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Donald Trump as the Slave Master of the Black Athlete Plantation

By Randy Blazak
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Sports can reveal so much about where we are in American racial progress: Jackie Robinson, the Mexico City Olympics, Derek Jeter dating white women. White sports fans have made

themselves the referees for what black athletes are allowed to do to move the racial equity ball down the field. And they'll be more than happy to shut down a spectacular rush. And that's the end of my sports metaphors.

Enough has been said about Trump's weird obsession with "ungrateful" NBA players and "ungrateful" NFL players. Except for white people who are in deep denial, anyone that has followed Donald Trump from his Central Park 5 ad, through his relentless Obama birtherism, to his comments about the "fine people" in Charlottesville, knows the man is a racist. He's the modern kind of racist who says, "I'm the least racist person on earth. I have black friends!"

The way to frame the "I'm not a racist, but..." racism that is flowing down from the White House and across the Facebook feeds of white America is to think historically. They want to make America great again. And for "again," let's choose 1857. This was a time when one in four white families in Virginia owned African slaves. And, like the NFL, the best team owners made the most money. There were over a hundred plantation owners who owned over a hundred slaves each. The slave labor on those plantations generated millions of dollars in revenue for the white elites, and it wasn't just cotton sales.

First, let's get this out of the way. The NFL kneeling protests have nothing to do with the flag or the anthem. They are about the persistent problem of racism in America, especially with regard to policing. Trump and his army of racist overseer trolls can try to spin it any way they want, but it's about racism. (Trump lamented that white NASCAR drivers don't bother us with this nonsense.) They can act all butt-hurt about how much the flag means to them, but it's not about the flag. It's a common racist trick to make any unwanted racial protest an "attack on America." Martin Luther King, Jr. and the civil rights activists of the 1960s were routinely called "communists" who wanted to "destroy" America. Trump's pathetic attempt to make this about the flag only reinforces the fact that this is about racism. "It's not what the black people say it is. It's what I say it is." And I could spend thousands of words talking about how we disrespect the flag on a daily basis. Ever seen a Kid Rock concert?

President Trump has fashioned himself as the ultimate plantation owner and these negroes better get back to work. He (and white America) owns them. Black players are chattel. Trump's Treasury Secretary, Steven Mnuchin, made that clear on ABC's *This Week* when he said, "They have the right to have the first amendment off the field." As if the Constitution is suspended when the beasts are on the field. I guess these black bucks should be "grateful" that Trump is giving them their first amendment right when they aren't picking cotton.

Obviously, racist whites don't like any type of black protest about the persistence of racism, whether it's a football player peacefully kneeling during our national anthem, written by a slave owner, or Black Lives Matter protestors peacefully marching down a street. Racist whites didn't like it in the early 1950s when Trump said America was "great," and they surely don't like it now, after a black president. Racism has been solved and these blacks are just being ungrateful, right? They should be grateful "we" freed them, right? (Does "we" include the white guys waving Confederate flags? Post-racial America is so confusing.)

I spent some time on sports discussion boards this week, trying to get the pulse of the hardcore sports fans. There was a lot of anger at Trump for inserting his weird version of patriotism into a multi-racial game, loved by many demographics. (Ask some of my Mexican family members about the role the Dallas Cowboys play in their lives.) Many even recognized that when Trump referred to the protesting black players as “sons of bitches” to a roaring crowd of white supporters in Alabama, he grabbed a third rail. The mothers of football players are beloved, much more than ratings-obsessed politicians. There were obviously a lot of racist posts that moderators were working overtime to delete. However, plenty of “I’m not a racist, but...” posts slipped through.

A trip through Twitter was more revealing. Not that these knuckleheads are actually going to do it, but a survey of #NFLBoycott posts was pretty harsh. Plenty of discussions of “ungrateful niggers.” And how much “we” pay them to entertain, not annoy us. One white Facebook friend said she almost walked out a restaurant because they had an NFL game on. Of course, she didn’t and if she did it would have had zero effect on the NFL or the need to solve America’s racial issues. But the blatant racism on Twitter has certainly been given a green light by Trump and his call to have these ungrateful negroes fired from their jobs.

The term “ungrateful” is key in this issue. White men earn their income. Eli Manning earns his \$21 million dollar salary. Black men are *given* their income. They should be grateful for their millions. I don’t have millions. Who are they to complain? (The average player in the NFL makes \$1.9 million, so there are a majority of players who are not getting paid millions to cover Matthew Stafford’s \$27 million dollar salary. In fact take a look at the 15 top paid players in the NFL. Thirteen white guys.)

Another friend on Facebook, who was angry about these “ungrateful athletes” said, “But *we* pay them millions!” (Something one of the indigent white hosts of *Fox & Friends* also claimed.) I asked, “Who is ‘we’?” Nothing. But the message was clear. White people pay them and the team owners own them. The don’t own Tom Brady, but they own Philadelphia Eagles safety Malcolm Jenkins, and any other black player raising a fist or taking a knee when they should be picking cotton and swearing allegiance to the slave owner’s anthem.

In my nearly thirty years of research on white supremacists, one of the recurring themes is the anger directed towards African-Americans who made more money than them. In my original study of skinheads in Orlando, Florida, racists were completely obsessed with the fictional middle-class Huxtable family on *The Cosby Show*. Their parents had been laid off from a Florida textile mill, but every Thursday night there was this black family on TV that had everything they thought they deserved. “What’s wrong with this picture?” I remember one saying in 1988. During that study, the movie *Mississippi Burning* was released. There’s a powerful scene in it which Gene Hackman’s character is trying to explain the racist white mentality to Willem Dafoe’s character. It perfectly summed up the skinheads I was living with and many of the NFL fans burning Colin Kaepernick jerseys (who, apparently, has not been punished enough).

Donald Trump clearly has a number of personal issues wrapped up in this circus act, including his legacy of driving the USFL, a football league meant to rival the NFL, into the ground. His Twitter barrages rile up his under-educated white base while distracting the country from his

numerous legislative failures. Perhaps there's also some admiration for Rocket Man Kim Jong Il. Nobody takes a knee during the national anthem in North Korea. Trump doesn't have his dictatorship (yet), but if he can get enough of his knuckle-dragging followers to demand that these ungrateful savages be fired from jobs they've worked their entire lives to have, he can call it a win.

Ratings for all sportscasts have been on the decline for the last few years. It's because young people would rather watch YouTube videos instead of sports, not because a handful of athletes want to make a peaceful statement about the race problem in America. Watching these idiots burn their sports crap in protest reminds me of the same fools who burned their Beatles albums 51 years ago because someone told them the Beatles believed they were better than Jesus. (John Lennon had just tried to make a valid point about the declining role of religion in young people's lives, but DJ's in Southern U.S. states and the KKK didn't care about context.)

Racism is real and continues to traumatize Americans on a daily basis. A black millionaire football player is still a black man in America. Malcolm X once said, "You know what a white man calls a black man with a PhD? A nigger." And here we still are. Those who are peacefully protesting racism by kneeling are honoring what the flag is supposed to represent. They are the patriots, not Trump and his racist cult.