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Sports Activism Panel

At the beginning, the panelists introduced themselves and each person detailed one their famous books. The first panelist, Michael Eric Dyson, wrote a book on Jay-Z and his hustling background which lead to his lucrative entrepreneurship. The book detailed his influence on LeBron James and Nipsey and his final chapter on Jay-Z in politics. The other panelist Bill Rhoden emphasized his book *40-Million-dollar slave*. He jokingly brought up a situation that he talks about in the book where a little kid asked him who was the first white person to play in the NBA. The book is mainly on how we got to this place and where are now as a race. The conversation then turned to the main subjects at hand which was athletes in activism. They talked about how many athletes keep their views quiet to avoid backlash. However, there has been a resurgence of athlete activism since the 60's and 70's. The strength in this is that when athletes talk, people listen. However, along with it the juxtaposition that they are "Regular Black people when they walk off the court". They emphasized that the lack of activism in some places is due to their isolation from their initial social networks, disconnected from communities. This can then lead to ignorance and the fear to speak out. Previously, black athletes lived in black communities, now they are compelled to go to the white societies where the money is such as PWI's. One of the panelists told a story about how players threatened to not play due to racist president at Miss U, and he was fired within two days. He implied this "If it wasn't for athletes" mantra that showed the power that athletes hold. Continuing on the NCAA, they talked about

how the NCAA makes you think that's the only route. To essentially make them their money and you leave. Rich Paul helped expose this and created the Rich Paul rule which makes sure these players agents know what they are doing, and they are well represented. Recently, in the NBA they have had the mentality that "We're not going to the white house no matter who wins" due to the current administration. Many people may not be swayed by this due to not having an easy point to as they had in the 60's as movement. Their largest emphasis was on the fact that there are going to be people like Jerry Jones in this world that say, "If you kneel, I'll fire you". That IT TAKES GUTS, or THE CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE to really stand up for your people with this platform.

I felt that this event was very important because it shed light on some of the underlying themes that you might not see at first when it comes to athlete activism. That having multiple voices in one place can lead to an effective discussion on a pressing matter. This is very relevant to me because I'm very interested in sports and activism. So, this discussion about athlete activism is very important to me, so much so that I purchased a limited-edition black Colin Kaepernick jersey and continue to support him along with Eric Reid, Kenny Stills and the countless others. I could really see some of these players coming to speak and interact at Howard and believe they would be very well received and have a large impact. I really look up to these players and admire their courage for putting their careers on the line for their people.