



**A TRIBUTE TO GEORGE CARLIN HOSTED BY WHOOPI GOLDBERG**

**March 24, 2010**

**LIVE from the New York Public Library**

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**Celeste Bartos Forum**

**GEORGE CARLIN:** To get around a lot of this, I decided to worship the sun, but as I said, I don't pray to the sun. You know who I pray to? Joe Pesci. **(laughter/applause)** Joe Pesci. Joe Pesci. Two reasons. First of all, I think he's a good actor, okay? To me that counts. Second, he looks like a guy who can get things done. **(laughter/applause)** Joe Pesci doesn't fuck around. **(laughter/applause)** Doesn't fuck around. In fact—in fact, Joe Pesci came through on a couple of things that God was having trouble with. For years I asked God to do something about my noisy neighbor with the barking dog. Joe Pesci straightened that cocksucker out with one visit. **(laughter/applause)**

There is no God. None. Not one. No God, never was. In fact, I'm going to put it this way. If there is a God, if there is a God, may he strike this audience dead. **(laughter/applause)** See, nothing happened. Nothing happened, everybody's okay. Tell you what. Tell you what. I'll raise the stakes, I'll raise the stakes a little bit. If there is a God, may he strike me dead. See, nothing happened. Wait. I've got a little cramp in my leg **(laughter)** and my balls hurt **(laughter)**, plus, I'm blind. Now I'm okay again. Must have been Joe Pesci, huh? **(laughter/applause)**

**PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER:** Thank you, George Carlin. My name is Paul Holdengräber, and I'm the Director of Public Programs at The New York Public Library. As many of you know, my goal here at the Library is quite simple—to make the lions roar, to make Patience and Fortitude roar. My department, as I said, is called LIVE from the New York Public Library. I once had the great pleasure of featuring an event on obituaries called Dead from the New York Public Library where I had half of the undertakers of the *New York Times* present. I was interested to learn that our emcee tonight, Whoopi Goldberg, began her career working in a funeral parlor. I would love to know more about that part of her life.

It is a great honor for us to pay tribute here at the Library to George Carlin. No better place, I believe, in the world could have a tribute to George Carlin, a man for whom words mattered so much, a man who was absolutely never pusillanimous and always pungent with his words. Whoopi Goldberg and others will introduce you to our

wonderful cast of characters, who are in order of appearance Jerry Stiller and Anne Meara, who will be joined onstage by Ben and Amy Stiller, Lewis Lapham, Kevin Smith, Dylan Brody, Kelly Carlin, Tony Hendra, Patrick Carlin, Floyd Abrams, and Louis C.K.

The impetus for tonight was Tony Hendra's book, which he cowrote with George Carlin, or the other way around, I'm not sure. Perhaps Tony will explain. The book, which is wonderful, is fittingly entitled *Last Words*. From the bottom of my heart, I would like to thank Tony Hendra and Kelly Carlin for all the work and passion they put into making this evening possible. Please stand and please join me in thanking them. **(applause)** You need not stand again, though I would love you to stand again, because I would also like to thank my entire team, who helped put this together with me, and first and foremost, my LIVE from the New York Public Library producer, Meg Stemmler. **(applause)**

I now leave you in the perfect company of Whoopi Goldberg, encouraging you first to become supporters and Friends of the New York Public Library. For just forty dollars a year you can become a Friend of the New York Public Library. If you ask me, that's a cheap date. Encouraging you to learn more about our LIVE programs, for instance, next week we have David Remnick in conversation with Ta-Nehisi Coates discussing Barack Obama and race. George Prochnik speaking about the importance of silence in a noisy world. We intend to start the evening with at least one moment or one minute of silence. Read the announcement about that evening in particular. It really is quite fascinating to find out how shrimps or elephants hear. Come hear Patti Smith, who I will be interviewing, Peter Carey, who Edmund White will talk to. And in June I will be

entertaining myself with John Waters, as well as Christopher Hitchens, who's publishing his memoirs now. That's something I think quite interesting and his memoir is called *Hitch-22*. We also have an extraordinary evening lined up with the photographer Lena Herzog, we end the season with an event on the World Cup, yes, on soccer. So stay tuned for that. Join our e-mail list and you will remain, as they say, au courant. And now, ladies and gentlemen, hosting not the Oscars but better yet, a LIVE from the New York Public Library event, it doesn't get better, is Whoopi Goldberg in a tribute to the late and great George Carlin.

**(applause)**

**WHOOPI GOLDBERG:** First, thank you for that really interesting introduction. It was a little PBS-like, **(laughter)** but I'm surprised you don't have an evening about curling, **(laughter)** but now that I've suggested it, I'm sure you'll get the curling experts to come up and help us out with shit like that. I'm going to briefly just give you a little of me about George Carlin. I for some reason have had George Carlin in my life since I was little. My mother introduced me to him. She woke me out of a dead sleep to come see him on some show, and from then on it was love. It was love and understanding that if he could walk such a funny line that it might be possible for me. And then she really messed me up and showed me Richard Pryor, and so you see what happened. **(laughter)** Those two men, along with a woman called Totie Fields, were instrumental in forming a lot of my style of comedy, which is a little bit out there, I know, for most people.

And tonight is particularly wonderful after Joe Biden said “fuck” and everybody lost their mind. **(applause)** You see, George would totally understand it, but apparently people were losing their minds—“oh my God, the vice president said fuck!” Let us not forget that Dick Cheney said “fuck off” to somebody in the chamber, so I don’t think it was as bad, but fuck exists all through our nation, and I’m proud to say that I’m a fan of fuck.

**(laughter)**

Having said that, let me begin the evening. **(laughter)** Jerry Stiller and Anne Meara. We are honored to kick off this tribute with these two folks who have themselves made huge insanely great contributions to comedy both as legendary comedians and apparently as the parents, because I keep forgetting, of two very seriously funny kids. Jerry Stiller and Anne Meara, those are not the kids, but they’ll introduce their children. Please come up, Jerry and Anne.

**(laughter)**

**ANNE MEARA:** Is this on? Is this just for me to hold? No, it’s on. Okay. What were those pictures we saw being drawn before? Does anyone know? Is it like a code thing? Secret? Speak up, I can’t hear you. Okay. We’re not here because of the drawings, are we? We’re here for George and for Kelly and Patrick, and it’s been wonderful for us to have crossed paths with George, even though we’re older. You know that?

**JERRY STILLER:** Listen, I just have to tell you—I just wanted to say I hate memorials, because to tell you the truth, I’m not feeling too hot myself, **(laughter)** but I have to tell you about why—I can talk for myself at this moment.

**ANNE MEARA:** You can talk for me.

**JERRY STILLER:** For both of us. I have to say that I went to college and there was a teacher who talked about a man named Joseph Tallmer. Tallmer was s a theorist and a drama critic. He had a theory about actors. He said that—

**ANNE MEARA:** Are you going to remember this or what?

**JERRY STILLER:** So here’s what he said: superior intelligence makes for middling actors, and middling intelligence makes for superior actors.

**ANNE MEARA:** That man was a drug addict.

**(laughter)**

**JERRY STILLER:** Of course that did not apply to George Carlin, who was both superior in intellect and also a wonderful actor. I once had a conversation with George. I said to him, “George, have you ever aspired to be on Broadway? You could have been a great Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman*, you could have played Hickey in *Iceman*

*Cometh*. “No,” he said, “Jerry, to tell you to the truth, “are you drinking? He said, “no, Jerry,” he said, “you know, if I had a chance to play Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman*, he said, I would have had to hide behind the character written by Arthur Miller, and I really would much rather play myself, where there’s nobody else to hide behind.” And that I thought was profound, and I still think it does, because from that moment on, it launched all the other comics who came out of this place who started doing themselves, but that’s all I have to say, because we’ve got a long evening.

**ANNE MEARA:** Okay, fine, Jerry, fine, thank you for that heartfelt thing. **(applause)** I think we’re supposed to have Amy and Ben come up with us, but I wanted to read you a letter first? Should I read that first? Yeah. Is that Tony? Tony’s speaking, I knew it was Tony. You really can drop the accent, you’ve been here forty fucking years. **(laughter)** I mean, it’s affected. **(laughter)** I was going and I was looking for correspondence, and Jody Eisenstein and John Eaton, they found this letter that was sent to us, this e-mail, and I thought we’d split it up and read, and if it’s too long, I’ll just cut off to the thing, whatever. And it’s from George.

**JERRY STILLER:** It’s dated January 9, 2006. I feel like that woman on the Good Morning show character, who was the daughter of Zbigniew Brzezinski.

**ANNE MEARA:** Mika! I can’t stand her, she’s a fake liberal. What a piece of caca, come on, those guys she’s working with. Ask him about that woman who worked in his

office, Mr. Scarborough, who's dead. I check the Internet, I believe every conspiracy theory there is. **(laughter)**

Here's George's e-mail, a group e-mail, not just to me and Jerry but to his friends, and he says, "Hi fucks, sorry, folks, folks, there's a difference, it's small but it's there. I know a lot of you don't like mass e-mailings. Well, tough shit. This is the easiest way for me to tell all of you the following wonderful Christmas tale. December 27th was my first AA birthday—one year sober. By now it's a year and twelve days, good for me. I celebrated that birthday in the hospital with congestive heart failure and pneumonia. I spent eight days in there, Christmas Eve through New Year's Day. It was a bit of a struggle, but what the fuck, I had nothing to do but get well."

**JERRY STILLER:** "When I went in I was so short of breath I couldn't walk fifty feet without beginning to breathe, and walking up a flight of stairs required a few minutes of recovery and regaining my breath. It's all part of congestive heart failure, which is a condition, not an event. There are degrees of heart failure. It's an unfortunately named condition—it sounds so final—but it is a condition with its ages and stages. It's not an event, it doesn't mean your heart stopped."

