

Hasan Minhaj

Using Humour as a Weapon

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Historically, humour has been a tool society has used for centuries as a weapon against injustice. Lots of comedy related media is surrounded around politics, especially when Trump was elected in 2016. With that being said, Hasan Minhaj uses his platform of comedy with a more unique approach. Not only does he target American politics, but he has gone after everyone. In fact he hosted the White House Correspondent's Dinner, in 2016 when Trump was elected.

Minhaj spent a couple years working as the senior correspondent for the Daily Show with Trevor Noah. Soon after he landed his own show, the Patriot Act, which ran from 2018 to 2020 on Netflix until they cancelled him.

Currently Minhaj has returned to his original roots of storytelling, in taking the road to tour stand-up, with his one-man show "The King's Jester." I personally watched the show on October 8th, and Minhaj was everything and so much more than I expected. He gave the audience a quick history lesson on the story behind what the U.S. Patriot Act actually means

and how being an Indian muslim American could have been a large determinant in whether or not he'd be able to pursue the career and lifestyle he has now. According to him, he was able to succeed because "he just got really lucky."

At the show, Minhaj gives backstory to how humour was always his go-to. He discovered its strength when he used it against his school bully, growing up. Over the years, even after getting his political science degree from UC Davis, it's been a tool for him to accomplish so much and actually create change. The main reason why the Patriot Act got cancelled was because he expanded the targets of his humour to international borders, and Netflix felt his actions were too controversial to keep in the franchise.

Minhaj's fearlessness in calling out those who contribute to a large part of our global society's injustices and challenges is not easy. When we entered the auditorium to watch his show last week, he had everyone lock away their phones in little pouches with magnetic locks that only his staff could remove at the end of the show. He even

talked about his choice in holding the audience back from getting out their phones, recording and taking pictures, explaining that with stand-up and comedy there is a level of trust he needs in order to say the things that are more truthful, but not necessarily enjoyable to hear. Humour in many ways makes the more difficult topics to see and process, more light and positive.

Although Minhaj no longer has a huge platform such as Netflix, backing his efforts up, the King's Jester will continue touring all over the country throughout this and the following year. Don't forget to snatch your own tickets, because it was by far one of my favorite stand-up shows I've ever seen, and there's no way you will get a recorded or edited version of everything he has to say!

