
Colin Kaepernick: From Athlete To Politician

Watching Barrack Obama sworn into office, I like so many others, watched in amazement and hoped this might be the change WE needed. But despite our hopes, little improved for us, in fact they seemed to spiral out of control for the black community, more specifically for black males.

I had honestly never heard of Colin Kaepernick, (I'm not a big sports fan), until I read the first article written about his silent protest. I couldn't understand why it caused such a negative response when clearly it was an emotional and personal, yet well thought-out reactionary display of support and outrage caused by a spate of unnecessary murders of unarmed black men and boys at the hands of the people who serve to protect us.

As a black man, Colin Kaepernick had made a conscious decision to use his very professional public platform to exercise his right to voice his outrage and show solidarity to the very people who were suffering. I can only assume that it was no longer an option for him to sit back and silently observe these atrocities. All too often we vocalise our outrage in the safety and comfort of our own homes but never take the steps to formalise a public reaction and attempt to readdress the balance of inequality.

The outright murder of black men was not unusual as it has occurred countless times in both England and America but it was apparent that the numbers were increasing and it was all because someone could be demonized simply by the colour of their skin. "And every denomination of Christians, deeming themselves peaceably, and as good subjects of the Commonwealth, shall be equally under the protection of the law. And no subordination of any one sect or denomination to another shall ever be established by law" (Massachusetts Constitution, 1780:2)

What further enraged our communities was having to watch the police men and women responsible for these senseless murders allowed to walk away unscathed by their actions. "In order to prevent those, who are vested with authority, from becoming oppressors, the people have a right, at such periods and in such manner as they shall establish by their frame of government, to cause their public officers to return to private life" (Massachusetts Constitution, 1780:2). The media would also play a pivotal role in terms of police men and women legally walking away with no clear or just consequences for their actions. Media outlets assisted greatly in demonising these black victims with their distorted rhetoric ensuring the public viewed them as undesirable by freely sharing any and all previous altercations with the law, family situations and any other information they deemed necessary and vital in an attempt to justify yet another nonsensical killing.

As I then continued to watch this singular man use his platform to garner more and more publicity for the injustices we were all privy to, it occurred to me that the people most vocal with regards to their interpretation of events were the very people who saw no wrong in a black life being blown out as easily as a burning candle. Their spin on the narrative became his lack of allegiance to a great nation and his ruthless disregard for the bravery displayed by the military. This incongruent twist on reality made no sense in light of the outpouring of support via social media from veterans. However, the truth is our military past and present, are the very people

who have, throughout history, willingly fought and in some cases paid the ultimate price, to afford us freedom of speech, attempt to restore freedom to the masses and stamp out the exact oppression Colin Kaepernick was fighting against.

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