**ANNE MEARA:** "Hospital stays are little more than a series of insults, injuries, inconveniences, and indignities, but if you're lucky and you get out safely without one of those hospital-spawned drug-resistant viral infections, they can get help you can get well

or at least they can keep an eye on you as you get well.” Go, go, go—ain’t it cute how we work together?

**JERRY STILLER:** This is like sex in a strange way, but I want to tell you something.

**(laughter)**

**ANNE MEARA:** The closest we’re going to get to it, I’ll tell you that.

**(laughter)**

**JERRY STILLER:** Secrets of the damned. **(laughter)** Thank you very much. I get congratulated once in a while. I might get lucky tonight, who the hell knows? Thank you George Carlin for that, anyway. “Being hooked up to monitors is terribly restrictive. You can’t reach far enough to get things off your table, and you can’t twist around for any reason. If you do, you pull the monitor leads, which are attached to a whole lot of hairs on your chest, so when you stretch or twist around, you pulls a whole lot of hairs”—that’s the funny part of George, he pulls a whole lot of hairs—“I don’t like that among the many.”

**ANNE MEARA:** “Daily IVs and blood draws also involve tape being placed on hairy areas and later removed, either slowly or savagely. Either way it hurts. Fuck you. It hurts. I’d rather have a spear lodged squarely in my neck than have thirty or forty of my hairs

pulled out all at once. I finally taught all the nurses about the little adhesive remover pads that were hidden deeply away in their supply closet, then I got hold of a small supply of my own, and from then on I removed the tapes myself.”

**JERRY STILLER:** “In the hospital only a few nurses speak enough English for you to be able to speak to them without any sort of nuance. By the way, if you ever check in a hospital, take a course in Tagalog first. The reason the Philippines are losing population can be traced directly to America’s hospital manpower needs, at least on this West Coast hospital.”

**ANNE MEARA:** “When I was in there, I got another angioplasty done and they placed a double stent in my right circumflex coronary artery.” Is that true, Kelly, he’s not making up these words?

**JERRY STILLER:** Ask me, I got one myself. Go ahead.

**ANNE MEARA:** Okay. “Anyway, at least I’m not having any symptoms that would indicate otherwise, it’s healing well and so I am generally. I’ve been home now for a week, and I feel a lot better, though there is a way to go yet. Eight days in a hospital bed is its own physical insult and you need to regain strength from that alone.” Your turn.

**JERRY STILLER:** “I am improving and getting stronger and breathing easier. Still a way to go, but I’m getting there. By the way, my Christmas present to myself was cutting

my annual show schedule from 150 nights to just eighty nights. I did it by eliminating all Las Vegas appearances. God, I hate that fucking place. **(laughter)** The audiences are bone dumb,” how ’bout that, Steve? “Bone fucking dumb. Eliminating those ten weeks of torture will eliminate a great, great deal of stress in my life. Believe me, a great deal of stress will disappear just like that. Free at last! Free at last! Great God Almighty, Free at Last!”

**ANNE MEARA:** And it’s signed, “Yours forever, Big George from the coast. P.S. No need to reply unless you need medical advice.”

**(applause)**

**ANNE MEARA:** Amy and Ben, why don’t you join us?

**JERRY STILLER:** Listen, this is the part of the show where Aldino Ray brings on the King Sisters. Oh you do remember, right? Here there are, Ben and Amy, who have had to put up with a lot of meshuggahs in their life.

**AMY STILLER:** I don’t want to get deep, here. We already did that, right?

**BEN STILLER:** Love the sex bit.

**(laughter)**

**AMY STILLER:** That's really reassuring, that's fun.

**BEN STILLER:** I hope you get lucky, hope you like get lucky.

**JERRY STILLER:** What did he say?

**AMY STILLER:** He hopes you get lucky tonight!

**BEN STILLER:** It is disgusting, yeah.

**AMY STILLER:** Welcome to our world, thank you. So, you know, I know George through Kelly, who's a friend of mine. When I think of George Carlin, I think of heart, and I think he had an ability to reach people intimately in mass groups, so whether you were watching him on HBO, or you were in a club, you felt like you knew him, and I think that was his gift, but what I loved was his absurdity and the way he was able to, you know, talk about huge issues and injustice, but then just sort of poke fun of the, you know, our own narcissism and stuff like that. That's what's I relate to most of all.

**BEN STILLER:** I just want to say, because there's a lot of people who are going to talk, but for me George Carlin was, you know, he was one of the comedy gods, right up there there's like Robert Klein and George Carlin and then Steve Martin, Bill Murray, Albert Brooks, these guys were the guys. And I—just wanted to say quickly—I was lucky

enough to get a chance to work with him in one of the first jobs I ever had, which was a shitty Fox movie of the week, called *Working Trash*, where George and I, in 1990, I think, where we played janitors.

**AMY STILLER:** I remember the picture—you were both wearing janitor suits.

**BEN STILLER:** Who we worked in a building, we were janitors, and there was a stock market firm, where we tried to beat the stock market, and it was me and George and George Wallace, the comedian, and Buddy Ebsen.

**(laughter)**

**AMY STILLER:** Oh my God.

**BEN STILLER:** Yes, Buddy Ebsen. I worked with Buddy Ebsen. It sucked because.

**JERRY STILLER:** Very popular dancing comedian, played the Capitol Theatre in 1942, with June Allyson and Kathryn Grayson onstage with that girl who could twist and turn.

**ANNE MEARA:** He's deceased. He's dead.

**BEN STILLER:** Yes, anyway, sorry, okay.

**(laughter)**

**JERRY STILLER:** I wanted to make it referential here.

**AMY STILLER:** This is a new reality show, right here, okay?

**(laughter)**

**JERRY STILLER:** I stayed for two shows at the Capital that day.

**ANNE MEARA:** Nobody cares.

**(laughter)**

**JERRY STILLER:** The movie was *Back to Bataan*, with Robert Walker.

**BEN STILLER:** Mind like a steel trap.

**(laughter)**

**ANNE MEARA:** Ben, talk over him.

**BEN STILLER:** No, no, anyway, but the thing sucked, but it was because he didn't write it, and George Carlin was about his mind and his words, but it was a opportunity for me to actually get a chance to meet one of my idols, and he was incredibly kind and warmhearted, and I just wanted to say it was just an incredible honor to even meet him ever. I have to say, I'm on Twitter. Yeah, I'm cool, and somebody tweeted a George Carlinism, which I thought was great, which is Frisbeeterianism is the belief that when you die your soul goes up on the roof and gets stuck. **(laughter)** That's great. And another George Carlin, one last thing, George Carlin had a bit about golf courses. He hated golf courses, and he thought that all homeless people should be taken to golf courses to live. And, you know what, that's exactly what's happening in Haiti right now. He called it. George Carlin was a genius and that's all I want to say, thank you.

**ANNE MEARA:** And we're happy to be included, and we thank Tony Hendra, we thank Kelly, Kelly Carlin-McCall, and we thank. I wish I had known Mary, your mom, Patrick, I wish I'd known her, and the only nice thing I can say about the Catholic Church is it gave birth to George and he probably left. Thank you.

**(applause)**

**WHOOPI GOLDBERG:** Wow. **(laughter)** Wow. Damn. That was deep. The whole sex thing freaked me out, too. **(laughter)** For over thirty years, Lewis Lapham edited the venerable literary magazine *Harper's*. He is one of America's leading essayists and

founder and editor of *Lapham's Quarterly*. As it turns out, he is also a huge George Carlin fan. Please welcome Lewis Lapham.

**(laughter)**

**LEWIS LAPHAM:** When I see and listen to George Carlin I think of him placing the ferocity of his wit at the service of his conscience, pitting it against what Mark Twain called the “peacock shams of the world’s colossal humbug.” Twain construed satire as a crime of arson, a torch of words tossed into the hospitality tents of pompous and self-righteous cant. So also George Carlin, who, to the best of my knowledge and recollection, belongs within a tradition of American dissent in which is to be found the work of Ambrose Bierce, H. L. Mencken, Philip Wylie, Finley Peter Dunne, Dawn Powell, Sinclair Lewis, Terry Southern, Richard Pryor, Lenny Bruce, Albert Jay Nock, Kurt Vonnegut, and Tom Paine. Carlin was a comedian, but his purpose was dissent, his standing up to say, “No, we do not agree,” reminding people that in a free society we can’t know what we’re about or whether we’ll telling ourselves too many lies unless we can see and hear one another think out loud.

The thinking out loud was the bone and marrow of Carlin’s art. What distinguishes his performances from the comedy routines that set up easy jokes in the shooting galleries of stale cliché. Knowing that liberty has ambitious and devoted enemies, Carlin, like Twain and Bierce and Lenny Bruce also knew that the survival of the American democracy depends less on the size of its armies than on the capacity of its individual citizens to rely

if only momentarily on the strength of their own minds. He sent his humor on a moral errand, what Twain called painted fire, intended to preserve his fellow Americans from being shriveled into sheep. The enterprise has become increasingly rare and therefore increasingly valuable during the latter half of the century denominated by *Time* magazine as America's own. The pretensions to world empire, joined with the triumph of network television, have boomed the production of shriveled sheep and seriously depleted the capacity of individual citizens willing to think, if only momentarily, for themselves.

