



CHAPTER 5

Rationalizing Black Death: Sport Media’s Dehumanizing Coverage of Black College Football Players

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INTRODUCTION

The portrayal of Black college football players’ abilities as superhuman is only a small step from Darren Wilson’s assertion that 18-year-old Michael Brown was a “demon” approaching him, who was “bulking up to run through the shots” (McCoy 2014). That ludicrous belief, which the grand jury accepted in declining to indict Wilson, led him to murder Brown. The pattern of justifying excessive force against Black people with racialized beliefs about the Black body was also exemplified in the trial of the officers

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who beat Rodney King,¹ in which the officers described King as “‘buffed-out’ ‘probable ex-con,’ ‘bear-like,’ ‘like a wounded animal,’ ‘aggressive,’ and ‘equate[d] with a monster’” (Alexander 1994, p. 80). Like Wilson’s grand jury testimony, officers’ deployment of myths regarding Black superhuman strength and animalism in their trial served to legitimize police brutality, effectively inverting the gaze so Rodney King—their victim—was ostensibly put on trial in the American imagination. Thus, despite being framed as praise in the context of sport, beliefs about Black football players’ superhuman strength and resilience support white supremacy by rendering Black pain and vulnerability, as well as humanity, invisible.

Media is a powerful socialization force and may be considered a form of education, especially where it concerns racialized ideas (Entman and Rojecki 2000; Hill Collins 2009). Research shows people tend to animalize (Goff et al. 2008) and mythologize (Waytz et al. 2015) Black people (especially men), not recognize their pain (Trawalter et al. 2012), and judge them to be older than they are (Dancy 2014) as well as larger and stronger than comparable white men (Wilson et al. 2017). These findings each relate to portrayals of Black college football players and the racist adages of the American imagination. In this chapter, we argue that sport media contributes to the marginalization of Black people not by pushing the group to the fringes of society, but rather by the spotlight it provides, creating and disseminating mainstream narratives. As the most watched college sport broadcast of all time (Volner 2016), ESPN’s College GameDay (CGD) primes audiences to make certain associations (Moy et al. 2016).

DEHUMANIZING BLACK PEOPLE

Dehumanization is a process that denies humanity to an individual or group. It reduces empathy for others through the ongoing denial of their humanity (at its core, their “human-ness”). Dehumanization can be accomplished in many ways, including language and symbols (Keblusek et al. 2017). Often, likening individuals to animals or inanimate objects is

¹ It is commonly referred to as “the Rodney King trial” or “the Rodney King verdict,” despite the fact Rodney King was not on trial. Rather, the trial was of the officers who beat him. This conflation in itself is indicative of the ways Black men are reflexively criminalized.

used to dehumanize them (Haslam 2006). The animalistic form of dehumanization connotes the object is “lacking refinement, civility, moral sensibility, and higher cognition” (Haslam 2006, p. 252). While meanings can vary, animal metaphors typically convey degradation by suggesting stupidity or signify disgust by implying depravity and disagreeableness (Haslam et al. 2011). Dehumanization also functions through objectification (also called “mechanistic dehumanization”), which involves inanimate comparisons or portrayals where people are associated with an object “lacking emotionality, warmth, cognitive openness, and individual agency ... and depth” (Haslam 2006, p. 253). Further, objectified representations that focus on the body (rather than face) can lead to being judged as having lower intellect, moral status, competency, and capacity to feel pain (Loughnan et al. 2010). A consequence of dehumanizing certain groups of people is this process can create desensitization to pain, injury, and/or violence experienced by this group. The converse is also possible: as people become desensitized to violence against a certain group, that group is seen as less human or less deserving of empathy.

Throughout history, Black people have been subject to demeaning and objectifying representations, stereotypes, and racial bias (Goff et al. 2008; Lott 1999; Volpato et al. 2010). There is a long history of associating Black people to animals, particularly apes, that has served to rationalize their subjugation (Johada 1999; Lott 1999, as cited in Goff et al. 2008) as this association signifies degradation (Haslam et al. 2011). In the contemporary context, animalistic associations are often implicit, but significant in shaping white views and treatment of Black people (Goff et al. 2008, 2014; Mekawi et al. 2016). For example, Goff and colleagues (2008) found the Black–ape association to be implicit and strong even in the absence of (1) explicit knowledge of this association and (2) anti-Black attitudes.

Other research has demonstrated animalistic dehumanization of Black people has a significant impact on shooting bias toward Black individuals (Mekawi et al. 2016). In other words, individuals who tended to associate Black people with animals had a lower threshold for shooting Black (versus white) individuals in an experimental scenario. In separate studies, researchers have also found this association can lead to condoning violence against both Black adults (Goff et al. 2008) and Black children (Goff et al. 2014). Goff and colleagues (2014) observed the Black–ape association among both undergraduates and police officers, the majority of whom were white males. When the researchers compared the racial bias scores to

actual force used in the field, they found “the more officers implicitly associated Blacks with apes, the more officers had used force against Black children compared to children of other races” (p. 10). Furthermore, after analyzing media coverage of 153 cases where defendants faced the death penalty, researchers found Black defendants were described with more ape-relevant words than white defendants. Black defendants who were sentenced to death were more likely to have been portrayed using ape-relevant words by the media (Goff et al. 2008).

In addition to these subhuman characterizations, Black people are, paradoxically, also characterized as superhuman. Waytz et al. (2015) investigated whether white people engaged in superhumanization of Black people, defined as when Black people were understood as “possessing supernatural, extrasensory, and magical qualities” (p. 353). Through a series of lab studies, the researchers provided evidence of whites’ implicit and explicit superhumanizing bias and also found the superhumanization of Black people was associated with the tendency to not recognize their pain. Other research has documented assumptions that Black individuals feel less pain than white individuals (Trawalter et al. 2012) and are naturally endowed with capabilities to overcome hardship (Harris-Lacewell 2001). Indeed, both white laypersons and those with medical training have been shown to endorse false beliefs about biological differences between white and Black people, and these beliefs are related to lower ratings for Black (vs. white) pain (Hoffman et al. 2016). These beliefs can also lead to inappropriate treatment (Hoffman et al. 2016). For example, compared to white children, Black children with similar levels of reported pain are less likely to be treated with pain medication (Goyal et al. 2015). Racial bias also reduces empathy for out-group members (Avenanti et al. 2010). Ultimately, such beliefs are steeped in racialized ideas of the Black body and biology that have been used to justify the enslavement and exploitation of Black people (Trawalter and Hoffman 2015). Importantly, white people’s racial bias in perceiving Black people’s pain can operate independently from racial attitudes, meaning the contemporary tendency among whites to not recognize Black pain can be unconscious (Hoffman et al. 2016).

