

Chapter 1: Mix It Up, Mash It Up: Arrangement, Audio Editing, and the Importance of Sonic Context

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2. “Bend the Knee” by Lesley M. Rodriguez and Christian Nevarez-Camacho

In “Bend the Knee,” Writing Across Media students Lesley M. Rodriguez and Christian Nevarez-Camacho reframe recent U.S. National Anthem protests against police brutality and systemic racism as patriotic. Through juxtaposing sound clips of Donald Trump’s reactions to these protests with repositioned news coverage of these events, the composers make a case in their project for continuing conversations about free speech, race, and inequality.

Transcript

Unknown Woman [*in singsong tone*]: Fake news, fake news, fake news, fake news
[*acoustic guitar plays in background*]

[*HBO show static introduction noise*]

Donald Trump: . . . turn on television, watch for a couple of minutes, and—

[*sound of television remote click and TV static noise*]

Madison Rising [*cover of “The Star-Spangled Banner” plays in background throughout track*]: Oh, say can you see? By the dawn's early light . . .

Unknown Male TV News Anchor: Now to that protest by Colin Kaepernick, the 49ers quarterback knelt instead of standing during the national anthem at last night's game.

Donald Trump: Give me a break.

Madison Rising: What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming . . .

Unknown Female TV News Anchor: One of Colin Kaepernick’s teammates joined him in taking a knee, and a Seattle Seahawks player also didn't stand for their national anthem.

Madison Rising: Whose broad stripes and bright stars . . .

Donald Trump: What the hell are we doing?

Madison Rising: Through the perilous fight, o’er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming . . .

Donald Trump: We respect our flag. [*crowd cheers*]

[*song transitions into fast-paced, rock-and-roll version of “Star Spangled Banner”*]

Madison Rising: And the rocket’s red glare, the bombs bursting in air gave proof through the night that our flag was still there. Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave . . .

Unknown Male TV News Anchor: And on the first Sunday of the NFL season, more shows of protest. And it happened on the solemn fifteenth anniversary of September eleventh. Several Miami Dolphins players knelt on the sidelines. A player with the Kansas City Chiefs and two New England Patriots raised their fists in the air.

Donald Trump: They’re very stupid people [*background beep*].

Madison Rising: O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

[song transitions to electric guitar instrumental continuation of “Star-Spangled Banner”;
continues throughout track]

Unknown Female TV News Anchor: U.S. Women's National Soccer player Megan Rapinoe is the latest athlete to protest systemic inequality and racism by refusing to stand for the national anthem.

Donald Trump: I don't give a damn *[background beep]*. Wouldn't you love to see one of these NFL owners, when somebody disrespects our flag, to say “Get that son of a bitch off the field right now?” *[crowd cheers]* Out. He's fired. He's fired!

[music builds to crescendo and abruptly stops; TV static noise follows]

Donald Trump: As a freedom of expression, I hate to do anything that's going to stop or suppress free speech.

Unknown Man: If you side with the president, then you find it just plain disrespectful. You're really not going to be able to change your opinion on that. You're not really listening to what the other side is saying. You can disagree with it, agree with it. But these are the kinds of conversations we have to have in order for us to move forward in this country.