



Podcast Show Notes

Watch Your Mouth - ACQUIT

This episode features court trials that went HORRIBLY WRONG!!! In our “That Was Then” segment we start with a Biblical/historical example of a woman charged with adultery (a crime punishable by death back then) and in our “This Is Now” segment shift to a non-religious modern account of a man wrongly accused and sentenced to over 200 years for a brutal sexual assault. In both cases, the defendants were (eventually) ACQUITTED of all charges. Marvin Anderson, with the help of the Innocence Project shared riveting details about his fight for freedom in his own words. Lastly, after getting an example from scripture of when we should or shouldn’t acquit (forgive) we rehashed some catch phrases that stemmed from past hurts caused by another person or circumstance.

Opening & Overview (3½ minutes)

THAT WAS THEN (10 minutes, 57 seconds)

[Lead into episode’s content]: (50 seconds)

- **DEFINITION:** According to Merriam-Webster’s dictionary, **ACQUIT** means “to discharge completely (as from an obligation or accusation)” and they used the example “The court acquitted the prisoner”.
- **APPROXIMATE # OCCURRENCES IN SCRIPTURE:** 6 times
- **BIBLICAL ACCOUNT TAKEN FROM:** the book of John chapter 8 verses 1-11 in the New International Version from Bible.com read by Max McLean
- **FEATURED TEXT:** verses 10 and 11 which says: **Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” “No one, sir,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”**

Full Biblical Account of John 8:1-11 (NIV) read by Max McLean: (1 minute, 13 seconds)

Commentary by Dorna Guice

- We drew a parallel from the account of this woman who was caught in the act of adultery (a crime punishable by death) according to **Leviticus chapter 20 verse 10** “**If a man commits adultery with another man’s wife – with the wife of his neighbor – both the adulterer and the adulteress are to be put to death**” and modern-day court trials.
- The Pharisees and Law Professors attempted to set a trap for Jesus by using the Law of Moses (cited above) and this woman’s infraction. **John chapter 8 verses 4-5** “**In the Law Moses**

commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" Now we already know they had zero interest in stoning her. In fact, these second-chair wannabe prosecutors made the rookie mistake of 'showing their hand' during their opening argument because the law they mis-cited commanded them to "stone both the woman AND the man". You'd only need to turn back one chapter to see the One they truly wanted to stone was Jesus - and they saw this as their big chance. One wrong answer could place Him on trial instead of her. Did these bloodthirsty religious hypocrites finally have Jesus on the ropes? What would He do? They intended for Jesus' rebuttal (literally) to be a matter of life or death – both hers and His.

- Jesus' initial response was unusual and provoked an interesting thought experiment: **"But Jesus bent down and started writing on the ground with His finger"**. Jesus Christ is the One whom more books were written about than any other living being. Yet, this is the only recorded encounter of Him writing anything. Whuddya think He wrote? Even if we didn't color outside of the lines of Scripture, we could refer to what we now know Jesus said in **Matthew chapter 7 verses 1 and 2** **"Do not judge or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you too will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.** And **Jeremiah chapter 17 verse 13** which says **"LORD, You are the hope of Israel; all who forsake You will be put to shame. Those who turn away from you will be written in the dust because they have forsaken the LORD, the spring of living water."** But even purists have imaginations... so we picked our brightest crayons and went with it!
- **John chapter 8 verse 7** delivers the epic shade heard around the world and clichéd to this day... **"When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, **"If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."**** Further from their expectations than the blind-siding *acquittal* that was handed down was the fact that they themselves were compelled to declare the mistrial. What a paradox! These erudite sophisticates suddenly found themselves more exposed before Jesus than the buck-naked adulteress they accused. That one rebuttal not only saved this woman's life but cleared the temple court as everyone who heard began to go away one at a time, the older [repeat offenders] first, until only Jesus was left with the woman standing there according to verse 9. It was at this point when the official verdict of **Not Guilty** was delivered and she was free to go.
- No matter who you most identify with from this account, we are **all** the woman caught in adultery and are standing **"uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account"** according to the latter part of Hebrews chapter 4 verse 13. Thank GOD, we can all be *acquitted* through Jesus according to Romans chapter 4 verses 7 and 8 which says **"Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him."**

THIS IS NOW (10 minutes, 56 seconds)

Transition:

