

WFAN Top Talent Quotes and Memories

Mornings 6:00-10:00AM – Boomer and Carton

Boomer Esiason Bio:

Boomer Esiason quarterbacked the Cincinnati Bengals, New York Jets and Arizona Cardinals during a 14-year NFL career, and reached many career milestones, including being named Most Valuable Player, earning two Pro Bowl bids, becoming an all-time passing leader, and winning an AFC Championship, as one of the most successful quarterbacks in the history of the league.

Upon retiring after the 1997 season, Esiason headed straight for the broadcast booth. He made his debut as a commentator for ABC's NFL "Monday Night Football," and called "MNF" games for two years. He also co-hosted, with WFAN's Christopher "Mad Dog" Russo, Westwood One's weekly NFL preview show, "In the Huddle" (1998-2002), and was the host of the Boomer Esiason Show on WLW in Cincinnati (1999-2002). He currently serves as studio analyst for THE NFL TODAY, the CBS Television Network's NFL pre-game show. He joined the show in 2002 and is heard weekly along with James Brown, Dan Marino, Shannon Sharpe and Bill Cowher.

In 2007, Esiason joined WFAN alongside co-host Craig Carton to anchor the morning drive program. The show has helped WFAN to reach all time highs in the Arbitron ratings and is consistently the No. 1 rated show in its target demographic.

Throughout his career, Esiason, along with his wife, Cheryl, has been a committed and very active participant in many charitable causes, including the Boomer Esiason Foundation, founded in 1993 to fight cystic fibrosis after his son, Gunnar, was diagnosed with the disease.

Best On-Air Moment: "I have a long history with the station - I've been a guest, I've been a fill in host, I've been a contributor and now I'm a morning show host, which is unbelievable. There have been so many great moments with Imus, Chris [Russo] and Mike throughout the years. One time, I was being interviewed by Chris and Mike toward the end of a very bad Jets season (as a player), and we got into a downright snippy argument on the air. After I hung up the phone, the amount of people who called me saying it was the greatest radio they had ever heard, the fact that we were fighting back and forth like that, was amazing.

Overall, Craig and I have had so many great times over our five years and I've never left disappointed – the laughter is uncontrollable. You never know what to expect; today he's in a chicken suit interviewing Johnny Bench."



Favorite Interview: “Jose Canseco and Hank Haney- both of the subjects hung up. They knew they were coming into a hostile environment, but couldn’t handle our direct line of questioning.”

Jose Canseco AUDIO: <https://www.box.com/s/e16c7fc62baf19c10e80>

Favorite Caller: “Lou from Staten Island – got a good heart, really loves the show, plays a lot with us as much as we play with him.”

Craziest Stunt on Air/Most out of Character: “The time I had the Hoodie Footie pajamas on. It was a breakthrough for me and I finally let my hair down on-air.”



Biggest Story Broke: “Selena Roberts - that was a tough interview for her.”

AUDIO: <https://www.box.com/s/f0df2f7f0d2ef173553c>

Favorite Team: “New York Rangers”

Favorite Personality: “Eli Manning – watching him grow from what he was in the past to what he is now.”

What WFAN Means to Me: “This is the biggest sports radio station in the world and to have the morning drive seat, and to have one of the microphones is not something either one of us take lightly, and it is an extreme honor to be sitting there and taking it seriously even though it doesn’t sound like that every single day.”

Craig Carton Bio:

Craig Carton began his broadcasting career in 1991 in Buffalo, N.Y. He moved from Buffalo to WWWE in Cleveland in 1992, and to Philadelphia sports leader WIP-AM a year later. After much success in Philadelphia, Carton hosted a syndicated sports talk show on the Sports Fan Network and was then recruited to join KKFN, The Fan, in Denver, Colo. as morning show host. In his first year with the station, he became the highest rated show in KKFN’s history. He was later hired by cross-town rival KBPI and followed that position with a stint at WNEW-FM in New York City, before joining WKXW New Jersey 101.5, where Carton had been hosting “The Jersey Guys” broadcast in afternoon drive for his five years prior to WFAN.

Since 2007, Carton has hosted the WFAN morning show with Boomer Esiason. The show has helped WFAN to reach all time highs in the Arbitron ratings and is consistently the No. 1 rated show in its target demographic.

