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THE N-WORD HAS BEEN CREATING CONTROVERSY FOR YEARS, BUT WHO REALLY DECIDES WHETHER OR NOT IT IS OK TO USE?

The n-word seems to be a hot news topic every year or so, and when a public figure like Jesse Jackson—one of our own—uses it, many ask who can and cannot use the word. So, is “nigger” exclusive to the African-American community?

“The only legitimate use of that word [should be] by us, but when white people use it illegitimately, they shouldn’t be shunned; they should be...critiqued and should have to go through some self-reflection as to what [that word] means,”

says race relations consultant David Campt.

The n-word has a history that dates back to slavery, but despite its past, some African-Americans have been embracing it for years. And when the urban community uses it, it may be offensive, but it’s definitely not racist, concludes Campt.

“Jackson’s use of the word...[is in no way] related to the demeaning of black people,” he says. However, when white people use it, they “call upon a much different, more horrible legacy.” —Tony Austin