

*CBS Mornings*

01/28/26

8:00:20 a.m. [TEASE]

6 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Attorney Ben Crump]

VLADIMIR DUTHIERS: Civil rights lawyer Ben Crump is in studio. We've got plenty to discuss, from the federal crackdown in Minnesota to his new novel.

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8:05:23 a.m. [TEASE]

20 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Ahead; Civil Rights Attorney Ben Crump]

GAYLE KING: Renowned civil rights attorney, Ben Crump is here with his debut novel. I say, you always meet the nicest people in here. It's a legal thriller, and Claus who is — is now doing the interview because Claus just said, Mr. Crump, when did you find time to write this book? And what did you say?

BENJAMIN CRUMP: On planes going all over America fighting for our civil rights.

KING: Yes, an interview with Claus and Ben Crump right after the break.

(....)

8:09:59 a.m.

6 minutes and 19 seconds

KING: Attorney Ben Crump has been at the center of some of the biggest civil rights cases of the past two decades, from the police killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor to the 2012 death of Trayvon Martin, Ben Crump has become a prominent defender of racial justice in this country. So, now he draws on that experience in and out of the courtroom, he has got a debut novel, a debut novel, a legal thriller. It's called *Worse Than a Lie*. Great title. Scan the Q.R. code to pre-order it now. It tells the story of attorney Beau Lee Cooper who fights the undercover — who fights to uncover, rather, the truth after a former Chicago police officer is shot by four White police officers. We're very happy to say that Ben Crump joins us live in the studio. It's good to have you back here.

CRUMP: It's good to be back!

KING: To be talking about your debut novel. But unfortunately, the news of the day sort of hijacks that for just a second, and it was interesting to me, Ben, how much the news of the day in Minneapolis is what I'm talking about —

CRUMP: Yes, ma'am.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Ben Crump on ICE & Minneapolis Tensions]

KING: — was eerily similar to what has happened in this book. But can we get your take on what you're thinking about Minneapolis? You were there, of course, for George Floyd.

CRUMP: Certainly.

KING: Yeah.

CRUMP: Certainly. Well, Gayle, obviously, what ICE is doing is an assault on our Constitution in every way. First Amendment right against free speech and assembly, Second Amendment right to bear arms, Fourth Amendment right against unlawful search and seizures, Fifth Amendment right to due process, Sixth Amendment right to counsel. I mean, what they're doing is a complete assault. And so even the facts and the tragedy of Alex Pretti, when I think about *Worse Than a Lie*, you see those similarities there in my fiction book and what's happening in reality in America today about we have video.

KING: It's so important, isn't it, Ben Crump —

CRUMP: Yes!

KING: — to have the video.

CRUMP: Yes, video is so important. But that's not a guarantee, like in the book, you see, the system conspires to try to oppress the truth, and so we have a lot to learn from not only books like *Worse Than a Lie* to inspire the next generation of Civil Rights lawyers, but to say, we refuse to look away.

KING: But in this book, your character lives. Why was it important for him to live, and he was shot 10 times. Also in Minneapolis, they said there were 10 shots fired there. I thought that that gave me a little goosebump. Why was it important to you that your character lived?

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Ben Crump on Legal Thriller "Worse Than a Lie"]

CRUMP: You know, Gayle, so often in cases I have handled in reality, they did not survive the brutality, but I wanted to make sure that Hollis Montrose, this Black police officer who was shot

by these four White police on the historic election of President Obama in 2008, so he can live to tell.

KING: To tell the truth.

DUTHIERS: So, Ben, if you were advising the families of Alex Pretti or Renee Good, what would you advise them to do? Because what legal recourse do they have given that we don't know anything about the individuals who killed them?

CRUMP: Well, that's it, and just like all the cases I've handled, you have to have your own parallel investigation. You can't trust that they will get it right, that they will get the evidence right, so you want to make sure you file your civil action. You want to make sure that you are doing an independent autopsy. Don't ever assume that they're going to get justice for you. We have to fight for every ounce of justice we get. And I know Tony Romanucci, my friend working with Renee Good's family tell them the same and I'd tell Alex Pretti's family the same.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Ben Crump on *CBS Mornings*]

KING: Do your own investigation.

CRUMP: Don't ever think that justice is going to be easy.

NATE BURLESON: I want to get back to the book, but last question here, what advice would you give individuals who are engaging with ICE, or if ICE is engaging with them?

CRUMP: You know, it's so sad because my daughter asked these questions, because people are so confused. You have to say, make sure you're video and like Gayle said, because we have to make a record, we have to document what they are doing, and we have to say the Constitution still matters. We are not a police state.

BURLESON: Yes.

KING: Yes. I want to get back to the book too, because the character's name is Beau Lee Cooper.

DUTHIERS: Doesn't he kind of look like somebody sitting here?

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Ben Crump on Legal Thriller "Worse Than a Lie"]

KING: And I wonder, your name is Ben Crump. What's your middle name?

CRUMP: Lloyd.

KING: Oh, so —

DUTHIERS: Okay.

KING: — so, BLC —

BURLESON: Okay, okay.

CRUMP: Similarities!

KING: Yes, a lot of similarities and he has a wife and he has a daughter, as you have a wife and you have a daughter, and he likes George Clinton and the Parliament, funkadelic. Did you like that?

CRUMP: I'm an Omega, so I love funkadelic!

DUTHIERS: Oh, he is an Omega.

BURLESON: Definitely.

KING: But have you always wanted to write a novel? Because I said, are you channeling your inner John Grisham here?

CRUMP: Well, you know, Gayle, it's interesting because my personal hero, Thurgood Marshall said once that most people won't ever know what actually happens in a courtroom. So, he always wrote his briefs to be very engaging.

KING: Yeah.

CRUMP: And what is more engaging than a legal thriller?

KING: This is a Civil Rights legal thriller.

CRUMP: This is a Civil Rights legal thriller, because when I'm on those planes going all over America, I'm always reading, you know, John Grisham's, *The Rainmaker* or —

KING: You're reading John Grisham.

CRUMP: — *The Lincoln Lawyer* by Michael Connelly.

KING: He is good. Yeah.

CRUMP: And I said, well, we're going to create legal thriller, but it's going to have a different kind of flavor, a different culture to it. And so that's what we wanted to do with this Civil Rights legal thriller and now, more than ever in America, we could use a Civil Rights legal thriller to engage us and educate us.

KING: I could see this as a movie.

DUTHIERS: Or a series.

BURLESON: Yeah.

CRUMP: Yes, ma'am.

KING: Have you thought about it, Mr. Crump?

CRUMP: Well, they are —

KING: Well, uh-uh-uh! Have you thought about it?

CRUMP: — well, there are a lot of cases, Gayle, that, you know, we've worked on. There are a lot of those things we draw from in the Beau Lee Cooper series.

KING: Okay, I am going to take that a yes.

BURLESON: Yes, yes.

KING: Oh, Beau Lee Cooper series.

CRUMP: Yes.

BURLESON: Okay. And speaking of that —

CRUMP: Yes.

BURLESON: — I look good bald headed. So, if you need a handsome man for the role, I've got you, baby! We're about the same size.

CRUMP: All right.

BURLESON: All jokes aside, thank you so much for joining us. We appreciate you, Ben Crump!

CRUMP: Thank you, Nate. Thank you, Gayle. Thank you, Vlad.

BURLESON: Of course, of course. All right, Worse Than a Lie comes out February 17. Go ahead and scan the QR code. We make it easy for you. It's on your screen right now to preorder the thriller inspired by Crump's own career.

KING: Mmhmm!