The Cold War served to instill the habits of fearful obedience and to inhibit any sudden movement of the dissenting spirit. Network television is, as Carlin well knew, made by a machine and meant to sell you stuff and keep you quiet, something to be seen and not heard, the picture of a thought, not the thought itself. Carlin preferred live performance, on the road for as many as 150 nights a year, because in the theater, words have consequence, and one can hear what is being said. Words were important to Carlin. Words, he said, are all we have, really, not only the heavy seven words that can't be heard on television, the ones that infect your mind and keep your country from winning the war, but the four hundred thousand other words in the English language that, when well and truly used, attack pride victorious and evil arrogance and add to the common store of human energy and hope.

In the 1980s the thrust of American humor reversed direction. Jokes that once favored the least fortunate members of the society at the expense of their selfish and self-important overloads turned into merry witticisms playing on the anxiety of the happy few

confronted with scary apparitions from the lower depths, worried about ragged street persons and ugly dogs and angry hotel clerks, wondering how to kill a rat with an oboe, how to turn unbearable pain into extra income, what to wear on the toilet. Carlin didn't take the bait. The strength of his comedy is his standing up to the fact of the society as it really is, not as it is advertised by NBC and MasterCard. He didn't stoop to malicious gossip about wayward celebrity and malformed political abstraction, to the freeze-dried sound bites dropped into boiling water by Rush Limbaugh, Keith Olbermann. His humor is counterpoint to the tragedy of the human predicament, in which, as you will see from the following clip, he was careful to include himself.

**(applause)**

**GEORGE CARLIN:** I'm not one of these people who's worried about everything. You've got these people around you—the country's full of them now, people walking around all day long, all day long, worried about everything, worried about the air, worried about the water, worried about the soil, worried about pesticides, insecticides, food additives, carcinogens, worried about radon gas, worried about asbestos. Worried about saving endangered species. Let me tell you about endangered species, all right? Saving endangered species is just one more arrogant attempt by humans to control nature. It is arrogant meddling, it's what got us in trouble in the first place. Doesn't anybody understand that? Interfering with nature. Over ninety percent, way over ninety percent of all the species that have ever lived on this planet, ever lived, are gone. They're extinct. We didn't kill them all. **(laughter)** They just disappeared. That's what nature does. They

disappear these days at the rate of twenty-five a day. Regardless of our behavior, I mean. Irrespective of how we act on this planet, twenty-five species that were here today will be gone tomorrow. Let them go gracefully. Leave nature alone. Haven't we done enough?

We're so self-important. So self-important. Everybody's going to save something now. Save the trees, save the bees, save the whale, save those snails. **(laughter)** And the greatest arrogance of all, save the planet. What? Are these fucking people kidding me? **(laughter)** We don't know how to take care of ourselves yet. We haven't learned how to help one another. We're going to save the fucking planet? **(laughter)** I am getting tired of that shit. Besides, there's nothing wrong with the planet. The planet is fine. The people are fucked. **(laughter/applause)** The people are fucked. Compared to the people, the planet is doing great.

The planet has been here for four and a half billion years, all right. Four and a half billion. We've been here what a hundred thousand, maybe, two hundred thousand, maybe, and we've only been engaged in heavy industry for a little over two hundred years. Two hundred years versus four and a half billion, and we have the conceit to think that somehow we're a threat, that somehow we're going to put in jeopardy this beautiful little blue/green ball that's just a-floatin' around the sun? The planet has been through a lot worse than us for a long time. Been through earthquakes, volcanoes, plate tectonics, continental drift, solar flares, sunspots, magnetic storms, the magnetic reversal of the poles, bombardments for hundreds of thousands of years by comets and asteroids and meteors, sandstorms, erosion of all kinds, cosmic radiation, worldwide fires, worldwide

floods, recurring ice ages, **(applause)** and we think, we think some aluminum cans and some plastic bags are going to make a difference? Planet isn't going anywhere. We are. **(laughter/applause)** We're going away. We're going away. Pack your shit, folks, we're going away.

And we won't leave much of a trace, either, thank God for that, maybe a little Styrofoam, maybe a little Styrofoam, that'll be here and we'll be long gone, just another failed mutation, just another closed-end biological mistake, an evolutionary cul-de-sac. The planet will shake us off like a bad case of fleas, **(laughter)** a surface nuisance. You wanna know how the planet's doing, ask those people in Pompeii who are frozen into position from volcanic ash **(laughter)** how the planet's doing. Wanna know if the planet's all right, ask the people in Mexico City or Armenia, or a hundred other places, buried under thousands of tons of earthquake rubble, if they feel like a real threat to the planet this week. How about the people in Kilauea, Hawaii, who build their homes right next to an active volcano and then wonder why they have lava in the living room.

**(laughter/applause)**

The planet is going to be here a long, long, long time after we're gone, and it will heal itself, it will cleanse itself, because that's what it does, it's a self-correcting system. The air and the water will recover, the earth will be renewed, and, say, if it's true that plastic doesn't degrade, well the planet will simply incorporate plastic into a new paradigm, "the Earth plus plastic." The planet doesn't share our prejudice towards plastic. Plastic came out of the earth, the earth probably sees plastic as just another of its children. Could be

the only reason the earth allowed us to be spawned from it in the first place, it wanted plastic for itself. **(laughter/applause)** Didn't know how to make it. Needed us. Could be the answer to our age-old philosophical question, "why are we here?" Plastic, assholes.

**(laughter)**

**WHOOPI GOLDBERG:** The gentleman who spoke before this started, if I croak before you do, will you, like, come talk about me? **(laughter)** Cause you're as deep as they come, baby. Love town. Anyway, that classic essay is also the favorite Carlin piece of our next guest: screenwriter, director, producer, comic-book writer, author, comedian, actor. You know, Kevin Smith is well rounded. He just does everything. And he bucks no shit from anybody, and I love him for that. Please welcome Kevin Smith.

**(applause)**

**KEVIN SMITH:** You'll have to excuse me, I got real nervous at the beginning of the thing when I first sat down, because I'm not a bright individual, and I saw the empty chair up here, and it took me about half the show to figure out this is meant to represent George. I thought it was a test of some sort, and I thought if I didn't fit in the chair will I be asked to leave? **(laughter/applause)** And maybe it's just me, but I heard whispers of "too fat to eulogize," **(laughter)** but fuck those people . I'm here for George.

Ladies and gentlemen, George Carlin gave me everything that I have in life as an adult, professionally and personally. I'm going to try to get through this, bear with me. When I was a kid, I grew up with very Catholic parents, confused Catholic parents, they were pretty—they believed in religion unless it cost a lot. And they proved this by when I was a kid they would take me to like Disney World, my brother and sister, my mother was there, I would go into the gift shop, like most kids, and be like, "can I get this?" And they'd be like, "Yeah, take it outside, and we'll pay for it," and I would do that, I would take a rubber snake outside, and I owned a rubber snake from the Jungle Cruise, or, you know, a Goofy toy or something like, and soon they were just following me out of the store, not paying for it as they said they would when I left, and I said, "What are you guys doing?" And they're like, "We're going to send a check back to Mr. Disney when we get home," and so I was like, "Right on, right on, what a great system and what a great country this is, **(laughter)** and Walt Disney's a generous, kind man." It wasn't until years later, I was talking to my brother and sister, and I was just like, "Wouldn't it be great if we went back to Disney World, and we could just get stuff again and then Mom and Dad send a check back to Disney World like they did?" My brother and sister looked at me like I was just, "But Kevin, you're twenty-eight. **(laughter)** Do you really not understand what happened back then?" I said, "No," and they said, "They weren't paying for that, they were just telling you to take it and go, because they thought Disney was overpriced, that's why you could have Mickey Mouse ears, but you couldn't have your name in it," and I was just like, "All right, I get it, so they're fucking crooks," and they made me an accomplice.

But it was weird because we were Catholic, and that was the family household that we had. The night that I watched *Carlin at Carnegie*, I was absolutely reborn, and it was a defining moment in my household. My father had always been about comedy and feeding me Redd Foxx records and George Carlin records, and stuff like that, and I'd never seen him perform. He was going to be on HBO, and my mother was like, "Oh, I don't know. I don't know. He curses a lot." My father, "Don't worry, it's just bad language." George opens with a wonderful ditty that kind of split my parents in two, and it was, "Have you ever noticed that the people who are against abortion are people you wouldn't want to fuck in the first place?" **(laughter)**

Now, my father was cracking up. **(laughter)** My mother was looking sternly at my father and I was like, "What's abortion?" **(laughter)** And she was like, "Great, Don, great, you tell him what abortion is," and left the room, and when she came back twenty minutes later, maybe thirty minutes, George was into the Rice Krispies bit, and suddenly the same woman who had such a reaction to that joke that my father laughed at but she did not, was, like, getting into the Rice Krispies bit, man. And I appreciated that. Suddenly I got it. This was a man who could work intelligently, and he could work for stupid people, like Mom. **(laughter)** And because of that, I was like, "That's what I would like to do, I would like to do that with my whole life, be able to just be up there, say things, and have people listen and I don't know, express yourself," and he seemed to do it so effortlessly, and I looked at the man on TV and I just wanted so much to be him. Everything about him, I looked up to. I was like, "my God, he's so funny and he's so smart, and he's so thin," **(laughter)** and I'd like to—"**(laughter)** Maybe I could be that—you know, it was

just the guy that I wanted to be. I spent most of my life trying to be George Carlin and one day I made a movie and boom my career started, and that movie was full of potty-mouth language, very, very potty-mouth language, and one critic in the world compared it to George Carlin and quietly I was like, anyway.

