



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Dr. Dobson: More Untold Stories

Guest(s): Dr. James Dobson

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Dr. James Dobson: Welcome everyone to Family Talk. It's a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute supported by listeners just like you. I'm Dr. James Dobson and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.

Roger Marsh: Welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh and I want to take this moment to wish you a happy New Year as today is the first day of 2024. I pray that this is a year in which you'll draw closer to the Lord and that you and your family will be richly blessed all year long. I also want to take a moment to thank everyone who gave to our ministry last month when we had our special matching grant in place. Because of listeners just like you that were able to stay on the air. So on behalf of everyone here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, please know how much we appreciate your prayers and are so grateful for your financial support.

Now today, we have a special classic program for you featuring our very own Dr. James Dobson. Several years ago I had the opportunity to sit down with Dr. Dobson and I asked him about some of the lesser known stories of his life. Today, doctor will talk about his pivotal role in the Reagan administration and the circumstances that led to his famous interview with the notorious serial killer Ted Bundy. So let's listen to this broadcast right now, right here on Family Talk.

Turning the tables on Dr. Dobson here, kind of having a Q&A session here on the special edition of Family Talk with Dr. James Dobson. I'm Roger Marsh and I'm asking the questions and Dr. Dobson is sharing some just fascinating answers and very, very revealing parts of his life. Many people remember that in the 1980s during the Reagan years, you were very much a part on the Commission on Family Teen Pregnancy Prevention. You were part of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography, and we remember that from the 1980s. What some people might not know is that work continued into the 1990s, especially with your work on gambling. And I want you to talk about that because 20 years ago you were at the forefront of the movement that said we have to do something in the culture about that.

Dr. James Dobson: You know, I could talk and bore people for a long time about the details of my life because it's just been jammed. There's been so many exciting things that

have occurred, and I feel so honored that the Lord put me in that position. Somebody referred to me once as sort of the Forrest Gump.

Roger Marsh: Yeah. With all the different people you've met, yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: Because it's been one thing right after another. The Pornography Commission was the most difficult thing I've ever done because I was exposed to stuff that I will never get away from.

Roger Marsh: You can't really see it.

Dr. James Dobson: And the horrible nature of pornography was exposed there. I saw the FBI files and the murders and the things that take place because it is a cancer. Both gambling and pornography are cancers that have taken root in this culture. And those two commissions that I served on were very difficult to go through and to experience primarily because there were members of each of those commissions who did not see it as a problem. And so there was a political tug-of-war that went on in both of those cases. The one on pornography ended one night with a vote on whether a small 40-page document from our 18 months of study of pornography would be official and submitted to the government. It was a whitewash. It contained none of the horrid detail. It ignored the distressing aspect of what we had learned there.

There was another document that was 2,000 pages long and there was a vote as to which one we were going to endorse. And the night before the end of the commission, I lost the vote 10 to 1. I voted for the 2,000-page report, obviously.

Roger Marsh: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: And 10 people voted for the whitewash. And my staff at home knew that this moral crisis was playing itself out and they fasted, 350 of them fasted out on the parking lot that day and they prayed and asked God to be in that final decision.

Roger Marsh: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: And the next morning, the most influential member of our commission, a psychiatrist and a lawyer and the one who was the most respected of anybody there came in the next morning and he said, "I wasn't able to sleep last night."

Roger Marsh: Really? Really?

Dr. James Dobson: He said, "All night long I was thinking I have dealt with this as a legal issue. It's not. It's a moral issue." And he was not a believer to my knowledge. Never saw any evidence of it. And he changed his vote and the final vote was 11 to 1 in my favor.

Roger Marsh: In your favor. Excellent.

Dr. James Dobson: And that 2,000-page report is what was released. And the serial murderer, Ted Bundy.

Roger Marsh: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: Who murdered more than a hundred women. The last one was a twelve-year-old girl that he killed and threw into a pigsty. He got a copy of that 2,000-page report and he read it and he saw himself in it. And he realized that he had gotten addicted to pornography and how it had happened and he wanted the world to know it. So his lawyer called me and said, "It is evident now that Ted Bundy is going to be executed. It'll take a while for this to play out, but when it happens, be ready. We're going to call you and ask you to come down and have the last interview with him because he won't talk to anybody but you." And it's because of that 2,000-page report.

