

Kristi Dosh

Hi, James, thanks so much for joining us today.

James Coleman

Appreciate you having me.

Kristi Dosh

You, I think, are only my second former football student athlete to come on. I had Tajh Boyd on, I don't know, episode two or three pretty early on and we did a deep dive on NIL rights. And I want to talk to you about that as we get kind of towards the end of this. But I thought we could start out by talking a little bit about your experience as a student athlete, and particularly your experience as a Black student athlete, because I think what we've seen over the last few weeks is increasingly Black student athletes have spoken up and talked about issues within their current and former programs. And I have a lot of different examples I want to sort of go through but I thought we could start by talking a little bit about your experience. Was there anything about your experience as a student athlete or even particularly at FSU that you think was different than maybe the experience that your White teammates had?

James Coleman

I think that's an interesting question. And I'm a history major. And I really like delving into all kinds of, in particular, African American history, US history. I had a great opportunity this past week to interview the original four African American athletes who integrated to a state from an athletic perspective. And I was blessed to have those guys come before me and other people go through some different games and help change the climate and then nothing really earth shattering happen at Florida State during my time because we were really good. And the people before me were good. I was on the downward trend of what they call the dynasty. So as long as I excelled on the field, the racism that I felt was more implied. It was not overt. We didn't have social media. Social media was just starting to come into vogue. So the people, and I hate to use this because it sounds almost elitist, but the people who have platforms deserved the platform.

Now, everybody has a platform—the guy in the front of the liquor store, the guy who's a janitor who's struggling with life, everybody has a platform with social media to be able to say what they want to say. So you're no longer hidden. And everybody has access to you. So you're no longer hidden from – your athletic gifts don't hide you anymore. And we never had a major social issues like what they have right now. The only ones that I remember growing up, I remember Rodney King, it was '91. So I think it was '91, '92. So I would have been like seven or eight years old.

Kristi Dosh

Yeah, and I'm just a couple of years older than you and I don't remember much either.

James Coleman

Yeah, so I remember my mom watching it. I remember "Can't we all just get along?" and some of the satire stuff that came along with it. But I do know these young men have seen, in the last five to six years they've seen a perfect example of a young man Tamir Rice would have been graduating high school this year, and he was shot in an open carry state for people thinking he had a gun in a park

when it was a toy gun, and before he even had the opportunity. So this recruiting class saw that. They've seen obviously, George Floyd. They've seen Eric Garner. They've seen Trayvon Martin who would have had graduated from college. They've seen numerous things they've seen, and then when the unrest came, they used their platform. So I was kind of the in between, like, kind of happy time.

But what I did see, what I did get the opportunity though was to see how I could change stereotypes of what people thought the hood was or what they thought African American men were or African American athletes thinking that we were dumb jocks. I graduated in three and a half years, not because I was a stellar student, but just because I went to school but I graduated, my sister was a collegiate athlete as well at Florida State, All-ACC track athlete, and she graduated in four years with a double major.

I went from the projects. I went from the hood. And so that was really the more of the thing is I interact with people and they think because of the neighborhood that I'm from, I'm supposed to be like the rappers, which it could be. And I'm from those areas, and I have friends who are like that, but I also came out of that and my goal is to do some other things. So that would be the stuff that you see is it's always everywhere you go people are suggesting that, oh, you're not what I thought. And then my mother taught sarcasm very, very well in my family. Like, we are a family of sarcastic people. And I tell you're not the White person that I thought. I would tell them the same thing, "I thought you all were airheads and from the valley," or "I thought you were all rich," or "I thought you were this". But again, that was the things that that my encounters were.

And I think the beautiful thing about it is what started me and I actually heard the original Ford talk about this. They all went to integrated high school. They were the first people to go. So when we went to Florida State it wasn't a shock. I went to Florida State Developmental Research School a.k.a. Florida High, which is on FSU's campus and it's a direct reflection of the state of Florida's population part of census. So it was like 60% White, blah, blah, blah, these different things. I went through an alternative middle school, because I got into a lot of fights, that was 98% Black. So I went from a 98%, African American school to a school where I was shell shocked. But had I not had that transition, I probably wouldn't have been as good at Florida State. I wouldn't have been able to accept it.

