



July 23, 2014

Mr. Daniel M. Snyder
Owner
Washington NFL Team
21300 R----- Park Drive
Ashburn, VA 20147

Dear Mr. Snyder,

While continuing to wait for an opportunity to discuss our feelings about the Washington football team's name in person with you, we write to alert you to a troubling trend among the people that represent the team in the public arena.

In the last month, two of your employees have suggested that people of color are not part of the Change the Mascot campaign. In his short-lived capacity as a spokesperson for the Washington team, Ben Tribbett alleged that our campaign is comprised of "only a small number of 'well-intentioned' elites... 'who are not Native American.'" A few weeks later, *USA Today* reported that the executive director of your new Native American-themed foundation, Gary Edwards, made similar comments. A tribal leader quoted Mr. Edwards as saying that your team's use of a racial slur is "a non issue" because the opposition represents "a white, liberal agenda."

The allegation that people of color are somehow not part of the Change the Mascot campaign is demonstrably untrue. As documented at www.changethemascot.org, the Change the Mascot campaign has the support of major Native American and civil rights groups representing millions of people of color. Organizations such as the National Congress of American Indians, the United South and Eastern Tribes and the National Indian Education Association have joined the campaign along with the NAACP, The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, the National Urban League and, the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, just to name a few.

Additionally, the campaign's goals have been endorsed by many people of color including Olympian and Native American hero Billy Mills, PGA golfer Notah Begay, President Barack Obama, and Attorney General Eric Holder. Similarly, current and former NFL players such as Richard Sherman, Champ Bailey and Calvin Hill have also endorsed the principles of our campaign.

Ignoring these facts by insisting people of color are not part of the Change the Mascot campaign is an unfortunate, age-old tactic designed to marginalize people of color by pretending our basic existence does not deserve to be acknowledged.

Attached to this letter is a list of the many Native American and civil rights groups who are part of the Change the Mascot campaign. We request that you print out this list, distribute it to your employees and instruct them to stop claiming that people of color are not part of the campaign to end your organization's use of the R-word. We request, in other words, that your employees express at least a minimal level of respect to the countless number of people of color who are part of this campaign.

As we continue to debate the damage your use of this racial slur is doing to Native Americans across this country, we hope that you at least agree that your representatives should acknowledge the existence of people of color, even when those people of color vehemently oppose your actions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ray Halbritter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Ray Halbritter
Oneida Indian Nation Representative

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jacqueline Johnson Pata". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with a large initial "J".

Jacqueline Pata
Executive Director, National Congress of American Indians

<http://www.buzzfeed.com/evanmcsan/redskins>

The Weirdest Conceivable Twist In The Fight Over Washington's NFL Team Name

Eight years ago, one of Virginia's most prominent liberal bloggers convinced America "macaca" was racist. Now he's in charge of convincing America "Redskins" isn't.

By Evan McMorris-Santoro, July 1, 2014

WASHINGTON — Last week, the Washington Redskins hired an unusual defender for the team's beleaguered name: the man who famously sunk George Allen's political career with a video of the Republican senator using the word "macaca."

Ben Tribbett, a blogger who first found and then promoted the video of Allen calling a Virginia man "macaca," [joined the front office](#) of the Washington Redskins and owner Dan Snyder's [team of consultants and paid staff](#) who are defending the NFL franchise's name.

The effort also brings Tribbett on the same team as Allen, whose brother, Bruce, is the Redskins' general manager. Tribbett won't talk about Allen or what exactly he plans to do to defend the Redskins' name, but he argues his new job is consistent with his long-held belief that the name "Redskins" is neither racist nor divisive.

The critics are only a small number of "well-intentioned" elites, Tribbett told BuzzFeed, "who are not Native American, by the way." On D.C. sports radio Monday, Tribbett dismissed the concerns over the team's nickname as ["a PC campaign."](#)

"It's something that's been around in our lexicon for, you know, 70 years, and it's primarily as a football thing," Tribbett told BuzzFeed. "The only people who get called Redskins are football players."

Tribbett is dismissive of those who say "Redskins" has any racially charged negative connotation.

"They don't have the support behind it," he said. "That's why they're resorting to these tactics of comparing it to the n-word or things like that that are horrible. Because they're not winning the debate. They're not winning over the public with this."

Football for many Northern Virginians like Tribbett runs very, very deep and the Redskins may be the only thing besides traffic that unites the three parts — Maryland, Virginia, and Washington — of the D.C. area. The team's regional fan base remains united behind the embattled nickname, Tribbett insists, and said the pressure to change it smacks of outside interference in matters that should be local.