So the day before it was scheduled for his execution, I was there. I went through seven locked doors to get to him. He was on the death row.

Roger Marsh: Maximum security, yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: And we had to take off our shoes because the sensors were so sensitive to the nails in your shoe that it was the most surreal thing that I have ever experienced. We got into the area where they had Ted Bundy. They took him in a little room and strip searched him and then brought him out to sit and talk to me. It was all videotaped and there were guards all the way around us, but you couldn't see them. He was totally surrounded by prison guards. And we began talking and we talked for 45 minutes.

The night before that, they brought him in on the other side of the glass and I had a chance to talk to him. And he had been confessing all day long because he felt like he needed to tell the parents of the women that he killed.

Roger Marsh: All those parents. Oh my goodness.

Dr. James Dobson: Where they were buried and what he did to them. And he was so exhausted that he had his head leaning on the glass. And I put my hand up against the glass on one side and he put his hand on the other side and I prayed for him. Not that I sympathized or empathized with him,

Roger Marsh: No, not at all.

Dr. James Dobson: In the sense of wanting him to be released or not wanting him to die. If there ever was a man who deserved to die, Ted Bundy was it. He showed no mercy to dozens and dozens of women that were killed in the most gruesome way. I had no sympathy for him in that, but this was a human being. And his lawyer said that he had confessed before the Lord. I don't know whether he did or not. Only God knows. We finished. And then the next morning he was executed at seven

o'clock. I was not there because I didn't want that on my memory. I didn't want to have to remember it. But there was a sheriff there who was a loud, braggadocious kind of southern sheriff, sort of.

Roger Marsh: Yeah. Right out of Central Casting game.

Dr. James Dobson: Right out of that. And he demanded to be there and he was there. And he said after, that he was sitting in the gallery watching this and at the last minute before Ted was electrocuted, he looked at him and his eyes locked on him. And he said, "I felt that thing try to get in me." And he said, "I did everything I could to stop it because something tried to invade my mind." I think Ted was demon possessed. How that works with prayer, I don't know. It's beyond me.

Roger Marsh: What a fascinating, interesting...

Dr. James Dobson: That all occurred because of that 2,000-page report.

Roger Marsh: That's an amazing story, Dr. Dobson about how that report moved Ted Bundy to help him see the dangers of pornography and how it had influenced his life. And I know that there are people who are hearing that story, who are having that same moment where they're recognizing...

Dr. James Dobson: Roger, I came out of that prison carrying the videotape and we worked out the details of being able to use it in a parking lot under a light standard.

Roger Marsh: Sure. Flicker head.

Dr. James Dobson: At 10:30 at night with my lawyer and Ted's lawyer. And then they took us across the street and there were 300 members of the press there. They were not sympathetic with the commission or me at all, but there were strobe lights set up. Most surreal thing I've ever experienced. And all these microphones. You've seen it when the president speaks and there were all these microphones, and I told them what had happened and how Ted told the story that when he was 13 years of age, he had been in a dump, fooling around in a city dump and he found detective stories. They used to have a lot of detective stories with scantily clad women who were tied up and they had blindfolds on and things. That appealed to him. It does to some people. It's related to sadism. And he got hooked on it.

The thing you got to remember about pornography is that it is always addictive and progressive. It gets a hold of you. I think it is satanic. And then it takes you into harder and harder material so that what excites you at one point, if you get hooked on it, will not satisfy tomorrow.

Roger Marsh: So you have to go deeper.

Dr. James Dobson: You have to go deeper. The song that said, in olden days, a glimpse of stocking was looked on as something shocking. But heaven knows,

Roger Marsh: Anything goes.

Dr. James Dobson: Anything goes. That's the way it is. There's a point at which just seeing a woman's ankle is stimulating, but it won't be for very long and it goes farther and farther. Well, what happens so often is that a person who is on this pattern in this addictive life will move farther and farther until you get to the point that there's nothing a man and woman can do together anymore that really gives you the same thrill. And there's a little fire trail there. Well, for a certain number of people, they jump the fire trail and they go from pictures and vicarious experience to the real thing. That's what happened to Ted.

