

CBS Mornings

04/20/23

7:00:29 a.m. [TEASE]

6 seconds

GAYLE KING: Welcome, welcome to *CBS Mornings* on this Thursday. Michelle Obama's going to be here today. I'm Gayle King.

(....)

7:02:43 a.m. [TEASE]

32 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Michelle Obama]

KING: We welcome you to *CBS Mornings*. We're very excited because we've got a very special guest in the show today. It's former first lady, what's her name, guys?

NATE BURLESON: Michelle Obama.

TONY DOKOUPIL: Michelle Obama.

KING: Michelle Obama. She's going to be here in the studio. She's been touring the country. She's been spreading the word about her new bestselling book called *The Light We Carry: Overcoming in Uncertain Times*. And boy, don't we have some uncertain times right now? I'll go first — yes, we do. So, we've got plenty to talk to her about today.

BURLESON: And her light shines bright. Speaking of women shining a bright light...

(....)

7:21:13 a.m. [TEASE]

8 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Michelle Obama; Coming Up]

KING: Coming up, former First Lady Michelle Obama will join us in the studio. She's here to talk about her book and podcast — give us an exclusive look at her new Netflix special with Oprah.

(....)

7:36:21 a.m. [TEASE]

11 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Ahead; Former First Lady Michelle Obama]

BURLESON: Alright, Ahead, First Lady Michelle Obama is here for an interview you won't want to miss. Her new book and podcast are about how we can all shine our light on the world even when times are tough.

(....)

7:51:35 a.m. [TEASE]
58 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Ahead; Former First Lady Michelle Obama]

KING: I always say you meet the nicest people in our green room. Look who's here. What your name is?

MICHELLE OBAMA: Michelle Obama.

KING: Michelle Obama. She is here. We are so glad to have you here. This is the first time you've been in our Times Square studio. Let me tell you, Michelle —

OBAMA: It's beautiful.

KING: — Mrs. Obama, you have put people in a tizzy. Yesterday for the first time a technician came to me —

OBAMA: Uh-huh?

KING: — and said, "how does Mrs. Obama like her room temperature?" [OBAMA LAUGHS]
Honest to god. Does she like it hot?

OBAMA: People don't normally ask that?

KING: Does she like it cold? Never.

OBAMA: They don't care —

KING: And I said —

OBAMA: — about your room temperature?

KING: — no. We're like human popsicles. How does she like her room temperature? I go, I guess she likes comfortable.

OBAMA: Right.

KING: So, was it comfortable?

OBAMA: It was very comfortable —

KING: And then Katie —

OBAMA: Technician guy.

KING: — come here, Katie.

OBAMA: Katie!

KING: Katie, her mom said, what are you wearing? And she said I'm wearing jeans.

OBAMA: Very cute.

KING: Her mother said that's disrespectful to the First Lady.

OBAMA: Oh, no, no. No.

KING: Tell Katie's mom —

OBAMA: Where is —

KING: — is this okay?

OBAMA: — it's okay. We're in jeans era. Former — for a former —

KING: We are so excited that —

OBAMA: — jeans are — Katie's mom —

KING: — Michelle Obama is here —

OBAMA: — it's fine.

KING: — to talk about her documentary. Thank you, Katie. Mrs. Smith, Michelle Obama says your daughter looks good.

(....)

7:58:09 a.m. [TEASE] [During WUSA-9 local news break]
20 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Coming Up on *CBS Mornings*]

KING: Hello to you. I'm Gayle King. Coming right up and only on *CBS Mornings* — we like when that happens — former First Lady Michelle Obama joins us here in the studio. We're talking about her new podcast — *Michelle Obama: The Light Podcast*, it's called — and that upcoming Netflix special *The Light We Carry with Oprah*. There's only one! That's coming right up on *CBS Mornings*.

(....)

8:00:33 a.m. [TEASE]
12 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Michelle Obama]

KING: Michelle Obama will be here today. She'll be sitting right there. In fact, we couldn't be more excited. You should see Klause's face on steady cam. The former first lady is joining us to talk about her book and here podcast.

(....)

8:01:04 a.m. [TEASE]
12 seconds

BURLESON: Oh, hey!

OBAMA: Oh hi!

BURLESON: My!

KING: Oh, like, you didn't see her standing there?

BURLESON: I did not, Gayle.

OBAMA: Surprise!

BURLESON: Surprise. This is a great surprise.

OBAMA: It's fun!

KING: This has never happened before, Michelle Obama, that we've had someone join us in the Eye Opener.

(....)

8:02:34 a.m.
10 minutes and 25 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Michelle Obama]

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Michelle Obama Live; Former First Lady on “The Light Podcast” and New Netflix Special]

KING: We’re going to begin this hour with former First Lady Michelle Obama, who is here in our studio, live and in color. She is — listen to this, guys — the number-one best-selling author of *Becoming* and her recent book *The Light We Carry: Overcoming in Uncertain Times*, by the way, that was number one, too.

