

« DREAM CRAZY » COMMERCIAL

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– The Guardian, by Martha Keiner

Nike's controversial Colin Kaepernick commercial campaign is most divisive yet !

1 ***Company's share price has fallen, protesters have burnt trainers but LeBron James and Serena Williams have offered support.***

5 Nike is no stranger to controversy. The sportswear firm has run advertising featuring Lance Armstrong after a doping scandal, Maria Sharapova following a failed drugs test and Tiger Woods in the midst of a sex scandal and after a drug driving accusation.

But selecting Colin Kaepernick, an outcast American football player and civil rights activist, as the face of its new global advertising campaign is its most divisive move.

10 Kaepernick has been a polarising figure since 2016, when, as a player for the San Francisco 49ers, he refused to stand during the national anthem. At first he sat as a protest, then later sank to his knee. The protest was intended to draw attention, he said, to police killings of African Americans and other injustices.

15 Nike's **share*** price fell by 2% on Tuesday as the response ranged from people burning trainers and cutting the Nike logo from their socks to threatening a complete boycott of the brand. On the other side the campaign was **lauded*** by figures including the basketball player LeBron James and Serena Williams.

20 Kaepernick said of his protest: "I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of colour. To me this is bigger than football and it would be selfish on my part to look the other way. There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave and getting away with murder."

25 Soon, his teammates joined him and the protest spread to other players, lasting into the 2017 season. The NFL released a statement saying players were "encouraged to" but not required to stand during the national anthem as anger grew among members of the public. The former NFL great Jerry Rice accused Kaepernick of "disrespecting the flag," though he said he understood his **stance***. [...]

30 Team owners reacted to widespread condemnation by banding together and ruling that all players must stand during the national anthem. In 2017 when Kaepernick became a free agent, a player without a club, no team offered him a contract, and that October he filed a grievance against the NFL accusing team owners of colluding to keep him from being signed.

The new Nike advert nods to the 30-year-old's apparent exile from the league. It features a black and white close-up of Kaepernick's face **overlaid*** with the caption: "Believe in something. Even if it means sacrificing everything." [...]

- **a share** : one of the equal parts into which a company's capital is divided, entitling the holder to a proportion of the profits.
- **to laud** : to praise
- **a stance** : a point of view
- **to overlay** : to be on the top of, to cover