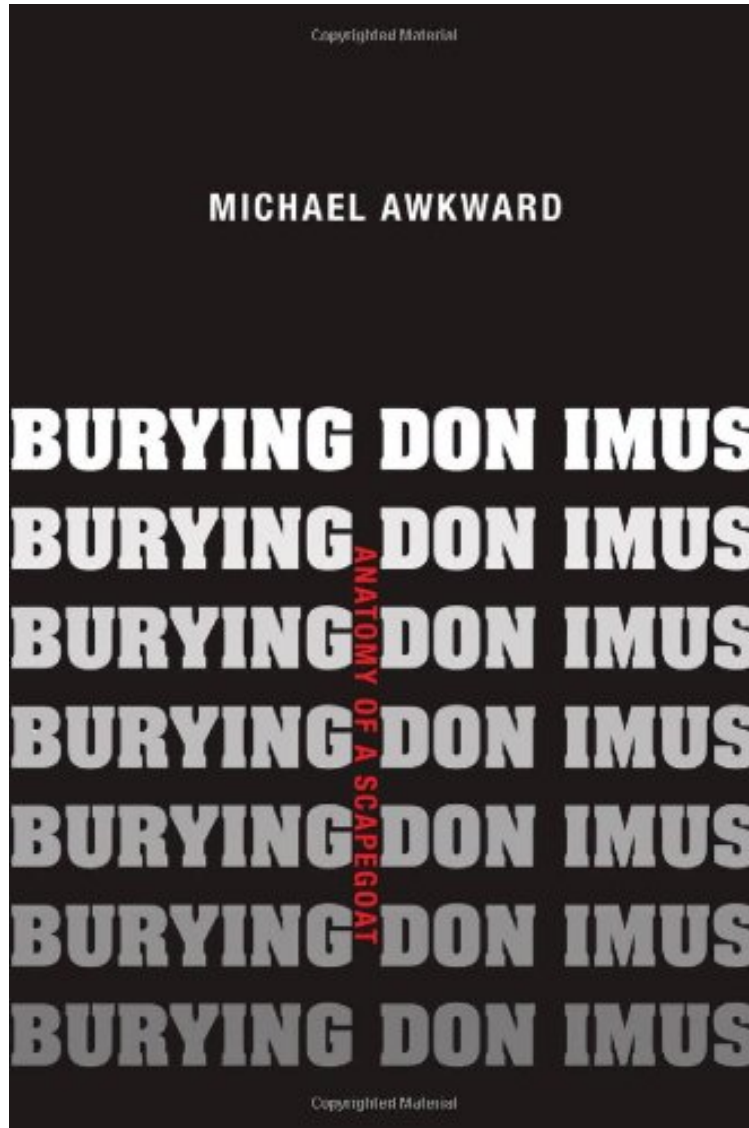


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## Burying Don Imus: Anatomy of a Scapegoat

*Michael Awkward*

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**Michael Awkward : Burying Don Imus: Anatomy of a Scapegoat** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Burying Don Imus: Anatomy of a Scapegoat:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The reality of IMUS' routineBy Thomas J. MayI thought the author presented an objective analysis of the IMUS in the Morning show's style on MS NBC. While I thought the skit that got him fired was over the top, Mr. Awkward presents the motivation that led to this skit and other "offensive" skits that IMUS was known for.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An analysis of race issuesBy Leon CzikowskyThe author urges that African Americans become more aware of the racial history. He is very critical of

