

Black Tea Episode 6 – English Transcript

Kardinal Offishall: [00:00:00] You have somebody like Drake, who I'm sure everybody thinks, Oh, you know, yeah. He must be number one across all these stations. These stations don't even play Drake like that. They still stick him in Can-con so that, you know what I mean? He can service their other needs to say, yeah, you know what I'm saying?

Like we did play some black artists. Look, we have Drake and weeknd. And even though these are some of the biggest artists in the world, they're still doing better in other territories than they are in their own home territory.

Dalton: [00:00:30] So welcome back to another episode of the infamous, or should I say world famous black tea podcast, hosted by yours, truly Dalton Higgins and the lovely and talented Melayna Williams. How's it going Mel?

Melayna: [00:00:43] Great. I'm really excited about this interview.

Dalton: [00:00:46] Oh, this is going to be lit fire now, as you know, Mel, I like to say that it's a hip hop world and you all are just living in it.

And uh, so we are especially geeked to have a hip hop pioneer. Join us on today's show. We have the, one of the only Mr. Kardinal Offishall. Noise. Make some noise.

Kardinal Offishall: [00:01:06] Where's the air horn?

Hold on a second. I was going to say we can't, we can't have an interview with Higgy and it's not the real ting

air horn that isn't working sound somethings in there. Oh, well, The horn didn't wake up yet

Dalton: [00:01:27] now, now here's it. Before we get into it, um, let me tell you a little bit about Kardinal. Uh, I mean, he's a Canadian music icon who really needs no introduction, but. I'm going to provide one anyways. Now Kardinal is a man of many talents. He's a Canadian rapper record producer DJ, and he's a record executive currently working as a senior director of urban ANR and artist relations for Universal Music Canada.

Now, Kardinal is often credited as being Canada's hip hop ambassador as, he was waving the Canadian flag around the world, you know, while on tour way before it became cool, sexy and trendy to do so. In fact, before the city we're based in Toronto, became known as the sixth, Toronto was always referred to as the T dot.

And it's a term that was coined by Toronto rapper K force, but then popularized by Kardinal. Now I like. Personally call Kardinal, yardinal like yardinal now, because he is, very proud of his Jamaican heritage, right? And he's one of those artists that is, you know, he's kind of best known for his distinctive reggae and dance hall influence style of hip hop.

And Kardinal now has won multiple Juno awards and MMVA's, so-can awards. And he was the first Canadian hip hop artist to reach the billboard hot 100 with his single dangerous

featuring Akon which reached number five on the single chart. Kardinal has also worked with and been featured on records with an absolute dream list of artists, including Lady Gaga.

Yeah, that Lady Gaga, Pharrell Williams, Rihanna T-Pain Vybz Kartel. It goes on and on and on. Kardinal also appears on what is in my personal opinion. One of the best songs on R and B superstar, Daniel Caesar's last album. The track is called Cyanide. So what's happening Kardinal.

Kardinal Offishall: [00:03:02] Man, I am, I am, I am here being, being reminded of some of these journeys every time, every time I hear, um, some of those names I'm instantly just.

Taken back to the auspicious, uh, scenarios that got me into those, into those rules and have those things come to life. But I'm good, man. You know, we're here at 2020ing it.

Melayna: [00:03:28] Yeah. So Kardi i'm so excited to have you here. Um, so as Dalton went over just now, you know, you're a hugely successful artist. You've worked with so many other artists.

Um, and you really display, I feel like you pioneered the global power of Canadian artists and even, you know, hip hop rapper can have building international bridges, you know, US globally. And a lot of the time when Canadians reach a level of success or gain the level of visibility you've had for such a long time, they leave.

So I'm just sort of wondering why you've chosen to stay.

Kardinal Offishall: [00:04:05] I mean for me, to be honest for me in particular, here's the truth. I didn't stay early out when I got my first record deal. And this is when record deals were, uh, at least for, for people. My age were really tun up. Um, they actually provided a stipend so that I could pay mortgage in America.

So I actually split my time between, Toronto and Brooklyn for like two years when I got my first deal. Um, I don't think it's, I don't think it's a widely known thing and it's not that important, but I never fully left here because for me, my inspiration for the music, like if you. Um, I'm sure we're skipping ahead.

