

Segment 1 - Interview

Dalton: All right. So everybody welcome back to episode two of a black tea podcast, the infamous black tea podcast. And, um, today we have an exciting, intriguing, fascinating show, ah tied to the sports world.

Melayna: I feel like sports is always going to be relevant to issues of race, because there's just such a large amount of racialized people in sports and the power dynamics are constantly at play.

And of course, like everything else, racism comes into play as well.

Dalton: Yeah, we are in an unprecedented moment in time and sports does not exist on a separate island. It is not immune to the major shifts in consciousness, raising occurring at this time. Now the theme of accountability is constantly being applied and racism in sports has definitely come to the forefront.

Now the infrastructure around the business of sports continues to contain gatekeepers and barriers affected by racism. And today we wanted to discuss racism at all levels of the sports world. So I wanted to introduce you to our guests. Uh, he goes by the name of Morgan Campbell. And I'm going to tell you a little bit about Morgan before we get into it now.

Morgan Campbell is a super accomplished, a journalist based in Toronto, and he had just joined CBC Sports as their first senior contributor. After spending 18 standout years at the Toronto star. In 2004, he won the national newspaper award for Long Shots, a serial narrative about a high school basketball team from Scarborough.

And then he later created hosted and co-produced Sportonomics, a weekly video series examining the business of sport. Morgan also spent his last two years at the star offering the sports prism initiative, which is a weekly feature covering the intersection of sports race. Business politics and culture.

Morgan just also happens to be a TEDx lecturer and his work has been featured in the New York times, the literary review of Canada and the best Canadian sports writing on Morgan Campbell. How goes it?

Morgan: Man. It goes well. Uh, it's, it's, it's an interesting time, uh, in sports and in journalism, I've been lucky enough that the stuff I'm doing is kind of pandemic proof, but, uh, yeah, it's every day gives us something else to think and to talk about.

Dalton: Yeah, absolutely. You know, these are, these are wild times and I'm hoping, you know, some journalists, the reporter editor, and it's going to properly document, uh, the happenings the day to day. Cause this is just super unprecedented, you know, as far as in human history and certainly our lifetimes. So here's the thing.

Um, you're the father, you know, I check out your socials and uh, you're the father of a lovely 15, 15 month old daughter. So congratulations!

Morgan: Thank you.

Dalton: And, uh, you also just happened to be married to a world champion hurdler. Perdita Felicien. I got to get that out there.

Morgan: That is true too.

Dalton: Which must be interesting in your household, you know, when there's like a race to get to the fridge to get that last, you know, glass of milk or know.

Um, but you also played some football at Northwestern university as well.

Morgan: Yeah, I haven't seen for two years in two years, they were really good. 95 and 96, not to date myself with boomer dated myself 25 years ago. I started.

Dalton: That's right.

We is getting old. Um, so as far as the reason I mentioned, uh, you being a, you know, married that you're a father, um, you know, I'm the father of a 14 year old son.

And, uh, you know, and I also used to be a baller back in the day, shout out Oakwood, Collegiate Barons, and, uh, I ran track at university. Um, now what I notice as a father is that, uh, a super large, and I guess we'd say disproportionate number of my sons, um, uh, friends who happen to be black. Um, they all seem to have this idea that they're going to ultimately, you know, go play in the NBA someday.

Alright. And, or it's either that, or they're going to become a huge rap star. Okay. So now I wanted to ask you, you know, you know, as a father, as a former athlete, as a sports reporter, is somebody married to the most elite level, you know, world champion sprinter. Um, in your opinion, is there a reason that so many black kids, black boys in particular, perhaps feel that they have, they have to carry this dream?

Of, you know, I'm going to play in the NBA, right? When the facts are kind of saying that the more sort of guaranteed, you know, steady money, longevity, it lies in other, you know, like ownership, being a sports, lawyer, management, coaching, that type of thing. What's your, what's your spin on that?

Morgan: I'm going to tell you like this, since you mentioned my wife, like she made a good living running, but she also knows that she is one of very small number of people that actually makes a good living in professional track and field, especially as a woman.

So like as our daughter gets older, we're definitely going to encourage you to try a bunch of different sports because there's a good chance. She'll have some talent, but no one in this house is going to put any pressure on our daughter become a professional sprinter because the chances of two, people from one family, making a good living in that sport where money is so scarce and where 10% of the people, they make 90% of the money.

You know, the chances of two people from one household winding up hitting, hitting that a lot on number. Are very slim. So that's not, that's not something that you bet on. And I think the problem with the way a lot of teenage athletes are socialized a lot of teenage athletes, a lot of whom for very good ones happen to be black are socialized to think that the NBA is the thing everyone can do.

When in reality, there's only two rounds in the draft, thirty teams in the league. It was only 16 new people, that get gigs in the NBA, basically every year. And so there aren't a lot of ways to make living and make a living playing and the reality is like, because you're 16, you think that you're going to go pro because you don't know or recognize the odds stacked against you.