Years later, I had the opportunity. I finally had a Carlin-worthy piece of material that I felt like I could approach the legend with, because this man, again, gave me everything. I'm married today because I made a movie that got me some money, and I paid some broad, and we got married, you know that, I mean, bought a kid in the process, so people wouldn't be like, "You loser," I'd be like "look." So, for me, when I got the first opportunity to kind of be like, "Oh, I'm going to get George Carlin in a movie," this was this movie that I made called *Dogma* that I wrote, and I gave it to George because it was so much up George's alley and in his wheelhouse. The first time we worked together, and it was amazing.

But he was not the dude who would just sit there and try to make you laugh. You could have a real conversation with George. He didn't just turn it on and be like, "Okay, you're standing in front of George Carlin, I'm going to make you laugh." You could just sit there and talk about boring shit. To be honest with you, George never really tried to make me laugh in person, and I loved him for it, because I just wanted to sit there and listen to him talk about normal things, because I could see him be funny on TV.

But I loved him so much I would keep trying to bring him back, and I brought him back for the second movie, called *Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back*, and this where I learned what an actor George Carlin was and how important acting was to him, because I just assumed, “he’s a comic, and he likes being onstage, and he’s a brilliant comic at it, and whatnot, and that’s all he needs.” George always wanted to act and whatnot and I found it while we were making of all movies *Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back*. He’s got a scene where he plays a hitchhiker where all essentially he has to do is blow some dude in a truck. **(laughter)** And he was so flattered that I called him. **(laughter)**

So he did it, we shot, and George, like, between takes, he was just like, “Okay, this guy is talking about the rules of the road and whatnot,” and George goes, “Okay, well, let me understand, do I believe in the rules of the road?” And I was like, “George, the picture’s called *Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back*, don’t think too much, just go like that, “you know, and that was it. But acting was important, and understanding the motivation of the character was so important to him, so and he came back the next time, he’s like, “I don’t know if I’m feeling it,” and I was just like, “You believe in the rules in the road, George. This is what you believe in your heart,” and he’s like, “thank you,” and he went out there and he gave a convincing, very convincing, wide-eyed cocksucking performance, you know. **(laughter)**

When we were done with it, I went back to the van with him, because we shot really far out, and we were driving back to base camp, and I was sitting with him in the van, I said, “How’d you like it?” And he’s, “I had a good time, had a good time, so glad I was able to

make it out,” because, as mentioned, dude was always on the stage somewhere, so I said, “I can’t thank you enough for coming out, it was really hysterical shit. What can I do for you, man? I know you broke us off the time.” He goes, “Kevin, don’t mention it. Just do me a favor. If you’re going to do anything for me, just write me my dream role for acting.” I said, “What would that be?” And he said, “I want to play a clergyman who strangles six children.” **(laughter)** And I said, “George, we already made our religious picture.” And he goes, “well, let’s do another one,” and I said, “If I can, I’ll get back to you.”

And so I wrote this movie called *Jersey Girl*, which nobody liked, but George very much and I sent George the script, and I’d written a lead role for him to play, of Ben Affleck’s father, I sent him the script cover letter, “George, this is the part I want you to play, I know it’s a real big part, but I think you could do it.” And he calls me about a day after he read it. I said, “how’re you doing? What’d you think?” And he goes, “Well, there’s a kid in it but I don’t fucking strangle her.” **(laughter)** And I can’t help but think it would have been so much better for my career if I had let him strangle that little girl. **(laughter)**

But it didn’t matter, man, because he fucking loved acting, that’s the thing probably a lot of people didn’t know about George. You see him in his element, you watch him in the clips, and he’s a brilliant master at it, but my God, he loved acting so much. That’s what he wanted to do most in life was be an actor, and he’d say that on set. He was like, “I love doing this, man, this is what I always wanted to do,” and I was like, “really? This?” and he was like, “Maybe not this movie particularly, **(laughter)** but good movies in

general” and whatnot. So for me I was like, “You’ve gotta be involved in this.” He came out and treated it so fucking seriously man, so seriously, gave it his all and whatnot, because he felt, he told me, “this is the moment I’ve been waiting for my life, to show people that I can like be somebody that’s not the comic, just inhabit the character. This is a salt-of-the-earth guy, I can totally get my head around it.

And he would get his head around it in weird, wild ways. He’d come up to me and be like, Kevin, we’re in the middle of rehearsals, me, Ben Affleck and him, we’re about to start, an hour later other people come it’s just the three of us. He goes, “Kevin, I just want you to know, there’s a character named Greenie, that I’m always fighting with.” I’m, “I know. I wrote it, George.” He goes, “all right, the thing is what’s not there on the page is you never say why I’m always fighting with Greenie, but like what I want you to know is I’ve come up with a backstory for myself about why I fight with Greenie all the time, and I wrote it down, I committed it to memory, and I’ve since thrown it out, it will never come up in your movie, but I want you to know that if you need me to reference something, I’m going to pull it and that’s where the words are coming to come from.” And I turned to Affleck, and I was like, “Why can’t you ever be this fucking good, man?”

**(laughter)**

And he was absolutely devoted to the craft, and we tried so desperately to get him into the last flick that we made while he was around, which was *Zack and Miri*, but again, his touring schedule was really weird, and I remember one of the last conversations I had with him, the last conversation I actually had with him, was while we were in the midst

of *Zack and Miri*, and he was telling me he wasn't going to be able to make it out to play this one-day role, and he was just like, "You know what, Kevin, don't worry about it, I'll see you on the next one," and that was that.

So he's not here, and, my God, I miss him so much, and I can't ever say that like we were close friends or something like that, you know what I'm saying? You know, a lot of these people come up, talk about him like I knew George when I worked with him but he made everything possible. It was so weird to be able to meet the guy and work with the guy who fucking made it possible for you, man, who inspired you, made you want to get up there and do it and whatnot, and George just kept giving, man, even in death, fucking George Carlin gave me. Because once George died, people started reconsidering *Jersey Girl*. **(laughter)** Thank you so much, thank you, George.

I love you so much. Ladies and gentlemen, I'm going to introduce you to a man who's far better with words than I am, and we talked briefly about how to intro, and he was very darling, because he goes, "Just make sure you end with my name," and I was like, "Wow, that's wild, because I was going to start with him and then like say a bunch of other shit, but then I was like, I should end with him, he's very smart." Ladies and gentlemen, he is a playwright, he is an author, and he is a humorist and his name is Dylan Brody.

Welcome him.

**(laughter)**

**DYLAN BRODY:** Thank you. Kelly, Tony, thank you so much for letting me tell this story on this night. It is an honor to be here. In my early thirties, I began to fear that I simply wasn't funny enough to die young. **(laughter)** Part of my understanding of the comedy world was that an early death was the surest route to immortality and certainly the quickest, and no one was comparing me to Lenny Bruce, and nobody was comparing me to Bill Hicks, and I started to shift my focus to my writing, to think about a literary legacy rather than a legacy of comedic potential unfulfilled.

And right around this time a friend made me aware that George Carlin was going to be at a party at a nightclub very near to my home in Studio City. So I took a chance—it wasn't a big chance that I took, it cost me nothing. I put a videotape of my standup reel in a manila envelope with a letter that said, "You're one of my heroes. I love your work. I hope you'll enjoy some of mine." And I wrote on the envelope, "For George Carlin, please hold for arrival," and I dropped it off at the nightclub, and on the way back to my car, I thought about how cool it was that George Carlin might watch my work on a television in the way that I had watched his work when I was a child.

I adored him as a child. When I saw him on television his rhythms were so natural, his jokes so conversational that I could instantly memorize an entire routine, and the next morning I would recite them word for word over my syrup-soaked toaster waffles. I remember my father saying, "That's not yours, Dylan, you didn't write that." **(laughter)** Eleven years old, I was learning about intellectual property rights. **(laughter)**

I would watch anything I thought might have George on it. I would lie on the floor of our cold Upstate New York house with my head resting against Dusty, the great matted sheepdog mutt of my youth, through insufferable hours of *Sonny and Cher* and the *Mac Davis* “when you’re hot, you’re hot” *Show* because I had seen George on Flip Wilson, and in my young mind all comedy variety shows were probably pretty much the same thing, drawing from the same pool of talent and when he didn’t show up, Dusty would comfort me with his nose, snuffling me.

Dusty, let me say, never died. When I was about fifteen or sixteen, he left home, and we thought he had gone off to the woods to die because we were told that’s what dogs do, but then several months later he came back well brushed and very clean. **(laughter)** And my father called a number on a tag on his collar and a man answered, and my father said, “Are you missing your dog?” And the man said, “No, my dog is lying next to me,” and my father said, “Well, our dog just came home after apparently a lengthy vacation **(laughter)** and he had your number on his collar.” And the man said, “Well, is your dog wearing a red collar?” And my father said, “Yes,” and the man said, “Well, my dog lost a red collar a couple of months ago.” **(laughter)** So my father hypothesized that Dusty had mugged the man’s dog, **(laughter)** stolen his collar, and adopted the new identity to enter the underground dog revolutionary army. The man whose dog had lost the expensive collar was not amused by this.

