
Subject: Jon Stewart on Crossfire
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This will be a long one, it is the transcript of the crossfire discussions between Jon Stewart, Paul Begala, and some dork with a bow tie on. Carlson.

Quote:BEGALA: Welcome back to CROSSFIRE.

As both of our loyal viewers, of course, know, our show is about all left vs. white, black vs. white, paper vs. plastic, Red Sox against the Yankees. That's why every day, we have two guests with their own unique perspective on the news. But today, CROSSFIRE is very difficult. We have just one guest.

He's either the funniest smart guy on TV or the smartest funnyman. We'll find out which in a minute. But he's certainly an Emmy Award winner, the host of Comedy Central's "Daily Show" and the co-author of the new mega best-seller "America (The Book): A Citizen's Guide to Democracy Inaction," at your bookstores everywhere.

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the CROSSFIRE Jon Stewart.

STEWART: Thank you.

CARLSON: Thank you for joining us.

STEWART: Thank you very much. That was very kind of you to say.

Can I say something very quickly? Why do we have to fight?

(LAUGHTER)

STEWART: The two of you? Can't we just -- say something nice about John Kerry right now.

(CROSSTALK)

CARLSON: I like John. I care about John Kerry.

STEWART: And something about President Bush.

BEGALA: He'll be unemployed soon?

(LAUGHTER)

BEGALA: I failed the test. I'm sorry.

CARLSON: See, I made the effort anyway.

BEGALA: No, actually, I knew Bush in Texas a little bit. And the truth is, he's actually a great guy.

He's not a very good president. But he's actually a very good person. I don't think you should have to hate to oppose somebody, but it makes it easier.

(LAUGHTER)

STEWART: Why do you argue, the two of you?

(LAUGHTER)

STEWART: I hate to see it.

CARLSON: We enjoy it.

STEWART: Let me ask you a question.

CARLSON: Well, let me ask you a question first.

STEWART: All right.

(LAUGHTER)

CARLSON: Is John Kerry -- is John Kerry really the best? I mean, John Kerry has...

(CROSSTALK)

STEWART: Is he the best? I thought Lincoln was good.

(LAUGHTER)

CARLSON: Is he the best the Democrats can do?

STEWART: Is he the best the Democrats can do?

CARLSON: Yes, this year of the whole field.

STEWART: I had always thought, in a democracy -- and, again, I don't know -- I've only lived in this country -- that there's a process. They call them primaries.

CARLSON: Right.

STEWART: And they don't always go with the best, but they go with whoever won. So is he the best? According to the process.

CARLSON: Right. But of the nine guys running, who do you think was best. Do you think he was the best, the most impressive?

STEWART: The most impressive?

CARLSON: Yes.

STEWART: I thought Al Sharpton was very impressive.

(LAUGHTER)

STEWART: I enjoyed his way of speaking.

I think, oftentimes, the person that knows they can't win is allowed to speak the most freely, because, otherwise, shows with titles, such as CROSSFIRE.

BEGALA: CROSSFIRE.

STEWART: Or "HARDBALL" or "I'm Going to Kick Your Ass" or...

(LAUGHTER)

STEWART: Will jump on it.

In many ways, it's funny. And I made a special effort to come on the show today, because I have privately, amongst my friends and also in occasional newspapers and television shows, mentioned this show as being bad.

(LAUGHTER)

BEGALA: We have noticed.

STEWART: And I wanted to -- I felt that that wasn't fair and I should come here and tell you that I don't -- it's not so much that it's bad, as it's hurting America.

(LAUGHTER)

CARLSON: But in its defense...

(CROSSTALK)

STEWART: So I wanted to come here today and say...

(CROSSTALK)

STEWART: Here's just what I wanted to tell you guys.

CARLSON: Yes.

STEWART: Stop.

(LAUGHTER)

STEWART: Stop, stop, stop, stop hurting America.

BEGALA: OK. Now

(CROSSTALK)

STEWART: And come work for us, because we, as the people...

CARLSON: How do you pay?

STEWART: The people -- not well.

(LAUGHTER)

BEGALA: Better than CNN, I'm sure.

STEWART: But you can sleep at night.

(LAUGHTER)

STEWART: See, the thing is, we need your help. Right now, you're helping the politicians and the corporations. And we're left out there to mow our lawns.

BEGALA: By beating up on them? You just said we're too rough on them when they make mistakes.

STEWART: No, no, no, you're not too rough on them. You're part of their strategies. You are partisan, what do you call it, hacks.

(LAUGHTER)

CARLSON: Wait, Jon, let me tell you something valuable that I think we do that I'd like to see you...

(CROSSTALK)

STEWART: Something valuable?

CARLSON: Yes.

(CROSSTALK)

STEWART: I would like to hear it.

CARLSON: And I'll tell you.

When politicians come on...

