A Team of Brothers:
Race, Kin, and Order in College Football

Tracie Canada
Greensboro, NC

M.A., University of Virginia, 2016
B.A., Duke University, 2013

A Dissertation presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the University of Virginia in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Anthropology

University of Virginia
May 2020

George Mentore (chair)
Ira Bashkow
Gertrude Fraser
Claudrena Harold
Paul C. Harris
Lee D. Baker

ABSTRACT

This dissertation describes the interconnectedness of race, kinship, surveillance, and injury in the lived experiences of Black college football players. Informed by 14 cumulative months of participatory field research at a historically white university in the southeastern U.S., this work tells how Black athletes navigate the institutional systems and everyday lived spaces that order, discipline, and regulate them. These include the formal football program, academics in the university setting, and the 'serious' real world beyond the world of play. All football players must deal with the stresses associated with these systems, especially as their individual subjectivities and career trajectories are shaped by participation in a multi-billion-dollar industry. But Black players, specifically, relate to them differently because of their positionality. For these athletes, risks and challenges are magnified by the social experience of Blackness. To successfully navigate their everyday lives, Black college football players meaningfully reappropriate and reimagine certain kinship relationships. I show that in the face of a broader normative discourse that prioritizes the football team, they take strength from and build relationships with their Black football brothers and their own extended family kin, specifically their moms.

A Team of Brothers moves off the gridiron into the daily lives of the young Black athletes that sustain this American sport. This dissertation marks a shift in anthropological focus from play to players, as scholars of sport have tended to emphasize studies of sports celebrity, fandom and spectatorship, and the sporting institution as a whole, over the experiential ground and embodied culture of participating in sport. My work helps to illuminate what college football, and the lived experiences of its Black players, can tell us about racial, historical, and political dynamics in the contemporary United States.

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Before I acknowledge the individuals who have supported me, I'd like to recognize various offices across the University of Virginia, the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship (administered by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Social Science Research Council), the National Science Foundation, the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport, the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, and the National Collegiate Athletic Association for their financial support of my ethnographic research.

I'm indebted to the countless former and current football players who have talked to me over the last ten years. By extension, I must also thank their affiliated family members, coaches, and football program staff members. Thank you for welcoming me into your lives, in one way or another, and trusting me to theorize alongside you about your own experiences.

This dissertation would not be possible without the intellectual guidance provided by my incredibly encouraging committee. To my chair, George Mentore, thank you for pushing me to think completely outside of my comfort zone, for trusting and supporting my vision, and for never giving up on me. Thank you to Ira Bashkow for your copious and detailed note taking, patience for my frantic emails and phone calls, and ability to tell me what I was thinking better than I could say it myself. Thank you to Gertrude Fraser for your unmatched ability to smoothly transition between editor, educator, administrator, and advisor, and for your thoughts and comments that somehow always arrived exactly when I needed to hear them. Thank you to Claudrena Harold for your constant reminders to consider how historical systems shape contemporary narratives in obvious and unexpected ways. Thank you to Paul C. Harris for your continued commitment to marry the practical and the theoretical when working with actual human beings. And finally, thank you to Lee D. Baker for introducing me to anthropology and

the discipline's intellectual history, for strategizing with me, and for, in your own words, acting as my lineman for the past decade as I've learned the particulars of life as an academic. Please know that y'all can't get rid of me now. I look forward to our continued collaborations.

Without a doubt, I was able to successfully and efficiently complete my doctoral program because of the smart, capable, and determined women in my cohort. A huge thank you to Cory-Alice Andre-Johnson, my intellectual foil and most trusted confidant, Xinyan Peng, one of the most impressive and motivating people I've ever met, and Bremen Donovan, the initial source of my confidence in professional spaces. I'm so lucky to have had the opportunity to learn from and alongside each of you. I can't wait to assign your published ethnographies in my courses.

I've been affiliated with multiple institutions while in graduate school because more senior scholars were willing to advocate for me and my work. Thank you to Karla Slocum and the Institute of African American Research at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill for hosting me while I wrote my dissertation. Amatullah King, Angela Hicks, Gregg Moore, Brendan Thornton, Jay Smith, and Matt Andrews made sure that my time at UNC was filled with meaningful conversation and plenty of laughs. Thank you to Deborah A. Thomas and the Department of Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania for hosting me in my last year of graduate school as I prepared to begin life as a professional anthropologist. Penn's intellectual community proved to be instrumental in my navigation of the notoriously precarious academic job market.

Over the course of my entire academic career, I've been advised by scholars who invested in me in ways that improved my writing, expanded my thinking, pushed my theoretical understandings, and encouraged my intellectual creativity. For this, I thank Susie McKinnon, Adria LaViolette, China Scherz, Richard Handler, Jim Igoe, Lise Dobrin, Brian Pusser, Kwame

Otu, A.D. Carson, Orin Starn, Laurence Ralph, Michael Ralph, Gabby Yearwood, and Micah Gilmer.

I found that graduate school – from coursework to write-up to job hunting – was often isolating and stressful, and more than once, I questioned my decision to pursue a life of the mind. I send thanks to my fellow students at the University of Virginia for their friendship and for keeping me grounded throughout this process: Jack Stoetzel, Dio Kavadias, David Flood, Jacqui Cieslak, Dannah Dennis, Nathalie Nahas, Julia Haines, Mac Garcia, Irtefa Binte-Farid, Anna Eisenstein, Lindsey Jones, Sadiq Olanrewaju, Miray Seward, John Favini, Katerina Sevastakis, Erin Jordan, and Eniola Afolayan. A special thanks to Leah Esslinger Spezia and Kevin Spezia for always making me feel welcome in Charlottesville. Also, because my network extends beyond my home institution, thank you to Benfeard Williams, Chris Daley, Jen Fry, Jordan Davis, Mason Williams, and Sara Rendell. I consider you all friends and colleagues that I can call upon at any time.

At Lee D. Baker's suggestion, I applied for the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program as a sophomore at Duke University. I was accepted then, but it wasn't until graduate school that I fully appreciated the support provided by this network of thinkers that has now been growing for over 30 years. Diana Ruíz, Rob Franco, Adrien Sebro, V Varun Chaudhry, Jallicia Jolly, Augusta Irele, and Carmen Ervin stand out amongst the dozens of beautiful and brilliant junior scholars of color I've had the pleasure of meeting during my time as a fellow. A special thanks to Val Swain-Cade McCoullum, Herman Beavers, and the Penn MMUF cohorts for taking me in during my last year. Once a Mellon, always a Mellon.

On a similar note, I must recognize that Black women scholars have been incredibly influential in shaping me, both professionally and personally. In addition to those already

mentioned here, I'm grateful to Sharon P. Holland, Keisha John, Bianca C. Williams, Todne Thomas, Riché D. Barnes, Cally Waite, Shanna Greene Benjamin, Rachel Watkins, Maya Berry, and Marla Frederick. Thank you all for your time and your labor, and for being constant reminders of how to gracefully navigate a system not built for us.

I'll end by acknowledging my family, those who have kept me in the game long before I even started playing. To Bruce and Penny, the best parents I could've asked for, thank you for always being there. I hope I've made you proud and I hope you now know what anthropology is. To Austin, my younger brother, thank you for supporting me in a way that only you can: by making fun of me the whole time to guarantee I don't take myself too seriously. And to Brandon, my person and my partner, thank you for loving me and taking care of me, even while deployed halfway around the world. There are really no words for the impact y'all continue to have on me.

In hindsight, I'm not surprised this became a project about race and kinship, given how important my own relational networks are in helping me tackle every single day. I guess it's true what they say about art imitating life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On a sticky hot Saturday in October 2017, at a mid afternoon Mellon University[1] football game at home, I stood at the top of the stadium stands as the seconds ticked off the game clock. There were about six minutes left in the fourth quarter and Mellon was losing, despite its impressive attempts all game to keep up with the opposing team's stiff competition. A recent touchdown put the visiting team up by seven points. Mellon had never beat this school before on the gridiron, so the team was more than motivated to pull off the win. The fans around me, dressed in various iterations of the team's red and white paraphernalia, were still mildly invested in what was going on on the field down below. There was still the chance that their team could win, after all. But as a few families began to gather their belongings, I realized their interest was dwindling because their willingness to leave the game before its end represented their waning belief in Mellon's ability to overcome the deficit.

Several minutes of playing time, which took about ten minutes to complete, ticked off the clock, still leaving Mellon down by seven points. But in a last-ditch attempt, Tim, the seasoned quarterback, passed the ball to Carter, a wide receiver, with about a minute left. Carter leapt up in the air and, surprisingly, the pass was complete, allowing for him to run a couple yards before he was tackled. The teams quickly reset and Tim attempted another long pass. Seconds ticked off the clock. Another successful pass to a different receiver. Slowly but surely, the home team made their way down the field toward their endzone, as Tim kept throwing to different receivers across

[1] All people, places, and institutions discussed in this dissertation have been given pseudonyms.

the field. A little life reentered the fans as they watched what was happening on the field below. Now about 35 yards away, there seemed to be a real chance for a touchdown.

With 20 seconds left, Tim tried to find Carter on the field again, but the pass was incomplete. Thirteen seconds remained and another incomplete pass. Ten seconds left and one last incomplete pass to Carter. This time, as he stood from not having caught the ball again, he hung his head a little, as if to show his own disappointment with himself for not completing the pass and saving the game for his team. With one second left on the clock, Tim tried one last pass into the endzone. A hectic mess of bodies and team colors, the pass was broken up by the opposing team and was unsuccessful.

Mellon lost by a touchdown, making it the third straight loss of the season. I stood off to the side of the field with the players' families and waited for them to debrief with coaches, shower and change clothes, and come outside to meet their loved ones. The mood around me was deflated. The families, like their players, really wanted the win. Everyone around me spoke in hushed tones as they waited, but Carter's mom was rather chatty. She detailed her family's plans for Thanksgiving, their potential plans to move several states away, and how excited she was for a change in scenery. After several minutes, Carter's dad walked up to where we were and waited with us; his mom mentioned that she told him to take a few minutes before seeing their son to get over the mistake he made late in the game.

When I imagine college football, these are the scenes that immediately come to mind: the prominent stadium that sits somewhere on the college's campus;[2] the team mascots dancing around on the field, sporting their team's colors; the announcer consistently voicing his opinions over the loudspeaker, while also attempting to keep fans interested with silly games between

[2] There are a few notable exceptions throughout the country, like University of Miami and University of Pittsburg. These universities play their football games in NFL stadiums.

plays; the whistle blows, the team yells, the fan encouragement, the use of football-specific language; and the excitement of not knowing if your team will lose or win on any given day. Really, it is the energy and pageantry that comes with football play on a beautiful fall Saturday.

But this is not an ethnography about football. Not directly, anyway. Instead, my focus here is on football student-athletes, particularly Black players like Carter, who suit up for and on behalf of institutions of higher education to play a game that has become integral to the social, cultural, and political fabric of American society. None of this would be possible without the young men down on the field, dressed in uniforms, pads, helmets, and cleats on Saturday, and on Monday, in street clothes and learning in college classrooms. As Kenny Chesney sang in his 2010 hit, it is the "boys of fall" that bring all these pieces together.

This dissertation explores how structures of race, affiliation and kin, surveillance, and injury shape the lived experiences of Black college football players. Primarily informed by participatory field research at a historically white university in the southeastern U.S., this work tells how Black athletes navigate the institutional systems and everyday lived spaces that order, discipline, surveil, and regulate them. These include the formal football program, academics in the university setting, and the 'serious' real world beyond the world of play. All football players must deal with the stresses associated with these systems, especially as their individual subjectivities and career trajectories are shaped by participation in a multi-billion dollar industry. But Black players, specifically, relate to them differently because of their positionality. For these athletes, risks and challenges are magnified by the social experience of Blackness. To successfully navigate their everyday lives, Black college football players meaningful reappropriate and reimagine certain kinship relationships. I show that in the face of a broader normative discourse that prioritizes the football team, they take strength from and build

relationships with their Black football brothers and their own extended family kin, specifically their moms.

In theoretical terms, my project marks a shift in anthropological focus from *play* to *players*, as the experiential ground of participating in sport is often paid little attention by scholars. *A Team of Brothers* moves off the gridiron into the daily lives of the young Black athletes that sustain this American sport. My analysis of these athletes provides a window into the historical and political construction of race in America, as well as into the ways gendered and kinship norms in this sporting space articulate with broader historical patterns.

Black football players are often faced with uncomfortable, dangerous, and risky situations. Systematic racism, microaggressions, exploitation, failure, and stress are woven into their quotidian experiences. However, they are creating full lives by forming relationships that are grounded in solidarity and community, loving their families, graduating from college, playing a game that they enjoy, and having fun with friends who become family. They manage to balance their lives, and actually stay alive and relatively unharmed while doing it, which is why I use the language of success here and throughout the dissertation. Despite the quite negative discourse that often surrounds their well-being and experiences (Hawkins 2010), I demonstrate that Black college football players are achieving success in the ways that they deal with failure, manage multiple situations at once, face racism and discrimination, and handle injury and violence. I argue that this is signaled by the special shared experience of their Black football brothers and the particular importance of their extended kin.

Literature on Play, Games, and Sports

Most of the chapters in this dissertation provide their own literature review that specifically pertains to the analysis in that section. However, the literature provided by scholars

of play, games, and sports lays the foundation for this work. While Black athletes are overrepresented in popular sports, especially American football (Harper 2018), surprisingly, the anthropology of sport is a domain where the athletes themselves are not placed at the core of the literature. Instead, the structures of sport, on a variety of levels, are emphasized.

Since the 1980s, anthropology has sought to gain recognition for the study of sport, with influences from sociology (Blanchard & Cheska 1985; Bourdieu 1990[1983]; Carter 2002; Dyck 2000). Literature dealing with the study of play is important to this body of work because it acts as the foundation for the study of modern sport. Interestingly, definitions of seemingly mundane terms that are often conflated – play, game, sport, leisure, contest – are key to this research because such distinctions have greatly influenced the theoretical approaches of anthropologists of sport. Given the struggle to establish working definitions, here I discuss the history of their usage. A review of the use of these terms in different contexts will bring to the fore what themes are given attention within the anthropological discourse on sport and how the participants themselves are rendered almost invisible.

Traditionally expressed as free, outside the ordinary, social, not-serious, and uncertain (Huizinga 1950[1938]), play is used to define and divide games into those of competition, change, simulation, and vertigo (Caillois 1961[1958]). Since "all play means something" (Huizinga 1950[1938]:1) and it is praised for its lightheartedness and universality in all societies, even on the level of neuroscience (Panksepp & Biven 2012), scholars have interrogated the cultural and social realities of this basic and seemingly universal capacity. Belief in unbounded participation in play is taken further to explain its paradox: the idea that all organisms can participate in both play and not-play (Bateson 1972). Given that play is not a uniquely human activity, the fact that anthropologist Gregory Bateson observed "two young monkeys *playing,*

i.e., engaged in an interaction sequence of which the unit actions or signals were similar to but not the same as those of combat" (1972:179), is important because it solidifies that play entails positive and negative statements. Play is spatially and temporally separate from everyday life, and although games are diverse in their content, they reflect and structure aspects of society; this is supported by the fact that some analyses deal with play as a form of cultural expression and production (Geertz 1973; Leach & Kildea 1976).

Key scholars of play introduce analyses of ritual into descriptions of play and games, as they come to recognize that play, and later sport, have ritualistic undertones. Claude Lévi-Strauss (1966[1962]) theorizes strictly within abstract structures and Victor Turner (1974) deals with anti-structure, but both scholars are concerned with dichotomies that arise to distinguish game, ritual, work, play, and leisure. In his work on binary relationships, Lévi-Strauss makes ritual and game into foils of each other, because ritual conjoins to generate symmetry that ends with all participants winning, while game has a disjunctive effect because it results in a clear winner and loser (1966[1962]:32).

Conversely, Turner sets out to distinguish between work and play on the one hand, and work and leisure on the other, concluding that work is closely related to myth and ritual because it is defined by effort and duty; play is subjective, free from external constraints and associated with the liminal phase; and leisure is defined by personal pleasure and free choice, thereby linking it to the liminoid. In short, "one works at the liminal, one plays with the liminoid" (Turner 1974:86), thus categorizing sport as a liminoid phenomenon. However, this description disregards the ritualistic tendencies of both play and game that have already been established, which are associated with the liminal. While I agree with scholars who have questioned where modern sports fit on the continuum Turner provides, given his slightly different interpretation of

play (Rowe 2008), I suggest that modern sport fits in the liminal because each game represents a moment of limitless possibility: time is nonexistent because it is manipulated by the game clock and there exists a preoccupation with social death in these heightened moments of everyday life.

Generally outlined by modern Western understandings, terms like game, work, and play arise within a particular framework that helps to realize the development of modern sport. Sport, the foil of play, mirrors a modernist preoccupation with order, rationality, and normativity, which is epitomized in the way that historian Allen Guttmann defines competitive, highly organized, and serious modern sport. For Guttmann, sports are "'playful' physical contests, that is, as nonutilitarian contests which include an important measure of physical as well as intellectual skill" (1978:7), and he offers a Weberian approach to the determination of the seven characteristics of modern sports: "secularism, equality of opportunity to compete and in the conditions of competition, specialization of roles, rationalization, bureaucratic organization, quantification, and the quest for records" (Guttmann 1978:17). These qualities are very much on display in American football. Huizinga (1950[1938]) and Caillois (1961[1958]), who are usually in conversation with one another, would speak against modern sport, because of what a commodified and commercialized system it has become, marking the corruption of play. Interestingly, the focus on the nonutilitarianism of play and sport from Guttmann's definition reinforces Huizinga's and Caillois' characterization of play as frivolous and carefree, but also dismisses their harsh criticisms of sport.

The intersection of performance, ritual, and symbol in modern sport is apparent on multiple levels (Gmelch 1971; Guttmann 1978; Shore 1996), as it is with play. On a larger scale, perhaps the best example of an international sport performance is the modern Olympics. This sport movement analytically combines "postcolonial studies, practice theory, the interest in the

body, feminism and transnational theory" (Brownell 2000:43) to negotiate the way in which hundreds of different nations and cultures are able to engage and cooperate every two years, if both the Winter and Summer games are considered. In a short span, the Olympic Games, a cultural tradition as much as a cultural performance, shifted from a regional to a global phenomenon, and its "events are encased in a set of rituals surrounded by a huge festival and take on the magnitude of a spectacle" (McAloon 1982:104). With the organization of the Opening Ceremonies, the Victory Ceremonies, and the Closing Ceremonies, Olympic rituals center around Arnold van Gennep's (1960[1909]) and Victor Turner's (1991[1969]) conceptualizations of the three stages of the rites of passage, marking a progression through a preliminal rite of separation, a liminal transition rite, and a postliminal rite of incorporation.

Scholars dealing specifically with American football have argued the symbolism and ritualization apparent in the sport (Foley 1990). William Arens (1976) tackles the symbolism of football, asserting that an understanding of this prominent symbol might help explain American society. Arens argues that "football epitomizes the spirit and form of contemporary American society" (1976:7) because of its complex division of labor, minute specialization, and reliance on sophisticated electronic technology. The symbolic nature of the sport is highlighted because it represents the whole of the nation, but the game also becomes a ritual, or sacred activity in which "we would expect the participants to disengage themselves from the profane world of everyday affairs" (ibid.:10). Sport, specifically American football, as ritual is a useful categorization for my own research because despite my focus on the everyday, these ritual interruptions occur on a weekly basis and thereby represent important threads in the overall fabric of the sport. Though brief, Arens' focus on football as symbol and ritual is important, given the scholars who have since worked through the religious-like devotion to the sport (Bain-Selbo 2009; Birrell 1981;

Forney 2007; Prebish 1993), but also because he is adamant in his belief that "if other people express their basic cultural themes in symbolic rituals, then we are likely to do the same" (Arens 1976:13), especially through sport. As I deal with a topic that epitomizes American exceptionalism, as "in no other large country in the world is commercialized athletic competition so closely tied to institutions of higher education" (Clotfelter 2011:6), this claim intersects with my own ethnographic research.

In an attempt to understand what accounts for the overwhelming popularity of American football, Alan Dundes (1978) incorporates a Freudian analysis into Arens' symbolic approach to the study of football's male dominance by focusing on folk speech. Working from Arens' analysis of the game as "a male preserve that manifests both the physical and cultural values of masculinity" (1976:8), Dundes considers the suggestive and sexual illusions in football's folk speech, realizing that the structure of the speech pattern mirrors that of verbal dueling. While his psychoanalytic approach to the use of coded words like "score," "pop," "down," and "sack" is important for a sport that claims hypermasculine tendencies, most relevant is his ability to connect football's symbolic and ritual play to other male activities. Recognizing American football as a form of mass spectacle and ritual combat, Dundes claims that the sport belongs "to the general range of male rituals around the world in which masculinity is defined and affirmed" (1978:87) by emphasizing that it is not alone in this characterization when compared to other domestic and international activities. American football is repeatedly hypothesized as a male-dominated space, as anthropologist Olatz González-Abrisketa (2013) also conceptualizes the space of sport as a male preserve that excludes women, but my research recognizes the juxtaposition of this male arena to the female space of the family, a distinction that is mirrored in the literature on sport and kinship.

While these scholars have contributed insight to the anthropological discourse on American football[3], I believe the most relevant ethnographic writing comes from H.G. Bissinger's *Friday Night Lights* (2000[1990]), a journalistic take on high school football that follows a team in Odessa, Texas. As Bissinger grapples with the impact that football has on the lives of those who play and who support it, he soon realizes that its influence is partly informed by the racial tension that exists in the small town. He also skillfully shows that football accounts for just a brief moment in time for many of those who play by recognizing that the players' families, future dreams, values, and desires outweigh the importance of playing the game under their high school's Friday night lights. Similarly, Mark Edmundson defends his own participation in football in *Why Football Matters* (2014), not because he went on to play at a high level, but because of what the sport taught him about manhood, responsibility, determination, respect, and character. Even more relevant to my work is the fact that all of these ideals are put into a generational perspective, as this pseudo-autoethnography is informed by his relationship with his parents and his son. Edmundson traces how football profoundly informed his development as a person, focusing on how "doing" the sport played an influential role in his life later on. Lastly, Robert Turner's sociological ethnography *Not For Long* (2018), a look at the current lives of those who were once involved in professional football, details the experiences of those attempting to transition to life after sport. A former football player himself, Turner's account of the struggles that athletes face as they negotiate football as a totalizing institution – at its various

[3] Gabby Yearwood and Micah Gilmer have also produced unpublished dissertations in Anthropology dealing with issues of interest. Yearwood's *Between Practice and the Classroom* (2012) negotiates the relationships between masculinity, patriarchy, whiteness, and Blackness in relation to Black male athletes on historically white college campuses, while Gilmer's *"You Got to Have a Heart of Stone to Work Here"* (2009) studies the unique relationships fostered between Black high school football coaches and their Black players.

levels, with its various competing interests – paints a rather grim portrait of how these men are incredibly ill-prepared for life post-sport.

Following the examples set by the above scholars, I incorporate and critique the literature of play to return the focus to players, their relationships, and their experiences both on and off the field. Like Edmundson, I agree that "we need a deeper understanding of the game than the one the coaches, boosters, and broadcasters offer" (2014:15). The anthropology of sport does not fully embrace its own protagonists, given it is rare for anthropologists to focus on the actual players of the game. Therefore, my ethnography draws on understandings of play, game, and modern sport to detail how these terms become relevant to college football players.

Gaining Access to Football Players at Division I Universities

Sport scholars Michael Messner and Michaela Musto (2014) recognize that dealing with university Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) might be a reason why there is not much research done on young kids and sport participation. However, I experienced my own roadblocks with this bureaucratic gatekeeper when trying to gain access to college athletes over the age of 18 for my dissertation fieldwork.

In a sense, I have been developing this dissertation project since my sophomore year in college as a cultural anthropology major. I began conducting fieldwork in summer 2012, interacting with players and coaches to discuss identity, masculinity, and academics in the realm of college sports and to explore questions of race, gender, and sexuality more generally. From this initial research, which easily passed the guidelines of my undergraduate institution's IRB, my project has continued to develop during my doctoral training. More serious research for this dissertation has been ongoing since summer 2015, since some iteration of my main research population has been constantly present, constantly discussed, and constantly visible.

My first interaction with the University of Virginia IRB occurred in April 2015, in hopes of beginning preliminary research in the summer. The first version of that protocol outlined that I planned to interact with football players at UVA, focusing on Black players, to gain a basic understanding of their process of self-making. This protocol was reviewed and tabled by the full board, as it did not address their concerns with how I would address illegal behaviors I might witness and how I would deal with risky data materials. With guidance provided by a couple professors, I worked to address these concerns in the second version of the protocol, adding a literature review section, general research questions, and changing the focus away from Black athletes to help maintain confidentiality and privacy of potential participants. This version was again reviewed and tabled by the full board because at this time, I learned that student-athletes are considered a vulnerable population due to their status as semi-public figures. There was an issue with what the IRB deemed a small sample size and the potential risks of collecting sensitive information about a group that has difficulty in separating their private and public personas. Further, the organization had contacted the Vice President of Student Affairs for the project's approval.

After these two rounds, I was encouraged to meet with the Director of the IRB, given the drawn out nature of the approval for this preliminary research proposal. While frustrating, I wanted to work the kinks out during summer research, rather than have to deal with similar issues while trying to get approval for my fieldwork year (in 2017-18) later approved. During this meeting, I was provided with several suggestions for how to improve my protocol, but the most interesting piece of advice I received was to consult the proposal of a more senior anthropology graduate student who just got approval for his fieldwork year. He had a difficult time getting his protocol approved, too, the Director told me, and since there were similar

restrictions with our research populations, his could act as a helpful guide. I was thankful for the advice, but it was telling, given the already approved project she was referencing was a dissertation about mobilities and sensory practices of people living through the American corrections systems, focusing on incarcerated folks in a Southwest prison. This was the first time I would hear an agent of a university would make the comparison between these populations.

The third version of my protocol, which was finally semi-approved by the full board, took this advice into consideration. It included a lengthy appendix with sample questions, personal contact cards, oral consent cards, and written consent for university administration, as well as an understanding that no data would be recorded or written down in the moment, but notes would be taken at the end of the day following participant observation. While it seemed most of the issues with the protocol were ironed out, there was one important caveat to its approval: I learned I could not conduct the study with football student-athletes at UVA, but I could conduct it at another university. In short, the IRB was instructing me to change my research population (if I wanted to stay at UVA) or research site (if I wanted to work with football players).

The fourth version of my protocol explained that I would conduct pilot and exploratory research with up to ten former athletes to gain a reflective perspective and this was eventually approved. With all the back-and-forth, it took a week shy of four months to get my protocol approved. And by then, the last week of July 2015, not much of summer remained for the preliminary project I had originally intended to carry out. Ever since this debacle with the IRB, I have been building upon this initial protocol, slowly adding research populations and methods of data collection to ensure that any concerns are appropriately satisfied to end with the "Situating Fieldwork" and "Ethnographic Methods" sections that follow here.

This experience did encourage me to reconsider the potential ethical challenges of my research, but more than anything, it drew attention to the heightened position and visibility that football student-athletes (and likely male basketball student-athletes, too) hold on a college campus. These student-athletes of revenue sports have a complicated status, as their dually indexed identities entail certain relationships, as they have to interact with professors, administrators, coaches, teammates, other athletes, and classmates. During this process, the fact that football student-athletes were deemed a vulnerable population, that I was instructed by the IRB to change my fieldsite (or research population), and that apparently, the most similar protocol I could consult was one for research to be conducted with imprisoned men and women in a maximum security American prison all proved to be interesting pieces of information that have grown to thoroughly influence this dissertation.

Situating Fieldwork

Given the cyclical nature of a football player's schedule, with the season and off-season as complementary periods, my 12 months of dissertation fieldwork began in August 2017 and took me through training camp, the playing season, the off-season, spring ball, and early summer. Not only was I with players in the sweltering heat and humidity that mark summer in the southeastern United States, but I was also in the classrooms that act as the hallmark of their dually indexed identities as 'student'-athletes, in the restaurants that football players often frequent, and with the people they call family. Weaving through these different phases and through these various spaces allowed for me to be present and engaged in the activities, people, and places that tend to shape the everyday lives of Black college football players.

Most of the ethnographic data presented here was collected during the 2017-18 football season and off-season, and was informed by data gathered during my years as an undergraduate

and during preliminary fieldwork as a graduate student. I spent most of my time during the fieldwork year at Mellon University, a medium-sized historically white institution located in the southeast U.S. A Division I and Research I university that belongs to one of the Power 5 conferences (with 21 varsity teams) and is known nation-wide for its academic prowess, Mellon consistently enrolls at most 7,000 undergraduate students, of which at most 10% identify as Black. According to Shaun Harper's (2018) most recent study of the racial representation and six-year graduation rate for Black student-athletes that play for institutions across the Power 5, Black men represent about 4% of Mellon's undergraduate population, but about 64% of its basketball and football teams. Combining this knowledge with the most recent annual report released by The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (Lapchick et. al 2017) – which states that 55.9% of all student-athletes in Division I football at the FBS level were Black – one can conclude that Black men are not only incredibly underrepresented on Mellon's campus and overrepresented on the institution's revenue generating sports teams, but their percentage accounts for higher than the average across the FBS. Despite this discrepancy, Harper (2018) finds that 81% of Mellon's Black athletes graduate within six years, making it one of the highest ranked universities for graduating its Black male student-athlete population.

In January 2018, I began to spend time at Eastern State University, a notable historically Black university (HBCU) in the same region as Mellon. One of the oldest and largest HBCUs in the country, Eastern State houses award-winning science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) departments. A Division I and Research II institution, Eastern State has 15 varsity sports and the football team competes at the FCS level, meaning that it cannot provide as many scholarships to its athletes. Not as much research has been conducted on the status of student-athletes at institutions in this subdivision, but for the 2017-18 school year, it was reported that

Eastern State enrolled about 10,300 undergraduates, of which 78% were Black, and graduated 71% of its overall student-athlete population.

Ethnographic Methods

Despite my lengthy IRB process, I consider my ethnographic methods for this project to be rather traditional. To address my project from different angles, I worked with three main groups: football players at Mellon, the study's home institution, and Eastern State, a secondary site of study; individual players at other Division I universities in the region; and family members of current football players. Former football players and their families, student-athletes who play different sports, coaches, professors, and university and athletic administrators were also on the periphery of my research.

Participant Observation

Participant observation formed the cornerstone of this person-centered ethnographic and immersive study of the everyday (Ralph 2014), as I hoped to document how Black players and their families navigate the everyday, given heightened moments at regularly scheduled football games. Like anthropologist Aimee Cox, I turned "close and generous attention to the quotidian spaces of meaning making that Black [boys and families] enliven and invent" (2015:25), which meant immersing myself with players in their everyday lived spaces. To access social relations through everyday experience (Smith 2005), I spent time with players on a daily basis, in season and off-season, to observe how their seemingly mundane activities oscillated during the calendar year based on participation in football. I spent hundreds of hours observing lifts, practices, scrimmages, and meetings, attending classes and student-led meetings, sitting with parents at games, and eating meals with research participants because this placed me in locations and situations that were important and relevant to them.

Perhaps the most obvious space I spent time was at football games. Experiences at games provided the necessary complement to the routine spaces and places that players often frequented because these weekly events marked sacred activities for all involved (Arens 1976). Similar to Max Gluckman's bridge-opening ceremony (1958), games are revelatory incidents that crystalize important ideas. Not only do they represent the culmination of the hard work and training of multiple participants, but they are events where social life is embodied in a strategically organized and ordered time and space. During the 2017 season, Mellon played in seven home games. On game days, before the game started, I spent time with the recruiting staff, learning more about how players are initially chosen, recruited, and convinced to play at Mellon. During the games, I sat with the families of these recruited players and with the families of current Mellon players to better understand their concerns.

During spring 2018, I also attended spring games at Mellon, Eastern State, and Capital City University. Officially, the NCAA considers these to be contests "at the conclusion of the spring practice period, provided the contest is against a team composed of bona fide alumni or students or both" (NCAA 2018:273). Essentially, they are public scrimmages that occur before the actual playing season begins and they provide a glimpse to fans of what they can expect in the upcoming season. During these games, I sat with families and ate dinner with them after the games ended. In these moments, families and players reconnected, outside of football, in a way that highlighted the intimacy of the relationships between family members and their athletes.

I spent the most time during fieldwork in the Cobb Football Center, the hub of football life at Mellon University. Football facilities, like the Cobb, are large, majestic buildings at the center of their respective campuses that signify both symbolic and economic wealth and help bring notoriety to the football team. This "state-of-the-art football training facility" is a building

named for the Cobb family, on the strength of a hefty financial donation, that mirrors how football facilities across universities are named (see the McCue Center at the University of Virginia, the Allen N. Reeves Football Complex at Clemson University, and the Manning Center at the University of Mississippi). Given the continual flow of endowment funds and donations from alumni, improvements have continuously been made to the Cobb since its establishment in August 2002. I believe that these buildings, not the extravagant stadiums, are the most important football structures on any given campus because they represent the material manifestation of the different relationships that are stressed and encouraged through the sport. Everything needed for the football program to run effectively is located here: offices of coaches, recruiters, and administrators; the weight room; the locker room; the equipment room; access to the football field and two practice fields; and space to host meals and large team gatherings. This is a building that allows the players to relax and hang out, to work out, to practice, and to eat together, so here, I was able to see how players directly interacted with organized football in the everyday.

Finally, because college football players are student-athletes, "the only hyphenated role identity within the academic setting" (Finch 2009:350), the last main space I spent time with Mellon athletes was in the classroom. During the fall semester, I shadowed five Mellon players to learn how their athletic identities informed their academic identities. With this dually-indexed identity, the two must go hand-in-hand, so by spending time with junior and senior players across several majors, I observed how they behaved in classes, how their classmates and professors acted towards them, and how they navigated hectic days that were filled with football meetings and practices, classes, and tutoring sessions.

Semi-Structured Interviews

I had initially planned to conduct semi-structured interviews over the course of the fieldwork year, but primarily in the second half, after I had already spent time with the players, coaches, and families. However, I quickly learned that these interviews were more helpful when conducted during the beginning stages of research in order to establish a connection with the current and former players, family members, coaches, and university administrators I wanted to learn from. Therefore, these acted as informal introductions to potential research participants and became an easy follow-up mechanism once they were comfortable with my project and my motives.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with about 50 former athletes, current college and NFL players, family members, coaches, and university administrators. Overall, I was interested in how these different groups talked about their own experiences with football in emic terms (Pike 1954). How did players separate life on and off the field? Knowing what they now know about the difficulties of football training on the body, would the players still have chosen to play football? Would their parents still allow it? Who motivated them to play in the first place? What institutional measures were in place to help football players find success in the various aspects of their lives? Instead of asking such questions directly, I gained insight into the answers through observations and conversations that arose during both casual interactions and scheduled interviews (Packer 2011). Sample questions helped guide how I engaged in conversations and interviews, but our interactions were never formal.

In these interviews, I was able to hear about situations, events, and opinions that otherwise, I did not have access to. They also helped to add context to situations I had witnessed, but did not fully understand at the time. In reality, these interviews proved to be the most productive moments I spent in the field because they enhanced what I was able to observe in

ethnographic contexts. And I quickly realized that these one-on-one sessions were priceless when working with current players because they were allowed to talk through and theorize their own situations in real time, but after they had a little distance from past situations. Providing this space for reflection proved to be invaluable for both me and them.

Life Histories

Finally, I learned how student-athletes frame their own lives through life narratives, documenting how players regard their interpersonal relationships and individual trajectories. Throughout my year of research, I periodically provided the space for Black players to narrate the self through the Life Story Interview (McAdams & Guo 2014; Ochs & Capps 1996). In *Vita*, Joao Biehl (2005) draws heavily on the narrative of a particularly lucid informant, providing the space for her explore and reflect on her exclusion from society, and to theorize her own life and conditions without an imposed subjectivity. Similarly, I placed myself in a position to learn from my informants (Sanjek 2014) as they reflected on and interpreted past experiences, events, histories, and opinions. Recording stories told in the voice of the actual player allowed me to then analyze how student-athletes organize, develop, and narrate their own lives as Black men in America. The collected life narratives were used to create character portraits of the athletes, and the latter helped me to situate individuals in a particular time and space. These stories show the degree to which the players were aware of their constant transitioning between and existing within various spaces and spheres.

It is important to note that while participant observation occurred in whichever spaces were important to the players, interviews and life histories were usually conducted and collected over meals. I found that this was the easiest way to plan to meet with the various people I worked

with, especially the players. Despite their hectic schedules, these young men always found time to eat and I was often right there with them.

*****

I remember reading an article before beginning my fieldwork year about the difficulties that can arise when an ethnographer leaves the field, but the lack of methodological attention that has been paid to this leaving process (Ortiz 2004). It is likely that the article was interesting because Steven Ortiz is a sociologist who conducted long-term research with the wives of professional athletes, but it was an idea that stuck with me the whole year. After spending so much time working on my relationships, primarily with players and coaches, making sure they trust me enough to share the details of their lives, I wondered how I would just disengage in July 2018.

Around the end of May, I realized that my worries were a bit unfounded when dealing with this particular group: people are always coming and going in the lives of college football players. It is a community that is constantly in flux because people are consistently shuffling around. Every year, teammates transfer to play for other universities, coaches leave to coach at different institutions, a group of freshman comes in and seniors graduate. Some of the players even joke about it. John, a rising senior at the end of fieldwork, playfully worried about feeling left behind during his senior year. He quipped that next season, he would probably call up some of his friends, forgetting that they have graduated and they were no longer on campus, only to be met with an annoyed response: “Bruh, I’m at home. Stop calling me.”

Despite these constant transitions, I learned that players do a great job of maintaining these highly mobile relationships: Matt, a junior transfer student, kept in touch with his three best friends from his first university and visited them often; most of the guys who already graduated

regularly communicated with teammates from their class with a group text message thread; social media was a great avenue to show support to one another; and football games and camps acted as perfect times for graduated players to return and visit with current players. All of this together presents an interesting foil to what Ortiz found in his work, given the possible methods he outlines were not completely necessary for my situation. Therefore, I did not have an official send-off from my primary research year. When my fieldwork ended in July 2018, I simply became a member of the mobile population that remains affiliated with the football players and coaches. We keep in touch over text and social media, I see people on campus when I am in town, and I try to attend a game every football season.

Ethnographic Positioning

The ethnographic framing of this dissertation directly follows the example set by Marla Frederick's *Between Sundays* (2003), an exploration of the role of spirituality in the everyday lives of African American women. Frederick's work approaches notions of spirituality, activism, and religion through the experiences of Black women, rather than through the scope of the 'black church' or through the lives of prominent figures (2003:18). Similarly, rather than focus on the anthropology of sport, the sensationalized accounts of the few athletes whose stories are propagated in the media, or the top-down, systematic positioning of ruling bureaucracy, I shift my research focus from play to players. Rather than focus solely on gridiron play, as likely expected of an ethnography about football players, this dissertation considers the lives of Black college football players off the field.

The level of access available to me at both Mellon and Eastern State is quite distinctive, given I was not a member of the media, a former or current football player (or athlete, for that matter), or a man. Even though I was a young female researcher, I could attend closed practices

and meetings, work outs, camps, scrimmages, and games at both universities. This access had to be granted by both team's head coaches, though my main contact at Mellon was an assistant coach and at Eastern State was a Strength & Conditioning coach. With the level of access provided, I spent most of my time at Mellon at practice and at games, and in the weight room and at fall camp at Eastern State. The main space I could not enter at either institution, while it was populated, was the locker room, likely because it is understood to be a "male preserve" or "one of the few social spaces where it is considered acceptable for same sexes to be naked together" (Wellard 2009:58).

With few exceptions, researchers who study sport are often the same gender as the athletes that she or he is working with and they are often male. Sociologist Belinda Wheaton critiques these works, stating that:

> […] it has become increasingly evident that in many of these sporting ethnographic texts the 'lived experience' that the researchers were detailing were specifically the realities, identities and experiences of white, Western, middle-class men. Despite reflection on the 'self' as cultural insider, researchers have often failed to investigate the 'self' as gendered or racialised subjects. Even fewer sporting ethnographies conducted by male researchers acknowledge – or make visible – their own maleness, or whiteness (2002:240).

With this ethnography, I have attempted to address this discrepancy in my own way. Not only am I a Black woman and indigenous researcher (Bernard 2006; Cox 2015; Frederick 2003; Howell 2013; Hurston 2008[1935]; Pattillo 2013[1999]), but I am also a female anthropologist studying the experiences of a group of young male athletes. Following examples set by Olatz González-Abrisketa (2012), a female anthropologist working with Basque pelota players, Kath Woodward (2007), a female sociologist studying male boxers in England, Lisa Uperesa (2014), a female anthropologist working with Samoan athletes who play American football, and Belinda Wheaton (2002), a female sociologist who works with male windsurfers, I recognize how my

particular positionality affected my relationships, how I was viewed by athletes, coaches, and family members, where I was allowed access, and how people acted with and towards me.

In *A Team of Brothers*, I address the lived experience of a population whose identity sits at the intersection of Blackness, maleness, youth, Americanness, and athleticism (sensu Cox 2015). I recognize that this language of intersectionality references Kimberle Crenshaw's (1989) highly regarded legal work on the experiences of Black women, as certain experiences and forms of oppression and discrimination arise the football players I worked with based on the particular intersection of their identities. For this group, specifically, this phenomenon first became apparent to me as an undergraduate student, as I noticed my friends on the football team were treated differently, stereotypically perceived and deemed intellectually inferior, and exploited for their talents, mainly because of their status as Black athletes on the campus of a historically white institution. Admittedly, this is when I originally became interested and invested in this project, as I now aim to address a large population in plain sight of the American public, but barely understood from a person-centered perspective (Ralph 2014).

Use of Black English

Language learning is an important component of any ethnographic fieldwork and a project like mine that considers the implications of Blackness and race in contemporary America should, at least, recognize Black English. Thus, an understanding of this register of English was necessary to effectively conduct my person-centered research. Black English's 'origin' debate is still ongoing (Green 2007[2002]) – scholars cannot seem to agree if it is its own language or a dialect or variety of English, whether it derived from an African or Caribbean language, or if it began as a creole or pidgin – but, fortunately, many have come to agree that it is not a slang. Black English, like other versions of nonstandard English, is "a separate system, closely related

to standard English but set apart from the surrounding white dialects by a number of persistent and systematic differences" (Labov 1972:237). It is a legitimate and structured system with standard grammar and consistent rules, but consistent with patterns of racism and discrimination, Black English is often deemed inferior and so-called standard English is often viewed as superior.

Widely spoken by the Black players, family members, and coaches involved in my project, I attempted to be true to their voice when quoting anyone. Black English has no standard spellings since it is a vernacular or spoken speech, so I was first tasked with choosing how to transform it into a written form. I have tried to avoid colloquial spellings in my transcripts – with a few exceptions – out of concern for the aesthetics of the texts and how these different spellings would impact the way the discourse is perceived by readers. The participants are already speaking as racialized subjects in a hyperracial contemporary America (Alim 2016) and issues have arisen because their everyday language "is stigmatized as 'not language at all' and 'not possessing the means for logical thought'" (Labov 1972:230). Therefore, to not encourage "language-focused discrimination" (Lippi-Green 2012[1997]:67), I have avoided most pronunciation spellings that can only exaggerate the nonstandardness of the original speech act and further mark its speakers as transgressive. I attempted to "retain AAVE's grammatical conventions" (Ralph 2014:xviii) without being creative with its spellings.

Chapter Summaries

In her discussion of how Black women politically respond to racial, gender, and class inequality, within the frame of Black womanhood and American citizenship, Melissa Harris-Perry notes that "even if there is no single, universal black female experience, there are enough shared identities, beliefs, and experiences to offer insight into African American women as a

group" (2011:47). I take this observation seriously and in *A Team of Brothers,* extend it to the players I spent time with. By working with a group of Black players at a couple universities in the southeastern U.S., I can shed light on the experiences of the 14,000 young Black men who played Division I football across the country during the 2017-18 playing season.[4] To better understand their overall lived experiences, informed by time both on and off the field, the chapters of this dissertation follow Black college football players through their various relationships and the multiple systems to which they belong. Throughout this work, I discuss Black players as teammates, as brothers, as sons, and as young Black men.

Chapter 2, "Gentleman's Agreement: The History of Race and Football," outlines the development of football as a college sport, its introduction in southern schools, and race's role in how the sport was played. By establishing the problematic history of football, a highly racialized sport both then and now, I address the prominent tensions in "America's game." Exploring notions of race, hyper masculinity, violence, militarism, and egalitarianism through the lens of football solidifies the particularly American concerns and tensions that present themselves on the field.

In chapter 3, "'I love Saturdays': The Team Ordering of College Football," I situate Black players within the daily operations of a Division I college football program. I observed that one's time on a college football team relies heavily on technologies of surveillance; a Division I college football program strictly orders, controls, disciplines, and surveils players' bodies and behaviors. The material realities of all players' everyday lives and individual subjectivity are inextricably linked to football, particularly given the demands of being socialized into a team.

[4] According to NCAA student-athlete data, 29,029 football student-athletes played during the 2017-18 season, of which 14,069 were Black. http://web1.ncaa.org/rgdSearch/exec/saSearch

However, this chapter challenges the effectiveness of the idea of the "team" for all players, and especially for Black players, to move beyond this normalized notion of community in sport. A narrative that is touted by football administrators and popularized in the media to demonstrate how players are able to come together for the greater good of the overall unit, I argue that this notion both individualizes athletes more effectively than it brings them together and projects onto college players' lives normative, Euro-American standards of whiteness, order, and rationality.

The chapters that follow aim to address how Black players navigate this circumstance and confront this paradigm with their own forms of relatedness and affiliation that, at times, contradict and undermine the idea of the team. My research demonstrates that participants in college football produce distinct ideas of race that shape personal ties and pecuniary aspirations. Chapter 4, "'I do it for them': Bonds of Brotherhood," considers the social kin, or football brotherhood, that Black college players create and encourage through meaningfully enacted everyday activities with their sporting peers. I posit that this form of relatedness is established originally through participation in football, but develops on its own to transcend the sporting activity itself. Outside of football, this relatedness becomes significant for Black players through everyday activities completed alongside one another, such as eating meals and living together, working out, attending classes, and joking around. Then, like brothers do, they develop a concern for each other outside of the football space. Therefore, despite the ordered notion of the team encouraged by the administration and staff, Black players find their own, sometimes unexpected, ways to create, navigate, and maintain meaningful relationships.

Chapter 5, "'The year my mom was born': Care and Kin," moves beyond the players themselves to consider their relationships with their biological kin, with a particular focus on

their mothers. The ordering presented by the Black family is often pathologized, seen as a threat to national order and rationality. This chapter highlights how productive these relationships actually are, while focusing on the importance of Black women's care work in the space of college football. Black mothering and emotional labor are imperative to the success of the Black athlete, as I show by describing my interactions with moms of players across universities and my participation in two NFL Moms Safety Clinics. While drawing attention to Black mothering and emotional labor, an interesting divide becomes apparent: the distinction between bureaucratic care, provided in multiple ways through the football program, and genuine family care that flows from these kin networks.

Of all the chapters, chapter 6, "'The son that gets a lot of whoopings': Navigating Violence, Blackness, and Athleticism," deals the most with players' lives off the field. A certain body is required to effectively perform, produce, and labor on the football field, one that is often marked by being taller, bigger, and stronger than 'the norm'. These coded bodies are privileged within the space of football, yet are often marked as dangerous and threatening beyond this realm. Thus, these men are constantly confronted with the possibility of injury, whether career ending or life ending, because of and in spite of their existence in football-playing Black bodies. This is a unique position to be in, due to the intersection of their particular embodied and racialized experiences. In this chapter, I describe how, as Black men living in the world of play and in the real world beyond it, players negotiate quotidian violence and grapple with injury by relying on one another and joking about the circumstances.

To conclude, chapter 7 crystallizes the notion that the lived experiences of Black football players can help to reveal nuances of the racial-political dynamics of the contemporary United States by connecting their everyday experiences to larger national phenomena.

*****

As I completed fieldwork, I asked a more senior graduate student in my department for write-up advice and in an email, he suggested that I return to my home university to write my dissertation. He closed with this: "At the very least, get away from your fieldsite. You need the separation."

Though likely good advice for other anthropology graduate students beginning to write a dissertation, I found it laughable. I study race, masculinity, and American sport. It is practically impossible to separate myself from my research. Even if I were not physically near my field site, I could not turn the television to certain channels, during any time of the year, without being reminded, in some way, of just how integral sport, particularly football, has become to American life. Love it or hate it, people are always talking about athletes and sports.

For this reason, I have followed examples set by other anthropologists (Frank 2002; Frederick 2003; Ralph 2014; Williams 2018) and included breaks in the ethnography with brief interludes between the chapters of this dissertation. Given the ubiquity of football, intercollegiate athletic activities, and professional sports in the United States, these stories are meant to interrupt the ethnographic narrative with snapshots from the real world to demonstrate the interconnectedness of what my research participants dealt with, in relation to what was going on outside of their individual lives and respective university teams. When read together, it is my hope that the chapters and interludes presented here will provide a holistic representation of the lived experiences of Black football players.

CHAPTER 2

GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT: THE HISTORY OF RACE AND FOOTBALL

The thousands of screaming fans present at games, the exaggerated and expensive playing stadiums, and the million-dollar media deals between universities, conferences, and news outlets are all aspects of college football that make it a big-time college sport. This is a phenomenon that Charles Clotfelter defines as "the highly commercialized and widely followed competition in football and basketball that is undertaken by several hundred American universities" (2011:xiii). J. Douglas Toma argues for the importance of football in the social life of institutions that support big-time sports by dubbing them "football schools," or "Football U." According to Toma, these are institutions where "football matters in several ways: in the expression of institutional culture on campus; in the national reputation of what are essentially local institutions; in the support by local communities needed to build institutions; in the ways people relate to and identify with institution; in the development of institutions as brand names; and in external relations and institutional advancement" (2003:19). But how did we get to this point where sports are so intimately woven into the fabric of social life at institutions of higher education? Here, I will discuss the history of American football, particularly in university settings, to establish the historical backdrop and situate the contemporary moment of my ethnographic research.

The Gentleman's Agreement

American football, and the intercollegiate system in which it began, have rather humble beginnings, as the game now recognized as football took several decades and various iterations to develop. In *Sports and Freedom* (1988), Ronald Smith argues that the big-time college system

that currently exists can and should be traced back to the 19th century Harvard and Yale model. He notes that these institutions borrowed their intercollegiate athletic organization from their English counterparts, particularly Oxford and Cambridge. In England, where "much of the participation in sport reflected the elite nature of the student body" (Smith 1988:5), college Englishmen participated in sports like cricket, tennis, crew, and hunting, as early as the 1500s. In his work on the relationship between sport and power, John Hargreaves details the ways that these sports and the athleticism they fostered "was one of the chief means of reproducing a sense of 'Englishness'" and "provided the meaning of life for 'gentleman' destined to rule the nation and an empire" (1985:144). Hargreaves argues that sport, especially team games that "emphasize collective effort and responsibility" (1985:144), was used as a form of normalization for the dominant group that taught the importance of manliness, rationality, competition, and 'normal' bodies, all through amateurism.

English football, played with an inflated pig's bladder, had been around since the 1300s, becoming a very popular but inherently violent game that drew attention because of its lack of rules and opportunity for the masses to participate. Through several bans on the game because of its violence, two versions of football evolved by the late 16th century: one resembling rugby and the other similar to soccer. In 1863, Cambridge University formalized rules for the latter version.

Institutionalizing one version of the game over the other was important for football when it arrived in the United States during the 19th century. In his history of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), Jack Falla (1981) details the way that the unruled version of the sport was played in New England as early as 1609 and at Northeastern universities (institutions belonging to what we now know as the Ivy League) by the 1800s. With obvious influences from the English game, the two versions of the sport emerged at different institutions. Princeton and

Rutgers (and eventually Columbia and Yale) picked up the soccer version of the game, with Princeton and Rutgers playing the first recognized intercollegiate American football game on November 6, 1869 in New Jersey. This game focused on kicking and did not allow the use of hands. Conversely, a few institutions, most notably Harvard, adopted the rugby version, as they engaged in rougher play that allowed for use of the hands. At Harvard, the most infamous game was played between freshmen and sophomores on the first Monday of fall on what became known as "Bloody Monday,"[5] as the real goal was for the sophomores to brutalize and embarrass the freshman. The first intercollegiate rugby-football game was played between Harvard and McGill, a Canadian opponent, in 1874, because the other American institutions would not agree to participate in this version of the sport.