Carton was born in New Rochelle, N.Y. and was graduated from the S.I. Newhouse School at Syracuse University with a degree in broadcast journalism in 1991. He interned at WFAN prior to his graduation. He is married and has four children.

Best On-Air Moment: “Our very first show. We got through it, we didn’t kill each other, and we both came back the next day.”

Most Memorable Moment: “The personal stuff is the most memorable: losing a bet and walking the Brooklyn Bridge in a Speedo. The first Brooklyn bridge walk when the Giants beat the Cowboys, a few hundred people walked across the bridge with us. When we did it a year later for the Jets, there were thousands of people walking the bridge – the turnout proved that we had arrived in a certain level of the work.”



Favorite Interview: “Hank Haney - Tiger Woods’ Swing Coach, Dan Rather, Hall of Famer Johnny Bench”

Hank Haney AUDIO: <https://www.box.com/s/721c971c06c05b085037>

Favorite Caller: “Lou from Staten Island”

Biggest Story Broke: “Being a part of Brett Favre coming to the Jets.”

Favorite Sports Team: “New York Knicks, New York Mets, New York Jets”

Favorite Sports Personality: “Howard Cosell. Guys that were different, stood out, and weren’t afraid to be who they were, without worrying who they offended.”

Great Accomplishment: “Getting to take over for a legend, that’s what Imus was and is, and to be successful doing so. I was an intern when WFAN celebrated its 1st anniversary in ‘88, so to be a host 24-5 years later and to achieve number 1 is a major thing that no one can take away from us. As an intern, even the thought of getting the opportunity to do mornings, would have been a pipe dream.”

Middays 10:00AM-1:00PM – Joe Benigno and Evan Roberts

Joe Benigno Bio:

Joe, a.k.a. Joe from Saddle River, got his big break in radio in 1994, when he won WFAN's Fan Appreciation Day contest and was awarded a guest host spot on the station. He parlayed his one-shot spot into an early evening host job at a small station in Elizabeth, New Jersey before being offered a full-time spot on the FAN in 1995.

Best On-Air Moment: "The most fun show I ever did was called Backyard BBQ – it was a contest for our audience. We hosted the show from a listener's pool in NJ, wore bathing suits, and kept jumping in and out of the pool during the show. It was hilarious."

Most Memorable Moment: "The different interviews I've been able to do, especially at the two Super Bowls of the New York Giants versus the New England Patriots. Interviewing all the different players like Jimmy Brown, Mean Joe Green and Joe Montana was definitely a highlight. Whenever I get to interview guys I grew up watching, especially being a football guy, is really a thrill."

Favorite Interview: "Jimmy Brown was the most intimidating and Dennis Rodman was the craziest/funniest interview I've done. He had his hair dyed, although he wasn't playing ball anymore."

Favorite Caller: "The most prominent caller to our show is definitely Bruce in Bayside – he's consistent, knows his sports and tries to be funny."

Biggest Story Broke: "Cole Hamels calls the Mets 'choke artists' on our show."

Cole Hamels AUDIO: <https://www.box.com/s/7a3926bdd9a56b57a87b>

Favorite Sports Team: "New York Jets"

Favorite Sports Personality: "Ike Davis"

What WFAN means to me: "I'm very fortunate, being a caller; I never thought there would be an opportunity to do it from this side. It's hard to believe it's been 18 years, I've been able to make the transition from the caller to show host, it's almost a little overwhelming that things have worked out this way."

Evan Roberts Bio:

Evan Roberts, who was first heard on WFAN when he was just ten years old (he did updates on the Imus in the Morning program), is the co-host of the Midday Show with Joe Benigno.

Past work experience includes hosting shows on Maxim Radio for Sirius Satellite Radio and XM Satellite Radio, sports updates on Diamond Vision for the New York Mets at Shea Stadium, sideline reporting for ABC during the Little League World Series and hosting a show for the New Jersey Nets called "Slammin Planet."

Evan is a diehard Mets, Nets and Jets fan. He loves Pro Wrestling, 90210 re-runs and lives in New York with his cat Freedom.

Best On-Air Moment: “My first moment on-air, July 17, 2004. The day was surreal - it was 4 am because they didn’t trust me during the day yet. At 4:05, I talked about the Mets. It was like, wow, this is my dream come true to be on the FAN.”

Most Memorable Moment:

“Seeing quotes from the Cole Hamels interview Joe and I did on the back page of a paper and to know that interview had such a big impact on local sports. It really made me realize people listen to us! I have a copy of that paper somewhere, and I did save it.”

