



**THE SOCIAL CONTRACT PODCAST  
SEASON 2 EPISODE 11:  
GEORGIE & GIGI  
MEET  
BARACK OBAMA**

**TAVIA:**

Hello everyone! You're listening to Season Two of the award-winning podcast The Social Contract. I'm Tavia.

**GEORGE:**

I'm George.

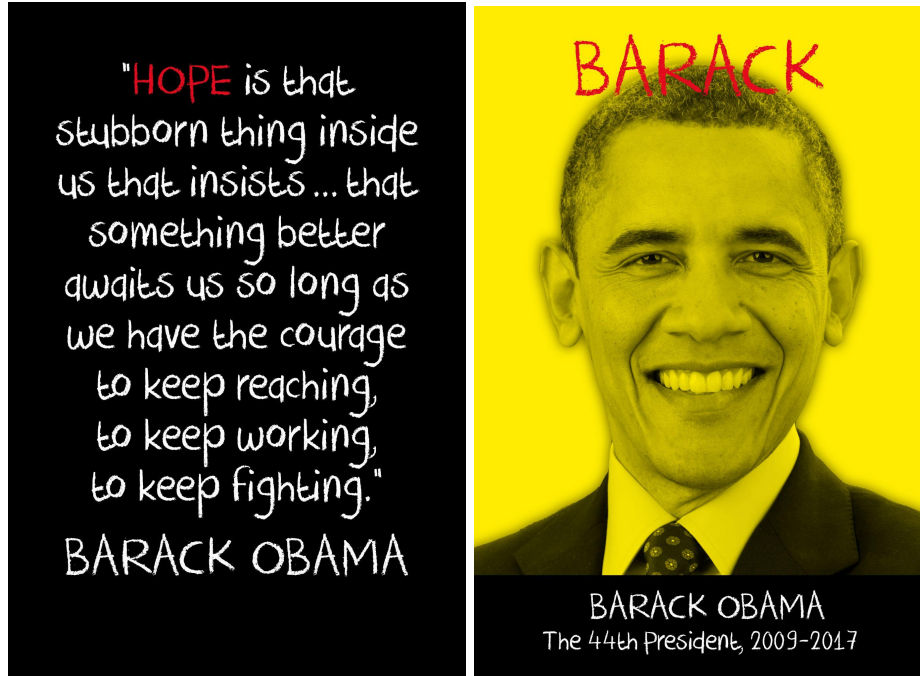
**CLEO:**

I'm CLEO.

**MAYA:**

And I'm Maya. Welcome to this episode of the Social Contract— the new way to Saturday!

"Hope is that stubborn thing inside us that insists...that something better awaits us so long as we have the courage to keep reaching, to keep working, to keep fighting." That's a quote from President Barack Obama.



**TAVIA:**

Thanks Maya, and welcome everyone! I hope you're all having a wonderful holiday weekend with your families.

Our hearts are heavy as we mourn the loss of First Lady Rosalynn Carter. She was such a special and important first lady. I'm glad George and CLEO included a special appearance by Mrs. Carter in Episode 9.

We'll hear from George and CLEO shortly, but something they shared with me that I thought was incredibly perceptive and moving was this:

Some couples are so close, when one dies the other can find it difficult to go on. The Carters were certainly very close, and shared a deep and abiding love. So our thoughts are with former President Carter as he copes with the loss of his beloved partner and soul mate.

We'll get into Part One of our exclusive conversation with George and CLEO in a moment, and you can catch Part Two in our next episode.

But first, by way of a quick recap as we near the finale of our second season of The Social Contract, this season we've followed ten-year-old BFFs Georgie and GiGi on their adventures traveling through time on a magical skateboard.

In this episode, Georgie and GiGi will meet President Barack Obama as a fellow skateboard kid (he went by "Barry" back then) in the great state of Hawaii. We acknowledge the

resilience of the people of Maui after the recent devastating wildfires ravaged that beautiful island. We hold you, always, close to our hearts.

Now before we catch up with Georgie and GiGi—and their new friend “Barry”—we have a chance to spend time with our own inspiring pair!

