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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:
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Whites Say Imus Story Has Been Overcovered, Blacks Disagree
MOST SAY IMUS'S PUNISHMENT WAS APPROPRIATE

Americans, both black and white, generally agree with the punishment radio host Don Imus received for the racist and sexist remarks he made about the Rutgers University's women basketball team. Nonetheless, there are substantial racial differences in views of Imus's punishment, and an even bigger gap in opinions about news media's coverage of the story.

Majorities of both whites (53%) and African Americans (61%) who have been following the Imus story say that the punishment he received was appropriate. But roughly twice as many whites as blacks believe his punishment was too tough (35% vs. 18%). On April 12, the talk show host's morning radio program was cancelled by CBS. A day earlier, a cable television simulcast of the program on MSNBC was cancelled by NBC.

Fully 62% of whites say that news organizations are giving too much coverage to the Imus story. This compares with just 31% of African Americans who believe the controversy has been overcovered. A plurality of blacks (44%) says that the amount of coverage has been appropriate, while a sizable minority (18%) says it has gotten too little coverage.

<i>Imus's punishment was...*</i>	Total %	Black %	White %
Too tough	32	18	35
Not tough enough	8	17	6
About right	54	61	53
Don't know	6	4	6
	100	100	100
<i>Heard about Imus's remarks...</i>			
A lot	61	57	63
A little	21	21	23
Nothing at all	18	20	14
Don't know	*	2	*
	100	100	100
<i>News coverage of Imus story...</i>			
Too much	57	31	62
Too little	6	18	2
Right amount	29	44	28
Don't know	8	7	8
	100	100	100

* Based on those who have heard "a lot" or "a little" about the Imus story.

The latest installment of Pew's weekly *News Interest Index*, finds that public interest in the Imus story was fairly modest, particularly when compared with the news media's intense focus on the controversy. The news coverage index for April 8-13, compiled by the Project for

Excellence in Journalism, showed that Imus’s downfall was the second most-covered story of 2007, filling 26% of the overall newshole for the week.

But the Imus story trailed the situation in Iraq as the week’s most closely followed story. About a quarter of Americans (26%) cited the situation in Iraq as the story they followed most closely, compared with 20% who cited reports about Imus’s remarks.

Imus-Type Comments Heard Frequently

More than four-in-ten Americans (42%) who have been following the Imus story say that, based on what they know about the radio host’s comments, they often or sometimes hear that kind of language used in their daily lives. African Americans – particularly black men – are far more likely than whites to say they frequently hear such language.

Overall, 55% of blacks who have heard a lot or a little about the story say they often or sometimes hear the sort of language that Imus used in denigrating the Rutgers players; by comparison, 38% of whites who have heard about the Imus story say they often or sometimes hear such language. There also are significant gender differences, among those in both races, in views of how often such language is used.

	Often %	Some- times %	Hardly ever/ Never %	DK %
Total	20	23	56	1=100
Blacks	25	30	44	1=100
Men	32	27	39	2=100
Women	20	33	46	1=100
Whites	18	20	60	2=100
Men	22	28	49	1=100
Women	13	13	72	2=100
18-29	32	27	39	2=100
30-49	19	24	55	2=100
50-64	17	22	60	1=100
65+	12	16	70	2=100

Based on those who have heard “a lot” or “a little” about the Imus story.

For example, about a third of black men (32%) say they often hear the sort of language that Imus used; this compares with 20% of black women. Among whites, 22% of men, but only 13% of women, say they frequently hear such language.

There also are large age differences in these perceptions, with young people much more likely than older Americans to report often or sometimes hearing this type of language. And younger African Americans, in particular, say they frequently hear the type of language Imus used. Fully 74% of African Americans under age 40 say they often or sometimes hear such language, compared with 44% of whites in the same age group.

Who Uses Offensive Language

Among those who have been following the Imus story, 38% say that “most” or “many” black males make racist or sexist remarks without thinking about it. By comparison, about a quarter of this group (27%) says that most or many white males use such language without thinking.

