

Take a Knee Transcript:

Wouldn't you love to see one of these NFL owners when somebody disrespects our flag, get that son of a bitch off the field, he's fired! He's fired!

(U.S.A Chanting)

Ultimately it is to bring awareness and make people realise what is going on in this country. There are a lot of things that are going on that are unjust right now and that needs to change. This country stands for freedom, liberty, and justice for all, and its not happening for all right now.

Hello and welcome to the philosophy of sport podcast. My name is Chayce Mindra, and what was just played were two clips from President Donald Trump, and Colin Kaepernick. This week we are discussing and chronicling Colin Kaepernick's decision to take a knee and the results and ramifications around his protest. We are looking at this story from its inception to where we are at now with Kaepernick being named GQ man of the year, the NFL pledging 100 million dollars to social justice initiatives over the next seven years. We are going to do this by listening to previous audio clips, having a conversation with another individual, as well as providing my opinion on the matter. Hope you enjoy it.

Before we get started if you would like any more in-depth information please refer to the show notes on the podcast page.

Just a little bit of background on Kaepernick around how things have come about until where we are in December 2017. He is an NFL quarterback, went to a Superbowl, has since been released and paid out by the 49ers as a result of his protest and since then has in essence been black balled by the league and hasn't been able to find a job. Before we get into this I thought it would be more effective to listen to Kaepernick's original interview following his first protest in the preseason of 2016. What you are about to hear is the first interview conducted with Kaepernick regarding his protest.

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Is this something that has evolved? And where do you stand on things right now?

Its something that I've seen, I've felt, wasn't something I was sure how to deal with initially. I do feel as though this is something that has evolved. What is going on in this country in the past and currently aren't new situations, this isn't new ground, these are things that have gone on in this country for years and years and have never been addressed and they need to be.

There are a lot of things that need to change. One specifically is police brutality. People are being killed unjustly. Cops are getting paid leave for murdering somebody. That isn't right. That's not right by anyone's standards. There are things we can do to hold them more accountable, make those standards higher. You have people that practice law in our country that go to school for eight years, and you can become a cop in six months and don't have to have the same amount of training as a cosmetologist. That's insane. Someone that is holding a curling iron has more education and more training than people that have guns and are on the street to protect us.

Individuals that view the flag as a symbol of military, how do you view it and what do you say to those people?

I have great respect for men and women that have fought for this country, I have family and friends that have fought for this country and they fight for freedom. They fight for freedom and justice for everyone. And that's not happening. People are dying in vein because this country isn't holding its end of the bargain up. Its something that's not happening. I've seen videos and circumstances that men and women that have served have come back and been treated unjustly by the country that they fought for, been murdered by the country they fought for, on our land, that's not right.

Do you personally feel oppressed?

This stand wasn't for me. This isn't because I feel like I've been put down in any way. This is for people that I feel like they don't have a voice. I am in a position in which I have a voice, so I am going to do that for people that can't.

You are a lone voice here taking this stand, why do you think you are the only one doing this?

I think there are a lot of consequences that will come along with this. I feel like a lot of people are worried that they might lose their job, might not get their endorsements, might not be treated the same way. Those are things I'm prepared to handle, and those are things other people might not be ready for. It's a matter of where you are at in your life and where your minds at. At this point I have been blessed to get this far and have the opportunities that I have, the privilege of being in the NFL, making the kind of money I make, and enjoy luxuries like that, but I can't look in the mirror and see other people dying in the street that should have the same opportunities that I have had. And say you know what I can live with myself because I can't right now if I just watch.

Well as President Trump put it he doesn't sound like a son of a bitch to me. |Sounded like he knew exactly what he was getting himself into. Starting this process seemed like he knew what the consequences would be. Didn't want to involve anyone else, just wanted to do what he thought was right. At least from my impression, all he cares about is providing a voice for those that don't have a voice. Using that platform to evoke social change for what he thought was right. Being able to look himself in the mirror, that is such a powerful statement. Being able to look yourself in the mirror and he wasn't able to do that right now because of what was going on to the individuals that didn't have the ability to stand up for themselves. So, keeping in mind what we know about him now and looking back at his first interview over a year ago. Seems like he had a good handle on what was going to happen and was willing to accept the consequences. Looking back hindsight is 20/20, he has been named GQ man of the year, last week received the Mohammed Ali Legacy award for social change and social justice. The NFL has committed 100 million dollars over seven years to social justice initiatives across the U.S. His protest got enough people talking, brought enough awareness to the topic that things have started to change. This might have ended his football career, but it sounds like to me he is able to look himself in the mirror and is completely okay with how things have happened.