Hello, my friends, George and CLEO, I'm so glad that you could join us for this two-part episode. I always enjoy catching up with you, and I know that our listeners love hearing from you, and we have all just celebrated Thanksgiving and harvest. So this time of the year is always a time to get us thinking about gratitude. It is a choice, I think, to be grateful. What are you most grateful for this year?

**GEORGE:**

I'm grateful for people caring for people. One of the nice things about American holidays — holidays anywhere — we all have Thanksgiving. No matter whether you feel one way or the other, whether you daily have bad feelings towards somebody else we still have these common things. It could be as sweet as sitting down to dinner with your family on Thanksgiving; it could be the Super Bowl that everybody watches. But I think from those, we can at least try to have a dialogue, at least, I hope so. That's what I'm thankful for this year.

**TAVIA:**

This episode centers around President Barack Obama. And I just remember so distinctly being in the middle of the street in Portland, Maine, and literally jumping up and down and crying with joy that we had this new hopeful era ahead. It was an unforgettable, unforgettable election night.

How do you remember that night? Where were you? Were you in the capital?

**GEORGE:**

Cynthia likes to take us to New York City for election night. And we like to stay at a very, very old, old-fashioned hotel. And we go down to Rockefeller Center and watch the numbers come in.

And then we always go to Times Square where everyone is together...

And we watch it come in. We just stay until there's an announcement.

**TAVIA:**

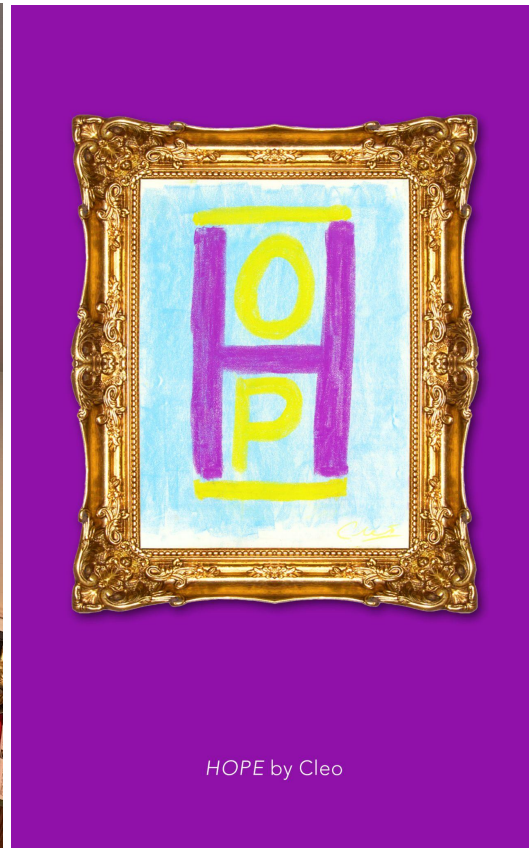
Hmm. CLEO, I remember during Obama's campaign, I remember Shepardd Fairey's now iconic Hope posters. It was really hard to not get swept up in the power of that one word, because we were experiencing it, and we were seeing it everywhere. That word hope continues to have such a powerful resonance, maybe more so today than ever before. Can you tell us why the word hope inspired your word art? What is it about the word hope that compelled you to make this new word art?



**CLEO:**

President Obama: His campaign slogan in 2008 could be boiled down to one word — hope, and the poster showing Obama and the big blue letters spelling the word hope has become one of the most iconic campaign images in American political history. Hope is such a powerful thing. When you are hopeful anything is possible; when you lose hope, the world seems like a very dark place. I believe so strongly in the power of art to remind us about things like hope, love, and freedom. It's why I love making and creating and sharing my word art with you. I hope the word inspires you.

I think mostly because it inspires us to be better people. It's forward-looking. It's not necessarily backward looking at what issues or mistakes may have happened, or things that didn't go the way we wanted them to go. It gives us a chance to live in the future.



**TAVIA:**

I love that. There was such a feeling of optimism after his election in 2008 and even after September 11th, there was this feeling of unity in the United States, even in the wake of that horrible tragedy. And now it feels like we're often so very divided. I'm wondering why you think that hope and that optimism and that unity didn't last, and what lessons can we learn from that?