Kristi Dosh

When I think something you brought up, I've got a question for you. You talked about the student athletes now and sort of what they've had to see and emotionally process with the deaths, the murders that we have seen over the past couple few months. And obviously, there are examples that go back even further than that. But there's been a lot during just the last couple of months, it seems like, with the pandemic it becomes so tough to keep track of time anymore, and it's all sort of happening, but it seems like a lot happened in a small window of time for them to process emotionally. And I had Tim Duncan the AD at University of New Orleans on a couple of weeks ago to talk about an instance where he was racially profiled up in Massachusetts while he was back packing up his house to get his family moved down to New Orleans. And we talked about how he decided to use that encounter to speak to his student athletes when he got back. And he said that they took their three African American administrators and had them talk to only their African American student athletes and decided that that was where the discussion should start. And one of the things that we've seen talked about a lot in the

news lately is Marvin Wilson at FSU, who refuted the head coach saying that he corresponded with every single player individually about George Floyd's death. And Marvin Wilson said, "No, you didn't". And it made me think about how Tim Duncan decided to approach his student athletes versus what we were hearing coming out of other schools.

As a former student athlete and I know now you work with athletes as well, what do you think is the sort of job of a head coach in this situation or of an administration? How should they be talking to, particularly their Black student athletes about what's happening?

James Coleman

Well, it should be a twofold thing, and I think the biggest thing with all of this is education. And education like not in a book sense, but in a real world application sense. Me and my radio partner, [Dingy 0:08:27], had a great dialogue, and I'm not using him to bash or anything. But when I hear people say, "I didn't know" that in the information age, ignorance is a choice. That's one of the things that they tell us. You have Google right here. And now, you should ask what the right thing because you can go down the wormhole. But what should happen so that we can advance the conversation is we have to, a, understand colloquialisms and language. And words have meaning especially to the African American community. We call it things like word is bond. Your word is your bond. Your name is attached to your words and your actions and they mean everything.

And for a new coach, that means everything. I had Mike Norvell on an interview of a podcast I have called 36 Degrees, I said, "Coach, why should they trust you? Why should a new athlete trust you when the coach who was there before Willie Taggart who looked like them said he was going to help them and he didn't, seemingly, and Jimbo left? Why should they trust?" They shouldn't trust me. Every day, I have to go out and I have to earn their trust. So we take that and then you see the thing now. And it was improper wording. He did reach out to everybody in theory, but the text and what it implied because he sent a text message and about 50 to 60 athletes responded. But what he implied is, and this is where it was dangerous and I'm glad it got cleared up is that I did more for my little color boys than what every other coach is doing.

Kristi Dosh

Right.

James Coleman

And it was a sense of pride – it would have been a home run article that was written because here is strategic message and why people who are saying and why it's detrimental because the media influences thought, and the way that we do things it influences people's thought. He didn't go towards him. He didn't go to 247, the local beat, where they don't have any African American writers. There are two African American writers on FSU.

Kristi Dosh

Wow.

James Coleman

I'm not, to me, I'm technically not a beat writer. I have something that I'm trying to do and I cover FSU because it's my alma mater, but I cover SEC, ACC and the NFL. So that to me, you didn't go to me which people would have been like, they would have been like, "James' job is to fit the program. This is his alma mater". You want to Tashan Reed who no longer covers FSU by the way, but he's an African American journalists, for The Athletic. And you told an African American journalist what you were doing for your African American athletes. So you got a cosign automatically from what he was doing. If that wasn't strategic and it was dumb luck then you're stupid, which I don't believe, I don't think he's stupid at all. I believe they knew what that could do for it. So when you use that word, it means something. So when Marvin sees that, and Marvin knows that, "Wait a minute, you ain't talking to me. I see you". That's when that comes in. And then that's when I think Marvin actually realized the power that he has as a student athlete.

Kristi Dosh

Right.

James Coleman

I don't think these kids realize, like we knew the power we had. But the athletic directors took the hat of just how much power they had put in the COVID situation. See, they're pushing COVID and making these guys go out without understanding it.

