

Celebrity Chef Paula Deen: 'I'm Not a Racist'

Celebrity chef Paula Deen said she is not a racist during a tearful interview on NBC's *Today* show Wednesday.

Deen has been plagued by controversy since admitting in a legal deposition that she's used the N-word in the past.

In response to her critics she said, "If there's anyone out there that has never said something that they wished they could take back, if you're out there, please pick up that stone and throw it so hard at my head that it kills me. Please, I want to meet you."

Despite the backlash, she said she still "had wonderful support." Her supporters include former *Food Network Star* winner Aaron McCargo, Jr., who is African-American.

He called her a "friend" on Facebook.

"Paula has always been very helpful and supportive throughout my career ... We are all human and we should never be quick to judge anyone," he said.

Author Anne Rice also came to Deen's defense. She wrote on Facebook, "Wow, This looks like a crucifixion. I may be wrong but aren't we becoming something of a lynch mob culture?"