

By [jasonmaddox](#)  
On January 10th, 2017

## Football Player's "Silent Struggle" ends in suicide

In December 2015, Zac Easter shot himself ending what he called his "Silent Struggle" from the effects of multiple concussions he sustained from football. A month earlier, Zac had planned to end his life either by his own hand or suicide-by-cop, but was stopped by police and hospitalized. The reality was that Zac had tired of watching himself deteriorate and he knew that the cause of his problems was CTE or Chronic Trauma Encephalopathy. He started playing football in third grade and "used his head as a weapon". Zac was raised in the football culture of Iowa and aggressive play was in his blood. In high school Zac earned two shirts in his Junior and Senior years carrying the phrase "The Big Hammer" from his coach which had been awarded for aggressive play. In high school, there were five diagnosed concussions and Zac lied to the doctor about symptoms he was experiencing to stay in the game. Zac played football in college, too. Who knew how many concussions Zac really had sustained?

In the time before his suicide, Zac had quit his job due to the cognitive and emotional problems he was having. He was drinking and misusing his medications. All this time Zac knew that he was struggling with the consequences of his many concussions and in his diary had requested that his brain be donated for study. In spite of attempts by his girlfriend of many years and his family to support him by the time of his death by suicide Zac was worn out. He chronicled his life, including the last phase which led to his suicide in his diary which has now been published in an article in GQ. Zac's family also has an ongoing "Silent Struggle" with his suicide and with the cause of his problems. They have set up CTE HOPE to provide education and awareness about the consequences of concussions and CTE.

NeuroNotes has published many blogs about CTE and multiple concussions. We have identified the work of Dr. Bennett Omalu and the struggles of many former football players like Dave Duerson, Junior Seau and George Visger. We have

included stories about other athletes like Ray Ciancaglini, a retired boxer who is a tireless spokesperson for preventing multiple concussions. Zac Easter's story reminds us that the effects of multiple concussions leading to CTE is not solely in the domain of professional athletes. Often the problem starts with concussions sustained in youth and school sports.

<https://traumaticbraininjury.net/2017/01/10/football-players-silent-struggle-ends-in-suicide/>