And in some ways that's fine. The question is what happens when you get to 18, 19, 20 you're in university or you're in college and it starts to become apparent that the NBA isn't going to happen for you. What are the steps you taking to prepare yourself for life? And you should also have people around you that give you, uh, an honest assessment of your chances of one going pro and two making a good living going pro. Um, so then it becomes a question of, do I want to do this for ever or do I just want to get a regular job.

Dalton: Yeah. And it's a sort of grows out of a, you know, perhaps, uh, you know, when your daughter gets older or, you know, and has a peer group, it's just an, it's an observation, you know, that I've seen, you know, the 14 year old son and, uh, you know, when you're kind of, uh, old school, you know, and do like, or think of the, you know, the notorious B.I.G Lyric, you know, where he says, uh, you know, "it's either you're slinging crack rock, or you've got a wicked jump shot."

You know, like these are the pathways, you know, for a lot of, uh, you know, black, black youth. And, uh, we know that the facts are, you know, the NBA, there's only, uh, you know, four, what is it? 497 jobs, right. There's only 497 players that were on an NBA roster last year. You know? So it's just this idea of, um, we are, you know, you may be young, uh, people who just happen to be black or perhaps.

Only told that we can entertain, you know, like every team has doctors, they got lawyers economists, but, um, yeah. So that's where that comes to the question comes out. It comes from.

Morgan: Yeah. Yes I do though. Push back on the idea that black people as a group, we don't achieve XYZ because XYZ careers aren't flashy enough for us because it's the same argument people make about baseball.

Why aren't there more black kids in baseball or baseball is too boring. Baseball is too slow for black kids. The implication being that, you know, we are not smart enough. Our attention spans aren't long enough to engage in this game meaningfully and follow it through. When the numbers also tell you that the number of the proportion of American born white players is also going down.

So baseball is too slow and too boring for black people. It's also too slow and too boring for white people, but these black people from other countries. And, and now in the United

States, the fact that black people also live in other countries is going to become a big thing because kamala Harris is the VP nominee.

But, uh, these black guys from Cuba, from Venezuela, from the Dominican Republic, they all play baseball. They're not too bored by, they are very black or black and an, I am Vladimir Guerrero jr. His nickname is "El Negro" and there are no layers to meaning to that nickname. That nickname is what it is and it says what it says a "El Negro".

So he's black unequivocally unapologetically, and baseball's not too boring for him. So it has nothing to do with boring side. We do have to, to, to get away from shaming, young black people for just being young people. So if you are on the outside, if you're 16 years old watching the NBA, the people you see are the players.

You don't see the team doctor, you don't see the accountant. So even a young black person watching hockey is not going to see a ton of black people. Well, you'll now see more than you would have seen 25 years ago, but as a young black person growing up, watching hockey, if you play a little bit, you're going to watch and say, I want to be the player.

You're not going to necessarily going to watch and say, I want to be the physiotherapist. I think it's completely natural to um, look at a performer in the same way. People look at singers and say, I want to say, it's not a ton of people until later on and say, I want a tune pianos or whatever it is.

Melayna: Yeah.

And you know, and also, I guess, you know, you're also talking about access and it is easier for, you know, younger people to be just in general. But I feel like a lot of the time when people are talking about black people, even if it's something that applies to everybody else, they get focused on like black on black crime.

Just, these are just like signals of white supremacy. I feel like um so of course you'd have to be careful with that in sports. And that's sorta what I wanted to talk about. You know, sports is supposed to be the great equalizer it's supposed to be. You know, how, how high you jump, how well you throw a ball, how fast you run.

Um, but I, I just feel like as an observer, the sports world lives in this constant state of. Paradox. I mean, there's a disproportionate of black talent and an athleticism on display play. Um, and you'd think based on numbers alone, a sense of equality would prevail. But then when you hear accounts of racism, anywhere from the court, the field coaching management.

Now we're hearing a lot about people that cover sports. I know you've written about it. Um, Donovan Bennett has been pretty outspoken as well as Kayla Gray here. Um, but then, you know, from the fans perspective and from what I, when I hear people pushing back, it's almost like that's a betrayal to the colorblindness and the meritocracy that sports is supposed to be based on.

But if we're talking about systems that don't work, isn't meritocracy, one of them does meritocracy really exist. If people are pretending that they don't have bias in the first place.

Morgan: Not that. Well, I will plug the tip of my TEDx talk. Cause I discussed this in my TEDx talk, the idea of sports in the meritocracy, right.

And how black athletics success, um, really, uh, confuses and confounds and trips up this white supremacist way of thinking. Right? Because white supremacy says in a meritocracy because white people were better white people are going to get ahead, if you give everyone a level playing field. Right. Which is why, again, like in the corporate world, when

we say your workplace needs to be more diversity to hire more people of color. And then the white people say we've got to hire the best person available. So if we diversify, we won't be able to hire the best person available. The assumption being that the white guy's already there, are the best people available then to get more talent from a shallow talent pool, and you go from a deeper talent pool, which is ridiculous, but this is what white supremacy says.

