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# **Anna-lyzing the Bachelor: A Bittersweet Farewell to the Bachelor 2021**

## Anna Popp, News Editor

The second-to-last episode of Matt James' rollercoaster season of the Bachelor aired and now all that's left is the final rose. While my hopes were high for this season, it feels like it just needs to be over. I honestly think James did everything right—he was honest, vulnerable and had every intention of leaving with a wife. Sadly, I have the feeling this season will not end well for him.

Michelle Young—my personal favorite—received James' first rose after Fantasy Suite week. Shockingly Rachael Kirkconnell received James' second and last rose of the evening, as James chose her over Bri Springs. The reality of the Kirkconnell situation is that she should have never been cast in the first place. It's obvious Kirkconnell captured James' heart and if she is the winner and they are in fact no longer together, my heart will break for James.

The franchise has failed James in a lot of ways. Most recently, the episode showed a conversation between James and his somewhat estranged dad. It was a difficult conversation to watch and felt like I was witnessing a conversation I had no business seeing. We see James confront his father about the ways he had hurt him and his family. Former Bachelorette Rachel Lindsay shared her frustrations about the portrayal of James' father on the "Bachelor Party" podcast. Lindsay expressed that the conversation between James and his dad should have never aired.

"What's the one thing we know about his dad? That he wasn't around. If you know anything about stereotypes that are assigned to particular races, here, the Black race, you know that absentee fathers is a stereotype," Lindsay said in the podcast.

For years, Lindsay has shed light onto racism within the franchise and after her recent interview with host Chris Harrison, she will no longer be renewing her contract with the franchise. Lindsay has spoken out many times about the negative treatment and blatant disregard for the feelings of contestants of color on the show.

"The fact that you were so willing to throw him under the bus and exploit him for stereotypes within the community for what you would call 'good TV'. The fact that they cannot see the underlying issues—or you know what's even worse? Not that they probably can't see them, they don't care," Lindsay continued in the podcast. "I know for a fact—please listen to me when I say this—I know for a fact, that Matt was uncomfortable with this conversation and the fact that it was going to be aired."

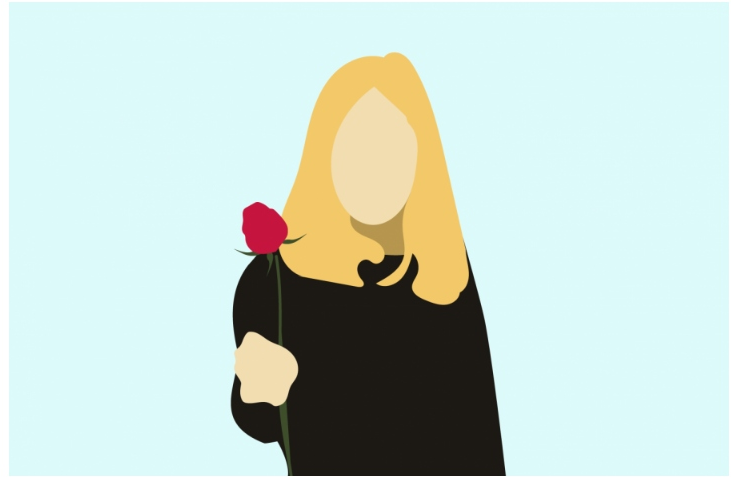
After the episode aired, James took to Twitter to express how difficult it was to watch the episode and the stereotype surrounding the narrative of the way the franchise portrayed his dad.

"I just wanted to say that too often, we see dangerous stereotypes and negative depictions of Black fathers in media. And they have consequences when presented without context," James said in a series of Tweets.

James concluded his series of Tweets on the matter.

"All I hope is that people watch that conversation with nuance, care and also an understanding that there are real systemic issues at play. I'm so proud of myself for being vulnerable, and I'm so proud of my mother. I wouldn't be who I am without my dad. That's a fact," James wrote.

The After the Final Rose episode will air after the finale next week, with Emmanuel Acho hosting the episode in replacement of Harrison. While I always enjoy the ATFR episode for my own entertainment, I sincerely hope James can get closure on his time as the Bachelor and share as much or as little as he wants about his experiences. I would love to know all of the juicy details on the situation, but it seems like James has been through a lot and I wish I could just give him a hug. He seems like a great guy that deserves love, so I hope—however the season ends—he is able to find it.



Andrew Mori

