

Paula Deen: Deep South Racist or Victim of Media Hype?

Paula Deen, known as the country cooking queen by millions, has stepped in a bona fide cow patty.

Deen, the gray-haired, wide-eyed woman who stares me in the face every week while I wait in line to buy my groceries, admitted to having used the N-word in the past. It seems set to spoil her culinary kingdom, as sponsors have begun dropping her left and right.

The hype started after a former manager at Deen's Savannah, Ga., restaurants filed suit against Deen and her brother for sexual and racial harassment. According to Lisa T. Jackson's lawsuit, Deen and Bubba Hier are guilty of acts of violence, racism and discrimination. Deen's attorney is adamantly opposing the allegations.

But Deen's own admission to using the N-word is stirring up dishes against the celebrity that could forever sour her stew.

When deposed as part of the case, Deen was asked if she ever used the N-word. Her answer: "Yes, of course." Deen said she likely used the offensive term when describing an incident to her husband "when a man burst into the bank that [she] was working at and put a gun to [her] head."

Deen has since apologized, but even the apology has set off a media firestorm against her.

Is the media exploiting the use of a foul term under duress, or is Deen really a full-blown racist who should be exposed for her undercover hatred for people different from herself? Is this much ado about nothing, or does it merely uncover remaining roots of racism in America? Will Deen pay the price for the sins of many that never come to light? Sound off.