But if you go to, you know, Old Time Killing, that was strictly, strictly, strictly inspired by Toronto energy.

Clip of Kardinal Song

So for me. If I was to go and live, permanently somewhere else to me, I was like, well, what is my music going to sound like? It's going to sound like every other American and you have to understand like, at the time, it's, it's very difficult to understand because it's like, there's a generation of people that grew up with hip hop, always being on TV, always being in commercials, always having access on the radio or even more so now literally on demand, you know, through subscription-based access and so forth.

Like we came up at a time where there was none of that, you know what I'm saying? Like there's literally nothing. So. Our agenda was, was very different. You know what I mean?

Like I grew up, you know, listening to the great MC Lyte, listening to, you know, NWA Ice-T listening to everybody under the sun and everybody

was able to, we knew where everybody was from because in some song or another, they mentioned where they're from. You know what I'm saying? One of my favorite songs from MC Lyte when I was a youth was kicked this one for Brooklyn and it's like, we used to go and like recite all those lyrics around the neighborhood, but.

You know, we didn't have anything directly that spoke to Toronto. You know what I'm saying? So that is for me, why I stayed because I wanted to stay authentic, looking back, you know, it's interesting. Cause I remember those labels. They're like, yeah. You know, we want to, and no disrespect because I think some of these artists are dope, but you know, they're like, yeah, why don't you do a song with Ashanti?

Or why don't you do this? Or, you know, get a song produced by X, Y, and Z. And I was just like, You know, no disrespect, but that's not who I am. As an artist, you know what I mean? And it's like, I wanted to make sure that I could stay as authentic and true to my culture and my music as possible. So that's, that's, that's why I stayed personally.

Dalton: [00:07:08] Now, Kardinal. Now I want to talk a bit about, um, actually your mother. All right. And

Kardinal Offishall: [00:07:13] hold on a second, you know, in most places, a man will get punch you can't just say you want to talk about my mother, bro. You know what I'm saying?

Dalton: [00:07:27] You know what I never thought about that actually.

Exactly. Oh, gosh. Yeah. Yikes.

Yeah, but, but anyways, yeah, we were hoping people.

Okay. So listen. So, so Kardinal now let's I want to talk about your family, your mother in particular. Now I'm thinking about Donda, you know, the company that, uh, Kanye West named after his mother, Donda West and which shares the same name of his next studio album, right.

People are thinking, you know, Kanye West he's out there in the news and his monitor paying Homage to his mother constantly. Um, you're you're I want to talk about your mother's influence on you because people in community in Toronto, um, that kind of know you, or know of you, you know, when they look at your social media feed, And they see these activist streaks, you know, like you've always been quite vocal when it comes to advocating for different causes, including, you know, those of your own black community.

Um, so from what I understand, this is like in your bloodline, this is your lineage. Can you, can you tell us a little bit about your mom's work in the community?

Kardinal Offishall: [00:08:25] The same way that that kids grow up now and hip hop is just a part of their DNA and they don't necessarily know why. Um, it's just something they can remember as, as, as far back as, you know what I mean, coming into the world and to them, it's, it's very, very, very normal and accessible.

That is kind of how my community involvement. Felt and feels to me, um, when I was, you know, when I was younger, you know, people, you, we often hear about these latchkey kids and, you know, Caribbean parents working two jobs and so forth to be able to support and properly provide for their kids. The times when I was young, when my mom

wasn't there in the evenings. It's because she had community meetings, things and meetings. And I used to, I actually, when I was really young, as you can imagine, any small child would, I used to hate when my mom was like, yo, I have a meeting and I got to go to, because it meant that whatever random babysitter would be there and we'd have to nyam some pizza for dinner or whatever it is, you know what I mean?

My mom, from the time that I was young dedicated a lot of her life. Um, to the community and also to education in particular, because she worked for the board of ed, uh, the Toronto board of education as did, um, Long story short when my mom came to Canada because she was not 18 yet she had to be adopted by her older sister.

