

BM: Hello.

Q: Hi, this Bill?

BM: Yep.

Q: It's Marc Allan.

BM: Yes.

Q: Ah, you're expecting me?

BM: Uh (laughing) I am, let me get rid

of all these people, hold on.

Q: OK. Hi, how you doin'?

BM: Oh we're a little swamped.

Q: Yeah, okay, well I promised the outfit.

They said 20 minutes.

BM: No, no, I'm good.

I'm not givin' ya the bum's rush.

Q: Okay.

BM: I'm just sayin' you
know we go on the air

Monday with our new season, so.

So it's like crunch week.

Q: Well I'm glad you're not
giving me the bum's rush

'cause I've spent enough
time watching this show

that you owe me some time
here, okay. (laughing)

We'll start out by asking you,

the personality that we
see of you on the show,

is that pretty much you?

I mean or are you, just
sometimes you go a little further

to gauge or to get a
reaction out of the guest?

BM: Why I think anytime
anybody's a performer,

when you're on camera,

you probably heighten
everything a little bit.

I mean if you're not, if
you don't get up for a show,

then you shouldn't be in the business.

But yeah, I mean
basically, I mean you know

when you're on television
that much you can't hide.

So it's silly to present
yourself as something you're not.

I mean I never for
example, take a position

or any opinion is a true opinion of mine.

I mean any, I mean I'm not acting,

it's not a spoof of a

talk show (laughing) or--

Q: No, I recognize that.

BM: No, I know.

But some people ask me that and,

no, I would say it's pretty much me

just you know probably

a little more animated

'cause we're on.

But pretty much that's, I think

you're smart in the business

if you graft your so-called TV personality

onto your real personality

instead of trying to do it the
other way around. (laughing)

(laughing)

Q: Okay, I just wondered if you were ever

like the devil's advocate and

just went a little further

on your opinion just to elicit a response.

BM: Yeah I suppose, yeah.

But I think I do that in life too.

I think I enjoy being a provocateur.

Q: Well I've been watching the show

since I moved to a place

that gets Comedy Central in February.

And let me, this is the
little profile of you,

this is the way I would describe you.

You tell me if I'm hitting it right, okay.

You're a disillusioned democrat,

you like Perot's ideas but you knew

he could never get them carried out,

so you probably held your
nose and voted for Clinton.

You think government is too intrusive.

You think people are too
dependent on government.

You think people have gotten fat, lazy

and unwilling to accept responsibility.

And sometimes you feel like
your father for saying that.

And you feel the same way every time

you mention that rap has no melody.

How's that?

BM: That's pretty damn good.

Q: Good, okay.

BM: The only thing I would change

is that I didn't feel

like I had to hold my nose

to vote for Clinton.

I like him.

Q: Sure, well that's a bit of a surprise.

'Cause I think in, sometimes I think

you're fairly hard on him.

But that, which is fine.

BM: Sometimes he needs to be hard on.

Q: Yeah. (laughing)

(laughing)

BM: And sometimes he
has a hard on, but he,

you know my take on Clinton

is that he is like,
are you a baseball fan?

Q: Yes.

BM: Okay, he's like a shortstop
that gets to more balls

and so he makes more errors.

Q: Um, hmm.

BM: You know, it's like,
Ozzie Smith usually

has more errors than lesser shortstop

but that's 'cause he

has a much wider range.

If you don't get to a ball,

you're not ever gonna make an error on it.

And you know I just think he tries a lot.

I mean the headline in the
New York Times yesterday

was "Healthcare, President's
Greatest Goal, Dead."

It just made it look like down in defeat,

President's highest
order, dead, down, gone.

Well, yes of course, I
mean that's what happened.

But I think the way the
political system works

is that you almost had to accept

that the first try was
gonna go down in defeat.

But that's why it's a first try.

And I think before his term is out,

he'll get a healthcare reform bill.

But you know, yeah, he
got an error on that one.

And did he handle it the right way?

No, I don't think he did.

I don't think he handled it very well.

But there's a learning curve in every job.

I mean you could imagine
what the learning curve

in that job must be.

At least he's I think smart enough

to probably learn from the mistakes

and do it better next time.

I mean he shoulda gotten
more bipartisan support

and he shouldn't a tried to do it

a lot of the ways he did it.

