

## The End of a Particularly Funny and Interesting Era

by Joe Mulder

[I'm not sure this piece ever really came together, and it certainly doesn't do justice to how much I enjoyed having "The Adam Carolla Show" to listen to for three-plus years. But you know what? It's free, and it'll kill a few minutes of your day. That, in a nutshell, is this website's entire *raison d'etre*, so quit your whining]

Last Friday, my life changed.

My *circumstances* didn't change, really. I still lived in the same house with the same wife and kid, and drove the same car to the same job at the same time. The way in which I pass a good couple of hours every day changed, however, because last Friday Adam Carolla broadcast his very last radio show.

I first encountered Adam Carolla on the televised version of the radio show "Loveline," which premiered when I was in college. It was an interesting premise; Adam, Dr. Drew and a token female cohost would take questions, generally from kids my age, and they would dispense critical advice. Once I graduated college and got a job about an hour's drive from where I lived (living in Los Angeles, as I do, the hour's drive covered about 17 miles), I started to record "Loveline" on the radio, using a cassette tape which I started at 10:00 and flipped over at 11:00 to catch the second hour (hard to believe I was doing this as recently as five years ago; my kids really aren't going to understand why the primitive nature of our technology didn't just cause us all to go out of our minds and kill ourselves).

"Loveline," it turned out, was nothing short of a master class in human psychology. It was a revelation for someone like me, someone who grew up just as the "self-esteem" movement was starting... we're all special, we're all different, all that nonsense. That everyone has a certain dignity and is deserving of a certain respect due to the fact that they are human beings, I don't dispute. But listening to young "Loveline" callers night after night, week after week, month after month, year after year, with Adam and Drew serving as my perceptive and insightful guides, I shaped my view of human nature. Every young woman (*every* young woman) who called the show with relationship problems beyond her years, problems she wasn't equipped to handle, had unresolved issues with her father. Every once in a while when Adam asked "where's Daddy" and the caller claimed that she and her dad had a great relationship, Adam and Drew would seem confused. Invariably, after digging a bit deeper, the truth would come out. One caller in particular insisted that her relationship with her dad was fine, and yet the problems she was having made such a thing sound doubtful. Finally, after a few minutes (an eternity in radio time), Adam finally asked if she was talking about her biological father. "Oh no," she said, "he died when I was

two."

I was raised just as the self-esteem movement was taking root; we are all different, we were taught. We were all special. A nice thing to tell kids, maybe, but it was a revelation to listen to several years of "Loveline" and find out that people are basically alike; a person is extremely likely to end up relating to others a certain way as an adult based on what he or she experienced as a child. The human psyche, in short, craves nothing so much as what is familiar, and will seek that out even to its owner's detriment. This is a fundamental truth, and one of which I'm not sure I'd be aware if Adam Carolla hadn't been so funny that I never wanted to miss "Loveline."

So there was that.

Then, of course, Adam moved on to his own morning radio show. For four hours every morning he would hold court on anything and everything that bothered him, from red left-turn arrows to airport security. Is it any wonder I was a huge fan? I'd been boring people with complaints about red left-turn arrows and airport security for years. To hear him tell it, Adam also constantly fought off meddling program directors and trusted his own instincts, eschewing pre-planned "bits" for a more off-the-cuff style, trusting in his sidekicks – hilarious Dave Dameshek in the show's first year; brilliant, beautiful Teresa Strasser and quick-witted "Bald" Bryan Bishop later on; and a game Danny Bonaduce during an ill-fated yearlong tenure – to run with a premise that he came up with on the fly. Guests who fit in well with the trio also felt free to add their two cents, and the particularly good ones – usually comedians such as Dana Gould, Doug Benson, Kevin Nealon, Christopher Titus, Larry Miller, Joel McHale and David Alan Grier – were invited back frequently (just reading that list depresses me; look at all the funny people I won't be hearing from nearly as much anymore). The result was nothing short of the best radio show I've ever heard, and it really, really put a big dent in my day when it went off the air last week. I have a job that involves a lot of sitting in front of a computer, doing relatively mindless work that doesn't require a great deal of concentration. I need radio to pass the time or I'd go nuts, and "The Adam Carolla Show," which was available online in podcast form as well, actually made it so that I looked *forward* to going to work.

To see just what I'm talking about, check out these two segments that, somehow, miraculously, are still available online:

<http://podcast.itm-1015.com/klx1/949063.mp3>

and

<http://podcast.itm-1015.com/klx1/950723.mp3>

You'll hear Adam and Norm Macdonald, with the help of Teresa and Bryan, almost start to play a game called "Blah

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Blah Blog," in which they try to match a certain piece of writing to the celebrity who wrote it on the internet... but then they go on a two-segment tangent during which they analyze the lyrics to the Kenny Rogers songs "Ruby, Don't Take Your Love To Town" and "Coward of the County." Unless you're much older than I am, much younger than I am, or have delicate sensibilities, I just can't imagine how you could justify not finding these two segments to be among the funniest things you've ever heard. The second one, in particular.

In any case, Adam Carolla, who always said he loved radio and would do it for free, has put his money where his mouth is: the Monday after his last show, he had a podcast up at [CarollaRadio.com](http://CarollaRadio.com). It wasn't good (as he himself has intimated). But it was his first one; I have no doubt he'll master the medium in short order (his second podcast, which I will likely have listened to by the time you read this, features Dr. Drew, and I'm sure it's dynamite). Please do support it, and download his podcast every day. Even if you don't ever listen to it, just download it (I don't ask much of you).

Sometimes in life, something will come along, something that you enjoy immensely, and you'll realize just how lucky you are to have it even as you realize that it's unlikely to last. I had a particular Thursday night poker game I used to love a few years ago; it ended. I thoroughly enjoyed "Arrested Development;" it got cancelled. I reveled in the chance to listen to "The Adam Carolla Show" every day; the radio station changed formats.

Such is life.

And who knows? Maybe he'll be back on terrestrial radio, doing two, three, four hours a day. Maybe (hell, probably) his podcast will take off and turn into something brilliant and innovative. It's unlikely, however, that the perfect mix of Adam, Teresa and Bryan will return in anything like the form we got to enjoy for the last, best months of the morning show's run, and that's a shame.

So thanks for all the laughs, Aceman.

Mahalo.

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