Melayna: But that, I mean, that goes from the assumption that their, their assessments are accurate in the first place. Cause like, thinking like that means that you don't think you should be analyzed.

Morgan: Exactly. And so now when you take it to sports, when like so many of the subjective measures are, especially in sports, like track and field where you, you have the fewest number of subjective measures, it's all it's about is who runs the fastest, who jumps the highest.

That's it. When you look at the sport, that has the least subjectivity, the most objective, cause it's just a start line, finish line stopwatch tape measure, and you see black people from different parts of the world, uh, excelling in different events. That up ends is this theory that given a level playing field white people will excel, which is why you start getting all white people obsessed with what makes these different types of black people run so fast.

How did you make them sprint so fast? Why black Americans sprint so fast? Why do, Kenyans run so well in the marathon? Why do you Ethiopians run so well in the marathon? What's the next group of East Africans that we can, um, uh, herd into these races to do well in the marathon to make money for white agents and white shoe company.

Right. Um, and this is also where we get the idea to understand it. Like right now, You know, there's this idea that athletic ability and brains, if you, you can not have a lot of, both of these attributes. So if you're really athletic yeah. You gotta be done but no one ever listen. That way of thinking didn't gain traction until black people started excelling in sports until black people started.

Like if you read old accounts, of like boxing matches and before boxing was integrated on the large scale, the perception is stereotypes about black people before Jack Johnson leading up to Jack Johnson, where that black people were too weak. And too dumb to be in sports like boxing. Right? So the stereotypes I went from black people are weak and feeble,

and unable to Excel in anything without the institution of slavery to keep them in line to black people.

Are these, uh, Selectively bred superheroes that are put on this planet to dominate sports.

Melayna: But these, yeah, these are all stereotypes that, you know, talk about how black people need to be controlled,

Morgan: Absolutely.

Melayna: To justify black people being better at something. The fact that that reasoning quickly needs to turn it on its head.

Morgan: Yes. And rather than just like evaluate people as individuals, as human beings and appreciate what they achieved. Right. You have to find some way to it explain it through in the laboratory or through pseudoscience instead of just saying, Hey, that guy's been good. I should appreciate it.

Melayna: Thank you for that.

And we're going to be back after a quick message.

Dalton: Yeah. So, Morgan, you know, what's interesting. Um, I spend a disproportionate amount of my broadcast watching time, like, you know, tuning into U S sports coverage. All right. Real talk now. Am I a bad Canadian, uh, or an unpatriotic Canadian? Um, I don't think so.

You know, what's been a real sore spot for me is, um, first, you know, there's a qualitative element to my analysis for one. So you can read between the lines on that, you know, with all due respect to, uh, many of the sports broadcast is working here. I just, it's just a better product. American for the most part, American sports coverage, basketball football, it goes on and on.

Now in Canada, you know where you've been based, you've been working as a print reporter, a broadcaster, uh, online. I find that in Canada, it seems to me that we. Tend to have, you know, most of our sports talk shows and, and sports coverage, you know, you look at the lead anchors and what you see what you've been seeing for the last number of decades.

This is sort of, you know, dual white guy set up, or you have a, you know, two anchors, perhaps it's one white guy, one white woman, or you have this, uh, mostly solo white male anchor thing. And then perhaps you're lucky on an off day, you'll have you know, one black EX athlete as a pundit on the side. Um, So I, this is what I've seen.

This is what I, these are real facts. It's not open to debate. I've been watching sports forever. I'm a former athlete. So as, so the question I had for you is, you know, where does this set up? Where I'm just seeing the white guy lead, anchor, the two dual white guy co-anchors um, Where does that set up?

Leave black reporters, you know, like you have a bunch of, uh, you know, black men and women who had, you know, summit gone to J school, you know, maybe Carlton and Ottawa, Ryerson, other journalism schools, um, yourself, you went to school in the States and some of these black reporters, you know, aren't necessarily, they may be black, but they may not even be ex athletes.

They're just really good written reporters who happen to be black. And want to get into sports journalism. So can you sort of give me your analysis on that over the years you having been at this for the last couple of decades, and this is what you've seen, this is what I've seen and it's, it's, it's just frustrating as a viewer, but I want to get your perspective.

Morgan: Part of the problem is that there's a really tight bottleneck to get those jobs in the first place. And then if you're black, the bottleneck is even tighter because the decision makers are so biased towards black EX athletes at the exclusion of everyone else. And so. For a lot of black people trying to get on the air, they faced this weird situation where a prerequisite to getting on the air is having played professionally and as tight as the bottleneck is to get on the air.