But, you know he did and he'll come back

and he does come back,
you gotta give him that.

Q:- Yeah, absolutely.

And I'm glad that you
compared him to a shortstop

as opposed to a box of chocolate

because if I hear a
box of chocolates joke.

BM: Why what is that?

Q: Oh from Forrest Gump, you know.

BM: Oh right.

Q: Life is like

a box of chocolates.

BM: Exactly.

Q: It's like eww man, I don't wanna hear that.

BM: Right.

Q: You know it's interesting to me

in watching the show and I wonder

if you have the same reaction

that Republicans seem to,

or the conservatives and the Republicans

who are on the show seem to be

completely aligned behind their people.

And the Democrats seem to be willing

to take more shots at a guy like Clinton.

BM: Yeah, I mean that's always,

I mean you know that's

Will Rogers great line,

"I don't belong to any organized party, I'm a Democrat."

Yeah it also seems there that there are so much more,

they have so much more of a unified agenda.

We did an issue the first season about how

the Democrats just have
like an issue de jour.

And I mean that's just
the nature of the party.

I mean that's why the
Republicans with a registration

of way less than what the Democrats have.

I mean the Democratic party is,

the registered democrats in this country

have always been overwhelming.

At some times as much as
two-to-one over Republicans,

but the Republicans were able
to capture the White House

so many times because of one
of the rules of party politics

which is a small but rabid
and well-organized group

can defeat a less organized larger group.

I mean you even see that in the party.

I mean the Republican party has now

the problem of being hijacked
by the far right wing

because they are the most organized,

and most fervid, the most rabid.

The other thing you said

in that little description

about a disillusioned Democrat

reminded me the thing I always say is,

I'd love to be a Republican
if only they would.

(laughing)

You know, and what I mean by that is

if they, if their platform is as they say,

of getting the deficit under control,

well then explain to me Ronald Reagan.

Because he's the one that
really jacked up this deficit.

Q: Right.

BM: So don't give me that bullshit.

And if the Republican party
is the party that says

get the government off
the backs of the people,

but in a woman's uterus,
that's an okay place

for taking 'em off their back?

You know I mean, how can you
be off the people's backs

but making decisions about what
goes on inside their bodies?

It's those kind of contradictions.

Q: Well both political parties I think

wanna be in your pants.

The Democrats wanna be in your wallet

and the Republicans
wanna be in your zipper.

And that's why I've always
chosen to be Democrat.

I can give up the money.

Going to the new format for an hour,

did you feel like it was a matter

of needing more time to explore issues?

BM: Actually we're not on for an hour.

But we are on a lot more.

We are gonna be on every
night at 10 o'clock.

Q: Well I thought it said
that it was going for an hour.

BM: That might be a false
thing that sometimes--

Q: Oh no, okay, I have
misread this then okay.

Sorry, so good okay, well
it's still at the half hour.

Good, okay.

BM: Yeah half hour but we will have
you know four new shows every week.

Whereas last year we only
had one new show a week,

Tuesday through Friday a new show.

Q: Oh that would be great news.

BM: Yeah it will be.

It will give us a chance
to do a lot of things

that we weren't able to do before.

Q: Such as?

BM: Well I mean little comedy bits
as opposed to just last year we did,
yeah it was very often we did what we call
a modest proposal at the end.

Q: Right.

BM: Which we'll still do that.

But we're able to, we can
do a few other things.

We'll just have more time each week.

Q: All right, so forget the hour thing.

Now let's talk about some of the guests

have really surprised me in
their weirdness sometimes

(laughing) and--

BM: You mean the pairing?

Q: Yeah, well no not the pairings, just the personalities.

Because you never get to see people talk like that.

BM: Right.

Q: And it's you really have no idea what they're like.

I mean Ed Asner, I always thought

had a reputation for being a very smart, very liberal guy.

And when he did that show with Tim Allen

and I forget who else was on it,

BM: Right, Quentin Tarantino?

Q: Was that the same show? Okay.

BM: Yeah, that was in L.A. when Quentin

was on with us in L.A. I remember, but...

Q: I just thought, boy, Ed Asner

did not come across very well.

And I don't know if it's, I don't know what that is.

So I'm curious about your reaction to some of these people

and guests who surprise you politically

or who do better than you thought,

or do worse than you thought.

