

**About Tesh Meet John: From television to radio to the Gulf Coast and back by Nathan Oravec**  
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There's something about that John Tesh.

Musician, television personality, radio host.

When he calls you 45 minutes behind schedule from his Los Angeles studio, he is earnest and apologetic, self-deprecatingly calling himself a "moron," which, of course, he is not.

You don't make it 25 years in the business by being one of those.

Tesh talks fast. Faster than you remember him talking on "Entertainment Tonight," when his baritone cadence called out celebrity birthday greetings.

He's late, he said, because a meeting ran over; his radio show staff currently in the excited thralls of prepping its Katrina Convoy, a relief-effort caravan of pre-owned motor homes and travel trailers to be delivered to those in desperate need of shelter on the Gulf Coast.

Before the convoy leaves for the coast from Birmingham, Alabama October 12, however, Tesh will work his way to Frederick and the Weinberg on Saturday for a few stories, a few tunes, and – possibly – recruitment.

"How far is Alabama from Maryland?" he asks.

That's what it is - that thing about John.

He's committed.

**About music**

In 1996, after ten years behind the desk as co-host of "Entertainment Tonight," Tesh left the show to pursue his music career full time. To date, he has garnered three gold albums and two Grammy nominations, while his most recent works have scaled the Billboard charts.

"I started in music for the same reason everyone does – and anyone who tells you otherwise is lying – I wanted to get noticed. Not because I loved music. It was

more, ‘What can I do to get girls to look at me?’ I was in sixth grade, in junior high, and 155 pounds. I needed super powers... [In music, I discovered] true power – a great form of expression. All of a sudden, there I was, for better or worse, forever.”

“When you’re a kid, you start to study the classics. You play what everyone tells you to... [And one day] you move a note – major or minor – and all of a sudden, you’re improvising. You’re arranging. It really does start there... You create something of your own.”

### **About radio**

Available on over 220 stations countrywide, The John Tesh Radio Show focuses on a family-friendly concept he calls “Music and Intelligence for Your Life,” providing listeners with daily guidance on subjects such as work, relationships, and parenting.

“I was performing over 60 [concert] dates a year. But when you have a child... In infancy it’s one thing. It’s when they get to be 3 or 4 years old and they know you’re not around. My family – my wife and my daughter and my son – came to me and said, ‘This is not working for us. Go back to television.’ I thought, ‘Oh, no...’ [Radio] was a way to do something different.”

The show, he said, was generally inspired by wife, actress Connie Sellecca (“The Greatest American Hero,” “Hotel”).

“[She was so busy] being a wife and a mother, a businessperson and an actress... She had all of these magazines – [‘Prevention’... ‘Readers’ Digest’] – but never had the time to read them. I thought, ‘We can do that for her.’ It would be a newsletter for the air.”

“...There’s a reason that no one’s ever done this before: It’s the most expensive show on the air... We have nine writers and all they do is read all day... We have everything from pets to poems. How to drive a semi to how to be a better parent. It’s all in there.”

“...One of the questions I get asked the most is, ‘Is it a Christian show?’ I tell people it’s not a Christian show, but it’s edited by a Christian. We understand we have a secular audience... What we do is use music and live shows to encourage people to be better at whatever it is they do and to live outside of themselves.”

### **About faith**

“... It keeps me alive... We try to leave the day better than we found it. We surround ourselves with prayer at all times. I truly believe the only reason the show is growing is because God’s hand is on it. It’s the most useful thing I’ve ever done. And it’s not about me. It’s not my opinion. I’m just the host... connecting people to information that we think is just perfect for them.”

### **About Radio Relief**

Eight months ago, in Sri Lanka, Tesh witnessed first hand the devastation wrought by the tsunami. Weeks ago, in his Hurricane Katrina journal, penned during his initial visit to Slidell, Louisiana and Long Beach, Mississippi, he wrote: “...the devastation I’m seeing here today is unparalleled to anything I’ve seen in my life as a reporter for 25 years.”

“I feel like a big component [of the radio show] is to get people to serve others. It’s one of the reasons we’re on our way to the Gulf Coast, actually. To live out what we talk about.”

“...When the hurricane hit, I was in the middle of getting my son married. I didn’t know how I was going [to focus on both.] My wife said, ‘You’re going to get a lot of angry letters if you don’t do something.’ And she was right. I did. People wrote letters saying, ‘You went to Sri Lanka, where are you now, big boy?’

“...We adopted two areas – Slidell, Louisiana and Long Beach, Mississippi – that hadn’t seen hide nor hair [of assistance]... We went down to get a lay of the land and come up with a plan. And our plan was, ‘Let’s relocate these people.’ But that’s not what they wanted. They wanted to stay and rebuild.

“...What [these people] need are rakes and hammers and tarps, and things to entertain the children [while their parents rebuild]. So we came up with what we call the 3 T’s: Tools, toys and trailers.”

“...When something like this happens, people get frozen in their tracks. They don’t know what to do... [I say], ‘We don’t want your money, we want your time, dude.’ That’s a perishable commodity.”

The massive convoy continues to be assembled. “We just purchased 10 travel trailers today at \$5000 a piece,” Tesh said. The caravan will meet in Birmingham on October 11 and depart the following day for the 48-hour journey.

“I told my staff to watch the original ‘Mad Max.’ You know, the one with the last caravan... running on diesel fuel... with the hang glider on top... That’s us.”

### **About the Weinberg concert**

“I probably do 40 shows a year [like this.] It’s a lot of music, but also a lot of stories... [Stuff from the Olympics], the Tour de France, marrying a crazy Italian actress... There’s something for everyone.”

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