



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Dr. Dobson: The Untold Stories – Part 2

**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: Well, welcome back to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh, and today we're continuing our special behind-the-scenes look at Dr. Dobson's remarkable life and ministry. And I am sitting in the guest host seat to interview the man himself. Now, if you were listening to the last edition of Family Talk, you heard Dr. Dobson shares some fascinating stories about his early years. You know, Dr. Dobson rarely shares these personal stories during his regular broadcasts as he's typically focusing on his guests. But today, you're going to hear first-hand accounts of events ranging from state dinners at the White House to private moments with world leaders. Now if you missed part one of the broadcast, I encourage you to listen in on our website at [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk).

Let's continue our special conversation with Dr. Dobson right here on the Family Talk broadcast. Dr., thank you for taking this time to share these stories with us. You know, so often you're the one doing the interviewing of someone but now you're giving me this incredible opportunity to ask you questions about things you maybe never shared before and nothing's off limits at this point. Is that correct?

Dr. James Dobson: It is correct. I have not shared them because I'm not sure anybody cares.

Roger Marsh: Oh, we do.

Dr. James Dobson: It has just been an interesting life.

Roger Marsh: 1979, Focus on the Family film series takes off. 1980, Ronald Reagan is elected president. There's a connection there.

Dr. James Dobson: Ronald Reagan, of course, was elected president in November of 1980 and January the 20th, 1981, he was inaugurated. To my surprise, I received an invitation to come to the Inauguration and to the Inaugural Ball, and they sent me 10 tickets so I could bring four couples or eight other people and Shirley and me. And so, we were thrilled beyond belief. I believed in Ronald Reagan and I still do. I think he was an absolutely great president.

And so, we were standing there on the west side of the Capitol building where the mall extends to Abraham Lincoln. You know them all. Well, we were about a half a block from where the President laid his hand on 2 Chronicles 14, which reads, "If my people who are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land." How we need a President now who will honor that Scripture.

But I was standing there and my heart was filled with pride. It was called the New Beginning. Those signs were all over Washington. Now, I had come to Washington to catch a glimpse of the President and I did at the Inauguration, but our hope was to see him somewhere else during that day. The Inaugural Ball was that night. There were nine Inaugural Balls, and we were at the ninth one, so it was after midnight when he showed up. We were at the Smithsonian Museum and we were waiting. It was jammed. You could not move in that museum.

Roger Marsh: How exciting.

Dr. James Dobson: It was thrilling, and it was cold, very cold. We were all wearing heavy formal overcoats. When we arrived there, we checked them and we were there for three hours, I guess, or four before Ronald Reagan came. About midnight, I said to one of my friends that had come with me, "When the President comes, everybody's going to try to get their coats and we're going to be stuck here forever. Let's go get our coats now." And so, we did. The two of us left and went and got our coats. As we picked them up, we had them over our arms, and a door swung open and in came the Secret Service. They opened the door. He was standing there. I was three feet away from him.

As soon as that occurred, they announced that he and Nancy were coming to the platform and the President said a few words, and then he danced with Nancy. I didn't get a chance to talk to him. I didn't even shake his hand because he turned left instead of right. But I want to tell you the interesting thing. Three years later, I had been invited by that President to come to the Oval Office and to the cabinet room and sit beside him, with the jelly beans between us, and advise him on how to strengthen the American family.

I came in there, was with him for a couple of hours along with other people who were there. After I had been there, they asked me to write what I said to him because there were four recommendations that I made to the President on that day, and he issued executive orders creating all four.

Roger Marsh: Wow.

Dr. James Dobson: That was the beginning of my friendship with Ronald Reagan and with other projects that I had. I worked with him for five years. I think the Lord had a plan somewhere in there, but I was there off and on for five years.

I'll tell you one other thing about Ronald Reagan. This is a very warm memory for me. The very last day, Ronald Reagan met with his staff after his second term. He brought them all together, and it was a highly emotional thing. You can imagine everybody was in tears. I was there.

Roger Marsh: Wow.

Dr. James Dobson: I had been invited there to talk about the fight against pornography, and the President had been working with us on that. And so, I was sitting there quietly watching that final moment between the President and his staff and the warmth. They loved that man. We all did. And then, he was gone.