Early games were organized and managed by members of the all-male student body with very little administrative supervision. Representatives from the soccer-football institutions met in 1873 to settle on rules. Harvard was not involved in this initial gathering, but by 1876, all football-playing institutions organized the Intercollegiate Football Association (IFA) to bring order to the unruly game. Around this same time, a rugby-football game was finally played between two American teams, as Harvard and Yale met on November 13, 1875 in New Haven, thereby planting the seeds for other universities to adopt the more violent, Americanized version of English rugby.

IFA's effort to regulate the game failed and play became increasingly dangerous: "kicking, punching, and butting [were] common," the "open-field tackling of unpadded ball carriers" was encouraged, and "the tactic of mass play," which allowed for the ball carrier to be surrounded by defensive players, only made the game more chaotic (Falla 1981:8). By 1903,

[5] An interesting call back to this name will reappear in chapter 3 of this dissertation.

journalists and legislators sought to ban the sport, and during the 1905 season, there were a total of 18 deaths and 149 serious injuries (Falla 1981:13). Rising concerns for violent play reached the White House, with President Roosevelt organizing representatives from Harvard, Princeton, and Yale in October 1905 to either reform or abolish the sport.

For Roosevelt the goal was not to ban the game, but to impose reforms that would preserve its character-building merits. While acting as governor of New York in 1900, Roosevelt wrote "What We Can Expect of the American Boy," an ode to American boys and the importance in their becoming manly men. He spoke highly of era-specific sports like football, polo, and fox hunting as efficient means to transform playing boys into working men; the sport was the means, not the ends, of work. He applauded the increased popularity of sports over the last decades, as "the great growth in the love of athletic sports, for instance, while fraught with danger if it becomes one-sided and unhealthy, has beyond all question had an excellent effect in increased manliness" (Roosevelt 1900). He advised that "in short, in life, as in a foot-ball game, the principle to follow is: Hit the line hard; don't foul and don't shrink, but hit the line hard!" (Roosevelt 1900). During his presidency, Roosevelt worked hard to save football.

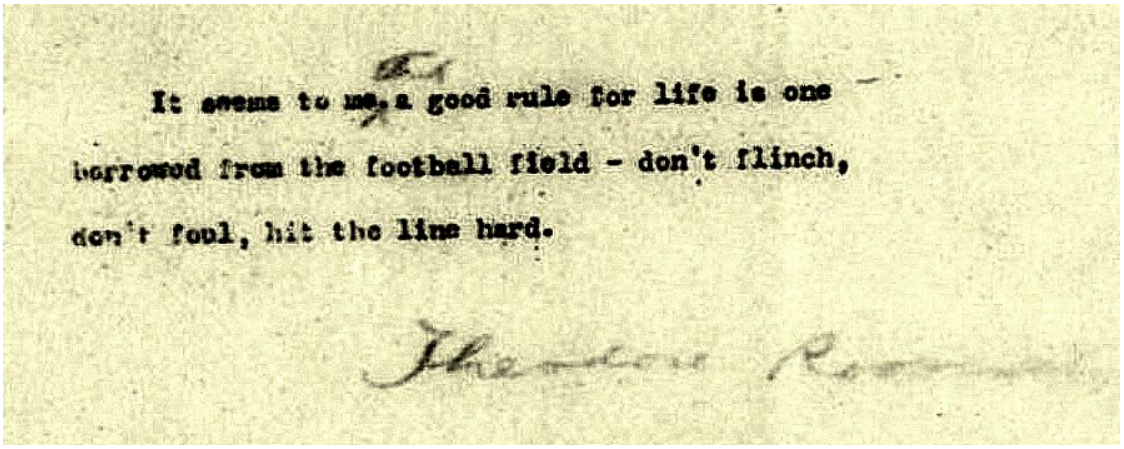
It seems to me, a good rule for life is one
borrowed from the football field - don't flinch,
don't foul, hit the line hard.

Figure 1: Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Leslie M. Hagen. Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library.

In December 1905, the New York University chancellor convened a meeting of 13 colleges and formed yet another association, the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the

United States (IAAUS),[6] in an effort to address the football crisis, specifically, and govern other intercollegiate sports, generally. Football was not the only college sport. Indeed, intercollegiate competition did not begin with football, but instead with crew, baseball, and track and field. Representatives met annually at the IAAUS conference, working diligently on creating consistent game rules, eligibility guidelines, and membership restrictions.

Walter Camp developed the modern version of what we now recognize as football. A Yale alum now known as the "father of American football," Camp instituted many changes to the rugby-like sport, such as the forward pass, the line of scrimmage, the game clock, the huddle, and the need to demarcate yards on the field (Camp 1901; Toma 2003:37). He standardized play across the various institutions and instituted rules to protect players against the previously mob-like conditions on the field. Camp was instrumental in how the sport would come to be played and popularized, as he distinguished it from its British cousins with these rules and he instituted the selection of an "All-American" team (Davies 2017:103).

Camp's *Book of College Sports* (1901) offered advice for the 'gentlemen' who participate in intercollegiate athletics, an important linguistic cue to the kind of young expected to be an athlete in the early 1900s. Combined with works like Roosevelt's published piece, this demonstrates that college football, with its strenuous, even violent, masculinity fit with the turn of 20th century rise in nationalism and militarism.[7] For example, in a speech delivered in Chicago in 1899, Roosevelt preached his approval of "the doctrine of the strenuous life, the life of till and effort, of labor and strife" (1902:1). He believed that it was through the quest for the strenuous life that American men, and women, would learn the true value of labor, power, national honor,

[6] In 1910, the IAAUS would become the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).
[7] For more on the relationship between the military and early football, see Amanda Bellows' short "How the Civil War Created College Football" (2015).

and international prestige. He applauded the American military, claiming that "the army and the navy are the sword and the shield which this nation must carry if she is to do her duty among the nations of the earth" (Roosevelt 1902:15-16), vehicles through which America can solidify "the supremacy of our flag" (Roosevelt 1902:19) with other nations. He ended with a call to action:

> Let us therefore boldly face the life of strife, resolute to do our duty well and manfully; resolute to uphold righteousness by deed and by word; resolute to be both honest and brave, to sever high ideals, yet to use practical methods. Above all, let us shrink from no strife, moral or physical, within or without the nation, provided we are certain that the strife is justified, for it is only through strife, through hard and dangerous endeavor, that we shall ultimately win the goal of true national greatness (Roosevelt 1902:20-21).

Clearly, there is a desired model of the American man that Roosevelt and Camp are speaking about. This young man is brave, willing to risk his life for his country, a worker, and both morally and physically healthy. Varda Burstyn, in *The Rites of Men* (1999), writes about the ideology of hypermasculinity, or "an exaggerated ideal of manhood linked mythically and practically to the role of the warrior" (4) and sportsman. She details the ways that sport became a venue of male socialization in the presence of social fathers responsible for teaching young men how to uphold the values Roosevelt touts, just as industrialization of the 19th century took many fathers out of the home. As "the remoteness of the father and of older males within the nineteenth-century family produced […] the 'over presence' of the mother and women in childhood life" (Burstyn 1999:52), 19th century men were invested in "creating new male-led and usually male-exclusive public domains" (ibid.:54).[8] Sport was ideal at the time because it was popular with most social classes, while simultaneously "improving the fitness and reliability of workers, soldiers, and clerks and minimizing political dissent" (ibid.:56). Football molded strong, brave men because of the simulated combat and organized violence it required. Aligning

[8] Another institution that arose at this time were fraternities, which are discussed in more detail in chapter 4 of this dissertation.

with Roosevelt's vision, football not only "trained males in the values and the conventions of the workday world of factory or office," but also "prepared males for exercising violence in the service of nation and empire" and "kept alive the ritual and celebration of territorial appropriation and physical domination" (ibid.:74). Militarism and sport were popularized simultaneously, thereby marking the interconnectedness of football and the military still prevalent today[9] (Butterworth 2017).

*****

The history presented details the origins of football in colleges, early football's focus on building manly (white) men, and the establishment of the NCAA. Black men are not present in this narrative because like women, they were not admitted to the universities that spearheaded football's introduction. The universities Black players could attend were primarily located in the South. Leo Andrew Doyle (1998) and Matthew Bailey's (2011) unpublished dissertations in History detail how football became popular in the American South, primarily between the early 1890s and early 1920s, despite its origins among the elite of the Northeast. Doyle writes that football was adopted in the South in the 1890s because "a cosmopolitan and forward-looking faction of an indigenous elite declared its affinity for modernization by adopting the sporting pastime of a more advanced society" (1998:20). The sport became popular only after Southerners were tired of their social isolation following the Civil War and Northerners, with their affinity for the sport, moved to Southern states. Further, Bailey and Doyle both claim it was called

[9] The comparisons between football players and military personnel and football and the military are often discussed and referenced. For more, see Lund 2015 and Earp 2010. But recently, the connection has been made much more blatant with the formation of Merging Vets and Players (MVP), an organization whose mission is "to match up combat veterans and former professional athletes together – after the uniform comes off – to give them a new team to tackle the transition together." The movement has gained momentum, with its weekly sessions now being held in three major cities. Further, Michael Strahan, a former defensive end and NFL Hall of Famer, brought awareness to and showed his support for the organization when he appeared on *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* in September 2018. http://www.vetsandplayers.org/

"scientific football" to distinguish it from English rugby and soccer, a nod to the rationalization, ordering, and modernity it inspired.

In order for this geographic diffusion to happen, Southerners had to reconcile their quest for honor with the sporting ideal of egalitarianism and equality. It took a while, about 20 years, for the sport to gain momentum in this region because "this modern, Yankee game ran counter to its aristocratic tradition and adherence to the values of the Old South" (Doyle 1998:39). In addition to this difference in value systems, the South had to significantly close the social, cultural, and economic gap that had developed between it and the rest of the nation. By 1888, four colleges in Virginia and North Carolina played the sport according to the rules set by the Intercollegiate Football Association (IFA) and the University of Georgia and Mercer University played the South's first intercollegiate football game on January 30, 1892 (Bailey 2011:22). Starting in the upper South, within seven years, the game increased in popularity and spread throughout the region. White southerners recognized "football's ability to instill courage, moral character, and a modern rationalist values in young men" (Doyle 1998:61), but nonetheless early Southern football represented a mix of "its elements of old and new, traditional and modern" (Bailey 2011:39). One example of how the sport was infused with Southern-ness is in the way that "Dixie," along with the national anthem, became the common place opening song at Southern games by the mid-1890s (Doyle 1998:127). Strict rules limited participation to White players.

During its initial stages, college football reinforced ideals of masculinity, honor, and militarism. It also promoted whiteness, as wealthy, white Northeasterners realized that "sporting competition could […] sustain racialist conceptions of Anglo-Saxon dominance" (Doyle 1998:22). The IAAUS/NCAA excluded students at historically Black colleges who were also

interested in playing the sport. In response, a group of Black colleges formed the Colored Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) in 1912 (Martin 2010:8).

While schools in both the North and South excluded certain players from participation, knowledge of southern regional policies of racial discrimination became more widespread once intersectional competitions were considered between the regions, since some Northern football rosters were speckled with a couple Black players. These games were important for several reasons, particularly as "gridiron success in a scientific and manly sport like football could help shatter the image of the South as a backward and primitive area populated by mental and physical defectives" (Martin 2010:14), but since Southern and border states were segregated, they were surprised to learn of integrated teams in the North. Thus, the 'gentleman's agreement' was institutionalized. Because of this unofficial, unspoken national policy to promote national harmony at the expense of Black athletes, "African Americans would be automatically barred from intersectional matches against southern teams, regardless of the game's location" (Martin 2010:18). These athletes remained peripheral to college football through the 1920s, as the agreement faced little to no challenge, until a 1929 game between University of Georgia and New York University drew media attention to the policy (Martin 2010:25). Even though no Black athletes participated in this contest, the fact that the policy was heavily discussed in newspapers brought attention in a way that was needed to overturn it. Racial exclusion and white supremacy still dominated intersectional football play until six Southern institutions agreed to play integrated teams in the North and West in 1936 and an integrated game in Virginia in 1947. The years between 1945 and 1965 were instrumental in how the gentleman's agreement eventually dissolved, primarily because Southern teams were forced to realize they would have

to battle integrated teams in order to stay competitive in the growing national sporting landscape (Martin 2010).

At this historical moment, football was known as "a 'scientific' sport that reflected the order and rationalist of an advanced capitalist society" (Doyle 1998:123). Yet, this overview shows how the sport was limited by class and race, as Black exclusion from both the classroom and the gridiron was encouraged. As these principles were ingrained in the foundation of the sport, it is no surprise that these trends have continued into the present day and have only become more exaggerated.

The Contemporary Moment

The current configuration of how college football is played is still similar to what Camp outlined in the early 1900s, as this brief overview will show. At any given time during a game, there are two teams of 11 players each, playing each other on a regulated field that is 100 yards long and 160 yards wide, with a 10 foot long end zone on each end. They are split between the Offense and the Defense. The Offense attempts to reach its end zone and be awarded six points by crossing the goal line. This side of the ball consists of one Quarterback and five down linemen (one Center, two Guards, and two Tackles), while the remaining players are a mixture of Running Backs, Tight Ends, and Wide Receivers. They are given four opportunities (called downs) to advance the ball ten yards, awarding them a reset of four opportunities to advance the ball the same distance (new set of downs). The Offense's goal is to continue to move the ball forward with individual plays until the ball crosses the goal line. If the Offense fails to reach the goal line, they can opt to punt the ball to the other team and play Defense, or attempt to kick the ball through the uprights in the back of the end zone and be awarded two points (kick a field goal).

The Defense has the exact opposite goal. This side's 11 players is composed of numerous configurations of Defensive Lineman, Linebackers, Cornerbacks, and Safeties. They are attempting to stop the ball from moving forward, while also trying to take possession of the ball away from the Offense. This could be done by making the ball carrier lose control of the ball (fumble), or by catching the ball when an offensive player attempts to throw it (interception). Both recovering a fumble and intercepting the ball are called a turnover. Defense can be awarded six points by taking the ball away, via turnover, from the Offense and advancing the ball to the goal line (defensive touchdown).

During the 2017-18 school year, football was played by 671 college teams across the country, which amounted to 73,000 total football student-athletes (Irick 2018:80). These athletes were spread across three divisions (Division I, Division II, and Division III), based on the institution's competitiveness and its ability to provide scholarships to its players. Even the biggest division is segmented based on these principles, as Division I is split between the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS, formerly Division I-A) and the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS, Formerly Division I-AA). For example, schools like University of Alabama and University of California-Los Angeles are in the FBS, while University of Delaware and Howard University belong to the FCS. This break[10] occurred in 1978 and marks a difference in how many full ride scholarships are allotted, length of playing season, how post-season play is determined, and the amount of money that is poured into the programs from various sources (Kirshner 2018).

An even further divide amongst Division I institutions occurred in 2014 with the creation of the Power 5. This group was adopted to provide autonomous governance to the 65 institutions

[10] Division I is only subdivided for football, as other intercollegiate sports are equal at this level.

in the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), Big Ten Conference, Big 12 Conference, Pac 12 Conference, and Southeastern Conference (SEC), meaning football programs in these conferences have "the ability to create some of their own rules that are associated with the legislation and voting rights for athletes" (Satterfield 2015:23). The Power 5 are all FBS institutions and are the biggest, most popular, and most profitable football schools in the country.[11]

By 1929, college sports "had already crossed the line from amateurism to a quasi-professional model" (Davies 2017:288), and over time "college sports has become Very Big Business" (Branch 2011), despite the NCAA's continued reliance on the rule of amateurism for those who play. The entire enterprise of the NCAA, which officially became an institution in 1910, is premised on the ambiguous, yet insistent, moral integrity of the "student-athlete." Currently, the NCAA asserts that "student-athletes shall be amateurs in an intercollegiate sport, and their participation should be motivated primarily by education and by the physical, mental and social benefits to be derived. Student participation in intercollegiate athletics is an avocation, and student-athletes should be protected from exploitation by professional and commercial enterprises" (NCAA 2018:4). With this drawn out definition, the organization is really targeting the ability for its athletes to be paid for the labor they provide for and on behalf of their university.

But someone or something *is* making money off of student-athlete labor. Plenty of it. Based on available data for public schools, 231 NCAA Division I athletic programs generated $9.15 billion in revenue during the 2015 fiscal year (Gaines 2016), with revenue coming

[11] There are other structures to football governance that could be mentioned, but overall, the hyper segmentation of football bureaucracies, to maintain a certain organization and claim a particular rationality, is an extension of the ordering that began with the emergence of modern "scientific football."

primarily from ticket sales, NCAA and conference distributions, royalties/advertising/ sponsorship, broadcast rights, and endowments (Fulks 2017:23). University of Texas and Texas A&M topped the list. During the 2016-17 school year, the NCAA generated $1.06 billion in revenue, passing the billion mark for the first time (Rovell 2018). In 2018, *USA Today* reported that at least 60 FBS head coaches made at least $2 million, with the highest earner, Alabama's Nick Saban, making more than $8 million (Berkowitz, Schnaars & Dougherty 2018). Then, with professional football, a 2013 *Forbes* study revealed that the National Football League was the most lucrative league in the world, with its revenue reaching a little more than $9 billion (Burke 2013).

With this massively popular and lucrative system, its necessary to remember just how selective it all is: according to annually released NCAA statistics, 2.8% of high school football players will play Division I college football and of the overall players who make it to college, only 1.6% will play professionally.[12] In short, this impressive, yet exploitative, college sport system depends upon just a slim portion of the population who begins playing football at a young age. Even so, timely arguments within college football – including pay-for-play, which asks whether college athletes should be paid for their athletic work while in school (Branch 2011; Rosenberg 2011) and the consequences of concussions for players, both young and old (Fainaru-Wada & Fainaru 2013; McGrath 2011; Ward, Williams & Manchester 2017) – have implications for American life off the football field. This is especially true because when considered together, the triad of race, nation, and sport (Carrington 2004) allows players' experiences to be used as a lens for scrutinizing how football represents American concerns and tensions.

[12] https://ncaaorg.s3.amazonaws.com/research/pro_beyond/2019RES_ProbabilityBeyondHSFiguresMethod.pdf

Integral to this argument is an understanding of the skewed racial dynamics of the sport that historian and former professional football player Michael Oriard defines as "contact ballet" (1993:2). Consider the racial demographics of positions important to college football. According to the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport's 2017 College Sport Racial and Gender Report Card, in 2017 in the FBS, 89.2% of university presidents were white and 72.3% were white men; 83.1% of athletic directors were white and 77.7% were white men; 86.9% of head football coaches were white men, and 63.3% of assistant football coaches were white men (Lapchick et. al 2017). But only 39% of football student-athletes were white men. Just as the overwhelming majority of those in positions of power and wealth at powerhouse sports universities and within athletic departments were white men, the overwhelming majority of football players themselves were men of color; 55.9% of football student-athletes were Black men. And let us not forget that these sports institutions are also often historically white colleges and universities, thereby marking them as institutions that at one time did not even allow Black students to enroll.

Further, despite the heightened NCAA oversight – so much so that the organization has been compared to a monopoly (Barro 2002), a cartel (Fleisher, Goff & Tollison 1992), and to slavery (Branch 2011; Hawkins 2010; Nocera & Strauss 2016; Rhoden 2007) – college football is riddled with controversies and scandals: athletic-academic corruption at the University of North Carolina (Smith & Willingham 2015); illegal gifting at Ole Miss and Mississippi State (Godfrey 2018); a massive sex abuse cover-up at Penn State University;[13] and interference in rape and sexual assault claims at Baylor University (Tracy & Berry 2017), just to name a few.

Together, these issues narrate a focus on issues of race, gender, class, access, and mobility, and demonstrate that college football, and its players' experiences, are extremely

[13] See volume 12, issue 4 of *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies,* entitled "Policing the 'Penn State Crisis'."

relevant to the racial-political dynamics in the contemporary U.S. Overall, as "the culture of big-time sport generates, reworks, and affirms an elitist, masculinist account of power and social order, an account of its own entitlement to power" (Burstyn 1999:4), the Euro-American, modernist values of bureaucratic oversight, amateurism, fair play, standardization and rationalization, militarism, honor, nationalism, and masculinity all become readily apparent in the ways that the sport was originally played, encouraged, and popularized. These are particularly American concerns and tensions that presented themselves on the gridiron then, and now. It is against this backdrop of the sport's contemporary issues, many of which can be traced to its historical origins, that the football players featured in this dissertation must navigate their everyday lives.

Media Days with Larry Fedora

Before the college football season begins in late-August, each Division I conference holds preseason media days, where the head coach and a couple players he selects are invited to a central major city for interviews. The coaches and the players spend a few days there and are asked to preview their teams, post-spring ball but pre-summer camp, as a way to begin the media circus that will be in full force when the season begins. These interviews usually go unscrutinized by the public, but that was not the case with the Atlantic Coast Conference media days in July 2018.

While fielding questions about the upcoming 2018 season, roster choices for certain positions, and his thoughts on his team's potential for success, University of North Carolina head coach Larry Fedora expressed his thoughts on how football and its value system connects with the success or failure of broader American society. Expressing a belief that football is "under attack" because of recent calls to change the violent nature of the game, Fedora responded: "I think [football going away or being changed] would be the decline of our country. There's no doubt in my mind. I think the lessons that you learn in the game of football relay to everything that's going to happen in the rest of your life. And if we stop learning those lessons, we're going to struggle. I think in some ways we're struggling now more than we ever have. Are we ever going to be a perfect country? No. But I think the game of football has had a major impact on who we are as a country" (Patterson 2018).

To further draw out this connection, Fedora referenced a previous conversation he had with an undisclosed general who told him that what makes the American military the best in the world is the fact that "the United States is the only football-playing nation in the world" (Fortuna 2018a). Because of this link between military superiority and football play, Fedora downplayed

the seriousness of sport-related concussions and disapproved of changing anything about how the game is played: “Our game is under attack ... I fear that the game will be pushed so far from what we know that we won’t recognize it 10 years from now. And if it does, our country will go down, too” (Auerbach 2018).

In a follow up interview later that day, Fedora did not back down from his previous comments. “I don’t know if clarification is the right word,” he said in his unmistakable southern drawl, in reference to a question about clarifying his thoughts on the connection between football and Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE), the degenerative brain disease caused by repetitive brain trauma. “It’s more about what I said. I’m not sure that anything is *proven*, that football itself causes it. Now we do know, from what my understanding is, that repeated blows to the head cause it, so I’m assuming that every sport that you have, football included, could be a problem with that. As long as you’ve got any kind of contact, you could have that. That doesn't diminish the fact that the game is still safer than it’s ever been, in the history of the game, because we continue to tweak the game, you know, to try to make it safer for our players” (Fortuna 2018b).

A few days later, I sat with Eastern State’s head coach in his office, chatting about his personal and football-related plans for the last few weeks of summer. He told me that his conference’s Media Days were the next week, so of course, I asked what he thought about Fedora’s comments.

“He said what again?” he asked, a look of shock on his face. I summarized the comments a second time and the coach simply responded with a smug smile.

“It’s my first year in this position,” he began, alluding to his hiring in January. With a laugh, he continued, “I'll make sure not to say something like that. Don’t wanna bring that kind of attention my way!”

CHAPTER 3

"I LOVE SATURDAYS": THE TEAM ORDERING OF COLLEGE FOOTBALL

In this chapter, I situate Black players within the daily operations of a Division I college football program. I observed that one's time on a college football team relies heavily on technologies of surveillance. As alluded to by Carter in the ethnographic snapshot below, a Division I college football program strictly orders, disciplines, and surveils players' bodies and behaviors by controlling most aspects of their daily lives. The material realities of all players' everyday lives and individual subjectivity are inextricably linked to football, particularly given the demands of being socialized into a team.

However, this chapter challenges the effectiveness of the idea of the "team" for all players, and especially for Black players. A narrative that is touted by football administrators and popularized in the media to demonstrate how players are able to come together for the greater good of the overall unit, my argument is two-fold. First, this notion of the team individualizes athletes more effectively than it brings them together, like in the way that players have their own jersey number and their own playing position. Second, because of this subliminal focus on an autonomous individual, this notion projects onto college players' lives normative, Euro-American standards of whiteness, order, and rationality. Therefore, in order to actually relate to others, Black players must move beyond this normalized notion of community in sport.

Lunch with Carter

The lunch rush was in full force. I arrived at the Cobb Football Center around 12:10 pm, prime lunch time on this hot day during summer training camp in August 2017. I was planning to reconnect with Carter, a redshirt junior I had met the year before, and I clearly remembered our

past interactions. I was intrigued by the put-together economics major from Florida who reminisced of 'Daddy/Dolphin Sundays' spent watching professional football games and throwing the ball around with his father during his childhood. Growing up in Florida, he had told me, put him in the middle of a football hub, so playing the game was just part of the culture there. His dad played through high school and Carter had been playing since he was eight years old.

I waded through the players at lunch, all dressed alike in some iteration of the Mellon University red and white, and quickly realized how out of place I was in the space. Not only was I the only woman on the floor not serving food, but I was also wearing a blue dress. My gender, my outfit, and the color I was wearing marked me an obvious outsider, someone who stood out from the others. Not something I would soon forget, especially since all my transgressions, along with the likely confused look on my face, drew the attention of the head football coach sitting in the corner. Between bites of his lunch, he asked what I was doing and how my day had been going, and I countered by asking how practice was that morning. "It was ok," he replied nonchalantly in his southern drawl. "We're still in the sore stages and need to get through that. Gotta toughen these guys up." He waved me away.

Following the brief conversation and a little more searching, I finally found the player I was looking for. Carter and I made our way to an empty table off to the side; him with his plate of whole wheat pasta with red sauce and shrimp, me with my notebook. As we sat in the Cobb, surrounded by memorabilia of Mellon's rich football past, Carter recounted his early-summer activities, focusing heavily on a New York internship he was able to take advantage of. He told me how much he enjoyed his time there and noted how playing college football would be good practice for working on Wall Street, assuming he landed his dream job: waking up early,

working long hours, experiencing delayed gratification for one's work, and the need to exhibit an almost-excessive commitment to the activity were all mentioned as transferable skills to this workplace. And it made sense that he was already thinking about this: during the 2017-18 school year, he had to decide if he would graduate in May 2018 or stay at Mellon to play football for a fifth year. I learned that his parents supported his decision either way, but when I asked which way he was leaning, it was not hard to realize that graduation might be looming. "I love Saturdays," he said. "Just not so much Sunday through Friday anymore."

Saturdays, of course, are when college football games are usually played. With just a few exceptions, this day of the week is saved for 'amateur' athletes, while professional football games are usually held on Sunday and Monday. By this point in time, Carter had already been a part of the Mellon team for three years. Coming up on his fourth academic year and football season – and tasked with deciding if he wanted to extend this to five years – Carter's comment drew attention to the fact that being a college football player is a week-long activity, consuming every day of the fall season and most days during the off-season. He still adored the pomp and circumstance of game day, but the draining preparation for it was beginning to take its toll.

Carter went on to lay out his practice schedule for the upcoming season to precisely explain just how much time he would be devoting to football. During the season, practice occurs on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. Meetings start by 7:10 am and players are on the field by 8:00 am. Though done by 10:45 am, just in time to shower and begin classes for the day, they also have to attend team dinners every weekday, at any time between 5:00-7:00 pm. No matter if the team plays a home or an away game, the players all stay in a hotel together Friday night and then all day Saturday is devoted to the game itself. Sundays are spent in the Cobb from

noon to 6:00 pm reviewing the previous day's game and starting to prepare for the upcoming game.

Throughout the lengthy interview, Carter constantly referenced the strict structuring of his college life that was dependent upon his participation in football, as well as his nostalgic aspirations to just "have fun and not stress about the plays" if he chose for his fourth year to be his last season playing. And because of this, I got the impression that the competition and seriousness of the sport were the cause of his increasing detachment from it. "Football is the greatest sport around, but I used to like it more," he said to end the interview. "Now I'm sore and I'm tired and might not want to do this anymore."

Carter had time to reflect on his experiences with football due to his seniority on Mellon's team. He was beginning to think critically about his time at Mellon, questioning aspects of the football spectacle that made it possible for the extraordinary performances of athletic bodies on public display every week during the fall. And I quickly learned that these intricacies of participation in the sport at this highly competitive (though amateur) level are integral to understanding the everyday lived experiences of its Black players.

*****

There are two overarching theories that guide the discussion in this chapter. The first is the idea of ordered and ordering systems, which stems from a continuing modernist reliance upon the Hobbesian thesis of order. Theorizing the natural state of man, Thomas Hobbes argues that "during the time men live without a common Power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called Warre" (Hobbes 2006[1651]:70). To avoid such a perpetual state of war, men relinquish some liberties and enter into a commonwealth that either comes about through force or by institution, the latter occurring "when men agree amongst themselves, to

submit to some Man, or Assembly of men, voluntarily, on confidence to be protected by him against all others" (ibid.:96). This commonwealth, based upon a social contract, is a modern state that institutes social order upon the men who submit to it in order to avoid the disorder, chaos, and violence that they naturally exhibit.

Second is the structuring of institutions. In his description and analysis of *total institutions*, like mental hospitals, Erving Goffman posits that these places are defined by four main characteristics:

> First, all aspects of life are conducted in the same place and under the same single authority. Second, each phase of the member's daily activity is carried on in the immediate company of a large batch of others, all of whom are treated alike and required to do the same thing together. Third, all phases of the day's activities are tightly scheduled, with one activity leading at a pre-arranged time into the next, the whole sequence of activities being imposed from above by a system of explicit, formal rulings and a body of officials. Finally, the various enforced activities are brought together into a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfill the official aims of the institution (2007[1961]:6).

Michel Foucault then describes disciplinary institutions, like prisons, whose "general form for an apparatus intended to render individuals docile and useful, by means of precise work upon their bodies" (1995[1975]:231), and "must assume responsibility for all aspects of the individual, his physical training, his aptitude to work, his everyday conduct, his moral attitude, his state of mind" (ibid.:235). Foucault distinguishes his institutions from Goffman's by focusing on power exercised on the individual body. Together, these theories about institutions help to frame Black players' everyday lived spaces that work to order, discipline, surveil, and regulate them.

I use these theories to describe a Division I college football program as an ordering institution that relies on particular rules to discipline and control both space and behaviors. Other scholars also note connections between collegiate athletics and total institutions (Hatteberg 2018;

Turner 2018). Certain norms rule and order college football, as will be discussed below, and it is only one of the several institutions that Black players must navigate on a daily basis. For example, the division between athletics and academics in a university setting, and the play world of sport and the real world beyond the playing fields are both emblematic of overlapping systems that Black athletes are pulled across and must successfully traverse. Along with institutions of higher education, sport itself mirrors the modernist preoccupation with orderliness and rationalization. It demands a certain kind of order, though, so models abound for how Black football players find themselves in need of navigating normalized categories in social spaces.

The Football Team

On a sticky afternoon in June 2018, I stood in the doorway of the coaches' office at Eastern State University, looking out into the weight room. Rap music played in the background, not overwhelmingly loud, but loud enough that, as I walked through the room, I made sure to avoid the large speaker standing in the corner. Wearing just black basketball shorts, a plain white t-shirt, and a pair of worn sneakers, a defensive lineman was getting ready to attempt a 435-pound back squat. He only had to make it through a set of three, but the group of six players was nearing the end of daily lifting. He was exhausted and pouring sweat, as he had already made it through several sets of other lifts and weight combinations. I stood off to the side and watched as Strength & Conditioning coaches stood beside him, excitedly providing encouraging words, and his spotter stood behind him, ready to mirror his motions and ensure that the weight could be returned safely to the rack if it ended up being too heavy. I, along with the few other guys lifting weights, paused what we were doing to watch.

With his legs spread about shoulder length apart and the bar behind his head and across his back, the lineman grunted as he lifted the weight off the bar, preparing first to dip, then stand

tall. As he made it through the first squat, the small weight room filled with the echoes of the no more than ten men there. “Go! Get down!” his teammates yelled, while the coaches helped to perfect his form mid-squat.

It took a few extra seconds to complete the second squat. As he stood, his eyes shifted ever so slightly to his left and to his right, as he looked past the weights on the end of the bar to see his teammates cheering him on on either side, seeking strength in their encouragement.

He took a deep breath and one last time, he dipped down and stood back up, thereby completing the set. The guys around him jumped up and down, screaming for their teammate, their way of recognizing just how heavy the weight was. Along with the spotter, two players came over to each side of the weight bar to help replace it on the rack. The lineman hunched over in exhaustion. “Good shit, bruh!” a teammate reached out his right hand to dap him up. The lineman stood to return the greeting, a smile slowly spreading across his face.

All together, the lift took no more than two minutes. And once this one was complete, the lineman moved on to his next assignment and his teammates resumed their own lifting. But to have everyone in the weight room supporting the lineman during his lift, and then to have four extra people help him to replace the bar, is the embodied representation of the team dynamic that is so frequently touted as integral to one’s experience with college football. Even though this specific situation occurred at Eastern State, I saw similar scenes at Mellon. Football-specific spaces like the weight room, the practice field, and the playing field were filled with moments where the various categories of person involved in Football – players, coaches, staff, administrators – worked as an organized unit to promote the success of the team, in whatever way that meant at the time. Of course, the ultimate group success, the embodiment of a would-be Durkheimian collective solidarity, was a win on game day.

Recall the description of contemporary college football in chapter 2. In its most literal sense, a Division I, Power 5 college football team is made up of 85 scholarship players and about 15 non-scholarship players that all play different positions. At any given time during a game, there are two teams of 11 players each. The teams take turns, either playing Offense or Defense. The Offense is made up of the Quarterback, five down linemen (one Center, two Guards, and two Tackles), and a mixture of Running Backs, Tight Ends, and Wide Receivers. The Defense is composed of numerous configurations of Defensive Linemen, Linebackers, Cornerbacks, and Safeties.

Though there are various playing positions that make up the team, I learned that there are several ways that the notion of the team is visually represented, embodied, or talked about. Often, the team is about uniformity: all teammates dressed in the same sweat suits when traveling and the same business suits when arriving at the home stadium on game day. Sometimes, it is about support and encouragement: like when a player pulls off an impressive play on the field and is congratulated by his teammates and coaches on the sidelines. Other times, the team relies on organic solidarity and specialization, as the team cannot win on game day without the individual accomplishments of those of different playing positions.

Another example of the team at Eastern State was the way that jerseys were handled. Every week during spring practice in March and April, the football team played a scrimmage game. I would often circle the field, to understand all that occurs during the practice before the scrimmage starts, but during one visit, I sat on the sidelines with Jamaal, the Assistant Athletics Director for Equipment, and Coach Howard, one of the team's most decorated former head coaches. It was odd for both men to be in attendance at the scrimmage, so I thought I would take advantage of their presence and ask a few questions.

The banter between these long time friends was entertaining, but I eventually interrupted them to ask Jamaal if the players' game jerseys had their last names on them. After all, his role as director of equipment meant that he was in charge of all the supplies distributed to players, like their jerseys. Coach Howard overheard and interjected, "You already got a number. What you need a name for?" When I asked him to explain, I found out that the head coach chooses whether or not to include the players' names on the game jerseys. Both men agreed that there are pros and cons to either possibility. However, Eastern State had decided for years not to use them because "it's hard to build a team with a bunch of individuals."

Jamaal explained that when a player performs well in a game, it is common for him to point to the back of his jersey to direct all recognition to himself, thereby bringing attention to himself rather than bringing attention to the collaborative effort required. "Parents sometimes can't handle it either," he added, describing how parents in the stands often go too far when congratulating their individual sons rather than the work of all the Eastern State players on the field. Both men agreed that names on the jerseys helped cut down on overt, individualized displays of what they deemed to be selfishness.

Almost on cue, as if he somehow knew what we were discussing, a running back on the field playing in the scrimmage broke away from a crowd and ran the ball towards the end zone to score. However, instead of just running the ball in, he capped his impressive run with a backflip from five yards back. The guys on the sidelines erupted in excitement to recognize the exceptional move and simultaneously, a flag was called on the play. The team on offense did not get the points for the run and instead lost yards. Satisfied, Jamaal and Coach Howard looked at each other and then turned back to me. For them, this was the perfect example of the player's lack of discipline, his selfish desire to show off and focus on his own individual athleticism, and

his disregard for his teammates by losing the yards. These are qualities that were meant to be avoided by leaving names off of jerseys. This small equipment decision emphasized the team over the individual, the university over the biological family, and teamwork over the star player. Jamaal and Coach Howard both agreed that spring ball and scrimmages were the times to instill these values in the players, so the team could avoid similar exaggerated displays of selfishness on Saturdays during the upcoming season.

This practice was not common, as at Mellon, and most other prominent Division I programs in the country, players' names are included on the jerseys. Instead, the team at Mellon came to life through a hashtag that was constantly repeated by coaches, recruiters, announcers, and the media as a way to reinforce the idea that the team was a unified force. #MELLONCREW was on the back of team-distributed shirts that players must wear, printed on plastic wristbands and in brochures, and uploaded with coaches' social media posts that forever live on the internet. The hashtag is an attempt to convey that despite football related differences, like different playing positions or scholarship vs non scholarship status, or social and cultural differences, like race and class background, these no longer matter when one becomes a Mellon teammate. It is an almost compulsory sense of group identity. Once a teammate, the player is no longer an individual, but is instead a member of the Mellon Football Team, someone who then represents the coaches, the staff, the other teammates, the athletic program, and the university.

Overall, teammates are supposed to share, borrowing from anthropologist Benedict Anderson, a "deep horizontal comradeship" (2006[1983]:7). And in these terms, the football team is an imagined community, one that, on behalf of the university and the nation in which it exists, teaches values of discipline, egalitarianism, honor, loyalty, competition, and national pride (James 1984[1963]). During an interview, one coach went so far as to describe the work he does

with players as "an American service" because of the way that "we have to come together as a team, despite our differences." In his mind, facilitating this feigned sense of community through team-building epitomize the supposed values upon which the nation is built.

Tension within the Team

Factions do exist within the larger grouping. When dealing with such a large group of individual athletes that are being socialized into a team by coaches and administrators, it is understandable that smaller groups might develop and segment themselves. Most notable on the football team is the divisions that occur due to different playing positions and playing on different sides of the ball (either offense or defense).[14] When describing the political life of the Nuer, a tribe in the southern Sudan, anthropologist E.E. Evans-Pritchard characterized it as a system of fission and fusion, social cohesion and social distance, given the "principle of segmentation and the opposition between segments" (1940:143). A similar phenomenon occurs in the social construction and maintenance of the football collective. In the way that each segment of a Nuer tribe "has its distinctive name" and "is itself segmented and there is opposition between the parts" (ibid.:142), football teams, large groups of at least 100 players, are segmented between the different playing positions played by individual athletes. As described, the Offense is populated by Quarterbacks, Centers, Guards, Tackles, Running Backs, Tight Ends, and Wide Receivers, while the Defense is made up of Defensive Linemen, Linebackers, Cornerbacks, and Safeties. Each playing position carries different responsibilities and different expectations for the performance expected from the player on the field. Football thrives on this division of labor among the athletes because "as soon as the distribution of labour comes into

[14] Another interesting faction is that of fraternity membership: if there are multiple members on the team that belong to different fraternities, these affiliation sometimes do come out on the practice field. At Eastern State, it was often a running joke between brothers of different fraternities that still had to come together when playing football for the same team.

being, each man has a particular, exclusive sphere of activity" (Marx 1978[1845]:160). A football player of one position cannot be interchanged for one of a different position because each has become specialized in the skills required for his own position. But of course, only one group plays in the game at a time. Because only either offense or defense is on the playing field at any given point during a game, these sides often practice together and split themselves from one another because of it.

To further highlight the division that arises between offensive and defensive players, each named position has an oppositional foil on the other side of the ball – offensive line and defensive line, receivers and cornerbacks, running backs and linebackers. While these foils from the same team are not on the playing field at the same time, they do come together during practice, as this is the way that skills are learned and practiced before the big game. This means that the foils all practice against each other as they are preparing for the game, despite the fact that they play on the same team; teammates are playing against each other and competition between them is fostered, especially by the coaches. "Offense sells tickets and defense wins ball games," recited Trae, a freshman receiver, one day when we were together. It is a mantra that he constantly heard from coaches during practice, but as an offensive player, he was not impressed with the saying. "You know how annoying that is?" he said, referring to the fact that the statement seemed to lessen the importance of his side of the ball. Further, it also implied that there was an inherent division between the players, one that was encouraged and preferred by the coaches.

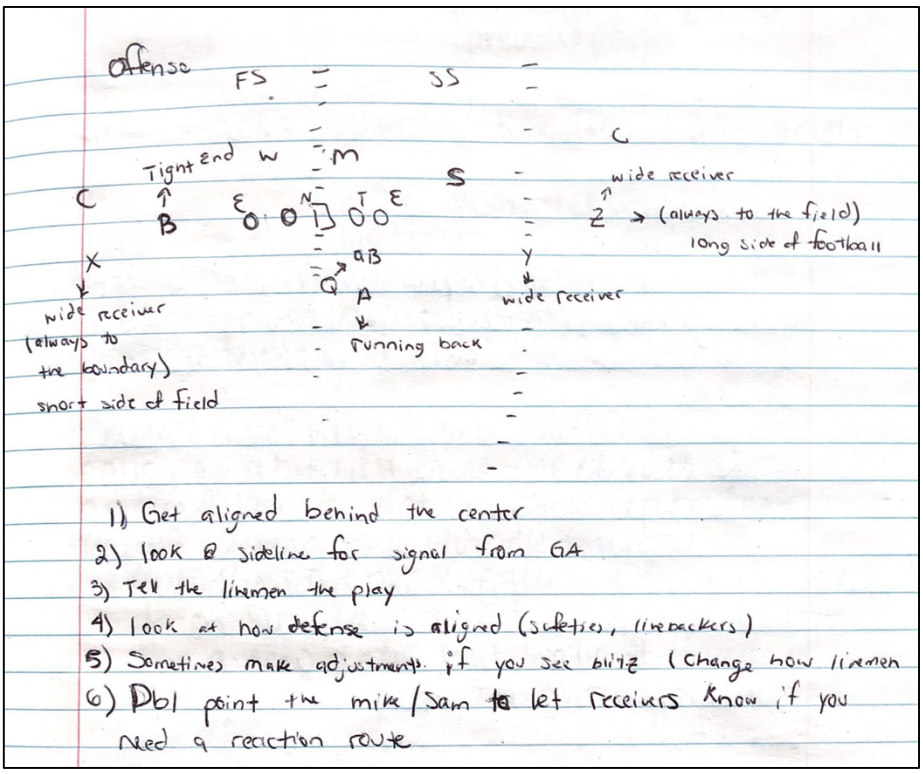

Figure 2: Explanation from Quarterback about offensive positions on the field.

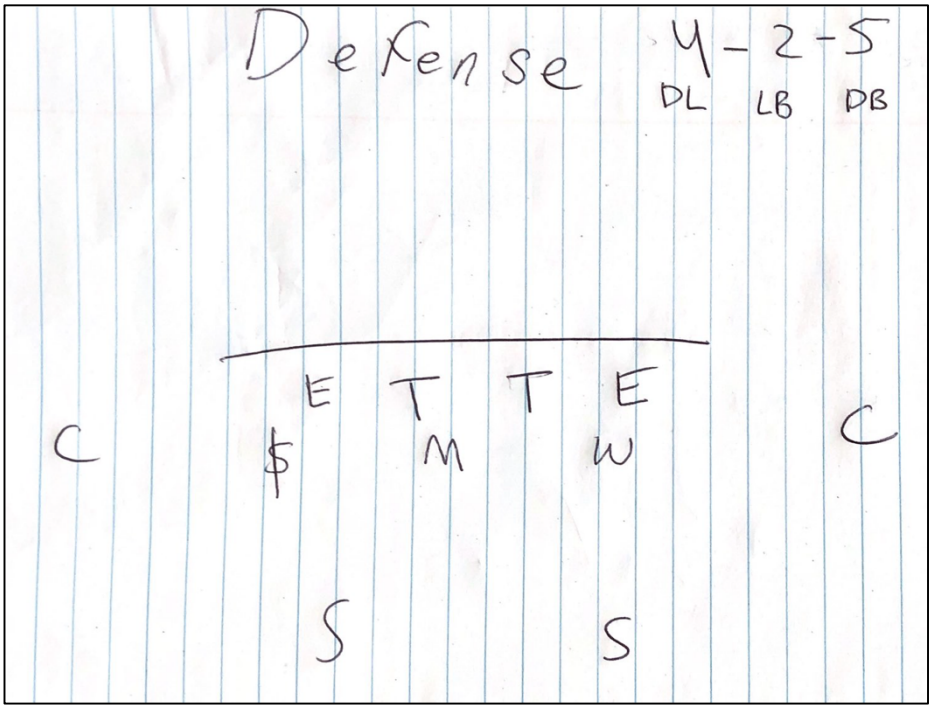

Figure 3: Outline from Linebacker about defensive positions on the field.

Players *are* encouraged to exercise force for one another, against players on other teams during the games, that can lead to real and critical injuries, but any violence that occurs within a football space is seen as rational because it is controlled by the rules of the game. However, because of the segmentation that arises from the different positions, as well as the fact that teammates play against their own teammates in practice, there are often disputes within the team between the players of these rival positions.

For example, one of the ways the team prepares for the fall season is through a three-week long training camp that takes place at the end of every summer (further detailed in chapter 4). Carter described it to me as "one of the best/worst times of my life" because while they are engaging strenuous daily practices and workouts, all players on the team must take part in daily meetings, stay in a hotel off-campus together, and eat all meals together. This intentional seclusion is compounded by the fact that their mobility is constricted, as players' car keys are also taken away. In reality, the guys could be spending almost 16 hours together every day during this period and players at Mellon often dread this time of the year because they describe the process, and the constant interaction, as exhausting. Ironically, but perhaps not surprising, this is the time when the most intra-team fights occur. Several players agree that it is difficult to be around each other for such extended periods of time, especially with all the adrenaline going that is required to practice, meaning that yelling and screaming are not uncommon during camp. Even the smallest and most insignificant comment made during these times could spark a dispute.

The players do engage in fights with each other, but these are interesting moments that mark the contradiction that can arise between perceived and real violence. Gregory Bateson recognizes this juxtaposition when he visits the zoo and is surprised to see "two young monkeys

playing, i.e., engaged in an interaction sequence of which the unit actions or signals were similar to but not the same as those of combat" (1972:179). From this observation, he determines that play entails both positive and negative statements, as "play" and "not play" are important when considering what actions denote other actions. Therefore, paradox is key to play, as "the messages or signals exchanged in play are in a certain sense untrue or not meant; and that that which is denoted by these signals is nonexistent" (ibid.:183), in the same way that paradox is key to violence on the field. During camp, the players are not determined to actually hurt each other during these fights – they are wearing full uniforms, pads, and helmets – and their relationships do not suffer because interactions return to normal once the fighting ends. Further, like the Nuer, where "members of any segment unite for war against adjacent segments of the same order and unite with these adjacent segments against larger sections" (Evans-Pritchard 1940:142), the same occurs at any point when the Mellon Football team, as a whole, must unite against an opposing team. Each player agrees that his connection to the overall team is most important and overshadows any petty disputes that might, and often do, arise amongst the teammates.

Order and Surveil, Discipline and Punish

A single thread connects these descriptions of the material, visual, embodied, and described versions of the team: this is a notion that is reinforced by the normative idea of community and cooperation so built into sports at every level, from youth sports to the pros. But specifically in college football, the idea is very much instituted and encouraged by those in positions of power. Here, the 'team' is based upon structures of order and rationality in an effort to manipulate, train, and discipline its members. Foucault (1995[1975]) theorizes that discipline is a form of power and domination that works to normalize and create docile bodies (138).

Taking this claim seriously, I posit that coaches and administrators exercise power in an attempt to discipline and normalize players for the benefit of the football team.

As described in chapter 2, sport itself mirrors a modernist preoccupation with order, rationality, and normativity, which is epitomized in the way that historian Allen Guttmann defines competitive, highly organized, and serious modern sport. For Guttmann, modern sport is defined by seven characteristics: "secularism, equality of opportunity to compete and in the conditions of competition, specialization of roles, rationalization, bureaucratic organization, quantification, and the quest for records" (1978:17), and these are all on display in college football. Here, through multiple sections, I will describe various ways that players' experiences are influenced by the order and discipline instilled by the football program. This description will be centrally based on one morning practice and peripherally influenced by situations that occur off the football field. By describing the intricacies of one practice, I show the very detailed ways in which players are controlled by participation in football.

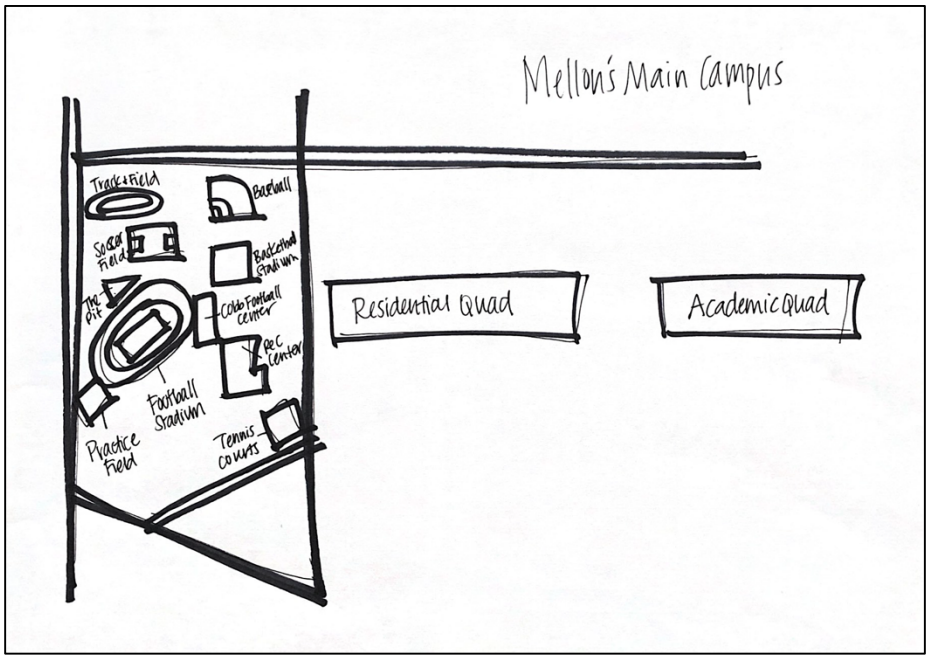

Figure 4: Aerial view of campus. Drawing by Tracie Canada.

Time

After sitting through exactly 70 minutes of meetings and film-watching that began at 7:05 am, the players made their way out to the practice field by 8:30 am, equipped in full pads and helmets. "It's Mellon versus fucking Gates, and it's damn Bloody Tuesday!" yelled out the offensive coordinator to his half of the team once they were gathered together. A chilly November morning, a few days before Thanksgiving, and the team was being put through their longest, toughest, and earliest practice of the week. There is a reason for this day's nickname. Sixteen periods of stretches, drills, and scrimmages take about two hours to complete, and I could tell that each minute exacted painful effort from the players. It did not take long for the coaches' voices to be hoarse from all the shouting and all the guys could do in response was attempt to keep up with their demands.

During the football season, Mellon's practices were scheduled Tuesday through Friday. Game day was Saturday, unless there was the rare Friday game, and then Sunday was spent reviewing film from the previous day's game and conducting a quick walk through on the field. Monday was the only day that players were not involved in some sort of official football practice, but if they were injured, they were expected to attend rehab. Therefore, "Bloody Tuesday" was named as such because it was the first, and most strenuous, practice day of the week.[15] And despite the chaos implied by its name, I quickly recognized it as an example of the orderliness and rationalization that defines competitive and serious modern sport.

Partially because the players grew more accustomed to the plays they were attempting to perfect and partially because the work did become easier to manage, the intensity of the practices lessened as game day neared. There is a certain rhythm to the practice week that Mellon players

[15] The name for this practice day is an interesting, though likely unknown, call back to the "Bloody Monday" of Harvard's games in the mid-1800s (see chapter 2).

were quick to learn, a signal of the temporal disciplining instituted by coaches and carried out by players. Coaches relied upon methods to "establish rhythms, impose particular occupations, regulate the cycles of repetition" (Foucault 1995[1975]:149) in order to regulate players' daily and weekly schedules with the sport.

As I stood on the sidelines during this Tuesday morning practice and looked out at the players on the field, I spotted John, an impressive linebacker who many coaches thought had real potential for the NFL, and was reminded of a comment he made the week before. During one of our frequent talks in the Cobb, he let out a big yawn. His entire body reacted to the yawn, as he stretched his arms above his head and arched his back against the back of the chair. I laughed a little, impressed by the performance, and asked if he got enough sleep the night before.