**CLEO:**

I wish I had an answer to that. Crisis usually brings people together. I would hope that this is a moment in time that we can get over and reflect a little bit that really the way to get through a crisis is through unity. That's how we've gotten through them before. So hopefully this is a very short period of time and our better selves will come through.

**GEORGE:**

The hope also comes in voting. If people really want to express themselves, other than marches, other than writing your representatives, and running for local office, these are all good things. But at the end of the day, the way we can really participate and express our hope is in voting.

**TAVIA:**

Well, George and Cleo, everyone, it's always a pleasure to be in their company.

Oooh! I am excited to continue part two of this conversation in our next episode, but for now, I'm going to kick it over to our own Stephen DeRosa:

**STEPHEN:**

To meet President Barack Obama, Georgie and GiGi traveled all the way back to 1972, to meet him as a fellow ten-year-old. The magic skateboard brought them to a skate park in Hawaii, where Obama lived for a time when he was a kid.

Georgie and GiGi had never seen palm trees in person, so they were in awe as they looked up and watched them sway. A boy on a skateboard glided up to them and kicked up his board. "Hey there," he said, beaming a bright smile. "I haven't seen you around here. Are you new?"

"It's a long story, but sure, I guess you could say we're new," Georgie said.

"Cool," the boy replied. "I'm Barack, but every- body calls me Barry."

Georgie and GiGi glanced at each other.

"Oh, cool, well I'm George—but everybody calls me Georgie—and this is my friend GiGi. Your last name wouldn't happen to be Obama, would it?"

"It is! How did you know?"

"Wild guess?" shrugged Georgie.

Georgie and GiGi were tempted to tell their new friend, Barry, that when he grew up, he would be- come the President of the United States! But they decided not to spoil the surprise.

Georgie couldn't help but smile to himself, thinking about the YouTube video his father had

shown him of President Obama riding a skateboard into a 2012 global summit. When Georgie’s Dad told him the video wasn’t real—no, Obama did not in fact roll into the summit on a skateboard—Georgie was disappointed. But when he found out that a clip from the made-up moment was awarded GIF of the Year, he cheered up.

After an afternoon of skateboarding, Georgie, GiGi and Barry treated themselves to shaved ices. The crumpled one dollar bills that Georgie had in one of his cargo pockets were a lot more valuable in 1972 than they were in the present day.

GiGi’s favorite flavor was cherry, so her shaved ice was a bright red. Georgie loved coconut, so his was white. Barry picked the flavor called “Razzmaspazz”—so his was blue!

After enjoying their patriotic ices in red, white and blue, the kids were back on their boards. Barry told his new friends that he would teach them how to surf. But he never got the chance.

**TAVIA:**

I just have to cut in here for a second to say how much I am loving this story. And also, I don’t even know what flavor “Razzmaspazz” is (I’m assuming there’s some raspberry in it?), but I suddenly cannot think about anything else but an ice cold, bright blue Razzmaspazz snow cone!

Anyway, please continue Stephen.

**STEPHEN:**

In a flash, Georgie and GiGi were flying again, soon descending upon Grant Park in the city of Chicago. It was November 4, 2008, and Barack Obama had just been elected the 44th president of The United States.

More than two hundred thousand people were there. Many of them were clapping and whooping at the top of their lungs. Some had tears streaming down their faces.

It was a historic night. America had just elected its first Black president. Georgie and GiGi could not believe that they were getting to witness in person this historic moment, one they’d only read about.

Obama was at the microphone waving and beaming that same bright smile he had as a kid. His wife Michelle and their daughters, Sasha and Malia, were at his side.

*If there is anyone out there who still doubts that America is a place where all things are possible; who still wonders if the dream of our founders is alive in our time; who still questions the power of our democracy, tonight is your answer.*

“Oh, I’m so proud of Barry,” GiGi said to Georgie.

“Yeah, and I thought getting elected class president of the fourth grade was a big deal,”  
Georgie replied.