So auntie is kind of like my grandmother legally by Canadian terms, but yeah. Um, the two of them, um, my mom and her older sister, both were for the board of education and we have other educators within the family. I have, um, a believe it or not a black professor uncle that I was a professor at the, um, university of Prince Edward Island.

Imagine that who actually is a, a published author with all that, you know, all that, to say that. Yeah, growing up, I just knew community involvement and, and worrying about your community and so forth. That was just what, you know, what we did anyway, at least what my mom did. So, you know, for me at a very early age, you know, now they call it, well, that word, the word is almost played out, but now they call it woke.

You know what I'm saying? But I think my family was, uh, was woke. For decades now. So growing up in that, you know, besides my mom who was so involved in everything, including the early stages of me actually becoming a professional, because to be honest, she was the one that encouraged me to write my first rhymes.

You know what I'm saying? When I was younger. And, um, I think she kind of looked at it as a educational activity, to be honest. Cause she's like, well, you're always at the centre, you guys are always making it, these dance routines, you're rapping other people's lyrics doing that. She was like, yo, you should, you know what I mean?

Really try and write your own verses and so forth. So she was actually the one that got me into this, but yeah. Yeah. I mean, it's definitely started with my mom who was a, when by the time I got to grade seven. Yeah. She was the black heritage teacher back when we still had black heritage classes. Uh, within the Toronto district school board.

Um, but yeah, it started with my mom and she used to teach all the kids in, you know, in the neighborhood that she taught in, like even on Saturdays. So a lot of people do know my mom from even outside of the traditional school board. Um, but yeah, you know, that's probably what led me to. Um, you know, be a good mentee to people like, uh, motion, you know, people like John Bronski, people like master T um, you know, or an Isaacs and, and, you know, several other, uh, black people that mentored me along the way.

So mom's definitely laid the foundation. And I think it was because of my teachings that at home and the way that my mom raised me. That I was able to, uh, you know, soak up a lot of the gems that my other mentors were able to give me along the way. And it really helped my career.

Dalton: [00:12:30] Yeah. And she was also, you know, in Toronto, like we had a guest that Sasha Exeter talk about, uh, you know, she'd attended Howard university, which is a historically black college and university.

My wife,

Kardinal Offishall: [00:12:42] my wife graduated from there. Don't get me started on these HQ people, but sorry, continue.

Dalton: [00:12:48] okay. Your wife is a Howard university grad as well. Interesting. But even locally, you know, we don't have historically black colleges, universities in Canada, but even your mother, um, she was, uh, one of the people working behind getting the Afro-centric alternative school up and running in Toronto as well.

Kardinal Offishall: [00:13:04] Yeah. Yes. Her, uh, her and miss, uh, miss Angela are credited with being the, the two to really go out there and Malcolm and Martin, the whole situation, you know? Yeah. I mean, listen, my mom right now, she should be retired. She should be. Chilling. My mom is, is, you know, on the phone to this day, still fighting the fight digitally with these boards education.

You know what I'm saying? Like, my mom is, my mom is on it, man. Like, she's not, she's not, she's not interested in putting down the megaphone anytime soon. So she's, you know, she's still on it, even though yeah. They, they were able to successfully. Um, create the Afrocentric school, which by the way, I don't know why it doesn't have an actual name and we just call it the Afrocentric school, but that's neither here nor there, but yeah, she's still out there thugging it, man.

She's still out there. Um, thugging it for the, for the kids. She also actually won the, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee award for her. Um, Her, uh, antiviolence work and, and, and anti gun violence work within the community as well. So, yeah, mom's, mom's been putting it down, man. She's yeah, she's, uh, she's a superstar, um, in the social work way to say way, I guess I am on the music side yo

Melayna: [00:14:16] uh, since 2013, you've been with universal and I'm really interested in, you know, you working on both sides and that decision to do so. Um, so as a music executive, like how do you feel that that is going to impact your legacy and sort of your journey working. For a label. Cause it's just so atypical.

Kardinal Offishall: [00:14:37] I didn't want to work quote unquote, on the other side, initially, if we're, if we're being totally honest.

