

Charlamagne tha God

Lenard Larry McKelvey (born June 29, 1978), known professionally as **Charlamagne tha God**, is an American radio presenter, television personality, and author.^{[1][2]} He is a co-host of the nationally syndicated radio show *The Breakfast Club* with DJ Envy and Angela Yee, and stars in *Guy Code*, *Guy Court* and *Girl Code*. He was also a VJ for *The Week in Jams* with DJ Envy and Sofi Green. In 2015, Charlamagne began hosting the MTV2 show *Uncommon Sense*. He was previously on *The Wendy Williams Experience* with Wendy Williams on VH1. In the shock-jock tradition, one of Charlamagne's personal mantras is "bite my tongue for no one."^[3]

Charlamagne tha God



Charlamagne tha God in August 2014

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Born | Lenard Larry McKelvey June 29, 1978 Charleston, South Carolina, U.S. |
|-------------|--|

Career

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Show | <i>The Breakfast Club</i> (co-host) |
| Station(s) | Power 105.1, New York City |
| Time slot | 6:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. |
| Country | United States |

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Early life

McKelvey was born to Larry Thomas McKelvey, a Jehovah's Witness-turned-Muslim^[4] and his wife Julie Ford McKelvey, an English teacher and Jehovah's Witness,^{[5][6][4][7]} on June 29, 1978,^[8] and grew up in Moncks Corner, South Carolina.^[9] As a teenager, McKelvey began selling drugs, and was arrested twice for possession of marijuana and cocaine with intent to distribute. After witnessing a shooting from the back seat

of a car, McKelvey was arrested for a third time. His father refused to pay his bail money, and McKelvey remained in jail for 41 days. Eventually, he called his mother, who paid for his bail and McKelvey was released.^[1]

Career

Radio

After being released from the county jail, McKelvey began attending night school and eventually got a job as a radio intern.^[1] He went on to become second mic to radio host Wendy Williams. He developed the stage name of Charlamagne, taken from his pseudonym as a drug dealer, "Charles," and created a new persona based on King Charlemagne, who ruled much of Western Europe as part of the Carolingian Empire^[6] in the late 700s and early 800s, whom he read about at night school. He added "Tha God" because it "sounded cool."^[1] At this point, his unorthodox and upfront questioning of hip-hop/R&B artists on radio raised his public profile but also caused rifts between himself and the guests of the show. He was laid off from the program in 2008.^[1] Relations between Charlamagne and Williams deteriorated, though Charlamagne has stated numerous times on his show *The Breakfast Club* that he views Williams as a mentor and bears no ill feeling toward her.

In 2010, Charlamagne began hosting *The Breakfast Club*, alongside DJ Envy and Angela Yee on WWPR-FM in Manhattan, along with its national television simulcast on Revolt.^[2] Once part of the show, Charlamagne gave himself the title "Prime Minister of Pissing People Off, the Architect of Aggravation, and the Ruler of Rubbing People the Wrong Way."^[10] In 2014, *Rolling Stone* nicknamed him "hip-hop's Howard Stern."^[11]

Television

Beginning on November 15, 2011, Charlamagne served as a cast member of *Guy Code*, a comedy television show on MTV2 that talks about a special code of conduct just for men. The show ended in March 2015. He formerly starred on the MTV2 show *Charlamagne & Friends*^[6] At the end of 2013 and 2014, he co-hosted MTV New Year's live from Times Square and in 2015 he was a correspondent for the 2015 MTV Video Music Awards pre-show.^{[12][13][14]} He currently stars and hosts MTV2 show *Uncommon Sense with Charlamagne tha God*.^{[15][16]} He currently narrates the BET Show, *Inside the Label*.

In the May 11, 2020 airing of *The Breakfast Club*, Charlamagne revealed that he had been working as a producer for a BET special on American record executive, record producer, songwriter and rapper Andre Harrell.

YouTube

Charlamagne currently hosts a YouTube series called *Emerging Hollywood* which is posted on The Hollywood Reporter's YouTube channel. On this show, Charlamagne speaks with Hollywood professionals to discuss various political topics. His past guests on the show include Trevor Noah and Jameela Jamil.^[17]



Charlamagne interviewed about *Guy Code* at the MTV Movie Awards 2012

With fellow MTV2 personality Andrew Schulz, he hosts *The Brilliant Idiots* podcast on Combat Jack's Loud Speakers Network.^{[18][19]}

Writing

In 2017, his book *Black Privilege: Opportunity Comes to Those Who Create It*, which he called "a self-help guide for the hood,"^[3] was published by the Simon & Schuster imprint Touchstone. Steven Kurutz of *The New York Times* gave the book a mostly positive review, describing *Black Privilege* as "a street-smart self-help guide" with typically blunt advice offered in eight different principles.^[20] The book was ranked sixth in the May 7, 2017, *New York Times* list of best-selling hardback non-fiction.^[21] McKelvey's second book, *Shook One: Anxiety Playing Tricks on Me* was released on October 23, 2018.^[22]

Controversy

Charlamagne is considered a controversial figure in the world of radio due to his willingness to ask personal questions and his open criticism of musicians, athletes, and other media personalities. Charlamagne's direct criticism of guests during interviews has resulted in numerous altercations and arguments on air.