"My sleep pattern isn't consistent, but it does progress throughout the week," he replied. When I asked him to explain, he told me that he goes to bed later and later throughout the week to keep up with the practice schedule. Since Tuesday's practice was the earliest, his earliest night to bed was Monday. But since we were meeting on a Thursday, he had gone to bed later the night before and the lack of sleep caught up with him during our afternoon conversation.

Dress

The decreased intensity of practice over the week was reflected in sleep schedules, but was also mirrored by what the players wore to practice. Isaiah, Mellon's back up quarterback, explained to me that on Tuesday, the hardest day, the team wore full pads and helmets. On Wednesday, they wore no knee pads and pants cut off to resemble haphazardly cut shorts. Thursday, a walk through day, they simply wore jerseys and basketball-type shorts, with no pads at all. They also went without helmets on that day, which signaled that no contact was expected

between the players. Finally, on Friday and Sunday, they wore a shoulder pad lining under their jerseys and the cut off pants from Wednesday.

There were nicknames given to each of these uniforms that players were expected to wear on a given day, but this information was not provided by the coaches. Interestingly, incoming players learned this from older players while in the locker room, thereby emphasizing the reliance that coaches placed on more senior players to teach more junior players the program's rules and particularities.

What players wore and when they wore it was central to their disciplining, laboring, and performing. As "dress renders [the body] analyzable, either forcibly through required clothing, or voluntarily though self-selected garments" (Warwick & Cavallaro 1998:75), the requirement to wear these exact outfits in certain situations creates the illusion of a unified team filled with similar, though individual, bodies that are controlled by and exist within a particular power structure. On game day, all Mellon teammates, no matter their position on the squad or their potential for playing time, were decked out in their official game jerseys and uniforms, the fullest expression of team through shared embodiment.

Savion, an offensive lineman, described that while the various iterations of the practice uniform were monotonous because it was worn almost every day during the season, game day jerseys were only worn, at most, 13 times in a given year. When this jersey and its corresponding uniform clothe the body, a sense of urgency overcomes the player. It is a special moment that epitomizes the way in which "fashioning the subject [… refers] to the creation and cultivation of distinctive modes of behavior and systems of belief" (Warwick & Cavallaro 1998:15). When wearing this particular jersey, the player realizes that it is game time, the time to perform all that he has learned over the previous week in an effort to help his team secure a win. Game day

jerseys act as "another kind of uniform, which is the marker of the body that has subsumed into a larger body [… and] indicates the body as usable" (ibid.:76). Wearing this jersey, Savion noted, is a unique experience because it signifies that certain behaviors are appropriate, even expected. With the game day jerseys, uniforms, pads, and helmets, players realize that the inherent violence of the sport can be fully enacted within this aesthetically defined, and spatially and temporally bound moment to the Saturday game. This jersey helps to index this distinction for the players.

Bodies Disciplined by Space

In addition to the scheduling and dress of practice, the regulation of the spatial aspect of the game was also evident during that November morning practice. In *Landscapes of Modern Sport*, anthropologist John Bale asserts that because modern sport is now "mass produced and international in style" (1994:101), its placelessness has arisen through the standardization and rationalization of the space of sport, leading to the necessity of replication and similarity across places. It is for this reason that the practice fields and playing fields at both Mellon and Eastern State, for example, are not identical, as each is surrounded by different stadiums, stands, and campus buildings, but each field is technically the same, so play can be seamlessly replicated across these places.

Despite the standardization that allows for these places to be considered interchangeable across university campuses, the fact that I was standing on the sidelines, unable to enter the marked 120 yards of the actual practice field, demonstrates that the playing fields of college football are also standardized realms that regiment physical bodies to obey certain rules and behave within the strict parameters of these rule-governed spaces (Bale 1994; Elias & Dunning 1986; Guttmann 1978; Hargreaves 1986). Each category of person involved in the football

spectacle, including players, coaches, athletic trainers, staff members, and nutritionists, was present at the practice field that morning, but each had been designated to a certain marked space. Only players and coaches were on the field. Staff members stood along the sidelines, as did athletic trainers, nutritionists, and academic advisors. If necessary, trainers could breach the space of the field on the rare occasion that a player immediately needed medical attention, but I watched as this activity was usually conducted on the sidelines. And had this been an official game day, fans would have also been included in this spatial disciplining, relegated to the stands with no potential at all to enter the field, the sacred space of the athletes.

I, too, became a body disciplined to perform certain duties that became expected of me because of my particular positionality as a researcher, an observer, a woman, and a non-athlete who was frequently present in football-spaces at Mellon. For example, a couple months into fieldwork, an influential member of Mellon's football staff, a man who was considered the head coach's right-hand man, pulled me aside to clarify where I was allowed to be and when. My clearance to attend meetings and practices was not an issue. Problematic, however, was the route that I took. The staff member informed me that I should not access the practice field through the building – past the team room, the locker room, the weight room, and through the tunnel. I would instead have to leave from the building's 2nd floor, walk outside and around to reach the fields. The much longer exterior route took me across the adjoining parking lot and down a small hill. The staff member explained that potential exposure to 'locker room talk' was the issue. I suspect that, more to the point, the shorter route I was taking took me through the players' space and staff did not want me there.

My previous route to the practice field violated the rules of the space, which were based upon the social relations constructed and fostered between the players, the coaches, and the staff

members (Foucault 1984), all predominantly male. As a woman who was not a staff member, I gathered from this intervention that I was transgressing the primarily male space of the players (Bourdieu 2003), in more ways than one. As noted by anthropologist Olúfémi Táíwò, "all bodies occupy *space*. Human beings, as bodies, occupy space, too. But we humans do turn *spaces* into *places*. That is, we colonize particular spaces, imprint them with our personal stamps, arrange them to reflect our whims, and turn them into *our place*" (original emphasis; 2003:44). Accordingly, this had become a culturally relevant and private place through the presence of the 'insider' male players and staff members.

There were several factors that automatically marked me as an outsider in this place: the fact that I was dressed in jeans, boots, and coats during these late-fall practices, the colors I chose to wear that did not often align with Mellon's red and white team colors, wearing my curly hair out and not in a ponytail, as it would have been if I was a staff member, and the liminality of my age, as I was too old to be a college student but too young to be a university administrator visiting practice. These aesthetic and demographic differences were only compounding the fact that my gender marked me as a transgressive being.

Gaze

The head coach moderated the space of the practice and playing fields. Though I did not have this conversation about my walking route directly with him, I knew that the information I received originated from him. I quickly learned that this disconnect between the head coach and those that he disciplined and surveiled was common, further epitomized on Bloody Tuesday. Woven into the usual sounds of practice – whistle blows, yells and curse words, pads and helmets hitting against each other, and rap music – every few minutes, the head coach's voice would ring out across the practice field, projected by a microphone and speaker set up so that

everyone could hear. Each time he spoke, I looked around at the field to take note of the ways that the players responded to his critiques. “What the hell are y’all doing?!” he yelled out at one point, directing my attention to the back left corner of the practice field. The receivers were running plays and a few missteps interfered with the success of the overall situation. Their position coach seconded the scolding and the players re-set to run the play again.

This happened several times more, the head coach’s voice ringing out over the practice field, before I realized that I had not seen him all morning. I had become so fixated on his disembodied voice that I did not feel the need to physically place him. But then I did start to look for him. I did not see him to my left or my right along the sidelines, or even across on the other side of the field. Neither was he walking between the groups of different playing positions on the field. It was not until I turned around to walk into the indoor facility behind me that I saw him. There he was, seated above the field, in a perch attached to a nearby building that epitomized the notion that “the gaze is alert everywhere” (Foucault 1995[1975]:195). The level of visibility provided by this aerial view allowed the head coach to monitor and surveil all activity on the practice field, as he watched the receivers on one end of the field, the kickers in the middle, and the defensive lineman on the other. The speaker system then allowed for him to communicate with everyone, whenever he wanted, despite the physical distance that separated him from his players and assistant coaches.

This vantage point, while helpful for the head coach, proved to be tricky for the players. Each player on the practice field was “perfectly individualized and constantly visible,” as the head coach’s positioning created a “panopticon mechanism [that] arranges spatial unities that make it possible to see constantly and to recognize immediately” (Foucault 1995[1975]:200). Every move was watched from above, as the head coach scoured the field, looking for mistakes

and transgressions that would then be called out in front of everyone. And even if there was something that the head coach did not happen to notice, all practices were video recorded. From various angles and from the perspective of multiple pieces of equipment, the duration of every practice was caught on camera so that the film could be watched back and picked apart. The film these cameras collected was central to the efforts to perfect the players' actions during daily practices in order to avoid mistakes on Saturday. In reality, there is no escaping the gaze while playing on the gridiron.

In his fifth year as a Mellon cornerback, Jordyn had thought a lot about this gaze and constant surveillance. "Imagine everything you do being taped," he posited during my first interview with him. He detailed how difficult it can be, knowing that he was always being watched and tracked, and his actions – sometimes the good ones, but usually the bad ones – were often the center of conversation amongst the coaches as they watched the film. And then after the coaches watched in the afternoons after practice, the film was shown to everyone in his position group in the morning meetings the next day before practice. "Some of the younger guys are afraid to make mistakes because they know they're going to see it on film," he added, further emphasizing his seniority on the team. He did not seem to mind watching his own mistakes, as he had been doing it for four years already, but he did note the difficulty of watching film after a team loss. "This is a 'what have you done for me lately' business," he said about football, "which means that it doesn't matter how well you've done in the past because what is remembered is your most recent mistake."

Surveillance

To further emphasize the constant surveillance, Jordyn began to describe Football's dependence on Teamworks, a mobile phone application that every Mellon player downloads

upon joining the team. A program utilized by more than 1,800 Division I athletic teams across the country, Teamworks touts itself as "the leading athlete engagement platform, built by athletes, for athletes. Our software and app make everything easier for elite athletic teams – from scheduling and communication, to sharing files and managing travel." I agree with this statement, as it is a useful platform that helps to organize players on a team. It acts as a way to connect players with each other, with coaches, and with staff members, as it is loaded with daily schedules, required outfits, reminders for meetings, travel schedules and airplane seats, and a messaging function that keeps everyone in contact with one another. It helps to keep individual teammates organized within the often hectic larger grouping of the team.

However, during this interview, Jordyn complained about the new check-in function on the app. New during the 2017 summer training camp and playing season, players were encouraged to ensure that the Location Services were activated on their phones, so that the coaches and staff could monitor where they were at any given time. This tracking function was mostly used for curfew checks during training camp to verify that players were in bed – or at least in their rooms – by the time previously established by the administrators. Therefore, Mellon used the app not only for surveillance, but also as a disciplining tool, attempting to encourage players to do what they are told to do on their own, but with the added reassurance that their transgressive actions would be tracked and corrected if they acted out of place.

Developed Bodies

Perhaps the most obvious manifestation of all the techniques of discipline and surveillance is that of the football sporting body itself; out on the practice field were at least 100 athletic bodies. A particularly important component of the spectacle, the body is at the heart of any study of sport (Besnier & Brownell 2012; Bourdieu 1990[1983]; MacAloon 1982). And

because “control over the appearance, treatment and functioning of the body is a universally important aspect of social order” (Hargreaves 1985:139-140), the sporting body is at the center of this rational and orderly disciplining.

The ways that the body is inscribed, imagined, and packaged through and for football is important, as are the bodily effects of this training, stress, and manipulation. For example, in addition to demonstrating the ways that team relations manifest themselves in often unexpected ways, the scene in the weight room I witnessed at Eastern State also represented an aspect of the way that the sporting body is built up and created in a particular way in the service of the team. Though different playing positions on the field do lend themselves to different body types – lineman, whose job centers on tackling, are often taller and heavier than running backs, who are shorter and leaner, because they need to run fast – there is often a certain desired physique for each position, as determined by the coaches and administrators.

According to scholar Ken Dutton, “the developed body is as much a cultural and imaginative construct as it is a physical object: it carries with it the whole baggage of perfectibility, localizing and giving shape to half-formed human fantasies and aspirations” (1995:191). Therefore, while the achievement of a perfectible body is no more than a fantasy, an obsession exists for the creation of a particular body type, on the part of the players, trainers, and coaches alike, and it is carried out in the weight room. It is the job of the Strength & Conditioning coaches to create certain bodies in the weight room. Thus, as there are others involved in the push to create an ideal body, this is both an individual and collective process.

On Bloody Tuesday, I took some time to focus on the linebackers who were practicing, given three of the nine – Alexander, John, and Braxton – were enthusiastic about working with me for my research. Linebackers are known to be strong and fast, as they are tasked with

supporting players on the defensive line and tackling those in offensive positions who are trying to score for the opposing team. The need to improve these skills was embodied in the plays they were practicing. According to their official statistics, each of these three linebackers was at least six feet tall and weighed at least 220 pounds. And their size was only exaggerated once they were wearing the pads, helmets, and cleats of the practice uniform.

A few months after this Tuesday practice took place, I sat in a tattoo shop with Braxton, the youngest of the linebacker trio. He was getting his first large piece, a visual representation of a Bible verse, tattooed on his upper right arm. I sat with him for the four hours that the process took, during which time he ate lunch and we discussed a variety of football and non-football related things. Right before the tattoo artist finished, Braxton told me that the only reason he participated in certain activities related to his body was because of football, as it would be unnecessary (and a bit ridiculous) to lift and work out in certain ways and at such excessive weights if he did not play the sport. "For example, the clean lift is for power and quickness, nothing else really," he said, and then explained why this was important for the position that he played. I could see the artist raise his eyebrows a little as he finished some shading on Braxton's bicep, an embodied representation of his surprise. Much of our football-related conversation had centered on the various activities Braxton engaged in; they were still a little odd to me, but completely foreign to the tattoo artist.

As he finished the tattoo, Braxton requested that I take a picture of it so he could send it to his family.

"Your arm is so big that it takes three pictures for me to get the entire thing," I joked as I strategically positioned myself in an attempt to get his whole tattoo in the frame. I was poking fun at Braxton, but the comment was true, as his whole arm would not fit in just one picture.

"My arms aren't big!" he exclaimed in response. "I don't know why y'all keep saying that."

Not his artist, but another who worked in the shop and had been a part of some of our conversations, walked by and nonchalantly retorted, "Your arms are huge."

This made us all laugh. "Well maybe to y'all they're big, but compared to some of my teammates, they're small," Braxton said in feigned defense of his size.

This funny exchange in a space completely separated from football points to an interesting paradox. Size, strength, and speed are the desired outcomes from the methods used by coaches in the weight room and on the field. These outcomes are reflected in the creation of a sporting body that is taller, bigger, and stronger than what is normatively expected in the real world, but this body is considered normative, and necessary, in this particular world of play.

Food

These coach's methods include the various combinations of lifts and weights during their visits to the weight room, but also in how their food intake is moderated. At Mellon, nutritionists are on hand to regulate when players hydrate, what they eat, and how much they eat, which is why they were always present on the sidelines at practices and games. This was also why players were required to attend dinner almost every night of the week at The Pit, a dining space on campus near the athletic facilities specifically for student-athletes. These meals were specifically organized for the football players, as their coaches had petitioned for them to be served a different menu in a different space, away from the other student-athletes on campus. On the various nights I met players for dinner there, I saw spreads that included moderately diverse selections, but they were all similar in their lack of creativity. Whole wheat pastas, grilled or sautéed vegetables, tacos, grilled chicken and fish, and rice were often on the menu, with some

kind of small dessert. Apparently, the players got most excited for the nights that breakfast-for-dinner was served. While the idea behind these provided meals was to regulate what players were eating, they did not technically have to eat the meal. But they did have to check-in. Unless the players had an excuse for not being able to attend The Pit between the allotted dinner time – from 5:00-7:00 pm – then they had to, at least, show up the dinner, even if they did not eat. Yet another way to track the players' daily whereabouts.

Every meal served at The Pit was strategically crafted by the Director of Sports Nutrition. A woman who had been described by the head coach as "a boss," Natasha, and her small staff, were central to the disciplining of the football bodies. These nutritionists worked with the coaches, the athletic trainers, the Strength & Conditioning staff, the academic coordinators, the doctors, the psychologist, and the compliance office, all in the hopes of coordinating across the various offices to ensure that each player was mentally and physically healthy, and academically and athletically prepared. Success in all aspects of a student-athlete's life in college, but particularly his success on the field, hinged upon ensuring the physical health of one's body. Therefore, Natasha was devoted to ensuring that players were eating relatively healthy meals and snacks, were given the appropriate time and fuel to recover from strenuous practices and lifts, had access to individual counseling to moderate their eating habits, and maintained healthy weights and body fat percentages during busy times of the football schedule. Daily hydration testing, conducted by measuring urine gravity, was also being done to determine if a player needed to include more water or Gatorade in his diet.

I knew that Bloody Tuesday was coming to an end when the players engaged in a series of stretches; these kinds of exercises marked the opening and close of the sixteen-period practice. On this particular day, before my walking route to the practice field had been rerouted, I walked

back up to the Cobb with Coach Smith, my main contact on the coaching staff. During this time, we strolled to the building and chatted along the way, with sweaty, smelly players passing us by as they jogged to the locker room and showers. Once we made it into the tunnel that connected the fields to the Cobb, I began to notice that the players around me were untying their cleats and taking off their footwear, walking the rest of the way barefoot. As we got to the top of the tunnel, even Coach Smith paused to take his own shoes off.

"Ok, what's going on?" I asked John, who was walking barefoot nearby.

"This is our house and we take pride in our house," he said, motioning to the Cobb around him. "We don't want to get it dirty," he added, showing me the grass- and turf-stuffed bottoms of his cleats. Despite what I eventually learned was a paradoxical engagement with the building and all it represented, there was a bit of pride in John's voice.

Disciplining off the Field

Technologies of surveillance and disciplining are prevalent throughout college football, as the sport organizes players' time, behavior, dress, space and place, and food and nutrition. Sociologist Robert Turner theorizes 'football habitus' to account for the ways that the various disciplining and ordering elements I have discussed here become internalized as norms for these athletes. Turner borrows this term from Loïc Wacquant's (2004) work with Chicago boxers and time Matthew Desmond spent with Arizona firefighters (2007), as these scholars considered the practical logics that arise to allow their research participants to successfully participate in their respective activities. In *Not For Long* (2018), his work on the ways that football players transition to and through professional football, Turner writes:

> The athletes I encountered demonstrate that the seeds of a general athletic *habitus* - a system of dispositions and a way of thinking about and acting in the world of sports - are generally planted in aspiring young Pop Warner and high school football players. Later in

> life, through education, training, and discipline within the organizational field of football, a specific *football habitus* is fully integrated in athletics (original emphasis; 2018:71).

Turner uses the term to describe how football players internalize the logics of the football program, as a totalizing institution, which then allows for the program to control the actions and behaviors of the players without any resistance to the methods. Once these athletes are inculcated in the system and controlled by the administrators and staff, they are willing to labor, to make sacrifices, and to abide by predetermined rules, without question, with the intent of succeeding as part of a team.

Turner's assertion is undeniable, but I would add that this disciplining also moves beyond just the space of football, as rules from the world of play are internalized and transition to the world beyond. With particularly the temporal and clothing disciplining dimensions of football exhibiting themselves in the real world, I will show that the material realities of all players' everyday lives are inextricably linked to football, thereby broadening the original definition of Turner's notion.

Click. Flop. Click. Flop. Click. Flop. In early December, I walked alongside John, the linebacker known as "the heart of the defensive line," on our way to the Cobb for dinner, me in my heeled boots and him in his famous athletic slides. Almost every time I saw him during fieldwork, without fail, if he was not in a football uniform, he was wearing sweats and those team-assigned Nike slide sandals. Shoes that he proudly claimed were some of the only he wore, those sandals are obvious markers of a football players' athlete status on this campus; they were provided to each player at the beginning of the summer, along with gray sweats, Nike sneakers, and a bright red book bag. John explained that he was most comfortable in those clothes and shoes, but also pointed out how convenient it was to wear every day. Because of how early he had to show up to meetings and practice, it was easier to grab these clothes instead of compiling

an outfit to “dress up,” as many of the players called wearing clothes other than team-distributed Nike gear.

We were nearing the end of a full day together, as I had shadowed John to better understand his daily routine during the football season. It had been a long day, starting with practice that morning at 7:00 am and his first class at 11:00 am. When I had previously discussed shadowing with him, he was able to rattle off his exact schedule, day-by-day, so that I could decide which day I wanted to spend with him. It was quite impressive, the ease with which he could correctly detail his daily routines, with football meetings and practices, classes, and tutoring included. Throughout the day, I took note of how aware of the time he was, knowing exactly how long it would take us to walk from one building to another, and how long we could spend at lunch before needed to leave to make it to class on time.

We had just left his last class of the day and we were walking to The Pit for him to check-in to dinner. Two other football players were also enrolled in that class, ironically “The Anthropology of Sports,” and two of these three were actually undergraduate anthropology majors. This meant that even outside of the football field, they spent a lot of time together in the classroom. Instead of waiting for a bus that would bring us back to the Cobb after class, Tim, the third player in the class, offered us a ride, so we all piled into his Jeep. Tall for his position as starting quarterback, I noticed that Tim’s head grazed the ceiling of his own car. While in the car, John began asking me questions about my research, wondering how many players I was planning to talk to and how long I would be in town. Tim, though, had different questions in mind.

“Have you talked to Coach about this?” he asked.

As I briefly explained my relationship with the head coach and his awareness of my project, I realized how struck I was by the question. I had interacted with a decent number of

players at this point, about 20 in total, and literally the only one who had asked me about whether I have permission for my research was the starting, white quarterback.

I should not have been surprised, though. Of course the 'leader' of the team would be the one to ask this. As the quarterback, the face of the team, Tim had been tasked with protecting the team's image and with representing it in a particular way because of his very prominent playing position. Of course he would feel the need to ensure that the team and the coach's best interest were central to my work. However, it was telling that Isaiah, the Black quarterback who plays behind Tim, had been incredibly supportive of my project, sometimes even commiserating with and relating to me as I describe my struggles with football administration.

Once we arrived at the Cobb, near the beginning of time range set for dinner, several players were already there. I spotted Alexander, the oldest linebacker from the trio previously mentioned, in the food line, and hoped to have the chance to talk to him. A few minutes later, he saw me sitting at a table with John and came over to sit with us.

It had been a while since I last spoke to Alexander, a player who had been dubbed "Grandpa" by his fellow teammates. He was a self-admitted old soul, which caused him to be quite the character. While he sat with us, I asked him how it was going as he prepared to apply to medical school in the spring and he said that he just went to a meeting the night before to learn about the applications. I found out about his postgraduate aspirations when I shadowed him a couple weeks before, as our day together had been filled with football practices, classes, and meetings with academic advisors who specialize in professional school applications.

"It's all bullshit," Alexander said. "There's lots to do and it takes lots of money. I'll just have to BTFU though. You know, 'Boss the Fuck Up'."

I smiled. I did know what he meant because this was his personal motto. I had noticed it written on sticky notes that he kept on his laptop and phone, and he frequently incorporated the phrase into regular conversation. It was his way of encouraging himself to push past present circumstances, no matter how difficult or uncomfortable, to focus on a future that was more desirable.

Once he realized I understood the reference, he showed me a handmade bead bracelet with the acronym on it. "I made it when I was volunteering at a daycare," he said with a smirk, which made me laugh at the thought of kids asking him what 'BTFU' stood for.

This interaction, which combined Alexander's way of navigating everyday difficulties, focusing on his future goals, and participating in extracurricular activities that he had to make time for, were all wrapped up in and influenced by his participation in football. Literally, since this was all explained to me in the football-specific dining hall.

My fieldwork was filled with these kinds of moments, where players would demonstrate – consciously or not – that their lives outside of football were undoubtedly influenced by their lives in it. They became disciplined and docile inside the space of the sport, but also outside of it, as their lives were obviously shaped by their immersion in competitive college football. The ways that they scheduled and managed their time, how they chose to dress, how they prioritized their actions, and how they dealt with failure and struggle often pointed back to lessons they had learned from the sport. Most Mellon players had been playing football for at least 10 years, which was plenty of time for its ordering to be ingrained in their everyday lives. Players internalized football logics and rules on a large scale, thereby demonstrating the holistic nature of their participation in their own Foucauldian disciplining.

Individuals on the Team

As of August 2018, Matt, a senior cornerback, was #9 on the Mellon Football Team. He was 21 years old, was 5'11", weighed 175 pounds, and had a body fat percentage of 10%. He could bench press 272 pounds, could squat 413 pounds, could power clean lift 247 pounds, and had a vertical jump of 33.5 inches. His GPA was a 3.45 and he only needed to take four more classes in order to graduate.

I was able to gather this data easily; Mellon Football had it all on file for every member of the team. And Matt mentioned that there were plenty of other data points that were, at one time, collected about him: hand size, arm length, knee width, 40 time, broad jump length. Further, in the face of the growing discussion around concussion prevention, there is also a base line cognitive 'score' measured for each player at the beginning of the year to help monitor change over time, for the concussion protocol, and to determine what academic services should be made available to him. Together, these data points present a statistical narrative about a living and breathing person who just so happens to suit up for the university's football team in the fall. Because, as one player put it, "football is turning into a data driven sport," it is worth considering what these data suggest about the people who actually participate in the sport.

I have outlined how all players deal with the demands of being socialized according to the ordered notion of the team. However, these players are simultaneously, and paradoxically, individualized by their participation in the sport, partially as a result of the data that is central for each player. In this world of play, players exist as individual collections of statistics that come to matter for the good of the overall team unit. These notions are constantly competing – the individual player and the team collective – thereby epitomizing a contradiction in social life that has long interested anthropologists (Cohen 1994). The interplay of these intersecting notions tend to play out in very tangible ways in the lives of football players.

Take, for example, football jerseys. I mentioned that these important pieces of clothing can help mark certain acceptable behaviors – whether a game jersey or a practice jersey is being worn. These pieces of clothing also work to connect players to a larger social world, feigning the notion of a team. Recall that Eastern State purposely leaves individual names off of jerseys to further push this notion. Each jersey displays a Nike swoosh (as all Mellon athletic teams are sponsored by Nike), a decal for the NCAA conference that Mellon belongs to, and Mellon's name and logo. Though relatively small details on the front of the jersey, these icons visualize the connection between individual players and their university, their conference, and the NCAA, and act as a constant reminder that these athletes are participating in a system much larger than just themselves.

There are also specific jerseys that do this work of uniting the individual and the collective. Mellon has a throwback jersey that they will wear for one game during the season, meaning that the style of the uniform is reminiscent of a style from a previous, well-known season. These throwback jerseys act as a connection to the past and invoke a sense of tradition. In fact, connections to football ancestors is common throughout the program, particularly through uniform numbers, as these are recycled once a player graduates and the new team member is aware of his number's previous owner. Uniform numbers are something players are constantly aware of, as many can recall at least two 'football ancestors' back who have worn the number and show pride in the number they wear, especially if it was formally attached to a well-known player. These tactics, whether intentional or not, demonstrate how "individual identities and social relations are constructed together" (Hargreaves 1985:138), thereby epitomizing the simultaneous individuality and connection to the collective that occurs as a member of the team.

But more than anything, jerseys, especially game day jerseys, individualize players. Though not all official jerseys include players' last names (as demonstrated by Eastern State), they always prominently display a number that specifically marks each player. No matter the university, no matter the conference, no matter the level of play, a football player always has an individual number. Sometimes chosen and sometimes provided by the administration, these numbers often become important to the players themselves. Earnest, an offensive lineman, once told me that he liked his college number because of its connection to his mom. When he made it to the NFL and had to change numbers, he noted that it was weird for a while to suit up in a different number. Saint, a cornerback, wore his number because it belonged to a high school teammate who made it to the NFL, so he considered it good luck.

Javon, a wide receiver, wore #5 in college because the number he wanted was already taken by a more senior player, so he chose the only single-digit jersey number left when he entered the program. "I played well in it, so I kept it," he told me. Now in the NFL, Javon explained the importance of jersey numbers to NFL players. "Your number can become a huge part of your identity and brand. Some guys pay others when they're traded [to a new team] to get their number." To explain, he gave the example of Odell Beckham, Jr., a well-known wide receiver for the New York Giants who is particularly defined by his number: "Beckham would probably pay for #13 if he was traded to a new team."

Almost as direct an identifier as one's actual name, one's jersey number often holds personal meaning for a player, and also is central to how he connects with other aspects of the football spectacle. Not only might there be monogrammed items with his number (like the necklace that John wears with his jersey number or the t-shirts that family members often wear to games), but he might be referenced by his number or have a nickname based on it. Where his

individual locker is located in the locker room will depend on his number, thereby demonstrating yet another form of spatial disciplining, and his playing position and side of the ball (either offense or defense) often defines what numbers he can wear. In short, this number is an integral component of how the sport organizes the individuals who belong to the team.

With their own personal jersey numbers, lockers, equipment, playing position, and personal playing and weight room records, these individualizing practices then converge with the fact that players will or will not be individually drafted to the NFL. Watch the April draft any year and it becomes clear that making it to the league is not a team activity. Individually selected players are recognized and congratulated for their own work that made it possible for them to make it to the professional league. While an impressive team record from the season helps to draw attention to an individual player attempting to make it to the league, one's own records and statistics are the ultimate draw for a professional team. And players are aware of how they are individually performing within the sport. Over dinner one night with Isaiah and Matt, the former was able to rattle off his game stats from not just the last game, but from the previous playing season. Maintaining and acknowledging one's own individual accomplishments, no matter how well the team performs, is key to participation in the sport. In the end, individuals are often recognized for their contributions to the overall success, or failure, of the team.

*****

Relative to others in the Mellon Football world, Matt's life narrative was distinct. He transferred to the university and the team during the summer of 2017, right before his junior year began. Because he transferred, he was not a scholarship player and was considered a 'walk-on' to the football team. I met him a couple weeks after he arrived on campus, so my fieldwork year aligned perfectly with his first full year on the Mellon team. And as an older player who had

experiences with multiple college football programs, he offered reflective insights to his own situation, as well as to those around him, that I doubt would have been as profound had he been a true Mellon freshman.

Hailing from the west coast, Matt was a cool California kid who always dressed to highlight his skater boy feel and incorporated words into his everyday language that rang weird to my Southern-born ears. Over time I learned that he did genuinely enjoy dressing the way he did, but the way he dressed, which was markedly different than most other football players, was also purposeful. When I saw him on campus one fall day wearing black ripped skinny jeans, a blue baseball styled shirt, black sneakers with rainbow colors across the tongue, and a purple book bag, I asked why I rarely ever saw him wearing Mellon-issued clothes or anything with the Football branding on it. He told me that wearing clothes that obviously marked him as a football player at his previous university elicited two distinct responses from other students, and sometimes even professors: either a) You are a Black guy. Do you really go to school here or are you just a fan of the team? or b) You play football, so you do not deserve to be here. "I wanted to avoid that here [at Mellon]. Not dressing like a player cuts down on the second, so I only have to potentially deal with the first," he noted nonchalantly. I learned that this tactic was effective for him. When I emailed one of Matt's professors about wanting to shadow him, the professor was unaware that he belonged to any athletic team, let alone the football team. "I thought I only had two athletes in this class, not three," the professor told me when I met him in person.

Matt's ability to distance himself from a football-player aesthetic was effective, but that obviously did not stop his actual affiliation with the team. Even if he did not dress like the others and was not on scholarship, he was still a Mellon Football player. He still practiced just as hard, had just as hectic a daily schedule, and would eventually travel with the team to every away

game. And to my relatively unexperienced eye, it seemed that Matt was utilized more than other walk-ons during practices and games. Granted, he was an experienced player who had helped to bring success to his previous Division I institution. But I was intrigued by the disconnect between his walk-on status and his consistent laboring on the field. Therefore, during one of our impromptu meetings, which usually occurred over a meal, we discussed the likelihood that he would earn a scholarship for his senior playing season.

"I don't see them spending all that money on a person with potentially two years of production left," he told me, referencing the fact that he could potentially stay for a fifth year, like Carter. Thus, at the time of this meeting, he had two years of eligibility left, which would require the football program to provide a scholarship for both years.

"I 'like' that it's two years of *production*," I replied sarcastically, noting the obvious reference being made to the players' work and labor that drives the capitalist system of college football.

He shrugged. "Well, that's how they think of it... I'm an X in their playbook. That's all I am." The 'they' that he referenced was, of course, the coaches.

Sad, I thought to myself. "Does that bother you at all?"

"No. It's just how it is." He paused, then added, "Some of the coaches don't know your name. That's how bad it."

For whatever reason, I tried to give the coaches the benefit of the doubt. "Do they know your jersey number, though? Do they at least know your number," I asked Matt.

He just shook his head no.

"Well that's problematic. That they don't know who you are."

"It's problematic because you probably feel like there should be a relationship there. And there isn't. Here's an example for you," Matt continued. "They don't have any information on me. My bio's not even correct. They don't have the right birthday for me in my football bio online."

I was shocked. "Really??" I pulled out my phone to look up his page on the Mellon Football site. I know his birthday is in September, same as mine. And sure enough, his birthday was incorrect, listed as December 30.

"See?" he said a little pretentiously. "Got a birthday letter in December and everything. It's stupid. There's a whole bunch of errors in it, too. Football errors. Actual typos and contradictions. But I didn't say anything. Still haven't."

"Why won't you tell them it's wrong?"

"Because that's something that as an organization, you should probably know about your players. And it just proves to me I'm just an X."

Just to get his feeling on other potential situations, I asked, "If you got hurt, do you think they would take care of you?" I was curious if he thought his walk-on status would impact his ability to receive medical care.

"Well, I got hit in the arm and they took care of that immediately," he said, reminding me of a situation that occurred at practice a few weeks before that required medial attention. "I think there's some things that they cannot not do. Like medical stuff."

Matt's sentiments were familiar, as they echoed the frustrations with football administration and coaches that other players also mentioned. Consistently, players each had a story to express a tension with those in positions of power. For example, near the end of my fieldwork year, I heard Alexander call Andre "Twin." These two graduating seniors looked

nothing alike, so when I asked him why that was his nickname for him, Alexander told me that when the two first arrived at Mellon, "everyone got us confused. From coaches to older teammates. But well into the season, coaches were still calling me Andre." The two eventually stopped trying to correct the coaches, but the fact that it took them longer than a few months to get the players' names straight signaled, at least for Alexander, how little personal attention was paid to the athletes as individuals. In a way, they were interchangeable, not even worthy of a name, because of their membership on the team.

These various examples, and the ways that players themselves were acknowledging and theorizing them, exemplify the primary argument at the center of the college sports controversy: often, players are valued and seen simply for their productive potential on the gridiron. Scholars have poignantly compared the college sports model, with the NCAA at its center, to a monopoly (Barro 2002), a cartel (Fleisher, Goff & Tollison 1992), and to slavery (Branch 2011; Hawkins 2010; Nocera & Strauss 2016; Rhoden 2007) in an attempt to demonstrate the ways the 'amateurism' claim in college sport, as well as the monopolizing power held by the bureaucracies that discipline college athletes, exploit and disadvantage student-athletes. While I agree, at least on some level, with these claims, what became more interesting to me was whether administrators and coaches were just oblivious to the needs of the players and were not invested in their true well-being. Did they care about the over 100 football student-athletes that were members of the Mellon University community?

Despite the political, biomedical, social, and economic issues that surround American football at the collegiate level, how football programs care for their athletes is important, considering this care is integral to maintaining one's eligibility and ability to continue to participate in the sport. As discussed, the statistics and data points that define football student-

athletes are important for each player. Therefore, I posit that all those involved with the Football apparatus – coaches, administrators, academic advisors, equipment managers, athletic trainers – demonstrate a form of bureaucratic care that is contingent upon ensuring a player's ability to perform on the field: coaches care because of the position an athlete plays, so they will teach and coach players to help them improve their playing abilities; academic coordinators care enough to keep players eligible, so they help them choose classes and make academic decisions; athletic trainers care to ensure players do not suffer from a severe injury, so they help to create rehabilitation plans and suggest relevant medical decisions to correct bodily issues.

In short, care is woven into this exploitative system only to ensure individual players' ability to produce for the overall team; this becomes apparent in how a player is cared for in the classroom, in the weight room, and on the field. The idea of bureaucratic care reappears in chapter 5 of this dissertation, but it is stems from what anthropologist Lisa Stevenson calls anonymous care. Defining care as "the way someone comes to matter and the corresponding ethics of attending to the other who matters" (Stevenson 2014:3) introduces the ability to consider the multiple, and sometimes conflicting, ways that one can both come to matter and then be cared for. Stevenson's anonymous care "requires life to become an indifferent value – that is, a regime in which it doesn't matter *who* you are, just that you stay alive" (original emphasis, ibid.:7), thereby emphasizing the health of the population over the health of the individual. Considering this analysis in the scope of the Mellon Football, players often find it difficult to believe that their well-being is being taken into consideration by those in power because the kind of care they are receiving is not individualized: it prioritizes the team over the individual players. Further, according to Matt's interpretation, he experienced even less care from certain administrators – as demonstrated by the fact that his birthday is incorrect – because

he was not on scholarship and was not being invested in monetarily in the same way as players who were recruited and on scholarship.

*****

However, even for a scholarship player, when someone graduates and is no longer recognized as a player, this care no longer exists. Bureaucratic care depends upon recognition of this subjectivity as a Mellon Football player. To bookend my conversation with Carter that began this chapter: in July 2018, after he completed his fourth playing season and decided to stay on for a fifth, I met with him again to discuss this decision. He told me that conversations with his mentors, particularly his father, helped persuade him to stay. "I know I'm not going to the NFL, so my dad told me that if this is going to be the last time I'll get to play football, I might as well continue. That made sense, so I have another year," he said. And while this statement made it seem as though his father's insistence was the determining factor, additionally, the fact that he suffered an injury just a few weeks into the 2017 season convinced him to stay around for one last, healthy year (this injury is further discussed in chapter 6).

I was not necessarily surprised by this decision. Though it had been a difficult journey, especially with his injury, football had been a part of Carter's life for so long that he wanted to maximize and capitalize on his opportunities to play it. He looked forward to suiting up in the Mellon uniform for one last season, before graduating with undergraduate and graduate degrees and (hopefully) starting a career on Wall Street. What was intriguing about the situation was Carter's introspection around the end of football, now that he had a concrete time frame in mind for when it would officially end.

"Well, come January [2019]," he told me, "my locker's getting cleaned out. There will be another #52. It's up to you to make sure you're good after." Carter was speaking to fact that he

would officially end his tenure as a member of the Mellon Football Team at the end of the upcoming season, a separation that would be marked by his locker being emptied out and passed on to the next player who would wear his jersey number. And there would always be someone there to take the number and play the position. He even had a funny anecdote to prove this point. A few weeks before, his girlfriend, Kayla, was stopped on a nearby college campus by another woman who noticed she had a lanyard with "Mellon Football #52" printed across it; the other woman had the same lanyard because her husband played football for Mellon and wore that number. Curious, and not yet jealous, the other woman asked Kayla why she had her husband's lanyard, but they quickly realized that her husband wore the number right before Carter did. This mix up, and the comment about the locker, proves that the team does not cease to exist when individual players graduate. Instead, players are constantly shifted around and replaced to ensure that enough players are present for the team to compete. Further, Carter's nod to his locker speaks to Matt's previously discussed idea about just being an 'X in the playbook.' Here, it is not the individual (Carter), but the category of person (wide receiver) that actually matters to the team.

In her essay to question "recognition, its linkages to care, and what these linkages imply" (Taylor 2008:314), medical anthropologist Janelle Taylor's work acts as a call to 'recognize' the various ways in which care is provided and received, perhaps outside of the boundaries of what is traditionally perceived as such. Problematizing the normative notion of "recognition," as this is central to questions she often receives about her mother's experience with dementia, Taylor considers how her mother, and other patients, are or are not "granted social and political recognition by others" (ibid.:314). Though Taylor acknowledges her mother's own unique ways of practicing and expressing care, however quirky they might be, integral to this argument is the

fact that others might not acknowledge these practices as care because they are based in the reciprocation of a mutually-recognizable care. By highlighting the various ways in which her mother has been socially abandoned by long-time friends, primarily due to her inability to reciprocate care in traditional manners (ibid.:319-320), Taylor interestingly draws attention to the centrality of reciprocation in normative expressions of recognition and care.

Taking this argument seriously and applying it to Carter's observation, one can conclude that bureaucratic care from Football stops when individuals are no longer recognized as football players because there is no reciprocity to the relationship. Since Football can no longer gain from the relationship - namely, labor that results in records, wins, and interaction with media - then players are left to their own devices. The strict time ordering, planned meals, required appearances, already-determined outfits, and concrete plans for the upcoming year abruptly stop. Sans the constant support, attention, and structuring, whether appreciated at the time or not, this is why, in Carter's estimation, "It's up to you to make sure you're good after."

Black Players and the "Team"

Football's various individualizing practices, that then influence how players are cared for, allows for an interesting paradox to arise between the individuals and the collective: individual players have to be maintained in order to produce for the team, but the actual individual doing so is interchangeable. This can lead to a tense relationship between the two, especially when the motivations for both do not align; it is not always true that what is best for the team is what is best for the players, and vice versa. But this creation of and reliance upon individuals should be expected, as it is integral to the modernist enterprise of both football and the larger American society it which it exists.

The debate about the Western individual self has a long history in anthropology, often from a comparative perspective to contrast the Western concept of personhood with how it is conceived in other parts of the world. Considering India (Dumont 1970, Robbins 1994), Melanesia (Strathern 1993), and South Africa (Comaroff & Comaroff 2001, Sökefeld 1999), these analyses are often conceptualized in opposition to the Western individual. Perhaps the most limiting description is provided by Clifford Geertz, as he argues that

> The Western conception of the person as a bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe; a dynamic center of awareness, emotion, judgment, and action organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastively both against other such wholes and against a social and natural background, is however incorrigible it may seem to us, a rather peculiar idea within the context of the world's cultures (1974:31).

According to Louis Dumont, who analyzes binaries that arise to separate traditional and modern societies, "traditional society, […] which know nothing, in short, of the individual, have basically a collective idea of man" (1970:9), while "[i]n modern society, on the contrary, the Human Being is regarded as the indivisible, 'elementary' man, both of a biological being and a thinking subject" (ibid.:20). Martin Sökefeld remarks that "the Western self is represented as an instance of the individual's providing it with boundedness, relative autonomy and independence, reflexivity, and the ability to pursue its own goals" (1999:418).

But across all of these descriptions, the Western individual is not racialized or gendered. This notion refers to a universalized, unmarked Western, or Euro-American, individual. Therefore, the utility of this trope is complicated for Black people. Cultural theorist Sylvia Wynter considers this often in her work, as she notes that "the West, over the last five hundred years, has brought the whole human species into its *hegemonic*, now purely secular (post-monotheistic, post-civic monohumanist, therefore, itself also transumptively liberal *monohumanist*) model of being *human*" (original emphasis; Wynter & McKittrick 2015:21).

According to this normalized version of being, "the incorporation of all forms of human being into a single homogenized descriptive statement that is based on the figure of the West's liberal monohumanist *Man*" (original emphasis; ibid.:23) is one that is singularly biocentric, of a particular socioeconomic positioning, and governed by normative beauty aesthetics. Despite its hegemonic representation, Wynter points out that movements in the 1960s, particularly, highlighted civil rights, women's rights, and gay and lesbian rights "to challenge Man's episteme, its truth, and therefore its biocentric deceptive statement" (ibid.:23). Appreciating this attempt to dismantle the single story (Adichie 2009) presented of this Western Man, Wynter further calls for recognition of "*being hybridly human"* (original emphasis; ibid.:27), a version of being human that is relative and multiple because then, "all of a sudden what you begin to recognize is the central role that our discursive *formations*, aesthetic fields, and systems of knowledge must play in the performative enactment of all such genres of being hybridity human" (original emphasis; ibid.:31). In all, this comes together with Wynter's assertion to consider 'human' not as a noun, but as a praxis that is not normatively conceived nor universally applicable.

In a similar vein, sociologist Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's notion of a racial grammar recognizes how a term or idea like 'human' or 'man,' which seems innocent enough, is in fact marked by meaning. According to his work, the West's prominent racial grammar entails the normalization of "the standards of white supremacy as the standards for all sorts of everyday transactions rendering domination almost invisible" (Bonilla-Silva 2012:174). Bonilla-Silva uses the term to account for the ways that visual media, news media, and biomedicine, among other institutions, are infused with normative whiteness, thereby rendering and reproducing "racial order as just the way things are" (ibid.:174). This grammar gives the impression of universal,

standard, ordered, and normative ways of behaving, speaking, and describing that actually stem from a racial ideology rooted in privileging whiteness.

Combining Wynter's analysis and Bonilla-Silva's term – and their challenges to the universalized and normalized West – comes in handy as I aim to adequately understand the lived experiences of the Black college football players I worked with. Specifically for my work, Wynter's ideas allows me to claim that the idea of a Western individual is coded as depending upon Euro-American standards of whiteness. This normative Man is autonomous, individual, rational, biocentric, bourgeois, and morally acts in a way that is recognizable by those who surround him. Here, I have attempted to show the ways that this individual Man is made for and through football, primarily for the benefit of the overall team. And when incorporating Bonilla-Silva's terms to think about the notion of the 'team,' it is unsurprising how the construct is also coded as depending upon Euro-American standards of whiteness. This is a notion that is very much instituted and encouraged by those in positions of power and it is reinforced by the normative idea of teamwork and cooperation so built into sports at every level. But here it is based upon notions of order and rationality that privilege whiteness, like the ways that players are encouraged to dress and maintain their appearance, the players that are allowed to talk to the media and travel on behalf of the program, based on the varieties of English they speak, and the extracurricular activities that are seen as acceptable, compared to the ones that are not. Because this is a top-down approach, the team structures and disciplines players in a way that will reflect positively upon the overall football program, and privileges those who are able to most successfully conform.

Given the privileging of whiteness that is inherent in the Euro-American insistence on the autonomous individual, and the fact that football players on a team are individualized through

the various surveilling and disciplining practices, these are narratives that mark Blackness as transgressive. Thus, the Black football players I worked with do not fit into this narrative because of their racialized experiences.

To further explicate this specific relationship between Black players and their 'white' teams, universities, larger social worlds, consider scholar Bryant Keith Alexander's work on performing Black masculinity in the university, an idea that fits well with Wynter's assertion of human as praxis. In his description of the ways that individual identities are performative, relational, and routined, Alexander posits that

> The university is often constructed as the ivory tower. Not just a space set apart from the surrounding community hovering above as a site of the intellectual elite, but as an institution presumed to be sheltered from the practicalities of everyday life. This is especially the case when issues of race and class are introduced into the equation of education, access, and community. In particular, the university becomes a contested terrain where Black folk (and other traditionally marginalized "others") must negotiate competing constructions of identity (2006:37).

Not only do Black college football players have to deal with this dynamic, as indexed by the 'student' of their 'student-athlete' moniker, but as a total, organizing institution, the football team does the same for them. Giving the impression that all differences are flattened, and that everyone on a team is the same through the use of this universalizing term, this overshadows the true inequalities and differences that do arise. How much one plays, one's preparation for this high-level of competition from high school, how individual players might relate to the ordering tactics of the football administration, and the true individuality that is inherent in these practices are all aspects of football that create differences and require players to relate to the team and to each other in different ways. And often, the differences in this experience do relate to one's racialized experience.

Conclusion

Overall, this chapter has demonstrated that American football is a standardized space that, ideally, disciplines and trains bodies, serves as a vehicle in the transmission of cultural values, and mirrors a modernist preoccupation with order. Division I college football programs strictly order, control, discipline, and surveil players' bodies and behaviors, apparent in the ways that primarily white, male football coaches and administrators order and organize players' time tables, space and place, dress, and food and nutrition through surveillance and disciplining. Overall, this is done to train and produce docile bodies that can effectively perform, produce, and labor on the football field and to imagine and package individual bodies that can come together on game day.

As discussed throughout the chapter, the narrative of the "team," the most recognizable way that all of this happens, is institutionalized and reinforced by football administrators and coaches. This is deliberately done for the purpose of creating a pseudo family dynamic amongst those who are affiliated with Football that attempts to encourage both on the field and off the field solidarity and trust. It is a normalized notion of community in sport that is very easily recognized. However, the Black players I worked with were not convinced. Not only does this notion individualize players more than it brings them together, but it also encourages a bureaucratic form of care that is no substitute for the care that is received from biological, social, and fictive kin relations. In short, the language of family and kinship, through narratives like the "team" and #MELLONCREW, is not enough to sway players to completely buy into this notion.

Explicitly in chapter 4 and indirectly in chapters 5 and 6, I explain fully how this tension comes to light in the lived experiences of Black college football players. Because they belong to a community that is historically based in connection, unity, social kinship, and collaboration,

Black players tend to relate to the team and to its paradoxically created autonomous individuals in ways that differ from their white counterparts who also play the sport.

Khalan Laborn Talks to a Reporter

As I sat at lunch with John and Isaiah, the day after the first round of the 2018 NFL Draft aired on television, of course, they were making fun of each other. As Isaiah teased John for a recorded interview he had given a couple years before and warned that he would pull up the video in the archives to prove him wrong, he did not hesitate. "You can pull it up if you want to. I lied to the camera all the time," John laughed. "I'd run out of things to say."

He detailed how he chose to answer a question the year before during bowl season, essentially choosing the basketball team at a rival university over the team at Mellon. He then described a journalist who tried to get him to talk bad about the quarterback at a visiting university, but he refused to and just talked about something else. Really, John told us how he liked to mess around with journalists because he got bored with all the questions they asked.

"You could start saying some reckless stuff," Isaiah said to John, knowing the latter was interviewed frequently because of his high status position on the team. But this reminded him of something.

"Yo, [our position] coach showed us an interview of a running back from Florida State, bruh," Isaiah said excitedly, referencing Khalan Laborn's post spring game interview.[16] "I don't know what his name is but he's good and they were talkin about their spring game. They were askin him about how he felt because he had a few good runs. And then he goes, 'Yeah, you know, one of them plays, I just saw that hole wide-ass open hole and I just took that bih. I took it to the house'."

John and I both laughed at the other player's comments, recognizing how inappropriate they likely were for a televised interview. Not only did he curse, something that players are

[16] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SwNNN29X6QU

heavily advised against doing when dealing with the media, but he was also speaking in Black English.

"After showing us the clip, coach said, 'If any of y'all say something like that, I'll kill you'," Isaiah said.

John agreed that his position coach would respond the same way. "We talk about stuff in the linebacker room," he stated. "Those words can get in your mouth, but you translate it before you say it out loud."

Between laughs, I said, "It could've been a lot worse, though." Isaiah and John both agreed, and we all enjoyed joking around for a few minutes, imagining other comments and scenarios that would've been much less desirable for someone who was speaking on behalf of such a well known football program.

"Half of white America's not gonna know what 'bih' is," John concluded, "so its aight! A select few of us are gonna know. Like I know what he meant, but do you?"

CHAPTER 4

"I DO IT FOR THEM": BONDS OF BROTHERHOOD

I have established how the team is an inadequate tool for Black players to think through community in college football because this notion actually individualizes players and is based upon a form of sociality that privileges whiteness. Now, this chapter explores the social kin, or football brotherhood, that Black college players create through meaningfully enacted everyday activities with their sporting peers. I posit that this form of relatedness is established originally through participation in football, specifically during training camp, but develops on its own, and through the active participation of the players themselves, to transcend the sporting activity itself. Outside of football, this relatedness becomes significant for Black players through everyday activities performed alongside one another, such as eating meals and living together, working out, attending classes and studying, and partying, playing video games, and joking around. Then, like brothers do, they develop a concern for and trust amongst each other outside of the football space. Therefore, despite the ordered notion of the team encouraged by the administration and staff, Black players find their own ways to create, navigate, and maintain meaningful kinship relationships.

Jordyn and Andre, Two Mellon Seniors

Coach Smith, a seasoned assistant coach at Mellon University and my main contact on the football staff, had been telling me for months that I needed to talk to Jordyn. In his fifth year and a 2017 team captain, it was obvious that the time Jordyn had invested with the team gained him respect from his teammates and his coaches. It was one of the first things I noticed when sitting in the position meeting room before practice. He sat in the back of the room, rarely

speaking up or answering Coach Smith's questions, but he always garnered the attention of his teammates when he spoke.

I managed to schedule an interview with Jordyn on a Monday morning in early October 2017, the only day of the week during the season when football activities are not scheduled. You would not know it, though, since we met on the main floor of the Cobb Football Center and he was dressed in team-issued clothing: a t-shirt, shorts, and sneakers, all boasting team colors and the Mellon logo.

Jordyn, a poised but rather reserved cornerback with aspirations for the NFL, comes from a tight-knit family that travels to every home game. His parents and three siblings usually drive down the day of the game and I noticed that they sit in the same section each Saturday. Jordyn provided several insightful reflections about his time as a football player during this initial interview. Inflected by his lengthy experience on the Mellon team, he eloquently described the daily stresses of playing college football, the internal and external pressure placed on players to succeed and win, and the equally important mental challenges that rival the physical challenges that come from play.