And because if you don't have football, you don't get your TV dollars. You don't get the booster money. And they're like, "We could lose our entire athletic department". So what you do is you just show weakness. So now I know. I know you need me just as much as y'all think I need you now. Because if I don't get out there and I don't play on that field, you don't get your ticket money". If you don't play on the field, you don't get the you don't get the TV revenue. If you don't get the TV revenue, that means you got outstanding bills because most of y'all are playing catch up to play with the Joneses, because you're trying to compete with Alabama and try to compete with these other people, which is such an unfair playing field. And we also know we should have been paid. So now the public perception of people saying we have to play college football, even if students don't come, so now the public is actually seeing, wait a minute, these guys ain't really stupid. These guys are chattel for the university that they need that the university is wanting to be able to function without them. And then now they realize that, "You know, if you want me to play, you better do what I say". So now you see not just a Florida State with Marvin says, "We ain't doing nothing else for the rest of the year until this gets handled," that immediately caused action from the president. The president had to lessen the rule because there was supposed to be no large gatherings on campus. The president immediately signs up, "You guys can meet. You need to have a team meeting". This happened, so 12 o'clock at night is when it happened. I remember hearing, getting updates from parents about my Mike Norvell at 7:00 and the president let them have a meeting at 9:00 AM. So you saw change happen within nine hours. Now, again, to Mike Norvell's credit, everything that he's done has been to show – I'm sorry, but Oklahoma State with Mike Gundy wearing OAN shirt. I don't care what people believe about it or not. His running back was hurt and they're like, "Well, he's just sensitive and Mike doesn't need to do nothing". Well, that running back represents 328-plus carries, 2,000-plus rushing yards, and 21-plus TV. That guy means something to Mike Gundy because if he doesn't play, Mike Gundy is losing a significant part of his office, which is a significant part of his salary, which is \$5 million a year. Well,

you're making money off of when I realized your \$5 million is off of me as the African American, you're going to do what I say and you have to bet on Black. Because the last time I checked, ever since Bear Bryant took that ass-whipping by USC, African American players have been very prevalent into this sport. So that's kind of where it's like three to four generations removed. They're coming in and seeing that this generation is doing the same thing. And people don't like that. Anytime change is being ushered, there's a painful processing. So people have to get on there but it's great to see the student athletes have more balls than the pro athletes.

Kristi Dosh

And I think what you said that's interesting and that I hope people paid attention to is the situation the pandemic has created, has hammered home for these Black student athletes the important role that they play in generating revenue, not just for the football program, but for the entire athletic department. And that that has perhaps given them the sort of confidence or the push to be more vocal about what's happening. Do you think this would have all looked different if there was no pandemic but we still had George Floyd being murdered and we still had these other instances of violence and particularly police violence against Black people? Does this all play out differently if we're not in the middle of a pandemic, where student athletes are so aware of their value?

James Coleman

I think it doesn't. I think it's a perfect storm or a perfect gumbo of everything. So the pandemic gives you a chance to go back home and see that and you're hearing about your value or you're hearing about schools that need this. Because for so many years, the people who were the most important were the booster. That was who the school catered to. So if the booster says this, booster says that, then you got to bow down to the guy that's paying \$1 million a year check. But now you see this and I think there was no, just normally, the student athlete can be – like I said with me, like I was for four years, I was effectively shielded from a lot because of my level of ability. And even now, like, the way I live my lifestyle now shields me from way more than what I do, what I've become now, when I encounter it now, it wakes me up a whole hell of a lot. And even then when I encountered it in college it woke me up a whole lot more. But normally, you're just like, "Hey," if you know that there's a threat every day, it's kind of like if you're an animal in the jungle, your instincts are everything that you're raised to do is to protect yourself from the potential of threats.

So when you know you've got class from 8:00 AM until 12:00. You got work outs in 12:00 to 2:00. You got film study from 2:00 to 3:00. You got practice from 3:30 to 6:30. You got chow for 6:30 to 7:30. Study hall up until 9:00 PM. Your day is so regimented that you don't get a chance to really worry about what's going on. You may look at your phone every now and then. But you don't have phones at practice or in your meetings. So you're really away from your phone for four to five hours a day.

But now during quarantine, you're on your phone. You see Twitter. You see this stuff. You're getting mad. And now you're around your parents. The biggest thing that these things do is the conversation that you had and if you're having conversations with your mom and dad that are tough. Your dad is stewing. I've had to have a conversation with my 7-year-old son about what was going on. So like it makes you mad. And now you're telling your son to be careful like your older son is Marvin Wilson's age. You're telling him to be careful, like, "Don't go out here. Don't do something stupid. Keep your

nose clean. Man, don't need to carry money. Use a credit card then they can't say it's counterfeit". A lot of things of that nature. So these guys are stewing and you're having conversation, again, it gets, and then I think it was the back to back to back nature. The Arbery situation that happened in Georgia. I forget his last name.

