

What If They Took a Knee to Protest Destructive Behavior?

Colin Kaepernick, the San Francisco 49ers quarterback cum political activist, really started something, didn't he?

First, he was out there all by himself, the only one who "took a knee" during the national anthem, protesting what he sees as racial injustice in America. "I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color," he said.

Then other NFL players joined the protest. Then college players took a knee. Followed by high school players.

President Obama was asked about the protest and said, "I think he cares about some real, legitimate issues that need to be talked about."

And when Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was asked to weigh in, she at first said his protest was "dumb" and "disrespectful," before backing off, saying her comments "were inappropriately dismissive and harsh."

But now, the movement has taken a new turn. Now, it's not only athletes who are taking a knee in protest. Now, even a few of the people who *sing* the national anthem before games have joined the movement.

Before a Sacramento Kings pre-season NBA game, Leah Tysse knelt down on one knee during the last line of the anthem. As she sang, "'O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave," she dropped down on the word "free."

On her Facebook page she wrote: "I cannot idly stand by as black people are unlawfully profiled, harassed and killed by our law enforcement over and over and without a drop of

accountability. ...

“Whether or not you can see it from your vantage point, there is a deep system of institutionalized racism in America, from everyday discrimination to disproportionate incarceration of people of color to people losing their lives at the hands of the police simply for being black. This is not who we claim to be as a nation. It is wrong and I won’t stand for it. #Solidarity.”

So much of this is nonsense. She and the others who have joined the protest paint a dark picture of America. They see a deeply bigoted country where police shoot innocent people “simply for being black,” as she puts it.

There is nothing in her rant about investigations of police involved in shootings, or charges filed against police officers who might have broken the law, or how many of the people who were shot were resisting arrest, or how some had guns they were pointing at police officers who felt that their lives were being threatened. Nothing either about this jarring statistic: Gun murders of police officers are up 47 percent (through October 21) compared with the same period last year. As for the “disproportionate incarceration of people of color,” that just might be because people of color commit a disproportionate amount of crime that lands them behind bars.

When Ms. Tysse tells us that she “won’t stand for it,” I guess she means that literally. But rogue cops aren’t what’s plaguing portions of black America. Dysfunctional behavior is.

Here’s an idea for Ms. Tysse and Colin Kaepernick and all the others: Take a knee to protest 15-year old girls having babies who likely will grow up in poverty.

Take a knee to protest kids dropping out of high school – and mocking kids who don’t for “acting white.”

Take a knee to protest the epidemic of senseless murders in

places like Chicago.

Or do black lives matter only when a cop – usually a white cop – is involved in shooting a black man?

It certainly is possible that protests against destructive behavior, well meaning as they might be, might not result in any meaningful change. But then, taking a knee during the national anthem isn't likely to produce anything of substance either.