But many progressives in Virginia who followed Tribbett for years are "appalled," one prominent liberal voice in the commonwealth told BuzzFeed.

"You've got overlapping priorities" in Virginia, said Catherine Read, Northern Virginia-based progressive political fixture and an Equality Virginia board member who thinks the nickname is racist. "It's a religion for some people here."

"I don't think Ben is coming at this from political correctness," she added. "He's coming at it as a fan."

"Maybe he's playing 3D chess, like in *Star Trek*," one prominent liberal said, wondering aloud how the man who surfaced "macaca" can square his new gig with his past. "Or maybe he's full of shit."

In August 2006, as detailed extensively in the book [Netroots Rising](#), Tribbett got word of what would be the first ever major "tracker video." Then an anonymous blogger writing under the name Not Larry Sabato — a crack at the [political prognosticator](#) based at the University of Virginia — Tribbett called up the campaign staff of Allen's Democratic challenger, Jim Webb, and told them he knew they had a recording of Allen mocking a Democratic staffer dispatched to follow Allen on the campaign trail. On [the tape](#), Allen pointed to the Democrat, an American of Indian descent named [S.R. Sidarth](#), called him "macaca" and added, "Welcome to America."

In the aftermath of Webb's defeat of Allen, "tracker" became a term of art, and a necessary hire for any candidate. In a sense, every opposition researcher everywhere hopes to be the one to shop the next "macaca." It's a moment that's often imitated but rarely recreated.

Another and, just as key, legacy of the "macaca" scandal was the requisite argument about a gaffe's intent that goes with any similar political scandal these days. No one had really heard the word before, and after Allen said it there was a lively debate about [whether or not](#) the word was racist or even an insult. [Allen](#) and his allies first said it was a nonsense word, made up by the Republicans, and the first Associated Press stories said it was a term for monkey. Even Tribbett didn't know what it was, spelling it "makkhah" in his first post. Eventually, Allen's critics found the word "macaca" used as a slur against dark-skinned people in Francophone northern Africa, tied that to the years Allen's mother lived in Tunisia, and eventually proclaimed that he must have heard it from her (she [denied](#) the charge). Years after the election, Allen [apologized](#) for "macaca," saying he "singled out" Sidarth by "calling him a name."

One of the loudest voices [insisting](#) the controversial term "macaca" was a racist attack: Tribbett.

"I've been arguing for two weeks on here that Macaca is a racial slur," he [wrote](#) in an Aug. 27, 2006 post about a Democratic candidate who he heard "made an offensive joke to a group of Muslims."

"Racial slurs are not funny things to joke about," he added.

Tribbett shut down Not Larry Sabato not long after taking the job with the NFL team. [Archived pages](#) show he was dismissive of those who thought Allen's crack was anything other than racially charged.

But Tribbett has been a staunch advocate of the Redskins name for a long time, leading to [vigorous debate](#) with followers. Tribbett says strange bedfellows are par for the course.

"There's all sorts of political issues all the time where there are people of different political views who are on the same side of a political issue," he said. "Weird? No, I've been on the same side of probably everyone in Virginia politics at some point on some issue."

In an interview, he kept pointing to a belief that average Americans aren't offended by the name and want to keep it, while a cadre of elitists bent on scoring a victory for political correctness based in ignorance want to destroy it. He used the widely derided "#RedskinsPride" [campaign](#) to illustrate the point. While on Twitter, the hashtag was quickly hijacked by opponents of the name, on Facebook, the hashtag was [a rousing success](#) for the franchise. Tribbett chalked up the difference to regular fans on Facebook against the more elitist anti-team name crowd on Twitter.

"I'm very confident that when people get all the facts behind this, they'll support the Redskins. The vast majority," he said. "The big fact is the history of the team, and we'll go out and talk about this more as the [campaign] goes on ... We're going to bring out a full history of the team, the meaning of the word 'Redskins,' what people perceive it is."

Tribbett is more than comfortable going from the man who made "macaca" a thing to the man trying to make sure "Redskins" isn't. But the Democrats who joined him in the political trenches in 2006 are scratching their heads.

"It's just sad that someone with a such long tradition of supporting Virginia Democrats and progressive causes can turn around and become a part of the Dan Snyder and Allen family regime to defend a racist team name," said a Democratic veteran of Virginia politics and commonwealth native now working on the national stage. "What does he really believe in?"

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/nfl/2014/07/17/washington-nfl-team-indian-tribe-skate-park/12793281/>

Indian tribe rejects Snyder's offer to fund a skate park

By Erik Brady, July 18, 2014

The Fort Yuma Quechan (Kwatsan) Tribe has rejected an offer from Washington NFL team owner Daniel Snyder's foundation to build a memorial skate park on its reservation, tribal President Keeny Escalanti Sr. said Friday.

