

Face of Papa John's steps down after N-word debacle

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By **ABDIRAHMAN ALI**
Special to the AmNews

John Schnatter, founder and public face of pizza franchise Papa John's, resigned from his position as chairman of the company's board after Forbes reported Wednesday that Schnatter used the N-word in a conference call back in May. The conference call was between Papa John's executives and marketing agency Laundry Service, and the purpose of the call was to help Schnatter prevent public relations scandals. In a role-playing exercise, Schnatter was asked by the marketing agency how he would distance himself from racist groups on the internet. Attempting to downplay comments he had made in November 2017, Schnatter said, "Colonel Sanders called blacks niggers," complaining that Sanders hadn't faced a similar public backlash. He continued to describe how during his childhood in Indiana, people dragged Black people from the backs of trucks until they died. Although Schnatter ostensibly intended for his comments to demonstrate his opposition to racism, individuals who were on the call found them to be offensive. Schnatter confirmed the incident Wednesday and apologized for his actions in an email statement. "News reports attributing the use of inappropriate and hurtful language to me during a media training session regarding race are true," he said. "Regardless of the context, I apologize. Simply stated, racism has no place in our society." Papa John's stocks took a dive Wednesday, falling as much as 5.9 percent, but rebounded after Schnatter's resignation as chairman Thursday. Schnatter's resignation follows his stepping down as CEO in January, after comments he made in November 2017 about the national anthem protests by NFL players, claiming that they were causing Papa

John's to lose advertising revenue from its deal as the "official pizza of the NFL." "You need to look at exactly how the ratings are going backward," Schnatter had argued. "Last year the ratings for the NFL went backward because of the elections. This year the ratings are going backward because of the controversy." After the comments, Papa John's stock fell 11 percent within hours and had fallen 25 percent in total before Wednesday's report causing Schnatter's net worth to fall by \$70 million. The NFL and Papa John's ended their sponsorship deal in February, in what they described as a mutual decision.

In a letter to the Papa John's board obtained by the Wall Street Journal, Schnatter said that his resignation had been a mistake. "The board asked me to step down as chairman without apparently doing any investigation," he wrote. "I agreed, though today I believe it was a mistake to do so. I will not allow either my good name or the good name of the company I founded and love to be unfairly tainted."

Schnatter claimed in an interview with WLKY Sunday that Laundry Service had coerced him into using the N-word, although Schnatter had been against it, and then had attempted to blackmail Papa John's. "They tried to extort us and we held firm and they took what I said and ran to Forbes. Forbes printed it and it went viral."

Papa John's announced that it would be removing Schnatter's image from promotional material Friday. In a press release issued Saturday, Papa John's stated that Schnatter no longer had office space at the company's headquarters in Louisville, Ky., and that he had been requested to cease media appearances.

Schnatter's name was stripped from the signpost of a gymnasium in his hometown, Jeffersonville, Ind., last week. The University of Louisville also removed Papa John's name from its football stadium Friday.

New Jersey News

Fatal shooting of Black man in Vineland caught on Facebook Live

By **CYRIL JOSH BARKER**
Amsterdam News Staff

The family of 37-year-old Rashaun Washington is demanding answers after police in Vineland, N.J., fatally shoot the father of two.

The shooting happened late Saturday morning when police responded to a report of a shirtless man "acting suspiciously" on the front porch of a home. Although it's not clear what exchange police and Washington had, the ordeal ended with officers firing three times, according to witnesses, killing Washington.

"They can find no other way of handling the situation other than to kill him?" asked Andaiye Al-Uqdah, an attorney for the Washington family. "There's no reason this man should be taken away from his family. It's just disgusting."

The incident was caught on Facebook Live and shows officers with guns drawn along with a police dog on scene. The graphic video, which made its rounds on social media, shows a standoff between Washington and the officers. One of the officers yelled "Bomb!" before three shots are heard. As Washington's body lay on the ground bleeding, the police dog bit him and officers placed Washington in handcuffs.

The Vineland Police Department has not said whether or

not Washington was armed. The officer who fired has not been identified and is on paid administrative leave as authorities investigate.

Witnesses said before officers shot Washington they told him to "calm down" and that Washington told officers he would not leave. Many are questioning why police didn't use a Taser.

"They shouldn't have killed him," neighborhood resident and witness Jose Pagan said. "He didn't have a weapon, no shirt. He showed the cops all he had was a bottle of water."

Community activist and founder of the National Awareness Alliance, Walter L. Hudson, said the shooting is another unjustified killing of an African-American by law enforcement. "This horrific shooting of Black and Brown people [by] overzealous police officers is a national issue," he said. "All while white men who shoot up churches, schools, movie theaters and businesses are taken into custody, without a shot fired."

The Cumberland County Prosecutor's Office is handling the investigation. In a statement released Monday, county prosecutor Jennifer Webb-McRae said the investigation is ongoing and asked the public to share information on the case with her office anonymously.

Newark City Council approves incentives for Amazon's second headquarters

By **CYRIL JOSH BARKER**
Amsterdam News Staff

The push to make Newark Amazon's newest home is steps closer as the City Council passes legislation authorizing up to \$2 billion as part of its campaign to bring the retailer to the Brick City.

Newark wants Amazon to commit to creating at least 30,000 new jobs and create investments of at least \$3 billion over a 20-year period to qualify for the incentives.

The incentives include accelerating the process of land-use and permit approvals and enabling Amazon to receive a 100 percent payroll tax exemption

for employees living in Newark and a 50 percent exemption for all other employees.

"The City Council has brought Newark a giant step closer to being Amazon's choice for HQ2," said Mayor Ras Baraka. "The creation of 12,500 jobs for Newark residents, the added revenue to Newark families plus the added revenue to the City of Newark, Newark Public Schools and Newark Public Library make HQ2 a game changer in the transformation of our city."

Amazon will make its final decision on where it will call its second headquarters home later this year. Other cities such as Boston and Chicago are also in the running.

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