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TO: St. Louis Area Residents
FROM: Frank Bommarito
RE: There Are Two Sides to Every Story

Even though I strongly believe in the right to protest, I was having a hard time supporting the reasoning of the recent NFL protesters and understanding their side to the story. Then a good friend, and fellow car dealer, Bill Schicker, sent me the following article which I will label Another Side to the Story (read on):

Recently, some NFL players have decided to exercise their right of free speech by kneeling or sitting during our National Anthem. In the United States, you are guaranteed the right to free speech and expression. However, I do think that some requirements should be met. First, you could spend a winter at Valley Forge without winter clothing and barely enough food. Next, you could put in some time in a trench in the Ardennes Forest or you can be the first one out of the gate of a landing craft at Omaha beach. Perhaps you could spend a week at places called Iwo Jima, the Chosin Reservoir, Khe San, or the Mekong Delta. Or maybe you can ride in the lead Humvee in a convoy through the Sunni Triangle or hike through the mountains of Afghanistan. You get my point. We are fortunate to live in a country where freedom of speech and expression are guaranteed rights under the First Amendment. These are rights fought for and protected by men and women who carry our flag into battle. How ironic is it for people to disrespect the anthem of the nation that gives you that right. So now that we have established our right of free speech and expression, all of those who still wish to sit or kneel during the National Anthem, please form a line at the gates of Arlington Cemetery. I'm sure the men who are resting there would understand and would be glad to assist you.

After reading the article, I was moved and impressed and asked my friend Bill Schicker who wrote it and what inspired them to do so.

It turned out the author was Air Force Staff Sergeant Mike Short, who passed it on to Ron Tierney, a very good friend of Master Sergeant Joseph Schicker, Bill Schicker's oldest son. Ron Tierney said he was inspired watching his good friend Master Sergeant Joseph Schicker rebuild his health and life while he was waiting for his medical discharge from the Army. Ron also revealed that he visited Master Sergeant Schicker in the VA Hospital while they removed 26 pieces of shrapnel from Joe's body, which resulted from his last assignment in Afghanistan.

I can fill the rest of this page up with Master Sergeant Schicker's decorations, awards and citations, but here's just a few: Two Bronze Star Medals, four Army Commendation Medals, Commendation Medal for Valor in Afghanistan, two Purple Hearts, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, three Combat Stars and more honors while serving in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

Master Sergeant Schicker was recently recognized as a Missouri Hero by Governor Nixon, the Missouri Senate and the House of Representatives, and received a standing ovation for his heroism.

The above article you just read by Staff Sergeant Short, and the heroism demonstrated by Master Sergeant Schicker, is about what our military has been doing for our American citizens since the birth of our Nation. I hope those who choose to sit and kneel read this Sunday's Post Dispatch for the other side of the story.

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Sincerely,

Frank J. Bommarito

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