

Prepping the game balls. People need to stop saying, like, oh, I don't experience it, so it's not, like, something I need to partake in, or something I need to deal with.

It makes me feel like our voice isn't really heard, and no one really cares how much. I think about all the hardships and the sacrifices that people before us made for us to get here. The civil rights movement is, honestly, not over.

When I first heard about the protest, I kind of knew immediately, like, it was going to be a big thing in the country. Like, nationwide, I knew it was going to be a huge topic of discussion.

Obviously, I heard it from Colin Kaepernick. It was all over the news. Me and my friend Ricky were at lunch, and we're talking about, like, what do you think about taking a knee for the national anthem. I was like, yeah, we can do it. I'm down. And then we went to go talk to my coach, and he was fine with us taking a knee. Ricky and Phil both came up to me, and they told me that they were going to take a knee, and they asked me to join them. And I was like, I'm going to do it.

Initially, I wasn't entirely sure what to think, because I knew, like, the national anthem, that's kind of a big part of, like, pre-game ritual and kind of American culture, in general. A lot of my football team supported me, and my mom supported me, and she was actually a veteran. Some of the, like, parents of the football team, a lot of them were upset, though. And, like, a lot of other people who saw it in the news and stuff were very upset about it.

I've talked about it with my immediate family, but none of the military members, just because I feel like maybe they'd be less supportive of it. And I don't know. It's a difficult thing to talk about.

You don't want to say something stupid, or you don't want to say something offensive, but I almost feel like that those things need to be said. I wish I could talk to more people about race. The discussion needs to happen, like, people need to be comfortable talking about it.

I have explained racism. I was walking over the Broadway Bridge with my little brother. It was like a group of four teenagers in a truck, and they drove by, and they threw trash at us. And they're like, F you, N-word, and then kept on-- and sped away. I just told him not to let them get him down or anything. Just keep his head up, keep on moving throughout his day.

People out there probably get it way worse than I do. But I just let it go, and just keep doing what I have to do to move on.

Being raised in America as a white person is very different than-- I'm assuming-- than being raised as a person of color. I don't know what it's like to walk into a room and be, like, the only person that looks like me in that room. We get pulled over and we're not worried at all. We don't have to think about, like, oh, what could happen? You know, how could this go wrong?

I knew that these things were going on, and I knew that it was wrong. But I didn't know how to protest, or how to put my opinion out there. And whenever I stand for the national anthem, I thought, these people are living in this country, and they're not being treated the same as everyone else. You know, like, the base enemy of the civil rights movement is, like, people who remain indifferent, people who quietly support the cause but don't actually do anything.

It makes me feel like, do I fall into that category? And like, what is it that stops me from doing something? I can't really figure it out. I can't pinpoint it. I have an obligation to go and stand by their side when they fight this battle that is going on in our country.

Everyone's going to obviously have their own opinion, but try to see it from a different perspective.

[CHEERING]