

## Nigger vs White

By: Dwight Jones

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Despite all of the above I am quite comfortable speaking the word nigger or hearing the word used by someone else regardless of the race. Admittedly I have never been called a nigger by a White person probably because I am one of those big-black-greasy looking niggers that some people think twice about tangling with. But if it were to happen I would merely laugh-out-loud while saying to myself, "well that makes you ten-times a nigger according to Dr. Leaky's summation regarding Ms. Lucy's skeleton."

But more importantly my sense of comfort stems from my upbringing relative to the fact I was always in the midst of strong Black men. It all started with my daddy, Evans Jones Jr. who instilled manners and honor into my character when I was six years beginning on my first day of school. Clearly I recall his last words that day of "come here son, remember, keep your shirt tail tucked inside of your pants, and use your handkerchief when you wipe your mouth and cough or sneeze." My dad was insane with that always carry a handkerchief stuff. One Sunday when I was about ten years old he gave me one of his customary pops in the center of my butt for not having my handkerchief. When I complained to my uncle John Ferguson about my dad's tough disciplinary approach, he responded "a gentleman should always carry a clean white handkerchief in case a lady decides to cry."

Additionally, my daddy was the tenth Black fireman hired by the city of Winston-Salem in 1954 when I was six years old. The original four Black fireman of the city literally integrated the south as no Black firefighters were employed by a municipality beneath Baltimore Maryland. Consequently they surely heard their fair share of the use of the word nigger while conducting inspections of residential and business properties belonging to White slum lords. Still the more they received those nigger worded insults, the brighter they made their white uniform shirts causing many Black people throughout community to view them as heroes.

At any rate I find it to be quite comical when I hear the word nigger coming from someone's mouth even when it's a bird. While living in Atlanta for two years while attending cosmetology/makeup school, I had to wear a white lab jacket. Being too lazy to wash and press them, I started dropping them off at a dry cleaner. The first morning that I opened the door, immediately, the most beautiful bird imaginable, sounded off with a loud whistling sound and then said: "nigger at the counter" - "nigger at the counter" - "nigger at the counter."

So when a White lady came to the counter I asked, what did that bird just say, "neighbor at the counter" was her answer. My response was it sounded

as though he said nigger at the counter which drew a "Pete would never say something like that." Anyway for the next twenty something months, every Monday morning Pete would greet the White customers by their proper names by saying "good morning Mr. Smith or Mrs. Jones but continued to greet me with a loud whistle and saying "nigger at the counter" three times. Ole Pete even had the nerve to say "by nigger" - "by nigger" every time I opened the door to leave. But that did not stop me from shopping at that business. In fact, whenever the lady went to the rear of the building to get my clothes, I flipped both of my middle fingers at the bird, gave the "bird-the-bird" while saying "bird-go-to-hell" - "bird-go-to-hell every time nigger at the counter echoed throughout the building. After of few months of looking forward to exchanging verbal trading verbal jabs

with Pete and enjoying every minute of it, the white people dropped the seventy-nine cent of my bill making the total an even six dollars, giving me vegetables from their garden, while make my lab jackets whiter-an-whiter!

Interestingly yesterday while working on this column, I had to take a break to prepare dinner for my 86 year old mother. Upon coming to the kitchen table she asked, "you doing ok with your writing," doing ok?" but it's a sensitive subject to discuss so I need to be careful was my response. Then I asked, do you think that papa Ruth, her daddy, Rufus McCollum Johnson, was ever called nigger after he walked 17.7 miles to work and back (over 34 miles all total) from Germantown NC to Winston-Salem during his 54 year tenure of working at RJ Reynolds Tobacco Factory #8. "Every day, all day long" was her answer, to which I responded, "what did he say about it?," "Oh he would say you better study hard so you don't haf to work in Reynolds!"

Then silently I began to say, if grand daddy were not willing to ignore the sound of the word nigger, the third and fourth child of his clan of thirteen would not have earned their scholarships to Howard University! Then after graduating, Aunt Ella would not have been capable of serving as an English professor at Howard for 38 years which allowed my cousin Pat to graduate from Princeton before finishing Yale Law School.