It's a tighter bottleneck to get into the NFL or the NBA, but this is the prerequisite, right? We we're lucky here in Toronto, that Sherman Hamilton exists. Right. And that he was around. And on the scene in the early years of the Raptors, maybe not right when they started, but when they started becoming an important TV property, because he's a guy that played, I remember him from peel region back in the day, he was a couple years older than me.

He was playing high school ball with him in Malton. He was a star. And then he went to Virginia Commonwealth, um, came back here and now he's a part of Raptors broadcast. Like if he wasn't around right now, if he wasn't already here, if they were trying to start a broadcast. It'd be very difficult for a guy like him who had not played in the NBA to get that job.

What you have is, again like this almost impossible, prerequisite that most of the white, most of the white guys with microphones don't have to satisfy. And they're really good at their jobs and never played pro and that's not necessarily something you would expect from them and they don't have to play pro for you to sit down and listen to what they have to say.

But for whack people trying to get similar jobs that seems to be prerequisite. And a lot of cases, it is a prerequisite and it just makes, you know, an uphill climb, even steeper for black people trying to get into the industry. And the other problem you have, and this isn't just in print, this is on TV and in print, many of the big shops.

Uh, we'll see what changes now, you know, on the backside of this reckoning on race that we've all been living through the last three months. But you know, my, in my experience in the industry is that, you know, the decision makers for the most part, see the nonwhite people as in competition and interchangeable with each other.

Um, and so when Hal Johnson from body break, when he made that YouTube video outlining his experience, trying to get hired at TSN. He said, he mentioned going up there and having

an interview. And I started doing the math on the years. And before he even got to the punchline, I thought to myself, that was when Mark Jones was at TSN,

and I bet what they're going to say is that we already have Mark Jones. We don't need hell Johnson. And when Howard Johnson got to the punch line, that's what, what, that was what it was. And so I'm not sure how much change between then and this year. But maybe things will change or will have changed over the last three months with all these big shops, reevaluating, how they value black, black talent, um, and other.

Other journalists of color.

Melayna: It's just so fascinating to me because it's literally an industry that is sustained by a lot of black talent.

Morgan: Yes.

Melayna: But again, this is, it's just like the mundane newness of racism. You know, but I kind of wanted to talk about politics, um, because Kelly Loeffler has been in the news.

Um, she's part owner of the WNBA team, the dream, and she's been calling for the de politicizing of sports and behaving like the opposite of that. She's essentially disgraced Trump's supporting Senator. Um, she's also had her own separate scandals related to this. Um, and recently the WNBA Atlanta dream team, along with Phoenix, mercury in Chicago sky showed up wearing t-shirts supporting her rival Raphael, Warnock, a Democrat running against her, um, and the NBA as absolutely been outspoken on that social justice issues before

is it the role of players to really be speaking out against this as this, the trend we're moving in, forward them standing up to ownership. Coaches.

Morgan: What fascinated me? What fascinated me about the WNBA was that a Trump supporting Senator from Georgia would wind up the co owner of a WNBA team in the first place

Melayna: I found that interesting too.

Morgan: Only because like political people that end of the U S political spectrum, we're also like super into very traditional gender roles. So a lot of them don't think women should play sports in the first place. And then they find out some of these players are homosexual. They don't like that either. Yeah, here she is jumping straight into this league.

So that was the first surprise. The fact that she owned the team is more surprising then the fact that she used the team of the league, Of which she is a part of the ownership class, uh, to try to score political points in her, uh, Senate race, because that's all.

Melayna: And what, and when she said, you know, the truth is we need less, not more politics in sports in a time we're polarizing politics is as defensive as ever.

I feel like it's just like, are we ever going to get to a point where black issues are going to be seen. Like centered in sports without this, just this nagging argument that she's trying to make, where she's using politics as a tool and then trying to depoliticize it.

Morgan: So a couple of things, one is that American conservative politicians don't want politics in sports, unless those politics agree with their politics.

And then it's fine. Right, because when Tom Brady had the Maga hat in his locker, um, people had questions and conservatives said, well, he's allowed to do that. He's allowed to wear what he wants to wear. He's got his first amendment right. To do this. But then when black, uh, athletes say, Hey, um, Hey League, Hey employers, uh, these issues are important to us, so they better be important to you too.

Then all of a sudden it's keep politics out of sports. And that's leaving aside the fact that again, so many of these issues that are important. When we're talking about the United States and Canada too, to black people where you're talking about creating a world where racism is absent, right. Creating a world where everyone has equal access to opportunity education, equal treatment, uh, by law enforcement and in the courts.

These issues are not inherently political, but one side of the political spectrum in the US, insists on politicizing and making debates of all these issues that are really just about fundamental human rights and decency. So the other thing that happens with really conservative American politicians when it comes to sports is they become arch socialists in reaction to any motion towards high profile athletes, especially the black ones that, that make college football and college basketball.

So lucrative, uh, any action towards them, getting paid. So last year when there was motion on this idea that. Athletes could profit from their name, image and likeness. In other words, go out and get endorsements. Then here comes Republican senators saying, well, they need to pay taxes on the money that they make from these endorsements.