Lil' Mama

In a 2011 interview with Lil Mama, Charlamagne confronted the rapper, saying, "you come off as cocky" and insinuated that she hadn't accomplished enough to be cocky. He additionally alluded to his belief that her criticism of other rappers' behavior should be communicated through her music rather than stated in the media. He provoked the rapper/actress by calling her the "voice of the young struggle-face," digging at her appearance.^{[23][24]} He went on to say, "you're young and you have an old face; like Drake says, 'I'm really too young to be looking this old.'"^{[23][25]}

She returned to *The Breakfast Club* for a less tense interview on January 12, 2016.^{[26][25]}

Birdman

Rapper Birdman walked out of his interview with *The Breakfast Club* on April 22, 2016, after just over two minutes, claiming the hosts, specifically Charlamagne, were not "putting respect on his name". Birdman was angry at the hosts allowing artists such as Trick Daddy and Rick Ross to appear on the show and make disparaging remarks about him. Charlamagne questioned why Birdman was angry at him and not the artists themselves, and Birdman left the interview after just over two minutes. The interview went viral and resulted in numerous memes based on the incident. It is the shortest interview in *Breakfast Club* history.^{[27][28]}

Fredro Starr

In the summer of 2014, hip-hop group Onyx appeared on *The Breakfast Club*. Tensions rose between member Fredro Starr and Charlamagne after Charlamagne brought up Starr allegedly receiving oral sex from singer Brandy Norwood. Starr responded by branding Charlamagne a "pussy", and made reference to Charlamagne being attacked on camera outside of the Power 105.1 building. Starr was eventually calmed down by fellow Onyx member Sticky Fingaz, and eventually finished the interview, however, the resulting video went viral, and led to Starr becoming the face of *The Breakfast Club*'s "P.O. Meter", a running joke used to measure a guest's perceived anger.^{[29][30]}

Beanie Sigel

On October 11, 2016, rapper Beanie Sigel appeared on *The Breakfast Club* to conduct an interview. Sigel grew annoyed with Charlamagne's perceived attempts at escalating the feud between himself and Meek Mill, complaining that Charlamagne was "harping on the issue". Charlamagne branded Sigel a hypocrite, who responded by saying he felt Charlamagne was a "sucker" for letting Fredro Starr disrespect him live on air, and criticised him for making rapper Lil Mama cry, calling him a coward. Sigel threatened to walk out numerous times before eventually finishing the interview. The subsequent video went viral.^{[31][32]}

Lil Duval

In July 2017, comedian Lil Duval joked on *The Breakfast Club* show about killing a sex partner if she turned out to be a transgender woman. Charlamagne tha God, while noting that killing a trans person was a hate crime, stated that women not disclosing their trans status were "taking away a person's power of choice" and "should go to jail or something". In response, trans activists, including Raquel Willis and Elle Hearns, called for the show to be boycotted or cancelled.^{[33][34][35]}

Elizabeth Warren

In June 2019, Charlamagne interviewed Democratic Presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren, whereupon he confronted her about her claims of Native American ancestry. In the interview he compared her to Rachel Dolezal.^[36]

Joe Biden

On May 22, 2020, Charlamagne interviewed presumptive Democratic Party nominee for President of the United States Joe Biden. Towards the end of the sometimes tense interview, Charlamagne asked Biden to come to do another interview in their New York City studio in the future, saying "we've got more questions for you." Mr. Biden responded "You've got more questions? Well, I tell you what, if you have a problem figuring out whether you're for me or Trump, then you ain't Black." Charlamagne said that "It don't have nothing to do with Trump. It has to do with the fact that I want something for my community."^[37] African-American Republican senator Tim Scott said that Biden's comment "is the most arrogant, condescending comment I've heard in a very long time."^[38] After criticism, Biden apologized for the comments later that same day on a phone call with the U.S. National Black Chamber of Commerce, stating that it was wrong for him to be such a "wise guy" and "cavalier" when referencing his Black supporters.^{[37][38]} According to Charlamagne, his goal was to get Biden to discuss what he's done for the black community recently. He's known for having tough interviews with political candidates.^[39]

Discography

- *South Crack: The Album* (2008)

Filmography

| Year | Title | Role | Notes |
|--------------|---|--------------|---|
| 2009 | <i>Kiss & Tail: The Hollywood Jumpoff</i> | Himself | |
| 2011–2015 | <i>Guy Code</i> | Himself | Stars in along with <u>Lil Duval</u> |
| 2011 | <i>This Thing of Ours</i> | "Shottah" | |
| 2012 | <i>Hip-Hop POV</i> | Himself | |
| 2012 | <i>Hood State of Union</i> | Himself | |
| 2013 | <i>The Week in Jams</i> | Himself | Host in along with <u>DJ Envy</u> & <u>Sofi Green</u> |
| 2013 | <i>Girl Code</i> | Himself | |
| 2013 | <i>Guy Code Honors</i> | Himself | A one and a half-hour show that honored the superheroes and villains from the 2013 <u>Comic-Con</u> in <u>San Diego, California</u> |
| 2013 | <i>Charlamagne & Friends</i> | Himself | 2013–Present |
| 2013 | <i>Guy Court</i> | Himself | |
| 2013, 2015 | <i>Wild 'N Out</i> | Himself | 3 episodes |
| 2014 | <i>Ride Along</i> | Cop | Cameo appearance |
| 2015 | <i>Catfish: The TV Show</i> | Himself | 1 episode |
| 2015–present | <i>Uncommon Sense with Charlamagne</i> | Himself | Host |
| 2015 | <i>Empire</i> | Himself | 1 episode |
| 2017 | <i>Grow House</i> | Black Jesus | Acting debut |
| 2017 | <i>Bodied</i> | Hunnid Gramz | |
| 2020 | <i>Dave</i> | Himself | 1 episode |

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External links

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