BM: Well I mean that part of
the pleasure is just that,

it's the surprise.

I mean, for us the pleasure is the mixing.

I mean a Quentin Tarantino was on,

as a matter of fact was not on that show,

'cause I remember he
was on with Dick Clark

which is exactly the kind of pairing

that just makes us giggle.

Because it's just so wrong.

Q: Right. (laughing)

BM: You know I mean to put Dick Clark

on with Quentin Tarantino.

We had on John Waters with
Senator Arlen Specter.

That just can't be right.

(laughing) You know we
had on G. Gordon Liddy

with Harvey Fierstein, I
mean that's the first joke

is that who these pairings are.

After that yes, sometimes people

absolutely do surprise you

that like you say, you
think they're more liberal

and they're conservative or
they the other way around.

We purposely don't pre-interview anybody.

I mean we purposely do not run this

like any other talk show.

Because it's not, you know,
it's not like any other show,

it's not an interview.

We're not plugging anything.

We're actually having people
just talk about stuff.

So, I don't really wanna know too much

before we go out there.

I don't wanna lose that spontaneity.

And I just want it to be just like,

I mean the idea is that
it's a cocktail party

and you certainly wouldn't pre-interview

to go to a cocktail party.

Q: Right, do the--

BM: If you do, you're life
is a little over-produced.

Q: Yeah. (laughing)

Do the guests know in advance
what the topics are gonna be?

(coughing) Excuse me.

BM: Very vaguely.

Q: Oh, okay.

BM: If they want to
know, we will tell them.

Q: So you're, so when you're
bringing up the topic,

they're hearing it basically
for the first time?

BM: They're hearing,
they're certainly hearing

anything detailed about it,

and if I have a position on it,

they're certainly hearing
that for the first time.

If they wanna know what we're gonna

be talking about on Monday's show,

we'll tell them O.J.
Simpson, but that's it.

We won't tell them anything more

about what the specific questions are,
or the baseball strike, or you know stuff,

I mean just really very
vague sort of general stuff.

And if it's a topic that's
a little more abstruse,

we will actually send
them an article on it.

I remember Rita Rudner was on one show

and I walked into makeup and she said,

"I haven't had this much homework

"since I was in sixth grade."

(laughing)

I guess we had to know
what the topics were

but I guess we sent her
a bunch of articles.

And you know Rita is of
course so meticulous,

that she of course had to read everything.

Q: Yeah, what did you
think of Quentin Tarantino?

Did you know him before?

BM: No, but he's a very
big fan of the show.

So, I mean that made me love him already.

And I was a huge fan of his work.

He was great.

I mean we thought he would be and he was.

Q: He's really out of control. (laughing)

BM: Now he is, so. (laughing)

I mean we wanted him
for the first week here

and he wanted to do it, but he's just,

I mean he is just too much in demand.

He's out plugging his movie
and a million other things

and I don't think he's gonna
make it the first week.

But I know he will whenever he can.

Q: And I don't think anybody
every talks to Roseanne

the way you talk to her.

Is that 'cause you know her real well?

BM: I do know her real well.

Q: I remember you being on the show,

being the photographer on
her show, that episode.

BM: Oh, right, right, right, I did.

That was just, I mean she just called me

'cause she, I guess she wanted
someone around that week

to play with.

(laughing)

And I was around.

But yeah, I mean, you
know Roseanne is not a,

I mean she's a lot of nutty things

but she's not a prima donna.

I mean she, you know you don't have to

walk on eggshells with her.

She enjoys a frank
exchange on stage and off.

Q: Well, it just seems like
everything else you read about her

is about people being afraid of her

and you talk to her just
you know. (laughing)

BM: I don't blame people
being afraid of her.

I mean she asked me years ago if I

wanted to write for her sitcom

and I said Roseanne, we
both know if I did that

we wouldn't be friends for long.

So let's shelve that idea right now.

Q: (laughing) And
actually one of the guests

I think comes off best on the panels

all the time is Larry Miller.

BM: I love Larry, well Larry
and I really go back a long way.

Q: Yeah, who does just a
great, who is really smart

as well as being funny

above all things.

BM: Yeah exactly.

I mean he's exactly what
we love on this show.

I mean he's, first of
all there is a chemistry

that you have with old friends

that you just can't have with people

who are not old friends.