Any other time, when else have you heard US republican senators, Republican Congress, men and women argue for more taxes when black athletes want to get paid. Now, here they come saying. You need to pay taxes on this money, which shows you that they don't think of taxes as taxes per se, or as a way to fund the government, but as a punishment on poor people for being poor and what they are conservative about really are your rights and freedoms, right?

As a black college athlete in a revenue sort, they are very conservative. They want you to operate in a very narrow lane. But they want all kinds of leeway for everyone else.

Dalton: Yeah, totally. Yeah. Yeah, no, totally. Yeah. That's a great segue. I mean, I mean, even in this year in sports Morgan, I mean, it's, it's going to be an interesting year because, you know, we see that, uh, you know, when large NCAA conferences, uh, you know, pro sports, like they're canceling their seasons outright, like you see that in football, different conferences, You like you'd know it's a problem.

You know what I mean? Because of the big business behind these decisions, like this is losing the schools are losing hundreds of million dollars making these decisions now. Now, here's the thing. When you, you know, when you take a look at the devastating impacts of COVID-19 on, on, on society at large. And, uh, and then you take a look at the stats and you see that a hugely disproportionate amount of black people are being affected by COVID-19, right.

For a plethora of reasons that that's even more disturbing, right. It almost feels like lambs to the slaughter. You know what I mean? So, so you, so here's the thing you even. You know, you wrote an interesting op ed, uh, not, you know, a number of weeks ago about the, you know, and, and the headline was, you know, rich, white coaches want football in a pandemic, but unpaid black players are most at risk.

All right. So can you sort of dig a little deeper into this, that idea around, because in Toronto where we're based and in Canada and most places, you know, North America, uh, you know, kids, they want to get the, you know, they're four years covered, you know, scholarship cover my four years I'll play football, basketball, doesn't matter what it is.

Right. Um, so I want you to talk about this idea of yeah. Unpaid labor of black athletes and it sort of fueling the entire college sports economy, you know, and, and also maybe for you to kind of predict or project. Where will we be three years from now? You know, our kids going to get, start getting paid when they play NCAA, like get paychecks per diems, what's happening there?

What's your take?

Morgan: The first question first, like in the context of the big 10 conference postponing fall sports and the pack, 10 conference postponing, fall sports. And it's interesting, but very typical and predictable that football gets all the headlines and gets all the attention. And everyone says, well, what are we gonna do without football?

These four, these poor football players don't get a chance to play. Even though volleyball, cross country soccer, field hockey, you're not going to get to play either their fall sports, if all of the sadness and the hand ringing and the regret over lost opportunity has to do with student athletes. Then why are we not directing any of this to people in sports that don't make money?

The answer is obvious because this isn't about opportunities lost for the students. This isn't about the student's life on campus being up ended, and then missing opportunities. They can never get back. This is about third parties. They want to make a lot of money and feel that the only way they can make money is for these unpaid unpaid athletes to go.

Play football and take even more of a physical risk because there's this virus floating around. So it's always about money. So let's not pretend it's about anything other than money, where this ties into race is that black Americans are maybe 12% of the time population at large, but half of the people playing division one college football.

And then at the higher level programs, basically the better your program is the more black guys you have. And so now you have guys who, because they come from a segregated

country. So often come from communities that are hardest hit by COVID-19. Now, if the school said to them, Hey, look, we want to do

you guys are favorite because we care about you as young men and women come back to campus, we're going to test you. And there's no quick pro quo cause this is the argument they're making. They got to come here and play football because this is where they can get tested. And this is where they can get care.

But if you're in the middle of the pandemic, like you can bring people back to campus if it's that important and test them anyway, without asking them to repay you, by going back out and exposing themselves potentially to the virus, right? It's really about taking care of these people, then that's what you could do.

But again, this whole operation is about trying to protect as many paychecks with many people as possible, except for the players. So if they really want to have a season, you know, these college football teams could drop the facade of amateurism. Do what the NBA is doing and say, Hey, let's stake out some ground.

Let's have a bubble. Let's have 10 teams in a bubble and play, uh, the flip side of that, the trade off isn't, the kids are off of campus. Now they're not really going to class, but if we think this is professional football, then this is what we do. But if we think this is sure football and the academic component of it is important, then we got to listen to what the university presidents say.

And the university presidents say, we're not playing sports this fall and that's what it is. And again, When you look at the complaints, the postponement of college football, they all come from the same end of the U S political spectrum. Right? And none of this is a, is a, is a coincidence. It's amazing and disappointing, but not surprising to see this many people or pretend to advocate for the players, right.

To play. What they really want is entertainment, because one of the things that has also popped up one players from the PAC 10 out in California, Colorado, like that, uh, started this movement saying, we want a union, essentially. We want to play an association. We're not going to play. Unless one you schools can safeguard our health, but two, unless you got paying us, like we want a revenue split.