Favorite Interview: “Doc Gooden”

Favorite Caller: “I like Frank in Massapequa. He calls up to complain about something Joe and I did or didn’t say. He’s passionate, he’s listening, he’s fair, he’s feisty.”

Favorite Sports Team: “New York Mets”

What WFAN Means To Me: “It is the greatest place on earth. I used to dream and pretend I worked here as a kid. To get to work here and express anger and happiness on the radio on a daily basis, it’s like psychiatry – I get to unleash my emotions good and bad about my teams.”

Funny Memories: “When I was ten, I had the opportunity to do a radio segment here at the station. I wrote WFAN a letter applying for a job when I was 10 years old, because I loved the station so much! When I got to the studio, I met Don Imus. He gave me advice about succeeding in the business and told me to read as much as you can. From then on, I stayed in touch with the station and sent them demos and sought advice until they gave me a shot to host a show.”

Afternoons 1:00-6:30PM - Mike Francesa

Mike Francesa Bio:

Now in his third decade in afternoon drive, Mike Francesa has firmly established himself as the most popular and influential sports-talk show host in the history of radio. In addition, his show regularly ranks among the top spots in its target demographic.

For 19 years Francesa teamed with Christopher Russo on the iconic “Mike and the Mad Dog” program, widely recognized as the most successful sports- talk program ever. As the cornerstone of WFAN’s all-sports format, they revolutionized an industry. Since 2008, Francesa’s afternoon program, heard daily on WFAN and simulcast on the YES Network, has grown to even greater heights. In addition to being recognized as one of the most important personalities in sports radio by Talkers Magazine, The Marconi and Emmy Award winner also hosts the top rated NFL Now on Sunday Mornings.

The St John’s University graduate resides on Long Island with his wife Roe and their three children- Jack, Emily, and Harrison.

Best On-Air Moment: “I’ve been lucky to be on the air 6 days a week for 24 years. [Chris Russo] and I had the opportunity to do so many interviews.”



Most Memorable Interviews: “Sid Luckman and Sammy Baugh. I got them to talk to each other.”

Favorite Caller: “I try not to choose one over the others. I have a lot of very passionate, good callers who have branded themselves as the listeners who have built their own reputations. Most are linked to a specific team. I always say, when you call into the show, you are now a part of the show. Callers want to participate and you have to challenge and question them. You can’t treat them as an audience member once they call in and become a part of the show.”

Transition from TV to Radio: “I like TV, the difference with TV and radio is, people like when they’ve done a TV show, but they might not enjoy the actual process of it. With radio, you enjoy it while you’re doing it - the process is personal. TV is a producers/directors medium, where radio is a talent driven medium. It is about you and your audience. On TV you filter your performance through a producer/director and they make you good - not in radio.”

Biggest Story Broke: “Just covering stories and dealing with the aftermath of situations such as the world crises of 9/11, the death of Bart Giamatti and even Magic Johnson with his AIDS announcement. When Mickey Mantle died, WFAN was the place to go to pay your respects – we spent a week on the story. It’s the times where sports and real life intertwine; illness, death and catastrophe, like the earthquake of San Francisco and the Penn State Sandusky story.”

What WFAN Means To Me: “WFAN filled a void, changed the way sports is handled, changed the way sports is viewed and watched and how fans participate. It changed the way fans react.”

MIKE AND THE MAD DOG REUNION AUDIO: <https://www.box.com/s/c2d97b62d14dd149eb10>

Nights – Steve Somers

Steve Somers Bio:

Steve Somers, a.k.a., “The Schmooser”, is truly a FAN original, having been an on-air fixture since the station debuted on July 1, 1987.

Somers’s path to sports talk radio began in his hometown, the Bay Area, where he delivered sports reports while he was in high school. Upon graduating the University of California at Berkeley in 1969,

Somers began hosting a news talk show on KNEW in San Francisco for which *Time Magazine* ran a story naming Somers the youngest talk show host in the country at that period of time.

Television beckoned and Somers joined CBS' KPIX-TV as a weekend sports anchor in 1970. He then moved on to KOVR-TV in Sacramento as the full time sports anchor as well as serving as Sports Director, and served in the same capacity at ABC-TV affiliate WXIA in Atlanta. Somers then headed back west to Los Angeles' KNBC-TV in 1979 before venturing back into radio, hosting his own sports talk show on KMPC.

