



Dirty Word Chapter

You might be wondering why a chapter on dirty words would be in such a fine and upstanding book. Perhaps there is more to dirty words than meets the ear.

Frackin' Unbelievable

We at Goofy Foot Press probably use the word “fuck” more times each day than the Pope says Amen. The sad thing is, we mainly use our fucks to express anger or frustration. Seldom do we use them in the fun way. This is often the case with sexual slang, where swear words and sex words are often the same.

“Fuck” as an expression of anger or despair is such an integral part of our language that we have created more acceptable ways of saying it, such as “friggin’”—as if friggin’ doesn’t have fuck written all over it—or “frackin’” as was used on *Battlestar Gallactica*.

While people who use fuck-slang aren’t always aware of the sexual connection, there’s no way that texting “WTF” or saying “It’s the Cylons, we’re totally fracked!” have any power without a connection to sex.

Calling People by the Female Genitals

When the author was a kid, the worst thing he knew to call another person was a “cunt.” He never could bring himself to use the word, but then again, he had yet to work with anyone in the entertainment industry.

Another slang word that kids often use is “pussy.” While pussy is a term that refers to the female genitals, it is also an expression that boys use to taunt other boys with who are being wimps, cowards, or who are using good sense and not acting on impulse alone.

Why does our culture associate cowardice with being a woman or having a woman's genitals? And why would we want to discredit the very female genitals that so many of us crave to touch and know more about?

A Fascinating Comment from Sweden

We assume that using sexual slang for swearing and for insulting others is the hallmark of a sexually-repressive society. This makes the following reader comment all the more interesting – when you consider that few people think of Sweden as being sexually-repressive:

"As someone living in Sweden (and fluent in Swedish) but American, I have to say that there are plenty of sexual swear words in Swedish. One of the worst things to say is the word "fitta," which can be translated as "cunt." Many are trying to (slowly) reclaim this word. Most girls in high school will also say that "hora" or "whore" is one of the worst insults for them. "Slampa" (slut) is also another derogatory word used the same way as in English. In many cases "kuk" (cock) can be used to express frustration although it is not intended to insult a specific person."

Mother-Fucking, Titty-Sucking, Blue-Balled What?

Warren Johnson, a researcher, studied how normal eight-year-old boys and girls use slang. According to Johnson, the children's favorite expression when out of parental earshot was "mother-fucking, titty-sucking, blue-balled bitch." Johnson hadn't expected to find America's eight-year-old children capable of outswearing members of his former Marine troop.

Of particular interest is Johnson's observation of an eight-year-old girl yelling "Suck my dick!" to another child who was annoying her. As long as she was going to use sexual slang for swearing, why didn't the little girl yell the more anatomically correct "Eat my pussy!"? Perhaps even an eight-year-old child knows that the way to insult someone in our society is to tell them to take the woman's place in sex, with terms such as "You cocksucker!" and "Screw you!" being crude ways of demeaning a person by saying, "You're the woman in sex!"

It is difficult to understand how something as delicious as sex could be linked to anger or frustration, unless you haven't been getting any

sex in a long time. It is equally difficult to understand why being perceived as a woman or as a woman who is having sex is a put-down. Yet these are the premises about sex that we grow up with.

When Eight Turns Eighteen

What's going to happen when the little girl who yelled "suck my dick" gets older and wants to share sex with a boy? She's supposed to enjoy performing the very insults that our society has taught her to hurl at others.

Equally disconcerting is what this attitude does to boys. The message is that you either screw or get screwed, the former being associated with winning, the latter with losing.

Sluts, Whores, Virginity & Sewers

Few religions have done well with the notion of women and sexuality. According to early Christians, a virgin daughter occupied a higher place in heaven than her mother, since the mother had sex for the daughter to have been born. Around 400 A.D., Christianity's St. Jerome wrote, "Though God can do all things, He cannot raise a virgin after she has fallen" (Epistles 22). Not even God can help you when you lose your virginity, if you are a woman. It's never been a problem for men, but then again, men are the ones who wrote the scriptures.

Rigid as St. Jerome may have been about women's virginity, he was quite the feminist compared to some of his Christian and Jewish predecessors. One early church father described woman as "a temple built over a sewer," with sewer referring to her genitals. Men who made statements like these were later declared saints.

Perhaps it's no coincidence that many women who are unable to have orgasms were raised in households where the temple/sewer notion still holds sway.

To this day people still equate a woman's personal reputation with her appetite for sex: if her sex drive is too low, she is cold; too high and she is easy, a slut, whore or ho. While young men are free to strut their sexuality, young women learn to carefully regulate theirs.