Kristi Dosh

Ahmaud Arbery

James Coleman

Yeah, Ahmaud Arbery, and you see what he is just running and people think he fits the description. And the crazy part about that is we wouldn't have heard him. That had been already out for 60 days before you heard about it. That was pre-COVID. But now you're seeing that it was a kid and it wasn't going to go, and like, man, so we could just be hunted when I'm working out. Then you see, then you hear about Breonna Taylor, in Louisville, where it was a no-knock raid and a man who had his license to carry who was a second amendment holder, and police come in and don't announce themselves, and your neighbors are saying that he shoots and then the young lady gets hit with a volley of shots. And then you hear about the cover up and how things were happening. And then you see the George Floyd situation. And then you see the situation that happened in Atlanta, justified or not justified or whatever you believe it's just a lot that you take in. And now you get back and then you don't know, like, you're away from home now and your coach is your father, is your father figure, your assistant coach, your head coach, and a lot of these parents can't really communicate to you. So they're asking the coaches "Talk to our son". And the coach says that and it's not what happened. And then you just go do that.

But it's, again, it's a great thing because Texas is doing something similar. Texas A&M is doing something with Kellen Mond the quarterback who's basically – and people are researching these monuments that they have to go in and play for. It is so crazy to even think about it. A lot of the schools that a lot of these guys come from, your Andrew Jackson, your Lee, your Jeb Stuart, they're like at one point they were predominantly White neighborhoods but now it's the hood. So you have a bunch of African American kids who have gone to schools that were named after people who hated their very existence.

Kristi Dosh

And Texas was one of the things I wanted to ask you about. Because the situation there, as I understand it, and as much as I have read about it at this point is that you've got multiple student athletes and it sounds like not just football, from various sports, who have said that they're not going to host recruits or attend donor functions or play until a series of steps have been taken. They want The Eyes of Texas song to be replaced. There are some building names that were brought up. And I think that's happening on more than just one campus, but Texas obviously, is such a big brand. That's the one we see most in the media. As a former student athlete, is that something you think student athletes should be using their voice for? And if so, how do they go about that? How do you sort of pick your battles and how do you use the power that you have to get the change you want to see?

James Coleman

I think whatever you're passionate about, you should use that, use the platform that you have to push and bring forth change. So we don't know everything. None of us are born knowing everything. So when you find out about something and you're educated, it's your responsibility to change once you are educated on a said thing. And I believe like symbolism is dope and everything and I think that's a good part. That's a good first step, but there should be some true change and that comes from listening to people who have a little bit more time to create and using your lane to be able to help foster that. We all don't have to, we all don't need to be in the streets marching. We all don't need to be doing these different things. But everybody can have a different lane that's headed toward the same goal. And I think that's where athletes, because you're visible, you step behind somebody and you could truly push something.

This is a quote from General Lee, "The circumstances which govern their actions change; and their conduct must conform to the new order of things". So basically, when the times change, you've got to adapt. And that's what we've always been slow to do in America unless it messes with the money. And that's why I believe student athletes in general, entertainment, because that's really what it is; entertainment in general can bring about change faster because that's what people like. I mean, we exalt celebrity for whatever reason. So since we exalt celebrity, it's the celebrity's job to speak on those things in which we want change.

Kristi Dosh

Which I think leads to an interesting question, I was kind of thinking, I was thinking in my head, I wonder if we'll see change happen faster on college campuses because of what student athletes are stepping up and doing right now versus some of the debate we're seeing about monuments that are off campus that are in major cities and that sort of thing. For example, I'm from Atlanta and there's always been a, I guess before now, I would call it something like a vocal minority who wants to take the etching off the side of Stone Mountain, and I grew up like right at the edge of Stone Mountain. And I think that that the call for that is getting louder and louder particularly over the last couple months. But do you think that we'll see change faster on these college campuses because there are such high-profile student athletes who are getting involved in calling for the change?

James Coleman

Yes. And again, like I say, everything is about bottom line. The other thing that happens in college campuses is the fact that they didn't play any spring sports, and they didn't play on the winter sport championships. So there's a deficit right now. And so like if they threatened to not play, that creates a larger deficit.

Kristi Dosh

Right.

James Coleman

So if a guy is just like, "I don't want to go to a dorm. I don't want to stay in the dorm of a guy who hated my existence". That's an easy change. That's not something you need legislation for. That's something that you just need the president to just change the name of the dorm, change the name to somebody else, which you can understand. But I think it ushers in a bigger, or I hope it ushers in a bigger thing.

And I think University of Texas guys had this in their own policy. I think some other schools have it to where you're asking a university to do more in the inner city or more in the communities that look like people like you. And you're asking them for better diversity hires and more grace given to those people. So when you look at a compliance department, or you look at the athletic department that is really fueled by 70% of the athletes looking like one minority, but there isn't very good representation of that, not suggesting 70% of your athletic department needs to look like that. But when it's less than 5%, that's a problem.

Kristi Dosh

Right.

