

Netflix Releases Trailer For Roger Guenveur Smith's Rodney King

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Rodney King is Roger Guenveur Smith's poetic one-man show about King's role in America's complicated racial politics. Rodney King became famous when he was videotaped being beat by the LAPD in 1991. The four officers who were charged with assaulting King and using excessive force were acquitted and this legal judgment was a catalyst for The Los Angeles Riots. Smith was performing *Rodney King* for a few years before Spike Lee shot an August 2016 performance to make into a film. The actor and director have worked together many times in the past on several movies including Lee's *Chiraq*. Smith described the film to the Seattle newspaper *The Stranger* and said this:

"I'm trying to take my audience on a journey of discovery, the same one that I've been on since I opened up my laptop on Father's Day 2012 and saw that Rodney King had drowned in the bottom of his swimming pool. I was moved. I wanted to know why I was moved, and why, by extension, my potential audience would be moved."

Rodney King is not the first time Smith has portrayed a controversial Black figure. He won an Obie Award for *A Huey P. Newton Story*, his 1996 one-man theater piece about the late Black Panther Party leader. Lee also adapted the Newton work into a film which was released in 2001. *Rodney King* will premiere on Netflix April 28th.