

# Director addresses Dookoom video backlash

By [Ruth Cooper & Sindy Peters](#)

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Since its release, [Dookoom](#)'s music video for *Larney Jou Poes* has sparked all sorts of controversy. [Afriforum](#) has gone as far as laying a complaint with the South African Human Rights Commission citing both song and video as hate speech inciting violence.

Debuting on [CityPress.co.za](#) on 12 October, the Cape Town hip hop group's video has since racked up 32,000+ views on Youtube. Comments, mostly in the vein of racist ramblings and vitriolic venting from all sides, have escalated just as swiftly.

Begging the question of whether the video draws on freedom of expression or hate speech, we interviewed the 19-year-old director, Dane Dodds, to get his thoughts on the Dookoom backlash saga.



Dane Dodds

■ ***It must have been quite apparent from the start that Dookoom's song Larney Jou Poes is pretty provocative and incendiary. When coming up with the concept for the video, was the idea to push these controversial issues even further?***

**Dane Dodds:** No, I don't think we have done that. I believe that a music video should stay true to the expression of the artist. Or any other client for that matter.

■ ***Are you surprised by the amount of attention and criticism this video has received or were you bracing yourself for a backlash?***

When you are working with an artist of this nature, it's not a surprise when the shit hits the fan. And as part of the intention was to provoke a difficult conversation, I was prepared for the reaction.



❑ ***What are your thoughts on the claim by AfriForum that the song and video amount to hate speech and is inciting violence?***

I see it very differently.

❑ ***How do you see it? We would love to get your opinion on this.***

Well, as for the submitted claim, that is a legal matter and for the lawyers to figure out. The intention is not to incite violence and I don't believe the video does that. I believe that suppressing emotions is more likely to result in violence than expressing them through art.

❑ ***The video's intention was not to incite violence, but promote dialogue; do you think it has achieved this aim so far?***

Yes. This song and video has shown that there are a lot of emotions left over from the past that we need to deal with. For a dialogue to start someone has to speak up. Dookoom has done that.

❑ ***Do you feel this song and video will be beneficial at all in improving the conditions of farm workers in South Africa?***

At the end of the day it is up to the people who run the country to deal with social issues. All artists can do is shine a torch at what is lurking in the shadows.



❑ ***Regardless of its intention, the song and its accompanying video have triggered rafts of racism and hate speech on the various forums where the content has been published e.g. YouTube and IOL. How do you feel about this reaction from the public?***

People are far braver when sitting at home behind their computers. I think most people are better than their comments online. That being said, I think the comments show that there is a lot of anger and fear out there. I think it's better to take the lid of the steaming pot before it explodes.

■ ***You say in a press release that you were given a few tracks from Isaac to choose from to create a video. What was it exactly about Larney Jou Poes that struck a chord and why was it that song that you chose to illustrate first.***

I found the song pretty challenging. It made me feel uncomfortable and I felt that it expressed something that should not be real, but probably was. The song is balancing between the real and the surreal and that is interesting.

■ ***What is your take, being so close to the situation, on the friction between farmers and farm workers?***

I am a filmmaker, not a farmer or a farm worker, so I don't want to speak for any of them. You don't have to see a music video to know farm workers are living a hard life, but that doesn't mean I am against farmers. Again, my hope is that the people running the country will take care of those who live in it.

■ ***Your father is a farmer though, right? Has he seen the video? What are his thoughts on it if so?***

He thinks it's a catchy beat ;) I'd rather not speak for him.

■ ***Can you tell us about your production company [Sirius Tales](#)? When did this launch? What other projects have you been involved with?***

We are a new production company based in Cape Town. We believe in letting the story define the medium and not the other way around, so we work with many different forms of expression. Our company consists of a few like-minded people from different backgrounds in media and business and also from different countries. Check out our website for things we have made so far.

■ ***Nineteen years old is a very tender age to start a company. Can you tell us about your film and photography background?***

I started playing around with cameras and making films when I was five, and I have never given it up. I wanted to work in a production company where I grew up, but there weren't any, so I started my own when I was 13. Since then I've been taking every opportunity to be around film sets and do whatever related work I could find, both to get experience and to have a creative outlet. After high school I became a resident artist at Fly on the Wall, which gave me even better

possibilities to develop my skills. If you are asking if I am ready, I guess time will tell.

■ ***The media surrounding this video has put your name and company name out there; what's next when it comes to future projects for you and your production company?***

My goal is to shoot the first feature film on the moon. However, in the meantime, we are working on a few international jobs while keeping our main project running in South Africa. It's a pretty challenging thing, but keep an eye out for it! We are open to forming new relationships with interesting people.

*Photos by Bryan Little*

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