"If you don't love it, you will hate it," he said when describing his participation in the sport, mentioning that his love for it is how he is able to manage the injuries, pressure, commercialism, failures, and critiques. This statement, though, made me question if anyone could actually love everything that comes with playing football in college. As we were wrapping up the interview, he closed with a suggestion: "Oh, you should talk to Andre. He's really good at football, but he doesn't like it at all."

I thought this disinterest was an odd paradox for someone involved in the sport at such a competitive level, given how much time and effort he must commit to it. Fortunately, I was able

to meet up with Andre at a coffee shop on campus the very next day; I found out later that he was actually at the Cobb, but did not want to meet there. Right on time, I was approached by a clean shaven young man sporting glasses, a low haircut, and a huge smile, and I was a bit thrown when he arrived dressed almost the complete opposite of Jordyn; no team-issued gear in sight. In a green and white striped collared shirt, black dress pants, black dress shoes, and burgundy socks, I was immediately struck by the realization that he did not dress like a football player. "Maybe he just has some kind of interview or something today," I thought to myself.

Andre came right over and sat at my table, explaining along the way that he had seen me around a couple practices, but did not know what I was doing there. He said he was excited I emailed because Jordyn told him he could tell me what he *really* thought about football. When conducting these semi-structured interviews, something I always did when first meeting a player because it established a connection before I began to spend time with them in their daily lives, I sometimes had a difficult time getting players to talk openly about their lives. This always came later, after a few interactions, once they were more comfortable with my presence and trusted my research intentions. But that was not the case with Andre.

For almost two hours, I spoke to Andre, learning about his time at Mellon, his life at home, and his plans post-graduation; the main reason this initial interview ended was because he had to leave to check-in at the team dinner. A senior Theater Studies major from the Midwest, he originally started playing football at his father's insistence. He actually started out as a wrestler, but switched sports in middle school when he became uninterested in wrestling, but his father still wanted him involved in a physical sport. Andre chose to play safety, an important position on the team because these players act as the last defense against a potential touchdown, and that is the position he was recruited to play in college. But he also was a dedicated member of his

high school's track team. "Track got me away from football, which was fun," he remarked with a smile on his face, as this reference gave him a brief moment to reminiscent on a simpler sporting life. Since his mom was very committed to his academics, he chose to attend Mellon and play football not because of the team, but because of the university's academic reputation, its location seven hours from home, and the team's lackluster performance. He reasoned that if he went to a school with just an okay football team, being a player would not be as strenuous and would be less stressful.

It was through a teammate that he discovered Theater Studies, though he was still surprised by how much he loved the major and his career prospects as an actor. "If someone would've told me this would be my major, I would've said 'you trippin, trippin for real,'" he laughed, acknowledging the unexpected choice. Despite his interest and commitment to the major, football has definitely interfered. He believed he was experiencing the "watered down" version of Theater Studies because of his membership on the team, given the scheduling, season traveling, and summer time commitments made it difficult to take advantage of summer internships and student-led productions. "I'm excited for my future post-season," he remarked, before going into detail about his experiences with football.

One of the reasons his father insisted he participate in a sport like football is because of his background in the army. Because of how his father would coach him and his brother when they were younger, Andre described that his time with the Mellon coaches has been familiar, as his father was also very disciplined and ordered in the ways he approached the sport. However, once Andre recognized his own skills on the field, he realized that football could be used as a means to gain a decent education. "I think the pros outweigh the cons," he said, because the financial burden faced by other college students is not there for scholarship players. "I can deal

with it because I know my college is paid for, but I'm trying to transition out of this football persona. Now, I'm Andre, who plays on the football team," he stated. He preferred this designation over being known as 'a football player named Andre,' which helped explain why he was dressed the way he was (and how he was every other time I saw him off the field).

If, as a reader, you realize that I have introduced Andre's participation and interest in academics before his participation and interest in football, you have picked up on something I also noticed. Andre spent the first half of our time together detailing his passion for Theater Studies and excitement to be a "regular student" once the season ended, and the second half complaining about playing football while recognizing the opportunities it had afforded him. As Ochs and Capps (1996) note, the order in which a narrative is delivered matters, so remembering Jordyn's comment about how one would hate the sport if he did not love it, and noting Andre's excitement to be a 'regular student,' even down to how he chose to dress, I eventually asked Andre outright why he even plays.

He responded, "I don't like football, but I don't half ass anything." Recognizing football is a team sport, he explained how his role as a small part in the whole is important to the overall success of the team. "When safeties mess up, we usually get scored on because we missed a stop. Our mistakes affect the whole team," he reasoned. "If you do your job, it'll help everyone else. I know some of my teammates actually want the NFL and if I do my job, that'll help them. So I give 100% and I do it for them. How I do on the field won't change how I feel about myself or about football, but I do feel bad for my teammates if I don't perform."

Andre did not use the language here, but on other occasions, he referred to his teammates, his Black teammates, as his brothers. As discussed in the previous chapter, players have a particular relationship to the team, primarily because this community is integral to their

identification as football players, the disciplining and ordering that results from participation in the sport at this competitive level, and how one's time in college is organized and experienced. Again, these factors are felt by all players, and Black players certainly accept dimensions of this approach, as, arguably, being socialized into a team is imperative to the fundamentals of football. It is not an individual sport like tennis or golf, so players, Black or otherwise, must on some level buy in to the idea of the team. However, Black players, specifically, relate to the team construct differently. When dealing with a group that makes up about half of the entire team, one must consider their potentially unique ways of relating to the program, their teammates, and to each other, within this larger community. It is this tension that leads me to ask how and why Black players make the move from teammates to brothers. Andre's unselfish expression of care for certain teammates, through a strenuous activity he is no longer invested in, encouraged a deeper investigation into the meaningful relationships that develop between Black players.

Becoming Brothers

I was running behind. I had not yet gotten used to how far I had to walk from the parking garage to the football field, so I finally found a parking spot around the same time that I should have already been on the field for practice and the scrimmage. I had to hustle once leaving my car because I did not want to miss much of the game, but it was mid-August 2017 in humid North Carolina. It did not matter that I was dressed in jean shorts and a white t-shirt – an outfit I thought was appropriate for the heat – because I was already sweating a few minutes into my walk. "I can't believe they're playing in this," I thought to myself, as I begrudgingly realized it would still take me about ten minutes to get to the field. But if I am being honest, this comment was more about me than about the players. They were already 11 days into fall training camp, so having a scrimmage planned for Friday evening at 6:00 pm was probably better than the mid-day

practices they had already endured. But this was one of the only planned events during camp that I had access to. Thus, not only was it the first time during fieldwork that I was dealing with football activities in the heat, but I also had to figure out how to make the best of the uncomfortable situation.

I made it to the Cobb right at 6:00 pm, but I still had to meet up with one of the staff members before I could go out to the field. Because I was running behind and did not arrive on the field before the team, I had to be escorted there. I had been instructed to meet my guide on the 1st floor of the building, where the weight room, locker room, training room, and tunnel are located, so I made my way through the main floor of the facility to the elevator to go down two floors. As I exited the elevator and turned the corner, I was met by Jake, a middle-aged white man with a distinctly Mississippian drawl, near the tunnel that would lead us down to the playing field.

Jake made small talk as we walked down the tunnel, a few straggling players in uniform running past us to make their way to the field. He asked about my summer and about when I had moved to town. Knowing my connection to the University of Virginia, he asked me about the upcoming white supremacist rally scheduled in Charlottesville. By the time we made it onto the field and were walking around to the stands, he was making an appropriate comparison, reminiscing about his time as an undergraduate at the University of Mississippi, affectionately known as Ole Miss, describing how fans used to bring Confederate flags to games until the university issued a 'stick ban' as a political move to limit the number of flags at games.

It would take until after the football season began in late-August for me to be designated a researcher. On this day early in my fieldwork, I had been dubbed just an interested fan, so I was sequestered to the stands, instead of the field, where other spectators were seated. From my

perch, I recognized that the 90 minutes of this practice game, essentially a fake game that mimics the real (Baudrillard 1994[1981]), had all the trappings of the real deal. A whistle blew at 6:30 pm sharp to signal the end of the time allotted for stretching and the beginning of the scrimmage. Rather than being played on the practice field, it took place on the playing field that will be used on Saturdays in the fall. To match, though not wearing their actual game jerseys, the players' practice jerseys were stretched over the actual pads that will be used and were worn alongside their playing helmets, representing to each other that hits are coming and should be expected during this form of play. Though paling in comparison to the turn out that would come out to support the team during the season, the few fans in the stands, largely family members of coaches, did generate some excitement and give a taste of the kind of spectator involvement that was to come. The various categories of person required to power the football machine – players, coaches, recruiters, referees, trainers and nutritionists – were all in attendance, fulfilling their responsibilities under the gaze of the stadium's bright lights.

Perhaps more important than the set up was that this pretend game represented a condensed form of, what I came to learn, represented the relationships between players and coaches that develop during training camp. Defensive and offensive players on the same team wearing different colored practice jerseys and battling each other, coaches yelling at and reprimanding their players for mistakes made, and players on each side of the ball congratulating and supporting their own teammates. The season had not even started yet, and players were already beginning to organize and align themselves in ways that were then expressed off-field.

Once football is a serious enough activity for its players, training camp becomes part of their sporting vernacular. When playing in high school, camp is often scheduled for a couple weeks before the season starts. In the NFL, around 90 members of the squad generally report to

camp two weeks before preseason play begins and six weeks before the start of the actual season, partially to whittle the teammates down to a 53-man roster. For college teams, camp usually lasts three to four weeks, in July and August, sometimes overlapping with the end of summer courses and the beginning of fall courses.

Monday, July 31, 2017 - Practice #1	
Attend all classes (Done by 4:30PM)	
4:40AM	Wake-up Teamworks Alert
5:00AM - 5:45AM	Pre-Practice meal at Cobb Center - Mandatory - Check-in by 5:15AM
5:00AM - 6:05AM	Treatment and Taping
6:15AM - 6:25AM	Special Teams Meetings
6:25AM - 7:05AM	Individual Meetings
7:20AM	Practice #1 with helmets
9:05AM	Practice 88 - 9:30AM class change
9:30AM	Attend classes as scheduled
	Breakfast at Cobb Center - Mandatory
12:00PM - 1:30PM	Lunch at Cobb Center - Mandatory
	Get all school work completed during the day
1:30PM	Football Staff Meeting
4:00PM - 5:00PM	Freshmen Meetings
5:30PM - 6:25PM	Dinner at Cobb Center - Mandatory - Check-in by 5:45PM
6:30PM - 6:50PM	Special Teams Meeting
6:50PM - 8:00PM	Individual Meetings (Review)
8:15PM	Walk-Thru at Field House (Review & Install)
9:15PM	Snack available on Cobb 1st floor
10:00PM	Lights out - Bed check Teamworks Check-in

Figure 5: One day of the 2017 training camp schedule. Reproduced by Tracie Canada.

For the 2017 season, camp for the Mellon University Football Team ran from Sunday, July 30 to Sunday, August 27. This 29-day period officially consisted of 23 practice days, two lifting and meeting days, and three mandatory off days. Because of the strict scheduling and relative secrecy surrounding it, the only football related activities I was able to witness during training camp were this scrimmage and one practice. But even with the little I was able to personally observe, I quickly realized it is a daunting time of year because of the extensive talk

around and about it that begins to consume players in late-spring. Without any prompting, camp was referenced at some point by every player I interacted with.

In Chapter 3, I briefly described the importance of training camp in relation to the ordering and disciplining of the team. However, here I will explain how camp is much more important to the ways that relationships develop between individual players. It is during this time of the season that teammates become brothers, which then prompts interactions and relationships that are no longer spatially or temporally bound to just football spaces and membership on the football team.

Camp was consistently described as somewhat of a necessary evil, a time of year that was difficult to enjoy, but was imperative to the playing season. Players described how, during the 29-day period, their car and apartment keys would be taken away, they would be moved into a hotel in town, and chartered buses would take them back and forth between the hotel and the Cobb every day. An ambiguous period during which "entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremony" (Turner 1991[1969]:95), all potential distractions were removed by football staff to ensure that the appropriate attention was given to learning the playbook, watching film, running practice drills, and conditioning the body in preparation for the playing season.

Because of how physically active the players were for this extended period of time, with intense practices and workouts almost every day, it is an injury prone time of year and can be particularly dangerous (van Gennep 1960[1909]:13). "Football is getting fun, but last year wasn't," Trae, a receiver, once told me, as he reminisced of how difficult his first summer, camp, and season were. He suffered a collarbone injury that summer and then was redshirted for the season, both of which negatively colored his first experiences on a college team. Leading up to

his second camp, he was undergoing treatment on his hamstring to make sure his condition did not worsen. Braxton, a linebacker, also suffered a hamstring injury, a deep tear near the bone, during his last camp. His injury required a painful stem cell procedure,[17] which caused him to miss most of the season.

Despite the physicality of camp, some described it as more mentally taxing than physically straining, not only from having to learn all the plays for the upcoming season, but also because of the amount of time spent in the football center. "Being at the Cobb from 6:00 am to 9:00 pm will have you questioning if you really even like this sport," explained John, an All-American linebacker. Isaiah, a quarterback, added that "the Cobb is like a black hole" during camp because being there so much alters one's sense of and relation to time. Consider the schedule in Figure 5. The days during camp were long and monotonous and were not completely booked with football activities, so there was down time. But since they could not leave the Cobb, they often got bored and tried to come up with ways to occupy their time. "I'm not excited for [camp], but I am ready for it," Charlie told me a few weeks before camp 2018, before describing the activities he and his friends were already planning to ward off boredom. He would be bringing *Risk*, a time consuming board game, and Braxton was working on securing small nets to set up in the locker room so they could play soccer.

Additionally, players described how off the field, there are traditions in place, specifically for freshman and transfers, that are both time consuming and relatively entertaining. For example, every day during the dinner that is provided by the football staff and mandatory for players, the guys would beat on the tables and a freshman or transfer had to stand and sing an entire song of his choosing. Also, about a week before camp ends, this same group of new

[17] It is likely that this procedure is was platelet rich plasma therapy (PRP), but interestingly, Braxton was never told what it is officially called.

students puts on a talent show for the whole team and all the coaches, performing whatever they want. The new players might take this seriously, or they might goof off through it, but these actions are meant to introduce the new players to the team in a unique way, showing a bit of their personalities, interests, and passions. A transfer student once told me that since he arrived on campus too late in the summer to participate in camp the first year he transferred, he did not have the experience of camp to bond with players from his class year. This claim emphasizes the importance of these seemingly silly activities in fostering relationships between players.

Considering the intensity that comes from the combination of conditioning and practices, injuries, heat, social separation, and boredom, Alexander's insightful comments on training camp are most representative of its true purpose. During my first meeting with the linebacker in summer 2016, Alexander explained that camp is "one of the best worst times of your life." It can be tough, but "we fall back on each other when coaches are hard on us." In his opinion, camp fosters the foundation of the team, as freshman "don't feel like members of the family until their first camp." Camp is "the time for freshman to prove themselves" and to "earn their membership on the team," he said. This statement mirrors John's language that camp introduces freshman to the rest of the team in a way that is dependent upon their playing persona: "put those pads and helmet on and that'll really tell you how a person is."

Upperclassman and freshman alike recognize the importance of camp to the relationship between the individual player and the other members of the team. And because of this, I posit the purpose of training camp is two-fold: first, as new members to the team, each neophyte, whether freshman or transfer, "must be a *tabula rasa*, a blank state, on which is inscribed the knowledge and wisdom of the group, in those respects that pertain to the new status" (Turner 1991[1969]:103). A liminal stage, training camp teaches newcomers the appropriate tools to

become part of the Mellon football team. These players are expected to learn the particulars of the college's and team's unique systems, and are tasked with studying the playbook, learning the campus, and learning how to balance their indexed identities, all in preparation for the upcoming football season. As the student-athletes develop their skills and remain members on the team, they move through the ranks and become more senior players, likely taking on the responsibility of teaching and mentoring the younger players as they come in. In short, once they have completed the liminal phase of camp, teammates are then expected to behave in particular ways, according to the norms and regulations silently enforced by the football administration (Turner 1991[1969]:95).

Second, as recognized by Alexander through his observation that freshman become members of the family during camp, this period encourages the solidification of kin relations amongst men who are not biologically related because of their shared experience of this intense and taxing initiation process. Camp is more than just about becoming a member of the team. While individual players become team members through activities that are required by the football administration, teammates become brothers through the ritualized training camp. The journey to brotherhood is a rite of passage, as players transition from being individual young men to entering the football brotherhood.

Fraternal Organizations and Social Kinship

While the anthropology of sport is a domain where athletes themselves are not central to the literature, there are several ethnographic works that deal with hypermasculinity in sport, given sport is often conceptualized as a male-dominated space. Since anthropologist Clifford Geertz's famed analysis of the Balinese cockfight (1973), scholars have considered the ways in which masculinity and patriarchal norms come onto the field of play in sports like boxing

(Wacquant 2004; Woodward 2006), windsurfing (Wheaton 2002), golf (Starn 2011), and Basque pelota (González-Abrisketa 2013), to name a few. And then there are works like anthropologist Gabby Yearwood's (2018) piece detailing structural racism in college sport, where masculinity is not the main concern, but what is argued is only possible through the lens of male bodies that seek a certain masculine power. However, what seems to be missing from this narrative is a thorough discussion of the relationships that form through male bonding in sport, possibly moving beyond friendships and teammate relations to social kinship and relatedness.

The process by which football players become brothers and stay brothers is unique, but it is not distinctive, as there are other male-dominated collectives that use this language and this ideology to describe the relationships that arise between members. Perhaps the most closely related grouping is that of fraternities. After all, "football is like a fraternity, but better," an assistant coach once told me, referencing the everydayness of shared college experiences that occur in both.

Collegiate fraternal organizations were first introduced in 1776 with the formation of Phi Beta Kappa at the College of William and Mary. Though a literary society, Phi Beta Kappa also sponsored social activities, thereby establishing it as the prototype of the college fraternity. Several years later, in 1812, Kappa Alpha was established at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, and with these first two fraternities, the fraternity movement was solidified by the late 1820s, as other organizations and local chapters were established. Craig L. Torbenson (2005) explains that the spread of these male gendered Greek-letter social organizations to colleges across the country in the early 19th century happened quickly, but it was riddled with tensions. This was partially due to the fact that national expansion made it clear that membership in these older fraternities was limited to "white, male, Protestant students to ensure a homogeneous group

of individuals of like mind, religion, and race" (Torbenson 2005:53). However, this was occurring during a time when women and ethnic minorities were entering colleges and creating their own associations. Therefore, the rise of Black Greek-letter organizations (BGLOs) is historically situated against the backdrop of the rising presence of white fraternities.

The first nationally recognized Black fraternity, Alpha Phi Alpha, was established at Cornell University in 1906. It would come to be known as the first of nine organizations, but five fraternities, that make up the present-day National Pan Hellenic Council (NPHC), the umbrella organization for Black national fraternities and sororities that was founded in 1929. It has been argued that these organizations, the first few founded at predominantly white institutions, acted as supportive networks for Black students dealing with discrimination and racism at their home institutions, and in the world beyond them. Since "Greek letter societies were important spaces where elite, white, masculine identities were constructed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries" (Wilkie 2010:16), BGLOs developed tangentially in order to provide the same to Black students.

Contemporary research and ethnographies of the collegiate Greek system have not been kind, particularly works that tackle the initiation rites of college fraternities (Leemon 1972; Rhoads 1995; Sanday 1990; Wilkie 2010). However, these works do not take into account the racialized dynamics of their arguments, as they primarily focus on the ways that fraternities exclude, oppress, and marginalize women, rather than also considering that the fraternities they study are predominately white. When positioning their work with their respective fraternities, race is not usually mentioned, thereby defaulting their analysis and observations to white organizations. But other scholars have argued that Black and white Greek-letter organizations *are* different. Tyra Black and colleagues (2005) address this tension in their study of the Greek

system, the structural differences between these fraternities, and the ways that on-campus segregation and racism affects them. And to counter the narrative of sexist and racist behavior that seems to follow white fraternities, scholars like Shaun Harper and Frank Harris III (2006) acknowledge that membership in one of the five Black fraternities present on college campus across the country positively impacts identity development while in college.

Despite their differences, what is consistent across works about the Greek system is an understanding of the importance of brotherhood, through whatever means the organization chooses to establish it. With or without an initiation process, "structural mechanisms exist to socialize recruits to the values, attitudes, and beliefs of the organization" (Rhoads 1995:320), thereby working to downplay the individual and promote collectivity and loyalty (Black et. al 2005:418). Though this is usually referred to as 'rushing' for white fraternities, with BGLOs, this is done through pledging. A semisecret and illegal ritual process, pledging "stands alone as the ritual perceived by many fraternity men as mandatory" and "is the only rite in fraternities that does not ask for, but demands, sacrifice" (Jones 2004:48). This initiation process is seen as central to one's membership in the fraternal brotherhood.

While the first Black Greek-lettered organization was officially founded 1906, this is not the first attempt at creating a Black fraternal organization; historical fraternal organizations like the Masons must be taken into account. Fraternal organizations, particularly Freemasons, acted as sites of gender and class identity construction for the men involved (Clawson 1989; Walker 2008), with a diasporic consciousness also important to the relationships that formed internationally (Summers 2003). European Freemasonry was first organized in the early eighteenth century in London by those skilled and trained as masons, with the creation of the first Grand Lodge occurring in 1717. Freemasonry crossed the Atlantic by 1733, with the

organization of the first lodge in North America in Boston. This American form of Freemasonry provided a space for "men of the Anglo-American world to imagine themselves as brothers, citizens, and cosmopolitans" through an organization that "fused an ecumenical Christianity with values of universalism, brotherhood, and mutual support" (Hinks & Kantrowitz 2013:2). However, these values and ideals extended only to certain members of colonial society, as Black men, women, and members of immigrant groups were excluded.[18]

It was not until March 1775 that the first people of African descent were initiated into the Freemasonry – headed by the efforts of Prince Hall, a formally enslaved leatherworker. The Prince Hall Masons, as they would be known, received a charter in 1787 from the British to establish African Lodge #459, but even then, they were still largely ignored and delegitimized by white American Freemasonry. In spite of this lack of formal recognition, Prince Hall Freemasonry spread rapidly across the United States after the establishment of the African Grand Lodge and traversed national boundaries, gaining a presence in the Caribbean and in western Africa by the 1820s.

While "fraternalism was one of the most widely available and persistently used forms of collective organization in European and American history from the Middle Ages onward" (Clawson 1989:13), a focus on African American Freemasonry calls attention to the "radically heterogeneous nature of the associational terrain of the United States" (Walker 2008:41). Prince Hall Masonic orders mirrored and paralleled those of European American Freemason orders, with an ethos of production and artisanship at the center of this orientation of fraternalism, "an identifiable social and cultural form" defined in terms of "'corporate' idiom, ritual, proprietorship, and masculinity" (Clawson 1989:4). These networks of racially-segregated men

[18] Given this foundation, it's also no surprise that two of the founding members of Phi Beta Kappa were Masons.

would establish local, national, and transnational bonds with one another, thereby creating collective identities, and would similarly model how their lodges were organized, how members were initiated, and the ways that relationships were fostered amongst themselves. Mutual aid, ritualism, brotherhood, respectability, and unity were key to the ways that all fraternal organizations positioned themselves.

However, because Prince Hall Masons were Black men, they were simultaneously engaging in what Corey D. B. Walker defines as 'rituals of race,' activities that functioned "in forms similar to their European American Freemason counterparts," but encouraged African American masons to engage as "participants and ritualistic in the larger production of a new racialized identity" (2008:47). Martin Summers (2003) also acknowledges this through an intersectional understanding of the gendered, racialized, and classed subjectivity that is wrapped up in Prince Hall Freemason membership, through an analysis of the correspondence and fraternal and transnational relationship between two Freemasons, one Ghanaian and one New Yorker. The point here is that despite the similarities that might have arisen between the European American Freemasons and the African American Freemasons, there was an inherently different process undergirding the latter, given the importance of their racialized identities against the backdrop of anti-black racism in America and colonialism in Africa.

Theda Skocpol and colleagues recognize that "the very existence of these African American federations […] represented a demand for self-respect and equal treatment - and a challenge to the hypocrisy of white Americans" (2006:11). Similarly, Walker (2008) notes that Prince Hall Masons were positioned as transgressive fraternal orders that were working both against and alongside the norms provided by the European American Masons, all while attempting to gain recognition for the legitimacy of Black masculinity (190). Having to deal with

anti-Black racism did affect these Black fraternal orders, as they often had "a more missionary tone, a greater emphasis on collective purpose, and a shift in the perceived means and ends of charitable work" (Skocpol et. al 2006:130). The Prince Hall Freemasons remained marginal for decades, not acknowledged as "regular" Freemasons by the United Grand Lodge of England until 1996.

Acknowledging the divide between European American Freemasonry and African American Freemasonry, Steven C. Bullock still posits that masonry in America

> defined itself as a fictive family, as a fraternity held together by brotherly love – a conception reinforcing and reinforced by the ideals of benevolence and sociability. Masonic fraternity gave emotional weight to enlightened social relations by asserting their similarity to the widespread, seemingly natural experience of the family. Members were knit together by the same permanent bonds of affection and responsibility as actual kin, even during a period of intense political and religious disagreements. Masonry's fraternal metaphor also suggested that the group was held together, not by authority or coercion, but by social affections among relative equals (1996:39).

These affective ties that developed between members helped to distinguish Masons from others, providing for social cohesion amongst themselves and social exclusion from non-Masons. This affect, at the center of fraternal bonds for both the Black Masonic brothers and for Black fraternity brothers who are modeled after them, is the fundamental principle on which these social kin relationships work. And then as "brothers used their fraternity to pioneer a new romantic vision of the self, an internal identity based on the heart and expressed through emotional outpourings rather than through controlled and polished publish self- presentation" (Bullock 1996:4), a "fraternally *defined* sense of self" (Sanday 1990:175) developed within the men who belong to the organization. These men not only became brothers – language and imagery that signaled to a particular morality invoked by family relations – but further, their subjectivity then became tied to their identification as members of this community, rather than as just disjointed individuals.

*****

Still now, membership in a fraternity is considered "an attractive possibility" (Sanday 1990:174) for many college-aged men upon entering the university, as fraternities are known to offer access to women, networks, prestige, privilege, and social capital. However, when I asked Mellon players if they were interested in pledging one of the three Black fraternities on their campus, not much interest was shown in these Greek organizations.[19] In fact, only five of Mellon's Black football players belonged to these organizations and each joined during my fieldwork year. Charlie, a defensive lineman that I spent a lot of time with, was one of the five.

One evening over dinner, I asked Trae, a rising sophomore at the time, if he wanted to pledge a fraternity. He told me he promised his grandmother, a woman who helped raise him, he would not pledge, as she was worried about the stereotypical horror stories she has heard about the pledging process.[20] "Besides," he added after telling me he was okay with the agreement, "I got my brotherhood with football." As if to prove this point, he brought up his roommate. "Rock's my little big brother: I'm older than him but he's bigger than me," he said with a chuckle. Using an appropriate nickname to describe the solidly-built offensive lineman who *does* tower over him, Trae signaled the importance of the football brotherhood. Referring to someone he had met not even a year before this conversation as his brother, Trae acknowledged that all they experienced in their year together – as roommates, as classmates, as teammates, as Black football players – had established a kin-like relationship that would likely extend beyond their time in college.

[19] At Mellon University, 37.6% of the undergraduate population belongs to a Greek Letter Organization, and only 2.1% of this group belongs to a Black Greek Letter Organization. Interestingly, this affiliation did affect football teammates, as membership in a fraternity on this campus created factions within the football brotherhood. Representatives of different fraternities would make fun of each other for their particular affiliation, but they would always come together on the field as a team during game time.

[20] For reference, consider the 2018 hazing death at UC Riverside: https://www.vibe.com/2018/09/alpha-phi-alpha-chapter-hazing-death-california/

The ritualized initiation during football camp mimics the fraternal ritual that occurs in Freemasonry and in Greek organizations. No matter the organization, it is their particular rituals that initially create brotherhood through these collective symbolic acts (Clawson 1989; Geertz 1973), often initiation ceremonies like pledging or rushing for fraternities, which only occurs once (Jones 2004), or training camp, which occurs at the beginning of every football season. And like other fraternal organizations, establishing a particular kind of masculinity through these rituals does occur.

However, note that Prince Hall Masons and Black Greek Letter Fraternities arose as a response to their white counterparts that purposely excluded the membership and participation of Black men. In the way that Black Masonic brothers and Black fraternity brothers materialized as a response to fraternal orders that were founded upon principles of *white*, elite masculinity, I posit that the brotherhood that develops amongst Black players is the way in which these particular players respond to the relationships that arise between teammates and is encouraged and nurtured by football administration. Here, the idea is that Black players are challenging the idealistic team narrative that claims to be postracial by recognizing and appreciating their differences, though not inferiority, to their white teammates, to foster a football brotherhood. Similar to the "resistant masculinity" rooted in slavery that appeared as a response against Euro-American white norms (Hine & Jenkins 1999), this brotherhood is racialized and forms as a response against team norms.

While scholars like Susan McKinnon (2016), Charis Thompson (2001), and Kath Weston (1991) outline that there are multiple ways that kinship can be chosen, materialized, and essentialized, and Janet Carsten (1995, 2000) argues to redefine kinship as fluid to represent those relationships fostered not just through blood, there is a specificity to the football

brotherhood that is naturalized between Black players. It develops not only through ritualized sporting activities and events – like training camp, weekly game days, and daily practice schedules – but also through everyday activities. This relatedness through everyday manners, "small, seemingly trivial, or taken-for-granted acts" (Carsten 2000:18), includes quotidian actions like living together, eating meals together, walking to class, and talking about life events.

Further, this brotherhood is racialized, including only Black athletes. Though there are lateral and vertical dimensions to this group, as current members across graduating years and graduated players belong, the fact that they are all Black is what determines their inclusion. Edmund Gordon (1997) contends that the cultural practices of subaltern racial groups are resistant, not just different, with reference to norms of the dominant culture, which explains why Black players are able to relate in ways apart from the ordered notion of the team. Unique features of Black communities – such as distinct ways of behaving and interacting (Kochman 1981; Moffat 1989) and speaking (Labov 1972; Smitherman 1977) – do have real implications for the ways that Black men, in general, and Black football players, specifically, live and experience their hectic, everyday sporting lives. And some of these ways of being do tend to demonstrate to others that there are actions and behaviors that very obviously signal an understanding of in-groupness, community, and inclusion, while simultaneously excluding those who do not display these attributes. Here, it is important to note that the players' class backgrounds do not seem to affect their membership in the brotherhood. John L. Jackson argues that class and race should be taken as "mutually inclusive" (2003:13) because behaviors and performances are often influenced by our class-stratified social world, but the football world privileges race over class. Thus, the Black pluralism that exists to distinguish, for example, a

middle-class Black player from Connecticut from a lower-middle-class Black player from inner city Atlanta, is all but flattened once this brotherhood is created.

Also, the labor involved in football makes this brotherhood different, which explains why other Black male students on campus are not included. Barbara Bodenhorn's (2000) observation that action and doing, especially in terms of labor, makes kinship 'real' is important here because of the intense labor involved in competitive college football that connects them. In chapter 3, I described the actual work and effort that football players must exert as members of the team in order to find success on the field during games, particularly on the practice field, in the weight room, and during playing time. Through their football labor – which is often exploited, happens to be violent, and is directly tied to a sporting body – Black players continuously engage in "the work of being related" (Bodenhorn 2000:143) through their participation in the sport.

Several scholars have considered the ways in which relationships develop specifically between members of marginalized communities – a categorization that I would also extend to Black football players – and some of the most noteworthy urban ethnographies all revolve around the ordinary lives of men who belong to the underclass[21] of society (Anderson 1978; Duneier 1992; Hannerz 1969; Young 2004). I appreciate, though, ethnographic pieces like Elliot Liebow's work on street-corner men, who would frequently manufacture "kinship ties [to] explain, account for, or even to validate friend relationships" (1967:166-7) and Carol Stack's Black families and "the non-kin they regard as kin" (1974:124), who become important when considering access to parental rights and duties as a strategy to survive poverty conditions. These works highlight that in the social worlds of those who belong to these Black communities, there exists an oppositional culture, as they abide by the norms regulated by their own social world,

[21] See William J. Wilson's *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987).

but not necessarily those of mainstream society. The flexibility of the distinction between kin and non-kin networks in Black communities, fostered through alliances between individuals who support and encourage each other, is not one that appears when considering configurations in the kin relations of other ethnic minorities (Taylor et al. 2013). But it is present among Black football players, as the following ethnographic descriptions show. As Aimee Cox (2015) does with her ethnographic analysis of young Black girls in *Shapeshifters*, I turn "close and generous attention to the quotidian spaces of meaning making that Black [players] enliven and invent" to demonstrate their Black football brotherhood with one another and how it differs from relationships Black players have with white players.

Being Brothers

Charlie, a goofy member of the defensive line, was joking around every time I saw him. This was a sight to behold considering his size. Carrying a tall 6'6" frame and weighing about 230 pounds, depending on the time of year, he was usually decked out in a funny t-shirt or a colorful durag, if not dressed in team-issued clothing. His dark skin and delicate light brown eyes only added to the visual of it all. He was on the periphery of my research for a while. He was referenced by a few other players and he had asked insightful questions at a couple public events I also attended, so I finally decided to reach out to him by email to request an interview.

A couple weeks passed without a response. The first time I saw him after this initial email was near the end of the 2018 spring semester. I was walking with John and Alexander to the student parking lot, and Alexander saw Charlie from afar, walking across the quad. "Yo, Charlie!" he called out to him. I wondered how he could tell it was him, but after scanning the small quad and finding the person in reference, the answer to that question became obvious. Dressed in all black, rolling a small suitcase behind him, and carrying another across his chest,

his large frame was recognizable from far away. And even if it were not for just his size, combining that with the fact that he was wearing a bucket hat boasting the Greek letters of his newly joined Black fraternity, it became quite obvious who it was.

As we got closer, Alexander asked where he was headed with his bags. “Taking this work over to the trap,” Charlie responded with a straight face, before bursting into laughter a few seconds later. The three of us joined. I added that he better not say that around other people who actually understand the drug reference and might think he was being serious.

As if to exonerate himself of any wrongdoing, Charlie opened both bags to show us that they were only filled with books from his spring courses that he was planning to sell back to the university. Both John and Alexander took this as an opportunity to express their doubt that he read them, let alone opened them, during the semester, noting their still almost-new appearance. I, however, took it as an opportunity to bring my email to his attention to remind him to respond.

“Oh, yeah yeah yeah! I’ve been meaning to do that,” he said. “You were surprised with that question I asked at the forum, weren’t you? Surprised a Black kid would ask that question. You wanted to talk to me after.”

I explained that I was impressed with his question, not because he is Black, but because it was an insightful remark to make. “I just figured you’d have some other interesting things to say,” I replied, to which he smiled and said again that he would make sure to reply to my email. He zipped up his bags, said goodbye to Alexander and John, and continued on his way to make a few dollars off of his books.

Charlie kept his word and emailed me soon after. We agreed upon meeting in the Cobb for an interview, though it took some finagling to fit it into his busy early summer schedule. But after our first meeting, we regularly got together over the course of the summer. Anytime we

would talk, he would take it as a chance to tell me about a different aspect of his life, whatever he wanted to share at the time. Without much prompting from me, he would describe what it was like growing up in Atlanta in the middle with four brothers, how he felt about being a noticeable different Black athlete at a predominantly white institution in the south, and how he was feeling about football on the given day. Our talks were not formal life narratives (McAdams & Guo 2014; Ochs & Capps 1996), but they did provide the space for Charlie to narrate his own story, in his own way, at his own pace, detailing how his life events had shaped and continued to shape his social world. And conversely, he was always interested in what I was researching, what other players had told me since the last time I saw him, and how I was thinking through the information I had received. "I can't help it," he would say. "You know I'm a psychology major." I reassured him every time that it was never a problem for him to ask me questions.

During one conversation in the Cobb, we discussed how Charlie wants to make it to a point in his life where he can just 'chill,' a classification I decided referred to a time in the future when he is mentally, spiritually, and financially stable.

"My dad told me the best thing," Charlie explained. "He said 'We only have rules because people are powerful enough to set them. Once you have enough power, you don't have to bend to rules.'"

"So that's what you want to be? You want to be powerful enough where the rules don't matter?" I asked.

"It's not really about dumb power or having hella money, just enough to survive and do what I want to do. Financial freedom and all that."

"And you feel like you can't do that yet?"

"Naw I'm not financially free."

"Well, yeah, but even without financial freedom, do you feel like…" I struggled with how to pose my question to him, so I took a different approach. "OK, you joined a frat that believes in that," I said to reference a previous comment he made about why he chose to pledge his business-oriented fraternity. "Do you feel like you can be that way around your fraternity brothers?" I asked. I was interested in if he felt he could 'do what he wants to do' around those brothers.

"Oh yeah. Most definitely."

"Do you feel like you can be that way around here?" I asked, while I motioned to the table we were sitting at on the 3rd floor of the Cobb.

"Yeah, so, yeah," he replied hesitantly.

"Here, like Football?"

"Yeah," Charlie stated with more conviction.

I was pretty surprised by his answer, which I let him know. "That's interesting. So you don't have to conform to anything in either one of those spaces? That's pretty cool," I said, as one last push to make sure I was understanding him correctly.

"Conform?" A few moments passed before he answered. "Conform in relevance to code-switching? Yes. In both. In everything. With [my fraternity brothers], I would tone down the jockish joking around all the time. I would turn on more like sarcasm and wit with my jokes with them."

"OK, what about here?"

"Here's like… here, honestly, it's just more free I guess. Noone cares what you say. You just say what you want to say. Say what's on your mind and we'll understand it and we'll take you for the best of what you meant. And even if we don't, we'll let you know that we didn't

agree with it, but we won't hold you to it. Say 'It's all love, weirdo' and then walk off. That's the best type of environment to have."

"That's pretty good, though. That you don't have to really change when you're here."

"Oh wait when I'm *here*?" he asked, emphasizing 'here' while pointing around to the Cobb, finally understanding what I was really asking.

"Yeah. Around football guys, you're free and you can do whatever you want. When you are *here*, what do you have do?"

Charlie was coming around, so it only took a moment for him to reply. "Oh, I just stay quiet and stay out of the way. At least I try to."

"So literally the opposite," I noted, as we both started to laugh. "So literally everything you just said you like about this, none of that applies."

"Man, the main reason I like this place is because of my teammates," he said, his voice starting to rise to empathize his point. "I stay out the way! I'm tryin' to get out of here. Get out, as soon as I can!"

We were still laughing at the exchange when two of his teammates entered the space from the stairwell and Charlie took a moment to acknowledge them both. I imagine they came up from the player's lounge on the 2nd floor of the Cobb and had to pass by us in order to leave the building. When the two stopped by our table for a minute, Charlie added, "Look, characters like this is why I like this place," as he dapped up one of his teammates, an act and a comment that nicely punctuated his previous explanation.

The initial misunderstanding from our exchange hinged upon our understandings of where "here" was. From the beginning, I was referring to the here of Football and all of the team ordering that entails, which is represented by the Cobb. This is why I kept motioning towards the

table and the building around us. However, Charlie assumed I was referring to the here of football brotherhood, a hypothetical space where he could be himself and felt no need to police his actions or beliefs. His reaction once he realized what I was really asking about speaks to the tension at the core of this argument about brotherhood. Charlie's relationship to Football, compared to his relationship to his football brothers, are foils of one another; the former infers standardization, ordering, and structure, while the latter encourages community, trust, and fellowship. This is why he acts the complete opposite when in the presence of either.

When considering Football, this references everything associated with the team and its administration: practice, work outs, Teamworks, staff, coaches, administrators, game day, disciplining, and surveillance. Chapter 3 introduced the centrality of the Cobb Football Center to all of this, as this space is the physical representation of Football ordering and expected norms, given the various activities and offices it houses and moderates. The Cobb is central to the everyday lives of Mellon football players, as even during the off-season, they spend just as much time here as they do in class or at home. However, there is a juxtaposition between the disdain the players often express (either verbally or unconsciously) for the building because of how repetitive it is to be there and for all it represents, and how much it really does bring teammates together into this football brotherhood. This social space supports a particular kind of kinship that is very much structured by football administration, but is then developed on its own to transcend the basics of what they set out.

This explains why when these two worlds intersect – when those in the brotherhood are present in the Cobb, even when football activities are not going on – the brotherhood is still favored over the team, in the way that Charlie clarifies his statement by referring to his teammates as the only reason why he enjoys the space and football. With his teammates, here an

example of a time when he uses "brother" and "teammate" interchangeable, he feels free enough to be himself and act as he normally would without having to worry about being judged or punished for his words or actions. These guys understand and relate to one another's experiences on such a profound level that they interact and behave together in ways that might contradict the norms set by the team, but they read as coherent to each other. Even when they do not, their actions are still met with an "It's all love, weirdo" and everyone carries on.

Black players frequently feel they can be themselves around their brothers and operate by a distinct set of norms than what are in place by team administrators, though often in the spaces and presence of those in charge. I was sitting in The Pit one evening, a space on campus near the athletic facilities where student-athletes from various sports eat dinner almost every night, and a player rode through the food line on a hoverboard. I pointed to him on the device and made a face, but Charlie just laughed and said he does it all the time. "We're used to it at this point. Other people will sometimes ride it, too," he shrugged, as he pulled out his phone. He showed me a video of Trick, a defensive back, dressed in all-white compression gear and a white football helmet, riding through the locker room on the hoverhoard with music from *Star Wars* playing in the background. Both instances with the device demonstrate a general acceptance among brothers, though the action would appear quite odd to anyone outside of the brotherhood.

A few weeks after our funny miscommunication about 'here', Charlie told me about some of his friends growing up, fondly describing his best friends from home. A group of young Black men who have such deep conversations that he considered them "signs from God," Charlie explained that these kinds of conversations could not occur among such young people without them "having gone through some shit."

He got emotional at one point when telling me about them, his eyes filling with tears and his voice quivering a bit, as he described some of the situations that he and his friends had to deal with in their hometown. “These boys be fightin’ demons, for real. Like everyday. A lot of that shit be real, bruh,” he said, in a nostalgic way that made me believe he carries a bit of survivor’s guilt, considering he made it to college on a football scholarship while most of his friends did not.

Charlie quickly regained his composure. A few minutes of this conversation passed before I decided to ask, then, who he is closest to, considering the kinds of relationships he has built with his boys from home, as well as the ones that have developed with his teammates and fraternity brothers at Mellon. I figured that he is close to his four biological brothers in a way that is completely different way, but I still wondered who is he closest to.

> Charlie: It *is* a lot of social spheres... Well within my household, it would probably be [my older brother closest to me in age]. One, because I just followed after him. He was the closest guy to me to follow after. But my little brother has me [like how I had my older brother]. It’s like a brotherhood here like it’s a brotherhood there. But the difference is if I’m in a real sticky situation, like on some real sticky stuff, with the boys back home, there’s no questioning that we’re on the same page on what to do and how to react. Up here, it’s like, you might have to look around and make sure everybody wit you, but they gone be wit you. It’s just a different type of trust. Alright, *so you got brothers from the same mother, you got brothers that you learn to love, and stuff like that, but you got brothers from the same struggle.* And if you from the same struggle, you know, you need to understand certain things (emphasis added).

Charlie’s decision to classify his teammates (and his fellow fraternity members) as “brothers that you learn to love” is striking, as it speaks to the sentiment that develops amongst players and to the levels of trust that develop over time. Rather than being brothers through consanguineal relations (“brothers from the same mother”) or by sharing a similar upbringing (“brothers from the same struggle”), Charlie learned to love his football brothers through shared experiences in the weight room, on the field, in the classroom, in the dorms, and during meals.

Here, Charlie speaks to a unique brotherhood that develops rather quickly and is based in repeatedly participating in both ritualized sporting events and calm quotidian activities from a similar embodied perspective, a shared experience that can only arise from playing football as a Black athlete. As Paul Gilroy (1993) grapples with the "trope of the family" that permeates Black culture and communities as a response to the desire for belonging and unity, Charlie's differentiation between brothers speaks to the various ways that social kin are incorporated into this discourse.

Charlie could very clearly articulate these distinctions between brothers and he was not the only one who experienced them. I actually saw Braxton's relationships embody this particularity, as I witnessed his interactions with different groups of brothers. A soft-spoken and kind linebacker, my first interaction with him was indirect, technically through his mother and another player.[22] I talked to Alexander about meeting his family at one of the home games in October, one of the few they were able to make since they had to travel from Alabama. I had forgotten to ask what any of the members of his family look like, though, so at the tailgate before the game, I was lost in a sea of football parents and siblings, looking for the right family. One thing that often helped me associate family members with the right football player was the lanyards they wore. For those who frequently received tickets from players and attended games, the football staff created laminated note cards with the players' name, number, and team picture that they would wear around their necks on lanyards. So on that particular game day, I was trying to casually peek at each lanyard to see if I could find one that listed Alexander's information, thereby pointing me in the direction of his family.

[22] Recall from chapter 3 that I visited the tattoo shop with Braxton.

I had no luck with the lanyards, and in these situations, my saving grace was usually the Mellon Stroll. Two and a half hours before kickoff, the football team would arrive to campus in a police-escorted bus, and the players and head coach would walk from the bus drop off to the Cobb, through the tailgates and the groups of people who had gathered to see them off. This was usually the first time that families in town were able to see the player they were there supporting, so players would stop along the way for hugs and quick conversations, and to take pictures.

When the Mellon Stroll started on this October afternoon, I scanned the group of players, hoping to catch a glimpse of Alexander before he walked by. I was lucky enough to find him and soon after he was spotted, he stopped to hug a woman standing a few feet down the line from me, closer to the Cobb. "There she is," I thought to myself, as I took a mental picture of her so I could find her once the crowd dispersed. I went up to the woman once all the players had gone by and asked if she was his mother. "Actually no," she said, "but he's like my son because he's my son's big brother." I apologized to her for the confusion, to which she was sympathetic since she had just hugged him, but she helped me by describing Alexander's mom and telling me where I could likely find her. Before walking away, I caught a glimpse of her lanyard and saw that her son's name was Braxton.

At the time, her comment about Alexander and Braxton being brothers did not seem weird to me. Even though I did not know who Braxton was yet, I had assumed he was just someone who was in a younger class than Alexander who he had created a relationship with during his time on the team. But I did not automatically assume that the term 'big brother' referred to some kind of volunteer or mentorship program (Beiswinger 1985), which the team did have a history of incorporating. I knew she really meant they were brothers because of what I had learned about the football brotherhood.

On that game day, I did eventually find Alexander's parents and a few weeks later, I met Braxton, thereby situating him within this particular football genealogy. It took me several weeks after actually meeting Braxton, though, to realize it was his mom I had talked to. There are so many players on the team, about 110, that it was sometimes difficult to keep the ones I did not immediately recognize straight. But it all became clear after a breakfast with Alexander. Before we said our goodbyes, I asked him for Braxton's contact information, just to make sure I had his phone number. Alexander shared the contact with me, a process that because it was done between iPhones, sent the information to me in the exact way that it appeared in Alexander's phone. Upon receiving the message, I noticed that the contact name was "Braxton (Brudda) Allen." "Brudda?" I asked. Alexander looked up with a smile and said, "Yeah, he and John are both in my phone that way. They're my little brothers."

Obviously, this was not the first time I had heard this. And by this point in my fieldwork, it was not even the first time I had heard Alexander himself call Braxton or John his little brother. But seeing it in the phone that way, especially with the word 'brother' written in a way that could be considered Black English, was striking. While Black English is a register of English with a legitimate and structured system, standard grammar, and consistent rules, it can simultaneously include and exclude members of a community, depending upon their knowledge, understanding, and recognition of the language being spoken (Labov 1972; Rickford & Rickford 2000). The use of Black English with this contact name points to the fact that a version of nonstandard English is being used among these players with each other, though a mastery of the Standard Language Ideology is shown when interacting with those who do not belong to the brotherhood.

All three – Alexander, John, and Braxton – were linebackers during the 2017 season, a senior, a junior, and a sophomore at this time. Alexander was the first to graduate, leaving in May 2018, and was affectionately nicknamed[23] "Grandpa" because of his wise, old soul. Of the nine linebackers, the bond shared by these three siblings (Cumming & Schneider 1961), in particular, expressed itself often: Alexander and Braxton were both selected as finalists for a national award during their senior years of high school, so they met before Braxton even arrived at Mellon; Alexander and John are constantly bickering and making fun of each other; and John and Braxton were two of the three players mentioned during the excursion to visit Alexander in the hospital after his wrist surgery (chapter 6). Though I rarely ever saw all three of them together, it was obvious that they shared a special bond. For Braxton, Alexander and John were two of the brothers he learned to love.

Once I finally began to interact with Braxton on a more consistent basis, an engineering student[24] with an affinity for Teslas, I quickly learned the sophomore was opinionated. And his opinions often extended to football, the sport he was recruited to play, but the one I realized was his second love. It was funny how critical of football, but interested in soccer, Braxton was. With a Jamaican father, he started playing soccer when he was three years old and has been playing ever since. On the other hand, he started playing football in the 8th grade, because now standing

[23] The fact that Alexander (and Trick and Rock) has a nickname that is constantly referenced by those closest on the team to him even points to this brotherhood, as "nicknames personalize and endear; they dramatically expose memorable or striking characteristics about a person, giving him a very special identity" (Stack 1974:xviii).
[24] Braxton's chosen major as engineering is worth noting, as this is not one of the departments that athletes, especially football players, are encouraged to enter. Demands in engineering classrooms and labs often interfered with demands on the football field; engineering is not included in the top 10 majors for athletes at any of the universities in the Power 5 conferences (Ferguson 2016). Even at a university like Mellon, where 81% of its Black male student-athletes in football and basketball graduate (Harper 2018), Braxton is only one of a couple scholarship players that have chosen this major and have been successful in it. Despite stereotypes of the academic performance of student-athletes, C. Keith Harrison and colleagues (2010) would likely qualify Braxton a 'scholar-baller' because of his successes both in the classroom and on the football field.

at over 6 feet and weighing in at over 200 pounds, his size was beneficial for the sport and his playing position.

Even with the amount of time he had to devote to both his major and his sport, Braxton still found time to enjoy soccer. He joined Mellon's intramural soccer team (an action that he made sure I did not share with any football coaches) and regularly played pick-up soccer games with other folks in his adopted city. Since I had already seen him as a football player, I asked to join him at one of his soccer games about halfway through summer 2018. It only took about a week for me to find out about the next game, an informal meeting of local players from the area who meet on the turf fields on Mellon's campus that happen to sit adjacent to the football buildings.

I was told the game would start around 7:00 pm, so I arrived a few minutes early to allow myself the time to walk to the fields. I had learned my lesson since running late for training camp the summer before. As I was walking up to the fields, a large SUV coming towards me slowed down as it passed. The window rolled down and I was greeted by a face I did not recognize. But almost immediately, Braxton poked his head around the driver from the passenger side, a wide smile across his face. He asked me if I was lost, to which I pointed to the field across the street with a smug look on my face.

"I think it's obvious I know where I'm going," I replied.

"Well, wait for us," he said, as the window rolled back up and the driver parked the truck nearby. As I stood off the side, I saw four people pile out of the vehicle, only two of whom I recognized. They were already chatting, something food related, by the time they walked to catch up to where I was standing. Braxton gave me a quick side hug as he passed by and we all walked together through the large gate surrounding the fields.

I asked for clarification about the night, since I did not have much information to go off. Braxton explained that every few days, one of the 90 or so members of a group chat he belongs to will propose a game somewhere at a local field. Anyone is welcome to show up at the designated time and everyone present plays. They choose the rules of the game, like size of the teams and how to determine a winner, based on the amount of people who show up and how tired they get.

I looked around, taking in the immensity of the size of the soccer fields, before returning my gaze to my male companions for the night. The only other person in the group I recognized was a white player on the Mellon football team, which I could confirm by the color of the cleats he was wearing. He was a kicker, though, not someone I had ever interacted with. I still could not place the other two guys. No one in the group was wearing paraphernalia from a specific university, and they were all talking like they were well-acquainted, so I assumed the others were also members of the Mellon team. But their footwear stopped me was odd. One was wearing only sneakers, a weird choice for the turf field if he had owned any cleats, so I discounted him as being associated with a football team. The other player was wearing cleats, sitting on the ground to lace them up, but instead of the traditional red and white that covered everything Mellon related, his were green and white.