Roger Marsh: Ted Bundy, yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: And he began killing women. And I asked him, "Ted, how'd you feel the next morning after doing something like this?" And he says, "I couldn't believe I was capable of even doing it, but I was so caught in it." And I said, "Did you ever kill anybody when you were not under the influence of alcohol?" And he said, "Not once." So it lowers your resistance. And then he would go do what even horrified him.

Roger Marsh: Interesting. I mean, it's amazing to see the progression and you talked about it being progressive and addictive, but it's progressively regressive though too. I mean it destroys. It takes you away from decency and morality.

Dr. James Dobson: Now let me tell you, Roger, gambling is like that.

Roger Marsh: Yeah. And you sat on the Gambling Commission too?

Dr. James Dobson: I did sit on the Gambling Commission. And it is also addictive and progressive and it destroys marriage. So does pornography. Because with pornography you got one member of the family that's not addicted to it and the other one is, and the one who is asking the one who isn't to perform things that the first one is not comfortable doing. And it just destroys the sexual relationship because there is nothing in reality that can compete with what is available on video. Now, can you believe the new videos are wrap around 360 degrees and they are virtual. I mean to tell you, you are there. And it is a curse that is going to take its toll on the people of the world, but especially Western nations.

Roger Marsh: And you saw this happening years ago.

Dr. James Dobson: I saw it. I knew it. And it's same thing for gambling.

Roger Marsh: Gambling too.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. But a little less intense.

Roger Marsh: It's encouraging to know, Dr. Dobson, that you've played such a valuable role in fighting the cultural decay. At the same time it's frustrating, challenging. I'm sure it is for you. I mean, I can see it in your face right now, how frustrating it is to know that we've had this cultural slide.

Dr. James Dobson: It is frustrating to me that while we were very excited at the time about making a difference and we did, that 2,000-word report resulted in 26 changes in the law that would never have been made otherwise.

Roger Marsh: With regard to pornography.

Dr. James Dobson: With regard to pornography and we made some difference on gambling. But just as soon as Bill Clinton came in, he changed the Attorney General of course. And that Attorney General withdrew the curbs against hardcore and violent pornography. And now it's worse than it's ever been. And gambling is also now not even considered to be anything to worry about. When I was a kid, and it didn't matter whether you were a churchgoer or a Christian or what, everybody knew gambling was dangerous. Now nobody knows it's dangerous.

Roger Marsh: Right. Dr. James Dobson, we've likened you to Forrest Gump in the different experiences that you've had. You also too, I mean I'm going to mention some dates here and you'll resonate with them right away. August 15, 1990.

Dr. James Dobson: Had a heart attack.

Roger Marsh: June 16, 1998.

Dr. James Dobson: I had a stroke caused by the heart attack.

Roger Marsh: January 9, 2009.

Dr. James Dobson: Um-hum, yeah.

Roger Marsh: Now this is a story a lot of people don't know. Most people know about the heart attack and the stroke, but this one here, you really are a cat of nine lives.

Dr. James Dobson: God is taking care of me. I am very, very grateful. I have no reason to be here in the sense that the probabilities were not good that I would survive, but I have and I'm healthy. That's amazing thing.

Roger Marsh: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: This is a guy's had a heart attack, a stroke and prostate cancer, and a couple of planes caught on fire. The plane experience is incredible. I was buzzing down on the way down there to Birmingham, Alabama to see a guru about my shoulder.

He is Dr. Jimmy Andrews, who is well-known in the NBA and NFL, and he agreed to see me. And I was going to have surgery on my arm. A friend sent a private plane for me to go down there to Birmingham, Alabama. I went to sleep. I was the only person on the plane. It was a little jet and I was the only one. And I woke up. I was awakened by the smell of smoke.

Roger Marsh: Oh, no.

Dr. James Dobson: And I looked around and there's smoke everywhere.

Roger Marsh: Oh, no.

Dr. James Dobson: And the front of the plane had been on fire. The two pilots were not Christians. They waited for me to wake up and then they called me and they said, "Would you come forward?" And I came forward and they said, "We hear that you're a praying man." And I said, "Well, I am." And they said, "Then pray." They said, "We've had a fire. It has burned all of our electronics. We have no ability to contact the control tower. We don't know where we are. We don't know how fast we're going. We don't know how high we are, and we're afraid we're going to hit another plane because we're going 500 miles an hour and a plane coming from the other side, that's a thousand miles an hour you're closing on one another." And they said, "We're going to drop down and we're going to look for a place to land."