Black men are both imagined and perceived to be more physically formidable than white men. Using text-based scenarios, Holbrook et al. (2016) found participants envisioned characters with stereotypically Black names as larger and more aggressive than those with stereotypically white names. A different set of studies demonstrated people perceive

young Black men as taller, more muscular, and more capable of harm than white men of the same size (Wilson et al. 2017). Black children are not spared from these racialized representations; they are judged to be older, less innocent, and more culpable for their actions than their white peers (Dancy 2014; Dumas and Nelson 2016; Goff et al. 2014). Ultimately, these racist misperceptions lead to greater use of police force (Milner et al. 2016) and endorsement of force against Black males (Goff et al. 2014; Wilson et al. 2017). Racial bias in the assessment of physical characteristics and possible threats are inextricably connected to dehumanization processes. For example, those who associate Black children with animals are also more likely to view them as older and more culpable (Goff et al. 2014).

Loughnan and Colleagues (2010) provide studies highlighting how objectification can influence behavior toward a given group. In one study when participants were shown images of women's face only, full body, and body only, they found women who were shown with body-only images were judged as having less mental capacity (perceptions, emotions, thoughts, and intentions) and less deserving of moral treatment and consideration. In a second study, the researchers found men and women who are bodily objectified (showing more skin versus fully clothed) were more likely to be denied intelligence and competence. Moreover, when given the option to decide on how much pain to temporarily induce in a subject in a hypothetical situation, participants were more willing to administer greater pain to those who were bodily objectified (compared to those who were not objectified), illustrating the denial of moral status.

The beliefs regarding Black physicality, strength, and biology underscore the objectification of Black bodies, which have often become spectacles for white consumption. Complex dynamics, including contradictory objectives, reinforce the display of Black people's bodies as battered and broken. "Colonial slavery.... designated Blacks as legitimate objects of excessive violence" (Berg 2015, p. 12). Further, King (2008) explained throughout history "Americans... accept[ed] pleasure in viewing Black pain and express[ed] passion through horrific acts of torture against the Black body" (p. 36). Alongside pleasure, racial contempt and fear buttressed the degradation of Black bodies. "Black boys and men present a particular kind of physical threat in the white imagination, a threat that must be contained," often through violence and terror (Alexander 1994, p. 90).

This pleasure is derived from the satisfaction of seeing something imagined as “powerful” rendered weak or “put in its proper place.” These acts and images of violence function to maintain the ideology of white supremacy (Markovitz 2004; Raiford 2009; Wood 2005). According to Wood (2005), photographs of lynchings signified “the uncontested “truth” of white civilized morality over and against supposed Black bestiality and savagery” (p. 377).

Even images of violence circulated to promote compassion (Putzi 2002; Silkenat 2014) anticipate a response of shock and awe in order to exploit Black pain as a means to an end. Likewise, the contemporary spectacles of Black death in the media largely serve as a commodity for economic interests rather than social justice (Noble 2014). As Fischer and Mohrman (2016) note regarding the subversive potential of data from wearable cameras and dashcams, “whether sousveillant images can challenge us to make Black lives matter and not simply reinscribe an association between Blackness and death depends not only upon their circulation within social media but their contextualization within larger social justice movements, such as Black Lives Matter” (para. 6). While offering testimony to the pervasiveness of white brutality against Black people and the disregard for Black lives (Juhasz 2016), the inundation of violent images can also serve to naturalize Black death (Williams 2016). Continued exposure to violence can lead to desensitization of violence and empathy (Anderson et al. 2010; Bartholow et al. 2006). Such images centering on Black bodies, no matter their intended aim(s), make entertainment of, normalize, and permit the ignorance of Black suffering.

Racial Stereotypes and Black Athletes

Athletes have endured racial stereotypes for decades. Bias regarding college athletes’ intellect, athleticism, and motivation are embedded in society and deeply rooted in athletic culture (Birrell 1989). While all athletes are vulnerable to stereotyping, there are racialized dimensions to the way(s) stereotypes are applied to Black as compared to white players. Although we use both “athlete” and “player” throughout this chapter, in light of the racialized way the terms “athletic” and “athlete” are often deployed, we tend to prefer the more neutral “player,” especially when the term is paired with a racial identifier.

Black players are viewed as highly talented, but low in intelligence (Walzer and Czoop 2011). Hughey and Goss (2015) found the framing

of “Black brawn vs. white brains” is still displayed in news literature through specific characterizations of Black players (e.g., “naturally gifted,” “God-given talent,”) while white players are often described by their intellect and work ethic (e.g., “mind for the game,” “disciplined”). Even though these stereotypes and perceived genetic differences in athletic ability are false (Carter et al. 2010; Harris 2007; Hunter 1996), the narratives persist, creating a dichotomy in sports media discourse where white players are praised for their diligence and intellect while Black players are assumed to have simply inherited the physicality necessary to compete. This minimizes the accomplishments of Black players while simultaneously providing a rationale for the perceived underrepresentation of white players at the highest levels (Azzarito and Harrison 2008; Davis 1990). Billings (2004) argued racial stereotyping of quarterbacks in professional and collegiate broadcast commentary was improving overall, especially when it came to comments regarding mental skill, but found the success of Black quarterbacks was still more likely to be attributed to athletic skill compared to white quarterbacks.

Hughey and Goss (2015) analyzed 292 articles covering Olympic, professional, and collegiate sport from ten major US newspapers and found there was a tendency for news media to attribute Black athletic success to a superior genetic predisposition rather than training or hard work. In another study that analyzed racial descriptors in college football and basketball broadcast commentary, Rada and Wulfemeyer (2005) found Black players were primarily described in terms of their “God-given” physical ability, and white players were described as hard workers or intelligent. They also found personal interest stories and character judgments portrayed Black players negatively, whereas white players were only portrayed positively.

Further, Woodward (2004) found racial bias extended to scouting reports of Division I (DI) football players. Specifically, white players were likely to be described in positive mental terms, whereas Black players were described positively based on their physical ability. The engrained bias essentially places players into “thinking” versus “physical” positions. Because “thinking” positions (quarterback, center, inside linebacker) are typically more lucrative and have a lower tendency to get hurt, these stereotypes have negative implications for career length, post-playing career aspirations, and health (Woodward 2004).