STEWART: Yes.

CARLSON: It's nice to get them to try and answer the question. And in order to do that, we try and ask them pointed questions. I want to contrast our questions with some questions you asked John Kerry recently.

(CROSSTALK)

CARLSON: ... up on the screen.

STEWART: If you want to compare your show to a comedy show, you're more than welcome to.

(LAUGHTER)

CARLSON: No, no, no, here's the point.

(CROSSTALK)

STEWART: If that's your goal.

CARLSON: It's not.

STEWART: I wouldn't aim for us. I'd aim for "Seinfeld." That's a very good show.

CARLSON: Kerry won't come on this show. He will come on your show.

STEWART: Right.

CARLSON: Let me suggest why he wants to come on your show.

STEWART: Well, we have civilized discourse.

(LAUGHTER)

CARLSON: Well, here's an example of the civilized discourse.

Here are three of the questions you asked John Kerry.

STEWART: Yes.

CARLSON: You have a chance to interview the Democratic nominee. You asked him questions such as -- quote -- "How are you holding up? Is it hard not to take the attacks personally?"

STEWART: Yes.

CARLSON: "Have you ever flip-flopped?" et cetera, et cetera.

STEWART: Yes.

CARLSON: Didn't you feel like -- you got the chance to interview the guy. Why not ask him a real question, instead of just suck up to him?

STEWART: Yes. "How are you holding up?" is a real suck-up. And I actually giving him a hot stone massage as we were doing it.

(LAUGHTER)

CARLSON: It sounded that way. It did.

STEWART: You know, it's interesting to hear you talk about my responsibility.

CARLSON: I felt the sparks between you.

STEWART: I didn't realize that -- and maybe this explains quite a bit.

CARLSON: No, the opportunity to...

(CROSSTALK)

STEWART: ... is that the news organizations look to Comedy Central for their cues on integrity.

(LAUGHTER)

(CROSSTALK)

STEWART: So what I would suggest is, when you talk about you're holding politicians' feet to fire, I think that's disingenuous. I think you're...

CARLSON: "How are you holding up?" I mean, come on.

(CROSSTALK)

STEWART: No, no, no. But my role isn't, I don't think...

CARLSON: But you can ask him a real question, don't you think, instead of saying...

(CROSSTALK)

STEWART: I don't think I have to. By the way, I also asked him, "Were you in Cambodia?" But I didn't really care.

(LAUGHTER)

STEWART: Because I don't care, because I think it's stupid.

CARLSON: I can tell.

(CROSSTALK)

STEWART: But my point is this. If your idea of confronting me is that I don't ask hard-hitting enough news questions, we're in bad shape, fellows. (LAUGHTER)

CARLSON: We're here to love you, not confront you.

(CROSSTALK)

CARLSON: We're here to be nice.

STEWART: No, no, no, but what I'm saying is this. I'm not. I'm here to confront you, because we need help from the media and they're hurting us. And it's -- the idea is...

(APPLAUSE)

(CROSSTALK)

BEGALA: Let me get this straight. If the indictment is -- if the indictment is -- and I have seen you say this -- that...

STEWART: Yes.

BEGALA: And that CROSSFIRE reduces everything, as I said in the intro, to left, right, black, white.

STEWART: Yes.

BEGALA: Well, it's because, see, we're a debate show.

STEWART: No, no, no, no, that would be great.

BEGALA: It's like saying The Weather Channel reduces everything to a storm front.

STEWART: I would love to see a debate show.

BEGALA: We're 30 minutes in a 24-hour day where we have each side on, as best we can get them, and have them fight it out.

STEWART: No, no, no, no, that would be great. To do a debate would be great. But that's like saying pro wrestling is a show about athletic competition.

(LAUGHTER)

CARLSON: Jon, Jon, Jon, I'm sorry. I think you're a good comedian. I think your lectures are boring.

STEWART: Yes.

CARLSON: Let me ask you a question on the news.

STEWART: Now, this is theater. It's obvious. How old are you?

(CROSSTALK)

CARLSON: Thirty-five. STEWART: And you wear a bow tie.

(LAUGHTER)

(APPLAUSE)

CARLSON: Yes, I do. I do.

STEWART: So this is...

CARLSON: I know. I know. I know. You're a...

(CROSSTALK)

STEWART: So this is theater.

CARLSON: Now, let me just...

(CROSSTALK)

CARLSON: Now, come on.

STEWART: Now, listen, I'm not suggesting that you're not a smart guy, because those are not easy to tie.

CARLSON: They're difficult.

(LAUGHTER)

STEWART: But the thing is that this -- you're doing theater, when you should be doing debate, which would be great.

BEGALA: We do, do...

(CROSSTALK)

STEWART: It's not honest. What you do is not honest. What you do is partisan hackery. And I will tell you why I know it.

