

- [George Carlin] This is George Carlin.

- [Marc Allan] Hi.

- [George Carlin] How you doing?

- [Marc Allan] Good, thanks for calling. Where you calling from today?

- [George Carlin] I'm in Hollywood, Los Angeles.

- [Marc Allan] Oh, okay, good. Anyway, let me start out you were here, I guess in March of '88 and the article that we ran in the paper said that the lead was George Carlin Carlin as angrier than he's ever been. So last year, you were angry. Are you still angry?

- [George Carlin] Well if that's their interpretation, I just, I do the same kind of things. I talk about what's on my mind. Some things are I guess an angry tone, maybe? I don't know. Some of them don't. There's a whole mixture. I always do a mixture of things, so I don't know what they were focusing on. Probably the thing about Christians.

- [Marc Allan] Yeah, the next graph says, he anger has been sparked by television evangelists, the Reagan administration, double standards and in general, just what some people can do with that. Or some people you can do with that. So.

- Yeah, that was, those were a series of routines. There's other stuff now that might fill the same role for me. Things that spark your emotions.

- [Marc Allan] Mm-hmm . Such as?

- [George Carlin] Oh I'd rather wait and have those appear in the show.

- [Marc Allan] Oh, okay.

- Yeah.

- [Marc Allan] That sounds fine. I was just wondering, I think the last time I may have seen you on TV, would've been, it would be on Carson or Letterman. Letterman, recently, right?

- Yeah.

- [Marc Allan] Not that long ago. I was just wondering, and I hope this doesn't sound like a ridiculous question, but I was wondering if you were enjoying yourself. Whenever I see you, I get kind of the impression that you're a little angry and I don't know, I don't know exactly how to

phrase it, but you just, I just get the impression sometimes that you're not entirely enjoying yourself.

- [George Carlin] Well on the Letterman show, isn't a very comfortable place for me.

- [Marc Allan] Mm-hmm .

- [George Carlin] Carson, I don't see any, I don't see that being a factor. I usually am doing a lot of silly, made up type of material from the panel and not relating very much to real life, the way a lot of people do on the panel. Letterman's is difficult to know what he's thinking and I don't, I'm not comfortable like that. So it's a discomfort that you probably see.

- [Marc Allan] Yeah, what happens there? I mean do you, because they do prepare you for questions, right? Or they give you an idea of what he's going--

- Yeah, they do go over, you suggest the things you'd like to, yeah.

- [Marc Allan] But does he not do that?

- [George Carlin] No he does them, it's just that, I always get the feeling that he's in a hurry for me to leave, seems preoccupied. Other people have said that. I don't know if it's the truth, it's just what the perception is.

- [Marc Allan] So we will not see you on Letterman much?

- [George Carlin] No I'll probably keep doing it, until I get it right.

- [Marc Allan] Oh okay. Then another instance where I've seen you on TV recently was a Saturday Night Live re-run, where you did your bit about religion, about questioning the existence of God, and not forcing religion on others.

- Right .

- [Marc Allan] Right, that's from the first show, right?

- [George Carlin] Yes.

- [Marc Allan] It occurred to me even when I was watching that, that that's pretty racy stuff and it must have been really even more, considered even more racy in the '70s. Did you get any kind of reaction to that? Was there a problem with doing that kind of piece on TV?

- [George Carlin] Well I believe we had the Cardinal on the air, not on the air, we had him on the phone before the show left the air that night.

- [Marc Allan] Oh really?
- [George Carlin] From the Dioceses of New York.
- [Marc Allan] Uh-huh .
- [George Carlin] That would have been Cardinal,
- [Marc Allan] O'Connor, was it, or?
- [George Carlin] I don't know if O'Connor was in yet in '75.
- [Marc Allan] Okay.
- [George Carlin] But whoever he was, yes, he was on the phone and complaining about that.
- [Marc Allan] So he watched Saturday Night Live.
- [George Carlin] Apparently!
- [Marc Allan] Yeah . I know that, I guess Sam Kinison was on there a couple years ago and did some material about Jesus on the cross and screaming and apparently that one, just, people went nuts over that.
- [Marc Allan] Yeah.
- I was wondering did you have a problem getting your material by standards and practices?
- [George Carlin] No, I didn't have any problems getting it to the stage where it was done. The problem came once it was on the air.
- [Marc Allan] Uh-huh.
- [George Carlin] The people on the show, said you know, that they didn't object to it and as far as I remember, I had no resistance from standards and practices.
- [Marc Allan] Uh-huh, so it was just the Cardinal and then any other problems with that?
- [George Carlin] The usual moral police, no just the Cardinal.
- [Marc Allan] Along those lines, do you consider yourself as something of a philosopher, as well as a comedian?