I mean that's not to say that

you can't have a wonderful chemistry

with someone you just met,

and sometimes that can be just as good

and just as interesting.

But it's just not, I mean there's no

replacement for that kind of feel

that you have for
someone that you've known

for 15 years and have
been clowning around with

like that for 15 years,

who you have been sparring
with verbally for 15 years.

It's just a sort of a, it's like a band,

it's like the Rolling Stones.

I mean they've been
playing together this long.

That's why they're this good.

I mean they just know where
each other what is going

just by intuition or something.

Whatever it is I don't know.

But you know, that's why I love to have

the Seinfelds and the Millers
and the people like that

who are my old cronies.

That to me is the most fun.

Q: Are there people you wanna
have on that won't come on?

BM: Oh yeah, I've done millions.

Q: Okay. (laughing)

I just wondered if there
was anybody in particular

who you've really pursued?

BM: Oh I'm sure there's, I mean there's

lists and lists and lists.

I don't have them in front of me.

The thing is that the
lists are always shrinking

because now as opposed to
like when we first went on,

it was really hard booking
because everyone was like

what, what kind of show is this?

I mean they had no idea what was going on.

I mean now, not only is our show on,

but there's a bunch of rip-off shows

either on or coming on.

So I mean, people have gotten the idea

that this is a, and also
everybody knows this show now.

I mean we have plenty
of people calling us up

and saying hey, can I
get on which is great.

And you don't have to explain the show.

And if by chance there's someone
who hasn't seen the show,

which we don't find very often,

we can send them tapes.

We can send them, whoever it is,

we can say, I mean if
we wanna get a senator,

and he says well I don't know.

We'll send him a tape of Senator Specter.

I mean you know, you can't get much more
establishment figure than that.

And the other thing is like Michael Moore

who did TV Nation had a quote in Newsday

a few weeks ago saying that
when he went down to Washington,

he said we were able to get
any politician we wanted

'cause they all thought that our show

was like Politically Incorrect
and they all do this show.

(laughing)

And they all thought this was the way

to sort of look to their constituents

like they had a sense of humor.

Once we established that we were not

any sort of a gotcha show which we are not

and never will be.

Then the politicians were
more willing to come on.

Now, you know is Teddy
Kennedy ever gonna come on?

I doubt it, I doubt if Teddy Kennedy

ever wants to appear on
anything called Comedy Central

because he just is obviously gunshy.

He's such an easy target.

I mean what he doesn't know

and maybe somebody will explain
it to him at some point,

is that I would never
ever make fun of him.

I sat there with Marion Barry
in January in Washington

and he's three time, he was talking about

how we need to have a new morality

and a moral re-invigoration,

and I never said, excuse me Mr. Mayor,

but weren't you the guy
smoking crack in a hotel room?

Somebody else on the
panel may have said that,

but I will never.

I mean I'm always, the show should be

a lot of heated funny debate

but it should never be in my view,

cheap or less than gracious.

Q: What kind of mail do
you get for this show?

BM: I'm amazed at the
mail I get for the show.

First of all, the sheer volume of it.

Must be like everybody
who ever watches the show

wrote me a letter, which
I love, which is great.

I answer, you know I
read every piece of mail

and I write a little note
at the bottom of the,

I mean we do have a form letter,

but then I always write
something at the bottom.

And I mean some of it is just, a lot of it
is just make the show an hour.

That's a very very common one I get.

It's too short, make it an hour.

A lot of it is just hey
keep up the good work.

Occasionally there's a, you fascist pig
or you liberal asshole.

And a lot of times there's a lot of people
who just wanna take one issue.

You know I have a special file
for the one's that start out,

"Bill, I thought you were a smart guy."

(laughing)

I used to think you were
a smart guy, but you know.

I mean 'cause you're
always gonna say something

that somebody thinks is crazy.

But generally, it's very very positive.

Q: That's good.

I think the best part of the
show, the modest proposals.

I mean, I enjoy that bit.

I always think, you know you really do
some great provocative things in there.

And I thought, and there was one,

I think it was a modest proposal,

where you said there should
be a warning on the Bible

not to be taken internally.

Man I thought, oh, with the
mail he's gonna get for this

should really be unbelievable.

