

NBC's 3<sup>rd</sup> *Hour of Today*  
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16 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Today Exclusive; First Lady Dr. Jill Biden]

AL ROKER: A *Today* exclusive: Dr. Jill Biden talking about her mission to help teachers, planning a White House wedding, and memories of Queen Elizabeth II.

FIRST LADY JILL BIDEN: She was very strong and I think that she was steady.

ROKER: Sheinelle going one-on-one with the First Lady.

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9:01:43 a.m.  
5 minutes and 57 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: One-on-One With First Lady Dr. Jill Biden]

ROKER: You were gone for a good reason, Sheinelle. You've got this exclusive interview with first lady Jill Biden.

SHEINELLE JONES: It was — it was such a great conversation, I should say. We met at an elementary school in Knoxville, Tennessee.

ROKER: Aww.

JONES: The First Lady is an educator. You know I love my educators. She actually continued teaching even while in the White House and she's become a champion for her fellow teachers and school kids, so we talked about that mission, unveiled the big school surprise, but we started by talking about the loss and legacy of Queen Elizabeth II. [TO BIDEN] The queen reigned for 70 years. 70 years. And as a woman in the spotlight yourself, what kind of example do you think she set when it comes to leadership?

BIDEN: You know, she was very strong and I think that she was steady. And I think that people really appreciate steady leadership. And she also had, you know, such grace and such dignity, and I think that's what really people will remember about her.

JONES: Dr. Jill Biden paying tribute to Britain's Queen Elizabeth while drawing attention to something close to her heart here at home. [TO BIDEN] Hello!

BIDEN: Hello!

JONES: How are you? Good to see you.

[BIDEN, JONES HUG]

BIDEN: Good to see you!

JONES: I got a chance to join the first lady at Sarah Moore Greene Magnet Academy in Knoxville, Tennessee, Monday, where she looked to shine a light on teachers.

TEACHER: I've never met the First Lady before.

BIDEN: I know, but we're colleagues.

JONES: And work on bringing more educators into our nation's schools. [TO JONES] You're one of so many teachers returning to the classroom. Meanwhile, there are schools all across the country facing these shortages. What concerns you the most when we talk about staffing for schools?

BIDEN: What we need to do is encourage younger people to come into the profession, and — and also teachers of color. We need a lot more teachers of color.

JONES: A federal study recently found that math and reading scores for 9-year-olds in the U.S. dramatically dropped —

BIDEN: Uh-huh.

JONES: — since the beginning of the pandemic and math specifically, and the gap between white and black students widened.

BIDEN: Uh-huh.

JONES: How do we make sure students of color don't get left behind?

BIDEN: Well, I think we are working on that. This summer, I saw several programs for learning loss and they were teaching math and they were teaching English, and also doing fun things like teaching the kids how to swim. We provided money for it in the American Rescue Plan. And — and so it's up to the districts, you know, to decide what they're going to do with that money.

JONES: We just met a second-year teacher today who was so enthusiastic and you could see the passion.

BIDEN: Don't you love her?

JONES: Delightful.

BIDEN: Yes, yes.

JONES: And I love that you called her a colleague.

BIDEN: Well, she is.

JONES: Absolutely. And then I thought about, when you complimented her on her classroom, I thought about my mom who just retired and that was one of her highlights every year was decorating the classroom. And I thought about it in that moment. There's something that happens sometimes between that second-year teacher and women like my mother. What do we do for teachers in the middle who feel either burned out or they want to quit? What's your message to them?

BIDEN: Stay with us. Stay here. We need you. You know, some days are good. Some days are bad. But overall, it's a profession like no other. [TO TEACHERS] Surprise.

JONES: On Monday, Dr. Biden teamed up with Pinterest to surprise teachers at the school —

BIDEN [TO TEACHERS]: What do you think?

TEACHERS: It's beautiful.

JONES: — gifting them a new teachers lounge, intentionally designed to help them recharge. [TO JONES] You're a teacher. You are also a grandmother.

BIDEN: Yeah.

JONES: There's a wedding happening —

BIDEN: Yes.

JONES: — with Naomi?

BIDEN: Yes.

JONES: So, how do you prepare for a wedding in the white house? That sounds like a dream, first of all.

BIDEN: Step-by-step. So, we're taking it slowly and I have been in on most of the meetings and watched her just blossom and really there's just such joy about it. And I — I cannot wait.

JONES: Last month you tested positive for COVID.

BIDEN: Mmm.

JONES: Not once, but twice.

BIDEN: Yes.

JONES: How are you feeling?

BIDEN: I'm feeling great, really. Each day, I mean, I feel better. I am in the classroom. I am back to work. And so, I feel good.

JONES: You had it. The President had it.

BIDEN: I know.

JONES: How did you stay in touch?

BIDEN: You know, we were calling each other constantly because he got it first and then he had to isolate and then I got it after, so we were apart for, I don't know, 20 days or something.

JONES: How did you pass the time?

BIDEN: Well, you know, I am an English teacher.

JONES: Yes.

BIDEN: I love to read, so I was reading so many books, articles that I could use in my class, and I watched a lot of Netflix and so, you know, like every other American who had to isolate, you had to find a way to keep yourself busy.

MELVIN: Netflix.

JONES: I was going to go into the shows she watched, Biden didn't reveal what was in her Netflix cue. But we got to know First Ladies are just like us.

MELVIN: Yes.

ROKER: Yes, absolutely.

JONES: I should also mention that lounge reveal, that room was beautiful.

MELVIN: Yeah.

JONES: It's just part of the First Lady's collaboration with Pinterest to honor teachers. So, you can head to *Today.com* for an exclusive first look at a curated Pinterest board that Dr. Biden together with tips and advice for how to curate a beautiful classroom and a beautiful setting. When the teachers walked in —

ROKER: Oh.

JONES: — they were hugging and shrieking, and I think it was intentionally designed, let's say you're having a tough day.

MELVIN: Mmhmm.

DYLAN DREYER: Yeah.

JONES: You can go in there, you can meditate. There are three chairs —

DREYER: Recharge.

JONES: — and recharge.

DREYER: Mmhmm.

JONES: So I was very happy for those teachers.

MELVIN: A great conversation and I continue to just be so pleased and thrilled with the fact that Dr. Biden, who doesn't really have to --

JONES: She doesn't have to be Dr. B.

MELVIN: — right.

JONES: Right.

MELVIN: She is still teaching —

JONES: Yeah.

MELVIN: — and she's still such an outspoken advocate for other teachers.

JONES: Absolutely.

DREYER: Fighting for teachers —

ROKER: They're so important.

DREYER: — cause teachers are so —

JONES: Absolutely.

DREYER: — the lifeblood —

MELVIN: Yeah.

DREYER: — for our kids' education.

JONES: And like you said, you know, we're losing them. We're losing them somewhere between where they're eager in their second and third year —

MELVIN: Yeah.

DREYER: Right.

JONES: — and then, for those — and a lot of the older teachers are retiring —

ROKER: Yeah.

JONES: — so they've got to figure out a way in this country to attract more people to be teachers.

ROKER: People need to think about two years ago during the heart of the pandemic —

JONES: Yes.

ROKER: — and how much they realized how important —

JONES: Important, absolutely.

ROKER: — teachers are.

MELVIN: Yep.

JONES: Absolutely, so good conversation.

DREYER: Yes, it was.

MELVIN: Thank you for that.

DREYER: And she meant to say Peacock, right?

JONES: [LAUGHS]

MELVIN: Not Netflix.