Dehumanization of Black Bodies Within Sport

In several studies specifically focused on the bodily objectification of college athletes, White and Molina (2016) tested whether praise or admiration for male athletes could be infrahumanizing, which refers to subtle dehumanization rather than overt. They found athletes who received bodily focused praise (physical skill) compared to intelligence-focused praise (intellectual skill) were assessed as having a lower capacity for self-control and thinking. They also found infrahumanization predicts less support for college athletes' rights (e.g., pay, unionization, medical coverage of injury). The researchers did not find race was a moderating factor; however, they argue their findings have implications for racial consequences because Black players are much more likely than white players to have their bodies objectified. Wallsten et al. (2017) similarly found support for athletes' rights, particularly pay for play, to be influenced by racial attitudes.

MEDIA MESSAGES MATTER

According to agenda-setting theory, media and broadcasters direct the public's attention to specific subjects (McCombs and Shaw 1972). Two levels of agenda-setting are commonly addressed: the selection of objects for attention and framing (Carragee and Roefs 2004); the third level, priming, is less frequently analyzed, though still impactful. In the case of CGD, producers and commentators choose which aspects of a game or season to highlight and discuss, essentially "setting the agenda" for public discourse of college athletics.

Framing is the second level of agenda-setting. Media members situate a story in a particular context and perspective by highlighting certain characteristics about the story, thereby making those aspects salient and creating a frame through which to view the story (Moy et al. 2016). Carragee and Roefs (2004) explained, "frames construct particular meanings concerning issues by their patterns of emphasis, interpretation, and exclusion" (p. 217). These frames, in turn, have "powerful agenda-setting roles" (McCombs et al. 1997, p. 704). Further, framing research addresses power relations by interrogating how frames are constructed and whose interest those frames serve (Carragee and Roefs 2004).

The third aspect of agenda-setting theory is the priming function: commentators prime people to associate specific attributes to a subject or object by relentlessly pairing with terms, descriptors, and/or images on air

(Moy et al. 2016). Blackman et al. demonstrated viewing negative news stories could “alter the participants’ sense of the surrounding social community and mobilize a sense of threat in them” (1977, p. 297). This finding may be particularly relevant in understanding the effect of viewing media that reinforces stereotypes about a racialized other. In the context of this study, CGD broadcasts prime the audience to associate certain characteristics with Black players that they then are more likely to recall, even in different contexts. Beyond the average agenda-setting role all media have, ESPN’s dominance in the sport media landscape means it is a persuasive force, recognized as authoritative by people both inside and outside typical athletic viewership (Meán 2011; Volner 2016). As a result, the corporation has immense cultural impact through the narratives, ideologies, and power relations produced (and reproduced) in its products. The cumulative effect of these media messages is profound. In isolation, some of the examples in this chapter are not particularly egregious (or may not be), but because these portrayals are so pervasive—literally occurring any given Thursday, Saturday, Sunday, or Monday between NCAA and NFL football—the exposure and inundation matters and affects how viewers interpret and interact with the world (Gerbner et al. 2002; Kellner 1995; Moy et al. 2016).

METHODS

This study is guided by a constructivist lens, which acknowledges reality is socially constructed and based on individual experiences (Guba and Lincoln 1994). Discourse plays a large role in that construction, according to agenda-setting theory. Using media content analysis to examine the discourse surrounding DI football for the 2016–17 regular season and playoffs, ESPN CGD lead-up coverage and in-game commentary was analyzed. CGD broadcasts emphasize high-profile games throughout the season and are positioned as embedded on the campuses where they film. Production chooses the on-site location each week as the season progresses in order to capitalize on major storylines regarding a specific player or team match-up, or games that affect teams’ chances for playoff selection. Inherent in the premise of CGD is an attempt to translate the college atmosphere to the public while also contextualizing games within our larger culture, both commercially and politically. In fact, preproduced segments, panel discussions on predetermined topics, and in-game commentary all serve as different genres and highlight different elements of this discourse in our data.

Data Sources and Analysis

Data consists of approximately 118 hours of video footage, including the 3-hour weekly CGD pregame show and the in-game commentary for the specified “College Game of the Week” for the regular-season and playoff games CGD covered in 2016–17, resulting in 16 weeks of lead-up coverage and live commentary. Data analysis was completed using Dedoose (Dedoose Version 6.2.7 2016), an online platform that allows video data to be coded directly. Coding the video rather than using transcripts allows for interpretation of expression and intonation, as well as other visuals and graphics, and provides context that potentially affects meaning (Drisko and Maschi 2015). The research team debriefed and memoed early games in real time and met to develop a preliminary code list that incorporated initial observations and themes from the literature (Huberman and Miles 2001). We then undertook an iterative coding and memoing process consisting of: collaborative initial coding, establishing coder reliability, and finalizing the codebook.

We also downloaded rosters and game stats, wrote memos summarizing each week of the season, foci of coverage, and interesting examples or situations. Relevant passages were transcribed after video coding. The primary codes examined in this chapter are *animal comparison*, *body*, and *injury*. The coded data was also analyzed separately and compared between athletes of color and white athletes to systematically identify differences. Our occasional use of “athlete(s) of color” rather than “Black athlete(s)/player(s)” reflects a distinction between comments about specific Black players rather than a group of athletes of color (with diverse racial backgrounds or where the race of all athletes could not be determined) and reflects our initial coding scheme (which coded broadly for athletes of color, then analyzed Black athletes specifically). In keeping with the norms of this type of research (McCarthy and Jones 1997; Rada and Wulfemeyer 2005; Woodward 2004), we assigned racial identifiers to the best of our ability based on visual clues and available press coverage. Although athletes’ self-identifications would have been preferable, it was not practical to ascertain self-identifications on this scale. Further, to some extent, how athletes are racially categorized by others (particularly commentators) is more relevant to our findings than their self-identification. Coding and data analysis were completed by four American women: an Asian American woman, a biracial Black woman, a Native American woman, and a white woman. Our diverse racial backgrounds hopefully lent us healthy skepticism about racial attributions and provided checks and balances on interpretations.

We primarily focus on the findings for Black players in this chapter due to our interest in how their portrayal affects perceptions of Black people. Although we do not share the findings regarding white players in this chapter, our disaggregated analysis made clear the themes discussed here are distinct for Black players in terms of their severity, frequency, and, in some cases, existence. Findings are written to discuss the range of examples as well as a vignette in which we analyze the context and nuances of the data in more depth. These examples, though player-specific, are representative of the many layers of data related to each theme analyzed. Further, discussion is interwoven with these findings rather than in a separate section.

