

“If Niggers Drink Beer, Then We’re All Niggers”

“One Voluntaryist’s Perspective” is an original column by the founder and editor Skyler J. Collins.

Accusations of racism and bigotry are seemingly everywhere these days. You’re not hip if you’re not ashamed of your whiteness or manhood or calling others racist or bigoted. I for one have had my feel. Maybe I am a little racist, or maybe I’m not. I was struck by this exchange (video) in the first episode of Louis CK’s *Horace and Pete* starring Alan Alda as Uncle Pete:

The scene is a bar, Uncle Pete’s serving drinks, a few regulars sitting at the bar, but some girl showed up who’s not a regular. Louis CK plays Horace and was just arguing with Uncle Pete after asking if he could make himself scarce when Horace’s sister comes over because Uncle Pete tends to make conflict.

Uncle Pete: *Oh, but now get his piss ant son Horace telling me I gotta get lost because he’s afraid of his sister coming over here with her Jew lawyer.*

Some girl: *Um, that’s pretty racist.*

Uncle Pete: *Um, racist is what you do, not what you say. This place ain’t racist. We served coloreds here in the ’30s.*

Some girl: *Oh, my God.*

Uncle Pete: *Yeah, nobody would serve boogies in those days. I got a picture of a nigger sitting right there in that stool, in 1930. You look at that and call me a racist.*

Horace: *Ugh, God damn it, Jesus.*

Pete (Steve Buscemi): *Don’t worry, he’ll run himself down.*

Horace: *Fuck.*

Uncle Pete: *My father, Pete VI, he used to say, “If niggers drink beer, then we’re all niggers.” Racist, I’ll give you fucking racist.*

Some girl: *That guy’s a nightmare.*

Uncle Pete: *Don’t come in here, then.*

Some girl: *How about I come in here and he stops being a gross racist? Why is that not an option?*

Uncle Pete: *What I would love is if you were to shut up.*

I tend to agree with Uncle Pete, that racist is what you do, not what you say. Words are words. Stick and stones, right? I don't have a habit of using racial slurs. That's not the language I was taught growing up. But so what if I did? How is "nigger" any worse than "mother fucker"? I use fuck and shit and douche and bitch with some regularity, even around my children, but not around those I care about *and* know that it bothers.

My wife's Mexican. We'll throw race-based jokes at each other. It's all good fun. Do I ever "do" racism? I don't think so. I strongly believe that doing so would be harmful to me. Not just because it would bring me scorn, but because it would limit my financial prospects. Uncle Pete would agree. He never turned away a "nigger" who wanted to trade his hard earned money for a drink. His family served them and happily took their money when nobody else would. How can that be racist just because of the words he uses? Sounds like progress to me.

It all seems a major distraction from the fundamental issue plaguing civilized society: the state. I don't care if you call blacks "niggers" or latinos "spicks" or asians "chinks" or gays "faggots." I only care if you violate the voluntary principle directly or indirectly. Then we have a problem. That's a real offense, a real attack on my person and my liberties. That's real sticks and stones.

In contrast, the market is where racism goes to die. Those who do racism by discriminating against certain groups of people are only hurting themselves. It's markets that have historically brought people together in common interest, and to get rich. Politics grossly lags behind. Free markets have always been and will always be the solution to problems of this sort, not politics.