

January 29th, 1999

Guests on this program were:

Ben Affleck
Christine O'Donnell
Joshua Harris
Steven Wright

Bill's Opening

Voice over: This week, Sony Music and the Vatican announced that Pope John Paul II will release his first CD of popular music.

The CD and music video will be in stores by Easter.

Bill Maher: Calling all Catholics!

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Panel Discussion

Bill: Thank you very much.

Let us meet our panel.

She is a founding member of the Savior's Alliance for Lifting the Truth, that girl, Christine O'Donnell.

Christine: Over here!

Bill: There she is.

How are you, sweetie?

Applause

Good to see you, as always.

He's a Christian activist and the author of "I Kissed Dating Good-bye" — Joshua Harris. Joshua.

Applause

Hey, how you doing?

Nice to see you.

He's an Oscar-winning director, actor and comedian — Steven Wright.

Cheers and applause

Hey, buddy boy, good to see you.

And he is an Oscar-winning screenwriter and actor.

His next two movies are "Forces of Nature" and "Dogma."

Right now he's in "Shakespeare in Love" — Ben Affleck, yeah!

Cheers and applause

Thank you for coming.

Ben: My pleasure.

Bill: Okay.

Christine: Hi, how are you?

Bill: All right.

Well, this is perfect triangulation.

We just had a little sketch about the pope.

We have two Christian activists.

And the Super Bowl is Sunday, and I just want to start this show by saying, I am so tired of athletes, especially at the Super Bowl, but every game, talking about Jesus. Jesus could give a rat's ass about sports.

Christine: Oh, that's not true.

Bill: Jesus doesn't care who wins the game.

Jesus doesn't help other teams.

And it is the height of arrogance when players say, "Thank you, Jesus.

Jesus helped me.

Jesus helped me catch the pass."

Christine: That's so not true.

Bill: What about the other guy, who missed the pass?

Laughter

Ben: Because Jesus is up there going, "You know, I kind of like the Packers."

Laughter

Does Jesus really care if you bowl a spare?

Joshua: The other day I was playing putt-putt, and I realized that I was praying over this putt, "God, please help me sink this."

And I realized, "This is stupid."

Christine: No.

Joshua: As if the God of the universe is looking down on my putt.

Christine: No, that's not true.

As you know —

Ben: We gave that up, I thought.

Christine: Two of the S.A.L.T. spokesmen are NFL football players, and it's so exciting to see the power of prayer in their lives.

I mean, they —

Joshua: Well, see, this is the thing.

I think —

Laughter

Christine: It's true.

Wait, God —

Joshua: I think that it's wonderful if these guys are thanking God for helping them do a good job at what they do—play sports.

Bill: That's not what they're saying.

Joshua: But I don't think that athletes should use it as if they are morally superior.

Steven: They're not referring to Jesus in the religious sense.

They mean — they're just —

Laughter

Christine: They're referring to some Mexican guy, Jesus.

Steven: They're just talking like they don't know what they're saying.

Laughter

They're just trying to be religious as — for security reasons.

Laughter

Christine: Well, who better to be more secure about than Jesus Christ, you know?

Well, let me tell you, I've talked to a lot of these guys.

Steven: You talk to Jesus?

Christine: I talk to Jesus all the time.

I just talked to him before we came out.

Steven: Really?

Tell him I said hello.

Laughter

Christine: I will.

I will.

But, you know —

Ben: He called me.

He's actually looking for you.

He doesn't know what happened to you.

Steven: I owe him something.

Christine: That's not who I was talking about.

But you know, these athletes, I've talked to a lot of them, and they say, "You know, I know that I did not have the talent to make that play or to do whatever."

And then it's just really surrendering your calling.

Yesterday's show they talked about calling.

And some people are called into the NFL.

They have a platform.

'Cause who is going to take them seriously if they just, "Hey, I'm Joe Citizen talking about Jesus."

That's exciting, but unfortunately, the world is gonna go, "Because you have an NFL platform, we're gonna take you more seriously."

Bill: But they never blame Jesus when they miss a play.

Laughter and applause

Joshua: That's true.

Bill: Nobody ever says, "You know, I don't know what happened out there, Jesus really let us down."

Laughter

Christine: No, no, no.

Ben: Linebackers converting to Confucianism, 'cause they're like, "You know what?

I punt, he wasn't there, the Lord's not on my side.

I'm going with Buddha."

Bill: "We're gonna go with Allah this year." Exactly.

Christine: That's not blame.

That's accepting God's will.

I mean —

Ben: But that's like saying that God really does like the Broncos.

It was God's will.

Christine: Well, you know what?

Let me tell you, when we had a S.A.L.T. party, when the Broncos and the Jets played against each other, because they are who our two —

Steven: S.A.L.T. party.

Ben: Is that the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty?

Christine: No, no, no.

The ministry that I work for.

