

*I've Had It Podcast News*

01/19/26

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8 minutes and 35 seconds

JENNIFER WELCH: The Trump administration has a huge problem with the First Amendment. Kylie, put up this tweet from little DL Queen Benny Johnson: “BREAKING: DOJ Announces intention to Charge Don Lemon under the Ku Klux Klan Act.” I want to remind everybody that Don Lemon is a black man and today is Martin Luther King Day, and I have to join us right now none other than best friend of IHIP News, Don Lemon. Don, how did you hear about this?

DON LEMON: I heard of someone texted me and said, ‘oh my gosh, I’m really sorry that you’re going through this,’ and I said, ‘going through what?’ Because I’ve been traveling all night. I was in — in Minnesota, and that’s how I heard about it, but I have not heard anything from anybody, DOJ officially. I’ve just heard lots of people just yapping, you know, on — on — either the internet, on social media, or on conservative, you know, podcasts or — or — you know, Fox News.

WELCH: All right, so walk us through this. You went to Minnesota. You’re an independent journalist. I’m sure all of our — everybody’s abundantly clear with your work, and you are reporting on all of these ICE protests, and you end up at a church. Is that what this is regarding?

LEMON: Yeah. So, there was a — I went to Minneapolis to cover the unrest there — and — I got a — I was trying to — I asked — I was asking people what’s going on — on the ground, I’m gonna get there. Should I go directly to the Whipple, whatever? And they said, well, there’s this thing happening that they’ve been sending out flyers for, perhaps you wanna cover this. So I said, sure. And I went, okay, I’ll cover. And then when I went to cover it, they said, we’re doing this — this protest that is sort of — similar to the civil rights movement where they show up places and they sort of disrupt the peace, like, sitting in at lunch counters or, you know, drinking out of — out of water fountains that were only supposed to be for white people. And I said, sure, I’ll — I’ll go, I’ll chronicle it. And they ended up at a church. I didn’t even know they were going to a church. They ended up at a church, and so once they went in and did their thing — other journalists started going in and I went in. So, I’m not exactly sure, Jen, how I became the face of it unless they just think I’m the bigger name, but it’s bizarre, and I reported on it and I entered, interviewed everyone there, the pastor, some of the congregants, and — and the protesters, and that was it. And now all of a sudden it blew up into this big thing where I am the one who is leading the protest and somehow I’m — I’m the agitator here when I’m just the journalist.

WELCH: And so this church, it was — it is friendly — is ICE friendly is my understanding.

LEMON: That’s the reporting. So, the — according to the group, and I have not been able to confirm this again because this wasn’t my movement. I am chronicling what happened. They believe they said that they found evidence that someone who is a pastor or registered as a pastor there is also an ICE agent or works in some capacity with ICE and they said they had — information about that and they think that, if that is the case, why are you a pastor at a church if

you were working as an ICE agent and so that's what their skirmish was about. That's what they went into to protest and that's what I went in just to — to report on.

WELCH: Well, I can certainly understand their frustration with that because all of the grifting through Christianity and overt patriotism, and then these people can't call out the — Jeffrey Epstein pedophilia ring. It's very alarming. But we have, I took from your Instagram, you interviewed this pastor, and let's watch this together from your Instagram, and then I wanna get your take on what was going on. Play the clip.

LEMON: Okay. [TO PASTOR] What do you think of this?

PASTOR: It's unacceptable. It's shameful. It's shameful to — to interrupt a public gathering of Christians in worship. So —

LEMON: But there are folks who support —

PASTOR: — listen, I have to take care of my flock and my family.

LEMON: — okay, but listen, we live in a — there's a Constitution and the First Amendment to freedom of speech and freedom to assemble and protest.

PASTOR: We're here to worship. We're here to worship Jesus because that's the hope of these cities. That's the hope of the world is Jesus Christ.

LEMON: I want to be very respectful. Please don't push me, though.

PASTOR: We're — we're here. We're here to worship Jesus.

LEMON: Yes.

PASTOR: That's why we're here.

LEMON: Okay.

PASTOR: That's why we're here. That's what we're about.

LEMON: Would you think Jesus would be understanding —

PASTOR: And we're — we're about —

LEMON: — and love these folks?

PASTOR: We're about spreading the love of Jesus.

LEMON: But did you try to talk to them as a — as a Christian?

PASTOR: No one is willing to talk.

LEMON: Okay.

PASTOR: I — I have to take care of my church and my family, so I ask that you actually would also leave this building —

LEMON: You don't want us to chronicle what happened?

PASTOR: — unless you're here to worship — unless you're here to worship.

LEMON: I'm always worship. I'm a Christian.