Um, I used to be managed by the legendary by storm, which is Mark Pitts and Wayne Barrel. And, um, for those unfamiliar, uh, that was a, the notorious B.I.G'S first manager. Um, On the management side, they've managed everybody from NAS to J Cole, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. So I was, uh, blessed enough to be under their tutelage for some years.

And during that time, you know, I remember the opportunity. Came about, uh, through the then president, Randy Lennox. And, um, I was, I was a skeptic, to be honest, you know what I'm saying? Like, you know, as, as Dalton was showing you, like, I was raised by my mom to where it's like, we, we fought the system, we didn't really join the system.

So I was like, well, why would I want to do that? You know what I'm saying? But to be honest, uh, Those guys, you know, the Storm family. They're like, listen, basically. They're like, there is no reason why you shouldn't diversify. You know what I'm saying? And not just be a one trick pony. Not that I was, but.

You know, they're like, listen, the amount of things that you will learn will help you better guide your decisions as a businessman period. So, you know, there's no, there's no reason why you shouldn't go and see what's happening on the other side of the iron curtain. And it was between them and, and Stephen Marley that that really pushed me.

To the other side. Um, I had a studio session with, with, um, with Steven at his crib and, uh, you know, I was telling him about it and how I was conflicted. Raga said, yo, to be honest, in order to change the system, we need more people like you inside the system. You understand what I'm saying? The system can change from, from, from outside and work within,

you gotta be able to figure out ways to penetrate so that you can make things better. For people like us, you know what I mean? People within the community and so forth. So it was really between, you know, between the business, the angle of it, um, from, storm. And then also, you know, a combination, I guess, um, from, from Steve and Marty, those two things were the real catalyst that really, I guess, changed the way that I was looking at it.

And sometimes you can, you know, sometimes as we all have our eyes on the prize, but. Uh, it looks different depending on what lens you have, you know?

Melayna: [00:17:05] Right. So how, like what, how did, how have you found it, like, in terms of your influence on other artists and, you know, being able to push for us, push for people like you.

Kardinal Offishall: [00:17:17] I've come to understand it's a very complex web and you know how sometimes we can stand up and, and we can see a spider weave this complex layer of different things. Some people only see it and they're like, yeah, spiders, they catch flies while other people are able to. To really analyze what's going on and, and understand what's really, you know, what's actually going down and the reason for it and there's there's there's levels.

Um, the first few years I'll be honest. I felt like I was there wasting time, just catching an extra cheque. And I mean, like, I don't feel like I really had, um, the effect that I would've wanted to, because all the ideas that I had were either shot down or I kind of got a Pat on my shoulder to say that sounds nice.

Yeah. We'll look into that. Um, and I, and I don't, if there was any real movement, but I think there were some. There was a lot of growth that happened in my life. I was able to kind of have me understand more what the function of the current day Canadian label is all about and that's important to understand are all labels are not created equal.

All of them are not the same. And even within this country, you know, the, the, the, the big three as they call them Sony Warner and universal, even those three do things differently. So, you know, it's important to understand. The culture of the record labels, um, in order to make the difference. Cause the thing is, if you don't even understand how they work, well, then how can you one actually participate?

You know what I'm saying? If you don't even understand how the business works and then, you know, once you understand how the business works and why the business works, it's only, then that you can actually. You know, start to attack it and use your influence, um, to do some amazing things. So, I mean, in terms of artists, I feel proud because as Dalton can attest, I don't think I can count more than five of major black artists that have had any significant.

Um, You know, uh, I don't think, I don't think I can count more than five. Maybe that have pushed the needle globally that have signed a deal here and off and off top. And this is pre my time in there. So, I mean, before I was, before I was there, or even if you want to call it pre Jazz Cartier, we had who assigned here, uh, Maestro, um,

Dalton: [00:19:51] Yeah, this, this long pause is telling.

So

it's like, it's like who was signed to a Canadian Canadian, deal it's like five minute pause

Kardinal Offishall: [00:20:03] Rascalz, Rascalz were actually Rascalz were

Dalton: [00:20:06] at BNG.

Kardinal Offishall: [00:20:06] Um, by the time I was able to, I got in there and was able to understand what was really moving, which honestly was if we're being completely honest, probably the last. Three four years, max.

