

# '8:46' Is Dave Chappelle's Unadulterated and Emotional Stream of Consciousness On Current Events

By **Murjani Rawls** - Jun 12, 2020



Photo Credit: Netflix

Within the many antidotes and tie-ins that Dave Chappelle dropped inside his almost 30-minute surprise special, there was one that got me. Chappelle was speaking about the late Trayvon Martin and with mentioning George Zimmerman, he says that he hates the 'idea of him.' Racism is a pervasive concept that has been passed on like a generational bedtime story. It's interwoven within the strands of DNA that make up America. Given the state of COVID-19, we are in a place where we can't seek an escape from it. Chappelle doesn't sugar coat things either. Rather than retreat to the virtues of laughter, '8:46' shines a light on racial tensions and the dire circumstances on what it is to be a Black person in America.

The death of George Floyd has seemed to spark something. This isn't the first time that we've witnessed the death of a Black person due to police brutality. Especially, given the instant nature of social media. Everything, for good and bad, has an audience. Chappelle even speaks to this in talking about the case of [John Crawford III](#). Within the same timeframe, the death of Michael Brown happened. Tragedies like this happen on such a frequent basis that they almost silence each other which is a shame. Just look at the current case of [Breonna Taylor](#) where much of the attention seems to be on the name of George Floyd.

Chappelle has vitriol for pundits such as Candace Owens and Fox News anchor Laura Ingraham. Specifically, the hypocrisy of the NRA when it comes to the death of Philando Castile. Owens has recently come out against making George Floyd a hero because of his criminal record, the comedian is quick to remind that the circumstances around his death made him that way. CNN anchor Don Lemon [urged celebrity voices](#) to speak out during the ongoing protests. What do they have to say that wasn't being shown to us? Why are we so reliant on looking towards someone to speak and ignore others because of status? This is where '8:46' succeeds because Chappelle seeks to explain the language of the protests and hurt in the best way possible. Equating the overall manhunt for [Christopher Dorner](#) to thousands who have taken the streets in the names of those like Eric Garner and George Floyd. Chappelle becomes a totem rather than an overbearing spokesperson.

Ingraham is famous for her "shut up and dribble" quote towards LeBron James. Chappelle attacks this notion in two ways; speaking to James' constantly exceeding expectations throughout his life. Also, he shows the juxtaposition Kobe Bryant's last game against the unfortunate [tragedy](#) in Dallas where five officers were killed and nine injured during a Black Lives Matter rally. He describes July 7th, 2016 as feeling like "the end of the world," but the euphoria of Bryant going for 60 points brought the world back from disaster. Sports can be both an escape and a platform to spotlight injustices. However, just like celebrities, these athletes are real people that undergo real issues.

Throughout his career, Chappelle has always interwoven social commentary into his standup routines. There was something different about his newest special. Jokes were few and far between. A fit of visceral anger permeated throughout the comedian after the initial icebreaking session

about how all these tragedies are indirectly tied to him, the utterance of 8 minutes and 46 seconds sturred me that an officer had his knee of the neck of George Floyd, that happened to be Chappelle's birth time.

ryteller is how they can tie personal and external situations all in one. He starts the special speaking about his g it back to that center. Racism is both an ancient and present problem. As a Black person, you are you see or a situation you encounter also triggers PTSD. It's almost like racism is an ancestral experience that's generation. Black people don't know any other way in America. Now, along with the video, Chappelle's birth

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time will forever be tainted by the blood of tragedy. He also speaks about Kobe Bryant's death and not attending the Grammys because of Kobe's jersey numbers combining

"This is not funny at all," Chappelle said. Comedy often appears as a blanket for us to laugh out our fears and anxieties. There were times during the special where Chappelle takes a brief pause to collect himself. He tries to cox a few laughs to lessen the tension. However, the course correction takes him back to the overall seriousness of the moment.

In times of civil unrest and strife, we often look to the voices of those who we consider elevated status. Celebrity has taken on another meaning in the past few weeks – for better or worse. It's all about trust. Chappelle is taking that trust and placing that and the microphone squarely at the feet of those marching in the streets and actively fighting for change. There's a reason why his special went to outlets like YouTube and Instagram Live. You use your voice to amplify others – not to shout over them. '8:46' is a snapshot of Chappelle in his element rather than veering off into mean spirited territory with parts of his previous stand-up specials on Netflix. Those of which he has been [aptly criticized for](#).

"I don't mean to get heavy, but we gotta say something." This wasn't a comedy special in the traditional sense at all. It's a teachable moment. A stern talking to. It's Chappelle with a stool, a cigarette, and justifiable anger with a thirst to speak it into existence. '8:46' is a history lesson broken down in digestible bites to a world that is only beginning to understand the ongoing plights of Black people.

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