After a Milk-Bone, Dusty run off again, but for the remainder of the time that we lived in that house, he would come back every few months, looking well cared for. None of us

has been back to Saratoga Springs for a long time now, but I'm quiet certain that Dusty is still there, this immortal dog wandering from home to home, finding new kids to raise and see off to school and then finding a new place to live. But I digress. **(laughter)**

In 1998, in the summer, I had totally given up on my standup career. I was focused on my writing. I was sending in a submission to *Late Night with David Letterman* every week. And they responded positively, and they told me I was very talented and they never offered me a job, and they never asked me for my Social Security number. And one afternoon, as I was spiraling into the late stages of early-onset midlife crisis, the phone rang, and I picked it up, and a voice said, "Hi, Dylan, this is George Carlin," and I began to run through a Rolodex of friends who might adopt that identity as part of a prank, so I said, "Uh-huh." And the voice said, "Listen, I just looked at your tape, I'm sorry it took me so long, it's been sitting on top of my VCR for six months. Your cover letter was touching and sincere," and I said, "Holy shit, it's really you!" because I'm very cool. **(laughter)**

And George said, "Yeah, anyway, I didn't think it was polite just to leave you hanging without at least picking up the phone. You're really very funny, and I thoroughly enjoyed looking at your work." I should have been thrilled to hear this, I'm thrilled now to know that I did hear this from my hero, but at the time, I was sad and stoned, deeply despondent, over the direction my career seemed to be going. So what I said was, "Great, would you mind telling the assholes at *Letterman* that?" And George said, "Oh, let me call you back." And my hero hung up on me. Seven minutes and nine bong hits later,

**(laughter)** the phone rang again, and I picked it up, and George said, “All right, I called the woman I deal with over there when they book me. I told her you’re a very funny young political comic and they should take you seriously. Is that okay?” **(laughter)** It was. I said, “Are you kidding me? Yes, that’s great! Yes!” And he said, “All right, then, well, take care, and good luck with all of it man, you’re really very good.” And he hung up again.

I don’t think I ever said “thank you” in this phone call. Here’s the thing. It was a small thing for him to call me. It was a slightly larger thing for him to call Letterman on my behalf, but it cost him nothing, and it meant a great deal to me. As a young comic starting out I believed that I could blaze my way into history with a six-gun wit. Now, walking the world, an adult grown older than I ever believed I would be, **(laughter)** it has become pretty clear to me that immortality is not earned with one-liners no matter how clever they are. Immortality is earned with a generosity of spirit to those around us, it’s earned with a kind gesture. Immortality is earned with a cold nose on a sad night. Thank you.

**(laughter)**

**WHOOPI GOLDBERG:** My nose is cold. **(laughter)** Now listen, before I get into this next thing I just want to—I’m not sure you all are aware of it, but Tony Hendra, who is the gentleman who called to get me to come and do this, has written this magnificent book, and you can pick it up, it is here, so please make sure you get it, because it is worth the read, it’s really quite fantastic, and I sent it to my mom, because she really digs, she

really digs Carlin. Listen, it's time to meet two people whose idea this tribute was. Miss Kelly Carlin—she's many things: a writer, performance artist, a personal life coach, a Jungian psychologist. I didn't know that—I've gotta talk to you. **(laughter)** Most important tonight is what it says on her Web site. She projects, protects, child please. She protects, cares for, and continues her father's legacy. You know I'm dyslexic, right? And Tony Hendra, who's an actor, comedian, editor, screenwriter, he's George's coauthor, you may know him better as the cricket bat-wielding manager of Spinal Tap, **(applause)** but he's okay, so please welcome Kelly Carlin and Tony Hendra.

**(applause)**

**KELLY CARLIN:** Hi, Dad. Words. My dad, as you all know, loved words. So much so that he tortured me at times about them. More specifically, my whole life, almost up until the day he died, he used to do this little thing to me. We'd be at some event, either at the house, or maybe at a party or in public somewhere, and at the end of the event or the evening he would hand me a little sheet of paper with a word on it that somehow I had managed earlier in the day to completely mispronounce at some time. And it would be phonetically spelled out, and then he would whisper to me the correct pronunciation. One particular time it was, "Honey, it's conscious, not conscience," and the other one, which was kind of surprising to me and one that I still haven't adopted, "It's short-lived, not short-lived." So there you go. There's a little education right there.

The reason I bring up words is because my father was an author and writer and he really felt that he was a writer first, a performer second. But more specifically he had written three books. He'd written *Brain Droppings*, *Napalm and Silly-Putty*, and the one that manages to piss off everyone in the world, *When will Jesus Bring the Pork Chops?*"  
**(applause)** Tony and I are now going to give you a little selection from these books.

Men I can do without.

**TONY HENDRA:** Men who have one long uninterrupted eyebrow.

**(laughter)**

**KELLY CARLIN:** Men who give their genitals a name.

**(laughter)**

**TONY HENDRA:** Women I can do without.

**KELLY CARLIN:** A crying woman with a harpoon gun entering a bar.

**(laughter)**

**TONY HENDRA:** Any woman who repeatedly gives me the high-five during sex.

**(laughter)**

**KELLY CARLIN:** Things you never see.

**TONY HENDRA:** The Latin word for douchebag.

**(laughter)**

**KELLY CARLIN:** A mom-and-pop steel mill.

**(laughter)**

**TONY HENDRA:** Condoms with pictures of the saints.

**(laughter)**

**KELLY CARLIN:** The George Carlin Book Club.

**TONY HENDRA:** *How to Milk a Dog While It's Sleeping.*

**(laughter)**

**KELLY CARLIN:** *How to Make a Small Salad out of Your Work Pants.*

**(laughter)**

**TONY HENDRA:** *Eat, Run, Stay Fit, and Die Anyway.*

**(laughter)**

**KELLY CARLIN:** *Fill Your Life with Croutons.*

**(laughter)**

**TONY HENDRA:** *Why Jews Point.*

**(laughter)**

**KELLY CARLIN:** *The Meaning of Corn.*

**(laughter)**

**TONY HENDRA:** *The Doorway to Norway.*

**(laughter)**

**KELLY CARLIN:** Short takes.

**TONY HENDRA:** You can't fight City Hall, but you can goddamn sure blow it up.

**(laughter)**

**KELLY CARLIN:** You know, there ought to be at least one round state.

**TONY HENDRA:** Nothing rhymes with nostril.

**KELLY CARLIN:** If you can't beat them, arrange to have them beaten.

**(laughter)**

**TONY HENDRA:** Meow means woof in Cat.

**(laughter)**

**KELLY CARLIN:** George Washington's brother was the uncle of our country.

**(laughter)**

**TONY HENDRA:** I never liked a man I didn't meet. **(laughter)** Work on it.

**KELLY CARLIN:** I recently bought a book of free verse for twelve dollars.

**(laughter)**

**TONY HENDRA:** When I was a kid, and a guy got killed in a Western, I always wondered who got his horse.

**KELLY CARLIN:** When Ronald Reagan got Alzheimer's, how could they tell?

**(laughter)**

**TONY HENDRA:** There is now a Starbucks in my pants.

**(laughter)**

**KELLY CARLIN:** More people I can do without.

**TONY HENDRA:** A dentist with blood in his hair.

**(laughter)**

**KELLY CARLIN:** People who know the third verse to “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

**(laughter)**

**TONY HENDRA:** Any lawyer who refers to the police as the Federales.

**(laughter)**

**KELLY CARLIN:** More short takes.

**TONY HENDRA:** Guys don’t seem to be called Lefty anymore.

**KELLY CARLIN:** You know the good part about all the executions in Texas? Fewer Texans.

**(laughter)**

**TONY HENDRA:** Very few Germans know that in honor of her husband, Mrs. Hitler combed her pubic hair to one side.

**(laughter)**

**KELLY CARLIN:** When you step on the brakes, your life is in your foot’s hands.

**(laughter)**

**TONY HENDRA:** Electricity is really just organized lightning.

**KELLY CARLIN:** I always refer to any individual member of the Red Sox as a Red Sock. Is this correct?

**TONY HENDRA:** Although it's untrue that rubbing a toad causes warts, it does give the toad a hard-on.

**(laughter)**

**KELLY CARLIN:** I think I am, therefore I am, I think.

**(laughter)**

**TONY HENDRA:** As far as I call tell, jack shit and diddley-squat are roughly the same amount.

**(laughter)**

**KELLY CARLIN:** A cat will blink when struck with a hammer.

**(laughter)**

**TONY HENDRA:** I don't understand why prostitution is illegal. Selling is legal. Fucking is legal. So why isn't selling fucking legal? **(laughter)** Thank you.

**KELLY CARLIN:** Thank you.

**(applause)**

**TONY HENDRA:** Thank you. As Whoopi mentioned, George's fourth and last book, *Last Words*, I was lucky enough to be the coauthor on. And it was published last Christmas, just about eighteen months after his death, but we started working on it in 1993, and the first task was what kind of book we were actually writing, and George didn't want to write an autobiography. He said only pinheaded criminal business pricks write autobiographies. And we certainly neither of us wanted to espouse the effete Gallicism "memoir," which we decided was a linguist **monglor? 65:19** of "me" and "moir."

So we searched around for a genre we were actually writing in. Because I was doing a certain amount of biography on this book and he was doing a certain amount of autobiography, we decided to split the difference and call it a sortabiography, and that is what we called it forever after. And it was a sortabiography in another way, because

George never really wanted to tell the story of his life, exactly. He wanted to tell, as he put it, the story of his art, how he went from a ninth-grade dropout to a major artist and a major intellect, someone who I think merits the term “our poet laureate of the ridiculous.”

I’ve always thought that calling George a comedian is kind of like calling B. B. King a guitarist, but in this culture, you know, comedy is rarely allowed into the elevated levels of art. Rodney Dangerfield famously said, “I don’t get no respect” as a comedian, but I think actually it’s comedy that doesn’t get any respect, unless you’re three hundred year old and French. **(laughter)** So one of the reasons Kelly and I wanted to hold this tribute at this epicenter of arts and letters in our city, was precisely that, to begin to acknowledge George’s legacy to what he called the vulgar art. So I would now like to introduce his much-loved brother to read from *Last Words*. It’s chapter 1, and it’s about George’s birth and conception. Now would you please welcome to the stage Patrick Carlin?

