

SWASTIKA & SOUL FOOD

By Goldie DeWitt

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It took me a while trying to figure out the proper title for this article, but I figure i couldn't go wrong with keeping it simple and to the point. I speak on this to share with you my personal experiences and nothing else. In no way shape or form is this to promote racism or ignite any thing ugly, but if anything for you to apply answers to things that need fixing. We've all seen movies, television shows, news clips and articles on racism in other countries, states and even right here in California, but never did I think I would be confronted with dealing with racism face to face. For me, it was really a shock because I find myself being a cool cat to everyone, regardless of their color, race or religion. I figured if I took the proactive approach and treated people with kindness and respect, this should fertilize the response I got back from them, but this was not the case when I became a Black business owner in the City of Chino Hills, CA. It's taken me a while to write this, but I feel I've held it in long enough. On Feb 15, 2005 I purchased a neighborhood bar in the city of chino hills with nothing but happy expectations of remodeling the place and bringing something fun and exciting for everyone to enjoy. I have to admit, it was a rough start out the gate. I opened my doors for business on a Tuesday, and by Saturday the fools who used to kick up dust at the bar before I bought it were getting very irritated of the fact that the new Owner was Black and they were starting to express their dislike. I was shocked at the ignorance coming from these people being it's now 2005. I honestly felt like a black man trying to open a shop back in the 1940's or something. I never seen a real SWASTIKA tattoo on anyone until I purchased this bar, I never heard the word Nigger screamed so loud so many times until I purchased this bar, I never received ugly hate airmail until I purchased this bar. Wow, I tell you, I saw real fast that this was going to be an uphill battle. I had to grab my nutts, take a deep breath and show these people that I'm here to do good business rather they like me or not. I remember this chick told me "wow, you and Mr. Woods (who owns the Ford dealership) are the only 2 Black business Owners in chino hills!" I was speechless; I didn't even know what to say to her. I was there everyday listening to these local fake ass two face mutherfuckers telling me thanks for cleaning the place up but calling me bad names behind my back. The ugliness came from people of 21 years old to 60 years old, generations of racism rolled over over through out the years and it came from the whites & the Mexicans. I gotta say, the word Racism is not what this really is. To me, a real racist does not react the way these people are reacting. These people are reacting to me out of bitterness and anger. This anger seems to be charged by seeing a young black man come into their town and purchase the ONLY bar in their entire city and they have also expressed their dislike that my background is heavily involved in the Adult Entertainment Industry. There may be things that they don't like about me and my business decisions, but with them having so much anger, jealousy and bitterness inside of them, the easiest way for them to express their dislike is to call me a Nigger. I really kinda find this a way of them showing ignorance and a lack of communication. Ignorance is the lack of not knowing and when you don't know or understand somesomething, you can find yourself being intimidated of the unknown, and when people are intimidated, they seem to react in a hostile way. This can easily be fixed if we all took the time to bridge that gap of a simple thing called "communication". If I could translate it to them that I come in peace and I mean no harm to them, but to bring

something positive to their city, and they still react with hatred, I don't really believe that is racism, I think that is plain ol' jealousy and hatterism and it could still be cured with proper communication. It's only so much anyone can continue to deal with stupid shit, so I soon found myself saying "fuck these bitch face mutherfuckers". I did more business & better business than any place that has ever done business at that location. I soon had the locals telling me "thanks for cleaning up this place and making it into a very nice safe place, but sorry to say, by this time I was finished with it and wanted to move on to another location where I would feel welcomed and appreciated, so I decided to sale the 1DOWN Lounge after owning it for a year and 10 months. Once the locals found out I was selling it, they stepped to me to buy it, but I was like "fuck you" I ain't selling shit to yo bitch ass, but this 1 white guy named Fred who lived in Chino Hills and always came to the bar dam near every day stepped to me and made me a solid offer and told me he was serious and already took out a loan against his house and he had the money in the bank. I told Fred to let me think about it and after thinking about it, I decided I would sale it to him, because he was 1 who always treated me cool and I had no bad feelings about him. He said this would be a dream come true for him to own the bar right next to his house. I told myself business is business; don't let my personal feeling get in the way. Money is money. During the time we were getting all the paper work together and starting escrow, I found myself feeling a little odd about this transaction. My staff was very sad many of the locals were sad and the guy Fred was running around happy as fuck telling everyone he had bought the bar and was gonna be the new owner but I just wanted it over. Well, on November 14, 2006 at aprox 11:30pm I get a devastating phone call that Fred had just died! He suffered a blood clot that hit his heart and he had just only turned 50 years old. This was very shocking, I've never dealt with nothing like this and it was a very sad thing to see happen to such a cool guy who was very happy at that time in his life. I must say at this moment "Rest in Peace Fred". Well, after Fred's passing, I took this as some type of sign from God that maybe it wasn't meant for me to sale the bar or for Fred to buy the bar so I have decided to keep it. Once I made that decision, I was able to recognize that odd feeling I was having during the sale, and it was that I was gonna miss the place.

I've come to realize that I will always have a hand full of people that don't agree with my life style or the color of my skin, but that doesn't mean I need to jump ship and relocate. I've never done it and even with this attempt, God put it right back in my hand and now I see why. I've now once again remodeled and now I've brought something else new to Chino Hills that this city has never seen "SOUL FOOD"! That's right baby the 1DOWN Lounge & Grill now features Southern Style Soul Food by the world renowned Chef "Day Day". I'm bringing that DOWN home cooking right to them. Trust me, I'm in this for the long run, and when God has sent me a message so loud and clear as this, I'm not gonna ignore it.

I will continue to do business in Chino Hills and this time I'm gonna make them love me, and as Don Cornelius from Soul Train would say.... "I wish you love, peace and soul."

Thank you for reading this.

Goldie DeWitt

(UPDATE: I sold the 1DOWN Lounge April 20, 2007)

