

OP: Just Kaepernick
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Back in Aug 2016, a photo was taken of Colin Kaepernick sitting during the National Anthem at a preseason game. By the end of the month, the picture had gone viral, and Kaepernick began to speak out as to why he was sitting. He said that it was done as a form of protest against the social injustice taking place in our country. After his protest began to gain buzz, Kaepernick decided to kneel instead of sit. He said this was done because he believed kneeling would be more respectful to the military service.

However, neither kneeling nor sitting was taken too well by the masses. People believed that whether he kneeled or sat, it was still disrespectful to the military and to the country. So due to pressure from the majority and people threatening to take funding out of the NFL, he became a free agent at the end of the 2016 football season. Which in turn caused him to file a grievance against the NFL, in Nov. 2017, because he believed that the NFL, and the team owners were colluding to make sure he wouldn't be re-signed.

Which brings us to today, Colin Kaepernick is now the new face of Nike's Just Do It campaign. When the news of the campaign came out, the controversy and anger grew larger, and people just couldn't understand how an international sports brand could support someone who they believed was spitting in the face of America's values and beliefs.

This ad campaign led to people saying that they would never buy from Nike again, and believing that Nike was also against the beliefs and values of American culture. People even went as far as destroying previously bought Nike apparel. Which if you ask me is kind of ridiculous, because the company has already taken their money. Destroying the items, though in a sign of "protest", hurts the individual more so than the company.

The biggest shocker for me surrounding the campaign was the fact that the NFL came out in full support of Nike choosing Kaepernick. Which leads me to believe that the only reason the NFL gave Kaepernick so much push back is because of the financial pressure from the team owners and others who endorse the NFL. Something we have gained from this controversy is the light that has been shed on the overall racism and hatred that is imbedded in our country.

What we as a people need to do is to take a step back and really analyze why these people are mad. It can't be because they feel like he is disrespecting the military or our country, simply because he began to kneel instead of sit, as a sign of respect for our soldiers and our nation. He has never said that he dislikes the country or the military, he just feels that he can't support an anthem designed to embrace freedom and liberty for all, when so much injustice is taking place around the nation. So instead of criticizing him and Nike for what has taken place, we all need to be kneeling beside them until every individual is given the freedom and liberty that they truly deserve.