**67:03**

**PATRICK CARLIN:** How you doing? Thank you. Yeah. I gotta stay near the mike, I know that. I want to thank you all for showing up for George, man. His vibes were everywhere today, I came down Riverside Drive just by accident, it just happened, you know, but that’s how he is, he was always a weird guy, and he loved me with all his heart and soul. I’m going to keep this short and read this beautiful opening to this book. And I did it in the audio version and I had a headset on when I did it, and it was really goofy to be saying words that I had said and words that I had heard him say.

But anyway here it is, kicking off: “Sliding headfirst down a vagina with no clothes on and landing in the freshly shaven crotch of a screaming woman did not seem to be part of God’s plan for me, at least not at first. I’m not one of those people who can boast of having been a sparkle in his mother’s eye. Cinder comes closer. I was conceived in a damp, sand-flecked room in Curly’s Hotel in Rockaway Beach, New York. August 1936. A headline in that Saturday’s New York Post said, “Hot, sticky, rainy weekend begins. High humidity and temperatures in the nineties send millions to the beaches.” At the Paramount Theater in Times Square Bing Crosby and Frances Farmer starred in *Rhythm on the Range*. Mary and Patrick Carlin started yet another doomed Catholic remake of rhythm in the sack. **(laughter)**

“Aaaah. For several generations Rockaway Beach had been a favorite weekend retreat for New York’s alcohol-crazed Irish youth in search of sun and sex. Popular ethnic slurs to the contrary, the Irish do enjoy sex, at least the last ten seconds or so, **(laughter)** but we must admit that Irish foreplay consists of little more than ‘you awake?’ **(laughter)** or the more caring, sensitive, ‘brace yourself, Agnes.’ By the time my father’s eager whiskey-fueled sperm forced its way into my mother’s egg of the month club, she was forty, and he was forty-eight. Certainly old enough to be carrying rubbers. **(laughter)** The odds against my future existence were even longer. This particular weekend was a single, isolated event during a marital separation that had lasted more than a year.” Those things, this is paraphrasing, but those happened. Anyway. “Those separations were long, because my father had trouble metabolizing alcohol. He drank, he got drunk, he hit people. Ahh, yeah. Their reconciliations were sudden, because my father had a terrific line of bullshit

and because my mother really loved him, so while I sprang from something good and positive, by the time I showed up I was a distinct inconvenience. This marriage had gone south long before, as in Tierra del Fuego.”

“Getting conceived had been hard enough. Staying conceived literally required a miracle. My next brush with nonexistence came two months after the sweaty sex weekend in Rockaway Beach. During the five years between the birth of my brother and my tiny embryo glomming on to her uterine wall, my mother had made several visits to a certain Dr. Sunshine in Gramercy Square. Never, never ever for an abortion, mind you. Holy Mary Mother of God, no. The procedure in question was called a D & C. Dilation and curettage. Literally open wide and scrape. Ah, yes, a wonderfully delicate euphemism for quasi-Catholics with a little money. I’ll tell you, really high-toned, too, Gramercy Park was the place to get opened wide and scraped. No back-alley abortions on my father’s salary.”

“Legend has it that my mother was seated in Dr. Sunshine’s waiting room with my father, who, being a family man, was reading the sports pages, apparently just fine with my being less than a hundred feet from Storm Drain Number Three. Then it happened. My mother had a vision. Sometimes when you’re trying to be born, that religious shit can come in handy. **(laughter)** Yeah, not a full-blown vision like Jesus’ face being formed by pubic hairs of the bottom of the shower, but real enough to save my embryonic ass. My mother claimed she saw the face of her dear dead mother in a painting on the waiting room wall. She took this as a certain sign of maternal disapproval from beyond the grave.

Catholics go for that kind of shit. **(laughter)** She jumped up and left the abortionist's office with me still safely in the oven. Ah, in the street below, she delivered these momentous words to my father: 'Pat, I'm going to have this baby.' That was it."

Thank you, thank you, yeah, and George thanks all of you, man, and he really is around. I'm not a spook job or anything like that, I don't see him, but I definitely hear him and I got his vibes and he's having a wonderful evening with all of you showing up here. And thank you.

**(applause)**

**KELLY CARLIN:** That's my uncle. I have a little story. I am a writer and a performer also. And I just wrote this recently, and it's a nice segue into our next segment. This is a true story. It's about when I was a kid.

1972 was quite a summer. Everything had changed. Only a few years earlier my dad had been a clean-cut, thin-tied, suit-wearing guy who was opening for the Supremes in Vegas and doing spots on the *Ed Sullivan Show*. He was making a great living working clean. Now, in 1972, his hair was down past his shoulders. Tie-dyed shirts and denim jeans were his fashion staple, and he was headlining at almost every college campus in America. He was now making a great living at what some call "working blue."

Although our family was now officially part of the counterculture, my mother still wanted her American dream home, so that summer we moved from a small apartment in Venice Beach, where we had been surrounded by our people—hippies, bikers, and freaks, into a huge modern house atop a hill in Pacific Palisades, where we were now surrounded by someone else’s people: RAND Corporation executives, a National Security Council bigwig and lots and lots of Governor Reagan’s fans. Although Venice had been a really rough neighborhood, in some ways it felt safer to me, at least our freakiness blended in. Now it felt like our freakiness could possibly lead to Nixon’s Enemies List. I remember during the first month we lived in the Palisades, there was some sort of a party across the street with men in suits and women in cocktail dresses mingling on the lawn. I guess they were the RAND executives. My dad and I were in the front yard and in a large, booming voice, he said to me, “Hey, Kelly, look at those assholes over there!” **(laughter)** Heads turned, bodies bristled, and I wanted to disappear.

An alarm went off inside of me and I suddenly felt very, very unsafe. Recently my dad had become more and more antagonistic to those on the other side. It was fueling him artistically and politically but nonetheless it was making me very nervous. 1972 was quite a year in general, because, as you all remember, the country was very divided. Lines were firmly drawn and sides were vehemently chosen. Freaks versus straights, heads versus blockheads.

In June after I got out of school, my mom and I joined my dad on the road. One of our first stops was Kent State in Ohio. All I remember from that day was my dad showing me

some makeshift memorial and telling me that some students had been shot and killed during a protest a few years earlier. My dad always wanted me to understand the importance of people who stood up for what they believed in and especially those who were willing to stand up to their government to make their point. It seems that many of Dad's lessons back then were about getting me to understand how the government had always tried to silence those who did not have a voice to begin with, in particular blacks and the Native Americans. Now he was saying young, white American girls and boys were in that category, too.

Being an only child and one who was increasingly needing to be more mature than my years, due to the chaos of the seventies, I acted nonchalant and calm about this news he was telling me, trying to show my dad that I understood the lessons of civics and morality that he was trying to teach me, but my calm veneer was just that. What was really going on inside of me was that alarm that seemed to be going off inside of me more and more those days. Somewhere inside of me was the question, "if they were shooting these people, why wouldn't they shoot my dad?"

A few weeks later we were in Milwaukee. My dad was hired to work at Summerfest, basically an ocean of beer with an island of sausage in the middle of it. **(laughter)** You know, what they call good, clean American outdoor fun. By this time my dad was doing his new routine, Filthy Words. It's where he was actually examining in a somewhat scholarly fashion the usage of language in our culture, more particularly the usage of the words "shit" and "fuck." Now, the Summerfest was like I said an outdoor venue where

the mainstage act could be heard in a very large vicinity. So there was my dad onstage, killing. Most of the audience loved it. And there were Mom and I backstage, enjoying the show and then suddenly the promoter comes up to my mom and says, “The cops are here. They’re complaining about the language, and they’re going to arrest George the minute he walks offstage.” I guess when my dad said that he would like to fuck everyone in the audience, the nice Midwest policemen just didn’t see the humor in that.

Knowing that my dad was carrying drugs in his pocket—grass and coke—my mom thought fast, grabbed a glass of water, and walked out on the stage. Dad, confused, took the water, and mom quietly told him to exit stage left soon—the cops were closing in on stage right. Dad wrapped it up, left stage left, and we all quickly hustled into the dressing room where the doors were locked, drugs were stashed, and plans were hatched. The promoter was trying to keep things calm when *bang!* the sound of a gun went off. I became hysterical, my mom grabbed me, and then nothing happened. It was a balloon. Someone had popped a balloon. Everyone laughed a nervous laugh, but I was now emotionally undone. Before I knew it, the door was opened, my dad walked out, and within a few seconds policemen cuffed him. Now terrified that I would never, ever see him again, I clung to my mother’s body. After a while, she calmed me down enough so that she could leave to find a First Amendment lawyer to help my dad get out of jail.

I went home with the promoter to his house and family where I spent the rest of the weekend distracting myself by swimming with his kids in something that, as a Southern California girl, I had never seen before. An aboveground pool. **(laughter)** Dad got bail,

we reunited, and the fight went on. A few weeks later, we were in New York, my dad's city, this city, with an audience that would have loved to be collectively fucked by him. **(laughter)** He opened to a sellout crowd at Carnegie Hall. I remember the thrill of hearing the chants: "George, George, George." We were back on safe territory.

By the end of that summer in 1972, although the lines may have been drawn and the sides chosen, there was a wave now, an unstoppable momentum, to the movement that my father and thousands of others were riding. Change was happening, and although I was just a child who was definitely traumatized by some of those events, I'm also very proud to have been a witness to the courage that it takes to speak one's truth and have your voice heard, especially today, in 2010, when once again everything is changing. Here's my dad's words.