- [George Carlin] Only by the very broadest definition in that we're all somewhat a philosopher and comedians who talk about what goes on, around them and give their own slant to it, sort of qualify, you know, in a very again, very broad, very loose definition of it. But there's definitely a certain amount of philosophical underpinning, to a lot of the material I do.

- [Marc Allan] And does it, so do you feel like that separates you from most of the other people who are doing stand up?

- [George Carlin] No.

- No?

- [George Carlin] Not really, I don't think of myself so much with respect to who they are and who I am. I pretty much operate in my own world and I let other people draw conclusions and make comparisons. I'm too busy trying to get what I do right, to get my observations into the patterns and thoughts that I want and then try to translate them into language and then perform them, that's a long and exacting process and so, I'm pretty much bound up in that and not so much who else is doing what.

- [Marc Allan] Does the process of creating your comedy come in different ways or is it, I mean, are you somebody who sits down at the typewriter and starts writing at nine in the morning, or?

- [George Carlin] No it's just a series of steps that take place haphazardly. The file cabinet contains most of the things that are sort of in waiting, ready to be transformed into a usable language, you know? That's the holding pen. The observations keep coming and the comparisons that the observations represent that are, you know you have a world view and it's like your matrix and so, when you see things happen, you're comparing those things to what you already know and how you already feel. That produces your impression. So those are things I write down, those impressions that I get from the world. So, some of them are in half form states, some of them are just ideas, just highlight, the key words, patterns, that I see. So later on, when I want to work on something, I'll take out the things I have on it and sort of put it into a rough shape, so that it can be delivered and that means just a few seconds. Then that's when it becomes, that's the other part of the work. The work then takes place mostly on stage.

- [Marc Allan] So you must have some sort of elaborate filing system?

- [George Carlin] Well it's considerable. I mean, it's a full drawer.

- [Marc Allan] Mm-hmm .

- [George Carlin] A full, long and deep filing drawer, but it's not elaborate, it just has certain normal classifications that I find crop up.

- [Marc Allan] Mm-hmm . Like words, politics, things like that?

- [George Carlin] Yeah, values, religion, self, politics, pets, food, yeah things like that.

- [Marc Allan] Uh-huh . Okay. Given your views, which I guess would be described as liberal, would that be fair?

- [George Carlin] Well if we were using those terms, it would be more liberal than conservative. It's just sort of unconventional.

- [Marc Allan] Okay. Do you feel out of step at all with the conservative tide in the country now?

- [George Carlin] Well I consider the whole country to be one large political party, two wings. I'm out of step with both wings, but on some issues, I come closer to the left wing and the libertarian or the anarchists, or the, and my dog is gonna ruin the door, if I don't let him out.

- [Marc Allan] Okay.

- Hold on. So I'm out there, among those groups I just mentioned and that's the kind of stuff I resonate with the most.

- [Marc Allan] But now you look at the country and the country seems to be, I don't know, we're almost back in the '50s again, I think. Morality wise.

- It's just issue by issue.

- [Marc Allan] Yeah.

- [George Carlin] If you look at this conservative versus liberal thing, you would find, I think, that I mean an awful lot of social issues where it comes to caring for people and where it comes to cleaning up the environment and a number of other things. The polls would show people to be more liberal than they are taken to be. The voting results come out more conservative.

- [Marc Allan] Mm-hmm .

- [George Carlin] Because the Republicans have learned how to win elections and not how to govern. So the people, the people keep voting for them and they're kind of expecting, I don't know when people finally will get this illusion, but they keep expecting these things to happen that they're promised and they just keep getting worse. I think it takes a cataclysm, for people to see their own best interests again.

- [Marc Allan] This year, it seems like there's more discussion of that. I guess I can just point to popular music as an example of that there's a lot more songs discussing the ideas that we could've changed the world and we did the change the world in '69, we better change it in '89.

- Yeah.

- [Marc Allan] Do you feel at all that the changes that have taken place in the last 20 years and that liberalism in some sense got the country into the mess we're in today?