While I was going through all of this in my mind, I could see Braxton out of my peripheral vision. He was looking me up and down, taking in the romper and sandals I was wearing, and after a few seconds he said with a smile, “Maybe you should’ve worn some cleats out here on the field.” Cocking my head to the side and looking up at him, I asked sarcastically, “Do I look like someone who owns cleats?” Braxton already knew the answer to my question, which is why he was smiling when he made his comment, but my retort made him laugh. His

comment did make me look down at his cleats, though, to close out my observation of their footwear.

"Are these football cleats?" I asked him hesitantly, as they were the right color to be Mellon-issued, but they looked a little different than the ones his white teammate was wearing. Even at that point late in my fieldwork, there were still some football-related details I was unsure of, equipment being one of them because different playing positions often require vastly different equipment.

"Nah, these are my soccer cleats," he said. "They're different than football ones," he added while sticking his foot out to show me. I nodded my head as I looked at the cleats, noticing the differences in the ankle height, style, and design. Who knew that the shoes each of us had chosen to wear would say so much about our positionalities and relationships to sport.

Around this time, other players began showing up, walking past us to gather at a field in the corner. Most greeted Braxton as they went by, further marking his membership in this eclectic and organically organized group. As we were getting ready to walk over to the others, the player wearing the green cleats held out his wallet and cell phone to me as he stood.

"Will you hold on to this for me?" he asked, his gaze set on the mid-size purse I had brought with me.

"Sure," I replied.

"Oh, so that's what we're doing?" Braxton chimed in, reaching into his pockets for his own personal items to hand over. The other two in the group followed suit as I just shook my head and laughed.

Now with my purse full of keys, wallets, phones, and chapstick, we began walking over to the corner field, which is when I learned why two of the players – the one wearing green cleats

and the one wearing sneakers – did not look familiar. They were both Braxton's friends from home, friends since at least high school. All three played on their high school football team together. The one wearing sneakers, Aaron, currently attends an Ivy League school and had been in town all summer for an internship. The one wearing green cleats, Barry, is a member of the defensive line for a smaller university a few hours away (thereby explaining the different colored footwear) and was visiting Braxton before his own training camp began in a couple weeks. Both knew just how much Braxton enjoys soccer, so they all planned to come out and play together while they were in the same city at the same time. Thus, Braxton, Barry, and Aaron were brothers from the same struggle, since they had grown up together.

That night, Braxton, his friends from home, and about ten other guys played soccer for two hours under the shadow of the large Mellon branding splayed across the football facilities in front of us. We stayed so long on the fields that they were blanketed with darkness by the time they decided to end the game, given the lights on the field never turned on.

Though noticeably bigger and taller than the other soccer players (except for Barry), Braxton moved with grace and swiftness, his moves targeted and purposeful. And despite the heat and the exhaustion I assumed he was feeling since he had a football work out that morning, I could tell that he was enjoying himself. He played the entire time, only taking two short breaks for water. By the time the game was over, each player that left the field was drenched in sweat, removing their shirts to ring them out, if they had even managed to wear them the entire time.

I learned a lot about Braxton's years before college during that game, and all the information I gathered came from Barry because he did not last long in the game. After about 20 minutes, he came and sat with me, allegedly exhausting all his reserved energy when running after a loose ball. "Whew! Soccer is no joke," he told me as he approached the bench where I

was sitting and watching. His friends would periodically come over to make fun of the fact that he had to quit the game, but Barry was unbothered. He sat to my left, sipping on water, daydreaming about the restaurant they would visit when the game finally ended, and reminiscing about his high school football playing days while watching Braxton and Aaron on the soccer field.

This fun, but impromptu, soccer meeting occurred just a few days after I had seen Braxton at dinner while eating with Carter, another member of the team who played a different position and was also classified amongst Braxton's football brothers. On July 3rd, I met Carter at The Pit for dinner. In this dining hall for student-athletes, Football is always separated from the other sports and during the summer, the team uses the first floor of the building. Sitting and talking with Carter one evening before his fifth and last training camp started, we stayed so long that we ended up being the only ones left. As we were preparing to leave, Braxton came in with the intention of getting a plate of food to-go. However, he saw us at one of the tables and stopped to chat for a few minutes. The fact that this conversation happened while we were at dinner is important: as Janet Carsten notes, eating together is particularly important for relatedness because over meals and shared food consumption, "people become complete persons – that is, kin" (1995:224).

"Have you made a decision yet?" Carter asked Braxton as he sat down with us.

"Not yet," Braxton replied. "But I'm going to look tomorrow."

"You know it's the 4th, right?" Carter said, implying that the holiday might hinder whatever his plans were.

"Yeah I know. Places should be open, just closing early."

Both nodded in agreement. I was out of the loop, though, so I asked what they were talking about. Braxton explained that his four-year anniversary was the day after the holiday and he still needed to find a gift for his girlfriend. Both Carter and Braxton have been in their respective relationships for a few years, so this revelation caused them to trade stories about the extravagant and thoughtful gifts their girlfriends had given them for previous holidays. Though very much appreciated, they decided that their great gifts always made it harder to shop for them. And this struggle had manifest itself in real time two days before Braxton's anniversary.

I had a few gift ideas for women to offer. "Well, you know you could look…" I began, before Braxton interrupted me.

"Oh yeah!" he said excitedly. "You're a girl. Help me out!"

His comment made me giggle, as if this was a piece of information about me he had somehow forgotten, but I continued to rattle off a few stores in town where he could look for thoughtful personalized items.

"That sounds great. Thanks," he said. "But I won't remember those places. Can you text them to me?" I brought out my phone, locating the "Braxton (Brudda) Allen" contact and sent the suggestions, while Carter asked Braxton about his plans for the actual holiday.

"After the team lunch, I think I'm going to the Quarry," he said, referencing a popular summertime destination in town where most visitors hike up to a cliff and drop 40 feet into the swimming hole below. "I'm not going to jump off, though."

"And you shouldn't!" Carter exclaimed, prompting him to describe the last time he went to the Quarry with a couple white teammates and their girlfriends. Carter was already standing at this point, as he had gone back to the food line for a cookie, so he remained standing while he dramatically acted out his story. Carter was invited to go to the Quarry by his roommate and he

was hesitant about swimming in open water after the cliff drop. He is not a strong swimmer, and he let the entire group know that, but they calmed his nerves by saying that there was a log in the middle of the pond where he could float if he needed a break. He eventually built up the courage to jump, but he had a hard time swimming out to the log that was supposed to help him, and then an even harder time after realizing he still had to dog paddle while at the log. The theatrics of seeing Carter in the middle of The Pit, flapping his arms around and heavily panting to signal how he was feeling out there in the water, had both Braxton and I hysterically laughing.

"Now I realize I have to get back to shore," Carter said before finishing his story, telling us about how difficult it was swimming back and that he essentially jumped the last few feet back to shore before both his legs cramped up. "I don't know what I would have done if my legs did that while I was still in the water," he concluded.

Throughout the telling of this story, Carter made it a point to highlight just how nonchalant his companions were about the whole thing. They did not seem to think it was an issue that he was struggling so much and did not do much to help him or check on him once he made it to shore.

"That's why you can't go with them," Braxton reasoned through laughs, referring to his white teammates as 'them' because they are outsiders to the football brotherhood. It is one of the last things said before we all got ready to leave The Pit, and it was a poignant comment to make. In this moment, with this brief comment, Braxton illuminated the different relationships that arise between Black and white players, noting that had Carter been at the Quarry with any of 'us' rather than 'them,' his difficult time swimming would have not even been an issue.

Witnessing Braxton as he interacted with these different groups of men – his teammates at Mellon and his old teammates from home – solidified Charlie's observation about brothers. In

just two years on campus, Braxton had established a relationship with the brothers he 'learned to love' through discussions about life, girlfriends, struggles on the team with teammates and coaches, and difficulties on campus, through the use of a shared language and shared behaviors that did not need to be explained to each other, and overall, through a mutual understanding, respect, and care for what each other might be going through. These instances show how the brotherhood he shares with Carter, Alexander, and John manifests itself, even to the point where his mother acknowledges the relationship. However, that did not diminish the relationships he already had with his 'brothers from the same struggle,' those guys from home that come to visit and still check up on him. Braxton's relationship with Aaron and Barry continued once he started college, even though he was physically separated from these brothers, thereby signaling the strength of this brotherhood. From Charlie's comment and Braxton's experiences we learn that there are different brotherhoods that can be nurtured over time and sometimes, they do intersect.

Staying Brothers

One might think that these teammate relationships that become a brotherhood are superficial, at worst, and tied to years in college, at best; relationships developed out of convenience because the players spend so much time together. However, this is far from the truth. "These guys are lifelong friends" was the phrase used often by current players on Mellon's team. Charlie went so far as to say that he could not get tired of his football brothers, even if he wanted to, because he knew that they will be around for the rest of his life. And this sentiment was exemplified by players who had already graduated. Marriage proposals, weddings, the birth of children, and vacations are all situations in which graduated players demonstrate the depth of the racially bound brotherhood that developed during college.

For example, Black players at Mellon who graduated in both 2013 and 2014, about 10 each year, have a group chat with their respective year. This means that all the guys that hung out in college still talk almost every day and make plans to see each other throughout the year, even though they all live in different parts of the country. These group chats, and the subsequent gatherings, just include Black players, exist for multiple graduated classes, and have been ongoing for several years. I also attended the weddings of two graduates from 2013 and each was well attended by the groom's brothers, with Mellon Football pictures taken at events showing that the guests from this part of the groom's life are primarily other Black men. Football brotherhood is not spatially bound to the college campus or temporally bound to the four or five years spent on the team.

Therefore, the relationship that develops between these players is more than just a friendship, more than just a spatially and temporally dependent relationship between teammates. These young men might start out as friends, testing each other out upon meeting for the first time as teammates, but this relationship blossoms into a meaningful and important brotherhood that bonds Black players through shared experiences, identity, understandings, practices, and traditions (Franklin 1999). The various identifying elements of this brotherhood – race, labor, language, everydayness, masculinity – establish the relatedness experienced by these players and then gives meaning to their interactions as brothers. Though not a kinship bound by blood or by marriage, this brotherhood is an example of David Schneider's "enduring, diffuse solidarity" (1980[1968]:52) because it is not specific in its goals, it is broadly defined, and it is not limited to a certain time or space. Like those relationships that develop among brothers in fraternal organizations, these are lifelong commitments made to one another.

Conclusion

The ethnographic episodes in this chapter demonstrate the ways that football brotherhood develops through the everyday activities of Black football players. Football teammates and football brothers exist alongside one another. Simultaneously, coaches, staff, and administrators visualize the team, and football brotherhood is solidified through the everyday activities of Black football players. These situations are not mutually exclusive and simply represent one of the many ways that a Black player "ever feels his two-ness," as W.E.B. Du Bois would say.

But one relationship (brother) is prioritized over the other (teammate). Chapter 3 describes that upon membership on the team, all players are provided with the necessary pieces to create a community with their teammates. In fact, the team is a ready-made, built-in, assumed normalized community in sport that is widely recognized as such. However, through everyday activities, such as eating meals and living together, working out, attending classes and studying, and partying, playing video games, and joking around, Black players are *choosing* to be brothers. Similar to the way that Prince Hall Masons and Black Greek Letter Fraternities arose as a response to their white counterparts that purposely excluded the membership and participation of Black men, Black football players are finding ways to build community amongst themselves against the backdrop of a community that privileges whiteness and Euro-American ways of being. In the shadow of the activities and actions of those manipulating the team, Black players have agency in the transition from teammate to brother. They deliberately choose who becomes a social kin relation through their active engagement and work to connect with one another.

Throughout my fieldwork, there were always moments where my own positionality as a woman, as a non-athlete, as a non-brother (but maybe a sister) came up, which only further highlighted the strength of the brotherhood. I, like others on the outside of this kin relation, would never be able to fully access it because I could not relate to the experiences they had

shared. Quotidian acts like eating meals and living together, working out and practicing, joking around, giving each other nicknames, and caring for one another outside of the football field became the pinnacle of these organically created, meaningful relationships and this unique sense of brotherhood, an affiliation that significantly outweighed the importance of the team for the individuals who belonged to it.

*****

"Have you talked to Alexander lately?" John asked me the first time I saw him during the 2018 football season. When Alexander graduated in May 2018, he moved back home for a medically-aligned internship as he prepared to take the MCAT and apply for medical school for fall 2019.

"No, not yet," I responded. "I checked on him during the summer, but I've been in my own world since August. Have you talked to him?"

"Yeah. Pretty regularly, actually. He calls me every Friday night," he explained. And with a smile, I listened as he told me about the conversations he still had with his big brother the night before games, as if he was still sitting beside him in the hotel like he was the year before.

Jacob Copeland and National Signing Day

Most people in the football world have seen *that* video clip from National Signing Day 2018. In its various iterations, it has been viewed a few million times. On February 7, 2018, the day when high school athletes officially declare where they will play in college, star wide receiver Jacob Copeland sat behind a table with three baseball hats carefully positioned in front of him: University of Tennessee, University of Alabama, and University of Florida. Each represented Jacob's possible academic and athletic home for the next few years. Broadcasting from his high school basketball gym in Pensacola, FL, a small group of family and friends surrounded him, as well as a gym full of people, all awaiting his decision. A few of his supporters were wearing Alabama gear, a couple donned pieces of Tennessee paraphernalia, but Florida apparel was noticeably absent. Wearing a red coat and bowtie himself, it seemed that when it came time for Jacob to participate in the ritual of the day and choose a hat, Alabama would be the winner.

However, in a move that visibly shocked his supporters, he reached for the Florida cap and placed it on his head. He had officially committed to the university. While there were a few surprised faces, no one was more shocked than the woman sitting to his immediate right. She took a beat to make sure she fully understood this decision, then grabbed for her purse from under the table, stood, and walked off camera, crossing in front of the table and in front of Jacob to leave. The crowd had not even had time to stop applauding.

The remote ESPN correspondent was quick to ask who the woman was and why she left. "Uh, that was my mom. I-I don't know exactly why she walked out. I-I don't know," was the only response Jacob was able to give in the moment. He was obviously shaken by his mother's actions, as he struggled through the remainder of the interview. He held it together

long enough, though, for the national cameras to leave. It is only when addressing his supporters in the gym, when local media is around, that the young athlete broke down into tears at the microphone. He was met with supportive applause from his classmates. Around this time, his mother finally reappeared and embraced her crying son in a hug.

There was plenty of talk on the internet in response to Jacob's experience on NSD and the narrative mostly centered on his mother's "unsupportive" and "selfish" actions. During a conversation with the running back coach at Eastern State University, Coach Gilroy was quick to point out that he originally felt the same way when watching the video. However, his opinion changed because he heard the same rumor I did: that Jacob was either gang affiliated or just in with a bad crowd at home and his mom wanted him to leave the state for college to separate himself from this bad influence. While I have not come across any reports that confirm this line of speculation, this idea helped justify the mother's actions for Gilroy. "If this is true, her actions made complete sense," he said. Gilroy considered this mother's walk off a commendable act because it showed her commitment to her son's success and investment in his future, as she was just displaying her disappointment that her son might still be around the same company. "Honestly, I wish more parents would get involved in the recruitment process," he remarked, before moving on to the next topic he wished to discuss.

CHAPTER 5

"THE YEAR MY MOM WAS BORN": CARE AND KIN

If 10 percent of mothers in this country would begin to
perceive football as a dangerous sport, that is the end of football.
- Dr. Bennett Omalu

There are certain things that a parent owes a child.
One is to prepare him for the world outside.
- Mamie Till-Mobley

Chapter 4 described Black players as brothers. This chapter, which introduces the players' unavoidable entanglements with blood relatives with a particular focus on their mothers, describes the players as sons. Here I highlight how productive mother-son relationships in football actually are, while focusing on the importance of Black women's care work in the space of college football. The support and labor of mothers is imperative to the success of the Black athlete, as I show by describing my participation in two NFL Moms Safety Clinics and my interactions with moms of players at three different universities.

Recall the idea of bureaucratic care introduced in chapter 3. The team and Football are performing a certain kind of care to ensure the well-being of the athlete, through services and resources that patch up his injuries, surveil and order his movements and behaviors, and assist with his in-class struggles. This is done to create a pseudo family dynamic amongst those who are affiliated with Football that attempts to encourage both on the field and off the field solidarity and trust. Yet Black players do not mistake these relations for genuine kin relations because this care is not true concern for him as a young man. The reason that bureaucratic care cannot act as a substitute for genuine family care is because of what players experience from their biological families, namely their mothers. Thus, while drawing attention to Black mothering and emotional labor, this chapter distinguishes between the various geographies of care that are present in the

lives of these football players, given the various parties invested in their well-being, in one way or another.

Carolina Panther's Moms Clinic

On May 23, 2018, I sat with about 100 local moms in the team meeting room for the Carolina Panthers, a professional football team whose stadium is in Charlotte, North Carolina. A brightly lit and central part of the expansive (and expensive) Bank of America Stadium, the room was rather simply filled with larger-than-normal plush black leather seats, dark gray carpet with white and teal Xs and Os, and a projector screen. I assumed this room was usually used to bring the professional team together to watch film and discuss practice, but today, we waited for the Carolina Panthers Moms Safety Clinic to begin.

The website for the event promoted that "each clinic will help provide mothers whose children are interested in playing tackle football with the latest information about player safety and other important information,"[25] but having attended the Atlanta Falcons Clinic in October 2017, I knew what to expect from this gathering. An event I had already determined to be more fun than educational, most professional teams in the league hold these free clinics throughout the year in an attempt to indoctrinate mothers to believe in the wonders of football, despite the political, biomedical, and social issues that surround it. I could not be convinced that this event was anything other than a false impression, a theatrical performance to try to secure the sporting participation of future generations. However, as the moms admired the locker room, the meeting room, and the impressive facilities around them, I could already tell this clinic would be successful in its intent.

[25] https://www.panthers.com/news/registration-now-open-for-moms-football-safety-clinics-20616544

Starting at 6:00 pm sharp, the sights and sounds of Panthers game highlights filled the room as an introductory video played on the projector. A video that, of course, incorporated the Panthers' motivational mantra to "Keep Pounding." Once the short video ended, the Director of Community Relations, Mark, thanked the group for attending the event and shared a quick story that he believed demonstrated the importance that these women play in the lives of their football-playing sons and why it is important that they have chosen to attend.

From the story, we learned that Mark's first-time playing football was in the 4th grade, as the running back for a team that went 0-8 and never scored a touchdown. Once he made it to the 5th grade, he and his teammates were committed to having a more successful season, and it only took until the second game for his opportunity to shine. Early in the game, the coach called his favorite play and the team was able to seamlessly pull it off. As Mark ran through the hole provided by his blockers and down the field with the ball, he described how, "Out of the corner of my eye, there's somebody that's like, right there." He did not pay much attention to the person, though, as his focus was on running into the end zone. After completing the 50-yard touchdown, he had a few moments to celebrate by himself in the end zone, as his teammates were still several yards away and running to catch up with him.

He was not actually alone, though. "I look over and it's my mom! It was her who had seen me break. She ran. She tracked me all the way down the field," he explained to the room of entertained moms, painting a hilarious image of his mother running alongside him on the side of the field as he scored his first touchdown.

The room laughed alongside Mark as he described the incident as both embarrassing and heartwarming. But as he closed his story, it becomes obvious just how important that moment was to him. "As a kid, you score your first touchdown, that is a lifetime memory. And my mom.

To see her excitement, her enthusiasm … It showed me that she was supportive and that she cared for me. It's probably a top 10 special memory. And football, you know, made that happen for me and my mom."

By opening the event with this story, Mark was able to connect with a room full of women who cared about their sons enough to attend a session that might help them better understand the game of football, its dangers, and how to protect those who play it. His story might have reminded the moms of similar moments they had shared with their sons or it could have served as motivation for something they could potentially experience. Either way, it gave the impression to the moms that the Panthers organization understood why they had given up an evening to learn about football basics.

This desire to connect to football moms is one that is often repeated by football administrators. The NFL began to publicly recognize the importance of players' moms a few years ago, when they began to hold these clinics during the 2013 season, conveniently right around the time that the concussion epidemic began to gain media attention. Moms, the league seemed to reason, are key to the participation of younger athletes in pee wee leagues and high school football, and eventually in college and the NFL, so these women also needed to be recruited. After all, Dr. Bennett Omalu, the pathologist who first attempted to bring attention the issue of Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) in football players, has said that, "If 10 percent of mothers in this country would begin to perceive football as a dangerous sport, that is the end of football" (Brinson 2013).

College coaches and recruiters are also aware of this idea. Ashley Baker (2016) wrote her entire dissertation in Kinesiology about Black mothers' roles in the college football recruitment process as a way to highlight their simultaneous importance and lack of representation in sports

literature and research. As if to validate Baker's research focus, I observed that game day staff at Mellon would often focus their efforts on moms who would visit with their sons, noting that they must pay attention to moms because they are often the gatekeepers to a player's positive or negative commitment to play at the university. Mellon's Coach Smith told me that he liked to use moms when he was recruiting. Because women "like to gossip," moms of already committed players can help convince moms of undecided players that their sons should join the team. Another coach mentioned the gendered choreography that occurs when meeting families of recruited players: dap up the son, shake hands with the father, hug the mother; talk social life with the son, talk football with the father, talk academics with the mother.

What is interesting is that these tactics for addressing moms are in place for a reason: football administrators at all levels are taking a cue from players and recognizing that moms have a special role in players' lives, based on the interactions they witness between them. Though fathers are often present during these interactions and players do have relationships with the men in their lives, administrators see and learn of the vulnerable relationships that players have with their mothers. Recall my interaction with Carter's parents at the beginning of chapter 1, after Carter's disappointing performance on the field and Mellon's loss: fathers play a role in the perpetuation of the football spectacle, often showing concern for the player's success and well-being on the field, while mothers are invested in the son's overall well-being, immediately once play stops. In contrast to the way that chapter 2 described football as a historical space of social fathering, football at all levels now shows an interesting concern for football mothers.

National Football League (NFL) Safety Clinics

In "Athlete's Path to Excellence," a piece that focuses on the experiences of mothers who support children who play sports, Miriam Palomo-Nieto and colleagues outline that pain, fear, or

anxiety for a child's safety is a primary source of "a mother's negative emotional investment," a theory that describes what is "associated with the help provided by mothers throughout their children's top level sports career" (2016:1988). In their study of Australian mothers of tennis players, these scholars argue that mothers and fathers unequally experience psychological and emotional sacrifices for their athletic children, as fathers do not show as much concern for risks to injury and health. This maternal concern spreads to other sports – especially a sport like football that reinforces "a form of masculinity which emphasizes sanctioned aggression, (para)militarism, the technology of violence, and other patriarchal values" (Trujillo 1991:292). This truth about the sport helps to explain why the NFL *Moms* Safety Clinics (emphasis added) were initially implemented.

I first learned about the NFL clinics upon reading an article in the *Huffington Post* (Dohrmann 2016). Its subtitle – "Inside the NFL's relentless, existential, Big Tobacco-style pursuit of your children" – is enough to get even the most passive sports fan interested in these alleged tactics. George Dohrmann's description of the ways that "the NFL has initiated a campaign to secure the next generation of fans that is unprecedented in the history of professional athletics" is shocking. He exposes approaches ranging from fantasy football to video game tournaments to 'sponsored education materials' to football-themed animated television shows, arguing that these are all marketing tactics employed by the league to attract the attention of potential new fans of a younger generation. But all of that is insignificant if parents, especially mothers, are not willing to let their son's participate.

Cue the need to introduce emotional branding targeting women. According to Dohrmann, family-themed advertisements under the guise of the "Football is Family" campaign and Moms

Football Safety Clinics are among the most effective of these calculated attempts meant to manipulate "the gut-level decision" required to allow participation in the sport.

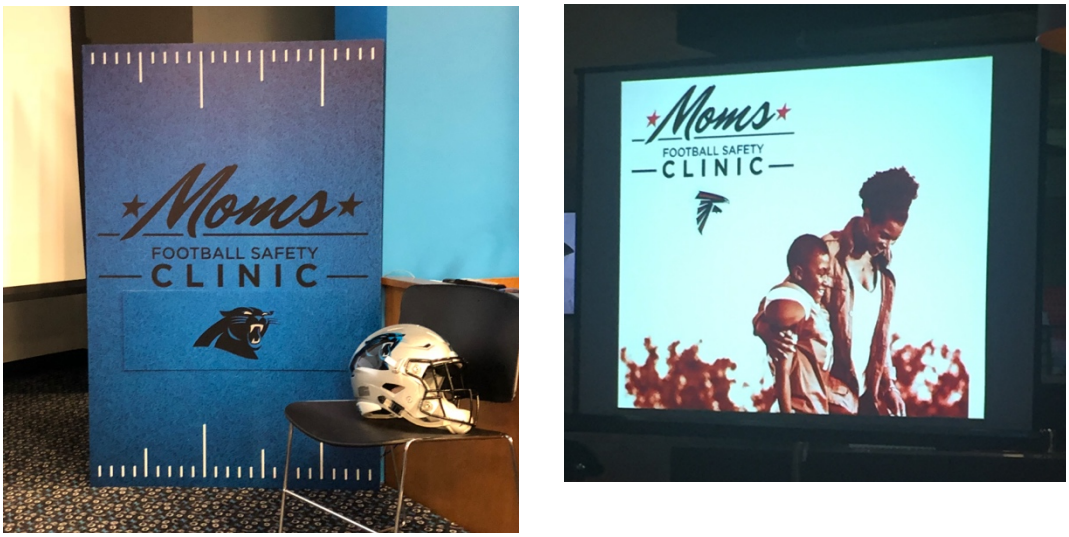

Figure 6: Posters on display during the NFL Safety Clinics. Photos by Tracie Canada.

In late October 2017, I traveled to the new Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta, Georgia to attend the Falcons Moms Football Safety Clinic, in hopes of witnessing for myself the technique outlined in Dohrmann's article. But before even arriving for the clinic, the importance of mothers' participation was emphasized, as every piece of email communication I received included the following notices: "This event is intended for moms only and we kindly ask that you please do not bring children or spouses to this event" and "We kindly ask that you do not bring your spouses or children to this event." This event promised to provide instruction on "proper equipment fitting, concussion awareness and proper tackling techniques," as well as on-field drills. The league branding was also on full display, as all email communication was dotted with references to the NFL, the Falcons, and the stadium they play in.

When I arrived for the event, I followed the crude directions and map included in the email communication and managed to maneuver my way around downtown Atlanta to find the

correct (of several) parking garages that surround the massive facility. I parked and left my car at the same time as three other moms, so we introduced ourselves to one another and walked across the street to the stadium together. Along the way, these women, who obviously already knew each other, marveled at the stadium and were particularly drawn to the massive stainless steel falcon statue located out front. Before entering the stadium, we all snapped a few pictures of the impressive art piece, the bird a likely reference not only to the team's mascot, but also to the organization's rallying cry to "Rise Up". Once inside, we were directed to check in, where we were asked to sign waivers and pay the $5 fee for the parking garage (the only cost for the whole event). We were then provided with a schedule, a Falcons shirt and pen, and a raffle ticket, and escorted upstairs.

As noted by one of the organizers of the event during the classroom education, "at the end of the day, we know it's you mamas that make the decisions about your babies," so no extravagance was spared to convince these moms that football is "a badass game your kid should be playing." The first ploy was the free items included with the event registration. Upon receipt of the shirt, we were more-than-just-encouraged to change into the stylist t-shirts in a nearby restroom, an opportunity for the mothers to congregate together to marvel at the quality, design, and message behind the shirts. The red fitted v-neck shirts boasted the Falcons "F" on the front, with "In Brotherhood '17" in block letters across the back. I found the back of the shirts to be interesting, given at this point in my fieldwork, I had already started to notice the importance of social kin among certain players (chapter 4).

All dressed in our new paraphernalia, we headed upstairs to the buffet dinner. A spread of cook out foods – salad, baked beans, hot dogs, hamburgers – were made available to us. All easy foods to make in bulk, but still impressive and appreciated by the moms near me in line. With my

plate in hand, I made my way to a table with three local moms, two friends and one woman by herself. After introducing ourselves, the friends told me that this was their second year in a row attending the event, though last year, it was not held in the stadium. To this, the woman who came by herself said she was happy that this year's program as being held in the stadium, just a couple months after its grand opening. "I wouldn't have been able to see the inside of it otherwise," she commented before asking if one of us would take her picture.

Second was the education portion, where different speakers discussed topics like football rules, substance use and abuse, proper equipment fitting, and concussion awareness. This occurred in a room in what felt like the opposite end of the stadium, meaning we were herded through most of the facility to get there. During the seven-minute walk, the moms around me were incredibly lively, talking loudly, laughing, and pointing out Falcons items along the way. Once in the conference room, amongst the other 180 moms in attendance, I managed to sit beside another mom who had attended by herself. "Those of us alone should stick together since it seems many people came together," she smiled after learning that I was also by myself. She introduced herself and told me all about her son, a 10-year-old who plays multiple sports, but likes football and basketball the most. "I'm surprised how much I've gotten into it," she said as she brought out a small notebook, "so I'm here to get to know more about tackle football."

The sessions began promptly at 7:00 pm and were all led by white men, with a noteworthy Falcons linebacker from the 1980s leading the charge. Though a white woman led all email communication before the event, men were the representatives for both these sessions and the on-field drills. Following a welcome statement made by the Director of Community Relations, each presenter took about 20 minutes to discuss his topic. Given how gregarious they had been, the group of mothers was relatively quiet during the presentations, most taking notes

using their new pens or typing them into their smart phones. They were quiet, but present. As a crowd, they actively engaged with each speaker, offering laughs, applause, and questions when appropriate. At this time, we learned about concussion symptoms and the appropriate protocol to treat these brain injuries, the dangers of performance enhancing drugs and the negative effects they can have on a young body, and the ways in which Ridell products – shoulder pads and helmets – should be worn correctly to protect the heads and bodies of football players. Several topics covered, with only surface level information provided. I imagine that the mothers whose high school-age sons had been playing for several years already knew most of what was discussed.

But in reality, the information sessions became almost irrelevant to the spectacle of it all. Especially given the last, and perhaps the most impactful use of propaganda: the on-field drills. After being instructed to shout "I'm ready!" in unison, the excited bunch was ushered down to the actual playing field, in the middle of the stadium, where we were met by the five retired Falcons players who were helping lead the drills. "Come on, girls! It's almost Christmas!" the decorated former linebacker yelled behind us, trying to get us to speed walk or run onto the field by the time we made it down there at 8:30 pm. It was jarring to hear these women referred to as "girls" throughout the evening.

Despite the theatrics of the set up, it *was* a surreal experience to be on the Atlanta Falcons playing field, to be able to look up and take in the immensity of the stands, press boxes, field goal posts, and scoreboard overhead. In that moment, standing on the field, I could feel myself relating to what an earlier mom had noted: when would I ever get the chance to do this again? I, too, found myself asking others to take my picture under the bright lights of the grandiose stadium.

It took a few minutes to gather the moms again, but once successful, we were put through a few tackling and catching drills. Again, more fun than serious and educational, the three or four drills that the men set up were perfect Instagram and Snapchat material, as friends took video and pictures for and of each other to post. The moms joked about being too old and not athletic enough to complete some of the drills, but most participated in each, either leaping to attempt to catch a ball thrown by a former quarterback, or squatting down to "break down" into the appropriate position. Finishing up around 9:15 pm, the last thing the organizers needed was a group picture of us all, with the former players, in our Falcons gear and in the middle of the Falcons field. The picture was posted to the Falcons Community Relations Twitter page by 10 am the next morning.

Before attending the Clinic, I was concerned that I would be 'found out' as single and (most importantly) child-less, but I quickly realized that my identification as a woman was all that really mattered. The men leading the event played up the gender dynamic, constantly reinforcing the women's assumed identification as heterosexual and as mothers. Pretending to raffle off dinner dates with the hosts, noting how good the group looked in the t-shirts, complimenting the group as the "most lively and fun" the organizers had ever worked with, and encouraging the moms to use their full bodies when "tackling" the drill assistants, these women erupted into screams, applause, and laughter each time. Additionally, since "a mom's job is to be a spotter and no one knows your child better than you," references were made throughout the classroom instruction and the field drills to a mother's role in her football-playing son's life. After all, as noted by the organizers, a mom is likely the one to encourage a child to sit out of play if he gets injured, over a coach or a father.

As already noted, the Panthers Moms Safety Clinic in May 2018, where Mark shared his childhood story, was very similar to this one. Only a few details separated the two: the Falcons served a buffet dinner while the Panthers only provided snacks and water; the Falcons hands-on drills occurred on the actual playing field in the stadium while the Panthers set theirs up on the practice field outside; and the Falcons used retired players for the drills while the Panthers recruited recently acquired roster players. again, the exact details of the events might differ, but their intention and manner of carrying them out are almost identical: classroom instruction and on-the-field drills meant to inform these excited and lively, yet concerned and interested, football moms of player safety techniques.

Overall, though, the free events followed a similar trajectory. And at both events, the participating mothers were disproportionally Black. What does it mean that the professional football league is marketing to Black communities across the country, attempting to smooth over the health risks associated with playing a violent game like football? And what does it mean that this message is being delivered directly to mothers, assuming that they should take most, if not all, the responsibility for keeping young football players safe from concussions, ill-fitting equipment, inappropriate tackles, and substance abuse?

These events seem to compound the responsibility, particularly of Black mothers, to protect, advocate for, and care for children against structural inequalities and social ills. This NFL marketing and the audience it reaches adds to the list the need for mothers to protect their football-playing sons from the ills of the sporting institution that is supposed to have rules in place to keep them safe. In short, these events highlight that not only are Black mothers simultaneously protecting their sons from potential harm and supporting them in the football endeavor, but that these institutions expect and rely on this care to power the football machine.

Black Mothering, Care, and Labor

During the fall of my second year of graduate school, I took a graduate course also open to upperclass undergraduates, called "Archaeology of Food and Drink," that had several football players enrolled. Every day, all five of them would sit in the back row of the class and they were rather quiet during discussions and lectures. As a way to encourage their participation in class and help them not feel so isolated from the rest of the students, I started conversations with them before class started. We would usually talk about football related things: the gallon water-bottles they would bring to class to help with hydration, how tired they were from practice that morning, and how they played in the previous weekend's game.

One day, I asked Earnest about his jersey number, #74: had he chosen the number or had it been randomly assigned when he joined the team? Given the guidelines set by the official NCAA Football Rule Book, it made sense for his number to be so big as a member of the offensive line (Shaw 2019:FR-20), but I was always curious if the numbers meant something to the players. He told me that he has been #74 since he was ten years old, so he did not feel a need to try to change it when he went to college. "I just liked the number," he said. "Plus, I kept it because it was the year my mom was born." He did not have time to explain the comment, as class was starting, but I do not believe he would have included any more context to the statement if he had had time. To him, it was enough to say that he liked the number because of how long he had it and its connection to his mom. Plain and simple.

Statements like Earnest's and player behaviors that exhibit care for and vulnerability with mothers show how central these women often are to the athlete's lived experiences and participation in football. But as noted by Baker's (2016) dissertation work, they are very seldom represented in academic literature and research. Similar to how Michael Messner and Michela

Musto (2014) question where children are in research on youth sport, I question where mothers, especially Black mothers, are in research on sport. In what follows, I describe how literature across disciplines and perspectives does speak to the lived experiences of Black football mothers, though in limited ways. This paradox is interesting, considering how much attention is actually paid to their participation in the football spectacle.

Mothers of Athletes

In her explanation of the connection between male bodies and the Basque imagined national community, through the game of pelota, anthropologist Olatz González-Abrisketa explores notions of nation, gender, and space to argue the ways that certain gendered bodies are allowed to represent the sport (read: the nation). According to her analysis, "war narratives, a basic constituent of community foundation, create the body of the nation, which emerges in two complementary body images: that of the mother who gives bodies *to* the nation, and that of the sons who give their bodies *for* the nation" (González-Abrisketa 2013:69). As it is difficult to disentangle sport and nation, given the connections between militarism and sport (chapters 1, 2, and 3), I will start by noting that mothers give bodies to the sport and sons give their bodies for the sport. Heroic sacrifice, on the part of both the mother and the athlete-son, fuel the sporting machine (Maxson 2017), but the latter is more often recognized than the former.

When available, parents are usually found in literature on sport through explorations of youth sports, as parents are often integral in the organization and perpetuation of the leagues in which these sports exist. And as sport is considered a male preserve that produces and reproduces masculine identity (Dunning 1986), fathers are usually figured prominently in these discussions. Anna Gavanas (2004) argues that sport is an institution that fosters heterosexual masculinity for fathers. This is done by reinforcing a masculine form of fatherhood that

contradicts the pushes for domesticating masculinity or masculinizing domesticity that were dominant discourses in fatherhood studies during the 20th century. Jay Coakley (2006) considers the implications of a father's involvement in youth sports. With many of the necessary daily tasks in a child's life depending on the involvement of the mother, youth sports is "a context that has been organized and controlled by men in ways that reaffirm traditional gender ideology at the same time that they meet expectations for father involvement" (Coakley 2006:157). Through sport, fathers spend quality time with their children that do not interfere with the already gendered dynamics of everyday family life.

There are limited examples where mothers do show up in this literature, and when they do, they are usually women of a certain raced and classed background. As sociologist Shona Thompson poignantly states in her investigation of domestic labor performed by women for their youth sports' participating children:

> On the one hand, despite its colossal global following, sport remains contextualized as separate from the 'important' aspects of life, reflecting the nonserious, playful connotations that are popularly thought to characterize sporting behaviors. On the other hand, the work women do, which structures and gives meaning to their lives, is often unrecognized, undervalued, and mostly invisible (1999:2).

While rendering visible the labor these women perform in Western Australia for their tennis-playing kids – a noticeable white, middle-class population and activity – Thompson's work notes that transporting their children to and from practice and games is central to these mothers' experiences, hence the title *Mother's Taxi*. Thompson's work offers a perspective on women's participation in sport, not as athletes, but as those who reproduce and service the institution itself through their various forms of caring, servicing, and domestic labor. These women exhibit a form of mothering that "had not only incorporated a commitment to the sport but that, more importantly, prioritized children's activities, allowing these activities to construct and define

their lives," as "serving sport becomes an ennobled way to 'be' a mother" (Thompson 1999:67). Through this work, Thompson notes that sport reinforces hegemonic gender relations, particularly those around conventional configurations of motherhood that accept this domestic labor around sport as a form of 'good' mothering.

Similarly, in their article on Little League mothers in Texas, Janet Chafetz and Joseph Kotarba (1999) demonstrate how these baseball mothers create and reproduce gender for themselves, for their husbands, for their sons, and for the community at large. In this predominantly middle- to upper-middle-class and white setting, the "Little League provides the ideal leisure-time vehicle for displaying one's competence as a mother" (Chafetz and Kotarba 1999:44). These Texan mothers engage in gender-specific tasks that contribute to their sons' successful participation in the sport. By participating in physical and domestic labor and sporting rituals, they are "reproducing and validating for one another traditional definitions of femininity" (Chafetz and Kotarba 1999:45).

In his chapter on 'team moms' in *It's All for the Kids* (2009), Michael Messner argues for a similar phenomenon, as he recognizes that team parents' labor is often devalued and invisible, despite its centrality in the existence of the youth sport itself. Leagues, like the youth soccer, baseball, and softball league he studies in predominantly white South Pasadena, require a substantial amount of volunteer labor. However, "it is not often recognized as anywhere equivalent to the importance of the work done by coaches," and further, "coaches sometimes talk about team parents' contributions as trivial or unimportant" (Messner 2009:45). Earlier in the chapter, Messner explained the importance of gendered language and ideology in these sporting spaces. While he uses the term 'team parent' when discussing these volunteers, but makes it clear that "women do the team-parent work because it has to be done…and because they know

that men won't do it" (2009:33). Messner found a strict division of gendered labor performed by the parents, and women are the ones doing the behind-the-scenes work that powered the sporting machine.

In an attempt to complicate the stereotypical notion of the 'soccer mom' and better understand the class and identity struggles in the everyday, Lisa Swanson (2009) studied white moms in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Her work argues that this label "erroneously simplifies the lives of mothers with soccer-playing children, and therefore is symptomatic of a cultural shift toward conservatism and the further entrenchment of patriarchal ideology in the United States" (Swanson 2009:345), as she instead works to highlight the multiplicity of these women's experiences. By spending time with these women, she notes that they reject the stereotypical idea of intense devotion and dedication to their soccer-playing children, though there is a substantial amount of labor waged in the children's favor. Instead, Swanson posits that through the sport-related experience, what these women are really doing is attempting to craft a particular class-based identity, for themselves and for their children, in a way that confirms their mothering role as necessary and valuable.

Across these representations of mothers of youth athletes, a similar demographic is addressed each time. Almost universally, the mothers in the work mentioned here are white, upper-middle-class, homemakers raising their children in two-parent, heteronormative families that ascribe to a notion of which parent performs paid and unpaid labor in the household. Thus, a rather particular representation of mothering and motherhood is presented in the literature on sport.

Despite their very limited representation in the research, what is available about sport moms reinforces that their involvement is heavily based in heteronormative gendered notions

that often restrict what activities they perform, what spaces they have access to, and what groups benefit from their labor and involvement. But even so, mothers' involvement and impact in these youth sporting activities is central, as well as in higher levels of athletic participation.

In a qualitative study with 201 Black and 43 white high school football players from five Southeastern states about one's motivation to participate in the sport, Kyrstin Dawn Krist's dissertation research in Physical Education revealed that "for Black football players, the mother was the most important person influencing player's decisions to participate, graduate from high school, and aspire to attend college" (2006:iv). My own research confirms these findings. Black football moms often enable young men to become college players in the first place, by putting aside their own concerns for their sons' safety. They act as important motivators in terms of where athletes choose to attend college, how they behave once on campus, and the careers they pursue when football ends. They are there to praise their sons' successes, and also to support them in their shortcomings.

Black Mothering

Several Black female intellectuals have contested the idea of a universal concept of mothering and motherhood (Barnes 2016a; Baker 2016; Collins 1991[1990], 1993; Hill 2005), which becomes apparent in the way that Black football moms mother. For example, while Patricia Hill Collins agrees that "survival, power and identity shape motherhood for all women" (1993:61), it is also true that "motherhood occurs in specific historical situations framed by interlocking structures of race, class, and gender" (1993:45). Thus, the lived experiences of Black mothers is particular because of this intersectionality of overlapping power structures (Crenshaw 1989).

In the way that Black families have been conceptualized in opposition to white, mainstream family structures, Black women and mothers are theorized and conceptualized in opposition to white women: "white women have been idealized (through the lens of sexism), and black women have commonly been denigrated as their opposite" (Winfrey Harris 2015:4). While similarities in their experiences can be found, part of what separates them is the sexual exploitation, particularly through the exploitation of reproductive labor, of Black women that occurred during slavery (Hartman 2016; hooks 1982; Spillers 1987), thereby influencing the number of controlling images and stereotypes that still dominate popular discourse (Collins 1991[1990]; Mullings 1997). These images – like the mammy, the Sapphire, the amazon, the Jezebel, and the Superstrong Black Woman – "have roots in negative anti-woman mythology" (hooks 1982:86) and are often weaponized to devalue Black womanhood.

These stereotypes also influenced any attempt by Black women to prove their commitment to motherhood, considering the Black matriarch was included among these negative characterizations. In *Ain't I A Woman,* hooks harshly analyzes of the "myth of the black matriarchy" (1982:81) – a myth because it implies certain social and political privileges and power that are in no way exercised by Black women in America. Further, the term was created by white scholars to further demean Black womanhood, allowing these women to be blamed (and very rarely congratulated) for the status of Black children and families (Collins 1991[1990]:74). As demonstrated by scholars like E. Franklin Frazier (2001[1939]) and Daniel Patrick Moynihan (1965), this label has been used to bring negative attention to Black women's familial labor and experiences, designating them the cause of the 'deviance' of Black families.

In addition to the struggles that they personally experience, Black mothers are faced with the added challenge of raising kids, particularly sons, in a nation riddled with structural

inequalities that automatically marks them as threatening and dangerous, and often uses violence against them (Burton 2015). Protecting at-risk Black children is a central component of Black mothering (Collins 1991[1990]:135), thereby influencing the tactics and practices that these women institute in their homes with their children. Especially through their mothers in the crucial site of the homeplace (hooks 1990), Black children are instilled with self-esteem, empowered with knowledge to navigate oppression, gain models for dealing with and challenging pervasive racism, and learn a form of resistance and resiliency that is rooted in Black family (Barnes 2016a; Collins 1993; Mullings 2005; Smith 2016).

One day during the off-season, I was trading stories with Javon, a former Mellon graduate and current NFL running back. He often returned to Mellon to work out, since it is close to his hometown, so in between his lift sessions and against the backdrop of the blasting rock music used to get players excited, he recalled different events that occurred in college that he believed were influenced by the fact that he is a young Black man. He presented a narrative that directly referenced the importance of Black mothering in his life.

"I didn't really experience it much here as I did just being out," he said, talking about being racially profiled on campus. "But traveling, going back home. It happened to me three times, actually, on the highway. The same spot every time."

He told that he was first stopped by a white police officer on this particular stretch of highway during his sophomore year when he was traveling to a football game at a nearby university to see a high school teammate play. An uncomfortable situation, as he was asked if his car could be searched because the officers suspected they would find marijuana, but Javon let that experience go.

"The second time I got pulled over, though, it was worse. I wasn't even speeding this time, coming back to Mellon. My lady, she was with me, and we were just coming from back home. Somebody was smoking, you could smell it out on the road, and my lady, she was like, 'Somebody is out here smoking!' So I'm ridin' and maybe three or four hundred yards up from where she said that, police was just kinda sitting outside his car. So I go past and I see him get in his car kinda quick. But I'm still ridin' and he catches up to me. He ain't turn his lights on right away but he was behind me. So I got over to the next lane and he followed me and turned his lights on."

Just out of curiosity, I asked what kind of car he was driving. With a bit of pride, he told me he was in an old red Ford Crown Victoria.

"He turns his lights on so I pull over. He comes to the window and asks for license and registration. He's taking a long time and does the same thing [as the officer from the first experience]: he calls for backup. The first officer is asking me where I'm from, where I'm going. And when the other police show up, he goes to the other side, where my lady was at, and asks her the same thing. Trying to see if our stories line up."

"So the guy that initially pulled me over, he was like, 'Well, I'm going to give you your license and registration back. I ain't gonna give you a ticket, but Imma be honest with you. We had gotten a call that the smell of marijuana was coming from your vehicle.' So I was like, 'How is this possible?' It was a Sunday evening. All these cars out here and mine is the one with the smell of marijuana?"

Both Javon and I agreed that this was highly unlikely, and that the officer was just providing a falsified reason for why he assumed the smell was coming from Javon's car, why he was pulled over, and why he was asked if his car could be searched.

Javon continued, “So I ended up telling my mom after that second time. This second time, I was going into my senior year. And she called the city police department and was like ‘Ya’ll keep racially profiling my son and it ain’t right. Imma have national attention come down here,’” he laughed, recalling how his mother took it upon herself to take action in this situation.

“And this was when Zaire was here,” he said, referencing a Mellon teammate who was a few years younger. “He had a Crown Vic and I had a Crown Vic. And Zaire was coming back that same day. So she told them, ‘One of his teammates is coming through, too, and he has a similar vehicle. They ain’t doing nothing. They just in school, playing ball, trying to make it out here. Leave ‘em alone’.”

By calling the police department, on behalf of both her son and his football brother, Javon’s mother acted as both a “bloodmother” and an “othermother” (Collins 1991[1990]:119), providing a mode of collective care that extends beyond just her biologically related kin. She cared for them both in a way that required thorough knowledge of the systematic disadvantages they already faced. Her call demonstrates her understanding that the car they drove likely influenced the police officer’s perception of the driver, as well as her desire to differentiate Javon and Zaire from other young Black men. By telling the representative at the police department that they were enrolled at a university and members of that school’s football team, she attempted to mark them as hard working, dedicated, disciplined boys who were not engaged in any illegal activities, no matter how society might present them. Arguably, this positioning is one that only a Black parent would truly understand.

Riche J. Daniel Barnes contends that “Black women have been strategizing for the survival of their families and communities since slavery” (2016b:51) and part of that strategizing includes a particular form of mothering that attempts to protect against and prepare children for

certain interactions that can end in violence. Christen A. Smith's ethnographic investigation of the impacts of anti-Black state violence on Black mothers shows that by "living in the deadly fallout of the modern, heteropatriarchal, neoliberal, White supremacist democratic American nation-state" (2016:32), Black mothers are burdened with the dual desire to live and also have their children live well. It is against this backdrop that Black football mothers are tasked with raising, protecting, and caring for sons who play an inherently violent sport that purposely builds playing bodies that are often taller, bigger, and stronger (read: more threatening) than 'the norm'. And no matter the negative and controlling images that have defined them in popular discourse, Black mothers, especially the ones highlighted here, manage and balance their homes, their families, and their work in productive ways that raise successful children, all while negotiating oppressive structural systems.

*****

In this chapter, I attempt to pay homage to intellectual peers like Joyce Ladner (1971), Marla Frederick (2003), Aimee Cox (2015), Riche J. Daniel Barnes (2016a), and Bianca C. Williams (2018), who eloquently and respectfully give voice to the lived experiences of Black girls and women in their ethnographic works. I would deem these scholars, among a host of others – including Maya Berry and colleagues (2017) – Black feminist anthropologists, based on the definition provided by Irma McClaurin in *Black Feminist Anthropology*. According to McClaurin, a Black feminist discourse in anthropology is

> An embodied, positioned, ideological standpoint perspective that holds Black women's experiences of simultaneous and multiple oppressions as the epistemological and theoretical basis of a 'pragmatic activism' directed at combating those social and personal, individual and structural, and local and global forces that pose harm to Black (in the widest geopolitical sense) women's well-being (2001:63).

By recognizing and theorizing the lived experiences and social positions of Black women outside of stereotypes and images, as does political scientist Melissa Harris-Perry in *Sister Citizen* (2011), these Black feminist scholars are representing the voices and experiences of a brilliant and persistent population that is often rendered invisible, caricatured, blamed, and objectified. I do the same here by bringing attention to football mothers' everyday practices of mothering, care, and labor.

What follows are three ethnographic snapshots of time spent learning about Black football mothers during fieldwork, particularly working, Black middle-class women raising their kids in two-parent households. Once I began to notice the various ways that football administrators attempted to co-opt Black women's care and mimic genuine kinship relations in order to support their business model – whether through the NFL safety clinics or in college recruiters directly targeting mothers in their pitches for their universities – I wanted to gain a better understanding of what exactly these institutions were attempting to take advantage of.

Katrina and Jaden

Simultaneous to the whistle blows, loudspeaker announcements, play calls, and missed tackles, large ominous clouds slowly crept over the field during the Capital City University Homecoming game in late October 2017. "I'm going to the car because unless my baby is on the field, I'm not sitting in the rain," Katrina said to no one in particular, as she began to gather her things as a precaution. Jaden, her 'baby,' was a redshirt freshman receiver, in his first year with the university because he had transferred from a different institution over the summer. "I sat at too many games in the rain when he was in high school to be doing it now, especially if he's not playing," she added. I agreed that I would not be sitting outside in the rain either, but thankfully, the weather held out and we were able to enjoy the entire homecoming game.

I met up with Katrina and her husband, Bernie, earlier that afternoon, about an hour before kickoff. I knew I wanted to attend a game with them during the season and this was one of the first when they had extra tickets available. Even though Jaden's new university is much further away from home, almost four hours away, he constantly had family members and friends attending his games. And since players only receive four tickets to home games, I had to wait my turn.

Proudly decked out in jeans, a "Capital City University MOM" t-shirt, and sneakers that match the school's colors, she greeted me with a big hug at the stadium's main gate and took my hand to walk over to where we would retrieve our game tickets. A relatively small stadium (when compared to those at other D-I institutions), it was easy to find our seats; they were only a few rows back from the field and a little off to the side, sitting among the other parents and friends of football players. We took our places across the bleachers: Bernie, Katrina, and then me.

Katrina and I talked the entire game, only stopping briefly when it seemed as though Capital City was going to execute a big play or score a touchdown. And as we talked, discussing everything from Jaden's time on the team to ways to care for our naturally curly hair, Bernie sat to her left, eating peanuts and focusing on the game. His stern and reserved demeanor an interesting foil to Katrina's outgoing and talkative nature, he only spoke sporadically, asking for the score to other games being played around the country and reacting to his son's team's performance on the field. During the several hours I spent with them, he directed no words or comments my way, but I did learn that he previously coached high school football.

"Do you miss him?" I asked Katrina during the second quarter, after noticing the background on her cell phone: a photo of her and Jaden was displayed across both the phone's

lock screen and home screen. I knew that Jaden's current location is much further from home that his previous institution. Where he was before, she could visit him every weekend.