This is an issue on which blacks and whites generally agree: 39% of blacks say most or many African American males use racist or sexist language without thinking about it, while somewhat fewer blacks (31%) believe that white males use that kind of language unthinkingly. Attitudes are comparable among whites – 37% of whites say most or many black males make racist or sexist remarks, while 26% of whites say many or most white males make such comments.

	Percent saying 'most' or 'many'...	
	Black males	White males
	%	%
Total	38	27
Blacks	39	31
Men	37	28
Women	40	32
Whites	37	26
Men	42	31
Women	31	21

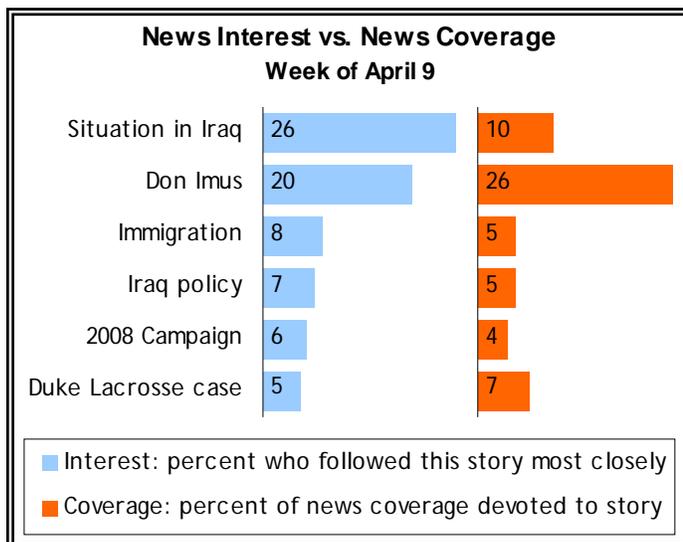
Based on those who have heard "a lot" or "a little" about the Imus story.

Notably, a majority of African Americans under age 40 (53%) say that most or many black males make racist or sexist remarks without thinking about it. A smaller number of younger African Americans (39%) say most or many white males use such language.

News Interest: Week of April 9

The war in Iraq continued to attract broad public attention, despite drawing far less news coverage than the Imus flap. Overall, 34% of Americans say they followed news about the situation in Iraq very closely, and 26% cited the war as the story they followed *most* closely from April 12-16.

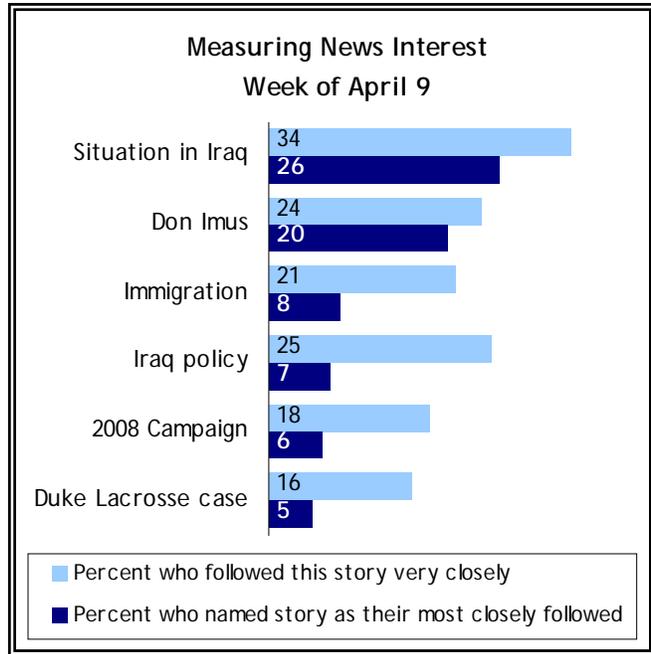
News about Imus’s remarks regarding the Rutgers women’s basketball team was the second most closely followed story: 24% say they followed this story very closely, and 20% named it as the story they tracked most closely.



