

OPINION



**Your Carpet
Best Cleaning
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Martin Cleaning Service

**Carpet & Upholstery
Cleaning
Residential &
Commercial Services
Minimum Service CHG.
\$45.00**
A small distance/travel
charge may be applied

CARPET CLEANING
**2 Cleaning Areas or
more \$30.00 Each Area**
Pre-Spray Traffic Areas
(Includes: 1 small Hallway)
1 Cleaning Area (only)
\$40.00
*Includes Pre-Spray Traffic Area
(Hallway Extra)*

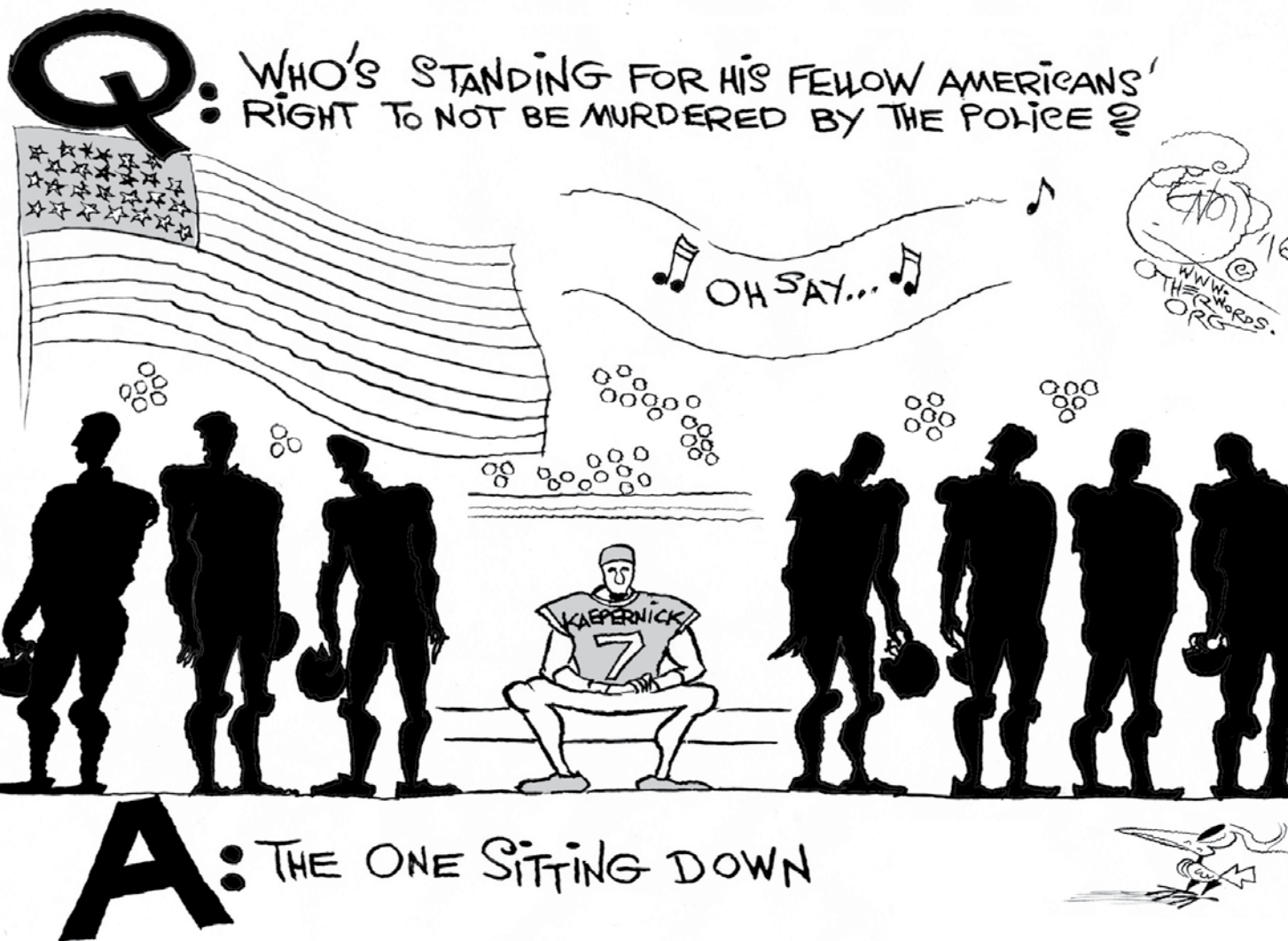
**Stairs (12-16 stairs - With
Other Services): \$25.00**
Area/Oriental Rugs:
\$25.00 Minimum
Area/Oriental Rugs (Wool):
\$40.00 Minimum
Heavily Soiled Area:
Additional \$10.00 each area
(Requiring Extensive Pre-Spraying)

