This is a piece I wrote in October of 2017. If you’d like to see the video of it (which is exactly the same as the transcript), here’s the link…

<https://www.cbs19.tv/video/sports/nfl/cowboys/the-double-standard-of-jerry-jones/501-2756311>

NFL players have been silently protesting during the national anthem for the past 14 months. And whether that protest is right or wrong is not what I want to address tonight. I do want to address the comments made by Cowboys owner Jerry Jones in regards to what he expects his players to do during the anthem.

After Sunday’s game, Jones said this, “If there’s anything that is disrespectful to the flag, then we will not play. Do you understand? If we are disrespecting the flag, then we won’t play. Period.”

If there was any ambiguity to that statement, Jones went on the radio in Dallas today and made sure everyone was clear about what he meant.

Jones said, “If you don’t honor and stand for the flag in a way that a lot of our fans feel that you should, if that’s not the case, then you won’t play.”

He then added, “The implication that we’re not respecting the flag is just not going to be accepted. I would just ask anybody to look at my record.”

Here’s the deal. Jerry Jones is the owner of the Cowboys. Every player and coach on that team is his employee. And as the boss, he has the power. Whether he’s violating their First Amendment rights or treating them unfairly, that is a different conversation. Jerry Jones is setting up shop on the moral high-ground, and he can absolutely do that if he chooses. However, Jones has owned the Cowboys for 28 years and in his more than 10,000 days as Cowboys owner, the moral high-ground has not been an area he frequents.

During his time as owner, the Cowboys have had 19 different players suspended. Those players have missed a total of almost 150 games, or almost 10 seasons of action. And if you think Jones held them all to the same high moral standards, you’re wrong.

Back in Jerry’s early days with the team, Leon Lett was a force on the Cowboys’ defensive line. He also had a serious drug problem. He was suspended three times for a total of 28 games between 1996 and 1999 for using marijuana and cocaine. After his third suspension, Jones said, “I’m glad we have a definitive time we can expect him back. We’re disappointed we don’t have him now.”

Between February of 2016 and January of 2017, defensive end Randy Gregory was suspended three times for a total of 30 games. All three suspensions were for drug use or simply not bothering to show up for a drug test. What did Jones have to say about that?

“He’s our baby. He may be an ugly baby, but he’s our baby.”

In 2014, then-Panthers defensive end Greg Hardy was found guilty of assaulting an ex-girlfriend. The charges were ultimately dropped, but the NFL still suspended Hardy for 10 games. Eight months after the court case was completed, Jerry Jones signed Hardy. After pictures of Hardy’s abuse were released, Jones said, “We’ve given Greg a second chance. He’s a member of our team and someone who is grateful for the opportunity he’s been given.”

And at the top of the list, we have nose tackle Josh Brent. In 2014, Josh Brent killed another man. Let that sink in. Brent was convicted of intoxication manslaughter and spent five months in prison. What was Jerry’s reaction to that? He thought the 10-game suspension Brent got was, “a lot more than I thought it would be.”

And if you think killing a man disqualifies you from football, that’s wrong. Jones said of Brent, “He has been through some eye-opening days. We could really benefit from that as a football team.”

Do people deserve a second chance in life? Absolutely. Jerry Jones has every right to give his players a second chance. He also has every right to tell his players to stand for the national anthem. But those two things cannot coexist.

You cannot say you are going to be a good upstanding moral citizen who respects the flag…yet you have employed men who have done illegal drugs, committed violent acts against women, and have killed people.

Regardless of how you feel about the protest, here’s the question tonight: How can all of those players be given a second chance, but taking a knee in silent protest is going too far? Why is that where the line is being drawn?