

THE POLITICS OF COMEDY

Bill Donohue

This first appeared in the [American Spectator](#) on Oct. 22

They got to Jerry Seinfeld. He received enough blowback from the Left that he caved: he no longer blames humorless left-wing pundits and activists for the war on comedy. Indeed, he now says he “[regrets](#)” saying that comedy on TV has basically disappeared as “the result of the extreme left and P.C. crap, and people worrying so much about offending other people.”

Will Chris Rock and Jennifer Aniston be next? [Rock](#) complained in 2019 that he can’t say anything “offensive and funny right now,” and [Aniston](#) said last year that “it’s a little tricky” telling jokes these days “because you have to be very careful.”

The humorless ones, who are heavily concentrated in education, non-profit advocacy groups, and the media, have certainly had an effect. In 2008, comedy as a share of the U.S. box office was [21 percent](#). Now it is in the single digits.

Seinfeld got it right the first time, but he understated it even then.

Political correctness, or woke politics, is a form of mind control. What animates the Left is power, and nothing is more important than getting inside the heads of the masses. Once the people surrender their conscience, they can be mobilized to do whatever the ruling class wants. Make no mistake, controlling what we are allowed to laugh at is part and parcel of their agenda.

The two most protected demographics in the nation are LGBTQ people and blacks. But there is a big difference between the two: blacks are much less incensed about jokes that come at

their expense than gays and transgender persons are. The latter, represented most conspicuously by GLAAD, are the biggest promoters of censorship in the nation. And they are very good about punishing the “offenders,” squeezing apologies from them.

- [Tracy Morgan](#) has apologized to the gay and lesbian community for a joke he told in 2011.
- In 2019, [Eddie Murphy](#) apologized to the same people for a joke he told in 1996.
- [Kevin Hart](#) apologized in 2019 for a joke that “hurt members of the LGBTQ community.”
- In September this year, [Will Ferrell](#) said he regretted dressing as a woman some years earlier while telling a joke. “That’s something I wouldn’t choose to do now.”
- Comedy writer [Harper Steele](#) said he regrets penning a drag queen joke that he wrote years ago. He now says, “It’s absolutely not funny.”
- [Amy Schumer](#) apologized in 2015 for making a joke about Hispanics, saying, “I hope I haven’t hurt anyone.”
- [Jay Leno](#) often made fun of Asians but now he says he regrets it.
- [Trevor Noah](#) had lots of fun at the expense of Indians and Pakistanis, but now he is apologizing for the “hurt” he caused.
- [Jimmy Fallon](#) has apologized for wearing blackface in a 2000 SNL skit.
- [Jimmy Kimmel](#) apologized in 2020 for wearing blackface in the 1990s.
- [Tina Fey](#) has apologized for wearing blackface in her sitcom.
- [Sarah Silverman](#) now says she is “horrificed” about wearing blackface in one of her 2007 episodes.
- [Nikki Glaser](#) has apologized for making fun of “skinny” women.
- In 2018, [“Weird Al” Yankovic](#) apologized for featuring the word “midget” in one of his songs from the 1980s.

- [Patton Oswalt](#) now regrets joking about “retards.”

No one ever apologizes for telling patently obscene jokes about Jesus, Our Blessed Mother, nuns, priests or the sacraments. This includes many of those who are now apologizing profusely about insulting others. Sarah Silverman and Trevor Noah, for instance, are two of the biggest anti-Catholic comedians in the nation, but they will never apologize for slandering priests.

If proof is needed to show how political all of this is, consider that [Dave Chappelle](#) (who won't apologize for LGBTQ jokes) apologized for simply saying in 2016, “I'm wishing Donald Trump luck.” Similarly, [John Mulaney](#) now says he “deserved backlash” for joking about Trump and Biden without making it clear that he very much favored Biden.

Best of all is [Stephen Colbert](#). In 2017, he made an obscene joke that offended Trump supporters and gays at the same time. He only apologized to gays.

Jay Leno called me years ago after I blasted him for telling anti-Catholic jokes. He said he tells 11,000 jokes a year and wanted my advice on which kinds of jokes about Catholics are okay and which are not (reporters and TV talk-show hosts have asked me the same thing).

I told him that jokes about Catholic school kids are fine. “Sister Act” type fare is also okay. But when you get to the heart of our religion—as Gretchen Whitmer did by mocking the Eucharist—that crosses the line.

The comedians of an earlier era—Bob Hope, Jerry Lewis, Sid Caesar, Rodney Dangerfield, Dean Martin, Don Rickles—made their audiences laugh without getting vulgar. Mel Brooks managed to lampoon everyone without getting nasty. So it can be done. All it takes is creativity, prudence and a sense of decency. When that happens, there is no need to protect or demonize anyone.