

HOW THE CURRENT N.I.L SYSTEM CAN LEAD TO A PLESSY VS. FERGUSON - "SEPARATE BUT EQUAL VERDICT"

July 1st 2021. The day in which college athletics changed forever. The three letters N.I.L. That quickly sent ripples of excitement among today's high school and college athletes. Of course, N.I.L standing for Name, Image & Likeness! The new rule that was passed in which allowed college athletes get paid. *Legally*. As exciting as this news was, I knew there'd be a ton of issues that come with it. With the main issue being, *every athlete doesn't generate the same amount of revenue*, and therefore the probability of teams being ripped apart, and feuding with one another (over money) was high. Also, the decision for high school athletes to attend college was not going to be about the education they'd receive, but about how much money they could make.

During my Senior year of high school, I had a Literature Teacher named "Mike Hibbs," who was also the school's Head Basketball Coach. One of the early assignments that year was to write a college essay. He told us he'd review it, to help us out, as we were in the process of applying to colleges. I remember putting in my essay something about, "me wanting to pick a school that will help me get the most money." I'll never forget the huge red ink from his pen that said, "Don't SAY THAT!" I asked him about it once he returned the papers to us, and he told me, "there's *no way I'd accept you*, if I read that, I'd tell you to go get a job."

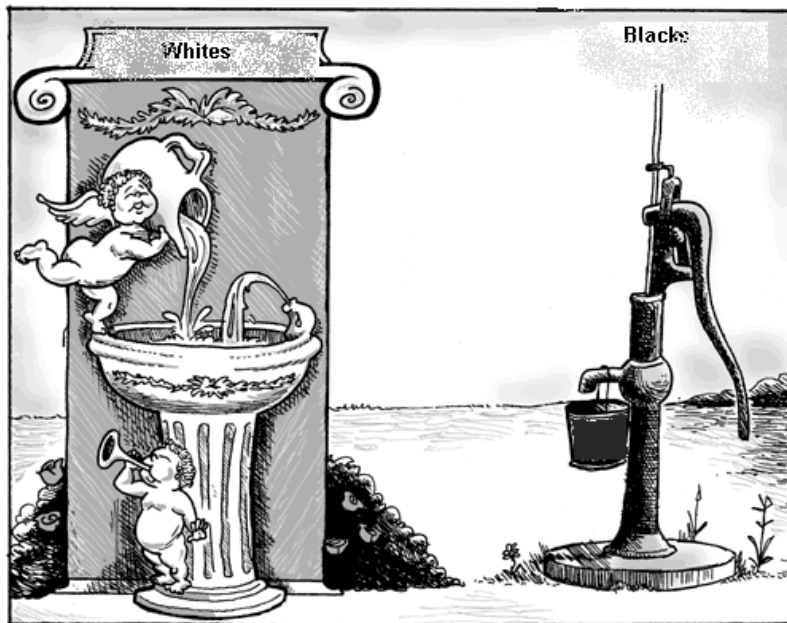
Sadly, this is exactly what has happened with college athletics. Athletes are being enticed to attend a university, because of the amount of N.I.L money they can get, and there has yet to be a strategy towards making sure the money is being distributed equally. Need I remind you, about the "Plessy vs. Ferguson case." Homer Plessy, who was thrown in jail for being 1/8th black, and sitting in a whites only section of a train. Fought the legal system, and lost. Eventually, *the court ruled that it was ok for things to be "Separate but equal,"* which led to the Jim Crow era in which there'd be "white only" schools, businesses, public bathrooms, water fountains etc. It was obvious things weren't equal. Folks who looked like me were only allowed to do things that had a sign that read, "Coloreds Only," and it was clear that the resources were not up to par. To say the least.

Just in case you're not seeing how this connects. Let me make it crystal clear for you. The University of Notre Dame currently has a partnership with the T.V station "NBC" through 2029, that includes the broadcasting of all of the school's football and hockey games. "NBC," is the same television network that gives us The Olympics, The Today Show, Sunday Night Football, Peacock, and countless other shows like "This is us," to keep us entertained. A football program that competes in lets say, the "Sun Belt Conference," Like James Madison University, whose football team was only ranked nine spots behind Notre Dame in the 2023 rankings.

Now, James Madison has to operate under the same guidelines as a school that can use a television network as a pipeline to advertisers and sponsors. Although, they're playing the same game, at pretty much the same level. There is no television network that'll nationally broadcast

all of James Madsions football games, they don't have a big enough fan base. This is the exact same thing as a young black kid who was forced to go to school with old textbooks that probably had most of the pages ripped out of it, and compete (for jobs & college acceptance) with a white kid who was going to a school that probably got new textbooks every year.

PLESSY VS. FERGUSON



**SEPARATE
BUT NOT EQUAL**