**We Can All Learn From Travis Hunter**

**The Colorado player sets a fine example of forgiveness.**

By

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Colorado cornerback Travis Hunter runs against Texas Christian University during an NCAA college football game in Fort Worth, Texas, Sept. 2. Photo: LM Otero/Associated Press

Few athletes have the talent and dedication to play Division I college football. Fewer make the first team, and fewer still are bona fide stars. Being all that and a two-way player—someone who plays offense and defense—at that level is a rarity. But that isn’t what impresses me most about Travis Hunter.

The sensational wide receiver and cornerback for the Colorado Buffaloes, a five-star recruit out of high school, was considered a Heisman Trophy contender before the matchup in Boulder with the Colorado State Rams. While running a route in that game, Mr. Hunter was injured by Rams defensive back Henry Blackburn.

Mr. Blackburn drew a penalty for the hit, and Mr. Hunter went to the hospital with a lacerated liver. The blow moved Mr. Hunter to the sideline, where he remains, and halted the meteoric momentum of the Buffaloes and their first-year coach, Deion Sanders.

I thought of Mr. Hunter recently, when Micah 6:8—“Do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God”—was discussed in a homily at Mass. It occurred to me how often I foul up these simple instructions. I demand justice from others when I’ve been wronged but expect mercy for my many shortcomings.

While recuperating, Mr. Hunter expressed no bitterness over the hit, acknowledging that injuries are a part of the game. He accepted the basic fairness of his misfortune, saying of Mr. Blackburn: “He did what he was supposed to do. It’s football.” This is rare equanimity from a young man. It’s doing justice when it is hardest: on your own nickel.

Nor did he stop there. Perhaps to take pressure off Mr. Blackburn, who had received death threats over the hit, Mr. Hunter did something radical. He went bowling with Mr. Blackburn. They rolled some frames, put the incident behind them and moved forward. The implication was that others should, too. This is loving mercy.

Mr. Hunter accepted the harsh justice of a brutal injury and concerned himself primarily with showing mercy toward another, Mr. Blackburn. This athlete who runs one of college football’s fastest post patterns appears to be closing in on personal virtue with no less speed. I can learn from this gentleman.

Mr. Hunter’s dual-threat athleticism is something to behold. His dual-threat character—doing justice and loving mercy—is something to emulate. He won’t always run so fast, but something tells me that when he walks, he’ll do so humbly, and not unaccompanied.

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