PASTOR: We're here to — well, we're here to worship. We're here to worship.

LEMON: Okay. Thank you very much. [BACK LIVE] Yeah.

WELCH: Weird to me that he's all about — this is the type of Christianity I grew up around. Recruiting but not helping, not comforting, not providing. Like, these people are hurting, these people that ICE are targeting are suffering. They're marginalized, and I thought you did an excellent job with the pastor saying, "don't you think Jesus would want to talk to these people and help these people?"

LEMON: Yeah, well, and also remember, as someone who wrote the book and was on your show about — wrote a book about — about God — Jesus turned the — the tables over in the temple, right? He flipped the tables because he was — he was tired of them — you know, not doing what they're supposed to do — in his father's house and not living up to the tenets of — of Christianity. And so, you know, I — it is — it is surprising to me if it is true that this person is somehow works for ICE, and then — and also, it is true that they're not understanding now of the — the protesters is that they're doing the exact opposite of what Christianity is supposed to be about, and I say in the reporting, Jen, if you look at it — and if you go and look at the full thing, I say it's interesting that you see the Pope — people over here praying and then the people over here protesting, but if they got together, they could solve this problem if you had people understanding, but it doesn't seem like anyone wanted to talk to each other. Now, I think the protesters actually went there to talk to these guys — obviously to disrupt, true — but I think they went there to talk to them, and I think if the pastor who was — I would — what I would have done, Jen, is I would have said no, we live in a country where we welcome dissent. We welcome peaceable — the — to peace of — the right to peaceably assemble. We welcome that. And so, we may not like it. It is uncomfortable, but that's what protest is about, discomfort. So, since you're here, let's please, please calm down. Let's try to talk. What would you like us to do? What do you want us to know? What would you like us to hear? What can we do to help you in Our Father's house, in the people's house? What can we do? None of that happened. I — I think he started to, you know — when we got there, I think he started just, you know, to — to preach sort of against the protesters or whatever, which I think is a natural reaction. But I think if you are going to be a representative of the Lord and of God, then perhaps you should conduct yourself as

such. Now, let me say this, Jen. I understand that people don't encounter this all the time. And that it can be unnerving for some people, especially for young people, but I think in the way that you handle it with young people is what I said before. This is what America is about. This is the reason we have a Constitution. People don't always agree. This is part of the rights that we're given under the Constitution we may not like. Don't be disheartened by it, but — so — I think there's a — to sort of comfort younger people. [SIGNAL CUTS]

WELCH: Did we lose Dawn? Dawn, Hang on guys, everybody stay. I think maybe Wi-Fi?

LEMON: Did you lose me?

WELCH: Oh, you're back. I got you. You're back.

LEMON: Okay, you lost me for a second. I'm back, yes.

WELCH: Okay, Don, let's get to the nut cut because here's my observation.

LEMON: Did you hear what I was saying?

WELCH: Yes, let me get to the nut cutting of what I think this is about. So, that is one of those white evangelical churches that turn out to vote for Donald Trump, 80+ percent of that sect of Christianity. These are the — don't tread on me, folks. These are the people who feel like America is for Americans and Americans only. These are white nationalists, and the DOJ got their panties in a wad because these protesters went straight to them and addressed their hypocrisy. You, a gay black journalist, are — I mean, prime bait for them to drum up these charges, but, so that's one issue. You went right into the most entitled white nationalists there are, and they feel that ICE is 100 percent justified.

(....)

10:07 mark  
27 seconds

WELCH: What I was trying to say to you guys is that I think it's incredibly rich of these people — that style of church is what average everyday people that are of their own personal private faith. That kind of evangelical church where they're all about recruiting and they're all about, we just need to know Jesus personally and not about helping people. They don't think they should be confronted.

(....)

11:55 mark  
8 minutes and 13 seconds

WELCH: Okay, let me get to this nut cutting here, and I don't know how much of that you heard,

but I think that style of church, that's the white nationalist style of church, that sect of evangelical Christianity has its rooting in the KKK because the KKK was a religious movement for white nationalists, and I think this DOJ via Pam Bondi, who wears her crucifix, who will not ever address anybody's suffering, they have a problem with those types of white people being confronted and called out on their hypocrisy. Furthermore, the staggering hypocrisy of Benny — DL Demon Queen Johnson — breaking this story when he outed himself with the — you know, the ads, targeted ads based on your Google searches — I think it's just really, really interesting. I think these MAGA men, they have, like, a hive mind. None of them are unique. None of them are — the alphas they think they are. They just all take their orders every day. What's Elon saying? What's Trump saying, and they have to bend and mold. And you are a — a prize for them. A — an independent, gay, black, happy, successful man, and this is an attempt to intimidate and beat you down.