FINDINGS

Findings are organized in the following sections: Nonhuman (animal and sub/super-human comparisons), Body, and Injury. We spend less time documenting that Black players were portrayed as inherently violent and/or dangerous. This portrayal is well documented in the literature as one way Black people are stigmatized and enslaved (Alexander 2012; Berg 2015), criminalized (Hill Collins 2006; Wood 2011), murdered (Yancy and Jones 2014), and/or discrimination against Black bodies is justified (Pratto et al. 2013). It is also well-documented that sport frequently furthers this racial narrative (Brown 2014; Carrington 2011; Hill Collins 2006). In this chapter, we primarily focus on other aspects of dehumanization that reinforce these corrosive racial narratives. Our analysis includes animalistic, objectified, & superhuman characterizations; correlating ascriptions regarding affect; excessive focus on the physical body; and the treatment of injury. We found the dominant narratives regarding each of these topics within CGD's coverage represented Black players as inhuman and invulnerable. In the context of sport, these narratives are commonplace and may even be intended as complimentary. However, these seemingly positive appraisals and characterizations ultimately serve to undermine Black players' humanity and deny their pain, influencing our cultural beliefs about Black bodies more generally.

Sub- and Superhuman

Groups and individual Black players were described using terms such as "workhorse," "stable of workhorses," "bell-cow," "pretty human beings running like deer," "monster," "beast," and many players' hands were

referred to as “bear paws.” Other directives and colorful verbs painted Black players as animal-like. A commentator instructed the offense to “feed the workhorse” by continuing to hand the ball off to the Black running back, and “gallop” was repeatedly used as a verb to describe Black players’ running style (e.g., “he galloped down the sideline”). Sometimes the animal comparisons were paired with phrases insinuating the players were (or needed to be) confined like animals. For example, a commentator stated, “He escapes and gallops down the sideline,” and described a separate player’s run as, “he busted loose and galloped...can’t contain him.” Similarly, after calling one Black player a “workhorse,” commentators noted, “He’s been pent up and he’s ready to explode.” These descriptions portray athletes as if they are caged animals and imply football is an appropriate venue to set them loose. The converse implication, which remains unarticulated, is this animalism is unavoidable and perhaps football is an appropriate outlet for the violence ascribed to Black people, specifically in contrast to other settings where Black bodies are perceived as an inherent threat.

Animal characterizations also carry with them the implication of being primitive and of underdeveloped intelligence and rationality (Haslam et al. 2011). As such, the frequent descriptions of Black players’ “instinctiveness” both echoed and reinforced animal characterizations. Ascriptions of “instinct,” even when used as a compliment, undermine the skill and football IQ involved in a great play, and instead attribute Black players’ good reads and impressive reactions to innate characteristics. Further, Black players, particularly quarterbacks, were portrayed as immature, impulsive, or in the process of maturing. For instance, in one game commentators continually discussed the Black quarterback’s emotional maturity and asserted he “*by nature* is an emotional player. Some people would say emotionally immature player” and he “is a very emotional player as well, some would say not the most *mature*, emotionally.” These repetitive ascriptions culminated with a commentator asserting, “I think he’s an impulsive player, and it comes out. And it’s just bad.” In a different case, a preproduced graphic of another Black quarterback featured the term “Maturation” as the headline accompanying his picture.

Commentators’ discussion throughout the game focused on how the quarterback had entered college with immense athleticism, but only recently matured enough to make better in-game decisions. Rather than fully complimentary, this coverage portrayed the quarterback as starting from a deficient level of maturity and his success was attributed to him

correcting that deficiency. More broadly, production decisions often insinuated Black players began from a state of immaturity and had to work to match the assumed emotional control of white players.

Commentators' descriptions of players' affect and demeanor, as related to violence, aggression, and/or anger, further reinforced the subtext apparent in their animal comparisons and animalistic descriptions. Commentators repeatedly used "violent" and "angry" to describe Black players' running style (e.g., "He is a *violent* runner"; "He ran *angry*.") In another instance, commentators noted about a Black player, "Coaches describe him as quick and *violent*." Another Black player was said to have "violent hands." And a group of Black players was described as: "These guys are so violent on defense they sometimes hurt each other." This description underscores the portrayal of Black players as not just violent, but animal-like and driven by physicality and instinct, to the point of accidentally harming each other. The image evoked is of a wild animal that knows not what it does but is all the more dangerous for that lack of knowledge and control.

A different, nonetheless insidious, way commentators dehumanized Black players was through the ascription of superhuman abilities. For example, during a game a commentator asserted, "When you pressure J.T. Barrett, you can make him human." In a separate game, a different commentator repeatedly referred to a Black quarterback as "immortal." A preproduced game introduction went even further to capitalize on the idea by featuring two opposing Black quarterbacks as superheroes in a "superhero showdown," complete with comic book panels. The animated graphic and narration portrayed them as possessing "superhuman speed, strength, senses" and situated them as characters within the unfolding comic book. Broadcasting portrayals like these of Black players as superhuman, immortal, and/or possessing superhuman abilities are posited as compliments, masking the dangerousness of associating these characterizations with Black people. Yet ascribing superhuman or immortal characteristics helps prime the audience to believe the use of force against unarmed Black people by police is needed and justified, rather than excessive. For example, Wilson's testimony Michael Brown was "bulking up to run through the shots" chillingly reads like something straight from a comic book such as Marvel's *Luke Cage*.

Body

Commentators often discussed Black players first and foremost in relation to their bodies and specific body parts. Commentators instructed the audience to notice the strength of Black players' legs, arms, or body composition (e.g., "You can see how he's stronger in the legs;" "Wait till you see the difference in Deshaun Watson, the difference in how he looks. He's 15 pounds heavier ... I don't know if it's all in his legs, but he looks a lot thicker than a year ago.") The language used to describe Black players' success also focused on physicality. Commentators often emphasized the "physical nature" of Black players when trying to compliment them. Similarly, commentators used "muscles" as a verb to describe how Black players gained yards, e.g., "[he] shows his strength and muscles for about six." The choice of verb implied athletes relied on their muscles and strength for success, rather than intellect, skill, or strategy.