Escalanti said the tribe won't take any money from the Original American Foundation, whose representatives met with tribal leaders earlier this week.

Kenrick Escalanti, president of Kwatsan Media Inc., whose organization is leading the drive to build a skate park, already had turned down the offer from the team's Original Americans Foundation. He also attended the meetings with foundation representatives on the tribal reservation on the Arizona-California border.

"They told us it wouldn't cost us a thing, that we wouldn't have to say anything and we wouldn't have to support" the franchise's controversial team name, Escalanti told USA TODAY Sports on Thursday. "They said they were not asking for an endorsement or a photo op, they just wanted to help. But if you know their track record, we didn't really believe that. ... We know bribe money when we see it. "

The foundation was represented by executive director Gary Edwards and director Karl Schreiber, plus a park designer, according to Escalanti. "They showed us digital renderings of a skate park and what struck me was the designs were all in burgundy and gold," Escalanti said. Those are the colors of the Washington NFL team.

The team issued this statement from the foundation: "Tribal leaders from the Fort Yuma Quechan (Kwatsan) Tribe invited and met with staff from the Original Americans Foundation to discuss projects that needed funding in Yuma. The conversation centered around eight projects that the tribe requested assistance for projects that improved their quality of life and at no time during our on-site discussion did the tribe object to working with our foundation.

"We are very proud of the more than 145 projects in partnership with 40 tribes that we have worked on and will continue to do what we can for those in need. We will maintain our foundation's policy of not disclosing our private conversations with tribal leaders."

Kenrick Escalanti's description of the two meetings, which together lasted nearly an hour, open a window on the nonprofit announced by Snyder in March to help Native American causes. Foundation reps told the tribe that they have 147 projects lined up involving about 40 tribes across the country. Escalanti said the reps added that about 100 tribes, including his, have participated in a survey concerning their needs.

Escalanti said no dollar amount was mentioned, but he said the budget for the planned Quechan Memorial Skatepark is \$250,000 and "they offered to build it, like a blank check." Kwatsan Media Inc., a nonprofit that runs a radio station, is accepting donations for the skate park, which will be dedicated to suicide prevention in Native youth.

"When we told them the skate park would be dedicated to fallen Native youth, you could see their eyes open up big, like they could smell good PR," Kenrick Escalanti said. "And that really irritated me."

The first meeting with tribal leaders, including three council members, lasted about 20 minutes and the second with Kwatsan Media about 30 minutes, according to Escalanti, who attended both.

One council member asked foundation reps why the team cares about Native American causes now, Escalanti said. "Edwards said they always cared and this is not an issue of the (team) name," Escalanti said. "He said the reason it comes up now is the team and the NFL have a diversity policy and they are trying to live by that."

The foundation representatives said they have helped tribes already with backhoes, jackets and boots, according to Escalanti, who said the reps "kept name-dropping tribe after tribe, and president after president, even though they were promising us we could have the skate park and nobody had to know" where the money came from.

Edwards addressed the team name issue, according to Escalanti: "He said he is a proud 'redskin' and that the controversy is a non-issue. He said it is inaccurate to call it a slur. He said the name stands for pride, courage and intelligence. And he said people who oppose the name are part of a white, liberal agenda."

Escalanti said that Edwards made an impassioned plea for Native American strength against white aggression: "The last words he said to us were, 'We need to get stronger, because if we don't, they will annihilate us.'"

Native American Tribes and Organizations **In Support of Changing the Mascot**

Scores of Native Nations and organizations unite to speak out against the racially offensive mascot name. Many have passed Tribal Resolutions, written letters to the NFL and to Congress and have taken action to stop the use of the R-word. They include:

- National Congress of American Indians (NCAI)
- United South and Eastern Tribes (USET)
- National Indian Education Association
- American Indian Sports Team Mascots.org
- Advocates for American Indian Children (California)
- The Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians
- American Indian Mental Health Association (Minnesota)
- American Indian Movement
- American Indian Opportunities Industrialization Center of San Bernardino County
- American Indian Student Services at the Ohio State University
- American Indian High Education Consortium
- American Indian College Fund
- Americans for Indian Opportunity
- Association on American Indian Affairs
- Buncombe County Native American Inter-tribal Association (North Carolina)
- Capitol Area Indian Resources
- Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma
- Comanche Nation of Oklahoma
- Concerned American Indian Parents (Minnesota)
- Council for Indigenous North Americans (University of Southern Maine)
- Eagle and Condor Indigenous Peoples' Alliance
- First Peoples Worldwide
- Fontana Native American Indian Center, Inc.
- Fort Peck Tribal Executive Board (Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of Fort Peck Reservation)
- Governor's Interstate Indian Council
- Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians (Michigan)
- Greater Tulsa Area Indian Affairs Commission
- Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council
- Gun Lake Band of Potawatomi Indians (Michigan)
- HONOR – Honor Our Neighbors Origins and Rights
- Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes (Composed of the Choctaw, Chickasaw, Muskogee (Creek), Cherokee, and Seminole Nations)
- Inter Tribal Council of Arizona
- Juaneño Band of Mission Indians
- Kansas Association for Native American Education
- Little River Band of Ottawa Indians (Michigan)
- Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs
- Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians Gun Lake Tribe
- Medicine Wheel Inter-tribal Association (Louisiana)

