
Cornered Man Fights For Fair

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Anthony Mundine was backed into the ropes, cornered and under pressure as bombs came flying from everywhere over his refusal to stand for the Australian anthem before his fight with Danny Green at Adelaide Oval on Friday night.

He said he expected Green to jump him from the opening bell on Friday night but four days early he was surrounded and under fire yesterday as cameras, microphones and notebooks were thrust at him.

He already had a bruise under a left eye from a sparring session but he fought back hard over the controversy his remarks on Sunday have created.

He said he did not want to be portrayed as a disrespectful villain after his decision not to stand for the anthem. He said it simply did not represent indigenous Australians like him.

Interviewed by a media posse inside a boxing ring erected in Adelaide's Rundle Mall for a public training session, Mundine said: "Look I just want to explain to the people of Australia I'm all about uniting people together, uniting our country together but do your research on the anthem - (it says) we're young and free. We're not young and a lot of us ain't free. Advance Australia Fair is about white 'fair' - not as in a fair go. That was the theme song for a White Australia policy when Aboriginal people weren't even considered citizens. It's not just." I asked him how he could take a seven-figure sum from the South Australian Government to fight in Adelaide while at the same time protesting against the anthem and Australian flag.

He hit back.

"I'm trying to better Australia," he said.

"I'm not trying to disrespect the Government. I'm trying to educate people. I think the anthem is wrong and I'm asking the Government to change it for the betterment of all Australia, especially the First Nations people.

"I woke up this morning to all these messages on my phone over my comments. I just really wanted to focus on the fight but here I am fronting the media talking about something that's engraved on my heart.

"The way I'm portrayed, that ain't me. I'm the coolest cat you'll ever meet. I'm down to earth. I give everybody time. I'm a humble man but I stick up for what I believe in and what's in my heart, and what I know to be true." Green said he was not

distracted or angered by Mundine's comments and respected his right to form his own opinion.

"I'll be standing and singing the anthem," Green said.

"If he wants to sit down, that's up to him." "I don't have enough of an emotional investment in Anthony Mundine to be affected by anything he says. Choc's an indigenous man and if he feels so passionately and strongly about the issue then that's his prerogative, that's his choice."