LEMON: Mmhmm. I don't disagree with — with that, and I didn't hear the first part, but — I think that there is obviously, there's racism and that the whole point of it is that they're trying to — they're detaining people on the streets because of accents and the color of their skin — and they're also targeting — they're targeting people of color and black people — as well as — as brown people. So, there is a certain degree of racism there and there's a certain degree of entitlement. I think people who are, you know, in the religious groups like that, it's not the type of Christianity that I practice, but I think that they're entitled and that — that entitlement comes from a supremacy, a white supremacy, and they think that this country was built for them, that it is a Christian country when actually we left England because we wanted religious freedom. It's religious freedom, but only if you're a Christian and only if you're a white male, pretty much. And so, yeah, I absolutely 100 percent, but it's an intimidation tactic. And, you know, I said, I don't understand how I've become the face of it when I was a journalist. I do understand that I'm the biggest name there. And I'm also — as — as I was on with my producers this morning, you know, you and Kylie talk all the time, my producers were saying, I said, how did I become the face of this? And my producer said, "Don, you're a gay black man in America and you have a platform and you're the biggest name. Of course, you're going to be the person that they single out and they're going to make the headline because it plays to their base and their base is full of racist, bigot, bigoted homophobes like Nicki Minaj, by the way."

WELCH: Oh, pop — pop that up. So, Nicki Minaj sent a tweet out: "DON 'COCK SUCKIN'" — in her words — "LEMON IS DISGUSTING. HOW DARE YOU? I WANT THAT THUG IN JAIL!!!! HE WOULD NEVER DO THAT TO ANY OTHER RELIGION. LOCK HIM UP!!!!" and then she bizarrely puts a Chucky doll with it. So number one, the — homophobia laced in that, but number two, the way Christ — this breed, this sect of Christianity, the white nationalist form of Christianity that I guess now Nicki Minaj attaches herself to — I'm like, good luck with that, say — at the end of the day, you're still black — but — but — they — they use their religion as a weapon, but then they also use it as a shield back and forth, back and forth. They weaponize it, and then, "oh my God, I'm a victim. Don't attack my Christianity." And that's what Nicki Minaj just did right there. And I have news for Nicki Minaj.

LEMON: Yeah.

WELCH: You think these white nationalists are gonna accept you and your WAP? Just hide and wait. These people are serious about their racism, Ms. Minaj.

LEMON: Well, I'm glad you said WAP and if you listen to Nicki Minaj's music and you're like, okay, that's Christianity. First of all, Jen, you know, the — the how we met is that I was promoting my book on Christianity. And so, Nicki Minaj is not a Christian. She knows nothing about a Christian. What she is — is a grifter. And instead of that, that Chucky doll, she should have had a pick-me doll on there because Nicki Minaj is a pick me. And she doesn't — she's not African-American. I think she's from the islands. She is a black woman, but she doesn't understand the African-American — struggle, so to speak. And if she did, she wouldn't be doing this and saying this on Martin Luther King Day, on the Martin Luther King holiday of all days, p — putting that out. Nicki Minaj doesn't care about black people. She doesn't care about gay people. Those are two of her biggest supporters and the people who make her rich. And if I was — as I should say, if I — I am, as a black and gay person — I'm not supporting her. And so, if you're black, and you hear what Nicki Minaj is doing, and she's sitting on the stage with Charlie Kirk's widow, who — who — who — Charlie Kirk, sadly, who should not have died — you have to, you know, say that — the way that he did, it was uncalled for. However, he talked shit about black people a lot. He said racist, bigoted things a lot, and she's cozying up to his wife and to his organization, and to all of the other bigots in the MAGA movement, and now she is calling a — a — a gay man, a cocksucker, that's homophobia. So — if — if we were in the day where we earned — where we bought records, I would be burning Nicki Minaj's records today. So. I'm so glad that I've never been a Nicki Minaj fan. I don't know her music. There's nothing on my playlist that's ever Nicki Minaj, and, and, and there isn't going to be because she is an ignorant pick me, and I choose not to pick her.

WELCH: And you know what?

LEMON: And so should you.

WELCH: Yeah, I agree with you. And you know what I think we have right now? We have DEI fascists, right?

LEMON: Mmhmm.

WELCH: You know, like, we have these people that are trying to seek safety in this horrific regime that is a personality cult. Nicki Minaj thinks she's gonna be the magic black lady, that old queen running the Kennedy Center, what's his name, Richard Grenell — he thinks he's gonna be the magic homo, right?

