



Critics blast 'words are violence' approach following attack on Dave Chappelle

Karol Markowicz: 'Comedians being assaulted on stage is the obvious end result of the 'words are violence' push'

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Critics responded sharply Wednesday to the "words are violence" mantra by some on the left following the mid-performance attack on comedian Dave Chappelle.

The attack occurred late Tuesday at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles as 23-year-old Isaiah Lee, who was allegedly carrying a replica gun with a knife blade inside, reportedly rushed the stage and tackled Chappelle while he was performing as part of his "Netflix is a Joke" tour.

Chappelle, who wasn't hurt in the attack, later joked Lee was a "trans man," referencing his past jokes about transgendered individuals. He also said during the performance that he had been recently forced to increase his security amid new threats stemming from his routine.

Critics responded to the attack by linking it to the phrase "words are violence," which, according to author David Harsanyi, is "an illiberal notion meant to stifle speech" that has been "popularized by a generation of coddled college kids," meaning the words of someone voicing an opinion others don't agree with could be considered just as much an act of violence as actual violence itself.

"There is a group of people in America who for years now have been telling us that they think that words are violence. So if you say something mean that somehow is a violent act, but actual violence, say, like burning down a Target or a Pep Boys is not violence," political commentator Dave Rubin told "Fox & Friends" early Wednesday.

"When you go to comedy clubs, you might hear something that upsets you. You might hear something that offends you. That is the point of going to a comedy club. A good comedian is going to get close to that line and maybe trip over it every now and again. But you cannot violently assault anyone," he added.

Other critics took to social media, with some describing the attack on Chappelle as the "end result" of the "words are violence" push, and others accusing Democrats of "normalizing" violence against people who say things others don't agree with.

"If 'Words Are Violence' what do we call rushing a stage and trying to stab someone? Violence is violence ... Words are words," tweeted writer Caitlin Flanagan, while writer Walter Olson wrote, "'Words are violence' hands a rationale to those who would use violence in response to words."

Journalist Stephen Miller wrote that the "words are violence" crowd would "excuse actual violence," as he responded to a tweet from ITV News, a British outlet, reporting on the Chappelle attack with the word "attack" in quotation marks.

"Comedians being assaulted on stage is the obvious end result of the 'words are violence' push," wrote Fox News contributor Karol Markowicz, while actor Nick Searcy argued, "Democrats have normalized violence against people when they say 'offensive' words."

A number of liberals reacting to the attack on Chappelle saw it differently.

"If Dave Chapelle didn't make offensive jokes about minorities, he wouldn't get attacked on stage, if his security have injured his attacker they will face a law suit [sic]," tweeted British band Calling all Astronauts.

The co-hosts of ABC's liberal daytime gabfest "The View" went so far as to blame former President Donald Trump for the attack, with Sunny Hostin accusing him of having "unleashed some incivility" across the country, and Joy Behar suggesting he caused a lack of "impulse control" among Americans.

An investigation into the attack by the Los Angeles Police Department is underway and a motive has yet to be determined.