The public paid less attention to the week's other major stories. Fewer than one-in-ten cited the issue of immigration (8%), the Iraq policy debate (7%), the 2008 presidential campaign (6%), or the Duke lacrosse case (5%) as the story they followed most closely last week.

These findings are based on the most recent installment of the weekly *News Interest Index*, an ongoing project of the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. The index, building on the Center's longstanding research into public attentiveness to major news stories,

examines news interest as it relates to the news media's agenda. The weekly survey is conducted in conjunction with The Project for Excellence in Journalism's *News Coverage Index*, which monitors the news reported by major newspaper, television, radio and online news outlets on an ongoing basis.



About the News Interest Index

The *News Interest Index* is a weekly survey conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press aimed at gauging the public's interest in and reaction to major news events.

This project has been undertaken in conjunction with the Project for Excellence in Journalism's *News Coverage Index*, an ongoing content analysis of the news. The News Coverage Index catalogues the news from top news organizations across five major sectors of the media: newspapers, network television, cable television, radio and the internet. Each week (from Sunday through Friday) PEJ will compile this data to identify the top stories for the week. The News Interest Index survey will collect data from Friday through Monday to gauge public interest in the most covered stories of the week.

Results for the weekly surveys are based on telephone interviews among a nationwide sample of approximately 1,000 adults, 18 years of age or older, conducted under the direction of ORC (Opinion Research Corporation). For results based on the total sample of 1,030, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

To gauge responses to the Don Imus story among both white and African American respondents, the survey included an oversample of 185 African Americans interviewed on two other ORC surveys conducted Thursday through Sunday, April 12-15. Demographic weighting was used to ensure that the survey results for the general public reflect the correct racial and ethnic composition of national adults. This oversample does not affect the margin of sampling error for the overall survey results.

For results based on the 286 African American respondents, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus 6.5 percentage points. For results based on the 815 white respondents, the margin of error is plus or minus 4 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls, and that results based on subgroups will have larger margins of error.

For more information about the Project for Excellence in Journalism's News Coverage Index, go to www.journalism.org.

About the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press

The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press is an independent opinion research group that studies attitudes toward the press, politics and public policy issues. We are sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts and are one of six projects that make up the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan "fact tank" that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.

The Center's purpose is to serve as a forum for ideas on the media and public policy through public opinion research. In this role it serves as an important information resource for political leaders, journalists, scholars, and public interest organizations. All of our current survey results are made available free of charge.

All of the Center's research and reports are collaborative products based on the input and analysis of the entire Center staff consisting of:

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PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
APRIL 12-16, 2007 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
Q1 and Q.2 N = 1030

G.3 through G.8 N = 1215 (Includes additional oversample of 185 African Americans)

Q.1 As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, tell me if you happened to follow each news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. First, **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE ITEMS] [IF NECESSARY “Did you follow [ITEM] very closely, fairly closely, not too closely or not at all closely?”]**

	<u>Very Closely</u>	<u>Fairly Closely</u>	<u>Not too Closely</u>	<u>Not at all Closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
a. News about the current situation and events in Iraq	34	33	20	13	*=100
April 5-9, 2007	33	39	16	11	1=100
March 30-April 2, 2007	34	37	16	13	*=100
March 23-26, 2007¹	31	38	18	12	1=100
March 16-19, 2007	34	34	17	15	*=100
March 9-12, 2007	34	37	16	13	*=100
March 2-5, 2007	37	37	16	9	1=100
February 23-26, 2007	36	36	15	13	*=100
February 16-19, 2007	30	36	19	14	1=100
February 9-12, 2007	37	34	18	11	*=100
February 2-5, 2007	38	38	17	7	*=100
January 26-29, 2007	36	38	15	11	*=100
January 19-22, 2007	37	34	18	10	1=100
January 12-15, 2007	38	36	17	8	1=100
January, 2007	46	40	8	5	1=100
January 5-8, 2007	40	32	16	12	0=100
December, 2006	42	39	12	7	*=100
November 30-December 3, 2006	40	36	13	11	*=100
Mid-November, 2006	44	38	12	6	*=100
September, 2006	33	43	14	8	2=100
August, 2006	41	39	12	7	1=100
June, 2006	37	43	13	6	1=100
May, 2006	42	35	15	7	1=100
April, 2006	43	36	13	7	1=100
March, 2006	43	38	12	6	1=100
February, 2006	39	42	12	6	1=100
January, 2006	40	40	12	7	1=100
December, 2005	45	38	11	5	1=100
Early November, 2005	41	40	13	6	*=100
Early October, 2005	43	36	15	6	*=100
Early September, 2005	32	40	20	7	1=100
July, 2005	43	37	13	6	1=100
Mid-May, 2005	42	42	11	5	*=100
Mid-March, 2005	40	39	14	5	2=100
February, 2005	38	45	13	4	*=100
January, 2005	48	37	11	4	*=100
December, 2004	34	44	15	6	1=100
Mid-October, 2004	42	38	11	8	1=100
Early September, 2004	47	37	9	6	1=100
August, 2004	39	42	12	6	1=100