So when that happens, like for college football gatekeepers, who are like, well, we don't care what you guys say. College football is college football. It doesn't matter what the players say, but now that the season has been postponed and there are players saying, we want to play, we'll sign a waiver, we'll sign the liability waiver to go play the same people that normally tell the players, shut up and go play are saying hey, we need to listen to what these players want.

But when the players said they wanted to paid, we didn't need to listen to what they wanted and that's even before we get to the fact that like you can't push a waiver in front of an 18 year old, 19 year old kid who was not allowed to have a lawyer or an agent. Right. And have him sign that waiver and then take that, wait for the court and say, don't worry, this is valid.

So if this kid dies of COVID-19 while under our supervision, he can't, he can't Sue and his family can't sue. And that's also, regardless of the fact that like for medical issues, school stopped people from playing all the time. If I'm a football player and I have like a spinal stenosis. And so I can't really go tackle people where I can, but at some point I'm going to paralyze myself.

The team will stop me from playing. And I cannot say to the university, I'll sign a waiver. If you let me play with the spinal spondylosis, they'll say no. Waiver, no waiver. You're not playing. And that's what happens. And so this is what has happened on a large scale and you know, half of the country, you can't take it.

And then the other half of the country says, yeah, that's fine. I'll wait until spring. Um, so now where this goes in the future, I'm not sure what I find interesting is that. When these big conferences started trying to make plans to have a fall football season. And then there was the first wave of players that say we're organizing sort of like a union.

We would like a union because we want to get paid alongside all these assurances that you're going to safeguard our health. You know, that was a big step. And then came this counter movement of, we want to play guys and we'll sign a waiver just for the right to play. You don't need to give us any extra perks.

Those voices got amplified. Uh, as if that attitude was something new, when the reality is 30 years ago, you'd have seen a lot more guys like the, let us play dudes, then you would've seen like the, you need to pay us dudes. Right. Like when I was in university, we were playing ball. Um, you know, we were playing against good.

Like I sit on the best. We were playing against really good teams and name brand schools you see on TV. That's what we were playing against. Um, and it never occurred to any of us, like to get a paycheck.

Dalton: Right,

Morgan: Right.

It never occurred to us that we should be getting merchandising money or anything like that. That's not where the conversation was back then. Like there was an idea that this thing was a big business, but no one ever said, Hey, you put all these guys on salary. Hey, let these guys make their own shoe deals. But that's what the conversation is now. So it's not a question of

but let us play you guys, um, rising up like this wave and overwhelming the, uh, we, we want our rights guys. The reality is that we want, our rights guys are a lot more numerous and more vocal than they've ever been.

Dalton: Yeah. And it's interesting too, because when I started reading some of the works from a Dr. Harry Edwards, uh, you know, the Americans, uh, sociologist, civil rights activists who people know from, you know, 1968 Olympics. And, uh, he, he, uh, uh, Cal Berkeley and, uh, yeah, he, he, he was always sort of intimating, not so much spelling out, you know, like

getting paid, but just kind of this idea of like, Hey, are we just gonna remain out on what he considered?

Like, you know, the playing fields on the, uh, you know, then modern day plantation, you know, and, uh, yeah, what's going on on the back end, you know, as far as my livelihood and, you know, like it can't be just that, you know, out there to happy to be there on the, on playing fields.

You know?

Morgan: Yeah absolutely. And this is the other wild attitude among fans that, and among administrators to the COVID has revealed, right.

Is this idea. That players, good players. You literally should play for next to nothing. Cause we've already, they've already said money is off the table, you're not getting money and so now here comes this pandemic and the players say, we need extra layers of safety and the teams say, huh, maybe we'll do it. We can. Right.

But you guys have to accept that you're going to get sick and some of you are going to die. But yeah. So now we've gone from. So you guys are making millions and I might die. Right?

Dalton: You'll notice that I said it feels like lambs to the slaughter

Morgan: You know in 19th century coal mine, which is, which is not what they were telling us.

This wasn't even last year. No, cause even last year it was, Hey, you're not getting paid, but you get a chance to get a free ride, go to school, graduate debt free, uh, enjoy. All the aspects of campus life at these great universities. And now it's be happy. You might die, but still be happy either way, bring me my money.

Melayna: Oh, thank you so much for sharing this knowledge with us. We really appreciate it

Morgan: Anytime guys.

Tea Segment

Melayna: Okay. So now this is our Tea segment, and we're going to be talking about, um, the reaction to Cardi B's song WAP, featuring Megan Thee Stallion, which stands for wet ass *Bleep*. And I thought the song was an Anthem for sure. Black sexual, Black female sexual power, and other people felt differently. And people had a lot to say specifically men.

Dalton: Yeah. Men, but like, you know what, Hey, I'm a guy. I don't even qualify. I don't qualify to critique what they're saying and doing in the song and video. Right. I'm a guy who cares. Who cares what these guys think, who cares?