- [George Carlin] No I don't really. I do believe that the people, generally, from the '60s through the '70s, learned to take a little more control and command and responsibility for their own lives, in terms of what they were allowed to think and say and enjoy in terms of popular entertainment. Everything in popular entertainment is different now, in terms of, when you think of its, the limits on topics and subject matter and language from Broadway shows through movies, rock lyrics and fashion design even. Comedy went along in that wave. It's a different place, in those terms. In terms of liberal education, that was going on for many, many, many decades, previously. I think there might be a problem there. I think that might've been a big mistake, the kind of education system we set up, because all the education system in this country does, is to produce a good little faithful consumer, and I don't think that's what we need, I don't think they teach people how to think.

- [Marc Allan] If you were in charge, would you be talking about more philosophy, more liberal arts kinds of things?

- [George Carlin] I don't know, I don't feel competent to say what ought to be done, I think what ought to be done to find out what ought to be done, is to start over again. You know the very fact that universities are involved in defense research, is appalling and, you know, it's just that it works exactly in the opposite direction from what the educational system is supposed to be. It's supposed to make you think and learn to love thinking and love learning and it doesn't seem to do that. It just seems to produce people who are interested in having a career and the ruling, whatever you wanna call the ruling class in this country, whether you call it the national security state of a business elite, they have an agenda. They set the limits of debate in this country. There is no real debate. They say Congress is now going to debate some issue, Nicaragua. Well the debate is over. The limits have been set. You can't go beyond those limits and be taken seriously. So I think the universities play into that. I think it's an unholy alliance of the media, which is now controlled by 29 corporations, that's all. Information flow in this country is controlled by 29 corporations. The elected representatives, most of whom are millionaires and our elected guy of the defense industry and the national security state, which is the NSC, the NSA, the CIA, the Defense Department and all of these companies that they, these are the people who set the agendas and this the lot that we march to. So I don't know how you overcome that. I don't think there's any help for that.

- [Marc Allan] Yeah . That doesn't sound like a very good situation, or.

- [George Carlin] But we can, America's got a big reserve.

- [Marc Allan] Your role in this isn't to maybe just make everybody see what they, what we're in?

- [George Carlin] Well if that were the only thing, I'd choose a different form than comedy. What I love to do is to entertain. I don't take the universe really seriously. I think it's a big joke. And so I try to convey that feeling to other people. Those who get something from it, that's fine. Those who are merely entertained and diverted by it, that's another thing and that's okay.

- [Marc Allan] Would you elaborate on that a little bit, that you say that you think the universe is a big joke?

- [George Carlin] Well it's a big accident.

- [Marc Allan] Uh-huh.

- I mean the very fact that we humans are here with this consciousness, is an accident. If the dinosaurs hadn't been wiped out, the mammals, who were very small and had no room to expand their domain, would never have evolved into large mammals and into human beings and into human consciousness. They would've remained the size of ferrets. Well the fact that something, whether it was an asteroid, or Darwinism, or whatever it is that set it along, that blocked out the sun long enough to kill off the dinosaurs, made room for us. That's an accident, that's a joke. People take that seriously, people think God did that. People say, "We're destined to do things." People say, "We have rights." There is no such thing as rights. We made up rights. You don't hear rocks and trees walking around, talking about their rights. We made that up, it's all a joke, it's all a man-made joke. You know what, it's not really a time, people say it's 8 o'clock. That's a joke. It's not 8 o'clock. This is all stuff we made to make ourselves feel comfortable. As a result, it's very fragile and it's completely artificial. So I see that and to me, this is just a free floating, I'm just a free floating organism, in this structured thing that people needed to put together, you know, for their own comfort. Agriculture's what ruined us, with civilization.

- [Marc Allan] How's that?

- Find the agriculture we had hunter gatherers and the hunter gatherer societies that still exist today, and that have existed in the century, who have been studied, were seen to be in the form of Eden. A folic paradise. It's just the right amount of food. The work was not considered work, it was considered a form of socializing. Language grew by leaps and bounds, when hunter gatherers worked together. When agriculture came along, they began the problem of owning property. This is our agriculture. We will store these grains here. This is where we farm. We'll put up this fence, you can't come here. All of this rivalry stuff started. Wars, priests, hierarchy, law, commerce. All of the things that have brought us to this sorry state, started because of agriculture. And that's what the loss of Eden is about. That's where the paradise myth comes in,

in man's histories. Many, many cultures have a myth of a lost paradise. And what it amounts to, is the loss of innocence and freedom that hunter gatherer societies represented. Least ways that's what I read.

- [Marc Allan] Okay.

- [George Carlin] I'm gonna have to run, I'm late to another interview.