Black players were portrayed as interchangeable and/or disposable when commentators advised a given team to "rotate more bodies in" or "get fresh bodies in there." Comments such as these speak to the structural constraints of football (e.g., physically demanding, highly specialized positions, a large roster in anticipation of injuries). Regardless of these constraints, reducing people to their bodies is problematic. Though the comments were occasionally directed at a group of athletes that included white players, the overwhelming majority of the athletes discussed in this way were Black. Given America's history of chattel slavery, there is an all-too familiar resonance to the suggestion Black bodies are functional objects that ought to be "used" for the game. Further, considering the frequency of head impacts in collegiate football and what we now know about brain trauma, concussions, and subconcussive injuries (Barnes et al. 2018; Boston University 2009a, b; Crisco et al. 2010; Masel and DeWitt 2010; McKee et al. 2010; University of Texas 2010), commentators suggesting players' bodies are interchangeable or meant to be "used" is grossly insensitive to the long-term health risks. In one instance, a commentator discussed the all-Black receiving core of a team by saying, "All those pretty bodies can't be used if you can't get the ball to them." This lament makes visible commentators' uneasy relationship with Black bodies, which is often both admiring and objectifying. Such comments and depictions reflect Black people's liminality or "the unsettled status of Blacks in the eyes of those who produce dominant culture and of those who consume it" (Entman and Rojacci 2000, p. 53).

Injury

As Tommy Armstrong lay immobile on the field, receiving medical attention, three replays of his head slamming into the ground and literally bouncing were shown. Commentators noted that “he is not moving” and “is motionless” as they looked at every camera angle and pontificated about why he was unable to brace himself before impact. Trainers converged, surrounding Armstrong until he was hidden from view, then producers cut to commercial. When they returned from commercial, trainers still blocked the view of Armstrong. They filmed from above while describing the necessity of cutting off his jersey and chinstrap in order to examine him without risking moving his head. Samantha Ponder described the “extreme concern from the people around him,” that were “being so gentle.... trying not to do anything that would disrupt anything further.”

Armstrong’s father is escorted to the field by police and his fiancée is on the sideline, crying—all of this is narrated as medical staff continue to work over Armstrong’s prostrate form. Commentators mention both staffs working together, and earlier noted the opposing team was looking on respectfully and with concern, thus painting a picture of fans and staffs coming together when it’s serious and/or important. “As trainers, doctors, medical staff, you practice, just in case something horrific happens—hoping that it never does—but then it happens ... when it happens, it doesn’t matter if you’re an Ohio State or a Nebraska doctor or trainer—everybody trying to pitch in.”

A commentator points out Armstrong’s father and fiancée again, then immediately transitions to, “we’ve talked about his toughness and his durability throughout his career.”

Fans clap as Armstrong is loaded onto the cart and a commentator simultaneously notes he’s “probably one of the more competitive guys that I’ve seen in the last few years, and the leader for this team.” Now, 8 minutes and 38 seconds after it was originally noted on air that Armstrong was injured, a commentator says, “It’s nice that he’s speaking and he’s aware now of his surroundings and his teammates.” Implying he may have been unconscious in the intervening time. The crowd chants “Tommy, Tommy,” and a commentator remarks, “It’s a nice show of support from the Ohio State fans.”

Then, “while the obvious concern is for him, Armstrong’s departure leaves quite a void for this football team.”

Armstrong props his arm on his own body to display his upturned thumb. The camera tracks as his father and fiancée jog after the cart carrying him for 75 yards to the ambulance waiting just beyond the far end zone; fans' cheers of "Tommy" can be clearly heard, and his dad raises his thumb overhead to the crowd. Before they are out of the end zone, and with the sound of a different "To-mmy-Arm-strong" chant still audible, the commentators begin discussing how the play that injured Armstrong will affect the game.

A bird's-eye view shows the ambulance driving away from the stadium.

Nonetheless, later in the game, cameras also followed Armstrong as he jogged into the stadium, still clad in scrubs, and back onto the sideline, where he interacted with teammates and coaches (now wearing a team sweat suit). Commentators expounded:

KH: "with how quickly he was getting out of the...the car and into the locker room, you could just feel that he wanted to get back to his team. Not, not to play, but just to be here for his guys. Talk to 'em and be there for 'em. True leader!"

CF: "We didn't want to say it, Kirk, but it's hard not to think that Armstrong, as a senior... When you see him taken off like that, you, you wonder if it's the last time you'll see him in a Nebraska uniform, but it doesn't certainly appear to be that way."

SP: "... He's already coaching his teammates up! It is just incredible what we have witnessed tonight!"

We share this vignette to highlight several features of the coverage (see [Appendices](#) for full transcriptions of the clips related to this injury). This was relatively serious and compassionate coverage of an injury, yet it rang hollow in light of their framing Armstrong as "durable" and their subsequent laudatory coverage of his swift return to the sidelines. Producers did stop showing Armstrong's fall—after the initial three replays—instead focusing on the trainers and protocols, and even the human angle of his loved ones' concern. Commentators were also relatively solemn throughout the almost nine minutes Armstrong lay on the field. Still, the injury was treated as improbable, anomalous, and as an opportunity for the respective fans and staffs to come together. Yet, as Armstrong was loaded into the ambulance, commentators noted the wonderful care a different athlete got in area hospitals after a catastrophic injury in the stadium dur-

ing the previous season, undercutting the impression the risk of such injuries is small or can be easily controlled or mitigated by the expertise of medical staff. More importantly, despite the solemnity of the coverage, the narrative arc ultimately reinforced the idea of invincible Black bodies by covering and praising Armstrong's improbable—and probably medically inadvisable—rapid return to the sidelines.

The image of Armstrong's prostrate body provided an impetus for commentators to discuss his resilience, even before it was clear whether he had suffered a serious and/or lasting injury. The commentary about Armstrong's durability took place while the camera showed what was happening on the field in real time: Armstrong's father and fiancée crying over him as he was placed on a stretcher, creating a severe dichotomy between the commentary and the visual in the moment. To capture such moments, we specifically coded for "mismatches" between the visuals and commentary surrounding players' injuries, one of the strengths of coding video directly rather than transcripts. Deondre Francois was similarly described as "resilient"; while various angles of his collision rolled, commentators oohed, aahed, and applauded the impressive impact. In many other instances, commentators discussed other, unrelated, aspects of the game as replays of a hard impact or an injury were shown. The obvious disconnect between these images and commentary reinforces Black players' pain and injury are immaterial and further desensitizes the audience.

Both these players ultimately suffered no (known) lasting injury from these hard hits and scary circumstances—as such, the tone of the coverage is seen as sufficient or even appropriate. However, Black players were injured more often than white players and had more severe injuries (Haslerig et al. 2018), which compounded the fact these injuries were discussed differently (with less care or concern for Black players). In the data, Black players experienced many more head, neck, and spine injuries, whereas white players tended to injure appendages such as an ankle or shoulder (Haslerig et al. 2018). Overall, the footage revealed a callousness or disregard for Black players' pain, as evidenced by the constant replays of how they were injured, shown in slow-motion and emphasizing the hardest point of impact. The fascination seemed to be with viewing violence that should have caused pain, then watching Black players continue as if they felt no pain. These images, especially cumulatively, reinforce existing racist beliefs Black people do not feel pain (or feel less pain) (Hoffman et al. 2016; Trawalter et al. 2012) and/or will continue despite pain.

