

## Forbes: You Don't Want to Admit It, But Donald Sterling Is Good For Sports And Society

Written by Maury Brown  
Tuesday, 27 May 2014 22:15

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It's not often that I pump out a column that reaches far deeper than sports, and instead, asks uncomfortable questions that each of us need to face, but that was the attempt for Forbes on Tuesday. For weeks, I've been reporting on Clippers owner Donald Sterling's comments, Commissioner Adam Silver's punishment, and how it impacts basketball.

But, from the time the story broke, the issues at the heart of Sterling's racial comments seemed to me to mean much more. That it reaches into not only the NBA and its owners, but to the NFL (Redskins name change debate), the historical references to what has happened with MLB (Marge Schott's comments regarding Hitler), and what it is that we expect not only of our sports owners, but business leaders, and most importantly, society as a whole.

As for baseball, when Commissioner Selig was asked about it, he said, "I don't want to get into that, except we do have a history, without me going back into it, and our constitution is different than the other sports."

I'm not so sure Selig and baseball would be able to brush the issue away easily, but his reference—clearly to Schott—brings up why going through adversity makes you stronger when you get past it.

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I start the column (see [Why Donald Sterling Is Good For Not Only Sports, But Society](#) ) this quote we have all heard many times before

*"That which does not kill us makes us stronger."* - Friedrich Nietzsche

We don't like the thought, but those that face adversity in life come out the better for it. As Nietzsche noted, adversity makes us stronger. In that, the Sterling debacle will not only make the NBA better, it will make cascade into other sports, and beyond into everything from questioning our business leaders on what we expect of them to matters of privacy rights, and ultimately you and I.

I touch on Mark Cuban's and Stephen A. Smith's comments. I bring up the Washington Redskins and how 50 members of Congress asked for the name to change (I'll be doing more on this for Forbes in a future column), but here's a sampling [from the Forbes article](#) :

### **Donald Sterling Asks Us What We Expect Of Business Leaders**

Like all of society, there are those that are good and bad examples of what we see as human character. While on one level it may seem unfair, when Donald Sterling signed-up to be owner of the Los Angeles Clippers, he became a steward of a public asset. As a business owner, he represents not only the Clippers and the NBA, but in a large way, represents the city of Los Angeles. So, to the critics that say that Sterling is being punished unfairly, the discussion has to be, do we hold sports owners and business leaders accountable in some fashion? That in owning a sports club as a public trust, they are held to a higher standard? In that, it begs the question as to whether all business owners and leaders be under higher scrutiny?

### **Donald Sterling Forces Us All to Look In the Mirror**

There has been a large discussion about whether any of Sterling's recorded comments be grounds for not only fining him \$2.5 million, but lead to the NBA terminating his ownership of the

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Clippers. After all, [until he went on CNN with Anderson Cooper](#) , the recordings from his alleged girlfriend V. Stiviano brings up the debate around privacy rights.

In the end, that may be true, but what Sterling's debacle has brought about is the notion that, for good or bad, in an age of smartphones and social media, we can all be photographed, and recorded. Maybe what Donald Sterling has done is force us all to ask, "If I was being recorded, knowing it could find its way into the public eye, would I say or do certain things?"

Yes, the Donald Sterling fiasco is good for sports... and society as a whole.

I look forward to [your comments on Forbes](#) .

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