

Korver's sudden self-revelation begs the question, "What Took So Long?"

By John Harris Jr. | VILLAGER Sports Columnist



Kyle Korver

Kyle Korver's compelling article about institutional racism and privilege has the NBA buzzing. Here's my take: It took a white basketball player to break down the uncomfortable barriers and address the "elephant in the room," as Korver described his view of race in America for The Players' Tribune.

Sure, LeBron James or Kevin Durant could tackle the subject - and both superstar NBA players have done just that. Unfortunately, the majority population doesn't like it when black millionaires "complain" about racism. Russell Westbrook went public last month regarding his exchange with a white Utah Jazz fan who told Westbrook to "get on your knees like you're used to." However, the issue of racism coming from a black basketball player doesn't have the same impact that it does coming from a white basketball player such as Korver.

My question to Korver is: What took you so long? And when will other white athletes join the party?

That's what needed, you know. More

white athletes need to stand up and speak out for their black teammates. Make that more prominent white athletes. I know that Chris Long, a white defensive lineman and son of Pro Football Hall of Famer and Fox television personality Howie Long, spoke out in support of Colin Kaepernick's national anthem protest about the killing of unarmed black men by police. Imagine the impact that a Tom Brady, arguably the greatest quarterback in NFL history, could have had regarding Kaepernick's stance. Brady and other prominent white NFL players remained silent, as the onus fell on black athletes to lead the protest that has quietly gone by the wayside.

I compare Korver's article to the Civil Rights protest when white clergy members and other white citizens joined blacks on the

frontline. The presence of whites in the Civil Rights movement moved the needle and forced people of all races to witness and understand the struggle of what it means to be black in America.

Korver understands that being white in America comes with privileges that blacks simply don't possess. Korver notes that even though the NBA is about 75 percent black, he has more in common with the fans in the stands, most of whom are white. He understands that even though blacks dominate on the basketball court, they remain minorities off the court and are treated as such.

Give Korver credit. He could have remained silent, but instead he stepped out on faith and honestly addressed the double standard that exists between races.

Korver started a dialogue that needs to be continued. Several NBA players and personalities have thanked Korver on social media, but we'll know that Korver's words are truly making a difference when some of his white peers follow his lead.

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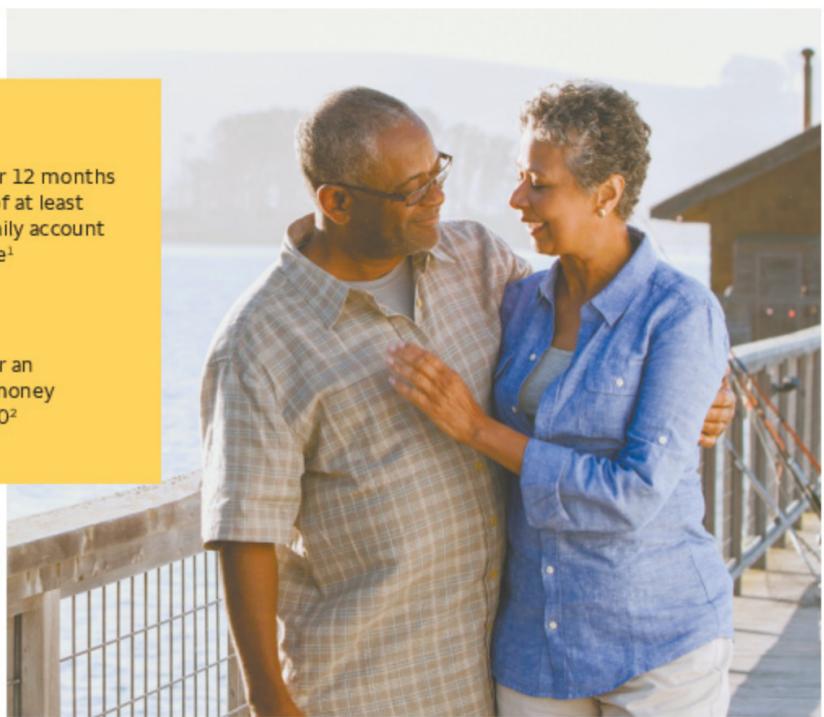
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