Plus if my grand daddy would have gotten all "bent of shape"

over the word nigger, my uncle, Raleigh Johnson would not have gone to Howard before and after WWII (Navy Corpsman) to become a biologist. Upon returning home, he accepted a position teaching biology at Winston-Salem Teachers College. But after completing the fall and spring semesters, he went to the chancellor and stated that he "felt inadequate teaching biology after studying under Charles Drew for five years, two of which Dr. Drew was his adviser" - "Medicine is my field!" My uncle had been accepted at Meharry Medical School, but came home to have a kidney operation. Consequently, the chancellor granted him permission to draw up the charter that started the School of Nursing at Winston-Salem Teachers College, currently Winston-

Salem State University. Thank God my grand daddy did not let the word nigger keep him from educating his children, otherwise maybe the hundreds of registered nurses that graduated from WSSU would not be capable of fulfilling the rigorous demands of that profession.

Also after fighting in WWII, my uncle, Harold Edmond Johnson, moved to the Bronx in New York, and started working as a busboy in a five star restaurant in downtown Manhattan. As he worked his way up from busboy to head maitre d', he was called nigger

on many occasions. Yet he never thought about quitting his job or getting fired for fighting. As a result, my cousin Derrick earned an under graduate and law degree from Columbia University where he served as the editor of the Columbia Law Review. From there he became a successful practicing attorney before the first Black mayor of New York, the honorable David Dinkins asked him to serve as chief counselor heading the teams of boroughs throughout New York having to park his Lamborghini in order to ride in a chauffeured driven limo. From there he took an executive counseling position at Time Warner Cable before moving on to serve as the executive director of the famous Apollo Theater. All this was made possible because my grand daddy and his children paid absolutely no attention to the racist word nigger.

Surely I did not reveal the preceding information pertaining to my esteemed love ones as braggadocio, but to illustrate how that people who are relevant in my life used what some people deem as negative to stimulate/motivate them above the idiocy of the word nigger. Nigger, a word designed for the purpose of degrading its victims while insulting them. The defense against "nigger" is to understand why the word exists in the first place. The word nigger according to white America is defined as a last, stupid, worthless, irresponsible creature that was solely dependent upon whites with that in mind and returning to the theme of irony, why would a person of such supremacy make a treacherous voyage across the ocean to drag back a worthless good for nothing nigger to your "Shining City on the Hill.?"

I will tell you why. Jesus Christ said "Judge Ye Not. For the same mete that you judge with shall be use to judge you." In other words, when ever a white person uses the word nigger he/she is really looking in the mirror. The only that an African-American can overcome the caricature/depiction trap is to study; to demonstrate again that striving to overcome roadblocks placed in our path. In fact the greatest marvel of modern America is the Americanized African. That people rose from incalculable depths survive the furnace and crucible which is America, the so-called greatest country in the world. So study and come to realize that you are not a "taker" but the exact opposite a "giver." Realize the same people who label you with derogatory terms as "takers" are in fact speaking about their ancestors.

After all, the table was set when huge waves of immigration came in the

1800s. The first wave provided a haven for the Famine Irish, Germans and others. The next wave of immigrants were largely made up of Eastern and Southern Europeans (Russians, Italians, Jew, Poles, etc.) who arrived from the mid 1880s to roughly 1915. When both groups arrived they were the takers and they took advantage of African's enforced free labor. By the time the immigrants arrived the white cotton balls that were planted by the black hands and fingers of the Americanized African literally covered dark rich soil of the Alabama Black Belt and the Mississippi Delta. The white balls of cotton planted by the Americanized African is what brought the European to America. That's Right! Cotton was the number one export of the United States until the Civil War. The Shipping, banking, and insurance, industries all benefited from the slave trade as Europeans imported themselves. Some of investment and venture capital - funded the new inventions of the Industrial Revolution. The black man/woman in America has contributed like no other people to the American way of life yet their descendants are labeled "takers." If you do not like being called "nigger" come back home. Return to your neighborhoods. Rid yourself of the disease that Malcolm X called "White-itis". The ice is still as cold in the black community as in the white community. Your children can still learn in the same neighborhoods you grew up in. Come home. Teach us to beautify our lawns like the lawns you love so much in the white neighborhoods. After all, we are people judged by the color of our skin. Therefore, when they come to eliminate poor blacks you are next. Come home! Come home! Willie Lynch let my people go!

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