I had a dream, shortly after that, that was very symbolic. I dreamt that I was invited to the White House like I had been so many times. I went through the North Gate, and I got there and there was nobody there. The gate was open and the guards were all gone. I walked in and I walked across the front lawn to the portico and the front door and the door was standing open. I walked in and looked around and nobody was there. I went up the stairs to the residence area and the President had moved out. He was not there. That was the end of the dream.

Roger Marsh: Wow.

Dr. James Dobson: You understand?

Roger Marsh: Yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: I was dreaming about the fact that this Cinderella experience and this wonderful President was over. It's done and he's gone.

Roger Marsh: We definitely saw a culture change in the United States after Reagan's...

Dr. James Dobson: No question about it. I've also worked with Herbert Walker Bush. I sat with him alone in the Oval Office. I had a chance to work with George W. Bush in a less intimate way, but I did some work with them too. But the time with Reagan was something I cannot describe, but I get emotional about it today.

Roger Marsh: I can tell. It still has an impact 30 plus years later.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah.

Roger Marsh: What a powerful memory. I can see. You're glowing right now just remembering those times. Were there others, other powerful memories during that time for you?

Dr. James Dobson: There were a lot of them, but one that I would share with you was a state dinner that Shirley and I were invited to. I don't know if you know what those are.

Roger Marsh: Sure.

Dr. James Dobson: When a dignitary is coming into town, they have a state dinner and they invite people that they want to honor, and Shirley and I were included in that. Only one, but it was quite a night. It came to the night of the state dinner and Shirley and I looked at each other and said, "You know what? You don't take a cab to the White House. You go in a limousine." We never even thought about that. I picked up the phone and I called my assistant, Dee Ovy, in California, and I said, "You got to get me a limousine." Dee doesn't know one limousine from another and she got one that was about a block and a half long. I'm not kidding you. This thing was unbelievable.

Roger Marsh: It's like an aircraft carrier, right?

Dr. James Dobson: I couldn't even see Shirley from the other side of it.

Roger Marsh: Love it.

Dr. James Dobson: We drove up to the front portico. One of the secret servicemen that I'd become great friends with was standing there looking out the portico when our limousine drove by, and he was thinking, "Who in the world is that?"

Roger Marsh: In this boat.

Dr. James Dobson: We get out of this limousine and a marine captain, wearing white gloves, dressed to the nines, comes over and Shirley takes his arm and I'm dragging along behind. We go into the White House. You curl around, and then there is a long hall, I'm sure you've seen it on television, which is right parallel with the Rose Garden. And so, they're bringing us all in and the hall has a little jog in it, and the photographers were all gathered right there to take pictures of the celebrities as they came by.

And so, Sylvester Stallone was right in front of us and they introduced him, "Sylvester Stallone," and the lights flashed and it was just everybody.

Roger Marsh: Pop, pop, pop, pop, pop.

Dr. James Dobson: Pop, pop, pop. Everything occurred at once. And then, Michael J. Fox was next, and they took pictures of him. It came to us and the Marine turns to us and says, "And your name please." We said, "Doctor and Mrs. James Dobson." He said, "Doctor and Mrs. James Dobson," and there was silence.

Roger Marsh: Not one pop.

Dr. James Dobson: There was not one flashbulb. I was not who they had in mind. It was really very suave. We laughed over that.

Roger Marsh: Oh good.

Dr. James Dobson: There was, I think, one disposable camera down at the end where somebody took one picture.

Roger Marsh: Click. One click.

Dr. James Dobson: But Raquel Welch was wearing a white dress. It was something to behold. I don't mean to be gross here, but everybody in the White House was watching Raquel Welch. She went on through the evening and danced with Ronald Reagan, and it was something to behold. Somebody, about a month ago, gave me a photograph of her and Ronald Reagan wearing that white, did I mention it was a white dress?

Roger Marsh: It was a white dress, yes. I think we're very clear on that dress.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, it was another Cinderella evening for us and we loved it. Now, I don't talk about it. I haven't told that on the air but, for us, it was a highlight.

Roger Marsh: Well, you're on the hot seat. We've turned the tables here today, Dr. Dobson. Of course, the guest is going to answer some questions like that.

Boy, the '80s were quite a decade in the Dobson household, and with your ministry too. I mean, at the start of the '80s, with the film series and, at one point, having seven of the top 10 best-selling books in America. What a way to kick that decade off, and culminating with your work in the Reagan White House in the late 1980s. And then, the new era, George Herbert Walker Bush coming in, inaugurated in 1989, and ushering in the 1990s. You had a good relationship with Bush 41, as they call it.