Note Contrary to what makes sense, women are often the first to accuse other women of being sluts or whores. Men may have been the

bozos who wrote the anti-woman theology, but women can be its cruelest enforcers. Also, if the human body was made in the image and likeness of God, as scripture says, why were church leaders so rejecting of women's genitals and sexuality? Had God been drinking the day He crafted the clitoris and vagina?

Dicks, Pricks & Morons

Why do we refer to a person who is being a total jerk as a "dick" or "prick"? A dick should be someone who brings pleasure, but that is not what our culture teaches us.

Adults will praise a young boy for his latest drawing or for making it to the toilet on time, but if he proudly displays his pint-sized boner, throats get cleared. Boys in our society are encouraged to spend eons learning how to make a baseline jump shot or to hit an A-minor flat nine on a guitar, yet they are taught to ignore their own sexuality in hopes that it will simply go away until they get older. Maybe that's why many of us grow up having more sensitivity for what happens in music, art, sports or video gaming than for what happens in bed.

Booting & Name-Calling

While our culture encourages its straight men to strut their sexuality, this doesn't mean we always do. For instance, the following story tells of how the term "faggot" is used by straight guys to deride other straight guys for preferring women to beer. It is from Regina Barreca's *They Used to Call Me Snow White But Then I Drifted*, Viking/Penguin:

"When I started my first year as a student at Dartmouth College, there were four men for every woman. I thought I had it made. Dartmouth had only recently admitted women, and the administration thought it best to get the alumni accustomed to the idea by sneaking us in a few at a time. With such terrific odds in my favor socially, how could I lose? I'd dated in high school and although I wasn't exactly Miss Budweiser, I figured I'd have no problem getting a date every Saturday night. But I noticed an unnerving pattern. I'd meet a cute guy at a party and talk for a while. We would then be interrupted by some buddy of his who would drag him off to another room to watch a friend of theirs 'power-boot' (the local vernacular for 'projectile vomiting'), and I realized that the social situation was not what I had expected.

Then somebody explained to me that on the Dartmouth campus they think you're a faggot if you like women more than beer. This statement indicated by its very vocabulary the advanced nature of the sentiment behind it. If a guy said he wanted to spend the weekend with his girlfriend, for example, he'd be taunted by his pals, who would yell in beery bass voices 'Whatsa matter with you, Skip? We're gonna get plowed, absolutely blind this weekend, then we're all gonna power-boot. And you wanna see that broad again? Whaddayou, a faggot or something?'"

Bitch vs. Faggot

The dirty words aimed at women often speak to how they regulate the space between their legs – with too many penises not being so good. Insults at men are aimed at a different level.

Guys are forever needing to demonstrate manliness. If we slip up, we're called a fag or queer, even if the only dick we've ever held is our own. This is particularly true among teenagers. A knee-jerk response that teenage boys have when another boy steps outside of the fragile notion of what's considered masculine is to call him a "fag."

The insults for men and women have the same premise: each likes dick too much. But a woman who is being insulted is usually allowed to remain heterosexual, albeit a slutty one. The guy, however, has his sexual orientation called into question. A man's heterosexual status knows no rest. It has to be earned and re-earned or he risks falling off the stilts that define him as straight.

Origin of the Bimbo & the Stud

"Bimbo" and "stud" aren't exactly dirty words, but they achieve dirty-word status when you consider the following observation made by a female friend of the author who was sitting on the beach:

A father was standing a few feet into the surf with a young boy on his right side and a young girl on his left. The children were the same size. Whenever a wave came in the father would keep his right arm rigid. This helped the boy brave the oncoming wave. At the same time, the father would lift his left arm, pulling the girl into the air so she could avoid the splash. The boy was being taught how to face the wave; the girl was being taught to expect a man to rescue her.

Bimbo training starts early in our country. All too often, the first step is getting girls to believe that they are more fragile than boys. Then, ads in women's magazines spawn the belief that there is something unsexy about the female body unless it's plugged with a scented tampon and accessorized with perfume, high heels, and is Photoshopped to look two clicks on this side of anorexic.

Blowjobs & Bounced Checks

Consider the following words of an American wife:

"My husband's going to be furious when he finds out the check I wrote bounced, so I better give him a really good blowjob tonight."

This book has no problem with really good blowjobs. But when blowjobs are motivated by fear, lack of power, or manipulation, it adds to the use of expressions like "blow me" as a putdown.

Then again, after this chapter was first published, protests from female readers flooded in, e.g. trading blowjobs for money is one of the few ways women have had throughout the ages to even the score economically; trading sex for money brings far more joy into the world and is less destructive than the ways some men earn their paychecks; and what about the possibility that the wife finds the situation to be a turn on and might totally enjoy giving the payback blowjob? Husbands weighed in as well: "My bank charges \$35 for each bounced check. If that gets me oral sex, let her bounce all the checks she wants!"