LEMON: You know pygmies, you know what a pygmy is, right?

WELCH: Because I — yes!

LEMON: Weeee!

WELCH: Kash Patel is gonna be the magic Indian, and at the end of the day. These, you saw that the video of these — DEI Nazis, Nick Fuentes and the Tate brothers singing Kanye West's N-word Heil Hitler. Have you seen that?

LEMON: No, I haven't seen it. Really though?

WELCH: Last night they went to a bar in Miami and they recorded it, and they are playing — Kanye West song N-word Heil Hitler. The song has been banned. And all of the people that are singing this are people that if they lived in Nazi Germany, Hitler would have sent them straight to the camps. The Tate brothers were not Aryan or white enough. Nick Fuentes is gay. He would have a — you know, pink triangle on him, and he's half Mexican, so that's not pure blood. And so you have this really interesting — marriage of these marginalized people that think they're the exception. And they think these white nationalists are going to provide protection and cover for them.

LEMON: It's not going to happen for them.

WELCH: And it's like they shot a white woman in the street. Imagine what they're doing to brown skinned people behind bars.

LEMON: I'm so glad that you said that. By the way, Nick Fuentes claims he's not gay, but you know, I take your point, but he says he's not, but whatever.

WELCH: Bitch, please.

LEMON: Yeah, but right, they shot a white lady in the middle of the street. What do you think they're gonna do to your black ass, right? You know what I'm saying?

WELCH: Right.

LEMON: What do you think they're gonna do to you? And what does it do to you to be singing, you know, the — the Heil Hitler song? Like, why do that if you're — if you, unless you have some sort of mental issues or — I don't know, some sort of masochist or whatever or self-hate. I — I — I don't really — I don't get it. I don't get it.

WELCH: I think they're drunk.

LEMON: There's no amount of money or fame that's — that — that — that's worth that, by the way, Jen.

WELCH: No, and I think they're drunk on this idea of toxic masculinity.

(....)

20:24 mark

5 minutes and 3 seconds

WELCH: [Benny Johnson] has got some lady there with him, and they're talking about they're gonna use the KKK Act, and I'm like, well, of course they're gonna use the KKK Act on a black man with a cellphone and a microphone because the white — nationalists at the white mega church got their feelings hurt for being called out for being hypocrites.

LEMON: Can I — can I jump in right there, Jen?

WELCH: Yeah!

LEMON: Because you think about, look, I — I think these people truly felt that they were traumatized or that they were upset by it, but I think there should be some proportionality here and a bit of empathy — right — and a bit of self-reflection because those people were able to um choose to stay or to go. They could leave and go to breakfast with their family or go home and do whatever and they had their freedom and they go back to their nice, warm, cozy homes. While, while they're doing that, the DOJ or ICE and, and — federal agents are picking people up off the streets, some of them who are American citizens, some of them who are working are in process of becoming documented, and they are in holding cells. They are freezing. They have no means — they have no voice, they have no platform, and they are not going back to cozy homes. They're sitting in cells with sometimes 20, 30, 40, 50, 60 other people with one toilet — and — what do you call that — the Mylar blankets, you know, one Mylar blanket between them. And so I think that you should, you know, especially if you're in a church and you're supposed to be about helping the least of these, that should be at the top of mind rather than I was inconvenienced today and my, you know, my kids are going to be upset because they happen to witness how America and the Constitution works.

WELCH: All right, Kylie, do you have that loaded up? Let's hear what — little Benny had to say — little being the operative word?

HARMEET DHILLION [on *The Benny Show*, 01/19/26]: — pursue charges in this case. I see — I see various — crimes that have occurred. Exactly what they are, I'm not gonna flag, but — the FACE Act has been mentioned as one of the predicates there. In other cases, the Biden DOJ used the Klan Act conspiracy charges —

LEMON: Oh, lord!

DHILLION [on *The Benny Show*, 01/19/26]: — tacked on to the FACE Act in the case of protests outside abortion clinics to bring much longer sentences, so there are a number of tools available to us. Who funded this? What else, what other crimes may have occurred?

WELCH: Pause real quick. This idea that is always in the right-wing where they say who funded this —

LEMON: Who funded it?



WELCH: — how much are they getting paid —

LEMON: Paid agitators!

WELCH: — because they understand that people care about other people for free and that people hate fascists and Donald Trump for fucking free. All right, play the clip.

DHILLION [on *The Benny Show*, 01/19/26]: — the wires or the mails in preparing for this event, did anyone cross state lines to do this? All of those are potential predicates for additional federal charges.