BM: Yeah, you know I didn't
get too much on that.

I've gotten much more on
things like gun control.

I mean you really learn what
the hot-button issues are.

Guns is a real big one.

People in this country
just love their guns.

Q: Yeah, which it's true, and I live

in a very conservative state.

So I get more of that than most people do.

BM: Yeah, I mean, you just say anything

and I wasn't even, I mean it was really

such a tongue-in-cheek thing we did,

I mean as most of those
modest proposals are,

that the bit was just you were saying,

you can have a gun but since

the Second Amendment was written in 1776,

it should be a musket.

Q: (laughing) That's right.

(laughing)

BM: But there are people
who are upset about it.

Q: Okay, now let's talk
about the book for a bit.

It's funny, there are
some real funny parts.

I'm about halfway through it right now

and at times also reading it and thinking,

this is like trying to relate

a funny stoned experience to
somebody who wasn't there.

BM: Huh.

Q: So, I don't know, what kind
of reaction have you gotten?

And talk a bit about what you
were trying to accomplish.

BM: Well, I mean, the reaction has been great.

It sounds immodest, but I haven't had

anything but good notices

and the people who, just different categories,

is people who I know who have read the book and call me.

There are people who stop me on the street

and have read the book and tell me what they think.

And then there's reviews.

I mean my goals with it were one,

a book that would be certainly as funny as any novel

anybody'd ever read.

And two, to for once, accurately portray

this life of the comedian that I don't think

anybody had ever sort of accurately portrayed

for the world at large.

I mean I think it's a subject

people are really curious about.

Q: So you think comics are horny, irresponsible,

smarter than average people?

BM: Basically yeah.

Q: Yeah, okay. (laughing)

BM: I mean I think that's only part of it.

I mean I think there's a lot more to it.

I think that there's also a great,

I mean there's a lot of
positive things that they do

that it's easy to read
it and only you know,

in any book, I mean the
juicy parts are the things

that are probably more negative.

But I mean I hope I capture
the camaraderie too,

the fact that these guys,
they stick together.

I mean they, I mean they
don't at some times,

but they certainly have the urge to.

I mean there's certainly a love among them

that I, I mean I remember,
that unfortunately

a lot of us from the old days,

we're all sort of have gotten our wish,

which is to have nice flourishing careers,

but for that reason we
never see each other,

or rarely see each other.

I mean there was a time when we all were

every night hanging out in that diner,

and every night hanging out in the clubs.

And it was just really a lot of fun.

And now our lives I guess are better.

But I don't know if
they're more fun than that.

I mean those days certainly
seemed like they were,

there was certainly less pressure.

And I mean if you could hang
out in a night club all night

and just hang out all
day and go to movies.

We really, we thought we
had the world by the balls,

even though we were
only making \$50 a night.

Q: Right. (laughing)

Do the other four people in
this book know who they are?

BM: Well, I mean they're really, I mean

all the characters are
composite of different people.

And I guess it would be a better answer

that would sell more
books if I were to say,

you know wink, wink, this
guy is Jerry Seinfeld

and this guy.

But it's not, I mean it's just not.

They're really based on comic personas
more than just specific people.

Q: So a little bit more about the show,
do people stick around and continue
talking after the show ever?

BM: They talk during the commercials too

and I have to shut them up

because I mean, it's like I always say

hey shut up, shut up,
especially if we're onto a topic

that is going to have to be
continued after the break,

but they get so going about it

that just because we went to commercial,

they wanna keep making their point.

And I have to like say,
please, please, please

if you have to talk to each other,

talk about the weather
until we're back on the air.

And yes, very often
they do after the show,

continue talking or some
people have forged friendships.

Mayor Barry and Liddy
got to know each other

from being on the show together.

And wound up taking a
walk through the ghetto

that they had planned and they bonded

over being in the same prison.

And it's awfully nice when you can bring

ex-felons together like that.

Q: (laughing) Makes you feel
so much better about your life.

Now have people gotten really
pissed off at each other.

I mean ever come to fisticuffs
or anything like that?

BM: No, no (laughing)

Q: Okay (laughing)

Well you know, it's the '90's

you would think that would happen.

BM: Now I'm hoping.

Q: (laughing) That would be great.

It would make nice footage
for Talk Soup or whatever.

BM: Yeah.