In some instances, replays were used to assess “targeting” penalties in which one player has hit another player’s head. These hits are illegal due to the risk of concussion or serious damage to the head, neck, or spine. In these cases, footage was replayed several times while a “rules expert” discussed whether the hit was worthy of a penalty, rather than focusing on the severity of injury or showing concern for the well-being of the player who was hit. This pattern also extended to players who were able to immediately return to play but were clearly in pain. For example, producers replayed a Black quarterback getting hit by two opposing players while in mid-air, creating a visually violent collision where his body was spun around several times and landed awkwardly. This replay was shown four times, each with audible “oohs” by both commentators, despite their emphatic acknowledgment that, “win or lose, [he] is gonna *feel* this one tomorrow morning.” Hard hits to other Black players throughout the season followed a similar script: violent collisions were treated as another form of entertainment within the game.

In one pregame show, producers repeatedly used a clip of a former player writhing in pain to promote an upcoming segment about his paralysis. Replaying this footage as spectacle assumes the audience will “stay tuned” for Black pain and suffering rather than being repelled, thus serving as a platform to normalize Black suffering and render it mundane. This process is in line with research showing a lack of empathy toward Black pain (Trawalter et al. 2012), though a causal relationship is not established. Rather, the lack of empathy and the willingness to view brutal images may be mutually reinforcing.

Further, Black players were often considered leaders only when they were perceived as sacrificing their bodies for the game or team. These “earning respect” and “owe it to the team” narratives about sacrificing their body were frequent and the (ir)rationality behind them taken for granted. Similar to the praise Armstrong received as a leader for returning to the stadium after his hospital trip, a different Black quarterback was admiringly said to have “taken a *beating* at times this year, has proven his toughness.” Commentators said of another Black player, he “personifies the toughness it takes to play this sport at a high level. Knocked unconscious in the Tigers’ last game at Wake Forest. Cleared his concussion protocol, good to go.” In these instances, Black players’ bodies are again valued for their usefulness to their team. This objectification renders both

pain and potential long-term damage to the individual immaterial, because it is all reframed as their opportunity to make a sacrifice for their team and thereby demonstrate leadership.

In this vein, injury and pain was discussed only insofar as it concerned players' short-term ability to return to play and how their return (or lack thereof) would impact the game. In one instance, a sideline reporter delivered the "good news for the Tigers" that a player was ready to return to play after he suffered a hard hit to his head. She reported,

[He was] given the all clear from the athletic training staff. They asked him a few questions when he came off, but then really didn't receive any medical attention after that despite the fact that he's in some pain. You can see why...he's taken some huge hits in this game.

In another game, a different sideline reporter detailed the minimal medical attention a player received despite observations he "wasn't right." She commented,

...the very critical linebacker for this Alabama team, was taken into the medical tent. He just wasn't right on the bench. I could see someone talking to him for a long time. They finally took him into the tent, and it alarmed me when they took out the medical STAT kit. They did not eventually use that and he has gone back out onto the field, but something definitely wasn't right with [him].

In the above example, the source of his observed medical problem remained unidentified, yet the player returned to play. Thus, commentators both reinforced and exposed the inconsistent nature of return-to-play procedures, allowing a glimpse at the lack of care and concern for Black players' long-term well-being. These comments emphasized whether a given player would be immediately available to serve their team, rather than the players' health.

CONCLUSION

There is a long history of Black pain and injury serving as a quintessentially American spectacle (King 2008; Raiford 2009; Wood 2011). Examples include images meant to inspire empathy and action, such as

pictures and exhibitions of slaves' lashed backs circulated by abolitionists (Putzi 2002; Silkenat 2014), news footage of dogs and hoses turned on Civil Rights protesters (Bodroghkozy 2013; Brasell 2004), and video documentation of police killing Black people (Hardeman et al. 2016; Marcus 2016). In contrast, images of lynchings are an equally American phenomenon that have nothing to do with inspiring empathy, and instead these images (and lynching itself) are deployed as acts of terror and to reaffirm white supremacy (Markovitz 2004; Raiford 2009; Wood 2011). Entman and Rojacki (2000) assert, "Blacks occupy a *liminal* place in White-dominated media and society, neither fully accepted nor completely rejected" (p. 46). The footage of injury in CGD broadcasts coexists uneasily with these other spectacles of Black pain and death. It does not fit neatly into either box, as athletes are celebrated for resisting/ignoring pain and injury in the face of violence.

Like more outright racist and degrading depictions of Black people, the seemingly favorable images and narratives in CGD coverage have material consequences (Alexander 2012; Hill Collins 2006). These broadcasts track with historic portrayals of Black men (Yancy 2017) and mirror the accounts of police officers such as Darren Wilson, who said Brown, "had the most aggressive face. That's the only way I can describe it, it looks like a demon, that's how angry he looked." Police officers' articulated "fear" has become a viable legal defense for murdering Black people (Hill 2017; Lee 2003; Light 2017; Marcus 2016). The legal question has shifted to whether they fear for their life, rather than whether their fear was actually reasonable because, in the American context, it is a given that Black men are dangerous and fear of them is therefore reasonable. The portrayals of Black football players within CGD reinforce this corrosive and ultimately lethal message.

We have documented prominent broadcast narratives promoting Black players as invulnerable, making the case these narratives serve to prime audiences (Moy et al. 2016)—including law enforcement—to ascribe inhuman abilities to Black people and justify the use of lethal force against them. Although CGD features only men playing football, we argue the marginalizing impact is not limited to Black men. Racist violence in the U.S., though often gendered in its execution (Bhattacharyya et al. 2002; Hill Collins 2006), has always included both Black men and Black women (Bhattacharyya et al. 2002; Hall 1983). As Morris (2016) argues, "Though media and advocacy efforts have largely focused on the extreme and intolerable abuse cases involving Black boys... Black girls are also

directly impacted by criminalizing policies and practices that render them vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, dehumanization, and under worst circumstances, death" (pp. 1–2). Black women are routinely dehumanized and/or diminished through both masculinization and objectification (Rushing 2009). Further, they have been denied the protections—both legal and extrajudicial—afforded to white women; in the American popular imagination Black women have been constructed as “unrapable” and therefore invulnerable (Crenshaw 1991; Broussard 2013). As such, we argue insofar as CGD images affect racial/racist violence, this effect is likely borne by all Black people rather than Black men alone.