elements of the hip-hop generation members who express pride in not knowing this history. The author observes that efforts of striking back at symbols of racial intolerance, such as Don Imus, do little to create racial healing. Controversies such as the Imus debate highlight the "still unresolved trauma" Blacks feel over racial progress combined with racism continuing. Don Imus, a shock jock, described the Rutgers women's basketball team as "that's some nappy headed hos". This provided evidence that racism continues. Critics made Imus a symbol of racial evil. Making Imus this symbol ignored that Imus was well known for outrageous comments, including calling Vice President Dick Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld as "war criminals". The criticism also ignored the amount of charity work Imus did with veterans hospitals and with ill children on his own ranch. Humor can expose deep seated anxieties. Some believe any white person telling a joke about Blacks "almost automatically" is "hate speech". The Imus Show is known for its informal mode of conversation. Jokes about race, Rednecks, and religion were known to arise in discussions and comedy skits. The author notes there are important difference between expressing intended racial beliefs, such as racial comments by Klan members, than what are the beliefs of a person performing a comedy sketch. Should John Donald Imus, the person, be held to hold the beliefs express in a comedy bit by Imus in the Morning? It is noted Freud claimed "jokes have a relation to the unconscious". Some see whites joking about Blacks as their racial hatred surfacing. The author warns that believing this, in many cases, does not help heal racial wounds.<sup>23</sup> of 24 people found the following review helpful. A Consideration of Race, Racial Humor, and Racial Healing By LEON L CZIKOWSKY The author urges that African Americans become more aware of the racial history. He is very critical of elements of the hip-hop generation members who express pride in not knowing this history. The author observes that efforts of striking back at symbols of racial intolerance, such as Don Imus, do little to create racial healing. Controversies such as the Imus debate highlight the "still unresolved trauma" Blacks feel over racial progress combined with racism continuing. Don Imus, a shock jock, described the Rutgers women's basketball team as "that's some nappy headed hos". This provided evidence that racism continues. Critics made Imus a symbol of racial evil. Making Imus this symbol ignored that Imus was well known for outrageous comments, including calling Vice President Dick Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld as "war criminals". The criticism also ignored the amount of charity work Imus did with veterans hospitals and with ill children on his own ranch. Humor can expose deep seated anxieties. Some believe any white person telling a joke about Blacks "almost automatically" is "hate speech". The Imus Show is known for its informal mode of conversation. Jokes about race, Rednecks, and religion were known to arise in discussions and comedy skits. The author notes there are important difference between expressing intended racial beliefs, such as racial comments by Klan members, than what are the beliefs of a person performing a comedy sketch. Should John Donald Imus, the person, be held to hold the beliefs express in a comedy bit by Imus in the Morning? It is noted Freud claimed "jokes have a relation to the unconscious". Some see whites joking about Blacks as their racial hatred surfacing. The author warns that believing this, in many cases, does not help heal racial wounds.

"That's some nappy-headed hos." With these now-infamous words, uttered in 2007 to describe the supposed appearance of the Rutgers women's basketball team, the radio talk show host Don Imus became the improbable focus of a heated national discussion on race, gender, and the power of language. Excoriated in the media as racist and sexist, Imus quickly lost the corporate sponsorships that had made his show so lucrative and, despite a public meeting with the Rutgers athletes and their coach to apologize for his comments, was fired by CBS two weeks later. In *Burying Don Imus*, Michael Awkward provides the first balanced, critical analysis of Imus's comments and the public outrage they provoked. Written from the singular perspective of a black intellectual with both a long-standing commitment to feminism and a deep familiarity with-and appreciation of-Imus in the Morning, this book contends that the reaction to the insult ignored the nature of Imus's contributions to popular culture and political debate while eliding the real and very complicated issues within contemporary racial politics. Awkward's probing account analyzes the responses within the African-American community as reflective of deep-seated anxieties rooted in the collective trauma resulting from centuries of slavery, Jim Crow, and racial violence. Placing the controversy in multiple contexts, he addresses Imus's public persona and the satirical intent of his show, and delves into such charged topics as the perception of women athletes in American culture, the tradition of racist humor, the sexist language of hip-hop, and the politics of black hairstyles. Awkward also juxtaposes the Imus incident with other recent controversies, including the rape accusations leveled against white players on Duke University's lacrosse team in 2006, in order to demonstrate how sensational spectacles of racism play out in the media again and again. Highly personal, eclectic, and illuminating, *Burying Don Imus* examines American society's predilection for self-congratulatory, ineffective hand-wringing over issues of race and racism and its inability to engage productively with the historic oppression of African Americans.

"Burying Don Imus is not only the book America needed. It is the book America didn't know it needed. Without the deeply contextualized knowledge that the author both possessed and went looking for, America would never have known how knee-jerk its condemnation of Don Imus was. This author included and how existentially misguided its reaction was to the Rutgers incident. Though I am thoroughly dissed in it, maybe because of that thorough 'dissing' I

cannot recommend this book highly enough. It is both entertaining and illuminating." Debra Dickerson