CARLSON: You had John Kerry on your show and you sniff his throne and you're accusing us of

partisan hackery?

STEWART: Absolutely.

CARLSON: You've got to be kidding me. He comes on and you...

(CROSSTALK)

STEWART: You're on CNN. The show that leads into me is puppets making crank phone calls.

(LAUGHTER)

STEWART: What is wrong with you?

(APPLAUSE) CARLSON: Well, I'm just saying, there's no reason for you -- when you have this marvelous opportunity not to be the guy's butt boy, to go ahead and be his butt boy. Come on. It's embarrassing.

STEWART: I was absolutely his butt boy. I was so far -- you would not believe what he ate two weeks ago.

(LAUGHTER)

(CROSSTALK)

STEWART: You know, the interesting thing I have is, you have a responsibility to the public discourse, and you fail miserably.

CARLSON: You need to get a job at a journalism school, I think.

STEWART: You need to go to one.

The thing that I want to say is, when you have people on for just knee-jerk, reactionary talk...

CARLSON: Wait. I thought you were going to be funny. Come on. Be funny.

STEWART: No. No. I'm not going to be your monkey.

(LAUGHTER)

BEGALA: Go ahead. Go ahead.

STEWART: I watch your show every day. And it kills me.

CARLSON: I can tell you love it.

STEWART: It's so -- oh, it's so painful to watch.

(LAUGHTER)

STEWART: You know, because we need what you do. This is such a great opportunity you have here to actually get politicians off of their marketing and strategy.

CARLSON: Is this really Jon Stewart? What is this, anyway?

STEWART: Yes, it's someone who watches your show and cannot take it anymore.

(LAUGHTER)

STEWART: I just can't.

CARLSON: What's it like to have dinner with you? It must be excruciating. Do you like lecture people like this or do you come over to their house and sit and lecture them; they're not doing the right thing, that they're missing their opportunities, evading their responsibilities? STEWART: If I think they are.

(LAUGHTER)

CARLSON: I wouldn't want to eat with you, man. That's horrible.

STEWART: I know. And you won't. But the thing I want to get to...

BEGALA: We did promise naked pictures of the Supreme Court justices.

CARLSON: Yes, we did. Let's get to those.

(CROSSTALK)

BEGALA: They're in this book, which is a very funny book.

STEWART: Why can't we just talk -- please, I beg of you guys, please.

CARLSON: I think you watch too much CROSSFIRE.

We're going to take a quick break.

STEWART: No, no, no, please.

CARLSON: No, no, hold on. We've got commercials.

(CROSSTALK)

STEWART: Please. Please stop.

CARLSON: Next, Jon Stewart in the "Rapid Fire."

STEWART: Please stop.

CARLSON: Hopefully, he'll be here, we hope, we think.

(APPLAUSE)

CARLSON: And then, did U.S. soldiers refuse an order in Iraq. Wolf Blitzer has the latest on this investigation right after the break.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

WOLF BLITZER, CNN ANCHOR: I'm Wolf Blitzer in Washington.

Coming up at the top of the hour, the Pentagon investigator a report that U.S. soldiers refused to go on a dangerous mission in Iraq. We'll have details. In medical news, the FDA prescribes a strongly worded label on antidepressant drugs. And why some experts think the flu vaccine shortage is a grim warning about U.S. vulnerability to bioterrorism.

All those stories, much more, only minutes away on "WOLF BLITZER REPORTS."

Now back to CROSSFIRE.

(CHEERING AND APPLAUSE)

CARLSON: Welcome back to CROSSFIRE.

We're talking to Jon Stewart, who was just lecturing us on our moral inferiority.

Jon, you're bumming us out. Tell us, what do you think about the Bill O'Reilly vibrator story?

STEWART: I'm sorry. I don't.

CARLSON: Oh, OK.

STEWART: What do you think?

BEGALA: Let me change the subject.

STEWART: Where's your moral outrage on this?

CARLSON: I don't have any.

STEWART: I know.

BEGALA: Which candidate do you suppose would provide you better material?

STEWART: I'm sorry?

BEGALA: Which candidate do you suppose would provide you better material if he won?

STEWART: Mr. T. I think he'd be the funniest. I don't...

(LAUGHTER)

BEGALA: Don't you have a stake in it that way, as not just a citizen, but as a professional comic?

(CROSSTALK)

STEWART: Right, which I hold to be much more important than as a citizen.

BEGALA: Well, there you go.

(LAUGHTER)

BEGALA: But who would you provide you better material, do you suppose?

STEWART: I don't really know. That's kind of not how we look at it. We look at, the absurdity of the system provides us the most material. And that is best served by sort of the theater of it all, you know, which, by the way, thank you both, because it's been helpful.

(LAUGHTER)

CARLSON: But, if Kerry gets elected, is it going to -- you have said you're voting for him. You obviously support him. It's clear. Will it be harder for you to mock his administration if he becomes president?