Despite being framed as praise in the context of sport, beliefs about Black animalism and invincibility support white supremacy by rendering Black pain and humanity invisible. If Black bodies are as indestructible, resilient, durable, and superhuman as they are often portrayed in these broadcasts, no level of force against them could be “excessive.” According to this logic, *any* escalation of force is justified because you are dealing with someone invulnerable to force. As the most watched college sport broadcast of all time (Volner 2016), CGD commentary and imagery is one source of socialization that rationalizes police violence (and our societal tolerance thereof).

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Armstrong Injury Transcription

00:00:00 [Beginning of Recorded Material]

Comm. 1: The Edge gets their first down at the 25-yard line. So, one of the scrambles. And Armstrong's down after getting knocked down by Hooker.

00:00:05 [Camera focuses on Armstrong not moving as trainers rush to his aid]

Comm. 2: Oh, boy!

Comm. 1: Oh, he is not moving there.

Comm. 2: Must have been when his...when he got hit he didn't have a chance, because the way he was holding the ball to brace himself.

00:00:26 [Transitions to two screens. The bigger one showing the replay (#1) of the injury and the other fixates on Armstrong]

Comm. 1: Malik Hooker took the feet out from under him *Comm. 2 talking over, start* while he was tackled.

Comm. 2: *Talking over, inaudible, end* You can see how the ball's in his right hand. He doesn't get a chance really get his head...protect his head there. Looks like his head may have hit the ground.

Comm. 1: It definitely did.

00:00:30 [The bigger screen showing the replay (#2) of the injury and the other fixated on Armstrong]

Comm. 2: See the ball in the right hand. Just doesn't have a chance to brace himself.

Comm. 1: Boy, just an awful scene. He's still lying motionless.

[The bigger screen showing the replay (#3) of the injury and the other fixated on Armstrong]

[Transitions to above view of the trainers and doctors blocking Armstrong]

Comm. 1: At the side is the trainers, doctors take a look at him.

00:01:00 [Cuts to commercial]

00:04:05 [Return from commercial, trainers/doctors blocking the view of Armstrong]

Comm. 1: Concern for the Nebraska quarterback, Tommy Armstrong, they rolled him over from his stomach to his back. They've cut off his jersey and used scissors to also cut off his shoulder pads *inaudible* the breastplate.

Comm. 1: Sam Ponder is on the sidelines. Sam...Sam, what can you see from your vantage point.

00:04:25

SP: Yeah, he's kept his eyes closed most of this time. We saw him move his lefthand very slightly, but his hands have mostly been clenched. As you said, theydid cut off, uh, part of his jersey just trying to take some of this off safely. They cut off his chinstrap. Extreme concern from the people around him. J.T. Barrett came over here. A number of different coaches and players toplay...pray around him. Obviously a very scary situation. They do have the board out here to takehim over, but right now just being so gentle. Um, trying not to do anything that would

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00:05:00 disrupt anything further. I did talk to some people who saw... who wereright here where it happened and they believe he came down on the ball. There was concern, obviously, that he hit his head from eyewitnesses whowere right here. They said they think he came down on the ball.
 [Showing the trainers getting the board ready for Armstrong]
 So, obviously a lot of unknown, but right now a lot of thoughts and prayersout for Tommy.

Comm. 1. You see they put the brace in his neck. They've got the board. The cart isright there.
 [Transitions to two screens. One shows Armstrong's father being with hisson and the other focuses on the action (trainers etc.) around Tommy]
 This is on the Ohio State sideline. And the Buckeyes have been gathered...looking
 with concern and support just a few yards away.
 [Pause]
 Talked about Armstrong has been a constant presence with this program the last 4 years. Starter from his redshirt, freshman year.

00:06:00 [Pause, still showing two screens]
 Comm. 1 Been told that his father has been escorted to the field by the police. Kneeling down there in the Black jacket on the left side. His girlfriend isover there, you see her, with the blonde hair, crying, being comforted by teammate.

Comm. 2 Trey Foster.
 [Transitions to one screen still focusing on Armstrong with the trainers/doctors]
 Comm. 1 It's a rough game and this is one of your worst nightmares.
 Comm. 2 No doubt about it.

00:06:30 Comm. 1 Be very careful to strap him on that board before they lift him on the cart.
 [Pause]
 Comm. 2 Actually see both the staffs working *Comm. 1 Umhmm* diligently together to try and make sure they're doing as trainers, doctors, medical staff, you practice these things, just in case something horrific happens—hoping that it never does—but then it happens and all that work that you've put in...you gotta come together as...and do everything, taking every precaution.

Comm. 1 When it happens, it doesn't matter whether you're an Ohio State *Comm. 2 Oh no no* or a Nebraska doctor or trainer *Comm. 2 Nope*—everybody trying to pitch in.
 [Pause, transitions to side screens one on Tommy's fiancée and one on Tommy]
 Comm. 1 There's Jaylyn Odermann and that is Tommy's fiancée on the left side...his father right there...in the Nebraska cap. Armstrong comes from theSan Antonio area.

00:08:00 We've talked about his toughness and his durability throughout his career. Mike Riley *Comm. 2. Oh, yeah.* offering comfort *inaudible* there.
 [Side screens, the left shows Nebraska teammate Stanley Morgan kneeling and getting up as Armstrong, on the right screen, is being loaded into the cart]

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Comm. 2 Probably one of the more competitive guys that I've seen in the last few years, and the leader for this team.
 [Transitions to single screen, Armstrong is being loaded onto the cart as the fans clap]

Comm. 1 Armstrong will be taken to an area hospital. We'll pass along the information as we get it. *inaudible* The obvious concern is for him. Armstrong's departure leaves quite a void for this football team...in leadership.
 [Crowd is chanting "Tommy, Tommy" as he is being strapped down to the cart]
 It's nice that he's speaking and he's aware now of his surroundings and his teammates.

Comm. 2 His father, right there with him.
 [Above camera zooming out and away from Tommy on the cart]

Comm. 1 *Inaudible* fifteen.

Comm. 2 See him holding his hand.
 [Fans still chanting "Tommy, Tommy"]

Comm. 1 Nice show of support from the Ohio State fans.
 00:09:00 Clapping and *Comm. 2 chanting saying Tommy* saying Tommy.
 [Camera follows Tommy off the field. He flashes a thumb up to the crowd, propping his arm on his own body as the crowd cheers]

Comm. 2 Gives his...giving his thumbs up to the crowd.

