

NBC's 3rd *Hour of Today*

07/09/26

9:00:09 a.m. [TEASE]

52 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: BOB ODENKIRK AND MOLLY RINGWALD]

CRAIG MELVIN: Then, two big stars live in Studio 1A. Bob Odenkirk and Molly Ringwald both here to share their powerful project.

(...)

9:19:12 a.m. [TEASE]

13 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: LATER; BOB ODENKIRK AND MOLLY RINGWALD]

MELVIN: Then, speaking of big stars. Not one but two. Bob Odenkirk and Molly Ringwald both live here in Studio 1A. They're gonna tell us about this really cool project that's brought them together. We'll do that when the 3rd *Hour of Today* comes right back.

(...)

9:27:51 a.m. [TEASE]

10 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: NEXT; BOB ODENKIRK AND MOLLY RINGWALD]

SAVANNAH SELLERS: Just ahead, we have two incredible actors teaming up, Molly Ringwald and Bob Odenkirk. They are here to tell us about their new project to tell us about an infamous time in our country's history.

(...)

9:32:27 a.m.

3 minutes and 59 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: BOB ODENKIRK & MOLLY RINGWALD ON *TODAY*]

LAURA JARRETT: We are back now with two acting greats. Molly Ringwald and Bob Odenkirk have starred for years on the screen. And now they are teaming up on the stage.

SELLERS: Yeah, now they're starting in the off Broadway show *Are You Now or Have You Ever Been?*

MELVIN: So, the play follows the work of the infamous 1940s House Un-American Activities Committee, which investigated anyone suspected of having communist ties, including some powerful members of Hollywood as well. Molly, Bob, good morning to both of you. Love the concept. For folks who may not be familiar with this particular part of American history, the play, we should point out, based on actual transcripts from those committee meetings.

BOB ODENKIRK: Yeah.

MELVIN: How do your characters fit into the story?

ODENKIRK: Do you want to go?

MOLLY RINGWALD: Well, I play Lillian Hellman, who was blacklisted. And my part is a letter that she wrote. I don't want to give too much away, but she's a pretty formidable presence, and you.

ODENKIRK: I play Lionel Standard, who people might remember from *Hart to Hart*, the TV show?

MELVIN: Yeah.

ODENKIRK: He was the Butler, Max.

MELVIN: Oh, yeah.

ODENKIRK: Yeah, but he was an actor his whole entire life, and he — he appeared before the House Un-American Activities Committee twice to say that he was not a communist. But it didn't matter, just having his name associated with this whole thing —

MELVIN: Yeah

ODENKIRK: — then he was blacklisted. He ended up not — you know, struggling for work doing nightclubs, going to Europe for a couple of years. It's one of the reasons he's in *Once Upon a Time in America*. He's in that movie because it was shot in Italy. MBut he struggled for work for about 15 years, and then was — slowly found his way back to another career in showbiz. But it was a very tough time for the whole country, and certainly for people in the arts, because for some reason, everybody got very scared, and excited about who might have been a communist, or even just attended a meeting —

MELVIN: Right.

ODENKIRK: — or been friends with someone who was, and it became this blacklist, and people didn't work, and were forced to testify. And so — some — the play is, as you point out, transcripts from the actual hearings that a great playwright Eric Bentley cut together, and you see every side of it. You see people who name names, Ilya Kazan, and other people like that. You see

people who fight and push back. You see every side of it. It's very entertaining. It's got humor. My character, Lionel Standard, just gave 'em a big — gave 'em the finger. Sorry, can I say that?

MELVIN: You can. You can.

JARRETT: You could leave it at that.

ODENKIRK: Yeah, yeah. We'll leave it at that.

JARRETT: And — and Molly, this really does have a revolving door of talent, if you will, and you two are now stepping in for the next few weeks. How do you find your groove so quickly? How do you get your tempo going?

RINGWALD: Well, it's a story that's always really been interesting to from the time I started in Hollywood. I didn't learn about the McCarthy Era in school. I actually learned about it on set —

MELVIN: Huh.

RINGWALD: — because somebody that I worked with was friends with Kazan, and I really wanted to work with Kazan, and I went out to dinner meeting with someone, a director, and she said, oh, who do you want to work with? And I said, I really love to work with Ilya Kazan, and she said, oh, what would you call it, naming names?

MELVIN: Ohhh.

RINGWALD: And then I went back to work the next day. And I said — I told my friend, BJ, and he freaked out, and he said, "But they already had every name. They already had it, you know?"

MELVIN: Wow.

SELLERS: Wow.

RINGWALD: And I thought, oh, this is interesting.

SELLERS: Been there, yeah.

RINGWALD: So, I started to do a lot of research about it, and it really was this time in American history that you think can never come back, and yet, we are in that sort of environment now.