

Antisemitic Remarks and Refusal to Recant Costs Nets' Irving 5-Game Suspension

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Only hours after their star guard Kyrie Irving refused to issue an apology sought by NBA Commissioner Adam Silver, the Brooklyn Nets suspended Irvin without pay for recent anti-Semitic remarks and his failure to “unequivocally say he has no anti-Semitic beliefs,” several news outlets have reported.

Irving recently posted a link on Twitter in support of a film Net's owner Joe Tsai said was “based on a book full of anti-Semitic disinformation.” The link was to the film “Hebrews to Negroes: Wake Up Black America,” which Amazon says “uncovers the true identity of the children of Israel by proving the true ethnicity of Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, the sons of Ham, Shem and Japheth.”

The Nets issued a statement late Thursday that Irving, who is averaging 26.9 points and 5.1 assists for Brooklyn this season, is “currently unfit to be associated with the Brooklyn Nets.”

“We were dismayed today, when given an opportunity in a media session, that Kyrie refused to unequivocally say he has no anti-Semitic beliefs, nor acknowledge specific hateful material in the film. This was not the first time he had the opportunity—but failed—to clarify,” the Nets said in a statement.

“Such failure to disavow anti-Semitism when given a clear opportunity to do so is deeply disturbing, is against the values of our organization, and constitutes conduct detrimental to the team. Accordingly, we are of the view that

he is currently unfit to be associated with the Brooklyn Nets.”

Consequently, Irving did finally apologize later in an Instagram post for “not explaining the specific beliefs he agreed and disagreed with when he made the post, the Associated Press reported. But Irving still believes his labeling of being anti-Semitic was unwarranted.

“To all Jewish families and communities that are hurt and affected from my post. I am deeply sorry to have caused you pain, and I apologize. I initially reacted out of emotion to being unjustly labeled anti-Semitic, instead of focusing on the healing process of my Jewish brothers and sisters that were hurt from the hateful remarks made in the documentary.”

The Associated Press reported that Irving’s reluctance to apologize “came hours before the FBI said it had received credible information about a ‘broad threat’ to synagogues in New Jersey, Irving’s home state.”

CNN News reported that “an online posting with anti-Semitic comments in a forum that is frequented by extremists is what prompted the FBI’s alert. While no specific target, timing or plan was mentioned, the nature of the post created enough concern on the part of the FBI that the agency decided to put a general warning out of an abundance of caution.”

ABC’s “Good Morning America” recently reported that more than 2,700 anti-Semitic incidents took place in the U.S. in 2021, a steady rise from the 751 that were reported in 2013.

The Nets organization had made several attempts over the past few days to reason with Irving about the perils and harm of his words and actions. A post-practice interview Thursday, however, revealed no change in Irving’s attitude.

He told the AP that he should not have posted a link to the movie.

"I'm not the one who made the documentary," Irving said. The AP said he was asked later if he had anti-Semitic beliefs, and he didn't say no.

"I cannot be anti-Semitic if I know where I come from," Irvin told the AP. {eoa}

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