James Coleman

You should be able to look. You should be able to look in there and see people who are like you, because again, it gives you an idea of other stuff, the other things that you could do once your athletic career is over. So those are things that I hope that the student athletes are moving toward. Because if it's really just about stopping chance, that's cool, but that doesn't affect real change. And people can still say those chance in the comfort of their home. But until fiscally you have things in place that help level the playing field to help you have opportunity, then you're just wasting your voice. That's my opinion though.

Kristi Dosh

Well, you led me right into my next question without even knowing what it was, but I am a UF law grad. And so I paid attention the day we're recording this, the news just came out yesterday that UF will no longer use the Gator Bait chant and because I went to UF law I have a lot of friends in my network who are UF grads, and I really saw a 50-50 split between my friends on Facebook and Twitter over the last 24 hours, those who think it's the appropriate thing to do to remove that chant and those who are really upset about it being removed. And for those who are upset about it being removed, they are mostly linking to comments made by former UF president Lawrence Wright, who sort of came up with the idea for that chant. He is Black and he says that he doesn't support the removal and that it wasn't meant in that way. How do you feel about it as a Black person who is not a UF grad, and FSU even you have no allegiance to UF whatsoever, what's your take on that situation?

James Coleman

I'll be honest with you. We use that as a troll to Florida fans. As an African American, it's one of the things that we use against other – like when we want to make a joke that cuts. How could you be at a university that believes that it's appropriate to chant about something that we were used as? No matter how, no matter what it was in there, it's about what it was. Some things we can kind of have a little bit of a change for, but sometimes it doesn't work like that. And it definitely doesn't work like that on the grand scheme. So again, to educate people on that. You can look it up. There's periodicals or there's advertisements in newspapers. There's plenty of information that shows where African Americans or African Black babies were used to be able to get alligators on a swamp so that people could catch them and do whatever they want to do with that. It was not to the defense of whoever used those things. The African American was compensated which was an excuse. We have African Americans that want to do

this. That doesn't make it right though. And I know Mr. Wright was about to launch a very profitable clothing thing towards that he...

Kristi Dosh

I saw that same thing that he had some apparel and some commercial products he was getting ready to launch that included the Gator Bait language on it so that perhaps colors his opinion on this a little bit.

James Coleman

So I'll give an example from my own. So again, actually we have close – this is what we call ourselves, especially those of us who played under Bobby Brown. We call ourselves dope boys. And that is a reference to the stadium in which we play under, which is Doak S. Campbell Stadium. There is information that's out now about Doak Campbell being a very popular segregationist. Did not believe in integration at all. Now, he did some other things like he did give money to FAMU. He did that. Same as Ben Hill Griffin, same as on O'Connell. A lot of things, a lot of things that people get are going to actually probably end up coming up and seeing if it's time to rename them. If FSU said, and I have a teammate Kendrick Scott—not a teammate, excuse me—a alumni who I know very well, who's leading a petition to try to change the name of the stadium. If they change the name of the stadium, then I will change the name of my brand in my own podcast, because it's no longer there. It doesn't mean enough to me, right? What means for me is playing for my university. A chant in a name is not what made me go to that university.

Kristi Dosh

Right.

James Coleman

But it can be something that can deter somebody. And you never want to inadvertently hurt somebody. And the one thing I always bring up and this isn't anything negative to them, but like, anytime a Black person says, "This offends me. It's snowflakes," or, "I know Black people who don't do this or this". But let me say something antisemitic. It's not I have a Jewish friend who says this. I have this – no, we all have been truly educated on the horrors of the Holocaust. The thing that all of this really comes down to is we have not been truly educated on the horrors of the Mid-Atlantic slave trade on how it was legalized, like your skin color was essentially mechanized against you. There were legal things that made you a slave at one point. It was, yes, there were Black slave owners. Yes, there are Black – you can go and find the anomaly. But for the vast majority of African Americans existence here in the United States, it hasn't really been that great. My mother was the first person that attended integrated school. So I'm literally like people – I'm less than a generation removed from the horrors of a lot of the stuff that we have that went on.

So I think sometimes we just got to look at it. What's the worth of it? And I actually, I love what our – I don't even know, I always confuse this, how to say his last name, but I love what the UF present has actually done.

The other side of it is I know that's not what we asked for. Most Black people would have never asked for it. And most people didn't know what Gator Bait was to their defense.

Kristi Dosh

No.

James Coleman

But now that you know what it is, it's about, you're armed with knowledge. What are you going to do now that you know about it? Are you going to say, "I don't care"? Or are you going to like move forward?