Ben: I didn't know any of the guys from the NFL were negotiating missile launches.

Bill: This is the Savior's Alliance for Lifting the Truth.

I know that's —

Christine: Right, and one of our spokesmen is on the Jets and the other one on the Broncos, so we had to like split up the room, 'cause we were praying for them while they were out there on the field.

Bill: But the Jets didn't make the Super Bowl.

What happened — ?

Christine: But you know what?

But they had —

Bill: What happened to their connections?

Ben: Nobody likes the Jets.

Talking at once

Bill: Even God.

Joshua: If they're praying to win.

Christine: They're praying the Lord's will be done.

They're praying that God gives them favor—

Steven: Jesus was a quarterback.

Christine: Look at the kind of season they had. They had a great season.

Bill: Okay, I just think if Jesus was so involved in football, he would do something about the officiating, because it's been terrible.

Laughter

We have to take a break.

We'll be right back.

Announcer: Join us Monday when our guests will be Arsenio Hall, Ricki Lake, Esai Morales and James Golden.

Applause

Bill: All right.

Let's talk a little bit about your book, Joshua, 'cause it is very provocative, very interesting.

It's called, "I Kissed Dating Good-bye."

And basically your thesis is that the best way to find the person of your dreams is to stop dating.

Joshua: Right.

Laughter

Bill: Well, why don't you —

Joshua: I was enraptured by the way you were putting it.

I didn't need to write it.

I could just —

Bill: I don't agree with it.

I'm just quoting you.

Ben: Why are you going to find the person of your dreams if you don't — if you don't date anyone?

Bill: Explain.

Joshua: Well, it's not quite as simple as just not dating.

The idea is that a lot of the things we do in relationships today are motivated by selfishness.

We're starting things we can't finish, we're pursuing things when we're really not interested in commitment at all.

And so, what I'm challenging people to do is rethink their whole approach to relationships.

And wait until they're ready —

Bill: Why does commitment have to be the goal?

Christine: Let me tell you, just to support Joshua, there is nothing more attractive than a guy who is not a player, who knows what he wants in life.

Bill: To you.

Not to girls who want him.

Laughter

Christine: There's nothing more attractive—

Bill: I don't think they care if he's a player, a nonplayer.

Christine: Let me tell you, when a guy —

Bill: A member of the Players' Club, with Telly Savalas, would be okay.

Christine: There's nothing more attractive than a man who just loves Jesus Christ, wants to serve him —

Bill: Oh, okay.

Christine: And is going on in his life until he meets that woman and knows how to guard a woman's heart.

Joshua: What are the other options, though, Bill?

If it's not commitment, it's just for the heck of it.

Christine: It's selfish.

Joshua: Is that what you're saying?

Ben: No, it's just giving it a shot.

You know what I mean?

Laughter

Bill: Yeah.

Christine: Like test-driving the car.

Ben: Exactly.

You know, it's just like, do you open the real estate book and just go like, "I'll buy this house"?"

Joshua: No, I totally agree with you —

Talking at once

It's important to pursue a relationship, to have the friendship and all that.

I think that's wonderful.

What the problem is, is a lot of us today, we start those relationships when we don't want to move on to commitment.

We're not interested.

We're just doing it for the heck of it, for now.

Bill: But if both people —

Audience member cheers

Ben: You speak for yourself, mister.

Bill: Steven Wright.

Steven: I have been dating animals.

Laughter

Christine: You know, I don't think that's legal.

Steven: You never have an argument and they're always naked.

Laughter

Christine: And you can get arrested for that.

Bill: That's weird.

You're a weird guy.

Steven: Thank you.

Laughter

Christine: But you know what?

Those kind of guys and those kind of women leave a wake of broken hearts.

Bill: No, they don't.

You speak only for yourself —

Ben: They leave a wake of joy and happiness in the world.

Christine: I speak from breaking hearts and from having a broken heart.

You know?

I commend you for that.

Bill: Why does — I mean, and this is my larger problem, excuse me, with a lot of the Christian stuff going on — is that everything has to be your way.

It's okay in your life, but why does everybody have to do it your way?

What about —

Joshua: Oh, that is so —

Bill: Wait a second.

Christine: That's not true.

You know what?

You know what, Bill?

Applause

Bill: Wait a second.

I mean, what about two people, a man and a woman, neither of whom wants a commitment?

What if both of them are just out for fun, as some in our audience here.

Laughter

Christine: You know what?

Joshua: And a lot of people do that.

That's the way a lot of relationships work.

Bill: So?

Joshua: And I'm not — I'm not trying to make —

Ben: That's fine if you want to burn, you know what I mean?

And you will burn.

Laughter

That's what you're saying.

Joshua: The point is, is that if people do that, they want to do that, they're not going to stop because I wrote a book.

I know that.

But what I want to show them is, is the beauty of pursuing a relationship that is based on commitment.

