

Mike Rowe's Brilliant Response to the Kaepernick Nike Ad

By now, you've probably heard all about Colin Kaepernick's Nike ad, which ran as follows:

Believe in something, even if it means sacrificing everything. [#JustDoIt](#) pic.twitter.com/SRWkMIDda0

– Colin Kaepernick (@Kaepernick7) [September 3, 2018](#)

Following the ad, Nike stock plunged and conservatives had a heyday making knock-off memes, inserting the images of their favorite Democratic whipping boys, including Barack Obama, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and the infamous Anthony Weiner.



These jokes are understandable and have become a part of normal life in the charged political realm in which we live.

But sometimes someone rises above the fray in a calm, reasoned, and adult-like manner and helps us to see these political fracas for what they really are. In the case of the Kaepernick ad, that person is Mike Rowe.

According to a recent Facebook post, a fan of Rowe's noticed his silence on the issue and asked for his thoughts. In response, Rowe [wrote the following](#):

Nike's free to celebrate whomever they wish, and Kaepernick

is entitled to his opinion – kneeling, standing, or lying down. But if I was going to put someone's face on a billboard – someone who epitomized bravery and sacrifice – I might have gone another way, especially this time of year. I might have gone with this guy – Tom Burnett.

Tom's last act on earth was one of the most courageous things imaginable. And his last words to his wife, Deena, are among the most inspiring I've ever heard. Those exact words are at the top of this page, and the bottom. They were spoken seventeen years ago, under conditions I hope to never experience. I'll never forget Tom's last words. I hope you won't either.

Transcript of Tom's Last Calls to Deena

6:27 a.m.(pacific time) First cell phone call from Tom to Deena

Deena: Hello

Tom: Deena

Deena: Tom, are you O.K.?

Tom: No, I'm not. I'm on an airplane that has been hijacked.

Deena: Hijacked?

Tom: Yes, They just knifed a guy.

Deena: A passenger?

Tom: Yes.

Deena: Where are you? Are you in the air?

Tom: Yes, yes, just listen. Our airplane has been hijacked. It's United Flight 93 from Newark to San Francisco. We are in the air. The hijackers have already knifed a guy, one of them has a gun, they are telling us there is a bomb on board, please call the authorities. He hung up.

6:31 Deena calls 911

6:34 The phone rang in on call waiting, Tom's second cell phone call.

Deena: Hello

Tom: They're in the cockpit. The guy they knifed is dead.

Deena: He's dead?

Tom: Yes. I tried to help him, but I couldn't get a pulse.

Deena: Tom, they are hijacking planes all up and down the east coast. They are taking them and hitting designated targets. They've already hit both towers of the World Trade Center.

Tom: They're talking about crashing this plane. (a pause) ... It's a suicide mission...(he then tells people sitting around him)

Deena: Who are you talking to?

Tom: My seatmate. Do you know which airline is involved?

Deena: No, they don't know if they're commercial airlines or not. The newsreporters are speculating cargo planes, private planes and commercial. No one knows.

Tom: How many planes are there?

Deena: They're not sure, at least three. Maybe more.

Tom: O.K....O.K....Do you know who is involved?

Deena: No.

Tom: We're turning back toward New York. We're going back to the World Trade Center. No, wait, we're turning back the other way. We're going south.

Deena: What do you see?

Tom: Just a minute, I'm looking. I don't see anything, we're over a rural area. It's just fields. I've gotta go.

6:45 a.m. Third cell phone call from Tom to Deena

Tom: Deena

Deena: Tom, you're O.K. (I thought at this point he had just survived the Pentagon plane crash).

Tom: No, I'm not.

Deena: They just hit the Pentagon.

Tom: (tells people sitting around him "They just hit the Pentagon.")

Tom: O.K....O.K. What else can you tell me?

Deena: They think five airplanes have been hijacked. One is still on the ground. They believe all of them are commercial planes. I haven't heard them say which airline, but all of them have originated on the east coast.

Tom: Do you know who is involved?

Deena: No

Tom: What is the probability of their having a bomb on board? I don't think they have one. I think they're just telling us that for crowd control.

Deena: A plane can survive a bomb if it's in the right place.

Tom: Did you call the authorities?

Deena: Yes, they didn't know anything about your plane.

Tom: They're talking about crashing this plane into the ground. We have to do something. I'm putting a plan together.

Deena: Who's helping you?

Tom: Different people. Several people. There's a group of us. Don't worry. I'll call you back.

6:54 a.m. Fourth cell phone call to Tom to Deena

Deena: Tom?

Tom: Hi. Anything new?

Deena: No

Tom: Where are the kids?

Deena: They're fine. They're sitting at the table having breakfast. They're asking to talk to you.

Tom: Tell them I'll talk to them later.

Deena: I called your parents. They know your plane has been hijacked.

Tom: Oh...you shouldn't have worried them. How are they doing?

Deena: They're O.K.. Mary and Martha are with them.

Tom: Good.

(a long quiet pause)

Tom: We're waiting until we're over a rural area. We're going to take back the airplane.

Deena: No! Sit down, be still, be quiet, and don't draw attention to yourself! (The exact words taught to me by Delta Airlines Flight Attendant Training).

Tom: Deena! If they're going to crash this plane into the ground, we're going to have to do something!

Deena: What about the authorities?

Tom: We can't wait for the authorities. I don't know what

they could do anyway.

It's up to us. I think we can do it.

Deena: What do you want me to do?

Tom: Pray, Deena, just pray.

(after a long pause)

Deena: I love you.

Tom: Don't worry, we're going to do something...

(Transcript from the [Tom Burnett Family Foundation](#).)

Is Rowe right? In an age where victimhood reigns supreme, have we glorified a type of courage, sacrifice, and heroism that is completely superficial? Is it time we remembered those who, with true, lasting courage, stood up and sacrificed all for the people and the country they loved?

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