Kristi Dosh

Yeah, I mean, once I saw when the news came out yesterday, I was not aware of Black children being used as gator bait and I immediately started seeing tweets where people had like postcards and advertisements depicting it and then started reading articles. And I spent time yesterday learning more about it before I ever retweeted or said anything about it because I knew that I had a big UF fan base that follows me because I went to UF and I wanted to know more before I shared anything about it. And after reading and seeing those things, you can't unlearn that. And I personally can't be okay ever using that chant again. And I mean, I have, I've taken part in that chant more times than I can count at the stadium, in a house watching with friends, and I will never see it the same way ever again because now I do have that education around it.

And so, for me as a UF grad, I don't want to hear it again. I think it's great that we decided we need to ban that and move beyond it. And for the people who are fighting so hard for it, I don't understand why they're fighting so hard for it and why their affection for it outweighs what it does actually represent. But I didn't know anything about it before yesterday, to be honest. And so I think all of us are getting an education on a lot of things we knew very little about. I grew up in a very White area. There were a handful of Black students at my high school and I don't think I got a lot of that education growing up. You get the typical sort of spoon-fed information about slavery in your textbooks, but I don't think I learned that much. And I wasn't around more diverse people until I got into college and then into law school and out in the working world and working in sports and that sort of thing. But I think it is incumbent upon us, as you said at the very beginning, the information is out there. All you have to do is hit Google and you can get educated on these issues, and I obviously encourage people to do that. But I'm going to link a couple of the things I read about the Gator Bait issue in the show notes for those people who haven't already taken the time to do it, I will do the work for you and give you a few of the links that I read. Because I do think it's important, especially for my UF fan base to understand what this is really all about.

James Coleman

Something I think everybody should do, and it's free, is go to Washington DC, and go to the African American History Museum. It's design is really crazy, right? So what you see is essentially where we're at today. And you go, you have to take an elevator and it goes down like four floors. And it represents the 400 years. So each floor is one of the centuries. And it's heavy. When I say heavy, it's, I know a lot, but like you literally learn what it's been like since the first African Americans entered here. And it's so

heavy that they have this thing called a reflection pool. Like it's supposed to relax you like you literally got to walk through it because there's people who are crying. There's people who are doing all kinds of other stuff. You literally see all the horrors. And it's almost like a triumph and tragedy, everything that they've been, that African Americans have been through. Now, the cool part is after you go through that, the top four floors are all about African American achievement. So you see like how cool it is to be like – which is something that Americans dope in the fact that out of many we are one. And I like – I never – like, if you're Italian, be proud to be Italian-American. If you're Chinese, be proud to be Chinese. If you're Black, be proud to be Black. It's just sometimes it's never told how dope it is to be who you are. And so you learn about all the bad stuff and then you learn how dope you are. But the reason why I say go to it is that sometimes you got to really get a crash course on why something might be offensive. Like even the way those Gator Bait things are drawn, they're drawn in blackface. And blackface is what people will consider the hideous features or the unattractive features of what an African American is—big lips, big eyes, big nose, tar skin. That's where things like tar baby came from and a lot of stuff like that. So those are things that when it's put out, it's not meant to be. It's not meant to show the positive side. So, again, it's just when you learn something, it's like, all right, "What does it really, really mean to me?" And if you can correct me if I'm wrong with this, they're not banning it. They're just banning the band for UF to lead the chant. You can go say Gator Bait on your own if you want to. They're not going to kick you out of the stadium if you say it, are they?

Kristi Dosh

No, but I would hope that UF fans would educate themselves on this more and that no one would want to say it anymore. I know that's not...

James Coleman

Yeah, that's what – no, no, and that's where I'm getting at.

Kristi Dosh

But you're right, the band just isn't going to play it.

James Coleman

It goes to something where it's just like the n-word. I don't want to go into this, but it's like, nobody is stopping you from saying the word. We're just hoping you have the civility to understand what the word implies and that you can't – and you just shouldn't. It's like there's literally no law against use of any word. It's just, as my mother taught me growing up, which is crazy, that how you get taught this in the inner city environment and the things that happened, she said, "Anything that you do in life, be prepared for consequence, positive or negative". You can do whatever you want to do. The thing is that there is going to be a consequence for the said outcome for the said thing that you've done. So that's really what it comes down to.

