

# Nehalem And The N-Word: Campaign Tactics Go Low and Grow

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Racial slurs and deprecating actions were directed toward mayoral candidate Micah White during the general election in November — and some are continuing today.

“Dream on nigger,” Nehalem resident Steven Meadows texted to White on Nov. 6 – two days before the contested race with Mayor William L. Dillard, Jr. “May as well pack your sh\*\*, loser. Bill Dillard for Mayor of Nehalem, keep Nehalem, Nehalem.”

White, a co-creator of the national Occupy Wall Street movement and a member of the City of Nehalem Budget Committee, started receiving derogatory remarks, thinly veiled death threats and questionable photos during his unsuccessful bid against the incumbent. The previously appointed mayor won that race with an 80-to-20 percent advantage over White. White is biracial African American; his father is black and his mother is white.



*Micah White*

Last week, Meadows, the texter, explained his reasoning for the message to White.

“Because he’s a nigger, that’s why,” Meadows said in a phone interview with the North Coast Citizen. “Nehalem is Nehalem because of what it is. I did not vote for the guy, and I’m glad as hell he lost. Take him snipe hunting. There are lots of old stumps that need fertilizer.”

In addition, Nehalem City Council Member Hilary Howell shared a Nov. 6 post on her Facebook page from fellow Dillard supporter Amy VanDyke stating, “If you support Bill Dillard for mayor, text this number with ‘vote for Bill Dillard for mayor and keep Nehalem, Nehalem!’ Micah is texting from this number. The number is Nehalem People’s Association’s (NPA) number.”



*Amy VanDyke*

VanDyke is not a local registered voter, according to the Tillamook County Clerk’s office. On her Facebook page, she says she is from Aspen, Colo. and currently lives in Manzanita.

NPA is a group formed by White to encourage citizen participation in local government. Keep Nehalem, Nehalem is a campaign slogan used by some Dillard supporters and a Facebook page. The ‘about’ section states: “For those who want the truth about Nehalem without being censored.”

The thread that ensued from VanDyke’s post and Howell’s share (also reported to be visible on the Keep Nehalem, Nehalem’s page) is laden with negative comments aimed at White. Much of the activity is supported by smiley face and thumbs-up emoticons.

“Amy posted my number and a bunch of people spammed it,” White recalled.

Some of the comments on Facebook included:

- “I didn’t know you can buy cell phones with food stamps.”
- “You can get anything for free (from working taxpayers) if you know how to work it.”
- “Obama phone.”
- “This a\*\*hole needs to get planted somewhere... lowlife piece of sh\*\*... f\*\*\*ing pussy!!”
- “All he has to say is how terrible Bill and Jeff are and how this town is filled with close-minded racist ‘good ol boys.’”
- “Well maybe if he gets enough texts back he won’t send out texts to vote for him.”
- “It’s illegal to send unsolicited commercial email messages to wireless devices, including cell phones and pagers, unless the sender gets your permission first.”

White said he obtained the phone numbers, as well as mailing addresses and party affiliations, from a voter database. According to Oregon Secretary of State Communications Director Molly Woon, he did nothing illegal.

“I have confirmed that there is nothing prohibiting a person from contacting voters on the public voter file through text message,” Woon said.

Regarding the threats, Woon added, “Insofar as the Elections Division is concerned, depending on what the threats are, (ORS 260.665) prohibits using undue influence, directly or indirectly, with the intent to induce any person to ‘be or refrain from or cease being a candidate.’”

She noted any Oregon elector could file a written complaint with their office, signed by them and providing evidence of the allegation.

“The investigation should be about whoever allegedly engaged in undue influence,” Woon said. “Not whose page it was on, unless they are one and the same.”

While Dillard didn’t dissuade the Keep Nehalem, Nehalem Facebook users targeting White, he told the Citizen he doesn’t endorse the activity.



Mayor William L. Dillard, Jr.

“I myself have not made any racist or threatening remarks and I do not support that behavior,” he said.

When contacted by the Citizen about the Facebook posts, council member Howell said, “No comment.”

White has also recently received Twitter messages calling him a “terrorist” and a “coward.”

Beyond social media, White said he is currently dealing with ostracization at the Nehalem Post Office from one of its employees, Camille Ayers. White said she gives him the “silent treatment” at the post office and sent him an email last summer comparing him to Adolph Hitler.

White reached out to the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) about the email. USPS officials responded by saying it happened outside of work hours and they could not take action on the matter.

“I have not yet complained (to USPS) about her recent wave of silent treatment,” White added.

Moreover, at a Dec. 12 Nehalem City Council meeting, Ayers continuously interrupted White when the public was invited to speak. None of the council members, one of whom was wearing a bright green Keep Nehalem, Nehalem sweatshirt, discouraged Ayers’ interruptions. Dillard was absent from the meeting.

White’s doctorate from The European Graduate School has also been called into question. On the Keep Nehalem, Nehalem Facebook page, one follower sourced Wikipedia and posted: “The college Micah White received his “PH.D” from is listed as a non-accredited, fraudulent college... “European Graduate School, Saas-Fee, Switzerland – reports accreditation in the Republic of Malta as of 2015;(unaccredited for use in the United States as of April 2016)”

The school’s website says differently.

“The European Graduate School M.A. and Ph.D. degrees meet all accreditation and quality assurance standards for institutions of higher education within the United States, as standardized by the Council of Higher Education Accreditation. The EGS School Code OPE ID Number is 03518300.”

White said school representatives are working with Wikipedia to correct the non-accredited claim. As far as the other virulent behavior, White said he has not contacted law enforcement with a formal complaint – yet.

“I forgive Steve Meadows for his ignorant racism,” he said. “I forgive Camille Ayers for her obnoxious behavior. I forgive those who spread malicious and false rumors about me. I am not afraid because I have been

through this before in previous campaigns in other times in my life and I always won eventually. For now, I am choosing not to file complaints or press charges, but if their behavior worsens then I will do so in an instant.”

He added the primary victim in all of this is democracy.

“The reason why I was the only person to contest a mayoral race in Tillamook County is because of the terrible, vicious lies that are unleashed against anyone who challenges the status quo,” he said.

Without a formal complaint, law enforcement officials said racist remarks are protected under the First Amendment.

“What (White) is experiencing is freedom of speech,” Tillamook County Sheriff Andy Long explained. “We cannot conduct a thorough investigation without a complaint being filed.”