**(applause)**

**GEORGE CARLIN:** There are four hundred thousand words in the English language, and there are seven of them you can't say on television. What a ratio that is. Three hundred and ninety-nine thousand, nine hundred and ninety-three to seven. They must really be bad. **(laughter/applause)** You know the seven, don't you, that you can't say on television? Shit, piss, fuck, cunt, cocksucker, motherfucker, and tits, eh?

**(laughter/applause)** Those are the heavy seven. **(laughter)** Those are the ones that will infect your soul, curve your spine, and keep the country from winning the war.

**(laughter)** Shit, piss, fuck, cunt, cocksucker, motherfucker, and tits, wow.

Tits doesn't even belong on the list, you know? **(laughter/applause)** That's such a friendly-sounding word. It sounds like a nickname, right? "Hey, Tits, come here, man, hey, Tits!" **(laughter/applause)** Sounds like a snack doesn't it? "New Nabisco Tits. **(laughter)** The New Cheese Tits. **(laughter)** Corn Tits and Pizza Tits and Sesame Tits and Onion Tits, Tater Tits. **(laughter/applause)** Yeah. Betcha can't eat just one. **(laughter/applause)**

But you can understand why some of them are there. I'm not completely insensitive to people's feelings, you know, I can dig why some of those words got on the list. Like cocksucker and motherfucker. **(laughter)** Those are heavyweight words, you know. **(laughter/applause)** There's a lot going on there, man. **(laughter/applause)** Besides the literal translation and the emotional feeling, they're just busy words. There's a lot of syllables to contend with, and those Ks, those are aggressive sounds, they jump out at you. Cocksucker motherfucker cocksucker motherfucker. **(laughter/applause)** It's like an assault on you, you know, so I can dig that.

We mentioned shit earlier, of course, and two of the other four-letter Anglo Saxon words are piss and cunt, which go together, of course, **(laughter)** but forget that, a little accidental humor I threw in there. Piss and cunt. The reason that piss and cunt are on the list is that a long time ago certain ladies said, "Those are the two that I'm not going to say. I don't mind fuck and shit, but p and c are out. P and c are out." **(laughter/applause)**

Which led to such stupid sentences as, “Okay you fuckers, I’m going to tinkle now.”

**(laughter/applause)**

Of course, the word fuck. The word fuck. I don’t really—well here’s some more accidental humor—I don’t want to get into that now—**(laughter)** because I think it takes too long, **(laughter)** but I do mean that. I think the word fuck is a very important word, it’s the beginning of life, and yet it’s a word we use to hurt one another quite often, and people much wiser than I have said, “I’d rather have my son watch a film of two people making love than two people trying to kill one another,” and I, of course, can agree. It’s a great sentiment, and I wish I knew who’d said it first, and I agree with that, but I’d like to take it a step further. I’d like to substitute the word “fuck” for the word “kill” in all those movie clichés we grew up with, all right? “Okay, Sheriff, we’re going to fuck you now, **(laughter/applause)** but we’re going to fuck you slow.”

**(laughter/applause)**

**WHOOPI GOLDBERG:** As you know, those words still can’t be said on television.

I’ve tried. **(laughter)** But now they charge you \$375,000 if you say it during like the show that I do and every place that it’s being broadcast at that time, you are fined for. So if you’re on in six or seven different places, you’re fined \$375,000 , so, since I’m not Oprah, **(laughter)** I didn’t want to chance it, really. But those seven words made George the only American comedian whose work resulted in a major Supreme Court ruling, *The FCC versus Pacifica*. Our next guest is the perfect person to take stock of that. Daniel

Patrick Moynihan once said of him that he is the most significant First Amendment lawyer of our age. He is also, as it turns out, a George Carlin fan. Please welcome Floyd Abrams.

**FLOYD ABRAMS:** I'll do it with this one. Thank you all very much. I never knew George Carlin. What I did know was his work in the way that all of you in this audience have come to know his work, and it only occurred to me in preparing to say a few words tonight, that the piece that George Carlin did that I came to remember the most for a number of years was a piece so innocent compared to everything we've heard tonight, so lacking in any of the language which led, as I'll tell in a moment, to the Supreme Court case, that it's worth just recalling his enormous facility with words, his enormous focus in a way that other people didn't have, long before he started to get famous in part because of blue language, and that was his piece about baseball and football.

I'm not going to do it, but I've remembered it so long for so many years, it's the depiction, for those of you who don't recall it, of baseball as this bucolic sport, outdoors, relaxed, friendly, cheerful, and football as war. Who ever noticed before George Carlin that in football they wear helmets and in baseball they wear caps? Who ever noticed at the same time that in football you get a penalty, in baseball you make an error? Who noticed that in football you have a two-minute warning, in baseball you have a seventh-inning stretch? And who ever noticed, and this one I want to read to you, at the end of his piece about this, he said, unforgettably about football, "The object is for the quarterback, also known as the field general, to be on target with his aerial assault, riddling the defense

by hitting his receivers with deadly accuracy in spite of the blitz even if he has to use shotgun, and that in baseball the object is to go home **(laughter)** and to be safe.”

Well, that was the George Carlin that I remember first and in a sense still best, and it was necessary for him as an artist, necessary to move beyond that. That was enormously perceptive. It's perceptive about the games. It's perceptive about words. It's perceptive in its way about the country, but he needed to do more, and he needed to use the sort of words which ultimately led to the great and sad Supreme Court case involving Pacifica. The case, you may recall, arose in the early 1970s. The piece that you've seen a little bit of had been on records, and it was broadcast at two in the afternoon one weekday on WBAI, a Pacifica-owned station. A man who was very active in a search for bad words on radio and television, active in a group called Morality in Media, was driving with his fifteen-year-old son when WBAI broadcast that, that which you just heard, and they broadcast all twelve minutes of it.

A complaint was filed with the FCC. The FCC concluded that there were statutes on the books which not only banned obscenity, don't ask me for definitions tonight, but banned obscenity but on television and radio went beyond obscenity and did so in a way that allowed broadcasting to be subjected to an entirely different regime than existed anywhere else and in any other media and so when “Filthy Words” appeared on WBAI, it was said to be indecent, not obscene, but indecent, and for the first time the FCC rendered a ruling saying that, those words, the use of those words in that way, was indecent. And that was the case that went to the Supreme Court. And by a five to four

vote the Supreme Court said yes, it was indecent, and that yes, that it was constitutional, it did not violate the First Amendment for the statute to say that and for the FCC to make that ruling.

The opinion for the court was written by Justice Stevens, now a sort of liberal icon, but who has never been in front of the line in terms of defending the First Amendment and I wanted to read you the first paragraph of Justice Stevens's opinion to show you his description of what this is about. "A satiric humorist named George Carlin recorded a twelve-minute monologue entitled 'Filthy Words' before a live audience in a California theater. He began by referring to his thoughts about 'the words you couldn't say in public, on the airwaves,'" the ones, I'm reading it as written, not spoken, which is what you've just heard. 'The ones you definitely wouldn't say ever.' He proceeded to list those words and to repeat them over and over again in a variety of colloquialisms. The transcript of the recording indicates frequent laughter from the audience."

Just compare those dead words to the language, the explosive language, the humor, the wit, the perception, and the seriousness of Carlin in using the seven words to talk about everything—about how words shouldn't lead to suppression and about how we go so far off base in banning words and banning certain types of speech. Justice Stevens' opinion for the Court had a lot of passages which I will spare you. It's really based on the notion that the program was on at two in the afternoon. Radio and television are different than books, magazines, newspapers, records, because they're so pervasive in American society it's hard, maybe impossible, to escape them. And he wound up answering the dissenting

opinion, which I will read a paragraph from, an opinion from Justice Brennan. He wound up answering that by saying, “Pacifica’s broadcast could have enlarged a child’s vocabulary in an instant.” **(laughter)**

Justice Brennan, and how we miss him, dissented from the opinion, and he dissented in a particularly sophisticated way, in a way that really goes beyond, in philosophy and in thoughtfulness, what many Supreme Court opinions do in the First Amendment area or elsewhere. He said that “the court’s balance fails to accord proper weight the interests of listeners who wish to hear broadcasts the FCC deems offensive. It permits majoritarian tastes completely to preclude a protected message from entering the homes of a receptive, unoffended minority.” Justice Brennan argued that the decision had the very opposite impact that the majority claimed, since it actually reduced the options available to a parent.

Well, a five-to-four opinion, the Supreme Court had decided. With what result? Well, the FCC had sort of promised the court in their briefs and in their opinions that they would interpret a victory very narrowly. And for almost twenty-five years, they did. They did not take a broad view of what could be deemed indecent. Indeed the view that they took sometimes sounded as if you had to use all seven words in a row to be inconsistent with what the law did not protect. But then in the Bush years, the later Bush years, the FCC changed, maybe the attitudes of the American public changed, certainly the membership of the FCC changed, and we started down the road that Whoopi Goldberg just told you about. Fines of individual stations, not of a network, but every station in the network, of

\$375,000 a shot for indecent material on television. It got to the point where over sixty PBS stations refused to show *Saving Private Ryan* for fear that the use of the words of the GIs in that movie would lead to enormous, paralyzing, and, indeed for public television, destructive fines.

As we meet today there are two cases in the courts which will have a lot to say about whether what George Carlin believed in will ultimately be vindicated. One of them arose at the Golden Globe Awards for NBC when Bono accepted an award, and to quote him because I don't want to lose the special flavor of what the court referred to, and I love the phrase, as a "fleeting expletive." He's given the award, and on live television he says, "This is really, really fucking brilliant." For that a broadcaster has been in court now for over four years, has spent an enormous amount of money, has been to the Supreme Court once. The case is now pending. It was just argued a few months ago in the court of appeals, federal court, here in New York. The language is strikingly similar to the vice president's language (**laughter**) referred to a few minutes ago, which in this small audience, just for us, I will read to you that he whispered in the president's ear, yesterday, as the president signed the health reform bill, "This is a big fucking deal."