OBAMA: Mmmm.

KING: She traveled the country. She talked to big names about her recent book including — there was Tyler Perry, Ellen DeGeneres, and Oprah — there’s only one. You can hear those conversations on *Michelle Obama: The Light Podcast*. The former first lady also recorded a Netflix special with Oprah during her final stop. Here’s a little sneak peek.

[*THE LIGHT WE CARRY WITH OPRAH CLIP*]

KING: Michelle Obama, we welcome you to the studio. I mean, Oprah and I actually did have a conversation about this because we always say we don’t have a lot of friends. I know a lot of people, but when it comes to friends — and then we met your friends —

OBAMA: Yes.

KING: — and they really are your true blue friends.

OBAMA: You know, over the span of a lifetime.

KING: Yes.

OBAMA: And it’s interesting because you and Oprah have been kind of in the same business, right?

KING: Yes, yes. Yes.

OBAMA: I have been a lawyer, a law school student —

KING: Yeah.

OBAMA: — and I almost take — I have a friend from each era of my life.

KING: Each chapter of your life.

OBAMA: You know, it’s like — I tell people you don’t need a ton of friends.

KING: I agree that.

OBAMA: To even experience with one good friend, you're ahead of the game.

KING: But your friends have gotten you through many things. That's the other thing.

OBAMA: Oh, my gosh. I —

KING: You know you can trust them. And when you're at the level that you are, it's very, very difficult. I want to talk about the difference between the two books —

OBAMA: Mmhmm.

KING: — because *Becoming* was a best-selling novel, over 12 million sold. Drop the microphone, thank you so much. So when you started writing the second one, did you feel pressure that I have to top that, or I want to make another bestseller?

OBAMA: No. Actually —

KING: You didn't?

OBAMA: — there was no commitment in my contract. I didn't have to write the book. The book just sort of came.

KING: Mmhmm.

OBAMA: You know, over the course of the last few hard years of being in quarantine, dealing with COVID, all the political uncertainty.

KING: Mmhmm.

OBAMA: You know, I had a lot of time on my hands to just sort of stew and to mull over questions that young people in particular would ask about just managing —

KING: Mmhmm.

OBAMA: — life in uncertain times. And I told you I took up knitting.

KING: Yes.

OBAMA: And a lot of the ideas came as I was learning to knit and thinking about how did I get here? What are the tools —

KING: And you took up knitting after learning it on YouTube you said.

OBAMA: — I taught myself how to knit on YouTube.

KING: That surprised me, too.

OBAMA: Yeah, yeah.

KING: This is the thing about you — you have always been very candid, authentic, uniquely yourself. And so many people, Mrs. Obama, at your stature, “when people say how are you doing,” “oh, fine, fine, fine.” But you have been very open about your insecurities, your anxieties, even your frustrations. Why did you choose to be so vulnerable, and do you regret being so vulnerable and open?

OBAMA: No, no, I don’t. In fact, you know — it’s the only way I know how to be me.

KING: Yes, yes.

OBAMA: When you have to operate at a high level, I think it’s easier just to be completely yourself, then you don’t have to keep up with the lie or the facade that you’ve kept up.

KING: Mmhmm.

OBAMA: But I also think it’s a responsibility to people with a platform, you know, in particular young people are watching us.

KING: Yep.

OBAMA: And a lot of times they glamorize the lives of the famous. And they don’t understand that we feel anxiety and — and guilt and remorse and fear. So, when they experience those same natural emotions, they feel like something is wrong.

KING: Wrong, yeah.

OBAMA: Because we don’t tend to share the hard stuff.

KING: Yeah.

OBAMA: I don’t think it helps anyone to put on a brave face and to pretend to be something that you’re not. And I — I never want to be that for people.

KING: You’ve never been that person. What have you learned about working through your own.

OBAMA: Oof.

KING: What do you think could help others?

OBAMA: It is a practice — first of all, I've learned to embrace the fact that basic anxieties, I'm not talking about dealing with severe mental health issues —

KING: Yeah, yeah, I understand that.

OBAMA: — but basic anxiety is a part of life. You know, anxiety has gotten me where I am today, you know.

KING: What do you mean?

OBAMA: Not wanting to mess up at school, being anxious about doing what I'm supposed to do. You know, making sure I'm not living on the streets, so I want to be able to have a job — that kind of anxiety, you know, propels me forward. But I've also learned that sometimes I got to just step out of the noise and — and know that I have to turn off the things that cause me upset. So, there are times even in the White House where I just had to not hear anything.

KING: Mmhmm.

OBAMA: You know, I didn't want to hear about the country through the voice of someone else.

KING: Mmhmm.

OBAMA: I — a lot of times I let my experiences with the American people shape my attitude —

KING: Mmhmm.

