



You can come to the cookout, but you still can't use the N-word

African American culture has become a thing to idolize, but society has commercialized portions of the Black lifestyle for non-black consumption. Whether it's music, hair or clothing, black culture seems to be up for grabs by anyone who deems themselves "down."

But there are lines that must be drawn. The N-word is one.

It is a word that has oppressed the black community for centuries. A word that originated from the hatred of black people. A word that holds the most offensive meaning in our day and age. If you are not black or of African descent, you are not allowed to use this word.

Point. Blank. Period.

Period.

Period.

Normally, there is room for debate in our editorial space, but in this instance, there's nothing to debate. If you are not black, you should not be using the N-word. We will say it louder for the people in the back.

IF YOU ARE NOT BLACK, YOU SHOULD NOT BE USING THE N-WORD.

Cleveland Publications is not a fan of the word; we don't condone its usage in any form. But we fully recognize there are years of history behind it that we as a staff will never be able to understand.

The black community are the only people allowed to say it, and we don't care if it triggers any feelings of exclusion. You were never meant to be included in the first place. Blacks have reclaimed the word and given it a familial meaning to use within their own community. It's not for the allies. It's not for the non-black people of color. Of course, you can be a non-black person who's down for the cause, but don't get it twisted - you're invited to the cookout, but you don't get to eat every dish.

To our black friends and peers, beware of the "black pass."

This pass is supposedly given out by some African Ameri-

cans to their to their non-black, "woke" friends. It is meant to be a symbolic gesture, but it opens the door for non-blacks to assimilate (or appropriate) into black culture

If you are a black person who is giving out a "black pass," do not be surprised when you, along with your friend, are called out. No one person can speak on the behalf of an entire race. Just because you may be OK with your friend using the N-word or infringing on your culture doesn't guarantee the next black person will be as understanding.

We are not suggesting that you should not have black friends, but there needs to be a

line for what is "too" comfortable. It doesn't matter if you're white, Asian, Latinx or Middle Eastern, the word is not yours to co-op. You are not entitled to any use of the word.

Let's call out ignorance for what it really is so we can further educate and evolve as a community. As much as we don't like the word being in our lexicon, the N-word should only be spoken by those only in the black community.

Period.

This editorial was written by Kezia Cook and reflects the opinions of the entire Cleveland Publications staff.

Cleveland Publications leadership team: Tina Dang, Jay Kent, Ruth Mulugeta, Andrew Cornel, Molly House and Wen Eckelberg.

Revolutions don't start by being obedient

BY BRANDON TEENY
Staff reporter



Ever since the shooting at Stoneman Douglas High School on Valentine's Day that killed 17 students and staff members, many adults have tried to shut down the voices in response to the shooting, which are primarily held by a young audience. Students at Cleveland have mixed opinions on the opposition that is happening, but I know for sure that the opposition is good.

The fact that adults tell us in one breath to speak up for our rights and then in the next attempt to shut us up when lawmakers take notice is completely laughable. Why tell us to speak up for our rights if you're going to turn around and try to muzzle us?

"I feel like all students have the right to speak their mind and say whatever they want," said freshman Demetreyonna Lindsey. "I feel like teachers think that they have control over us because they're older than us."

Students can be undermined by their elders because of the stereotypes put on us. It is frustrating for the students who want to make a difference in the world. Sophomore Mitchell Moss believes we've done this to ourselves.

"We're the same generation that's been eating Tide Pods and snorting condoms and posting it on YouTube," he said.

Moss said students should try to work with adults before going a national stage and insulting the people from whom they are trying to get help.

"I've seen a lot of ... 'Oh, you must not care about kids; you must not this and that,'" Moss said. "When you're attacking someone like that, they won't

want to help you, but if you give them more respect ... they're gonna respect you because they're gonna see that you're mature and sophisticated."

This is a move that has to be reciprocated. Adults insult kids all the time, so I feel that they deserve to have some of it come back on them. We can't let them knock down our self-esteem and confidence. Instead, we have to try our best to gain their attention in a compelling way. Senior Olivia Raymond-Williams believes adults need to start listening to young voices who are trying to create a better future.

"I think that it's important that students have voices because we're the next generation and our way of thinking - especially now - is really revolutionary," she said. "We're gonna be the people that's gonna have to live with the world we create, so it's important that we get our voices heard."

I personally believe that we as students need to continue to act out and present our beliefs in front of big audiences so we can get attention that can spur changes. Raymond-Williams has some hopes for what she wants to see in the futures.

"I want to see equality for all types of people like genders and races," she said. "I ... want to cut down the violence in the U.S."

Raymond-Williams can't accept that other countries are able to have less murders, but America can't.

"I just want to live in a world that is safe, you know?"

If lawmakers want obedience, they should do their jobs. And if they want us to act like an adult, the least they could do is act like one too.

FHS BLACK STUDENT UNION

HBCU

COLLEGE NIGHT

LOCATION
Franklin HS, Room 205
3013 S. Mt. Baker Blvd
Seattle, WA 98144

RSVP at fhsbsu.blackexcellence@gmail.com

FRIDAY, MAY 18

5:30pm - 8pm

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HBCU Alumni Panel Discussion
"It's a Different World..."

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