And I looked out the window and there's nothing but dirt roads with snow on them. I came back and I tried to call Shirley. I couldn't reach her. So we're buzzing along, and I don't know if these are the last moments of my life or not.

Roger Marsh: Right. I'm hearing Payne Stewart type of moments here.

Dr. James Dobson: We had oxygen, but we just didn't have any electronics. And finally they came to the Mississippi River and the pilots recognized it and knew that Memphis is on the Mississippi River. So they turned and we flew along the Mississippi until we came to Memphis. Then they gained altitude, they dropped the wheels, which says we're going to land. They passed the airport, circled around and came back and landed. And we had 20 minutes fuel left.

Roger Marsh: Wow. So which life was that? Was that the fifth or the sixth?

Dr. James Dobson: I don't know which life, I'll take it. The interesting thing is that the SWAT team thought we were terrorists because we wouldn't talk to them.

Roger Marsh: Sure.

Dr. James Dobson: When we opened the door, they were all over us. Get out of the plane, made demands on us, and we explained what had happened, and that was the end of that. Except that this man who sent me that plane, Bill Johnson, sent another

one and I flew on and I met with Dr. Andrews and he said, "Don't touch your shoulder. You're going to be okay." So I avoided surgery too.

Roger Marsh: Well, that's very good. So from being part of a SWAT rescue to also being part of the Secret Service too, you've really had an adventurous life.

Dr. James Dobson: My life has been full, more than I can tell you, but more than that, my life has been full of love. I've had a loving family. I've had a lot of love from people that I don't even know. I've been hugged by people on the street and in conferences and people that know a lot about me because many of them made breakfast with me every morning.

Roger Marsh: Right, listening to you on the radio.

Dr. James Dobson: Or got dressed with me every morning, and I've had more good things. God has poured it all out on me. I've had an opportunity to get a good education. I've had all kinds of opportunities to do creative things. I've had travel. I've had some real bumps in the road physically, but I appear to be totally healthy today. I've got a wonderful wife that I love like crazy, and she seems to love me. That's the biggest miracle. Two children and two grandchildren, and there's love everywhere. So I worry a little bit about getting to Heaven and the Lord saying, "Son, you've had your share." Because I have. I've had more than my share.

Roger Marsh: Well, Dr. Dobson, it has been a pleasure. Thank you for the invitation to come here and turn the tables on you, so to speak. You've been a great guest. You're an excellent host, but you're an excellent guest too. Thank you for what you've shared with our Family Talk listeners today here on the program.

Dr. James Dobson: Thank you, Roger. I really enjoyed working with you.

Roger Marsh: You've been listening to the first part of a fascinating classic interview that I conducted with our very own Dr. James Dobson here on Family Talk. If you enjoy programs just like this one, consider our 2023 Broadcast Collection. You'll hear seven of the best programs featuring our own Dr. Dobson from this past year. And in addition, eight bonus programs from a special event here in town. Now, if you'd like your own copy of the five CD set or to get it as a digital download, simply visit us online at drjamesdobson.org/2023. Everything you need to get your copy will be right there on that page. We'll be sending it to you as our way of thanking you for your gift of any amount in support of the ministry here at the JDFI.

So again, go online to drjamesdobson.org/2023 for the 2023 Broadcast Collection. Remember, you can also easily make your request over the phone. Dial 877-732-6825. We love to hear from our listeners, so please feel free to send us your comments, your questions, and even your prayer requests. Again, the number to call is 877-732-6825. I'm Roger Marsh, and I hope the rest of the first day of 2024 is a blessed one for you and your family. Thank you for making

Family Talk a part of your day and join us again tomorrow for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer: This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.

Roger Marsh: Hey everyone. Roger Marsh here. When you think about your family and where they will be when you're no longer living, are you worried? Are you confident? Are you hopeful? What kind of legacy are you leaving for your children and their children. Here at Family Talk we're committed to helping you understand the legacy that you're leaving for your family. Join us today at drjamesdobson.org for helpful insights, tips, and advice from Dr. James Dobson himself. And remember, your legacy matters.