¹ From May, 2003 to March 23-26, 2007, the story was listed as “News about the current situation in Iraq.”

Q.1 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>Closely</u>	Fairly <u>Closely</u>	Not too <u>Closely</u>	Not at all <u>Closely</u>	DK/ <u>Refused</u>
July, 2004	43	40	11	6	*=100
June, 2004	39	42	12	6	1=100
April, 2004	54	33	8	5	*=100
Mid-March, 2004	47	36	12	4	1=100
Early February, 2004	47	38	10	4	1=100
Mid-January, 2004	48	39	9	4	*=100
December, 2003	44	38	11	6	1=100
November, 2003	52	33	9	5	1=100
September, 2003	50	33	10	6	1=100
Mid-August, 2003	45	39	10	5	1=100
Early July, 2003	37	41	13	8	1=100
June, 2003	46	35	13	6	*=100
May, 2003	63	29	6	2	*=100
April 11-16, 2003 ²	47	40	10	2	1=100
April 2-7, 2003	54	34	9	2	1=100
March 20-24, 2003	57	33	7	2	1=100
March 13-16, 2003 ³	62	27	6	4	1=100
February, 2003	62	25	8	4	1=100
January, 2003	55	29	10	4	2=100
December, 2002	51	32	10	6	1=100
Late October, 2002	53	33	8	5	1=100
Early October, 2002	60	28	6	5	1=100
Early September, 2002 ⁴	48	29	15	6	2=100
b. The debate in Washington over U.S. policy in Iraq					
April 5-9, 2007	25	29	22	23	1=100
March 30-April 2, 2007	31	28	20	21	*=100
March 30-April 2, 2007	26	29	21	23	1=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:					
January 12-15, 2007: President Bush's proposal to increase the number of U.S. troops in Iraq	40	33	13	13	1=100
c. The recent remarks Don Imus made on his radio show about the Rutgers University women's basketball team					
	24	31	20	24	1=100
d. News about candidates for the 2008 presidential election					
April 5-9, 2007	18	28	27	27	*=100
March 30-April 2, 2007	25	30	26	19	*=100
March 30-April 2, 2007	20	29	27	23	1=100
March 23-26, 2007	20	32	22	26	*=100
March 16-19, 2007	20	32	22	26	*=100
March 16-19, 2007	15	28	29	27	1=100
March 9-12, 2007	24	30	23	23	*=100
March 2-5, 2007	19	31	26	23	1=100
February 23-26, 2007	22	33	24	21	*=100
February 16-19, 2007	18	32	22	27	1=100
February 9-12, 2007	24	30	24	21	1=100

² From March 20-24, 2003 to April 11-16, 2003, the story was listed as "News about the war in Iraq."

³ From October, 2002, to March 13-16, 2003, the story was listed as "Debate over the possibility that the U.S. will take military action in Iraq."

⁴ In Early September, 2002, the story was listed as "Debate over the possibility that the U.S. will invade Iraq."