Q: There seemed to be
some doubt or question

of whether you'd come
back and do it again.

Was there a question about this season?

BM: Well, I mean, I think
the network always wanted it.

And I wanted to continue to do this show.

The truth is that other networks

are not ready for this show.

Everybody knows it would be better

if we were on a network that got into

every single home in America.

But the truth is that you have

to make decisions in this world.

And it's much better for me anyway,

it's much better to do the show I want

on a smaller network, than
to do a show I don't want

on a bigger network.

Q: Did people propose a different version
of the show for you?

You know maybe with singing and dancing
or something like that?

BM: Yeah, from day one, this network
has let me do exactly the show I wanted
and never ever once said one word to me
about how to do it.

And that, for that I will
always be immensely grateful.

And I realize how rare
that is, how lucky I am.

And so, I really don't
wanna blow a good thing.

Q: Okay, and just a couple, one
or two other things personally.

Are you married?

BM: Not to my knowledge.

Q: No, (laughing) okay.

Yeah well, they re-ran the

Valentine's Day one yesterday

and my wife and I were getting a big kick

out of the modest
proposal of bachelor day.

BM: Bachelor day.

Q: It wasn't going over big
in our house but (laughing).

BM: I know, I have a
feeling that that's probably

a common--

Q: Other than comedy and the TV,

do you do things, you said you
were a baseball fan I guess.

Are there other things
that you do hobby-wise,

entertainment-wise that would,

that get you away from comedy?

BM: Since I've started to do, I mean

since I've been doing this show,

I have not had time
really for much of a life.

Also this year, I've also had
sort of a moonlighting job

as Jay Leno's remote correspondent

which sort of like added just enough work

so that I really never got out.

It's funny, this business is like that.

I mean either you're too
idle, or you're too busy.

There's no middle speed to show business.

Q: Doing the Leno stuff that you do,

does that preclude you from
doing any Letterman things?

BM: Pretty much, I have
a contract with NBC.

Q: Oh, okay, that's that.

BM: They would probably take
a dim view if I did Letterman.

(laughing)

I think it would be a bit
of a slap in the face.

Q: Yeah, are you watching
Letterman at all?

BM: I mean, yeah, I mean
at 11:30 if I'm home

I'll take a look at, what
those, everybody's doing.

Q: And how do you like the new show
compared with Late Night?

I don't mean Conan O'Brien Show,

I mean how Letterman has changed

since going over to CBS.

BM: I don't think he's changed that much.

I think the show that's
changed in the last six months

is Jay's show the last year.

I mean I think Jay is
just doing a lot better.

I mean I think Jay is
really finding himself.

I've really been happy to be a big part

of that show this year

because I sensed it was a show

that was growing and finding itself.

And it was also nice to be
with him and be a part of that.

I mean I've known him a long time

and I know he's experienced
some tough times there.

I mean there was a while when they were,

in that press conference where he said,

hey, you know what's
everybody cheering about

I just didn't get fired, that's all.

You know I mean when Letterman, you know,

when they wanted to get Letterman back

and then there was like,
I mean this whole year

has been like Letterman, Letterman.

I mean the Olympics and
the whole fucking thing.

It was just Dave's year.

And Jay just sat there and weathered it.

And you know in ratings, he
wasn't exactly getting killed.

He wasn't winning, but finally
last week he won a week.

And I'm sure he's thrilled about that

because the truth is that
the show has come a long way

and it's a good show now.

And people who were snobby about,

oh, no, I never see
that I watch Letterman.

Well you know, I always say to them,

really, watch Jay one
night, give it a chance,

see what you think.

Q: All right, I will. (laughing)

BM: Yeah, okay.

Q: I must, I watch Letterman 'cause

I like the edge of Letterman.

I mean Jay, I've talked to a few times

and just seems like a very nice guy

and I'd always thought he was
a very funny standup comedy.

But the niceness just went over the top

for me to watch the Tonight Show.

BM: Right, well I think that's,

see that's one thing that I think

you'll find has changed a little bit.

I think he's a little more of the real Jay

which is more of an edge.

Listen, I gotta go to a meeting.

Q: All right, that's great.

I appreciate your time.

BM: My pleasure.

Q: Thank you very much.

BM: Thank you.

Q: Take care, bye, bye.