

Chris Matthews plays Soft Ball with Terry Jones

Written by Reggie

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This evening, Chris Matthews interviewed the mad pastor Terry Jones on MSNBC's *Hard Ball*. This pious man of the cloth plans to burn copies of the Qur'an in a ceremony in Gainesville, Florida, to commemorate the attacks of 9/11. Not surprisingly, Jones was treated as if he were a rational, respectable guest, - and given air time to promote his filth about Islam. In a month so dominated by Muslim-bashing, a most deferential Chris Matthews managed to add insult to injury and promote the kind of misinformation and bigotry that has taken hold of this country.

This was not

Hard Ball

at its best by a long shot. It was fawning, subdued

Soft Ball

at its worst.

The news about Terry Jones should have been swept into the nearest garbage bin when it was first reported. The man merited little more than public scorn, but, during a slow news week and with *People Magazine* scooping Elin Nordegren, Jones was featured on a handful of corporate media broadcasts and got his fifteen minutes of fame. I caught the Chris Matthews exchange with the deranged pastor and still am shaking my head in both disbelief and disgust.

I'm not about to recap the interview here, but I do want to comment on the most glaring stupidity that passed for 'asking the hard questions' - as Chris Matthews often claims to be doing. I was struck by the opportunity given to this hate-filled preacher to explain his views - as if there were any possible rationale for what he intended to do to the books most holy to hundreds of millions of people around the world. In defense of his plan, Jones claimed that the Qur'an called for the stoning of adulteresses and homosexuals. He wanted to let the nation know the evil laws embedded in Islam, and Chris Matthews did not have the courage, or more probably, the information with which to challenge this assertion.

Let's look at that with a fact-finding eye and not from the evil perspective of the ignorant and those in denial of their own religious madness.

First, the Qur'an does NOT contain any references to stoning anyone. According to Wikipedia, the Qur'an does not call for stoning as a punishment for any crime. According to Islamic scholar Al-Bahuty, a verse on stoning once existed in the Qur'an, but it was verbally abrogated by Mohammed and his first followers. However, laws in some Islamic countries that follow strict Sharia law, still call for stoning as a form of punishment for adultery. That list includes Afghanistan, Iran, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Somalia.

For the record, and for the enlightenment of Terry Jones and his ignorant followers at the deceptively named Dove World Outreach Center, most Muslims - who follow the Qur'an - do

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NOT live in those countries. Less than twenty percent of Muslims live in Arab countries. Do either Jones or Matthews even have a clue?

Surely, after the burning ceremony, the more than one and a half billion Muslims around the world will once again hate us for our freedom.

And second, the Holy Bible....the guiding light of pious Christians such Jones who claim to know TRUTH about everything.... is quite enamored of stoning. A Google search led me to an article by Sami Zaatari, entitled *Stoning in the Bible* at http://muslim-responses.com/Bible_Stoning/Bible_Stoning

Here is some of what Chris Matthews might have thrown at Terry Jones:

The Bible doesn't just call for stoning on adultery, but calls for stoning on a whole range of issues! Here are the Biblical passages on stoning:

- *Anyone who blasphemes the name of the LORD must be put to death. The entire assembly must stone him. Whether an alien or native-born, when he blasphemes the Name, he must be put to death. (Leviticus 24:16)*

- *If a man happens to meet in a town a virgin pledged to be married and he sleeps with her, you shall take both of them to the gate of that town and stone them to death?the girl because she was in a town and did not scream for help, and the man because he violated another man's wife. You must purge the evil from among you. (Deuteronomy 22:23-24)*

- *If a man or woman living among you in one of the towns the LORD gives you is found doing evil in the eyes of the LORD your God in violation of his covenant, and contrary to my command has worshiped other gods, bowing down to them or to the sun or the moon or the stars of the sky, and this has been brought to your attention, then you must investigate it thoroughly. If it is true and it has been proved that this detestable thing has been done in Israel, take the man or woman who has done this evil deed to your city gate and stone that person to death. (Deuteronomy 17:2-5)*

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- *If your very own brother, or your son or daughter, or the wife you love, or your closest friend secretly entices you, saying, "Let us go and worship other gods" (gods that neither you nor your fathers have known, gods of the peoples around you, whether near or far, from one end of the land to the other), do not yield to him or listen to him. Show him no pity. Do not spare him or shield him. You must certainly put him to death. Your hand must be the first in putting him to death, and then the hands of all the people. Stone him to death, because he tried to turn you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. (Deuteronomy 13:6-10)*

- *If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother and will not listen to them when they discipline him, his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his town. They shall say to the elders, "This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is a profligate and a drunkard." Then all the men of his town shall stone him to death. You must purge the evil from among you. All Israel will hear of it and be afraid. (Deuteronomy 21:18-21)*

- *'A man or woman who is a medium or spiritist among you must be put to death. You are to stone them; their blood will be on their own heads.'* (Leviticus 20:27)

- *While the Israelites were in the desert, a man was found gathering wood on the Sabbath day. Those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and the whole assembly, and they kept him in custody, because it was not clear what should be done to him. Then the LORD said to Moses, "The man must die. The whole assembly must stone him outside the camp." So the assembly took him outside the camp and stoned him to death, as the LORD commanded Moses. (Numbers 15:32-36)*

- *But seat two scoundrels opposite him and have them testify that he has cursed both God and the king. Then take him out and stone him to death." (1 Kings 21:10)*

The Bible even calls for the stoning of animals!

- *"If a bull gores a man or a woman to death, the bull must be stoned to death, and its meat must not be eaten. But the owner of the bull will not be held responsible. (Exodus 21:28)*

Yet, despite the facts, and the furor with which his act will resonate around the world, Terry Jones will have his media circus in full operation on September 11th. His appearance on *Hard Ball*

gave him both credibility and respectability to an alarming extent. It was shameful and embarrassing to see how this interview came to a close. After Jones virtually said that nothing would deter him from the burning ceremony, Matthews - in a soft and pleading voice - said "I

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hope you don't do it." And then politely thanked this madman for appearing on his show.

How I wish that Joseph Welch, not Chris Matthews had closed this sad segment of *Hard Ball*. How refreshing it would have been to once again hear someone say: Have you no sense of decency, sir? At long last, have you left no sense of decency?