OBAMA: — and nine times out of ten when I based my feelings on my interactions with people —

KING: Yeah, yeah.

OBAMA: — I was always in a better place.

KING: Yeah.

OBAMA: I say it's harder to hate up close.

KING: Yes, I so believe that.

OBAMA: And people are a lot better one on one than we look when we — when we see ourselves on the news or, you know, on TV.

KING: I know. I know. I've heard you say that when you're in the White House, did you feel tremendous pressure? Because all eyes were on you. And I heard you say once we just knew we could not screw up.

OBAMA: Uh-huh.

KING: I mean, you had eight years where there were really, relatively no scandals to speak of —

OBAMA: Compared to —

KING: — compared to what we're dealing with even now.

OBAMA: — no, exactly.

KING: Did you feel that type of pressure when you were there?

OBAMA: Ab — absolutely. I talk about the pressures of being the first —

KING: Yes.

OBAMA: — of being an only. There's that attitude —

KING: Being the other.

OBAMA: — being the other. Knowing that your successes and failures define the rest of your community and others like you coming behind you. So yes, Barack knew he couldn't afford a scandal. I mean, he wore a tan suit and got criticized, you know?

KING: And you know, you were long shorts in 110-degree weather at the Grand Canyon. People said, look at her.

OBAMA: And I knew — we had a long debate on the plane. I said, well, if I get off in a dress I'll look out of touch —

KING: Yeah, yes.

OBAMA: — because we're going on a hike. Then if I walk off in shorts, some fashion critic is going to say —

KING: Yeah.

OBAMA: — that's a no-no. So there's — yes —

KING: Yeah.

OBAMA: — we were — we were always mindful of the example that we set. But guess what?

KING: What?

OBAMA: That's what you're supposed to be when you're president of the United States and First lady. You should be mindful of the messages, the things that you say —

KING: Mmhmm.

OBAMA: — the example that you set. You know, that's part of the job.

KING: Yeah. You know, you're also candid about relationships. And I think you speak for many women when you so candidly said — I mean, people took off on this — you know, there were years where you just didn't like him. Many spouses will say, you know, there's some days I don't like him. I don't like her.

OBAMA: Yeah. So what — what's the controversy? It's like —

KING: That you said it out loud.

OBAMA: We like everybody every day. It is impossible.

KING: But — were there times that you think he didn't like you? Cause I know you said —

OBAMA: Of course not.

KING: — I didn't like him for ten years. No, what did he say — I was wondering what did he say, you said, I didn't like you for ten years. I was mad in that picture.

OBAMA: Right. No, no. I — I share these things because marriage is hard.

KING: Yes.

OBAMA: And a lot of young people quit on marriage over things that are just a part of the — the commitment.

KING: Yes.

OBAMA: We've been married for 30 years.

KING: I know.

OBAMA: You know, if I fell out with him for ten and we had great 20 years, I'd take those odds —

KING: Yeah.

OBAMA: — any time. But I don't — we glamorize marriage. And in this day and age, marriage is more about the dress and the dresses —

KING: Yes.

OBAMA: — and the proposal and the honeymoon and all the stuff around it. And young people aren't ready for the real of marriage. So, I think, once again, it's incumbent upon us, people who have had successful marriages, to be really honest about the fact that making a commitment to being with someone means you compromise. And compromise ain't always fun.

KING: Yeah.

OBAMA: And don't add kids into the mix because they really mess up your life.

KING: Well, let's talk about kids. Because people think, god, I hope she writes a book on parenting. Honestly, because you have raised two confident, not arrogant girls —

OBAMA: As have you.

KING: Thanks, thanks. Knock on wood. Who are —

OBAMA: I do that all the time.

KING: — who are very poised, who are really generous human beings.

OBAMA: Yeah.

KING: What did you want -- when they could have come out of the White House and been obnoxious and they have not, that has to do with the way they were raised. What is it that you want your girls to know, how you wanted them to move in the world? A lot of people can take lessons from this.

OBAMA: Gratitude because they are way more blessed than we ever were

KING: Yes, yes.

OBAMA: They had way more. And learning to parent with more was a thing I didn't know. I want them to have compassion and empathy. I want them to be independent.

KING: Mmhmm.

OBAMA: I want them to be able to stand on their own two feet, not depend on us. And the very important thing, I want them to know that their happiness is up to them.

KING: Yes.

OBAMA: That the world doesn't owe them anything, and neither does anybody else. And control happens when you know how to make yourself happy, where you know how to create your own

joy.

KING: Yes.

OBAMA: So, those are some of the things. And what comes with that are boundaries, expectations, giving them responsibilities, handing them their lives early, you know. Not — not being afraid of allowing them to fail, standing back, and letting them sit in their failure.