So, my question is whether or not athletes should stick to sports? Or I this something that more athletes should be willing to do, more individuals with platforms be willing to do.

At this point I'd like to bring in another voice to see what he things on whether or not athletes should speak up, have a responsibility to speak up, what he things about the protest and Kaepernick in general.

So, what's your understanding of the whole protest?

To start awareness, and I think it did the job perfectly.

To start awareness around what?

Awareness around how black people are discriminated against and how it is still happening today, and all those cop stories, and dash board videos where it is clear as day that there is discrimination and prejudice against them. He wanted to bring awareness to the issue and I think he did it perfectly. I don't fully understand the issue because I'm not black, I'm not American, but what he did I don't have issues with. And if it kind of screwed his NFL career I feel like he feels so strongly about it that he is okay with that.

The biggest thing I've gotten out of this is that the media has twisted everything. It is no longer a police brutality issue, its an anthem issue, a patriotic issue, it's a country issue. It's been twisted to that he's protesting the anthem rather than the police brutality that is occurring in black communities.

Oh yeah, and that's why no one takes a knee anymore. Its lost all its MOJO. The owners helped, and everyone took it away and masked into something else. Kaepernick is being kind of quiet right now because he knows that the true message has been kind of lost.

He has come out and said that if I get signed by a team ill stand for the anthem. He's been on record saying that because his initial protest, the actual act of kneeling, has been twisted into something that he did not intend. His initial protest was against police brutality and the discrimination that was occurring, that has been completely lost in this so what's he doing if he knees then.

So I like Adam agree that athletes should speak up. If you have the platform, the want, the desire to speak up you should say something. You should be willing to put yourself out there to act on something to evoke change, protect people, and help people that otherwise don't have the ability to do so. The thing about that interview with Kaepernick is that he is so focused on everyone else. He is so focused on the people that don't have the ability, platform, or means to act on what is happening and he views it that he has the ability to do so and that it is his responsibility to do so. I think that people in general should have this attitude. If you have the ability to speak up you should. Not just athletes, but people in general should take action if they perceive something as being wrong. You shouldn't just put it out of side and out of mind because it doesn't directly affect you. If there are people suffering then something should happen.

I'd like to leave you with a final thought. Being an existentialism class, I'd like to bring in a philosopher rather than me just rambling about sports. So, I would like to bring in Hannah Arendt, experiencing Nazi Germany, the hate, the oppression, I'd like to speak to one of her concepts which is that at the end of the day you only have to live with one person. At the end of it all you go home, you're by yourself, there is only one person you have to live with and that's the person looking you back in the mirror. And I think that Kaepernick's statements about not being able to look himself in the mirror align perfectly with this concept. I think the difference between Kaepernick and not only athletes but people in general is that when a lot of people can't look themselves in the mirror they just completely ignore it, put it out of their minds, and focus on themselves. They aren't willing to put themselves into a potentially negative situation where its possible that you will lose something. I think that situations like this need to happen more often and be taken a lot more seriously. History tells the way things happened, the way things turned out, and I think that this story with Kaepernick could have turned out very differently. This story

could have gone a completely different direction and his real motives and purpose for protest could have been completely lost with things getting twisted by media. So, I think that it is important to remember what the original protest was about, ignore a lot of the media, the twisting, and the lies essentially. Focus on the issue, what this individual was willing to do, and use it as an example of stepping outside yourself to evoke change for others.

One thing I would like to leave with you is to take five minutes, think about what you believe in, what is going on, and decide whether or not the reality matches what your beliefs are. If not, think about what can be done and take action. Things aren't going to change until enough people speak up, are willing to take action for what they believe in and are willing to look themselves in the mirror and if they don't like what they see act on it.

Thank you for your time, if you would like any more information please refer to the show notes. There are tons of links leading to more information on how this story has developed and changed so if you are interested in learning more please refer to that.

Thank you.