**(laughter/applause)**

The other case is the "wardrobe malfunction" at the Super Bowl. How many years ago was that? I mean, do you believe that case is still in the courts? And in that case CBS has been fighting for years not to have the principle established that that minisecond—I could never see Janet Jackson's breast, but it was there—but in that minisecond, that that, if that

ever happened again, at least, would be \$375,000 dollars a peek per station around the country something which would destroy live television broadcast. And indeed, have you noticed C-SPAN doesn't broadcast live things anymore? C-SPAN has a hold for a few seconds, the same way entertainment shows or other shows do, because of these cases, because of the FCC's decision, and because ultimately of the Supreme Court's error in the case involving the FCC and Pacifica that all started with a great piece of humor and philosophy by George Carlin. I think it will get better, in these two cases, at least, and I think we all have a lot to thank George Carlin for for being willing to take the lead in trying to open up the areas of communication so we can all hear or not hear, see or not see, that material as we like. Thank you very much.

**(applause)**

**KELLY CARLIN:** Before I introduce our last guest, I just wanted to say a few things, one of which was my dad got such a thrill knowing that his whole routine was typed out verbatim into the Supreme Court records **(laughter)** and that someone in front of the justices actually read, "Shit, piss, fuck, cunt, cocksucker, motherfucker, and tits." It was one of the biggest joys of his life. **(applause)**

And I'd also just want to take a moment to thank Tony Hendra especially and Paul and everyone at the New York Public Library and all of you, all of our guests for speaking about my father so beautifully and all of you who came tonight to join us. Thank you so much for being here. **(applause)** Yes, give yourself a round of applause, and I just

wanted to say a public thank-you to the world of comedy, who has taken me into their heart since my father died. And you may think comedians are crazy—they are—but they've got huge hearts, and so I just want to publicly thank of all the world of comedy who's really brought me into the family. Thank you so, so much. **(applause)**

Our last guest, like others, our last guest is an all-rounder. Actor, comedian, Emmy-Award-winning writer, filmmaker. He is ranked number 98 on Comedy Central's 100 Greatest Standups of All Time, **(laughter)** but what the fuck do they know? For us, he's number one tonight. Louis C.K.

**LOUIS C.K.:** Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I'm really honored to be here. I'm happy just to be here as a ticket holder, just to watch everything that's happened. The Stiller family, and, that was crazy, and Kevin, and the guy that looks like Dick Cheney, at the end there, **(laughter)** a very nice version of Dick Cheney, he's not a lizard, I don't think. But, I think I can just tell you what George's—I'm a comedian, and I do what he did, and he was the first person I knew that I knew what comedy was.

Children love to laugh, but most people that make children laugh for a living suck at it. Clowns aren't funny. That doesn't exist, a funny clown. If a person was funny, they'd do comedy, because you make money doing it. There's no HBO Clown Specials for you to make a bunch of money. **(laughter)** So clowns suck, and kids just look at them and just go, Just please stop trying to make me laugh. There's nothing worse than a person who's not funny trying to be funny, and that's what a clown is. A guy waiting for a bus is

funnier than a shit clown at a kids' party, so, **(laughter)** but kids need to laugh, so the first time you really laugh means a lot to you, and I remember my first grown-up feeling laugh and I saw George Carlin on *Saturday Night Live* and he said, "What do dogs do on their day off? They can't lay around. That's their job." And I just, something went off, and I just couldn't stop laughing. And the idea was born in my head at that moment, "I want to be funny, I want to be a comedian."

I didn't know that a grown person could be a comedian, that's an incredible thing to me and I had other heroes, Richard Pryor, Steve Martin, Bill Cosby, but George was like me, he was an East Coast Catholic, you know, I had something to identify with him. The first time I remember getting a laugh I was in fourth grade and they asked the class, the teacher said, "There are three bones in the skull. Name one." And I said, "the noggin," **(laughter)** and I got a big laugh, and I thought, "Hey, you know, I could do this, I could be like George," so I started doing, right out of high school, started doing standup, didn't go to college, didn't pursue anything else professionally, really, started doing standup. The first time I went onstage I did a minute and a half, and I bombed, it was terrible, but I wanted it so badly that I kept trying, and I learned how to write jokes, and I just had jokes, kind of funny thoughts, and I don't know, about fifteen years later, I had been going in a circle that didn't take me anywhere.

Nobody gave a shit who I was and I didn't either. I honestly didn't. I used to hear my act and go, this is shit and I hate it, but I've been doing this for fifteen years, and stopping now is like getting out of prison, like what do you do after fifteen years of standup

comedy, how do you reenter the workforce? **(laughter)** So I was in a really bad place. I hated my act. I had been doing the same hour of comedy for fifteen years, and it was shit. I promise you. And I was working places like Chinese restaurants. **(laughter)** I was, I'd do a show at a Chinese restaurant, they don't even know there's a show going to happen, they're there to eat, and all of a sudden, you'd go "hey, everybody," and they'd go, "I'm eating, I don't want to be forced to sit and—"

So I was doing it at a Chinese restaurant called Kowloon in Boston, it's August, Massachusetts, and I was sitting in my car after the show just feeling like, "This was all a big mistake, I'm not good enough, and I felt like my jokes were a trap, and I listened to a CD of George talking about comedy and workshopping it and talking about it seriously, and the thing that blew me away about this fellow was he kept putting out—specials, every year there'd be a new George Carlin special, a new George Carlin album, they just kept coming, and each one was deeper than the next, and I just thought, how can he do that? And it made me literally cry that I could never do that. I was telling the same jokes for fifteen years, so I'm listening and they asked him, "How do you do all this material?" And I hear him and he says, "I just decided every year I'd be working on that year's special, and I do the special and then I just chuck out the material and then I start with nothing." And I thought, "That's crazy. How do you throw away. It took me fifteen years to build this shitty hour. If I throw it away, I've got nothing."

But he gave me the courage to try, but also I was desperate, what the fuck else was I going to do? This idea that you throw everything away and you start over again. And I

thought, “Well, okay, when you’re done telling jokes about airplanes and dogs, and you throw those away, what have you got left?” You can only dig deeper, you can start talking about your feelings and who you are and then you do those jokes and they’re gone. You’ve gotta dig deeper, so you start thinking about your fears and your nightmares, and doing jokes about that, and then they’re gone, and then you just going into just weird shit, and eventually you get to your balls, **(laughter)** but there’s a whole.

It’s a process that I watched him do my whole life, and I started to try to do it and I started to think, “What do I—because he says whatever he wants. What do I really want to say that I’m afraid to say?” At the time I was a father. I am still a father. **(laughter)** But at the time—I had started out, I didn’t take off yet, the jury’s out, my oldest is eight. I can still split. So far I’m still there. I was having a hard time being a father, and I wanted to say it onstage. One night, just I thought, okay, “forget all the old jokes, I’m going to start again, “and I thought of the first thing, “I can’t have sex with my daugh—my daughter!—with my wife, because we have a baby, and our baby’s a fucking asshole,” it was just what I was feeling and I said it and the audience went “whoa” and I thought, “Oh, I’m somewhere new now.” And I said something like, “I never used to get babies in the garbage, but now I understand it,” and they did that, and I thought, I’d rather have that than the shit tepid laughter for my fifteen-year-old jokes, so I started going down this road and he was always the beacon for me, always, this guy, he always gave me the courage.

He says, you know, the line that Kevin quoted, where he said people at anti-abortion rallies are people you wouldn't want to fuck in the first place. He opened a special with that at Carnegie Hall. **(laughter)** He comes out on the stage, you have to watch it, and he doesn't milk the crowd for applause. They're applauding, they're all going "George, George," and he goes, "yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, I gotta get this out. Did you ever notice that the people at anti-abortion rallies are people you wouldn't want to fuck in the first place?" And most comedians would do, like, you know, a good half an hour of really sweet material and couch that joke in a lot of—but he just had to get it out there, and he set that example for me, and that's the way I've done my act, and since then I've done three comedy specials, and I've started down the same road, it's been a massive change for me, I feel every year I've got something to work for. The same—I'm doing exactly what he taught me to do, and onstage I feel a courage to say what I want to say because of this guy.

Anyway, a few years ago, I was about to tape my first, my second standup special, and he was taping the same night, in LA, and he taped his last special on the same night that I taped one. And I remember feeling like, "This is amazing that I do what this great man does, and that we do it in the same way." And he died and it kicked me in the balls when he died, it really hurt, and then I remember that—I don't want to be doing this, I'm sorry—but later I was at a whatever, doesn't matter, and my phone rang, and it was his daughter, it was Kelly, and I have two kids and they're girls, so I thought, "he's got a daughter, and his daughter is calling me." And I know what it means to have a daughter, because I have two, and she's calling and asking me to come and say something about

what he meant to me. So that was a big moment for me, I'm very proud to do what George did. I know I'm supposed to close funny, but I just—I'm not good at doing stuff that isn't my act, so I'm sorry. But he was a great man, and anything that ever happens to me that's good is due to this guy and I can tell you because I do what he did, that it was really hard to say the shit that he did, and that it took a lot of courage, it was difficult. So thanks for coming and honoring him and thanks for having me.

**(applause)**

**KELLY CARLIN:** We just have a little moment of good-bye for you.

**GEORGE CARLIN:** Thanks for being here with me for a little while. Thank you very much. Thank you.

**(applause)**