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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

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Jesse Jackson: No More "N" Word

Happily, Jesse Jackson isn't just mentioning Michael Richards -- he's also calling on all rappers, hip-hop artists and black comics to stop using the "n" word as well. Just as gay people feel free to call each other "fags," many black people in the entertainment world especially say "nigga" constantly. Indeed, no one uses the word more than black people, especially in the media. And if Richards hadn't been on an angry tirade, if he hadn't been mocking and attacking two black patrons, wouldn't the question of using that word in a standup act be much more complex? Of course, Eminem never uses the word; he knows there are certain lines you don't cross. But surely Jackson and Bill Cosby et al are right: any desire to defuse the word and claim it as their own (a la fag and queer and fairy for gays) has long outlived its usefulness and now it's just a case of filling up the world's image of black people with gangstas and thugs and gold-toothed caricatures of rappers and the "n" word. The one annoying postscript to this is that Jackson also called for a boycott of the just-out Season Seven of "Seinfeld." Why? Richards has apologized publicly and repeatedly (and somewhat convincingly albeit in a clueless manner). The show itself certainly isn't racist and Richards is only a small part of it creatively. What possible purpose could a boycott of the DVD set serve? And since it won't be a successful boycott, why would Jackson idiotically call for one? It's like that college student on "The Daily Show" last night staging a hunger strike over his meal plan. You just cheapen these protests by calling them willy-nilly for any old reason. [The LA Times](#) has a good rundown of the issue.

POSTED BY MICHAEL IN NEW YORK AT 11:15 AM



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