STEWART: No. Why would it be harder?

CARLSON: Because you support...

(CROSSTALK)

STEWART: The only way it would be harder is if his administration is less absurd than this one. So, in that case, if it's less absurd, then, yes, I think it would be harder.

But, I mean, it would be hard to top this group, quite frankly.

(LAUGHTER)

(CHEERING AND APPLAUSE)

STEWART: In terms of absurdity and their world matching up to the one that -- you know, it was interesting. President Bush was saying, John Kerry's rhetoric doesn't match his record.

But I've heard President Bush describe his record. His record doesn't match his record.

(LAUGHTER)

STEWART: So I don't worry about it in that respect.

But let me ask you guys, again, a question, because we talked a little bit about, you're actually doing honest debate and all that. But, after the debates, where do you guys head to right afterwards?

CARLSON: The men's room.

STEWART: Right after that?

BEGALA: Home.

STEWART: Spin alley.

BEGALA: Home.

STEWART: No, spin alley.

BEGALA: What are you talking about? You mean at these debates?

STEWART: Yes. You go to spin alley, the place called spin alley. Now, don't you think that, for people watching at home, that's kind of a drag, that you're literally walking to a place called deception lane?

(LAUGHTER)

STEWART: Like, it's spin alley. It's -- don't you see, that's the issue I'm trying to talk to you guys...

BEGALA: No, I actually believe -- I have a lot of friends who work for President Bush. I went to college with some of them.

CARLSON: Neither of us was ever in the spin room, actually.

(BELL RINGING)

BEGALA: No, I did -- I went to do the Larry King show.

They actually believe what they're saying. They want to persuade you. That's what they're trying to do by spinning. But I don't doubt for a minute these people who work for President Bush, who I disagree with on everything, they believe that stuff, Jon. This is not a lie or a deception at all. They believe in him, just like I believe in my guy.

(CROSSTALK)

STEWART: I think they believe President Bush would do a better job.

And I believe the Kerry guys believe President Kerry would do a better job. But what I believe is, they're not making honest arguments. So what they're doing is, in their mind, the ends justify the means.

(CROSSTALK)

BEGALA: I don't think so at all.

(CROSSTALK)

CARLSON: I do think you're more fun on your show. Just my opinion.

(CROSSTALK)

CARLSON: OK, up next, Jon Stewart goes one on one with his fans...

(CROSSTALK)

STEWART: You know what's interesting, though? You're as big a dick on your show as you are on any show.

(LAUGHTER)

CARLSON: Now, you're getting into it. I like that.

STEWART: Yes.

CARLSON: OK. We'll be right back.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BEGALA: Welcome back to CROSSFIRE. We are joined by Comedy Central's Jon Stewart, host of "The Daily Show" and author of No. 1 bestseller, "America (The Book): A Citizen's Guide to Democracy Inaction."

CARLSON: And a ton of fun, I like that too.

BEGALA: Some questions from our audience. Yes sir, what's your name, what's your name?

QUESTION: Hi, my name's David. I'm from Boston.

STEWART: Hi, David.

QUESTION: My question is, what do you think the hump on G.W.'s back during the debate was?

STEWART: Say it again?

QUESTION: What do you think the hump on George's back during the debate was?

STEWART: The hump on his back?

BEGALA: Oh, you're familiar? This is (INAUDIBLE) conspiracy theory. Can I take this one?

STEWART: Yes, please.

BEGALA: It was nothing, his suit was puckering. A lot of people believe he had one of these in his ear. If he was being fed lines by Karl Rove, he would not have been so inarticulate, guys. It's a myth.

(LAUGHTER)

BEGALA: It's not true. There's this huge myth out on the left.

(CROSSTALK)

BEGALA: Yes, ma'am.

QUESTION: Renee (ph) from Texas. Why do you think it's hard or difficult or impossible for politicians to answer a straight, simple question?

STEWART: I don't think it's hard. I just think that nobody holds their feet to the fire to do it. So they don't have to. They get to come on shows that don't...

BEGALA: They're too easy on them.

CARLSON: Yes. Ask them how you hold...

STEWART: Not easy on them...

(CROSSTALK)

BEGALA: ... saying we were too hard on people and too (INAUDIBLE).

(CROSSTALK)

STEWART: I think you're - yes.

CARLSON: All right. Jon Stewart, come back soon.

BEGALA: Jon Stewart, good of you to join us. Thank you very much. The book is "America: A Citizen's Guide to Democracy Inaction."

From the left I am Paul Begala, that's it for CROSSFIRE.

CARLSON: And from the right I'm Tucker Carlson, have a great weekend. See you Monday.

It's a shame the one that looks like a skeleton wasn't on there, because I'm sure it would've been much funnier then it already was.