**UPHOLSTERY
CLEANING**
Sofa: \$69.00
Loveseat: \$49.00
Sectional: \$109 - \$139
Chair or Recliner: \$25 - \$49
Throw Pillows *(With
Other Services):* \$5.00

**ADDITIONAL
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- Deodorizing & Pet Odor Treatment
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Makes Me Wanna Holler and Throw Up My Hands

**Kaepernick's
saying what you
and I know**

BY DR. VALERIE WARDLAW

I am not going to equivocate my thoughts about these United States of America. Amerykah - as the artist Erykah Badu has called it is hands down the greatest country in the world. Like most citizens, I love America and so does Colin Kaepernick, the once beloved and now embattled quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers.

In case you've been living under a rock for the past few days, Kaepernick refused to stand while the National Anthem was being played during a recent pre-season game. His refusal was his expression of the frustration he felt as a black man, a citizen living in America, observing the lack of racial equality for people of color. Kaepernick made it perfectly clear that his act was his decision and it was personal. We got to witness an act of protest protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. You know, the document that begins with We the People."

And then it happened... we the people (Twitter sphere, sports fans, and a whole lot of folks) lost their figurative minds and let him know (as was their right) how they

felt. Some said he was a coward, that it wasn't the right time or place. No matter, the form is never convenient. It was astounding to me that some said he showed disrespect to the men and women who served in the military, and more than a few of our loving citizens strongly suggested



that he find another country to live in. It was as if this millionaire athlete could not and should not have a conscience and that he absolutely could not exercise his right to object to the playing of a song that has a known racist history.

Some applauded his right to protest and wondered if Americans would really hear his heart. They said it was madness but magnificently so.

I immediately thought of the late Muhammad Ali.

The greatest boxer of all times was once called a traitor and draft dodger for refusing to be inducted into the Army. He was immediately stripped of his heavyweight title and not allowed to box in the U.S. for many years. Ali lost millions but it seemed that his soul remained intact. He showed us by his personal act that our worth is not determined by green backs and coins but by the tenets of our hearts and those valuable truths that we would willingly sacrifice our lives for.

It was Ali who told the world that he would not put on a military uniform and journey thousands of miles away to drop bombs and bullets on brown people in Vietnam while black people were being treated like dogs right here in the streets of America.

Ali unapologetically said that the real enemy was not Vietnam but the good ole USA. It was Ali who said he would willingly go to war if he thought it would bring freedom and equality to black people. For Ali, the real test was whether he would stand up for his beliefs while facing the possibility of jail. In the end, he reflected that he really had nothing to lose if he went to jail because we (black people) had been in jail for 400 years.

Like Ali, Kaepernick did not mince his words when explaining his actions. Kaepernick said he could not stand up and show pride for a country or a flag that oppresses black people and people of color. He said the oppression that he witnessed was bigger than football. He spoke of the bodies lying in the streets. He knew he might pay a heavy price for his beliefs with his NFL career and endorsements on the line, but he stood up for what is right. Sound familiar?

Kaepernick was once chastised by a reporter for wearing his cap backwards. "Turn your cap around and act like a professional quarterback," the reporter

wrote. I guess that reporter was blissfully unaware that white NFL quarterbacks also wore their caps backwards. Or what about the reporter who loathed the tattoos on his arms, comparing Kaepernick's look to that of a prisoner who just got paroled? It didn't seem to matter to that reporter that under Kaepernick's leadership, the 49ers earned a trip to Super Bowl XLVII. But I digress.

Kaepernick simply wanted to know when would justice for citizens of color be congruent with the type of justice experienced by white citizens. He did not disparage the brave men and women who serve or have served in the military nor the police who bravely seek to make the streets safe for all citizens of this great nation. He did question the system that allows some to escape the consequences of their misguided actions. After all, aren't all citizen's innocent until proven guilty in a court of law?

Kaepernick simply spoke of his disappointment in a country that is better than what we at times exhibit. He said what you and I know - that we can and must do better. It is a courageous act to speak truth to power. It's not for the faint at heart and Colin Kaepernick makes me wanna holler and throw up both my hands.

Dr. Valerie Wardlaw is a writer and psychologist from Los Angeles.