

Aretha Franklin, “Respect” (1967)

In 1967, Aretha Franklin's “Respect” would dominate the airwaves and resonate with Americans from all walks of life. “Respect” was originally written and recorded by Otis Redding in 1965. Redding's version is delivered from the perspective of a working man demanding respect from his homemaker wife. Franklin's “Respect” is marked by two distinct changes: the narrative perspective shifts to a woman speaking to a man, and Franklin's sister provides additional vocals. Franklin's transformation of “Respect” into a song of a black woman demanding respect resonated with people during a time of racial tension and changing attitudes towards existing gender norms.



Franklin's version of “Respect” coincided with the Civil Rights movement and the emerging Women’s Movement. In 1967, race riots broke out across the nation in major cities, spurred by the poverty and lack of opportunities available to African-American communities. At the same time, women became involved in the Civil Rights, Labor, Anti War movements, and a nascent Women’s Movement was forming. The appeal of Franklin's “Respect,” especially to those who were marginalized, has helped it stand the test of time.

Lyric Excerpt

<p>What you want, baby, I got it What you need, do you know I got it? All I'm askin' is for a little respect when you get home (Just a little bit) Hey baby (Just a little bit) when you get home (Just a little bit) mister (Just a little bit)</p> <p>I ain't gonna do you wrong while you're gone Ain't gon' do you wrong 'cause I don't wan- na All I'm askin' is for a little respect when you come home</p>	<p>(Just a little bit) Baby (Just a little bit) When you get home (Just a little bit) Yeah (Just a little bit)</p> <p>I'm about to give you all of my money And all I'm askin' in return, honey Is to give me my propers when you get home (Just a, just a, just a, just a) Yeah, baby (Just a, just a, just a, just a) When you get home (Just a little bit) Yeah (Just a little bit)</p>
---	---