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[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Senator Cory Booker Talks New Book & More]

MICHAEL STRAHAN: And then we're here now with New Jersey Senator Cory Booker and he's out with a new book called simply *Stand*. Mr. Booker, thank you for joining us.

SENATOR CORY BOOKER (D-NJ): Good to see you, man.

STRAHAN: Good to see you man. Appreciate you being here.

BOOKER: Great to see you.

STRAHAN: And I love this book because this is a book about virtues.

BOOKER: Yes.

STRAHAN: And — and it's 10 of them and the people, famous or non-famous who exemplify them or who don't.

BOOKER: Yes.

STRAHAN: So — so why now? Why'd you write this book now?

BOOKER: Well, more than you know, I — when I'm walking around the country, people are afraid, worried about their nation across the political spectrum, and were asking me, what do I do? What do I do? And my response is we are the heroes that we've been looking for. And if you look at our history or even our present, it's always Americans in times like this that stand up for the best of who we are in the worst of times, and that's how we win.

STRAHAN: And one vulnerability that might surprise people — no, one — one virtue that might surprise people is vulnerability. How is that a virtue?

BOOKER: Well, you see it in sport — in sports right now. Some of the men that I think really break through often are the ones that talk about their own personal struggles. This is not a time we need more boasting of how great I am or how perfect I am. We create community many times when we open up about our struggles, about our pain. This is difficult times. So many Americans are hurting and I — in the last year, have seen so many Americans courageously opening up. This young man named Joseph Peters at one of my town halls — he suffered from severe anxiety, but wanted to come out and speak about what cuts in healthcare were meaning to his family and it was amazing to watch a crowd of a thousand people change instantly, crying, hugging, and he became a hero in my life because of that. Something about sharing when you're broken open

gives you more points of connection and more people to come together and show strength. That's what we are as Americans when we're honest and open with each other. And I think one of the best ways to show the strength of who we are is by showing our imperfections and our vulnerability.

STRAHAN: Yeah, and you talk about opening up and others opening up, but you opened up yourself. You write about yourself in this book.

BOOKER: Yeah.

STRAHAN: About vulnerability. When were you vulnerable?

BOOKER: Look, I've struggled a lot with the virtues in this book. In many ways, this book is about a lot of the teachers from history and from present who've helped me, but I think there was no harder period in my life when my dad was suffering from Parkinson's and I had this one moment where my life came full circle watching my mother deteriorate her own health suffering, losing money, a lot of people who are caregivers with people with Alzheimer's or dementia. And it was just a taking my dad to the bathroom for the first time, this man who took me to the bathroom so often. And it was in that bathroom — it was a public bathroom in Atlanta movie theater when my dad was completely gone and not there that somebody walked in and recognized me and I'm horrified, mortified, embarrassed that here I am trying to help my dad go to the bathroom and then suddenly, I look at my father and he is laughing because suddenly he was there and realized that he had mortified me yet again in my life. And it was just sweet tender moment, but also an expansion for my heart to understand not just what my family was going through, but suddenly realizing there was millions of Americans who often struggle in isolation were all going through this. And I've now really worked with that community of caregivers and others across the political spectrum to say, we as a country have to do more for people who are struggling like this. So, it's really one of those moments in my life where I found myself broken down, but yet in that breaking, I found myself more whole by joining with others.

STRAHAN: It's part of the, just, living part of life.

BOOKER: Yeah.

STRAHAN: You know, you start out, somebody is taking care, taking you to the bathroom.

BOOKER: Yeah.

STRAHAN: It's the cycle of life, man, and a real moment. But let's switch to politics for a minute. The DHS has been shut down for 38 days now. A lot of TSA workers — or none of them have been getting paid, line that airports are backing up. President Trump is now sending ICE agents to airports to help out. Do you think it's time for both sides to come together and get this figured out?

BOOKER: Yeah, this is one of the more stupid things I've ever seen in Washington where you

have TSA agents who are really struggling. Now many of them having to ask others to help them with food and meals because they're missing paychecks and we just need to pay the dam TSA agents and Democrats seven times have come forward and say, hey, look, we're having a fight on ICE. But pay TSA, pay FEMA, the people that are helping them. Why hold hostage airports because we're fighting over ICE? Look, the principle here is something Americans agree with. Frankly, on both sides of the aisle, we don't want ICE agents arresting Americans, dragging people out of their homes, killing people. There needs to be reforms and while we negotiate over that, don't drag in all these other agencies that have nothing to do with that principle to fight. So, I'm hoping this week, when we propose again, pay ICE [sic], make airports work, pay FEMA, they have urgent work to do, and let's continue the negotiations over Homeland Security's ICE activity.

STRAHAN: So, I think it surprised a lot of people with how much they're making, because people think how could it be paycheck to paycheck, but when you see what their paychecks are, they're really not making a lot of money as much of the same fact they should.

BOOKER: You know, I was one of the people leading for their pay raises. They get a lot of daps when I go through the airport —

STRAHAN: Yeah.

BOOKER: — because people forget that these are public service officers, but some of the lowest public safety professionals in the federal government workforce. These folks do a really tough job, and often we take out our — our anger on them because they delay us, but really what they're doing is keeping us safe.

STRAHAN: Mmmm.

BOOKER: We owe them to end this nightmare, to pay them, and then let's work on the negotiation over ICE, which to me, desperately — this reckless agency needs some reform.

STRAHAN: Yeah, and I'm sure a lot of people are frustrated because the lawmakers are getting paid —

BOOKER: Yeah.

STRAHAN: and the TSA workers aren't getting paid. And very quickly, yes or no answer, you're a contender — or you're considered to be a presidential contender for 2028. Running or not.

BOOKER: I'm running for reelection in November, so I'm hoping New Jersey will support me. Hoping folks will reach out to my campaign. But no matter what, in 2028, I'm telling you right now both the Democratic Party and the Republican Party need big change. I want this country to have a new vision. I want us to redeem the dream of America. I think all of us in this generational shift now going on with younger leaders coming up. It is time that we bring a — a real new

vision for our country. And so, I'm gonna be a part of that conversation regardless of what I'm running for. I'm just tired of both parties, frankly. We're missing the moment. I see corruption in Washington like I've never seen before, with billions of dollars of dark money, corporate money, corrupting the system. I see a lack of simplistic vision. Most Americans are losing their faith that the deal works for them. They're working harder than their parents making less can't afford rent mortgage providing for their kids and God, health care costs and other costs are skyrocketing. It — it is time that we renew America again and make the best of who we are really present in our politics, which I think right now has been devoid of a lot of hope and a lot of promise for Americans who are losing faith.

STRAHAN: So, I take that as a yes. Cory Booker, thank you so much. We appreciate you being here.

BOOKER: Thank you for not bringing up my most embarrassing sports moments.

STRAHAN: I'm not going to talk about how you hit me with a golf ball back in the day, but Cory's book *Stand* is available tomorrow. Make sure you pick it up and get all those virtues in.