*It's been a long time coming, but tonight, because of what we did on this day, in this election, at this defining moment, change has come to America.*

There were so many flashes going off from so many camera phones (even flip phones!) that Georgie and GiGi found themselves squinting.

*As Lincoln said to a nation far more divided than ours, “We are not enemies, but friends... Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection.” And, to those Americans whose support I have yet to earn, I may not have won your vote, but I hear your voices, I need your help, and I will be your president, too.*

Georgie rubbed his eyes. When he opened them, he saw a young couple that he recognized among the crowd. It was his parents, Cecile and John! Georgie remembered the story of how his parents met—standing in line at the polls on election day in 2008. He figured they must have decided to go and see the president elect speak. This was their first date!

He thought about pointing out his young parents, who were on a date, to GiGi. But for some reason, he decided not to. Awkward.

*For that is the true genius of America—that America can change. Our union can be perfected. And what we have already achieved gives us hope for what we can and must achieve tomorrow.*

Georgie and GiGi found themselves caught up in the moment, and joined the crowd as it chanted Yes, we can! Yes, we can!

Wow, they thought, politics is fun!

*This is our moment. This is our time—to put our people back to work and open doors of opportunity for our kids; to restore prosperity and promote the cause of peace; to reclaim the American Dream and reaffirm that fundamental truth that out of many, we are one; that while we breathe, we hope, and where we are met with cynicism, and doubt, and those who tell us that we can't, we will respond with that timeless creed that sums up the spirit of a people:  
Yes, we can.*

**TAVIA:**

Oh what memories of that unforgettable night...

Now, Maya has been patiently waiting in the wings with a couple of questions about Barack and Michelle Obama.



**MAYA:**

First Lady Michelle Obama is famous for launching which public health campaign as First Lady? Was it:

- a) Let's Dance,
- b) Let's Move, or
- c) Let's Laugh?

The name of the program Mrs. Obama founded to encourage a healthy lifestyle in America's children was..."b," Let's Move!

Okay, one more: What is the title of Michelle Obama's first book? Is it:

- a) *Beginning*,
- b) *Believing*, or
- c) *Becoming*?

If you guessed "c," *Becoming*, you got the right answer!

**TAVIA:**

I'd like to add that *Kirkus Reviews* calls Michelle Obama's *Becoming: Adapted for Young Readers* "a warm memoir." And the very same review publication, *Kirkus*, calls George and CLEO's book *Presidential Conversations for Kids* –the one that inspired this podcast – "history with a wink." I absolutely love that.

And now, some closing thoughts from Barack Obama's first book, called *The Audacity of Hope*. It inspired me, and I hope it inspires all of you:

*We hang on to our values, even if they seem at times tarnished and worn; even if, as a nation and in our own lives, we have betrayed them more often than we care to remember. What else is there to guide us? Those values are our inheritance, what makes us who we are as a people. And although we recognize that they are subject to challenge, can be poked and prodded and debunked and turned inside out by intellectuals and cultural critics, they have proven to be both surprisingly durable and surprisingly constant across classes, and races, and faiths, and generations. We can make claims on their behalf, so long as we understand that our values must be tested against fact and experience, so long as we recall that they demand deeds and not just words.*

Our finale episode will take Georgie and GiGi, and us along with them, back into the present. The two G's will visit the White House, where they'll get to meet our current president and vice president, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris. It premieres on Saturday, December 30th, and trust me, you won't want to miss it.

We'll also be making a very big announcement—how's that for a cliffhanger?

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visit our website: [myTSCpodcast dot com](http://myTSCpodcast.com). We also invite you to visit [GeorgeSCorey dot com](http://GeorgeSCorey.com) and, of course, [TheArtistCleo dot com](http://TheArtistCleo.com).

The Social Contract podcast is created by George S. Corey and CLEO. Produced and hosted by Tavia Gilbert. Associate producer Katie Flood. Music courtesy of liCten audio. Mix and master by Kayla Elrod. Additional dialogue editing by Cathleen Conte and by production coordinator for Talkbox Bryan Wilson. Social manager Suzette Burton. Production supervisor Tatiana St. Phard.

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On behalf of George, CLEO, Maya, Stephen, and me, Tavia, thank you for listening!