BENNY JOHNSON [on *The Benny Show*, 01/19/26]: Harmeet, I've just pulled up the Klan Act because this is the first time that I've heard this mentioned. This is an act that was passed in 1871 — correction there — to combat the Ku Klux Klan and protect African Americans' voting rights, especially the Enforcement Act, which is known as the Force Act. So, here's some of the information on screen. Would you mind breaking down for us, because we have just read the FACE Act and how this is an affinity to the Face Act —

DHILLION [on *The Benny Show*, 01/19/26]: Right.

JOHNSON [on *The Benny Show*, 01/19/26]: — an obvious and egregious demonstrable violation of the FACE Act because they were entering a place of worship, harassing and threatening. We just played a video of a man, a bearded man, who was threatening to attack the Christians that were worshipping there, so it seems like an obvious FACE Act violation, but the Klan Act here, it is on screen. First time I've heard it mentioned. Can you unpack this for us, Hameet?

DHILLION [on *The Benny Show*, 01/19/26]: Yeah, the Klan Act is one of the most important federal civil rights statutes, and it goes back to the time when President Lincoln emancipated the slaves, and yet the Southern states — Dixiecrats mainly — were refusing to give them equal rights. In fact, that — you had sheriffs and you had law enforcement harassing the newly freed slaves. So, the Klan Act is a law that makes it illegal to terrorize citizens, to violate their civil rights, to get together, and conspire to violate the civil rights, it is often used against law enforcement, but is now used against others as well. So, whenever anyone —

WELCH: Okay, so Don, it's abundantly obvious to me that if they do charge you. You're gonna lawyer up and they're gonna go get humiliated in federal court yet again because these people are dumber than a box of hot rocks. They're so breathtakingly stupid.

LEMON: Yeah.

WELCH: I can't even take it.

LEMON: None of what she says there applies to me.

WELCH: Right.

LEMON: There's no evidence. I have no affiliation with the organization. I have no planning of any of this. I am a journalist reporting and so, you know, she's saying that I'm — they're saying I'm in — some sort of activist. I'm like, okay, why do you keep dragging my name in it? What you're saying doesn't apply to me at all. And you know, so I say —

WELCH: Your producer is right, it's the black gay thing.

LEMON: — I stand by my reporting, and that and that should be my response. I stand by my reporting, you know, to, to everybody, Jen. So, it's kind of, it's ridiculous because she keeps talking like in circles about these things, and "I just found out about the Klan Act,"

(....)

27:37 mark

WELCH: So, Don, if you get tomorrow, if you — if you find out the DOJ is pressing some sort of chicken shit Klan charge — what — what — what would your — what were your plans be?

LEMON: I'm calling you because I know you'd have my back and I know you had to assemble the squad. No, seriously, if — if that happens and — you know, I — I will — I'm standing tall. I'm not ashamed of anything. I'm not afraid of anything. Do — do what you must, and I'll do what I must, and I will assemble a group that's going to defend me, and I'm gonna rely on my supporters and my friends — and my allies to help me out, and I'll do what I have to do, but I'm gonna. Keep going and continue. I'm not letting this bother me or worry me, but — and at all.

WELCH: No.

LEMON: And so, I'm gonna keep continue reporting. Right now, what I'm deciding is, do I go into back to Minnesota and stay longer, or do I go back to New York and, you know, get back to some business that I have to take care of there? I'm not concerned about — I'm not concerning myself with this. Whatever they do, let them do it. But in the end, I'm telling you, I don't think that they've realized and people are fed up with this. That's why you see so many people out on the streets. That's why those protesters went into the church, and I think they are mobilizing people against the MAGA and the Trump administration and the ICE agents and other federal agents who are out there. They're actually mobilizing the opposition and the protests because people are fed up and they're tired of living in this Gestapo-like world under this tyrannical government. I think that — what they're doing — their efforts are going to backfire.

WELCH: Don, I completely agree. Everybody here at IHP News, the I hipsters, the Patriots, the gay riots, the black riots have your back, and — I — I look forward to the hysteria that will ensue. These people are such titty babies. You're a Southerner, so you know, you know the line, titty babies.

LEMON: I know what titty baby is.

WELCH: I've never seen such titty babies in my life, and so, I look forward to their ensuing meltdowns because I've figured out these people are far more terrified of us than we are of them.

LEMON: Yeah, and I just say to them, as we say as Southerners, bless your heart. You know what that means.

WELCH: That's right. Oh, I know exactly what that means. Go fuck yourself. [LEMON LAUGHS] All right, Don, we love you.

LEMON: Love you too.

WELCH: If you get charged, we'll come back and we'll do it live again. All right, bye.

LEMON: We'll do it live! Bye, Jen!

WELCH: Do it live!