Uh, I feel very blessed because the type of deals that I'm involved in are competitive deals, meaning that, uh, if you went to America, it's pretty much the same, the same deal that you would be able to be offered in terms of monetary resources. Yeah. In terms of a lot of different things. And I think that's very important.

So it's like, Not just culturally. Now, are we starting to see a shift? And, you know, I would be able to point to the most recent one being Emmanuelle who, you know, had zero following is from London, Ontario. He is an Ethiopian Canadian artists from London. Ontario had zero following, zero music out and so forth.

And within a few months, he's closing in on 10 million streams, which for any act Canadian or American being brand new is quite a feat. So, I mean, In the, in the small amount of time that I've been there, I've been able to, uh, in terms of the way that we do business in terms of the ways that the way that we see business and the type of people that we do business with, I've been able to make a real, um, a real change.

Yeah. There's a lot of other things that are that way be revealed soon, but I feel dope about being able to change infrastructure. Cause that's the only way that things are going to be able to change for future generations. It's not about just the one artist it's about changing infrastructure.

Dalton: [00:21:37] In the broader scheme, Kardinal, I mean, you know, in society, like we're obviously having this woke moment, you know, and, um,

it seems that everyone in their third cousin is, is an, an activist now. Um, so, so here's the thing that you're a rapper, you know, and R and B singer reggae artist, or you, or you do afrobeats, you know, in, in Canada. And you're trying to navigate the Canadian music industry. It's it's, it's, it's obviously still very complicated, awkward and scary.

Um, and why say this is, um, yeah, no, it's, it's, it's, it's just awkward as hell. I mean, I had to do an interview recently about the state of black or urban radio in Canada recently. And I'm big on facts because, you know, as far as hard data and the reality of the situation is that the state of black or urban radio in Canada is far worse than wasn't the nineties.

Um, so when, you know, when, so there's a time we get, you know, FLOW 93.5 In the nineties, uh, when it was black owned rather. And, um, at the time. You know, when it came to be, there was a fleet of urban stations popping up around the country. And we had that in combination with his thriving campus community radio scene.

So there was a lot of radio going on for about an eight year period. Now, much of that is, is gone. Um, so, so without, um, radio support, um, and you know, in Canada, like you referenced some great acts that you're working with, Emmanuel who has some great music out. You know, it's, it's, it's, it's really tough to make it here, like commercially, you know, because you kind of need sometimes that radio support.

I'm just talking about radio for this instance now. So what is, what are you, what do you tell like Canadian, you know, rappers, R and B singers on ways to make it in Canada, like commercially, meaning not feeling the need to want to get the hell out of Dodge. Like Mel

was asking you, you know, like how do you make it here in Canada and not have this feeling like, okay, Jazz Cartier he's in LA and everybody ultimately leaves or tries to leave.

How do we convince them to stay?

Kardinal Offishall: [00:23:22] I do not. Um, I do not, there is not a way to have a sustainable career yet where you can rely simply on a domestic infrastructure. It just doesn't exist. Anybody. The, the, the, one of the greatest things was them getting rid of geo-fencing, um, which was remember back in the day on your phone or your computer, you'd go to login to.

You know, to see somebody's video and it would say video is not available in your territory. Um, yeah. You know, they, they've done away with, with a lot of that. So right now what's great is that you put a song out and you're putting in and out to the globe. So. Unfortunately, but to our advantage, we circumvent the entire Canadian industry.

There isn't any, uh, you know, support for black music, uh, within the radio infrastructure here. And you know, it is. Glaringly obvious. And everybody knows that. So, you know, it's funny. I was on a, I was on a call with some successful managers from here that, that managed some global artists and, you know, just, yeah, respect for the privacy.

I won't mention the artists or them, but I was like, yo, so. You know, artists X, I said, how much radio play do they, you know, do they get here Canada? They're like, what's that? Radio play in Canada? You know what I mean? Like, you know, any, anybody that's doing anything of any significance, we're not getting any play here.