Dr. James Dobson.: I did. What a gracious man. I met him at the White House when he was Vice President, and we had about an hour together, and that was May of 1988. That's significant because my mother died one month later, and he wrote me a personal note of consolation.

When I had my heart attack, I was in the hospital. This was in 1990, and we didn't reveal who I was because we didn't want anybody coming in there. I really needed rest and I needed to recuperate. The hospital did not know my name until George Herbert Walker Bush called to see if I was there.

Roger Marsh: Wow.

Dr. James Dobson: And then, they were saying, "Who is this masked man here?" But let me tell you one quick story. This is a cute story. I went to the Oval Office to meet with George Bush 41, and Millie was the name of their dog.

Roger Marsh: Right. The first dog.

Dr. James Dobson: In fact, Barbara Bush wrote a book about Millie, and Millie was a spaniel.

Roger Marsh: Cute dog.

Dr. James Dobson: I got there that day and Millie was in the Oval Office. She was lying over by the window and the President came over and talked to her and she wouldn't get up. She just rolled her eyes up at him and I said, "What's wrong with her?" He said, "She's pouting." I said, "Why is she pouting?" He said, "Well, the grandkids are here, and she gets very jealous when the grandkids come, so she won't look up at you and she'll lie there all day long." That was Millie. She just was very possessive of the Bush family.

Roger Marsh: Sure. It doesn't matter if you're the President of the United States or not, when there's a dog that's pouting, that dog's going to have a good pout.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah, because those grandkids shouldn't be there.

Roger Marsh: Right. Well, Dr. Dobson, we could spend several weeks talking about all the famous celebrities that you have met and people who've sought you out, and I'm sure that have surprised you in terms of saying, "Wow, I didn't realize," like Ronald Reagan's invitation to his inauguration. You did have an encounter, as it were, with Prince Charles.

Dr. James Dobson: There were aspects of that meeting that I will really need to keep confidential because I feel like that was the understanding when we were together.

Roger Marsh: Sure.

Dr. James Dobson: But the essence of it is that I was given an to fly to London and to go to Prince Charles's estate in the Cotswolds. It was, really, a fascinating experience. He is a much more gracious man than people realize he is.

Roger Marsh: Really?

Dr. James Dobson: You think of him as obscure and British.

Roger Marsh: Stuffy.

Dr. James Dobson: Stuffy, but he couldn't have been warmer to us. Invited Shirley and me. We came up the night before and we spent the night in a hotel across the street from his huge estate. The next morning, we were ushered in to the estate. I

would describe the decor of that building as shabby chic. Do you know those words?

Roger Marsh: Yes, I do.

Dr. James Dobson: Shabby chic means deliberately old looking.

Roger Marsh: Sure, sure.

Dr. James Dobson: I'd never seen that before. We walked down the hall toward his living room. There were bookshelves there that were overloaded and were bowed in the middle, that kind of thing.

Roger Marsh: Sure.

Dr. James Dobson: We went into the living room and he met us there. There was a newspaper on the couch and the couch was a little frayed. Just things like that, that kind of surprise you. You'd think a prince-

Roger Marsh: Royalty would have better,

Dr. James Dobson: ... Next in line, for royalty, for the throne. That's not the feel of the building, although it was gigantic. We sat down and talked for about an hour. We talked, basically, about global warming, which is not a favorite topic of mine.

Roger Marsh: I was going to say.

Dr. James Dobson: I think that's why I'd been invited there. Talked about the environmental factors and so on. He had a farm across the street from this big estate. All of their farming is done without gasoline. As much as possible, it's done with old equipment and things like that. They're trying to preserve the environment. He really takes that seriously.

Roger Marsh: Interesting.

Dr. James Dobson: And so, we talked about that subject. And then, a reference to God came up. I don't remember exactly how, but I think Shirley probably introduced it into the conversation, and that gave us an opportunity to talk about our faith. He then said something that just amazed me, and people who've heard it since then can hardly believe it happened, but he said, "I have a private chapel in the garden. Would you like to see it?"

Roger Marsh: Really?

Dr. James Dobson: Nobody goes into that chapel. In fact, the woman who, for 20 years, has taken care of the garden, asked us what was in it because she's never been in it.