Comm. 1 It's great to see that, isn't it? *Comm. 2 murmurs in agreement*
 There is a neck brace.

Comm. 2 The players looking at this cart as it pulls their guy away. Their leader...away.
 [Pause] Josh Kalu coming over.

Comm. 1 Ambulance has been brought out on the playing surface. In that area just beyond the end zone.
 [Pause, Camera follows his father and fiancée jogging after the cart carrying him the 75 yards to the ambulance waiting just beyond the far end zone; fans cheer "Tommy" and his dad raises his thumb overhead to the crowd.]
 00:10:00 The run created the first down and we'll fill you in on Armstrong's replacement. And his dad gives a thumb up as well.
 [Camera pans to fans chanting "Tommy, Tommy"]

Comm. 1 Fans on both sides chanting "Tommy"

Comm. 2 Yeah.

00:10:30 [Pause, Camera focuses back to Tommy being placed on the ambulance stretcher.]

Comm. 2 Chris, I don't know if they'll take him to the Ohio State Medical Center onto the Riverside Hospital, but great hospitals and care that he'll receive herein the area.

00:11:00 Remember when the Penn State defensive back had a neck injury here and received such great care for maybe up to a week until he was able to fly home.

Both 1 & 2 *Inaudible talking over each other*
 [Pause, crowd is cheering "Tommy Armstrong" while he is being loaded into the ambulance]

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(continued)

00:11:30

Comm. 1 Conversation with his father. He will not come meet his son in the back of that ambulance, apparently. *Comm. 2 in audible* He's been given a ride in the front.

[Pause]

00:12:00

[Camera is still focusing on the ambulance]

[Camera moves back to Nebraska players, mainly Ryker Fyfe]

Comm. 1

Trying to fill the void, Kirk, as we resume football. Nebraska will have the first down at the 24-yard line. This is the senior, Ryker Fyfe, who really has almost no experience. Just two for five this year. He's played in three games. Hasn't played or thrown a pass since mid-September against Oregon.

00:12:30

Comm. 2

Uh, throughout his career, being a senior, he's played some football. This has...this has been Tommy Armstrong's position and...and he's their guy. As we said, their leader. So, Ryker's been more in support from the sidelines and, uh, trying to offer support to Tommy when he comes off the field throughout this season. And now he'll...he'll get the call.

Comm. 1

Not easy to execute as a quarterback or a team when you've just watched this scene here.

00:13:00

[Transitions to shot of the ambulance leaving the stadium while fans cheer]

Comm. 2

It's really for both teams, obviously, for Nebraska. They're...they're concerned. [Camera transitions and focuses on the Nebraska players running in formation on the field]

But I think people watching at home, people watching in this stadium, everybody right now, their...their thoughts are with Tommy Armstrong.

[Players are in position and they begin to play]

Comm. 1

It's their first down for five *unintelligible* who did start one game last year when Armstrong was out with a foot injury.

00:13:30

And they hand it off in the back field and that's Wilbon knocked for a loss.

Sam Hubbard got there.

[Transitions to above view of ambulance leaving the stadium]

Appendix 2: Armstrong Return Transcription

00:00:00 [Beginning of Recorded Material, Camera focuses on players on field and transitions to follow motorcade outside of the arena]

CF: The 35. And, Kirk, this is encouraging. There is a motorcade bringing Tommy Armstrong back to the stadium. Our news editor, Michael Allen, reporting that he's left the hospital quickly. He wasn't there very long. It's more encouraging news *KH "Are you sure?"* in the short drive back to Ohio stadium and his teammates will certainly be relieved to hear that.

[Camera transitions to above shot of the whole stadium and slowly descends to the field]

Earlier we heard Sam Ponder relay what Mike Riley had told her. The belief that

00:00:30 there was no spinal damage at all. Very cautious as you would expect him to be. And the news continues to be encouraging.

[Next clip, Showing players on the field]

KH: Really can open up the inside running game.

[Transitions to outside of the stadium where Armstrong's is coming back in]

CF: Oh, this is just wonderful!

KH: That's great!

CF: Live picture of Tommy Armstrong walking back into Ohio Stadium gives his fiancée there a quick hug. *KH "Wow, that's great" *

He's got the scrubs on, but

00:01:00 that is wonderful news. If you think about what the...what the scene was here, Kirk, about a half hour ago late in the second quarter. [Tommy walks towards the stadium, transitions to field and players]

KH: He's walking fast too. He seems like he wants to get back out here to his...his teammates.

[New clip, Armstrong is walking to his teammates and hugging them]

CF: Picture of the night. Tommy Armstrong a moment ago jogging. Jogging back to go down the line of teammates. That's Jordan Westerkamp, his buddy, his roommate with a hug and he went down to almost every Cornhusker teammate.

00:01:30 Pierson-EL, his receiver. Just tremendous to see. I have to say it's pretty stunning. To see *KH "It certainly is" * him running back out here like that.

KH: Very cool! Very cool to see the reception he received here from the Ohio State crowd.

[Camera transitions back to field]

CF: Bryant from the five. He was trying to get back against the green all night on the return. It's so tough to escape that left corner, the Buckeyes coverage unit. And those get out to the 25-yard line.

[Camera focuses on Armstrong again talking to teammates]

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00:02:00

KH: With...with how quickly he was getting out of the...the car and into the locker room, you could just feel that he wanted to get back to his team. Not, not to play, but just to be here for his guys. Talk to 'em and be there for 'em. True leader!

CF: We didn't want to say it, Kirk, but it's hard not to think that Armstrong, as a senior...

[Transitions back to field]

When you see him taken off like that, you, you wonder if it's the last time you'll see him in a Nebraska uniform, but it doesn't certainly appear to be that way.

00:02:30 Fyfe, his replacement, throws a dart to Westerkamp. Sam?

[Focuses back to Armstrong talking to his teammates]

SP: Chris, I mean, the guy is a competitor! I don't...it's incredible to see down here! He's already coaching his teammates up! I mean, he sees the score. He knows what the situation is, but he's down here trying to help them out to get more points on the board. It is just incredible what we have witnessed tonight!

KH: Sammy, he's talking right now to Zack Darlington. The sophomore quarterback who...who looks like may get a chance to play tonight as well. [Transitions back to field]

He's just making sure he's got everything covered if he gets in there.

00:03:00

CF: Fyfe from the pocket lops it over the head of Stephen Carter.

[Transitions back to Armstrong speaking with teammates]

CF: There he is going down the line to different teammates there.

Reed was probably also stunned and obviously clearly pleased to see him.

KH: Oh, yeah. [Pause]

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