I hope you got something from our "That was Then" segment. For my contemporary listeners, thanks for hanging in with me. As King Solomon often said, "there's nothing new under the sun", let's fast-forward a couple thousand years to explore an account of the same Verbal Activity – **ACQUIT** in our "This Is Now" segment. (20 seconds)

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dz3sXQo9Fz8> This segment opens with brief testimonies of 4 people from Ohio who were wrongly accused, tried, convicted and (after decades of incarceration) acquitted for heinous crimes they didn't commit.
- They join over 2,800 people listed in the National Registry of Exonerations to date where a staggering 50% of these jailed but innocent people are African American. The Registry was

founded in 2012 and only records cases in the US of people wrongly convicted and **acquitted** of all charges going back to just 1989, which means there are many others that are undocumented or worse yet, still incarcerated or deceased. Most, if not all of the defendants that make up this very select group represented the most vulnerable members of our society as they lacked the pedigree, financial means, education and legal representation to be given a fair trial. And unfortunately, also fell victim to mistaken identity, sloppy police investigation, faulty forensic science, prosecutorial misconduct, political posturing, and corrupt judicial practices. One example is Marvin Anderson who was wrongly accused and sentenced to 208 years in prison for rape, sodomy and abduction of a white female. Mr. Anderson told his story in his own words via [an interview for The Innocence Project: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=25&v=DSS18Prxmo&feature=emb_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=25&v=DSS18Prxmo&feature=emb_logo) (3 minutes, 45 seconds)

Commentary by Dorma Guice

So how does this keep happening...?!!! And how does an ambitious young man with a stable job, the love of his family, respect of his community and absolutely no criminal history become the prime suspect of one of the most egregious violations of a white female (or anyone) in Virginia at that time? It turns out the single thing that made Marvin Anderson a "person of interest" in this case was his personal interest – he just happened to have a white girlfriend.

This one factor caused investigators to pursue him like a honey badger going after... well, anything! Once they locked Mr. Anderson in their sights, they stubbornly refused to be deterred – not even by conflicting DNA evidence that identified someone else as the attacker. And when the culprit himself (who was already in State prison for multiple rapes committed before AND after this offense) confessed to this crime a year later, the investigators' response was 'eh!... pish posh, we already got our guy!

*Thank GOD for The Innocence Project (along with their National Capital Region at American University), who discovered this case while representing another wrongly accused man and found links that would exonerate Mr. Anderson as well. Both Defendants found a welcome smoking gun in the form of the lab notebook of a criminalist named Mary Jane Burton. She was known for meticulously keeping a small portion of all the evidence from every case she was assigned in the event it was needed later. Had Burton followed policy and returned her partially used swabs to these rape kits, all evidence in these cases would have been forever lost. It's worth stating that the contents of Ms. Burton's files have since resulted in the exonerations of **16** wrongly accused incarcerated men.*

- *Thankfully, this story has a happy ending. In 2003, the Virginia Legislature approved a lump sum compensation payment to Marvin Anderson of \$200,000 plus \$40,000 annually for life. Moreover, from a young age, Mr. Anderson's dream had been to become a firefighter and right before he was convicted, he was in the process of going through the academy to become a professional fireman. Today, he serves as Chief of the Hanover, Virginia Volunteer Fire Company, where he oversees a team of about 30 people. He also serves on the Board of Directors for the Innocence Project and has three children.*
- *This podcast celebrates the many people who dedicate their careers (and lives) to getting justice for those whom the system failed. People like Barry Scheck and Peter Neufeld, Co-Founders of the Innocence Project are not only responsible for Marvin Anderson's **acquittal**, but for over 375 exonerations since its inception in 1992. In addition to leveraging DNA testing to **acquit** wrongly accused individuals, they labor to reform the criminal justice system to prevent future injustice, as well as provide support to exonerees while they rebuild their lives post-release.*

- *There is not enough time to tell of the many others who dedicate themselves to the work of providing wrongly incarcerated men and women worldwide the hope of a new life via a trial that concludes with the words “you’re free to go with the court’s profuse apologies”.*

WHO SAID THAT?!!! (1 minute, 13 seconds)

- *During this short segment we listened to a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King’s 1963 speech where he said “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KjIX7esSFII>.*

WHAT DID YOU SAY?!!! (6 minutes, 21 seconds)

Outro: “What Did You Say?”:

- *In our final segment: “What Did You Say?!”*, we take a moment to examine our choice of words and decide to eliminate unhelpful and hurtful speech from our dialogue. The fastest way to choose what to say is to know “WHAT NOT TO SAY”. And the best way to determine what not to say is to see what the Bible says about what we say. So before exploring some examples, we took our queues from two very straightforward scriptures: the first is Proverbs chapter 17 verse 15 in the New International Version, which says “**Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent – the LORD detests them both.**” And the second is found in Luke chapter 6 verse 37 in the Amplified Version. In the Words of Jesus Himself: “**Do not judge [others self-righteously], and you will not be judged; do not condemn [others when you are guilty and unrepentant]; and you will not be condemned [for your hypocrisy]; pardon/acquit [others when they truly repent and change] and you will be pardoned/acquitted [when you truly repent and change].** I like the way the Classic Amplified Version puts the latter part of that verse. It says “**acquit and forgive and release (give up resentment, let it drop), and you will be acquitted and forgiven and released**”. So, the Bible has given us an example of when not to **acquit** and when it is acceptable (and frankly, expected) for us to do so.
- *And to practically apply this in our lives today, let’s expose and uproot some communication styles and catch phrases that stem from past hurts caused by a person or circumstance. Left unattended, these feelings could give way to critical or judgmental tendencies, or worse yet, to bitterness or unforgiveness. All of these things create barriers to our success – not just in our relationships with others, but they can affect us personally... by stunting our spiritual and emotional growth, imprisoning us in anger, and even impairing our health.*
- *In this case we can come across as rigid or condescending and friendly chats can morph into toxic rants of rehashing old painful memories, identifying people by their faults and flaws, making assumptions about a person or situation without being open to knowing all the facts; not asking enough questions or only asking “leading questions” that will paint the person in a negative light; or using yourself as the standard by which all others will be measured.*
- *Clues that one or more of these things may be lingering subtly in our hearts result in sayings like “I could never forgive this person for what they did”; or “how could you still be friends with them?! Don’t you remember what they did?”; or “I can tell he/she is guilty just by looking at them”; or “I don’t need to know any more – I’ve already made up my mind”; or “boy, those people are all the same – you can’t trust any of them”; and the whopper of them all – “I would NEVER have done something like that”! The best antidote to this poison is to **acquit** the person of all charges. This not only frees them but liberates you as well. I realize it’s not easy, but it is easier than the alternative. Some of the most powerful, healing and life-*

changing words you can say are “I forgive you”. Even in cases where all is not well, all can still be forgiven. I’ve had to do it. And I can say with humble gratitude that a few people have done it for me.

- Marvin Anderson and all of the people we heard from in this podcast can teach us a thing or two about **acquitting**. Not just because they were **acquitted**, but they had to work extremely hard to **acquit** and forgive the people and a system that violated and traumatized them all while robbing them of a significant portion of their lives. Snippets of Mr. Anderson’s interview with WNCU after his release underscores everything we explored about **acquitting**:

Affirmation & Closing:

- Lastly, I’ll leave you with an AFFIRMATION to ponder and say until we get together again. Ready?... “I am slow to judge and quick to forgive [**acquit**]. Even in painful or confusing situations, I pursue the path of peace by remaining objective, while leaving the justice to GOD”

Closing remarks:

- Thanks for listening to this podcast. If you enjoyed it, feel free to share it with everyone and check out the corresponding blogpost at watchyourmouth.blog for more insight. Feel free to download the show notes from our [Podcast](#) page to get links and references to the information shared in this episode. You can also join our [Member](#) Community by subscribing and we’ll make sure you never miss one. Members can also share comments, stories and keep the conversation going in our [Discussion](#) Forum. Additionally, please consider supporting this podcast by donating any amount on our [Donate](#) page. Your generosity enables us to keep delivering fresh content and reach more people. Lastly, like us on [Facebook](#), follow us on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Pinterest](#). Until next time... be well and watch your mouth!

Sources and Links:

www.watchyourmouth.blog

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/acquit>

<https://www2.bible.com/bible/111/JHN.8.niv> John chapter 8 verses 1-11 New International Version read by Max McLean

J. Vernon McGee’s Thru the Bible

Bible Exposition Commentary (BE Series) – New Testament

Ohio Innocence Project Exonerees <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dz3sXQo9Fz8>

Marvin Anderson’s Testimony <https://innocenceproject.org/cases/marvin-anderson/>

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<https://www.law.umich.edu/special/exoneration/Pages/casedetail.aspx?caseid=2995>

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WUNC Interview with Marvin Anderson <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZjUUiLk6pXQ>

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KjIX7esSFII>

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