- [Marc Allan] Oh, geez, but I have a lot of stuff I wanted to ask you.

- [George Carlin] How long does it take? It's usually only 15 minutes, I got a 9 o'clock call I got to make.

- [Marc Allan] Hell they told me I could have half hour with you.

- [George Carlin] Well who said that?

- [Marc Allan] Your people at your agency, what are they called?

- [George Carlin] I'm gonna have to talk to them.

- [Marc Allan] Okay. Can we--

- Okay let's just go a little bit longer then.

- [Marc Allan] Okay, that would be great, I appreciate it. Let me talk to you about some things that--

- [George Carlin] Did we also tell you to tape record?

- [Marc Allan] Yes and I am tape recording.

- [George Carlin] Good.

- They said you requested it, so, which I would've done anyway, but,

- [George Carlin] Great.

- [Marc Allan] Anyway, TV seems to be eating comedy at kind of an alarming rate and to my mind, a lot of what I see is pretty poor quality.

- [George Carlin] Yeah.



- What do you think?

- [George Carlin] Well I don't see a lot of it. So I don't know, but I agree that when I press the dial across I don't see much that holds it in one place. Although I'm gonna probably wind up doing a TV show, I hope it's better than average.

- [Marc Allan] Uh-huh. Are you talking about a network TV show?

- [George Carlin] Yes, CBS is interested and we're working on a pilot script right now.

- [Marc Allan] What kind of show, can you tell?

- [George Carlin] No I'm not really, not yet.

- [Marc Allan] Uh-huh, okay.

- Too early. But it would be a half hour comedy and it would be on the setting and the situation, which would be believable for me, where people could sort of see me and believe me in that setting. Not as the father of three girls.

- [Marc Allan] Uh-huh . We talking about like a replacement show coming up? Or maybe for next season, or something?

- [George Carlin] No it would be aimed at next fall.

- [Marc Allan] Next fall.

- If it tested well.

- [Marc Allan] Huh, okay.

- Besides the pilot would probably be done in January, or February. Tested in March and then they make their decision.

- [Marc Allan] How about, let me talk about your records, also. How have your comedy records done sales wise, in the past few years?

- [George Carlin] No they don't do as well as they used to.

- [Marc Allan] Yeah.

- I had four gold records in the '70s.

- [Marc Allan] Right.

- But that era passed, and my mass market is reached through HBR, I don't depend on records for anything. I put them out more or less as sentimental artifacts, so to complete the collections and to have them out and as part of my work on the show.

- [Marc Allan] Mm-hmm . Is the fact that CDs have become so popular, hurt comedy albums, as well?

- [George Carlin] No I just think they never really, comedy albums never really had a predictable push into the market, it was always kind of hit and miss.

- [Marc Allan] Okay, and you started your own record label to put the?

- Yeah, just so I could control the output better. Control the promotion and advertising and how the record's were used and where they went and who had charge of them. It's nice to control your own work.

- [Marc Allan] Okay.

- It increases the profits that you keep too, if you .

- [Marc Allan] Right. A little bit about your movies, too. Although, you're probably, if not the smartest comedian, or certainly one of them, you haven't really made high brow comedy films. Is that by design?

- [George Carlin] I haven't really been the part of the movie scene, in general. I've only done a couple of small parts in the last four years, or so. Outrageous Fortune and Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure and that's because people who make movies don't see me as a movie actor, or movie personality. They're very, I've tried and it'll get better I'm sure and some things will happen for me, especially if the TV thing were to click. But they're not in the business of finding new things to do in the movies. They're pretty much in the business of saying, "Well that was good, how can we do that again?" So, they're not sitting around trying to find a place for a 53 year old comic who's been around 30 years. They see me as someone who's a comic, period. It takes a little bit of vision to understand that I have other abilities, other talents and that I bring with me a built in following, a built in audience. So I have to kind of wait for the specific slots to come up where I'm just right and then I have to hope that the person who's filling that slot, thinks of me, or sees me in that manner. So, I'm just kind of waiting. We keep trying, we keep looking at certain things that aren't suitable and then there are things that we like, that I don't get. So it's a matter of waiting. One thing already that I had a good long flurry of having things my own way, there's nothing wrong with a little frustration.

- [Marc Allan] Okay. If you were a new comic today, do you think you'd be as successful as you have been?

- [George Carlin] If I came along with all of my belief systems in place the way they were in 1960, well first of all, I'd be some kind of a freak. It's hard to answer, because I don't know whether we mean if I were who I am today, coming along today. Who I was then coming along today, or some other kind of new person, coming along today.

