



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on August 17, 2010

“Media Matters” wants Dr. Laura’s scalp

The controversy began when a female caller, who claimed to be an African-American in a racially mixed marriage claimed her husband’s friends and family members continually made racist remarks in her presence. Dr. Schlesinger, who often begins with the premise that the caller is usually wrong, immediately asked if the remarks were really racist, or if the caller was overly sensitive? She asked for a couple of examples.



Well, for one the caller said, they often ask her what black people think or how black people feel about certain issues. Nothing racist about that, Schlesinger insisted, despite the obvious stereotyping that the caller pointed out. After all, said the radio host, 95 percent of black people voted for Barack Obama in the last election simply because he was black.

Here, I believe, Schlesinger went over the line, but not so far over as to be legitimately accused of racism. She would have been on safer ground if she had said that 90 percent or more of African-Americans usually vote for the Democratic candidate for President, regardless of who he is or what he has done, since that percentage of the black vote has gone to white Democrats in previous elections and has for roughly the past 40 years. Schlesinger, who is a religious Jew, might also have noted that a substantial majority of the Jewish vote always goes to the Democratic candidate as well, while heavy majorities of conservative Christians tend to vote Republican. Okay, so what?

I have a Jewish friend who often quizzes me on what Catholics believe, not because he is trying to stereotype me, but because he is genuinely curious about what the church teaches and he knows I try to be a well-informed and faithful Catholic. I don’t find that offensive. One might have to hear the remarks the caller has found offensive in context to discern their nature.

But Dr. Laura got into serious difficulty — “deep doodoo” as former President Bush ’41 used to say — when the caller went on to say that some of the white folks in her life use the “n” word. Well, Schlesinger said, one hears black people using that word all the time. Doesn’t the caller listen to black comedians on HBO and elsewhere? They say that word all the time, she claimed. Schlesinger, who often bristles when confronted with the rules of “politically correct” speech wanted to know if one race had a monopoly on the use of the word.

Whereupon the caller accused the host of “spewing the N-word,” at which Dr. Schlessinger took immediate umbrage. She was merely quoting what some black entertainers say publicly and asking if that is acceptable, she said. But no, the caller insisted, Schlessinger had said the word repeatedly right there on her own radio program.



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The whole thing looks and sounds like a setup, but Schlessinger walked right into it like an ingénue. First she should not have argued implicitly that black Americans think alike about almost everything just because 90-some percent of them vote alike in presidential elections. Because of her moral conservatism, one might find that 80 or 90 percent of Dr. Laura's fans vote Republican most of the time, because that is the party that has successfully packaged and marketed "family values" conservatism for the past three decades. That doesn't mean they think alike about everything. The caller had a point about stereotyping.

Schlessinger should also have recognized that some terms are acceptable when used self-referentially, but not when used by others who are not covered by the label. Dean Martin, christened Dino Crocetti, could say "Dago" and get away with it. The Irish can joke about Irish fondness for whiskey without arousing cries of bigotry that might be heard if a WASP, other than the fictitious Archie Bunker, made the same comment. I have seen a local, overtly homosexual, politician turn white with rage over the use of the word "queer" in a newspaper editorial which used the word only to point out the kind of things that ought *not* be said to or about "gays." But I have also heard a group of people marching for "gay rights" come down the street chanting: "We're here! We're queer! We won't disappear!"

Schlessinger, who is no newcomer to political games, was led into the use of the n-word" by the caller, but she should have known better than to take the bait. She might also try to rid herself of the chip she is so quick to discern on the shoulders of her callers. But Eric Burns and whoever else may be involved in *Media Matters* are now trying to hound Dr. Laura off the air as they hounded CNN to get rid of Lou Dobbs for giving air time to the "birthers" who believe Barack Obama was born outside the United States. The tolerance level of Burns and Co. appears to be quite low. But its what fuels their calls to get those with whom they disagree off the air because of their alleged "intolerance.



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