Because a lot of people live like that, and they come to the end of their life, and they see their life is empty.

Ben: Hold on one second.

What are you guys really saying?

You're basically saying you don't want to have sex with anybody until you're married.

That's basically the pitch, right?

Bill: Yes, it is.

Christine: No, because it goes beyond sex. It goes beyond sex.

Can I just tell you, if you've never experienced the blessing of living in obedience to God, then what he's saying sounds so far out to you.

But when you —

Ben: Living in obedience I understand.

Laughter

Christine: But because —

Ben: You see that on Santa Monica Boulevard all the time.

There's one guy, another guy's on a chain.

Christine: No, when you just have the blessing —

Ben: It's not my lifestyle.

Laughter and applause

Joshua: To answer your question —

Bill: Leave Eddie Murphy out of this.

You may have to work with him someday.

Joshua: It's not just about saving sex.

It's not just about saving sex.

The point is, is that a lot of us get into — I did this.

I mean, I'm writing the book from the mistakes that I've made in the past, that we get emotionally involved, we lead someone on, and then we break it off.

And we get into a pattern in our lives of doing that for the rest of our lives.

Ben: But look, Bill, I mean, you kind of say that, and yet the picture you show in your book's kind of a pimp photograph.

Laughter

This is kind of like — it looks like Michael Jackson.

Christine: Don't judge a book by its cover.

Ben: It's the Michael Jackson dating theory.

Christine: Well, that's the PR people.

Ben: "Don't date any women, and you find God, unless there happens to be a little white boy."

Laughter

Bill: That is exactly the Michael Jackson look.

Ben: It is.

Bill: That's just coincidence, I'm sure.

Ben: I think it's sexy.

It's kind of like saying, "I'm hard to get."

Christine: That doesn't discount his good points, though.

Talking at once

Bill: For example, a woman can help by refusing to wear clothing designed to attract attention to her body.

Joshua: Of all the quotes, you would find that one.

Bill: Well, it's in your book.

What, should I — I mean, I did, it jumped out at me.

Ben: Do you think those are provocative clothes that this woman is wearing, or not provocative?

Christine: Way to put me on the spot.

Laughter

Wait a minute.

Laughter and applause

I finally take a risk and wear something flashy.

Ben: That's very sassy.

Joshua: A lot of girls today want to get a guy's attention, and so they dress that way.

But, my perspective is, is that I want to guard my eyes.

I don't want to be encouraging lust in my own heart.

And so, that's why I say that if girls dress more modestly, it helps out a guy who's trying to think that way.

Bill: Well, I was gonna help you out, but it's over now.

We have to take a commercial.

We'll be right back.

Bill: Okay.

Stop talking about sex.

And you know that we had a thing, and it was all sex.

But okay, I'm not gonna — no, we like —

Christine: Yeah, my friends are going to believe that.

Bill: We liked each other, but it was because the sex was good.

All right, you say what you want.

Christine: He lives in another world.

Bill: Speaking of the pope, as we were, I thought it interesting that, last week, when the poll came out about the most admired men, President Clinton beat the pope.

Laughter

And I've been saying this for a long time here on this show, that this country now is France.

Laughter

Christine: It's messed up.
This country is messed up.

Ben: We'd be lucky to be France.

We'd be moving the right direction if we moved towards more tolerance and understanding.

I mean, just because we're not getting as hysterical as everyone thought we would because the president had a mistress is —

Bill: Don't you think that indicates that we are moving towards — ?

Ben: I hope so.

Christine: Well, you know what, Ben?

Nothing is wrong with understanding and tolerance.

It's how you define understanding and tolerance, and I think the fact that President Clinton had a mistress is appalling, but that's not what we're upset about.

Ben: Okay, wait a minute, stop.

I'm not appalled, okay?

Christine: Well, that's fine.

Ben: I'm not appalled.

Most people aren't appalled.

Cheers and applause

Christine: That's not the issue here.

Ben: It's between him and his wife.

What do you care?

Christine: That's not what's gonna cripple our judicial system.

Steven: Why do you dislike the French people?

Laughter

Christine: Because I can't speak their language.

It's too confusing.

No, I'm just kidding.

It's the fact that he lied under oath.

Ben: He didn't lie under oath.

He lied to the American people.

He said, "I did not have sexual relations with that woman."

Christine: He lied to a grand jury.

He lied under oath.

If we don't take that as serious —

Ben: Hold on, hold on.

Please, I'm begging you, stop for 1 second.

Christine: Let me finish my point.

Laughter

Ben: I'm asking you, please!

Christine: Ten more seconds to make my point.

Ben: I just want to ask you one question.

Christine: Yeah, get on your knees.

Ben: Do you think that he should be impeached —

Cheers and applause

Do you think he should be impeached because he had an affair?