- [Marc Allan] I mean if you came along, right as you are, right now, you had never made a record, no one had ever heard of you and you got out on the stage.

- I'd kill, I'd kill. I'd absolutely kill. I'm doing my very best work, right now.

- [Marc Allan] Really?

- I'm not doing my, yes, my observations are sharper than ever. The connections I'm drawing and the language I use, that is to say, not anything about good or bad language, just the language, the words I use to say my things. All of it's better now. Because I'm clear and I'm integrated now.

- [Marc Allan] Okay. Two other things I was gonna ask you. Do you have any reaction to what's happened with Jackie Mason and this Rudolph Giuliani stuff in New York?

- [George Carlin] Well I think it's funny that, you know Rudolph Giuliani is such a simp. Such a dork. Anything bad happens to him, I'm in favor of.

- [Marc Allan] Uh-huh .

- [George Carlin] As far as Jackie Mason's concerned, I don't consider Jackie Mason inherently bad for him, or bad for anyone else. I love Jackie Mason's work. I always have, even when a lot of people hadn't heard of him. But the fact that he's injured Giuliani, makes me happy.

- [Marc Allan] The fact that he's hurt himself, doesn't bother you?

- [George Carlin] I don't think it'll hurt Jackie Mason.

- [Marc Allan] No?

- He is and always was what he is and that's the way he is. He does jokes about people's differences. Some of those differences are ethnic.

- [Marc Allan] Okay.

- And that's what he does, that's his spec and there's actually nothing wrong with it.
- [Marc Allan] Okay. If I can keep you on for two more minutes.
- [George Carlin] Okay.
- I just wanted to throw out, names of people and things and just give me instant reaction, if you would.
- [George Carlin] All right.
- [Marc Allan] Dan Quayle.
- [George Carlin] He's, I don't know, he's a pretty frightening individual, when you think about the background, you know the family's background. He as himself as a simple minded man, probably wouldn't hurt anybody, because I don't think he has very much intellectual capacity. But coming from a powerful family and I understand his wife's father is a little strange. Those things give me pause.
- [Marc Allan] Yeah, his family owns my newspaper, so they'll like that.
- [George Carlin] Dangerous people. And the media, the ownership of media in this country is very dangerous.
- [Marc Allan] Along the lines USA Today.
- [George Carlin] Yeah.
- [Marc Allan] What do you think of that?
- [George Carlin] Well USA Today it's funny, because they tried to make a television show out of the newspaper, that already is an imitation of television news. I mean I love, USA Today, I love a newspaper you don't ever have to turn the page to finish the story.
- [Marc Allan] Mm-hmm .
- [George Carlin] It's ridiculous, it's absurd.
- [Marc Allan] Yeah, Donald, sorry--
- The kind of thing Americans need, because Americans don't wanna know the truth.
- [Marc Allan] Donald Trump?

- [George Carlin] An interesting kind of , you know a real rat, it would be nice to see him run over by a truck. but he makes life interesting. These people make my life interesting.

- [Marc Allan] Uh-huh.

- I can't help but marvel at the Leona Helmsleys and the Ollie Norths and the Donald Trumps and the Zsa Zsa Gabor's and the Bess Myerson's and all these people who managed to get themselves in these ridiculous situations. I am very entertained by the world.

- [Marc Allan] Okay, Jesse Jackson?

- [George Carlin] Jesse means well. You know, he's done a lot of good and in his heart and his intentions he wants certain things to be right, but he's another odd actor. He has a style that's unusual. I like Jesse's politics. I'd vote for him in spite of my feelings about his style.

- [Marc Allan] Crack.

- [George Carlin] Crack, America gets what it deserves. See America taught everybody the work ethic and free enterprise. So all these Jamaicans went into business. They came here and they said, "How can we make a product smaller, cheaper, "more powerful, that people will want?" And that's what they did. They took their lessons from the American industry. And I wish them well.

- [Marc Allan] 30 something.

- [George Carlin] I have never seen it. Everything I've read about it, makes me just a little ill from a distance and I'm afraid if I ever watched it, I'd probably throw up all over.

- [Marc Allan] and last thing and I'll let you go. The Rolling Stones.

- [George Carlin] Always and forever the Stones, I think it's terrific that the rock and rollers who really understood what rock and roll was about, defying it and not about things like Bon Jovi. But real, true defiance. I'm happy that they're still making some music.

- [Marc Allan] Okay. Well I really appreciate you--