Kristi Dosh

There was something, I don't want to veer totally off course, but you said something earlier and I made a note about it because I wanted to remember to go back to it before we finished up. When you were talking about Doak Campbell and I was sort of thinking about the buildings and the stadiums that we're starting to hear sort of an uprising for changing the names. And a lot of the names, most of the names

that are at issue right now are names that are not contractually obligated to be on these buildings and stadiums and structures because they were named back when it was more of an honorary sort of thing versus the more modern era where now people are paying for naming rights on both academic buildings and on athletic buildings. Now, some schools and even some conferences are still very much against paid naming rights on buildings. But look, I work with a consulting firm and I've worked on naming rights deals before and some of the naming rights deals I've seen have kind of like a morals clause that would be similar to what we hear about with professional athletes, the clauses they might have in their sponsorships where when they go out and do something offensive or illegal or whatever against the morals of the company, the company can yank their sponsorship. I have seen a few naming rights deals that have had what I would essentially consider to be a morals clause. But quite frankly, it's a minority of them. Most of them don't have anything like that. And I wonder, as a consultant who works on this kind of stuff, not even wonder, I mean, I now feel strongly that there's got to be something, if you're going to take money from somebody to put their personal name or their business name on your building on campus or your stadium or your arena or whatever it is, you've got to do some pretty serious research into who that person or who that company is. And you got to have some sort of out clause, some sort of morals clause in the contract because we start talking about stadiums and arenas that have been named after people and corporations under contract for tens of millions of dollars. Taking the name off is going to be a little more complicated than it is if it's just a building named in honor of somebody. And as somebody who does that kind of consulting work, like I made myself a note here to talk to the people I consult with about how we should do this going forward, because I don't think that kind of research is being done. And I don't think those kind of clauses are being included in the contracts. And it's probably going to come back to bite somebody in the butt before too long.

James Coleman

Yeah, and I think we also – there is a danger – danger is a wrong word, but there is some stuff that we have to use some brevity. And you can't – it's very difficult to – there are things that we can say that are universally immoral. If you find out somebody is a rapist, if you find out somebody killed people, if you find out somebody literally went out of their way to hold people back, those are people that I would not want to be associated with. And you hear businesses all the time say, the values that this person represents does not represent the values of, blah, blah, blah, anytime somebody gets in trouble. So you have to have that same, yeah, it has to be consistent from top to bottom. But it's like just goes to the Doak Campbell thing, like it's hard when people ask me, like, as an African American man, yes, if you don't want, I don't want to play on this stadium of a person that didn't want me to be there.

That being said, at the time segregation was the worldview. So I can understand, it doesn't mean I like it, I can understand why you did that. So like for me to punish him, punish somebody based on the values that we have in 2020, yes, it's easy to do that. But what was the whole world like and what other things that he did. But it goes back to what you said. I just need to know who the person is. And you have to do the research and then you get a chance to really make a choice.

We all have a ton of things that we do that we make the best choice with the information that we have. Like I'm a sneakerhead. I really like tennis shoes. Most of my tennis shoes are made in China. But I also believe in human rights, and I believe in making money. I believe that people should make their fair share. So very huge dichotomy right there. So like, oh, there's some things that people could do better,

but like, man, do I want my Jordans to cost me \$300 on a regular price, or do I like the fact that they cost 190 if I give them. So those are things that we're doing every day. So imagine how escalated it gets when we actually get to a situation where it's millions of dollars involved, and it's a college or it's a business. But I think that, to me, schools that are struggling with it, yes, the Alabama's and SECs. So if I'm an ACC school, and I don't really, I don't have the booster structure that a lot of these other places have, I'm trying to find money at every creative way possible. And there's banks. That's why I think what the Jaguars do is amazing. It's very difficult for a TIA bank to like, have a bad thing, unless they get hit with lending practices. But that's a whistleblowing thing, and most of the time they collapse and another bank buys them. So it's like, it just changes like that. So that's the money part is where it gets interesting. And to be honest with you, until they really start paying athletes, I really don't care how hard they get.

Kristi Dosh

Well, he talked earlier about sort of what student athletes can do right now to use their voice. Most of the people who listen to this podcast work in an athletic department or they work with a service provider, a consultancy that provides services to athletic departments. This is mostly people who work in and around college athletics, sort of imparting, what is your advice to them on how they can best support their Black student athletes right now?

James Coleman

The best way you can do is use the word that everybody either hates or doesn't understand, is use your privilege. And it's not necessarily about your skin tone or it doesn't mean you didn't work hard. It just means that we all have certain privileges that we've worked hard for or we inherently get that give us open doors to places that we wouldn't normally have. So when it comes to your African American athletes, educate yourself on what they mean, on what police brutality means from the eyes of our African American. What is it like going home after the club? Or, even if you didn't go to the club, what is it like driving home at one o'clock in the morning from the stadium as a student athlete and you see a police officer come behind you? What thoughts do you have? And why do you have those thoughts? Okay, what is policing like for you? So once you learn that, and you listen to understand, then you start working on ways to actually bring about change. Because one thing I understood and I was listening to comedian Dave Chappelle talking about this, is that there is some White people or some people in general who have literally never had a bad experience with a police officer or in general, and that's a phenomenal life. So you can't wrap your mind around why somebody else would be stressed because of every interaction you had.