KING: And also it's okay for them to make mistakes. We — we have bills to pay around here, Mrs. Obama, so we're going to have to take a break. Please don't run out like your hair is on fire.

OBAMA: Okay.

KING: We're going to continue the conversation.

(...)

8:15:19 a.m. [TEASE]

5 seconds

BURLESON: We'll be right back with more from former First Lady Michelle Obama, so stick around.

(...)

8:19:17 a.m.

3 minutes and 55 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Michelle Obama]

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Michelle Obama Live; Former First Lady on "The Light Podcast" and New Netflix Special]

KING: We're going to continue our conversation with the former first lady. Her name, of course, is Michelle Obama. I have to say something about the book because it's called *The Light We Carry: Overcoming in Uncertain Times*. I really think that these are uncertain times.

OBAMA: Yeah.

KING: I look at the things in the news recently, the three recent shootings, the terrible shooting in Kansas City with the 16-year-old, thank God he survived.

OBAMA: Yes.

KING: A young woman in New York was shot turning in the driveway — just normal things.

OBAMA: Mmm.

KING: Do you think that we can ever figure out a way to reconcile gun violence in this country? Because it does keep me up.

OBAMA: I hope and pray that — that, at some point, enough becomes enough.

KING: Enough. But is there a point?

OBAMA: But, you know, we wondered that throughout our entire presidency —

KING: Mmmhmm.

OBAMA: — thinking that this time —

KING: — yeah. Barack Obama said —

OBAMA: — you know?

KING: — Newtown was one of the worst days of his presidency.

OBAMA: Yeah.

KING: And we still didn't get that message.

OBAMA: But we are the only developed country on the planet where its citizens can have unfettered access to firearms.

KING: Mmmhmm.

OBAMA: That is not a good thing.

KING: Mmmhmm.

OBAMA: And more of us have to feel strongly about it and particularly our young people. This is where democracy comes in. Voting — this — all this stuff is decided —

KING: It matters.

OBAMA: — in the — in the ballot box.

KING: And then you've got the Supreme Court, when they overturned *Roe v. Wade*. You — you put a very poignant message about you were heartbroken.

OBAMA: Mmhmm.

KING: What's your reaction today as you see this battle over abortion access continuing to play out, uncertain times, scary times.

OBAMA: This is — this was to be predicted. I can't tell you how many times we talked about the importance of the Supreme Court, the importance of voting, voting in every election, so now we are here. I am not surprised by it. It was coming.

KING: Yeah.

OBAMA: Now the problem is that our young people have to understand that just because an issue doesn't affect you today doesn't mean it doesn't — it's not going to matter in five or ten years.

KING: Yeah.

OBAMA: Voting matters. That's all I can say.

KING: Yeah, I know, and you've said it over and over. I emceed this event at Lincoln Center, Jazz at Lincoln Center, for Wynton Marsalis, and just mentioning your name that you were going to be on, people were YAHHHHHHH! I mean, people have such expectations and hopes that will she, will she? I'm not even going to ask you that. But do you ever wonder or do you ever think when will politics leave you? Because you said I'm not a political person, politics isn't something I wanted, that people still hope and want you to do something.

OBAMA: Yeah. It — I am authentic. If I were going to engage in politics, I would let people know.

KING: Know, yeah.

OBAMA: But I am a public figure, I still care about these issues.

KING: Yes.

OBAMA: I will always find ways to use my platform to — to speak out. That's why I'm focusing on getting young people to vote.

KING: Yeah.

OBAMA: Because none of it matters, it doesn't matter who's in the Oval Office if we can't give them a Congress to work with.

KING: So, listen — let's —

OBAMA: If we're not, you know, managing our state house and on and on. I could go on and on about it.

KING: — I know and I'm not even pushing for you running. That ship has sailed. I get it. What gives you joy these days, Michelle Obama?

OBAMA: Joy, so much.

KING: What are you looking forward to?

OBAMA: Yeah.

OBAMA: So much.

KING: In less than 30 seconds, what is it? Other than being with all of us today.

OBAMA: Watching my girls become the women that they were meant to be and watching young people evolve. I mean, that's still the thing that gives me not just joy but hope — is when I meet these young people who are really grappling with these issues in a major way, they want to have an impact. They are so full of promise. That's why I stay connected to young people —

KING: Yeah.

OBAMA: — because it's the best way to remember the best of our country.

KING: We are so glad you are here, that you came to us in the studio. You should have seen Klaus doing the happy desk [sic] on steady cam. There's Klaus. You can listen to *Michelle Obama: The Light Podcast* now on Audible wherever you get your podcasts.

(...)

8:53:01 a.m.

7 seconds

KING: Thank you, Michelle Obama.

DOKOUPIL: Smells good.

GAYLE BASS: It's very nice.

DOKOUPIL: Oh, that's very nice. I love it.

VLADIMIR DUTHIERS: Yes, and Michelle Obama!