"J's not that far, so it's not that bad," she said, calling him by the nickname she always uses for him. "I still see him regularly."

I learned that she takes home football games as almost weekly opportunities to see her son. Even though he only played in one game (his second and last of the season being this homecoming game), she and Bernie traveled to every home game. They also traveled to two away games so far, one being as far away as Texas. Her commitment to witnessing her son succeed, as well as letting him know of this commitment, was exhibited in her determination to attend as many games as possible. Seeing Jaden participate in something that he loves, and hopes to pursue in the future, was a positive outcome of his membership on a college football team. She did tell me, though, of the difficulties associated with it.

"Well, as a parent, stressful is the word I would use," she explained to describe her own relationship with football, half of her attention on me and the other half on the field, in case Jaden was put in the game. I could tell that she is not a fan of the politics of football programs, now having dealt with two different ones in different conferences and different states. "I send my child to you and I want to know that you value him as more than just a player. How is he developing as a man?"

She brought this concern up as a way to address one of her main issues with Jaden's previous university, which she explained during halftime. In late December 2016, Jaden sustained a broken collarbone during a practice for a bowl game that he would not even play in because he took a redshirt year his first year. She explained that the team medical staff took him to the hospital and insured that he had the necessary surgery and procedures done to deal with the

break. However, when she went to visit him the day he was released from the hospital, she learned that they had prescribed him pain medication, but had provided no way for him to fill the prescription. He could not drive himself, so she wondered what would have happened if she had not arrived to fill the prescription herself. Then, Jaden traveled with his teammates to their bowl game the same month as his surgery. Because he was still part of the team, he was expected to dress out and show up to practices, even if he could not participate. One morning, he had a hard time getting dressed, as he was still trying to get used to the injury and the cast, and a couple active roster players helped him out. All three of them ended up being a few minutes late to practice, and no matter the legitimate reasoning behind the tardiness, they were all punished; the healthy players had to run and Jaden had to walk the field for the beginning of the practice.

According to Katrina, the way that the other team's staff, administration, and coaches treated her son was less than ideal. She did not appreciate the way that the staff and administrators seemed to only be concerned with Jaden, the redshirt football player, rather than Jaden, the then-18-year-old injured student-athlete. This discrepancy between how Jaden was actually treated and how she wishes he was treated illustrates Lisa Stevenson's divide between everyday forms of care and forms of bureaucratic care, namely anonymous care, in *Life Beside Itself* (2014). Defining care as "the way someone comes to matter and the corresponding ethics of attending to the other who matters" (Stevenson 2014:3) introduces the ability to consider the multiple, and sometimes conflicting, ways that one can both come to matter and then be cared for, particularly as she investigates modes of care meant to address pressing healthcare issues in Nunavut, Canada's northernmost territory. Stevenson explains that under the guise of humanitarianism, self-protection, and citizenship, anonymous care is a biopolitical form of care that adheres to a particular rational logic. This care "requires life to become an indifferent value

– that is, a regime in which it doesn't matter *who* you are, just that you stay alive" (original emphasis, Stevenson 2014:7), thereby emphasizing the health of the population over the health of the individual.

This paradox reveals itself in the bureaucratic care offered to student-athletes through football programs. While analyzing the team ordering and disciplining present in college football (chapter 3), it was noted that individual football players are often considered, by Football, as a collective of statistics that are cared about and for, simply because of the numbers they represent. These numbers have to do with their size (weight and height), gains they are making in the weight room, records they are setting on the field, how they are performing in the classroom, and how their injuries are healing. While it may appear that Football is concerned with these individuals, it is actually their ability to contribute to the team ("the population") that matters most. Similar to Stevenson's observations, care in the college football model can be conceived of as a tense and "shifting relationship between professional and friend, indifference and concern, the bureaucratic and the intimate" (2014:83) because those administrators involved – coaches, academic advisors, program personnel – are often merely motivated by an obligation to the program, not genuine consideration for the student.

From Katrina's negative comments, I theorize that once he had surgery, which the team did pay for, Jaden was expected to move on as a member of the team, without any consideration for the consequences of such an injury. Conversely, the everyday forms of care demonstrated by Jaden's mother and his teammates (likely players he would instead consider brothers, per chapter 4) during this injury highlight care that is exhibited by those who he shares a close social relation with. In his argument about the connection between memory, caring, and ethics, philosopher Avishai Margalit defines care for these "thick" social relations, those relations shared with "the

near and dear" (2002:8): caring is "a demanding attitude towards others" (2002:33) that "suggests regard for other people" (2002:31), it "cares about the well-being of meaningful others" and "is concerned with their wants and needs" (2002:34), it "gives the other the feeling of being secure in having our attention and concern" (2002:35) and it "is a selfless attitude" (2002:35) rooted in a desire to protect the other. Because of their identification as thick social relations, rather than thin ones, the care that Jaden's teammates and mother exhibit does differ from Football's bureaucratic care.

Given her reaction to Jaden's treatment during his injury, Katrina's main concern for her son is that his coaches and administrators are committed to his development as a complete person, focusing on his talents both on the field and in the classroom, and his overall development as a young man. While he was a pre-med student at his previous university, he is now a sociology major at Central City. "I can tell he's kinda over school and just really wants to pursue the NFL, but I advised him to keep his grades up. I support the dream, I just want to make sure he'll be set if he does need to apply to medical school one day," Katrina remarked. Perhaps she is aware that the NFL drafts "fewer than two percent of college student-athletes each year" (Harper 2018:19), thereby explaining her concern for his need to focus on his classroom activities as much as his efforts on the field.

Central City lost their homecoming game in a heartbreakingly close loss of only three points. And as mentioned, Jaden actually played in the game. Though Katrina missed the beginning of one of his plays, she said she would watch back the film and not tell him about having missed it. Once the game ended, we gathered the jackets, blankets, and snack trash we had accumulated to meet Jaden by the stadium's main gate. Still wearing his dirtied uniform and

turf-filled cleats, Jaden managed to find his parents in the crowd, greeting his mom with a big hug and his dad with a rather cordial handshake.

Jaden asked his parents if they saw the whole game and excitedly announced that he had been selected for the punt return team for the rest of the season. Bernie perked up a bit and the two began to break down the game and strategize how he should perform this new role. Meanwhile, Katrina fiddled with her cell phone, attempting to get to the camera. "We need to take some pictures," she said out loud once she has reached the correct screen. Bernie and Jaden slowed their conversation and began to walk a few feet to their left. Given the choreography of the moment, I could tell that the two men had grown accustomed to this request from Katrina, ready to act out her desire to capture the Homecoming game on film.

Afterwards, Jaden and his parents parted ways, agreeing to meet up later for dinner. I walked back to my car with Katrina and Bernie, as our vehicles were parked in the same lot, still chatting with Katrina along the way. Right as we arrived at our cars, the lot in sight, Katrina received a phone call from Jaden. When she hung up, closing with an "I love you, too," she relayed the message to Bernie: the team provided players with full meals from Zaxby's, so Jaden did not need them to take him to dinner. "Oh well. We're staying in a hotel tonight, so we'll stop by to see him in the morning before we leave for home," she told me before we hugged and parted ways.

*****

Several months later, in April 2018, I attended another football event with Jaden's family: the Capital City spring game. Most universities play a spring game that follow a similar pattern: these games are a practice and a scrimmage that are open to the public and officially mark the end of off-season practices. Having made it through the football off-season that begins in

January, these games act as the first sign that spring is coming to an end and the upcoming football fall is not too far away. Jaden's parents, his aunt, his cousin and her two kids, a couple of family friends, and two of his high school coaches all made the trip to see the scrimmage. Traveling from out of state, most of the family made a weekend out of it, deciding to stay in town so that they could eat dinner with him after the game and then attend church services with him on Sunday morning. On this chilly April Saturday, his mom and dad were again decked out in Central City paraphernalia – Katrina boasting a different "Central City Mom" t-shirt to match her sweatshirt and baseball cap – and they bought more garb before the day ended.

Jaden's family arrived at the stadium about two hours before the spring game started, so by the time I met them, they had already selected a row of seats for us all near the top of the stands, perfectly centered on the 50-yard line. Bright yellow pollen covered the navy blue plastic seats, remnants of it still left behind after I attempted to clear it away with a napkin. It was officially spring.

As we took our seats in the stands, Jaden's supporters very neatly divided themselves by gender in their seating arrangements: the coaches and Bernie on one end, with Katrina, her sister, and the rest of her family on the other. Katrina sat in the middle of the two groups, with me to her right, on the side with the other women. Throughout the scrimmage, the women in the entourage passed snacks back and forth, joked with each other, took turns caring for the two-year old cousin, and occasionally paid attention to the actions on the field. But from the snippets of their conversation that I could hear, I could tell that the men stayed focused on the game the whole time.

While dealing with the active toddler, distributing snacks, and fielding questions about Jaden's upcoming season, Katrina told me that he was enjoying his time at Capital City, now that

he had time to adjust to it. By her estimation, he had made some close friends, had settled nicely in the city, even finding a "a little church he likes," and was learning how to balance school, football, and the prospect of finding a job over the summer. He was even getting his old jersey number back: today, he was playing in #13, his number from last season, but for the upcoming season, he was going to switch back to #6, his number from high school. Overall, she seemed to believe that he decision to transfer universities turned out to be positive.

Jaden will be a starter and travel with the team during the 2018 season, but he did not play much during this spring game, which consisted of four 12-minute quarters and a half-time period. At one point in the third quarter, he made a pretty impressive catch during one of the only plays he participated in, but he was unfortunately called out of bounds, so the catch did not benefit his team. Later, his aunt joked with him that "we showed up for that one big catch they didn't count."

Once the game finally ended, the entourage congregated on the concourse to wait for Jaden. He eventually spotted our group amongst the crowd of other family members and friends, and greeted each person individually with a hug. As she did during the game back in October, his mom started to take pictures of Jaden with his guests, calling out different combinations for the posed photos before taking a group photo of all his supporters. After the pictures, Jaden spent a decent amount of time talking to his high school coaches, since he knew that they have to leave soon after. "They weren't trying to feed me!" I heard him tell his previous head coach, referring to the fact that the quarterback did not throw the ball his way much during the game. The coaches ended the conversation with some advice for him for the upcoming season before they left to drive back home.

The fact that Jaden barely played in these games, but that his parents were still committed to traveling to each home game and some away games, demonstrates a certain care that is invested in Jaden during his time on the team, despite the temporal and financial commitment it also signals. Annemarie Mol's *The Logic of Care* (2008) is a creative ethnography about that brings attention to everyday practices of care involved in the treatment of, and life with, diabetes in the Netherlands. In it, Mol muddies the idea of a Western autonomous individual by noting one's unavoidable entanglements with blood relatives, friends, and colleagues. She refers to these people as one's "hidden company" (Mol 2008:69), a classification I would assign to Jaden's parents, friends, and family members that consistently show up at games. Mol's work signals various webs of caring (and uncaring) relationships that often make it difficult to disentangle an individual from the networks of which she belongs to foreground the fact that people are related to others in very real, tangible, and relevant ways. In Jaden's case, this relatedness is most prominently displayed by his biological kin. His football games act almost as family reunions, where people from different times of his life come together to support him in the sport he loves to play. Though they are not, in a traditional fashion, activity participating in any of his play on the field, and it is very seldom that Jaden even gets the opportunity to play, his hidden company invokes a logic of care rooted in being present and showing up, both physically and emotionally, to demonstrate their support, love, and care (Garcia 2010:67; Garey 1999:32).

Later that spring day, after Jaden showered and retrieved his things, a group of nine of us chose a popular restaurant in town for an early dinner. Apparently, it is one of Jaden's favorites. The interactions during this dinner solidified my previous observation about the gendered aspects of these football outings. At dinner, Jaden asked Katrina about sending him the pictures she had taken, paying for this and future meals, and buying him more clothes and athletic paraphernalia

he claimed he needed for practice. On the other hand, he and Bernie focused on different plays called during the screen game, the alums they had both noticed on the football field, and strategized how to optimize his position as a starter for the upcoming season. Bernie even made a generalized comment about gendered interests, noting that he and the only other husband present at the dinner were the only ones interested in watching any of the sport games being broadcast on the televisions on the restaurant, so they needed to sit facing the screens.

Conversations during this dinner, as well as other interactions I had had with Jaden, his parents, and his family members, further establish the importance that mothers and female relatives come to play a role in their football-playing sons' lives; there are patterns to their involvement. In the way that A.R. Radcliffe-Brown conceptualizes patterns of behavior among kin relations, as "the father is the one who must be respected and obeyed, and the mother is the one from whom may be expected tenderness and indulgence" (1952:20), this somewhat outdated model seems to hold true, at least in Jaden's family. In the context of sport, Jaden's interactions with his parents were incredibly gendered. His conversations with his father revolved around the technical aspects of the sport, as Jaden gained advice and tips to follow on the field (Thompson 1999:51), while his interactions with his mother were concerned with the social and emotional aspects of the sport. Previously mentioned literature on white mothers' roles in athletic participation argues that the mother usually reinforces the father-son relationship through her labor (Chafetz and Kotarba 1999; Thompson 1999). However, the mothers in my research, like Katrina, instead work to produce and support their own relationships with their sons in ways that differ from the relationships they have with their fathers. No longer is football a space only for social fathering, as these women play integral roles in the system's perpetuation and in ensuring

that the sport's athletes receive an authentic form of care that does not depend upon their performance on the field.

Vivian and Saint

Eastern State University, a large historically Black institution (HBCU) in the southeast, had an amazing 2017 football season. Finishing the season as the only undefeated team in the NCAA Division I-Football Championship Subdivision (FCS), they were the defending black college football national champions, the defending Bowl champions, and the defending conference football champions by the time I started spending time there in January 2018. There was plenty discussion around what made that team so successful – their prolific and retiring head coach likely being part of the winning recipe – but having one of the most productive and accomplished defensive backs in the country on the team definitely helped.

Saint Stevens, a redshirt freshman, dominated on the field during his first season playing cornerback for Eastern State. It seemed as though news articles were written about him every week of the season, as he racked up awards and recognition for his performances on the field. I later learned that his parents printed and kept them all, storing them in a folder at home. I imagined that all of the attention and praise would have gone to Saint's head, especially so early on in his college career, but his mom, Vivian, disagreed. "Reserved, humble, super cool," she told me when I first met her. "That's Saint."

Vivian Stevens agreed to an interview with me on the strength of her connection to my own mom; they are sorority sisters and thereby share a woman-centered support system (Barnes 2016a:133). During our first conversation, I first noticed Vivina's hair – her short natural curls each delicately coiled and in place – and her finger nails – freshly done and painted in a bold sparkly navy blue. When I commented on her nails, impressed with the color, she lifted up her

hand for a closer inspection. “You like them? I’m not sure how I feel about ‘em. My daughter talked me into the color,” she said, putting her hand back down. “Of course y’all would have similar tastes,” she laughed, to reference the fact that me and her oldest child, who had recently graduated from college, are not that far apart in age. “I’m just trying to keep up with you young people.”

During this first meeting, Vivian took the time to carefully outline Saint’s experiences with sports in high school and now college, her pride in her son’s accomplishments readily apparent during these detailed explanations. Saint, her youngest child, has always been an athlete, playing multiple sports growing up. Vivian thought he was a particularly gifted soccer player, but Saint most enjoyed basketball. Passionate about this game, he worked hard at his technique and skills, but he was consistently concerned with being competitive enough for a college scholarship.

The first hurdle he had to overcome was convincing his parents to let him transfer high schools. “He told us, ‘I need to be where the competition is and I want to be with my people’ when he starting asking about transferring,” Vivian explained. This was a notable statement he made, since he was asking to go from a predominantly white high school to the historically black one in the county.[26] Saint’s campaigning finally worked, after “working all his angles,” as he was able to transfer to the more athletically competitive school out of his neighborhood for his sophomore year of high school.

Once he was in the more challenging environment, Saint was then convinced that he needed to get bigger and stronger to be successful at basketball. Leading up to the summer

[26] Once I finally met Saint, he explained to me that the reason he wanted to transfer schools was that scouts very regularly visit the high school he wanted to attend. Since his goal was to play either basketball or football in college, that was where he thought he needed to be.

before his senior year, Saint told his mom he needed to eat more and work out more to be prepared for his senior season. “I was supportive of him,” she said. “Some mornings, I would go to the gym with him at 5:30 am [before school and work] to catch his basketballs for him.” She would also cook whatever he requested in this quest to get bigger. As a working mom, Vivian’s descriptions of herself embody the notion of “strategic mothering” (Barnes 2016a), as her roles as a mother and as a worker were balanced in particular ways during his time in high school. Negotiating time commitments and managing the work day to include time on the court with her son, just serving him basketballs, epitomizes this strategy as one that is employed by working middle-class Black women to aid in the survival of their families.

The summer before his senior year, Saint became involved in football again, attempting to diversify his talents across sports to increase his chances of earning a scholarship. Vivian also supported this decision: “‘You need to walk in your call’ is what I told him,” she explained. “‘You should play all the sports.’” The decision to vary his athletic skills across sports proved to be effective, as universities showed interest in him as a football player, rather than as a basketball player. When choosing between a few different offers, he chose to commit to Eastern State University, an institution in his hometown where he is a 3rd generation legacy, he could attend almost for free, and his parents could attend all of his home football games. “We were elated,” Vivian said, beaming as she remembered the day he signed his National Letter of Intent for Eastern State.

Then, very sympathetically, Vivian relayed how difficult Saint’s freshman year of college was, given he did not get to play much. “I would watch him walking up and down that field every game. Dressed out, gloves, uniform,” she recalled, as Saint was supportive of his

teammates while he on the sidelines and disappointed that he himself could not participate. That all changed with the 2017 season, though.

"Everything that took place in Saint's life has lead up to this year," she smiled, excitedly remembering all the awards he won during this past season as a starting cornerback for the Eastern State team. She noted that the hard work, tears, and time committed all paid off for Saint. Interestingly, she described that ever since he started playing well, she and her husband became very closely linked to and identified with their son's success: "We're no longer Vivian and Joe. We're Saint's parents," she said, explaining how they are now referenced by new acquaintances. As Saint's identification as a football player solidifies, their identification as individuals, or even as husband and wife, simultaneously becomes molded by his success and they are known by their association with him. In short, their social recognition changes as their son becomes more publicly recognized; "their identity was through their son's name or status" (Chafetz and Kotarba 1999:45).

We talked that day for about an hour and as I was preparing to leave, Vivian ended our conversation by asking, "You know 'Saint' is a nickname, right?" I did not know that, which prompted Vivian to explain where the name came from. Saint is a third, the third person in his genealogy to carry his legal first and middle names. When Vivian was pregnant, she and her husband were trying to come up with a nickname for him, so that he would not get confused with his father or grandfather. "Trey? No, we already know one," she said, going through the common nicknames for this position in the lineage. "Tripp? No, we can't name a Black boy this because they already think he's a trip," she retorted, using 'they' to refer to those in white America who might have preconceptions about Black children based on their names. "But a friend of ours eventually suggested Saint. In a way, it's short for Stevens, our last name." After a brief pause,

she added, “I don’t think my kids would be who they are without those around them. We raised them in a village.”

Vivian’s own representation of her participation in her son’s sporting life echoes various threads in the literature on the labor of mothers and the resilience of Black families. As detailed by Shona Thompson (1999), not only did Vivian perform domestic labor while Saint was in high school – driving him to practices and cooking meals – she also participated in the technical aspects of his basketball career – catching balls for him at the gym. At no point was it mentioned that Vivian's husband was also present for these activities, which solidifies the notion that her “particular style of mothering [...] incorporated a commitment to sport” (Thompson 1999:67). Further, her narrative highlights the importance of social, or non-blood, kin in her life and in the lives of her children (Stack 1974; Mullings 2005; Barnes 2016a). From Saint’s nickname; to Vivian’s connection to my mom, her sorority sister; to the way that she and her husband chose to raise their Black children “in a village,” a hallmark for the notion of communal support, Vivian attributes notoriously Black modes of socializing to her children’s overall success.

*****

The next time I saw Vivian was at the Eastern State University spring game, and by then, I had met Saint. He was just as humble and cool as she described, though I think her opinion of his reserved nature was likely muddied by her status as his mother. Saint was undeniably outgoing and charismatic, with a smooth personality that people were attracted to. It is likely that this persona, combined with his standout performances on the football field, is part of the reason why he received so much press coverage during his freshman season. He exuded passion for the game when he was on the football field, his confidence, but not cockiness, easily apparent during

practices and in the weight room. I sensed the same confidence from him when he was off the field.

While we were sitting in the stands together during the chilly game, Vivian began to grill me about the several conversations and interactions I had had with Saint since we last spoke. "Was he talkative or quiet? … Did he say he wanted to play in the NFL? … Can you believe that tattoo he got on his arm!?" I managed to keep up with her rapid-fire questions, given this was an exchange I had already expected. In my interactions with mothers, I quickly learned that they often considered me a liaison between them and their sons, an insider who might have attained important information that the players had not yet shared with their mothers. Other times, the mothers just wanted to confirm that their information about their sons matched what their sons were telling me. Because of my age, gender, personality, and closeness to the players, I was expected to know something worth telling about their sons.

Vivian's husband, Joe, did not attend the spring game. Instead, she sat with an old friend of hers from college and his two young children. For these parents, who both attended and graduated from Eastern State, the spring game represented a way for them to reconnect with their alma mater, while supporting the university's current students. All together, we watched and paid attention to the field, chatted, and made sure that the kids were relatively entertained. But through it all, Vivian's most repeated comment directed my attention back to the field: she didn't understand why the players, in their pads and helmets during the spring game, were hitting each other so hard. "They're teammates and it's just practice!" she cried out when Saint made a tackle. Her friend chuckled, "They have to get used to the physicality for when the season starts." But Vivian was unfazed in her opinion. She would settle for something like a flag football game for now.

Vivian had already told me that she worries about Saint's safety when he is playing. "I don't like to see him hit people," she told me during our interview, a verbal statement that became visually obvious, as she grimaced almost every time Saint would engage in any kind of contact on the field. "The only way he is in the line of fire is if they catch him and he has the ball. So I'm praying they don't catch him," she had said about his defensive position that does not often have him with the ball. She worried about potential injuries for him, but even further, she tells him not to hit the other players as hard when they are on the field to make sure he does not hurt someone else.

Vivian's discomfort with her son's actions down on the field were apparent, as she grimaced through the rest of the scrimmage. Fortunately, though, Saint played well, really showcasing his athleticism and true potential for the upcoming season. I could tell that Vivian was proud of Saint as the last whistle blew, a tone of satisfaction and pride in her voice as we said our goodbyes and she made her way down to the field to greet her son.

Vivian's concern for Saint's risk to injury is mirrored by other football mothers and, again, is likely why the NFL Clinics market directly to moms. Not only was it previously noted in my interaction with Katrina about Jaden, but it came up during almost every interaction I had with any mother. Perhaps the most poignant example occurred with a family that was visiting Mellon in September while the middle son was being recruited to play for the university. His older brother was already playing football for a big west coast Division I school and did not attend this game, and his younger brother, who was there, was in middle school and loved the game. The two youngest sons were accompanied by their parents, their mom a doctor and their dad an engineer. Because all three of her kids play the game, I asked the mother if she ever gets nervous watching her boys play. She responded that she does, but she doesn't want to incite fear

in them because then they will play fearfully and hesitantly. She wants to be supportive, so she trusts her husband to tell her when game injuries are serious enough that she needs to go down to the field. Her youngest son chimed in to brush off his mother's concerns, saying it is usually "not that bad."

While football mothers are constantly concerned with the safety of their sons, both off and on the field, it is interesting that they often receive conflicting messages from the men in their lives – their sons and their husbands – about the level of concern appropriate during game time. It is as if this concern, like the rules from the real world that warn against violence inflicted upon another, are suspended while the football game is being played.

Faye and John

Surprisingly, I never actually met John's mother while I was conducting fieldwork. But because of how present she was in his life, in both tangible and invisible ways, I felt like I had. John's parents attended every football game of the 2017 season, both home and away, even though they live several states away from Mellon University. They also attended each of his brother's games, a member of a different Mellon athletic team. I probably heard about his parents often because he saw them so much.

In early July 2018, I met John for lunch at a Chipotle near Mellon's campus. Meeting at the Cobb or on campus had never bothered him before, but he explained that he wanted to meet off campus because he had not been to campus in several weeks, other than to go to the Cobb, and he wanted to keep the trend going.

Dressed in his 'signature' Mellon Football Nike t-shirt, shorts, socks, and athletic slides, I noticed something new about John's outfit.

“I like your necklace,” I told him, pointing to the gold and diamond encrusted “#55” he wore around his neck on a thick gold chain to represent his jersey number.

“Oh, thanks,” he said, reaching up to touch it as he talked about it. “My mom bought it for me. She bought these socks, too,” he said, motioning to his high-top Captain America socks. “You know she figures out most of what I wear,” he said as a reminder, as we had spoken about how his mom still shops for him, finding clothes and accessories that he will like and will fit his athletic frame.

John is a great football player and has been, consistently, for the three years of his college career. At this time, he had already been nominated for national preseason awards, placed on several watch-lists, and was the center of several conversations about the best linebackers in the country. In short, his dreams of being drafted in an early round to the NFL were incredibly realistic, as long as he played as expected during the 2018 season and chose to graduate to enter the 2019 draft. His plans for the future were a main topic of discussion during our lunch that day.

John and Michael, another defensive player on the team, were both already talking about getting insurance taken out on their legs to “make sure we get paid” in case an unpredictable injury occurs. “Anyone’s ACL can get blown out,” he said, referring to the fact that suffering that kind of injury while in the league without the insurance in question could jeopardize his ability to collect a sizable paycheck. Similar to his decision to already look into insurance, John had been strategic with his time in college since he started, choosing to overload his academic schedule in his first couple years so he could graduate early. With his plan to graduate in December, in three and a half years, he could then solely focus on training for the NFL combine and pro day during the upcoming spring, if he chose to enter the 2019 draft.

"My mom would be supportive of the NFL now since I'm graduating in December [2018], but she wouldn't be on board if I was graduating in May [2019]. It would be hard to train in football and finish school at the same time," he noted in between bites of his large chicken burrito.

Faye, John's mom, was a special education teacher in a predominantly Black high school in a northern city, "so she's no joke," he said admiringly. She was heavily invested in both John's athletic and academic success since even before he enrolled at Mellon. Apparently, when he was being recruited to play football out of high school, she kept a thorough and detailed notebook of questions and things she had learned, adding to the collection after each visit to each university. "She has no problem talking to anyone and she always told me, 'I'm not gonna just let you play for anybody,'" he smiled. It is no surprise that she was central to conversations about his decision to enter the draft. Faye's actions during the recruiting process are consistent with those of other parents of athletes, as they often act as "unofficial agents" for their kids (Magnusen et al. 2011:692). Now that John as considering the NFL, the pattern as just being repeated from when he was considering colleges.

I knew that Faye had been involved in this decision, but I was still interested in who else would have a 'seat at the table' when he officially decided. John made it clear, though, how limited other's involvement would be. He said, "At that point, it's not about Mellon anymore. It's about my family." Talking about Mellon, he continued, "Y'all will tell me what I need to do and how it's good for y'all, but I got what I needed. I got my degree. Y'all were being rented and now it's about my day ones."

This statement, again, highlights the distinction between those who have offered him bureaucratic care over time – Mellon Football – and those who have constantly offer everyday

forms of care – 'day ones' or biological kin. He observed that Mellon, particularly administrators and coaches, might suggest that he do what is best for the team (or the overall population), which is to stay for his fifth year and forgo the draft for another year. However, he made it a point to say that serious conversations about the draft will only occur with his family, those people who have supported him for much longer than just the three years he has been in college. His mother's opinion will be central in these conversations. A temporal aspect of this arrangement is recognized in John's declaration that Mellon staff was just "being rented," referring to their relevance and importance to him for only a limited amount of time.

John's comments about Mellon and his family confirm that there is a strict divide between the ways that Black players recognize the various forms of care they receive. Echoing Katrina's frustration with how an injured Jaden was treated by bureaucratic administrators, compared to the care he received from social and biological kin, John poignantly prioritizes his family over Football, given the differences in the way he perceives the true intentions of each.

Conclusion

You always was a black queen, mama
I finally understand
For a woman it ain't easy trying to raise a man
You always was committed
A poor single mother on welfare, tell me how ya did it
There's no way I can pay you back
But the plan is to show you that I understand
You are appreciated

- 2Pac, "Dear Mama" (1995)

The first single on what is considered his most reflexive album, Tupac Shakur devotes this song to the woman who raised him. Repeating the line "You are appreciated" after each verse and chorus, Shakur's song is a tribute to his mother, an attempt to show that he recognized her importance in his life. Followed by tracks like "Song for Mama" (1997) by Boyz II Men,

Kanye West's "Hey Mama" (2005), J. Cole's "Apparently" (2014) and "Proud" (2018) by 2 Chainz, YG, and Offset, Black male artists have since contributed several odes to mothers in the hip-hop and rap cannon. Together, these works act as a call for all Black mothers who have sacrificed, cared, protected, and fought for their children – particularly their sons – in this white world that is often difficult to navigate. Given the prominence of this theme in popular music, it is no surprise that what is discussed by these artists is also a lived reality for Black athletes.

While drawing attention to Black mothering and emotional labor, this chapter considers the various geographies of care that are present in the lives of these football players and highlights the unique position these women are in when mothering their football-playing sons. Football mothers – the women who listen to their son's air their grievances with football staff; the ones who have professional signs made to bring to games; the ones who travel for hours almost every weekend during the fall just so their sons know they are there; and the ones who hold their breaths every time their sons play, given the risk of injury – exhibit "unconditional support" in the way that Palomo-Nieto et al. define it, "as a true umbrella metacategory covering a whole set of other supports, namely, emotional, logistic and economic support" (2011:153). For Black football mothers, the addition of care in the face of structural inequality is also important.

Together, the ethnographic episodes in this chapter demonstrate various ways that Black mothers support their football-playing sons, both in sport and in life. Gendered interactions in football became increasingly apparent as I spent time with Katrina and some of Jaden's family at the Capital City University homecoming and spring games. Jaden's conversations with his father and former coaches, compared to those with his mother and older female relatives, made it clear that he was aware of the gendered dynamics of these interactions, as each set of supporters warranted a different approach. But the fact that he consistently had their support, with his

parents usually in the stands during games he did not play in, represents a form of care rooted in being present and showing up, both physically and emotionally. Vivian's mothering techniques, which I was only privy to because of her connection to my own mother, showed that she prioritized spending time with Saint while he was participating in various athletic endeavors, both practice and games, all while managing her own work schedule. She also consistently demonstrated her concern for his safety and health, whether spiritual, mental, athletic, or academic. Faye's care work with John portrayed elements of both, as she was consistently present at her son's athletic events, investing her time and energy into their athletic and academic successes while also working a full-time job in a different state.

Overall, these women embody a concern for their sons as whole people, rather than as just athletes or commodities. Unlike how Football institutions, like college recruiters and NFL teams, bureaucratically take care of the athlete because he has the potential to generate profit for the program, these mothers are driven by the desire to view and respect their sons as maturing human beings. Football mothers are participating in a form of care work that is being manipulated, and unsuccessfully mimicked, by institutions with a particular outcome in mind. Therefore, while drawing attention to Black mothering and emotional labor, this chapter has distinguished between the bureaucratic care that players receive from the football program and the family care that flows from biological (and social) kin networks.

Note that Katrina, Vivian, and Faye are not single mothers. Across these examples, their husbands – the players' fathers – are all active participants in their lives. Therefore, I do not intend to perpetuate the stereotypes of the absent Black father because that is simply not the case with these athletes. In fact, many players note the important of their fathers in their lives, particularly when it comes to football, because their father's own involvement with either college

or professional football is the main reason they initially became involved in the sport. But there is something different about the players' vulnerable relationships with their mothers, and that "something" is the reason why the NFL began to hold its Moms Clinics. A special relationship arises between these young men and their mothers, as "the affective ties between a mother and her children […] are said to be particularly strong" (Carsten 1995:234), because football mothers are at once concerned with protecting against harm, preparing for life after football, and supporting their athletic and academic goals. They are caring for their sons, no matter their athletic outputs on the field. Thus, this relationship interestingly complicates the strict separation that is assumed of the male-driven football world and the often woman-centered realm of the Black family.

One might believe that I had access to these narratives and these mothers because I was a woman in this hypermasculine football world. Perhaps they felt more comfortable talking to me and felt as though they could relate to me in different ways than if I had been a male researcher. But as epitomized by Javon, during his weight room narration, and others, the players were quick to offer information about their moms, in interviews, in random comments, in informal conversations with each other. These women were a central part of their everyday language and conversation – whether the players were aware of it or not. Their mothers were always present, always thought about, always being considered. As Tupac would say, they were always being appreciated by their sons, in some way or another.

LeBron James: Shut Up and Dribble

On February 15, 2018, an almost 20-minute interview between ESPN broadcaster Cari Champion, Golden State's Kevin Durant, and Cleveland's LeBron James was released on YouTube.[27] The format was unique: Champion drove the two basketball superstars around Akron, Ohio, James' hometown, before the 2018 NBA All-Star Weekend and the three discussed the challenges of growing up and succeeding in a Black community, the pressures associated with being an athlete at the top of his game, family life and raising children, and the country's political environment. Most of James' comments dealt with his experiences not only as a professional athlete, but as a Black man in America, and early on in the interview, he discussed his responsibility to speak out behalf of others.

"How do you describe the climate for an athlete with a platform nowadays that wants to talk about what's happening in our world?" Champion asked James.

"Well the climate is hot. The number 1 job in America, the appointed person, is someone who don't understand the people. And really don't give a fuck about the people," he said, in reference to the president of the United States, never calling him by name.

James continued, "While we cannot change what comes out of that man's mouth, we can continue to alert the people that watch us, that listen to us, as this is not the way." Reacting to criticism that discredits his comments about social injustices because of his status as a high-paid athlete, he responded, "I'm a black man with a bunch of money and having a crib in [Los Angeles neighborhood] Brentwood, having the word 'nigger' spray painted over my gate lets you know I ain't too far removed and I still got a lot more work to do."

[27] The video is entitled "Kevin Durant x LeBron James x Cari Champion | ROLLING WITH THE CHAMPION": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HtNWc1AIU20

The day after the interview was posted, Fox News pundit Laura Ingraham responded to his comments. “NBA superstar LeBron James is talking politics again and this time, it’s R-rated,” Ingraham opened her show segment by saying. Calling James’ statements “barely intelligible” and “ungrammatical,” she laughed and warned kids and adults who might have watched the original segment against taking both James and Durant's comments seriously. “It’s always unwise to seek political advice from someone who gets paid $100 million a year to bounce a ball,” she said smugly. “Keep the political comments to yourself. Or as someone once said, shut up and dribble.”

Ingraham received backlash for her comments, but James seemed unfazed. In an interview he gave right before playing in the All-Star game on February 18, James said,

> We will definitely not shut up and dribble. I will definitely not do that. I mean too much to society, I mean too much to the youth, I mean too much to so many kids that don't have a way out and they need someone to help lead them out of the situation they're in. [...] To make it where I've made it today, I think I've defeated the odds. And I want every kid to know that. The youth, they can do it as well. [...] The best thing she did, it's gonna help me, is create more awareness. I appreciate her for even giving me more awareness. [...] This is the best weekend in the NBA [...] and I get to sit up here and talk about social injustice and inequality. So, thank you, whatever her name is. I don't even know her name.

And James was right. The controversy did bring attention to his cause because he used her own words against her; released in October 2018, James executive produced a three-part Showtime documentary series entitled *Shut Up and Dribble*. According to a Showtime press release,[28] the “controversy serves as a prologue to the series as it chronicles the modern history of the NBA and its players, starting with the 1976 merger of the freewheeling ABA and the more conventional NBA of today.” Overall, the series documents the contemporary way in which players evolve from top athlete to cultural icon “through the experience of basketball players,

[28] https://www.cbspressexpress.com/showtime/releases/view?id=50702

who by taking control of their own destinies have helped to bring about social change and make their own statements in the current political climate." It is just one of the many examples of the ways that LeBron James has and continues to use his platform as one of the most decorated and respected American basketball players of all time.

CHAPTER 6

"THE SON THAT GETS A LOT OF WHOOPINGS": NAVIGATING VIOLENCE, BLACKNESS, AND ATHLETICISM

Previous theoretical chapters in this dissertation have considered my research participants based on their affiliations to others – as teammates, as brothers, and as sons. This chapter delves, more broadly, into their experiences as young, Black, athletic men. I follow these athletes through different spaces and events, outside of the football field and the classroom, to show how their various intersecting identities become important throughout the everyday. A certain body is required to effectively perform, produce, and labor on the football field, one that is often marked by being taller, bigger, and stronger than 'the norm'. These coded Black bodies are privileged within the space of football, yet are often marked as dangerous and threatening beyond this realm. Because of and in spite of their existence in football-playing Black bodies these men are constantly confronted with the possibility of injury, whether career ending or life ending.

This is a unique position to be in, due to the intersection of their particular embodied and racialized experiences. Throughout this chapter, I explore how, as individual Black men living in the world of play and in the real world beyond it, players negotiate the potential for injury and violence. This is almost a given on the football field, as this is an inherently violent game, and a real risk in the real world, as this is a space riddled with systematic racism. In order to deal with these uncomfortable and risky situations, this chapter reinforces the fact that they rely upon their football brotherhood and find solace in each other.

Savion, Post-Football

While in town for a spring game in April 2018, I had breakfast with Savion, a retired and graduated college offensive lineman. We had become good friends since we met during my first

year of graduate school, checking in on each other on holidays and each other's birthdays. We met at my favorite breakfast spot, a well-known diner. So well-known, in fact, that the place was always packed on Saturday mornings, at least a 25-minute wait for any size table at any time of day. Fortunately, as we waited for a table, two seats at the small bar opened up. First come, first served. I looked up at Savion for his approval of our newfound seating arrangement. When he silently nodded his agreement, I snaked my way through the small crowd to arrive at the bar at the back of the restaurant, him a few steps behind. Plopping down on one of the backless stools, my feet dangling way above the ground, I looked to Savion on my right, waiting for him to get situated. At that moment, I was reminded, yet again, of just how big he is. As I struggled to find my balance on the seat, he had no trouble at all. His long legs never left the ground as he easily sat atop the stool, his torso extended far above the countertop of the bar. The restaurant patrons, had they been paying attention, would have found it comical that I, the much smaller and shorter of the two of us, was the one who led us through the breakfast rush. Looking at him now, he seemed out of place on the small stool, in the small restaurant.

Though now a graduate, he frequently visits the town where his alma mater is located; his long-term girlfriend (now fiancé) still lives there. They have been in a relationship for as long as I have known him, so one of the first things I did once we were finally seated was to congratulate him on his engagement.

"You waited long enough, didn't you?" I joked. "How'd you finally know you were ready to propose?"

"You know how when you're Black, a white person will question you all the time until you've proven yourself?" Savion asked. "Then once you've done that, you can do what you want, even wear natural hair in the workplace?" he said, pointing to my curly hair.

As I nodded in agreement, recognizing that he was simultaneously signaling to a much larger conversation about respectability politics in the workplace for Black employees (Gray 2016), he continued. “It was a similar idea. I had to prove that I could take care of my family and make decent money before I felt I could propose.”

In the moment, I was not surprised by the analogy. Savion is one of the most insightful players I have come across in the past decade and he is constantly thinking through his surroundings, his circumstances, and his responses to societal ills. But after our breakfast, I realized just how profound the comment was, as he linked his marriage proposal to real world stresses he has often felt. Though he did not mention it explicitly then, past conversations allowed me to infer that he was referring to situations he had experienced in college. We had previously discussed how Savion deals with the stereotype of being an athlete and how he sometimes has difficulty being taken seriously in endeavors that do not involve sports. Not only that, just based on the fact that he is a large, dark-skinned Black man, with a deep voice and booming laugh, newcomers are often weary of approaching him or talking to him. This statement about proposing referenced that he feels he is viewed differently than his peers and has a more difficult time gaining respect from his superiors. As a 6’6”, 280-pound Black ex-athlete, these are situations he feels he will constantly confront.

While reflecting on his comment, I was reminded of a situation he recounted to me a couple years before. During a mid-week summer day in 2015, before the start of his junior playing season, Savion had to report to the weight room at 9:00 am. He spent the morning as he usually did: as he naturally woke up around 7:30 am, he had time to eat breakfast, catch up on social media, and watch a few minutes of TV before he got dressed and drove the few miles from his apartment to campus. During the short ride, one that he had driven countless times before, he

noticed something was different: there was a police car a couple of vehicles behind him. He did not think much of it, though, since he was not doing anything wrong and he was already cutting it close to get to the football facility on time. As he turned the corner to pull into the parking lot, with only five minutes to spare, he was surprised to see that the police car's lights turned on directly behind him. He had been in this position before, so he knew to slowly come to a halt, but this was the first (and only) time he had been pulled over in front of the football building.

A little nervous, he placed his hands on his steering wheel and waited for the police officer to come to his already rolled-down window. Prompted for his license and registration, Savion politely asked the officer if it was okay for him to reach for the requested information; he had seen too many stories of young Black men being shot by white police officers to chance any unexpected movements (Guardian 2015). Once granted permission, he retrieved the materials from his wallet and glove box, and waited for the officer to run his information. The officer came back to Savion's car, a black Suburban with tinted windows, and stated that he would let him go with just a warning. Confused, Savion asked why he was stopped in the first place. The officer, obviously annoyed by the question, simply replied that he was playing his music too loud, but since his record was clean, he was free to go.

Shaken from the encounter, Savion pulled into the parking lot, realizing that he was officially late to the weight room. He scrambled out of the car and made his way inside, attempting to hide both his frustration and anxiety from his teammates and position coach. Since he was late, the coach added extra reps to every lift he had to complete and he had to do some running, thereby keeping him in the weight room for longer than his teammates. Savion was exhausted by the time he could leave for the locker room and missed the opportunity to talk to his best friend and football brother, Earnest, who had already showered and left the building.

Even though he knew it would worry her, Savion instead decided to call his mom at work because he needed someone to talk to about what had happened. As discussed in chapter 5, he knew to call her because he could be vulnerable in his explanation of what happened and she would attempt to protect him from any harm that could come from the situation.

*****

While in Charlotte for the Panthers Moms Safety Clinic in May 2018, I made sure to visit Savion. As a consultant for a management consulting firm, his job sent him to the city where his current client was located, so he was stationed in Charlotte for a few months. Since I did not get to ask about it last time, during our breakfast, and I was still a little unclear, I asked him to specifically explain his job to me. After passionately describing his fast-paced consulting lifestyle, all I could do was smile. His personality and skill set are perfect for the job and I told him so.

"I think so, too," he said, "but some people called me a sell-out when I took it."

The shock obviously read on my face, so he explained. "I was an African-American studies major. My nickname was 'Mr. Woke-ton.' And now I'm in the private sector," he said with a hearty laugh. "Some people didn't understand it."

His undergraduate major and nickname both speak to his interest in and hyper awareness of social issues impacting Black communities, something that others did not think aligned with what he was pursuing in his career We decided, though, that those who chastised him about it just did not know him well. They were probably the same people who also thought he should have pursued a career in the NFL.

Savion's experience with football was unconventional. He wrestled and played soccer, basketball, and football as a child, but was best suited for football because of his build. Though

he was recruited to play Division I football, he did not get to play much during his first two years on the team because of various injuries, and then missed his entire junior season because of an injury. After weighing the pros and cons of continuing to play, he decided to retire before his senior year for medical reasons, amidst shoulder and knee issues. Therefore, unlike other football players who usually have only one football-free semester of their college experience (the spring after their senior season ends), Savion got to experience three football-free semesters. And because of this, his time in college was atypical, when compared to other football players. Not only did he find himself in gendered sporting spaces through Football, he was also often in intellectual and academic spaces outside of the classroom, due to his participation in certain on-campus organizations and involvement with local activism.

It is because of these varied experiences that Savion expressed his interest in his current position, as well as his appreciation for the demographics of his consulting firm and his work team in Charlotte. He was surrounded by young, talented, interesting people, like in college, but surprisingly, he was not one of the only Black employees. In fact, his team was quite diverse and he loved the opportunity to work around so many women of color. He tried to explain. "Being in all-male spaces, being in Black male spaces like Football, you feel like you're being sized up and you have to size everyone else up. It's a type of masculinity that traps me and I can't be myself." He paused. "But when I'm around women of color, I don't feel like…," he said before losing his train of thought. "Cuz I'm not an uber masculine person," he continued. "I may look it, but I'm not. And now I can say things like, 'Wow, that guy's jeans fit really well' and they can be like 'Oh yeah, they really do.' I've just always wanted to express myself how I feel."

I already knew this about Savion. I knew that he felt stifled in college because of what he was perceived to be and how he was expected to react because of it, especially in non-Football

spaces. Assumptions had been made about him because of how he looked and the sport he played. Here, on the other hand, Savion explained how liberated he felt to be able to express himself however he wanted, without being pressured to perform according to a presumed hyper masculine aesthetic. Despite being a former football player, he felt that in this new environment, one dominated by women of color, he no longer received negative backlash when he did not perform as expected of a tall, Black, male, athletic body.

By stringing together various interactions with Savion over several years, I have come to realize that what he describes is experienced and felt by many. Savion's lived experiences, and his own reflections of them, allude to the fact that he, at times, attempts to either downplay or feature his masculinity, his Blackness, and his athleticism – identities that have been shaped by his existence and participation in the football world – because of how these embodied qualities reflect his own positionality to others. This results in a kind of performance that Savion often believes is necessary to successfully navigate the everyday. This success, I argue, is in some ways constituted by avoiding injury, whether through sport – which Savion did not do effectively – or through just living in America as a Black man – which he managed to do, despite encounters like those with the police officer.

Other Black football players demonstrate an awareness of this performance, but continue to live in both the football world and the real world however they please, despite the negative ways in which they might be perceived. Their experiences will be detailed later in the chapter. But no matter the approach, this phenomenon points to an interesting paradox that arises for Black players: because of the country's current socio-racial-political landscape, where conversations around both football and the experiences of Black men have reached a previously unforeseen hyperpublic platform, there is heightened awareness that Black football-playing men

deal with the increased potential for injury and violence in both their on-the-field and off-the-field interactions.

Violence and the Black, Athletic Body

Imperative to chapter 3 is an understanding that though the anthropology of sport does not often consider one's lived experience of doing sport, scholars *do* recognize that the body is at the heart of any study of sport. Nothing would be possible without its presence. Thus, human participants become part of the conversation about sport once the physical body is theorized.

Particularly relevant to the study of modern sport, the attempt to normalize, train, and discipline the sporting body has been analyzed from a variety of angles. Docile, disciplined bodies are on full display in football, especially during practice and in the game, as the individual players are trained to use their bodies in particular ways for the good of the collective, as they work towards a win for the team. The value attributed to the body has been considered in situations of transnational migration in sports (Besnier 2012; Uperesa 2014) as economic capital is wrapped up in the process of commodifying, objectifying, and scrutinizing the sporting body. In *Training the Body for China* (1995), Susan Brownell unites the works of Bourdieu, Mauss, and Foucault to consider 'body culture' – rather than 'habitus – to study an embodied form of culture that incorporates everything done with the body. Loïc Wacquant (2004) and Greg Downey (2005) both employ the concept of "body work" to define their respective sports, boxing and capoeira, as forms of training that incorporate sensitive description. They, along with Robert Sands (1999) vis-à-vis college football, are also scholars who embody their ethnography, and train in and participate alongside their informants, which can be defined as an aim to "thematize the necessity of a sociology not only *of* the body, in the sense of object, but also *from*

the body, that is, deploying the body as a tool of inquiry and vector of knowledge" (Wacquant 2004:viii).

Given the ways the physical body is utilized in sport – as research tool, disciplined entity, engaged participant, interested observer – deploying the notion of spectacle is helpful, considering that bodies are performing and being displayed in strategic ways. Here, spectacle can be theorized through the athletic body and the sport itself, and such complementary orientations are necessary to highlight the public, theatrical, and dramatic nature of the entire sporting endeavor (MacAloon 1982). The space conceptualized and maintained by modern sports, especially American football, characterizes the fact that sporting events are moments that mark the continuance of public spectacles (Bale 1994; Barthes 1957; Foucault 1975). Individual games are grand public displays of cultural performance that celebrate the spectacular: spectacularly executed movements enacted through spectacularly trained bodies, all within an often spectacularly regulated space. These exhibitions depend upon the participation of those in the social roles of performer, victim, and witness (Riches 1986) — which could arguably be filled by athletes, spectators, coaches, and referees. Social distance provides the logic for the segmented creation of different categories of person (Bourdieu 1983), and these distinct roles coincide to perpetuate the spectacle itself.

Not only are football sporting events spectacles, but their violence contributes to their importance. In the football world, fields and stadiums are regimented spaces with rules that successfully regulate physical bodies in their presence. Violence in a football game is used in metaphorical signification, because spectators take advantage of the scenes of controlled violence it provides (Riches 1986), and the gridiron is ruled by ritualized threats of violence. Threat can be exercised through gestures, verbal insults, or actual physical injury; thus, both

symbols of and expressions of real violence are present. Players on the field risk their bodies and often get hurt because of the actions of others; as "the cockfight is 'really real' only to the cocks" (Geertz 1973:443), the violence enacted in the game is really real only for the players because of the demands placed on their bodies. This is by no means an exaggeration. While the injuries in question do often heal, increased evidence and research of the deadly effects of football, from heat exhaustion (Tynes 2019) and Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy, or CTE (Mez et. al 2017), are bringing awareness to the life-ending violence that can result from play.

The public spectacle of modern sport is seen as a civilized and rational realm due to the rules involved, its voluntary nature, and the fact that the violence is only metaphoric because actual killing is not encouraged. Thus, the space of American football is an ordered realm where metaphoric and literal threats of violence are acceptable. The sport is controlled by rules and records and, as suggested, works to discipline and organize those in its space. Here, Roland Barthes' (1957:15) analysis of wrestling as an "open-air spectacle" of excess is useful, given his discussion of the ways in which wrestling as spectacle works to celebrate the victory of the hero and the defeat of the villain, both predetermined, by functioning within the logic and space afforded by the rules of engagement. The fact that the performance of passion, violence, suffering, and triumph during the spectacle are not real, does not matter, because feelings they evoke in spectators as they become invested in the performers, are real. Other scholars have considered the nexus of hero and villain in a given sporting event (Hall 1997; Starn 2011), but Barthes' interpretation is unique because above all, the convincing portrayal of an essential *justice* is central to justify the suffering of the villain and success of the hero. Despite its performativity, the fact that the spectator has an idea of who should win the match reaffirms justice in the real world, an abstract truth through the spectacle.

The distinction between justice in the spectacle and in the real world is particularly poignant and productive for Black college football players, especially when considering that the disciplining of and violence against bodies in football are, more often than not, enacted upon Black bodies. These coded bodies are privileged within the particular space of football because they have been trained and disciplined in strategic ways, in order to achieve overall success for the team. A large, strong, and tough young Black man is appreciated and purposely produced for the benefit of football. Sport, especially American football, also prides itself as a realm that can control the violence and aggression of its athletes, by implementing regulations meant to keep players relatively safe, and guarantee that excessive force is used only within specific boundaries.

However, the systematic structuring of football hides just as much as it claims to disclose. Perceived egalitarianism and the quest for individual achievement, both measures of modern sport, are negotiated and promoted through the spectacle, despite the fact that this is an arena riddled with structural racism. Black bodies become entertainment for mostly white pleasure, Black football labor is exploited by mostly white football coaches (Lapchick et. al 2017), and Black lives are made to fit into a larger narrative dealing with the American ideal of the ability to overcome adversity. Ironically, though, since these players are participating in the sport while simultaneously belonging to a Black body, they are not afforded the same access to History and nation, as their white counterparts, because of their racialized and diasporic identity (Bennett 2000:105).

For some, football, and modern sport in general, evoke the logic of an oppressive plantation system (Nocera & Strauss 2016; Rhoden 2007), given the control afforded to

individual universities and the NCAA, the governing body of college sport.[29] Further, outside the regimented and ordered realm of the football field, these same Black bodies are marked as dangerous, violent, and threatening (Baldwin 1963; Coates 2015; Hill 2016; Wise 2008). It is because of this disconnect that Black boys are not given the same opportunities as their white counterparts to make mistakes growing up or to just enjoy boyhood (Drake 2016; Dumas & Nelson 2016), and that Black men are routinely shot and killed by police just for living in their particular bodies (Burton 2015). The racialized Black male body, no matter the age, is almost always considered a threat, as "people who inhabit black *bodies* become floating signifiers for threat that require policing" (original emphasis; Burton 2015:41). According to historian Robin D.G. Kelley (2014), this can be attributed to the "permanent war waged by the state and its privatized allies on a mostly poor and marginalized Black and Brown working-class."