Melayna: I know and honestly, it really wasn't like, I wish that it didn't get as much press. I wish more press was dedicated to protecting Black women, specifically Megan Thee Stallion who recently got shot. And she even said she was unprotected in that moment, but this is

where we are in hip hop lyrics are still being analyzed this way. Women's sexuality is still being questioned. And I don't even like Cardi B that much, the fact that I have to defend her, I'm just like, Oh God, I know you like her.

Dalton: And I'm actually a Cardi B fan, but I'm probably not defending her. Right. So, Hey, there's going to be a good one.

Melayna: Okay. So first, um, we had the viral response of Ben Shapiro, a conservative pundit, where he kind of went over the lyrics in a really funny way.

Ben Shapiro: Here's some of the lyrics you ready whore's in this house. There's some whores in this house. There are some whores in this house. There's some whores in his house. Hold up. I said, certified freak, seven days a week. Wet ass P word. Make *Bleep* game weak. Yeah, you effin with some wet ass P word. P word is female genitalia, bring a bucket and a mop for this wet

Melayna: Do you watch Atlanta? It kinda reminded me of that episode, where that mother was, um, talking about Paper Boi's, lyrics in horror.

Dalton: That's right. Extreme, extremely out of touch. Don't have your finger on the pulse of culture, just that, you know, not black, you know, and just clueless, you know, just out to lunch.

Melayna: Right. And so he's like, you know, it's extremely vulgar. He's totally like. Oh talking about how vulgar it is. But then something that he said that I thought really stood out was interesting, as he said, this is what the feminist movement was all about. Obviously he's being sarcastic. He says it's not really about women being treated as independent, independent, full rounded human beings.

It's a wet ass P word. And if you say anything differently, it's because you're misogynist, but isn't that what being independent and full round mean? Doesn't that mean we should be able to do whatever we want.

Dalton: Oh 100%. I mean, I mean, okay. Just coming from like a male perspective. Uh, I, I mean, let's also too, you know, I had worked in the hip hop industry and still do you know, for the last forever.

And, um, you know, Mel, there are literally hundreds, if not thousands of rap songs where male rappers are explaining to you, like in explicit detail, like, you know, that they're a freak and why they're a freak and where they like to freak, this is light weight.

Melayna: And who are they having sex with? I feel like it's all about the agency.

And now these women that these rappers have been talking about, like even the DMX, um, Snoop Dogg, that amazing versus challenge, uh, it was kind of uncomfortable in this day and age. Cause I was like, wow, these men really hate women. We were celebrating it.

Dalton: No, no, this is it. I mean, how about we take a look at it from, you know, we live in a capitalist society, Mel, and it's just like, from a pure capitalism point of view, you know, sex sells.

Okay. Sex, always outsell, everything else. Right? Rightly or wrongly. Okay. And the thing is here, you know, again, I can, without even blinking, I can list off hundreds of rappers, you know, like, like male, like male rappers have been doing what Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion and they've been doing that since Jesus, you know what I mean?

And making a ton of money doing it. So I would say that Cardi B and a Megan, they're just very business savvy rappers. That's what I would say.

Melayna: Right, but it's, I mean, this is what Jermaine Durpri last year called stripper culture. He said, you know, it's not really about the way people can rap.

Now it's about strippers rapping, but I feel like it's like, you know, we've had, you know, the video hoe and, and expressing that type of agency when. These women were just in videos. And then we had Carin Stephens come out and say, no, I actually do this. I actually enjoy doing this. And then with this whole stripper culture emerging, who brought the stripper culture into hip-hop men.

But now it's that the, now that the women are allowed to make the rules, do what they want, say what they want and men aren't involved. I think a lot of people are also reactive to the fact there's not one man in this video. Cause I think it would be different if there was a, if one of them was featured on our Rapper's song.

Dalton: Yeah, totally.

Melayna: It's always about, you know, is it too sexual, is it like, why are black women always seen as the people who are holding the community back?

Dalton: Right, right. Yeah. I mean, it's, yeah, it's not fair. Like I think, okay. I'll say this. I mean, I think someone like myself know is represented, uh, you know, I've represented female rappers and singers as a, you know, as a publicist.

All right. And I would say, you know, to keep it, I guess, as far as balance, like it would be. Also nice. Like if our community like, meaning the, you know, the hip hop community, the black community, that racial humidity, like if we kind of show where to show a little bit more enthusiasm for there's so many great female rappers who, you know, like who like basically rat female rappers would tell me as their publicist.

They feel that if they don't show some TNA and talk about, you know what I'm saying, and like, aren't over sexualized, like they're going to get virtually ignored and that's pretty much what happens, you know what I mean? So it would be, it would be,

Melayna: You mean like conscious rap.

Dalton: Well, yeah, conscious rap.