Rap Lyric Ho'down – Dirty Words and Then Some

No chapter on dirty words would be complete without mention of rap song lyrics. It is not unusual for rap songs to have a liberal peppering of words like "bitch" and "ho," as well as sexual references that don't always express loving intent toward women. Here are two examples of rap-song lyrics that contain the words bitch and ho:

The first is from Soulja Boy's "Crank That (Soulja Boy)." Here's one of the lines with just three words:

Superman dat ho.

Superman dat ho means to ejaculate on a woman's back when she is sleeping so she wakes up in the morning with the sheet stuck to her back like Superman's cape after the cum dries. It could be payback for when a woman won't give him sex. Soulja Boy swears this isn't what he

meant, so let's look at another line in this same song:

I'm cocking on your bitch ass.

"I'm cocking on your ass" is rap for when one man says to another: "I have a gun and will shoot you with it." So why make it "on your *bitch* ass?" Soulja Boy ramps up the insult by throwing in the gender card and making it a female reference. Ramping-up insults like this happens so often in rap that we don't even notice it.

The second song to consider is Dr. Dre's "Bitches Ain't Shit." Here are three of the lines:

Bitches ain't shit but hoes and tricks

Lick on these nuts and suck the dick.

Get the fuck out after you're done.

Most people would assume this is a derogatory song about women. However, the song is apparently about a fight Dr. Dre had with his fellow N.W.A. band member and former friend Eazy-E. Dr. Dre also references N.W.A.'s manager as a "white bitch."

If this is a song about men who were suing each other in a court of law, there are thousands of terms Dr. Dre could have used to express anger. So it's telling that he and other rap artists use terms that are sexually degrading to women. No wonder why some of the people who work for companies that distribute songs like these won't let their own children listen to them. They are some of the few parents who actually listen to the lyrics.

Intellectuals rationalize the negativity toward women in rap by claiming it's a cultural matter, and is not meant to degrade women. Is this what black women think? How many men would dismiss it with a smile if another man said these things about their wives or girlfriends? But give misogyny rhythm and base, and all bets are off.

Apple Computer paid Dr. Dre and his co-founder \$3 billion to purchase their company. Do you think Apple would have bought the company if Dr. Dre had written vile lyrics about gay men instead of women?

The Sociology of Bitch vs. Ho

We usually think of "bitch" and "ho" as meaning the same thing. But that's not always the case in rap lyrics. According to sociologists Adams and Fuller, the term "bitch" in rap lyrics could be referring to a

powerful woman who dominates her household and her man. They suggest that “the bitch” in rap music is a woman who has a sharp tongue and is somewhat castrating.

The “ho” in rap lyrics is a different woman entirely. She is a woman who let’s herself be used, often to manipulate men into getting what she wants. She will give a man any kind of sex he might desire to achieve her ultimate goal. She is a woman whose moral compass could use a bit of adjustment. She is not well thought of in the world of rap.

A male singer can establish his street credentials by referring to the hoes he’s had sex with and which of their body openings he has stuck himself into.

Ultimately, there is no easy answer to why rap singers use words about women and their sexuality that sound hateful. Nor is there a straightforward answer for why so many women download these songs and enjoy singing and dancing to them. But this doesn’t mean we shouldn’t call them on it.

End Of Chapter Notes: The Soulja Boy lyrics are from Soulja Boy’s “Crank That (Soulja Boy)” from ColliPark Music/Interscope Records. It received a Grammy nomination. “Bitches Ain’t Shit” is from Dr. Dre’s album “The Chronic.” This song is still covered today by a number of artists, including a Columbia University a cappella group composed of twelve very white young women that has gathered more than 1.5 million YouTube views. The analysis of the meaning of “bitches” vs “hos” is from an article titled *The Words Have Changed But the Ideology Remains the Same: Misogynistic Lyrics in Rap Music* by Terri Adams and Douglas Fuller, Journal of Black Studies.

There are certainly times when fuck-slang is used in a positive sense, as in “fuckin’ wonderful” or “fuckin’ amazing.” But when the word is used this way it tends to be role-neutral and refers to the act of intercourse rather than the woman’s role in it. When it takes its more usual form of “We’re totally fucked now!” it’s got “girl” all over it. As for the idea that the insult gets its grit from the homosexual implication, we have plenty of insults for that and few people hesitate to use them when that’s what they mean to say.

Special Thanks to the writings of Ira Reiss, Paul Evdokimov, David Schnarch, Regina Barreca, Carol Tavris, the late Bob Stoller, and many others for inspiring concepts used in this chapter, and to the famous sex researchers who originally suggested that people should think of foreplay as everything that happened since the last time you had sex.

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