So, you know, that goes, uh, here's a perfect example from a couple of years back. Um, when Melanie Fiona won her, her Grammy, and then, you know, as we usually do here in Canada, we were like, Oh, *bleep* I guess we should, uh, we should recognize her. So I remember they gave her a Canadian, uh, walk of fame or whatever.

And, you know, I remember her just shaking her head, being like, yo Kardi. They don't even play my music in Canada at all. And I'm sure most of these people don't even know who I am. It's only because I won a Grammy and it's that what I'm saying? And. That's been our reality. You know, I spoke a bit about this on, um, on that, uh, the CBC podcast, you know, where I said, you know, dangerous was a, was a massive international hit before Canada recognized it.

You understand what I'm saying? And that's just, been even though that was 10 years ago or 11 years ago, or what have you, it's still the same now, you know what I mean? To where it's like, We all know the controversy surrounding him. But prior to the controversy, you look at somebody like a Tory Lanez who was doing extremely well outside of the country, you know, before we even acknowledged that he was, that he was doing well on, on radio or, or any of our other platforms here.

So, I mean, it's kind of always been the way and yeah, I mean, hopefully in 2021, listen, I know that right now, there are some independent audits that are going on and they're pulling together like. Like Dalton was talking about hard data because now that you know, everybody is woke and layers are being pulled back.

Now, these guys are being held accountable publicly. We'll see what happens in, in 2021. When these guys have to kind of, you know, face up to it, you know, you understand what I'm saying? Like. You have somebody like Drake, who I'm sure everybody thinks, Oh, you know, yeah. He must be number one across all these stations.

These stations don't even play Drake like that. They still stick him in con, in Can-con so that, you know what I mean? He can service their other needs. Yeah. You know what I'm saying? Like we did play some black artists. Look, we have Drake and Weeknd, but in, you know, if you dig deep and these are, these are not opinions by the way.

If you dig deep and understand how radio works, you'll understand that even though these are some of the biggest artists in the world, they're still doing better in other territories than they are in their own home territory.

Melayna: [00:27:07] That's pretty shameful.

Kardinal Offishall: [00:27:10] It is. But we've been walking around with shame for years.

Dalton: [00:27:13] So, so Kardinal, I wanted to talk to you about your, the relationship with the comedian, Dave Chappelle. I mean, we obviously all know Chappelle he's known best known for his, uh, satirical comedy sketch series of Chappelle show and doing standup and, um, for those people out there that, on your social media feed and they know, you know, they're there, they watching your career, they see that, you know, you've performed at his events.

You've DJ'd his events. You've. Hosted party for parties for him in here in Toronto, the Toronto international film festival. Um, so, okay. Can you talk about that relationship? Because Dave Chappelle is arguably, I mean, last year he won that prestigious Mark Twain prize. I think you were at the ceremony.

Can you just talk a little bit about, give us some, some nuggets, some anecdote about Dave Chappelle, cause he is one interesting ass f'er.

Kardinal Offishall: [00:27:57] Boy Dave is, um, Dave is like being friends with Dave is like finding a unicorn actual real life unicorn. There's literally nobody that I know that is, that is like him. And what's interesting is that, um, he has never directly.

Addressed, uh, you know, him walking away from 'em from the Chappelle show, he has done like everything around that to make me understand, you know, what happened because of that Dave's mentality is ah. Yeah, man, like, you know, a man like Dave, everything that he does, anything that you see him doing, he's doing it because it's something that he's passionate about and he wants to do his way and he's able to do it his way.

And, you know, sweeter than, you know, that 50 million was, you know, coming back to the game and his first, his first offerings, he saw 60 a million, you know what I'm saying? Like, Dave, uh, put it this way. I remember the first time I ever went to his house and, um, Dave

was very instrumental in me even finding back my passion for music, because I had lost it for a while because I'm like, eh, hip hop is to me at the time I was like, yo hip hop is trash.

Like, you know, I don't see myself. In this mix of everything that's happening at the time. And you know, one, one drunken night, it was just me and Dave in, at his crib, um, at his bar. And he's like, yo. I'm telling you that I am a massive fan. And if I'm a massive fan, that means there's millions of other people like me and, you know, blah, blah, blah.