I liken it to this. If I tell you that this this food that I've had or this dish my mother makes, I like gumbo. So my mother makes this gumbo and it's so delicious, man, you got try. And I sell you on it, right? And you eat it and you're like, "Eh," like instead of me bashing you for not liking what I like, if I love you or if I'm really, like, you're really one of my people, "Well, why didn't you like it?" "Well, I have a shellfish allergy". "Oh, okay. Well, maybe if I take the shrimp out and I just, it is just chicken and sausage, like, maybe you'll like it then". And I change it. And then God forbid, you like it. That's not how Americans talk to each other about this. They talk to each other about how can you get pulled over. But when I tell, "How can you hate the police?" I'm like, "Well, I don't hate them. I distrust them because of situations, like, I mean, I've been detained in front of my own house because a police officer didn't believe I lived

there". Like, until you felt that, that's not only embarrassing, it's infuriating, because the person is terrified of you just because there are some mental thing that makes them afraid. I'm afraid of the Black person in some of these police officers at. Like, I don't know who this person is, because I've never encountered them before. But I do know this. I look like them apparently. And I don't want to play Russian roulette. So those are my experience with a police officer with anybody. So those are the things that we could do is listen to our guys so that we can understand, so that we can translate to others. And then from there, build rapport and relationships to where we can actually change this. Because it's not for the African American or the person who's oppressed to change. It's not their problem. It's your problem for having an issue with them that you don't even understand why you have. So until that change happens, all it is is rhetoric. And the other than that, bring somebody along. I'm a big proponent in if you have a skill, if you have a talent, the best way to love somebody, and to build somebody up is to teach that person everything that you know. Because if you can replicate yourself with somebody who looks different, you just gave somebody a leg up and a chance. And fiscally, it's time, talent and treasure. If you spend your time, talent and treasure with somebody else, you typically have to have an affinity on them.

Kristi Dosh

I think that's great advice. And I think I'm actually going to link down in the show notes to a few books that were recommended to me that I am currently, one, I'm in the middle of reading and the others I've got up to read next, to help educate myself better because I am a White woman, and I want to learn more. And the one thing I have sort of I have heard and listened to is my Black friends who have said, "Don't come to me and ask me to educate you. It's not my job". And I have taken that very seriously. And I have asked when there is something that I need their personal opinion on or I've looked and I found conflicting information. Yeah, I mean, there are situations where I felt like it made sense to go to one of my friends and ask a genuine question. But I'm not going and saying, "How can I do better? What should I be doing?" or "What should I be reading?" I tried really hard to go out and find my own resources.

So I am happy to share with people the resources I found, which you may or may not find helpful, but I will link to a few books. I'm in the middle right now of one called White Fragility that I'm reading actually with a whole group that's facilitated by a friend, that's biracial. And that group still hasn't met yet. So happy to link to that too if people want to join our sort of book club to discuss it more in depth, but I'll put that down in the show notes for everybody. And also I'm going to put down some links for the things I read about Gator Bait as well, in the hopes of changing some of the minds of some of my fellow Gator friends.

And I just want to thank you so much for coming on and spending time with us. I feel like I learned a lot. I made several notes to myself here of things I want to look into more or think about when it comes to my role in the consulting space. So I appreciate you coming on and spending so much time with us.

James Coleman

No problem person. Also another person to look into is, I think she's a doctor, but Jane Elliott.

Kristi Dosh

Okay.

James Coleman

She's a White woman who does a phenomenal job of teaching racism by putting on a different light. She's been on Oprah. You can watch one of her sessions, and how she splits and divides rooms and shows exactly this is what systemic racism is. Because until you feel it or experience, it's like really, it's just different. But I mean, this is really the only way for things to happen is to have platforms where people actually feel comfortable to dialogue. And so, I learned a lot from that. Because I don't know a lot about White people either. I'm interested. I'm intrigued by a lot of people. But I learned, one thing I want to ask questions, I learn that we all have way more in common than we don't.

Kristi Dosh

That's true. Absolutely. Well, thank you, James. I appreciate you joining us. And I will link to everything down in the show notes for people. Have a fantastic rest of your day, James.

James Coleman

All right, you too.