



Jerry Jones' anthem order means 'Slaves, obey your master,' John Wiley Price says

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Dallas County Commissioner John Wiley Price is not surprised that Cowboys owner Jerry Jones ordered his players to stand during the national anthem — or sit out the game.

"It's Jerry's world," Price said Tuesday. "When they own you, that's what they do."

Price, one of Dallas' most prominent black politicians, said the players who took a knee during the anthem were showing that they could "really see" the mistreatment of people of color in America.

"What the players are saying, in some uniform position, is that they can see," Price said. "And so, Jerry issues an order that says, 'Slaves, obey your master.'"

Price, who has represented southern Dallas County since 1985, added that he found it "interesting that nobody wants to talk about the third stanza" of the national anthem.

The third stanza by Francis Scott Key decries the former slaves who joined the British Royal Army's efforts in exchange for their freedom, according to *The Root*.

The lyrics:

*And where is that band who so vauntingly swore,
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion
A home and a Country should leave us no more?
Their blood has wash'd out their foul footsteps' pollution.
No refuge could save the hireling and slave
From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave,
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.*

According to Jason Johnson, an editor at *The Root* and a political science professor at Morgan State University, Key wrote the stanza in 1814 after America lost a battle to a British battalion that included some black soldiers.

"Key was saying that the blood of all the former slaves and 'hirelings' on the battlefield will wash away the pollution of the British invaders," Johnson wrote. "With Key still bitter that some black soldiers got the best of him a few weeks earlier, 'The Star-Spangled Banner' is as much a patriotic song as it is a diss track to black people who had the audacity to fight for their freedom."

However, there are other interpretations of that stanza. According to *The National Review*, the word "slave" in Key's time was used "as a wide-ranging epithet, hurled at persons of any and all colors, nationalities, and conditions of servitude or otherwise." So Key may have been insulting the largely white British forces by calling them slaves, wrote Cato Institute fellow Walter Olson.

It doesn't appear that Key ever explained what he meant by the phrase, according to Snopes, a fact-checking website.

But to Price, the third stanza vilifies the black people who fought to be free. He said the anthem debate is misguided because nobody ever talks about those lyrics.

"Ninety-nine percent of white folks and most black folks ain't never heard the third stanza," Price said. "So you're gonna sing something that is counter to your interest? You're gonna salute and cover your heart?"

Price added that the freedoms the soldiers fought for included freedom of speech, so it is still patriotic for the players to express their opinions. He lamented that the message of former San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick's original protest — against the deaths of black people at the hands of police — had been muted.

"They've hijacked the narrative," Price said. "Now it's about, 'Can we make you get in line? Can we make you stand up? Do you really have a right to protest?'"

Price added that Jones' actions are fitting for "America's Team," since Dallas has always been "America's poster child for racism."