- Menominee Tribe of Indians (Wisconsin)
- Minnesota Indian Education Association
- National Indian Gaming Association
- National Indian Youth Council
- National Indian Child Welfare Association
- National Native American Law Student Association
- Native American Finance Officers Association (NAFOA)
- Native American Rights Fund (NARF)
- Native American Caucus of the California Democratic Party
- Native American Indian Center of Central Ohio
- Native American Contractors Association
- Native American Journalists Association
- Native Voice Network
- Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs
- Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi (Michigan)
- North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs
- North Dakota Indian Education Association
- Office of Native American Ministry, Diocese of Grand Rapids (Michigan)
- Ohio Center for Native American Affairs
- Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin
- Oneida Indian Nation
- Poarch Band of Creek Indians
- San Bernardino/Riverside Counties Native American Community Council
- Seminole Nation of Oklahoma
- Society of Indian Psychologists of the Americas
- Society of American Indian Government Employees
- Southern California Indian Center
- St. Cloud State University – American Indian Center
- Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians (Michigan)
- Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (North Dakota)
- Tennessee Chapter of the National Coalition for the Preservation of Indigenous Cultures
- Tennessee Commission of Indian Affairs
- Tennessee Native Veterans Society
- Tulsa Indian Coalition Against Racism
- The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
- The Three Affiliated Tribes of the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation
- Unified Coalition for American Indian Concerns, Virginia
- The United Indian Nations of Oklahoma
- Virginia American Indian Cultural Resource Center
- Wisconsin Indian Education Association
- WIEA “Indian” Mascot and Logo Taskforce (Wisconsin)
- Woodland Indian Community Center-Lansing (Michigan)
- Youth “Indian” Mascot and Logo Task force (Wisconsin)

Organizations On the Right Side of History

*Many organizations and have taken a stand against the use of the R-word.
They include:*

- Anti Defamation League
- American Counseling Association
- American Jewish Committee
- American Psychological Association
- American Sociological Society
- American Civil Liberties Union
- Asian American Journalists Association
- Asian Americans Advancing Justice
- Associated Students Council of San Diego State University
- BRIDGES – Building Roads Into Diverse Groups Empowering Students
- BIG – Blacks in Government
- Calvert Investment Group
- Center for Artistic Revolution (CAR) (North Little Rock, AR)
- Center for the Study of Sports in Society
- Cincinnati Zapitista Coalition
- COLOR – Community One Love One Race
- Committee to End Cultural Genocide (St. Cloud State University)
- Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)
- Faith Strategies
- HONOR – Honor Our Neighbors Origins and Rights
- Hutchinson Human Relations Commission
- Illinois State University Student Government Association
- Inter-Ethnic Children’s Council (Los Angeles)
- Inter-Faith Council on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR)
- Latino Children’s Action Council (Los Angeles)
- League of United Latin American Citizens (National)
- Mascot Abuse San Francisco Bay Area
- Michigan Civil Rights Commission
- Michigan Education Association
- State of Michigan, State Board of Education
- Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board
- Minnesota State Board of Education
- Modern Language Association
- Morning Star Institute
- NAACP
- National Association of Black Journalists
- National Association of Hispanic Journalists
- National Coalition for Equity in Public Service
- National Coalition on Racism in Sports and the Media
- National Conference of Christians and Jews
- National Conference for Community and Justice

- National Education Association
- New Hampshire State Board of Education
- New York State Education Department
- North Dakota State University Student Senate
- Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.
- Progressive Resource/Action Cooperative
- Rainbow Coalition
- Students Making All Races Tolerant (SMART)
- Southern Christian Leadership Conference
- The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
- Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
- United Church of Christ Central Atlantic Conference
- United Methodist Church
- United States Commission on Civil Rights
- United States Black Chambers, Inc.
- Western North Carolina Citizens for an End to Institutionalized Bigotry
- Wisconsin State Human Relations Association