

*CBS Mornings*

04/20/22

7:03:03 a.m. [TEASE]

18 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Jordan Klepper]

VLADIMIR DUTHIERS: And *The Daily Show*'s Jordan Klepper is here to discuss his latest special, it's about an unusual fascination shared by some supporters of former President Trump. Jordan's journey takes him all the way to Europe and the authoritarian government in Hungary. You won't want to miss this.

GAYLE KING: No. He's got an interesting spin on this.

(....)

8:00:36 a.m. [TEASE]

9 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Jordan Klepper]

GAYLE KING: Coming up in this hour, *The Daily Show*'s Jordan Klepper is here. He will tell us why he went to one particular country in Europe to learn about American politics.

(....)

8:11:08 a.m. [TEASE]

34 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Comedian Jordan Klepper]

TONY DOKOUPIL: Jordan Klepper of *The Daily Show* is known for his interviews at political rallies and protests in the U.S., but for a new special, he's traveled all the way to Hungary to find out why so many American conservatives look at that Central European country for inspiration.

JORDAN KLEPPER: Today's their Revolution Day. It celebrates 1848 when they pushed back against the Habsburgs and I should have bought a guidebook instead of trying to watch *Tenet* on the plane.

DOKOUPIL: Ahead, Jordan will share what he eventually learned about Hungary's brand of authoritarian politics and what it says about us.

(....)

8:25:08 a.m. [TEASE]

8 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Comedian Jordan Klepper]

KING: And still ahead, *The Daily Show*'s Jordan Klepper — there he is in our Progressive greenroom. Hey, Jordan.

JORDAN KLEPPER: Hello.

KING: Here for his new special. We're good. Hope you're good, too.

(....)

8:33:23 a.m.

7 minutes and 59 seconds

DOKOUPIL: All right, my Talk of the Table looking forward to right now is *The Daily Show*'s Jordan Klepper, best known for interviewing Trump supporters at rallies all across America. His new special takes things much, much further. Last month, after speaking with people at the conservative political convention, CPAC, Klepper went to the European country of Hungary. At CPAC, he had asked U.S. conservatives why so many seem to look to Hungary and its authoritarian leader as a model for America's future.

KLEPPER: What do you think about Donald Trump when he called Vladimir Putin a genius? Was that him being tough?

MAN: I think he has a way of playing with words.

KLEPPER: Yeah, definitely like saying the opposite of what a Patriot would say?

MAN: Yes, and then he gets the media riled up.

KLEPPER: He disregards his own Intelligence Community, and instead he kisses [bleep] Vladimir Putin. But that's him just being smart.

MAN: Being a wise guy.

KLEPPER: He's being a wise guy. The MAGA crowd's obsessions were predictable. [TO THE CAMERA] Is this a little much? But there was a new infatuation I was surprised to hear because for the first time at CPAC, people were applauding another country.

WOMAN: Hungary's on the forefront.

MAN: When you see people like leaders in Hungary, talking and speaking the way that Donald Trump did when he was in office, it inspires me.

DOKOUPIL: The special is called *Jordan Klepper Fingers the Globe: Hungary for Democracy*, later on Comedy Central. Why do I we feel like a practical joke has been played on me with reading that title?

KING: I know.

KLEPPER: You shouldn't have comedians on your show. Be more respectable than that.

DOKOUPIL: I do enjoy it. And the lawyers required me to say that CBS is a division of the Paramount Global Company. *Daily Show* is part of that and you've convinced our fine corporate leaders to send you on a European vacation where you also did some work.

KLEPPER: Exactly. I think that's the — that's the little trick I pulled there. It's been a long couple of years, send me to Eastern Europe and it turns out, democracy is crumbling there, too.

DOKOUPIL: Which had a serious point, exactly. So why did you do it?

KLEPPER: Well —

KING: And why Hungary? That is what I think is so interesting.

KLEPPER: You know, Hungary has suddenly been a part of the cultural conversation here. Tucker Carlson has done a special over there. We went to CPAC, where a lot of conservatives get their marching orders for what's next. And they're literally holding a CPAC in Budapest. So, we were curious, what is it about Hungary that conservatives see as a potential American future? So we went.

DUTHIERS: So —

KING: Were you surprised to see that people there say that Joe Biden is fake? That his presidency is not legit? Somebody even brought up Hunter Biden's laptop. I was so — I was blown away by that.

KLEPPER: Yes.

KING: That was a topic of conversation in Hungary.

KLEPPER: I thought I was escaping those conversations for a mere 10 days. But when we landed in their March 15th, they have a giant event, and I was shocked, I thought we're going to talk about what was happening in Ukraine —

KING: Yes.