Q.1 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>Closely</u>	Fairly <u>Closely</u>	Not too <u>Closely</u>	Not at all <u>Closely</u>	DK/ <u>Refused</u>
February 2-5, 2007	24	36	22	18	*=100
January 26-29, 2007	24	33	23	20	*=100
January 19-22, 2007⁵	24	27	22	26	1=100
2004 Presidential Election					
November, 2004 (RVs)	52	36	8	4	*=100
Mid-October, 2004	46	30	12	11	1=100
August, 2004	32	38	16	14	*=100
July, 2004	29	37	18	15	1=100
April, 2004	31	33	19	16	1=100
Mid-March, 2004	35	34	18	13	*=100
Late February, 2004	24	40	23	12	1=100
Early February, 2004 ⁶	29	37	20	13	1=100
Mid-January, 2004	16	30	27	26	1=100
Early January, 2004	14	32	30	23	1=100
December, 2003	16	26	27	30	1=100
November, 2003	11	26	34	28	1=100
October, 2003	12	27	28	32	1=100
September, 2003	17	25	30	27	1=100
Mid-August, 2003	12	27	27	33	1=100
May, 2003	8	19	31	41	1=100
January, 2003	14	28	29	28	1=100
2000 Presidential Election					
Early November, 2000 (RVs)	39	44	12	5	*=100
Mid-October, 2000 (RVs)	40	37	15	8	8=100
Early October, 2000 (RVs)	42	36	15	6	1=100
September, 2000	22	42	21	15	*=100
July, 2000	21	38	20	20	1=100
June, 2000	23	32	23	21	1=100
May, 2000	18	33	26	23	*=100
April, 2000	18	39	22	20	1=100
March, 2000	26	41	19	13	1=100
February, 2000	26	36	21	17	*=100
January, 2000	19	34	28	18	1=100
December, 1999	16	36	24	23	1=100
October, 1999	17	32	28	22	1=100
September, 1999	15	31	33	20	1=100
July, 1999	15	38	24	22	1=100
June, 1999	11	25	29	34	1=100
1996 Presidential Election					
November, 1996 (RVs)	34	45	15	6	*=100
October, 1996	31	39	18	12	*=100
Early September, 1996	24	36	23	17	*=100
July, 1996	22	40	23	14	1=100
March, 1996	26	41	20	13	*=100

⁵ January 19-22, 2007 asked about "Recent announcements by prominent Democrats about plans to run for president in 2008."

⁶ From May 2003 to Early February 2004 and in March 1992, the story was listed as "The race for the Democratic nomination." In January 2003, the story was listed as "Recent announcements by prominent Democrats about plans to run for president in 2004." In September 2000, Early September and July 1996, and May 1992, the question asked about "the presidential election campaign." In January, March and April 1996, the story was listed as "News about the Republican presidential candidates." In August 1992, the story was listed as "News about the presidential election." In July 1992, the story was listed as "News about the presidential campaign." In January 1992, the story was listed as "News about the Democratic candidates for the presidential nomination." In 1988, the story was introduced as being from "this past year" and was listed as "News about the presidential campaign in 1988."

Q.1 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>Closely</u>	Fairly <u>Closely</u>	Not too <u>Closely</u>	Not at all <u>Closely</u>	DK/ <u>Refused</u>
January, 1996	10	34	31	24	1=100
September, 1995	12	36	30	22	*=100
August, 1995	13	34	28	25	*=100
June, 1995	11	31	31	26	1=100
1992 Presidential Election					
October, 1992 (RVs)	55	36	7	2	0=100
September, 1992 (RVs)	47	36	11	6	*=100
August, 1992 (RVs)	36	51	11	2	0=100
July, 1992	20	45	26	9	*=100
May, 1992	32	44	16	8	*=100
March, 1992	35	40	16	9	*=100
January, 1992	11	25	36	27	1=100
December, 1991	10	28	32	30	*=100
1988 Presidential Election					
October, 1988 (RVs)	43	44	11	2	*=100
August, 1988 (RVs)	39	45	13	3	*=100
May, 1988	22	46	23	6	3=100
November, 1987	15	28	35	21	1=100
September, 1987	14	34	37	14	1=100
e. Prosecutors dropping all charges against three former Duke University lacrosse players					
May, 2006: <i>Accused of sexual assault</i> ⁷	16	27	29	27	1=100
	16	29	28	25	2=100
f. The issue of immigration					
August, 2006	21	29	24	26	*=100
June, 2006	34	40	16	9	1=100
May, 2006	36	41	15	7	1=100
April, 2006	44	33	13	9	1=100
	39	34	16	10	1=100

