



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on July 19, 2025

Old Media Dying: Waning CBS Cancels Colbert. Is Kimmel Next?

“So, for the first time in history, Americans have stopped watching NBC, CBS TV, and ABC,” reported commentator Bill O’Reilly Thursday. “Their viewing level has fallen below 20 percent — *unheard of.*”

“And it’s because they’re boring and they’re far left,” O’Reilly elaborated. “That’s the two reasons.”

The latest casualty of this legacy-media collapse is notable, too.

CBS is canceling *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, effective after the 2025-’26 season.



AP Images

The move will end what will have been a 33-year run that began with host David Letterman in 1993. Colbert took the show’s helm in 2015, shortly after Letterman’s retirement.

The news-making announcement has prompted some [observers](#) to ask: Is this the death of the late-night genre? Actually, it portends far more:

The old media’s slow but sure demise, as new media come to flower and inherit the former’s mantle. With media/entertainment not being on our culture’s periphery, but at its center, it’s a sea change at least as significant as the transition from horse and buggy to automobile.

Is Its Cancellation the Funniest *Late Show* Happening in Recent Memory?

No one should feel too sorry for Colbert. After all, with an approximate \$75 million [net worth](#), he won’t be missing too many meals. It’s clear, too, that many won’t miss him. For example, PJ Media’s David Manney picked up where O’Reilly left off and [wrote](#), comedically:

Nearly all of us have that uncle who knows he is the funniest guy in the room. Unfortunately, he has to explain his own jokes, wait for the laughs, and hear crickets.

That is Stephen Colbert.

After a long decade of being our unfunny uncle, he repeats that act every night. Finally, at long last, CBS performed the act that most Americans have been steadily doing for years: pulling the plug.

“The Late Show with Stephen Colbert” airs its final episode in May 2026, marking the end of a decade of monologues that replaced comedy with exact moral instructions, revealing how Colbert and the left feel about us.

CBS is calling the cancellation a “financial decision,” but here in reality, we call it a mercy



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killing.

For sure, the show's genre is a long way from the legendary Johnny Carson, the *Tonight Show* host from 1962-'92. While a liberal man, Carson poked fun at both sides and made a legitimate effort to be politically neutral. He treated all guests with respect, too, as [this 1975 interview](#) with then ex-Governor Ronald Reagan (R-Calif.) evidences.

From Carson to Sliding Nielsen

Those days are gone. I myself never watched the late night scene and don't today. I do, however, regularly visit someone who has only alphabet-network access. And during these stays I often find myself accosted with ABC's *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* and, therefore, Jimmy Kimmel's jive.

It's Trump Derangement Syndrome on steroids — with President Donald Trump living inside Kimmel's head rent free.

This brings us back to O'Reilly's "boring" diagnosis. While I don't like Joe Biden, if all a host did, *every night*, was beat up on the pol, it would get as old as Biden *really* fast. My attitude would be, "Okay, we agree he's a ____." But can we talk about something else now? It also would, frankly, smack of bullying.

And what of the business model? Is being predictable a recipe for comedy-business success?

This does not mean Colbert doesn't have his fans, and, not surprisingly, Kimmel is one of them.

"Love you Stephen," he [wrote](#) Thursday on his personal Instagram story. "F*** you and all your Sheldons CBS," he continued, apparently referencing CBS's *The Big Bang Theory* spinoff, *Young Sheldon*.

Of course, Kimmel, known for crying on air, may have a very personal reason to be upset.

He may be next on the chopping block.

Making mention of this was President Trump himself while crowing about Colbert's plight. As [The Hill reported](#) Saturday:

"I absolutely love that Colbert' got fired. His talent was even less than his ratings," Trump wrote Friday on Truth Social, a day after the news broke. "I hear Jimmy Kimmel is next. Has even less talent than Colbert!"

Yet Colbert has his supporters in politics, too. As Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), sometimes known as "Faucahontas," tweeted Thursday:

CBS canceled Colbert's show just THREE DAYS after Colbert called out CBS parent company Paramount for its \$16M settlement with Trump - a deal that looks like bribery.

America deserves to know if his show was canceled for political reasons.

Watch and share his message. pic.twitter.com/Rz7HcWFLYM

— Elizabeth Warren (@SenWarren) [July 18, 2025](#)



Times, They Are a-Changin'

Yet while there can be immediate, exacerbating factors in an event, it's no mystery why Colbert is biting the dust. When I was a boy in the 1970s, the alphabet networks reigned unchallenged. (There were essentially seven TV channels in the New York City metropolitan area. In the mountains upstate, you could pull in maybe *one or two* with rabbit-ear antennae.) There was no internet, cable television was still uncommon, and satellite TV was just being born. The result? ABC, CBS, and NBC controlled more than 90 percent of the prime-time television audience. And today?

Nineteen percent.

That's what you call a complete collapse. It's also what you call, in our entertainment-rich time, a civilizational sea change.

O'Reilly [provided](#) the above stat, along with the following, relating to current entertainment consumption:

- 46 percent use social media streaming.
- 23 percent watch cable (declining fast)
- 12 percent engage with other sources.

And Colbert's *Late Show* reflects the alphabet-network decline. He lost one million viewers over five years, a 30-percent drop from the show's previous audience. In other words, he's not exactly earning his \$15 million yearly salary.

Economic Democracy Is Speaking

Now, what's occurring could be analogized to sports, in which there's far more competition than ever before. For example, in the early 1900s, only country-club-member toffs could play tennis (I used to be a tennis pro). Consequently, the highest level at the time was a bit like that of today's very good club players. With our age's wide participation and enormous talent pool, the top ATP (Association of Tennis Professionals) competitors are now like AI-controlled androids in comparison.

Similarly, decades ago the news and commentary business was controlled by a sort of oligarchy. Oh, you could be immensely gifted. But you'd remain unknown if the powers-that-be didn't want to give you a chance.

The internet, however, gives everyone access to the game (assuming censorship remains nonexistent or minimal). The result is not just a pie divided among many more competitors, but an infinitely wider talent pool. The cream is more likely to rise to the top — and the antique media are getting creamed.

Many new media figures are far better, smarter, more articulate, funnier, and more charismatic than the old guard's stale offerings. Most significantly, while there's some misinformation everywhere, the best of the new breed are far more truthful. Old-guard lies, which once could go unchallenged, can now be debunked almost as soon as they're uttered.

So *vox populi* is now more often heard. For [the market](#), which is actually economic democracy, is casting its consumer-choice ballots more robustly than ever. And the once powerful, once mainstream, and once mighty and still flighty old media are being voted out of office.

Addendum: Below is an apropos blast from the past — hilarious comedian Jackie Mason on *The Tonight Show* in 1988. Enjoy.





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