Christine: He has been impeached.
He has been impeached.

Ben: Removed, rather, yeah.

Christine: Okay, no, he should be removed because he lied under oath.

And if we don't take perjury serious —

Ben: You're lying.

Christine: Wait, let me finish my point.

Bill: That is a lie.

Christine: If we don't take —

Steven: I will pay you to stop talking.

Laughter and applause

Christine: If we don't take perjury seriously, then think of all the drug dealers, think of all the murders who are gonna go —

Bill: You hate him because he had sex with a Jew on Easter.

Laughter and applause

Christine: Bill, you're just exposing my inner self.

You're really — you figured me out, Bill.

Ben: Do you know what the secret is?

Honestly, is that, it turns out everyone agrees that Clinton did a great job as president, right?

Bill: Yes.

Christine: No, people don't agree.

Ben: The polls agree.

Christine: No, let me tell you —

Ben: Honey, I'm begging you now, please, hold on!

Talking at once

Joshua: Back to the French.

Back to the French.

Talking at once

If we're becoming more like them, basically what we're doing — and leave Clinton out of it — but if we're becoming more like the French, we're basically saying we're not willing to change the way we're living, and so we'll lower our standards.

And I think that's a problem.

I do think that's a problem.

Applause

Bill: Why are their standards lower?

Why, because —

Joshua: Well, what you're saying is so noble about the French is that they don't give a rip about this or that.

Ben: They don't give a rip about — listen.

Listen, a lot of people have affairs, good people, smart people, capable leaders — Martin Luther King, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy.

As a matter of fact —

Christine: He's not on trial for having an affair.

Ben: My contention is, is that actually having an affair makes you a better leader.

Because, if you look back —

Laughter

Honestly.

Bill: Absolutely.

If you judged leaders by who didn't have a lot of sex, Hitler and Jimmy Carter would be the best leaders we ever had.

Cheers and applause

Christine: Let's get back to the issue, okay?
The issue is a man lying under oath.

Bill: Steven Wright?

Steven: Jesus was French.

Laughter

Christine: You're right.

Call Henry Hyde.

Let him know.

Bill: That is wrong on so many levels.

Jesus was not French.

Christine: But you know what, the issue here, he's not on trial for his affair.

Bill: Okay, okay, okay.

Christine: He's on trial for lying under oath.

Ben: Just admit that what you object to is that he fooled around.

Christine: I certainly think it's wrong, but — I've said this from the very beginning, and this is why in the very beginning I did not accept interviews on this, because it's not an impeachable offense to have an affair.

Now, what he did —

Bill: But it apparently is.

Christine: No, what he did do is lie under oath and abuse his power.

And if we tolerate that with the highest member —

Bill: What he did was cover up an affair, the way any married man who has an affair covers it up.

Christine: But he is not any married man.
He is the president.

Ben: "I got your wife on the phone.
Did you sleep with that woman?"
"Who?"
It wasn't me."

Christine: Any married man — any married man — let me tell you, any married man is not gonna be dragged before a grand jury.

Bill: Precisely.
Precisely!

Christine: But he is not any married man.
He is the president of the United States.

Ben: Political enemies have used this situation —

Christine: That is so not true.
If the tables were turned.

Bill: Oh, come on.

Christine: If it were George Bush up there, when he were in office, he would have been thrown out.

Ben: George Bush had affairs.

Bill: Yes.

Ben: George Bush had affairs.

Christine: If he had done the manipulative, deceitful things, he would have been thrown out of office.

He would have resigned.

He would have been a good leader and resigned.

Bill: You always say that it's not about morality, and the American people have abdicated morality in supporting Clinton.

But you know what?

The American people have decided that Ken Starr's questions are worse than Bill Clinton's lies, and that is a moral judgment.

Ben: Yeah!

Applause

Christine: Because of what — Bill — they believe that because of the nature of the questions, and unfortunately, the nature of the beast is so vile that the questions to get to the truth are gonna be vile.

Steven: You would look amazing in a black bathing suit.

Cheers and applause

Bill: All right.

We have to take a commercial.

Bill: All right.

Calm down, Christians and lions.

Laughter

Now, Monday we're gonna have Arsenio Hall, Ricki Lake, Esai Morales and James Golden.

Okay, I have one final question.

Betty Ford — we're talking about past presidents — put a human face on substance abuse.

Hasn't Bill Clinton performed the same service for adultery?

Christine: Yes, adulterers rights.

Ben: I think he has.

Bill: Isn't that a service, oral sex with a human face?

Laughter

Christine: Let me tell you, that's a sad about our country, if adulterers are fighting for their rights now.

Ben: I got it.

I know what it is.

You know why it bothers you so much?

'Cause you have a certain, like, Monica flair about you.

Bill: Yeah.

Ben: A little bit.

Bill: Hey, thank you.

This was a great panel. I had fun *watching it*.