We just went on to discuss it. And I thought it was amazing. Cause if you know, Dave, Dave Chappelle doesn't need anything from anybody. So he has no reason to just give you some random talks to boost you. And I remember before I left on the Monday, You know, I had given him some songs just off of my laptop.

I'm like, yo, here, hold, hold these songs. And, and, you know, just enjoyed them. And I remember him opening his laptop and him saying, yo, check out, check out this, uh, this thing that I filmed, um, the other day, and I watched about 10, 15 minutes of it. And I was like, Dave, this is hilarious. I was like, yo, what is this?

He's that eh, you know, it's just. Something that I recorded out of my, you know, I filmed it out of my own money or what have you, well, anyways, you know, he was like, yo, like, What do you think? And I was like, yo, Dave, this is it's *bleep* hilarious. You know what I'm saying? Like, it is super dope and he's like word, alright, cool.

No word of a lie on my kids. It wasn't more than two months later that that Netflix, um, announcement came out. And that same thing that he just had chilling on his computer, that that was worth \$30 million. You know what I mean? That's the type of magical life that Dave has. Dave is just one of those people that I remember, um, You know, he put out two specials and one of the specials he used that same song that I put on, on his computer where I'm like, yeah, just enjoy it.

He used it as the, you know, the, the music in the end credits, you know what I mean for, uh, for his special. So, I mean, being friends with Dave, this is just the type of, this is the type of experience that you're going to have. He is one of the most giving, honest, passionate, generous, and what people don't know.

Most informed and intelligent black men that, that, you know, and I mean, I think with the, with the special that he put out the other day, um, what was it called? 846 I think, I think that's what it was like. That was just a, that was just glimpse into, into what Dave's demeanor and his energy and who he is.

Like, you're always going to get comedy cause that never turns off, but you're also going get some of the most intelligent, uh, interactions ever.

Dalton: [00:31:57] Yeah. Yeah. And your song actually. Yeah. The song, your song called reaching through the darkness. That's the one that appeared on his comedy special Dave Chappelle equanimity.

That's right.

Kardinal Offishall: [00:32:07] yes. That's right.

Melayna: [00:32:08] Well, thank you so much for joining us and dropping so many gems Kardi. We really appreciate it.

Kardinal Offishall: [00:32:13] My pleasure.

Melayna: [00:32:21] So welcome back to our Tea segment. And one of the hot topics of this week has been a lot of critique around the Raptors game, seven loss to the Boston Celtics, particularly Pascal Siakam's performance. But of course, this devolved into racism. So immediately after the loss, somebody created a petition. Filled with racism and demanding that he go back to his country.

Dalton, how are we ever going to address the, like, what I find so interesting about racism in sport is that athletes are often not even allowed to protest general racism, um, without backlash. So I just feel like how are we going to even address players being constantly subjected to it? Yeah. No racial abuse.

Dalton: [00:33:15] Yeah. Yeah, no, it's a good question. I mean, I think, you know, I'm not a happy camper for one, because Siakam, that's my boy, that's my dog. You know

Melayna: [00:33:25] Didn't he win most improved player last year.

Dalton: [00:33:27] Yeah, he did. He was a key cog in the wheel. Like he averaged, I don't know, like 17 points a game. Like he was just, he played amazing last year.

And if not for his contributions we are not the world champs, you know what I mean?

Melayna: [00:33:38] Right.

Dalton: [00:33:39] But, but, you know, but, but here's the thing I think, um, you know, at the end of the day, you know, you know, did Siakam struggle during the series. Yeah. He obviously did. Right. He played lousy and game seven, you know, he didn't have very good series, but so what, who cares

Melayna: [00:33:53] there were other players that struggled as well in the bubble.

Like, that's kind of what, when I was reading about this, he wasn't the only one.

Dalton: [00:34:00] No, he wasn't the only one. And here's the thing, Mel what NBA star hasn't struggled or had an off game or series, right. People need to grow up. They need to smarten up. Every, all of our sports icons have had terrible games, terrible series, terrible playoffs.