The juxtaposition that arises in praise on the football field on the one hand, and defamation in the outside world on the other, embodies the notion that Black athletes "encapsulate the extreme alternatives of heroism and villainy in world athletics in one black body" (Hall 1997:228), and highlights that there is often performativity involved when transitioning across social boundaries and between social roles (Alexander 2006; Goffman 1956). Race, gender, and class inflect a certain understanding and presentation of self in particular spaces (Cox 2015; Hawkins 2010; Jackson 2003; Pierre 2012), and to these, I would add athleticism as an identity that becomes important for Black football players. As Bryant Keith Alexander explains in *Performing Black Masculinity* (2006), this changing presentation across spaces occurs because these "are texts that establish specific sites of contestation that are not located in/on the body, but within the psyche of the social communities who assign meaning and

[29] Squire and colleagues (2018) make a similar argument about concerning plantation politics and the enslavement of Black bodies within contemporary institutions of higher education.

value to bodies and lives" (xvii). Therefore, bodies are inscribed with cultural meaning that often influence how these human beings interact with their cultural and social surroundings.

This chapter is based on my analysis that Black football players are aware of the need to properly execute this performance because of the potential consequences, and are particularly targeted when they do not. An important component of their routine is recognizing that the ritual of sport is supposed to mark belonging and unity to one's university, state, and nation, no matter the identifications that work to separate and segment in the everyday. Any transgression is stigmatized, and there are increasingly more popular examples of this stigmatization, given the nation's current political and cultural climate. For example, similar to the way that Barthes' (1972[1957]:24) spectators were offended when the wrestling match transgressed the boundaries of the formal ring, the American public did not appreciate when gymnast Gabby Douglas did not place her hand over her heart during the national anthem at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio (Boren 2016), or when quarterback Colin Kaepernick began to kneel during the national anthem the 2016 football season (Sandritter 2017). Previously categorized as national heroes for their athletic feats, they have now been portrayed as villains, and are receiving backlash for their gestures while trying to address racial injustice in the world outside of sport. The fact that politics have now blatantly come onto the field of play with the ongoing consequences of Kaepernick's years-long protest (Branch 2018) only further targets these entanglements between an athlete's commitments to various identities and institutions.

Dealing with what I consider the "really real" threat of violence on both the football field and in the outside world, this chapter asks how young Black men juggle these juxtaposing ideals and navigate the terrain of being included and excluded, accepted and denied in specific spaces

at specific times. Violence, and the different forms of injury it can cause, is a key trope of Black bodies in football[30] and this deserves exploration into how this is experienced on a daily basis.

What follows is a description of an all-day football camp for high schoolers and of a newly formed student group on Mellon's campus specifically for Black athletes. These situations and events focus on both productive and normative bodies in football and on the social experience of Blackness. Combining this with a discussion of how football injuries are treated and reflected upon allows for a more nuanced description of the ways players confront potential threats of violence and injury by ultimately relying on their brotherhood and being able to laugh with each other.

Football College

During the early summer, after spring classes have ended but before fall training camp begins, Mellon University holds football camps for aspiring college players. Every June, at least for the past decade, middle and high school players have had the opportunity to travel to Mellon's campus to work out and train with real college coaches, with the help of real college players.

In June 2018, Mellon held an all-day camp for high school defensive backs, the term used to describe defensive players who specifically play safety and cornerback. The event would provide "on the field and in the classroom instruction" for this group, which is why the event was dubbed "Football College". This designation was meant to signal that the campers would be exposed to football drills and on-field activities, as well as informative sessions in intimate settings with the Mellon coaches. The Mellon defensive backs coach and my main contact on the

[30] I agree with Ralph (2014) and others that this extends beyond just the gridiron.

football staff, Coach Smith, was in charge of the event, so he made sure I had access to everything: I was allowed entry into every session, practice, and room I wanted.

Registration for the camp started early, around 8:30 am, and by the time I arrived to the Mellon practice facility at 9:30 am, the large facility was full of people. Mellon Football staff members, Mellon coaches and coaches from other universities, current Mellon players, parents, and, of course, high-school aged defensive backs filled the space, either mingling or registering or beginning to perform the field exercises.

For the first hour, the campers were put through basic drills to collect their individual stats, a way to mark their abilities: height, weight, 40 yard dash time, and vertical and broad jump distances were all written down in association with their names, hometown, and high school. This information, Jake told them, would be kept in the Mellon system. If their performances on the field that day were impressive and their information was still with Mellon, they might be considered for a scholarship to play Division I college ball. This was only further marketed as a reality since the players were given the opportunity to interact with coaches from various Division I programs, not just Mellon.

Throughout the morning, I stood on the sidelines, interacting with a few of the parents, current Mellon players, and coaches that were also standing around. Wearing a dress and sandals, something that marked me as not a member of the Mellon staff, and apparently appearing too young to be the mother of a high-schooler, one of the dads approached me early on.

“Learning something?” he asked, with both sarcasm and interest in his voice, as he moved a bit closer to where I was standing. I had been approached in this way enough times before to know that he thought I was out of place.

"Yeah, it's pretty interesting, actually," I replied, "Some of these guys are impressive for how young they still are."

"Are you someone's sister or something?" he asked, still trying to place me.

"No, but I worked with the football program where I went to undergrad. I'm in grad school now and I'm here to do research on football players."

I knew that would peak his interest.

"Oh really? Well isn't that something," he said with a bit of a grin.

It seemed I had validated myself enough for him, as he proceeded to chat with me, asking questions about my research, but also providing insightful (and funny) comments about what we were seeing on the field. As we stood off to the side, he pointed out potential issues he saw in different players on the field.

"You see him?" he started, pointing to a player wearing what appeared to be Timbaland boots, as his camel-colored cleats stood out amongst the others. "Those are probably Cam's cleats because they're tan, but he shouldn't be wearing high tops for a skill position."

Here, the dad was referring to cleats from the equipment collection of professional player Cam Newton, the Carolina Panthers quarterback. The dad disapproved of the defensive back wearing them because they were not suited for his playing position. As noted by the discussion of cleats in chapter 4 during Braxton's soccer game, sporting equipment is made with particular playing positions and sports in mind, thereby marking certain kinds as more effective for each situation.

But it was not just equipment that the dad noted was important.

"Ok, so if you look around, you can see that most of these guys have a certain look," he added, after I commented on how I was interested in how certain bodies are better equipped to play certain positions. "Not super tall, but a certain body type that says they'll play somewhere."

"But then I see stuff like this," he said, as he motioned towards a relatively small, short, and thin Asian player running by, "and I wonder what that conversation is like. Like with teammates, college coaches, parents, high school coaches. Who is telling him he'll be able to play?"

Unfortunately, I knew the dad was right. As I glanced around at all of the high schoolers in attendance, most were solidly built guys, hovering right under and around six feet tall, with noticeable muscle mass. From my experience, they matched the physique of most of the defensive backs already at Mellon. In a way, this dad was discounting the thin player, before he was even given the opportunity to play, all because he did not fit the bodily mold proven necessary to effectively fill the role on a college team.

I talked to and laughed with the dad for several more minutes, enjoying his observations about the camp and its participants. His comments stayed with me as I walked around the field, observed the different drills that the players were being put through, and noticed the tangible body differences between the players. They were split into four groups for the drills, each in a marked location on the field. As they spent the rest of the morning completing exercises to show off their foot work, catching ability, speed, and agility, I realized that this felt like a recruiting camp. Similar to the Pro Day that occurs at colleges around the country for graduating players to show off for NFL scouts before the draft, this was an opportunity for these high school players to show off their skills for the various college coaches in attendance. "This is the only camp I know of like this," the dad had told me, and I was beginning to understand what he meant.

It was not only players that were putting in hard work that morning. Several Mellon coaches had been recruited to help with the camp and most of them, alongside their current players, demonstrated drills before they were to be completed by the campers. At about mid-morning, I came across Coach Byers, the running back coach. We greeted each other and I leaned in for a hug.

"Sorry, I'm wet," he apologized, referencing the fact that he was pouring sweat. He stuck his arm out to lightly pat me on the back from the side.

"I don't care," I replied, reaching around to receive a proper two-armed embrace. It was nowhere near the first sweaty hug I'd received from a football player.

"Yeah, you're right," he chuckled. "You fam."

I smiled, appreciating the distinction he had bestowed upon me. With about two months left in my fieldwork, it was nice that a few of the coaches had finally accepted my presence around the Mellon facilities.

When the first part of the camp concluded around 11:45 am, the campers were instructed to leave the indoor practice facility and enter the Cobb for the in-class instruction portion of the day. First, they were all ushered into the large team meeting room to watch a video about maintaining NCAA eligibility. Then, in keeping with their already formed groups, the campers were split among four meeting rooms in the Cobb, each under the direction of a different Mellon coach, for different sessions of 'classroom instruction'. Each presentation lasted about 10 minutes. And while three of the four sessions covered useful defensive back plays and field positions, the fourth, delivered by Coach Smith, stood out.

During his time with the campers, Coach Smith focused on a motto, and subsequent Twitter hashtag, that he developed. It is a phrase that draws on the idea that life, like football, is a game that you must strategically navigate and game plan in order to win.

I sat in the back of the room, with a full view of the about 25 high schoolers and white board at the front. “This isn’t like an average camp that you’d be going to, okay?” Coach Smith started off his presentation. “You’ve had a chance to work out, work out, work out. But today, we want to make sure you leave here with something a little bit different than just football knowledge. I wanna talk to you a little bit about the game of life.”

He continued, “I got a hashtag on Twitter and it makes a very broad statement. It’s how you present yourself, how you carry yourself, how you introduce yourself, it’s the things that you say, it’s the things that you do. But more so than anything else, it’s your character. And you have to play to win in every single thing that you do.”

Encouraging the high schoolers to respond, he asked what might be necessary when first introducing oneself, especially to the coaches at the camp. The guys replied with standard answers: name, hometown, handshake, eye contact. Coach Smith argued that doing these things effectively and confidently “might be the deciding factor for one of us remembering who you are.”

But then there was a shift in his speech. “What I really wanna talk to you guys about is how you carry and conduct yourselves on social media. Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter. Bottom line is all of y’all probably have a clique you hang out with in high school.” He paused. “All y’all have boys you hang out with everyday? Two, three people you kick it with? Eat with the same people at lunch everyday? Locker room, bell rings, you find your boys for a minute,

dap yourselves up?" A wide grin on his face, Coach Smith added, "I did the same thing and that's cool."

These different scenarios were met with subdued laughs among the group, as if this was their way of agreeing with the interactions Coach Smith was describing.

"So you gone have to tell me, what are some of the things you talk about when you in your groups? After school, at lunch."

"Football?" a student up front offered.

"You ain't gone talk about no football," Coach Smith exclaimed in response, jokingly rolling his eyes.

He continued, "Females!" A few of the guys laughed in response to the more accurate answer. "Don't tell me what you say about the females because we have a female in the room," he said, nodding to me in the back. A few players turned around in their seats to look at me and verify for themselves. "But we know what we talk about, right?"

His use of 'we' was interesting, as Coach Smith was associating himself with the players at least 20 years younger than him, almost outing himself as someone who also "talks about" women in his free time with his friends and colleagues.

He kept going. "And who do you have recruiting ya'll? People who once sat in your seat. So we know how this goes. And we're ok with that. But you don't put the things that you talk about in your cliques on social media. You don't have those conversations on social media. That's a no-no. Because one wrong re-tweet, one like of a post could be the difference in a coach saying 'he's not our type of guy'."

He walked the students through a possible recruiting scenario, where a player's behavior on Twitter caused him to lose a scholarship offer over a competitor who did not have such

questionable behavior. Just as he was finishing, the bullhorn rang in the hallway to signal the end of the session. But before he let the students leave, Coach Smith made sure to close with a reminder: “Everything you do in life is an interview.”

*****

By 12:30 pm, it was finally lunch time. With each camper taking two or three hamburgers and/or hot dogs, it was a wonder there was any food left by the time I went through the line. Once I had retrieved a few items, I sat off by myself, at a table near the back of the Cobb’s main floor. The other tables were full with dirty, sweaty campers, as well as a few current Mellon players. I saw Michael, a rising senior cornerback who was projected to have a stand out 2018 season and enter the NFL draft in January 2019, among them.

Given my choice in table, I figured that once they had gone through the food line, the coaches in attendance would come and sit with me. My assumption was right: Coach Smith walked over with his plate a few minutes later, and a few of the other high school coaches followed his lead. Once all together, the coaches began discussing how successful the camp had been so far. The high school coaches appreciated the time and energy that Coach Smith had devoted to coaching the 20 kids that they brought with them from Tennessee, and Coach Smith thanked them for even making the trip.

Around this time, Jerome, a 2017 graduate and former defensive back who now works for the university as an administrator in the athletics department, walked into the Cobb. He had been asked to speak with the campers about his experience with football after lunch, so he came a few minutes early to snag a hamburger. After greeting him, one of the first things that Coach Smith told Jerome was that Jordyn, a recent 2018 graduate, was also there. Once all three of the players – Jerome, Michael, and Jordyn – greeted each other, they began to talk and laugh loudly,

catching up with each other and filling the others in on what was happening in their lives. Three players from three different academic years, all interacting again as if no time had passed from when they first met years ago.

Coach Smith looked on proudly at them. I called him out on it, teasing him about how excited he looked that they were all together.

"These are my guys," he said with a smile, "so of course I'm happy."

It was interesting to see these three players and their coach together in this space. It was obvious to everyone around them in the Cobb that the players were close with each other and that they had formed a close relationship with their coach, primarily because of how they were all making fun of each other.

The 3rd floor of the Cobb, where lunch was being served, is the main floor of the large building and it is where most events like this are hosted. This floor represents the interconnectedness of recent history with the present day, as signals to Mellon's football team's origin story and glorious past were spread throughout. There were large action shots of current players on the team, plaques to honor exceptional feats, both on the field and in the classroom, and reminders of the noteworthy history of Mellon Football spread throughout the floor. This signage encouraged visitors to roam about, to take in the welcoming environment and messaging that constantly signaled back to the prestige of Mellon Football.

Because of their playing position – play-making defensive players – Jerome, Jordyn, and Michael were well-known, productive teammates, which translated to them having several pictures hanging throughout the Cobb. Well, Jerome and Jordyn did.

Coach Smith pointed out that Jordyn was in a large, prominently placed picture in the back with the head coach.

"Look, I got some love," joked Jordyn, walking over the poster to give it a closer inspection.

"He's coaching you up! What was he telling you there?" Coach Smith asked in return.

"Ain't no tellin," Jordyn replied, to which the two just laughed.

Even Jerome, who graduated a couple years ago, still had a poster displayed. His was hanging on a square column in the middle of the space. However, despite the fact that he probably had the most promising football career of them all, Michael was noticeably absent from any of the paraphernalia on the Cobb's main level.

"Michael ain't got nothing!" Coach Smith pointed out.

"He's the prodigal son," Jordyn noted. "He's the son that gets a lot of whoopings! He has too many tattoos!"

All four erupted in laughter at the comment, a lighthearted diss at Michael's expense. But what they were discussing and laughing about was much deeper than just the fact that Michael received no visual exposure and praise in the Cobb. At that moment, four Black men of different ages were discussing their awareness of how their particular Blackness was read, perceived, and processed by Mellon's white head coach.

In *Muslim Cool* (2016), anthropologist Su'ad Abdul Khabeer defines Blackness as referring to "both the histories, traditions, and customs of Black peoples and to the circulating ideas and beliefs about people of African descent," an understanding that renders this idea "as culture and discourse, which relies on and exceeds the body" (5). While Khabeer's ethnography aims to demonstrate that "Blackness is inevitable in our collective existence" (2016:222) through her analysis of how Islam, hip-hop, Blackness, and youth culture collide in the United States, she

recognizes the ways that anti-Blackness discourses, particularly white supremacy, cloud this assessment. She writes:

> White supremacy advances notions of racial superiority and inferiority that privilege those identified as White as ideal – the culmination of human potential – and normative – the standard against which all other sentient beings are judged. White supremacy produces a racial logic that sets up a grid of associations in which Blackness, in relation to Whiteness, is always and already less-than in terms of value, history and, most importantly, humanity. Blackness is also configured as morally deviant when juxtaposed against the idealized standard of normative Whiteness (Khabeer 2016:14).

Taking this analysis seriously, I show that the different ways the three players perform Blackness is treated (or policed) and rewarded (or punished) differently by the head coach because of how these various, fluid iterations might contradict team norms that conform to white ideals.

During my fieldwork, there was plenty of discussion about what the head coach, an older white man from the deep south, deemed to be appropriate and acceptable "swag" for his players. One of the first times this came up was on a game day early in the 2017 season. As I was helping to sign in the visiting high school players and their families, I recognized a player that Mellon had already extended a scholarship offer to. I did not notice him, though, because of his assumed athletic talent; I noticed him because he had a keychain hanging out of the back pocket of his jeans that was filled with the lanyards of different colleges. Since he was obviously visiting Mellon University that day, I found it odd for him to display the names of other institutions, some of them well-known Mellon rivals.

Curious, but not quick enough to ask the player himself, I asked his mom why he had so many lanyards.

"Oh, that's just all the schools that have offered him. He likes to show them off," she said with a smile, as she proceeded through the registration process after her son.

I had never seen or heard of a player doing something like that before, so I asked the Football staff assistant, who also was helping with registration, what she thought.

"Coach says 'the best swag is no swag,' so he probably won't like that if he sees it," she said, a bit disgusted at what she deemed a cocky demonstration by the high schooler.

Her description of how the head coach might react was in line with how Mellon players themselves talked about the coach's feelings towards how his players presented themselves. For him, "swag" refers to the ways in which a player carries and presents himself, including a variety of factors: behaviors in football spaces and on campus, preferred modes of dress, ways of speaking, language used, hair style, amount of facial hair. The list goes on, and in a way, it all circles back to Coach Smith's hashtag about how one should carry himself in the world. But while Coach Smith's narrative focuses more on the individual, the head coach's concern with swag deals with how the player, no longer an individual but instead a member of the Mellon Football Team, will subsequently represent the university, the team, his coaches, and his teammates. The head coach is concerned with the aesthetics and behaviors – the swag – of his individual players because they are a reflection of the overall team. Accordingly, this player's decision to boast about his individual achievements with his lanyards would not go over well with the Mellon coaching staff, particularly the head coach, because it was not considered a humble act. Their worry, had he decided to accept Mellon's offer, would be that he might negatively represent Mellon once he was on the team.

By teasing Michael, all the men involved in the exchange were acknowledging and making fun of the head coach's preferences for a certain kind of swag, or lack thereof. The fact that Michael was dubbed a 'son' invokes a kinship logic, but not the same one that I detailed in chapter 4. Football coaches are often considered mentors, gender role models, and teachers of

skills used on the field, sometimes even acting as fathers (at least on campus) to their players. I would agree that these three players feel this way about their position coach, Coach Smith. But not about their head coach. There is too much distance between the players and the head coach for this kind of relationship to be nurtured. Thus, here, Jordyn is drawing on a family structure when referring to the head coach not because of any feelings of paternal attachment, as literature and the media would have you believe, but because of the disciplinary tactics used. As A.R. Radcliffe-Brown conceptualizes patterns of behavior among kin relations where "the father is the one who must be respected and obeyed" (1952:20), it is this configuration that is called out, thereby making the head coach the father who should be respected by his sons, or players. Accordingly, Jordyn, Jerome, and Michael are all his sons, and as in any family, each has a different personality.

With this understanding of the pseudo kin relations, it is easier to then clarify the diss thrown in Michael's direction. Overall, he is seen as the stubborn, disobedient child. Being classified as the prodigal son characterizes Michael as the one of the three who is most likely to behave recklessly, without any concern for the consequences he might face. Thus, he receives the most punishments, or whoopings. The use of this term here is interesting, as it is a call to a form of physical punishment that is often used to discipline an unruly child, but is the Black English form of the word 'spanking'. With this in mind, it explains why Michael would not be honored with any posters in the Cobb, as opposed to ones that the other 'sons' have hanging.

The first two of Jordyn's exclamations about Michael were only hypothetical, true within the confines of the imagined kin relation. However, the third and last exclamation, about his tattoos, was rooted in reality. With a couple chest and back tattoos, and both sleeves completed, Michael is covered in tattoos, most of which are visible when wearing a short-sleeve shirt. But he

is not the only player with tattoos. They are quite common among football players, especially on their arms so that they can be seen during games while wearing a jersey. Savion has a back piece that covers the entire length of his large torso, but it can be easily hidden when wearing any shirt. Jerome has a few that cover his arms. As detailed in chapter 3, I went to the tattoo shop with Braxton, the soccer-loving football player, when he received his first large piece on his upper right arm. And Trae, the young player whose grandmother did not want him to join a fraternity, has covered all four of his limbs in them, each with a different theme. When explaining his reasoning for all his artwork, Trae described it to me as "your inner self being exposed on your body," thereby explaining his desire to permanently represent his family, his interests, his life mottos, and his hometown in various ways on his body.

While some players have body art more noticeable than others – based on size, location, and use of color – these bodily adornments all come to express complex social meanings, as described by Terrence S. Turner in his analysis of the social skin. Turner writes:

> The surface of the body, as the common frontier of society, the social self, and the psychobiological individual; becomes the symbolic stage upon which the drama of socialization is enacted, and bodily adornment (in all its culturally multifarious forms, from body-paining to clothing and from feather head-dresses to cosmetics) becomes the language through which it is expressed (2012:486).

The way the body is adorned represents an extension of the social on the individual that is then expressed in multiple ways. As sociologist Mary Pattillo explains in her analysis of Black middle-class youth in Chicago, "Groveland youth use their own bodies and accessories that adorn them as status markers and symbols of identity" (2013[1999]:146). Throughout this dissertation, I have mentioned my own choice of bodily adornments – clothes and shoes, jewelry, scarves, hair style – to highlight that all of these decisions marked me as 'other' in football spaces. Not wearing university colors implied I was not a staff member; wearing a dress or open

toed shoes pointed to the fact that I was not an equipment manager or videographer; wearing my hair out, not in a ponytail and out of my face, meant I was not a trainer. Purposefully, I was distinguishing myself from the few other women that were present in these spaces. But for these football players, their bodily adornments – hair style, clothing choices, tattoos – are all together solidifying their identity as players, thereby associating them with a particular community on campus.

The problem with Michael, and the reason for his missing posters, is that he had exceeded what had been deemed reasonable in terms of bodily adornments. He was doing too much to solidify his identity, as a young guy, a Black man, a football player. His short dreaded hair, as opposed to a close cut, his scruffy facial hair, his desire to constantly be dressed in athletic gear, except on weekends, his gold jewelry, his extravagant sneakers, and his bold black and gray tattoos on his lighter skin, when taken as a whole, contributed to his overall swag in a way that the head coach was not a fan of. In short, he had too many tattoos.

In *Harlemworld* (2003), an investigation into the importance of both class and race in the everyday lives of Harlemites, anthropologist John L. Jackson, Jr.'s argument is based on the notion that "race, like class, makes sense in people's daily lives in terms of performances, practices, and perceptions" (161). Since this can include dress, gesture, and language – outside of just phenotype – coincidentally, Michael's choice in bodily adornments are also markers of his performance of race. Thus, this performance is linked to his physical body. And as already mentioned, the body is inscribed with cultural meaning. Cultural theorist Hortense Spillers argues that there exists "a class of symbolic paradigms that 1) inscribe 'ethnicity' as a scene of negation and 2) confirm the human body as a metonymic figure for an entire repertoire of human and social arrangements" (1987:66). For Spillers, 'ethnicity,' very directly, refers to white and

Black, as she notes the binary opposition between ways of being ascribed to these positionalities, as well as the hegemonic notions of value tied to race and gender that are ascribed to the human body. Therefore, here, Michael's Black, male, athletic body was imbued with cultural values which were read in opposition to normative whiteness.

*****

One of the last sessions of classroom instruction, which occurred right before the campers returned to the practice field to finish out the last drills of the camp, was Jerome's presentation. Once the campers were all gathered together again in the team meeting room, Jerome was introduced as a player who received various accolades, both athletic and academic, during his time in college. But before talking to the campers, a brief highlight reel played to chronicle his journey playing for Mellon.

"That's not one of the best players in Mellon history, that's one of the most productive players in college football history," introduced Coach Smith. "But with one play is where it ended. Regardless of how good you are on the football field, there are other things in life that matter."

With that, the film began. Jerome contributed a voiceover to the beginning of the video, stating that he regretted nothing, "not a single second," about his time at Mellon because he "left it all out on the field." Though the video was only a few minutes long, the clips of his feats on the football field during his impressive four years on the Mellon team were exceptionally effective in portraying just how good of a player Jerome was. "Speaking of spectacular, one of the best," pointed out an announcer before Jerome was shown running the entire length of the field, after a kickoff return, to score a touchdown. Game footage from several competitions

demonstrated Jerome's various contributions to the team, showing his speed, grace, and agility while effectively avoiding blockers, intercepting the ball, and scoring touchdowns.

A gifted safety and punt returner with potential for the NFL, Jerome suffered a severe knee injury – MCL, meniscus, and ACL were all impacted – in the fourth game of his senior season. He worked hard to rehab the injury, returning to Mellon for surgery and training after graduation, and was even able to heal enough to work out with a professional team during the spring of 2018. But an MRI right before the draft in May 2018 showed that he would likely never play professional football because of a new meniscus tear. Combined with his other injuries, this last tear was his third strike.

The play during which he suffered the severe injury was shown at the very end of the film, but only briefly. And while the campers had been audibly reacting to Jerome's abilities during the different plays, a hush fell over the room as his injury was shown. Afterwards, he walked up to the podium, introduced himself, and began to tell his story, not through film, but in his own words.

The theme that ran through the presentation of his archetypal story, which lasted only about six minutes, was that no matter one's plans and expectations, not everything can be controlled because of life's unpredictability. When something does not go as plan, it is necessary to have an alternate strategy. "You can only control what you can control" was something Jerome's safety coach told him early in his college career and he quickly learned that the advice was applicable outside of the football field. It was interesting that his take away from the experience was not about the violence of the game, but about how unpredictable it is.

"As you saw, I had a great career. I was thinking about going to the NFL, taking care of my family," the soft-spoken, retired athlete said to the room full of campers, coaches, and chaperones. "Unfortunately, things happen that you can't control."

After his knee's third strike, Jerome realized that his academic experiences at Mellon were important and did matter. It is because of his success in the classroom, and the networking opportunities provided by his university, that he was able to transition to his current job in administration. Ideally, this job will act as a stepping stone as he pursues his second dream: to become the general manager of an NBA team.

"I have guys that I played with who are in the NFL, who I competed with, and I always thought that I belonged in the NFL. But sometimes things don't work out that way. I made friends for life and we all support each other either way," he said, acknowledging his football brothers.

He paused and stepped back a bit from the podium. "So that's my story. I hope y'all learn from it and don't take it for granted, playing football."

Jerome's heartfelt speech was met by thunderous applause, a stark shift in the room from how quiet it had been since his injury was shown on video. I imagine it was its inspirational nature – Jerome's ability to overcome continued hardship and succeed in spite of it – that led to this response. But generally speaking, it was a talk for the aspiring college players to realize the importance of both athletics *and* academics, given time playing football is not guaranteed. And the reason for this uncertainty has nothing to do with one's playing ability, but instead with the possibility of experiencing a career-ending injury.

*****

Over the course of the day that Football College occurred, Mellon Football delivered a variety of messages – both explicit and indirect – to the campers. During the on-field measurements and drills, the high schoolers' bodies were put on display, rationally documented and statistically noted for their abilities and potential to produce. The importance of academics was on full display, focusing on high school grades and classes in college, to emphasize the duality that is indexed by their constantly hyphenated identification as student-athletes. Coach Smith's classroom session established the need to present oneself professionally because of how behaviors and interests and dress can be perceived by one's superiors. All of these messages, which are coming in an official capacity from Mellon Football, deal with performing well within the normative confines established by Football. And most of them revolve around the way that one's body is used, scrutinized, exploited, and potentially stereotyped, both within and beyond sport.

But when the current players were just talking amongst themselves, with their coach participating in their informal discussion, the focus changed. The conversation that occurred between Jerome, Jordyn, and Michael more directly spoke to the potential experiences of specifically Black players because their interaction focused, instead, on what happens when Football norms are transgressed, disregarded, and played with by those who already deviate from white norms and standards. In this example, a player is not recognized visually in the Cobb. Other times, this could result in a player not being selected to talk to the media after a game, not being asked to travel to events where he would represent Football as a whole, or having to perform extra drills or reps during practice. Some kind of punishment, or 'whooping,' is the result.

Negotiating Injury

I ended up with a broken arm in January 2018, about halfway through my fieldwork year. It was an unfortunate personal setback and I worried that it would interfere with my research. I was in a large, cumbersome, uncomfortable cast for five weeks, and then in a brace for almost three months while I was rehabbing. I avoided driving for a couple weeks, I had to learn to sleep on my back to help manage the swelling, and it was difficult to get around, as I maneuvered through my hectic life with only one functional arm and hand. But it actually proved to be a helpful research advantage, as I was able to interact with players who were dealing with their own football-related injuries in an entirely new way. Plus, it showed me just how annoying it can be to deal with an injury that completely inhibits one's ability to use an entire limb, something players often have to endure.

Back in August 2017, I had a conversation with a player who suffered a substantial knee injury during training camp, one that caused nerve damage and, he was told, usually only occurs with really bad car accidents. He would have to be in a cast and stay off the leg for months, use crutches and stop driving, and rehab extensively. He was out for the season before it even got started. While asking him about the injury, I remember being impressed by how well-versed he was on how a properly functioning knee reacts, the details of the injury itself, the rehab he would have to undergo, and strategies he could implement outside of rehab.

After experiencing my own injury, I became even more impressed when talking to any injured player. While I could barely describe what was going on with my own body, they knew exactly what was going on with theirs. In fact, some could tell me about myself before I even had the chance to offer the limited information I did know. I was fascinated by how much they knew about what was going on with my arm: how long I would have to be in a cast, what kind of rehab

I was doing, how the bone was broken. It was an insightful look at the fact that to them, bodily injury was common, almost expected. And there was a particular way to go about treating it.

I had lunch with Jerome in early May while I was still in the brace, which happened to be the week after his MRI that confirmed his likely inability to play professional ball. After showing me the video of the play when he got injured and the scars on his knee from his surgeries, he asked to see my scar. I told him I did not have one because I opted out of surgery to fix the broken bone, instead tapping the hard plastic of the brace that had been hidden under my shirt sleeve. And he reacted with what I can only call restrained disgust. For him, surgery leads to a quicker recovery time – and a faster return to the field – so it is preferred. I, on the other hand, have never undergone surgery and I did not intend on that being the first time. Jerome responded to my injury the way several other players did. In their opinion, surgery was the desired route. When talking about my arm with a current NFL player, I was told that my fear of the surgery was silly. I would have been unaware of the procedure because of the anesthesia and the scar would not have been too bad, he informed me as he showed me his scar from a surgery for a broken collarbone.

"See, you, you have no war wound," he quipped. "I don't feel bad for you that you're still in that brace since you didn't go through with it. My scars are part of my story. I wouldn't be the same without them."

*****

Jordyn, one of the defensive backs present during Football College, once explained to me the difference between being hurt and being injured. "If you play," he said, "you're always hurt. 'Hurt' means you have to play through it. 'Injured' means you can't play." He described his constant body aches and pains, pointed out that several of his fingers no longer straighten, and

spoke to me about a new ankle issue that had presented itself in practice last week to show the various ways he was hurt, in that moment. But that was juxtaposed with the ACL injury he suffered during his junior year, which caused him to miss the whole season. To further explain the distinction between being hurt and being injured, he used the example of a concussion. "Those are serious," he said, "so it's considered an injury. They put you through cognitive tests to show that you're normal and can play again."

The 'they' he was referring to was the athletic training staff members, particularly the executive director of athletic medicine, who are responsible for validating the health of the athletes before they are allowed to work out, practice, and play. But important here is the fact that reclaiming a 'normal' status is the goal whenever an injury occurs, as it speaks, again, to the notion that there is a desired marker of bodily health that is required to participate in the sport. And because a Football affiliate makes those decisions, they could potentially be manipulated to meet the needs of the team during the season. Consider, for example, Carter's shoulder injury. He had undergone shoulder surgery in late-January 2018 – after the regular season ended and Mellon competed in a post-season bowl game – even though he sustained the injury in mid-September 2017. When I asked him why he waited so long to go through with the procedure, he first downplayed the seriousness of the injury.

"I tore the labrum in my shoulder, so it was just a minor injury," he claimed, listing at least five other teammates who have had the same injury to highlight how common it was.

I was surprised when he told me this. I made sure to tell him that perhaps the injury seemed common because of who he was constantly surrounded by, but in the 'real world,' that was not a common injury. He laughed, acknowledging the truth of my statement, but still

supporting his own assertion. “Well, even so,” he continued, “lots of guys play with it torn and that’s what I did. If I could, I wanted to play through the season.”

Carter was one of several Mellon wide receivers, but he saw playing time every game. He was a consistent player and the coaches could rely on him for a least a couple catches a game and a decent number of yards run. He had been notified by the athletic trainers that as long as he was careful, he could play through the end of the season and have the surgery afterward. So, rather than miss the opportunity to play during his redshirt junior year, Carter – with the help of his parents – decided to postpone the surgery.

I include Carter’s predicament here as a way to discuss the ways that football, the sport, and Football, the system, plays into the decisions made about a player’s physical health. Carter had been playing the sport, in some capacity, since he was eight years old. It makes sense that he would have wanted to guarantee as much playing time as possible during what could have been his last season ever. But Carter’s story directly highlights the ways that Football is concerned with maximizing the potential labor of each sporting body for the benefit of the overall team. This is not to say that Carter was not taken care of: the surgery, which he discovered would have cost him $25,000, and the rehab were both expenses covered by the Football program, and he was carefully monitored to ensure that the injury did not get worse as he continued to play. But there was strategy involved in this decision to make sure that Carter could play for as long as possible, thereby increasing the chances that Mellon would win more regular season games to be eligible for the post-season.

According to Hortense Spillers’ analysis, these medical treatments reduce a player to “flesh,” a body with “zero degree of social conceptualization” (1987:67) that “demarcate[s] a total objectification” (1987:68). Once an object that can be medically treated for the overall

benefit of the team, these kinds of decisions about players' surgeries are made. As with the bureaucratic care discussed in chapters 3 and 5, Football cares enough to make sure that players maintain their playing eligibility. This becomes apparent when academic resources are provided to help keep grades up and excessive medical attention is provided to ensure the body's playing potential. Athletes need to be eligible to play, and a big part of that is maintaining the body's health. There are tools, resources, techniques, and plans in place to maintain the functionality of football-playing bodies in a way that is appropriate and profitable for Football. Then, players use their experiences with injury almost as a badge of honor, or 'war wound,' a marker that they successfully dealt with and overcame the difficult time.

Again, it is important to note that this is often done on the backs of Black labor. After all, "predominantly white and wealthy academic institutions are dependent on poor, black, and male athletic bodies for their labor" (Woodbine 2016:8). The risk of injury is a predicament faced by all athletes who play competitive football, but considering the demographics of college football, Black players are disproportionately inflicted by these almost inevitable and seemingly expected playing injuries. Thus, as the brotherhood outlined in chapter 4 is effective because Black players relate to one another based on shared experiences, dealing with these injuries can also be added as a shared experience (Franklin 1999). Given the aforementioned discussion of Blackness, football-related injuries are not the only injuries that are concerning for Black players, those athletes who inherently contradict the particularly ordered spaces of both Football and the real world. And oftentimes, an awareness of these situations is discussed when Black players convene.

A Space for Black Athletes

"What about that Black Power meeting I walked in on the other day?" Andre joked with Alexander as we were all sitting in the Mellon student union. Even though Andre, the Theater Studies major, and Alexander, "Grandpa," had both just completed their senior playing seasons, they still saw each other frequently, either on purpose or by chance. On this chilly February afternoon, Alexander joined Andre and I after randomly spotting us in the crowded union building.

I could tell by Alexander's confused expression that he was not immediately sure what Andre was asking about, but he could not contain his laughter once he realized. From their banter, I learned that Alexander and John now lead a newly developed group for Black student-athletes on campus called Black Athlete's Union (BAU). The 'Black Power meeting' from a couple weeks before was their first formal gathering and Andre happened to walk in on it because it took place in the Cobb. I was surprised by the fact that they met in a football building, so when I asked why they held it there, Alexander told me that while their university staff sponsor is not associated with Football, he is a Black administrator who used to work specifically for football development. Now the Senior Associate Director of Athletics, the sponsor, Desmond, figured that the Cobb was a centralized location well-suited for all the group's potential members.

The BAU was intriguing. I knew that Mellon had never before had an organized group specifically catered to Black athletes, both male and female. While these particular athletes do make up a small percentage of the overall athlete population – with eight of the twenty-one varsity sports not even having any Black teammates – players on different teams, especially basketball and football, often stick together and do not strategically mingle with other players. I decided to look into the group.

After checking in with John, I learned that there were a few football players who acted as leaders of the group, but they did not actually found the organization. Instead, three female athletes – Melanie, a lacrosse player; Kiara, a basketball player; and Jasmine, a track athlete – developed the concept. These women then paired up with five football players to help spread the word about the group and increase its exposure among the student-athlete population. From interviews with these female athletes and the group's university sponsor, it became immediately clear that all parties involved saw a need for this kind of organized group.

Over dinner in early March, the group's founders explained to me their reasoning behind starting the group. Melanie, the one who initially came up with the idea, told me that at the beginning of the school year, her junior year, she came back as a mentor for an already established group for all student-athletes. But she was bothered when she realized she did not know any of the other Black athletes in the room. She wanted to get a group together to address this disconnect, which is when she brought the idea to Kiara and Jasmine, and they worked during the fall semester to secure funding and a sponsor from the university.

"We're glad that Desmond is our administrative person because he's super cool," Melanie told me as we all ate tacos at a local restaurant.

"We did get some push back initially, though," added Jasmine. "When we told him we wanted the group to just be for Black athletes, he questioned it." Talking directly to the other women, she said, "Remember? He was like, 'You know you can't just meet, right? You'll have to do some kind of programming?'"

Later, when I interviewed Desmond, he validated that this was his initial reaction to the group. "It was needed," he said, "but I was only okay with the group as long as it had a purpose."

Having attended a predominantly white institution himself for college, he recognized the importance of having a group where as a Black athlete, one feels comfortable bouncing ideas off of the other people involved in competitive sport.

"When I was in school, we made it a point to be a close group. It was like a village mentality," he said, referencing his undergraduate years.

Because of this revelation, I was interested in what Desmond thought was the purpose of BAU. "In your opinion, then, what's the point of the group?"

"Building a support or preparedness group," he answered quickly. "If something happens, there's now a group we can rally with. It gives support and community, but really, there was no real goal for practical change when forming it. We didn't form with a mission to solve concrete issues."

When I asked him to clarify what exactly might occur that would require Mellon's Black athletes to rally, Desmond alluded to potential controversies that might arise: racialized police violence against unarmed Black citizens, student stereotyping of Black athletes, racist and microaggressive comments made in the media, and difficulties associated with being Black players with white coaches. He then made a statement that demarcated a clear distinction between Black and white athletes: "We know what we go through more than they know what we go through. We need us more than anyone."

Similar to Braxton's comment in chapter 4 that distinguished between his white and Black teammates during Carter's swimming incident, here, Desmond also noted a racial divide by using language that references an 'us' vs 'them' dichotomy. For Desmond, this binary extends beyond just the teammates that Braxton was referring to in order to also include faculty, administrators, and local supporters. Desmond noted the importance of having Black adults at

the university that support Black athletes because they are more likely to understand the implications of potentially controversial socio-political situations. Throughout my fieldwork, this idea was constantly reinforced by Black players, family members, coaches, and administrators. According to them, skinfolk were the only kinfolk (borrowing from a quote attributed to Zora Neale Hurston) that could be relied upon during playing years in college. Conversely, white folk (teammates, coaches, and administrators) were often cautiously treated as acquaintances, sometimes friends, but not kin. Therefore, these meetings were intended to provide a space for Black athletes to discuss, amongst themselves, issues that they determined were particular to their intersectional population as Black student-athletes.

*****

Since learning of its inception, I kept in touch with both the members and leaders of the BAU. The group met, at most, twice a month, and in early April, they chose to address a relatively controversial topic: how to deal with the divide between "Black Mellon" and Mellon's Black athletes. As soon as the topic was introduced, the group of about 20 athletes from various sports seemed to give a collective sigh. Apparently, it was a well-known issue among this crowd.

To start the conversation, Melanie outlined the noticeable separation between "regular" Black students and Black athletes on Mellon's campus – a distinction that poignantly became simplified to 'students vs athletes' over the course of the conversation – and then asked how the group felt about it and how the issue could be addressed. According to the athletes in the room, the current problems revolved around the fact that so much time was spent with their teams and at athletic events that it was difficult to prioritize interactions with other students. This then interfered with each group's – the students and the athletes – ability to completely understand or relate to what the other dealt with. No matter their sport, these athletes sensed that students

believed they were only able to attend the university because of the privilege provided by their athletic talent.

Given the mixed attendance, the conversation then became about what it means to be Black on one's specific team and in one's overall sport. The wrestlers explained the pressure of feeling like they have to work harder for the Black athletes coming behind them because there are only a couple on the team every year. The women on the track and lacrosse teams noted their discomfort when their 'cultural' differences are highlighted, especially questions around how their hair is worn during the season. But the football players were much less bothered by the racial dynamic. John played lacrosse in high school and used this experience to explain that while he felt out of place in that sport, he was completely comfortable playing football because "most of us are Black anyway." Matt, a cornerback, added that having played on both predominantly Black and predominantly white football teams, the real shock occurs when a player does not fit in with the culture of a team. "It's not so much because of how you look," he said, "but it's the idea that your way of being doesn't align with that of your teammates." The other football players agreed with these statements, solidifying the notion that Mellon's team had provided these particular players with other men they could rely on and feel comfortable around. These observations also spoke to the previously mentioned 'us' vs 'them' dichotomy, as athletes on predominantly white Mellon teams (all teams except for basketball and football) noted the feelings of isolation that can result as one of only a couple Black athletes on a team.

Melanie then poignantly asked the football players in the room if they felt there was a specific stereotype they must negotiate because of the sport they play. Asking this question presented an opportunity for the players to collectively explain why, especially recently, the answer was a resounding "yes." John looked to Trick, an outspoken cornerback, to describe a

recent troubling incident on campus: a Black female student publicly shamed "Black Mellon football players" for their inappropriate and insensitive treatment of Black Mellon women. Since this was done on an online forum, a few Black players took it upon themselves to respond to her comments, which only intensified the situation.

While the players agreed to the importance of the alleged sexual violence she was referring to, their discomfort with the incident was two-fold. First, the guys did not appreciate that she chose to discuss the issue online, an opinion that reinforced Coach Smith's comments to the high school campers about the dangers of certain social media posts being discovered. "What's at stake is higher for athletes and students don't usually understand that," John began, alluding to the fact that consequences like termination from the team or losing eligibility can result from what was insinuated. "It's just a different set of rules," Matt added, "and on social media grounds, students just have the upper hand every time." In their opinion, since this fact seemed to be lost on students, it only further exemplified the divide between students and athletes.

Second, the players felt it was problematic that the student generalized her complaint about a specific person to include about half of the team. To them, this epitomized the tendency to stereotype all Black football players as aggressive, sexual, violent, and unable to be in committed romantic relationships. This, they believed, was a mere extension of the stereotypical belief that they were unapproachable and unfriendly, only cared about fostering their athletic abilities, and were not smart enough to attend college on just their intellectual merit. Olúfémi Táíwò would describe this as a belief in black individuality, a kind of individuality that does not actually recognize the individual, but instead "characterizes the group and is transferred by extension to all its members *regardless of what variations there may be from one individual*

member to another" (original emphasis; 2003:40). In short, the potential particularities of the individuals in this group are rarely recognized, as they are often lumped together based on their race and the sport they play. Black players recognize that few of the assumptions made about them are positive, unless they were tied to their abilities on the gridiron, and the public nature of her complaint only added weight to these negative views.

Further, their feelings towards the incident demonstrated an interesting inverse to the football players' usual interactions, as here, they were hoping for a more individualized approach to their persona, rather than the usual instinct to group together and be treated as brothers. While they were still supportive of the player at the center of the controversy, there was an individual desire to be separate from it and not be grouped in with his negative actions.

The situation with the female student, seemingly addressed by the time BAU met, represented the underlying gendered and racialized dynamics that Black football players must often navigate in their everyday sporting lives. And overall, the BAU meeting further demonstrated that social separation from other students encourages social cohesion among college athletes, both Black athletes in general and athletes on the same team in particular.

*****

I found out right before the BAU meeting that Alexander would not be able to attend because he was in the hospital. In addition to his knee surgery before the bowl game in December, he had wrist surgery in early March to correct an ongoing issue. Unfortunately, something went wrong over the weekend and he was admitted for an emergency procedure to deal with an infection and the subsequent swelling it caused. Talking to him on the phone, he sounded pretty heavily medicated, so I promised to visit in the next few days.

However, as the BAU meeting wrapped around 9:00 pm, I heard two players talking about going to see Grandpa. Alexander had called John earlier in the day to update him on the situation and John was planning a visit that night with a few teammates. I was told I could tag along, but upon illegally parking my car near the large black SUV carrying John, Braxton, and Trick near the university hospital, I had a feeling we might not be in the right place.

Having just recently visited the hospital for my own arm injury, I quickly verified my suspicion, but I let them navigate us around the back of the hospital, through construction, dirt trails, and unpaved parking lots. During the walk through the dimly lit paths, we filled the silence by talking about our own injuries and trips to the hospital. Braxton described his most recent hamstring injury that required a painful stem cell procedure to correct. John had been dealing with back spasms and the troubling findings of a recent knee MRI, and surprisingly, Trick had never been seriously injured in college.

We continued to walk around, with John constantly checking his phone's navigation, until we were eventually met by a chain-link fence. Determined, Braxton suggested hopping the fence. They were all over six feet tall and had plenty of upper body strength, so it would be no big deal for them. But remembering their short and injured accomplice, John asked, "Yeah, but what about Tracie?" I joked that they could just toss me over, as long as they watched out for my arm, but Braxton had a better idea, suggesting that I crawl under instead. We debated how to tackle the unwelcome barrier in our path before deciding that it would be unrealistic to jump the fence. We collectively agreed to return to our cars and drive to a different part of the hospital.

As we were walking back, we saw a person approaching us, the only one we had seen all night. As we got closer, we saw that he was dressed in scrubs, a marker that he belonged in the area much more than we did. John decided to ask him for directions. Noticing the man's shift in

body language as we approached, Braxton giggled and sat on a nearby bench, separating himself from the upcoming conversation. Trick joined him, but I walked over with John. Shifting his eyes between the two of us and the two of them on the bench, the man explained that we were in the complete wrong place and that we needed to drive to the main entrance on the major street that runs in front of the hospital. John and I thanked him for the help, and we all kept walking.

Almost immediately after, before the man was even out of earshot, Braxton and Trick started laughing. “He looked so nervous! He just knew he was going to get robbed right after work,” Braxton said, referring to the nervous energy we all sensed from the hospital worker. Though unstated, Braxton was assuming that the short, white man was unsure of what would come from his interaction with four unknown young, Black people at night behind the hospital. Not knowing how their ‘threatening’ appearance would be taken, this is likely why Braxton and Trick separated themselves from the conversation. The guys laughed about the incident all the way back to the cars.

Given our new strategy, we drove around and easily walked into the hospital from its main entrance. We signed in at the desk in the lobby, retrieving our name tags and learning which room Alexander was in. I decided to head up this mission, weaving us past gurneys in hallways, before arriving at the correct hospital wing. Then we were confronted by the nurses at the main nursing station.

“Honey, who are y’all here to see?” one of the women asked Trick.

“Alexander Johnson,” he replied.

“Oh, it’s too many of y’all. He’s already got people in there and he’s only supposed to have four visitors.”

Realizing that we, on our own, were four visitors, I could feel the guys' energy shift around me, as they began to figure out a way to get into Alexander's room. They immediately began to play off of each other, taking each other's lead.

"You have to let us see him," Trick started. "We know it's late. We won't stay for long."

Braxton added, "Yeah, we promise!"

"Pleeeeaaassseee! We have to see our teammate," John jokingly pleaded as he pointed to his Mellon Football shirt. "You know he's in there hurtin' without us."

Entertained by their performance, I stayed quiet because I knew I would be part of the package deal if they could get through.

The nurse, unable to hide her smile, shoo'd us through, but not before making it clear that we could only stay for a few minutes.

"I shouldn't be surprised that worked," I laughed as we walked down the hall.

"You know how we do," John replied, looking down at me with a wink. And I knew exactly what he meant. It was not the first time I had seen players use their team affiliation to charm their way into, or out of, a situation. Despite their paradoxical personal engagements with the team, they had learned when it could come in handy.

We proceeded down the long hall, counting off the room numbers until we got closer to the right one. But we were met by an unexpected sight once we got to the end. We could tell that Alexander's room was straight ahead, the last visible room before the hallway angled to the right. But three police officers stood against the blank wall between the corner at the left and Alexander's door. Because of how the hall turned, it was difficult to tell if they were guarding Alexander's room or the one numerically before it, which was at the end of the hall on the left. We slowed down and stopped talking.

“What’d he do now?!” John exclaimed.

“Must be something serious since they sent three of ‘em,” Braxton responded.

These comments were directed at the seemingly excessive police presence in the hallway that John and Braxton assigned to Alexander's room. I figured they were joking, but I could feel the energy around me shift again, as we all cautiously approached. It is the hesitance that comes from interactions with police, based on the racialized violence that sometimes follows (Burton 2016).

It was not until we were right at the rooms that we saw the police officers were there for the other room; a fourth one was in talking to the patient.

“Had me worried there for a second,” Braxton said under his breath as he knocked on Alexander’s door.

We entered the room after an anonymous voice said we could. The door closed behind us and we each greeted Alexander as he sat in his hospital bed, surrounded by his mom and his younger sister. It was only then that John asked about the police officers. Apparently, Alexander’s neighbor had been disrespecting the nurses for some time and reinforcements were called in to calm him down.

“Well, that’s crazy,” I said.

“But not as crazy as our time getting here,” Trick said behind me. John filled the room in on our adventure around the back of the hospital.

“I was wondering why it took so long for you to get here,” Alexander shook his head, feigning disappointment at our lack of sense of direction. “Y’all knew you were in the wrong place.” Pointing at Braxton, he added, “You were just here a few weeks ago!”

We all laughed, recognizing again how odd our journey there had been.

*****

I recount these events to bring attention to the oddly concurring interests that presented themselves that spring evening. The BAU meeting, Alexander's emergency surgery, the interaction with the hospital worker, and the police officers guarding the patient's room all spoke to different ways that Blackness and athleticism and injury intersect and become important – sometimes even life or death – experiences in the everyday lives of Black football players.

This particular BAU meeting provided a space for Black players to air their frustrations with their treatment on campus among other students, noting the difference in their experience because of their membership on the football team. And ironically, the only reason that Alexander, one of the group's leaders, was not able to attend this meeting to contribute his opinions was because he suffered a football-related injury. Despite the urgency around getting the wrist issue fixed, the fact that he was injured was not a shock. Players are constantly facing and dealing with injuries, navigating them while also progressing through their quotidian lives. But when they must interact with people outside of their traditional football spaces, like those at the hospital, these football players are reminded of how their appearance and social being might be perceived hesitantly by those not used to being in their presence. Even their reaction to the police officers represented an immediate recognition of self, due to the shift in behavior the interaction caused. However, it is difficult to challenge the bond formed between football brothers, so no matter the potential obstacles, those three players were committed to seeing their brother that night in the hospital.

Conclusion

Because of the demands placed on the football-playing body, most college football players must deal with living in bodies that do not conform to certain norms, particularly based

on size and perceived strength. But in contrast to the daily traumas experienced by the Black players I worked with, David Leonard (2017) argues that white players often have a distinct, more privileged, experience because of the systematic advantages offered by their whiteness, both on and off the field. Because of the social experience of Blackness, Black players interact with the social world in a way that requires navigation and negotiation of the perceptions and stereotypes that come from their specific social being.

Based on their interactions with each other and others not included in this tight-knit grouping, I found that Black players are aware of how they are stereotyped, racialized, and gendered beings in certain spaces at certain times. And knowing that this has the potential to lead to violence and injury, in its various iterations, they often react accordingly to avoid any negative consequences. Interestingly, it is the awareness of these intersecting notions of Blackness, violence, injury, and athletic bodies that allows for jokes to be made by them; they are making fun of the need for a socially determined performance of identity.

