We're on the verge of electing a black man as president of the United States. I think Simmons and Winfrey are calling on their own people to grow up," said Adrienne Colan, 65 and a white New Yorker.

Another person wrote, "The filth and violence in the words of certain recordings are contagious and tend to spread to the general population."

<http://www.diversityinc.com>

NAACP's Detroit Chapter to Bury N-Word

By Aysha Hussain

NAACP to Bury the N-Word

Sixty-three years ago, the Detroit chapter of the NAACP held a symbolic funeral that marked the end of the Jim Crow era, a time during U.S. **history when the law required public schools**, public places and public transportation to have separate facilities for whites and blacks. The civil-rights organization plans to do the same this summer with the N-word. In the wake of the controversy surrounding former talk-show host Don Imus' comments, the Rev. Wendell Anthony, president of the NAACP's Detroit branch, announced that members and supporters of the organization will conduct a eulogy for the racial slur. The mock funeral is slated to be held during the NAACP national convention in July. [Read more.](#)

Driving While Black & Latino: Traffic Stops, Arrests Higher for People of Color

Race continues to be the chief reason people of color are more likely than white people to be searched and arrested by a police officer, particularly at traffic stops. A new study released by the Bureau of Justice Statistics examined police contacts with the public during 2005 and was based on interviews by the Census Bureau with nearly 64,000 people age 16 and older. It found that while whites, blacks and Latinos are equally likely to be pulled over by a police officer, blacks and Latinos are more likely to be subjected to random searches and arrests. The study stated that police were much more apt to threaten or use force against blacks and Latinos than against whites in any encounter, whether at a traffic stop or elsewhere. [Read more.](#)

White Teacher Forces Black Student to Urinate in Bottle

Michael Patterson, 14, will never forget the day his middle-school science teacher forced him to urinate in an empty Gatorade bottle in a corner. Instead of allowing him to use the restroom, his teacher left Patterson no choice but to relieve himself with 31 of his classmates in the room. When he was finished, Patterson's teacher told him to go to the bathroom to wash his hands and dispose of the bottle. The eighth-grader said he was extremely embarrassed by the incident. Patterson, his mother, Kelly Jacko, and the local chapter of the NAACP are demanding that the district fire the teacher at Charles M. Goethe Middle School if he does not resign. Jacko said the science teacher, who is white, owes her son an apology. "I don't think he should teach," said Jacko. "He had to know this was not appropriate behavior." School officials said they are looking into the matter. [Read more.](#)

Universities Admit More Black Immigrants

The number of African-born blacks attending U.S. colleges is rising. According to a new study released by the American Journal of Education, the number of black students from Africa and the Caribbean admitted into college is disproportionate to the number of American-born blacks admitted. The study showed that among 28 top U.S. universities, the representation of black students of first- and second-generation immigrant origin, at 27 percent, were about twice their representation in the national population of blacks their age at 13 percent. Within the Ivy League, immigrant-origin students made up 41 percent of black freshmen. The authors of the study suggested that the reason for the high proportion of immigrant students may lie in how the students are perceived. [Read more.](#)

Advertisers Reach Out to Muslim Market

Advertisers have long been scared and largely unaware of how to reach out to Muslims because of their diverse ethnic backgrounds and the negative sentiment surrounding the Islamic faith. Although some advertising companies admit marketing to Muslims carries some risks including a political backlash, advertising executives say that ignoring this group—5 million to 8 million people—is like missing the booming Latino market of the 1990s. However, this is changing. Consumer companies and advertising executives plan to focus on ways to use the cultural aspects of the Muslim religion to help sell their products. J. Walter Thompson Co. (JWT), one of the largest advertising agencies, plans to encourage clients such as Johnson & Johnson (No. 17 on [The DiversityInc 2007 Top 50 Companies for Diversity list](#)[®]) to begin marketing to American Muslims. In addition, JWT plans to reach out to the chief executives of all of its major clients, including JetBlue, Ford Motor Co. (No. 5 on [The DiversityInc 2007 Top 50 Companies for Diversity list](#)) and HSBC (No. 36) to encourage them to market to Muslims in the United States and Britain. Nasser Beydoun, chairman of the American Arab Chamber of Commerce in Dearborn, Mich., is currently working with IKEA, Wal-Mart (No. 41) and Comcast (No. 49) to develop strategies to reach Muslim consumers. Other companies like Frito-Lay (part of PepsiCo, No. 10) and Kodak (No. 35) have recently considered marketing to Muslims. [Read more.](#)

Howard University President Retires

Howard University's 15th president and fifth black to serve as the university's CEO announced his plans for retirement. While H. Patrick Swygert made several contributions during his terms, several faculty members demanded he step down from office. In a damaging letter sent to the Board of Trustees, faculty members questioned Swygert's ability to lead the university citing his contribution to financial problems at Howard University Hospital spilling over into academic budgets, among other issues. Swygert first became president of the university on Aug. 1, 1995. He

has plans to retire June 30, 2008. [Read more.](#)

Religion Guides Black Women to Lose Weight

For some black women, the key to losing weight may rest in God's hands rather than their own. Recent studies show that the "all-about-you" mentality of mainstream diet programs do not resonate as well with black women as with white women.

Researchers say the reason is because black women are generally more focused on their families, communities and churches. Rather than pushing black women to adapt to those programs, dieticians and health officials are developing new programs that emphasize improving health as a pathway to better serving God. Judith Fifield, a professor in the University of Connecticut's medical school at the UConn Health Center, said, "A lot of the existing weight-loss programs are designed and developed for typical middle-class white women." [Read more.](#)