Q.2 Which ONE of the stories I just mentioned have you followed most closely, or is there another story you've been following MORE closely? (**DO NOT READ LIST. ACCEPT ONLY ONE RESPONSE. IF "IRAQ" UNSPECIFIED, PROBE: "Do you mean events IN Iraq or the debate over Iraq POLICY?"**)

- 26 News about the current situation and events in Iraq
- 20 The recent remarks Don Imus made on his radio show about the Rutgers University women's basketball team
- 8 The issue of immigration
- 7 The debate in Washington over U.S. policy in Iraq
- 6 News about candidates for the 2008 presidential election
- 5 Prosecutors dropping all charges against three former Duke University lacrosse players
- 10 Some other story (**SPECIFY**)
- 18 Don't know/Refused
- 100

⁷ In May, 2006, the story was listed as "Duke University lacrosse team members being accused of sexual assault."

G.3 How much, if anything, have you heard about the remarks Don Imus recently made on his radio show about the Rutgers University women’s basketball team – a lot, a little, or nothing at all?

<u>Total</u>	<u>Whites</u>	<u>Blacks</u>	
61	63	57	A lot
21	23	21	A little
18	14	20	Nothing at all
<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>2</u>	Don’t know/Refused
100	100	100	
	(N=815)	(N=286)	

G.4 Do you think news organizations are giving too much, too little or the right amount of coverage to this story?

<u>Total</u>	<u>Whites</u>	<u>Blacks</u>	
57	62	31	Too much
6	2	18	Too little
29	28	44	The right amount
<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>7</u>	Don’t know/Refused
100	100	100	

ASK G.5 THROUGH G.8 ONLY OF THOSE RESONDENTS WHO ANSWERED 1 “A LOT” OR 2 “A LITTLE” IN G.3 [N=1025]:

G.5 Do you think the punishment Don Imus received from the networks that carry his show has been too tough, not tough enough or about right?

<u>Total</u>	<u>Whites</u>	<u>Blacks</u>	
32	35	18	Too tough
8	6	17	Not tough enough
54	53	61	About right
<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	Don’t know/Refused
100	100	100	
	(N=711)	(N=235)	

G.6 Based on what you know about Don Imus’s comments, how often do you hear this kind of language as you go about your daily life... **[READ]**?

<u>Total</u>	<u>Whites</u>	<u>Blacks</u>	
20	18	25	Often
23	20	30	Sometimes
41	45	32	Hardly ever or
15	15	12	Never
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	Don’t know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ)
100	100	100	

ROTATE G.7 AND G.8

G.7 From your experience, how many white males today make racist or sexist remarks without thinking about it? Would you say most, many, only some, or few white males make racist or sexist remarks without thinking about it?⁸

<u>Total</u>	<u>Whites</u>	<u>Blacks</u>	
8	7	10	Most
19	19	21	Many
32	32	34	Only some
32	34	28	Few
<u>9</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>7</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	100	100	
	(N=815)	(N=286)	

G.8 From your experience, how many African American males today make racist or sexist remarks without thinking about it? Would you say most, many, only some, or few African American males make racist or sexist remarks without thinking about it?

<u>Total</u>	<u>Whites</u>	<u>Blacks</u>	
15	13	16	Most
23	24	23	Many
28	28	29	Only some
24	25	25	Few
<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>7</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	100	100	

⁸ This question is identical to one asked by Newsweek/Gallup in March 1993, however the results are not necessarily comparable due to differences in the content of the 1993 survey and the context in which the question was asked, as well as the question being filtered on those who had heard of the Imus story.