KLEPPER: — which is literally next door to Hungary, Hunter Biden's laptop came out of their mouths, so it felt like I hadn't gotten very far.

DOKOUPIL: So the other really amazing thing is how Hungary has declined from a near democracy to what has been qualified as an authoritarian state by many observers. In your piece, I learned that the opposition leader, the guy trying to replace the current leader got five minutes of state television over a four-year period.

KING: Yes.

DOKOUPIL: That's astounding.

KLEPPER: Yeah, you go —

KING: Early in the morning early.

KLEPPER: Yeah, it was early in the morning —

DOKOUPIL: Actually, same time slot you're having right now.

KLEPPER: — which is a great time.

DOKOUPIL: Wonderful.

KLEPPER: You've got to utilize that timestamp, but you look at it, essentially, the amount of time that I'm going to be on this program is too little. I've been telling you producers this, but the Hungarians have been talking about that as well. Like, if you go to Hungary, they're having an election. It is a democracy. But what you see is, there's only one candidate that anybody is hearing from us and that's affecting the outcome.

DUTHIERS: And that's my question, which is it is a democracy. It's part of the E.U. These things don't happen overnight. It's not that all of a sudden Hungary woke up and it's in the situation that you're seeing on the ground now. How did it happen? And how do you see the antecedents here in the U.S.?

KLEPPER: Well, it's a slide from democracy towards autocracy to go from free to partly free. And basically what happens is they affect — make voting harder. There's a lot of gerrymandering. They control the media. Most of the media there is owned by wealthy oligarchs who have connections to the ruling party, and they vilify certain minority groups, the LGBTQ community is being vilified right now to rev up voters and you look at what's happening in Florida right now —

KING: Yeah.

KLEPPER: — and you start to see that thing happening here. And so when you see this democracy slide, in a European country, it's that frog boiling in water. Democracy is fragile. And so when you're back here in America, look, it might look a lot like what's happening there.

KING: Before you realize — the frog realizes, hey, I'm dying in here.

KLEPPER: Yeah.

KING: Getting really hot. I mean, you said in this special that you wanted to go to get some sense of where America is heading. You briefly touched on that. What conclusions did you draw?

KLEPPER: Democracy is fragile, and you have to stay vigilant. When people talk about the downfall of American democracy, it can be very hyperbolic and hard to imagine. And you look at Hungary, it's beautiful. Travel to Budapest, people are wonderful and they do vote. They do have a media system that looks, on the outside, like it's an open free democracy. But underneath, people who are in power are making it harder and harder for things to change. I think America needs to look very closely at that.

DUTHIERS: How about misinformation? What role does that play? We know what it plays here in the United States. What role does it play in countries like Hungary?

KLEPPER: Well, when I'm talking to people on the streets, and I'm talking to folks about George Soros being the boogeyman who controls things, talking about Joe Biden being a fake President, and they're getting some of our misinformation. They are in bubbles, like we're in bubbles over there and again, if all you're exposed to day in and day out is one party's view of the world and a distraction that is happening, literally in the world, literally next door, you're going to be caught up in kind of this echo chamber.

KING: You also talked about Ukraine with a spokesperson from the government, from — from President Orban. It was very interesting to see their reaction to Putin. Could you talk about that for a minute?

KLEPPER: Well, like Orban —

KING: They did not want to call Putin out.

KLEPPER: — yeah. Their leader, Viktor Orban, is very cozy with Vladimir Putin.

KING: They said, it's too early to tell —

KLEPPER: Too early to tell, exactly.

KING: — who is responsible here.

KLEPPER: Well, I think, you know, you start to see a lot of this rhetoric echoed in the conversation here. They make no — Viktor Orban was very cozy with Vladimir Putin and to his supporters, that's a tough time to be cozy with Vladimir Putin. So when you address, is that an issue now? They point fingers somewhere else.

DOKOUPIL: You've got to be getting recognized at a lot of these conferences, right? Like when you're on the street, people still talk to you?

KLEPPER: Yes. Occasionally. I will say this though —

KING: That's a good question, Tony.

DUTHIERS: Do people who go to those rallies, watch your show and watch *The Daily Show*?

KLEPPER: They watch it. I went to CPAC, full of conservatives and I kind of expected to be a public enemy number one, and I took selfies the entire time, and I pulled —

KING: They turned into dartboards.

KLEPPER: — they turn the dartboards really quick, but I think for many people, even if you're the heel in this world, they view it as entertainment so they want to be a part of the world, even if you're not supposedly on the side of the person they support.

TONY DOKOUPIL: Great. Amusing ourselves to death. I love it. Jordan Klepper, thank you very much. Jordan's special premieres tomorrow on Comedy Central.