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# First-Gen Voices: Creative and Critical Narratives on the First- Generation College Experience

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## White Boy

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“I Want To Hang Out With You Guys.” That’s what one of my White homeboys said to me. I initially thought that it was a terrific idea until my homegirl (his girlfriend) said, “I don’t think that’s a good idea.” Then it hit me! She must be worried about the risk of hanging out with me and my Latino homeboys, so I said, “It’s alright girl—I’m not gonna’ let anything happened to him.” She said, “I know that, but you know that wasn’t what I was talking about.” Then I really knew what she was talking about. She wasn’t worried about the risk of violence that can erupt at any given time (which she should be worried about) as much as she was worried about the racial politics of her boyfriend hanging out with me and my Latino homeboys in the gang dominated neighborhoods we party in. I understood where she was coming from.

See, my homeboy was White and I’m mixed White and Latino. Growing up, however, I wasn’t quite as accepted as my darker skinned Latino friends. To this day my friends of almost 6 years still consider me the “**White Boy**”. Although my homeboy said it doesn’t bother him if they call him a “**White Boy**,” it bothers me. It’s about respect. Although I understand the term “**White Boy**” can be used as a term for racial identity, in this case it’s not, it is used as a difference, a difference that is looked down upon. Another thing that doesn’t help my White homeboy is the fact that he doesn’t have any street cred or reputation as well as he doesn’t dress the part either. Instead, he looks like a kakis and dress shirt type of guy, which means that going to a party in Pomona or La Puente isn’t the best option.

Don’t get me wrong. I’m not singling anyone out, especially not my Latino people, I just believe it brings us back to a bigger issue of socially based racial segregation, which has been established by previous generations, yet is still affecting our youth within our modern day society. There are some who would have you think otherwise. Consider the lyrics from the song “My Life” by The Game: “Fuck Jesse Jackson, cuz it ain’t about race now.” But then compare this to the song “Vicious,” by Chicano Rap artist Mr. Criminal, where he recites his worries about being banned from the music industry due to his name and appearance: “Picture having a name like Criminal, thinking they will ban you, especially when you’re young, Hispanic, with some tattoos.” Honestly, I think that The Game has lost sight of reality due to his multimillionaire status and has forgotten the racial segregation, as well as racial hate, in the streets that has yet to elude us. However, Mr. Criminal, as someone active in the Chicano Rap<sup>1</sup> industry as well as in the streets, understands the struggle of the racial hatred and racial segregation that has been shown in the rap industry to his Latino people.

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<sup>1</sup> Chicano Rap is a rap industry that consists of Chicano rappers, typically considered a part of the underground rap industry and usually consists of active or former gang members performing songs.

In other Chicano Rap songs, artists tend to use skin color as a way of emphasizing that a person is not Latino, but White or Black. This is supposed to make another artist's reputation look bad (making him or her appear as an outsider). This again goes to show that the term "**White Boy**" can be used in a derogatory manner and can tie into street politics, which promotes socially based racial segregation and leads to racial hatred. The reality is that it isn't safe for people from certain ethnic backgrounds to be in certain places or with certain people in certain environments, and from what I have gone through and have seen I can testify to this.