Roger Marsh: Oh my.

Dr. James Dobson: He built it out of materials that are on the estate. If you look at my book, *Legacy: The Greatest Gift*, you will see a photograph taken of Shirley and me and Prince Charles in front of that chapel because it's there.

Roger Marsh: Lovely. Lovely.

Dr. James Dobson: But, anyway, he said, "Would you like to see it?" We said, "Of course." He brought us out into this garden, which is gorgeous, it's so manicured, and into the opening of the chapel and took us inside. It is small. It is a place where he goes to contemplate and to pray and to think. It has Byzantine art in it and a cross and a little bench where he kneels before the cross. It's obviously extremely meaningful to him.

Roger Marsh: He brought you in there.

Dr. James Dobson: He brought us in there. We were also with the Bishop of Liverpool in the Anglican Church, and he had something to do with my being there. And so, we stood and talked about the things in the chapel, and then he did something that also is never done.

Roger Marsh: Prince Charles did this?

Dr. James Dobson: He did. This was a surprise to both the bishop and me because Prince Charles turned to the bishop and asked him to pray. Commoners like us never pray with a member of the monarchy. That's just not done.

Roger Marsh: Incredible.

Dr. James Dobson: But he prayed a wonderful evangelistic prayer. It was really a beautiful prayer. And then, I did something that I still can't believe I did. This was one of a kind.

Roger Marsh: I can't wait to hear this.

Dr. James Dobson: I said, "Your highness, may I pray for you?" He said, "I would like it if you would do that."

Roger Marsh: Oh, wow.

Dr. James Dobson: And then I prayed with Prince Charles.

Roger Marsh: Beautiful.

Dr. James Dobson: It was a precious moment. Outside, the Navy, representatives from the Navy, including two or three helicopters were out there waiting for him. He was 45 minutes late to review the British Navy, and he stayed with us for 45 extra



minutes out there. He showed us around the grounds, showed us the wedding gift that they had been given by the Army when he and Diana married, and the other things. His wife, Camilla, was having surgery, so she was not there. But we spent a good part of a half day there, and it was just a very special time.

Roger Marsh: You and Prince Charles.

Dr. James Dobson: Yes.

Roger Marsh: Just praying in his private chapel.

Dr. James Dobson: Yes. We corresponded afterward. I've now lost touch with him, but I will always appreciate the fact that I had an opportunity to be there. A lot of people don't consider him one of their favorite people because he leans sometimes in a Muslim direction, not that he is Muslim, but doing what he can for mosques and things like that. All I saw was a very gracious man who has a meaningful faith and is dead serious about the environment, more than I happen to be.

Roger Marsh: But you can have a great appreciation for Prince Charles's concern.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. He knows what he believes.

Roger Marsh: Well, what great stories we've heard these past couple of programs here on the Family Talk broadcast. I'm Roger Marsh, and you just heard the conclusion of my two-part conversation with our own Dr. James Dobson, as we turned the tables on Dr. and gave me the amazing opportunity to act on your behalf as a listener to hear Dr. share these rarely told stories from his life. By the way, if you missed the first part of this conversation, both parts one and two are now available at [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk) and you can also hear that audio on the Family Talk app as well.

Well the stories we've heard today from Dr. Dobson remind us there's really no limit to the impact that we can make for God's kingdom when we stand firm in our convictions. Through his decades of ministry, Dr. Dobson has consistently championed biblical truth about marriage and family and this far-reaching impact continues today through programs like Family Talk which is only made possible through the generous support of friends like you. Your tax-deductible donation of any amount will help us continue to reach America with the unchanging truth about faith, family and God's design for marriage and children. You can make a secure donation by the way online at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org) and when you make your donation today, we will thank you by sending you a copy of the "Building a Family Legacy" bundle. It includes six of Dr. Dobson's most essential books on topics like marriage, parenting and leaving a spiritual heritage. These trusted resources provide the practical wisdom you need. Don't miss the opportunity to invest in your family's future. Ask for your copy of the "Building a Family Legacy" bundle features books like *Bringing Up Boys*, *Bringing Up Girls*, *Your Legacy* and more.

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Well, I'm Roger Marsh and on behalf of Dr. Dobson and all of us here at the JDFI, thanks so much for listening today. I pray that you have a blessed rest of your day and invite you to join us again next time right here for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer:

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