It would be, it would be great if we could get a little bit excited about, you know, female rappers who aren't, who aren't like just wicked lyrics about other things too, because they get virtually ignored. You know, like, like there's this rapper out of the UK, Little Simz out of the UK, like she's incredible.

I don't think anybody knows or cares about, or Mumu Fresh. Like I could just list off so many, you know, like female rappers is, they're not doing the Cardi B thing and they've been virtually ignored. So I think as a rap purist, you know, I would say that, yeah, the balance is good. Like, you know, what, what Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion are doing.

I mean, I grew up, it's like, You know, they're just, they're an extension of like, you know, Foxy Brown, little Kim, you know, this is not a new thing. This is nothing new going on here, you know? Um, but yeah, the balance it'd be great if, uh, you know, a lot of black men and women were to support like black female rappers that aren't doing the Cardi B thing.

Melayna: Well, yeah, even Cardi via spoken on it, she said, you know, she doesn't get as much of a response when she, like, when, for example, when she did be careful, um, she said, first of all, I wrap up *Bleep* cause she's my best friend. And because that's what people want to hear. And she even showed it out a bunch of rappers and said, y'all, don't be supporting them.

And they're mad, dope bloggers don't support them. They don't get the recognition. So again, this goes back to the notion of sex selling, but do rappers ever stop talking about sex? Yeah. Like, why are, why are women always held to this standard?

Dalton: No, they shouldn't be, because again, the men they've been cranking out, uh, you know, two live crew, like it's, you know, since the beginning of time, you know what I mean?

And here's the thing, Mel. I mean, like me personally, um, I, you know, I, I sit more on the, kind of what you dubbed it kind of like the conscious rap, you know, like rapping about political issues, social issues, like, you know, I like my Kendrick Lamar, J Cole's, that kind of thing.

Melayna: And also talk about sex too, though.

Dalton: 100% they do. Yes, they do. Yeah. Tupac. That's the reason Tupac was a celebrated widely. He talks about sex, he talks about political consciousness. He talks, you know, the things that make us human, you know, we're not kind of like this, I'm a conscious person. That's all I do. I have no desire to engage in sexual relationships.

Like that's not it. Right. Um, but the song itself, I mean, you know, do it, do I personally find the song itself to be that deep? Um, you know, you know me like me personally? No, but is it an important song? I would say absolutely. You know, is it a great song from a hip hop? Kind of me being more like a rap purist.

So I'm like, eh, not really. I don't think I'd be talking about this song. You know what I mean? If not for the shock value, the video, I don't think I'd be, we'd be talking about it as much based on like, you know, so that's my take, you know,

Melayna: Well, it's interesting because CeeLo who, I mean, he's not perfect himself on a personal level, but he did an interview and he actually ended up apologizing a couple of days ago because he said, um, you know, a lot of music today is unfortunate and disappointing on a personal and moral level.

There was a time when we were savvy enough to code certain things. We could express to those what it meant with a style of language we used, but now music is shameless and then he cites Nicki Minaj. Um, and he says that she misuses her success and visibility. It says she could be effective in many constructive ways, but it feels desperate.

And attention is a drug and competition is around. And then he talks about Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion. Um, and he, but what really got me is that he said, I get at the independent woman and being in control of the divine femininity and sexual expressant, but it comes at what costs, like, what does that mean?

Cause I feel like there still are people that feel this way. Especially about Black women.

Dalton: Yeah, no

Melayna: Like we are we're losing something by having this other dimension

Dalton: Yeah, no, I, I would say no, no, you, women are gaining something. You know, you talked earlier on, you know, just about this idea of sexual agency. Like it's, so it's so incredibly dumb and like backwards, you know, for like a man in 2020 or any time for that matter, right.

To feel, uh, you know, entitled enough to talk about whether a woman's project. You know, what I mean is like empowering for women. That's just, that doesn't make any sense.

Melayna: Yeah like women talking about themselves, but they can talk about women all they want. I just feel like it's all about agency and who's in control.

Like it's about the fact that men aren't involved. Like these women are talking about being, being sexual. They perhaps they're talking about, you know, the male gaze in terms of that's how they, like, in terms of the sexuality, they feel in that moment, but they don't really need men to put through that message.

Dalton: Yeah, that's right. And it's pissing men off or, or who made 'em, you know, since how did CeeLo Green become like the moral barometer? You know, of all that's good and right in, in hip hop, like it's just, I mean, he has some, you know, skeletons and there's, it's just ridiculous. Yeah. I just, it's hard to read that it's tough.

It's tough to stomach or reading CeeLo Green and sort of weighing in on, you know, on, on Megan Thee Stallion and Cardi B. It's really weird reading that.

Outro

Thank you so much for listening. We also want to thank our guest for this week, Morgan Campbell and you can reach us both on social media. Me @MelaynaWilliams on Twitter or

the @TheOnlyMelly On Instagram and DaltonHiggins5 on everything. We also want to thank our producer Ryan Clarke. We will see you next week.