Somers, who has won numerous awards for his work, is a die-hard Rangers and Mets fan, and currently resides in Manhattan.

Best On-Air Moment:

"Probably the most memorable moment was being on-air in June 1994, when the Rangers won the Stanley Cup. And also, when they beat the Devils in game 7 to get into the Stanley Cup Finals. There were callers that were crying on the air they were so happy. Beating the Devils in one of the more memorable Game 7's, in double overtime, at Madison Square Garden. It was their first championship in over half a century, so it really meant something to the city and to the fans."

Most Memorable Moment:

"Another great time in the history of the station, more memorable and historically important than that – it touched the heart and soul of New York City and transcended sports – was ten days after 9/11, September 21, 2001. Amidst the loss of family, friends and innocence, Mike Piazza hit one of the more dramatic home runs to win the game. Yeah, the Mets won and beat the Braves, but it was a small first step for a city grieving and mourning over this really important loss. It was the first baby step for the city to feel joy and happiness again – moving forward – not forgetting anything, but toward recovery and in the right direction. Even though the game and home run were insignificant in the big picture, whether we were Mets fans or Yankees fans or sports fan, it was something the city needed."

Favorite Interview:

"Jerry Seinfeld, by far and away is the most notable caller I've ever had. We actually met at a bodega at 1:30AM when I was going in on a hot Saturday night to buy a pint of ice cream. There were two people aside from the attendant in the store, and I saw him and George Wallace, a fellow comedian, in the cereal section! He was wearing a Mets cap, as was I, and because I recognized him, I had to walk over and say "hello." I didn't want him to walk away or think I was a nut, so I took a business card out of my wallet – we didn't make eye contact – and I gave him the card and said 'I'm a big fan,' without ever looking directly at him. He took the card, looked at it, then looked me directly in the eye and said 'You're Steve Somers?! I listen to you all the time.' That Monday, he came on my show, and the rest is history."

Favorite Caller:

"I've had Charles Grodin, Tony Roberts, Andrew Dice Clay, Steven Wright, Bruno Kirby and even Lawrence Ritter – the finance professor from NYU who wrote the Pulitzer Prize winning book on Baseball, *The Glory of Their Times*."

Update Anchor- John Minko

John Minko Bio:

John Minko is a 1971 graduate of Bergenfield High School in New Jersey and a 1975 graduate of Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana.

At Butler, he broadcast Butler basketball and football games on the 37,000 watt FM student station WAJC. His first professional position was at WSAL Radio in Logansport, Indiana in the summer of 1975. Minko was the morning drive disc jockey and play-by-play broadcaster for their high school sports schedule.

In 1977 he was hired fulltime by WART Radio in Plainfield, Indiana and at the same time hired part-time by WIRE Radio in Indianapolis. The part-time position would later turn into a full-time position. Minko was the afternoon drive sportscaster and did play-by-play for their high school sports football and basketball schedule. He was part of the Indiana Pacers broadcast team for two years and did lap-by-lap coverage of the Indianapolis 500 time trials.

Minko was hired by WFAN in the summer of 1987 and currently completing his 25th year. As one of the originals, he has done updates in afternoon drive for 24 of the 25 years. In addition, he has broadcast Knicks and Nets basketball games on a fill in basis throughout the years on the `FAN'. He has also done play-by-play for Army Football, college basketball for Westwood One and is currently the voice of St. John's University basketball.

Best On-Air Moment: "Being able to be here for the entire 25 years of The FAN. Being on the air in New York City and getting a chance to come back home, from Indiana - to live here and be here."

Most Memorable Moment:

"The first year was the biggest in my memory. It was my first year working where my family could listen to me on the air. For all of us who started at the station, it was a dream of ownership to see if something like this could even happen- 24 hours worth of sports on the radio- and it has happened big time."

WFAN Means to Me: "The station is my professional life, my heart and I put everything I have into what I do. Putting the family aspect aside, FAN is my life."

Funny Memories: "Before working at Hudson Street, we worked in Astoria, Queens for 23 years. The office was a dump, but it was our dump and the history of sports radio was born and is still in that dump. One beautiful 90 degree day, down in subbasement in Astoria, the ceiling began to leak and it was raining in the newsroom. We had our umbrellas up while gathering and reporting the news!"