

June 23, 2008

Some people do not like George Carlin. Some can't get past what they view as his obscenity to see the observational comedy of which he was a master. Others may have leaned to the opposite extreme and found his use of taboo language the key to his comedy. I think I'm somewhere in the middle. I found some of his later routines to be pointless rants, but also found some raw pieces to be extremely funny. If you are of the first group, you may not want to read any further. But if you are not put off by the occasional use of the "F word" by all means stay with me.

Many think that the "Seven Dirty Words" routine was Carlin's signature routine. It certainly drew a lot of attention. Over several years George worked the routine, embellishing here and there and adding new terms until it grew to an imponderable list of "2,443 Impolite Word and Phrases."

Once I saw George explain the nicest thing you could do to somebody was Fuck them. He went on to say you couldn't do that on TV, you couldn't even say that on TV, but the worst thing you could do was kill somebody and you can do that all you want on TV. He proposed that we exchange the definitions of Fuck and Kill for one year. He said, "I can see it now, Shamu The Fucker Whale." Then channeling John Wayne he said, "You better get down off that horse son, we're fixin' to Fuck you."

So today when I was watching the morning news and heard of George Carlin's death, my mind raced ahead to a possible opening for Entertainment Tonight. Picture sweet Mary Hart trying to switch off her permanent smile and effect a serious look, gazing straight into the camera and saying, "Early today George Carlin was fucked. He will be missed by his many fans."

I didn't watch Entertainment Tonight, but I'm quite sure that my vision of a proper George Carlin salute wasn't in the script used.

Dave Koschnick
Cohoes, NY