So what you know that doesn't

Melayna: [00:34:16] And the thing about fans is that this whole notion of, you know, I need to be entertained and seeing athletes as property is just such a, it manifests in every sport.

Dalton: [00:34:28] Oh, it really does. I mean, what we saw here is the same anti-black racism, uh, you know, that many delusional Canadians claim doesn't exist.

It just, it just reared its ugly head once again. Right? I mean, Well, you know, like I go to sports games, I go to, you know, soccer games, football games. I go to everything. Even the Argos, even the, the, the lowly Argos. I check out games every now and one thing I'll tell you about sports fans, as you know, you know, sports fans are fanatics, right?

Like the word fan is, is a short form for the word fanatic. Um, you know, so that's why you'll see people in Toronto running around painting their faces and torsos with their team colors. You know it's absolute fanatics. Right. Um, so, so what we know is that, you know what I would say my personal opinion is that many fans they're not altogether there.

Right. And that there are just as many. Racist pigs sitting in sporting stadiums as you'll see, you know, when your local grocery store, right. It's not like the NBA exists on a separate Island from the rest society.

Melayna: [00:35:21] Yeah. And I just feel like it's become such a clash with the movement because more athletes are speaking out.

And I guess, you know, the administration of the teams have been, you know, they're saying, they're listening, they're saying they're changing things from the inside, but it's hard to believe that when it's a structural issue and there's. Barely any black ownership, barely any black coaches.

Dalton: [00:35:43] Yeah. That's and we like to, you know, I'm glad you raised that point.

Oh, no, for sure. I mean, I'm glad you raised that point because when you look at, uh, you know, real measures of equality, you know, not the, not these feel good moments, you know, we look at the courts and we say, Hey, there are black players or European players, but you know, the facts are in the NBA. The NBA is like almost 80% black as far as its players.

And there's only like one black owner and that's Michael Jordan and there's like 30 teams, mel 30 teams in the league, only one majority African American owner. Right. That, that, those are the facts. Now just, just, you know, further to your earlier point, which is good. One is that, you know, I got to thinking after seeing this kind of, uh, this blow back against, uh, Siakam, uh, you know, go back to Africa, people calling him gorilla, you know, on change.org.

It kinda got me to thinking about how, you know, us black, cultural critics, we've been thinking about this kind of thing for a long time, this idea that, you know, when black athletes can no longer, you know what I mean? Like jump higher or run faster on playing fields. Um, they, they just get cast aside, like yesterday's news, right?

They get to, yeah, like

Melayna: [00:36:47] they're discarded. Like they don't matter unless it's about their abilities, which is really dehumanizing.

Dalton: [00:36:54] Oh, it's super dehumanizing. It's insulting. Um, I mean, I remember at the AGO, um, I had to do this voting, this contest for this visual artist and this American visual artist. His name is Hank Willis Thomas.

And. He created this incredible piece of visual art, where he portrays like, you know, this football player on a playing field. And then he juxtaposes it with like a moderate, a cotton field, you know? Wow. That's used during slavery, you know? So this idea of being the behalf of the playing field, being this sort of modern day cotton field, you know, so there's always this.

Interesting discourse around, you know, black men serving a bit of the same purpose as, as the transatlantic slave trade. And that's essentially to make money for mostly white business owners, you know, and, and just to be judged on your physical attributes, you know, so this is kind of what we see playing out with the Pascal situation.

Melayna: [00:37:36] And I also think that it's interesting that Draymond Green was questioning why the Raptors would have black lives matter on their bus when this is precisely why

Dalton: [00:37:45] that is precisely why it's it's Toronto Raptor fans, um, that. We're starting these change.org petitions to send Pascal back to Cameroon, to Africa and calling him a gorilla.

These are being generated in Toronto, in Canada. So, um, you know, Draymond Green. Yeah. Anti-black racism is a, is a global phenomenon. My friend, it's not just restricted to the United States. It's time to wake up and smell the coffee or wake up and smell the tea that we're spilling here today.

Melayna: [00:38:19] Thank you so much for listening. Um, we want to thank our amazing producer Ryan Clarke, and you can find me on social media. @MelaynaWilliams and Dalton @DaltonHigginsFive.