



The Great Joe Rogan N-Word Controversy

White popular podcaster Joe Rogan apologized after someone posted a 30-second compilation clip on YouTube of Rogan repeatedly saying the N-word. Rogan described his uses of the word, culled from 12 years of shows, as taken “out of context,” but still apologized, now insisting “there’s no context where a white person is ever allowed to say that word.” Not even if and when it is *not* used as a racist, derogatory insult? It’s not as if society lacks sensitivity about this word when used as a racist insult. How many words are so problematic that we refer to them only by their first letter?



Larry Elder

What exactly are the rules?

Rappers and comedians, provided they are black, *can* publicly use the word? But whites who enjoy rap music and black comics cannot even sing the lyrics or repeat the joke if doing so means they say the N-word, whether publicly or privately if among friends? So, whites who enjoy Dave Chappelle, a black comedian who uses the word, may laugh at it, but it stops there?

In 2017 comedian Bill Maher apologized for using the N-word in a joke. Are we to believe that Maher has never used the word or heard it from his many black friends? But when he uses it in a joke on his uncensored cable show he suddenly becomes racially insensitive? Rapper Ice Cube chastised Maher for the joke. Never mind Cube’s repeated use of the N-word in his lyrics.

It does get confusing.

At a Lollapalooza concert, rapper Kanye West gave white attendees temporary permission to sing the lyrics to his No. 1 hit song “Gold Digger,” which included a word that rhymes with “digger.” Temporary permission? Did the temporary permission expire when the whites hit the lobby as they left the show, or did it expire when they got to the parking lot or when they drove up to their homes?

In his first book, former President Barack Obama rebuked a friend named “Ray” for what Obama considered Ray’s frequent baseless claims of racism. Obama told his friend, “Maybe we could afford to give the bad-ssed n— pose a rest. Save it for when we really needed it.” At the White House Correspondents Dinner in 2016, black comedian Larry Wilmore also dropped the N-word, after which cameras cut to a laughing Obama. And the president told a podcaster, “Racism, we are not cured of it. And it’s not just a matter of it not being polite to say n— in public.” And then-Sen. Joe Biden, at a committee hearing, read out loud part of a memo that quoted racial slurs used by a Louisiana legislator, “We already have a n— mayor (in New Orleans); we don’t need any more n— big shots.”

Now the senator was quoting someone, but didn’t Rogan say no matter the context?

Quentin Tarantino, the white filmmaker, used the N-word in many of his films, including *Pulp Fiction*. Black filmmaker Spike Lee slammed Tarantino for doing so, while the characters in Lee’s films say it in various ways and for various purposes. Never mind, according to actor Samuel L. Jackson, who



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frequently appears in Tarantino movies and insists that in nearly all of his films his character is usually “the smartest person in the room.” Mel Brooks used the N-word in his hit comedy “Blazing Saddles,” in which the butt of the jokes were dumb, racist whites.

Bill Cosby criticized black comedians for using the word, while, as we now know, Cosby serially drugged and sexually assaulted women. But he drew the line at black comics using the N-word. Race-hustling incendiary Al Sharpton weighed in on the Rogan controversy, calling his apology insufficient without “some penance.” Never mind that Sharpton once called the first black mayor of New York City a “n— whore.” To this day Sharpton refuses to apologize for perpetuating the Tawana Brawley hate crime fraud when Sharpton knowingly and falsely accused a former white assistant district attorney of raping the black teenager.

In 1979, toward the end of his stand-up career, comedian Richard Pryor apologized for decades of using the N-word in his performances. But contemporary comedians like D.L. Hughley, Katt Williams and Chris Rock use it, despite Pryor’s regret.

Meanwhile, as the blacks-are-victims-of-racism media obsesses over the Rogan “controversy,” never mind the real problems affecting the black community.

But, hey, at least Rogan groveled.

Larry Elder is a bestselling author and nationally syndicated radio talk show host. His latest book, The New Trump Standard, is available in paperback from Amazon.com and for Nook, Kindle, iBooks and Google Play. To find out more about Larry Elder, or become an “Elderado,” visit www.LarryElder.com. Follow Larry on Twitter @LarryElder. To read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate website at www.creators.com.

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