At the outset of this chapter, I asked how individual Black players negotiate the potential for injury and violence, given its likelihood on the football field and its real possibility in the world outside of sport. As a call back to chapter 4 on brotherhood, and to extend beyond it, this chapter has detailed that they navigate potentially harmful and dangerous situations by finding community and solace in each other as brothers and joking about it.

In *On the Fireline* (2007), an ethnography about the high-risk profession of Arizona firefighters, Matthew Desmond explores the role of banter and joking in the creation of the firefighter brotherhood. For the men Desmond worked with, teasing each other and shit talk was key to their community- and trust-building. This form of entertainment was meant "to build solidarity and friendship ties in a twisted system that fosters alliance through animosity"

(2007:99), often reinforcing a hierarchy within the firecrew. Black players are using jokes to reinforce their football brotherhood, but unlike the firefighters, it is not at each other's expense. Instead, the Mellon football players are playing around and making fun of each other, in the midst of uncomfortable situations, as a way to demonstrate their understanding of a collective struggle in navigating the football world and the real world as Black men. The diss at Michael's expense, the laid back environment during BAU while describing discriminatory events on campus, the jokes about the hospital worker, and the initial comments made about the police officers in the hallway all point to a keen awareness of racist and discriminatory behaviors that Black players often confront. They are using humor as a sophisticated way to signal their recognition of how problematic these situations are, as their Black, male, athletic bodies are read as threatening in opposition to normative whiteness, thereby using a "really real" response to the "really real" threat.

Throughout this chapter, the players were faced with the potential for experiencing racism that could end in violence, as they interacted with predominantly white coaches in football spaces, navigate university campuses and classrooms, and move through their daily lives. Further, this chapter is bookended by Savion's interaction with the police while driving to practice and the worry of confronting the police in the hospital hallway, both situations where Black players were directly and indirectly interacting with the police, agents of the state who have shown an increased use of violence against Black bodies (Guardian 2015). Thus, this chapter explains how Black football players are navigating the collective risk of what *could* negatively happen to them as they deal with racism and discrimination. This is what the football moms in chapter 5 were burdened with when they were concerned for their sons' safety, as those from marginalized positions have heard the stories of what has happened to others. From cases as

extreme as the murders of Emmett Till and Trayvon Martin, to those of Black people being harassed and reported to the police for mundane actions (Nash et.al 2018), these narratives are circulated, taken seriously, and used as warnings for those who match similar profiles.

The jokes and humor they were constantly engaged in represents how these Black players were preparing for and bracing themselves for what could happen, as they navigated a world filled with the real potential for violence to be enacted against them. No matter Black players' supposed affiliation with a feigned 'post-racial' ordered team, they are still uniquely confronted with interactions that pose the risk of quotidian violence, both off and on the field, and they are successfully navigating these risks together.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

As I finish writing this dissertation in fall 2019, college football is celebrating its 150th anniversary; recall from chapter 2 that the Princeton and Rutgers game of November 6, 1869 was the first recognized intercollegiate American football game. The anniversary is surrounded by pageantry and performance: Division I uniforms now include stylish '150' logo patches, with approval from the NCAA Rules Committee for inclusion on uniforms;[31] six million viewers watched ESPN College Football 150's opening documentary, *Football is US: The College Game*[32], on its opening night in August 2019;[33] and, various football institutions, like the National Football Foundation and the College Hall of Fame, will host activities throughout the season to commemorate the anniversary.[34] And if that is not enough, ESPN CFB150 has vowed to release new digital content every day through the end of the 2019 football season.

The narratives about the anniversary focus on different aspects of the game, from its origins and tradition, to personal memories of time playing, to best on-the-field moments and plays, all to highlight what sets this college game apart from other sports. Threaded throughout it all, though, is an appreciation for the various college programs that have participated and contributed to the history, which in turn places a focus on the teams that have brought notoriety to these popular and prestigious programs. The media consistently speaks to the importance of specific teams and different team dynamics in how the game is currently played. But in this

[31] https://cfb150.org/index.aspx
[32] https://vimeo.com/353568890
[33] https://espnpressroom.com/us/press-releases/2019/08/espn-college-football-150-reaches-19-million-fans-in-one-day/
[34] https://footballfoundation.org/news/2019/7/10/college-football-prepares-to-celebrate-150th-anniversary.aspx

dissertation, I have complicated this central claim, the one upon which all of American football is based, to show how it is limited to certain players. These media narratives lead one to believe that players rely on their teammates, their coaches, and their team administrators while playing college football. Instead, Black athletes prioritize different relationships. My work demonstrates that they reappropriate and reimagine the normalized team to signal the special shared experience of their Black football brothers and the particular importance of their extended kin, specifically their moms.

*****

The biggest surprise for me during fieldwork was how little the players seemed to be concerned with the ways their lives figured into larger national conversations surrounding race and football. I began fieldwork in August 2017, when public discourse around Colin Kaepernick, anthem protests, and social justice issues addressed through sport was at its height (Sandritter 2017). I expected to be constantly engaged in conversations about racism, discrimination, and exploitation. I was working with Black college football players, a group I assumed to be linked to these professional league conversations and would be vocal about how race had influenced their time playing the sport.

However, that was not explicitly the case. Players seemed unfazed of their own racialized experiences, in the sport and in the real world, as they would rarely discuss them outright in our daily conversations. At the time, I was not sure how to reconcile this alleged disconnect. How were these players not aware of the role that race was playing in their experiences? Why were they not more invested in the protests, given they belonged to the group that Kaepernick was speaking out for? Why were there so few conversations about exploitation within the college athletics system?

Now, I do not think the two are so unrelated. This disconnect was not as prevalent as I had previously assumed because all of these concerns were actually interconnected in several ways. Once I had spent enough time with the players, each of my concerns could be explained by what I learned about their everyday lives with football. Below are my concluding analyses of how these national conversations and their quotidian experiences are intertwined and why Black college players might not have reacted in the way I initially expected.

1) There is comfort in the liminality of college, which means that these athletes are not pushed to reflect on situations as they are occurring or to disrupt the system in any way. This is likely why there was not much talk about the Kaepernick protests, though the players were clearly aware they were going on. There are certain protections that come with the university classroom, a dorm, a dining hall; these are spaces where for four or five years, this young population is separated from the real world and this liminality is only exaggerated for college athletes.

Chapter 3 described the myriad ways that college football programs order, surveil, discipline, and bureaucratically care for their players, all in the hopes of crafting a cohesive and efficient team on the field. And despite their paradoxical personal engagements with the team, Black players accept dimensions of this community, as being socialized into a team is imperative to the fundamentals of football. This large grouping of feigned community has to participate in rituals to gain membership, endure daily ordering, disciplining, and surveillance, and balance both aspects of their dually indexed identities as student-athletes. Together, all of this work on behalf of the program further separates athletes from the rest of the student body, compounding the liminality of college for college athletes. Thus, it is very rare for players to publicly speak out against their team, their university, and the system of college football.

Further, really reflecting on their experiences with football would likely cause Black athletes to become so cynical about it that they would no longer choose to play. This explains why I noticed that as players age and become more senior, they also become more reflective, more critical, and more judgmental of the system. Black athletes tend to not be reflexive of the past and are concerned only with immediate history and the future. William Rhoden outlines that for professional athletes, it is difficult "to focus on anything historical beyond yesterday's game. They are so focused on the here and now – the next game, the next season, the next contract – that many have no sense of what came before and none at all of what is coming around the bend" (2007:xii). My research has shown that the same phenomenon occurs for college players, perhaps on an intensified scale.

As described in chapter 3, these players are plagued with hectic and regimented schedules, intense power exercised on their bodies through practice and conditioning, responsibilities to the gridiron and to the classroom, as well as the stresses that come from living in a Black male body while navigating the team. Black football players do not focus on and replay history, but are instead "learning to live with diverse and even contradictory storylines – multiple possible futures" (Mattingly 2014:124). Dwelling on the past might lead to negative reminders of mistakes made in practice or on the field that had costly consequences. Instead, players would rather prepare, as much as possible, for an unpredictable future by laboring in the present.

2) The fact that Black players had their community of football brothers to rely on acted as insulation to some of the challenges I expected to learn about. In chapter 4, I reviewed how Black players, specifically, foster community within and outside of the team dynamic. This occurs through the active participation in the creation of a football brotherhood, a socially based

kin group that is fostered through mundane, everyday activities completed alongside one another. This brotherhood, and by extension, the relationships with social kin, were meaningful because they aided players in learning how to navigate their daily lives, whether or not they were riddled with interactions with police, challenging coaches, demeaning professors, long days, and tough losses. Chapter 6 then discussed how this brotherhood is actually operationalized, as it was the foundation upon which Black players were able to confront uncomfortable and discriminatory situations together. I eventually realized that this racialized community that Black players actively created had a very clear purpose. Whether in the informal brotherhood that arose through everyday activities completed alongside one another, as discussed in chapter 4, or in a formalized state, like the Black Athlete's Union (BAU) as explained in chapter 6, relationships fostered with each other were the most important in their day to day lives. Again, while the players were aware of national conversations about police violence exercised against Black bodies, the liminal space of the university campus and protection of the shared brotherhood allowed them to process these situations together, in ways that they jointly recognized.

3) Race, and how it influenced everyday life, was rarely explicitly discussed. In interviews and during informal discussions, I would ask players if and how they saw race permeating football, campus life, and time spent away from school, and often, they could not verbalize any ways. However, race *was* coded into Black players' behaviors, language, dress, jokes, criticisms, and relationships. The disconnect between their theory and their practice of race was perhaps the most surprising aspect of my fieldwork.

Despite the fact that they never openly claimed it, this dissertation has worked to show how race and the social experience of Blackness does play a role in the lives of Black football players. In chapter 5, I discussed the importance of Black football mothers because their

particular forms of mothering and care work are based upon their sons' racialized experiences. These mothers are not only supporting their sons' athletic and academic goals and helping to prepare them for life after football. In an experience unique to Black mothers, they are also working to protect, advocate for, and care for their children against structural inequalities and racism that will particularly target them. The chapter about Black mothers is just one example of how this dissertation is riddled with examples of situations, experiences, behaviors, and opinions that expressed themselves only because I was working with young Black men.

*****

Recall Charlie's comments from chapter 4, the goofy and fun loving defensive lineman who explained how he differentiates between his brothers: brothers from the same mother, brothers that you learn to love, and brothers from the same struggle. Also, recall John's statement from the end of chapter 5, as he described Mellon Football as being rented during his time in college, but post-graduation, he would solely be concerned with his 'day ones.' I hope that this ethnography has emphasized the beauty and insight of these comments, as I have explained the ways that Black players relate and find community outside of the football team. The goal of this work has been to trace the lived experiences of Black college football players, as they manage their lives as athletes, as students, as sons, as brothers, and as Black men. While structures of racism, injury, and surveillance are shaping their everyday lives, these players are also successful in how they manage these situations. They are building community, loving their moms and their families, playing a sport they love, getting a college education, experiencing new things, and generally, living. In the face of these struggles, the Black players I worked with had full, successful lives.

I realize I could have carried out this project by focusing solely on the Game of football, but I have long been under the impression that football is just one aspect in the multidimensional lives of its players. Black football players are at the center of this work, as I explored ethnographically the athlete in the sport, the son in the family, and the man in the world, all within a systematic framework that has now been around for 150 years. By shedding light on the complexities of affiliation and kin, in the face of the normalized football team, I have shown that the construct of race *does* impact gridiron play and participation. My analysis of these athletes provides a window into the historical and political construction of race in America, as well as into the ways gendered and kinship norms in this sporting space articulate with broader historical patterns. Overall, this work helps to illuminate what the lived experiences of Black college football players can tell us about historical-racial-political dynamics in the contemporary United States.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi
2009 The Danger of a Single Story [Video file]. https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en, accessed November 29, 2018.

Alexander, Bryant Keith
2006 Performing Black Masculinity: Race, Culture, and Queer Identity. Lanham: AltaMira Press.

Alim, H. Samy
2016 Introducing Raciolinguistics: Racing Language and Languaging Race in Hyperracial Times. *In* Raciolinguistics: How Language Shapes our Ideas about Race. H. Samy Alim, John R. Rickford, and Aretha F. Ball, eds. Pp. 1-30. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Anderson, Benedict
2006[1983] Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. London: Verso.

Anderson, Elijah
1978 A Place on the Corner. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Arens, William
1976 Professional Football: An American Symbol and Ritual. *In* The American Dimension: Cultural Myths and Social Realities. William Arens and Susan P. Montague, eds. Pp. 3-14. Port Washington, N.Y.: Alfred Publishing Co.

Auerbach, Nicole (NicoleAuerbach)
2018 Larry Fedora: 'Our game is under attack ... I fear that the game will be pushed so far from what we know that we won't recognize it 10 years from now. And if it does, our country will go down, too.' July 18, 2018, 11:41PM. Tweet.

Bailey, Matthew
2011 Games that Will Pay: College Football and the Emergence of the Modern South. Ph.D. dissertation in History, University of Mississippi.

Bain-Selbo, Eric
2009 Game Day and God: Football, Faith, and Politics in the American South. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press.

Baker, Ashley Rae
2016 He's My Child: A Narrative Inquiry into Black Mothers' Experiences Throughout the College Football Recruitment Process. Ph.D. dissertation in Kinesiology, University of Georgia.

Baldwin, James

1992[1963] The Fire Next Time. New York: Vintage Books.

Bale, John
1994 Landscapes of Modern Sport. Leicester: Leicester University Press.

Barnes, Riche J. Daniel
2016a Raising the Race: Black Career Women Redefine Marriage, Motherhood, and Community. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
2016b She Was a Twin: Black Strategic Mothering, Race-Work, and the Politics of Survival. Transforming Anthropology, 24(1):49-60.

Barro, Robert
2002 The Best Little Monopoly in America. Business Week, December 9, pp. 22.

Barthes, Roland
1972[1957] The World of Wrestling. *In* Mythologies. Annette Lavers, trans. Pp. 15-25. New York: Hill and Wang.

Bateson, Gregory
1972 A Theory of Play and Fantasy. *In* Steps to an Ecology of Mind, pp. 177-193. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Baudrillard, Jean
1994[1981] Simulacra and Simulation. Sheila Faria Glaser, trans. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Beiswinger, George L.
1985 One to One: The Story of the Big Brothers/Big Sisters Movement in America. Philadelphia: Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America.

Bellows, Amanda Brickell
2015 How the Civil War Created College Football. January 1. https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/01/01/how-the-civil-war-created-college-football/?_r=0, accessed on May 24, 2019.

Bennett, Herman L.
2000 The Subject of the Plot: National Boundaries and the "History" of the Black Atlantic. African Studies Review, 43(1):101-124.

Berkowitz, Steve, Christopher Schnaars, and Sean Dougherty
2018 2018 NCAAF Coaches Salaries. October 3. https://sports.usatoday.com/ncaa/salaries/, accessed May 30, 2019.

Bernard, H. Russell
2006 Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches, 4th edition. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.

Berry, Maya, Claudia Chavez Arguelles, Shanya Cordis, Sarah Ihmoud, and Elizabeth Valasquez Estrada
2017 Toward a Fugitive Anthropology: Gender, Race, and Violence in the Field. Cultural Anthropology, 32(4):537-565.

Besnier, Niko
2012 The Athlete's Body and the Global Condition: Tongan Rugby Players in Japan. American Ethnologist, 39(3):491-510.

Besnier, Niko and Susan Brownell
2012 Sport, Modernity and the Body. Annual Review of Anthropology, 41:443-459.

Biehl, Joao
2005 Vita: Life in a Zone of Social Abandonment. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Billingsley, Andrew
1968 Black Families in White America. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

Birrell, Susan
1981 Sport as Ritual: Interpretations from Durkheim to Goffman. Social Forces, 60(2):354-376.

Bissinger, H. G.
2000[1990] Friday Night Lights: A Town, A Team, and A Dream. Cambridge, MA: De Capo Press.

Black, Tyra, Joanne Belknap, and Jennifer Ginsburg
2005 Racism, Sexism, and Aggression: A Study of Black and White Fraternities. *In* African American Fraternities and Sororities: The Legacy and the Vision. Tamara L. Brown, Gregory S. Parks, and Clarenda M. Phillips, eds. Pp. 363-392. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.

Blanchard, Kendall and Alyce Cheska
1985 The Anthropology of Sport: An Introduction. S. Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey.

Bodenhorn, Barbara
2000 'He Used to be My Relative': Exploring the Bases of Relatedness among Inupiat of Northern Alaska. *In* Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship. Janet Carsten, ed. Pp. 128-148. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo
2012 The Invisible Weight of Whiteness: The Racial Grammar of Everyday Life in Contemporary America. Ethnic and Racial Studies, 35(2):173-194.

Borden, Cindy

2016 Gabby Douglas Apologizes for Not Placing her Hand Over Heart. August 10. https://www.washingtonpost.com/olympics/2016/live-updates/rio-games/scores-and-latest-news/gabby-douglas-apologizes-for-not-placing-her-hand-over-heart/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.f384cf31dc67, accessed February 15, 2019.

Bourdieu, Pierre
1990[1983] Programme for a Sociology of Sport. *In* In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology. Matthew Adamson, trans. Pp. 156-167. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
2003 The Berber House. *In* The Anthropology of Space and Place: Locating Culture. Setha M. Low and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga, eds. Pp 130-141. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Branch, John
2018 Why the N.F.L and the N.B.A are So Far Apart on Social Justice Stances. June 22. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/22/sports/nfl-nba-social-justice-protests.html, accessed February 15, 2019.

Branch, Taylor
2011 The Shame of College Sports. October. http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/10/the-shame-of-college-sports/308643/, accessed April 16, 2019.

Brinson, Will
2013 Frontline PBS Doc 'League of Denial' Examines NFL Concussion Problem. *CBS Sports* website, October 8. https://www.cbssports.com/nfl/news/frontline-pbs-doc-league-of-denial-examines-nfl-concussion-problem/, accessed on November 6, 2018.

Brownell, Susan
1995 Training the Body for China: Sports in the Moral Order of the People's Republic. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
2000 Why Should an Anthropologist Study Sports in China? *In* Games, Sports and Cultures. Noel Dyck, ed. Pp. 43-63. New York: Berg.

Bullock, Steven C.
1996 Revolutionary Brotherhood: Freemasonry and the Transformation of the American Social Order, 1730-1840. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Burke, Monte
2013 How the National Football League Can Reach $25 Billion in Annual Revenues. August 17. https:/www.forbes.com/sites/monteburke/2013/08/17/how-the-national-football-league-can-reach-25-billion-in-annual-revenues/#6822dc641f64, accessed on May 28, 2019.

Burstyn, Varda
1999 The Rites of Men: Manhood, Politics, and the Culture of Sport. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Burton, Orisanmi
2015 To Protect and Serve Whiteness. North American Dialogue, 18(2):38-50.

Butterworth, Michael, ed.
2017 Sport and Militarism: Contemporary Global Perspectives. London: Taylor and Francis.

Caillois, Roger
1961[1958] Man, Play, and Games. Meyer Barash, trans. New York: Free Press of Glencoe.

Camp, Walter
1901 Walter Camp's Book of College Sports. New York: The Century Co.

Carrington, Ben
2004 Introduction: Race/Nation/Sport. Leisure Studies, 23(1): 1–3.

Carsten, Jane
1995 The Substance of Kinship and the Heat of the Hearth: Feeding, Personhood, and Relatedness among Malays in Pulau Langkawi. American Ethnologist, 22(2):223-241.
2000 Introduction: Cultures of Relatedness. *In* Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship. Janet Carsten, ed. Pp. 1-36. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Carter, Thomas
2002 On the Need for an Anthropological Approach to Sport. Identities, 9(3):405-422.

Chafetz, Janet Saltzman and Joseph A. Kotarba
1999 Little League Mothers and the Reproduction of Gender. *In* Inside Sports. Jay Coakley and Peter Donnelly, eds. Pp. 41-48. London: Routledge.

Clawson, Mary Ann
1989 Constructing Brotherhood: Class, Gender, and Fraternalism. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Clotfelter, Charles T
2011 Big-Time Sports in American Universities. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Coakley, Jay
2006 The Good Father: Parental Expectations and Youth Sports. Leisure Studies, 25(2) 153-163.

Coates, Ta-Nehisi
2015 Between the World and Me. New York: Spiegel & Grau.

Cohen, Anthony
1994 Self Consciousness: An Alternative Anthropology of Identity. New York: Routledge.

Collins, Patricia Hill

1991[1990] Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment. New York: Routledge.
1993 Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing about Motherhood. *In* Mothering: Ideology, Experience, and Agency. Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Grace Chang, and Linda Rennie Forcey, eds. Pp. 45-65. New York: Routledge.

Comaroff, John L. and Jean Comaroff
2001 On Personhood: An Anthropological Perspective from Africa. Social Identities: Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture, 7(2):267-283.

Cox, Aimee Meredith
2015 Shapeshifters: Black Girls and the Choreography of Citizenship. Durham: Duke University Press.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé
1989 Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics. University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1(8):139-167.

Crowder, Khaaliq
2018 Death of UC Riverside Student Under Investigation for Having. September 19. https://www.vibe.com/2018/09/alpha-phi-alpha-chapter-hazing-death-california/, accessed October 19, 2018.

Cumming, Elaine and David Schneider
1961 Sibling Solidarity: A Property of American Kinship. American Anthropologist, 63: 498-507.

Davies, Richard O.
2017 Sports in American Life: A History. Chichester, U.K.: Wiley Blackwell.

Desmond, Matthew
2007 On the Fireline: Living and Dying with Wildland Firefighters. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Dohrmann, George
2016 Hooked for Life: Inside the NFL's Relentless, Existential, Big Tobacco-Style Pursuit of Your Children. *Huffington Post* website. https://highline.huffingtonpost.com/articles/en/nfl-football-moms-kids/, accessed November 2, 2018.

Dollard, John
1937 Caste and Class in a Southern Town. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Downey, Greg
2005 Learning Capoeira: Lessons in Cunning from an Afro-Brazilian Art. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Doyle, Leo Andrew
1998 'Causes Won, Not Lost': Football and Southern Culture, 1892-1983. Ph.D. dissertation in History, Emory University.

Drake, Simone C.
2016 A Meditation on the Soundscapes of Black Boyhood and Disruptive Imaginations. Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, 18(2-4):446-458.

Drake, St. Clair and Horace R. Cayton
1945 Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.

Du Bois, W. E. B.
1967[1899] The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study. New York: Schocken Books.

Dumas, Michael J. and Joseph Derrick Nelson
2016 (Re)Imagining Black Boyhood: Toward a Critical Framework for Educational Research. Harvard Educational Review, 86(1):27-47.

Dumont, Louis
1970 Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implications. Mark Sainsbury, trans. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Dundes, Alan
1978 Into the Endzone for a Touchdown: A Psychoanalytic Consideration of American Football. Western Folklore, 37(2):75-88.

Duneier, Mitchell
1992 Slim's Table: Race, Respectability, and Masculinity. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Dunning, Eric
1986 Sport as a Male Preserve: Notes on the Social Sources of Masculine Identity and its Transformations. Theory, Culture & Society, 3(1):79-90.

Dutton, Ken
1995 The Social Body. *In* The Perfectible Body: The Western Ideal of Male Physical Development, pp. 169-197. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Dyck, Noel, ed.
2000 Games, Bodies, Celebrations and Boundaries: Anthropological Perspectives on Sport. *In* Games, Sports and Cultures, pp. 13-42. New York: Berg.

Earp, Jeremy, dir.

2010 Not Just a Game: Power, Politics, and American Sports. 62 mins. Media Education Foundation. Northampton, MA.

Edmundson, Mark
2014 Why Football Matters: My Education in the Game. New York: The Penguin Press.

Elias, Norbert and Eric Dunning
1986 The Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process. New York: Wiley-Blackwell.

Evans-Pritchard, E.E.
1940 The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Fainaru-Wada, Mark and Steve Fainaru
2013 League of Denial: The NFL, Concussions, and the Battle for Truth. New York: Crown Archetype.

Falla, Jack
1981 NCAA: The Voice of College Sports: A Diamond Anniversary History, 1906-1981. Mission, KS: National Collegiate Athletic Association.

Ferguson, Justin
2016 Most Popular Academic Majors for 2016 Power 5 Conference Football Players. August 18. https://bleacherreport.com/articles/2658255-most-popular-academic-majors-for-2016-power-5-conference-football-players#slide2, accessed October 14, 2018.

Finch, L. M.
2009 Understanding and Assisting the Student-Athlete-To-Be and the New Student-Athlete. *In* Counseling and Psychological Services for College Student-Athletes. Edward Etzel, ed. Pp. 349-378. Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology

Fleisher, Arthur, Brian Goff, and Robert Tollison
1992 The National Collegiate Athletic Association: A Study in Carter Behavior. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Foley, Douglas E.
1990 Learning Capitalist Culture: Deep in the Heart of Tejas. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Forney, Craig A.
2007 The Holy Trinity of American Sports: Civil Religion in Football, Baseball, and Basketball. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press.

Fortuna, Matt (Matt_Fortuna)

2018a UNC coach Larry Fedora says he once spoke with a general and asked him what makes the American military the best in the world. The general's answer, per Fedora, was simple: The United States is the only football-playing nation in the world. July 18, 2018, 11:44AM. Tweet.
2018b UNC coach Larry Fedora came back out a few minutes ago to clarify remarks with reporters, although he didn't exactly back down from his earlier comments. July 18, 2018, 2:06PM. Tweet.

Foucault, Michel
1984 Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias. Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité, 5:46-49.
1995[1975] Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison. A. Sheridan, trans. New York: Vintage Books.

Frank, Katherine
2002 G-String and Sympathy: Strip Club Regulars and Male Desire. Durham: Duke University Press.

Franklin, Anderson J.
1999 Invisibility Syndrome and Racial Identity Development in Psychotherapy and Counseling African American Men. The Counseling Psychologist, 27(6):761-793.

Frazier, E. Franklin
2001[1939] The Negro Family in the United States. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Frederick, Marla F.
2003 Between Sundays: Black Women and Everyday Struggles of Faith. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Fulks, Daniel L.
2017 2004-16 NCAA Revenues and Expenses of Division I Intercollegiate Athletics Programs Report. http://www.ncaa.org/sites/default/files/2017RES_D1-RevExp_Entire_2017_Final_20180123.pdf, accessed on May 30, 2019.

Gaines, Cork
2016 The Difference in How Much Money Schools Make Off of College Sports is Jarring, and It Is the Biggest Obstacle to Paying Athletes. October 14. https://www.businessinsider.com/ncaa-schools-college-sports-revenue-2016-10, accessed on May 30, 2019.

Garcia, Angela
2010 The Pastoral Clinic: Addiction and Dispossession Along the Rio Grande. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Garey, Anita Ilta

1999 Weaving Work and Motherhood. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Gavanas, Anna
2004 Domesticating Masculinity and Masculinizing Domesticity in Contemporary U.S. Fatherhood Politics. Social Politics, 11(2):247-266.

Geertz, Clifford
1973 Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight. *In* The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays, pp. 412-453. New York: Basic Books.
1974 "From the Native's Point of View": on the Nature of Anthropological Understanding. Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 28(1):26-45.

Gilmer, Micah
2009 "You Got to Have a Heart of Stone to Work Here": Coaching, Teaching, and "Building Men" at Eastside High. PhD dissertation in Anthropology, Duke University.

Gilroy, Paul
1993 It's a Family Affair: Black Culture and the Trope of Kinship. *In* Small Acts: Thoughts on the Politics of Black Cultures, pp. 192-207. London: Serpent's Tail.

Gluckman, Max
1958 Analysis of a Social Situation in Modern Zululand. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.

Gmelch, George
1971 Baseball Magic. Transaction, 8(8):39-41, 54.

Godfrey, Steven
2018 Crooked Letters: Inside the NCAA's Years-long, Twisting Investigation into Mississippi Football. May 30. https://www.sbnation.com/a/ole-miss-leo-lewis-ncaa-enforcement-recruitment-violations, accessed on May 28, 2019.

Goffman, Erwin
1956 The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life. Edinburg: University of Edinburg Social Sciences Research Centre.
2007[1961] Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates. New York: Routledge.

González-Abrisketa, Olatz
2012 Basque Pelota: A Ritual, an Aesthetic. Reno: University of Nevada Press.
2013 Bodies Out of Place: Gender, Space, and Community in the Basque Sport of Pelota. *In* Playing Fields: Power, Practice, and Passion in Sport. Mariann Vaczi, ed. Pp. 61-84. Reno: University of Nevada Press.

Gordon, Edmund T.
1997 Cultural Politics of Black Masculinity. Transforming Anthropology, 6(1): 36-53.

Graham, Roderick
2016 African American Families. *In* Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedias in Social Science: The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Family Studies. Constance L. Shehan, ed. Hoboken: Wiley. http://proxy.lib.duke.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/wileyfamily/african_american_families/0?institutionId=2558, accessed November 28, 2018.

Gray, Herman
2016 Introduction: Subject to Respectability. Souls, 18(2-4): 192-200.

Green, Lisa J.
2007[2002] African American English: A Linguistic Introduction. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Guardian, The
2015 The Counted: People Killed by Police in the US. June 1. https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/series/counted-us-police-killings, accessed January 24, 2019.

Gutman, Herbert
1976 The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925. New York: Pantheon Books.

Guttmann, Allen
1978 From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sports. New York: Columbia.

Haley, Alex
1976 Roots: The Saga of an American Family. New York: Doubleday.

Hall, Stuart
1997 The Spectacle of the 'Other'. *In* Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices. Stuart Hall, Jessica Evans & Sean Nixon, eds. Pp. 225-279. London: SAGE Publications.

Hannerz, Ulf
1969 Soulside: Inquiries into Ghetto Culture and Community. New York: Columbia University Press.

Hargreaves, John
1985 The Body, Sport and Power Relations. The Sociological Review, 33(S1):139-159.
1986 Schooling the Body. *In* Sport, Power and Culture: A Social and Historical Analysis of Popular Sports in Britain, pp. 161-181. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Harper, Shaun R.
2018 Black Male Student-Athletes and Racial Inequities in NCAA Division I College Sports. University of Southern California, Race and Equity Center.

Harper, Shaun R. and Frank Harris III
2006 The Role of Black Fraternities in the African American Male Undergraduate Experience. *In* African American Men in College. Michale Cuyjet, ed. Pp 128-153. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Harris-Perry, Melissa
2011 Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in America. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Harrison, C. Keith, Scott Bukstein, J. Mottley, Eddie Comeaux, J. Boyd, C. Parks, and D. Heikkinen
2010 Scholar-Baller: Student Athlete Socialization, Motivation, and Academic Performance in American Society. *In* International Encyclopedia of Education, 3rd edition. Penelope Peterson, Eva Baker, Barry McGaw, eds. Pp. 860-865. Oxford: Elsevier.

Hartman, Saidiya
2016 The Belly of the World: A Note on Black Women's Labor. Souls, 18(1):166-173.

Hatteberg, Sarah
2018 Under Surveillance: Collegiate Athletics as a Total Institution. Sociology of Sport Journal, 35:149-158.

Hawkins, Billy
2010 The New Plantation: Black Athletes, College Sports, and Predominantly White NCAA Institutions. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hill, Marc Lamont
2016 Nobody: Casualties of America's War on the Vulnerable, from Ferguson to Flint and Beyond. New York: Atria Books.

Hill, Shirley A.
2005 Black Intimacies: A Gender Perspective on Families and Relationships. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.

Hine, Darlene Clark and Earnestine Jenkins
1999 Black Men's History: Toward a Gendered Perspective. *In* A Question of Manhood: A Reader in U.S. Black Men's History and Masculinity. Darlene Clark Hine and Earnestine Jenkins, eds. Pp. 1-60. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Hinks, Peter P. and Stephen Kantrowitz
2013 Introduction: The Revolution in Freemasonry. *In* All Men Free and Brethren: Essays on the History of African American Freemasonry. Peter P. Hinks and Stephen Kantrowitz, eds. Pp. 1-20. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Hobbes, Thomas
2006[1651] Leviathan. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc.

hooks, bell
1982 Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism. London: Pluto Press.
1990 Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics. Boston: South End Press.

Howell, Angela McMillan
2013 Raised Up Down Yonder: Growing Up Black in Rural Alabama. Margaret Walker Alexander Series in African American Studies. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

Huizinga, Johan
1950[1938] Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture. Boston: Beacon Press.

Hurston, Zora Neale
2008[1935] Mules and Men. New York: Harper Perennial.

Irick, Erin
2018 NCAA Sports Sponsorship and Participation Rates, October 2018. Indianapolis: National Collegiate Athletic Association. https://ncaaorg.s3.amazonaws.com/research/sportpart/Oct2018RES_2017-18SportsSponsorshipParticipationRatesReport.pdf, accessed on May 30, 2019.

Jackson, John L., Jr.
2003 Harlemworld: Doing Race and Class in Contemporary Black America. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

James, C.L.R
1984[1963] Beyond a Boundary. New York: Pantheon Books.

Jones, Ricky L.
2004 Black Haze: Violence, Sacrifice, and Manhood in Black Greek-Letter Fraternities. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Kelley, Robin D.G.
2014 Why We Won't Wait: Resisting the War Against the Black and Brown Underclass. November 25. http://www.counterpunch.org/2014/11/25/why-we-wont-wait/, accessed February 15, 2019.

Khabeer, Su'ad Abdul
2016 Muslim Cool: Race, Religion, and Hip Hop in the United States. New York: New York University Press.

Kirshner, Alex
2018 The Differences Between FBS and FCS Football, Explained Quickly. August 25. https://www.sbnation.com/college-football/2017/11/19/16647542/ncaa-fbs-fcs-differences-ia-iaa-scholarships-division-1-what-is, accessed on May 30, 2019.

Kochman, Thomas
1981 Black and White Styles in Conflict. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Krist, Kyrstin Dawn
2006 Socialization of Black and White High School Football Players in the Southeastern United States. Ph.D. dissertation in Physical Education, University of South Carolina.

Labov, William
1972 Language in the Inner City: Studies in the Black English Vernacular. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Ladner, Joyce
1995[1971] Tomorrow's Tomorrow: The Black Woman. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Lapchick, Richard, Ashleigh Boyd, Nataliya Bredikhina, Keegan Brown, Devinn Cartwright, Gustavo Costa, Alexis Feller, Zachary Gerhart, Chevelle Lee, Cymonne New, Paris Rainey, Ilze Shaw, Trevor Troutman, and Carter Young
2017 The 2017 DI FBS Leadership College Racial and Gender Report Card: Collegiate Athletic Leadership Gets a D- as it is Still Dominated by White Men. University of Central Florida, The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport.

Leach, Jerry W. and Gary Kildea, dirs.
1976 Trobriand Cricket: An Ingenious Response to Colonialism. Berkeley: University of California Extension Media Center.

Leemon, Thomas A.
1972 The Rites of Passage in a Student Culture: A Study of the Dynamics of Transition. New York: Teachers College Press.

Leonard, David J.
2017 Playing While White: Privilege and Power On and Off the Field. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude
1966[1962] The Science of the Concrete. *In* The Savage Mind, pp. 1-34. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lewis, Hylan
1955 Blackways of Kent. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Liebow, Elliot
1967 Tally's Corner: A Study of Negro Streetcorner Men. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Lippi-Green, Rosina

2012[1997] Language Subordination. *In* English with an Accent: Language, Ideology, and Discrimination in the United States. Pp. 66-77. New York: Routledge.

Lund, Jeb
2015 The NFL and The Military: A Love Affair as Strange and Cynical as Ever. September 11. https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2015/sep/11/the-nfl-and-the-military-a-love-affair-as-strange-and-cynical-as-ever, accessed on May 31, 2019.

MacAloon, John J.
1982 Double Visions: Olympic Games and American Culture. Kenyon Review, 4(1):98-112.

Magnusen, Marshall J., Michael Mondello, Yu Kim, and Gerald R. Ferris
2011 Roles of Recruiter Political Skill, Influence Strategy, and Organization Reputation in Recruitment Effectiveness in College Sports. Thunderbird International Business Review, 53(6):687-700.

Margalit, Avishai
2002 The Ethics of Memory. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Martin, Charles
2010 Benching Jim Crow: The Rise and Fall of the Color Line in Southern College Sports, 1890-1980. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Marx, Karl
1978[1845] The German Ideology, Part I. *In* The Marx-Engels Reader. Robert C. Tucker, ed. Pp. 146-200. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Mattingly, Cheryl
2014 Moral Laboratories: Family Peril and the Struggle for a Good Life. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Maxson, J. David
2017 A Rhetoric of Masculine Virtue and Spartan Motherhood. In Sport and Militarism: Contemporary Global Perspectives. Michael L. Butterworth, ed. Pp. 275-288. London: Routledge.

Mez, Jesse, Daniel H. Daneshvar, Patrick T. Kiernan, Bobak Abdolmohammadi, Victor E. Alvarez, Bertrand R. Huber, Michael L. Alosco, Todd M. Solomon, Christopher J. Nowinski, Lisa McHale, Kerry A. Cormier, Caroline A. Kubilus, Brett M. Martin, Lauren Murphy, Christine M. Baugh, Phillip H. Montenigro, Christine E. Chaisson, Yorghos Tripodis, Neil W. Kowall, Jennifer Weuve, Michael D. McClean, Robert C. Cantu, Lee E. Goldstein, Douglas I. Katz, Robert A. Stern, Thor D. Stein, and Ann C. McKee
2017 Clinicopathological Evaluation of Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy in Players of American Football. JAMA, 318(4):360-370.

McAdams, Dan P. and Jennifer Guo

2014 How Shall I Live? Constructing a Life Story in the College Years. New Directions for Higher Education, 166:15-23.

McClaurin, Irma, ed.
2001 Theorizing a Black Feminist Self in Anthropology: Toward an Autoethnographic Approach. *In* Black Feminist Anthropology: Theory, Politics Praxis, and Poetics, pp. 49-76. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

McGrath, Ben
2011 Does Football Have a Future?: The NFL and the Concussion Crisis. January 23. https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/01/31/does-football-have-a-future, accessed on May 30, 2019.

McKinnon, Susan
2016 Doing and Being: Process, Essence, and Hierarchy in Making Kin. *In* The Routledge Companion to Contemporary Anthropology. Simon Coleman, Susan B. Hyatt and Ann Kingsolver, eds. Pp. 161-182. London: Routledge.

Messner, Michael A.
2009 It's All for the Kids: Gender, Families, and Youth Sports. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Messner, Michael A. and Michela Musto
2014 Where are the Kids? Sociology of Sport Journal, 31:102-122.

Moffatt, Michael
1989 Coming of Age in New Jersey: College and American Culture. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Mol, Annemarie
2008 The Logic of Care: Health and the Problem of Patient Choice. London: Routledge.

Moynihan, Daniel Patrick
1965 The Negro Family: The Case for National Action. U.S. Department of Labor, ed. Washington, D.C.: Office of Policy Planning and Research.

Mullings, Leith
1997 On Our Own Terms: Race, Class, and Gender in the Lives of African American Women. New York: Routledge.
2005 Resistance and Resilience: The Sojourner Syndrome and the Social Context of Reproduction in Central Harlem. Transforming Anthropology, 13(2):79–91.

Nash, Niecy, Taige Jensen, and Jenn Lyon
2018 To the Next 'BBQ Becky': Don't Call 911. Call 1-844-WYT-FEAR. October 22. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/22/opinion/calling-police-racism-wyt-fear.html, accessed on October 7, 2019.

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)
2018 2018-19 NCAA Division I Manual. August 1. Indianapolis: National Collegiate Athletic Association. http://www.ncaapublications.com/productdownloads/D119.pdf, accessed May 30, 2019.

Nocera, Joseph and Ben Strauss
2016 Indentured: The Inside Story of the Rebellion against the NCAA. New York: Portfolio.

Ochs, Elinor and Lisa Capps
1996 Narrating the Self. Annual Review of Anthropology, 25:19-43.

Oriard, Michael
1993 Reading Football: How the Popular Press Created an American Spectacle. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Ortiz, Steven M.
2004 Leaving the Private World of Wives of Professional Athletes: A Male Sociologist's Reflections. Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 33(4):466-487.

Packer, Martin
2011 The Science of Qualitative Research. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Palomo-Nieto, Miriam, Luis Miguel Ruiz Perez, Mauro Sanchez-Sanchez, and Virginia Garcia-Coll
2011 Young Athletes' Perceptions of the Role of their Mothers in their Sport Career. European Journal of Human Movement, 26:141-157.

Palomo-Nieto, Miriam, Luis Miguel Ruiz Perez, and Donald N. Roberson Jr.
2016 Athlete's Path to Excellence: The Role of Mother's Sacrifice. International Journal of Advanced Research, 4(11):1986-1996.

Panksepp, Jaak and Lucy Biven
2012 Ancestral Passions. *In* The Archaeology of Mind: Neuroevolutionary Origins of Human Emotions, pp. 1-46. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Patterson, Chip
2018 Larry Fedora: The Game of Football is 'Under Attack' and Necessary for American Prosperity. July 18. https://www.cbssports.com/college-football/news/larry-fedora-the-game-of-football-is-under-attack-and-necessary-for-american-prosperity/, accessed on May 31, 2019.

Pattillo, Mary
2013[1999] Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril Among the Black Middle Class. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Pierre, Jemima.
2012 The Predicament of Blackness: Postcolonial Ghana and the Politics of Race. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Pike, Kenneth
1954 Language in Relation to a Unified Theory of the Structure of Human Behavior. Glendale, CA: Summer Institute of Linguistics.

Powdermaker, Hortense
1939 After Freedom: A Cultural Study in the Deep South. New York: Viking.

Prebish, Charles S.
1993 Religion and Sport: The Meeting of Sacred and Profane. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Radcliffe-Brown, A.R.
1952 Structure and Function in Primitive Society: Essays and Addresses. Glencoe: The Free Press.

Ralph, Laurence
2014 Renegade Dreams: Living through Injury in Gangland Chicago. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rickford, John R. & Russell J. Rickford
2000 Spoken Soul: The Story of Black English. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Rhoads, Robert A.
1995 Whales Tales, Dog Piles, and Beer Goggles: An Ethnographic Case Study of Fraternity Life. Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 26(3): 306-323.

Rhoden, William C.
2007 Forty Million Dollar Slaves: The Rise, Fall, and Redemption of the Black Athlete. New York: Broadway Books.

Riches, David, ed.
1986 The Phenomenon of Violence. *In* The Anthropology of Violence, pp. 1-27. Oxford: Blackwell.

Robbins, Joel
1994 Equality as Value: Ideology in Dumont, Melanesia and the West. Social Analysis, 36: 21-70.

Roosevelt, Theodore
1900 What We Can Expect of the American Boy. St. Nicholas Magazine, pp. 571-574. http://www.foundationsmag.com/americanboy-com.html, accessed on May 21, 2019.
1902 The Strenuous Life. *In* The Strenuous Life: Essays and Addresses, pp. 1-21. New York: The Century Company.

1903 Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Leslie M. Hagen. February 3? Theodore Roosevelt Papers. Library of Congress Manuscript Division. https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=o184095, accessed October 7, 2019.

Rosenberg, Michael
2011 A Simple Solution to NCAA Corruption: Let Stars Get Paid. July 26. https://www.si.com/more-sports/2011/07/26/ncaa-pay, accessed on May 30, 2019.

Rovell, Darren
2018 NCAA Tops $1 Billion in Revenue during 2016-17 School Year. March 7. http://www.espn.com/college-sports/story/_/id/22678988/ncaa-tops-1-billion-revenue-first, accessed May 30, 2019.

Rowe, Sharon
2008 Modern Sports: Liminal Ritual or Liminoid Leisure? *In* Victor Turner and Contemporary Cultural Performance. Graham St. John, ed. Pp. 127-148. New York: Berghahan Books.

Ryan, William
1976[1971] Blaming the Victim. New York: Vintage Books.

Sanday, Peggy R.
1990 Fraternity Gang Rape: Sex, Brotherhood, and Privilege on Campus. New York: New York University Press.

Sandritter, Mark
2017 A Timeline of Colin Kaepernick's National Anthem Protest and the Athletes Who Joined Him. September 25. https://www.sbnation.com/2016/9/11/12869726/colin-kaepernick-national-anthem-protest-seahawks-brandon-marshall-nfl, accessed February 15, 2019.

Sands, Robert R.
1999 GutCheck! An Anthropologist's Wild Ride into the Heart of College Football. Carpinteria: Rincon Books.

Sanjek, Roger
2014 Ethnography in Today's World: Color Full Before Color Blind. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Satterfield, James
2015 Organization and Governance of the NCAA. *In* Introduction to Intercollegiate Athletics. Eddie Comeaux, ed. Pp. 14-33. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Schneider, David
1980[1968] American Kinship: A Cultural Account. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Shaw, Steve

2019 2019 NCAA Football Rules and Interpretations. May. Indianapolis: National Collegiate Athletic Association. http://www.ncaapublications.com/productdownloads/FR19.pdf, accessed on October 10, 2019.

Shore, Bradd
1996 Mind Games: Cognitive Baseball. *In* Culture in Mind: Cognition, Culture, and the Problem of Meaning, pp. 75-100. New York: Oxford University Press.

Skocpol, Theda, Ariane Liazos, and Marshall Ganz
2006 What a Mighty Power We Can Be: African American Fraternal Groups and the Struggle for Racial Equality. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Smith, Christen A.
2016 Facing the Dragon: Black Mothering, Sequelae, and Gendered Necropolitics in the Americas. Transforming Anthropology, 24(1): 31-48.

Smith, Dorothy E.
2005 Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.

Smith, Jay M. and Mary Willingham
2015 Cheated: The UNC Scandal, the Education of Athletes, and the Future of Big-Time College Sports. Lincoln: Potomac Books.

Smith, Raymond T.
1996 The Matrifocal Family: Power, Pluralism, and Politics. New York: Routledge.

Smith, Ronald A.
1988 Sports and Freedom: The Rise of Big-Time College Athletics. New York: Oxford University Press.

Smitherman, Geneva
1977 Talkin and Testifyin: The Language of Black America. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Sökefeld, Martin
1999 Debating Self, Identity, and Culture in Anthropology. Current Anthropology, 40(4) 417-448.

Spillers, Hortense J.
1987 Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book. Diacritics, 17(2):64-81.

Squire, Dian, Williams, Bianca. C., & Tuitt, Frank
2018 Plantation Politics and Neoliberal Racism in Higher Education: A Framework for Reconstructing Anti-Racist Institutions. Teachers College Record, 120(14):1-20.

Stack, Carol
1974 All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community. New York: Harper and

Row.

Starn, Orin
2011 The Passion of Tiger Woods: An Anthropologist Reports on Golf, Race, and Celebrity Scandal. Durham: Duke University Press.

Stevenson, Lisa
2014 Life Beside Itself: Imagining Care in the Canadian Arctic. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Strathern, Marilyn
1993 Making Incomplete. *In* Carved Flesh/Cast Selves: Gendered Symbols and Social Practices, Vigdis Broch-Due, Ingrid Rudie and Tone Bleie, eds. Pp. 41-51. Providence: Berg.

Sullivan, Emily
2018 Laura Ingraham Told LeBron James to Shut Up and Dribble; He Went to the Hoop. February 19. https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/02/19/587097707/laura-ingraham-told-lebron-james-to-shutup-and-dribble-he-went-to-the-hoop, accessed on May 31, 2019.

Summers, Martin
2003 Diasporic Brotherhood: Freemasonry and the Transnational Production of Black Middle-Class Masculinity. Gender & History, 15(3):550-574.

Swanson, Lisa
2009 Complicating the "Soccer Mom:" The Cultural Politics of Forming Class-Based Identity, Distinction, and Necessity. Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 80(2):345-354.

Táíwò, Olúfémi
2003 This Prison Called My Skin: On Being Black in America. *In* Problematizing Blackness: Self-Ethnographies by Black Immigrants to the United States. Percy Claude Hintzen and Jean Muteba Rahier, eds. Pp. 35-51. New York: Routledge.

Taylor, Janelle S.
2008 On Recognition, Caring, and Dementia. Medical Anthropology Quarterly, 22(4):313-335.

Taylor, Robert Joseph, Linda M. Chatters, Amanda Toler Woodward & Edna Brown
2013 Racial and Ethnic Differences in Extended Family, Friendship, Fictive Kin, and Congregational Informal Support Networks. Family Relations, 62(4): 609-624.

Thompson, Charis
2001 Strategic Naturalizing: Kinship in an Infertility Clinic. *In* Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies. Sarah Franklin and Susan McKinnon, eds. Pp. 175-202. Durham: Duke University Press.

Thompson, Shona M.
1999 Mother's Taxi: Sport and Women's Labor. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Torbenson, Craig L.
2005 The Origin and Evolution of College Fraternities and Sororities. *In* African American Fraternities and Sororities: The Legacy and the Vision. Tamara L. Brown, Gregory S. Parks, and Clarenda M. Phillips, eds. Pp. 33-61. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.

Toma, J. Douglas
2003 Football U.: Spectator Sports in the Life of the American University. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Tracy, Marc and Dan Berry
2017 The Rise, then Shame, of Baylor Nation. March 9. https://www.nytimes.com 2017/03/09/sports/baylor-football-sexual-assault.html, accessed on May 28, 2019.

Trujillo, Nick
1991 Hegemonic Masculinity on the Mound: Media Representations of Nolan Ryan and American Sports Culture. Critical Studies in Mass Communication, 8(3):290-308.

Turner II, Robert W.
2018 Not for Long: The Life and Career of the NFL Athlete. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Turner, Terence S.
2012 The Social Skin. HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory, 2(2):486-504.

Turner, Victor
1974 Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow, and Ritual: An Essay in Comparative Symbology. The Rice University Studies, 60(3):53-92.
1991[1969] The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Tynes, Tyler
2019 Don't Forget Jordan McNair. January 10. https://www.theringer.com/2019/1/10/ 18175709/jordan-mcnair-maryland-terrapins-ncaa-player-deaths, accessed February 15, 2019.

Uperesa, Fa'anofo Lisaclaire
2014 Fabled Futures: Migration and Mobility for Samoans in American Football. Contemporary Pacific, 26(2):280-301.

van Gennep, Arnold
1960[1909] The Rites of Passage: A Classic Study of Cultural Celebrations. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee, trans. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wacquant, Loïc
2004 Body & Soul: Notebooks of an Apprentice Boxer. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Walker, Corey D. B.
2008 A Noble Fight: African American Freemasonry and the Struggle for Democracy in America. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Ward, Joe, Josh Williams, and Sam Manchester
2017 111 NFL Brains. All But One Had C.T.E. July 25. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/07/25/sports/football/nfl-cte.html, accessed on May 28, 2019.

Warwick, Alexandra and Dani Cavallaro
1998 Fashioning the Frame: Boundaries, Dress and the Body. New York: Berg.

Wellard, Ian
2009 Sport, Masculinities and the Body. New York: Routledge.

Weston, Kath
1991 Families We Choose: Gays, Lesbians, Kinship. New York: Columbia University Press.

Wheaton, Belinda
2002 Babes on the Beach, Women in the Surf: Researching Gender, Power and Difference in the Windsurfing Culture. *In* Power Games: Theory and Method for a Critical Sociology of Sport. John Sugden and Alan Tomlinson, eds. Pp. 240-266. London: Routledge.

Wilkie, Laurie A.
2010 The Lost Boys of Zeta Psi: A Historical Archaeology of Masculinity in a University Fraternity. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Williams, Bianca C.
2018 Pursuit of Happiness: Black Women, Diasporic Dreams, and the Politics of Emotional Transnationalism. Durham: Duke University Press.

Wilson, William J.
1987 The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wise, Tim
2008 White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son. New York: Soft Skull Press.

Winfrey Harris, Tamara
2015 The Sisters Are Alright: Changing the Broken Narrative of Black Women in America. Oakland: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Woodbine, Onaje X.O
2016 Black Gods of the Asphalt: Religion, Hip-Hop, and Street Basketball. New York:

Columbia University Press.

Woodward, Kath
2006 Boxing, Masculinity and Identity: The "I" of the Tiger. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

Wynter, Sylvia and Katherine McKittrick
2015 Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species? Or, to Give Humanness a Different Future: Conversations. *In* Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis. Katherine McKittrick, ed. Pp. 9-89. Durham: Duke University Press.

Yearwood, Gabby
2012 Between Practice and the Classroom: The Making of Masculinity and Race in the Mis-Education of Black Male Student-Athletes on a College Campus. PhD dissertation in Anthropology, University of Texas-Austin.
2018 Playing without Power: Black Male NCAA Student-Athletes Living with Structural Racism. Transforming Anthropology, 26(1):18–35.

Young, Alford A., Jr.
2004 The Minds of Marginalized Black Men: Making Sense of Mobility, Opportunity, and Future Life Chances. Princeton: Princeton University Press.